

THE
LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
JOHN ANGELL JAMES

INCLUDING
AN UNFINISHED AUTOBIOGRAPHY

EDITED BY
R. W. DALE, M.A.,
HIS COLLEAGUE AND SUCCESSOR.

Second Edition.

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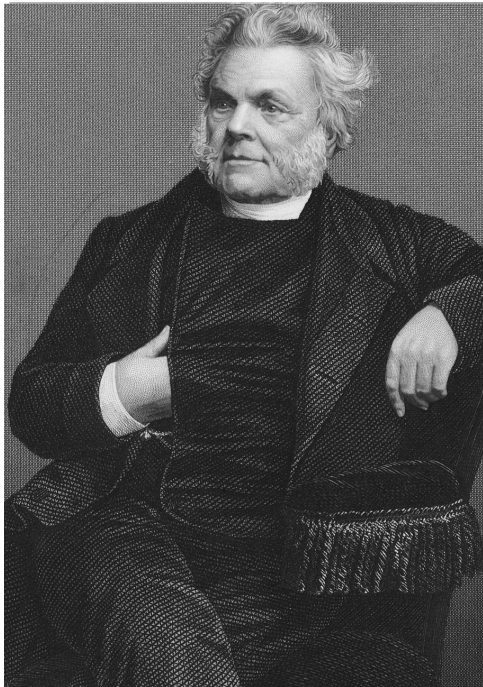
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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

HAVING left England before the first edition of this “Life” left the printers, the second edition appears without the corrections and improvements which would probably have been suggested both by public and by private criticisms. Many slight inaccuracies have caught my eye in a hasty revision; many others, I fear, have escaped my notice.

MONTAUBAN, 18 May 1861.



TO
TS JAMES, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

It was at your earnest request that I undertook to prepare this Memoir; allow me to present it to the public through you.

That these pages should exhibit a perfect image of your father's excellence is impossible. The impression his goodness produced on his children, and on the friends who knew his daily life, no language can adequately represent. I shall be satisfied if you think that strangers will find here a faint outline of his true character.

The gratitude I feel to your father's friends, who have aided me in various ways, will be shared by yourself. To the Rev. Dr King of Glasgow, whose communication on the early history of the Evangelical Alliance has been of great service to me; to the Rev. William Guest, who has written an interesting paper on your father's influence on the Spring-Hill Students; to the Rev. Dr Patton and the Rev. Dr Sprague, who have sent me a large number of valuable letters,—my thanks are especially due. The judgement of my friend and neighbour, the Rev. GB Johnson of Edgbaston, has saved me from many mistakes, and would have saved me from many more had his health and engagements permitted me to consult him more frequently.

The interest in my work which has been manifested by yourself and Mrs James, and by your sister, who has often forgotten her sufferings while recalling pleasant passages in her father's history, has greatly en-

couraged me. From the Rev. Thomas James of London, and from other members your father's family, I have received important information. For the Supplementary Chapter, written by yourself, I know not how to thank you.

For permission to insert the Photograph prefixed to this volume, I am indebted to Mrs Whitlock.

Conscious of how imperfectly I have fulfilled even my own idea of what this Life ought to be, I rejoice that your father's reputation cannot suffer from my inefficiency. His usefulness has won him the noblest and most enduring fame. The brightest creations of art must perish, and the glory of literature must become dim; but the tens of thousands whom he taught to trust in the mercy of Christ and to keep his commandments, will regard him with immortal love and reverence.

With very sincere affection and respect,

I am, yours faithfully,

RW DALE

EDGBASTON, April 1861.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION.

THE Autobiographical Fragment found among the papers of the late JOHN ANGELL JAMES was commenced in the autumn of 1858, and laid aside before the end of the year.

Let the reader imagine himself in a square room of moderate dimensions, comfortably furnished but without ostentation, a blazing fire on the hearth, the dark heavy curtains drawn, and candles lit for an evening's work. The wall on your left is covered with engravings of well-known ministers: you will recognise at once the majestic form and the ardent gaze of Dr M'All, the most brilliant of modern preachers; the quaint, kindly countenance of William Jay; the rugged face of Chalmers; and the robust form and ample brow of Robert Hall, who in genius and scholarship, vigour of judgment and splendour of imagination, surpassed them all. Facing you are two large oil-paintings, one on each side of the fire-place; that on the right is an early portrait of Mr James, the other, of his second wife, who has been dead now for seventeen years. Two or three other faces which are dear to the old man writing at the table, look down upon him from above the mantel-piece; and on a bracket fastened to the opposite wall stands the bust of his tutor, Dr Bogue.

There is a couch on one side of the fire, and on it there lies one whose sufferings, protracted through many weary years, have had much to do with her father's sanctity. Now and then, as he looks up from his writing to speak a kind word to his child, you see in his countenance a massive strength and a winning gentleness, the simplicity of childhood blended with manly shrewdness and no-

bility. The mouth was made for eloquence; the broad and ample chest below is what you like to see in a popular orator. His eyes are of the light blue so uncommon now in England, and brighten as he speaks till they shed a positive illumination over his face. But the light passes away, and he turns again to the page before him, writing swiftly and yet surely, hardly ever pausing for a word or turning back to cancel or correct. He writes like one who has written much, and who has small anxiety about the refinements of literary art. If he can make his meaning clear, if his sentences run smoothly, and are tolerably accurate and vigorous, he is satisfied. And now, having shewn you the writer, I leave you for a time to the manuscript which is growing rapidly under his hand. It is the record of his long and laborious life.

Autobio-
graphical.

I have been many times solicited to prepare for posthumous publication an autobiography. To this I have many, and, as they appear to myself, strong and well-grounded objections. I am quite aware that on some accounts, most men are their best and most competent memorialists, provided they have preserved, as life went on, the matter of which such a history should be composed, and have sufficient courage and honesty, and freedom both from false shame and self-love, to write the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth concerning themselves and others; and at the same time enough of candour, perspicacity, and discrimination in judging of events and characters with which they have been mixed up. Nor ought I to omit as another qualification for an interesting and instructive autobiography, a consciousness on the part of the writer that his life is of sufficient importance to be committed to record.

Of many of these pre-requisites I am deficient.

1. I have never kept a diary. I now regret this, for although I should not have had many things partaking of the marvellous, or strikingly novel and interesting to relate, yet in a public life of fifty-three years, and carried on in a rather public situation, some occurrences must have happened which would have furnished subjects of information and reflection which would, had they been

recorded at the time, have been worth notice. I was led to this neglect partly by a constitutional indolence; partly by what I considered, incorrectly, want of time; but perhaps still more by a fear of being tempted to write under the influence of self-love what was hardly a faithful transcript of the events that occurred. I thought I could hardly trust myself as a narrator of what belonged to myself. I feared that I should be tempted to write for the eyes of others, and thus give features and a colouring to the portrait which were not in the original. Autobio-
graphical.

Now, in default of a diary, I do not think recollections, called up at perhaps a late period of life, can be a full and faithful narration. Many things necessary to give completeness to the account must be wanting; the links of events were so delicate that they were hardly perceived at the time, and must be altogether invisible when looked for at a subsequent period. Impressions made at the time are evanescent, and cannot be recalled; opinions then entertained are forgotten. A traveller should, and usually does, note down scenes and opinions as he goes along. So it should be with him who would write a history of himself, a narration of his travels through life. This I have never done, and therefore cannot pretend to prepare what deserves to be called an autobiography.

2. My life has had little variety of incident. I have had few changes of situation, and a limited range of adventure. I have lived fifty-three years in the same town, have been all the time connected with the same church, and have resided all this while, with the exception of one year, in the same house. True, had I kept a diary, and been purposely observant of passing events, I might have found material enough to suggest much profitable remark, although I have not been called out to strange adventures, to only one or two controversies, and to no picturesque situations.

Mine has been a life of great uniformity, with the exception of domestic troubles. My ministerial life has been singularly monotonous; happily the monotone was a joyful one. I have had no quarrels with my flock, no divisions in my church, no change from one town or church to another. No pastor ever had less of

Autobiographical.

all this. As in general history, so in a more private life, war and strife rather than peace furnish the stirring, startling, engrossing themes of a narrative. Moreover, though I have had a good share of publicity, and of what is called popularity, I have not been summoned as by a trumpet-call to occupy posts of difficulty, importance, or danger.

I have been an author as well as a pastor and preacher, and have met with more acceptance in my works than I had any reason to expect, and in one instance have been granted a degree of success, I mean in reference to the "Anxious Enquirer," which is as marvellous as it was unlooked for, a more extended notice of which may be expected further on, when I come to speak of my books. Still these works are all practical, and contain no profound theology—nothing to give me a high place among divines, commentators, or critics.

3. I never indulged a taste nor possessed a faculty for epistolary correspondence. My letters have been mostly on ecclesiastical business, and brought back only letters of the same kind. My portfolio contains no affluence of this sort. I cannot furnish original communications from illustrious men. I have had little to do with such. I never was ambitious or solicitous to get introduced to such. I was conscious of the limited nature of my education, and my want of conversational powers, and the narrow range of my reading. I knew that I was a practical rather than a speculative or imaginative man, and I remained pretty much in my own sphere. I have, of course, known nearly all the great men of the various bodies of Nonconformists of my day, and have had occasional intercourse with them; but the only one with whom I kept up constant correspondence was the late Dr Fletcher of Stepney, who was my particular friend. I was too busy, or thought myself so, to enter largely on this mode of communication between man and man.

4. The character of my mind being eminently and unalterably practical, I have never had either the taste or the ability for metaphysical speculation or theological profundities, and therefore I have nothing to record in this way. I am neither philosopher nor

critic, and can give no emendations of difficult or doubtful passages, and no new theories of particular texts on general doctrines. I cannot add to the stock of sacred literature, or enlarge the stores of any who are well read in divinity, and, in default of fact and incident, supply suggestive thoughts and impulsive reflection. I feel as if I could start no mind upon a new track of investigation or career of discovery. No glimpses of previously undiscovered truth have visited my mind. I lack the powers of invention, and have no originality.

What have I therefore to record which would interest other minds in reading? I have been a mere plodding, working husbandman, using old implements with some industry and following old methods with a kind of dogged perseverance and considerable success. I set out in my ministry, even when a student, with the idea of usefulness so deeply imprinted on my heart, and so constantly present to my thoughts, that I could never lose sight of it long together: and I mean usefulness of one kind—that is, the direct conversion of souls. I have perhaps been in danger, and I now feel it, of restricting that idea within too narrow a circle. There are various kinds of usefulness. He is eminently useful who writes a defence of our holy religion against the cavils of infidelity, or a commentary upon a portion of Scripture, or a clear statement of Christian doctrine, or a valuable criticism on some disputed passage, or a religious tract, or anything else connected with divine truth. The priesthood of letters are eminently useful. The press is one of the two main pillars of the temple of truth. So in the conversion of souls, though the pulpit is the main instrument in effecting this, yet the tract distributor, the Sunday-school teacher, the Bible reader, are all useful, and every person should study his talents, his means, and his opportunities for usefulness. In reference to myself, however, I meant usefulness in the way of direct conversion of souls.

In consequence partly of this, partly of a want of literary ambition, and partly also of a want of vigorous application to study, by which to build on the very slender foundation laid in my very deficient college education, I never reached to such eminence of attain-

Autobio-
graphical.

Autobio-
graphical.

ment as would enable me to do anything beyond my own line of practical teaching. On all these accounts, therefore, I have ever felt that there could be little done by me in the decline of life in the way of autobiography, that would interest and instruct the public; yet I have thought I might do something in this way, that would be valuable to my children. What I have here written respecting autobiography, will in some measure apply also to a biography written by another hand. My own opinion is, that we have too much of this species of literature. Too much I mean of an ordinary kind. Even of the most distinguished men, biographical memorials are often too diffuse. It is too commonly thought, that a great man's history must necessarily have a very great book.

Of the lesser lights, even of the sanctuary, many might be permitted to pass away without any more permanent memorial than the stone which is placed over their tomb, and the love and veneration of those who have profited by their labours. How few biographies of any kind live in the use of those for whom they are intended! Some few attain to the honour of a kind of sacred classic; the rest are read, perhaps—and then are quietly entombed on the shelf. Now, there is nothing in my life that could exempt a memorial of me from this lot, and therefore I do not at all desire, what probably no one will think of writing, a published biography. I believe, without vanity I may say it, that my life has been in some measure a useful one, but even that has been in a very common method of procedure. I have been no comet in the solar system of Christianity, but one of the planets revolving in the attraction, and reflecting a little of the light of the Sun of righteousness. No one could say more about me than that for fifty years I was the pastor of one church, preached the gospel, wrote some books, and was honoured of God to save many souls, and all this with a very slender stock of secular learning. Most thankful do I feel that this can be said of me. And now, in the review of my life, and the anticipation of eternity, I feel more pleasure and more gratitude for this, than if I had attained to the highest niche in the temple of literary or scientific fame.

BOOK I

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

CHAP. I. BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

„ II. SCHOOL LIFE.

„ III. APPRENTICESHIP.

„ IV. CONVERSION TO GOD.

„ V. CALL TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

„ VI. STUDENT LIFE AT GOSPORT.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

JOHN ANGELL JAMES, fourth child but eldest son of Joseph and Sarah James, was born at Blandford Forum in Dorsetshire, on the 6th of June 1785. Blandford Forum lies pleasantly in the valley of the Stour, and in the heart of a beautiful country. Its name suggests the antiquity of its origin, but the whole town was twice burnt to the ground during the eighteenth century, and there is not an old-looking building in the place. There is no cathedral or castle to fill the hearts of the children with romance; no market-cross, with stories about reformers or martyrs; not even an ancient street, with quaint windows and carved doors, and wonderful legends about the Tudors or the Commonwealth. It is one of those quiet respectable boroughs, with a population of four or five thousand people, common enough in the south and west of England, which appear to persons accustomed to the hurry and weariness of the great centres of manufacturing and commercial activity to lie in perpetual slumber. At one time large quantities of wire buttons were made at Blandford, and Mr James's father, who was a draper, was engaged in the manufacture. Old-fashioned Dorsetshire folk still think that Blandford buttons are the only buttons that a gentleman should wear on his linen,—Mr James was faithful to this superstition to the last,—but Birmingham has long ago almost extinguished the trade.

The inhabitants of Blandford have time for reading and reflection and pleasant social intercourse; they are intelligent and cultivated. The more affluent people have not won their wealth by shrewdness and hard work, but inherit the occupations and position of their fathers. If this stationary condition gives less stimulus and excitement to life, it gives more tranquillity; if it produces less vigour, it secures more simplicity and refinement. From the quiet country towns of England come some of the highest and best elements of our national character.

Mr James was born in Salisbury Street, four doors from the Bell Inn, in the house now occupied by Mr Frampton. Within two years his parents removed to the house in the same street adjoining the Bell, and there remained to the end of their days. The exterior of this second residence, with which, of course, all Mr James's recollections of his early life were connected, remains very much as it was in the days of his childhood; the interior has been considerably altered. He says:—

Autobio-
graphical.

I have nothing to boast of as regards the distinctions of earthly heraldry, none of titled rank and fame can be found in the line of my ancestry; but, what to a Christian is of far greater honour, some of God's nobility were among them. I am descended from an old Dorsetshire family, and once had in my possession, but have unfortunately lost it, a list of my pious progenitors on my father's side for two hundred years back. They were not men of wealth, but belonged to the yeomanry of the country, and lived principally in the neighbourhood of Dorchester. One of them was upon the jury at "the bloody assizes" of the ferocious and sanguinary Judge Jefferies,* and, with his fellow-jurors, received the menaces of that ermined tiger if they did not do their duty; by which he meant, consign by wholesale to the gallows the objects of his fury. My grandfather was a native of Swanage, a man of simple, earnest, and consistent piety. He endured the persecution of ridicule and

* There is a tradition in the family that at the very time he was sitting on the jury at Dorchester he had some of the unfortunate fugitives concealed in his own house.—Edit.

opposition for his religion. A young clergyman, who took delight in annoying him while engaged in his family devotions, afterwards was brought to see the folly and wickedness of his conduct, and called on the aged saint with his confession and humiliation. At one period of his life he was bailiff for a gentleman in Berkshire, and not unfrequently fell in with George the Third during his residence at Windsor, who familiarly addressed him as "Farmer James." I never saw him but once, and that was across the street, for his last visit to Blandford was when we had the small-pox, and as he had never gone through the disease, he durst not venture into the house.

Autobio-
graphical.

Before the young clergyman just referred to had an opportunity of making a personal apology to the good man whose devotions he had interrupted, he wrote a letter to a lady at Swanage, in which he expresses his sorrow for his fault. The letter was written from Loxley, near Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. An extract from it may be interesting.

Editorial.

"I have had the unspeakable happiness to have my views entirely changed with regard to the religious sentiments I preached when at Swanage town.

"I can say,—I am happy to publish it,—I, who was once a persecutor of the truth as it is in Jesus, now preach it; and I ever will, till my last dying breath. I have already met with much opposition in boldly declaring the truth as it is in Jesus; believe me, I don't deceive you with a lie. Jesus has wonderfully revealed Himself to my soul; and I know in whom I do believe. It is too long to enter into particulars. I am a brand plucked out of the fire—I am a monument of Divine love. Though a gazing-stock to my relations and all my neighbours, suffice it to say, that I now in this manner abjure and reject the doctrine of heathen morality I preached in Swanage church, and in various parts of England. I preach nothing now but the gospel of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to every soul of man that has the transport and glory to believe in Him. I am as yet in the Church Establishment, but do not know how long I shall remain in it. I have the interest of my Saviour warm in my heart. I have the love of God abundantly shed abroad in me. I care not, I fear not, any change of time or fortune. . . .

“I have done an injury to the cause of Christ in Swanage. I now write this to you and them. I entreat your and their pardon. I did it in ignorance and unbelief. My conscience won't be easy till I have confessed the whole to you. Oh, I am not ashamed to confess it to all the world. I persecuted the cause of Christ at Swanage, but God has wonderfully stopped me in the midst of my blind and mad career, and wonderfully revealed Himself to my soul. Oh, the heights, depths, and riches of God's grace! I beg pardon also of an old gentleman whose door I violently assaulted when he was in family prayer. I entreat that gentleman's pardon in this letter. I tell the people of Swanage that I have been building them up in their own righteousness, but now I declare unto them, that will not do, nor make satisfaction to the justice, the unchangeable justice, of God, and there is no hope but in a Saviour alone. I once more confess my faults to you, to them, to all the world, and to Heaven, without prevarication or reserve. I beg your and the people of God's forgiveness. I entreat your and their prayers for me, as you and all the people and children of God have mine.”

My father was quite an ordinary man, somewhat handsome in person, but not of strong intellect. He had very little influence, and took comparatively little pains, in the formation of his children's characters. Yet he was kind to us, and concerned for our happiness, and generally sought our welfare. He was of a peaceable disposition, and fond of my mother. He was a regular attendant at public worship, but till the close of life made no profession of religion; and, I regret to say, did not, beyond attendance at meeting, give much evidence of a spiritual and renewed mind. In the evening-tide we hope it was light, and he joined the Independent church at Blandford. He died of diabetes in the fifty-ninth year of his age, about five years after my mother. Of her I have a happy recollection. I knew very little of her ancestors. Her father was a builder in Blandford, and I was shewn one large building which he erected. She was brought up under the care of a Mr and Mrs Angell, from whom I derived my cognomen. Mrs Angell was her aunt. Mr Angell was a respectable tradesman, a hatter, in Blandford, and retired from business with what at that time was a competency for a small genteel family. Of the religious character of this couple I know nothing:

but I believe they were General Baptists, as my mother was of this denomination. Autobio-
graphical.

From some of the books which formed their library, I think they must have been Arians. I never knew Mr Angell. He died before I was born. But I have a recollection of his wife, or, at any rate, of some scenes connected with her residence, her life, and death. One of the first things that I remember very vividly, was my being taken by my mother to the window to see her funeral as it passed our house. My sister Harriet, Mrs Keynes, was adopted by her when a child, and lived with her till her death. At her decease she bequeathed her whole fortune, amounting to about four thousand pounds, to my mother.

My mother was a woman of sweet, loving, peaceable, and gentle disposition, a general favourite, and deservedly so, but not possessed of an enlarged mind. She was a woman of sincere piety, without much theoretical knowledge. Her heart was beyond her head, as is the case, I believe, with many of God's children. She was a woman of prayer, and so fervent in her private devotions, that she could be heard far beyond the precincts of her closet. This was injudicious, but it was not confined to her, for I fell into the same fault in the early part of my religious history, and occasioned some remarks, if not ridicule, by it. This is hardly "*shutting the door*" and praying to our Father in secret. I remember her taking me into her chamber, and pouring her fervent and pious breathings over my infant head. And who can tell how much of all that follows in my history is to be traced up to a mother's prayers? How important a part in the working out of the great scheme of human redemption and the salvation of a lost world will, when the Divine scheme shall be revealed, appear to have been borne by pious mothers!

His father's letters, a considerable number of which I have had Editorial. the opportunity of reading, (of his mother's none are preserved,) and all the traditions which linger about Blandford, strongly confirm the accuracy of Mr James's account of his parents. The old man was a Nonconformist of the type of the last century, rather

stiff and narrow, and cherishing small respect for the rites and customs of the Episcopal Church. Being up in London one spring to sell his buttons, he was greatly annoyed because “yesterday *being called* Good Friday, of course no business was done, *so that I may reckon a day lost.*”

The pursuits of a draper seemed to him much more real and substantial than the work of a preacher. When one of his younger sons wished to become a minister, his father earnestly reminded him that it was possible to serve God as a tradesman, that a man may be as much in the path of duty while attending to secular concerns as while preaching the gospel, that perhaps the lad's anxiety to be a minister had been caught from the zeal of a friend, and would soon cool, that there were sisters not yet settled in life whose interests must be thought of, that old age was coming upon himself, that “the business here at Blandford or that at Romsey” would have to be given up if this desire to become a minister were not abandoned. And thus he argued down the passion of his son to do the noblest work in which God can employ the noblest of His servants. When John Angell James first longed to leave business and devote his ardent nature to the preaching of the love of Christ, his father urged similar objections. Suppose they had been successful!

Towards the end of the old man's days many troubles came upon him; and so his heart was softened. His children rejoiced to see that the close of their father's life was enriched with a grace which its earlier years had not known.

Of his mother, who was perhaps descended from one of the younger brothers of the great Admiral Blake, it was always a delight to him to speak. Mrs Angell, under whose care she was brought up, was a most excellent and pious person, and her adopted child inherited her goodness. Between the Angells and the Jameses there was an alliance of old standing. In the churchyard of the little village of Ower Moigne, there are many tombstones on which the names stand together; and when not long ago an heir was wanted for large estates at Brixton and elsewhere, be-

longing to the Angells, the connexion between the two lines excited a good deal of curiosity and interest.

Mrs James, as the autobiography has already indicated, was a Baptist, but there has never been a Baptist congregation at Blandford, and she worshipped with her husband in the Independent meeting-house in Salisbury Street; and there they both lie buried. She died in 1807, aged fifty-nine, and he, at the same age, in 1812. There is a stone to their memory on the outer wall of the chapel, and filial love has inscribed upon it the affectionate and reverential words—"THEIR CHILDREN SHALL RISE UP AND CALL THEM BLESSED."

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL LIFE.

Autobio-
graphical.

MY education for this world commenced at a day school in Blandford, and through my whole career my training has always been imperfect. My mind has had but little proper culture, so that I am a wonder to myself, when I consider what God has done by me. Having in boyhood contracted some improper associations, I was sent off to boarding-school at the age of eight years. But my father, not himself aware of the benefit of a good education and but little acquainted with schools, made a most unwise selection. It was a village school for the sons of the neighbouring farmers, kept by a man whose qualifications extended literally no further than to teach writing and common arithmetic.*

Here I lost two precious years in learning nothing. Nothing was taught but writing and ciphering. All the religion of this school consisted in our going to church on Sundays, and hearing prayers read in the morning. It is not to be wondered at that I never had a religious thought or feeling here, and by bad associates became wicked, even to swearing. The whole ambition of the master seemed to consist in making us good penmen, in which with me he never succeeded. My next school was at Wareham,

* At this school I have heard him say that the boys had to take their towels in their hands every morning and run off to a neighbouring brook to wash—an arrangement rather more bracing than pleasant.—EDIT.

kept by Mr Kell, an Arian minister. This was a classical school, and in every way incomparably superior to the other. There I remained rather more than two years, during which I learned Latin, and had some general instruction; after which I was sent back for a short time to the former school to get up my penmanship. But my mother, and perhaps my father, seemed to be so impressed with the want of all religious instruction, that I was allowed to go home every other Sabbath. My whole boyhood and school days passed by without any decided religious thought or feeling. Autobiographical.

In looking back at the system of education which in those days generally prevailed, and comparing it with what is now supplied, I am profoundly astonished at the vast improvement which in this respect has since then taken place. With the exception of Latin and Greek, more general knowledge is now communicated in our common day schools for the labouring classes than was at that time imparted in ordinary boarding-schools.

Thus finished my childhood in vanity and folly. I was yet “without God and without hope in the world.”

All the stories of Mr James’s school days that he himself was accustomed to tell, and all that I have been able to collect from his old schoolfellows and playmates, shew that he was a bright, merry boy, with exulting animal spirits, and a kindly, generous temper. He was not very clever in class, but was a good hand at trap-ball and rounder; and in the rough fun of the playground, and in the practical jokes so dear to thorough English lads, he was always forward. Some boyish sins he fell into, but he was always brave and generous, and was never suspected of a lie. Editorial.

He often used to tell with great glee how, on one Guy Fawkes’ night, he had the audacity to let off a squib at a soldier, which singed the warrior’s whiskers, and greatly provoked his fury; and how, on another, having filled his pockets with fireworks, all his thunder prematurely exploded, and began to blaze away so fiercely that he had to be put under the spout of the pump in order to save him from as tragic and fiery a fate as that to which the

immortal conspirator had doomed the rulers of the English nation. To convict all unbelievers, the pump is still at the back of the old house, with his father's and mother's initials upon it.

While preparing this biography, a kind note reached me from Mr James C—of Bingham, an old schoolfellow of Mr James's, with whom he once had a "battle-royal, which lasted half-an-hour;" but, writes Mr C—, "after the battle was over we soon forgot our encounter, and were afterwards very good friends." Thirty years passed before the combatants met again; and, having talked over the heroic deeds of their boyhood, Mr James looked his old foe and old friend in the face, and said with genuine and affecting earnestness, "My dear friend, I hope we are one in Christ."

It was not unnatural that even his mother should acknowledge to a neighbour that her "son John was her chief trouble," and deplore that he made no progress at school; or that she derived little comfort from her friend's assurance that as the boy was clever at his play, she need not trouble her heart about him, "he'll do well enough by and by."

Perhaps with individuals as with nations, their military glory is remembered and sung when their more peaceful though greater achievements are forgotten; but whatever the cause, most of the recollections of those who knew Mr James in early days celebrate his pugilistic prowess rather than his learning. Once he is said to have thrashed a lad for calling him a "pug-nosed Presbyterian," an insult flung at his religion as well as his person, which an ardent, impetuous, broad-chested boy could hardly be expected to endure. Old Mr Fisher, father of the two gentlemen of that name now living at Blandford, was travelling once in the west of the county, and put up at an inn kept by a Blandford man. Naturally enough the innkeeper began to inquire about the townspeople, and as the conversation ran on he exclaimed, "There were two boys of the name of James that went to school with me—what has become of them?"

"One of them," was the reply, "has become an eminent Non-conformist minister."

“Ay, which is that?”

“John Angell.”

“What! thick [Dorsetshire for *that*] thick-headed fool—why, he was fit for nothing but fighting!”

The general religious influences under which he lived during his boyhood were very feeble. He had to thank God for his mother's piety, but for little besides.

The Independent congregation of which his parents were adherents, like most of the Presbyterian, and many of the Independent churches of the last century, was paralysed by respectability and dulness. The effeminate refinement which had nearly proved the death of our literature, had invaded the pulpit and destroyed its authority and power. As the warmth and vigour of Dryden had given place to the cold timidity of Pope, as the sinewy directness of Locke had given place to the gliding gracefulness of Addison; so in the pulpit, Barrow and South, to say nothing of earlier and perhaps greater names, were forgotten, and Tillotson with his imitators reigned in their stead. Even when the tide had turned, and the French Revolution had made men impatient of mere finished correctness in general literature, preachers were still expected to be elegant and cold; and in good society Dr Blair was the model preacher.

This enfeebling fastidiousness was at once a cause and an effect of spiritual declension. In Doddridge and Watts, the spiritual energy which wrought mightily in the Puritans of the age of Elizabeth, and afterwards in many of the great Churchmen who offered a blind homage to the first two Stuarts, as well as in the illustrious divines of the Commonwealth and the confessors of 1662, had exhausted itself. At the close of the seventeenth century, Burnet, who was generous enough to applaud religious earnestness wherever he discovered it, said that the strictness of piety for which Dissenters had been distinguished was rapidly disappearing. The few eminent Nonconformists who were living immediately before the great revival under Whitfield and Wesley, mourn over the decay of spiritual earnestness among the members of their churches, and the prevalent latitudinarianism in matters

of doctrine. Doddridge confesses and deplors that for churches holding a moderate Calvinistic creed, it was hard to find ministers. The whole country was under a blight. In the Church of England evangelical orthodoxy had scarcely a refuge except in her Articles, and devoutness was to be found only in her Liturgy. Nearly all the Presbyterian pulpits, once occupied by the relentless but fervent Calvinists of the Commonwealth, were now filled with men who began by evading all definite statements on the chief articles of the Evangelical Confession, the divinity of the Lord Jesus, and the expiatory character of His death, and ended by distinctly denying them. Occupied in constructing endless demonstrations of the existence of God, and in weary controversies with a heartless scepticism, the divines of that age neglected and forgot the central and vital truths of the Christian faith. To pass from the theology of Puritanism to the folios which ensure the Boyle Lecturers a torpid immortality, is to exchange the tropics for an Arctic winter.

The churches of the Independent order suffered less severely during that age of darkness than their neighbours; but they were not wholly uninjured. Some became Arian. Others retained through a protracted period of spiritual slumber their old creed, and were at last re-awakened by the dawn of the great Evangelical Revival. The Independent church at Blandford belonged to the latter class, but in Mr James's boyhood the slumber had been but slightly disturbed. The minister, Mr Field, was a man whose personal religious habits and ideal of ministerial responsibilities had been formed when the religious temperature of the country was at its lowest point; his ministry commenced in the year 1753.*

He was a man of excellent character, a tolerably good scholar, and a gentleman, but a drowsy preacher. He is suspected to have held, though he never frankly avowed, Arian doctrines; when

* It is worth recording, and may serve to correct the mistake of those who suppose that Independent churches are such hotbeds of faction and restlessness that no minister can continue long in any one pastorate, that the Blandford church had only three ministers during a period of more than one hundred and fifty years. The Rev. Malachi Blake was minister for more than fifty years, the Rev. Henry Field for sixty-seven, and the Rev. Richard Keynes for fifty-three.

away from home his pulpit was often supplied by ministers who openly professed the Arian creed. His congregation included many of the most respectable inhabitants of Blandford, and he was held in very general affection and respect.

Good Mrs James, however, was often weary of the coldness and formality of the services at the Independent meeting. Many a time on a winter evening she called one of her boys to light the lantern and walk with her to the homely room where the Methodist preachers were stirring the blood and firing the devotion of their simple-hearted hearers. She found there less polish but more power, and believed that the dignified discourses of her own minister were well exchanged for the rude eloquence of less cultivated but more fervent men.

Although for a time she had no reason to suppose that her eldest son was at all affected by what he heard, who can venture to affirm that the stirring sermons he listened to at his mother's side in the Methodist conventicle produced no impression on his boyish heart? At least they must have helped to teach him that lesson which he often and solemnly endeavoured to teach others, that the gospel, though preached by unlearned men, is always and everywhere "the power of God unto salvation."

CHAPTER III.

APPRENTICESHIP.

Autobio-
graphical. MY father, in common with many others of like standing at that time, not being personally aware from experience of the advantages of a good education, took me away from school at the early age of thirteen. In determining for me my future avocation, he selected his own trade, as linen-draper, with the design perhaps that I should one day carry on his own business. It is a little remarkable that he should have decided in the same way successively for his three sons, and that neither of them should, after having learnt the trade, continue in it; though both my brothers, Thomas and James, entered upon it,—Thomas at Romsey, and James at Blandford. Thomas, as is well known, relinquished it, and entered the ministry, and James, after a few years, relinquished it too, and came to reside in Birmingham. The lot is cast in the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. As my father's business was small, he wisely determined to look out for me a situation away from home, and selected Mr B—of Poole as my future master, to whom, after the trial of a month, I was bound for seven years. This was, I think, in the year 1798.

Editorial Sixty years ago, the town of Poole, now a very quiet and somnolent place, was full of energy and wealth. Its little harbour

was crowded with ships, and the Newfoundland trade, which at that time was a far more important element of British commerce than it is now, was largely in the hands of the Poole merchants, and they carried it on with great spirit. How the trade was lost, it does not concern this narrative to inquire; it is only necessary to remind the reader, who in his summer tour may happen to have passed through this somewhat decayed town on his way to Bournemouth, or some other point on the south-western coast, that when Angell James began his apprenticeship, Poole was not an unfavourable place for acquiring commercial knowledge, shrewdness, and habits of industry.

I well remember the legal formality of my indentures, and receiving a short admonition from the attorney as to my conduct. I was at first upon the whole pleased with my situation, and happy in it. Besides myself there was a relation of the name of Cull, who was in the last year of his apprenticeship. He was a clever, agreeable man, and kind to me, but of no decided personal godliness. He afterwards married a lady of considerable fortune, settled in business for a short time in Wareham, and then went to Newport, Isle of Wight, and became the intimate friend of Dr Winter, who was then the pastor of the church in that town. Mr Cull became unfortunate, lost his property, removed to Canada, where he was employed in some public situation, and soon after died. Besides him there was another apprentice in Mr B—'s employ, a godless youth, from whom, however, I know not that I received any moral injury. Mr and Mrs B—were upon the whole kind to me at first. He was a professor of religion, *she* not. I believe he was a good man, though in some things a somewhat inconsistent professor. He maintained family prayer, somewhat formally and irregularly. I suppose he was about as serious and spiritual in this as many others. I am afraid family religion is very poorly maintained by many professing tradesmen of the present day. Mrs B—had no religion, and made no profession of any. They were singularly tried in their children. The eldest girl was an idiot, another was blind, and another was burnt to

Autobio-
graphical.

Autobio- death. Two or three of their sons attained to considerable respect-
graphical. ability and station in society.

Mr B— was not successful in business. He failed while I was with him, and I was the witness of much distress, and some things which were not very consistent with the “whatsoever things are of good report.” Oh, to what temptations are men exposed in business, and especially in times of difficulty and declension! It is a terrible conflict, and a man who would follow the apostle’s rule of trade, and maintain a conscience void of offence, must have the spirit of a martyr, and be willing to suffer loss for Christ. I pity the professing tradesmen of the present day when competition is so fierce, and it is so difficult to get on without what may be called the tricks of trade. To follow out the history of Mr B—. In the latter part of his life he joined the Primitive Methodists, became a local preacher among them, and died at the age of ninety-three or ninety-four. I became tolerably proficient in the business, and was put forward by my employer. During the first two years I was a careless youth, except at intervals, when a serious thought would cross my mind, and a remonstrance of conscience would disturb my tranquillity. I never despised or ridiculed religion, but always had a respect for it. My mother’s example and prayers did, I daresay, occasionally come to my recollection. As Mr B—was a member of the Independent church at Poole, I regularly attended the Dissenting place of worship in that town. The ministry was not of a kind much to interest a youth of my frivolous turn of mind. Mr Ashburner, the pastor of the church, was of the Whitfield school, and a regular annual supply at the Tabernacle in London. His doctrine was, of course, Calvinistic, and rather high. He was fond of anecdotes, some of which were homely enough and facetious. This tickled my fancy, but made no impression on my heart. His manner was peculiar, and somewhat calculated to provoke a smile in those who were not accustomed to it. He occasionally strolled into our shop, but never said a syllable to me on the subject of religion. There was little spirituality of conversation maintained by him. Yet he was useful, and there was a tone of devotional piety pervading a large portion of

the congregation. He was an old man when I first heard him, and as I was so young, and it is so long gone by, I cannot give a more particular account of him. Autobiographical.

Under Mr A—'s preaching I do not remember to have received any religious impressions whatever. Nor were our domestic habits and the companions I had in the house likely to foster them, if I had. After shop hours we had no place to retire to but the kitchen, and therefore no companions to associate with in the house but the servants. Yet, as an apprentice who had paid a high premium, I ought to have been called into the parlour, or we should have had a room provided for us.

I now tremble to think to what temptations we were here exposed, but from which, through God's goodness, I was preserved. A most solemn obligation rests on masters to take care of the young men whom they receive to their houses, either as apprentices or shopmen. This is too little thought of by many who make a profession of religion. They are to shelter them from moral evil as far as their efforts can go, and give them good advice. Eut then, this must be sustained by the honest and honourable manner in which their trade concerns are conducted. I know, for I have been informed by the young men themselves, to what moral perils they are exposed by the very questionable principles on which trade is conducted. Some have come to me for advice in cases where they were required to tell downright falsehoods and do dishonest acts. And some professing tradesmen and deacons of churches are not, to my knowledge, so scrupulous in this respect as they should be. I am sometimes told by tradesmen that if they do not do as others do, they cannot live. But what says Christ, "What do ye more than others?" that is, in the way of self-denial. Evidently implying, we ought to do more than others. I saw something of this in my own case while an apprentice. I remember that during the difficulties of my employer, the stock was taken, and this was carried on during the Sabbath, under the direction of a person put in charge of the business by the creditors. I was requested to join in this desecration, but I respectfully but firmly declined, and was not compelled nor blamed. This occurred,

Autobio- however, after my mind had become engaged on the subject of
graphical. religion.

About a year after I had been in Poole, I began to be a little more thoughtful occasionally about religion, which I knew I did not possess, and after which I felt a vague kind of desire. Sometimes on a Sunday I would go by myself and pray. In my ignorance, I felt the difficulty of entering on a religious life. I wanted to be pious, but knew not how. I believe God the Spirit was then striving with me. I made no effort to quench His motions in my soul, but at the same time I took no pains to nourish and strengthen them, and it was rich grace in Him that He did not leave me. He had purposes of mercy towards me, such as then, of course, it never entered into my heart to conceive of. Feeling the difficulties of my situation, I prayed that the Lord would raise up some one in the house to be my guide. I am sure I was sincere in this. And now comes a turning-point in my history. But this must be left for the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.
CONVERSION TO GOD.

THE time was now near when God would draw me to Himself. Autobiographical. Mr B—, with whom I lived, being in want of money, took another apprentice for the sake of the premium. A youth was engaged who had been religiously educated, and who maintained an external respect for the forms of godliness. The apprentices all slept in the same room. The first night of this youth's lodging with us, he knelt down by his bedside and prayed, in silence of course. The thought instantly occurred to me, as I looked with surprise upon the youth bending before God, "See there the answer of your prayers—there is somebody to lead you into the way of religion." This made me thoughtful and somewhat uneasy.

I do not recollect that I said anything to my fellow-apprentice, nor can I now remember whether I immediately commenced the practice of prayer daily. I think it probable I did, and that, emboldened by this example, I prayed too. I mention this fact, not merely because of its influence upon my future history, but as shewing the importance of letting our light so shine before others, that they, seeing our good works, may "glorify our Father who is in heaven." We should never be ashamed of our religion, nor of the performance of its duties. It is a very great disadvantage to young men going out into the world to be lodged in the same chamber with others. It requires much moral courage, more than

Autobio-
graphical. most possess, to pray amidst the gazing eyes and scornful looks of irreligious companions. *I* shall ever have reason to bless God for this act of Charles B—.

After a while I observed that Charles, as soon as the shop was shut, used frequently to go out for an hour. I had no reason to suppose that he went into any bad company, and at length discovered that his visits were paid to a pious shoemaker, or rather cobbler, who by hard labour earned just enough to live in the most frugal manner. I prevailed upon my fellow-apprentice to allow me to accompany him to his pious friend. He could not very well deny me, and yet was not perhaps overjoyed at the proposal. With a mixture of curiosity, trembling, and vague expectation of religious benefit, I went with Charles to the pious cobbler's. The house was small, mean, ill-furnished, and in a low situation. The shoemaker was unprepossessing in his appearance, having bad eyes, and being rather dirty: but both he and his wife received me kindly, and yet with some suspicion. I found that it was what I wanted; both the man and his wife were eminently pious and communicative. There was a gentleness and softness in their manners which were above their rank. The shoemaker was a rigid Calvinist, yet he had none of the dogmatism and pride and cap-tiousness of the Antinomian school. The first book to which he introduced his young neophyte was that farrago of spiritual pride and presumption, Huntington's "Bank of Faith." To the pure all things are pure, and good John Poole, for such was the cobbler's name, fed upon it as a feast of fat things, and considered it the very marrow of the gospel. I did not enter very deeply into the subject, but thought it very wonderful. The good man used to pray with us, and at length got us to attempt the exercise of prayer with him. In order to take off all fear from my mind, he requested me, the first time I prayed, to go and stand in a small place that was boarded off, in which coals and other matters were kept. Here in this dark corner I stood to pour out an audible prayer for the first time with a fellow-creature. Just about the time of my going first to John Poole's, Mr Sibree of Frome came to Poole, and preached from these words, "Therefore will the

Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you," (Isa. xxx. 18.) Autobiographical.
 The sermon produced a very deep effect upon my mind, and brought my impressions and floating convictions to a point, which the good shoemaker's instructions served to confirm. My views of religion were still very dim and indistinct, and my progress slow; yet I had a decided taste and relish for spiritual things, and my visits to my good Aquila and Priscilla were constant and delightful. Just about this period Mr Ashburner, the old minister, was laid aside, and Mr Keynes, afterwards my brother-in-law, came and preached at Poole for several months. His sermons were impressive, and were blessed of God to keep up my attention to eternal realities. Mr Keynes was succeeded by Mr Durant, whose ministry often and deeply affected me.

The cobbler's house, when I saw it last spring, had hardly Editorial.
 been altered since the time that Mr B—'s apprentices used to make it their daily resort. It is on the left hand of Fish Street, at the end near the quay. The street is narrow and dirty, and the house deserves the description given of it in the Autobiography; it is "small, mean, and in a low situation." "In this room on the right," said John Poole's son, who took me to see the place, "my father used to work, and Mr James, and Charles B—, and one or two others, would come in two or three times a-day to talk with him; sometimes several of them together, and sometimes one would come alone; and while my father went on with his work, the young men and he used to talk together about religion." The shoemaker's chairs being probably somewhat scanty, and perhaps not very strong, the young men bought a bench for their own use. "And this is the wall, sir," said my guide, "that they put it against, and there they used to sit." The room is not more than eight or ten feet square.

The little circle at the shoemaker's was enlarged by two more Autobiographical.
 young men, who were permitted to join us. We usually all met on a Sabbath evening after sermon at his house for prayer and praise, and very sweet and sacred were the seasons we there spent.

Autobiographical.

It was the vernal season of my religious life, when all was lively and budding. I now attended an early prayer-meeting on a Sunday morning at the vestry before breakfast, and occasionally engaged in prayer, though I believe with more fervour than correctness. The sermons seemed very solemn and interesting to me, and religious exercises in general very delightful. My religious affections were very strong, but my knowledge limited. I, of course, understood that I was to be saved from my sins by Christ, yet I had very crude notions of justification and other great doctrines of the New Testament. I was now thoroughly engaged to the subject of religion, and had given myself up to the company of the Lord's people.

Editorial.

An old gentleman, still living in Poole, gave me a very characteristic illustration of Mr James's earnestness during the early-period of his religious life. One Saturday evening Mr James had gone over to Blandford to see his friends, and, of course, was not expected at the seven o'clock prayer-meeting the next morning. "But, sir," said the old gentleman, "I happened to be a few minutes late that morning, and when I came to the door of the vestry, I found the meeting had begun, and I thought that from the voice it was John James who was praying, but could not believe that he had got back from Blandford so early. However, when I got in, I found that there he was. After the meeting was over, he came up to me with his smiling face, and said, 'Oh, why could you not come in time? I have walked over from Blandford this morning, and got here before you.' As Blandford is about twelve or fourteen miles from Poole, he must have started soon after three o'clock."

Autobiographical.

But all this while great imperfections attached to me. Mr and Mrs B—were excessively annoying in their conduct; they treated their apprentices like menial servants, and required of them services which respectable young men ought not to be expected to perform. I did not stand this test of my temper so well as I ought. I now see that I should have remonstrated with more

meekness, and submitted with more gentleness. I gave too much reason to them to reproach me, and did not display proper meekness. The situation became irksome and disagreeable to me. Had I sought more grace to be humble and contented, I should have been more consistent, and have grown more in grace. I was notwithstanding much valued by them I believe, and considered both trustworthy and clever in business. Autobiographical.

I one time gave occasion to my good friend the shoemaker to grieve over me, by going to an election ball; not that I danced, for I was never taught, but merely went for an hour or two to see what was going on. It was more a matter of curiosity, and of petty vanity at having an opportunity of going to a ball, than any particular taste for such things; but I ought not to have been there. My then present feelings were incompatible with such amusements. My pious friend, who watched over me with a jealous eye, wisely reprov'd me, and with such delicate gentleness as endeared him to my heart. I was also betrayed by curiosity into another inconsistency, and that was to go and see a mimic play, got up by a few young men of the town. While in the room, my conscience so severely reprov'd me, that its accusations were like scorpion stings. I was situated under a large beam, and I trembled through my whole frame lest it should fall and crush me to death: as soon as I could, I left the place, and jumped for joy when I found myself safe on the outside of the house. I mention these things to prove that there may be a work of grace going on in the soul when some appearances in young converts would lead us to suspect the reality of the change. Even after the soul is converted to God, it does not see all at once the full extent of its duty. Corruption gets for a little while the upper hand in the struggle.

During all this time I never had exchanged a word with Mr Durant, though I greatly desired to converse with him, and have stood at the corner of a street watching him to his lodgings, with a bursting heart, and longing to speak to him, but without courage to accomplish my wish. This has shewn me the propriety of the modern practice of ministers of setting apart

Autobio-
graphical.

times to converse with inquirers, and inviting them to come for instruction and encouragement. In all congregations there must be many persons in such a state of mind as I was then in, and who require the kind care and attention of the pastor, who, like his Divine Pattern, should gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom. In consequence of having no experienced spiritual guide beyond the good shoemaker, I had no one to direct my reading, and indeed, if books had been recommended to me, I had no opportunity to read them, being engaged in the shop from the moment I left my chamber till nine or ten o'clock at night. Among the books which I did read, and which greatly impressed my mind, were the sermons of President Davies of America, than which, even to this day, I know of no finer specimens of the hortatory, evening style of preaching*. He made Baxter his model, and in intense earnestness he well imitated his master.

I wish our young ministers would drink into the spirit of these pungent discourses, from the effect of which, upon my own youthful heart, I learnt much of the kind of preaching likely to interest the popular mind. I was also much interested and affected by Maurice's "Social Religion Exemplified," as abridged by Dr Williams, a book which should be read by all who would wish to see how beautiful are the principles of the Congregational mode of church-government, when carried out in a scriptural manner and to their proper extent. When retiring from the shop wearied with the business of the day, this book had charm enough to keep me awake, and to draw many tears from my eyes.

It will be seen by what I have related that my religious character was a gradual, and not a sudden formation: there was no pungent conviction of sin, no poignancy of godly sorrow, no great and rapid transition of feeling, nor any very clear illumination of knowledge; but there were many evidences of a real change. My delight in

* "The composition of Davies's sermons of New England is too equable and elaborate, and wants relief and shade; but I must confess, no discourses ever appeared to me so adapted to awaken the conscience and impress the heart. In reading them, one seems always to feel that they were written by a man who never looked off from the value of a soul and the importance of eternity, or sought for anything but to bring his hearers under the power of the world to come."—*Jay's Autobiography*.—EDIT.

prayer was very great; when alone in the shop, when riding in the country on my employer's business, I could not help pouring out my heart to God. In one thing, as I have already said, I was extremely injudicious, and that was, I allowed my feelings so far to get the upper hand of my judgment as to pray so loud, that though I was in the attic I was heard in the lower parts of the house, and exposed both myself and the exercise I was engaged in to no small degree of ridicule. Young converts in the ardour of their first love oftentimes want judgment. Still I did not intend to be ostentatious, and really enjoyed the exercise of prayer as an act of communion with God. Autobiographical.

My joy in the company of the Lord's people was very great; they were my chosen companions, their conversation was my delight, and a happy circle, as they then appeared to me, I had. Through the medium of my good friend the shoemaker, I became acquainted with several of the members of the church, of great worth and much esteemed. There were also several young people who, like myself, met at the house of this good man for conversation and prayer. One of these, William L—, was a respectable young man, engaged as an apprentice to an ironmonger, whose mind appeared to be in some measure under religious influence for awhile, and yet there were acts of his, of which I was aware, that ought to have made me suspect the sincerity of his religion, and deliver to him the language of faithful warning. After a while he strangely apostatised from his religious conduct, and went into downright infidelity, upon the principles of Thomas Paine. The town of Poole was at that time deplorably infected with the disciples of that reviler and blasphemer of God's Holy Word. A band of them used to meet at the house of an apostate Quaker, to strengthen the bands of each other's iniquity, and to pour contempt upon the Sacred Scriptures. Poor William L— fell into the snare, and became so ardent a proselyte that he copied out the whole of Paine's "Age of Reason," and sat up at night for that purpose. This did not occur till after I left Poole. His infidelity, however, was soon shaken for a while, in consequence of a dangerous illness which brought him within sight of the grave; his alarm and agony of mind were extreme. He sent

Autobio-
graphical.

for our common friend, beneath whose roof we had so often met, poured out the confessions of his guilt in abandoning the Bible, cried for mercy to his offended and insulted Saviour, and ordering his infidel manuscript to be brought, made his deeply affected visitor burn the whole before his eyes. He found infidelity a wretched companion on a bed of sickness, a miserable comforter in prospect of death. He recovered, and for a season returned to the good old paths which he had forsaken. But as a washed sow returns to the mire, and the dog to his vomit, he relapsed again, I believe, to infidelity, and became a callous, practical rejecter of religion, though I am not sure that he continued a speculative blasphemer. Of his end, or whether he has come to his end, I know nothing.

Another of my companions became, I believe, a drunken profligate; and as for poor B—, who was in some sense the occasion of my conversion, his history was a melancholy one.' He inherited considerable property, which, having no knowledge of business nor any business habits, he gradually frittered away, and then went to America, where he wandered about from place to place, reduced, I believe, in some periods of his history to the lowest straits. A letter of his to a friend in Poole, the last, I believe, he ever wrote to this country, now lies before me, and a sad detail it is; speaking of his poverty, he says, "I have not a solitary dollar." He died I hope safely; though long after he reached America he confessed in a letter I received from him, that at the time we used to meet at the good shoemaker's he was a stranger to the power of true religion. I can never think of his name but with a pang of remorse; in his distress he applied to me for assistance, and not being at the time very well able to afford substantial relief, and not being satisfied as to his character, I was dilatory in replying to his application, till when I would have helped him he was beyond the reach, and I hope the need, of sympathy or succour.

Such, then, were the three friends with whom I used to meet at the house of John Poole, and with whom I took sweet counsel and walked to the house of God in company. Precious and hallowed were the seasons we spent there, when on a Sabbath

evening, after the public services of the day were over, we united in prayer and praise, and still prolonged the Sabbath for the exercises of sacred friendship. Autobiographical.

But there was another of my Poole friends, with whom, at a later period of my residence in that town, I became acquainted, and who still continues a consistent follower of the Lamb, a preacher of the gospel, and a pastor of a Christian church,—I mean a Mr Tilley, then a tailor; a truly humble, pious, devoted servant of the Lord. Sweet indeed and profitable was my intercourse with him. He changed his views on the subject of baptism, and became an immersionist. I was at that time nearly persuaded to embrace the same sentiments. As there was no Baptist congregation in Poole, my friend went to Wimbourne, a distance of six miles, to be baptized. I remember the time well, as I accompanied him on his way on the Sabbath morning selected for the ceremony, and see myself now shaking him by the hand at the stile when we parted, and wishing that I was going with him.

Little events determine the future destination of men. Had I been at that time my own master in all respects, it is every way probable I should have become a Baptist, and thus the whole course of my life would have been naturally changed. I consider it a mercy, of course, that I was not then led away by my friend, but continued in the sentiments which subsequent reflection convinced me were true.

My religion during its earlier stages at Poole was strangely imperfect. I now see that it partook of an error very common, I mean an error of defect in the range and sphere of its operation: it was too much a religion of the imagination and the feelings.

I courted, and not unfrequently enjoyed, the luxury of weeping under sermons. The mellifluous tones of Mr Durant's musical voice, like the breath of heaven passing over the strings of an Æolian harp, swept over the chords of my excitable heart, and set them all in motion; but I was not sufficiently aware of the functions of conscience, that religion is a universal thing, dictating how everything is to be done, and following us with its commands, constraints, and warnings into every department of

Autobio-
graphical.

action. My judgment was not sufficiently enlightened as to (he motives and extent of duty, nor my conscience sufficiently tender as to its performance. I did many things which I now see to be wrong, and left undone many things which I now see to be right

It was not to be looked for that my dear relations could long be ignorant of the change which had taken place, or indifferent about it. I could not at first gain courage to inform them of it; and, indeed, it came on so slowly and imperceptibly that it was difficult for me to decide when and how to make the first communication. It is matter of notoriety that there is a strange, perhaps sinful, reserve between near relatives on the subject of personal and experimental religion. There is scarcely any subject on which it is so difficult to converse as this. Probably this is, partly instinctive, the soul being thus taken off from man, and led more directly to God; but like other instincts it may be carried too far, and become criminally excessive; and were religious education conducted as it should be, and religion in that high state to which it should attain, there would be less of this religious bashfulness than there is between religious parents and their children.

The first disclosure to my dear and anxious mother that her son John, of whom she had already become somewhat proud, was concerned about his soul, was the discovery in his greatcoat pocket on one of his visits to his father's house of a Bible. Overjoyed at the incident, and rejoicing in the discovery more than if it had been of a bank-note of large amount given to her, she made some inquiries, though I now forget how far I was communicative on the momentous topic; nor am I quite certain whether even this incident was not preceded by a disclosure to my sister Jane, to whom for a few minutes I will advert. From some cause or other, though younger than my sister Harriet, afterwards Mrs Keynes, she became a kind of second mistress, a deputy-mother in the family, and almost usurped maternal control; yet I do not think it was assumed out of the least disrespect to our dear mother, who, being of a kind, easy, gentle, and consenting disposition, gave up the reins pretty much into the hands of this her second daughter. Harriet had neither taste nor disposition for this; she was a lively, thoughtless, sprightly girl, a good singer, and fond of

company; but Jane was sedate, thoughtful, and fond of managing. She superintended our meals, clothes, and in fact governed us the younger ones. Her reign was not altogether impartial,—she favoured Thomas, and persecuted, in a little way, James. Jane was our instructress on the Sabbath; to her we said our catechism and hymns, though I believe my father heard us read the Scriptures. Alas! this was all he did for our religious instruction. Autobiographical.

Jane's mind was the first in our family which was impressed with the subject of religion; and to her, but by what means I do not now recollect, I opened my mind on this sacred and momentous theme. It is probable, that knowing the state of her mind I disclosed to her my own, and it is not unlikely that the Bible which my mother found in my pocket had been given me by my sister. A correspondence on the subject of religion was immediately commenced, which was maintained for some years, and from which I learn more of my religious history at that time than I can gather from my memory.

The future state of our family, considering the remissness of my father, for he never had family prayer during the earlier part of our history, and at the same time the very unattractive and unimpressive nature of the public means of grace we were under, is a subject of adoring wonder, gratitude, and praise.

To return now to my residence at Poole. I never became a professor of religion there, for I was never invited to join in the communion of the church. It was not then so customary as it now is to call out persons from the congregation that may be pious or anxious, and to invite them into fellowship. If the ministers and churches and parents were too backward in those days, I believe we in these days are too much in haste to press persons into communion.

I never engaged in any other way of usefulness at Poole than as a Sunday-school teacher. I was solicited to go to a neighbouring village and address the people, and had some intention to do so. I fixed upon this passage as the subject of my intended discourse,—“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” I had begun to pen down some thoughts; but by some cause or other my intention was not fulfilled.

CHAPTER V.

CALL TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

IN the office of the English Established Church for the ordination of deacons, the candidate is asked, "Do you trust that you are *inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost* to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people?" and he is required to answer, "I trust so." At the ordination of an Independent minister, it is not usual for any such profession to be formally demanded, but still it is our profound and solemn conviction, that if any man assume the office without an inward and divine call to its responsibilities and glories, he involves himself in awful guilt, and will be a curse instead of a blessing to his people.

How this call is to be ascertained, is a question which has filled the hearts of thousands with perplexity and anguish. Most of our graver and wiser ministers would determine it in words something like those which occur in the admirable Addresses of the Bishop of Oxford to Candidates for Ordination:—"Some desire, at least, to live nearer to Christ in employment and pursuit than worldly callings render possible; some personal sense of the deliverance brought to the soul by His gospel; some desire to speak His precious name to others; some love for souls; some aptness for ministering to them; some of the desires and qualities of the watchman, the steward, the shepherd, the physician, the good

master-builder must be certainly within us, and attest the working of the Spirit of the Lord, if we would assert safely that we act beneath His guidance. And these *may*, and in not a few instances, thank God, do mount up to an earnest, self-devoting love to the Lord our Redeemer; to a supreme desire and labour to live in all things for His glory; to a spirit burdened with a 'Woe is me,' and struggling like a pent-up fire until it can witness unto others of the love of God our Father, of the power of Christ's cross, of the healing, ennobling presence of the Lord the Holy Ghost." Change the "may" of this last sentence into "should," and most evangelical Nonconformist ministers would adopt the language as their own.

This "call" came to Angell James while still a youth. He "kept no account in writing of the workings of his mind at the time," and was not able sixty years afterwards to recall them. But it is not difficult to imagine the fervent and impetuous passion with which he longed to be a preacher of the great salvation. Unlearned in ecclesiastical history, and unfamiliar with the traditions of saints and martyrs which stir the hearts of the ardent and devout youth of some churches, his imagination was not fired with the poetry and romance of a mystic and heroic piety; neither St Bernard nor Thomas à Kempis, neither Fenelon nor Ignatius, suggested the type of spiritual perfection and ministerial service to which he aspired. Nor is it probable that he coveted the honour of being enrolled in the glorious company of the doctors of the Church; to his eyes, Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, the scholars and bishops that gave form to the theology of the English Church, even the illustrious theologians of the Reformed and Calvinistic communions, seemed crowned with a meaner diadem than Whitfield and Wesley, whose apostolic labours had regenerated the religious life of England. To catch their inspiration, to be surrounded in this world by eager crowds crying, "What must we do to be saved?" and to be welcomed into immortal glory by the songs and gratulations of thousands, who through his labours had escaped eternal destruction, would seem to him the highest honour and blessedness possible to man. His own narrative runs thus:—

Autobio-
graphical.

During the latter part of my residence at Poole, the Sunday school, by the instrumentality of gratuitous teachers, came into pretty general use, and was taken up by Mr Durant and his congregation. An application was made to many of the young people, and to me among the rest, to come forward and to assist in this good work. I accepted the invitation, and took my place at the head of a class. The work was exceedingly agreeable to me, and I became much attached to my children, and much interested in their welfare. I needed no stimulating addresses from time to time, to make me regular and punctual in my attendance; for the occupation was my delight. The other teachers were also devoted and in earnest. There was at that time less system in the methods of teaching, and none of the modern excitement of tea-parties, Sunday-school unions, and teachers' meetings: we loved the employment, and found stimulus and reward enough in the work itself to keep us going on with it. I do not condemn the modern practices, but I wish we could do without some of them; and it is much to be feared that many engage in the work more for the love of the excitement that is connected with it, than for the work itself.

It was while working as a Sunday-school teacher that I first felt a desire to be employed in a field of usefulness more extensive than that of my weekly class of boys, and to engage in the work of the Christian ministry. As I kept no account in writing of the workings of my mind at the time, I have not a very distinct recollection of the progress of my views of this great undertaking. My religious friends encouraged my desires; but as I was not then received as a member of the church, there was no small degree of irregularity in the proceeding. I opened my mind I believe to Mr Durant, but forget whether he encouraged or discouraged me; but my present impression is, that he did not think very highly of my qualifications, and left me to follow pretty much the bent of my own inclinations. My father was no sooner apprised of my intentions, than he opposed them. Having given a handsome sum as a premium at the time of my apprenticeship, and being now required to advance still more money to procure

my liberation, be felt much objection to the scheme on this ground, and also from a consideration that all my time had been thrown away as well as the money, and that he should have to support me a longer period than he would have been called to do had I proceeded to complete my apprenticeship and enter into business. I will not say that he attached no importance to the views I had taken up of the ministry, but he might justly be doubtful of my success if I prosecuted them. In this stage of the affair it was made known to Mr (since *Dr*) Bennett, then settled at Romsey in Hampshire, who was one of our friends. I remember I took a journey to Romsey while my sister Jane was visiting at Mr Blake's, our maternal uncle, and had an interview with Mr Bennett. On this journey I had a narrow escape from a broken limb or a still more serious injury by the fall of the horse on which I rode, in consequence of which I was thrown with considerable violence over his head. However, through the good providence of God, I received not the slightest harm. By the mediation of Mr Bennett with my father, his consent was obtained, and an arrangement was made for leaving my employment and going to Gosport to study under Dr Bogue. Just before I was to quit Poole, I was seized with a fever of the form of mild typhus, which, though not of a malignant or dangerous character, brought me very low.

As soon as I recovered from this, which was in two months, I left Blandford, at the close of 1802, for the scene of my studies. This was an eventful era of my life, and excited most grave and solemn reflections.

Autobiographical.

CHAPTER VI.
STUDENT LIFE AT GOSPORT.

DURING the last forty years the system of ministerial education among English Congregationalists has undergone a complete transformation; and Mr James's account of his life at Gosport, under the care of Dr Bogue, has all the interest which belongs to a trustworthy narrative of customs now almost obsolete. Just here and there a few candidates for the ministry are still gathered under the roof of a laborious man, who occupies at the same time the pulpit and the professor's chair, and superintends the reading of his students in the most dissimilar and remote departments of learning; lectures to-day on Original Sin, and to-morrow on Jupiter's Satellites; passes from Xenophon to Homiletics, and from Tacitus to the principles of Church Polity; and the earnestness and ability with which these numerous and conflicting duties are discharged, and the ministerial success of some of the students from these unambitious seminaries, awaken astonishment and admiration. But a new epoch, which Mr James himself helped to inaugurate, has now begun. Nonconformist colleges are attempting to secure for the ministry a more liberal and learned education than the private academies were able to impart.

It may, however, be necessary to remind some who read these pages, that the desire for a thoroughly accomplished as well as a devout ministry is not a passion which Dissenters have only

recently acquired. The meagre professional education received by the subject of this memoir, and by very many of the Congregational ministers of his age, was the result of necessity, not of choice.

The illustrious confessors who were driven out on Bartholomew's Day, 1662, were the flower and glory of the Church from which they were expelled. They were the most learned as well as the most religious of the clergy. But their descendants were excluded from the national universities, and were forbidden to establish private academies for the education of their ministry. Nearly sixty years after the great secession of 1662, a prosecution was commenced in the ecclesiastical courts against Dr Doddridge, by some clergymen of the English Church, for setting up an academy in Northampton, and the prosecution was only terminated by the express order of the King, who declared that "during his reign there should be no persecution for conscience' sake."*

When the growing strength of the principles of religious freedom rendered hopeless the malignant attempts to ruin the cause of the Nonconformists, by making a learned ministry impossible, other difficulties arose which delayed among them the restoration of the scholarship, both general and professional, of earlier days. "It had been seen with bitter regret that the elegant classic, the profound metaphysician, often lost the spirit of the man of God in the taste of the man of letters, and studied to recommend himself to the great by his literature, rather than to the good by his usefulness; while not a few of those who had ascended the pulpit uneducated, had, by the purity of their aim, and the ardour of their zeal, won from the finished scholar the palm of wisdom which Heaven awards to him that 'winneeth souls.' Many liberal friends of true religion were induced, therefore, to project the formation of seminaries, in which the time of education should be shorter, and the objects of attention should be only those which were essential to the formation of the plain, useful pastor. As the modern efforts for the propagation of the gospel increased the number of congregations in villages and smaller country towns, the slighter species of education given by Calvinistic

* Orton's Life of Doddridge. Doddridge's Works, vol. i., p. 148.

Methodists, and by some of the evangelical Dissenters, became absolutely necessary to supply the demands of the churches. It lowered, indeed, the standard of general knowledge among Dissenters, so that to the superior information of the old Dissenting congregations, which were often assemblies of divines, succeeded the comparative ignorance of the Methodistic societies. In too many instances the student never contracted enough of the habit to acquire the love of study, nor gained sufficient information to spend his future time to advantage. Where this was the case, the churches were injured, and they not only soon grew weary of the sameness of ignorance, but were sometimes wounded by the discovery that the natural effect of an incapacity for study was indolence, which exposed ministers to dangerous temptations.

“Serious as was this deduction from the benefit, the less finished species of education was productive of immense good. Many came out of the new academies with so much attachment to divine truth, and such solicitude for the salvation of men, that they proved far greater blessings to the Church than the arianised or latitudinarian divines who issued from some of the seats of learning. Though truth was worth the sacrifice, it was still an evil to be obliged to forego the advantages of learning. The first race of Dissenting ministers who, to the erudition of the universities, added the piety of minds purified from its dross in the fire of persecution, were as far beyond many of the preachers of modern days, as these are superior to the mere philosophic divines who had just learning enough ‘to corrupt them from the simplicity that is in Christ.’”★

Dr Bogue, from whose “History of Dissenters” this long extract is taken, was himself at the head of one of these private and unostentatious educational institutions. George Welch, a wealthy London banker, having determined to bear the expense of educating a considerable number of young men for the work of the ministry, three were sent by him to Dr Bogue towards the end of 1789, and the number gradually increased. Just before

★ History of Dissenters. By David Bogue and James Bennett, (London 1812) Vol. iv., pp. 299, *seq.*

Mr James's student-life began, Mr Robert Haldane having met Mr (now Dr) Bennett, a pupil of Dr Bogue's, expressed his regret that Dr Bogue's time and talents were being spent for the benefit of such a small number of students. As the result of that conversation, writes Mr James—

Mr Haldane offered a hundred a-year, for three years, towards the education of ten young men, if the friends of religion in Hampshire and other places would raise two hundred a-year more, so as to allow each student thirty pounds a-year towards his maintenance. Upon this foundation I was placed. My tutor was a man of great public spirit in religious matters, and of great weight of character. He had originated the Missionary Society by a letter which appeared in the *Evangelical Magazine*, and he did much to rouse and direct the public feeling in this noble enterprise. Perhaps there were very few of the illustrious band of fathers and founders of that institution to whom so much is due as to Dr Bogue for its existence and success. Soon after the society was formed, he was appointed to be the tutor of such young men as were accepted as missionaries, and who needed the advantages of education. He had before this acted as tutor to young men for home service. Autobiographical.

At the time of my entrance upon my studies there were six or eight missionaries going through their preparatory studies, so that I was led from the beginning, by my intercourse with them, to take a deep interest in missionary affairs. All of them, and others who came afterwards, have ceased from their labours and entered upon their eternal rest and reward. Among these was Dr Morrison, the distinguished missionary to China. He was a remarkable man while at college. Studious beyond most others; grave almost to gloom; abstracted; somewhat morose, but evidently absorbed in the contemplation of the great object which seemed to be ever swelling into more awful magnitude and grandeur the nearer he approached it. I remember his coming to me at one time when his mind seemed much depressed, and saying, "James, let us go and pray together we retired to his chamber, where he poured out his burdened spirit to the Lord, and, to use a scriptural expression, which was

Autobio-
graphical.

aply illustrated in this case, “this poor man cried, and the Lord delivered him out of all his troubles: he looked unto the Lord, and his face was lightened.” I cannot help thinking that there is too little of this occasional united prayer among Christians, and especially among ministers—this saying to each other, “Let us pray together.” How would it lighten our cares and troubles thus to commend each other to God, while it would give a strong and sacred cement to our friendship, and prove to us in the fullest sense of the expression, the blessedness of the communion of saints!

In looking back upon the time I spent at Gosport, I often feel much astonishment and deep regret. In whatever things the moderns are inferior to their progenitors, they certainly are beyond them in the management of collegiate matters. When I went to Gosport, I passed through no examination either as to piety, talents, or acquirements from any one. Mr Bennett wrote to Dr Bogue to say I was coming; and when I arrived, I called upon my future tutor, who received me courteously, but said little to me, and what little he did say was of a vague character, and ended with a request that I would attend at the vestry with the other students; leaving me, of course, to find out lodgings for myself. There were no college buildings.

Editorial.

Dr Bogues chapel and the adjoining vestry are still standing. The chapel will hold a thousand people, and is a plain red brick building; a slight alteration, which was begun before Dr Bogue’s death, is the only change which it has undergone for sixty or seventy years. In front, on either side of the path to the centre door, used to stand several cottages, which were rented by members of the church, and in these most of the students used to lodge. But in Mr James’s time there were more than these cottages would accommodate; and he, with another, lodged in a house at the end of Roberts’s Lane. Dr Bogue’s vestry—the theglogical hall of the Gosport students—is a room of about thirty feet in length and eighteen in breadth. The table, the professor’s chair, the worm-eaten benches which the students occupied, are there still. A capital bust of Dr Bogue stands in a recess over the fireplace. A

library, which was commenced in the Doctor's time, but has since been much enlarged, occupies part of one side of the room; many of his books, volumes of old Puritan theology for the most part, are still on the shelves.

It was not to be expected that when Mr James went to Gosport, his friends at Poole would forget him, and accordingly he had not been there long before he received a letter, an extract from which will indicate the simple earnestness of his humble friends. It is written in an odd fashion, every line commencing with a capital letter as if it were blank verse.

"The length of time has been so great since your letter was received, that we suppose you are almost ready to conclude that your Poole friends have forgotten both you and their engagements. This, in fact, has not been the case, as you are often the subject-matter of our conversations. At the present time we with pleasure behold you engaged in a work which we hope in time will be for the glory of Christ and the consolation of deathless souls. The promises of God are full of encouragement to the faithful servants of Jesus Christ who have embarked in His cause with prayer and praise. How strong that language we have in the prophet Daniel, 'They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever!' Yes, brother, the ministers of Christ will shine; and what will cause them to sparkle will be the precious souls that will flock around them to whom they have been made instrumental of good.

"How will the faithful minister of his dear spiritual children rejoice before Jesus the glorious Saviour! In this the Redeemer will see the travail of His soul But, dear brother, we must remember, that while we are inhabitants below, we are exposed to many snares and temptations; therefore our Lord's exhortations should be always our practice, 'Watch and pray.' Prayer tends to support the weak soul, strengthen the tempted soul, comfort the comfortless soul.

"We hope you will excuse a little plain, honest advice; for it is probable you may be called soon to go out into some of the villages round you, to speak to poor dark souls that are sitting in the region of the shadow of death. To such, be very faithful, tender, and compassionate; be sure you don't shoot over their heads, but be concerned that the plain word of truth should get into the hearts of the people.

"Tell them of the glories, the beauty, the excellencies of the love of Christ—the freeness, the completeness of His salvation, that it is a salvation for all that believe, without exception. O brother, the love of Christ is a subject that tends in its very nature to warm cold

hearts, soften hard hearts; the love of Christ is of a drawing nature, it draws from misery, and leads to happiness.

“There is a happiness in the enjoyment of the presence of Christ below; but how much greater will it be above, where our enjoyment will be all eternal! That we may meet there together, and while below may we enjoy every divine blessing, is the prayer of your real friends,

“L. PHIPPARD.

“JOHN POOLE.

“THOS. TILLEY.

“THOS. SILBY.”

But to return to the autobiography.

Autobio-
graphical.

At this time, I had never entered into the fellowship of a church; and, indeed, had never been baptized, as my mother was a general Baptist, and my father, like too many others, yielded to her wishes in not having the children baptized. This ceremony was performed before a large company in the vestry, after which I was admitted a full member of the church under Dr Bogue. I have no particular recollection of the state of my mind during this service, except that the publicity of it rather diverted my thoughts from that solemn sense of self-surrender which ought to accompany such an observance.

During the early part of my studies, I often had much spiritual enjoyment and many seasons of solemn communion with God. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that a college life is eminently favourable to godliness. It requires a degree of watchfulness and determination such as few possess, to keep up the life and power of religion amidst studies which, from their very nature, have such a tendency to depress the spiritual state of the soul.* Lessons *must* be prepared, lectures attended, and all

* “So again, all excitements, not only of a worldly and corrupting sort,—as pleasure, gaming, ambition, and the like,—but even the purer kinds, are adverse to devotion. A highly intellectual habit of thought, such as students or professional men usually live in, has a very subtle effect on the mind; it makes it over-active, so that the stillness and fixedness of prayer are irksome and peculiarly difficult. Also, it tends to dry up and deaden the affections, in which devotion is chiefly engrafted. This is true even of pastors, in the study of divine truth, and in the exercise of their spiritual ministry.”—*Archdeacon Manning’s Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 319.—EDIT.

the demands of the tutor met; and too often this is done at the sacrifice of time required by the closet. Subjects hitherto treated only as the elements of devotion, are now made matters of criticism and discussion. Besides this, any assemblage of young men will usually contain some of more than usual vivacity, not to say levity, the buoyancy of whose spirits will be perpetually rising into boisterous, and not unfrequently unseemly mirth. It is difficult to repress this, and almost as difficult to resist its ensnaring influence. Autobio-
graphical.

Many are carried away, and not a few are injured by it. Spirituality is damped, the tone of devotion is lowered, and the fine edge of conscience somewhat blunted. I never saw or heard anything approaching to immorality of any kind, and I believe such things are extremely rare in any of our colleges. Still, I am quite sure personal piety, without great care, is flattened, and learning is sometimes gained at the expense of godliness. I do not think I suffered materially in this way, though I am not quite sure that my religion was not below its former level when I left college.

My literary advantages at Gosport were of a most slender kind. The fact is, Dr Bogue, though possessing a great mind and noble heart, was not a great scholar. His *forte* was theology,—that is, the systematic theology of the Puritan school—the theology of Owen, Bates, Chamock, Howe, and Baxter, together with the foreign divines, Turretin, Witsius, Pictet, and Jonathan Edwards.

Here he was at home. His library was extensive; he had read much and was well acquainted with books. But his theology was almost exclusively dogmatic. Of Hermeneutics we heard little, of Exegesis, nothing. His lectures were drawn up in the form of a syllabus, somewhat resembling Doddridge's, but far less systematic and philosophical. They resembled the skeletons of sermons, with heads and particulars, divisions and subdivisions, with references to books, which we were required to read; and when the lecture was "given in," as we called it, we read in turn the particulars as they occurred, and the Doctor would ask us as he thought proper what we had to say on each. By this method we certainly acquired a great deal of acquaintance with old divinity, and a relish for the writers and their works of bygone times. We

were also obliged to work hard. The labour of copying out the lectures was a drudgery, which we were compelled to do before we could read upon them.

I remember that when I entered the college the class were in the middle of the system of divinity, and the first lectures I had to copy, to read upon, and to study, were on "The Freedom of the Will;" and one of the first books I had to read was Jonathan Edwards' celebrated treatise on this profound question. To those who are acquainted with that extraordinary piece of theological logic, it will be no surprise that to a youth just leaving the counter, with no previous habits of study, who had gone through no process of mental training, such a volume should prove a most vexatious and discouraging commencement: it was indeed a *pons asinorum* to my untutored brain, which, to tell the truth, I did not, and could not pass over, so I tumbled over the side of the bridge into the water, and, narrowly escaping drowning, scrambled up the bank and got into the road again, with the rest of the train, a little further on.

With such a course, which lasted with me only two years and a half, it will be matter of little surprise that I never became a classic, mathematician, or metaphysician.

Editorial. This estimate of the inefficiency of the course of education at Gosport was not the judgment of the moment, but a deliberate conviction to which he gave frequent expression. In a letter, dated September 6, 1811, to his brother James, who at that time was intending to become a minister, he says,—

"I must enter my protest at once against Gosport. I have various objections to your going there. The plan of education is, and must be, from the shortness of the time and the important engagements of the tutors, exceedingly defective—this, therefore, I set entirely out of the question."

He goes on to say,—

"The choice must lie between Hoxton and Homerton; on most accounts I prefer the latter. It forms no objection to it in my opinion, at least not a sufficient one to deter a pious young man from going there,

that there have been several of the students who have proved Socinians. From what I know of some of them, and from what I hear of others, they would have become Socinians anywhere. When young men enter an academy without the grace of God in their hearts, it is not a matter of wonder if they come out without the truth of God in their judgments. There is one objection to Homerton, which is, that the period of study is rather too long for you. Less than five years, with your ignorance of classical literature, you cannot be admitted for; this at your age is rather too long. Everything else meets with my approbation. The qualifications of the tutors I believe are undoubted; Dr Smith is a man of great literature and biblical knowledge, and Mr Hill, I am informed, is quite equal to his department. I should prefer Homerton on every account but the time, which, as I said before, for your age and circumstances is rather too long.

“The system at Hoxton is far more superficial in every point of view, though perhaps more popular. Most of the young men that I have known from there are exceedingly scanty in their ministerial qualifications. In many cases their [*], and in some their emptiness, has been their recommendation to the injudicious, who, I am sorry to say, form nine-tenths of the religious public of the present day. I know there are exceptions to this general character, and I know also that very much depends on the vigorous application of the young man himself. Since I began this letter, I have recollected that Hoxton has the privilege of sending four young men to the Glasgow University, after they have studied there; and if you could by diligence procure one of these scholarships, you would, by going to Hoxton, unite the advantages of both the seminaries in question. Of this I will make further inquiries by writing to Mr Wilson of London.”

Thus early had he formed his opinions on the importance of a thorough education for the work of the ministry. And these are corroborated by what follows in the autobiography.

When I think of the advantages enjoyed by the students of our own times, in the present improved system of education in colleges, and recollect that they have in some cases six years to pursue their studies, I could almost weep to think of my own disadvantages. When I see what men are now presiding over the studies of our colleges, it seems to me as if now I could gladly go and sit down at their feet, to repair, at the approaching end of

Autobiographical.

* Unintelligible.

Autobio-
graphical.

my course, the disadvantages I suffered at its commencement. O favoured students, know, value, improve your privileges! No man has ever been more conscious of his defects than I am of mine. No man ought to have more excuse made for him than myself. It is not surprising that I cannot write in such a pure classic style of elegance as they can who have had a more perfect education. How should I? Yet, through God's most abounding goodness, I have not been idle, or useless, or unknown. I have become an author of works, neither few, nor neglected, nor unblessed, written in good plain idiomatic Saxon language: and most of them written but once. To me my career is more wonderful than anything I have ever known; I mean, that one so partially educated, so limited in his attainments, so confined in his knowledge, should have acquired a standing such as has been assigned me in this extraordinary age. Instead of lifting me up with pride, it humbles, me in the dust—for in addition to my original defective education, I have had the disadvantage, as in one respect I may call it, of having been placed in a situation so public, and requiring such constant demands upon me, that I have had little time for reading and study, and for thus making up my original defects.

Editorial.

A few years ago, the Rev. Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, one of Mr James's fellow-students, published Dr Bogue's Lectures, in two octavo volumes.* Whether the fault lies with the editor or the printer, cannot be determined, but the book is full of blunders; some of the names of the authors cited are perseveringly and consistently misspelt throughout, others are spelt in a new fashion almost every time they occur. There are eight distinct courses of Lectures. The first, which is on Dogmatic Theology, is not very logically arranged; the Divine Decrees are the subject of Lecture XXVIII, and seventy Lectures on the Creation, Angels, Original Sin, the Person of Christ, the Covenant of Grace, the Freedom of the Will, Regeneration, Justification, the General Judgment, Hell, Heaven, and many other subjects, intervene before the Professor

* The Theological Lectures of the late Rev. David Bogue, D.D. Edited by the Rev. Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey. New York, published by Lewis Colley, 1819.

discusses the doctrine of Election. The form and character of the Lectures are sufficiently described in the autobiography.

The lectures on what may be called "Introduction," or as it is here denominated "Divine Revelation," have the merit, and this is no small one, of not plunging into difficulties and controversies for which the student is wholly unprepared, and from the discussion of which he could derive no profit. The other courses are on Divine Dispensations, Church History from the Creation to the Eighteenth Century, Jewish Antiquities, Sacred Geography, the Composition of Sermons, or rather Rhetoric, and the Pastoral Office, including eighteen lectures on Homiletics.

Of these the best are the lectures on Rhetoric; the most curious and interesting, those on the Pastoral Office.

In the latter course, the Professor entered very minutely into questions of ministerial ethics; inquired, "What proportion as to expense ought a minister's library to bear to his furniture?"—described what the minister's domestic economy ought to be,—
"1. Plain; 2. Frugal; 3. Decent; 4. Hospitable;"—what amusements he may indulge in, and what amusements he should shun;—gave very sensible advice, very racily expressed, on what kind of a wife to choose, and when to marry; suggesting, for instance, that in addition to piety there should be good temper, for "God can dwell in the heart, when men cannot dwell in the same house, See, therefore," adds the sagacious old Scotchman, "how she behaves herself in the family, to parents, connexions, servants;"—he recommends his students "not to seek for great riches," not to "marry for money's sake, but if possible not without money;" and finally, "as to the time of thinking on the subject,—first be married to a church, then to a wife."

The authors most frequently referred to are Owen, Baxter, Howe, Charnock, Bates, Barrow, Ridgley, and Gill; Edwards, Limborch, Witsius, Carpovius, and Michaelis.

Singularly enough, neither Calvin nor Turretin is, so far as I have noticed, once referred to, and their names do not appear in the index of authors cited. Mr James thus continues his account of his life at Gosport:—

Autobio-
graphical.

My early efforts at preaching were of a very humble character. The first pulpit I entered was at Ryde, then an inconsiderable village compared with its present extent, beauty, and populousness. A small chapel had been erected, which was supplied by the students from Gosport. I went over with one of them who was to preach, and he requested me to take the devotional services. Soon after this, I delivered an address in the vestry at a Sunday morning prayer-meeting, and was taken to task by the students for having delivered some unsound theology. The unsoundness was, however, more in the confusion of my thoughts than in any false views entertained by me. Near the chapel was a bed-ridden old Christian, called Rachel Butcher, for whose comfort a weekly service was held in her chamber. My next effort was to conduct a religious service in this abode of piety and poverty. Dr Bogue used to say her room was a cradle which had rocked many an infant minister, and some who became great men. Not long after, I was walking to Stobbington, a village where Mr Hunt, late of Brixton, who was a student of Dr Bogue's, resided. He was going to preach in a house that was licensed for worship. He said to me, "I wish you would preach this morning." Nothing loath or backward, I consented, and as far as I can recollect, got pretty well through.

Within two months after I went to Gosport,—that is, when I was little more than seventeen years and a half old,—I was placed upon the preaching list, and was sent out to preach—it is true, in country places and to village congregations. This was injudicious in my good tutor. There are two extremes to be avoided,—too early and too much preaching by the students of our colleges, on the one hand; and too little, on the other. To set a young man upon preparing sermons before he has entered the theological class, and to have that time thus engaged which is demanded for his classical, logical, and mathematical studies—all a necessary part of his college curriculum—is certainly wrong; and yet, to take him from scenes of usefulness of an humble character, in which he has been engaged, and to put an entire arrest upon his efforts to do good, and thus allow all the fervour of his first love to cool down amidst

the dry subjects of secular learning, cannot be right, on the other hand. Surely a medium might be found. To keep up his religious zeal to a due pitch, let a student, from the time of his entering college, be stimulated to become a Sunday-school teacher, a tract distributor, or a Bible reader. Let him be sent out into poor-houses, hospitals, and any other places where human beings congregate, to read the Scriptures and address the people. Let him deliver cottage lectures, which require no such previous thought and preparation as would interfere with his studies. And before he is allowed to go to town congregations, let him be sent to address village audiences. All this would keep up the divine life, and increase his fervour for saving souls, while it would give a habit and facility for free speech, and render him, when he becomes a preacher, independent of his notes. It will also beget a habit of right preaching, both as to matter and manner, and produce that kind of direct address, instead of essay-like stiffness and formality, which is desirable for popular and useful preaching. At the same time, great care should be taken in college that this do not degenerate into a loose way of speaking and a bad style of composition. I have ever felt this to have been, in some measure, my own case. The weakness of the logical faculty in my mind required another kind of intellectual training than it was ever my privilege to enjoy. In public, I always spoke rather interestingly and impressively, but not very accurately. Still, as God has blessed my ministry, and given me great acceptance, both in the pulpit and on the platform, I have cause to be thankful, and perhaps if I had been trained to logic and metaphysics, I should have been spoiled as an effective speaker.

To return to the narrative of my early efforts. When I had been at Gosport a year, I was sent out to preach in some of the principal places in the county, such as Southampton, Lymington, Romsey. In the latter place I was guilty of an indiscretion, which excited some prejudice against me among the serious people. One of the deacons or principal people gave an entertainment on the majority of his only son and child. A dance was got up, in which I joined and manifested a degree of levity in other ways. Some of the con-

Autobio-
graphical.

Autobio-
graphical. gregation would not come again to hear me preach. I did wrong, clearly wrong; that is to say, the act was a thoughtless folly, and shews upon what slender threads hang our reputation and usefulness. Yet some excuse might have been made for a youth only between eighteen and nineteen years of age. Students for the ministry should be careful when they go out to preach, how they act in the families which receive them. They are watched, and not always with friendly or candid eyes.

BOOK II
SETTLEMENT IN BIRMINGHAM.
EARLY STRUGGLES.

- CHAP. I. HISTORY OF THE CARR'S LANE CHURCH.
- „ II. FIRST VISIT TO BIRMINGHAM.
- „ III. ORDINATION.
- „ IV. DOMESTIC HISTORY.
- „ V. DISCOURAGEMENT.
LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF THE CARR'S LANE CHURCH.

THE facts contained in the following chapter from the autobiography are given with much greater fulness and vigour in Mr James's "Protestant Nonconformity." But as it seemed necessary to prefix to the narrative of his settlement in Birmingham some account of the church over which he became minister, I have concluded that it will be best to let the chapter stand just as he wrote it, without abridgment or addition. Autobiographical.

How true it is that God bringeth the blind in a way they know not! Little did it enter my mind in the most sanguine moments of my college-life that I should ever occupy so important a sphere as that to which Providence conducted me in this town. I had received a deputation from Alton, in Hampshire, to invite me to settle there. I had preached several times in that place; Mr Spicer, who was deacon of the Independent church there, (father of the Messrs Spicer of London,) was sent to request me to become its pastor. This I declined, no doubt under the direction of God.

It may not be amiss here to give a short history of the church over which God has called me to take the oversight. There is little doubt that Nonconformity existed in Birmingham from the time of the ejection of the two thousand ministers in 1662, for a Mr Wills, who was illegally dispossessed of the living, and who

Autobio-
graphical.

afterwards preached at St John's Chapel, Deritend, was an evangelical minister, and was persecuted for not reading the Book of Common Prayer; and by his preaching prepared a goodly number of his hearers to seek that truth out of the Church which they could no longer have within it. We find from Palmer's "Nonconformist Memorial," that a Mr Turton, who was ejected from Rowley Regis, was minister of one of the Dissenting congregations in Birmingham, and died there in 1716. So that before the close of the seventeenth century there were more Dissenting congregations in this town than one. There is a place in Digbeth called Meeting-House Yard, now filled with low houses and occupied by very poor people, which was, I think, the local habitation of Dissent in its infancy in this town, and I am not quite sure that the remains of the primitive meeting-house do not exist there still. If so, it soon removed to a more public and respectable situation.

I have endeavoured in my work on the "History of Nonconformity in Birmingham" to trace the origin of the two Unitarian places, and it is clear they were at one time both occupied by orthodox ministers and congregations. It is matter of notoriety, and not disputed by any one, that the old meeting-house certainly was, and I believe the new meeting-house was also. And among other ministers who there preached the evangelical system, was Mr Broadhurst, whom Dr Watts has celebrated by a Latin epitaph to his memory, inserted in his "Miscellaneous Thoughts," in prose and verse. In process of time, however, through a relaxation of discipline in the admission of members to the Church, vital piety declined, and lukewarmness in religious affections prepared the way for errors of the judgment, and Mr Howell, an Arian minister, was invited by a majority of the people to occupy the pulpit. Those, and they formed a very respectable minority, who still loved the truth, resisted and protested, but in vain, and they then quietly withdrew to found a new church upon the basis of Trinitarian views of the Word of God. They purchased land in a little, narrow street, called Carr's Lane. This name is an alteration from Cart Lane, or, as it was once called, God's Cart Lane, from the circumstance of its having contained a small building which

was an appurtenance to St Martin's Church, and in which the carriage or cart was kept that was employed in Popish times for carrying the sacred vessels employed in religious processions of the Host. Autobiographical.

This fact I had from the Rev. J. Garbett, who gathered it from some of the muniments connected with King Edward's School. The separation from the old meeting took place in the year 1746. A small chapel, or, as it was then called, meeting-house, was immediately erected, to which the entrance was under a gate-way, with houses in front, and doors one side of the place.

As this last sentence is rather obscure, I extract the following passage from Mr James's "Protestant Nonconformity," which will explain its meaning:—"In the front of the land purchased for the site of the intended meeting-house, and for many years in front of the place of worship itself, was a row of small tenements, through a gate-way in the middle of which the house of God was approached, while another row of tenements ran along the whole west side of the building; so that the congregation were put to much inconvenience by various noises and other annoyances. A member of the Society of Friends once remarked in reference to the poor people who inhabited these tenements, 'That if the Carr's Lane congregation were addicted to works of mercy, they need not go far to find objects for their bounty;' while Hutton, in his own style of levity and low wit, remarks, 'The residence of Divine light was totally eclipsed by being surrounded with about forty families of paupers crowded almost within the compass of a giant's span, which amply furnished the congregation with noise, smoke, dirt, and dispute. If the place itself is the road to heaven, the stranger would imagine that the road to the place led to something worse.'"* Editorial.

It is a curious illustration of the contrast between the position of Dissenters in those times and the present, that in the original trust-deed for the Carr's Lane meeting provision is made for the appropriation of the property, should it ever

* Protestant Nonconformity, p. 109.

become illegal for the Independents to use it for the purpose of their worship.

Autobio-
graphical.

The meeting-house was opened in 1747, when Mr Sloss of Nottingham, and author of a book on the "Trinity," preached. Soon afterwards Mr Gervas Wilde, who had been assistant to Mr Sloss, was chosen to be the first pastor. His ordination took place in the new meeting-house, which was lent for the occasion, being more commodious than the one recently built in Carr's Lane, for and by the congregation. Mr Wilde was a very lively preacher, and was very successful in his ministry. He died after about sixteen years' labour, and was interred on the premises; a neat and respectable marble monument was erected to his memory in the meeting-house. He was succeeded by Mr Punfield, a dull, heavy preacher, who, during the three-and-twenty years of his ministry, reduced the congregation to a very low ebb. Next to him came Mr (afterwards, and while in Birmingham, made *Dr*) Williams, a profound divine, and the author of some able works on theological subjects, which however are now almost forgotten. After three years and a-half he removed to preside as divinity tutor over the Divinity College at Rotherham, in Yorkshire. Dr Williams was a most lovely character, much esteemed by his flock, and held in deserved affection by all who knew him. When I say his works are forgotten, I mean that they are not much read; though the effects of them remain in a clearer, sounder view of the theological system, than prevailed when he began his ministry. To Dr Williams, among the Independents, and Andrew Fuller, among the Baptists, we owe the prevalence of the moderate Calvinism of modern times, and the present generally received opinion of the universal aspect of the atonement. Dr Williams was succeeded by the Rev. Jehoiada Brewer, who came from Sheffield, to take charge of the church in Carr's Lane. Mr Brewer was a man of popular pulpit talents, commanding in his person, with an eye and face that gave him great power over his audience; a good voice, much self-possession, dogmatic in manner, terse in style, and resolute in tone; he was formed to be an orator; and was both at

Sheffield and in Birmingham, but especially in the former place, very useful, particularly in the conversion of young men who afterwards entered into the ministry, among whom was Dr Pye Smith of Homerton, one of the brightest ornaments of our body. Mi-Brewer's usefulness in his best days was lessened by a most imperious temper, and a proud, lofty spirit, while at the same time his political tendencies, which were of a republican tenor, lowered the spirituality of his mind, and damped the ardour of his piety. After about seven years he fell into temptation, and resigning his charge at Carr's Lane, went off with nearly half the church and a large proportion of the congregation to occupy a building in Livery Street, which had been formerly used as a riding-school. There he attracted, by his talents, and by the popular sympathy excited by his friends towards him as a persecuted man, a considerable congregation. Autobio-
graphical.

For a few months the pulpit was then occupied by Mr Joseph Berry, the grandson of one of the deacons of the church. It is a little remarkable that I entered upon my studies at Gosport, almost to a day, at the very time that Mr Brewer retired from Carr's Lane. Little did the afflicted church imagine, when they found themselves as sheep without a shepherd, that they would have to wait for a pastor, till a youth who had just then gone to college should finish what few studies he would engage in, and which he had then scarcely commenced. And how much would they have wondered, and revolted at the idea, could they have seen that boy who had just left the counter of a linen-draper's shop, and have been told, There is the individual who within two years will be invited to be your minister, to whom you will offer to commit the care of your souls.

CHAPTER II.
VISIT TO BIRMINGHAM.

Autobio-
graphical.

AT the close of the year 1803, the Rev. James Bennett of Romsey visited Birmingham, on his wedding tour, having been invited at the request of Mr Phipson, one of our members, who had often heard him preach, and much admired him. He remained here, I think, three Sabbaths, and produced so deep an impression by his preaching as to awaken an earnest desire to obtain him as the pastor of the church. A unanimous and most cordial invitation was sent to him, to which, after much deliberation, he returned a negative. On being asked if he knew any one who would suit the people, he mentioned me, in whom, for reasons formerly stated, he might be supposed to take some interest. As the midsummer vacation in the year 1804 drew on, my venerable tutor, who had been written to by the Birmingham friends about me, proposed that I should spend three or four Sabbaths at Birmingham during the approaching recess. I am a little surprised on many accounts that I should have consented. I had been at college only a year and a half; my stock of sermons was really very scanty,—and such sermons too! my age was only nineteen; my general knowledge most limited; so that I am now ready to exclaim, “Rash youth—bold, forward young man.” But it was of God. I had acquired from the beginning of my ministerial efforts a somewhat earnest manner, which covered a multitude of defects.

My entrance to Birmingham was in a state of much mental perturbation; for, on leaving Gosport, I had forgotten to ask, and Bogue to give me, any direction where I was to go when I arrived in this then large town. I knew nobody, and nobody knew me. It was most strange that this had not occurred to me, but it had not till the morning I left Bristol. However, my solicitude was soon relieved, for, on reaching the town, I was accosted by an individual who proved to be my first and one of my dearest friends through all my ministry, I mean Mr Phipson. The people not having heard of or from me, knew not whence I was to come, or when, and had been in great perplexity, and through the whole of Saturday had sent to the various coach inns of the town. I should here remark that the thought, as far as I can now recollect, scarcely entered my head that I was going to Birmingham as a candidate. Consequences such as have resulted never rose before my mind. I was going to preach, and that was all. I was but little troubled then, as I have sadly been since, with nervous disorder. I thought less on Saturday night, and slept sounder than I do now when going to preach a Sabbath in a neighbouring town. I am afraid it was not so much the fervour of my piety and the simplicity of my confidence in God, as the thoughtlessness of youth.

My lodging was at the house of Mr Sargeant Taylor, in Great Charles Street, a kind, friendly, fatherly man of about sixty, with a wife earnestly devoted to acts of kindness to the sick; with two daughters at home, another at school, and a son, then either apprenticed or a shopman away from home. The habits of the family were plain and simple, but all the members of it were kind to me, and much devoted to my comfort. The good man was somewhat proud of his guest, and, as he was not very closely confined to business, devoted no small portion of time to shew me the town, and to introduce me to the various members of the congregation.

At the time of my arrival, the Baptist congregation in Cannon Street, to which the seraphic Samuel Pearce had ministered, was being rebuilt for his successor the Rev. Thomas Morgan, and

Autobio-
graphical.

during the time of carrying the work forward, the congregation was accommodated with the use of Carr's Lane Chapel at nine in the morning, so that we went in almost as soon as they left the place, and usually met them as we went down the Lane. We worshipped again in the afternoon, and they had the place again in the evening.

I cannot forget the impression produced on my mind by the first view I had of my future flock. The way to the pulpit was from the vestry through a door in the wall, so that I came at once upon the congregation without any preparation. There was no crowd to appal me, for in a place that with one gallery would seat about eight hundred persons, there were probably not more than a hundred and fifty, so that, in this respect, the sight was anything but encouraging; but what impressed me was the unusual number, in proportion, of venerable persons. There were nine or ten as respectable elderly gentlemen as are usually collected in a congregation several times the size. It looked like an assembly of the ancients. This a little appalled me, but I do not recollect that it discomposed me.

My first text was I John iii. 1, 2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," &c. First impressions are important to success, and those, I believe, were decidedly in my favour. The subject was interesting, and as it was a sermon I had, of course, often preached before, I had it pretty much at command, and being self-possessed to an unusual degree for so young a man, I gained a lodgment in the hearts of the people from that morning. If I mistake not, my text in the afternoon was John i. 14, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," &c. A bold and adventurous flight for so young a preacher! However, it proved me at once to be sound on the subject of Christ's divinity, a truth dear to the minds and hearts of the pious. It is of great importance to young preachers to be thoroughly evangelical in their first essays at preaching. Philosophy will not be accepted as a substitute for theology by the people, and ought not to be offered by the preacher, especially if he be a young one.

Sabbath after Sabbath my congregation increased, for which I believe we were mainly indebted to our Baptist friends, who began

to hear it rumoured that the young student from Gosport was considered in the light of a candidate for the vacant pulpit. I do not distinctly recollect my first introduction to my friend Mr Morgan, the Baptist minister, or whether he was at home during my first visit. Autobiographical.

It was impossible for me to be ignorant that my preaching had produced a very favourable impression, and I was requested to prolong my stay another Sabbath, which I consented to do. By this time I was, by my good host, who squeezed my hand, screwed up his mouth, and looked smilingly upon me, let into the secret that the people wished me to become their minister. As far as I can recall my feelings and views, I was not much elated, though perhaps somewhat surprised.

I was to leave Birmingham on the Monday after my last Sabbath, and a church-meeting was therefore called after the afternoon service, to consider the propriety of inviting me to become their pastor, when a resolution was unanimously and cordially carried to that effect, and a deputation, consisting of the four deacons and three other persons, was appointed to convey to me, at Mr Taylor's, the call of the church.

It was a rather peculiar and striking scene, and a trial of his humility, to see the youth of nineteen surrounded by seven venerable men, who were tendering to him the oversight of their own souls and that of the church which they represented. It was a moment in my existence of greater solemnity and responsibility than, I fear, I then felt it to be; a moment on which were suspended issues that will affect multitudes of immortal souls through eternal ages. It was an impressive interview. I expressed my favourable disposition to accede to their wishes; in short, my acceptance of this verbal invitation, subject to the approval of my tutor, as to the time when I should be allowed to leave Gosport and settle in Birmingham. With this understanding, I parted from the friends at Carr's Lane, and returned into Dorsetshire for a few days, before I went again to college. All this was enough to corrupt the mind of a youth who had been only a year and a half at his studies: but I believe, as far as I can recollect, I was kept by Divine grace from being unduly lifted up by the new situation

Autobio-
graphical. in which I was placed. I consider it a proof of God's special grace to me, that I was not allowed to become, elated, vain, conceited and self-confident. I was mercifully preserved from moral injury.

Editorial. Those who are unacquainted with the principles and usages of Independent churches will have inferred from the autobiographical narrative, that every church, by which is meant the society of communicants, appoints its own pastor. No minister of state, no patron, no external ecclesiastical power, is permitted to interfere. Neither the trustees in whom the church buildings are vested, nor those seat-holders who are not communicants, have any right either to nominate a minister, or to place a veto on his appointment. It is a fundamental principle of the Independent polity, that since every church, if devout and humble, may rely on the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in all its meetings, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all its ecclesiastical affairs, it does not require, and should firmly decline control from without. Friendly suggestion and fraternal counsel are gratefully listened to, but authoritative interference is resolutely resisted.

Mr James's settlement in Birmingham will be further illustrated by the following extracts from the Carr's Lane "Church Book." Under the year 1804 there are the following very interesting entries:—

"*September 16.*—At a church-meeting held this day, it was resolved, 'That the Rev. J. A. James having preached to this society four Lord's days with very great acceptance, Messrs Rogers, Tutin, Cocks, Taylor, and Frears be appointed a deputation to inform him that it is the unanimous wish of this meeting that he would come as soon as opportunity would allow, and exercise his ministry among us.'

"*September 23.*—At a church-meeting, the deputation appointed at the last meeting to wait upon Mr James reported that his answer was favourable, and that he expressed great affection for the people.

"Resolved unanimously, That the request made to Mr James, conformably to the resolution of the last church-meeting, be transmitted to him in writing, as being more orderly and more respectful. A letter being laid before the meeting, it was approved."

“THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MEETING IN CARR’S LANE, BIRMINGHAM, TO THE REV. J. A. JAMES, WISH EVERY BLESSING, TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL.

“DEAR SIR,—After the conversation you had with our deputies in this place it may seem almost unnecessary to address you by letter, but we feel ourselves urged thereto by a regard to order in our proceedings, and by that respect which, we trust, it will ever be our study to shew you.

“We bless the Great Head of the Church, to whom all events are known, and who sees the end from the beginning, that He has designed to favour you with such abilities for the ministry, and we hope with a view that you should exercise that ministry in Birmingham. We have been long praying, and we hope sincerely, that God would in His providence direct us to such a man as He would own and bless among us, for the conversion of sinners, the edification of His saints, and the building up of the Church in this place in particular; and we cannot help thinking that your being sent among us was in answer to our prayers.

“If the utmost unanimity on our part, and a favourable regard to us on yours, be evidences that the work is of God, we must consider them as indications of His will that you should labour in this part of His vineyard. There is here much to be done. The field is large and white for the harvest.

“While here, you must have observed a spirit of hearing in many who are not of our congregation, and we hope and trust that if God shall settle you in this place it will be followed by the conviction and Bound conversion of many. Yet we would bear on our minds the important truth that ministers are only instruments, and that the success of a Paul or an Apollos depends entirely upon God. For His influence we shall daily supplicate the throne of grace, and if our prayers be heard, we have no doubt but that you and we shall rejoice together, and see the work of the Lord prospering in your hands.

“We do, therefore, most cordially and unanimously request that you will come as soon as you can with propriety, and exercise your ministry among us; and we sincerely hope a connexion will be established between us which will never be broken till your great Master shall call you from all your labours to receive your gracious reward.

“Signed at the unanimous request of the church-meeting by

“J. BERRY,	}	<i>Deacons.</i>
“THOS. COCKS,		
“JOSH. ROGERS,		
“S. TUTIN,		

“BIRMINGHAM, *September 23, 1804.*”

Mr James addressed a letter, dated October 13, to the church, requesting a little longer time for his final answer to their invitation.

Early in 1805 another church-meeting was held, and the following minute was recorded:—

“Mr James addressed a letter to the church, of which the following is a copy, giving his acceptance of their invitation:—

“TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, MEETING IN CARR’S LANE, BIRMINGHAM,
J. A. JAMES WISHES EVERY BLESSING, BOTH TEMPORAL AND
SPIRITUAL.

“MY DEAR BRETHREN,—When I look back upon the past, and forward to the future years of my life, I contemplate or imagine a variety of events truly interesting and important. But neither a review of past occurrences, nor the anticipation of future things, exhibits events of my life attended with more important circumstances than my visit to Birmingham. When the proposal was made to me to preach to you for three Sabbaths, I acceded to it without the most distant idea of visiting you as a candidate to fill your vacant pulpit; and after having finished the time at first proposed, I should have crushed that idea as vain and presumptuous, which would have led me to think of Birmingham as the destined field of my labours, had not your own intimations led me to view it as possible, if not probable.

“From the many distinguished marks of esteem and affection which I received from you as a church and as individuals, from the cordiality which prevailed among you during my stay, and from the many intimations I received that my labours were not altogether unacceptable, I began to suspect that the eyes of the church were fixed on me as a person to whom you could commit the care of your immortal souls. This was put beyond a matter of doubt in my mind, by the personal interview which I had with your deputies the night previous to my departure from Birmingham, who expressed a unanimous invitation to me from the church to settle among you as your minister. In addition to this, you thought it advisable, from a respect to order, to send me a written invitation, directed to Gosport: this I consider another among the many tokens of regard which you have already shewn me. I should have felt happy if I had left you praying for my welfare. I should have esteemed myself honoured, if, on parting from you, a desire had been expressed to see me at any future period when I should be called in providence that way. It would have increased my happiness, and conferred an honour upon

me if your affection and esteem had gone thus far only: but you have proceeded to greater lengths.

“After the most mature deliberation, the most ardent prayer for direction, you have seen fit to call me as the minister under whom you could willingly and readily sit to hear the everlasting gospel preached. I trust, brethren, that I am not insensible to the distinguished honour you confer upon me in judging me to be qualified to act in that capacity; but may I not consider it also as a mark of the approbation of the Great Head of the Church? May I not listen to your call as the medium through which He speaks, ‘Son, go work in my vineyard?’ You have already received one reply to your invitation. In that letter, though I begged to postpone my final answer till some future time, I gave a specimen of my sentiments: I made you acquainted with my feelings and views, that your minds might not be ignorant of the state of mine. I now once more address you, to give you my decided answer to your important question, and be assured that it is not given till after the most serious examination of my heart, the minutest investigation of my principles, and the most earnest prayer to Infinite Wisdom for guidance and direction. Conscious, therefore, of my own weakness, yet depending upon Him who is omnipotent, sensible of my own inability and insufficiency, yet relying upon the promise of Him who hath said, ‘My grace shall be sufficient for thee,’ I venture to express my acceptance of your unanimous call, and now declare my compliance with your cordial invitation to settle among you as your minister, as soon as circumstances will allow me to depart from the academy.

“I left it entirely to you whether you chose to fix on a limited time as a further time of probation. This you have seen proper to decline. Prudence will therefore direct us as to the future proceedings, and shew us when the proper time is come which should complete our connexion—a connexion which I now consider as really established. On which may the Great Head of the Church smile with approbation! In which may both minister and people enjoy solid, lasting, and increasing delight! To the commencement of which may hundreds look back with unutterable joy, through the revolution of eternal ages!

“Suffer me now to rejoice with you, my dear brethren, in the prospect of a speedy close to your trials and distresses as a Christian society. The storm has spent its force, and I trust will be succeeded by a lasting calm. With the strongest faith let us believe that these things will ultimately prove for the furtherance of the gospel. Place them among the ‘all things’ which ‘work together for your good.’ Let us rejoice that though in the present state of imperfection we are unable to explore the mysteries of Providence, yet what we know not now we shall know hereafter; and under all our afflictions let us bear this thought in our

minds, that whether God thunder in a storm by His providence, or speak by the still small voice of His Spirit, He is the same immutable Jehovah, the Head of the Church, the Father of His people, the Friend of the distressed, and the Hearer of prayer,

“Pardon me, my brethren, if I suggest a hint, or rather express a wish, that the past unhappy circumstances of the church be so forgotten as not to be the frequent topic of discourse; this would be a stumbling-block in the way of your minister’s happiness, and would much interrupt that composure of mind which the affairs of the church, the good of your souls, and his own comfort so much require. Let us lose the past in the prospect of the future. Let us pray for success to attend the gospel, by whomsoever or wheresoever preached, so that in all God may be glorified.

“Let me now ask for your ardent, constant prayers at a throne of grace. Pray for me in the church, pray for me when around your family altars, wrestle with God for me in secret. Without much prayer to God I can expect but little pleasure in my work—you but little edification or comfort from it. Be assured I cease not to make mention of you when I bend my knees before the throne of God, praying that God would bless you with His presence as a society, pour His blessings on your families, and His blessings on your own souls. May God meet with you when you meet for worship, and your daily intercourse with each other. Such, my dear brethren, are the constant prayers of your devoted servant in the Lord Jesus,

“J. A. JAMES.

“GOSPORT, *January 11, 1805.*”

The following letter to his friend Mr Samuel Cocks bears the same date, and was accompanied by one to the young people of the congregation.

“TO MR SAMUEL COCKS, JUNIOR.

“GOSPORT, *January 11, 1805.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—How do you account for my long silence? Do you imagine that the articles of letter-writing are scarce? that an embargo is laid on the post-office? or that I have forgotten you? Do you ever thus conjecture? If you do, your conjectures, I assure you, are unfounded. But I’ll tell you the reason I have been so long silent. So many friends have been teasing me on all sides—their demands have been so large for letters—that I have been nearly a bankrupt; and in fact, I have played the rogue with some of them, and cheated them

of their due: but with you I shall be honest; you shall be paid your debt; to defraud you of a letter, would be dishonest and ungrateful indeed. Pardon me, my friend, for thus giving loose to nonsense—I assure you, it is friendly nonsense—cover it with the veil of love.

“With what regret do I exchange a personal interview with my dear friends at Birmingham, for epistolary converse! The prospect of seeing you at Christmas had cheered many a gloomy hour. When present scenes were barren of joy, and yielded no delight, this future prospect was always a resource; the prospect of conversing and praying with you, of exhorting you from the pulpit, never failed to give me pleasure. But that God who does all things well, who guideth all the affairs of men, had determined otherwise. What a blessing to man is ignorance of futurity! How would the foresight of future sorrows increase their weight—the foresight of future pleasures, in the prospect of their close, decrease their joy! Little was it in my mind, when I parted from you, that I was shortly to have the bitter cup of affliction put into my hand to drink to its very dregs. So sure is it that we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. How necessary then, by an interest in Christ, to prepare for all that we may be called to meet with! How soon may we from the highest pinnacle of earthly comfort be plunged into the lowest extremity of woe and distress. But the Christian, with revelation in his hand, and the grace of God in his heart, can smile at affliction. When he has least of earth, he often has most of heaven. While storms and clouds may hover and beat upon his clay tabernacle, his soul, like some tall cliff stretching its head above these clouds, has sunshine on its top. O my friend, it is sweet to be afflicted when Jesus is with us; it is pleasant to endure pain when supported by His arms, when the angel of His presence is with us, when we consider that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

“I now begin to look forward to the period when I shall come among you; the time hastens on. Oh, could you read the feelings of my heart, and there see the confusion of various passions; the mixture of joy, hope, dread, fear, and comfort, what a scene would you discover! Could I persuade myself that I was fit for such a situation; could I entertain the idea that I could feed such a flock, and lead them to green pastures, where they might lie down beside the still waters,—with what delightful anticipation should I look forward to the period! Still I comfort myself with the consideration that God is all-sufficient. Here is all my comfort,—here is comfort enough for one, whose difficulties are a thousand times more than mine,—‘Why then art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God; *for* I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance.’

“You mentioned in your letter that you do not promise me that I am going to a land flowing with milk and honey. I expect no such land this side Jordan; but I rejoice that I have the prospect of settling where the power of religion appears to be felt. On you, my dear friend, with the other young people, I look with the most heartfelt joy,—you are to support me in future life. Did I not perceive the young inclined to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, how should I fear lest the church would expire with its aged members! But, blessed be God, ye are rising to call the Redeemer blessed.

“I seem to rejoice with you in the prospect that your distresses as a church are nearly at an end; that the wounds are nearly healed; that the disadvantages which you the young people, especially, have laboured under, are nearly closed; and should a union betwixt us take place, and should that union meet with the approbation of the Head of the Church, what happiness may we not expect, what blessings may we not anticipate, mutually striving for each other’s happiness and comfort, the minister for the people, the people for the minister! God will not, cannot withhold His blessing.

“I trust, my dear friend, that religion is flourishing in your soul, that you are growing in grace. Go on, and may the Lord prosper you. May you feel Christ increasingly precious in all His offices, in all His relations, and at all times. May you be blessed in your soul, your family, your worldly concerns. May God smile upon you, and then you must be happy.

“Do not forget me, when retired from the world, when you pour out your heart in secret, and He will reward you openly. My time and paper admonish me to conclude.”

“TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE CONGREGATION WORSHIPPING AT
CARR’S LANE, BIRMINGHAM.

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—Impressed with the tenderest concern for your spiritual and eternal welfare, a concern which language cannot express, I am induced to intrude a few lines upon your attention, which, should they not convey all the instruction and advice which might be given by one older in years, wisdom, and experience than myself, will express the affection of a heart wholly (teyoted to your best interest.

“You are aware that it was my intention to have visited you at this season of the year; but that God, who draws the line of our habitation, had otherwise determined; and now, instead of the pulpit, I address you from my study.

“With a pleasure I cannot express, I reflect upon that moment when

our acquaintance first commenced—an acquaintance which I trust the lapse of time will ripen into the purest and closest friendship. But I do not consider you merely in the light of friends, but also as fellow-Christians. Many of you I trust have passed from death unto life, and are directing your faces Zion-ward, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Happy, glorious choice!

“The advantages of such a choice, in the early part of life, are immensely great and numerous. To cite them all would be a trespass on your patience, a reflection on your judgment; for ye must be sensible that the morning of life is productive of a thousand advantages to a religious course, which are ended by the shadows of evening. It was the saying of a good old man, that if it were lawful to envy any, he should be inclined to envy those who remembered their Creator in the days of their youth.

“Most of you are the children of pious parents; for you ten thousand prayers have ascended before the throne of God, prayers as constant as the morning and evening. How does your father wish for David’s blessing!—a son growing up like a plant in his youth, to whom he might say when he is called to close his eyes on earth and earthly things, ‘I go the way of all flesh, but I know that thou art a wise man, and knowest the things that thou oughtest to do.’ How does a tender mother wrestle with God for your salvation! Refresh the bowels of your parents by an attention to divine things now, while their instructions drop down upon you like the early dew. How will it refresh their hearts to behold you growing in grace as you grow in days and years! What an additional relish will it give to all their exercises of devotion, if they behold you giving yourselves up to the Lord in youth! With what comfort will they go up to the house of the Lord in company with a child who is saying, ‘I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up to the courts of the house of God!’ Their family altar will acquire a fresh delight when they behold you engaged in pouring out your soul in unison with them; they will enter their closets with fresh joy when they carry with them this reflection, that their son, their daughter, is praying, ‘My Father, be Thou the guide of my youth.’ Shall not these considerations, my dear young friends, operate upon our minds? Shall we not be induced to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? Shall we not remember our Creator in the days of our youth? Where shall we seek for happiness equal to that resulting from joy and peace in believing in Christ? Does the world, does Satan, do your own hearts say that religion is melancholy, gloomy? Deny the charge; for if the Word of God be true, if there be anything in the experience of ten millions of saints, Wisdom’s ways are ways of

pleasantness, and all her paths, paths of peace. Do you feel Satan suggesting the idea, that by becoming serious you will become the objects of ridicule? and are you inclined sometimes to give way to the temptation? What! shall a sneer—a cavil—the charge of hypocrisy, Methodism, or enthusiasm, keep you from God? affright you from the cross of Christ? Where is the reason, the magnanimity of that mind which will suffer its conviction to be either sacrificed or shaken by a jest? Shall the broad laugh of a fool be a stumbling-block in your way? Hear the words of Christ—‘Whosoever is ashamed of me before men, of him will I be ashamed before my Father and his holy angels.’ But I hope better things of you—things accompanying salvation. I trust you are taking up the cross. Go on, and may the Lord bless you. Turn your back on the vanities of the world. ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate. Touch not the unclean thing, saith the Lord.’ Be constant in your attendance on the means of grace. Be much in prayer, meditation, and reading the Scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation. Be constantly looking by faith to Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Pray for the Spirit of grace to work in you the good pleasure of God. With what comfort will your venerable parents and elders look upon you rising to fill their places! and, oh, with what joy will your minister behold his infant church! When standing over the grave of your parents, he will not sorrow as one without hope, he will not think that he has buried the church in the tomb of its aged members, he will not despair; you will cheer his mind, you are coming forward to hold up his hands, to be his friends, to assist him in the affairs of the church. My brothers, my sisters, God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of the Lord Jesus: my heart’s desire and prayer for you is, that you may be saved. For you I bend my knees at a throne of grace,—for you my warmest prayers ascend, that God would confirm you in the faith, preserve you from all the snares to which your age peculiarly exposes you. May you rise respectable, valuable, and experienced members of the Church of God! May you grow up as the cedars of Lebanon, when your parents shall be laid in the silent tomb; and when ripe for glory, may you be transplanted to the paradise of God as trees of immortal life, and flourish in everlasting verdure through a thousand generations.

“May I beg an interest in your prayers. Bear me on your minds at a throne of grace; there wrestle with God for me in secret, that I may be prepared for the proper discharge of the work which is before me, whether I labour among you or in any other part of Christ’s vine yard. Be assured you lie very near my heart. You have a large share

of the prayers of him who with joy subscribes himself, your most affectionate friend and devoted servant in Christ,

“J. A. JAMES.

“GOSPORT, *January 1805.*”

There was some thought about the desirableness of Mr James's attending the classes at the University of Glasgow during the winter of 1805–6; but the circumstances of the congregation rendered it, on the whole, inexpedient; and accordingly, having paid his people another visit in the early summer of 1805, and finished his short course at Gosport a few weeks later, the young minister finally settled in Birmingham, at the beginning of September.

The strong affection which, from the very first, he felt for his church, is strikingly shewn, though with some juvenile peculiarities of expression, in a letter he wrote to his friend Mr Samuel Cocks, immediately after the summer visit just referred to, and before he finally left Gosport

“Did you not think me the very essence of weakness when I parted from you? A thousand times before the same dagger had pierced my soul. Farewell has ever been like an arrow shot through my heart; but that morning fresh barbs seemed given it. I have parted from my parents, my friends, but that day I parted from *my people*, if I may yet call them so. I had taken sweet counsel with them as Christians, we had walked to the house of God in company; I felt my affections riveted to that society in which I had laboured, and to which I was looking forward as the persons who were about to commit the charge of their immortal souls to me. The frailty of human life seemed to whisper in my ear, ‘You will never be permitted to return to them again.’ The uncertainty of all things here made it possible that I should find some of you missing when I returned. These and a thousand other things pressed with all their weight on my mind.”

In the same letter he speaks of the apprehension with which he anticipated the duties of the ministry. It was not with mere boyish ardour that he was looking forward to his escape from the restraints of college and the commencement of his ministry. “Ah! my dear friend,” he exclaims, “could you tell

what are my feelings in the prospect of this important undertaking, you would be almost inclined to pity me." Yet he knows that God will be his wisdom and strength. God has given His people the promise of His support, and not only so, but has confirmed it with an oath, giving us, as he quaintly puts it, "a rock for each foot to stand upon, a holdfast for both hands to cleave to."

The following letter was written to his father at the same time:—

"GOSPORT, *June*, 15, 1805.

"DEAR FATHER,—I have been loaded, I doubt not, with a thousand censures by every branch of the family, for not writing to you before. Indeed, it was my intention to have sent you a letter immediately on my return from Birmingham, but . . . not a spare moment has passed which could have been occupied in writing to Blandford. Never since I came to Gosport have I been so busy as the last fortnight. Tilings are now come nearly to a close at Gosport, and, I assure you, work increases with me as fast as time diminishes. I need not inform you that I returned safe from the North. I left my friends at Birmingham quite well, with the promise of returning to them the latter end of August, so that my time in this part of the country will be exceedingly short. Our vacation commences the beginning, I think about the first week in August. A fortnight, therefore, at most, is all I shall be able to be with you at Blandford, as I shall be under the necessity of being a week in London to purchase books.

"Nothing was fixed respecting my journey to the North, that is Scotland. The most respectable, at least some of them, of the congregation were of opinion that I should go, and spoke decidedly in favour of it; others said it could not be determined at present, till we see how the Baptists will be situated this winter, or rather next. All circumstances taken into consideration, great as the advantages would be to me, I think I shall be obliged to relinquish them, as it is likely the Baptists will be in their new place before Christmas.

"Nothing was said concerning my salary by Mr Frears, at whose house I was visiting. The evening before we parted, he expressed his surprise that nothing had been said by the church relative to that subject. He was speaking of the sum they gave Mr Berry, which was one hundred pounds per annum; but he said that would be no criterion for their conduct towards me; and he frankly acknowledged that was not enough, nor did they intend to confine themselves to such a sum. I told him freely, that I thought from such a congregation the sum was too little, considering the present state, or rather price, of provisions, books, &c.

I expect to receive a letter with, proposals, either from him individually or from the church, very shortly, which I shall not answer myself, as Mr Bogue has engaged to settle that with them. I think my letter from Birmingham was written before our church-meeting for the addition of members. I think it was the most solemn, yet most delightful occasion I ever witnessed in my life. We received fourteen members, which raises the number of our members to about fifty-five—no inconsiderable church. The last evening I preached, I addressed the young; and as I gave notice of it the Sabbath before, we had a most crowded auditory. The meeting and aisles were quite crammed by half-past six o'clock.”

In reviewing the matter from this distance, and even with the knowledge of the blessed issues that have resulted from that visit, and the invitation and acceptance to which it led, I cannot justify, but must condemn the precipitancy of the church. The importance of the station in the midst of a town that is the metropolis of a mighty district—the delicate relation of the church to the large and powerful body that had seceded from it—the smallness of the congregation, which required something extraordinary in the pulpit to revive it—the youthfulness of the preacher—the shortness of the time he had been at college—the immaturity of his mind and studies,—all rendered it a hasty and injudicious procedure, to invite him at once to be their pastor. The utmost that prudence would have justified, was to have invited him upon another probationary term. There is no doubt, however, that the finger of God directed, and blessed be His holy name for the great and glorious results that have followed.

Autobiographical.

My first labours in Birmingham were comparatively light, in consequence of their being shared with and by Mr Morgan, the Baptist minister, whose congregation was united with ours; and yet the necessity, even in this mitigated service, of composing two sermons a week, with other duties in such a public situation, kept up a pressure upon my time, and left me comparatively little for improving my mind and adding to my stock of knowledge. I now deeply regret much misspent time, and greatly deplore that I did not, from the commencement of ministerial life, acquire the habit of early rising. Oh, what time I have slept away and for

Autobio-
graphical.

ever lost! Not that I was a late riser; my time through life has been nominally seven o'clock, and has ranged from that to eight; but this is too late for one who would attain to excellence and eminence; and I therefore most earnestly enjoin all young persons to form the habit of quitting their chambers not later than six.

I cannot say that I was a very diligent student on my entrance upon the ministry. I was not, 'tis true, a loiterer or saunterer, but my reading was desultory, for want of a wise and settled plan. I am persuaded that young ministers need a guide through the first two or three years of their ministry, as much as they do at college; and it should be an object with their tutors before they finish their curriculum to give them some directions as to the manner of carrying on their mental improvement when they have entered upon their pastoral occupation.

CHAPTER III.

ORDINATION.

AMONG Mr James's papers I found a rather curious document. It has already been seen how he was "called of God" to the work of the ministry, and qualified by Divine gifts for its duties; and in this chapter will presently be given an account of his being solemnly ordained to the pastorate of a Christian church by prayer and the imposition of hands. But in those days His Majesty George the Third was graciously pleased to exercise a very watchful care over the spiritual interests of his subjects; and soon after the young draper had become a student at Gosport, he had to appear at the Winchester Quarter Sessions, and invoke His Majesty's protection, by taking some very loyal oaths, and solemnly renouncing some very abominable errors. Here is the document:—

"CERTIFICATE FOR DISSENTING MINISTERS.

Southampton, I hereby certify, that at the General Quarter Ses-
To wit:— of the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the King,
holden *by adjournment* at the Castle of WINCHESTER,
in and for the said county, on *Monday the eighteenth day of July*, in
the *forty-third* Year of the Beign of our Sovereign Lord GEORGE the
Third, and in the Year of our Lord, 1803,
John James,
a Dissenting Teacher, did in open Court, between the Hours of Nine

and Twelve of the Clock in the Forenoon, take and subscribe the Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, and Abjuration, and did also make and subscribe the Declaration against Transubstantiation, and against the Invocation and Adoration of the Virgin Mary, and the Sacrament of the Mass, and all other Idolatry, and also did subscribe the Declaration mentioned in the Act passed in the nineteenth year of his present Majesty George the Third.

“Witness my Hand, this *eighteenth* Day of *July* 1803.

“PETER KERBY,
“*Clerk of the Peace*”

Among Congregationalists the ministerial office is divested of much of the mystery and awe which surround it in many other ecclesiastical communities. As a matter of expediency and order, the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is commonly restricted to those who have been ordained to the ministry, but ordination is not supposed to confer any mystic spiritual character necessary to give the sacraments validity. What is generally understood by the doctrine of Apostolical Succession is universally repudiated. Perhaps as a consequence of having been called through many generations to protest against the assumption by the Christian ministry of priestly prerogatives, the Independents have too much forgotten that it was by Christ himself that an order of men was established in the Church, separated to spiritual work, and clothed with official authority.

The rite of Ordination, however, is almost universally observed, and, though simple and severe in its outward and visible form, is mighty in all those elements of power by which the spiritual nature of a devout man is most profoundly stirred. After reading the Scriptures and prayer, an “Introductory Discourse” is commonly delivered, in which the Independent polity is developed and vindicated, and the true significance of the day explained. And the preacher seldom forgets to recall the troublous times when imprisonment and banishment and death were the penalty of bold and courageous Nonconformity. The church is then asked, most usually by some grave and venerable pastor, who for many

years has “fed the flock of God,” whether by its own free choice the minister to be ordained has been selected. And the newly-chosen minister is required to answer in his own words, a series of questions, relating to his personal Christian life, his reasons for supposing himself called of God to the ministry, his doctrinal faith, his opinions on ecclesiastical polity, and the manner in which he hopes to fulfil the duties of his office. If these replies are deemed satisfactory, he kneels down in the presence of his church; his ministerial brethren gather round him; one commends him to the Divine keeping, and invokes upon him the richest benedictions of Heaven, the baptism of fire, the spirit of wisdom, of power, of holiness, and joy; all lay their hands upon his head, and silently join in the invocation. A “Charge” is then delivered to the ordained minister; and, either before the congregation separates or at a service held a few hours later, a sermon is delivered to the people, upon the duties they owe to their minister.

This is the usual form of the service. Mr James’s ordination was rather longer. He says:—

This solemn and public event took place May 8, 1806, after I had been eight months with the church. This was an unnecessary, and I must say injudicious and unscriptural delay, and occasioned some inconvenience to the church as regards the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. As the time drew near it became a grave and serious question, what ministers should be invited to conduct the service. The pastors of the churches in the vicinity had nearly all become the friends of Mr Brewer, who had been rejected by the church for immorality of conduct, and therefore my friends would not have them invited. It is probable that in this they carried their opposition to Mr Brewer a little too far. Still I can scarcely wonder at their decision. My mind was, of course, somewhat solemn in prospect of such a service, and through it. Yet I had not then the deep impressions I have acquired since, of the tremendous responsibility of the ministerial office.

Autobiographical.

Autobiographical

The ordination certificate was signed by

JAMES MOODY, Warwick.
 EDWARD WILLIAMS, Rotherham.
 DAVID BOGUE, Gosport.
 THOMAS BURKITT, Kenilworth.
 GEORGE OSBORN, Worcester.
 ALEXANDER STEILL, Kidderminster.
 JAMES BENNETT, Romsey.
 JOHN STYLES, Cowes.
 INGRAM GOBBIN, Banbury.
 WILLIAM JAY, Bath.

With one exception, these all have finished their course, and have entered into rest.

On the day after his ordination, as he often told his friends with great delight, he attended the first meeting held in Birmingham on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The following extract from a letter to Mr Joseph Phipson gives a full account of the proceedings of the day:—

“May 15, 1806.

“The meeting-house began filling about half-past nine o’clock, and by half-past ten was so crowded as to be unable to contain another person—the place was literally crammed, the seats seemed ready to burst. The moment the pulpit door opened, a solemn stillness and silence took place; every countenance seemed already serious, and every mind solemn and devout. Mr Cobbin of Banbury began the service by prayer and reading the Scriptures. Mr Moody then preached an introductory discourse, explaining the nature and constitution of a Christian church; his sermon was founded on 1 Peter ii. 5, ‘A spiritual house:’ a very judicious, clever discourse. Mr Steill then asked the usual questions. The first, which was addressed to the church, to repeat their call, was answered by your uncle. This being ended, I delivered my answers to the several questions proposed, which were as follows to repeat my acceptance of the invitation; to give an account of God’s dealings with my soul, and my religious experience; to give my views of the nature and obligations of the pastoral office, with the motives which induced me to take upon me this office; to give the reasons which induced me to dissent from the Church of England, and to deliver

a confession of my faith. I stood on the seat in the table pew with my face towards the congregation, that I might be the more distinctly heard. Dr Williams then presented the ordination prayer, which was accompanied with the imposition of hands. This being done, and the right hand of fellowship being given me by the ministers present, Mr Bogue delivered a charge from 1 Tim. vi. 11, 'O man of God.' He shewed, 1st, what the appellation implied; 2dly, gave some directions for the performance of the duties which it enjoined; and 3dly, advanced some encouragements to animate me. Mr Osborn of Worcester presented the intercessory prayer, and Mr Bennett preached from Rev. iii. 23, an ingenious and good discourse. He shewed, 1st, the duties which devolved upon a church to those who are without its limits; 2dly, the duties the members of it owe to each other; 3dly, their duty to their minister. Mr Burkitt then concluded the whole with prayer.

"The service, though it began precisely at half-past ten o'clock, did not end till half-past three. The people, however, discovered no mark of inattention even to the last. When Mr Bennett began his discourse their minds seemed as eager and as fresh as at the beginning of the service. We then adjourned to the Castle Inn to dine. About sixty persons, including ministers, sat down at the table, which was very well furnished with the good things of this life. In the evening, the service commenced at seven o'clock. Mr Styles prayed. Mr Jay preached; his discourse was founded on Exodus xxxiii. 14-16. He was clever, but not quite so much so as I expected;—allowance though is to be made for illness; he was very much indisposed indeed two or three weeks before he came to Birmingham. Mr Edmonds of Bond Street closed the whole service with a very solemn, serious, and earnest prayer. Never was an ordination service from beginning to end conducted with less confusion. Crowded as was our meeting, and sultry as was the day, we had no fainting amongst the female part of the audience.

"The ministers had their parts all arranged, so that there was no disputing about engaging; everything was done decently and in order. Never did I witness an auditory more apparently interested. Oh, how it would have melted your heart to have seen the aged members of the church meeting each other, unable to address each other but by an exchange of sobs and tears! Joy glistened in every eye, and every tongue that could speak declared the satisfaction of the heart. It was like the beginning of a new age. We seemed meeting together like the ancient Jews to welcome the return of jubilee.

"To describe to you my feelings on that solemn occasion would be quite beyond my power. I had scarcely a moment's sound sleep all the

preceding night—I could eat no breakfast the morning of the ordination. However, when I had answered one question, my feelings became less painful. I found God to be as good as His word,—for, as my day was, so I found my strength to be; His grace was sufficient for me. Oh, what a difference was there in the state of my mind Tuesday morning and Tuesday evening! It seemed like a mountain removed from my spirits.

“We have lately made very great exertions in this town on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society. . . . There was a meeting held at the committee-room of the Blue-Coat School, for the purpose of taking into consideration the best means of aiding this institution. Persons of all descriptions were present,—Quakers, Socinians, Churchmen, Baptists, Independents; and when it was resolved that the town should be divided into twelve districts, and three persons appointed to each to go round and call on all the inhabitants to aid and assist in so good an undertaking, it was so ordered that the three persons to each district should be of different denominations. On Monday week we delivered in our collection, and what would you imagine we collected in Birmingham?—upwards of £500! This is no bad beginning of the generosity of the people of this town.”

CHAPTER IV.
DOMESTIC HISTORY.

IT is said of God that He setteth the solitary in families. I have abundant cause for thankfulness for the manner in which God appeared for me in this momentous matter. . . . He chose better for me than I should have chosen for myself. There is a great fault in our students in forming hasty and often injudicious attachments. Those generally do best who hold their affections in control till they have finished their studies and have entered upon their ministry. The cause of failure to many of our ministers may be found in their hasty and ill-formed matches. Autobio-
graphical.

When I first settled in Birmingham I came on a visit to a Mr Frears, one of the leading members of the church, an American merchant, and a man of much real worth. His wife was a Scotch lady, of great strength of mind and real piety. I was received as one of the family, and treated as a son. As no suitable place was found for my lodgings, I remained in that family month after month, and acquired an attachment to them of no ordinary strength. My feelings for Mrs Frears were truly filial, and I think I never loved any man at that time out of the circle of my own friends as I loved Mr Frears. When a situation was at length found for me, and the lodgings were actually engaged, we all felt so much when the time for separation arrived, that my dear friends invited me to remain where I was till I should remove

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graphical.

to a house of my own, of which there was then some prospect at no very remote period.

Among my congregation were two sisters of the name of Smith, —Mary and Frances Charlotte. They were the daughters of Dr Smith, a respectable physician of the town, lately deceased. Then-father, before his death, had furnished for them, in prospect of his departure, a house, only two doors below that in which Mr Frears lived. I was thus thrown into the company of these ladies, especially by meeting them at Mrs Walford's, an aged, pious, and most intelligent woman, and an intimate friend first of Dr Smith,—who wished to marry her,—and then of his daughters. Mrs Walford lived exactly opposite the house occupied by the ladies. My attention was soon directed to Fanny, the youngest. I had been one day most earnestly praying for Divine direction in this important step, and during prayer Frances Smith occurred with such force to my mind, that I considered it an indication of Providence that my attention should be directed to her—to which I was encouraged by Mrs Walford, her intimate friend; and on December 2, 1805, I made known to her my attachment, and my wishes to obtain her hand and heart. I was accepted. As she was living in her own house, there was no need of long delay, and on the 7th of July the following year we were married at the parish church of Edgbaston. So that I had only to remove from my kind friend, Mr Frears', to the next door but one, where was everything made ready to my hand.

An incident occurred on the day of our marriage which might have terminated our connexion as soon as it was formed. On the road to Worcester, through which we had to pass on our way into Dorsetshire, we were overtaken by a tremendous thunderstorm accompanied with hail. The postilion drove us under a high elm tree for shelter. Aware of our danger in such a situation, I ordered him to proceed, but as the storm increased he again took shelter under another tree, and, upon being remonstrated with, he declared that the hail was so heavy, that neither he nor the horses could stand under it, and that be the consequences What they might, he must have the covering of the boughs for a protec-

tion. It was an awful moment; the thunder was rolling, the lightning flashing, and the hail, notwithstanding the protection of the tree, fell so heavy that it seemed as if the roof of the chaise would be beaten in. We had scarcely courage to utter a word, but sat in silence, not knowing but the next flash might sever the knot which only a few hours before had been tied. However, by God's good providence we were preserved from all harm, and proceeded on our way very glad and grateful for the deliverance we had experienced.

My marriage gave great satisfaction to all parties: to my congregation, by whom my wife was held in the highest estimation; to my parents, and to my friends generally. But here I must except many of my dear wife's own personal connexions. These lay in the circle of the Church of England, from which she had lately come out, and were persons of the highest respectability in the town and neighbourhood. They were mortified to see her giving herself, her fortune, and her house to a Dissenting minister: and it required no small share of moral courage and decision of character on her part to act in opposition to the views and wishes of so many of her former acquaintances and companions. However, she cared little for all this, believing that she was under the guidance of Providence in this great and important matter.

This dear and eminent woman had few personal charms, but her countenance was intelligent and thoughtful, with a cast of mild and reserved benevolence. Her character, spirit, and temper were a combination of matured female excellence. She had little sprightliness or vivacity; was not obtrusive in conversation, yet was not taciturn, but ever ready with invariable good sense to bear her part in the ordinary subjects of discourse. Her demeanour was grave, but by no means gloomy. Profoundly humble, and beautifully meek, she could never offend, and was rarely offended; though I have known her roused to dignified displeasure on some occasions, both before and after our marriage. Her prudence, sound good sense, sobriety of mind, and correctness of judgment were exemplary. All this was veiled by a delicate and invariable

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modesty, and sanctified by eminent piety. After our marriage, when she became better known to the congregation, she was hailed as an angel of God, and I believe that there was not an individual in either the church or the congregation to whom she was not an object of love, interest, and esteem. Never had there existed in our world a more devoted and affectionate daughter. Such was her attachment to her widowed father in his last illness, that had he lived much longer, her own life would have fallen a sacrifice to her attempts to prolong his; and it was some time after his death before her constitution recovered the damage it had sustained by her incessant ministrations by night and by day. Her mind was as much tried as her body, in consequence of her father's want of religion. Unhappily, Dr Smith had imbibed very light views of Divine revelation, and was, I believe, an infidel, or at any rate a sceptic. It was to this dear devoted child the very bitterness of death to see her father, on whom she doated and for whose salvation she would have laid down her life, sinking into the grave with no faith or hope of a glorious immortality. How she prayed, and watched for one glimpse of light from Heaven to beam upon his mind, and irradiate the darkness of his dying chamber, she only knew! but, alas, he died "and made no sign;" and all that was left her, as in other such cases, was to turn away her thoughts from the gloomy subject and leave the decision in the hands of a just and merciful God. Such was the blessed woman the Lord gave me, and of whom I feel that I was utterly unworthy; and to whom, under God, to her gentleness and prudence, to her meekness and good sense, to her sobriety of judgment and instinctive propriety, I owe in great measure the formation of my own character and my fair and good start in my ministerial career. And now, at the distance of fifty years from the date of my union with her, and of nearly forty from her death, I record my gratitude to God for this inestimable gift.

In the latter end of March 1807, my wife was prematurely confined; but the child was dead. This same year I lost my kind, good mother. She had lived long enough to see me married, and setting forth in life respectable and respected, and was

extremely anxious I should not be lifted up by my possessions and prospects. Often, during my wedding visit, which was paid to my parents, she would say, "Remember, my son, there is nothing so beautiful as an humble Christian." Honour to her memory! She was a good, though not a great woman. Autobio-
graphical.

In November 1809, my son Thomas was born, and was soon after publicly baptized by myself in Carr's Lane Chapel. I know it is usual for ministers to employ some ministerial brother to perform this office for them, but I see no reason for this, except that they lose the benefit of exhortation; yet it might be supposed that they are sufficiently acquainted with their duty, if not to render this unnecessary, yet to dispense with it for the sake of the solemn interest which accompanies the act of a father's dedicating his own child to God.

It was then I commenced my career as an author, by printing for the use of my congregation, but not publishing, the sermon I preached on the occasion, entitled, "Parental Desire, Duty, and Encouragement." I was not, certainly, actuated by much vanity in this first effort of my pen, as is evident by my not offering the sermon to the public; though I am not quite sure that it was not as worthy of publication as some other things which, with greater boldness, I have sent out since. I little thought at that time that I should ever be encouraged as I have been to pursue the career of an author.

Another child was born to us in the year 1810; this was a little girl, but she lived only six weeks. In 1814, my daughter Sarah Ann was born, who took joint names after my mother and my wife's friend, Mrs Walford.

CHAPTER V.
DISCOURAGEMENT.

Autobio-
graphical.

AFFAIRS in the congregation went on quietly, but comfortably, for several years, without any very great increase of numbers, till at length I began to be somewhat discouraged. My dear wife was always a comforter when I was a little cast down. A little occurrence took place at a church-meeting, which might have occasioned some uneasiness. One of the deacons interfered in the course of the proceedings of the evening, with what I considered the prerogative and authority of the pastor, when somewhat petulantly I resisted and rebuked him. Considering his age and my comparative youth, I did not act with all the meekness I should have done. It ought to have been passed over more gracefully on my part, and should have been mentioned to him in private, instead of being resented in public. The old gentleman, however, took it very quietly, and it made not the slightest difference in his conduct towards me. But he did not attend the church-meetings afterwards, though this might be attributed, perhaps, rather to the infirmities of age than to the circumstance just mentioned. It might have generated ill-will towards me. Young ministers sometimes are too sensitive in matters relating to what they consider official dignity and authority. . . .

I at last became exceedingly disheartened by the state of

the congregation. Our place of worship was uncomfortable; the street in which it stood, though central as to the population, was narrow and shabby, and great odium was raised, ungenerously and unjustly, against it by the congregation which had retired with Mr Brewer. Yet, after all, the chief cause of its not being better attended was perhaps a want of care on my part in the preparation of my sermons. I have ever felt, and do feel to this day, the want of a more complete education. Autobiographical.

My composition was loose and unfinished. I was always energetic in manner, and have owed, under God, my success to this. I believe that had any offer of another situation been made at that time, I should have been strongly tempted to accept it. Against this, however, my wife, who knew the bias of my mind, firmly set herself, and used to say to me, "Never leave Birmingham till you see your way out of it as clearly as you did into it." Her advice was sound and good, and shews the vast importance of a minister's having for a wife one who can be a counsellor as well as a comforter.

I am persuaded that ministers are too apt soon to get discouraged, and to quit a situation because their first success is not equal to their expectations. They should recollect that a man does much by his character as well as by his talents; and that confidence is the growth of years. There seems to be, of late, a most extraordinary and painful mobility come over our ministers. This arises, I know, from various causes,—the fastidiousness of the people is become excessive, through the circumstances of the age, and it really does require extraordinary effort on the part of our pastors to satisfy their flocks. This ought to stimulate the ministers, who, instead of endeavouring to meet these demands upon their talents and their diligence, lie down in despondency, and spend that time in reproaching their congregation which ought to be spent in coming up to their wishes.

My congregation perceiving that something needed to be done, determined upon improving their place of worship, and rendering it more comfortable. During the alteration we were accommodated with the old Meeting-house, where Mr Kell, my old schoolmaster

Autobio-
graphical.

at Wareham, was then minister. This gave us publicity, and the result was, that on our return to Carr's Lane, our chapel was crowded, so that the very table pew was let From that time we date our prosperity; and it shews what a public-spirited people can, and will do, to promote the usefulness of their minister; while others, through covetousness, carelessness, or a kind of hereditary attachment to the place in which their fathers worshipped God, will keep their minister's talents and usefulness confined within a much narrower compass than he ought to be allowed to occupy.

Editorial. How it was that Mr James's ministerial life commenced with seven years of apparent failure, is a question worth examining with the utmost care. The Church Book confirms what he has said of his want of success. At the end of 1805, when he had been in Birmingham four months, the church numbered sixty-two; at the end of 1806, sixty-nine; at the end of 1807, seventy-seven; at the end of 1808 the number had increased to a hundred; but fell again next year to ninety-eight. For several years after this the church record was very imperfectly kept, till for a time it ceases altogether. Although the official record fails us, tradition confirms Mr James's own testimony, that till 1812 his congregation continued to be very small. Carr's Lane did not remain empty through want of people in the neighbourhood to fill it, for even then the population of the town was upwards of eighty thousand. Nor was Mr James's failure occasioned by the number and eminence of the other evangelical ministers in Birmingham; with the exception of Mr Bums at St Mary's Church, there was no evangelical clergyman in the Establishment, having any pulpit power; and there were only two congregations of importance among the evangelical Dissenters, that in Livery Street (Independent) under Mr Brewer, and that in Cannon Street (Baptist) under Mr Morgan.

That Mr James preached in a mean chapel situated in a dirty street, that the popular sympathy was with his vigorous and.

eloquent, though guilty, predecessor, and that the young minister himself was too confident in his own power, and too careless in his preparations for the pulpit, were, as he has said, among the principal causes of his disappointment. But there are some other circumstances which deserve consideration.

For some time his health appears to have been very feeble. Through month after month in 1806, Dr Bogue expresses his regret to hear that his young friend continues so unwell; in 1807 he writes,—“I am sorry to hear of your being ill and obliged for a season to abstain from preaching and for several years his work was continually being interrupted by physical weakness.

It should also be remembered that he had come from Gosport with a mind untrained to protracted and strenuous exertion, and unenriched with either sacred or secular learning. There could have been at that time but little depth or variety of thought in his sermons, and he must have often violated the laws of good taste. At first he was scarcely conscious that hard work was the indispensable condition of great success. With an ardent, impetuous, glowing heart—a mind full of life and activity, though as yet altogether undisciplined—with a very free command of sonorous, if not accurate English—with a voice which for sweetness, richness, and pathos has been rarely equalled, never surpassed, and which even then was as absolutely under his control as in his later years, he could easily interest and excite a popular audience, and the necessity of diligent self-culture and laborious preparation for the pulpit was not forced upon him. But more metal was wanted, if he was to produce any deep and permanent impression on a vigorous and intelligent community.

From the first, he had some idea that his study was a place for reading and thought, and not merely for sermon writing; and here is an old book-bill which indicates, perhaps, the direction of his reading at the very commencement of his ministry:—

“Manton’s Works,	£3	13	6
Bennett’s Christian Oratory,	0	6	0
Pirie on Baptism,	0	1	3

Owen's Gospel Church,	£0	2	3
— Sermons and Tracts,	0	15	0
Meikle's Solitude,	0	3	6
Edwards' Bedemption,	0	3	3
— Remarks,	0	3	0
Leighton,	0	14	0
Edwards' Affections,	0	3	8
Newman's Baptism,	0	0	5"

These books he bought in London in 1805, on his way to Birmingham; and he seems to have ordered from the same bookseller, Owen on the Hebrews, and Howe. But for a time there was not much vigorous application, and he paid the penalty in a protracted period of disappointment.

He felt his failure very keenly. He wrote desponding letters to his friends, who did their best to encourage him, knowing that he must ultimately succeed. Dr Bogue tells him in February 1806, that his "anxieties and fears about continuing in Birmingham are vain, and should be driven away without delay." In March, Mr Bennett implores him to lay aside his "paralysing anxieties and in April, to "bear up against discouragements, and not to run away from his post." His energy was at last stung into activity. His intellectual habits rapidly acquired manly vigour. Mr Bennett and he began to correspond on questions of Biblical criticism and theological scholarship, which could not be discussed without considerable reading and reflection. The mental discipline he should have received at Gosport under the direction of his tutor, he now acquired by his private studies. Before he gained accidental publicity by preaching in the Unitarian chapel, his resources were greatly increased, and his whole intellectual nature had become more robust. The temporary occupation of the Unitarian pulpit was the occasion, not the cause, of the sudden increase of his popularity.

About a year before the enlargement of the Carr's Lane meeting, he was invited to preach at Liverpool to the congregation which had been gathered by the earnestness and eloquence of Spencer, and which had been suddenly plunged into the greatest distress by his premature death. Some of his Birmingham friends

were apprehensive that the visit might end in his removal from Birmingham to Liverpool, and perhaps their fears were not altogether without foundation. That his removal would have occasioned them the greatest sorrow is evident from the warm affection they had expressed to him in a letter which he received at Bristol just before his Liverpool visit, and which may help to illustrate the kind of attachment which existed between himself and his flock. After acknowledging and thanking him for a pastoral letter he had written to them during his absence, and making some general observations on the uncertainties and vicissitudes of human life, they go on to say—

“Yet amidst all these proofs of mutation and imperfection one thing remains to comfort us, and that is, that our connexion as pastor and people still subsists. We rejoice that you are spared to us as our pastor. We rejoice that, although we can look around us and see vacant pews, which but lately were occupied with valuable and active members,—although Providence is removing some, the hand of death arresting others, and disease and suffering, too generally its precursors, depriving us of the service and society of more, yet that many are from time to time coming forward to fill up the ranks, and are thus ‘baptized for the dead,’—so that, notwithstanding all these losses, you are not left to preach to empty pews, nor even suffered to preach to a declining congregation. But that which contributes most to our happiness is the confidence we feel that there is no decay of affection either on the part of pastor or people. We most sincerely thank you for the gratifying assurance that the lapse of nearly seven years has made no change in your affection for us,—that notwithstanding the experience you have had of our inaptitude to profit as we ought under your ministry, notwithstanding the many imperfections which, during so long a residence among us, you cannot fail to have discovered,—notwithstanding any wounds which you may have occasionally received from any quarter,—your attachment is yet unabated. We read with unfeigned pleasure the declaration that no change of scene, no variety of character, nor even the endearments of your father’s house, have divided your kind regards from the people of

your pastoral charge. We hope, nay, we are confident, the affection is mutual. We have no wish to see your pulpit filled by a stranger, but we acquiesce in your occasional absence, because we think it needful that you should relax your labours for a short space during the revolution of a year; but we anxiously anticipate your return again among us.”

LETTERS.

THERE are a few of his letters belonging to this period which seem to deserve a place in this volume. The first was written to his sister Jane; the second to his brother Thomas, now the Rev. Thomas James of the Colonial Missionary Society, when about to make a public profession of his faith in Christ; the third was addressed to Mr Phipson, who was afraid that the church at Liverpool was about to rob him of his minister; the fourth and fifth were written to the Rev. Thomas James, when about to commence his studies for the Christian ministry.

TO MISS J. JAMES.

“BIRMINGHAM, *November 22, 1805.*

“MY DEAR SISTER,—Were you acquainted with my engagements at Birmingham, it would be matter of little surprise to you that I had omitted writing to you at Romsey. The commencement of a ministerial career in any part of the vineyard of Christ, but especially in that part of it which is the destined lot of my labours, is attended with so many new scenes to try, and so many others to perplex the mind, as leave it no liberty to think of anything but its present engagements. Do not let the silence which has so long subsisted be the criterion of my love; do not imagine that because I have not written so often, or said so much as in past times, that I love you less. To none would it give me greater pleasure to write than to yourself; and I assure you, that you are not the only respected friend who complains of my remissness; to all, therefore, I am constrained to make the same excuse,—my numerous and important engagements. Did you, my dear Jane, know

how I was situated, you would almost pity me. I have not, like yourself, only one soul to look after, but many; not only my own vine to prune and dress, but a whole vineyard to watch and manage; not only one plant to nourish and take under my fostering care, but a whole garden to keep free from weeds, and to till. You know, by experience, that even the care of your own soul calls for the most vigilant attention, the most diligent watchfulness; and oh, do but imagine what it requires in me to look after so many.

“Our silence, when together at Blandford, is not only lamentable, but criminal. I confess it with shame, but I find it more easy to lament it, than to mend it. I find it a matter of extreme difficulty with near friends, to give loose to the feelings of my heart, and to engage freely in spiritual conversation. There is a kind of timidity, criminal, because injurious to Christian communion, which I cannot overcome; with a stranger I can be free, but with near, and even dear friends, I cannot be so familiar as I could wish.

“I trust that my dear sister is growing in grace; that this divine plant, which the hand of God has set in your heart, is still thriving. It seems as if God had so ordered it, that you should water this plant with your own tears, that it should take deep root downward, as well as grow upward. By many expressions in your letter, you seem yet a child of light walking in darkness. Pray, did you ever meditate on that passage of God’s holy Word, which is in Isaiah l. 10? I have often thought it, and do still think it, peculiarly applicable to yourself. I trust your character is described in that passage; that you fear God, I have little doubt, and that you are as willing to obey His voice. The fear which is there spoken of, is not that slavish dread of God’s wrath, which leads the soul to view Him only as a revengeful being full of wrath, and determined to punish all that disobey or break in any measure His commandments; but that fear which arises from a sense of His love and mercy, a fear originating in faith, and excited by gratitude, that leads the soul to fear offending Him, because of His great goodness and love. The state which is there described also seems to suit you exactly, walking in darkness and without light. This is not the darkness of a state of nature, but that which is occasioned by the hiding of God’s countenance. Now, though you are in this darkness, yet attend to the exhortation in this text. ‘Trust’ upon, or in ‘the name of the Lord,’ also His word, His promises, His covenant, and make these things the foundation of your hope; again, ‘stay’ upon the name of the Lord. This seems to allude to. one who is struggling in deep waters among the billows; just ready to sink, he grasps hold upon something, but is still timorous whether he may venture his weight upon it. In such a situation, he is assured by one that it is quite able to bear him

up,—no unfit resemblance of the state of a soul tossed with strong temptations and anxious fears. I hold fast the promise, the Immutable Covenant of Jehovah to you—stay yourself upon this; it never yet gave way beneath the feet of any that ever trod upon it. Even were you driven to such an extremity, imitate Abraham, who, against hope, believed in hope. ‘Stay upon his God;’ this seems the most comfortable word of all; this shews you, however you may suspect your sincerity and your interest in the covenant, God is still your God—is not unmindful of you. How amazing His love! Yes, my dear sister, though you form such hard thoughts of yourself, His thoughts are not as your thoughts. He reverses the sentence which you pass upon yourself. He is now saying to you, I am thy God. Why will you disbelieve Him? why discredit His immutable word? Do not, then, delight to dwell so much in the regions of despondency. Perhaps you wish for more rapturous enjoyments, more sensible manifestations of the light of His countenance, than it is His will to give;—bow with submission to the dispensation.

“You wish, also, for a crown which it is not the privilege of all Christians to wear—I mean that of assurance; but you would do well to consider, that assurance is not of the essence of faith. A man, a Christian, may have sincere and justifying faith, without being firmly assured that his sins are pardoned—that Christ died for him in particular. Do not, then, let this so much distress you. The vision is for an appointed time, and though it tarry, it will come. In the evening time it shall be light.

“I am going on tolerably comfortable and happy in my new and important situation; fresh cares and fresh pleasures seem to keep the matter pretty nearly on an equilibrium; our congregation increases, our church flourishes, our prayer-meetings are well attended. I am still with Mr Frears, and I expect to be with him till February, when I am to enter my lodgings. O my dear sister, if you ever, which I hope you will ere it is long, see Mr and Mrs Frears, thank them a thousand times for their kindness to me. In them, I find a second father and mother. Upon the whole, I am tolerably well. I had, for about a month, a very ugly cough, which is mercifully removed. Your account of my brother Thomas has given me fresh cause for gratitude and praise. I do not despair of seeing all my brothers and sisters in the way to glory. Farewell. May the Lord give you every needful blessing; so prays your affectionate brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO MR THOMAS JAMES.

“BIRMINGHAM, *January 24, 1807.*

“Self-dedication is included in baptism when received by an adult.

Remember, then, that on such grounds you solemnly declare your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,—you renounce every other dependence for salvation,—you swear allegiance to Him as your rightful sovereign, and declare in the presence of witnesses, of heaven, earth, and hell, that you will now depart from iniquity,—that you now give up yourself, your body, your soul, your time, your talents, your all to be devoted to His glory. Such a solemn surrender should not be made without much serious meditation and much earnest prayer. Remember, I do not say that this is the principal design of baptism, but it must surely be a reflection which ought very much to impress the mind of one who at adult age passes under this solemn seal of the new covenant. With respect to the Lord's Supper, while I would be extremely cautious to guard it from the intrusion of those who, being like Judas, enemies to it, have, like him, no just right to the privilege, yet I would encourage every Christian, though he were a babe, to join in the commemoration of the sufferings and death of Christ. You express a fear as to your fitness to participate in this privilege; perhaps, if this were sifted to the bottom, it might be found to be a weed springing from a seed of self-righteousness. You do not express any fear about any other duty; you do not say, Am I worthy to go to prayer? am I holy enough to go to the house of God? To wish for more holiness is a very natural, and very justifiable wish; but to wish for it as giving you a stronger claim, or better right to any of the privileges of the New Testament, is self-righteousness, and arises from indistinct views of the truth. I am not now speaking against sanctification—God forbid!—but I am speaking against the idea of meriting any one privilege of the gospel by any real or supposed excellency of our own. You are ever *Jo* go to the table of the Lord as a sinner hoping for salvation through the perfect atonement of Christ, which is beautifully set forth by the bread and wine which you receive. The Divine promise of salvation to those who believe, and the gracious invitation of all such to the table of the Lord, and not your own personal holiness, is the foundation of your title to a seat with the righteous.*

* There appears to be some confusion of thought in this passage. Although the *increase* of personal sanctification does not confer "a stronger claim or better right to any of the privileges of the New Testament," there can be no fitness at all for communion apart from the *existence* of sanctification. If a man ask on what ground he may venture to trust in the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins and the regeneration of his spiritual nature, it is clear that Scripture replies, that the only ground required for faith is the grace and promise and work of the Lord Jesus. It is not *saints* that are invited to trust in Him for salvation, but sinners. Not holiness, but sin, constitutes the personal qualification for trusting in the compassion of Him who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. But we are invited to the Lord's Supper, not that we may

“Do not think, my dear brother, that there is any spiritual magic, if I may so speak, in the bread or the wine, which will make you a perfect Christian all of a sudden; this, like every other religious ordinance, depends on God for a blessing. Don't expect either, any wonderful elevation of mind, any ecstatic feelings, any rapturous sensations in the performance of this duty; such 'experience,' as it is called, is often to be doubted. Many have felt at the table of the Lord what they would have felt anywhere else, if there had been anything to strike the senses—anything novel or extraordinary—and have thought all this the very summit of religious perfection and enjoyment; whereas, perhaps, there was very little religion in it. If it strengthen your faith in the Lord Jesus—if it increase your love to Him—if it enflame your love to the brethren—if it wean you from the world—if it send you away humbler in your own estimation than when you came—if it give you more exalted and extended views of the person, the work, the office of Christ—if it lead you to adore more the Divine character as displayed in the plan of your redemption, it has effected that for which it was designed; and if you feel nothing of that rapture and ecstasy which some profess to feel and enjoy, be neither disappointed nor distressed about it.

“I still recommend to you a diligent perusal of the Word of God, accompanied with much earnest prayer to God for the enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost. Continue constant in prayer. I rejoice to hear of your religious society; I hope it will prove a lasting benefit. You are not to be surprised, if out of such a number some should not continue to run as well as they appear to have started. If this should be the case, don't think the worse of the gospel. Even among Christ's little society, which consisted of twelve, there was a Judas—a devil. Take heed that it be not yourself. Send me their names who they are. We go on very well at Birmingham—our congregation and church both increase.

“Mr Keynes has been here preaching for me three Sabbaths during my illness, which has been pretty severe. To-morrow I preach three

be reconciled to God, but to celebrate the festival of our reconciliation, and as the friends of Christ, to rejoice in His love. If this be true, some proof that we have really been renewed by the Spirit of power and holiness is indispensable to fellowship with the saints.

The fallacy which underlies the sentence, “You do not say, Am I worthy to go to prayer? am I holy enough to go to the house of God?” may easily be exposed. The drunkard and the adulterer should, it is universally acknowledged, pray to God; their very sins are a reason for praying; and “go to the house of God,”—the more guilty, the more need for them to seek His mercy; but none would say that such persons should approach the table of the Lord. It is not their duty to profess love to Christ until they actually love Him, or to place themselves among the number of His servants until they are really serving Him.—EDR.

times, which I have not done for eight weeks past. Through Divine goodness I am now tolerably well."

TO MR JOSEPH PHIPSON.

"*October 29, 1811.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Before I relieve the anxiety which my visit to Liverpool excited in your affectionate heart, I will first thank you for it, as a proof and pledge of undissembled regard, that you feel so peculiarly solicitous for my longer continuance as your pastor and friend. You are yourself answerable for the error, if I have reposed more confidence in your friendship than your feelings towards me either sanction or desire. I consider and esteem you as one of my best friends. Yours was the first voice and hand and heart that welcomed me to Birmingham, and would be, I hope, the last that would rejoice at my departing from it. Valuing, then, as I do, your attachment, I could not but feel in some degree gratified by the solicitude you manifested concerning the result of my Lancashire journey; it endeared you to my heart, and had your fears been realised, would have rendered the separation which you dreaded still more painful to me. But those fears are not likely to be realised. I tell you now, as I told you then, that they are groundless. I went down to Liverpool merely as a supply, and as far as I can judge, was considered by the people in no other light. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? I should be ill qualified to fill the place that had been occupied by Spencer. He was a most excellent youth, and, as far as I can judge by the glowing twilight which still survives his departed day, he was a burning and a shining light.

"Short was the season which to his friends was allowed to rejoice in that light. As a preacher, he was possessed of extraordinary qualifications; it was not energy of thought, it was not a bold genius, it was not a sparkling imagination that rendered him popular, but an elegant, fervid animation of manner, coupled with the youthful beauty of his appearance. The attention excited by his preaching was indeed remarkable; from what I have seen, I do believe that he could have commanded a congregation of five thousand people, if a place had been built large enough to contain them, and if his voice could have been distinctly heard in it.

"It is a most happy circumstance, that the impulse given to the public by his labours is not likely again to subside. The attendance at the chapel in which he preached is astonishing. If I say that a hundred people went away unable to gain standing room within the walls the last two Sunday evenings of my visit, I should speak within compass; and though it was on a week-day when I preached my last

sermon, the place was crowded even to the aisles. One circumstance peculiarly favourable to the future prospects of the church there is, that a spirit of prayer seems to be poured out upon the people. There were not, perhaps, fewer than three hundred people at the prayer-meeting. A great and effectual door is opened for the entrance of the gospel into that large and wicked town. As far as I could judge, and have a right to speak on such a subject, my services were tolerably acceptable, but beyond expressions of satisfaction and gratitude, nothing was communicated to me. You may, therefore, so far as your comfort is concerned in this matter, set your mind at rest. 'Tis true, it would be highly gratifying to the most anxious feelings of my heart, to see a larger congregation surrounding my pulpit; but I shall never quit my post till I am convinced, and others are convinced too, that it is my duty to do it for some more extended sphere of ministerial usefulness. We had a very pleasant excursion upon the whole, and were introduced to a number of very excellent people."

TO HIS BROTHER MR THOMAS JAMES.

"December 19, 1811.

"Were my ability equal to my wishes, with what hallowed delight should I expatiate on the scenery of that prospect, which, to the eye of your imagination, is seen stretching over the interminable compass of futurity. How readily would I trace, and how plainly, the path from which your feet must never deviate. I would mark the spots where you may naturally expect to meet with danger—where with difficulty—where with delight. I would tell you when to open your heart to the most delicious pleasures—when to close it against the most insidious poison. I would caution and encourage, stimulate and restrain, as circumstances required. But because I cannot do what I would, shall I not do what I can, and thus obtain Mary's memorial? I will.

"It was my intention, my dear brother, to have written one long letter, containing merely such heads of advice as I thought adapted to your present situation, but finding upon reflection that I should wish to say more than could be well contained in a single epistle, I determined to change my plan, and tax your patience by a series of letters addressed to you at different times, each containing the discussion of some particular topic.

"The plan which at present I propose is:—

"1. To state with what particular end and design you should enter on academical pursuits, and the great importance of keeping that precise end continually in view.

"2. To consider the great moment of preserving in the midst of your studies, the power and life of personal religion.

“3. To mention what branches of study should most closely engage your attention during your residence at Hoxton.

“4. The means of prosecuting those studies with advantage to yourself, and in subordination to the great end of all your academical pursuits.

“The subject of the present letter is to state the chief end and design with which you should enter on your preparatory studies, and the great importance of ever keeping that end in view.

“It is the part of folly to act before the end is chosen or the means of exertion properly arranged.

“Right reason suggests to every one entering on a new career this natural inquiry, For what precise object are you about to start? It is to a neglect of this question that we are to attribute that profligate misuse of time and talent which in this world of activity we are so frequently grieved to witness.

“How many active minds, capable of great service to the world, do we see driven at random over the stage of existence, answering no other end but to teach mankind how much exertion may be wasted for want of a precise and proper end to guide its progress. Their whole life resembles the evening flight of the bat,—a useless flutter amidst darkness and vanity. What wisdom, to say nothing of religion, dictates to you, my dear brother, at the present moment is, to fix with yourself, after serious deliberation, the precise design of your academical career, to divide between many claimants which has the rightful authority to your supreme reverence and regard. By your preparatory studies you propose to become possessed of learning,—you mean to be a minister of some literature,—you wish to preach with acceptance,—you propose to yourself great pleasure in the attainment of knowledge. Those are all endä which you may lawfully set before your mind in your present prospect; but woe be to your ill-judging mind if either of these be the chief end. If this be the case, you will carry a curse with you to the study, and from there to the pulpit, from thence to the grave, from thence to the bar of Christ, and from thence, by a last remove, to the bottomless pit. I am, however, persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak. Your religion has, ere now, fixed this on your heart as the chief design of preparatory studies, ‘that you might be qualified in the use of appointed means more fully to glorify God in the salvation of immortal souls.’ It is not merely to be prepared to preach, nor merely to preach well, nor to preach acceptably, but to preach successfully. And what is successful preaching short of the conversion of immortal souls?

“But what I wish to impress upon your mind is the infinite importance of keeping this great object in view through all, even the most

minute of your academical pursuits. Everything is to be viewed by you in connexion with this end; and only as it promotes this is anything absolutely momentous. This must remain in the midst of all your feelings and opinions, all your pursuits and exertions, the common centre to which everything by an undeviating law of attraction gravitates.

“If you pore over the difficulties of language, if you read the systems of moral philosophy, if you study the accuracies of logic, if you examine the flowers of rhetoric, or demonstrate the problems of mathematics, it must not be ultimately for the purpose of becoming a classic, a philosopher, a logician, an orator, or a mathematician, but that by these means you may, in one way or other, be prepared to demonstrate, explain, and enforce to the conviction of sinners, the truths on the belief of which their salvation depends. All are to be viewed as giving you in the order of means a readier access to their minds, a greater power over their hearts.

“A man who is systematically trained to the terrible art of war is taught some of the modern languages, he is instructed in mathematics, mechanics, geography, history, fortification; not, however, merely for the sake of being a learned soldier—no—but a successful general in the defence of his country and the destruction of its enemies. He is taught to study, as it were, at the foot of a bastion, in the middle of a trench, pointing a cannon, storming a breach, or heading an army, and drives on his scholastic pursuits amidst imaginary shouts of war, the glories of conquest, or the shame of defeat. Fields covered with the slain, cities reduced to ruin, and prisons crowded with captives, are the objects on which he is taught that all his learning must terminate. Similar must be the manner in which your preparation for the work of the ministry is carried forward.

“You will not mistake me, and suppose that I am upholding the barbarous idea which many seem to entertain, that learning for a minister of the gospel is unnecessary. Such a sentiment can spring only from ignorance and envy. No, my brother, I attach the greatest importance to general knowledge, considered as a means subordinate to the great end which I have already specified. Learning is likely to procure respect for its possessor, is calculated not only to screen him from neglect or contempt, but to engage the attention of many who would otherwise treat him with indignant scorn. It has, in innumerable instances, abated the violence of prejudice, and conciliated esteem, where excellence the most sterling, unattended by the polish of education, would have been totally destitute of attraction.

“How often have men of taste and intellect been led to hear from the lips of some able preacher the glorious gospel of the blessed God,

not from any desire of spiritual edification, but merely to be pleased with the talents of the speaker, and who, when they intended only to admire the abilities of the servant, have returned adoring the grace of his Lord! In this respect, learning is useful to a minister, as it extends the probability of his success. For this end it ought to be pursued, and as this is the best motive to stimulate your mind in its academical engagements, so it is unquestionably the strongest. Who is likely to search for knowledge with the greatest ardour,—the man that seeks it merely as its own reward, or he that desires it as a probable means of enlarging his qualifications as a messenger of peace?

“The former has little to urge him but the prospect of personal gratification; the latter, in addition to this, has the hope of making his knowledge subservient to the best interests of his fellow-creatures. One is urged forward by selfishness somewhat refined; the other, by a benevolence which knows no limit to the extent of its desires, short of the everlasting happiness of its objects. Such a view as this of the great design of academical pursuits, would not only excite the mind to exertion, but help it to bear with patience the rigour of intellectual toil. By having determined to arrive at the pulpit only in the regular way of preparatory study, you have undertaken what will often be found a weariness to the flesh.

“Your way as a student must necessarily lead you through much which at first will present on every hand little but alpine hills of difficulty and desert plains of barren sterility. If you mean to apply closely to study, which I most fervently hope is your determination, there are hastening on to meet you hours and weeks and months of dry and tedious labour. And can your imagination frame one motive so encouraging, so strengthening to the mind as the recollection that all this toil is to enable you to discharge with ability and success the arduous and important duties of the ministerial office?

“If you keep in view as you ought, and as I pray God you may, the proper design of your academical pursuits,—if your soul glow with burning zeal for the glory of God, and is penetrated with tender pity for the souls of mankind, you will with the greatest cheerfulness make any sacrifice, however costly, endure any fatigue, however oppressive. I do most earnestly entreat you, my dear brother, to consider well this great design of your residence at Hoxton. There the model of your future character will be framed, the path for your future steps will be indicated. In short, there will your whole future life in all its important results, both to yourself and others, be epitomised.

“I can assure you from evidence, that without great watchfulness you will be often in danger of forgetting the precise end for which you study. If you make proficiency in learning, vanity will suggest how

pleasing it is to be esteemed a literary character. If you should feel a deficiency compared with some of your fellow-students, envy will sometimes spur you on to diligence, with the hope of equalling or excelling these where precedence is so mortifying.

“If you take the lead of many of the others, pride will induce a kind of idolatry of your own talents. Hearing of the applause with which the attainments of some popular favourite are received, you will feel a temptation to give such a turn to your studies as shall be likely to prepare you for a share of public admiration. These and a variety of other feelings will frequently send up a mist that will hide from distinct observation the great object which revelation has already erected for your way-mark, and which I have endeavoured to point out to your vigilant attention.

Again, before I close this letter, I remind you that the chief design of your academical pursuits is to prepare you more extensively to glorify God in the salvation of sinners. Let this thought be the constant inmate of your soul. Let it rise up with you in the morning and lie down with you at night. Wherever you go, whatever you do, let it attend and direct you.

“Beckon the duties of that day but half performed on which you have never seriously reflected on this vast subject, and impress it upon your spirit, by making it the subject in part of almost every prayer that you present to God. As a means of fastening it more securely on your own heart, talk of it to others. Let it be the matter of conversation with those to whom it is a subject of equal interest and obligation. And be assured, my dear brother, that it will be my fervent and never-ceasing prayer to the God of all grace that He would grant you that assistance which is necessary to keep this great object ever before your eye, surrounded with all its tremendous importance, and ever impressed upon your conscience with all its beneficial influence.—Believe me, my dear brother, yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO MR THOMAS JAMES.

“FIVE WAYS, *February 27, 1812.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Few days have passed during the last month from which I have not parted with regret that they afforded me no opportunity of renewing the subject of my last letter. If it be a fact worth knowing, I can assure you that my prayers are not so unfrequent as my epistles. Having prescribed a path for my thoughts by what I said in my last, it will become me now to walk in my own road. What I intend at present is, not to prove the self-evident truth, that to

teach religion we must first know it ourselves, but to insist on the infinite moment of endeavouring to maintain the vigour and life of godliness in the midst of academic pursuits. Whatever be the cause of such a circumstance, it is a fact which innumerable instances will verify, that many candidates for the ministerial office lose in personal religion while at a seminary, more than they gain in mental improvement. What I have seen and heard and felt on this subject, induces on your behalf, my dear brother, a degree of trembling solicitude in my mind which the Searcher of hearts only can estimate. What I design, therefore, in this letter is,

“First, To state the vast importance of your vigilant endeavours to maintain a spiritual and holy frame of mind during the pursuit of your preparatory studies. To see this in its true light, and feel it in its full force, consider, 1st, That except you cultivate such a disposition while a student, you are not likely to excel in it as a minister. I have no need to shew you how necessary it is that a Christian teacher should be a spiritually-minded Christian. Much more than knowledge is surely requisite for one whose business it is to proclaim incessantly, ‘though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not love, we are nothing.’ Talents may make us shine, but piety alone can make us glow. Without the unction which spirituality of mind alone can impart, our most elaborate sermons will be like the cold beams of a wintry moon, falling upon the icy bosom of the frozen lake. If, then, such a frame of mind be of any moment to you in future, the importance of cultivating it now exceeds all expression. Such as you are in the academy, such you will be hereafter found within the circle of pastoral engagements. I speak now not only from the dictates of abstract reasoning, but also from observation and experience. In looking round upon those who were the companions of my studies, I observe that they are the most spiritual ministers who were the most devotional academics.

“2d, Without eminent spirituality of mind your studies will be in great danger of acquiring a wrong bias. This is the only channel through which your mind will or can voluntarily propel the stream of its own vigour to the ocean of Jehovah’s glory. Without this frame of heart it is impossible either to understand the nature, perceive the design, or feel the importance of your present engagements. The object I endeavoured to hold up to your view in my last letter can be distinctly seen through no other medium than a spiritual mind. In the absence of this you will sink into a mere self-seeking orator, or into a dull, uninteresting, philosophic lecturer, or, what is still worse, into a teacher of damnable heresies. Perhaps it would be the first of these, for when the fervour of religion is gone from the soul, what other

object can you propose to yourself in your preparatory studies but as a qualification to enable you to become a successful candidate for popular applause? That zeal for the Divine glory and compassion for immortal spirits which should be the very soul of every minister's exertions, are the offspring of glowing piety, and must cease with the cause that produced them. The power of God and the spiritual welfare of man will be present to the eye, and objects of pursuit only so long as they are present with the heart as subjects of experience. Lose from the mind the spirituality which it ought to possess, and which, I hope, yours does possess, and that moment your study is converted into the temple of a false deity. Self is the idol, vanity the priest, and all the attainments which your vigilance enables you to make, so many sacrifices and acts of worship, while piety, like Jeremiah anticipating the desolation of the Jewish temple, stands weeping at a distance, exclaiming, How is the gold changed, the fine gold become dim!

"Perhaps you would sink, without spirituality, into a cold, dull, uninteresting stiffness. Whatever attainments you might make, if during the process of acquiring them devotion should evaporate, they will remain behind a mere useless sediment. Science and literature, to be useful to a minister of Jesus Christ, must be held in solution by eminent religion. Without this they will be very likely to lead us beyond dulness, and conduct us to the regions where dwell the most pernicious errors. This brings me to the third probable result of a decay of spiritual religion in a theological student, i. e., an apostasy from scriptural truth. You will soon learn, my dear brother, if you have not already discovered, that during the revolution excited in the human mind by the influence of sin, its faculties were displaced, and the will and the affections, formerly the servants of the understanding, became to a very considerable extent its governors. Hence many of the intellectual errors of mankind have resulted from the depraved state of their hearts. In ten thousand instances a lukewarm state of the affections has been the cause of the most pernicious errors of the judgment. The truth of God is given to us as the instrument of sanctity, and when we become indifferent to the end, it is no matter of surprise that we become regardless about the means. Truth is the food of spiritual religion, which, when the appetite is lost, is first disrelished, and then loathed. Were it possible for us to trace the history of their apostasy, we should certainly find that of those who have wandered into the darkest religious errors, by far the greater part commenced their dreadful career from a lukewarm heart.

"3d, Spirituality of mind would be likely to ensure the blessing of God upon your studies, by urging you to constant and earnest prayer. Let it be remembered that intellectual as well as moral improvement

is dependent on Divine assistance. He is the creator, the preserver, and the benefactor of the human faculties. It is in Him they live, and move, and have their being. It is God alone that can expand the judgment, invigorate the imagination, strengthen the memory, sharpen the penetration. He could enervate the soul, and render the closest application useless. One very considerable cause that produced the vast superiority of mind in the [early] Nonconformist divines above their successors, was the vast proficiency they made in personal religion.

“These ideas, and many others which your own judgment will readily suggest, will tend to unfold and enforce the importance of eminent piety to a candidate for ministerial employment.

“Secondly, I will now, my dear brother, point out those circumstances in your present situation in which the vigour of personal religion is in danger of being relaxed. It is certainly a melancholy reflection that there should be any circumstance likely to be injurious to piety in that very situation where it sojourns for a while for the purpose of being better qualified to teach its own nature and enforce its own practice. Yet so it is. Not, however, that there is anything in academic institutions naturally and essentially unfavourable to it; if there were, the prejudices which many have imbibed against them would be too well founded to be easily overthrown. Still there are circumstances which, through the imperfections of the best men, are likely, unless constantly watched, to issue in this baneful consequence. What these are I will now specify, that being apprised of the source from whence danger may be expected, you may be incited to incessant watchfulness.

“1st, The first source of danger I shall notice is in the nature of your studies. These will of course be multiform, and by examination it will be found that each, without great watchfulness, may become injurious to religion. . . . Let it be remembered that in an academy divinity is studied as a science—a hallowed one, it is true, but still a science. Its evidences are canvassed, its terms are criticised, its parts are analysed, its doctrines are classed. What till now has been treated as a system of facts and maxims, will be treated as a theory of doctrines and sentiments. Instead of listening to the holy converse of Christian friends comparing their experience with the Scriptures of truth, and mutually helping each other forward through all the difficulties of the path to Zion, you will frequently think and speak and read of religion as merely an intellectual study. The Bible, which you had never read but as a Christian, you will peruse as a student. You will pray, to learn to conduct public prayer with decorum and edification.* You

* The practice of praying in order “to learn to conduct public prayer with decorum and edification,” is adopted in no Nonconformist college with which I am acquainted. Morning and evening prayers are often conducted by the resident

will compose sermons, and listen to the composition of others, that you may learn to preach. You will hear the most awful, the most melting truths of the Word of God mentioned and conversed on without any of that feeling or that reverence with which you had ever been accustomed to listen to them. You will hear sermons in the academy for the sake of exercising your critical talents, till you find it difficult to lay aside the criticism in the most solemn and serious engagements. Whither, without some exceedingly strong counteracting force, all this tends, you have perhaps, my dear brother, felt ere now, to your no small distress and humiliation. Whither, without incessant vigilance, will such a state of things lead us, but to the most frigid, barren» deathlike regions of lukewarmness itself?

2d, The close application which it will be found necessary to pay to your studies will frequently endanger the prospects of your personal religion. . . . Goaded by the reproofs of your tutors, or impelled by the rivalry of the students, you will carry on your pursuits with a closeness of attention that will sometimes render you deaf to the call of that hour that summons you to the closet of devotion and the mercy-seat of God. In this particular, my dear brother, your danger will be found peculiarly imminent; indeed, still greater by the suggestions of a deceitful heart, that the neglect is excused by the cause of it.

“3d, The novelty of a great part of your studies will also open a source of danger. Your mind is travelling through a country almost new to you; objects before unseen will be perpetually starting up before you, not only soliciting your attention, but highly deserving of it; and as new situations are always a trial of religion, you will need all the care which it is possible your soul can exercise to prevent your mind being so occupied with the novelties of your present situation as to neglect those important concerns which nothing should be so bright as to eclipse or so great as to obscure.

“4th, The companions of your studies will render great caution absolutely necessary. Those who ought to be helpmates, will not unfrequently be snares. Some of them, it may be feared, entered the academy with but little personal religion, and have been gradually losing what little they had since they have been there. Others, with dispositions far more jocular and volatile than is consistent with much

tutor and the students in turn; and I can suppose that if a student committed any very egregious impropriety, the tutor might tell him of it in private; but the purpose of the service is strictly devotional, not that the student may “learn how” to conduct prayer. It is, however, a very general thing in Nonconformist colleges for every student to read a sermon in class three or four times every session, and for the students and the Homiletical Professor freely to criticise what is read. This criticism, though sometimes offered in a captious spirit, may, I know, be characterised by habitual gravity and fraternal kindness.—EDIT.

seriousness and spirituality, are apt, in unbending the mind after the rigour of a close application to study, to run into an excess of levity and unsanctified hilarity. Amidst such circumstances, it is easy to perceive that fervent piety is endangered. The student, I acknowledge, must have occasional relaxation from intellectual labour. His health, his spirits, require it; but then even his recreations ought to be those of a man of God—such as fit him for his future work, and not such as disqualify him. Incessant joking, laughter, sarcasm,—which I lament to say form the substance of that conversation which is generally maintained within the walls of a seminary,—totally unfit the mind of the students for spiritual intercourse with God or each other. . . . I beseech you, my dear brother, be upon your guard. There is something bewitching in the character of a merry fellow, even though it be united with that of a candidate for the pulpit. We love too much to be diverted, to be sufficiently alarmed at the danger arising to religion from a jocular and diverting disposition.

“Thirdly, I will now proceed to give you a few directions to guard you against the danger which your experience will testify I have not exaggerated.

“1st, Endeavour to acquire a deep conviction of the necessity of spiritual religion as an important part of your present and future character. Do, my dear brother, survey the subject on every side; consider it in every point of view; trace it in all its bearings, all its connexions; let no suggestion of Satan, no insinuation of your own depravity, lessen in your estimation the importance of this ministerial qualification. Look at the ministers who most excel, and those who are the most deficient. Think of the glowing ministrations of that great man whose public and private services you found so profitable and delightful during your abode at Romsey. What unction attends all his labours, and oh, what success! I can assure you there is much truth in Abraham Booth’s remark, that it is from a pastor’s defects in the light of a disciple that his principal deficiencies and his chief dangers arise. For there is no reason to fear, that if tolerably furnished with gifts, he will be remarkably deficient or negligent in any known branch of pastoral obligation, while his heart is alive to the enjoyments and duties of the Christian character.

“2d, Impress your mind with the danger arising to personal religion from the causes I have already specified. Of this object never for a moment lose sight; never think yourself beyond the necessity of caution and watchfulness. Let a holy trembling take possession of your soul. Consider that you have a treasure to preserve among thieves. Exercise an incessant jealousy over your own heart.

“3d, Consider the guilt of such a defect—yes, the guilt, the guilt! For if it be sinful in a Christian to be lukewarm, how much criminality attaches to such a frame of soul when found in a student or a pastor! The deceitfulness of your own heart will frequently suggest, by way of apology, that it is impossible in such a situation to avoid it, that the rigour of your studies requires relaxation.

“My dear brother, nothing can justify the decay of real religion in the soul of any one, least of all in a student or minister. I do assure you I can never look back without pain upon my academic years; for though I then endeavoured to justify myself under a too considerable declension of piety, now I exclaim ‘O Lord, thou makest me to possess the sins of my youth.’ It is impossible for us to say how many of the trials of our future ministry are retributive visitations for our sins at the seminary.

“4th, Be exceedingly strict and conscientious in observing the times and maintaining the spirit of direct devotion. In whatever danger a Christian is placed, I have no great apprehension of his safety when he continues instant in secret prayer. In having separate studies, you possess every advantage for the performance of this momentous duty. Let nothing ever induce you to give up the time, whatever it be that solicits it, which is allotted to this sacred exercise. Be exceedingly careful so to arrange your studies as to have sufficient leisure for your visits to a throne of grace. Rather than part with the opportunity for this, and thus incur the frown of God, carry an imperfect lesson to your tutor, though it may bring upon you his censure and the laughter of your fellow-students. And let your prayers ever embrace the subject which I now am endeavouring to impress upon your heart. Your petitions will bind you to fresh watchfulness, your watchfulness impel you to fresh prayer.

“5th, It will greatly assist you to set apart occasional extraordinary seasons of devotion—say one afternoon every month. There is no one circumstance which I find so adapted to check the progress of lukewarmness, and to promote an opposite frame, as this very edifying practice. During the common routine of stated duties, the soul is apt to be lulled into a lethargy from which nothing is so likely to rouse it as a season of extraordinary devotion. On such occasions call your spirit to a reckoning, examine its accounts, reprove it for negligence, and stimulate it to greater diligence. Not one direction which I have yet given deserves so well your serious regard as this. I speak from experience, and do therefore urge it upon you with the utmost importunity.

“6th, Occasionally select the most holy of your fellow-students for half an hour’s spiritual conversation and prayer. Never mind what their talents are, so that they have much piety. Choose such a one for a bosom friend. Converse and pray over your difficulties and dangers.

“7th, And it would be sometimes beneficial to enjoy a few minutes’ pious converse with some private experienced Christians.

“I must now, my dear brother, leave to your devout attention these few hints. If you needed an admonition to attend to the subject of this letter, I could upon my bended knees beseech you at your very feet, as you valued your own comfort and usefulness, the salvation of sinners, the glory and favour of God, to take most earnest heed to the piety of your own heart. Happy indeed will your unworthy brother feel if this effort of his affection, weak as it is, should contribute to a purpose so important and so desirable.

“Commending you to God and the word of His grace, I remain your affectionate brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

BOOK III

SUCCESS,

- CHAP. I. INCREASING POPULARITY.
- , II. SICKNESS AND BEREAVEMENT.
 - „ III. MISSIONARY SERMON, MAY 12, 1819.
 - „ IV. A NEW CHAPEL.
 - „ V. SECOND MARRIAGE.
 - „ VI. CONTROVERSY.
 - „ VII. FORMATION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.
 - „ VIII. AUTHORSHIP.
 - „ IX. RELIGIOUS LIFE, AND RELIGIOUS WORK, 1813-1833.
LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.
INCREASING POPULARITY.

MR JAMES always referred to the temporary occupation of the old Meeting by the Carr's Lane congregation, at the end of 1812 and the beginning of 1813, as signalling the termination of his early years of disappointment and comparative failure. But a little before that time there had been some very unequivocal indications that he was about to become a very successful public speaker. His friend the late Mr Thomas Wilson, the treasurer of Highbury College, invited him to take his turn among the regular preachers at Hoxton Chapel, which in those days was filled Sunday after Sunday with crowded congregations, attracted by the most effective preachers that Mr Wilson could find in the provinces. "I believe," writes Mr James, "that my services were acceptable there, as I could not be ignorant that they were favourably received by the public." Soon after he first preached in London, and before his services at Hoxton had won him any great reputation, an incident occurred, over the telling of which he often laughed himself, and, the humour of his manner heightening the absurdity of the story, never failed to make his friends laugh too. This is how he tells it in his autobiography:—

"One of the congregation at Hoxton Chapel being much taken with my preaching, and supposing that everybody was as much struck as himself, persuaded me to preach a sermon in some chapel

in the city, which he would procure, for the benefit of the Missionary Society. Whether this arose from a deep interest on behalf of that institution, or a wish to bring into public notice a young preacher whom he admired, I cannot say. In both ends, however, he failed; for to my good friend's inexpressible mortification, much more than to my own, he waited a considerable while for a congregation, which at no time during the evening amounted to more than fifty people. When the plates were brought in, they contained a few shillings, and the promoter of the scheme comforted me with the intelligence that there had been deposited a bank note, which, however, as the wind was rather high, had been blown away and could not be found. I hope the good man did not soothe my mind by a sacrifice of truth. My popularity was then all to come."

Soon after this he made his first speech in London on behalf of the London Missionary Society. The annual meeting that year was held in Silver Street Chapel. He was in "prodigious trepidation" after he had consented to speak, and says,—“I was about to throw up my brief, when my friend Mr (now Dr) Bennett, who was sitting next to me, endeavoured to calm my perturbation, and suggested some topics on which I might enlarge. It so happened that I was rather happy in my speech, which elicited some very encouraging terms of approbation, at which I was as much surprised as gratified. From that time I commenced my career as a speech-maker—a business of which, though I have not been unsuccessful in it, I was never very fond.”

It was his impression that he had spoken at the annual meetings of the London Missionary Society more frequently than any other man, having taken part in them not fewer than a dozen times; “more shame both for them and for me,—they ought not to have asked me, and I ought not to have consented.”

In April 1812, he had delivered a very effective speech at the annual meeting of the Birmingham Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was afterwards printed by the London Committee and circulated by thousands, in order to explain the objects and enforce the claims of the society. He refers to it

in his autobiography as being the "best oration which on any occasion" he ever delivered. In this judgment no one who ever heard any of the vigorous speeches of his maturer years will concur. The impression it produced on the audience, of which I have often heard old men speak with something of the enthusiasm they felt while listening to it, its publication by the London Committee of the Bible Society, and his own kindly liking for it six-and-forty years later, are curious illustrations of the prevailing taste of that day.

The public mind had been corrupted by the inflated style of a race of speakers, preachers, and writers, who had been dazzled by the stately and splendid diction of Burke, Gibbon, and Johnson, and aspired to the same regal grandeur. No speech could be overlaid with elaborate antithesis, sonorous climax, and glittering metaphor. It seemed to be supposed that ambitious bombast was the truest and highest type of eloquence. In the violent reaction of the last twenty or thirty years perhaps simplicity has degenerated into rudeness, ease into vulgarity, and speakers in trying to avoid pompous pretension have sacrificed refinement and dignity. How greatly the general taste has changed since 1812, the following extracts from this admired speech will sufficiently indicate. The sound sense only makes the false rhetoric the more surprising.

"SIR,—When I recollect that the Bible Society, like the Bible itself, has no more to fear from the weakness of its friends than it has from the power of its foes, I am emboldened to give utterance to feelings which it would be impossible to resist, and difficult to conceal. The Bible, sir, is on its march to the seat of universal empire, led in triumphal pomp by this excellent society; and I esteem it one of the greatest honours, as well as one of the highest felicities of my life, to join the splendid procession, if it be only with the surrounding throng to cry, Hosannah. If, sir, we would befriend our species by exercising towards them the most enlarged and efficient benevolence, we must bestow upon them that volume, which, while it soothes the sorrows and removes the imperfections of the present world, opens to the eager and exploring eye of instinctive expectation the bright visions of immortal bliss. This blessed book, while it pours a flood of heavenly radiance on every subject that views man in his connexion with

eternity, recognises his relation to time, and prescribes its necessary duties; its absence, therefore, must be a negative cause of misery to man. Who without a weeping eye can survey the various forms of wretchedness which infect the vale of tears in which man for a season is destined to dwell? The body of human society lies prostrate in the dust, bleeding at every vein, convulsed in every limb, through the wounds inflicted by its own hand during the frenzy of its depravity; and though general philanthropy may do much to stanch its blood and bind up its wounds, it is Christianity alone which can restore that moral sanity, without which man must be still the suicide of his own peace. Wretchedness is but the shadow of wickedness, and to dispel the shadow, we must remove the substance with which he intercepts the rays of infinite benignity. Imagine, sir, what would be the results if the Bible were circulated through the whole earth, its dictates everywhere obeyed, and its spirit generally imbibed. There would neither be tyranny in the prince nor rebellion in the subject—there would be neither fraud nor violence, neither injustice nor oppression, neither war nor bloodshed—nation would no longer rise against nation, and the art of war being no longer practised, the dreadful artillery of human destruction would be no more seen, except among the antiquities of a museum; or, rather, men, ashamed of these memorials of their violence, would convert their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Human legislation would universally proceed on the principles of Revelation, and whatever were the size or the shape of its legal body, equity tempered with mercy would be its living soul; for to what can it be attributed that the British jurisprudence is, on the whole, so richly impregnated with justice and wisdom, but because it has flowed over the bed of inspired truth? Then, also, would the fetters of bondage, melted by the warmth of Christian piety, dissolve from the limbs of the wretched slave, and the captive, lifted from his degraded prostration, would be taught that he carries in his bosom a soul that is human in this world, and *may be* angelic in the world that is to come. In short, were the Bible universally circulated, believed, and obeyed, every ill that renders man a foe to others and himself would be removed, and the whole family upon earth harmonised into order and happiness.

“Such, sir, is the benevolent object of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It desires and attempts to transplant to every clime that tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

“To accomplish this godlike object, it has associated the love and zeal of all denominations of professed Christians, that by such a union of their strength a mightier shock might be given to the throne of darkness, and that their scattered rays of light and love, converging

in this focus, might be dispersed with greater energy over the thick gloom of a benighted world. It is wisely determined, that when the object of their exertions is to bestow upon mankind that book whose design it is to unite men to each other and to God, to enforce the acceptance of the gift by exhibiting one of the grandest instances of its harmonising tendency that men or angels ever witnessed. We all know that there is a method of conferring a benefit which will draw towards it a greater degree of attention and regard than it would otherwise receive; and, in my humble judgment, if anything can procure for the Bible a readier reception, or insure to it a more serious attention from those on whom it is bestowed, it is the circumstance of all denominations uniting to confer the precious boon. Our diversity of opinion, in such a case, so far from obstructing our desire to draw the eyes of the human race to revealed truth, will tend rather to promote its success, by teaching that, however we may differ in opinion concerning the meaning of particular parts, we are united in the great importance which we attach to the general whole. By this association we are also furnishing to the nations a lesson, which, if we may judge from the concurrent testimony of all history, is small neither in value nor necessity, that men, without any danger to the community, may be left to form their own religious opinions, unawed by the tortures of intolerance, since diversity of opinion has no necessary connexion with alienation of heart.

“It is time for me now to glance at what the society has accomplished. Although it has existed but eight years, it has done, what, for extent, must excite the surprise of every reflecting mind, and, for utility, the gratitude of every pious heart. Its operations and their success can be compared only to the events which transpired in the first ages of Christianity, when so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, that the most formidable opposition served but to form a cataract in its course, over which the torrent, impeded for a moment, dashed with greater violence, and rolled forward with more resistless impetuosity.

“The grandest effort of this noble institution is, however, to be seen in those vast regions of pagan idolatry, where, overwhelmed with the blackness of moral darkness, are more millions of immortal beings than there are individuals in this large assembly. Over those frightful scenes, shocking alike to humanity for their cruelty, to reason for their absurdity, and to religion for their impiety, the Bible Society, this chariot of the moral sun, is directing its bright and benevolent career. That man’s heart must have certainly been petrified to stone, under the perpetual droppings of selfishness and irreligion, who can hear without rapture that this institution is promoting the translation of the Scrip-

tures into five-and-twenty languages, which never yet contained the glorious gospel of the blessed God. And let it be remembered that these are the exertions of its comparative infancy. What, then, may not be expected from the maturer age to which it is advancing, with the mighty purpose of never considering its object entirely accomplished while one language of all that prevail on the globe shall not be the vehicle of inspired truth, or one individual of all the countless millions that inhabit the earth shall be unblessed with a smooth access to the water of life issuing from the fountain of Revelation! Noble resolution! whether it be ultimately followed by failure or success. Failure, did I say? The very mention of the word, in connexion with the British and Foreign Bible Society, is a species even of impiety; compounded of such a disbelief in Divine prophecy, such a misrepresentation of providential smiles, combined with such a miscalculation of the tendencies of human events as seldom occurs in the annals of scepticism itself. If Religion desponds of its success, Infidelity does of its failure, and must be ready, in the madness inspired by desperation, to flee from the only refuge she has long enjoyed,—a miserable ruin of demolished argument.

“It must not be omitted, that the exertions of this society derive an additional degree of interest and importance from the general circumstances of the age in which they are carried forward.

“We must, sir, be possessed of minds in no common measure beclouded by ignorance or benumbed by stupidity, not to discern that we live in one of the most astonishing eras which has ever yet transpired. Providence seems to be disclosing some of the grandest scenes of its sublime and universal drama. Jehovah, arrayed in the garments of vengeance, has come forth to shake the nations and punish the inhabitants of the earth. The storm which had been long collecting its forces in the dark clouds of corrupted Christianity and the most daring infidelity, has discharged its yet unexhausted stores of fury upon the continent of Europe. Nor has the tempest rolled at such a distance that we could but just discover upon our political horizon the faint reflection of its destructive flashes. No, sir; we stand at this moment amidst the wrecks of nations shivered at our side. We ourselves have entered the cloud; and though we are yet spared, who will pretend that we have been without the most appalling apprehensions? One spectre of national calamity has scarcely vanished from the public eye, before another has risen from the terrifying gloom. At such a period, when the safety of our much-loved country seemed to place under just and necessary requisition the whole stock of public feeling and property, the British and Foreign Bible Society was born. It appeared an inauspicious moment for it to commence its existence, for if not blasted by the lightnings

that played around its infant head, one should have thought it must soon have perished through neglect; for where shall be found the leisure, the property, the anxiety necessary to cherish its life and promote its growth? But amidst the loudest thunders of war, its infant cries were heard. British liberality and British piety flew to its assistance, adopted the babe, increasing in generosity as they have increased in poverty. The child grew in wisdom and in stature, and has been seen sitting among the doctors in the temple, asking them questions, refuting their objections, and confounding their most ingenious arguments. What, sir, can be inferred from this singular conjunction of national calamity and national benevolence? May we not hope that while the offended Governor of the world is passing through the kingdoms pouring out from one hand the vials of His wrath, He is preparing in the other for their consolation the cup of salvation, and that the shaking of the nations is but preparatory to II is coming, in whom the desire of all nations shall ultimately centre. Of that spiritual and glorious event, I think we behold in this institution the forerunner, who already begins to exclaim, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, that his glory may be revealed, and all flesh see it together.' May we not also hope that Jehovah, by making Britain the almoner of His bounty, intends to make her the object of His care? Par be it from me to minister fuel for national vanity, or to prefer claims of merit upon the goodness of God; yet, arguing both from the testimony of revelation and the analogy of the Divine government, I think it may be regarded as an auspicious omen for any people, when, according to the declarations in the Apocalypse, they carry their glory and their honour within the walls of the holy city, and consecrate upon its altar the fruits of their bravery, their commerce, and their learning. If pagan Babylon, under the reign of the proud and impious Nebuchadnezzar, was rewarded with the spoil of Egypt for service unintentionally done for the cause of God, (being the instrument of His vengeance in the destruction of Tyre,) we may humbly hope that when He marks the nations for ruin, and gives to the destroying angel His commission, He will mercifully regard this and similar institutions as our national passover.

"And thou, Britannia, whose real glory we delight to uphold, go on to transmit, from thy rocky seat of majesty in the middle of the ocean, that sound to the kingdoms of the earth, 'Behold your God!' till every nation shall respond, 'Lo! this is our God; we have waited for him; we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation!' Then shall commence, led by our beloved country, the grand hallelujah chorus of all kindreds, people, and tongues; when the multitude of isles shall unite with the continents; when the Nile and the Ganges, the Niger and the Euphrates,

shall join in concert with the Thames, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Mississippi; when the Pacific, the Indian, and the Frozen Oceans shall swell the thunder of the Atlantic; and heaven, resounding the strains of earth, shall exclaim, Hallelujah! Salvation! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; King of kings, and Lord of lords; and He must reign for ever and ever."

That he was capable even then, of far better things than this, appears from the sermon he preached before the Staffordshire Association of Churches and Ministers in 1814, reprinted in the first volume of his *Collected Works*. This sermon, though not altogether free from the blemishes of the speech, has excellencies of a very high order. It contains a large amount of just and admirable thought; the illustrations, which for the most part are apt and beautiful, are kept in their proper place; there is fervour in the style, but no rant; and though occasionally the worthless rhetorical spangles which had dazzled the meeting of the Bible Society offend a cultivated taste, there is far less of artificial glitter, and the brilliancy is generally tempered and subdued. The following extract will justify these observations:—

"Let no one, however, imagine that he can do anything acceptable unto the Lord in the way of zeal, except his zeal be the offspring of true faith. Our first duty is our own salvation. We must first 'give our own selves to the Lord.' To attempt to do His work till we are reconciled to God by the blood of His cross, is but to thrust ourselves among His servants while we are yet His enemies. The exertions of an unconverted man in the cause of Christ, with whatever benefit they may be attended to others—for we deny not that in some instances God employs the instrumentality of the wicked—will to himself be profitless and vain. There is just ground of apprehension, that in an age happily characterised by an enlightened and vigorous activity, not a few will be found guilty of the ruinous inconsistency of contributing to send the gospel to others, while their own hearts are strangers to its influence, and thus resemble the workmen of Noah, who helped to build an ark for others, but perished in the flood themselves. No liberality, however diffusive, no zeal, however ardent, can be a substitute for 'repentance towards God, faith in Jesus Christ, and that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.' Should we ultimately perish for want of these great and necessary prerequisites for heaven, will it assuage the agony of the deathless worm, or allay the fury of the

quenchless fire, or render the bottomless pit more tolerable, to remember that we had been the means of plucking others from the place of torment? Oh no! even in the presence of Satan we shall blush for the hypocrisy, and curse the folly of choosing heaven for others and hell for ourselves. A personal and experimental acquaintance with the gospel must be the starting-point in the career of religious benevolence.”

It will be remembered that when Mr James came to Birmingham, there was the strongest antagonism between the Carr's Lane congregation and the seceders who had adhered to Mr Brewer and founded a new church in Livery Street. For eleven years after the secession, the mutual hostility continued, and no attempt was made to remove it. How friendly relations were at last restored, is thus explained:—

From the time of the disturbances and separation of the church upon Mr Brewer's misconduct, there had been no intercourse between the two congregations or their ministers till about the year 1814, when a deputation from the London Missionary Society, consisting of Messrs Bogue, Burder, and John Townsend—Autobiographical. I think these were the gentlemen who composed it—came to Birmingham, on their way to some other place, to see if the alienated churches could be so far harmonised as to unite in missionary operations. The two ministers and some of the influential members of each congregation met the deputation in the vestry of King Street Chapel, and there agreed, without entering into any explanation of past affairs, to form an Auxiliary Missionary Society, the rules of which were moved by Mr Brewer, and seconded by myself.

The chasm between us was thus bridged over, and it ought to have been done before, and might have been, had some such party mediated. My friends, I am bound to say, were a little too unrelenting. Mr Brewer had acted very badly; but he had professed repentance, and had made no second slip. But how difficult it is to heal an old sore, that has been long opened and neglected!

All parties were happier for the reconciliation, as is always the case. In the spring of next year a Sunday-school Union was formed in Birmingham, and *I* was appointed to preach the first

Autobio-
graphical.

sermon to the assembled body of children and teachers. The meeting was held in Livery Street Chapel, the place of Mr Brewer's ministrations. It was, of course, the first time I had ever appeared in that pulpit. Mr Brewer was now breaking down under a heavy load of domestic affliction, and this union of the two congregations, so far, was a source of consolation to him in his rapidly accumulating infirmities. Being asked on the Sabbath following how he was, "Oh," said he, "I have had neither pain nor ache since last Tuesday;" alluding to the service which had been held in his chapel when I occupied his pulpit.

The address delivered on that occasion to the Sunday-school teachers was printed; the first edition was soon sold, and a second called for. Upon reviewing it for the press, I perceived that it admitted of great amplification, and I therefore expanded it into a little volume, entitled "The Sunday-school Teacher's Guide." This work has had a very considerable circulation, being now I think in the twentieth edition.

Editorial.

Early in 1815, an attempt was made to remove Mr James from Birmingham to London. Mr Thomas Wilson, who had just built Paddington Chapel, was very anxious that he should be the first minister. His friend Dr Bennett advised him to accept the invitation. The London Missionary Society, in which he was deeply interested, and to whose affairs he would be able to give more personal attention if he removed to the metropolis, was a strong reason for yielding. Although by this time Carr's Lane was full, the chapel was still comparatively small, and London has always had strong attractions to a young and effective preacher. By what considerations he was induced to remain in Birmingham, does not appear. However wise his choice may have been, I am inclined to think it was the heart rather than the judgment which determined it; for in 1815 he could hardly have foreseen the great and prolonged success which lay before him at Carr's Lane.

CHAPTER II.

SICKNESS AND BEREAVEMENT.

THE popularity which Mr James now achieved was too sudden and too triumphant to be without its perils. His genial, generous heart, which had not been soured by adversity, was likely to be too much elated by the noisy excitement and indiscriminating admiration which his eloquence had at last awakened. I shall not anticipate in this place the analysis and review of his personal religious history, which will come later in this book; but it is important just to say, that the severe physical suffering which laid him prostrate in 1817, and the loss of his wife early in 1819, derive their chief significance from the crowded congregations which now filled his chapel, and the vehemence and delight with which he was flinging himself into the religious activities of the country. His nature was too ardent for him not to be in danger of mistaking the emotion of the orator for the spiritual affections of the Christian, and the ardour of genius for apostolic consecration and zeal. His was a temperament in which enthusiasm was easily excited, but in which enthusiasm was only slowly transformed into a profound and settled passion. Suffering was necessary to discipline and mature the higher elements of his nature, and to prevent him becoming a mere rhetorician, with an insatiable craving for popular applause. And suffering came. In what form and with what severity he himself narrates:—

Autobio-
graphical.

In the year 1817, it pleased God to visit me with a most alarming bodily illness, in the form of a low fever, which deprived me of the use of my limbs for a considerable time, and left me so enfeebled that I was nine months out of my pulpit. The affectionate sympathies of my beloved flock were called forth in a very delightful manner, and in the best manner too. Prayer-meetings were held during the time of my danger to intercede with God for my recovery, and much wrestling supplication went up to God on my behalf. In looking back upon that time of trial, I feel much cause for deep humiliation that I had not a livelier enjoyment of true religion. Generally speaking, I was at peace; but my feelings were not quite so happy as might have been expected. There was great danger, and I had no very painful anxieties about my spiritual safety, but I had not those exalted joys which many experience. I was always of a nervous temperament. It has through life been the besetting fault of my constitution. I have ever been prone to look on the dark side of events, and to prognosticate by my fears, rather than my hopes. Nor did it produce "afterwards" in such abundance as it should "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." I have learned from that time the melancholy fact, that nothing promises more in the way of spiritual improvement, and pays less, than bodily sickness. The recovery to health furnishes such a source of delight, that we are very apt to be wholly taken up with that. Existence was never such a joy to me as when I was recovering. I went to Malvern for change of air—it was a fortnight before midsummer—the weather was very fine, and amidst the beauties of that lovely spot, health in a continuous stream flowed back into my exhausted frame. Every day I could walk further than the day before; so that I had a vivid idea of *a* resurrection, though, of course, not of *the* resurrection. I was, I confess, too much taken up with the delight of animal and rational existence, and far too little with my *spiritual* life. I see the need of watchfulness and prayer, lest the religious benefit of bodily affliction be lost on recovery in the pleasures of restored health. It is now most deeply humbling to me to think how little I have been benefited by the judgments of God.

“O my heavenly Father, I am astonished that Thou hast not either inflicted upon me still heavier strokes, or ceased to smite at all” I have a thousand times feared lest I should not honour God as I ought in affliction. I am greatly affected by pain, a poor, timid, cowardly creature. I can never cease to wonder at God’s infinite forbearance towards me. I believe my life was spared in answer to prayer. The earnestness of the people in supplication was remarkable. The chief part of my usefulness, both as a preacher and an author, has been since that illness. Autobiographical.

Before finally returning to Birmingham he stayed some time at Teignmouth, whence he wrote with exuberant gratitude and joy to his friend the Rev. Joseph Fletcher of Blackburn, afterwards Dr Fletcher of Stepney. He also wrote from Blandford to the deacons of his church immediately before his return to work. These letters are inserted here as illustrating the immediate effects of his severe illness on his own heart. Editorial.

“TEIGNMOUTH, DEVON, *August 2, 1817.*

“And am I again addressing my dear friend, my very friend Fletcher, whom I love with an affection which I cannot express, and whom I expected no more to greet till I welcomed him to his eternal home, whither I lately thought myself so rapidly hastening? ‘What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, and redeemeth thy life from destruction!’

“Indeed he *has* redeemed my life from destruction, for I was at one time on the very borders of the grave. Eternity seemed just at hand, and the Judge waiting at the door. It was an awful, but not a terrible season. The gloom was thick, but not impervious. Flesh and heart appeared to be failing; but God was near, and then the broad, black shadow of death lost its power to alarm and terrify. My brother made you acquainted with the particulars of my disorder, so that I have no need to enter into detail now. Your first letter reached Birmingham at a season when the fervent strains of your friendship would have been too much for my weak frame. I should have almost dissolved beneath their ardour. It was very long before I was permitted to read the expressions of your regard. How shall I repay you for your affection! When I assure you of the strength of *my* friendship, I do not seem to have returned anything equivalent to the value received,

because my soul, with all its love, weighs light on many accounts to yours. Well, I can only give what I am, except it be the assurance, that, if my heart were a thousand times more worth acceptance than it is, it should be yours in the bonds of purest friendship.

“It was a great disappointment that you could not preach our charity sermon; but I could as little bear the thought of your being at Birmingham in my absence as you could. Do not multiply beyond absolute necessity your engagements. I am often filled with anxiety on your account, lest a life so valuable should be prematurely shortened by the intenseness of its labours. Do, my dear friend, spare yourself all you can. Learn to say, No. I am aware of the difficulty of this in your case, but it is a duty you owe your wife, your children, your church, your God. In your present situation, unless you are very careful, your strength will consume away like a candle lighted at both ends. I do not wish you to be less in earnest in what you do; oh no! Can we be too earnest in the cause of immortal souls and the eternal God? Never, never did the Christian ministry appear to me so dread a thing as now. To stand between the living and the dead is indeed no light matter. We all want more of the spirit of our office, more of that temper which dropped from the eyes of our great Master in tears of grief upon the lost souls which crowded the miserable city below Him. Let us be more spiritual, more heavenly. This is what I want; what more than ever I will seek.

“I have removed to this place nearly three weeks, and think I am somewhat better for the breezes and the baths of Teignmouth; but I am still much enfeebled. Some remains of my disorder yet hang about my frame. When I shall again become the echo of mercy’s life-giving accents, I know not. I have read the Scriptures and prayed in public, and probably, should my strength in any measure increase, may attempt to preach in a week or two. I expect, however, that it will be long before I shall be able to fill the measure of my ministerial duties.

“You know how much pleasure, a letter from you gives me, and therefore I hope it will not be long before you gratify me. This is the third I have written since my illness. The first was to a beloved brother, and the second to my church. Mrs James unites with me in affectionate regards to Mrs Fletcher; and believe me most truly yours,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE DEACONS OF THE CHUBCH ASSEMBLING IN CAKE’S LANE,
BIRMINGHAM.

“BLANDFORD, *November 6, 1817.*

“MY DEAR BRETHERN,—Although you were addressed in common

with the church in the pastoral letter I transmitted from Teignmouth,* still I think it due both to your office and the persevering fidelity with which you have discharged its duties, especially during my late affliction, to forward an epistle exclusively directed to yourselves. The alarming illness with which it pleased God to visit me, and the long relaxation from all pastoral care with which it has been followed, necessarily threw the whole weight of our church affairs upon you; and I am induced, no less by justice to your excellent conduct, than to my own grateful feelings, to take this opportunity of expressing the deep sense which I shall ever cherish of the value of your services. Could I have anticipated an absence of nearly eight months from my beloved flock, I should unquestionably have felt some degree of solicitude for their harmony and satisfaction; through the blessing of God, however, upon your diligence, prudence, and foresight, the peace of the society has never been interrupted, nor its prosperity at all impaired. This, my dear friends, in a church of such magnitude as ours, is not a little to accomplish. During the absence of the shepherd, either the sheep are apt to stray, or wolves to creep in. Neither of these evils, and principally through your vigilance, has troubled the church in Carr's Lane. Receive, then, my best and warmest thanks for a course of judicious conduct, which both the church and its pastor know how to appreciate. If I had room, I would also express at more length than I have it in my power to do at present, the approbation with which I have viewed the whole tenor of your official behaviour. I am sorry to say, from an extensive survey of our independent churches, that deacons have not unfrequently been the torment of the minister, and the bane of the congregation. A mean and unworthy lust of power, a busy and meddling disposition, which loves to intrude into things beyond the line of its appropriate sphere, have multiplied in modern times the character of the Diotrephes of antiquity. It has ever been the happy lot of the church in Carr's Lane, and of its present minister, to be blest with deacons who know how to support their office with dignity, without pride—with authority, without usurpation—with activity, without officiousness.

“One end I had in view in addressing you, is to announce, what I am confident will be no unpleasant intelligence, the time of my return. I expect, if nothing unforeseen prevent, to be at home on Wednesday evening or Thursday by dinner time. I have been in some doubt whether to preach on the first Sabbath, but, on the whole, I am inclined to think I may as well attempt it, as it will be attended with little more agitation than appearing even as a hearer in my own pew. I wish no notice to be given, nor, indeed, much to be said about the

* This letter I have not found.

matter. I must now conclude with most fervent wishes for your individual comfort, and earnest prayers for our collective prosperity as a church, and that by any means I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God, to come unto you, for I long to see you, to the end ye may be established, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.—I remain, dear brethren, your affectionate pastor,

“J. A. JAMES.”

A still heavier trouble soon followed. Mrs James, who had nearly sacrificed her life by her loving attentions to her father in his last illness, now, by her devotion to her husband, sank into an illness which terminated in her death. “I had one proof,” writes Mr James in the autobiography, “that however little I had improved my own personal affliction, God did not say, ‘Why should you be stricken any more?’ The drain upon my wife’s strength, never very robust, which that long illness of mine occasioned, enfeebled her constitution, and she fell into a consumption. During a period of four months she wasted away, and departed to be with Christ on the 27th January 1819. After what I have said of her merits when speaking of my marriage, I need not enlarge here. A more pure-minded, disinterested, gentle, and noble-minded woman rarely dwelt in our world. Oh, how much I owe to her!”

The Carr’s Lane Church Book has the following touching minute in reference to Mrs James’s death:—

“The church, and more especially the pastor, sustained a heavy and afflictive loss on January 27, 1819, in the decease of Mrs James, than whom a more estimable or a more esteemed minister’s wife has rarely been granted for a blessing to a Christian society. Earnest for piety, and alike exemplary for prudence, meek, gentle, conciliatory, she raised the highest admiration in all who knew her; and it was admiration founded on the basis of affection. Few are the names of departed saints over which more tears have been shed than on that of Frances Charlotte James; and rarely has the tribute of affection been more fully deserved or more promptly paid. ‘The remembrance of the just is blessed.’”

CHAPTER III.

MISSIONARY SERMON, MAY 12, 1819.

ON Wednesday morning, May 12, 1819, Mr James preached the annual sermon on behalf of the London Missionary Society, in Surrey Chapel. This discourse produced such an extraordinary impression, and so greatly heightened his fame as a preacher, that it claims a prominent place in this narrative of his life. From the commencement of his ministry, he had manifested the strongest interest in Foreign Missions. With Dr Bogue for his tutor and friend, with Morrison for his fellow-student, whose passion for evangelising China had an almost supernatural intensity, it was impossible for him to be indifferent to the condition of the heathen. It has been already stated, that when Mr Wilson proposed that he should remove from Birmingham to London in 1815, he felt it to be one considerable reason for accepting the invitation, that he should be able to attend regularly the meetings of the Missionary Directors, and to exert some influence on their operations. This reason had the greater weight, because he was not quite satisfied with the manner in which the affairs of the society were at that time conducted.

Early in 1816, Mr James had occasion to criticise with some severity the general proceedings of the Board. Among Dr Bogue's students in that year was a young man named John Smith, who had been a member of the Carr's Lane church, and who had been

received by the Missionary Society on Mr James's recommendation. He had only just commenced his studies when the directors determined to send him out, at once, to Demerara. In the judgment both of his former minister and of his tutor, he was altogether unprepared to go; and Dr Bogue, having protested without effect, wrote a long and most earnest letter to Mr James, invoking his interference, not only to avert mischief in this particular case, but in order to check the very erroneous and pernicious policy which, it was alleged, the directors had been pursuing for several years. In this letter it is affirmed, that "a few laymen wish to rule the society with a rod of iron;" they are "well meaning men, but they have neither the knowledge, the comprehension of mind, nor the temper necessary for the management of a missionary society. The missionary students and the missionaries they look upon as menial servants, whom they are to govern according to their sovereign pleasure,—as men who are to have no will of their own, but to yield implicit obedience to the London directors." He goes on to say, that "they were sending out men to the heathen who, although truly religious, had not even such a knowledge of the gospel of Christ as to be able to teach it with propriety. . . . These things I have endeavoured to oppose, sometimes with success, and at other times without; and as the severe system is increasing in violence, it will be with less and less effect. . . . I have also endeavoured to oppose what I conceive an unreasonable fondness for the South Sea Islands and South Africa. In the former, I suppose there are not thirty thousand inhabitants. They have eight or ten missionaries [there already], and the directors are sending out four more, only one of whom has received any theological instruction. In the whole of South Africa, including the inhabitants of every colour in the colony, and all the various tribes which Mr Campbell heard of as probably accessible in time, the population does not amount to two hundred and fifty thousand, and there are already nearly forty missionaries there of one kind or another. I have earnestly pleaded that these might suffice for the present, and that the vast, populous regions in the East might receive more of our attention;

but my remonstrances are in vain. . . . What will the intelligent part of mankind think of a great society, more than one-half of whose missionaries are employed about three hundred thousand people, when there are, perhaps, more than seven hundred millions perishing for lack of knowledge, and calling on them to come over and help them?" Dr Bogue then states at great length the principles which ought to guide the society in reference to these important matters, and earnestly requests Mr James to do his best to insist on their practical recognition. His old tutor's appeal was immediately responded to; and the second* of Mr James's letters to the society on this subject bears date February 23, 1816.

It is addressed to the secretary:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—Perhaps I ought to crave the pardon of the directors for troubling them with any further remarks upon the appointment of Mr John Smith as their missionary to Demerara; but as your letter has not removed in the least degree my objections, nor furnished me with any light upon the subject of which I was not previously possessed, so far as his qualifications are concerned, I am compelled, both by a regard to the welfare of my young friend, who has entrusted his affairs to my hands, and by a still higher regard to the success of the missionary cause, to persist in my endeavours to obtain an alteration in the appointment I am not pertinaciously contending for my own opinion as mine;—this, in opposition to the wisdom, and the will of the directors, would entitle me to their just contempt;—but I am now writing with a zealous and most sincere regard to their honour and success, which, if I err, must be my apology. You mistake in supposing that I thought Mr John Smith was to labour principally amongst the whites; what I insisted upon was, that he must be necessarily known by them, and, unless he was respected for his abilities as a teacher, was not very likely to secure their patronage. In my humble opinion, your own letter increases the evidence of his ineligibility. Whoever goes out to Demerara should go out as a repairer of the breach—a restorer of paths to dwell in. To do this, it is necessary he should not only be a man of peace, but a man of personal influence. No other is likely to be respected by the missionaries whom you have already there. No other is likely to repair the mischief which imprudence and imbecility have already occasioned in that quarter of the world. The missionary cause stands at this moment on the edge of a precipice at Demerara, and you

* The first I have not been able to find.

want a man of great wisdom as well as gentleness to take it off. Mr Smith, as it respects men and things, is entirely a novice. His timidity, the necessary result of a deficient education and a modest temper, renders him unfit to cope with — and —. Besides, sir, I rest my objection on the broad basis of the right which every student has, to claim an education for missionary work. It was under this idea Mr Smith offered himself as a missionary. It was with this implied stipulation he gave himself up to the society. Bather than have decided to go out to the heathen in the present unprepared state of his mind, he would have gone back to his former employment. I submit it to the consideration of the directors, whether it will not operate as a serious check upon young men disposed to devote themselves to the interests of the heathen, if they find that they are liable to be called away almost before their education has commenced. What pastor will recommend a young man under such circumstances? If Mr Smith is sent out to Demerara, I beg most explicitly to be understood as withdrawing my recommendation of him to the society. Instead, therefore, of writing to him in a different strain to my first letter, I am compelled, by my convictions, to follow up the advice which I therein gave, and endeavour to go on still further, by entreating him to relinquish the object altogether, rather than to go out in his present uneducated state. Are there no other missionary students at the seminary, who have enjoyed more advantages than he has, who can be sent to the station?

“The directors, sir, must pardon me if I suggest a few more remarks, occasioned by a paragraph in your letter, viewed in connexion with the existing circumstances of the society’s affairs.

“You say, ‘The directors have of late met with several instances of opposition to their wishes from some of the young men now at Gosport, whom they intended for African missions after a short course of education, sufficient in their judgment for such situations, by the young men writing to their pastors to get them to interpose on their behalf.’ From this most comprehensive paragraph I infer the following things:—

“1. That the young men are not to be consulted as to the field in which they are to spend their future lives, and discharge the duties of their arduous and important office. As a society, sir, we are loudly complained of for our conduct towards our missionaries. We are accused of exercising a system of stem tyranny over these devoted young men, and of viewing them more in the light of menial servants than as honourable co-workers in the same great cause. This is not only the charge preferred against us by enemies, but it is an opinion entertained by a large proportion of our most zealous and enlightened friends. Having spent nearly three years in the Gosport academy, I can speak

from experience; and I assure you, that, times without number, I have heard the students bewail this very circumstance. I have been informed that the sentiment has been uttered in the directors'-room without contradiction, that a missionary is to have no will of his own, no view, no preference as to the station he is to occupy, but to follow implicitly the will of the directors. All this looks very like evidence in support of the charge mentioned above, of our treating the missionaries more like servants than brethren.

"2. I infer from your remarks that it is not pleasant to the directors to be troubled with the advice and opinions of country ministers. I speak, sir, from the most pure and tender regard to the welfare of the society, when I assure you that the neglect of the country directors is a subject of very loud and increasing complaint. An opinion prevails very widely, that in affairs of consequence the views of country friends ought to be consulted. I cannot be supposed to be writing now from any considerations of a selfish nature, for I am not a director, though a warm and active friend to the cause.

"3. I cannot help inferring from your letter, especially if it be viewed in connexion with several circumstances which have lately transpired, that the directors are not quite agreed with many of their brethren in the country as to the necessity in every case of a good education for the missionaries. Many of us have seen with inexpressible regret, that some have lately been sent out, and more are intended to be, with very little or no instruction. All the country ministers with whom I have ever conversed unite in opinion that every man who goes to the heathen in the character of an ordained minister should have a good previous education, even though savages or negroes are to be the object of his labours. Our standard of education is already too low; it had not need be lowered. Our cause depends upon the qualifications of our missionaries.

"4. Many of the country friends of the society are of opinion that sufficient attention has not yet been paid to the civilisation of Africa nor to the evangelisation of Asia. With the exception of what Morrison and Milne have done for China, how little has yet been done for the populous regions of the East! In Hindostan we are doing comparatively nothing. By your letters I conclude that Aida is not yet coming forward as prominently to notice as it should.

"These, sir, are a few amongst other remarks which might be made in reply to your letter, and upon the general affairs of our society. I know not if any of my country brethren have expressed similar statements to the directors, but I know that they hold such.

"It is a pretty general opinion, that if we were to copy the conduct of the Baptist mission we should not do amiss. Like them, we should

have some important station in the East, occupied by a body of able men, whose united exertions would be the means of causing the rays of Divine truth to diverge from the spot they occupy as a centre. I again beg the indulgence of the directors for obtruding these remarks upon their attention, and once more to express my hope that another appointment may be made for Demerara.—I remain, my dear sir, yours truly,

“J. A. JAMES.

“BIRMINGHAM, *February 23, 1816.*”

This letter greatly delighted Dr Bogue, and he entreated Mr James not to abandon the good work he had taken up. “Allow me,” writes Dr Bogue, in April 1816, “again to recall your attention to the subject of our late correspondence. I wish you to continue the champion for that principle which you so ably advocated in your letter to the directors. It is one of the highest importance, and I have no doubt but your perseverance will fully establish [it], so as to deliver us from the guilt and dishonour of sending to the heathen men unqualified to discharge the duties of a good missionary of Christ.” The doctor adds, with something like a chuckle, “Your letter prodigiously galled some of the London gentlemen.” But so far as Mr Smith was concerned, both his tutor and pastor interfered in vain,—he was sent out to Demerara immediately. A few years afterwards, his sufferings and death roused the fierce and righteous indignation of the Anti-slavery party in this country; and Henry Brougham’s speech on the “martyr, John Smith,” is one of the noblest which the great orator ever delivered.

Although the policy of the London directors, in neglecting the education of their missionaries, and concentrating their strength on the scattered and degraded populations of Southern Africa, and the remote and insignificant islands of the South Pacific, while India and China were almost, forgotten, appeared to Mr James exceedingly erroneous, and although he frankly and vigorously condemned their treatment of their agents, which he thought insulting and tyrannical, he was happily not among the number of those who abandon a great enterprise because the men who happen for a time to be at its head are mistaken in their plans, or arbitrary

in their temper. He continued to be the hearty friend of the society, and while he censured, he endeavoured to remove its defects.

The directors, whatever may have been their faults, knew how to discriminate between mere carping censoriousness and the dissatisfaction of a friend whose very love prompted his complaints; and in 1819 they gave him the highest proof of their esteem and confidence, by requesting him to preach their annual sermon. Forty years ago this sermon was the most important and exciting service connected with the missionary anniversaries. There was no Exeter Hall meeting, and the "business" was transacted by three or four hundred persons, who met to "hear the Report" in one of the city chapels, where the oratory was quite subordinate to the narration of facts and the statement of accounts. It was in the Wednesday morning sermon, in Surrey Chapel, that the eloquent advocates of the society exerted their strength; and this was the great centre of attraction both to those whose missionary zeal was nothing more than a morbid hunger for religious excitement, and to those who felt deeply the grandeur of the missionary enterprise.

Mr James's reputation as a preacher attracted an immense congregation; the place was nearly full two or three hours before the service began. In the front seat of the gallery which runs round the place, were seated all the principal ministers connected with the society, both in London and the provinces,—many whose names are now forgotten, and many whose memory we still venerate,—Bogue, and Winter, and Waugh, and Haweis, and Wilkes,—men held in reverence for their age, their wisdom, their personal sanctity, their ministerial power, their arduous and successful labours in the service of Christ and His Church.

The sermon, which occupies fifty pages of the Collected Works, and lasted two hours, was not read, but delivered *memoriter*. The preacher's brother sat in the pulpit with the manuscript in his hand, prepared, if there was a moment's hesitation, to suggest the forgotten word; but, from first to last, the discourse was delivered exactly as it stood on the paper—not an epithet or a preposition was changed. At the close of the first hour, the preacher

requested permission to pause for a few minutes, and the people sung a hymn. Such was the excitement of the congregation, that during this temporary interruption of the discourse, oranges were thrown into the pulpit to refresh the exhausted orator. The hymn finished, he rose again, and recovering his strength, thundered on for another hour, and closed at last with a peroration anticipating the homage of all created things to God and Christ:—"The ten thousand times ten thousand angels round about the throne shall respond to the shouts of the redeemed on earth, 'Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing;' and still the chorus shall swell, and still the strain shall wax louder, and louder, 'till every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, shall cry, Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Amen and amen."

The congregation listened with enthusiastic admiration; and old men in the front of the gallery were heard at the close of some of the more thrilling passages to murmur their applause.

That the sermon has serious faults, few modern readers would deny. Like the Bible Society speech of 1812, the thought is sometimes crashed by a mass of glittering ornament. In eighteen lines, Satan falls "like lightning from heaven;" the apostles and their immediate successors are "ministers of light, who rose with the number, the order, and the brilliancy of the stars;" persecution, "like the wind of heaven blowing upon a conflagration," serves "to spread the flame;"—Eome is "the Imperial eagle" which, "collecting all her strength, and rousing all her fury, attacked the Lamb of God, till she too, subdued and captivated by the cross, cowered beneath its emblem as it floated from the towers of the Capitol;"—and Christianity, "with the purple waving from her shoulders, and the diadem sparkling upon her brow," is "proclaimed to be the Truth of God and the empress of the world, on that throne of the Cæsars before which she had been so often arraigned as a criminal, and condemned as an impostor." A few pages further on,

in order to introduce a rapid review of the religious condition of the world, we are required, "for the sake of illustration," to suppose that we occupied the station of the angel represented in the Apocalypse as standing in the sun, and that, with eyes piercing as the beams of day, "we were looking down on the revolutions of this low, diurnal sphere." These are only illustrations of the profuse excess of metaphor by which the sermon is enfeebled. John Elias, the great Welsh preacher,—no foe to the wise and moderate employment of the imagination in the pulpit,—heard the sermon, and is said to have exclaimed when it was over, "I believe the cross was there, but it was so heaped up with flowers I could not see it." And another critical hearer delivered his judgment in a form even more terse and epigrammatic—"I don't care to dine at a pastry-cook's."

The faults which forty years ago were recognised by comparatively few, are likely now to make most readers overlook the real worth of the sermon. If the diamond turns out to be paste, it is natural to infer that the gold is a lacquered fraud. But in this case good solid metal is discredited by the shining tinsel. As this discourse presents all the excellencies and all the defects of Mr James's early style of preaching, I shall make no apology for entering very fully into a discussion of its merits.

The first two or three sentences of the Introduction are wanting in ease, but are immediately followed by a passage admirably calculated to rivet attention, since it repels by a vigorous practical argument what was a very common objection to attempts to convert the heathen. It was alleged that without miracles these attempts must be altogether ineffectual; he replies—

"This objection, however, is best answered by an appeal to facts. However difficult it may be to ascertain with precision the exact time when the testimony of miracles ceased, nothing is more certain than that these witnesses had finished their evidence long before the conversion of the northern and western parts of Europe; and the demand of supernatural interposition as necessary to the propagation of Christianity is urged with an ill grace by a Protestant, when it is remembered that there is not a single Protestant country which did not receive the gospel unaccompanied with signs and wonders; and with still greater

inconsistency is it made by an Englishman, when it is considered that this happy country, the glory of Christendom, the joy of the whole earth, and the evangelist of the world, was recovered from the thralldom of Saxon idolatry without one miraculous operation."

By a felicitous transition the subject is introduced:—

"What, then, are the means with which we set out on this high and holy enterprise of converting the world? I answer, The doctrine of the cross: for saith Christ, 'If I be lifted up,' or, 'when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.'"

The next paragraph indicates the line of thought the preacher proposed to follow, and closes by a reference, introduced without abruptness or violence, to his recent and "irreparable loss." He knew, and determined to possess, the power which a preacher derives from being master of the sympathies of his congregation.

"In these words, our Lord announces the nature of His approaching death; He was about to be lifted up, or crucified: He predicts the consequences with which His crucifixion would be followed; all men would be gathered to Him: He specifies the means, and the manner of their conversion; they would be drawn or attracted by an exhibition of His death. In other words, the text presents us with the great object of missionary zeal, the grand instrument of missionary exertion, and the final consummation of missionary success. It will be instantly perceived that I have not sought after novelty of subject, and it will soon be discovered that I have not attained ingenuity or profundity of discussion. The state of my mind and feelings since I received the application of the directors, would alone have precluded these. Their request for my services on this occasion found me at the tomb of all that was dearest to me on earth,—a situation not very favourable for penetrating into the depth of any other subject than my own irreparable loss. One thing which induced me to comply with their solicitation, was a hope that my mind would be drawn away in some degree from the heart-withering recollection of departed bliss: nor has that hope been altogether disappointed; for the subject of my sermon has often presented such visions of spiritual glory, as have made the tear forget to fall, and hushed the sorrows of a bursting heart, and taught the preacher, that while the missionary cause goes as the messenger of mercy to pagan realms abroad, it is one of the best comforters in the house of mourning at home."

But he was too wise to permit the Introduction to consume

much time; it occupies scarcely two pages out of the fifty. He has awakened attention; stated his subject and the manner in which he intends to treat it; above all, he has disarmed unfriendly criticism, and secured a kindly hearing; and he is now ready for the great work of the morning.

According to the outline of the discourse he has just sketched, he has first to present "*The great object of missionary zeal,*" which, he says, is "to bring men to Christ." Nothing can be simpler or more obvious than this thought, which is the real starting-point of the sermon; both in conception and expression, it is absolutely free from all pretension to what is startling or original. He knew, what some preachers seem never to have discovered, that a very striking statement of a division, though sometimes useful to stimulate and excite careless listeners, is apt to make the subsequent filling up and development appear commonplace. The quaint, the grotesque, the fanciful, Mr James habitually shunned in the heads of his sermons; partly, no doubt, because he felt it was dangerous to awaken expectations it might be difficult to fulfil, and partly for other reasons of a more serious nature. Nor is this quiet description of the object of missionary zeal followed by a sudden effort to rouse the imagination or fire the passions. He goes on to say—

"There are at the present moment more than six hundred millions of the human race in the appalling situation of the men whom the apostle describes as 'without Christ in the world;' and the question is, with what feelings and what purposes a Christian should survey this vast and wretched portion of the family of man. To ascertain this, you have only to contemplate the scene which at your last anniversary was brought before you with such force of reason, pathos, and eloquence. Behold St Paul at Athens."

Then follows a passage of brilliant declamation on the scenery, the historical associations, the genius and the intellectual culture by which the apostle was surrounded. "The glorious prospect of mountains, islands, sea and sky," and the plain of Marathon, "where the conquests of the old Greek heroes had saved, not their country only, but the mental liberty and energy of man"—"the

Acropolis, crowned with the pride of Grecian architecture”—“those peerless temples, the very fragments of which are viewed by modern travellers with an idolatry almost equal to that which reared them,” are gathered into a magnificent picture, only to heighten and strengthen the representations of that profound passion of the apostle for the Divine glory, and that zeal for the salvation of men, which made him insensible to all this beauty and grandeur, his spirit being “stirred in him,” because “he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”

“What must have been his indignant grief at the dishonour done by idolatry to God—what his amazement at the weakness and folly of the human mind—what his abhorrence of human impiety—and what his compassion for human wretchedness, when such stately monuments had not the smallest possible effect in turning away his view from the guilt which raised them, and the misery endured amidst them!

“Here, then,” he exclaims, “is the object of our zeal, to bring to Christ those who are afar off.”

The paragraph which follows, and in which he weaves into one long sentence some seven or eight of the Old Testament prophecies of Messiah’s glory, is far too artificial. It could add nothing to the clearness of his meaning, nothing to the impressiveness of his appeal, to say that in sending the gospel to heathen nations the Church was endeavouring

“to scatter the fruits of Isaiah’s rod, and diffuse the fragrance of Jeremiah’s branch, over all the famishing and fainting children of the fall; to open new channels through which the cleansing streams of Zechariah’s fountain and the vivifying waters of Ezekiel’s river may flow; to prepare for the coming of Haggai’s desire of all nations, and to bring forth the people sitting in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death, to feel the enlivening beams of the moral sun, the dawn of which Malachi foresaw, and to catch the healing virtues which he shakes from the golden plumage of his wings.”

This passage bears no trace of being inspired by a sudden and irresistible rapture at discovering in the modern missionary enterprise the issue, fulfilment, and consummation of what had been revealed to prophets and psalmists in the ancient days. It is a manufacture, not a creation—it is ingenuity, not eloquence.

Having stated his object, the preacher resolves to magnify and exalt it before he passes on. And he does this by shewing “that such an object associates our cause, first, with the design of the Son of God in redemption;” secondly, “with the ultimate end of all providential arrangements;” thirdly, “with the best interests of the human race:” and he illustrates and insists upon every one of these points with vehement energy. The following passage forms the first of these subdivisions:—

“The object of the Redeemer’s visit to our world was not to teach men the arts and the sciences—not to instruct them in letters—not to introduce the reign of philosophy—not to break the yoke of civil tyranny, nor to promulgate the best theory of human government; valuable as are these objects to the present interests of mankind, they are infinitely too low to be the end of the incarnation and death of the Son of God. For such purposes He would not have deigned to approach the horizon of our globe. No, my brethren, the one object of the humiliation of the Son of God was the salvation of the human soul. And what must be the value of the salvation which was worthy of that humiliation? When Jesus Christ rose from the throne of His glory, it was to avert the curse which threatened to sink a guilty world to perdition, to roll back the torrent of damnation, and pour through its deserted channels the streams of salvation; to rescue innumerable millions of immortal spirits from the consequences of the fall, and lift them by the power of His grace from the borders of the flaming pit to the heavens of the great God. This was the favourite object on which His mind reposed from eternity—which He seemed in haste to disclose, as soon as the apostasy of man presented an opportunity—which He loved to announce to the world by the messages of the prophets, and to exhibit in shadow by the sacrifices of the priests for four thousand years before its accomplishment. In seeking to save the souls of the heathen by bringing them to Christ, we raise ourselves into the dignity of a partnership with the Son of God in these His mighty designs; we enter into the fellowship of that cross which is destined to occupy eternity with the development of its wonders, and to fill the universe with the brightness of its glory.”

The second principal division of the sermon is devoted to “*the grand instrument of missionary exertions,*”—the doctrine of the cross: “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me”

“It was evidently our Lord’s intention to represent the conversion of the nations, not merely as a circumstance that would follow His death in the mere order of time, but as a consequence connected with it in the order of cause and effect.”

It could scarcely have been without consideration and design that the solid matter both of the first and second divisions was introduced by an attempt to stir the heart and excite the imagination. The description of the glories of Athens, and of the apostle who “bemoaned a city of philosophers, with more intense and piercing grief than any of us ever did a horde of idolatrous savages,” precedes the three subordinate divisions under the first head; and before stating, under the second head, what is essentially included in the doctrine of the cross, illustrating the various powers of attraction which the doctrine of the cross exerts, and reviewing its past successes, he recalls “the splendid fable told of Constantine’s conversion,” and exhorts “the hosts of our British Israel marshalled around this pulpit, and confederated in the mighty enterprise of wresting the empire of the world from the prince of darkness,” to “behold the cross suspended in the firmament of revelation, radiant with its own brightness, and inscribed with the auspicious motto, ‘By this, conquer.’” And he contrasts Christian missions with the bloody Crusades of the middle ages, which, “in the midnight of superstition, disturbed the slumber of the globe, and, like a volcano, precipitated all Europe in a state of fusion upon the valleys of Judea.”

He includes in the doctrine of the cross, “the manner of Christ’s death “the design of Christ’s death, as an atonement for sin “the divinity of Christ’s person, as constituting the value of His satisfaction;” “the gratuitous manner in which its blessings are bestowed;” and “its moral tendency and design, as respects the heart and conduct of those by whom it is received giving to each of these particulars a separate paragraph; and finally concentrating all that he had said in the following passage:—

“It is not one of these, but all of them combined, which form the doctrine of the cross. Take either of them away, and the arch is destroyed,—all the rest sink together to the dust, a mass of splendid ruins,

a heap of crumbling fragments. Without the atonement, the fact of the crucifixion appears to me a dark, unintelligible, inexplicable spot upon the page of revelation, connecting nothing, supporting nothing, explaining nothing: the atonement, without the deity of Christ, wants both the impress and the value to secure for it confidence; and acceptance of the atonement and the deity of Christ, without the justification of the soul by faith, leaves the system without any link which can connect it with the experience of the sinner; while all together would be of no avail in his salvation, unless they secured his sanctification."

He then passes to the second part of the same division, and illustrates the various powers of attraction which the doctrine of the cross exerts. His first point is, that the "stupendous fact arrests, and fixes the attention."

"The human mind, especially in its ruder states, where there is such a preponderance of imagination over reason, is much more easily and powerfully wrought upon by a narration of facts than a statement of principles; and the whole fabric of Christianity, both as to doctrines and duties, is founded upon a fact, and that fact drawn out into details more touching and tender than can be found in any history or in any romance. The life and the death of the 'Man of sorrows,' to all the sobriety and power of truth, unite the fascination of fiction. The veiled splendour of His deity, occasionally bursting through its thin disguise, and irradiating the gloom of His poverty—the extremity of His sufferings, and the heart-affecting meekness with which He bore them—the perfection of His virtues, together with the unrelenting cruelty of His enemies—the mysterious combination of glory and meanness in His person and life—the garden of Gethsemane—the scenes of Pilate's hall and the Mount of Calvary;—give a magic power to the story of the cross. But when we thus know that this was the incarnation and crucifixion of the Son of God for a world of sinners, we arrive at the acme of all that is marvellous and interesting and sublime. History in its most extraordinary narrations, and imagination in its loftiest flights, are both left infinitely behind."

Secondly, The doctrine of the cross, "as an exhibition of unparalleled love, melts and captivates the heart." Thirdly, "As a system of mediation, it allays the fears of a guilty conscience." Fourthly,

"By admitting an individual appropriation of its benefits, it appeals to all the feelings of self-regard and personal interest. It is the glory

of the gospel, that while it makes an ample provision for the world, and invites the whole family of man to the feast, it lays all its blessings at the feet of every individual to whom it comes, and tells him that they are all for him, if he will accept them. It does not appraise the value of the human race by a method of calculation founded only on the mass of mankind, but represents every individual as an object of infinite importance, and of distinct and separate consideration in the view of Infinite Mercy.

“Think of the effect of this upon the mind of an obscure pagan, who, amidst the millions around him and above him, has no idea of his own individual importance; who, by a long series of cruel oppressions, has begun to lose all self-respect; who, under the debasing influence of tyranny, has reconciled himself to the thought of having no separate destiny or accountability, and of being a mere appendage to the establishment of some lordly master;—I say, conceive the effect of the gospel upon this man’s mind, when led forth by a missionary to Mount Calvary, and told that if he believe the truth, the Son of God died upon the cross for him, for no child of Adam rather than for him, as much for him as if he stood alone in need of a Saviour, and that all the blessings of salvation shall centre and settle in him. Do you think there is no attraction here?”

Fifthly, “By the suitableness and certainty of its blessings, it awakens hope, and establishes faith.”

He then considers “the effects which the doctrine of the cross has already produced,” and rapidly, yet without hurry or confusion, tells the history of its triumphs in the apostolic age, first in Jerusalem, the very scene of the crucifixion, then in some of the great centres of paganism. A few vivid details are given to illustrate the depravity in which the apostles found their Gentile converts—Antioch and Corinth being taken as “instances selected from a general course of exertion and success.” And then the preacher shews that it was by “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,” that these degraded people were delivered from the dark superstitions and darker vices of heathenism. The great religious revival at the time of the Reformation, and the success of modern missions, are traced to the same Divine and irresistible power.

The third principal division *anticipates the final consummation of missionary success*. After somewhat limiting, with characteristic caution, the comprehensive declaration, that “all men shall

be brought to Christ," he invites his hearers to "contemplate for a few moments the state of the earth, together with the means which are employed for its improvement," affirming that there is very much in the present "exertions of the Christian world" to confirm and strengthen the highest anticipations. Then follows that view of the religious condition of mankind which it is supposed a person might have who "occupied the station of the angel represented in the Apocalypse as standing in the sun." There is, however, scarcely any attempt to exhibit what had been principally promised, "the glories of the final consummation of missionary success." It is plain that the preacher gave scarcely any pains to this part of the discourse. Perhaps he was sensible that after the rich and brilliant colouring of the first two divisions, the attempt to place vividly before the congregation the vision of the world filled with the holiness and joy of heaven would produce weariness rather than delight.

Let me pause here for a moment, to call attention to the fulness and strength of the tide of thought by which the congregation has been swept along. By shewing the identity between the object of the missionary enterprise, on the one hand, and the great design of Christ as the Saviour of men, the ultimate end of all the complex movements of the Divine Providence, and the highest interest of the human race, on the other,—the preacher has ennobled his theme, and given it an air of impressive grandeur. By presenting a brief yet comprehensive summary of the most important truths of the Christian faith, and affirming that these constitute the instrument of missionary success, he has pressed into his service the fervent attachment of his audience to the evangelical confession,—an attachment which would have been unshaken by imprisonment and by the prospect of death. By illustrating the various powers of attraction which these truths possess, he has built up a moral argument on their behalf, in which all who heard him would greatly exult, and at the same time recalled the most sacred and solemn passages of their own spiritual history; for the heart of every Christian there, had been won from sin and wretchedness to God by the very charm and constraining power that he described.

And although both the argument and declamation under the third division, on "the final consummation of missionary success," are deficient in vigour, they probably derived from the ardent manner of the preacher and the enthusiasm of his audience a power not properly their own.

Among those passages which I have quoted, there are several in which the thought is not only just and sound,—the two most important characteristics of all thought,—but also striking and impressive. The purpose, however, for which I have given this analysis is chiefly to shew how much of truth was naturally and without any show of effort introduced into the discussion and development of the preacher's principal idea; and it is the truth which a sermon contains which gives it power. Is there not some reason to fear that this has been too much forgotten? There is often in modern sermons a great deal of thought about the truth, sometimes very fresh and beautiful, and sometimes very ludicrous in its pretensions to freshness and beauty; but there is too little of the actual statement of the truth itself. It may be doubted whether some of those who most firmly and affectionately adhere to the doctrines commonly described as evangelical, have obtained a sufficient mastery of theological science to be able to wield the doctrines they believe with much effect. The decline of the study of systematic theology has greatly enfeebled the English pulpit.

It should be remembered that it requires far higher intellectual power, and more strenuous intellectual effort, to present Sunday after Sunday the very truth of God clearly and impressively, without wearisome iteration of the same forms of thought, the same illustrations, and the same language, than to interest a congregation with our own thoughts and reflections on spiritual topics. But, I repeat, it is the truth itself, and not our striking thoughts about it, in which spiritual power lies.

What would a minister try to say to the troubled heart of his dying child who was longing for rest in God, and seemed to long in vain; or to his aged parent, on whom the sorrows of sixty or seventy years had been wasted? He would try to reproduce as vividly as he could the very substance of what God had taught him on those

awful questions that startle and oppress us when our thoughts “wander through eternity.” And, if I mistake not, he would soon discover that to do this again and again, without indolent and repelling repetition, would tax his powers far more severely than those discourses of his which were most rich in “striking” and “original” ideas.

To return to the sermon. In the successive appeals with which it closes to the directors, the missionaries, the ministers, and the general congregation, the preacher exerts all his strength. He does not forget that Dr Bogue is in the gallery, and that now is the time for reasserting the necessity of giving to the missionaries “every opportunity of acquiring those qualifications which are pre-eminently important in their situation.”

“I speak,” he says, “the sentiments of all my brethren in the ministry with whom I have conversed on the subject, when I respectfully but urgently advise a lengthened term of education for such of our missionaries as are destined to the East. It is our opinion that four years are quite little enough for the literary and theological education of men who are to preach the doctrines of the gospel in a strange language, and to present them pure as they were revealed from heaven, in a faithful translation of the sacred volume. In this country, valuable as are literary attainments,—and highly valuable they are everywhere,—a minister may discharge the duties of his office with considerable success, although he be ignorant of every language but his own; and even should he unhappily swerve from the truth, there are many on every hand to pluck up the weeds of error as fast as they arise in the garden of the Lord. But what is a missionary to do without a literary education, who cannot hold a conversation with a pagan till he has acquired a foreign tongue—who cannot distribute a tract till he is able to translate it into a language, the genius and structure of which are totally dissimilar to any with which he is acquainted? The work of translating the Scriptures is of immense importance, and of no small difficulty, and should not be entrusted to unskilful hands. One imperfect version of the Bible may pollute the crystal stream of revelation for ages, and one error in theology planted amongst the heathen may luxuriate amidst almost boundless space. First versions and first systems of doctrine delivered to the converts from idolatry should be as perfect as possible, since these are the models of others which succeed, and in addition to the circumstance of propagating their own imperfections, if any such attach to them, they soon acquire the veneration which is paid to antiquity, and cover their errors with the defence

of this sacred shield. I can assure the directors that any increase of expense incurred by renewed attention to civilisation in barbarous countries, and by an extended literary education being given to their missionaries going to the East, will be most cheerfully defrayed by increased liberality on the part of their constituents."

The appeal to the congregation, responded to on the spot by the largest collection ever made after the Surrey Chapel sermon, is marked by great impetuosity and vehemence:—

"If anything can be needed to excite your benevolence, I bring forward this morning five petitions, each soliciting your assistance, and each sufficient of itself to merit the greatest liberality.

"The first is uttered in the groans of six hundred millions of human beings, who, as they pass before you on their way to eternity, repeat that imploring language, 'Come over and help us.' The second is from several hundred missionaries, who, looking around upon the immeasurable scene of their labours, urge the admonition of their Master, 'The harvest is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send more labourers into his harvest.' The third is from the directors, 'stating that their expenditure this year has exceeded their receipts above five thousand pounds, and entreating that they may not be forced to slacken their exertions for want of funds to support them, which must inevitably be the case unless they are encouraged to go forward by increased liberality on the part of their constituents.' The fourth is from heaven, borne to us by the spirits of departed missionaries, who hover over our assembly this morning, 'beseeching us to carry on with renewed vigour that cause in which they sacrificed their lives, and the magnitude and importance of which, amidst all their zeal for its interests, they never perfectly knew till they were surrounded with the scenes of the eternal world.' The fifth is—will you believe it?—from hell. Yes, directed to your hearts in the shriek of despair, comes the solicitation of many a lost soul in prison, 'Oh, send a missionary to my father's house, where I have yet five brethren, that he may testify to them, that they come not to this place of torment!' You cannot reply to this, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear theiiiii.' What hearts you must possess if you can be deaf to such pleas, and can turn away such petitions unrelieved! Have you arrived at the very limit of your ability, and is every private resource exhausted? Then let us go to the treasury of the sanctuary, let us melt down the church plate, and convert even that into a means of sending the gospel to the heathen, assured that if we have nothing else to give, it will be more acceptable to our divine Lord to see it so employed, than to behold it glittering upon His

sacramental board. But do not plead such a necessity till you have surrendered the luxuries of your own houses, till the gorgeous display upon your own tables is given up. The mere title of extravagance would support all the missionary and Bible societies in existence magnified to ten times their present extent. A showy and lavish profusion in our habits is not only injurious to our own spiritual interests, but also to the interests of others. It is a felony upon the fund of mercy. Frugality is the best financier of philanthropy, and one of the most important auxiliaries of the missionary cause."

The impression produced by the sermon on most of those who heard it, and on thousands in every part of the country by whom it was eagerly read on its publication, it is scarcely possible to describe without appearing to be guilty of the wildest exaggeration. During the forty years which have passed since it was delivered, the popular type of excellence has been so completely altered, that those passages which once excited the greatest admiration are now regarded as its greatest blemishes. Excitement, no matter how tumultuous, was the universal craving, and the stimulants by which it was produced were of the most violent description. Every one who has read Sheridan's speeches knows that, only a few years before, the House of Commons itself was willing to be intoxicated by what seems to us the muddiest and most fiery rhetorical wine;—how soon the taste will change again we cannot predict;—but the slightest acquaintance with the history of literature should teach us, that while the really great and original thinkers of every age, men who have extended the boundaries of human thought, or have been able by speech or song profoundly to affect the hearts of men, are sure of immortality, the mere literary costume of to-day, which is the solitary claim of many writers and many preachers to an imaginary superiority over their predecessors, will seem as antiquated forty years hence as the shoebuckles and wigs of our grandfathers are now, and can confer no lasting fame.

Let this missionary sermon be judged by those elements of power which it contains over the permanent principles and passions of human nature, not by the conformity of its style with that of the preaching or the literature which happens just now to be most popular, and the secret of its success will be discovered.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW CHAPEL.

IT was Mr James's invincible conviction that the present Carr's Lane Chapel is the perfection of chapel architecture. Those who are familiar with the place will remember that behind the pulpit there is a row of columns, on which it would not be safe to invite Mr Ruskin's criticism. These columns were Mr James's delight; and he seldom passed out of the front entrance, after the Sunday-evening service, without turning round, just as he reached the door, to look at them with fond admiration, often exclaiming with characteristic vigour, "Well, there's no place in the denomination like it!" Although it has neither graceful spire, nor majestic arches, nor windows glowing with sacred legends, its real merits are considerable. It holds seventeen hundred and fifty or eighteen hundred persons, every one of whom may see the minister, and a voice of very moderate power may be heard in every comer. The exterior is heavy and sombre, but the interior filled with a crowded congregation is impressive and even grand.

Mr James gives the following account of its erection:—

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After much private conversation and deliberation among the deacons and trustees, and much cordial feeling in reference to the project, it was resolved to call the congregation together and ascertain their determination on the subject. Some few friends

had promised to give specified sums of considerable amount. I Autobiographical. took the lead. I was possessed of a tolerably good income, though not above half what I was supposed to have, for the whole, arising both from my wife's property and my own salary at that time, did not exceed £600 a-year. I have ever considered it a very solemn obligation upon ministers of any wealth, to be patterns to their people in liberality as well as everything else. I am at the present time grieved and astonished at the want of this grace in many of our ministers who abound in wealth; some of them with none or few children, yet doling out their gifts with a grudging and niggardly hand, as if the official function of *preaching* on liberality dispensed them from the personal performance of the duty. My people have been generous almost to profusion; and I account for this, though it may savour of boasting to affirm it, on the great principle on which I have acted. My admonition has ever been, "Only follow, *I* am willing to lead and they have nobly acted upon this direction. On Christmas day, [1818,] we met in the schoolroom to consider and determine upon the project of building a new place. We had previously resolved, that unless a sum of £3500 was promised at that meeting, the scheme must be abandoned. To our great joy, more than £4000 were entered upon the lists. It was a good Christmas day's work, though my domestic affairs were then very gloomy, as my dear wife was drawing near her end. There is a great deal in the circumstances of time and place, as well as principle, that has to do with the exercise of liberality. You must, if you wish to succeed, in some measure consult these, and seize the opportunity when the benevolent and kindly feelings are likely to have full and fair play. On Christmas day people are usually in good temper, families are about to enjoy a season of affectionate intercourse, and it is therefore a very good time to appeal to them for money, and to draw forth their benevolent sympathies. Since that Christmas meeting to determine on the erection of the chapel was so successful, we have considered Christmas day sacred to the cause of Christian charity.

The chapel was opened in August 1820, and it was immediately

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evident we had not too soon erected it, nor had built too large a place, for though it seated eighteen hundred persons, it was soon filled.

Not long after it was opened, an incident occurred which might have been attended with very appalling circumstances, and which placed me for several hours in a very painful situation. At the annual meeting of the Missionary Society, the abandoned idols which had lately been imported from the islands of the South Seas were exhibited on the platform in front of the pulpit. As the clock gallery was the most favourable place to gain a view of them, this was crowded to excess. After the business had proceeded for about an hour and a half, I received a pencil note to this effect:—"By all means, stop the clapping of hands and stamping of feet. The gallery shakes under us. I have already heard two distinct cracks." This was signed by a young architect. Upon the receipt of this note, I was thrown into a most dreadful dilemma. If I gave the alarm, the mischief by the sudden rising and rush of the people would in all probability be done; and if I said nothing and the gallery should fall, I should be blamed for knowing the state of the case and not giving notice of it. We did stop the clapping, and the business went on. For two hours was I kept in this agony of suspense and dread. Happily, the meeting ended without any accident. Upon examination, it was found that we had been preserved from an appalling catastrophe by an interposition of Providence, little less than miraculous; for the two middle beams that support the gallery were found cracked quite through. And we had the mortification to see the gallery of our new place of worship shored up by a row of props; the mortification, however, was lost in the joy and gratitude we felt for our deliverance—for had the gallery fallen, scores, if not hundreds, must certainly have been killed.

After the opening of the new place, things went on for many years in an even kind of prosperity. The chapel was Med, the church increased, and the sun of prosperity shone upon us with cloudless splendour.

CHAPTER V.

SECOND MARRIAGE

THREE years after the death of his first wife, Mr James married again. In his narrative of his second marriage, after a few introductory observations, he says,— Autobiographical.

By God's good providence I was directed to one in every way worthy to be the successor of my first wife, and this is saying much. The widow of Mr Benjamin Neale, of St Paul's Churchyard, had been sought by many, but she was reserved for me. Her first husband was a man of distinguished worth; intelligent, yet modest and rather reserved; public spirited, yet meek and gentle. He was just emerging into public notice, and was likely to prove one of those to whom the present and future ages, and all the nations of the earth, will be indebted for those invaluable institutions which are doing so much for the conversion of the world to God. By one of the mysteries of Divine Providence, he was cut off by consumption at the age of thirty. His widow was left without family, and in the possession of property to the amount of about £20,000. This was placed at her own disposal, with an understanding that so much of it as was mentioned by him, amounting to £5000 or £6000, should at her death be devoted to religious institutions. Half of this sum she immediately paid over to various societies, reserving the other half to come after her decease. Instead of continuing housekeeping, Mrs Neale, at the death of her husband's mother, with whom she for a while resided, went into lodgings, that she might have a

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larger sum to dispense in works of general and religious chanty. As a short memoir of this eminent Christian is in print, together with a funeral sermon preached by Dr Bedford of Worcester, and entitled "Faith Triumphant," I shall not enlarge here upon her early history nor her closing scenes. We were married by Rowland Hill, her particular friend, at Christ Church, Blackfriars, in London, February 19, 1822. She proved in every respect a helpmeet. Possessed of a masculine understanding, great public spirit, equal liberality, and eminently prudent, she was well fitted for the station into which Providence had now brought her. She had her failings; but they were very light and small compared with her many and eminent virtues.

I account both my marriages among the signal mercies of my life. Under God's blessing, I owe not only much of the happiness of my life to them, but no small share of my usefulness. The counsel of my wives guided me, their prudence controlled me, and their sympathies comforted me. It has long been my opinion that the comparative failure of many of our ministers in their public career is owing to unsuitable marriages. They are in haste to be married, and frequently make most unwise selections. Unhappily some of them had formed juvenile engagements before they entered upon their studies, which they could not very honourably dissolve, though very much below them; while others have most incautiously allowed themselves to be entangled while at college. It is but rarely that a student makes a wise choice. The result is, a frivolous, weak, moneyless, thriftless woman becomes his wife—a young family comes on—difficulties increase—a small stipend, hardly sufficient to obtain necessities, is all they have to depend upon—the spirit of the husband and the pastor is broken, and he wears out life in moving from church to church, without being useful anywhere. He has had little leisure, and less disposition, surrounded as he has been with pecuniary embarrassments and domestic perplexities, to improve his mind and add to his stock of knowledge. What is the preventive of all this? Celibacy? By no means; but great care, deliberation, caution, and patience in the selection of a wife, united with much and earnest prayer to be guided aright.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTROVERSY.

SOON after my second marriage, I believe in the year 1822, I published my volume entitled "Christian Fellowship; or, the Church Member's Guide." This work immediately took with our churches, and edition after edition, in rather rapid succession, was called for, till it has reached by this time a tenth. It is like all the rest of my books, practical—not entering much into the controversy on church-government, but laying down rules for the conduct of church members. This work, some years afterwards, involved me in a controversy. It was reviewed in a periodical, since defunct, sustained while it lasted by the evangelical clergy, entitled "The British Review." I had made very liberal concessions of some practical evils incidental to the working of the Congregational system of church-polity. I now see that I was incautious in much that I said, forgetting how many were ever upon the watch to catch up anything unfavourable to Dissent, especially the admission by its friends of anything faulty in the application of its principles. All my concessions were carefully selected, though many of them were infirmities common to humanity, and by no means peculiar to Dissenters, and classified under different heads, and then held up to public notice with this comment, "See what Dissent is, by the admission of one of its ministers!" At the time I took no notice of the critique; but it was at length printed as a Autobiographical.

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tract, entitled "The Church of England and Dissent," and circulated by thousands through the length and breadth of the land. I found that it was incumbent upon me to reply to it, and in the year 1830 I published a pamphlet entitled "Dissent and the Church of England." This pamphlet went through three editions in a very short time, and gained me some credit both for its argument and its spirit. The author of the critique had his own weapons turned upon himself, for just about that time a considerable number of books on Church-reform had made their appearance, containing the most appalling admissions of evils in the Church of England. Of these I made good use. No reply was made by the author of the critique to my pamphlet.

Editorial.

If those who fear and shun ecclesiastical controversy need any additional reasons to justify the publication of this pamphlet, they may find them in the following extracts from the preface:—

"Last year a reprint of this critique [in the *British Review*] appeared, designed, as the title-page informs us, for gratuitous distribution; and which I find has been industriously pushed into circulation in various directions, and especially in this town and neighbourhood. Still I was unwilling to continue a discussion which might in any degree endanger that good feeling and friendly intercourse which are happily increasing between Churchmen and Dissenters in this town. Moreover, as certain works of a very extraordinary character have lately been published by clerical members of the Establishment, I felt myself relieved from the necessity of a reply to my anonymous opponent, who, in much that he has advanced, is answered by the works of the Rev. Messrs Acaster, Nihill, Cox, and Riland. At length, however, this Protean critique has assumed a *third* shape, and is now in the arena, corrected and enlarged, in the form of a two-shilling pamphlet. Here, then, my silence must be broken. Quiescence would now be construed into defeat or cowardice.

"It is the infelicity of Dissenters, if such it may be called, that they cannot state or defend their own principles without impugning those of the Church of England. The terms 'Dissent' and 'Nonconformity,' by which, as separatists from the National Establishment, we are designated, do not express our theological opinions and our relation to the New Testament, but our views of church-government and our position in reference to the diocesan episcopacy set up by law. Hence the very

explanation of our identifying names, much more the defence of our principles, necessarily places us in opposition to the Establishment as such, invests the most candid of our statements with the semblance of controversy, and imparts to the mildest defence the appearance of aggression. It is impossible not to observe, on the part of many Churchmen, a kind of morbid sensitiveness on this subject. In their ardent, tender, and sincere zeal for their church-polity, they lose all forbearance for those who dissent from it, and become irritable, petulant, and intolerable towards them, if they have the insolence, almost the irreligion, to justify their conduct. The privilege of defence, much more of attack, must be all on one side. Is this quite fair?"

There is no reason to believe that Mr James ever regretted this fearless and somewhat vehement defence of Nonconformity; his autobiographical reference to it seems rather to indicate that to the last he remembered his prowess with pride and satisfaction, and saw nothing to condemn in the spirit with which he had written.

The pamphlet was not thrown off before the ardour and impetuosity of youth had had time to cool, for he was forty-five when he wrote it, and had been twenty-five years a minister; nor was he insensible at that time to the claims of Christian Charity, for his volume on that very subject was written ten years before.

It is true that during the last twenty years of his life he seldom spoke in public, except in his own pulpit, in explanation or defence of Dissent, or of his own principles of church-polity, and that during that period he stood very distinctly aloof from organised hostility to the Established Church. It must not be inferred, however, that his convictions of the magnitude of the evils inseparable from the alliance of the ecclesiastical and civil powers, of the irreconcilable antagonism between some of the services of the Church of England and the Holy Scriptures, of the entire absence of primitive precedent, to say nothing of Divine sanction for the Episcopal form of church-government, were at all enfeebled. He doubted the wisdom of the leaders of the Anti-State-Church movement, but he did not differ from them in reference to their object; he wished for the separation of Church and State, as heartily as any of them. Nor did he ever imagine that it was either possible or desirable to silence the controversy, though he did believe it

both possible and desirable for Christians to contend for truth without forgetting that charity which is the bond of perfectness.

In 1849 he thus wrote:—

“The question between the advocates and opponents of religious establishments is not among the mere *nugæ* of controversy; on the contrary, it is a serious and momentous subject. One party views establishments as the will of God, and essential in the present state of things to the maintenance of national religion; the other considers them as opposed to the New Testament, and essentially corruptive of the nature and obstructive of the progress of true religion. There cannot, therefore, with these opposing sentiments, be any cessation of the conflict between the two parties, or any truce between them. Allegiance to truth, to God, and to conscience forbids it. The advocate of each is contending according to his own view for truth, and against error. Each *ought* to contend. But, then, as *truth* is important, so is love. If truth ought not to be sacrificed for charity, so neither ought charity to be sacrificed for truth. The man who would never oppose error, but allow it to run its mischievous career for fear of violating charity, is wrong in one extreme; while the man who would do nothing to assist charity in its peaceful and tranquillising efforts for fear of compromising truth, is wrong in the opposite extreme. He only is right who fears to be silent in the cause of truth, but equally fears to be uncharitable in the cause of love.”*

His views on the *policy* of Dissenters remained, I believe, to the close of life what they were in 1834, in which year he published a Pastoral Address to his people, from which the following extract is taken:—

“It will be thought perhaps by some, that as all the deprivations under which we labour are but the shoots of a political alliance between the Church and State, I ought, in order to be consistent, to urge you to lay the axe to the root of the tree, and call upon you to make the dissolution of that union the main subject of appeal to the Government and the Senate. I need scarcely tell you that this point has been much agitated and discussed, both in the different committees of the Dissenting body, and in their periodical journals; and that the general *feeling* is, that while all our memorials to Government, and all our petitions to Parliament, should contain a strong protest against the alliance, coupled with a declaration that the Dissenters consider every reform to be incomplete as long as this remains, yet that it is not expedient to

* Protestant Nonconformity, pp. 271, 272.

make its removal the great object of confederated effort. It may not be improper to introduce here an extract from a letter which lately appeared in the *Patriot* newspaper from John Wilks, Esq., who, as you are aware, is an Evangelical Dissenter, and a member of the House of Commons. It was written in reply to an application from the Dissenters at Bristol, for his advice as to the measures now expedient to be adopted:—

“They (the United Committee) have repeatedly met, and intend next week to address the Dissenters of England and Wales, and to invite their co-operation for the redress of the grievances of which Dissenters may yet justly complain. They will, in their address, assuredly state their conscientious disapproval of all religious establishments, and of an unhallowed alliance between the Church and the State; and they will recapitulate all the grievances heretofore announced by them, and stated at Leeds;—and which mainly consist of the want of an improved and civil parochial registration; of compulsory payments for the support of the Church; of the exclusion of Dissenters from an equal participation with Churchmen in the benefit and honours of the universities; and of the degradation of Dissenting ministers, by preventing them from celebrating marriages and from officiating in churchyards on the interment of their friends.

“Until this address shall appear, yourself and enlightened colleagues will probably defer any public proceeding and final resolves; and when it is received, I sincerely hope that prudence, and not passion, will dictate the course they pursue. The opinion of the Government, and or many parliamentary friends to liberty of conscience and the cause of Dissent, I believe to be, that any immediate and urgent attempt at the severance of the Church and the State would utterly fail—would injure the administration—would delight and strengthen the Tories, still numerous, affluent, and strong—would delay the ecclesiastical reforms intended and desired—would retard an abolition or commutation of tithes—and would prevent the Dissenters from progressively procuring that redress of practical evils by which they are afflicted, and which, if they be temperate, united, vigilant, and judicious, they will gradually acquire, and at last completely obtain.

“In these views I am much disposed to concur; and at least I urgently recommend them to devout and deliberate thought.”

“I approve of the sentiments of this able and eloquent advocate of religious liberty, and have reason to believe they will be adopted as the rule by which our body will be guided. Until the union can be dissolved by the diffusion of sound scriptural sentiments, both among the people and the legislature, both within the Church and without it, most of the sober and reflecting members of our different denominations are

quite averse from making the attempt by the force of political agitation. Let our efforts be directed to the extension and consolidation of our own liberties, leaving the Church, if it is to be pulled down, to pull down itself, or the Church and the State to do it between them.

“In our endeavours to gain the relief which we have an equitable right to expect, I prefer that we in this town, for reasons which will readily occur to you, should act as separate congregations, and that we should have no recourse to agitation and clamour. The best way to disprove the calumnious assertion—for calumnious it is—that Dissenters are in league with infidels and radicals, is to act by ourselves. I hope that we shall never give colour by any part of our conduct to the slander which has been so industriously circulated, and so greedily received, that we are after all far more of a political than a religious body. It appears to me that if we ever aim to carry a question by the power of numbers rather than by that of truth, by clamour and not by cool, dispassionate reason, by the influence of political strength rather than by the progress of conviction, and by secular confederation rather than by ecclesiastical association, we shall by so doing be setting up, though in a modified form, the alliance between Church and State among ourselves. I again quote from the beautiful speech of Sir George Saville, and address to you, and would address to our whole body, the nation at large, to the Government and the Legislature, were I writing for them, the forcible and sacred motives with which he appealed to a British House of Commons:—*‘I therefore beseech you; I become an humble and earnest supplicant to you, by the benevolent spirit of the gospel, by all that is serious, I beseech you by the bowels of Christ, that this affair be treated, not as a matter of policy, not as a matter of levity, not as a matter of censoriousness, but as a matter of religion.’*”

It is impossible for a Nonconformist who is too young to remember the ecclesiastical conflicts which preceded and followed the Eeform Bill, to glance through a collection of the pamphlets of that stormy time without astonishment. Since then the Church of England must have freed herself of many practical abuses, if either her friends or her enemies described her truly. There has been a change not less remarkable in the spirit with which Dissenters vindicate their own principles and criticise the evils of the Establishment. The controversial vehemence of our fathers may be explained without supposing that our charity is much greater than theirs. Those Nonconformist ministers who began their work early in this century had to struggle against hostility and

persecutions of which we know nothing. When they went out into country villages to preach the gospel, they were not unfrequently assaulted by brutal mobs, who knew that the clergy and the magistrates were looking on with scarcely concealed delight, and that the Methodist would appeal for protection in vain to the local preservers of the peace. From the very tower of the church, stones and rotten eggs were sometimes hurled on the itinerant evangelist as he passed beneath it to the village chapel. Among the clergy there were many whose immoralities made the church an object of disgust and abhorrence to their parishioners; and the earnest and devout, instead of being numbered by thousands as now, were bright and rare exceptions to a prevailing indolence and worldliness.

The ecclesiastical strife was embittered by habitual political antagonism. During that long struggle for the extension of political freedom which triumphed in 1832, the vast majority of the Dissenters were the eager friends of reform, while the clergy were its most uncompromising and formidable opponents.

These were among the causes which gave to the permanent controversy between Church and Dissent an unusual and temporary severity. Since then, many events have assisted to produce a kindlier feeling, though the convictions of the two parties, on the theological and ecclesiastical questions by which they are divided, remain unchanged. Our civil disabilities have been removed. Mobs and magistrates have learned that there are penalties sharp and sure for the grosser forms of religious persecution. The pulpits of the Church of England in the large towns are generally occupied by evangelical ministers, many of whom exhibit a most noble and exemplary earnestness. Even in the rural districts, though there are vast numbers of churches which are the homes of mere religious routine, or of practices and teaching which fill a Protestant and Englishman with contempt, indignation, and alarm, we are not often scandalised by seeing men of profligate and dissolute lives pronouncing in God's name the absolution of sins and consecrating the bread and wine of the sacred Supper.

The friendly relations between Church and Dissent were also

greatly strengthened by the terror excited throughout the Evangelical party in the English Church, by the ability, the boldness, and the success of the leaders of the Anglo-Catholic movement of 1833. In that controversy, the commencement of which is popularly identified with the publication of the "Tracts for the Times" in that year,—though, perhaps, it might be more accurately fixed seven years before, when Hugh James Eose preached his sermon on the Clergy before the University of Cambridge,—and which virtually terminated with Dr Newman's Essay on Development and secession to Eome, the evangelical clergy sorely needed the help, and it was generously and heartily given, of the learning and the genius of the Nonconformists.

And it would be most uncandid not to acknowledge that, with whatever amazement and antagonism Evangelical Dissenters cannot but regard the creed and the ecclesiastical practices of the Anglo-Catholic clergy, their purity of life and the simple and unobtrusive devotion of many of them to parochial duty, have attracted our affection and respect. With the old high-and-dry, fox-hunting clergyman, who loved port wine, and yet was willing to leave it to see a Dissenter mobbed, our controversy was almost of necessity bitter and angry. With the really devout and learned Anglican—I do not refer to that silliest and most solemn of idiots, the clergyman who professes to admire Fathers he has never read, and who utters, with an unction positively ludicrous, the battle-cries of a party, with the real genius and principles of which he has not the slightest acquaintance, and which he has only joined to avoid being vulgar and low, or for the sake of the candles and millinery;—with the devout and learned Anglican, I say, the most earnest controversy need not be envenomed by any personal enmity.

Twenty years ago, the perilous errors of Anglo-Catholicism drove us into kindly alliance with the Evangelicals; and now, though our hostility to those errors has not become less decided, the bright excellencies by which many of the adherents of the Anglo-Catholic party are graced and ennobled have won our admiration and esteem.

Finally, the startling revelations of the ignorance and ungodliness of millions of our population, and the manifest need of

instant and unsparing labour to deliver large masses of the English people from heathenism, have made us forget questions less urgent, clamorous, and imperative. Whenever the Establishment controversy shall again be the subject of general public debate, the remembrance of the kindly intercourse of the last twenty years should dispose the combatants on both sides to that Christian generosity which has seldom had any place in ecclesiastical conflicts.

Mr James's pamphlet, though free from virulence, is a fearless and unsparing assault on the English Church, and a manly defence of Nonconformity. As it has not yet appeared in his Collected Works, it may be well to give a full account of it, both to illustrate his power as a controversialist, and to inform those members of the English Church who loved and admired him, on what grounds he was accustomed to vindicate his dissent.

Having stated in his "Church Fellowship" that "the following are the first three principles of Protestant Nonconformity: First, The all-sufficiency and exclusive authority of the Scriptures, as a rule of faith and practice: Secondly, The consequent denial of the right of legislature and ecclesiastical conventions to impose any rites, ceremonies, observances, or interpretations of the Word of God upon our belief and practice: Thirdly, The unlimited and inalienable right of every man to expound the Word of God for himself, and to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience—his reviewer objected, that if the Church of England cannot quote for all her institutions and usages the letter of Scripture, Dissenters are equally destitute of inspired authority for many of their practices.

Mr James answers,—

"I now go on to reply to the charge of inconsistency brought against Dissenters, of acting in numerous instances in opposition to their own principles. Suppose that this charge were well sustained, what does it prove? Nothing more than that they need to be called back from their wanderings, and to be admonished to cleave more closely to their guide. But the charge is *not* well founded, and rests only on a misconception, perversion, or forgetfulness of our avowed sentiments. Our views are these: the New Testament contains, in its recorded facts, such general

principles on the subject of church-government and discipline as are sufficiently explicit for the guidance of all who are willing to take God's Word for their rule; principles which need no addition, allow of no alteration, and demand universal submission. With these, such of our usages as cannot plead *express* command or example ought to be in accordance, and to the application of these all our customs must be directed. Whatever we do must be an act of obedience to the authority of Christ, as the only King and Head of the Church, and designed to carry into effect some law which as the supreme and exclusive legislator He has enjoined. We disclaim any right to decree, any power to impose; and feel that we have only one Master, who is the Lord that bought us, and only one rule to guide us, which is the Word of God.

"The general principles for which we contend are as follows: Christian churches are congregations of faithful men, united by voluntary consent, and for the purpose of mutual edification; the only officers of such churches are bishops and deacons,—the former being, not the overseers of many ministers, but each the pastor of one church—and the latter being appointed to take care of the poor; these officers are to be chosen by the people among whom they are to serve; the pastors are to be supported by the free-will offerings of the people who enjoy the benefit of their labours; the government and discipline of a church are entirely within itself; the reception and exclusion of members belong to the church, and not exclusively to the pastor. These are our principles, which we think are to be found in the Word of God, and may be defended by the practices of the earliest Christian churches. To the application of these principles we wish all our customs and usages to be directed.

"In carrying these principles into effect, it must be expected that a considerable diversity of opinion in minor things will exist. And here the Reviewer has confounded two things so essentially distinct, as a diverse mode of executing the same general law, and the rejection of it. We contend for the right of private judgment, which in many cases leads to a different result; the general law is acknowledged, although there is a contrariety of opinion as to the best mode of carrying it into effect. One or two instances may serve for the sake of illustration. It is our general principle that the people should choose their own minister: but we differ as to the best mode of applying this to practice; some thinking that the whole body, subscribers as well as communicants, should have the right of choice; others, that only the *communicants* should have this privilege. Again, it is our general principle that the church should receive members on satisfactory evidence of their personal religion; but we differ as to the manner in which that evidence should come before us. This will be a sufficient answer to all

that has been advanced by my opponent, and will defend us from the charge of inconsistency, which he supposes he had deduced from my pages. We have essential agreement, combined with circumstantial difference. As to what is said about 'lord deacons,' 'chairmen,' 'presidents,' 'influential members,' &c., &c., constituting other officers than those we admit to be scriptural, it was unworthy of his candour to write it, and would be only a waste of my time and labour to reply to it.

"Dissenters do not pretend to find Scripture precedent or precept for all their usages, any further than as those usages are involved in and deduced from general principles, or are necessary to carry them into effect. Some things, such, for instance, as the frequency and order of our public services on the Sabbath, are admitted by them to be truly indifferent; but then they are matters not considered essential to religious actions, nor imposed upon others as terms of communion. 'The proposition that everything relating to the worship of God which is not commanded or implied in a command is forbidden, presents, when rightly understood, the only satisfactory conclusion on which we can rest. As those co-necessary, natural circumstances which adhere to every action are virtually comprehended in the precept which is the basis of the instituted duty; so whatever circumstances, considered strictly as means of discharging what is positively enjoined, conduce to the more decent and impressive performance of the duty, are strictly consonant with the Divine command, are permissively, although not specifically, involved in it. On the contrary, whatever does not partake of the strictly subordinate character of means, or if the term may be allowed, does not come under the description of *modal circumstances* of obedience—whatever is added as a moral or religious circumstance, with a view of constituting the action more efficient or more acceptable to the Lord of worship, is to be condemned as superstition.' Thus far do Dissenters go in admitting things indifferent; but then it must be ever kept in view, that matters of acknowledged indifference are not terms of communion, nor considered to be essential to religious actions: for, to use the words of Stillingfleet, 'what charter hath Christ given the Church, to bind up men more than Himself hath done?' And we may carry the question still further, and add, *to bind up itself?* From what has been said, it may be seen what is intended by the great fundamental principle of Dissent; I mean, the sufficiency and exclusive authority of the Scripture. This is so far sufficient, that nothing is essential to the performance of individual or of social worship, which is not enjoined by express command, or implied in some precept, or set before us by example; and it is exclusively authoritative, inasmuch as nothing but what is so enjoined or implied can be lawfully taught by any human authority whatever. 'It

is our only rule, both in the sense of a law, and standard; a rule sufficient as opposed to all deficiency; exclusive as relates to the Divine authority from which it emanates: universal, as embracing all the principles of human actions, and ultimate, as admitting of no appeal. For all religious purposes it is literally the only rule, because the Divine command constitutes the only reason, as well as the only law of religious actions; and there can therefore be no scope for other rules, except with regard to the mere outward circumstantial of religious duties, which do not come within the obligations of any law.”

The Reviewer had also demurred to Mr James’s definition of the word “church.” In his “Church Fellowship” he had affirmed that in the New Testament this word has only two senses: “In some passages of Scripture it signifies the aggregate of the people of God of every age and nation, the whole company of the redeemed; and in others it means a single congregation, associated in the bonds of Christian fellowship, and accustomed to assemble for religious worship in one place.”*

“The Reviewer thinks that he has found no less than *five* different meanings of this term, and having enumerated them remarks,—‘Our

* It is only right to add, that Independents would not unanimously accept the argument of this passage; many would agree with the following paragraph from Dr Davidson’s “Congregational Lectures:”—

“*The usage* of Congregational Independents is also exceptionable in regard to this point; hut our business is to elucidate *principles*, not to defend prevailing practices. They are right in maintaining that all the believers in Jerusalem, the *ἐκκλησία*, met together habitually under the government and instruction of various elders; hut are wrong in splitting up what ought to be one church, the company of believers in modern towns, into several churches, each with its own pastor, which in their independent individuality are patches and shreds, often incapable of a right self-government, because they have lost sight of the unity and kind of government existing in the earliest churches.

“By so doing they have thrown away much of their strength, and what is more, their views have been narrowed.

“Every man thinking, moving, and acting in the midst of his little society becomes contracted in his ideas of men and things. It is very difficult for him to avoid being sectarian, selfish, unsocial in spirit, because his sphere is so narrow. Comprehensive and liberal views of Christianity are not readily nurtured in the small canton which the preacher looks on as peculiarly his own.

“All Christians in a town or city should be one church, having several teachers and rulers in common, as was the case in Jerusalem. There are no peculiar circumstances sufficient to justify their separate, *self-governing* association in the present day, except the absolute impossibility of obtaining a place sufficiently large to accommodate all, and capable of being filled with the human voice. The entire

readers may now decide whether the word has never more than two significations, and whether Mr James be a fit person to quote and interpret Scripture.' A few paragraphs will indeed decide this matter. I shall consider my opponent's five meanings of the word, though not exactly in the order in which he has arranged them.

"1. 'The word signifies all the people of God, of all climes and ages, from the beginning to the end of the world.'

"In this view of the term we are agreed.

"2. 'It signifies the faithful Christians of some one district or province.' 'The church of the Thessalonians,' (2 Thess. i. 1.) 'Ye Philippians, know also that no church communicated with me but ye only,' (Phil. iv. 15.) I am surprised that it should have escaped the Reviewer's recollection, for he certainly could not be ignorant of the fact, that Thessalonica and Philippi were *cities*, and neither districts nor provinces. His second meaning of the term, then, as signifying a district or provincial church, must be given up, as contrary to the passages he quotes.

"3. 'The *governors* of the church.' 'Tell it to the church,' (Matt. xviii. 17.) But this is an obvious begging of the question. By what argument can it be proved that the *church* means the *governors* of the church? He has yet to prove his assertion from Scripture. We might as well contend that a nation means the governors of the nation; that when the English nation, for instance, is spoken of, it means the parliament. *This* signification must therefore be abandoned.

"4. 'The Christians of one family, who with a few other Christians were wont to meet with God in a house.' 'The church in their house,' (Rom. xvi. 5.) There are other instances of a church in a house, (1 Cor. xvi. 19, &c.)

"Mr Scott, in his Commentary, has given a very probable meaning of the expression, 'a church in a house.' 'The family of Archippus was so pious and well regulated, that it was in some sense a Christian church.' The term in these cases is used figuratively, and not to be taken in its literal import. Or if, as the Reviewer observes, other Christians were united with the family, although this is assumed without being proved, then the company thus associated celebrated all Divine ordinances in a stated and regular manner in the house where they met; and these are instances directly and powerfully in support

church should always meet in one place for worship and ordinances, while congregations, for the purpose of bringing sinners under the power of the gospel and adding them *to the church*, might, at the same time, be regularly gathered. The preaching of the Word might be conducted in many places; but the peculiar privileges of Christian assemblies composed of believers should be enjoyed together."—Pp. 96, 97.

of my view of the term, as meaning a company of believers assembling in one place. But, then, it is contended, that if this be correct, it overthrows my position that the word is never employed to comprehend more congregations than one. Priscilla and Aquila, it is said, dwelt at Rome, and had a church in their house. Now, unless all the Christians of Rome met in the house of this pious couple, there must have been at least *two* congregations in that city. Well, admitting that there were, which probably there might have been, how does this prove the point, unless it can be shewn, which I defy the Beviewer to do, that all the Christians at Rome are ever called *a church*? No, they are called 'saints,' 'beloved of God,' &c., but not *a church*. Aquila and Priscilla had also, says my opponent, a church in their house at Ephesus, (1 Cor. xvi. 19;) and as we cannot suppose that the whole body of the Ephesians were assembled under their roof, and yet the believers in that city are addressed in the book of the Revelation as one church, the term means sometimes more congregations than one. This by no means follows, since the Apocalypse was written forty years after the first Epistle to the Corinthians—in all probability, long after the church had ceased to exist in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, who appear to have spent a very migratory kind of life. The church in their house may have been the embryo of that larger one which forty years after ceased to assemble under their roof, either because they were dead or had removed, or because their house was too small. This supposition is surely more consistent than to suppose that the comparatively little company still met at Aquila's house. My opponent is visibly hard driven, when he assumes the continued existence of this independent society in a private habitation, after the establishment of the much larger society to which the Apocalypse alludes. He must be fond of *schism*, indeed, and suppose the early believers so too, to make two separate communities at Ephesus, and the one so inconsiderable that its numbers can scarcely be supposed to have incommoded the other. But perhaps it will be said, that from the account furnished by the Acts of the Apostles, of Paul's extraordinary success at Ephesus, it cannot be thought that the whole body of believers could assemble in a private house, and hence there must have been two or more churches simultaneously existing in that city. What then? Suppose there were; though this cannot be proved, inasmuch as we know not the dimensions of Aquila's house, which, for aught we can tell, might have had an outbuilding large enough to contain all that *really* embraced Christianity and held it fast; but admitting that there *were* two churches in Ephesus at the time the apostle speaks of *the church* in Aquila's house, this does not prove the point that the word is used in this case to signify more congregations than one, as the expression '*The church at*

Ephesus,' is used nowhere else in the New Testament besides the Apocalypse. The point to be proved is the simultaneous existence of two or more separate societies of Christians, which are addressed in the singular number, as *the Church*; till this is done, the argument of the Reviewer is obviously invalid. The other instances advanced by my opponent may be disposed of no less easily and satisfactorily.

"5. 'The word means a number of believers called by Divine grace out of the world, and worshipping God in one place.' 'The church at Jerusalem,' (Acts viii. 1.) Now, this view of the term would seem to accord with that which is taken by myself and all Protestant Dissenters of the Independent denomination; and if by the word 'place' in this sentence were meant the building in which the believers assembled, and not the city in which they dwelt, the accordance would be real; but the subsequent reasoning of the Reviewer, in reference to the church at Jerusalem, plainly shews that he applies the word 'place' in the latter sense. We are asked, 'Was there only one congregation of Christians at Jerusalem!—what! when three thousand were added to the church at one time; and when it is said in another place, "Thou seest, brother, how many myriads" (for so I admit the word signifies) "of Jews there are which believe?" (Acts xxi. 20.) 'I will first give Doddridge's comment on this last passage, and then make some general remarks on the case of the church at Jerusalem. 'I do not apprehend,' says that expositor, 'that it can be certainly argued from hence, that there were more than thirty, or even twenty thousand Jewish believers now present at Jerusalem—for the word (myriads) may only in general denote a great number; but it is certain that the greater part of them were not stated inhabitants of Jerusalem, but only visited it on occasion of the great festival, (compare ver. 27;) so that no certain argument can be deduced from hence, as to the plurality of congregations supposed to have been now under the care of the bishop of Jerusalem.' Besides, I remark, it matters not what the numbers were, since it is said in the next verse but one, 'What is it therefore? *The multitude must needs come together*, for they will hear that thou art come.' Here it is necessarily implied, that notwithstanding their great number, they *did* congregate, did meet together for conference and instruction. If it be asked, where? I reply, in the court and precincts of the temple, for we are informed this was their practice from the beginning; 'They, continuing daily with one accord in the temple;' 'and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch;' 'and daily in the temple they ceased not to teach;' 'then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them;' 'and when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church;—then all the multitude kept silence.' We may not know how such a multitude could conveniently assemble and con-

duct worship, nor is it our business to explain the matter; we have only to prove the fact that they did assemble, and this fact is repeated in the Acts of the Apostles with a frequency which puts the case beyond all doubt. The church of Jerusalem was one church, and as such they were in the habit of assembling in one place.

“Where now are the Reviewer’s *five* significations of the word church? Not, I think in the New Testament. But had he even proved his point, it may be asked if among these five significations he can find the prototype of his own church. He has given us a church in a house—a church in a city—a church of governors—a church in a district—a church in heaven and earth; but has he found a church established by, and united with, the secular governments of this world? Even had he overthrown my position, he has not proved the scriptural authority of his own system. He has not contributed one other sense of the word *church*. We cannot yet find a *national* church—nor a *provincial* church—nor a church extending beyond a single convenable society.”

In the chapter on Church Officers, he thus replies to the argument of his Reviewer founded on Scripture for the superiority of a bishop to a presbyter:—

“But in what part of the Scriptures is this superiority discovered? In the following: ‘For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou should set in order things that are wanting, [τὰ λείποντα, things left undone,] and ORDAIN ELDERS [πρεσβυτέρους] in every city as I had appointed thee,’ (Titus i. 5.) ‘I besought thee still to abide at Ephesus, (where were many presbyters,) that thou charge some that they preach no other doctrine;’ παραγγείλης τισὶ μὴ ἕτεροδιδασκαλεῖν; admonere quosdam ne doctrinam alienam a vera et pura religione christiana ab apostolis traditâ inveherent. Schleusner. (1 Tim. i. 3, and vi. 3.) ‘Against a presbyter receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses,’ (1 Tim. v. 19.) ‘If then to order things left undone; if to ordain presbyters in every city; if to charge presbyters to preach sound doctrine; if to receive accusations against presbyters;—if all this does not prove that a bishop is superior to presbyters, we know not by what facts superiority can be proved, nor in what language superiority can be expressed.’

“Can the Reviewer be in earnest when he talks of this as most clearly proving from the Scriptures the superiority of the Episcopal to the Presbyterian office? We may be sure that this is all that he can find to support his position; but whether it most clearly proves his point, let any candid reader judge. *How* does it prove the point? This is not stated, but I presume the force of proof lies in this: Timothy was à bishop, and ordained elders, and as the ordainer is superior to the

ordained, therefore a bishop is superior to a presbyter. But this is assumption—assumption all, and not *most clear proof*. It is assumed, but not proved, that *Timothy and Titus were bishops*, in the usual scriptural sense of the term; their mission was clearly of an extraordinary nature, and had little in common with the pastoral and episcopal office. Again, it is assumed, that ordination necessarily infers superiority of office in him who performs it. Is this the case in the Church of England? *Virtually* the king ordains all the bishops and archbishops,—*nominally* the dean and chapter elect,—and *ceremonially* bishops ordain bishops. If the two archbishops deceased together, who would consecrate their successors? Let my friend's argument be resorted to for a solution of the difficulty, or rather the circle of difficulties, with which he is now encompassed. Will he still maintain that the ordainer is necessarily superior to the ordained? 'Why,' says Milton, 'should the performance of ordination, which is a lower office, exalt a prelate? Verily neither the nature nor example of ordination doth any way require an imparity of character between the ordainer and the ordained; for what more natural than every like to produce his like, man to beget man, fire to propagate fire; and in example of highest opinion, the ordainer is inferior to the ordained; for the pope is not made by the precedent pope, but by cardinals, who ordain and consecrate to a higher and greater office than their own.' But I refer to better authority than the practice of the Vatican, I mean the practice of the apostles. If Timothy was a bishop, then he was ordained by inferiors, for he was 'set apart by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.' Paul an apostle, and Barnabas, were ordained to a special mission, by the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch. 'And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away,' (Acts xiii. 3.)"

His special objections (Chap. IV.) to the Church of England are, that she teaches that children are regenerated by baptism; that her bishops have the power of conferring the Holy Ghost in the ordination of her ministers; that her priests have power to forgive sins; that all who die go to heaven, whatever their previous character. Moreover, "the Church of England uses liturgical forms, which we deem less edifying than extempore prayer; and her Liturgy abounds with vain repetitions." In his "Church Fellowship" he had said, that "the Church teaches that her bishops have the power of conferring the Holy Ghost in the confirmation of the young this he retracts as an inadvertence.

The objection to the Burial Service is thus developed:—

“The question to be settled is this:—Is the burial service so framed as to pronounce upon the eternal state of *all* who are interred, and does it pronounce that they *all* go to heaven? This can be decided by a reference to the Prayer-book. We find there the following expressions:—‘Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we commit his body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.’ It is said by those who defend the Prayer-book, that the words are not in sure and certain hope of *his* resurrection to life eternal, who has been buried, but of *the* resurrection generally. But let any man of candour say whether the latter part of the paragraph is not connected with the former, and whether it is not intended to apply to the individual whose body has been committed to the grave. Why should it not? If God *has in great mercy taken his soul to Himself*, it is a matter of inevitable consequence that his body will obtain a resurrection to eternal life. We find also the following expressions:—“*We give Thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this OUR BROTHER out of the miseries of this sinful world; we meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from a death of sin to a life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Him, as our hope is this our brother doth.*’ Now, in all this there is a mode of speaking which leads, so far as this service goes, to the conclusion, that all who die go to heaven, whatever their previous character might have been. I do not say the Church of England teaches this anywhere else, or teaches it here in so many words; but that the service is so framed as naturally to lead to this conclusion. I speak of the impression *in toto*, of the construction which every hearer naturally puts; not of the absence of a pronoun, but of the sentiment of the whole service respecting the buried person. Do not the relatives of the deceased feel persuaded that the clergyman has pronounced their departed friend to be a Christian; and consoled *them* with the assurance that he has gone to heaven, and that they will meet him at the resurrection of the just? I again say, make the experiment, ask the people whether this is not their view of the meaning of the service. There are but three cases in which the church refuses this solemn service of burial; viz., to those who die unbaptized, to self-murderers, and to those who are under the sentence of the greater excommunication. To all others, let them die in what circumstances they may, the sixty-eighth canon commands the clergyman, under pain of suspension, to grant the right of sepulture and the office of burial. They may have died in a duel, or a pugilistic contest, or in a brothel, or in a drunken fit at an alehouse;—over every one of these the Church orders the clergyman to say, that ‘*Almighty God of His great mercy has taken to Himself the soul of this his brother,*’ and ‘*to give*

God hearty thanks, that it hath pleased Him to deliver him out of the miseries of this sinful world; and to pray, *'that the spectators of the funeral, when they shall depart, may rest in Christ, as their hope is their deceased brother doth.'* And what is still more strange, the same man on whom the church pronounces eternal damnation while living for not believing the Athanasian creed, she declares to be safe when he dies, although his last breath should have been a declaration of Arian or Socinian sentiments. Now, does not all this, in effect, teach the unreflecting multitude that all men go to heaven, whatever may have been their previous character? To what conclusion will the great mass come who attend such a service? *They* know the life of the individual who has been interred, if the clergyman does not; *they* in many instances know his dark and vicious career, and have seen him go out of life without a single mark of piety; and yet they have heard the Church, through the medium of her minister, pronounce him to be safe in heaven. Multitudes of the spectators of funerals, in consequence of their neglect of public worship, hear no other office of the Church but the matrimonial and the burial services; and therefore are out of the way of those wholesome instructions and checks to delusion which other offices of the Church supply."

He thus concludes his indictment against the Prayer-book:—

"Such are some of the grounds on which, in reference to the Prayer-book, Dissenters secede from the Established Church.—It is well known that every clergyman is required, before he is admitted to a benefice, to declare, *ex animo*, his belief *'that the Book of Common Prayer containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God; and at the same time to declare his unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained therein.'* Some have argued that this unfeigned assent and consent which the Act of Uniformity requires, relate only to the use of the things prescribed, and not to the inward and entire approbation of them. That this, however, is incorrect, is shewn not only from the language of the Act, *'unfeigned assent and consent,'* but also from the decision of the legislature itself; for on the final settlement, the year after the Act passed, an attempt was made to give this latitudinarian interpretation of the clause, but the effort failed, and the sense of the legislature was declared to be that unfeigned assent and consent relates not only to the use, but to the inward and entire approbation of whatever is contained and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer.

"The objectionable parts of this book, and its imposition by human authority, formed originally almost the exclusive ground of Nonconformity. The great body of the two thousand holy men who were then thrust out of the Church of England had no objection to an alliance of

the Church, with the State, provided they were allowed to exercise their own choice in the mode of conducting public worship. But so objectionable did the Book of Common-prayer appear to them, at least to those of them who had an opportunity of reading it before the time prescribed for their signing, that rather than forswear themselves by subscribing to that which they could not approve, they resigned their livings, and cast themselves upon Providence for their support. That which with some Dissenters constitutes the weakest ground of secession, was with them almost the exclusive one. They became outcasts, exiles, and prisoners; and exposed themselves to all kinds of sufferings, and mockeries, and losses, rather than give their assent to that which they did not believe. They consulted not with flesh and blood; they hearkened to no such reasoning as that in quitting the Established Church they were putting a stop to their own usefulness, and extinguishing so many lamps of the sanctuary which were throwing their light upon the moral darkness of the land. They were mighty men, whose talents, equalled by their piety, would have adorned any communion; and while the Dissenters can mention the names of Owen, Baxter, Howe, and Bates, with many others, they need not fear the reproaches which may be cast on them by ignorance or prejudice."

The fifth chapter is on the present condition of the Church of England as described in the recently published works of several of her pious clergy. Its severity is tempered by genuine sorrow that such great evils should exist in a Christian community, but will probably startle those who are unfamiliar with the literature of the Dissenting controversy; and it should be remembered that, while some of the evils are inseparable from the system, a remarkable change has taken place in the internal condition of the Church of England since 1830—a change to be traced to the rapid growth of the Evangelical party, on the one hand, and to the religious earnestness of the Anglo-Catholic party, on the other; their combined power has almost cleared the Church of those ministers whose negligence and vices were so manifest a disgrace. The terrible exposure in pamphlets, reviews, and speeches in Parliament of ecclesiastical abuses, must also have contributed to the happy change.

The chapter is principally composed of extracts from publications by clergymen of the English Church. It commences thus:—

“I come now to that portion of the Reviewer’s remarks which is designed to give, from my own concessions, a frightful and revolting picture of the evils of Dissent. These evils are classed under seven divisions, and are intended to produce an impression to the disadvantage of Nonconformity. I shall not stop now to inquire into the fairness of so representing exceptions as to convey the idea that they form the general rule, but go on to lay before my readers an *exposé* of the state of the Establishment, which has been drawn up by some of its most devoted supporters, and which therefore is furnished by men of whose competency and motives there can exist no doubt. *They* at least cannot be suspected of bearing false witness against the Church; *their* testimony will be read without the suspicion usually awakened by the deposition of an interested or irritated foe. To this part of my pamphlet I feel peculiarly anxious to draw the attention of my readers, whether they are Churchmen or Dissenters; that the latter may learn from the writings of Episcopalians how strong are the reasons of Nonconformity; and the former be stirred up to seek with unwearied, undiscouraged zeal, the removal of evils so flagrant and afflictive. As it regards my own feelings on this melancholy subject, I can truly aver, that although no degree of reformation could reconcile me to a Church which leans for support on the arm of secular power; although in all probability such a reformation would remove the objections of many Dissenters, and draw them back into the communion of the Church, and thus weaken the cause of Nonconformity; yet I should most truly rejoice in the removal of those abuses, which not only strengthen the grounds of Dissent, but are a grief to many pious and zealous Churchmen. I should hail the day when the Episcopacy would shine forth with a radiance as pure and bright as such a system admits of; when these impediments to its usefulness would be taken out of its path, and its career rendered as illustrious and successful in the spread of true religion as the most devoted of its friends could desire. I trust that without hypocrisy or ostentation I may lay claim to that charity which ‘rejoiceth not in iniquity,’ but rejoiceth in the truth; and though I cannot conform to the Church, I feel that it would be no inconsistency to say that I should at all times feel willing to join in efforts to reform it.”

The evidence is summed up in the following paragraphs:—

“Such is the picture of the Church of England as it now exists, drawn by the faithful pens of some of her own clergy; for who else could or would have drawn it so accurately? They surpass all that has ever proceeded from the Dissenters, and more than justify our secession. Deeply must it be deplored by every friend of pure and

undefiled religion, whatever be his denomination, that so much evil should be allowed to exist under the sanction of the Christian name. Recoiling with disgust and horror as Dissenters do from all association with infidels in their attacks upon the institutions of the country, whether civil or sacred, and refusing the most distant help from such auxiliaries in their contest with the Church, they cannot but bewail the occasion of boasting which these things afford to their common enemy. Yet what an inference in their own favour may Dissenters draw from such statements and confessions!

“If there be vestiges of Popery in the Church of England,—if there be a want of due administration of the supreme presiding power,—if the legislative jurisdiction be exercised by men whose want of reflection renders them incompetent for the task,—if the appointment of the bishops be generally a matter of mere secular policy and cabinet influence, without regard to spiritual qualifications,—if the revenues of the cathedrals be lavished to aggrandise the pride and pamper the luxury of the richest and best-provided members of the clerical profession,—if the archdeacons cannot discharge their duties without exposing themselves to derision,—if the greater portion of the clergy are ignorant, or worldly-minded, or profligate, or incompetent, and this be the result of the easy access to holy orders,—if pluralities and non-residence be so common that a large portion of the clergy perform their duties by proxy, and thus occasion a mass of perjury to be committed,—if churchwardens also are continually guilty of this awful crime,—if there be this malignant and rancorous hostility carried on against the evangelical portion of the clergy, and such hindrances thrown in the way of their usefulness,—if the system of tithes be productive of so much altercation,—if the patronage of the Church be so incurably corrupt,—if the creeds, catechisms, and articles be all declared defective, and in some things obscure and seemingly contradictory,—if the Apocrypha be read as the lessons of the Church, and ‘nauseous gabble’ be substituted for Holy Scripture,—if the absolution in the visitation of the sick have fallen in many cases into desuetude, because it claims a power which the clergy tremble to use,—if the office for the burial of the dead is a burden to the conscience of a great portion of the clergy,—if the rubrics are vague, defective, and contradictory,—if the arts of evasion and sophistry have never been more notoriously developed than in attempts to explain away the strictness of subscription to the articles, liturgy, and homilies,—and if there be no hope of such evils being removed,—and if these evils and the hopelessness of any remedy being applied to remove them be acknowledged by the clergy and laity of the Church of England themselves,—then let them not wonder that there are men whose minds are too enlightened and their con-

science too tender to subscribe, as every beneficed clergyman must, and every unbeneficed one does in effect, in the face of such things, their unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common-prayer; nor let them wonder that such men should secede from a communion in which the members and friends of it themselves profess to see so many corruptions: and especially let them abstain from reproaching them as restless, discontented, and factious schismatics, who have neither ground nor defence for their separation. We find many of our reasons of dissent stated in the works from which I have made such large extracts; and we find them stated there with a force and boldness of language which we ourselves should certainly have scrupled to employ. We measure not other men's judgments and consciences by our own; which, however, cannot certainly be condemned as remarkably squeamish or fastidious, merely because they cannot be reconciled to a system which some of its most pious supporters confess is disfigured by so many blemishes and tainted with so much corruption. But even were these blemishes removed, and this inherent corruption expurgated, which we have the authority of Episcopalian writers for believing never will be done; were the Church of England as much reformed as its most holy and zealous friends could wish; were its Liturgy revised, and the defects of its creeds and catechisms supplied, and all that is objectionable in its offices taken away;—still the intelligent and consistent Dissenter could not be conciliated and drawn back to its communion: for his objection lies not merely against the contents of its Prayer-book, but against its very constitution as a Church established by law, allied to and supported by the secular power. Of union there is therefore no hope. The Church must alter its form as well as its formularies, or we must abandon our convictions. One party must yield not merely its prejudices but its principles, before a coalition can be formed: this is not to be looked for, and therefore instead of seeking after uniformity, which neither legal restraint nor angry controversies can ever be expected to produce, let us now endeavour to obtain that unity of spirit, which is a thousand times more to be coveted than a mere outward and heartless agreement, and which will throw a brighter lustre over the Christian cause, by the very consideration that it has force enough to resist the damping influence of different sentiments and separate communions."

In reference to the evils which are to be found in the Church of England, and among Dissenters, as acknowledged by both parties, he says:—

"FIRST.—*The evils which I have confessed are to be found in Dissenting*

Churches, are exceptions from the rule *by which their general state is to be judged of, and not the rule itself.*

“Instances are to be found—and taking them in the aggregate, not a few—which answer to the portraiture in my volume; but no one acquainted with our condition will believe that this is the usual posture of our affairs, or the general aspect of Nonconformity. To select from my book everything that was said in the frankness of candour, to tear such passages from their context, to detach them from their scope and design, and then to hold up this collation of facts as a fair specimen of the general state of the whole body to which they refer, is not very fair in the way of argument, nor very honourable in the way of charity. Would it be fair to estimate the moral character of Ireland by the scenes of St Giles’s in our metropolis, or that of England by the assize calendar and the state of our prisons, or the morals of our nobility or gentry by the instances of profligacy which are admitted to exist, and that not unfrequently, in the higher circles; or the state of health in our towns by the casualties and diseases which are to be found in our hospitals? Yet this may be done as fairly as to represent the practical abuses of Dissenting principles as the usual condition of Nonconformity. Perhaps we could not find half-a-dozen congregations of my own denomination in the three midland counties at this moment, but what are in a state of profound tranquillity; the ministers living in harmony with their flocks, and their flocks living in harmony among themselves. Yet if half-a-dozen *could* be found, these would constitute a number sufficiently large to justify the use of the language of lamentation, rebuke, and strong representation on the part of a writer who was laying the sins and duties of church members before them.

“Can these same remarks be applied to the evils admitted to exist in the Church of England? The evils, for example, of patronage, pluralities, non-residence; the secular influence of the crown or cabinet in the appointment of the prelates, or the spiritual qualifications of the clergy. I ask, if, according to the statements of Episcopalian writers, the evil is not the rule, and the good the exception? I appeal to the pages of the authors whose language I have quoted for an answer to this question. What can be meant by such an ominous title as ‘The Church of England in Danger from Itself,’ but an admission that the practical abuses are predominating above the practical benefits? And is not the title borne out by the allegations of the volume? Will the Reviewer deny that there is a much smaller number of bishops elevated to the bench for their spiritual fitness and truly apostolical qualifications, than by mere cabinet or aristocratic influence, without any regard to distinguished personal holiness, or even literature? And as to the inferior clergy, are the religious motives by which they are

led to select their profession the rule, or the exception? Is eminent piety, as a ground of presentation to a benefice and a means of preferment, the rule, or the exception? Are pluralities for the higher classes of the clergy the rule, or the exception? The Church writers alluded to so frequently boldly admit that evil is in these things the usual practice, and good the deviation. And as to the Prayer-book itself, it would be almost difficult to decide, Mr Riland himself being judge, whether its excellencies or its blemishes predominate.

“SECONDLY.—*The evils which I have admitted as existing amongst Dissenters are in ourselves, and not in our ecclesiastical opinions; while the evils existing in the Church of England are inherent in the system.*

“So variously constituted are men’s mental optics, and in such different lights do they contemplate the same objects, that my opponent contends for the very opposite of this proposition, and says that the evils of our system are inherent, while those of his own Church are extraneous to it. Let us examine this point. One class of evils which he charges upon us—or to put it with all possible fairness, which he says I admit—is composed of those ordinary frailties of our nature and sins of human conduct which are utterly irrespective of all systems of church-government whatever; such, for instance, as pride, irascibility, tattling, backbiting, mischief-making, violations of the Sabbath by travelling, feasting, vain conversation, &c. &c. That such things really do exist among us it were idle and untrue to deny; for in what community do they not exist? And to rebuke them was very proper in one who, like myself, was pointing out the duties and exposing the misconduct of professing Christians. But what will be said of the candour of a writer who would glean all such passages, put them together, and hold them up as a part of a picture of Dissent—as, in fact, its personification? Did he not blush over his own sentences, or write them with a faltering hand? Such efforts may serve the purposes of a party, but not the cause of truth. And, then, as to *the evils which more immediately connect themselves with the operations of Dissenting principles*, we may affirm that they are more, far more, *in ourselves than in our system*. What are these evils? Collision of opinion on important matters, and that conflict of feeling which is its too frequent and its somewhat natural result; a desire after pre-eminence; a love of dictation; a want of just subordination;—these are the causes, *i. e.*, the operations of the depravity of our nature which agitate our churches and bring in divisions amongst us, while our principles and practices as Dissenters are but the occasions of such abuses. The same evils exist in every association of human counsel and energy and operation. They are to be seen in every society, in every committee of a civil and secular nature. It is in human nature to be proud,

selfish, domineering; and as the members of a Christian church are still imperfect, it is not to be wondered at that these signs and operations of imperfection should be exhibited by them in their ecclesiastical capacity and relation to each other. But it would be as fair to trace up the bribery and corruption practised at our elections to the representative system, or all the jobs and tricks and unconstitutional influence sometimes practised by a corrupt administration to the system of monarchy and royal prerogative, as the evils of Dissenters to Nonconformist principles. That our principles give occasion to such things, in consequence of our imperfect nature, is very true. But they are not the cause of them. The gospel itself is exposed in all its great doctrines to a similar abuse. It is especially worthy of remark, as strikingly confirmatory of the scriptural support of our system, that the churches planted by the apostles, and addressed by them in their inspired letters, are supposed to be saints,—men acknowledging the authority of Christ and professedly governed by His laws, men with whom humility and love and meekness are cardinal virtues. For such men the system of union, upon the ground of voluntary consent, seems eminently adapted; it gives an opportunity for the operation and exhibition of their appropriate graces, and under the influence of these graces would be productive of nothing but good. The election of our pastors and deacons by the people, and the admission of the people by each other, seem to be things so rational in themselves, and so easily managed upon the acknowledged principles of the Christian character, that they are not to be surrendered because of the abuses to which they are incident by the imperfection of our nature. And as the evil is in us, but not in our system, our great business is to improve our own hearts; which, were it done more perfectly than it is in the management of our church affairs, would immediately deprive Dissent of that which invests it with so much deformity in the eyes of its enemies. We do not pretend that our system is absolutely perfect; but we contend that most of the obloquy with which it has been loaded belongs to human nature, and is to be added to the melancholy proofs of human depravity.

“Examine now the evils of the Church of England. And what, by the confession of its candid, pious, and enlightened friends, are these evils? Patronage is admitted by them all to be the great corruption: that which extends its polluting influence from the head to the remotest extremity; which corrupts it in mass and in detail. It is the *caput mortuum* of the ecclesiastical body into which all subsides. But will any one contend that *this* is extraneous? I ask if a State Church can ever be separate and secure from State influence? Supported by the power and fostered by the bounties of the State, it will ever, and natu-

rally enough, both from principles of policy and feelings of gratitude, yield itself, more or less, to that which creates and sustains it. As long as the king is the head of the Church—and this must be as long as the Church alliance remains—the whole hierarchy must be a ‘compact and united form, composing a chain of various links which hang suspended from the throne.’ How much, then, depends, in this view of the case, upon the moral and spiritual qualities of that royal mind with which rests the appointment of the primate and all the prelates! But, in fact, it does not depend on him; for the mainspring of the English Church is in the cabinet, and the disposal of the higher offices is as much, and as certainly, the result of cabinet discussion, or the effect of ministerial influence, as the disposal of offices in the army and navy. If half the bench were to be desolated by death the next year, who would deny that the hero of Waterloo, were he still premier, would have the destinies, for the time being, of the Church of England in his hand? Nothing less than a divorce of the Church from the State could alter this state of things, or prevent the ecclesiastical system from being an engine of the secular power. The weaker party must ever be subservient to the stronger. The Church has lost the only shadow of independence it ever had, by the reduction of its convocation to a mere name and a mockery. And then go to the inferior clergy. Is not the patronage of almost all the livings in the kingdom in hands which nothing less than a miracle can render fit to employ it with spiritual advantage to the Church? About five thousand of these, as I have already remarked—that is, about half—are in the gift of the nobility and gentry of the country, who, of course, look to them as a means of providing for their younger sons, rewarding their friends and favourites, or improving their own means by the sale of advowsons. Thus, full half of the livings of the Church are at this moment interwoven with the private property of the country; and together with the congregations and cure of souls with which they are connected, may be put up at any time to auction, and sold, with the immortal interests involved in them, to the highest bidder. Is this, or is it not an evil? If so, is it inherent, or extraneous? It is so inherent, I will affirm, that by nothing short of a revolution, which no Churchman could contemplate without horror, could it be removed. It will not do to say, in reply to all this, that the Church *could* exist, even if these things were altered; for we are not now speaking of such a church establishment as we could frame for Utopia, but of such an one as does now exist in this country, and we are speaking of that *as it is*, with all the abuses which its best friends must know to be remediless. The alliance with the State is the great evil, and the prolific source of many others, and which, as long as it remains, must inevitably corrupt it as a system of religious instruction, and

render it to a considerable extent an engine of secular policy. In spite of all these evils so justly complained of, its pious clergy, holier and more efficient than their system, may do immense good, as is eminently the case in the present day: but the evils themselves must remain, for they are inherent and inseparable; they are a disease in the ecclesiastical body, which no medicaments can reach, no skill can eradicate; which must continue to fester and bum through the frame, impairing its health, and enervating its strength; and in reference to which, its more enlightened and candid friends must admit that the only hope they have is, that the stimulus supplied by the present accession of evangelical ministers will invigorate its constitution, form a moral antiseptic to resist the progress of decay, and still enable it to continue a little longer a blessing to the land. But in the meantime let them turn their attention to the diseased system they are prolonging, the immense good they are preventing, and the boundless evils which they are upholding and promoting.”

He also maintains that while the evils connected with Dissent are extraneous, its benefits are inherent; and that the very opposite is the case in the Church of England, as admitted by her own writers: that the abuses of Dissent are strikingly analogous to the irregularities and disorders which existed in the apostolical churches, and which are mentioned so frequently and with such minuteness of detail in the epistles of St Paul: that the abuses connected with the principles and practice of Nonconformity admit of easy correction, reformation, and removal; but that the abuses of the Church of England are almost beyond the reach of reform.

“As our evils are manifestly those of our nature, rather than of our system, we have only to begin a work of personal reformation, which is always within our reach, and by the aid of Divine grace is always attainable by our efforts. We need tarry for no decrees of ecclesiastical courts, for no acts of parliament, for no orders of the king in council. The gospel method and ours is a self-adjusting apparatus; easily reparable, because so simple—fitted to all circumstances, all times, and all places. It never becomes absolute or powerless. We have in the New Testament an infallible rule, very near at hand, by which to conduct the business of improvement; and in the authority of Jesus Christ we have a tribunal which is final and decisive. Here is balm for our wounded churches, and a Physician to apply it. We need no foreign power, which in all cases is itself tardy, fallible, and corrupt; we have only to ask, ‘What saith the Lord?’ and then, after receiving the

response of the oracle, to apply the remedy. Our general system may not be so absolutely perfect, but the fault lies more in the irregular action or flaws of particular parts, than in any derangement or bad construction of the whole machine. When evils do arise and operate for a while, they are generally removed in the end. In most instances, as is known to those who are at all conversant with Dissenting affairs, the causes which for a season have interrupted the harmony of particular churches, and produced collision of feeling, have given way to the influence of time and Christian charity, and weeks or months of agitation and discord have been succeeded by many years of the most delightful tranquillity and prosperity. Christian principle has recovered its elasticity; the depressing and resisting force has been removed; and the church, taught by sad and humiliating experience to be cautious, has remained both harmonious and happy.

“But are the abuses connected with the Establishment thus easily removed? The clergymen who admit their existence are calling loudly for their removal. Reform in the Church has become a topic of discussion, if not as extensive, yet as earnest, in the circle in which it is mooted, as reform in Parliament; and that circle is, of course, within the Church itself. It is from within the Establishment that these ominous sounds are heard, not from without. The books on Church-reform have been published by clergymen themselves; who, while they admit the existence of evils so numerous and so flagrant, look round, after all, with a kind of hopeless though imploring cry for help: they know not to whom to apply for assistance, or in what way it is to be granted. Various remedies are suggested, and different plans of healing laid down: but their adoption is utterly hopeless; and if not, they would not meet the case.”

He is not, however, blind to the glories of the English Church. In his closing advice to Dissenters, he says:—

“In our conduct towards the Establishment from which we separate, let us cherish the influence and display the fruits of Christian charity. Let us not look at it with the jaundiced eye of prejudice, and profess to find in it nothing but one great mass of unmixed and unchecked corruption, which, during the progress of decay, is filling the atmosphere of religion with pestilential exhalations. That its constitution is unscriptural we believe; or why are we Dissenters? But with much to condemn in this view of it, we may in others find something to admire. Although its basis is unsound, its superstructure is magnificent. Its scriptural doctrines are the themes with which Luther and Cranmer and Calvin and Knox assailed the Papacy and effected the Reformation; its divines have covered its altars with works more precious than the

finest gold of the ancient sanctuary of Israel; its literature is the boast and glory of the civilised world; its armoury is filled with the weapons of ethereal temper which its hosts have wielded, and with the spoils they have won in the conflict with infidelity, Popery, and heresy; its martyrology is emblazoned with names dear and sacred to every Protestant; and at the present moment are to be heard from many hundreds of its pulpits truths, at the sound of which, accompanied as they are by the life-giving power of the quickening Spirit, the dead in trespasses and sins are starting into life, and exhibiting a people made willing in the day of His power, which shall be as the dew of the morning. All this I for one most willingly concede, and only regret that so much excellence should be united with what I must be allowed to call, and Churchmen themselves have taught us to call, so much corruption. And should the Church be destined to fall, may its humiliation never be effected by the rude hands of the sons of anarchy, nor by the violence of political convulsion, nor by the confederacies of scheming speculators; but by the diffusion of those mild and holy principles of Christian truth, meekness, and love which shall conduct its members back to the simplicity of pentecostal times, when believers were united upon the ground of voluntary consent, and were of one mind and one heart; and may its requiem be sung, not by the voices and amidst the orgies of a wide-spread and triumphant infidelity, but by a Christian nation, enlightened to perceive by correct reasoning, and so far sanctified as to feel by satisfactory experience that the Bible, and the Bible alone, without the aid of the civil magistrate or the support of the secular arm, is sufficient to sustain the Church of Christ amidst all its difficulties, and to conduct it to final victory over all its foes. As Dissenters, we must be candid as well as conscientious. Let us avoid that bigotry in ourselves which we condemn in others; especially let us delight and bless God for the increasing piety of the Church of England, and feel it our duty as well as our happiness to enter into all those religious associations which the public institutions of the present day afford us for co-operation with those who differ from us on these minor points. Let us dissent only where we must, and unite where we can. Let us recognise piety wherever we find it, nor allow our principles as Dissenters to chill the ardour of our emotions as Christians. If we cannot have uniformity of order, let us have unity of spirit; and recollect that it is better to be of one heart, than even in all things to be of one mind."

Finally, he appeals to the candour and good-will of Episcopalians:—

"As it respects the conduct of Episcopalians towards Dissenters, we

ask nothing but candour and good will. We have suffered contumely, and hatred, and misrepresentation enough to provoke any degree of hostility, and exhaust any measure of charity, and these, not unfrequently, from individuals in whom such conduct was most unseemly, and least to have been expected. If we are occasionally betrayed into expressions of warmth and irritation, which will hardly bear the test of the high-toned morality of a religion that requires us to bless those that curse us, perhaps our excuse, if anything could excuse the least violation of Christian meekness, may easily be found in the pages of many writers, both clergymen and laymen, poetical and prosaic, who seem to regard it a proof of good churchmanship to insult and abuse the Dissenters. We sometimes smile at the harmless fulminations of *ex cathedrâ* or *ex rostro* scorn and displeasure with which we are assailed; but they do not hurt us: amidst all we go on, and go on our way rejoicing. Our numbers ought to be sufficient to protect us from contempt; and though excluded from the universities, and denied access to the national fountains of literature, by a bigoted and narrow-minded policy, and thus left to provide as we can for the education of our own ministry, we have among us some, who, in the departments of Biblical criticism, the Greek and Hebrew languages, systematic theology, and English literature, would be referred to as splendid ornaments of any church. At any rate there is one thing which entitles us to the gratitude and respect of all who prefer constitutional freedom to despotic authority: for David Hume himself, 'a competent witness, if there ever was one, of political principles, and who was far from being partial to Dissenters, candidly confesses, that to them we are indebted for the preservation of liberty.'

"Desirous of living in the good-will of our neighbours, we ask for just so much esteem as our conduct entitles us to, and no more: and as to our principles, they are matters between God and our souls, which we have placed in the sanctuary of our heart, under the guardianship of our conscience, and allow no man to meddle with: which we love and value, notwithstanding the incidental evils with which it is our unhappiness to see them sometimes associated; which inspire us with no ill-will to those who differ from us, and disqualify us for none of the duties of social life, none of the operations that are carried on for the temporal or eternal welfare of mankind; which we publicly profess, and unblushingly avow, amidst the wonder of the ignorant, the suspicion of the credulous, and the sneer of the scornful: which we have inherited from martyrs, and for which, should God call us to the trial, we hope we should find grace to accept and wear the crown of martyrdom ourselves: but which we are ready, notwithstanding our present convictions and attachment, to surrender to any one who will prove

them to be contrary to the Word of God. In ceasing to be Dissenters we should have no sacrifices to make, no persecution to endure, no cross to take up; these things lie all on the other side. Dissent, if it be a sin, is neither a courtly nor a gainful one. So far its motives are beyond suspicion. Our principles cost us much money and much respect, which we should save by entering within the pale of the Establishment: and at the same time we should lose the ungracious character of separatists, and get rid of the unmerited name of schismatics. We should, at any rate, try our fortune in the 'lottery of ecclesiastical prizes,' and the career of Church preferment. We are neither stoics nor ascetics; we do not profess to be in love with poverty and reproach, though quite willing to endure both for conscience' sake. We are open to conviction, and will hearken to reason: but are never likely to be converted by the hectoring and contempt, the dogmatism and arrogance of either the evangelical or anti-evangelical members of any hierarchy upon earth. Although we contend for Dissent, our desire is to be vanquished by the truth; and if these two can be shewn to be at variance, we are quite prepared to surrender the former. But the man who would lead us back to the Church of England, must not meet us with the words of Hooker, but with the New Testament; he must not confide in that measure of dialectic skill or critical refinement, which may suffice to convict of many errors in style and logic so humble an advocate of Nonconformity as myself, but let him direct the weight' of his artillery against our great position, THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS THE SOLE AND SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION; let him impeach our argument, and not our style of writing, lest we should ask the question, so little to the credit of Episcopalian charity, who is it that excludes us from the seats of learning, and then mocks our ignorance—and lest the world should shrewdly infer that our adversaries find our rhetoric more vulnerable than our reasoning: he must not only prove, if prove he could from my concessions, that Dissenters are guilty of many things inconsistent with their own principles, but he must demonstrate, and nothing less than this will give him the victory, THAT AN ALLIANCE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WITH THE SECULAR POWER IS SANCTIONED BY THE AUTHORITY AND ACCORDS WITH THE GENIUS OF CHRISTIANITY; THAT DIOCESAN EPISCOPACY, FOUNDED ON THE SUPERIORITY OF BISHOPS TO ELDERS, IS OF APOSTOLIC ORIGIN AND APPOINTMENT; AND THAT THE BOOK OF COMMON-PRAYER CONTAINETH NOTHING CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD. Until this is proved, nothing is done; and when this is demonstrated, the grounds of Dissent are taken away, and Dissent itself will in all probability be abolished for ever."

I repeat, that there is no reason to suppose that any of these opinions were ever abandoned by Mr James. That his heart yearned for close and affectionate communion with the spiritual members of the Church of England—that he earnestly promoted every scheme for fraternal intercourse—that he was lavish in his expressions of love and honour for those clergymen in whose devoutness and generosity of spirit and ministerial labours he rejoiced to recognise the very presence of the Holy Ghost, and that he shrank more and more from public antagonism to the Church of England as the Establishment controversy gave place to conflicts for the central principles of evangelical religion, is true.

Indeed, antagonism of every kind was a terror to him during his later years; it was his fixed resolve to live peaceably with all men. But his autobiographical account of this pamphlet is a virtual expression of his opinion, that it is no breach of Christian charity to speak and write strongly in defence of Dissent, and against those evils of the Establishment which render Dissent a duty.

The discussion cannot cease. If Churchmen and Dissenters no longer wrote or spoke about the great questions by which they are separated, their silence would only prove, either that they were indifferent to their ecclesiastical principles, or that, desiring to cherish fraternal affection, they had not sufficient confidence in each other's charity to believe that it could withstand the wind and storm of controversy.

But that charity is very spurious and contemptible which would be destroyed by frankness and honesty. The peace which some good men have tried to secure is a truce between foes—not the cordial confidence of friends. If a Dissenter cannot cordially love a Churchman, who is clothed in the integrity, gentleness, and devoutness of Christ, and yet desires to perpetuate the political relations of the Established Church, approves her polity, regards her services with veneration, almost with awe, and openly and vigorously maintains his convictions, the Dissenter has no right to speak of his charity; and if a Churchman cannot cordially love a Dissenter, who manifestly loves Christ and keeps His commandments, though

he desires to terminate the alliance between the civil and ecclesiastical powers, objects to the constitution of the Church, objects to her services, and without apology or concealment, employs all his energies to translate his convictions into facts, the Churchman has no right to speak of his charity.

Christians of different churches must have forgotten the grandeur of the objects of their common faith and love, to fear that frankness in debating their ecclesiastical differences will separate their hearts. Is it true that myriads of Churchmen and myriads of Nonconformists have prostrated themselves before the same merciful God, uttering the same bitter confessions of wrongdoing, pleading the same promises of free forgiveness and eternal life for Christ's sake, and have all testified that their fears and misgivings fled when they learnt that the same mysterious and awful death was the atonement for their sin? Is it true that not a day passes without every one of them looking up with joy into the same glorious face, clinging with confidence to the same mighty Hand—that in sorrow they are all consoled by the same Comforter, and that in death they hope to be upheld by bright visions of the same immortal home? If so, their ecclesiastical differences, however earnestly they are debated, need not, and ought not, to chill their mutual affection, or interfere with their fellowship in Christian work and worship. It is a calumny on that love of the brethren, by which we know that we are the sons of God, to say that differences like these must be concealed, or our mutual affection must perish. A compromise founded on silence, is a fraudulent imitation of that charity which is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VII.

FORMATION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

“WHATEVER importance,” writes Mr James, in “an account of a few of the more remarkable incidents of my ministerial life,” at the close of his Autobiography, “whatever importance attaches to the Congregational Union, I was one of its original projectors. When some of my seniors felt grave objections to this confederation, as containing a germ of mischief in the way of an organised controlling body, I thought their fears groundless, and went into the association with my whole heart. I well remember that excellent and wise man, Mr Griffin, of Portsea, taking me aside at one of its first meetings to discuss the project, and saying to me, ‘I see you will have much influence in the formation and guidance of this Union, I hope you will be very careful what you do.’ By this he evidently thought there was some danger ‘looming in the distance.’”

Mr Griffin’s apprehensions were shared by very many; and it is rather curious, now that a quarter of a century has gone by, to look upon the exaggerated alarms and the exaggerated hopes with which the Union was originally regarded. The battle was fought in the columns of the *World* newspaper, and of the *Congregational Magazine*, both of which have been extinct for many years. It was alleged that the scheme threatened the equality of pastors and the independence of churches. “It is for us to profit by the past.

Episcopacy arose out of the presidency of the more influential men in the assemblies of presbyters holding equal rank; and the churches lost their internal rights by appealing to the wisdom of such assemblies. Metropolitans next claimed priority of provincial bishops. Patriarchates were at length erected, and the pastoral chair of a single church became, in the end, a throne lifted high in supremacy over all the churches. Hierarchies have sprung from the most inconsiderable beginnings.”*

An objection hardly less grave was, that the project would constitute the Independents an organised community, that all the affiliated churches would become responsible for the purity of discipline and doctrine of every individual church belonging to the Union, and for the orthodoxy and Christian character of every minister and every delegate. It was declared that although the promoters of the Union might disclaim the authority and power of a court of appeal, it would inevitably assume and exercise the prerogatives it repudiated.

“On what principle,” writes one, “are the churches to be admitted into union? Shall every separate society bearing the designation of an independent church be entitled to admission? Then how many communities, from which, in our separate state, we have been compelled by conscience to withhold fellowship, will be incorporated? This is too startling a proposition to be entertained. But what, I ask, shall be the rule of admission? “What symbol of orthodoxy shall be proposed? And what tribunal shall be erected to decide the question of Christian purity? And supposing the Union happily organised, and every difficulty overcome, is the Church, once united, to be considered as bearing an indelible character? Is the seal of incorporation never to be broken? Should error insinuate itself, or should an unholy ministry be tolerated, what steps shall the national union take? Unless we are to give the sanction of the incorporated body to every such case of error or immorality, an investigation must be instituted, and a court of inquiry must be erected; evidence must be received on the one side, and appeal cannot be refused on the other. In cases also of division, although your correspondent can scarcely conceive of the ignorance that would appeal to the Union, I cannot conceive how appeal is to be avoided: should division of feeling issue in the formation of a separate church, such an investigation must take place as shall determine whether the

* *Congregational Magazine*, 1831, p. 95.

separating community is to be recognised or rejected; that is to say, whether it shall be authoritatively pronounced a true church, or visited with sentence of excommunication.”

On the other hand, it was urged that the isolation of the Independent churches of England had enfeebled their evangelistic efforts, and seriously hindered the full and public assertion of their ecclesiastical principles; that the ministers and churches were ignorant of each other, and that mutual acquaintance would promote mutual sympathy and help; that only by a “Union” could fraternal intercourse be maintained with Congregational churches and other bodies of Christians throughout the world; that the Union would procure accurate statistical information relative to the Congregational churches of England and of other countries; might assist in the extension of Congregationalism through the colonies of the British Crown; might not only “inquire into the present method of collecting funds for the erection of places of worship,” but might “consider the practicability of introducing some improved plan;” might assist in maintaining and enlarging the civil rights of Protestant Dissenters. The fears of those who predicted evil, were answered by appealing to Scotland, in which for eighteen years a Congregational Union had existed without interfering with the independence of the churches; and to New England, where Congregationalists had been very completely organised from the earliest years of their history, and had even found that independency was practically maintained, although the associations had apparently violated the essential principles of the Independent polity, by entertaining and determining appeals from the confederated churches.

Mr James was among those who believed that the Union might be productive of great good, and that the evils apprehended would prove altogether imaginary. In the autumn of 1830, a meeting of the ministers of Stafford, Worcester, and Warwick, who were attending the anniversary services of the London Missionary Society in Birmingham, was held in Carr’s Lane vestry, and they formally expressed their approval of the project. In May 1831, at a meeting of delegates, ministers, and officers of churches, in

the Congregational Library, Finsbury Circus, London, "to consider the subject of a General Congregational Union," Mr James moved, "That it is highly desirable and important to establish a Union of Congregational churches throughout England and Wales, founded on the broadest recognition of their own distinctive principles, namely, the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs."

At the adjourned meeting, the resolution, having been revised and expanded, was finally passed in the following form:—"That it is highly desirable and important to establish a Union of Congregational churches and ministers throughout England and Wales, founded on a full recognition of their own distinctive principles, namely, the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs; and therefore, that the Union shall not in any case assume legislative authority, or become a court of appeal." A provisional committee, in compliance with the instructions of the meeting, drew up a report of the proceedings, and transmitted it, with a circular letter, to the officers of the county associations throughout England. The documents were also addressed to the secretaries of the Congregational Union of Scotland and Ireland; to the Board of Congregational Ministers in London and its vicinity; to the officers of the Congregational Unions and Associations in New England; to the missionaries professing Congregationalism at Calcutta, Madras, in South Africa, and certain islands in the South Seas; and to the editors of the Congregational and Evangelical magazines. Criticism on the plan was invited, and information likely to be interesting to its promoters.

In May 1832, upwards of eighty ministers and twenty-five lay delegates met in the same place to consider the letters which had been received in reply to their communications, and it appeared that out of thirty-four English county associations twenty-six were most fervently disposed to the Union, "four declined for the present," from the remaining four no answer had been received. Mr James moved the adoption of the report of

the provisional committee, and its adoption was immediately followed by a resolution declaring that a "General Union of Congregational churches and ministers throughout England and Wales 'BE NOW FORMED.'" Later in the morning he introduced a paper containing a declaration of the Principles of Faith and Order of the Congregational body, "drawn up by an individual at the request of several brethren in town and country."* The paper was read, and at the adjourned meeting it was resolved—

"That this meeting respectfully invite the opinion of the associated ministers and churches on the following questions:—Whether, in accordance with the example of our Nonconformist ancestors, it be desirable *to present to the public* a declaration of the leading articles of our faith and discipline? and whether, if it be deemed desirable, that declaration should be made by such a statement as the following, which has been read, but not discussed, in the meeting of the Union, subject to such modifications as may be suggested and generally agreed on at the next annual meeting?"

Also—"That the committee be instructed to prepare a letter to accompany the proposed declaration, carefully stating its object to be the communicating of information to the public, on the doctrines generally held and maintained by the Congregational denomination, at a period when so much ignorance and misrepresentation prevail upon those subjects."

There was reason for apprehending that by this "Declaration" the whole scheme might be wrecked. Independents had been so long struggling against enforced subscription to articles and creeds as the condition of enjoying civil rights and church communion, that the very name of a Confession of Faith excited the gravest fears. And yet in earlier times it was no uncommon thing for our fathers to repel the slanders and correct the misapprehensions of enemies by "declaring" their faith. "Independents have never held the unlawfulness of publishing declarations, or *expositions of their existing sentiments and practices*; and if this be all that is meant by Confession of Faith, it is wrong to represent them as enemies to them. But these public formularies are generally viewed in a

* *Congregational Magazine*, 1832, p. 381.

very different light. They are used as standards and tests by which the faith and orthodoxy of the present and future generations are to be tried, and to which a solemn subscription on oath is required, binding the subscriber to abide all his life in the principles thus professed. This, when extending to a large book of human composition, when made a test of character, a qualification for office, and an evidence of unity, is what Independents object to; as what the law of Christ does not enjoin, what has never promoted the peace, purity, or unity of the Church, and what has powerfully retarded the progress of truth.”*

Mr Orme, from whose life of Owen this extract is taken, enumerates several Confessions of Faith which were issued by both sections of the Independents, Baptists and Pædobaptists, from 1596 to 1648. But the most important document of this kind was that which was adopted by the Savoy Conference in 1658.

Cromwell, shortly before his death, reluctantly granted permission for the holding of an assembly of “elders and messengers from the Congregational (Pædobaptist) churches of England and Wales,” and on the 29th of September about two hundred, representing one hundred churches, met at the Savoy, and their deliberations lasted a whole fortnight. Owen and Goodwin, Nye, Caryl, and Greenhill were prominent in the discussions. In the preface to their Declaration, said to have been written by Owen, it is said:—“We confess that from the very first all, or at least the generality, of our churches have been in a manner like so many ships—though holding forth the same general colours—launched singly, and sailing apart and alone on the vast oceans of these tumultuous times, and exposed to every wind of doctrine, under no other conduct than that of the Word and Spirit, and their particular elders and principal brethren, without associations among themselves, or so much as holding out common lights to others whereby to know where they were. But yet, while we thus confess to our shame and neglect, let all acknowledge that God has ordered it for His greater glory, in that His singular care and power should have so watched over each of these as that

* Orme's Life of Owen, p. 228.

all should be found to have steered their course by the same chart, and to have been bound for one and the same port; and that, upon the general search now made, the same holy and blessed truths of all sorts, which are current and warrantable among the other churches of Christ in the world, should be found to be our lading.”*

Nearly one hundred and eighty years after this, the ministers and delegates of the Congregational churches of England and Wales rejoiced in the same general concurrence of belief among the churches they represented; and the Declaration of Faith and Order, prepared by Dr Bedford, of Worcester, and presented to the meeting in the Congregational Library by Mr James, is believed still to represent the convictions of the churches and ministers adhering to the Union. This document is of sufficient importance, as illustrating Mr James’s theological and ecclesiastical opinions, to require a place in this volume. I give the original paper presented by him to the Union in 1832; some of its details have since been slightly altered. The preliminary notes were prefixed by the secretaries on issuing the Declaration to obtain on it the judgment of the churches:—

“DECLARATION.

“The Congregational Pædobaptists of England and Wales hold the following doctrines as of Divine authority, and as the foundation of Christian faith and practice. They also form and govern their churches according to the principles hereinafter stated:—

“PRELIMINARY NOTES.

“1. It is not designed, in the following summary, to do more than state the leading doctrines of faith and order maintained By the denomination of Christians in question.

“2. It is not proposed to offer any *proofs, reasons, or arguments*, in support of the doctrines herein stated, but simply to *declare* what the denomination at large believes to be taught by the pen of inspiration.

“3. It is not intended to present a *scholastic* or *critical* confession of faith, but merely such a statement as any intelligent member of the body might offer as containing the leading principles of the denomination.

* Orme’s Life of Owen, p. 231.

“4. It is not intended that the following statement should be put forth with any authority, or as the result of a general and critical discussion of the doctrines professed.

“5. It is not to be understood that the particular wording of the following statement has been approved by the whole body, but that it is merely the language of an individual, and approved in the main by those who submit it as a declaration of what is believed and practised throughout the Congregational denomination.

“6. Disallowing, as they do, the utility of creeds and articles of religion as a bond of union, and protesting against subscription to any human formularies as a term of communion, they are yet willing to declare, for general information, what all believe in common; reserving to every one a right of explanation, and the most perfect liberty of conscience.

“7. They deprecate the use of the following statement as a standard to which assent should be required, though they have no doubt as to the general prevalence of these principles throughout their churches.

“8. Upon some minor points of doctrine and practice they charitably differ among themselves, allowing to each other what each claims from the whole—the right to form an unbiassed judgment of the Word of God; but yet, agreeing most cordially and generally in maintaining the great doctrines herein declared.

“9. They wish it to be observed, that notwithstanding their jealousy of subscription to creeds and articles, and their general disapproval of the imposition of any human standard, they are far more agreed in their doctrines and practices than any church which enjoins subscription, and enforces a human standard of orthodoxy, and they believe it may be confidently affirmed, that there is no minister and no church among them that would deny *the matter* of any one of the following doctrines of religion: each might prefer to state his sentiments in his own way and in his own words, but the statement of each, if taken separately, would be found in substance to contain the following fundamental truths:—

“PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.

“1. The Scriptures of the Old Testament, as received by the Jews, and the books of the New Testament, as received by the primitive Christians from the evangelists and apostles, they believe to be Divinely inspired, and of supreme authority. These writings, in the languages in which they were originally composed, are to be consulted, by the aids of sound criticism, as a final appeal in all controversies; but the ordinary version of them into the English language, published under civil authority,

they consider to be adequate for the ordinary purposes of Christian instruction and edification.

“2. They believe in one God, essentially holy, just, and good; infinite, eternal, and immutable in all natural and moral perfections; the Creator, Supporter, and Governor of all beings and of all things.

“3. They believe that God has revealed Himself to man in the Scriptures under the threefold distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to each of which Divine Persons are attributed the same infinite and immutable properties, perfections, and prerogatives. The mode of the Divine existence, as a Trinity in unity, they profess not to understand: the fact they cordially believe, but the mystery of the Godhead they are content, in this life, to reverence and adore.

“4. They believe that Jehovah created man in His own image, pure from evil bias, sinless, and, in his kind, perfect.

“5. They believe that the first man disobeyed the Divine command, fell from his state of innocence, and involved himself and all his posterity in a state of guilt and depravity.

“6. They believe that all mankind are born in sin, and that a fatal inclination to moral evil, utterly incurable by finite means, is inherent in every human being.

“7. They believe that God designed before the foundation of the world to redeem fallen man, and that He made very early disclosures of His mercy toward this sinful race, which were the grounds of faith and hope to many among the antediluvian world.

“8. They believe that God revealed more fully to Abraham the covenant of His grace, and, having promised that out of his descendants should arise the Deliverer and Redeemer of mankind, He set him and his posterity apart as a race specially favoured of God, and devoted to His service; and that hence a Church was formed and carefully preserved in the world, under the Divine sanction and government, until the birth of the promised Messiah.

“9. They believe that, in the fulness of the time, the Son of God was manifested in the flesh, being born of the Virgin Mary, but conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that our Lord Jesus Christ was both the Son of man, as partaking fully and truly of sinless human nature, and the Son of God, as being in every sense equal with the Father and ‘the express image of His person.’

“10. They believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God revealed, either personally in His own ministry, or by the Holy Spirit in the ministry of His apostles, the whole mind of God for our salvation, and that by His obedience to the Divine law while He lived, and by His sufferings unto death, He meritoriously ‘obtained eternal redemption

for us;’ having thereby satisfied Divine justice, ‘magnified the law,’ and ‘brought in everlasting righteousness.’

“11. They believe that after His death and resurrection He ascended up into heaven as a Mediator for us, and that He ‘ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him.’

“12. They believe that the Holy Spirit is given in consequence of Christ’s mediation to quicken and renew the hearts of men, and that His influence upon the human soul is indispensably necessary to bring a sinner to true repentance, to produce saving faith, to regenerate the heart, and to perfect our sanctification.

“13. They maintain that we are justified, through faith in Christ; and that not of ourselves, ‘it is the gift of God.’

“14. They believe that all who will be finally saved were the objects of God’s eternal and electing love, and were given by an act of Divine sovereignty to the Son of God, but that this act of sovereignty in no way interferes with the system of means nor with the grounds of human responsibility, being wholly unrevealed as to its objects, and therefore incapable of becoming a rule of human duty.

“15. They believe that the Scriptures teach the final perseverance of all true believers to a state of eternal blessedness; though not irrespective of a constant faith in Christ, and uniform obedience to His commands.

“16. They believe that a virtuous life will be the necessary effect of a true faith, and that good works are the indispensable fruits of a vital union to Christ.

“17. They believe that the sanctification of true Christians, or their growth in the graces of the Spirit, and meetness for heaven, is gradually carried on through the whole period during which it pleases God to keep them in the present life, and that at death their souls are perfectly freed from all remains of evil, and are immediately received into the presence of Christ.

“18. They believe in the perpetual obligation of baptism and the Lord’s Supper: the former to be administered to all converts to Christianity and their children by the application of water to the subject; and the latter to be publicly celebrated by Christians as a token of faith in the Saviour, and of love to each other.

“19. They believe that Christ will finally come to judge the whole human race, that the bodies of all men will be raised again, and that, as the Supreme Judge, He will divide the righteous from the wicked, will receive the righteous into life eternal, but send away the wicked into everlasting punishment.

“20. They believe that Jesus Christ designed and directed His followers to live together in Christian fellowship, and to maintain the

communion of saints; and that for this purpose they are jointly to observe all Divine ordinances, and maintain that church order and discipline which is either expressly enjoined by inspired institution, or sanctioned by the undoubted example of the apostles and apostolic churches.

“PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH ORDER AND DISCIPLINE.

“1. They hold it to be the will of Christ that true believers should voluntarily assemble together to observe religious ordinances, to promote mutual edification and holiness, to perpetuate and propagate the gospel in the world, and to advance the glory and worship of God through Jesus Christ; and that each society having these objects in view in its formation is properly a Christian church.

“2. They believe that the New Testament alone contains, either in the form of express statute or in the example and practice of apostolic men and churches, all the articles of faith necessary to be believed by a Christian, and all the order and discipline requisite for constituting and governing Christian societies; and that human traditions, fathers, and councils possess no authority over the faith and practice of Christians.

“3. They acknowledge Christ as the only Head of the Church, and the officers of each church, under Him, as ordained to administer His laws impartially to all; and their only appeal, in all questions touching their religious faith and practice, is to the Sacred Scriptures.

“4. They believe that the New Testament authorises every Christian church to elect its own officers, to manage all its own affairs, and to stand independent of, and irresponsible to, all authority saving that only of the Supreme and Divine Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“5. They believe that the only officers placed by the apostles over individual churches are the bishops or pastors, and the deacons, the number of these being dependent upon the numbers of the church; and that to these, as the officers of the church, are committed respectively the administration of its social worship, its discipline, and its temporal concerns—subject, however, to the approbation of the church.

“6. They believe that no persons should be received as members of Christian churches but such as make a credible profession of Christianity, are living according to its precepts, and attest a willingness to be subject to its discipline; and that none should be excluded from the fellowship of the church but such as deny the faith of Christ, violate His laws, or refuse to submit themselves to the discipline which the Word of God enforces.

“7. The power of admission into, and rejection from, any Christian church they believe to be vested in the church itself, and to be exercised only through the medium of its officers.

"8. They believe that Christian churches should stately meet for the celebration of public worship, for the observance of the Lords Supper, and for the sanctification of the first day of the week.

"9. They believe that the power of a Christian church is purely spiritual, and should in no way be corrupted by union with temporal or civil power.

"10. They believe that it is the duty of Christian churches to hold communion with each other, to entertain an enlarged affection for each other as members of the same body, and to co-operate for the promotion of the Christian cause; but that no church, nor union of churches, has any right or power to interfere with the faith or discipline of any other church, further than to disown and separate from such as, in faith or practice, depart from the gospel of Christ.

"11. They believe it is the privilege and duty of the church to call forth such of its members as may appear to be qualified, and indicated by the Holy Spirit, as suitable persons to sustain the office of the ministry; and that Christian churches unitedly ought to consider the maintenance of the Christian ministry, in an adequate degree of learning, as one of its especial cares, that the cause of the gospel may be both honourably sustained and constantly promoted.

"12. They believe that church officers, whether bishops or deacons, should be chosen by the free voice of the church, but that their dedication to the duties of their office should take place with especial prayer, and by solemn designation, in the act of imposition of hands, by those already in office.

"13. They believe that the fellowship of every Christian church should be so liberal as to admit to communion in the Lord's Supper all whose faith and godliness are, on the whole, undoubted, though conscientiously differing in points of minor importance; and that this outward sign of fraternity in Christ should be coextensive with the fraternity itself, though without involving any compliances which conscience would deem to be sinful."

Had Mr James been a member of a Convocation, Conference, or General Assembly, he would have become a powerful ecclesiastical chief. He possessed all the qualities by which men acquire authority. When business had to be done, his eloquence was characterised by remarkable vigour, directness, and practical sagacity. He inspired his friends with confidence and courage, and conciliated the respect of his opponents. He was free from "crotchets." He had none of the self-will which disposes some men to give their bitterest enemies a complete victory, rather than win a triumph by

slight and unimportant concessions to their allies. His character was a power among his brethren.

In the Congregational Union, which claims neither legislative nor executive prerogatives, there was comparatively little scope for the operation of these great qualities; but his counsel, and the influence of his temper and spirit, were eminently beneficial. He was chairman of the Union in 1838, preached the autumnal sermon at Bradford in 1852, and again at Cheltenham in 1857. He was a regular attendant at the meetings, and took his full share in all the more important discussions, and at last he reviewed his connexion with the origin and history of this important organisation with satisfaction. A quotation from his Autobiography introduced this chapter, another may very properly close it.

The Union, if it has not accomplished all the good its friends predicted and expected, has not produced any of the evils which its opponents foretold. It is a question, however, which ought to be seriously considered, whether it is doing all for the denomination which it is capable of doing. Considering how large a portion of the missionary week is occupied by the meetings of the Union in London, and nearly a *whole* week at the autumnal meeting in the provinces, the work done hardly pays for the time spent in doing it. Much gratification, I know, is furnished by the meetings to the brethren who attend them; but ten days or a fortnight in these busy times forms a long period to be so employed. Had it done nothing more than call forth the Lectures which have been delivered and published under its auspices, it would have achieved a good work. The *Christian Witness* and the *Church Member's Penny Magazine* are also among its fruits, which have not only given out much useful religious knowledge and edification, but have raised a fund for the relief of our aged ministers. I claim to have been the proposer of these works, or rather of one of them, for it was intended originally to have been but one. I shall ever consider it an honour to have done what I did in common with others, for thus gathering together into a body the *disjecta membra* of our denomination.

Autobiographical.

CHAPTER VIII.

AUTHORSHIP.

THE pressure and variety of Mr James's labours, when his popularity as a preacher was at its highest point, cannot be appreciate I without an account of the books, pamphlets, and sermons, which were published during the same period. The list is a long one. His Address to the Teachers connected with the Birmingham Sunday-school Union, published in 1815, and expanded afterwards into "The Sunday-school Teacher's Guide," has already been mentioned. In 1815, he also published his sermon on "Christian Activity," preached before the Staffordshire Association; in 1816, his charge,* at the ordination of his brother, the Rev. Thomas James; in 1819, the Surrey Chapel Missionary sermon,† on "The Attraction of the Cross;" a sermon,‡ entitled "The Crisis," on the commercial distress and political troubles of the country; a short memoir of his first wife, appended to the funeral sermon by Dr Fletcher; and a controversial pamphlet on Religious Liberty; in 1820, two sermons, one on Christian Mercy,§ preached in the Poultry Chapel for the City of London Lying-in Institution; the other, "Small Beginnings not to be Despised," || preached for the Port of London Society on board the Floating Chapel, moored off Wapping Stairs; in 1821, a sermon,¶ occasioned by the death of

* Collected Works, vol. i.

§ Ibid.

† Ibid.

|| Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

¶ Ibid.

the Rev. John Berry; in 1822, "The Church Member's Guide;" and in 1824, "The Christian Father's Present to his Children." He says, in his Autobiography, "that the design of this work was to form, develop, and guide the religious character of young people. It met with great acceptance, and ran through fifteen or sixteen editions. I have reason to believe that it was useful in many families of God's people, and afforded considerable help to those parents, alas! how few, who were really anxious to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord. It has been often mentioned to me by those who have derived benefit from it."

In the same year he published a sermon,* "Youth Warned," in which he vigorously assaulted theatrical amusements, and another on "The Sin of Scoffing at Religion." The promoters and supporters of the Birmingham theatre were greatly provoked by his attack, and several pamphlets appeared in reply. The ablest of these, written by a clever Birmingham solicitor, has for its principal object to damage Mr James, by charging him with plagiarising in his "Youth Warned" from Dr Styles, and in his "Sin of Scoffing" from Tillotson. Referring to this controversy, the Editor of the Collected Works, in the introductory note to the first of these sermons, says, "The author was grieved at the ill-will which he thus contracted, as tending to weaken his hold on his fellow-townsmen; and it was clear, from what he from time to time said on the subject, that he had become convinced that the best method of opposing any popular amusement which may appear wrong, is rather by inculcating counteracting principles than by a direct attack upon it."

In 1825, he printed his funeral sermon† for Dr Bogue; in 1826 his sermon at the opening of Hoxton College as a missionary academy; in 1827, his sermon‡ to the church assembling in Livery Street, Birmingham, at the settlement of the Rev. J. Mather; in 1820, his sermon to the members of the Juvenile Auxiliary Missionary Societies, preached in the Poultry Chapel. In the same year he also issued his "Christian Charity; or, The Influence of Religion upon Temper." "This volume," he says, in the Autobio-

* Collected Works, vol. i. † Ibid., vol. ii. ‡ Ibid., vol. i.

graphy, "was first preached in a series of sermons on the chapter which it proposes to expound. It had been for a long time my deep and settled conviction that no part of Christianity is less understood and exemplified than that which is thus characterised by Mr Hall: 'Love is the very essence of the Christian religion: all else but its earthly attire, which it will throw off as it steps across the threshold of eternity.' Oh, how different would be the condition of the world now—how little would have been left for us to do in the way of its conversion to Christ, had all the professed followers of Christ from the beginning been so many living examples of love! Would there have been found an infidel who would believe himself that such a religion was a mere imposture or enthusiasm, or who would have attempted to persuade the world that it was so? Who could have become antagonistic to pure, practical Christian love? But what of love is found on the pages of ecclesiastical history? Alas, alas! how little of it is seen in the conduct of professing Christians of every age, church, or country! As a proof how strangely this subject is neglected, even by preachers and authors, I mention the fact, that an American author of considerable ability and extensive reading says, he had never met but with one treatise on this subject, and that was my own. Is not this an astounding and melancholy fact, that while thousands and thousands of volumes on all other parts of Christianity, on all subjects of faith, controversy, and practice, should be from time to time issuing from the press, only one volume, and that of no great merit, should have come forth wholly devoted to the exposition and enforcement of this cardinal virtue of our holy religion! My work is now in its sixth edition,—a circulation far above its own intrinsic merits, but far below the importance of the subject. If love be religion in its very essence, we shall, in looking abroad upon the Christian world, be led to conclude there is yet but little of genuine Christianity in the world, or even in the church."

The Editor of the *Collected Works*, in an introductory note to "Christian Charity," has this very pertinent and interesting paragraph:—

"The author often expressed his surprise that no other book had

been exclusively devoted to the praise and inculcation of Christian love, and he derived much pleasure from his having in any degree supplied the deficiency. The subject has always had this disadvantage, that the practice of any one writing upon it must be consistent with this book, or it would, as far as he was known, have little other effect than that of a satire on himself. Those who really knew our author, have ever testified that his life exemplified and enforced his precepts. The Editor recollects the volume being once quoted against him, but it was by a man towards whom he had ever practised forbearance and forgiveness. The author was much delighted that his work was approved by two readers more than ordinarily qualified to judge of it: one of them well acquainted with life, as having sustained a high part in it, and the other as having keenly mused in solitude on the ways and feelings of men; they were the Chief-Justice Bushe, and the poet Wordsworth. The latter introduced himself to the author after a service at Carr's Lane, saying, that for a long time it had been one of his cherished wishes to see and speak to the author of 'Christian Charity.'

To this followed "The Family Monitor; or, A Help to Domestic Happiness," which had also been preached in a series of discourses. In his Autobiography, he says—

"When I had finished the course, I received a numerously signed petition from the married women of my congregation soliciting the publication of the sermons to husbands and wives. But I chose rather to publish the whole.

"Here, again, I believe the pulpit is deficient in the minute inculcation of specific domestic duties. How much the well-being of the community and the prosperity of the church depend upon the order, good government, love, and harmony of families! I have heard of preachers, who dwelt almost exclusively upon the doctrinal parts of Divine truth, and who, having expounded in course the earlier parts of the Epistle to the Ephesians, said, on coming to the practical parts, in which the domestic duties are so beautifully set forth, 'We have no need to dwell on such matters, for the people know their duty on these things.' What a reflection on the apostle dwelling upon them; or rather upon the Divine Spirit by whom he wrote!"

In 1829, he issued a series of pastoral letters on Revivals; in

1830 his pamphlet, "Dissent and the Church of England;" in 1831, a sermon* on "Dislike to Ministerial Fidelity;" and in 1832, a tract on "The Importance of Doing Good."

In this chapter I have relied on a list of Mr James's works, with the dates of their publication, drawn up by the late Thomas Beilby, Esq., who for many years was a most efficient deacon of the Carr's Lane church, and one of Mr James's dearest friends. Mr Beilby's accuracy makes it quite unnecessary that I should hunt up first editions in order to verify his record. Of Mr Beilby Mr James once said to me, with an emphasis that has stamped the words for ever on my memory, "That, sir, is the most perfect man I ever knew;" the justice of this remarkable testimony everything that I know of Mr Beilby, or have ever heard of him, confirms.

* Collected Works, vol. ii.

CHAPTER IX.

RELIGIOUS WORK AND RELIGIOUS LIFE, 1813—1833.

IN the preceding chapters of this Book I have attempted to trace the rise of Mr James's fame as a preacher, and have narrated the prominent events of his history from 1813 to 1833,—his long and dangerous illness, the death of his first wife, his second marriage, the erection of a larger meeting-house, the part he took in the ecclesiastical movements and controversies of his time. The most important provinces of his history, the vicissitudes of his personal religious life, and his quiet work among his own people, can receive no adequate illustration. To record definite proofs of a minister's spiritual earnestness and fidelity, to illustrate his candour and boldness in privately reproofing sin, his patience and gentleness with the wayward and self-willed, the tenderness of his sympathy with the bereaved, the sick, the poor, his kindly advice given to the young, his persevering endeavours to reclaim the profligate, his unwearying vigilance in assisting and guiding persons whose religious troubles required special and personal attention, is beyond the power of a biographer. But I have formed a conception of what kind of a person Mr James was during these twenty years, and instead of attempting to string together a number of illustrative facts, I will state what that conception is. The significance of a man's life is not declared by exhibiting any number of isolated instances of well-doing or ill-doing. His life consists, not in par-

ticular actions which often live in the memory, because they are exceptional, but in settled habits which can hardly be crystallised into anecdotes.

In these twenty years Mr James's congregation increased from four or five hundred to nearly two thousand; and the church from about one hundred and fifty to about five hundred. The reverence and affection he inspired in the hearts of his people preserved them in unbroken peace, preventing many causes of disquiet, and enabling him, when trouble and perplexity arose, so to guide the action of the church as to secure, if not perfect unanimity, general consent and confidence.

It was during this period that he became known in all parts of the country as a stimulating and impressive religious orator. The restless, dissipating life of a popular preacher, travelling incessantly from county to county, occupying a new pulpit or a new platform every successive evening for a month together, reaching home weary and jaded at the end of the week, and starting on a new journey early on Monday morning, was the life which Mr James was at this time in some danger of living. He never permitted himself to be quite hurried away by the strong and deceptive current of entreaty, flattery, and excitement, which might have swept him from the anchorage of a devout retirement and unostentatious pastoral work; but for a time he must have been in serious peril.

The injurious influences against which a popular preacher has to struggle are not sufficiently considered, either by the silly idolaters of his power or by the harsh critics of his imperfections, and they are grave enough to make those who may be disposed to sigh over the obscurity of their ministerial work content and grateful; and grave enough to alarm any man who, instead of attempting to make his ministry effective in producing the noblest results, is so foolish as to covet tumultuous admiration.

It is no inconsiderable evil that the popular preacher loses the moral and religious benefit of order and regularity in his personal habits. The monastic rule appointing to every hour its proper functions, though likely to produce stagnation in a sluggish nature,

protects the active and the vigorous from many evils; external order is an assistance to calm self-control, and to what the mystical writers call "recollection." The minister whose work lies round about his own home may secure to a considerable extent the advantages of this discipline. He has his time for study, his time for work among the people outside, his time for rest, and above all his time for prayer; and though he will not attempt to enforce the systematic division of his hours with rigid exactness, the approach to method in his life is healthful and invigorating.

But if once a minister chances to achieve a noisy reputation for the oddity, or the beauty, or the brilliance of his sermons, he will find it very difficult to resist the temptation to desert his home, and his more private and noiseless work, that he may dazzle, amaze, or impress congregations that are eager to hear him all over the country; if he yield, his inward life is likely to become as restless and unquiet as his outward life, and his piety, instead of being calm and profound, will probably become vague, desultory, and fitful.

The irregularity of a popular preacher's life, though a serious evil, is perhaps less obviously injurious than some of its other characteristics. While constantly travelling from town to town, he is likely to find that necessities he can scarcely evade, often allow him no time or opportunity for protracted meditation and prayer. Nor is it spiritually healthy for him to be incessantly engaged in authoritative teaching and exhortation.

Preaching does not exercise and strengthen the gentleness, the patience, the perseverance, which are developed by the more private functions of the ministry; the visitation of the sick and the troubled and the poor, seems an almost indispensable protection against the self-exaltation into which an attractive preacher is in danger of being betrayed. Even that kind of humility which is produced in a true-hearted student by the perplexities of many of his studies, and by the transcendent greatness of the illustrious teachers of the human race, the famous preacher whose days and nights are spent in haranguing crowded congregations has no chance of acquiring. The excitement he creates he must largely

feel himself, and to be agitated day after day with violent emotions will not promote the depth of his religious affections.

Moreover he is exposed to terrible and constant temptations to utter more than his heart feels, to exaggerate and intensify the expression of his spiritual fervour and zeal for human salvation. Sometimes the preacher must be weary, and long to be with Christ "in a desert place," for quietness and rest, but the throngs that fill the pews and aisles demand his thrilling climaxes and his passionate appeals; they expect to catch the contagion of his enthusiasm; and if he shrink, as he probably will, from disappointing them, he will use, with a vehemence and solemnity which imply present earnestness, language which was natural and true when first he wrote it, for it was the unstrained expression of his inward ardour, but which is now most false, for the ardour has quite gone down. If he speak extemporaneously, his danger will be greater still, for he will perhaps lash himself into a rhetorical excitement, and utter words and thoughts which imply the most solemn and awful vision of the eternal world, rapturous fellowship with God, Christ-like agony for the conversion or sanctification of his hearers, while the great currents of his religious nature are stagnant or frozen.

To all these dangers Mr James was exposed during a considerable part of the period between 1813 and 1833, and his natural temperament and the complexion of his youthful piety made him peculiarly susceptible to their influence. At Poole and Gosport, and during the early years of his ministry in Birmingham, although he acknowledged and enforced the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ over every faculty and energy of human nature, the ideal of Christian holiness by which his life was practically influenced gave a very exaggerated value to excited religious affections. He was fascinated by the conception of a fervid and enthusiastic devotion, and resolved to attain it. Tears produced by the contemplation of the more pathetic passages of Christ's history, or of the awful destiny of the finally impenitent, appeared to him an important evidence of advancing piety. It is probable that in prayer his chief concern was to raise his own nature into intense

and ardent activity, as though it were the strength of our human feeling which achieves spiritual victories; almost forgetting the responsive grace and power of God in the endeavour to imitate and reproduce the agonising earnestness which has characterised the devotions of illustrious saints. In preaching, vehement passion, which, whether exhibited by an actor, or by a political orator, or by a preacher, produces immediate and violent agitation, was more eagerly sought for than those penetrating elements of spiritual power which, while they permanently affect the lowest depths of man's religious nature, often leave the surface unmoved.

The disappointments and discouragements of the earlier years of his ministry, the admirable practical goodness of his first wife, his serious and prolonged illness, prepared him in some measure to meet the perils of his popularity. Whether he escaped altogether unharmed, cannot now be easily determined, but it is natural to suppose that as the immediate results of his troubles gradually wore off, he would need some other corrective influences to save him from the vanity and religious shallowness which are the besetting sins of the popular preacher.

These were supplied. A few years after his marriage to his second wife her influence over his whole character became very powerful. She was a woman of unusual moral vigour. Her conceptions of duty inclined her rather to asceticism than to laxity; and her piety was fervent and elevated. The life of Mrs Fletcher of Madeley was one of her favourite books. When she came to Birmingham, she resolved to do her utmost to discourage "worldliness" among the more wealthy people in her husband's congregation, to relieve the loneliness and hardships of the poor, and to endeavour with all her energy to increase the efficiency of the various institutions connected with the church. Her earnest devotion to the people could not have been without its effect in maintaining and strengthening in her husband's mind a conviction of the worthlessness of mere transient excitement and popular applause, and of the transcendent spiritual value of his quiet labours among his own congregation.

About the year 1827 he began to form an intimate friendship

with several American ministers, and it is my conviction that he owed very much of the religious earnestness of the last thirty years of his ministry to his intercourse with them. Selections from his correspondence with Dr Patton and Dr Sprague are appended to this Book. He had many other friends in the States with whom he corresponded, though less frequently.

Of still greater importance in relation to Mr James's religious life was his partial retirement from general public work in consequence of a severe nervous affection, which gradually increased towards the close of the period of which I am now writing, and at last became so distressing that the prospect of any public engagement away from home became a source of terror to him. Of this it will be necessary to speak more fully in the next Book; but before 1833 it had compelled him greatly to diminish his general activity. The quietness thus enforced upon him did much to develop the maturity and depth of Christian life, which won for him the affectionate reverence of devout men of all churches and all creeds.

LETTERS.

TO HIS SISTER SARAH.

"ABERYSTWYTH, *August 1, 1818.*

"MY DEAR SISTER,—It has been said that nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm; not that we are to infer from thence that enthusiasm is invariably the indication of something noble going on; if it were, then indeed is a mighty work at this time doing in Wales. In my last letter to James, I told him that in my next, which I should address to you, I should give an account of what I witnessed at Bala last Sabbath-day. You have often heard of the Welsh Jumpers. I will, to the best of my power, describe to you the apparently frantic excesses of their zeal. Mr and Mrs Davies did everything to prepare us for an extraordinary scene; but not all they said, nor all I had read before, nor anything I had ever conceived, came near to the reality. As Vronhanlog is four miles from Bala, and as the family in which we were visiting is not remarkable for punctuality, we did not get to meeting till the minister (who, by the way, was the same good man on whom we called on Friday) had just taken his text. During the early part of his discourse, which was of course all in Welsh, he was quite cool and sober. Considerable attention from the beginning was paid by the greater part of the congregation. As he proceeded he became more and more animated, and in proportion, the people became more and more interested and affected. Great numbers were at length dissolved in tears, and a loud groan attended by some fervent exclamation burst from all parts of the place. Being seated in the gallery, I could command an entire view of the congregation, and could discern many very interesting cases of deep and silent emotion. Some of them interested and affected me greatly. I understood not a syllable that was uttered; but to see hundreds of people melted down to tears

and groans by the simple yet impassioned tones of a rustic, whom I had seen but two days before in the character of a ploughman, was indeed a novel and impressive sight. Thus far all was interesting, and I could not help weeping abundantly. The preacher now grew more warm than before, and at length proceeded to what in refined English congregations would be accounted a species of pulpit raving. Still, however, he was not ungraceful. His eyes seemed ready to start from their sockets. His every muscle seemed strained and quivering. This drew forth fresh bursts of feeling from his audience. Many screamed out at once, and some writhed as if in agony or in fits. This returned just as often as the preacher ascended into his altitudes. When the sermon was closed and the people rose to prayer, you might see them in different parts of the meeting, six or eight in a group, with their arms round each other's necks and waists, all hanging together. The sacrament was now to be administered, which is conducted something after the plan of the Church of England. The communicants come and kneel round the railing of the chancel, and receive the elements from the hands of the ministers. Among these were many boys and girls, not more than twelve or thirteen years of age. The men approached the table first, and during their approach all was silent and solemn, but no sooner did the women draw near than a scene commenced which baffles all power of language to describe. One woman directly after receiving the bread and wine, began to vociferate as loud as her lungs would permit, at the same time throwing her arms about and clapping her hands, more like a man playing the cymbals in a military band of music than anything else I can compare it to. This never ceased for a single moment during the space of twenty minutes, till pale and foaming she seemed ready to drop. Her shrill cry was the signal for many others to commence. The whole place was now filled with a howling I cannot describe. I saw a crowd of women, perhaps thirty in number, come together and literally throw themselves down before the railing, all bathed in tears, and filling the place with loud lamentation. One of them beat against the railing with her fist as if she was determined to demolish it, till her hands must have been bruised. Another, directly she rose from off her knees, plucked off her bonnet and threw it violently across the meeting. As they retired from the table, they seemed to form into groups, and commence jumping with all their might, as if they were trying to leap from the area into the gallery. I saw five or six women jump with their bonnets off, I suppose fifty times without stopping, nearly a yard high, at the same time uttering loud cries. They were chiefly occupied in saying, 'Bruised for me,' 'Died for me.' In another part of the place were groups of men waving their hands over their heads, clapping them together, and

filling the place with their cries. All this time fresh groups were coming up to the table to receive the elements, and in the midst of the surrounding noise and confusion, the ministers at the table were perfectly composed, and actually sometimes engaged in prayer with others of the communicants. I was quite alarmed for Fanny, lest she should become hysterical, and often advised her to go out. To say all in a word, conceive of fifty mad people turned loose into one place, and giving vent to their feelings in wild gestures and incoherent ravings, and you have the best idea that can be entertained of the interior of Bala chapel the day that we were there. I shall never, never, never forget the scene, if everything else that memory ever received were to be effaced."

TO THE CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING IN CARR'S LANE MEETING-HOUSE,

BIRMINGHAM.

"*ABERYSTWYTH, August 11, 1818.*

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—It has been customary with me, when I have been called by Divine Providence to be long absent from my beloved and affectionate flock, to address a letter to the church, in which I have stirred up their pure minds by way of remembrance. On the present occasion, however, I have determined to enlarge the sphere of my epistolary concern, and include my hearers in general in the object of this letter.

"I flatter myself that this effort of ministerial solicitude, attended as it is with the warmest assurances of my sincere regard, and containing the most fervent desires for your spiritual welfare, will be neither coldly received nor inattentively heard. It is but a feeble expression of the feelings of my heart towards you, to say that no change of time, or place, or circumstances, or society, produces the smallest variation of sentiment towards the people amongst whom I have now laboured for thirteen years, and whom I can truly say, I have loved the more the more I have known them; and amongst whom it is in my heart, if it be the will of the Great Head of the Church, to close the ministry which I have received of the Lord. God is my witness, my dear friends, 'how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ earnestly desiring that 'by warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, I may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily.' I trust that it was not in a thoughtless manner, or ignorant of its tremendous import, that I received the solemn and weighty trust of your spiritual concerns. It is a trust which I assure you I can never totally forget—a care of w'hich my mind is never entirely divested. Whether I am at my usual post of labour, or enjoy-

ing a season of innocent relaxation, I cannot forget that the interests of your immortal souls are in a measure confided to my hands. Oh, what a deposit! Lord, who is sufficient for these things? If, through my neglecting to instruct you in sound doctrine, or to admonish you with seriousness and fidelity, you should be lost, indescribably dreadful will be the consequences, both to you and to me. *You* will die in your sins, and your blood will God require at *my* hands. Let us both tremble at a catastrophe so shocking: *you* at the thought of losing your souls, and *I* at being the guilty occasion of such an incalculable loss. As it respects my own part, amidst all the imperfections of which I am humbly conscious in reviewing my past labours, I cannot help hoping that I may adopt the apostolic appeal to the elders of the Ephesian church—‘I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men’ who have sat under my ministry. What I believed to be truth I have never shunned to declare, nor have I, out of respect to any man’s person, failed to rebuke, to exhort, or to convince; but have endeavoured to commend myself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. I cast myself upon your impartial judgments. Have I prophesied smooth things? Have I cried peace when there was no peace? Have I attempted to purchase your smiles by flattering your imperfections? Have I endeavoured to lull you into the slumber of carnal security upon the lap of ministerial carelessness? No. I am confident none of you will accuse me of these things. God is my witness how often I have studied by what new modes of representing truth I could instruct your minds, interest your attention, and alarm your consciences; how often, as I entered upon my weekly task of preparing for the pulpit, it has been my prayer, ‘Lord, teach me the way to the human heart.’ Yet after all, of some of you I must say with the apostle to the Galatians, ‘I stand in doubt of you.’ I doubt if yet my ministry has been successful in persuading you to seek the favour of God with your whole heart, through the mediation of His divine and equal Son. *Some of you, I fear, are still living without God and without hope in the world.* Are there not some living in known and open sin, which their own consciences in loud and faithful echo to the Word of God assure them will end in death? Are there not some Eving in secret sin, who as yet have not entered the high-road of immorality, but are stealing along the by-paths of more private iniquity, who are not become hardened in their sin? Are there not many who are halting between two opinions, sometimes impressed under the word and troubled with occasional convictions, whose religious feelings are like ‘the morning cloud and early dew?’ Are there not many young persons, gay, volatile, worldly, who are not remembering their ‘Creator in the days of their youth,’ but are for-

getting, turning a deaf ear to His righteous demand, 'My son, give me thine heart?' Are there not even some of the children of the righteous, the offspring of the godly, over whom prayers and tears and admonitions without number have been poured, even these, who are disappointing all the hopes that had been entertained concerning them, and instead of preparing to occupy their parents' seats when they shall have risen to the Church triumphant, are foolishly and sinfully ambitious of becoming the votaries of fashion and the people of the world?

"I put it to your consciences, are there not still in the congregation to whom I preach the word of God some of all these classes? *You* can tell, *your* consciences can reply. Oh, my dear friends, if any who may hear this letter should stand self-reproached, self-condemned, do not, I beseech you do not, treat the matter with indifference. Your souls are too precious and valuable to be abandoned to that destruction which unbelief and impenitence must inevitably bring upon all by whom they are indulged to the end of life. The thought is very dreadful to me that any should go from beneath my ministry to the worm that never dies, to the fire that is never quenched. I can scarcely bear to dwell upon the reflection that my sermons should be forgotten upon earth only to be remembered in hell. Gospel sermons will indeed be most tormenting companions in those dismal regions, which are never to be gladdened by the tidings of salvation. *There* they will haunt the memory of the lost, only as the ghosts of slighted, murdered friends.

"Suffer, my beloved hearers, suffer the word of admonition. My heart in this seclusion is as full towards you, as when I have been surrounded by you in the place of our accustomed resort. I would try every means for your salvation, and earnestly pray that this letter may effect what a thousand sermons have tried in vain, to rouse your attention, in a saving manner, to the things that belong to your peace. Consider your situation as placed under a dispensation of mercy, and 'give a more earnest heed to the things you have heard, for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how will you escape who neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?'

"*Young people*, let me enforce the claim of God. Give to God your hearts. Nothing short of this will be accepted. Your tongues to talk of Him, your feet to carry you to His sanctuary, your knees to bow to Him in prayer, your whole bodies to be employed in the mere forms of godliness, will be refused as an unworthy sacrifice without the heart,—yea, all the faculties of the mind, the judgment to understand His nature, the memory to remember His truths,—all will be disdained till you give Him your hearts to love Him, to delight in Him, to be sancti-

fied and satisfied by Him: give Him then your hearts,—who so worthy of them as God, who besides Him can keep them, or who else can fill them?

“*Aged persons*, let me admonish you to turn unto God while yet your life continues. Your sun is just about to set; it already as it were touches the mountains, and your shadows lengthen on the plains. It is dreadful to think that night is approaching and your work not even begun. But salvation is of grace, and even you, at the eleventh hour, are invited to believe and be saved. Do not, as you value your souls, do not delay to cry for mercy, no not an hour.

“*You that are poor*, I would earnestly exhort to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Denied by a wise but inscrutable providence many of the comforts of this life, seek to have the deficiency infinitely more than supplied by all spiritual blessings— in heavenly things in Christ Jesus. With this ‘pearl of great price’ to enrich you, with a title to ‘an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,’ to animate and comfort you, all the privations of earthly poverty might be borne, not only with patience, but with cheerfulness. The grace of God in the heart, the promise of God in the hand, and the glory of God in the eye, are enough to reconcile us to the longest life of severest poverty. But poverty without religion, is to be poor indeed. To be poor and to be wicked, is to have a double hell,—a hell here, and a worse hell hereafter.

“Some of you *are comparatively rich*. Trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; be not high-minded, do good. ‘Be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, laying hold on eternal life.’ Think how dreadful would it be to sink from all the comforts and luxuries of this life, to that state of forlorn wretchedness in the world to come, which admits not the alleviation of a single drop of cold water.

“Many of you, of all ranks and descriptions, I know are *partakers of the grace of God*. Happy, most happy do I feel when my mind turns to you. Of not a few I can say, What is *my* hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are *my* glory and joy. My beloved children in the Lord, whom I have begotten in the gospel of Jesus, as the humble instrument of Divine power and grace, with feelings of peculiar affection and interest, I address myself to you. Let us rejoice together in the grace of our God,—I in the honour of being employed to introduce you to the privileges of the spiritual life, and you in the bliss of being called to such a distinction. You may have ten thousand instructors, far abler than I, yet have ye not many fathers. Remember I have no

greater joy than to hear of my children walking in the truth. Look to yourselves, that I lose not the things that I have wrought, but that I receive a full reward. Be faithful unto death, and then, what mutual joy shall we experience in that great day, when I shall attend you to the throne of Almighty God, saying, 'Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given me!'

"Some of those who have been enlightened in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, have not yet joined themselves to His disciples, and are living in a state of separation from the church. Is this right? Can you justify it to yourselves? Can you excuse it to Jesus Christ your Lord and Master? Have you a dispensation from Him to be exempted from the obligation of that command, 'Do this in remembrance of me?' Would you wish it? Do you desire to be excused from the table of the Lord? Suppose your neglect were turned into a punishment—suppose Jesus Christ were to say of you—'I Never let him sit down at my table amongst my disciples. I will admit him at last to heaven, for his heart is right with God, but never let him be united to the church on earth.' Would you not feel this a dreadful privation? Yet you inflict it upon yourselves. Where should a child be, but with the family? Where should a lamb be, but with the flock? Where should a disciple be, but with the master? Where should a loyal subject be, but with his prince? Let me hear, upon my return, that your names are given in as candidates for fellowship.

"Professing Christians, you who are walking in church-fellowship, bear the word of admonition. 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' 'Ye are the salt of the earth;' let not 'the salt lose its savour.' 'Ye are the light of the world;' let not your light be darkness. 'Ye are a city set on a hill;' do not occupy that high station, only to be a public reproach. Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things. There is such a thing as disfiguring, deforming this doctrine. You had better be Christians than angels, if you are consistent Christians, but you had better be infidels—I was going to add, devils—than inconsistent Christians. Satan has not a more successful agent upon earth, nor God a more triumphant enemy, than an unworthy member of a Christian church. Such a man might be called Apollyon, for he is indeed a destroyer, and 'goeth about seeking whom he may devour.' Brethren, follow after peace and 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' Fly not only from what would be vice in a wicked or worldly man, but what would be a spot upon the character of a Christian. Remember you are consistent only just so far as you are like Christ. You wear His name, and His name imports His likeness. Be diligent in all the means of grace, private as well as public, week-day as well as the Sabbath. Seek the spirit of prayer, for this is

the spirit of true godliness. You that are in business, carry your religion into your worldly transactions, and let those that are without be constrained to say, 'I can trust that man, for he is a Christian. If you are servants, let your religion make you faithful, diligent, obedient, and humble; if you are masters, let it render you kind, gentle, and watchful; if you are poor, let it exhibit you contented and cheerful; if rich, spiritual, humble, and liberal. If you are parents, let your profession lead you to instruct your children in the fear of God, especially by the impressive admonition of a good example. If you are children, adorn your character by a dutiful and affectionate line of conduct towards those whom you are commanded to love and honour. May those of you into whose hands the inscrutable will of Providence has put the bitter cup of affliction, drink it with submission, remembering that 'the time is short,' that 'the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed,' and that our 'present light afflictions work out for us,' if sanctified to us, a 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

"And now, my dear hearers, after having written much more at length than it was my intention when I commenced, and I almost fear too long for your patience, I must 'commend you to God and the word of His grace, who is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' I entreat an interest in your prayers, that in due time I may be restored to you again, in renewed health and vigour, and above all, 'in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.'—I remain, your unworthy but affectionate and faithful minister,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ASSEMBLING IN CARR'S LANE, BIRMINGHAM,
THEIR FAITHFUL PASTOR SENDETH GREETING.

"WEST COWES, ISLE OF WIGHT, *August 27, 1819.*

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Although absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit; joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ, and making constant mention of you in my prayers before our heavenly Father, that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. If the tenderest interest in all your concerns, united with the most affectionate solicitude for your spiritual and eternal welfare, be among the qualifications which are required in your pastor, I do at least possess *these*.

"In the exercise of these feelings I admonish you by epistle, as I have done being present with you, to give all diligence to make your

calling and election sure. You have lately had very striking proofs of the vanity of the world, and the power and excellence of religion, in the removal of some of our friends from this low diurnal sphere, and in the sacred composure with which they sustained the approach of the last enemy. I would fain hope that the living virtues and dying supports of that dear saint who, a few months since, ascended from my side to the right hand of Him who redeemed her by His blood, are not yet forgotten. Oh, they were far too precious to be deserving of a speedy oblivion. Think how holily and unblameably she behaved herself among you for nearly fourteen years; how meekly and affectionately she ever behaved. Often look at the bright picture which her innumerable and ineffable excellences have left suspended upon your recollection, and remember that the richest honour you can bestow upon her memory is to be like her. I have sometimes been afraid lest this costly sacrifice should have been made in vain. I had need gain some spiritual improvement from it; for, as it respects this world, it has in a measure created a wilderness before me, so where I will, and opened springs of sorrow at almost every step of the journey of life. To you, however, next to God, I look for consolation, and in your holiness, spirituality, and Christian consistency find a balm for every wound, a cordial for every fear. Other breaches, I find, have been lately made upon us by the king of terrors. Not only has the aged disciple, in the full maturity of years and graces, been gathered home like a shock of corn fully ripe, but also the father of a rising family has been cut off, while his sun had scarcely attained to its meridian. Pity and pray for the widow, that she may not be swallowed up of over-much sorrow, and commend the dear children to Him with whom the fatherless findeth mercy.

“In the removal of our dear friend Elmore, the church has lost a very valuable member, and I a most affectionate friend. Cut off in the midst of his days, his death speaks loudly to us all. What now is the world or any of its concerns to him? What all those objects for which men toil, and contrive, and consume their strength? Brethren, I beseech you, dwell more upon the topics which revelation brings before the mind. Think more of the soul, and its vast concerns. Look at things unseen and eternal. Realise the thought that every moment you are verging to an everlasting state. Resist the undue anxiety which many feel about this vain transitory world; and nothing will so much enable you to do this, under the blessing of God, as to have the mind much occupied with the prospect of the world to come. Let us set up eternal glory as the back-ground of all our earthly prospects, and while moving forward amidst the pleasurable or painful varieties of the latter, keep our eye steadily fixed upon the former. How little then

stall we think of those sorrows which are irradiated by beams of splendour fetched from heaven! how little of those comforts which are lost in the radiance which spreads its glow over the whole compass of the distant horizon! My dear brethren, let our conversation be more in heaven. We are too earthly and sensual. We are too much elated by the comforts and too much depressed by the sorrows of life, forgetting how close at hand is the event which will render them both alike indifferent to us and us to them. Eternity, eternity is before us, and what should materially affect those who are moving to eternity? If a monarch were going to take possession of a kingdom, or a person were going to take possession of a large estate, neither of them would think much or care much whether the road were smooth or rough—the weather fair or foul—the carriage elegant or homely. Christians, you axe kings travelling through this world to a kingdom—heirs journeying to be vested with an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Why, then, should you think so much about the road, and the weather, and the mode of travelling? The very next point beyond death renders all that you pass through on this side of it a matter of no consequence. Let these thoughts be present with you amidst the perplexities and embarrassments of the times. Most deeply and tenderly do I feel for those of you on whom embarrassments press with peculiar weight. There is not a care which wrinkles your brow that does not reach my heart. I have prayed for you in this respect that God would appear for you. The resources of the universe are at His disposal. The silver and the gold are His, and if He do not give them to you, it is not that He does not love you, but because He sees that these things would not be good for you. What! has He given His Son for you, and would He withhold wealth from you if it were for your benefit? Look at the cross, and ask what God would be likely to deny you that is for your benefit. Cast all your care upon God. Do not appear dejected and at your wits' end like the men of the world. Let them see that your principles have a tendency to keep the mind calm and serene amidst external changes and agitations. Let them clearly discover the soothing and supporting operations of that hope which anchors upon the promise of a better and more enduring substance. Remember the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and that the times and the seasons are in His hands. Be it your earnest prayer and constant endeavour that in this season of difficulty and trial you may be kept from every dereliction of Christian principle in the transactions of worldly business. A season of worldly embarrassment is a test of Christian principle. Happy is the man who endureth temptations, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Rather suffer the greatest losses by trade than commit the

least sin to avoid them. Hold fast your integrity. How sweet will be the reflection when the time of trial is over, to reflect that you passed through it with an unsullied reputation!

“You cannot be indifferent to the dark cloud of a political nature with which God has permitted the internal concerns of our country for a season to be veiled. ‘Unreasonable and wicked men, aiming alike at the destruction of all that is venerable in our civil constitution and all that is sacred in religion, have arisen, who, under specious pretexts about liberty, are covering designs of a most mischievous and dreadful nature.’

“I should indeed blush and be ashamed if any of you were seen, in the smallest degree, to give countenance to their seditious conduct. I again repeat that loyalty is one of the fruits of piety and the injunctions of revelation. Depend upon it, that the most malignant infidelity is closely connected with that seditious spirit which has unhappily gone forth to corrupt the popular mind. As the recent transactions which have taken place are likely to agitate and divide the public mind, and as political animosities and even strong political feelings are very unfriendly to the meek and gentle spirit of true religion, I most seriously and affectionately admonish you to be upon your guard against suffering your minds to be too deeply engaged in the subject, or your tongues from being too busily employed in the discussions which, in every house and every company, are sure to be carried on. Avoid all excess of feeling and dissension. Say but little, and speak mildly. If you feel strongly, you will need to be still more upon your guard. Nothing can compensate for an injury inflicted upon your own personal religion, and religion is never more in danger than when enveloped in the mist of political feeling. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men.

“It gives me great pleasure to hear that everything continues to go on with regularity and harmony in my absence. I trust this will continue. The unanimity which has subsisted in relation to the great work which is upon our hands, if not absolutely perfect, is more than could have been expected considering the magnitude of the undertaking. It is, indeed, a mighty work; and glorious, I hope, will be the results. Who does not feel a glow of sacred delight at the thought of helping to build a place where, for ages, two thousand immortal souls will hear the glorious gospel of the blessed God? What an unspeakable honour! Compared with the good to be expected, what are the sacrifices which must be made for its completion? I admit, that a cloud has arisen since the work commenced, which many regard with peculiar dread, and I admit, that had the present difficulties existed before the work was begun, it would have been prudent to suspend it for a

season; but, as the national embarrassments have come on since we began, we have only to continue with firmness, looking up to Him who has the silver and gold at His command. 'Tis true, we are not to expect miracles even for the support of the cause of God; but, I think, we may humbly hope, that for a work so obviously connected with His glory, He will provide us with the means. We must, however, every one of us determine to exert himself to the uttermost. We must stand prepared to deny ourselves some of the usual luxuries of life, rejoicing that God hath put it into our heart to do this thing for His name's sake. Bearing in mind your affectionate solicitude for my health, I have given every degree of attention to the subject; having, on no Sabbath, preached more than once, nor ever more than once in the week. I am thankful to say that my strength continues to increase, and that, for the ordinary duties of my office, I feel as equal as at any period of my ministry.

"I commend to your affection my dear friend and fellow-labourer Mr Adams, whose name in Hampshire, but more especially in this island, is a precious perfume. Love him for his work and his piety's sake.

"I beg you to accept, individually, my warmest and most grateful love. This letter is but little worth your attention, in consequence of its being written amidst many interruptions.

"Commending you to God and the word of His grace, I remain, your devoted and faithful pastor,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ASSEMBLING IN CARR'S LANE.

"LONDON, *February 15, 1822.*

"MY BELOVED FLOCK,—If it were necessary, after the sixteen years that I have spent amongst you, to speak of my affection for you, I would rather refer you to my conduct during all that period, than abound in expressions of the strongest regard. I may, however, with propriety, because I can with sincerity, adopt, in reference to you, the language which St Paul applied to his beloved Philippian converts, and call you? My brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown.' All of you are the subjects of my pastoral care, many of you the fruits of my ministerial labours,—considerations these which, in addition to the usual grounds of brotherly love, give you a high place in my heart.

"Most truly can I aver, that, to promote your best interests is the anxious wish of my soul; and the consciousness of having in any measure attained this object, is one of the sublimest gratifications of my life. The bond which unites a faithful pastor to an affectionate flock,

is no common tie, but gives rise to feelings, and motion to energies of a most elevated nature. Through whatever part of the religious world I journey, and amidst whatever scenes I sojourn, I turn to you with the fond feelings of a heart that considers your society as its religious home; and, at the same time, I rejoice in the assurance, that I have not to say with the apostle, the more I love, the less am I beloved. Every demonstration that you *could* give of your attachment, you have given. You have approved my labours, you have ministered to me in sickness, you have provided for my comfort, you have made me the subject of your prayers, and have left nothing undone by which you could manifest your esteem and regard. If other ministers have had to complain of a cold, neglectful line of conduct from their people, I have never for a moment had any ground for such an accusation. Such a state of things between us has led on my part to that decided, unwavering, unhesitating, preference for the people of my charge, which nothing for a moment could change or diminish. Other churches have offered me inducements to leave you, when your prosperity was far less than it now is; but they were presented to a mind too fixed in its choice to be attracted by the prospect of a larger salary, or a richer congregation. I received you as the people not only of my charge, but my preference: as such you have continued, and as such you remain to this day.

“With such feelings, absence from you, though it has been frequent, has never been pleasant to me. Some ministers are put more in requisition for the public than others. It has been the lot of your pastor to have many demands of this nature urged upon him—demands which it has been impossible for him wholly to resist. He can, however, assure you, that it has been the subject of much reproach upon him from abroad, that he confined himself so much at home.

“My present absence, at least for the greater part of the time, was by no means a voluntary one, and has, on your account, from the length of it, been a source of the most acute distress to my mind. My labours on the first Sabbath in January, at a time when I was suffering under a severe bilious attack, brought on a state of feverish languor and debility, for the consequences of which I was certainly a little alarmed. I suffered far more illness than I was willing my people should know; and hence, I charged the few friends who visited me, not to circulate alarms, which I hoped a little time would remove. I was certainly very ill, and my skilful and attentive physician ordered an immediate journey. Thanks to the Father of mercies, my visit to my native air, with constant exercise on horseback, has been of great service to my health; and, I am sure, I do not miscalculate your affection, when I express my confidence, that you will rejoice in my gradual return to

health. When I say return to health, I must of course be understood in a comparative sense; for, after the dangerous illness which I experienced five years since, I must never look for that robustness of constitution which I enjoyed before the attack. Experience has proved to me that I must not be surprised at frequent returns of indisposition. On this ground I may probably have need of your patience.

“It has aggravated the distress of my absence greatly, to know that my supplies have not altogether met with your approbation. Most grieved have I been to learn that considerable dissatisfaction has prevailed on this ground through a large portion of the congregation. It should be recollected, that my attack being sudden gave no time for previous arrangement and extended application. Mr — had been engaged to preach in the afternoon, for a few Sabbaths, as probationer for the office of assistant-minister, and it was thought advisable, in the existing state of things, that he should preach morning and evening for two Lord’s days. Efforts more than you can conceive of were made by myself to procure acceptable assistance; and by a most singular concurrence of circumstances, these efforts in almost every case were followed by disappointment. I have written an incredible number of letters on the subject, and I regret with so little success. I am happy, however, to express my hope, that I shall trespass very little longer on your patience. After two more Sabbaths I expect to be at my post, and for these two I have provided supplies, whom nothing but a sinfully fastidious taste can render unwelcome in my pulpit. And having mentioned the subject of fastidious taste, I cannot but express my fears that there is rather more of this in our church, and more looking to the messenger, and less to the message, than there ought to be, I have often been grieved at that restlessness and dissatisfaction which have discovered themselves, if even for a single Sabbath the supply had not some of the features of a popular preacher. You will readily believe me when I say, that I wish to give place to no one in your estimation as a preacher; yet, still I could desire to see a little more willingness to hear others when I am occasionally absent. I am not to be understood as pleading for more frequent leave of retirement from my home duties, or as giving any intimation of being more abroad for the future; on the contrary, it is my fixed and deliberate resolution—a resolution to which I am brought no less by a sense of duty than by inclination—to give up all public engagements whatever, besides those which are already made, and to confine my exertions almost exclusively to my own congregation. All that I have of physical or mental strength shall be in future almost undividedly yours. It is your due, and you shall have it. The public are nothing to me in com-

parison with you. I am your shepherd, and the flock have a just right to the attention of their pastor.

"In the new relationship to which I am looking forward, I have consulted your comfort no less than my own, as I believe the result will prove.

"You will not be displeased to hear that I have preached once every Sabbath since I have left home; and last Sabbath-day morning was very unexpectedly called to preach in Surrey Chapel, and am thankful to say did not feel the worse for the exertion.

"Commending you to God, and the word of His grace, who is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified, I remain, your affectionate pastor,

"J. A. JAMES."

The answer of the church to the foregoing letter, written after his second marriage:—

TO THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ASSEMBLING IN CARR'S
LANE CHAPEL.

"DEAR SIR,—As through the superintendence and guidance of an all-wise Providence, you have entered into a most interesting and honourable connexion; and as it hath pleased the Great Head of the Church to remove the severe indisposition under which you have so recently laboured, and to restore you to comparative health and strength; permit us, as the flock over which you are the endeared and beloved pastor, to offer our sincere and heartfelt congratulations. Accept, as a pledge and a proof of continued affection and esteem, our desire to participate in your joys as well as your sorrows; to rejoice when you rejoice, as well as to weep when you weep. It is our ardent wish that the scenes through which we are called to pass, whether they be prosperous or adverse, may have the tendency of exciting those reciprocal sympathies and good wishes which shall bind us still closer to each other, and strengthen that union which, through the blessing of God, has been crowned with the most glorious and auspicious consequences. The anxiety which you manifest for our welfare during your absence; your earnest solicitude to promote our immortal interests when present; your disinterestedness in refusing to accept of the more splendid offers of other churches; your avowal of the decided preference which you entertain for the people of your charge, induce us to believe that, on your part, the bond of connexion is daily acquiring strength and firmness. We trust, also, that we shall not incur the charge of insincerity when we affirm, that your anxious care, your unwearied and persevering labours of love on our behalf, your fixed determination to continue

with us, notwithstanding the change which has taken place in your circumstances, have produced corresponding feelings of love and esteem, and cemented more strongly on our part the hallowed union.

“If, during your absence, we appeared to be fastidious, it was not because we despised the servants of Christ, (for we desire to ‘esteem all of them very highly in love for their work’s sake,’) but because we were convinced that the shepherd who was best acquainted with our wants and our circumstances, was best able to apportion to us that food which we required, and to break to us the bread of everlasting life. It resulted from a firm conviction that your ministry was more adapted to promote our benefit and advantage, than the ministry of any other person.

“With such views and such feelings, we hail with unmingled delight and pleasure your resolution to confine your labours more exclusively to your own flock; and more especially so, as we are convinced that it was a resolution prompted as well by a sense of inclination as of duty; and that it originated in an increasing affection for your people, and a more ardent desire to promote their eternal as well as temporal felicity.

“We humbly hope, that through the influence of the Spirit of God, our profiting and growth in grace, and every other Christian virtue, may render us more worthy to receive, and you more ready to bestow, your undivided labours.

“May the wise Disposer of all events consecrate with His rich blessings and inestimable favours, the endeared relationship into which you have entered; may He render the union more permanent and durable than *that*, the transient and fleeting nature of which we saw and deeply deplored!

“May the happiness derived from it soothe your mind in seasons of domestic sorrow, and alleviate the burden and anxiety of public duties; may it sweeten those cares, and soften those woes, from which no station in life can possibly exempt us; but above all, may it be the means of promoting the honour and glory of God, and the welfare of immortal souls!

“May you and the partner of your life enjoy continually the smiles of Heaven; may a long life of health, of happiness, and peace be granted to you; may your paths, like the path of ‘the just, shine brighter and brighter unto a perfect day,’ and at last, after having spent your days in the service of your Maker, may you descend to the grave laden with the fruits and honours of those who have ‘turned many to righteousness,’ and like them shine as stars of the first magnitude, and in the celestial city wear a bright diadem, and an unfading crown, is the earnest wish, and sincere desire, and fervent prayer, of your affectionate flock.”

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ASSEMBLING IN CARR'S LANE, BIRMINGHAM,
UNDER THE PASTORAL CARE OF JOHN ANGELL JAMES, TO THE
CHURCHES OF CHRIST, WITH THEIR BISHOPS AND DEACONS,
ASSEMBLING FOR THE WORSHIP OF ALMIGHTY GOD IN VARIOUS
PARTS OF THE ISLAND OF TAHITI.

“DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,—Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. As ye also heard of Mr Nott and others, our dear fellow-servants, who are for you faithful ministers of Christ, and who have declared unto us your love in the spirit. The account of your conversions, dear brethren, from the worship of dumb idols to serve the living and true God, was a cause of unspeakable delight to us, and we have innumerable times blessed God our heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, for this great and glorious change. God be thanked that though ye were the servants of sin, ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which ye were delivered. It is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes. What else but divine grace could have enlightened your understanding to see the great wickedness of idolatry, or have caused your heart to abhor and forsake it? How justly might God have said concerning you, ‘They are tied to their idols, let them alone!’ But blessed be His glorious name, instead of this He has made you to exclaim, ‘What have we any more to do with idols? Other lords have had dominion over us, but by thee only, Jehovah, will we be called.’ How truly, dear brethren, has the apostle John said that ‘God is love!’ ‘In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.’ The love of God, in sending Jesus Christ to die upon the cross for our sins, is the greatest wonder that we shall ever hear of on earth or in heaven, in time or through eternity. How constantly should we think of it, how much should we talk of it, how great should be our gratitude to God, how strong our love to Jesus Christ!

“Dearly-beloved brethren, we are quite sure that you have a deep

sense of your obligation to God for sending missionaries to your islands. What a change has the gospel produced in your customs, manners, and feelings! No infant murder, no human sacrifice, no bloody wars are practised now. Husbands and wives live, and eat, and dwell together. Parents, instead of destroying their children, bring them up in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound! You have proved, by your happy experience, 'that godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.'

"Oh, happy, happy Tahitians! we doubt not that you feel greatly indebted to those dear men of God who first brought to you the glad tidings of salvation. *We* in England love them for what they have done for you; and how much more may it be expected that you should love them! Do everything in your power to promote their comfort; in order to this hearken diligently to their advice, constantly attend their ministry, and never grieve them by sinning against God. The sins of the people are the deepest afflictions of a minister's heart.

"We earnestly pray for you, dear brethren, that you may persevere in faith and holiness to the end of life, for Christ has said, 'Then are ye my disciples indeed, if ye continue in my word.' Remember that it is only such as continue to the end that shall be saved. We are surrounded by trials, temptations abound in every place, and many by this means make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience—and if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the proverb, 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.'

"We would most affectionately warn you, dear brethren, against the temptations to which we think you will be exposed in future. As your civilisation advances, and your island, with others in the Pacific Ocean, becomes more improved, you will, in all probability, be visited by more ships from different parts of the world; the crews of which, often consisting of men that fear not God, will tempt you in various ways to sin against the Lord. Your wives and your daughters will be tempted to lewd conduct, and your men to drunkenness, falsehood, deceit, and injustice. Against these things we most affectionately warn you, and entreat you to watch unto prayer. Alas! alas! that we should have to caution you against the vices of our own countrymen! but there are great multitudes among us, who, though Christians by name, are not in

reality. Your dangers will perpetually increase, and it is only by a deep-rooted fear of God in your hearts that you can escape them. As British property becomes more and more introduced among you, there will be more room for envy, jealousy, dishonesty, and covetousness. All of which, as your honoured teachers, the missionaries, inform you, or rather as the Word of God tells you, are very wicked in the sight of God. It is by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil. You must depend for protection on the grace of God. It is not the strength of power but of principle that must defend you. How would it distress us if we should ever be informed that our dear Tahitian brethren had lost their first love, and had sank into the pollutions of the world! But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

“We doubt not, brethren, that you will continue to increase in diligence and industry in reference to your temporal concerns. Running water is sweet and pure, but stagnant water soon becomes foul and offensive. ‘Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do,’ and our idle days are his busy days.

“Cultivate your gardens, multiply the useful furniture of your houses, promote in every possible way the improvement of your island. We are very anxious that you should all be able to write, and especially to read, and therefore hope you will be constant in your attendance at the school. What a useful art is writing, and especially printing! Be very attentive to the education of your children, let them at home neither hear nor see anything in you but would recommend religion. Example is more powerful than precept. It is in vain to teach them religion by your words unless you shew it to them by your actions. Teach them to obey you, but provoke them not to wrath. Be firm, but mild. Govern them in love. Subdue them by kindness. Send them early, punctually, and constantly to school. It will be a disgrace if a single Tahitian child should grow up in ignorance.

“We are most happy, dearly beloved brethren, in being informed that you have a system of wise, just, and humane laws. No state can be happy or prosperous without good laws, and no laws can be effectual unless the people determine to support them. Next to your Bible, your laws are the greatest benefit you have received from the missionaries. Our king in England does not rule by his own will, but by the laws which are made by him and the people, and we hope that you will fear God, honour the king, and respect the laws. It is a cause of great pleasure and thankfulness to us, brethren, to learn your zeal for the Lord God of hosts, and your love for mankind, as manifested by your forming missionary societies, and sending missionaries to other islands which have not yet cast away their idols. Every Christian church

ought, so to speak, to be a missionary society in itself. It was so in the days of the apostles, and should be so in our days. When a Bible comes into a man's hand, his first duty is to believe and practise it himself, his second is to help his neighbour to believe and practise it. How can we love God if we are not anxious to destroy idolatry, or how can we love our neighbour as ourselves if we do not endeavour that he should possess the blessings of the gospel as well as we? Would you, or should we in Britain, ever have had any knowledge of the true God, or of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, had it not been for missionaries? No! how much then is it our duty to send missionaries to others! We hope that from you will sound out the word of God all through the islands of the vast Pacific. Look out from among you the most holy, the most courageous, the most prudent, and the most learned of your own number, and let them give themselves to reading, meditation, and prayer, and especially let them be instructed by the missionaries in all useful knowledge, and go forth to preach the gospel among the heathen.

“Every country that is converted to Christianity should, in process of time, find both ministers for itself, and missionaries for its neighbours, amongst its own converted natives, and not be dependent upon a foreign country, and this is the way for the word of the Lord to have free course and be glorified. The visit of your dear minister and our beloved brother Mr Nott to this kingdom, and especially to this town, from which he formerly went out, has been a source of great delight to thousands of the saints in England, and has refreshed the hearts of many. We all esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake, and having blessed God for permitting us to see him, we send him back with many prayers for the safety of his passage, the continuance of his life and health, and the success of his labours through the future years of his continuance on earth.

“While we cherish a very strong affection for all your missionaries whom we have never seen, we entertain a very peculiar regard for those whom we personally know. We feel greatly honoured in having sent out to you a member of our own church, and his wife, to aid those who already laboured among you in word and doctrine. Mr Pritchard was among us a brother dearly beloved, whom we would gladly have retained, had not the Lord inclined his heart to quit his native country and live and die among you. We commend him and his wife to your deserved regards. And now, brethren, in conclusion, we beseech you to walk worthy of your vocation in all holiness, meekness, love, and humility, and pray that we may do the same ourselves, that when we meet, (as we shall do at the last day before the judgment-seat of Christ, and never till then,) our meeting may take place at the right hand of

Him who sitteth on the throne, and that we may hear the voice of our Divine Lord saying to each of us, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; ye have been faithful in a few things, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.'

"JOHN ANGELL JAMES, <i>Pastor</i> ,	}	<i>Deacons</i>
"THOMAS COCKS,		
"JOSEPH PHIPSON,		
"WILLIAM EDWARDS,		
"JOHN GAUSBY,		
"JOHN BERRY,		
"JOHN WALFORD,		
"THOMAS BEILBY,		
"JAMES JAMES,		

"Passed at a meeting of the church, held September 29, 1826, and signed on their behalf, by

TO THE REV. W. PATTON, D.D., OF NEW YORK.

"BIRMINGHAM, *February* 19, 1827.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . I have an invincible dislike of letter-writing, which has often subjected me to heavy charges and more serious accusations, than those I have provoked from you.

"You will please to accept my best thanks both for your letters and pamphlets. Dr Griffin's 'Concio ad Cleros,' is exceedingly good, and 'The Moral Grandeur of the Missionary Enterprise,' is a very striking discourse. It is truly delightful to see that talent is peculiar to no country, and that great powers of mind are everywhere employed in the cause of our glorious Redeemer. America has yet produced no great authors, at least with few exceptions; but in the department of theology, and in her Edwards, she stands pre-eminent in the science of sacred truth. Dwight is excellent, and has more of the graces of composition, but less of profundity, than Edwards. I think the latter will never be surpassed as a theological reasoner. I have herewith sent you two sermons which I have published since you were here—one on the death of my venerable tutor, and the other preached on occasion of the opening of our new Mission College; they are not worth the transit across the Atlantic, but if they have no intrinsic worth, you will perhaps feel some little interest in them on account of their author. I have also sent you a copy of a work which I consider to be an astonishing production. The author is comparatively a young man, but a man of prodigious reading, as will be evident to you from a perusal of his book. It is much admired in this country. I should tell you that Mr Douglas is a Scotch layman, and will not be liked the less by you for being a Presbyterian.

“Well, how goes on the great cause of Truth and Holiness in America, in New York, and in your own congregation? I expect great things from your country in every point of view. I believe that the United States are destined to a distinguished place in the future history of the world. If you do not divide into separate kingdoms, which I think you will do in process of time, you must be the greatest and most powerful people on earth. And I think that as your wealth increases, you will do much more than you have ever yet done for the spread of Christ’s kingdom in the world.

“Your Foreign Missions do not yet bear a proportion to your population and your piety. To be sure, you have the Indians to attend to in your back settlements. Religion is, I hope, gaining ground in this country. It is spreading in the higher walks of life. Several of our nobles, and many of our gentry, are become truly pious; our evangelical Episcopal clergy are still increasing, and, I believe, their labours are very successful in turning sinners to God. Our religious institutions continue to be well supplied, but the Bible Society controversy has given some little check to the distinguished career of that noble organisation of religious zeal. Perhaps this check will be salutary, and was necessary. We were becoming proud and vain-glorious. We were in danger of almost worshipping the Society as such, and exalting the Bible, perhaps in a forgetfulness of the God of the Bible. God is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another. We must be cautious against doing His work in our own strength, and in our own spirit. The Scotch opponents of the Society’s proceedings have been actuated by a bad spirit, and have strangely lost sight of that declaration, that ‘the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.’ I am happy to say that the ferment is rapidly subsiding, and that I hope nothing will in a little time remain, but the fruits of a sanctified affliction. The Society was certainly at one time in peril. God, in mercy to the world, has preserved it. Blessed be His holy name! Our Missionary Society is, happily, preserved in peace, but its expenditure is swelling beyond its income in so rapid a manner that, unless the public come forward in an extraordinary manner, we must curtail our Missions.

“My own congregation is much in the same state as when you were here. Nothing very remarkable in the way of success has lately followed my labours.”

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“BIRMINGHAM, *February 2, 1828.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I must commence my letter with the language of apology, for having suffered your first communication to remain unanswered till my neglect was reproached,

and my recollections quickened, by the arrival of your second epistle. It is usual to plead in excuse for such omissions, the number and urgency of engagements, but such attempts at extenuation are usually but one remove from falsehood. I shall not, therefore, resort to them, but confess my fault, promise amendment, and ask forgiveness.

“I am indeed your debtor, not only for the letters themselves, and for the pamphlets, but for the information you have conveyed to me of the progress of religion in the United States; for although the general facts to which you allude have obtained considerable publicity in this country, they are of a nature so truly gratifying to every one who is concerned for the extension of the Redeemer’s cause, that like a person listening to the tidings of a victory, we delight to hear the blissful details repeated, though it be ever so frequently, and especially by those who helped to fight the battle, and to achieve the conquest. Your country, my friend, seems selected by the Sovereign Dispenser of all grace, for the richest communications of spiritual blessings. Gladly would I come, if it were possible, to see the grace of God, and with all gladness to exhort you with full purpose to cleave unto God. For a few months’ residence in America I would forego most willingly the pleasure of a visit to the classic scenes of Greece and Rome: gladly would I yield to others the associations connected with the mouldering monuments of ancient greatness, to look upon the rising fabric of future empire; and especially would I abandon, without a moment’s hesitation or regret, the opportunity of seeing all that is left of those splendid ruins, which, while they proclaim the splendour of human genius, no less truly prove the depravity of the human heart, to gaze upon the spiritual temples of the Triune Jehovah, which are rising all over that land, which, so short a time since, was a moral as well as a natural wilderness. If I were so much of an Englishman as to forget that I am a Christian, or permitted what some call patriotism to smother and extinguish the purer flame of Christian love which burns in my bosom, I should look on the United States with feelings of alarm, and of jealousy, and of gloomy anticipation: but this is not the case. I rejoice with all the full fervour of universal benevolence in what I see going on in transatlantic regions; and much I do see going on for the glory of God, and the good of the human race. All the germs of human greatness and human happiness are there, vegetating in soil of uncommon luxuriance, fostered by institutions adapted to their growth, and nurtured by the choicest influences of Heaven. Go on, my dear brother, to fan, by the breathings of a Heaven-kindled eloquence,—that is, the eloquence not of words, but of thoughts—not of the school of rhetoric, but of religion—not on the model of Cicero, but of Paul,—the flame of public spirit. Most gratefully do I bless our Lord Jesus

Christ, that He has put His own mind and spirit into so many of His American servants. But how shall we account for your revivals? I now, of course, mean as to *second* causes and means. One, and perhaps the first of secondary causes, is that you seek them and expect them. Then perhaps may be mentioned, that you have not to contend, as we have, with the prejudices of an Established religion. I do think that much is to be set down to this. This is one of the fearful and distressing evils resulting from an Establishment; men are bound by it to particular persons, and forms, and habits of thought, and feeling, and action; anything which does not come from canonical individuals, and in a prescribed way, instantly arrays all the prejudices of bigotry—*i.e.*, human depravity, in the form of zeal against innovation—against it. We are hindered, effectually hindered, in our attempts, at least oftentimes, especially in small towns and villages, by the intolerance of the clergy and their flocks. Of Revivals, strictly so-called, I am sorry to say, we know nothing in this country. It is true that religion is, I think, steadily advancing, but it is more in the way of silent and unmarked progress, than in that of conspicuous and noticeable movements. I am also a little apprehensive, that neither our people nor our ministers are distinguished for depth and fervour of pious feeling. I am both delighted and astonished at the liberality displayed by the friends of missions in New York. Christians seem coming to the conviction, that all they *have*, as well as all they *are*, belongs to God. I am of opinion, however, that there is in the present day a proneness to depend rather upon organised systems of human energy, than upon God's own Spirit and grace. Our *societies* are to do everything, and we must have large and impressive combinations of men, and means, and wealth, and wisdom, or we do not expect any result. But was this the way in which the gospel was first spread? How is it that we hear nothing of separate churches sending out their messengers and missionaries into the field, supporting them, and supplying them with all necessary assistance, and looking up to Him who can bless the feeblest means. We must have great and imposing associations, or our weak faith and self-dependence are apt to suggest that we can do nothing. And then we should endeavour to make the cause, so far as means can go, self-propagating. Every convert from paganism, who has even tolerable qualifications, should be a preacher of righteousness.

“You have much indeed to do for your own country, as well as for the heathen. Your population increases so rapidly, that unless prodigious exertions are made to train up a very large number of ministers, your people will, to a very great extent, be a population of practical atheists. I do not think that an appeal to the benevolence of this country would be followed with any beneficial results, and that for two

reasons: First, It must be confined to the Dissenters, for the Church people would do nothing; and, secondly, The hands of the Dissenters are already so full, that they cannot do all they wish to do for our own population, a great part of which are as destitute of religious instruction as yours can be in any of the back settlements. You must, therefore, go on calling out the pecuniary resources of the people, and bringing them to this great principle, that they have no right to live in houses ceiled with cedar, and to feast at tables covered with luxuries, as long as the Lord's house lieth waste, and the souls of men are famishing for want of the bread of life. I have read with great pleasure and edification your excellent sermon. It is just in all its reasonings, and forcible in its appeals, and will, I trust, be followed with the Divine blessing. We are going to form a society on Wednesday evening, for the purpose of diffusing Christian instruction through the myriads of our population, in this town, who are living without God and without hope in the world.

"I know not whether the attention of your ministers has been at all excited to the study of the unfulfilled symbolical prophecies of Daniel and John. The subject has been taken up pretty extensively in this country, especially by some ministers in London, at the head of whom is the celebrated Mr Irving. I am in no degree infected with the passion, being persuaded that time is the best expounder of prophecy. I never could make up my mind on the meaning of the Apocalypse, except as to its general design. No expositor that I ever read, and I have read many, has yet satisfied me: and, as they all disagree among themselves, I think it is a presumption that none of them understand the subject. I am also afraid that evil will arise from the prevalence of the study, inasmuch as religious people will be taken off from labouring, to bring on the millennium, to watch the signs, and calculate the time of its approach. I have sent you a volume of sermons on the 'Evidences of Christianity,' preached by some of the London Independent ministers. Some of them are very superior discourses. I have also put in a little production of my own. I feel gratified by your remembrance of me at the Falls of Niagara: it was no small proof of friendship that my name should occur to your recollection amidst such scenes of sublime and absorbing grandeur. The cane from Goat Island has not yet arrived, but will be much valued when it does. My family, through the goodness of God, are all well.

"Desiring for you every blessing, as a man, a Christian, and a minister,—I remain yours, in bonds not severed, and in communion not interrupted, by an interposing ocean,

"J. A. JAMES.

"I shall hope to hear from you again soon."

TO MRS PATTON,
ON THE DEATH OF TWO OF HER CHILDREN DURING HER HUSBAND'S
ABSENCE IN ENGLAND.

"BIRMINGHAM, *August 19, 1828.*

"MY DEAR MADAM,—An act of pure friendship needs no apology, although performed by an entire stranger; and as I am conscious that the writing of these few lines is an effort of Christian affection, and an effort made at the request of your excellent husband, I shall not ask your forgiveness for that which, under other circumstances, might he deemed an obtrusion. It will relieve your mind at once from all solicitude as to the purport of this letter, if I assure you that its only object is, to condole with you as a mother bereaved of her children, and to inform you that Mr Patton is greatly improved and still improving in health; and bore the communication, which it was my painful office to make to him, of the sad intelligence of his loss, with more than manly fortitude, with the most Christian resignation. It was indeed both affecting and instructive to be the witness of his chastened grief and meek submission, and we glorified God in him. It was a great cordial to his mind to learn, that you had been so graciously supported in the hour of your severe trial by 'Him who comforteth those that are cast down,' and that you had been enabled to keep silence, if not to say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' You will be pleased to hear, my dear madam, that, to borrow the words of the excellent Philip Henry, 'weeping did not hinder sowing,' and that the next day after Mr Patton received the mournful news, which was the Sabbath-day, he stood up in my pulpit, and to a congregation of nearly two thousand people, bore his testimony for the Lord God our Saviour, and gave us some account of what he had seen and heard of the work of revival in America. I have reason to believe his visit was amongst the merciful arrangements of the Great Head of the Church, and that it will appear at the last day that 'he must needs pass through 'Birmingham. At our prayer-meeting the next evening, there was a congregation of twice or three times the usual number, to which I again delivered the substance of your good husband's address, and I do hope that although we may not have what in your happy and highly-favoured country is meant by a revival, we shall have God's great and good work in the souls of men revived amongst us.

"And now, my dear madam, may you be filled with 'all joy and peace in believing,' that in the full assurance of faith and hope you may find

'A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for your fears.'

"Your husband, when I broke to him the intelligence, in as delicate and gradual a manner as possible, replied, 'It is right, all right. I dedicated them to God in baptism, and He has a greater right to them than we have.' Echo his language, and say, 'It is right; yes, all right.' Ah! my friend, it will all end well if we do. As sinners we have no right, and as Christians we have no reason, to complain. We are within a circle of mercy, and nothing can reach us but what passes through that reconciling medium. As to your dear babes, they are in glory, and as to yourself and your husband, you are going thither. What more would you have, can you have? They have sipped the cup of human life, and are gone to drink of the river 'clear as crystal, which floweth from the throne of God and the Lamb.'

"Think of the mercy of Mr Patton's recruited strength, and set one thing over against the other. May the Lord grant you a happy interview with each other, and many years of mutual comfort and helpfulness! My wife unites with me in kind regards.—I remain, my dear madam, your friend and brother in Christ,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

"BIRMINGHAM, *December 13, 1828.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—The receipt of your letter gave us unfeigned delight, and a new occasion of praise to the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, on account of your safe arrival in the bosom of your family and flock. We bless God that He sent you here, and overruled your personal affliction for the good of many who have been stirred up by your account of God's dealings with the churches in America, to seek the same blessings for themselves; and we now bless Him also that He has taken you back in renewed health and strength, to be instrumental in carrying on the great and glorious work in New York. After you left us, we watched the direction of the clouds with a fresh interest, hoping that He who appoints the winds from what quarter they are to blow, would give you the breezes that were necessary to waft you to your desired haven. Your visit to this country has been, I believe, the means, in connexion with the printed accounts which have been forwarded to us, of exciting a very considerable interest in the subject of revivals, of which I will now give you some account.

"About a week after you left us, I attended the ordination of a missionary at Worcester; this solemnity took place in the evening of the day appointed, the morning of which was employed in a conference on the subject of revivals, at which were present ministers of several denominations, and many persons of Mr Redford's congregation, besides Christians from other churches. As I had been much with you, I was

called upon to state the substance of the communications I had received from you in the different conversations we had held upon the subject; with this request I complied, and a very solemn feeling was produced by a conference of about two hours and a half. The hint of a deputation from America was thrown out, and the matter referred to the ministers, who, in the following week, were to be assembled at the missionary meeting, to be holden in Birmingham. At that meeting, the subject was taken up in my vestry, and discussed for the greater part of three hours. All present were deeply affected with the solemn importance of the subject, and in conclusion resolutions were agreed to, recommending a consideration of the subject to the Congregational Board of our denomination in London. The Board was specially convened to take our resolutions into consideration, when two successive adjournments took place, and at length the resolutions were agreed to, which you will find in the *Congregational Magazine* forwarded herewith. At these meetings of our ministers in London, the most heart-affecting impressions were produced; an unusual solemnity prevailed; aged and respectable pastors rose and confessed their unprofitableness, others joined in making the same declarations, till all present seemed melted down under a new and powerful influence. No proposition was made, as you will see, for an exchange of deputations, but merely for opening a correspondence. This I am sorry for, as I am convinced that the visits of three or four of your ministers would have been of vast service to our churches. The subject, however, has got fast hold of the public mind, both in the metropolis and in the country. Meetings are being held in many places, and the periodical publications are continually discussing it. But what I am afraid of is, that the matter will end in mere public stir and excitement. I have held a season of humiliation and prayer with my church, which lasted for three hours, and was of a very solemn character, and have appointed a monthly special season of prayer to implore the influence of the Holy Spirit upon us; but I was much grieved and disappointed to observe our last meeting not so well attended as I expected. I am afraid the piety of our churches is at a low ebb, and that the general habits of our people are not friendly to the revival or cultivation of a devotional spirit. I mean, however, by God's grace, diligently to persevere, with the hope of seeing something done. Unhappily I have been somewhat indisposed for the last six weeks, and have been prevented from being so active as I otherwise should have been; but I am considerably better, and intend, by Divine help, to apply most diligently to the work, and pray that God would arise and have mercy upon us, and cause His face to shine upon us. I long most intensely for the blessing; and entreat a special interest in your prayers, and in the prayers of as many as you can engage for us, that

God would visit us with one of those fruitful showers which have fallen upon your country.

“I have herewith sent you a complete copy of the ‘Family Monitor,’ which I am thankful to say is obtaining the favour of the public here, and selling fast. I am not now preparing anything for the press, except a pastoral letter to my people on the subject of revivals. All my time and all my strength I intend to devote to the great work of stirring up my people’s hearts to serve the Lord more fully.

“We have been visited by a Dr —— of your city, who has come over to negotiate some sort of connexion between our London Society for the Conversion of the Jews, and an institution which you have in the vicinity of New York for employing converted Jews. He seems an agreeable man, but does not seem an enthusiast in the subject of revivals.” . . .

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“BIRMINGHAM, *December 15, 1828.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—You must possess a very extraordinary and unusual measure of that charity which ‘thinketh no evil,’ if you have not before this often reproached me, and imputed all kinds of bad motives to me, for my long silence. I can only borrow the language of Themistocles, and say, ‘Strike, but hear me!’—not indeed that my explanation will be any farther a justification than to clear me, if my veracity can be confided in, from all want of real respect and sincere affection. In the first place, then, I have been a great part of the year at intervals from home, and once so long a time as six weeks together; at others, I have been engaged in bringing two volumes and a sermon through the press; for two months I have been somewhat indisposed, and though not ill enough to lay me aside from my public labour, yet so nervous as to be disinclined for everything but that which necessity compelled me to attend to. Then I have had some little difficulty in procuring two or three of the autographs which attend this letter; and, last of all, I have a strong and almost invincible dislike of letter-writing. I have told you all, and having finished my defence, await your verdict. I confess, I repent, and I hope I shall reform.

“We were much gratified to hear of your safe arrival at home, and in improved health. Yours is one of the pleasant reminiscences which furnish the more delightful scenes of the mingled and chequered history of our life. You were with us long enough to produce, but not to gratify, the feelings of Christian friendship. I suppose you are never likely to cross the Atlantic again, except it be on the same errand as brought you here before—the pursuit of health; and as this is the case, I say to you, as Louis XIV. said to our James II., of infamous

memory, when the latter was leaving the French Court for Ireland, 'The best wish I can express to your Majesty is, that I may never see your face again.' Much as I could wish to renew our personal intercourse, I cannot desire it at such an expense as your health. Blessed be God, Christian friendship, like everything else of essential Christianity, has the principle of immortality in its nature; and is one of the plants of grace which, having struggled for existence in this poor soil and this insalubrious, climate, will be transplanted to the paradise of God, and there flourish as one of the lovely flowers that bloom outside, at least, of the palace of the King in His glory. There is an expression of the apostle, than which I scarcely know any one more beautiful or comprehensive, or more gratifying to the love of Christ and of our friends, 'I beseech you by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our *gathering together* UNTO HIM.' What a gathering together! all that are saints, and all to Christ!

"Mr Patton's visit was, I believe, the means of great and lasting good to this country; by exciting a still deeper interest in the subject of revivals than had before been felt. Our periodical publications had already brought the subject before the minds of the religious public. It had been discussed, and much talked of; but as he was several months here, and had been blessed with a glorious work in his church, his company was sought by the ministers of the metropolis, conferences were held with him, and the result at present is a considerable excitement throughout the country at large. Oh that God would indeed come and bless us, and grant us if it were only the skirts of the shower which is falling so plentifully in your highly-favoured land! Our churches are, in my opinion, far from a state of sound, healthy religion. We have but little of what constitutes the essence of experimental religion. Everything is superficial. Our repentance, our faith, our love, our devotional habits, all superficial. The world has engrossed men's minds, absorbed their feelings, starved their piety. Conversions, at least supposed conversions, are not unknown, nor unfrequent in many congregations, but the work, in most instances, is not of a decisive and impressive character. Attention has been drawn off from the heart and the closet to public meetings and bustle and activity. Not that I am against public institutions for the spread of the gospel—far from it—but I am persuaded that Satan has taken advantage of them, to divert men's minds from the state of their own souls. We need a revival then; we feel that we do, and acknowledge that we do, and we are, I hope, seeking it in earnest. Oh, what a time was it at Northampton under the ministry of your illustrious Jonathan Edwards! and yet there is a problem connected with that revival which I cannot solve. In five years after it took place, the hearts of the people were so turned

against him as to account him their enemy, or at least to treat him as if he were so. Moreover, he states that, during the revival, his church had increased to six hundred members, and yet, when the church-meeting was held at which it was to be determined whether he should go or stay, there appears to have been only about two hundred and fifty present. What had become of the rest? Had they fallen back to the world? If so, would it not seem as if the supposed conversions, during the time of the revival, were but a mere temporary excitement of the feelings? I must say, that I feel so deeply interested in the subject of revivals, that I am anxious to have every objection to them removed. The existence of our National Establishment is, in this country, a great impediment in the way of such a state of things here. I am quite convinced that, had not the Church of England been set up again at the Restoration, religion would have been in a far better state in the British empire than it is now. There was piety enough in the land at that time, had it been left to its own unrestricted energy and influence, to have filled the country by this time.

"I have sent you a few autographs. The sermon of Philip Henry is a fine specimen of that eminent saint. Matthew's is not so good, but is undoubtedly genuine, as I received it from Mr Williams of Shrewsbury, who has lately published a new life of that admirable commentator. Dr Priestley's autograph I received from his son. I do not know whether you have autographs of Drs Bennett, Bogue, and Williams; if not, I have added them to your collection. I have not been able to procure anything of Samuel Pearce's, but I will still go on searching after something. Pamphlets I have sent you none, not knowing what to select.

"You will do me the favour of accepting a copy of a small volume I have lately published. I would have accompanied it with another volume on Christian Charity, which I have also published this year, but the first edition is out of print, and as the second is about to be published, I would prefer sending you a copy of that.

"You do not admit of the lawfulness of revenge, therefore I hope you will not retaliate on my long silence.

"We are much indebted for your valuable present of the India-rubber shoes, which came safe to hand, and fit admirably. They are a great curiosity, and are much admired.

"May our God and Saviour Jesus Christ continue to bless you with health, comfort, great grace, and great usefulness. My wife unites in every feeling of regard to yourself and Mrs Sprague with, yours most affectionately,

"J. A. JAMES."

NOTE.—The following extract from Dr Sprague's reply, in reference to Jonathan Edwards' treatment at Northampton, is interesting:—

"You suggest, in your letter, a difficulty respecting the revival at Northampton and Jonathan Edwards. I have not the means, at this moment, of referring to printed documents on the subject, but my impression is, that it admits of easy explanation. That that part of his congregation who passed through the revival without becoming Christians, should have been more restless than ever before, and less patient of his close and pungent dealing with the conscience, you will readily perceive was a natural consequence of their having been in a greater or less degree awakened under his preaching, and having resisted the Holy Spirit. I have myself often seen cases, during a revival, in which persons who have been regarded as models of everything that is amiable, and among the best specimens of human nature, have exhibited against the revival, and all who were active in promoting it, the venom of a viper. And there have been instances not a few, in which this has laid the foundation, on the part of those who have not been converted, for a deep and incurable prejudice against the minister; he has been guilty of the sin of disturbing their consciences, and they cannot forgive it. This would go far to explain the fact that Edwards' congregation became hostile to him. In respect to the church, you say it had increased to six hundred members during the revival, whereas only two hundred and fifty appear to have acted relative to his dismissal. The six hundred, I presume, included both males and females; the two hundred and fifty only males, as they only are accustomed to vote in church-meetings. It is probable, moreover, indeed the fact is unquestionable, that a considerable number of his friends, regarding the case as one of extreme difficulty, on account of the violent opposition that prevailed against him, did not act at all, and were not present at the meetings.

"This I take to be in general a solution of the difficulty which you suggest; though, after all, I am fully prepared to admit that there are dangers connected with revivals, and that one of the most prominent of them is precisely that to which you refer,—that of spurious conversions,—of admitting persons to the church who are nothing better than stony-ground hearers,—who have mistaken the temporary excitement of natural feeling for the spirit of true piety."

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

"BIRMINGHAM, *June 2, 1829.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—My delay in answering your numerous and interesting communications, both, written and printed, has afforded you accumulating evidence that I am a tardy correspondent. I have such an aversion to letter-writing, that it requires the dictate of necessity, the strong sense of duty, or the powerful impulse of affection, to overcome my reluctance, and to extort from me an epistle. In addition to this, I have been waiting to give you some account of several things connected with the cause of our home and foreign proceedings in reference to the kingdom of our Divine Lord.

"I shall first refer to the account contained in your last letter but one, of the interest taken by your flock in the spiritual welfare of the British churches generally, and of mine in particular. The account most deeply affected me, even to tears. I was touched to the very

centre of my heart with the idea of being the object of Christian sympathy and kindness, and the subject of prayer, by a church on the other side of the Atlantic. Herein indeed is the communion, not only of the saints, but of the churches, and a proof of that union of all believers in Christ, which cannot be dissolved nor altogether interrupted by the intervention of oceans, or the distinction of separate nations, or the differences of various denominations. Yes, we are all one in Christ. There is, there can be, but one church. You will not be surprised to be informed that your letter was read to our church when assembled on Good-Friday, for humiliation and prayer, to seek the outpouring of the Spirit for the revival of religion; and was heard with deep and solemn emotion by all present. You and your people were specially and fervently remembered by our brethren who led our devotions. We thanked God for the abundant grace bestowed upon you, and supplicated for still larger communications of the heavenly gift. It was matter of entreaty that the example of earnest, and vigorous, and fruitful piety, set us by the American churches, might be followed by the disciples of our Lord in your mother country. No feelings of envy, no disposition to detract, but a sentiment of gratitude to God, and a cordial willingness to believe to the uttermost the accounts we have received of the glorious work which is going on among you, occupied and influenced every bosom.

“It had been resolved, as you know, by the churches in London, and recommended by them to their sister churches in the country, to spend Good-Friday as a season of humiliation and prayer. This resolution was very generally adopted throughout England, not only by the Independents, but by great numbers of Baptists; and we may hope that the thousands of prayers which were presented on that day will bring down upon us showers of blessings in their season. The subject of revivals still continues to occupy the public attention. The greater number of our ministers have preached upon it, and many have printed tracts, treatises, or sermons, copies of which I herewith send you. My expectations, I confess, are not sanguine as to the results. Our professors are so entangled with the world in various ways, that I do not look at present for any great increase of their spirituality of mind or their devotional habits. My chief hope rests upon the ministers, who will, I think, be stirred up to a greater devotedness to the duties of their office, and a more intense earnestness after the conversion of sinners. Our churches are, I think, likely to be enlarged by a greater number of conversions, but I am afraid the tone of individual piety is not likely to be much raised. I have lately had an opportunity, during a long journey, to ascertain the fact that the subject has laid hold of the mind of many of our ministers, who are going more diligently to their work.

“As it respects our own church, you will see by a paper in one of the magazines that I send herewith, that I have begun an anxious-inquiry meeting, and I am happy to say with considerable success. Since that paper was written, the meeting continues not only to answer, but to exceed my expectations—new cases are continually occurring. I sent the account to the magazine, with the hope of drawing the attention of my brethren in the ministry to the subject. My address to the ministers in the January number excited considerable notice. Some cordially thanked me, but others thought me an accuser of my brethren. Thus it is, that all who would do good must pass through evil report and through good report. A great impression was produced upon our congregation by the addition of twenty-one members at once in the month of April, and the proposal of nine more as candidates for fellowship. This may seem to you a small number to be followed with any remarkable effect in the way of surprise; but here it is thought an extraordinary occurrence.

“I can most truly aver that I never felt so awful a sense of responsibility as I do at the present time; never felt so heavily the weight of the charge I have undertaken; never had such desires to be useful in the conversion of souls; never had such longings for the coming down of the Spirit in power and great glory; never was conscious of such an entire consecration of myself and all I possess to the work of the ministry; never more anxiously looked round for open doors of usefulness; never had a more humbling and afflictive sense of past inactivity and unfruitfulness; and never had larger expectation of success than at this moment. Oh that God would bless us indeed!

“I am sorry, however, to add that God is pleased to try me just now, by considerable bodily indisposition; and yet, if it pleased God, why should I say I am sorry? He doth all things well He can fit me for greater success, or do without my exertions. I have no organic disease of any kind that I know of, but am the subject of frequent attacks of nervous irritability, which disturb my sleep, and sometimes take it away whole nights together. My late journey was intended to brace up my nerves, but I do not think it has altogether accomplished the end. I desire to be thankful that I have not yet been incapacitated for my public duties; but sometimes I seem very unfit for them. In consequence of my indisposition, I took no part in the public services at the missionary meetings, although I was present at some of them.

“These meetings were as numerously attended as ever, and I think that the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society was the most deeply touching in some parts of its procedure that I ever attended. The presentation by Mr Mark Wilks of Paris, of three French missionaries to go out with Dr Philip to South Africa, was most

affecting. I think I never saw so many men in tears at once before. We saw the French Protestant Church, in that scene, laying her first-fruits to the missionary cause on the altar of the Lord. The liberality of our churches, as appeared by the statements, has kept up, but not much increased during the past year. There yet is lacking in the rich a disposition to give of their abundance, and in abundance. Now and then a generous individual gives his hundred pounds, but this is a comparatively rare thing. The responsibility attaching to property is either not yet understood, or not yet believed.

"I suppose you were a little surprised in America at the manner in which the Catholic question was settled by our Parliament. Is not the finger of God in this? The men that have for years been trying to do it were not permitted to do it, and those who have been strenuously opposed to it have done it. I think the influence of the measure will in several ways be unfriendly to Popery, and therefore rejoice in it. But what an open insult was it both to the laws of God and man, for our premier and a semi-religious peer to meet as murderers!

"I shall take into consideration the subject of an epistolary intercourse between your church and mine. I like the idea, and shall bring it before my deacons, and if they approve of it, shall prepare a letter for the adoption of the church.

"I am much obliged to you for the various books which you have sent me. Beecher's sermons are truly eloquent; and it is legitimate eloquence, there is no bombast; but I wish they were a little more interspersed with Scripture. I think this is a defect in most printed sermons on both sides the Atlantic. I received the American edition of my books with a peculiar interest of course. It was like sending my intellectual offspring to be adopted by America, and receiving them back in transatlantic clothes. God grant His blessing upon the circulation of them

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

"BIRMINGHAM, *September 14, 1829.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—You have much reason to complain again of my long silence. The date of your last letter makes me ashamed of my seeming neglect. I wish, however, that He whom we are both bound to hold in perpetual, and grateful, and adoring remembrance, had not still more cause to reproach me with oblivion than you have. Your heart must be in a holier and happier state than mine, if upon any consciousness of too much forgetfulness of an earthly friend, it is not forcibly rebuked for its criminal neglect of that dear heavenly Friend who loved us even to the death. This, however, in reference to yourself I can say, that I have more frequently thought of you and

talked of you than you, from my conduct, may be led to suppose. Enough of preamble. I have learnt that I am to congratulate you upon your academic honours. Well, although I have no pretensions to a diploma, I have some slight conscientious scruples about the propriety of D.D.'s; yet if this shall be of the least service to you in the cause of Christ, by giving you greater weight in society, and thus opening a little wider your door of usefulness, I shall rejoice in the effect. Doctor of Laws or Master of Arts does not appear to me to be liable to the same objection as Doctor of Divinity, inasmuch as the former are civil, and the latter ecclesiastical honours, and therefore not equally opposed to our Lord's prohibition, 'Be ye not called Doctor.' The trial of my principles is not, however, likely ever to be made again as it once was by some injudicious friends, whose attempts I immediately resisted, and the matter fell to the ground.

"You have seen and read, of course, the correspondence between our Congregational Board in London and the General Assembly of the United States. Nothing for a long time has more delighted me. The American letter is most beautiful; it is the eloquence of piety. I feel not a little gratified and honoured in having been, in connexion with our mutual friend, Bedford, the occasion of this auspicious commencement of our associated intercourse with the American churches. In his vestry at Worcester, at a meeting called by himself to consider the subject of revivals, I proposed that a deputation should be invited from the United States to visit our churches; the proposal was referred from that meeting to the ministers of the three midland counties about to be assembled in this town at their annual missionary meeting. It was taken up at a meeting held in my vestry, and introduced by myself. Mr Orme, the Secretary of the London Missionary Society, was present at the discussion, at the termination of which it was resolved that it should be recommended to the Congregational Board in London to open an intercourse with our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic. This is the history of the late exchange of communications, and which, I hope, will, as the letter from the General Assembly expresses it, lead to an exchange of delegates as well as letters. Delightful will it be to see the two most Christian nations in the world thus visibly united by the bond of brotherly affection and confidential intercourse. Had I nerve and health enough, it should not be long before you saw me in New England; for although I should feel a deep interest in treading the classic ground of Greece and Italy, yet would I ten times rather visit America than stand on the Acropolis of Athens, that scene 'of lost gods and godlike men,' as Byron calls it; or pace the Capitoline Hill, or the solitude of the Coliseum at Rome. Yes, I would rather look upon the blossoms of American grandeur than upon

the mouldering stones and withered leaves of Attic or of Latin beauty. Greece, or at least those remains of it which give it such an interest in the glowing imaginations of scholars, and the majority of travellers, was after all the enemy of God, and insulted the one great Jehovah by a system of mythology which, however adorned by the arts, was still an act of immorality or impiety. I want to look on the infant nation which, in the maturity of its years, its wisdom, its wealth, and its piety, is destined, I think, to do more for the spread of Christianity through the world than any other country on earth.

“I am sorry to say that I think the stir about revivals begins to abate in this kingdom. We have taught, preached, printed, and prayed about it; but somehow or other it is, I fear, slipping from the public mind. I see no signs of an approaching awakening. I hear no rustling in the tops of the mulberry trees indicative of the coming breeze. We do not seem prepared for the blessing. Our people are brimful of the world in most directions; if not of the love of the world, yet of the care of the world, and there is little room for the subject of revivals. My own church, I thank God, is in a tolerably flourishing state; yet I cannot speak of an awakening. We shall add to our fellowship this year perhaps about seventy members, which is certainly with us an unprecedented number. But the generality of our members appear to me to be in a state of much lukewarmness. My greatest hope arises from the fervent and united supplications that are presented for us by the American churches. This is a most encouraging and delightful fact; and it is so purely and manifestly in accordance with the letter and spirit of the New Testament, and must be so acceptable in the sight of God, that I do think if we ever have the blessing it will be granted to us in answer to your prayers. This should stimulate you to go on, and to abound in prayers on our behalf, and I do entreat in a particular manner that my church and their unworthy pastor may be made the subject of special intercession. I long for a blessing; I am praying for it; I am hoping for it. I have had some peculiar exercises of mind in reference to this matter, and who can tell but the Lord will come and bless us?

“There is one circumstance which I am anxious to mention, and to gain some information upon. It has been stated in this country that *a large proportion* of the Congregational churches in the New England States are Socinian, and that nevertheless the orthodox body still continues associated with them in visible connexion. Is this true in either part of the statement? Are the Socinians so numerous as this, and are you thus united? I should be obliged to you for accurate information on this subject, as the statement has occasioned no small degree of surprise. Accompanying this letter is a MS. ser-

mon of that inestimable man, Samuel Pearce. I have found considerable difficulty in obtaining an autograph of his, and have at length succeeded, much to my satisfaction, and I hope to yours. I could not obtain a letter or even a signature, but you may depend on the sermon as being a genuine document.

"I must conclude with assuring you of the sincere affection and tender interest, and pleasant remembrance of your friend and brother in Christ,

"J. A. James.

"My wife joins in affectionate regards to yourself and Mrs Sprague."

NOTE.—The following is an extract from Dr Sprague's reply, in reference to the passage in the preceding letter on the Socinianism of New England:—

"I will now answer your inquiries in reference to the Socinianism of New England, and have no doubt that I can do it quite to your satisfaction. Nearly all the Socinianism in New England is confined to Massachusetts, there being not more than about half-a-dozen churches in all the other States, and those of but little importance. In Massachusetts, I should say that from one-fourth to one-third may be Unitarian. This heresy began to come in as far back as the days of Doctors Chauncy and Mayhew, a little after the middle of the last century; but it was in a covert form, and was scarcely ever avowed until about the beginning of the present century, and not frequently till about 1811. Up to this latter period the Unitarians were not known as a sect, and no instance had occurred in which any orthodox minister had refused to exchange with them; and very few instances had occurred in which positive Unitarianism had ever been heard from any New England pulpit. Dr Codman of Dorchester was the first who declined exchanges with them, and he did it well-nigh at the expense of martyrdom; his decision drove all the Unitarians from his church, of which there were many, and had it not been for his wealth, which enabled him to purchase the church, the experiment never could have succeeded. As the Unitarians became more open, other orthodox ministers gradually followed in the steps of Dr Codman, though as late as 1820 there were a considerable number who still continued occasional exchanges. And the truth was, that in many cases there was a real difficulty in giving them up, from the fact that where heterodoxy existed it was not avowed, and in some instances the departure from the faith was so small that it was not thought sufficient to warrant a virtual excommunication, such as would seem to be implied in a refusal to exchange. I am not certain that at this day there is a single orthodox minister in New England who admits Unitarians into his pulpit, and yet I am not certain but that there are two or three who do it occasionally, because they say they must or give up their congregations to Unitarians altogether. The line between the two parties is perfectly drawn, and has been for three or four years, though there is still one occasion which brings them together; it is in a general convention for the appropriation of a fund for the widows of clergymen who are left destitute. They have a sermon on this occasion sometimes by an orthodox man, sometimes by a Unitarian, though the orthodox being the majority have now determined to keep the staff in their own hands, and have none but their own preachers. It is not improbable that the effect of this will be ultimately to divide the convention. Great efforts have been made to introduce Unitarianism into other parts of the country, and in most of our principal cities there is a single congregation, but in nearly every instance it consists of a handful, and is in a gasping state."

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“BIRMINGHAM, *June 8, 1830.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—As an opportunity presents itself of sending a letter by the return to America of the gentleman who will present this to you, and who has already performed a similar act of kindness, I avail myself of his offer, and transmit these few lines. Indeed I had intended to write before this, in consequence of a piece of information which I received a few weeks since in London. I was told, that in the exercise of your kindness, and under the influence of your friendship for Mr Fletcher of Stepney and myself, you were about to procure for us from one of the American colleges the honour of a diploma. I am not sure the report is correct, but it is so reported. If such be your intention, I beg most cordially to thank you for this fresh proof and display of your esteem, but at the same time to entreat you, so far as I am concerned, to lay aside your purpose. In declining this academic distinction, I would not be supposed to undervalue it; so far from it, did circumstances permit, I should feel myself much flattered by becoming a member of any one of your colleges—but in the first place, I decline the honour on the ground of disqualification. I am not by any means entitled to it. My literary, scientific, or even theological acquirements, are not such as authorise me to accept of it. I am merely a preacher of the gospel, not a scholar, not a philosopher, not a profound theologian. I should lose my respectability and appear ridiculous, if I were to assume the title of D.D. But secondly, I have a conscientious ground of refusal: ‘Be ye not called Rabbi,’ said He who is my Master, and whom I serve. Are not these titles, especially that of doctor of divinity, a disregard of the injunction of Christ? Duly then as I appreciate your too flattering respect, and at the same time the honour of having my unworthy name upon the college list of any one of your theological institutions, I must beg leave, for the reasons which I have stated, to decline it. I put a stop to similar efforts which were made a year or two since, by some persons in this town, to procure for me a degree from one of the Scotch universities. Mr Fletcher is pre-eminently entitled to it, and has no conscientious scruples on the subject, and upon him it would be very properly bestowed. But perhaps what I heard is a mere report; if so, I shall be glad. . . . Our May meetings this year were as well attended as ever. Our London Missionary Society has sustained a very great loss by the death of Mr Orme of Camberwell, our foreign secretary. He was an invaluable man, in every point of view; an able officer of our institution, and one of the brightest ornaments of his denomination. He was only about forty-three years of age. What an admonition to us, to ‘work while it

is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work.' The finances of our society are this year in a most flourishing condition; the receipts amounted to nearly £49,000, being £10,000 above our expenditure. I wish I could see more spiritual feeling apparent in our meetings. They appear too much like religious amusements. I am afraid that He whose eye is upon the heart, sees but little pure zeal for His glory in what is doing in the present day. All the institutions seem flourishing so far as funds, activity, and a certain kind of interest, are concerned.

"A strange medley of religious controversy has sprung up both in England and Scotland. In the former, among Mr Irving's followers, on the subject of the peccability of our Lord's human nature; and in the latter, on the subject of universal pardon, by Mr Erskine of Dundee, the author of some little treatises on the internal evidences of Christianity and Faith. He has lately gone so far in delusion, and led his followers with him, as to assert the revival of miraculous gifts, which he contends are possessed by some in the north. Oh what a mercy is it to be kept sound in the faith, and with sobriety of judgment!"

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

"EDGBASTON, *April 12, 1831.*

". . . . I hope you were not hurt at my refusing to wear the honours which you so kindly procured for me from the college of New Jersey. I lament that you should have given yourself so much trouble. If, however, you wished to give me an impressive token of your respect and regard, your labour was not in vain; for although such a proof was not necessary to convince me in what light I am happy enough to be viewed by you, yet it adds to the evidence of a point to which I will not pretend that I am insensible. I still retain the same views of the subject as a matter of conscience, and were both our English universities to award me in full convocation a similar honour, I could not assume it. I perceive by an American paper forwarded to me by one of your pious citizens now in this country, that I am not without abettors of my opinion in the United States. Some Synod, I forget where, has declared its opinion, that such titles are unscriptural and improper. You received, I hope, the parcel in which was contained my letters on this subject addressed to yourself and the President of New Jersey, and in future will address me, I hope, as *Mr James* and not as *Dr James*. I am anxious to keep the matter secret in this country, that I have been offered the distinction.

"I am glad and thankful to perceive by our periodicals, that your favoured land continues to receive and enjoy the copious showers of heavenly blessings in their season, and that the city of New York has

shared largely in the gracious effusion. I shall await with some degree of impatience a little information of the extent of the revival produced by the Holy Spirit in your late attempts. As I perceive you have been much engaged in the work, I am a little anxious about your health, and shall be happy to hear from you that you are not the worse for your exertions. Should a voyage be again necessary for recruiting your strength, you know one land, on the shores of which you will be welcome, and I think you would not be long in selecting the one family in that land, which would give a heartier and kinder welcome than all the rest. I do not want to see you on such an errand; I would not buy your society at such a loss to yourself, your family, and your flock; but if the Divine Lord see fit to permit affliction to come upon you in His service, I do covet the happiness and honour, in conjunction with my wife, of doing all we can to repair the wastes of your strength, and the damages in your constitution.

“Alas! for England, on the subject of revivals! Ho symptoms of an encouraging nature appear in our churches; no certain signs of renewed vigour; no unambiguous tokens of the descending shower are to be discerned. The little stir that was made about two years ago has nearly all died away; and though it has left in some few instances a happy result in renewed ministerial exertion, it has not been followed by any visible general result. Among the great body of evangelical Dissenters things are much as they were, and within the pale of the Establishment a great deal of the religious feeling that is produced is running into the wild luxuriance of all sorts of novelties. Not a few of our evangelical clergymen are pursuing themselves, and leading their hearers to pursue, such subjects as prophetic interpretation, assurance, the revival of miracles in the Church. Both in Scotland and in England, the evangelical body is strangely unsettled, and is rambling away from the ‘old paths’ in search of something new, and for more of the deep sense of eternal realities which seems to be granted in such numerous instances to America—and yet, even with you, I can see signs of a metaphysical, scholastic theology springing up, which is wide of the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus, and which will be very likely to corrupt the taste for the sincere milk of the word. The controversy about Regeneration discovers great dialectic skill, but it appears to me too much like an attempt to settle a doctrine of the Bible without the Bible. I am persuaded that we are but just entering upon the great conflict of opinion. We know what will be the result, but for a time I believe we shall witness a partial triumph of error. There is a subtle and unavowed infidelity creeping over the public mind here. Our political horizon is also now presenting a strange aspect. The new ministry have introduced a scheme of Parliamentary reform so exten-

sive, as to be generally denominated a revolutionary measure. The balance is at present in equilibrio; the friends and opponents are preparing for the tug and strife next week. On the second reading of the bill, as you will have been informed, the measure was carried in a house of more than six hundred members present by a majority of *one*. How it will terminate I know not—but God does; and it will be all for His glory. This is enough for a Christian.”

NOTE. The controversy on Regeneration, to which Mr James alludes in this letter, was one of the numerous points of dispute between the Princeton and the New Haven divines. The Princeton theologians maintained that Regeneration consists in a change produced by the immediate action of the Holy Ghost on the disposition or bias of the mind, resulting in a change in its volitions. The theologians of New Haven maintained that the whole change is in the sinner's will and choice; that though wrought by the Holy Ghost, it does not “lie back of voluntary action,” to use the phrase constantly employed in the controversy, but in volition itself. On the one hand, it was contended that virtuous volitions imply a virtuous *state of mind*, and sinful volitions a sinful *state of mind*; it was asked, in reply, whether the state of Adam's mind was sinful before his first sinful volition; and it was contended that a sinner when required to repent might, on the Princeton theory, answer,* “You call me to the exercise of emotions which, according to your theory, are the results of a previous change of heart or bias, which change is not within my ability, inasmuch as it respects something which lies back of voluntary action, and which, therefore, is wholly independent of my will. I must wait for such a change as this; there is a necessity in the case over which I have no control.”

This question was only part of a much wider controversy which extended over many years, and ended in the disruption of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The most accessible sources of information to English readers, in reference to this most interesting passage in polemical history, are the *Quarterly Christian Spectator*, the *Biblical Repository*, and the “Princeton Essays,” selected from the *Princeton Review*.

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *April 13, 1831.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—You have proved by this time that I am a sorry kind of correspondent, and that the rarity of my letters is not compensated by their value. The date of your last communication is so remote, that I confess you have just reason to suspect either that it has never been received, or is never to be answered. Forgiveness is a Christian virtue, the exercise of which I crave in the present delinquency, and which I trust you will not refuse. Your sermons, both the detached ones and the volume addressed to the young, came safely to hand, for which I return you my sincere thanks, especially for the latter, which are exceedingly valuable. I doubt not they have been well received in

* (American) *Quarterly Christian Spectator*. 1833. P. 660.

the United States, and that by the blessing of God they will prove extensively useful. I have herewith sent you a controversial pamphlet, which I have been compelled in self-defence to publish. It has met with favourable acceptance from my own denomination, and has been admitted by the members of the Establishment at any rate to be written with candour and good feeling. It will not interest you a great deal, as your land is free from the evils of religious establishments, and not much affected by those of prelacy. The Church of England is in a very extraordinary situation at the present time, partaking very largely of the convulsions of the times, or at least manifesting many symptoms of approaching convulsions. The increase of pious clergy, and of course pious members, is undoubted and delightful, and yet withal the increase of indifference and even of hostility on the part of the nation generally is no less certain or manifest. The whole country is completely disgusted *ad nauseam* with the tithe-system, and pluralities, and the abuses of patronage; while many of the pious clergy are publishing the most extraordinary books on the abuses of the Church, and, as you will see by my pamphlet, strengthening the grounds of Dissent in the most (so far as they are themselves concerned) suicidal manner. I am inclined to think that things are tending to an unestablished episcopacy; that by and by many of the evangelical clergy will come out and select a voluntary, unendowed Episcopal Church. Many of the pious clergy in both the Established Churches of England and Scotland are sunk into strange, and much-to-be-regretted novelties of opinion. Millenarianism, universal pardon, assurance the essence of faith, the revival of miraculous gifts, the sinfulness of the human nature of Christ, are making considerable way among many, both on the northern and southern side of the Tweed; so that the evangelical world is in this country in considerable agitation. It is a little gratifying to know that the great body of orthodox Dissenters are not infected themselves, nor infecting others, with these pestilential perversions of the doctrines of grace and the records and evidences of the truth. I do not think that these errors will spread much. Satan has been making a most desperate effort to avail himself of the opportunity afforded by an age of excitement, to corrupt the faith of the saints. A subtle, covert-kind of infidelity is creeping over the more enlightened part of our population, akin to the neology of Germany; not indeed that neology as a system is much known by them, but they admit the Word of God in gross but deny it in detail. Knowledge, Knowledge is the god of their idolatry, and Reason the priest of the mysteries. Infidelity is the enemy which the Church has now to fear and to fight. Our country is waiting in a kind of awful suspense for the decisions of next week on Lord John Russell's, or rather Lord Grey's, measure on parliamentary reform. I

hardly know how it will go. If, however, it should be thrown out, the popular ferment will be very, very great. What times we live in! Everything is shaking; the scenes of Providence are rapidly shifting, as if to use the language of the late Robert Hall, the drama was soon to close. This leads me to advert to the death of that illustrious man. Yes, his eloquent tongue is hushed in the silence of death. How deeply is it to be regretted that he could not be prevailed upon to publish more; and of that which he has published, how much is it to be lamented that there is not even a single sermon which is devoted to a full and explicit statement of the peculiar and fundamental doctrines of grace! His works have many allusions to them, so that his orthodoxy is and ever must be unsuspected, but we should like to have had his lengthened testimony to such subjects. About two volumes of new matter will be published, i.e., not entirely new, but gleaned from sources not well known before. Many abstracts of sermons taken down in short-hand will also probably be published, but we must have Hall's own words, or the thing is not his. Dr Thompson's death is also a great loss. Such events are monitory to us to work while it is called to-day. And oh, what an idea do they furnish of heaven, that region of pure and holy intellect, that world of sanctified genius, that fellowship of pious minds, each reflecting the image of the great God around whose throne they assemble as the centre of their everlasting union!—Believe me, yours in the fellowship of Christ,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *December 7, 1832.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—I am really concerned that so long an interval should have elapsed between the receipt of your truly excellent volume on Revivals, and my acknowledgment of your kindness in sending it; but the fact is, that upon perusing it I was unwilling to make such acknowledgment till I could do so in a way that would more emphatically convey my sense of its value, than by a mere complimentary letter. I now send you this last of your mental offspring, and I may add, the most promising, in an English dress—a dress somewhat less costly and splendid than that in which it crossed the Atlantic, and disrobed of some of its American habiliments, to make way for some British appendages. But leaving the metaphor, and coming to matters of fact, and thus to account for what I am afraid must appear ungrateful neglect, permit me to say, that soon after the book arrived I wrote to Mr Redford, suggesting to him the expediency of his publishing it in England with a preface of his own. This he declined, but offered to do something in conjunction with myself, if any plan could be

devised for bringing it fairly before the public. Just about this time, or, I believe, upon second thoughts, just before Mr Bedford's answer came, Mr Collins of Glasgow, who has been for several years bringing out a series of old authors with prefaces written by living writers of celebrity, called upon me, and upon my shewing him your book, offered to print it if Mr Bedford or myself, or both, would write a preface. Upon conferring with Mr R., it was agreed that he should address the pastors, and I the churches, on the subject of revivals. It was found by Collins that to make way for our essays, it would be necessary to displace that of Dr Wood's, excellent as it is. After much correspondence and much delay, the book is at length placed in the hands of those who may feel interest enough in the subject of revivals to purchase it. I wish it may obtain that circulation which its importance and eminently judicious mode of discussing the momentous topic on which it treats, deserves as well as demands. I doubt not that its value will be duly appreciated in the United States. There, where corrections and safeguards were wanted more than stimulants and excitements, its influence will be great and most beneficial. You have done yourself great credit, and the cause of revivals and of religion great service, both by your own lectures and the letters you have added to them from so many able and candid men. As it respects the co-operation of your English brethren, it was thought that the recommendation of men who are somewhat known to the religious public might procure for the work more attention than it would otherwise receive; for I am sure you will not consider it as a reflection to say that you are less known in this country than your own. Your name is familiar to many of our ministers, but, of course, not to the great body of our private Christians; and on this account it was deemed advisable that you should be formally introduced by some of your friends here, who know, esteem, and love you, both for your own sake and also for your work's sake. You will find Mr Bedford no unworthy coadjutor in this your labour of love, and work of faith, and patience of hope. His fine logical mind and classical style and vigorous thinking, united with his ardent piety, render him a literary associate in whose company you will not feel ashamed to come before the public. As for your other fellow-worker, so truly unworthy did he feel himself of this fellowship, that nothing but Mr Bedford's obstinate resolution not to accompany you without him would have induced him to appear in the preface of your book. He was quite aware of the disadvantage under which he must present himself in such company; but so impressed was he with the benefit which might be derived by the ministers and the churches of this land from your volume, and Mr R.'s introduction, that to secure so rich and lasting an advantage, he felt it to be his duty to submit to

the self-denying mortification. Already have my earnest supplications ascended before the throne of grace and the fountain of life, for a great and effectual blessing to attend the circulation of the work in these United Kingdoms. I need not ask you to join your supplications with mine to the same important object, since you have a deep personal interest in the work. Do, do beseech the Giver of every good and perfect gift, that in His great mercy, and in His wise and uncontrollable sovereignty, He would be pleased to pour upon the dry, parched, and barren places in this land, some showers of blessings like those which He has caused to fall on your country. In the moral condition of America I seem every year to take a deeper interest. You cannot well imagine with what solicitude the state of your country is watched by persons of all creeds, both in politics and religion, in this land. The church party are seizing with avidity upon every fact that proves the destitution of your rapidly increasing population of the means of public religious instruction. And I do give it as my deliberate and frequently expressed opinion, that the paramount duty of American Christians is the evangelisation of their own people. Foreign missions are not so much your duty as home objects. The valley of the Mississippi, as to its spiritual condition, should receive the concentrated attention of all the members of the evangelical denominations in the United States. You want two thousand new ministers of religion every year to supply the demands of your prodigiously advancing population, and the wants of your churches. If ever, since the days of the apostles, there were a people who seemed called to the high and holy purpose of throwing all their wealth and talents into one common stock for their own religious improvement, that people is the American nation. You have no prejudices to obstruct you at every step, generated by a national establishment, as we have. Unless something, and much more still, be done by your churches, although they are already doing great things, the Catholics will outstrip you, and take possession of that portion of your territory which in half-a-century will form the very heart of your country. You must even yet bestir yourselves still more, or the condition of your population will be such as to prevent our appealing to your land, as furnishing a proof that the expansive force of Christian principle in the church when left to itself, will sooner and better supply a country with religion than legislative enactments.

“We are just entering the bustle of a general election for the reformed parliament; a new seal of our national history is about to be broken, and a new dispensation to open upon us. The Church will be reformed in its secularities, but I do not think its connexion with the State will be dissolved at present. We are all in suspense about a continental war. The obstinacy of the King of Holland in retaining Antwerp has

led to the commencement of hostilities, which we hope will terminate with the capture of that citadel; hut this cannot yet be depended upon. One thing, however, is certain,—‘The Lord God omnipotent reigneth,’ and Christ is Head over all things to His Church. We may well say, Hallelujah. I trust you, your family, and your flock have escaped the awful visitation of the cholera,—that mysterious scourge, especially of the intemperate. I know not whether Mr Delavan is a member of your church; if so, give my kind and Christian respects to him, and tell him I am sorry to say the Temperance Society does not flourish much with us.

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“EDGBASTON, *December 10, 1832.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—The volume of Dr Sprague’s Lectures on Revivals, a copy of a reprint of which I now send you, is doubtless well known to you. I think that they are well calculated to do good in the United States, and to serve as a dam to keep and guide the feeling of your churches within proper bounds, without, at the same time, stopping up its source. Mr Bedford and myself, who are both interested in the subject, have written, as you will perceive, a preface to the book, and have thus introduced it to the attention of the churches and ministers in this country. May the Divine Spirit accompany it with His blessing, and render it effectual to stir up an interest in the subject in these kingdoms! Of this, however, my hopes are at present rather low, for, in addition to the usual deadness of our religious community, we have now topics of such irresistible power and absorbing influence before the minds of our people, that I am afraid revivals of religion will be almost the last thing they think and talk about. The Reform Bill is just coming into operation. The Parliament was dissolved last week, the writs are out to elect a new one, and the fury of election contest is just about to commence, in which our pious people will be more deeply engaged than is perhaps either their duty or for their comfort. Besides this, the slavery question has taken hold of their feelings, and is much occupying their minds. The public excitement on the state of the Established Church is very great. Our ministers have, I believe, determined upon a reform,—which means, in their vocabulary, nothing more than a more equitable equalisation of church property. I do not think that any dissolution of the alliance will at present take place. The church is unquestionably rather unpopular, but still its members cleave as closely to it as ever; and, strange as it may appear, it is a fact that many wealthy Dissenters are from time to time going over to it. It is still the religion of the state, of the nobility

and gentry. There is more genteel society among its members than among the Dissenters; and in this age of extra-refinement, these are strong attractions for those who wish to find out a genteel way to heaven. Charles II. said, that the Church of England furnished a very good religion for a gentleman, and so think some of our worldly-minded evangelical Dissenters. And as there are now a great body of truly pious clergymen belonging to the National Church, they think they may as well unite a regard to the claims of piety and fashion in their outward profession of religion. But oh! these are sad symptoms of the state of piety among us. Indeed, my brother, I am afraid it is but low. Dissenters, as a body, are a little divided on the line of conduct they should pursue in the present juncture,—whether to be quiescent or aggressive—whether to let things take their own course, or to make a bold united attack upon the National Church, Our political parties are likely to be brought into envenomed conflict; and, to add to all other causes of agitation, hostilities have commenced in Belgium, and all the kings of Europe are at this moment standing with their hands upon the hilts of their swords, and watching each other's movements with suspicion and distrust. Our confidence is, that Jehovah Jesus reigns, and is 'Head over all things to His Church.' My own ecclesiastical affairs are, blessed be God, tolerably prosperous. We shall have added about fifty members to our church this year, and are likely to add, I hope, many more soon." . . .

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“EDGBASTON, *November 30, 1833.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I ought to begin this letter with an apology for not acknowledging before this your last two parcels, which, with the communications accompanying them, came safely to hand, and afforded me much information and gratification. Abbott's books are indeed most striking. Jacob is a most extraordinary man, and his brother is quite worthy of him. The 'Young Christian' is, I think, more widely circulated, read, admired, and talked of, than any book I have known in modern times. The 'Mother at Home' is also getting into innumerable families, and is the subject of conversation in almost every religious circle. The wise mothers praise it; but the fond and foolish ones, who are condemned by it, reproach it as too rigid. The 'Teacher' is of its kind quite equal to the others, and will, I doubt not, introduce more of the science of education into many schools than they had ever practised or even thought of before. These two men are raised up by God to be extensive blessings, not only to *your* country, but also to *ours*. . . . There is another subject of immense consequence to the interests and moral reputation of your

country which ought to be deeply studied by all who have her welfare at heart—I mean, the perplexing question of slavery. The determined opposition, so long and at length so successfully carried on by Great Britain against this evil, renders us still more alive than ever to the flagrant and shocking inconsistency of some of your States in retaining more than two millions of their subjects in a condition of cruel vassalage, and in a land, too, professing the most love of freedom. I am quite aware that this is a matter of state, and not federal legislation; but it does appear to all thinking people in this country that the anti-slave States have not done all they could and should do in the way of intelligent and affectionate appeal to their slave-holding neighbours, and in the way of generous willingness to bear the loss, to induce them to wipe out this foul blot on your national escutcheon. Your Colonisation Society is pretty generally considered here as a mere delusion, tending only to keep up the system of slavery. But that you in the north are participating in the crimes of the south, is apparent from your deeply-rooted prejudices against the free people of colour. The contempt and obloquy to which, however respectable in circumstances or in character these hapless beings are exposed from their white-skinned neighbours, shock our feelings in this country. I do not forget the force of habit, and how difficult it is to break through hereditary prejudices and the customs of society; nor do I forget either that it is only a little more than a quarter of a century since this land was involved in all the atrocity of the same system, and all the violence of the same prejudices. But I am anxious that the light which has at length broken in upon us should visit you. The case of Miss Crandall has produced in this land emotions of disgust and astonishment which I am not able to describe. I am the more solicitous about the matter in consequence of the revivals of religion with which your land has been visited and blessed. It is becoming more and more common for humane and even religious persons to meet our accounts of these gracious visitations with the taunt, 'Let them learn humanity towards the blacks, and we shall then perhaps be inclined to think better of their religion.' This is sufficiently mortifying to one who has said so much about America as myself. It was proposed at the last meeting of our Congregational Board in London to address a letter of affectionate and respectful expostulation to the ministers of religion in the United States, earnestly soliciting them to employ all their influence in endeavouring to soften and subdue the prejudices against the coloured people in the non-slavery States, and in attempting to induce the southern States to abolish slavery. The measure is still under consideration. Do, my dear brother, as you value the moral reputation of your country,—as you wish to make the example of your churches effective upon Chris-

tians in other countries,—as you are anxious to rouse and sustain a more liberal and zealous spirit of moral enterprise in the Protestant nations of Europe, both for their own internal improvement and the extension of religion in the world, do call the attention of your brethren to the vast importance of a more philanthropic and Christian treatment of the slaves and free blacks. Let the ministers of the gospel of all denominations take up the subject, and employ both the pulpit and the press in demolishing those prejudices which, as long as they are suffered to exist, are at once your reproach and your weakness. Pardon these suggestions, which are thrown out in a spirit of genuine solicitude for the moral reputation of your country. With this letter I send a newspaper, in which you will see how the conduct of the Americans in reference to slavery is considered by our journalists. The *Evening Mail* is in fact the *Times*, (which you may know, perhaps, is the most influential of all the English papers,) put in another form and published three days a-week as an *evening* paper. Could you convey it, with the accompanying letter, at small expense, to Dr Hewitt, Bridgeport?

“You refer to a report that I am about to visit the United States. That I have been requested to do so is very true; but it is not true that I am about to comply with the request. I am much indebted to you for your most friendly and brotherly invitation, which I cannot help wishing it were in my power to accept. Insurmountable difficulties are in the way of my seeing America, and I must therefore indulge the hope of seeing you and others whom I esteem in that land *here*. Come, and you shall be welcome.” . . .

TO THE PUPILS IN A YOUNG LADIES' SCHOOL.

“EDGBASTON, *December 4, 1833.*

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—You will, perhaps, feel some surprise, and I hope some pleasure, in receiving a few lines from one who, though till lately an entire stranger to you all, is not uninterested in your future, and especially in your eternal welfare.

“The visit I paid to the excellent family under whose kind, Christian, and truly parental care you are so happily placed, and the conversations I had, not only with those pious and well-informed ladies, to whom your general education is intrusted, but also with yourselves, have left a deep and pleasant impression on my mind, and have induced me thus to address you. The interest you appeared to take in the advice I gave you, and the many tears you shed, lead me to hope that many of you begin to ask, and to ask with a seriousness in some measure commensurate to its importance, that momentous question, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ And what question, my dear young friends, can be so appropriate to the condition of a lost sinner as an

inquiry after salvation? Oh, what a word is *salvation!* It is uttered in a moment, but it will require eternity to comprehend it, and, if lost, an eternity to deplore it. Salvation is our great business in this world; and whatever else we gain, yet if we miss this, the end of life is lost, existence is thrown away, and, to all valuable purposes, we have been made in vain. Begin life, then, my dear young ladies, with a clear perception, and keep it ever in view, of the great and merciful end of” God in sending you into the world. Eternity, vast eternity, is before you, and that eternity must be spent in heaven, or hell! This world is a great school-house; all its inhabitants are the scholars; religion is the grand lesson to be learnt; heaven is the state for which religion is to prepare us, and dying, to a Christian, is but finishing his education, and going home to his Father. I would not, for a moment, insinuate that your whole attention is to be taken up with religious matters. No. But you are commanded to seek—*first*, mark that—‘*first*, the kingdom of God and His righteousness.’ You are related to this world as well as to the next, and therefore you are to prepare for the station you are to occupy here, as well as for the duties you will have to discharge, by cultivating your mind with useful and ornamental knowledge, and by forming your character, so as most securely to give and receive pleasure. Religion is not unfriendly to any study or pursuit to which your attention will be directed at ——. Get all the knowledge of a general nature you can, but ‘with all your getting, get understanding,’ even that which consists in being made wise unto salvation. You are now about to separate, and return home to your parents. Happy and thankful ought you to feel that you have a good home to go to, and affectionate parents to receive you; but let me remind you, that there is a danger lest the joyous and innocent enjoyments of home should turn away your thoughts from the still more sacred pursuits of religion. I have known young persons who, though deeply impressed with pious subjects at school, have lost all their impressions at home, even though their parents were pious people. Before, then, you leave school, I would advise you seriously to reflect upon this, and most earnestly to jfray to God that you may be kept from losing your interest in spiritual matters, by the agreeable and lawful delights in your father’s house. Not that you are to be gloomy and unwilling to enter into the pleasures of home, for there is nothing melancholy in the fear of God and love of Christ; on the contrary, there is ‘joy and peace in believing,’ a ‘joy unspeakable,’ a ‘peace that passeth understanding.’ Who has a right to be happy, or a reason for it, but he whose sins are forgiven, who is adopted into the family of God, and entitled to everlasting glory? But I am a little jealous of school impressions of religion, and afraid lest they should be left at school, or lost at home.

Some of you have found peace through faith in Christ. Strive to keep it by looking still to Him who first gave it, and by walking in all well-pleasing before God. Remember the loveliest fruits of faith are humility and love, and the best ornament of piety a beautiful exemplification of the character of a daughter and a sister. There are others of you who are seeking the Lord, but have not yet found peace in believing. Take care. Delays are dangerous. Impressions and convictions that do not *soon* end in conversion, terminate in confusion and disappointment. Tremble lest yours should leave *you* unconverted. Nothing is so dangerous as to tamper or trifle with conviction of sin.

“There is still another class—I mean those who are not yet even convinced or deeply impressed. What! where salvation is come so near as even to some of your school-fellows, will *you not seek it?* You may never again be in a situation so favourable to your eternal welfare. Times of awakening around us are seasons of gracious invitation to ourselves. Will you leave your school-fellows to go to heaven by themselves? Take hold of their hand, and say, ‘We will go with you.’ ‘Some few are going from the school to return no more. You know not into what scenes you may be introduced in future life. Commit your way unto the Lord; say unto God from this time, ‘My Father, be Thou the guide of my youth.’ I commend you all to God. May He bless you all with the grace that is unto eternal life.—I remain, your sincere friend,

“J. A. JAMES.”

BOOK IV

DISCIPLINE,

- CHAP. I. NERVOUS DEPRESSION.
- „ II. “THE ANXIOUS INQUIRER.”
- „ III. BEREAVEMENT.
- „ IV. AUTHORSHIP—RELIGIOUS LIFE AND WORK.
LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.
NERVOUS DEPRESSION.

MOST persons, I suppose, imagined that Mr James's broad chest, firmly compacted frame, and powerful voice, indicated a constitution never troubled by the shadowy but terrible sufferings which arise from a morbid condition of the nervous system. For thirty or forty years before his death, he had the appearance of a man accustomed to pure air and constant exercise; his build was that of a country gentleman, rather than a Nonconformist divine. In the pulpit, and on the platform, he appeared to be completely at his ease; he never betrayed any agitation, except that which is occasioned by strong emotion; no one would ever have suspected that he could have had any sympathy with that dread of an audience which often paralyses strong men, and makes wise men talk very foolishly. There was never any appearance of fear, nor was there that overstrained audacity, or that unnatural calmness by which fear is often disguised. And yet for many years he scarcely ever slept on a Saturday night, so uncontrollable were the apprehensions with which he looked forward to the services of the Sunday. I have myself seen him manifest extraordinary nervous excitement in the vestry just before entering his own pulpit,—excitement occasioned by the restlessness and uncertainty of which, I suppose, many public speakers are conscious when they are intending to make any unusual effort.

In his later years, all perturbation seemed to subside the moment he faced his congregation, and it was transformed into that genial and kindly warmth which was one charm of his eloquence. Earlier in his ministry, I believe that though his fear ceased as soon as he began to preach, it left him in a state of great excitement and keen sensibility. He suffered a double loss of energy; the anticipation of having to preach deprived him of rest, and in the preaching itself there was an unnatural consumption of strength. After a time, this began to tell upon his constitution; he became so prostrate, that any special public engagement haunted and terrified him till it was over. Twice or thrice his dread became so excessive' that he was compelled to leave important services at the last moment in the hands of his brethren. His sufferings, reached their climax in the prospect of an engagement at Hanley, where he had promised to take part in the ordination of the son of his old friend Dr Fletcher. As his agony on that particular occasion is fully described in one of the letters appended to this chapter, I need only say that I believe his fears did not exaggerate his danger. It became evident that for a time it was necessary he should limit himself to his home engagements, and for several years he preached but seldom away from Birmingham. The restless, hurrying life of the popular preacher was exchanged for the more quiet life of the faithful pastor; and during these years of concentrated activity, his growth in all the highest elements of wisdom and power was both sure and rapid. His temporary retirement from general public life awakened the concern of his friend the late Dr Bedford of Worcester, whose intellectual power, learning, and Christian excellence Mr James regarded with the greatest admiration, and in 1837 Dr Bedford wrote him the following letter of remonstrance:—

“WORCESTER, *July 5, 1837.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Ever since those feelings have come upon you which have caused you to retire from nearly all your extra public engagements, I have felt strongly that it was my duty to remonstrate with you, and to endeavour to convince you that the enemy has gained, in this, at least, an advantage over you. I have felt this inclination

seriously to address you upon the subject, greatly strengthened since our last interview, and particularly so because we had not then any opportunity of praying with and for each other, as on former delightful occasions. I have feared that you might deem it intrusive and presumptuous in me to interfere in a matter that must necessarily be so much dependent on your own feelings, and rest almost exclusively between God and yourself; and had I supposed that you could take what I may say in any other than the kindest and most affectionate manner, I should certainly have been content to mourn and pray for you in silence and secrecy. But I feel quite satisfied that you will at least attribute what I may say to none but the purest motives, and that your friendship, which I have so long enjoyed and prized, will ensure my forgiveness, if I should inadvertently drop a word that may cause you a moment's pain. The thought of circumscribing those talents to your own immediate charge, which have hitherto been so serviceable to the Saviour's cause at large, is exceedingly painful to me. I have no doubt it is so to you; and I think I hear you say, It is incomparably more painful to myself to be obliged so to act, than it can be to my best friends to witness it. I remember, also, that you attribute it to physical causes; and in doing so, the conscience feels, perhaps, that responsibility is no way implicated in yielding to what is conceived to be a necessity. Now, I will not take upon me to argue this point, whether your feelings originate in a physical, or a metaphysical, or a moral, or a strictly mental cause. But I do most earnestly entreat you as a brother to examine the cause very seriously; and unless there are satisfactory proofs that your nerves are affected, or your physical strength in some degree impaired, try whether the whole has not originated either in being worried into a little irritability by public engagements in time past, or whether it does not arise from an excess of anxiety to acquit yourself fully to your own idea of excellence and the expectations of the public, or from a want of simple reliance for assistance on Him who has said He will never leave us. I hint only so much for your own consideration, and by no means as my opinion of your case. If I thought it were really a jealousy for your reputation, I would tell you so. But I feel quite convinced that this is not the case; and I confess to you I never was more completely at a loss to name a cause in any given case. But the fact itself distresses me, because I see you in the vigour of bodily health—never, I think, better—certainly in as energetic a state of mind, with a maturity of knowledge, of piety, and of Christian feeling, that is, with far greater powers of usefulness to the church and the world, yet now falling under a sort of paralysis of purpose and timidity of effort which will cut you off from a very large measure of usefulness. Let me, then, my dear brother,

entreat you to wrestle with this infirmity for your own sake—for the church's sake—and, above all, for the love of that Master, in whose service I am sure you could suffer far more than you are likely to do in resisting this feeling. Usefulness to souls is a master-spring in your heart, and you must not suffer it to be relaxed. When you and I reflect for a moment upon our period of life, and remember, that should we live and be continued in health, ten years more service or thereabouts is all we have to look forward to,—then, or soon after, we must *decrease*. While, therefore, our great Lord continues to us almost unimpaired health, and we may hope—somewhat improved grace, let us not think of limiting our exertions. You, at least, ought not, because you have achieved already an instrumentality for spiritual good, through the Divine blessing, which few other men possess. I think I may assume, moreover, that when called upon and induced to stand forth, you have felt no diminution of strength or ability for any engagement. You have not been forsaken of your Master,—His Spirit has not left you without unction and power. Why, then, should you shrink from the opportunities of still further usefulness which He affords? Oh, it is, indeed, a delight and privilege to serve Christ! The richest solace, next to that of feeling Him our own Saviour, is to be the means of leading others to experience the same supernal blessedness. You have in time past put your hand vigorously to the plough, and can you now relax your grasp before the Lord has weakened your strength in the way? You have hitherto lived and preached, not for Birmingham alone, but for England; and do you think we can now spare you from the wider sphere? No, my brother; you must think again, and make another more vigorous effort to conquer this painful feeling. Will you allow me to suggest, as to the remedy for it, first, to resolve not to make more than your usual preparation for your own pulpit when you have an extra service—say, leave it always till the day before—and then, after moderate preparation, calmly commit the engagement and yourself to the hands of God,—and since 'tis His honour, and not your own, you seek, trust in Him to give you at the hour what you ought to speak. I feel confident He will not forsake you; and depending upon such a Master, you have nothing to fear. When did He ever forsake a right-thinking, right-aiming, and right-feeling minister of His gospel? Might I be allowed to say farther, try *speedily* to shake off this shackle. Do not let it gather strength by delay; it has restrained you too long. Yet I do not wish to urge you to any excess of public engagements. There is some probability that this in past times may have been the cause of your present revulsion of feeling from them. But a moderate share—just such as might neither interfere with your home engagements, nor lead to too much excitement and fatigue—

would, I conceive, soon restore you to the delightful consciousness that you were really doing all, or nearly all, that your talents and strength would admit. Time is short; work while it is called *to-day*. You have nobly and effectually roused others to exertion. Inferior men have grown great by your example; and you shall yet, my brother, see the hand of the Lord with you, making you a blessing unto thousands, both mediately and *immediately*. Trim again the lamp, and seek to have it replenished with fresh oil. Brace up once more your energies for the goodly fight. These are no times for retiring within our camps and our tents. We must go forth into the high places of the field, and eye our great Captain and Leader as He appoints us our posts. Our day of active exertion is at least hastening to its close, and I hear Him saying, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no wisdom nor work in the grave whither thou goest.' We most probably have both thought often of this solemn issue,—we have felt how near we may be to our last sermon, our last testimony for Jesus our Master. Probably we have applied to ourselves these words, Be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace. But I am extending my remarks too far, and troubling you with a long letter, contrary to my intentions. But I have written *currente calamo*, and just as my thoughts have flowed. If I should be the means of drawing your attention to the duty of endeavouring to regain your former calmness in anticipation of public engagements, I shall have accomplished something; and if I should have done no good, I hope my effort will do no harm. You will receive it, I am sure, as it is meant, in brotherly regard; and forgive me if I have trespassed upon the bounds of fraternal and respectful intercourse.—Believe me, unfeignedly and affectionately, your friend and brother,

“GEORGE BEDFORD.”

The unlimited confidence which Mr James reposed in Dr Bedford's judgment—a confidence which led him, even before the railway made the journey a very short one, to go over to Worcester for conference with his friend, in the anticipation of all the more important events in his public life—and their strong mutual affection, gave Dr Bedford the right to speak very freely on what he supposed to be a sinful weakness, or, at least, an unconscious submission to a crafty and injurious scheme of the devil to diminish the usefulness of one of Christ's servants. In this instance, the Doctor was probably mistaken I am inclined to think that it was God's wise love, not the cunning of the devil, which tempo-

rarity interrupted Mr James's public activity. The letters on this subject cover several years, one of them was written so late as 1845; I have brought them together, for the sake of illustrating a very painful, but very interesting part of Mr James's history:—

TO THE REV. J. PARSONS, YORK.

“January 17, 1835.

“MY DEAR SIR,—It is at no ordinary expense of feeling that I ever negative an application from *you*, but I must do so in the present instance. I have become of late so exceedingly nervous, especially in prospect of public services, as to lose my rest, or else have it only very partially for many successive nights, and to be incapacitated when the season of exertion comes for doing anything. I was lately obliged to come away from Oswestry without fulfilling my engagement, after losing three almost whole nights' rest, and about a month since I was almost in a similar state at Oxford. And, indeed, generally I find my nerves in such an irritable state that I am ever liable to lose my rest. It is my purpose, therefore, to avoid all public engagements except the London one in May, and spend all the time I can spare from my people in entire relaxation. Acting on this principle, I have lately negatived a pressing application from Mr Smith of Sheffield, who wishes me to give him a Sabbath about the time you wish me to visit York. It would give me real and great pleasure to come and see you, but I must forego it. If *you* were a little more prudent about public engagements, it would be quite as well for your own health and the good of your family and flock.”

TO THE REV. JAMES PARSONS, YORK.

“EDGBASTON, December 24, 1836.

“MY DEAR SIR,—It grieves me to deny you anything, much more the matter of your present request; but my public services from home, at least for the present, are suspended. I cannot sleep, as you know, in prospect, of them; and if a man cannot sleep, how can he preach! I fear I shall never break this spell. The dread is in the ratio of the distance, and as York is a hundred and fifty miles, or more, from Birmingham, I should be restless for a week, and a great part of the time sleepless too. Pity me, but do not blame me. I have a letter from Clunie to come to Manchester, but I must return the same answer.

“Beverley's letters do not surprise me. He is one of the unaccountables. The book is a sharp threshing instrument, having teeth; all the mountains come in for a flagellation, but I do not think any of them will become chaff under his hand. There is something for all to oppose, yet something that all may learn from.”

TO THE REV. DR FLETCHER, STEPNEY, LONDON.

“EDGBASTON, *March 13, 1840.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wrote to your son a few days ago, with the expectation that you would see my letter, supposing that you did not intend to leave Hanley this week. I conclude from what you say in yours, that you left the day my communication reached the Potteries.

“It is impossible for me to say what measure of disappointment was felt in consequence of my absence, but I should be ready to suppose, that put it together, it scarcely amounted to the misery which was compressed into my one poor tortured mind. I have been suffering during the winter from occasional attacks of nervous distress, but the week before the Hanley engagement it had greatly increased. I was in frequent, almost constant dread of losing my intellect. This was not produced by the prospect of a public service, but was probably increased by it. On Sunday I preached with great debility, having lost much sleep during the preceding week. Sunday night was dreadful. Still I resolved to go, feeling quite sure that if unable, not only would great confusion ensue, but that all hope of any further engagement at public services, except in the smallest congregations, and in my own vicinity, was gone. At the last hour I failed, and the day was spent in a state bordering on insanity, if not over the border. My wife was terrified, and my daughter, too, into illness. My medical attendant says, had I gone, he does not know what would have been the result either to body or mind. Last week was distressing, and I am still a poor shattered vessel. I preached once on Sunday at the recommendation of my medical friend, being helped in the devotional services. He said that I was sinking into a sad state, and wished a little gentle excitement. He is still attending me, and is anxious to keep down the mental agitation and terror. Such is my state, a poor bruised reed, out of which I fear little music will ever be brought again that is worth listening to. My nervous system is gone. No more public engagements—if I can do a little for my congregation, it is the utmost I can hope for.

“And now, my good friend, about yourself. Deeply grieved am I on your account. You can do more for the public than I can if your strength returns, and therefore your life is far more valuable as a public man. May God restore you: may good nursing and good doctoring, by the blessing of God, set you up. I pray for you fervently. Do, do spare yourself; and if, like me, you are tried by public services, though I suppose this is not the case, avoid them. Better live only for your flock and family than not at all. Recreate in the summer—lie by—yours is physical disorder; mine is mental, and lying by would be more

injurious than moderate work. Mine is the effect of a morbid imagination, which must not be left to worry me in idleness.

“Oh, may God sanctify us both by His dealings with us! I trust I am a holier man by what I suffer. Unless my heart greatly deceives me, I can say, without a moment’s doubt or hesitation, ‘It is good for me that I am afflicted.’ Sometimes a wish arises that it were not this kind of suffering that I am tried with; but I dare not question the skill of the Physician, nor ask him to change the medicine. My affliction is relative as well as personal; my wife will never be well again, and my daughter gets worse. We are, to outward appearance, a gloomy family. But it is all right. Time is short. We shall soon see the reason of all May God strengthen our faith!

“Let me hear that you are arrived at home, and improving.

“Give my kind regards to Mrs Fletcher and your daughter, and believe me, as ever, your affectionate friend,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE SAME.

“EDGBASTON, *November 2, 1840.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am ashamed to look at the date of your last letter; but really this merciful, oppressive penny-postage is making such demands on my time, already too little to meet the numerous and heavy demands upon it, that I am sometimes ready to wish Rowland Hill had been with his namesake in heaven, before he thought of his plan for relieving my pocket, at the expense of what, to *me*, is far more valuable than money.

“Is it so that you have begun to preach again? Has our God so far had mercy on you, and not on you only, but on many others also, as to give you strength for this? Prayer in abundance has ascended for you, and should it please Him, ‘who doeth all things well,’ to restore you, the incense of praise will rise from thousands of hearts before His throne. You need not be admonished to be cautious. *Festina lente* must be your motto and your rule. I could have wished a longer respite. A whole year might have been well and profitably spent in silence. But oh, how could *I* have taken such advice! What a trial is silence to him who loves to speak *of* Christ and for Him! What humbling lessons we learn by being laid aside from labour! How the world goes on without us! and when we are silent for ever it will be the same. I am glad to perceive in your letter such evident proofs of cheerful submission to the will of the Great Master. An over-eagerness to get to work, as if we would thrust ourselves upon Him, and He *should* have us, is not the temper which befits us: to be willing to work or suffer as He shall please, is the most unequivocal mark of a minis-

ter's sanctified affliction. If, as you say, Christ has been more than ever endeared, you cannot have suffered so many things in vain, and to secure that, we might be willing to suffer any thing.

"I was sorry you could not be present at the pleasant and well-timed, well-intentioned ceremony of the Wilson Memorial. It was due to the good old man, to whom our denomination stands more indebted, not only than any other, but to any ten men that could be found in all England. We have no man like-minded who will forego one fortune by his early retirement from business, and spend another in promoting our cause. It must have been peculiarly gratifying to him, and I trust the vase will remain an heir-loom in a long line of descendants that shall inherit his name and his spirit. What think you of the state of our denomination? There seems to be, notwithstanding the great multiplication of our students, a great paucity of young ministers rising up of talent and power. Our rich people are going over to Mother Church, and I am afraid that there is more *bluster* about the Voluntary principle than intelligent, deep-rooted conviction. Scotland is far a head of us in this. With the Dissenters there it has more of the aspect of a religious question than it has with us. It is better understood and more deeply felt beyond the Tweed than here; and there the great battle is being fought. What will Chalmers and his party do, and what will the civil courts do? I am inclined to think the matter will be compromised somehow or other, but how I cannot imagine.

"And now to poor Finney. I so far agree with you as clearly to perceive a tendency in this age to oscillate from the extreme of Antinomianism on one side of the pendulum to Arminianism on the other, and that caution, and in order to this, warning voices are necessary; but I am still confident that, with all the palpable faults which attach to his books, they have done immense good in this country; far more good than they will ever do harm. Our whole system of theology and of preaching was, in my judgment, too scholastic, stiff, and cold, to be either scriptural or efficient, and needed to be untrammelled, warmed, and made more a thing of the heart, and especially of the *conscience*, than it had ever been. Finney, with all his vulgarity, and, frequently, rash and hazardous phraseology, is a more perfect exemplification of that passage than any preacher or writer of sermons that I know, 'Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' This is the grand excellence of his sermons. It is a perpetual grappling with the conscience, and a successful method of making the sinner, and the believer too, feel and know what they have to do, and when to do it. I do not think responsibility can be too much dwelt upon and pressed home, till it has excluded sovereignty, which I do not think Finney has done. True it is, that the danger to be dreaded is from

the men who swallow him whole, and as he is, without discrimination; men who become his imitators, and have not judgment enough to 'avoid his faults. It was as much for the purpose of caution as recommendation that I wrote the short preface that you regret. After all, I should be glad to see a caution sent forth by some able pen—would that you had health to do it!—against what I admit to be the tendency of this day. Our pastors in many parts of the country have been delightfully roused to action, revivals in lukewarm ministers and churches have followed, and I cannot help hoping that a spirit of healthful, energetic piety is rising up.

"And now as regards myself and my family. *I* am tolerably well; still troubled with nerves that are like the fibres of the aspen leaf, so feeble and so delicate as to make the leaf tremble with every breeze, and almost without one. My dear wife is much the same, gradually but certainly declining—ever verging to a point the contemplation of which makes every husband's heart tremble, who loves his wife and feels how much his comfort depends on her life. May God prepare me for all that is before me!

"I shall be glad to hear from you soon, to be informed how you are, and what you are doing. I beg to be most kindly remembered to your good and excellent wife, whose health I hope is improved, and to your daughter.—Yours, as ever, most affectionately,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. JAMES PARSONS, YORK.

"EDGBASTON, *Feb.* 14, 1845.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I must first express my deep and tender sympathy with you under your long-continued, though I rejoice to hear now mitigated affliction. God does much *by* you, and therefore it is to be expected He will have much to do *in* and with you. You know who said, Study, prayer, and temptation make a good minister of Christ. I now turn to my own trial, and it is an aggravation of it that it compels me to return another negative to your application. My thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, still continues to wound and lacerate my poor nervous temperament. It has been supposed by some that it was either extracted, or that my frame had accommodated itself to the intrusive annoyance. Alas! my feelings at this moment are a painful proof to the contrary. I gave a conditional promise to one of our students to preach at the opening of his chapel at Shrewsbury the first week in Starch. More than a week ago, the recollection occurred to me, when in a nervous state on some other account, and immediately all the dark thoughts left the original cause of disquietude and clustered round this Shrewsbury engagement, and

I have not had a comfortable day since, and *have* had several broken nights. Nor will my nerves be tranquil again till the engagement is either dissolved or fulfilled. There will be a month's discomfort and interrupted pursuits as the consequence of one trifling engagement. Can you wonder I am compelled to say 'No' to applications for foreign service? I find it difficult to explain the idiosyncrasy under which I labour. It is something like this: I make a promise to preach—after a while I am somewhat poorly—I wake in the night—the promise comes up like a spectre before me—it is a trifling concern, no matter, it is a concern, it is future—I cannot sleep. I rise uncomfortable, and continue so through the day. I go to bed dreading I shall not sleep—the prediction verifies itself. Then I calculate there are so many weeks to intervene, and that I shall not sleep comfortably till it is over—and how can I endure broken rest so long? By this time the matter has got hold of me, and neither reason nor religion can throw it off; and where others would find that which they would never think about for a moment till the time comes, I find that which darkens every moment till it is past. It is not, observe, a dread of the service itself, but a dread that I shall not sleep till it is over. I could, if called to it, get up at Surrey Chapel and preach on a missionary occasion to fill up an unexpected gap, if I knew it only the day before; but a little engagement at a month's distance unnerves me. It has become a kind of monomania. The whole, therefore, may be resolved into a morbid association of ideas, between a future service, and not sleeping till it is over. *Perhaps* you can now understand my trial—and it is a deep and afflictive one to myself—and it is sometimes annoying to others to whom I give promises, extorted from me by importunity, and which I am compelled at length to break. God grant that whatever affliction He may see fit to visit you with, it may not be of a kind to prevent you from serving the denomination as well as your own congregation."

CHAPTER II.
"THE ANXIOUS INQUIRER."

A VERY interesting and useful book might be written on the religious manuals, which in different churches and different ages have most powerfully affected the popular religious life; I refer to such works as the *De Imitatione* of Thomas à Kempis, the "Introduction to a Devout Life" of Francis de Sales, Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," Law's "Serious Call," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress." That there are real and very important harmonies between Catholic and Protestant, Anglican and Puritan, Arminian and Calvinist, when they lay aside the rigid technicalities of controversy, and strive to minister to the spiritual strength and joy of simple and untaught men, is obvious to every student of devotional literature; that there are real and very important differences, is not less obvious. They differ in their ideal of spiritual perfection, in the relative importance they assign to particular "means of grace," to particular elements of spiritual experience, to particular lines of duty. Although membership of the same church and profession of the same creed will not produce absolute uniformity of opinion in reference to the directions that should be given to those who are endeavouring to recover the image of God, it is impossible that our conceptions of the religious life in its origin, the methods and forces by which it is developed, and the type of its ultimate perfection, should be uninfluenced by our theory of Christian doctrine.

John Wesley's theology could never have issued in a religious experience of fear and sadness like that expressed in "The Christian Year;" and Mr Keble's theology is wholly incompatible with the vigour and triumph of the Wesleyan Hymn-book.

Should any competent writer ever attempt such a review of the most famous devotional books of the great churches of Christendom, Mr James's "Anxious Inquirer" will claim very careful notice. Its very title declares its vital connexion with that remarkable movement to which the popular religious life of England in our own times owes its origin. The necessity of a conscious, personal application to the Lord Jesus Christ for the pardon of sin and release from its power, as distinguished from the theory that forgiveness and the germ of holiness are invariably imparted to the unconscious infant at the font, and that the adult who was baptized in childhood has rather to seek the development of a life already possessed and the confirmation of privileges already conferred, than a complete change in his relation to God, and a complete renewal of his spiritual nature; in other words, the doctrine of *conversion*, has been from the beginning one of the principal articles in the brief confession of the evangelical party. To arouse the unpardoned and unregenerate to inquiry, and then to direct them to the Lord Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, has been the great aim of all who have been animated by the true spirit of the chiefs of the Evangelical Revival. The great cry of Whitfield and Wesley and their immediate successors was, "Flee from the wrath to come;" a gross, sensual, godless people had to be stung and startled into religious earnestness, and, God helping them, they did their work by reiterating the truths which first alarm the irreligious by the discovery of their guilt and danger, and then lead the terrified penitent to trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation. Whether sufficient care and thought have been devoted to the culture and discipline of moral and spiritual excellence by the Evangelical ministry, both in and out of the Establishment, need not be discussed in this place; Mr James, at least, was altogether free from blame in that direction.

But the *characteristic* element of their preaching has not

been the inculcation in detail of Christian duty, or the declaration of those aspects of Christian doctrine which cherish a lofty devotional life. Their special vocation has been to warn the impenitent of coming judgment, and to entreat the guilty to rely on Christ for the pardon of sin, and the regeneration of their nature by His Holy Spirit. Mr James's book, "The Anxious Inquirer after Salvation Directed and Encouraged," is a complete and permanent expression of the genius and principles of the whole movement. Its popularity is a proof that any future student of the religious history of the nineteenth century, who wishes to learn by what religious teaching vast multitudes of persons in these days were practically guided, may, with confidence, seek an answer in its pages. It was published in 1834; I have lying before me now the sixth edition, which was published in 1835. Writing to Dr Sprague in 1839, Mr James tells him that the Tract Society had issued 200,000 copies. An account of the languages into which it has been translated and some extraordinary illustrations of its usefulness, will be found later in this chapter.

I have frequently heard good and thoughtful men, whose theology is in perfect accord with that of the "Anxious Inquirer," declare their inability to discover the secret of its power. There are many other books which explain with equal clearness the evangelical doctrines of repentance, faith, and conversion; why should this have achieved its unique success?

It is my conviction that any intelligent man who has had much experience in the instruction and guidance of the class of persons for whom it was written will be able, after a careful study of it, to solve the difficulty.

Between seventeen and eighteen years have passed by since, on my knees and in keen distress about my personal salvation, I first read through the "Anxious Inquirer." Night after night I waited with eager impatience for the house to become still, that in undisturbed solitude I might agonise over the book which had taught so many to trust in God. It is with a feeling approaching reverence and fear that I now attempt an estimate of the chief

contents of the little volume which is so intimately associated with some of the most sacred passages of my personal history.

The opening sentences are instinct with a spirit which has moved the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands of readers. In innumerable instances the book has been placed in the hands of persons *already* greatly troubled by the conviction of their guilt and peril, and intensely anxious to escape from their present wretchedness, and from the penalty of eternal exile from God by which they are threatened in the world to come: such readers have found evidence on the very first page that the author is as much in earnest as themselves; that instead of writing a theological treatise for the instruction of their understandings, he sees very clearly all their danger, and is profoundly concerned for their salvation. Others have begun to read with sluggish carelessness, but have been startled at once by discovering what a very serious enterprise the writer had undertaken, and have come to feel that if he wrote with such a solemn impression of the transcendent importance of his subject, it becomes them to read with devout anxiety. He thinks his book will be remembered in heaven with joy, or in hell with remorse. The subject is of such awful moment that it must not be read like other books, and he gives directions how to read it:—

“It may seem strange to some persons, that I should give directions for the performance of an act so well understood as the perusal of a book; and especially the perusal of a book of so simple and elementary a kind as this. But the fact is, that multitudes either do not know, or do not remember at the time, *how to read to advantage*; and, therefore, profit but little by what they read. Besides, simple and elementary as is this treatise, it is on a subject of infinite and eternal importance, and is perused in the most critical season of a man’s everlasting history; when, in a very peculiar sense, every means of grace, and this among the rest, will be either ‘a savour of death unto death, or of life unto life,’ to the reader. Tremendous idea! But strictly true.

“Reader, whosoever thou art, it is no presumptuous thought of the author, to believe that thou wilt remember the contents of this small treatise, either with pleasure and gratitude in heaven, or with remorse and despair in hell Can it then be an impertinently officious act, to remind thee how to read with advantage what I have written!”

The directions themselves are admirable, and I doubt not have guided in innumerable instances the first earnest endeavours of the soul to enter into real and living communion with the Unseen and the Eternal.

“Take the book with you,” writes the author, “into your closet; I mean your place of retirement for prayer; for, of course, you have such a place. Prayer is the very soul of all religion, and privacy is the very life of prayer itself. This is a book to be read when you are alone; when none is near but God and your conscience; when you are not hindered by the presence of a fellow-creature from the utmost freedom of manner, thought, and feeling; when, unobserved by any human eye, you could lay down the book, and meditate, or weep, or fall upon your knees to pray, or give vent to your feelings in short and sudden petitions to God. I charge you then to reserve the volume for your private seasons of devotion and thoughtfulness: look not into it in company, except it be the company of a poor trembling and anxious inquirer, like yourself.”

Nor is it enough that the reader is alone, he must read “with *deep seriousness*,” being charged to “take it up with something of the awe that warns you how you touch a holy thing;” “with earnest prayer,” for “it will convey no experimental knowledge, relieve no anxiety, dissipate no doubts, afford neither peace nor sanctification, if God do not give His Holy Spirit; and if you would have the Spirit, you must ask for His influence.” Moreover, there is a warning against reading too much at a time, a recommendation to meditate on what is read, to read regularly through in order, to turn to all the passages of Scripture and chapters which are quoted, and which for the sake of brevity the author has only referred to without quoting the words.

In the First Chapter the profound earnestness of the writer appears even more impressively than in the Introduction. He evidently feels the terrible magnitude of the sin and of the danger by which the heart of the reader is troubled; he is as much alarmed as though he were still personally exposed to the “wrath to come—

“No wonder you should be anxious; the wonder is, that you were not concerned about this matter before, that you are not more deeply

solicitous now, and that all who possess the Word of God do not sympathise with you in this anxiety. Everything justifies solicitude and condemns indifference. Unconcern about the soul, indifference to salvation, is a most irrational, as well as a most guilty state of mind. The wildest enthusiasm about these matters is less surprising and unreasonable, than absolute carelessness, as will appear from the following considerations:—

“ . . . Every day brings you nearer to everlasting torments or felicity. You may die any moment; and you are as near to heaven or hell as you are to death, No wonder you are asking, ‘ What shall I do to be saved?’

“This solicitude is reasonable *if you consider that the eternal loss of the soul is not a rare, but a very common occurrence.* It is so tremendous a catastrophe, that if it happened only once in a year, or once in a century, so as to render it barely possible that it should happen to you, it would be unpardonable carelessness not to feel some solicitude about the matter: how much more, then, when, alas! it is an everyday calamity. So far from its being a rare thing for men to go to hell, it is a much rarer thing for them to go to heaven. Our Lord tells us, that the road to destruction is thronged, while the way to life is travelled by few. Hell opens its mouth wide, and swallows up multitudes in perdition. How alarming is the idea, and how probable the fact, that you may be among this number! Some that read these pages will very likely spend their eternity with lost souls; it is therefore your wisdom, as well as your duty, to cherish the anxiety which says, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’”

His earnestness is not exhausted in the first few pages; it burns and glows in the heart of the writer till the last sentence of the last chapter is written, and not only animates and fires all he writes, but becomes in several places uncontrollable, and expresses itself in renewed and direct appeals and entreaties. This vehement solicitude commands the confidence of the reader and sustains his own anxiety; the teaching is in some places deficient in clearness, but the fervour never cools; and increased clearness would have been bought at too high a price by the sacrifice of intensity.

Nor was the excitement artificial, for the “Anxious Inquirer” was not addressed to mere imaginary readers; chapter after chapter was written for a number of young men and women

whom Mr James was meeting every week, and for whose salvation he felt all the concern of a faithful minister of Christ. This gave vigour by, giving concentration to his holy passion. It is not possible for an author to write with the same sustained solicitude for a thousand unknown persons who may some day read his book, as for fifty or sixty people, every one of whom he knows well, every one of whom is, at the very time he writes, exciting his deepest sympathies, every one of whom has come to him in sorrow and doubt asking the questions which his book is intended to answer, and alarmed at dangers from which the book shews the way of escape.

And the fact that Mr James wrote for living persons, perplexed and misled by mistakes with which, week after week, he had practically to deal, enabled him to produce a book having a reality and truth which no mere theorist could attain. Nearly every direction, nearly every element of instruction has evidently been suggested by the actual mistakes and dangers of his "Inquirers' Class."

I greatly doubt whether any mere speculative divine would have written the chapter on "Religious Impressions, and the Unspeakable Importance of Retaining and Deepening Them." It would have seemed the most natural way for an evangelical theologian to have passed at once from Chapter I. on "The Reasonableness and Necessity of Deep Solicitude about Salvation," to explain the nature of Repentance or Raith, or to develop the Divine provision for removing human guilt, and cleansing the human heart; but, to a minister writing his book in his study in the morning, and expecting to meet a large class of persons newly aroused to religious anxiety, in his vestry in the evening, it was a more natural thing to postpone full and explicit doctrinal teaching to certain necessary practical directions. This suggested the remarkable chapter (Chapter II.) in which the reader is solemnly told that he must "admit the possibility of losing" his convictions of sin and religious impressions; that he should "dread the idea of relapsing into indifference;" that he should make "it a subject of devout and earnest prayer, that God would render these impressions permanent by the effectual aid of His Holy Spirit."

“It is of infinite consequence that you should, at this stage of your religious history, deeply ponder the great truth, that all true piety in the heart of man is the work of God’s Spirit. Do not read another line till you have well weighed that sentiment, and have so wrought it into your heart, as to make it become a principle of action, a rule of conduct. Every conviction will be extinguished, every impression will be effaced, unless God himself, by His own sovereign and efficacious grace, render them permanent. If God do not put forth His power, you will as certainly lose every pious emotion as you now possess any. You may as rationally expect light without the sun, as piety without God. Not a single really holy feeling will ever come into the mind, or be kept there, but by God. Hence, the object and the use of prayer are to obtain this gracious influence. Prayer is the first step in the divine life, prayer is the second, prayer is the third, and indeed it is necessary through the whole Christian course. Awakened sinner, you must pray. You must find opportunity to be alone; you must cry mightily unto God; you must implore His aid; you must give up a portion of your sleep, if you can command no time in the day for prayer.”

As the writer had not paused to discuss whether a sinner should pray before believing in Christ, neither does he stay to discuss whether he should endeavour to forsake sin before believing in Christ: for these subtle questions, the consideration of which is not unimportant, however, to him who has the guidance of souls, Mr James’s vigorous common sense had no inclination; anyhow, it must be right and good to pray, and right and good to avoid sin, and so he proceeds to say—

“If you would retain your impressions, and persevere in the pursuit of salvation, you must at once determine to give up whatever you know to be sinful in your conduct, and you must also be very watchful against sin. Thus runs the direction of the Word of God: ‘Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,’ (Isaiah lv. 6, 7.) To the same effect is the language of one of Job’s friends: ‘If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away,’ (Job xi 13, 14) It is right for you at once to know, that the salvation which is in Christ is a deliverance from sin. ‘Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,’ said the angel to Joseph, when he announced the approaching

nativity of Christ. 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' (Titus ii. 14.) It is of immense consequence that you should at once have a distinct idea that the salvation you are beginning to seek is a holy calling. Whatever is sinful in your temper, such as malice, revenge, violent passions; or whatever is sinful in your words, in the way of falsehood, railing, backbiting; or whatever is sinful in your practice, in the way of Sabbath-breaking, injustice, unkindness, undutifulness to parents or masters;—must immediately be given up without hesitation, reluctance, or reserve. The retaining of one single sin, which you know to be such, will soon stifle your convictions, and efface all your impressions. *If you are not willing to give up your sins, it is not salvation you are seeking.*"

Worldly companions must be forsaken. "All those scriptural means which are calculated and intended to keep up a due sense of religion in the mind must be used." And these directions are admirably closed with a warning against mistakes which half the number of those who have just begun to think in earnest about serving God almost invariably commit.

"It is of consequence that you should here distinctly understand, that the grace of God in your salvation is rich and free. Your exertions in seeking salvation do not merit or deserve it; and if you receive it, you will not have it granted to you as the reward of your own efforts to obtain it. To imagine that you can claim the grace that is necessary to your conversion, because you profess to seek it, is to follow the wretched example of those who, in ancient times, went 'about to establish their own righteousness, and did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God.' Your deep convictions, impressions, and solicitude; your many tears; your earnest prayers; your diligent attendance upon sermons; and your partial reformatations, can claim nothing in the way of reward from Him; nor is He bound to save you for that which has no reference to His glory; till you believe God's promise, He is under no obligation, even to Himself, to save you. Notwithstanding all your concern, you lie at His mercy; and if you are saved, it is of pure favour."

"These are awful instances, and prove by facts, which are unanswerable arguments, that it is but too certain that many seek to enter in at the strait gate, but do not accomplish their object. And why? Not because God is unwilling to save, but because they rest in impressions, without going on to actual conversion. It is dangerous, then, reader, as well as unwarranted, to conclude that you are sure, to be saved, be-

cause you now feel anxious to be saved. It is very true that where God has begun a good work He will carry it on to the day of Christ Jesus; but do not conclude too certainly that He has begun it. You may take encouragement from your present state of mind to hope that you will be saved; but that encouragement should rather come from what God has promised, and what God is, than from what you feel. To regard your present state of mind, therefore, with complacency; to conceive of it as preferring any claim upon God to convert you; to look upon it as affording a certainty that you will be ultimately converted, a kind of pledge and earnest of salvation, instead of considering it only as struggles after salvation, which may or may not be successful, according as they are continued in a right manner; is the way to lose the impressions themselves, and to turn back again to sin or the world. The true light in which to consider your present solicitude, is that of a state of mind which, if it terminate in genuine faith, and which it is probable it may, will end in your salvation: consequently, your object should be to cherish your anxiety, and seek the grace of Jehovah to give you sincere repentance towards God, and true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The chapter on Knowledge will probably be thought by many very open to adverse criticism. The attempt to illustrate and enforce in twenty pages such great subjects as the moral character of God, the nature and requirements of His law, the evil of sin, the doctrine of original and inherent depravity, the design of Christ’s mediatorial office and work, the evangelical doctrine of justification, and the nature and necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit, could hardly be successful. It was in all probability this chapter to which a young friend of mine particularly referred, who told me that the “Anxious Inquirer” had suggested more difficulties than it had removed. But if the amount of theological knowledge which was likely to be possessed by most of its readers is taken into account, it will be seen that a fuller and more thorough discussion of these great truths might have been worse than useless. Enough is said to afford practical guidance to the untaught; more elaborate and exact explanations might in some instances have puzzled and repelled; in others they might have stimulated a purely speculative activity which would have been likely to divert the soul from its search after God. It is very possible for us to be so solicitous about making the truth clear to the understand-

ing, that the theoretical interest awakened in our discussions of the way of salvation shall gradually deaden the anxiety of the heart to secure salvation itself.

A sounder objection may be taken to Mr James's want of distinctness in his teaching on a subject so important as the nature of justification. On page 37* he writes—"The justification of an innocent person is pronouncing him just, on the ground of his own conduct; but how can a sinner, who is confessedly guilty of innumerable transgressions, be justified? Now, you will see at once that the term in reference to him is a little different, and signifies, not that he is righteous in himself, but *is treated as if he had been, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him.* 'Justification,' says the Assembly's Larger Catechism, 'is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which He pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in His sight, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the *perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.*'"

This is a very unequivocal declaration of agreement with the doctrine that justification consists in the imputation to the believer of Christ's obedience and satisfaction. Had he said nothing more, his teaching would have been perfectly definite and unambiguous. Whether true or not, the theory of "imputation" taught in the Assembly's Catechism is free from all censure on the ground of indistinctness. Its simplicity is equal to its clearness; a child may understand it. But thirty lines below he explains that "this is what is meant by the imputed righteousness of Christ, that the sinner is accepted by the Divine favour *out of regard* to what Christ did and suffered on his behalf,"—a statement which might not only be accepted by many who are most firmly opposed to the "imputation" doctrine, but almost suggests a different theory. It is clearly one thing to say that Lord Raglan's sufferings and achievements in the Crimea are "imputed" to his son, and that therefore his son receives a pension; and another thing to say that "out of regard" to Lord Raglan's services, his son receives a pension.

* Sixth Edition.

This, however, might have passed unnoticed, but a careful reader of the paragraphs immediately following the passages I have quoted will see other traces of vacillation on this great subject. On page 38 it is affirmed that "justification means not merely pardon, but something more;" on the next page, pardon and justification are virtually identified. Indeed, it was Mr James's habit to tell his congregation that pardon and justification are substantially the same. His great anxiety was to distinguish justification as a change of our personal relationship to God, from sanctification as a change of our personal character; and the virtual identification of justification with pardon enabled him to do this with great ease. There was an obvious practical benefit to be gained in making justification and pardon almost identical; it enabled him to make the distinction between justification and sanctification plain to the most ill-informed and undisciplined minds. To secure this advantage, he seemed almost indifferent to the two theological difficulties in which he manifestly placed himself. If justification be substantially the same as pardon, it cannot consist in the imputation to the sinner of Christ's obedience and satisfaction; and secondly, the attempt to distinguish between the two blessings, after affirming them to be substantially the same, must prove a failure.

It would be an error to suppose that this question is one of merely speculative and theological interest. If justification and pardon be "substantially" identified, the soul when conscious of needing a renewal of pardon, will practically suppose that its justification needs renewal too; in other words, that it is standing in precisely the same unsheltered and perilous condition which preceded its original reconciliation to God. But if such a theory of justification be held as leaves that great and permanent blessing unaffected by the infirmities, follies, and sins which are daily confessed, and need daily forgiveness, the soul will be exempted from the shock and injury it must receive if thrown back day after day into the wretchedness and horror of being under the Divine condemnation. Mr James saw that justification abides with the soul as long as faith abides; but through making it sub-

stantially the same as pardon, for which we need to seek God's mercy every day, he reduced the permanent blessing of justification to insignificance and worthlessness.

The following passage from the "Course of Faith," published in 1852, will further illustrate the point under discussion:—

"Justification, I say at once, is substantially the same as pardon. The two words convey the same, or nearly the same idea. The apostle appears to use them convertibly where he says, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin.' 'In these verses,' says Dr Wardlaw, 'the forgiveness of iniquity, the covering of transgression, the non-imputation of sin, are evidently considered as amounting to the same thing with the imputation of righteousness; and this also is the same as justifying the ungodly: for David is represented as describing under one set of phrases the blessedness which the apostle expresses by the others.' Still, as the apostles, in the language of the New Testament, so generally employ the word justification rather than the word pardon, there must be some reason for this, which I think is to be found in the two following considerations: First, The word justification, while it means pardon, is used to convey the idea of the method by which this pardon is bestowed—that pardon consistent with justice; so that the word embraces both the blessing and the way of its bestowal, according to the demands of the law. Secondly, It denotes a general and permanent state of pardon, and not merely a particular act. By justification we are brought into a new and permanent relation, a state of favour. Justification is our introduction into this abiding condition; so that though pardon may be needed, and may be granted to us in this state from day to day, justification cannot be said to be repeated every day. By justification we pass from the state of an enemy into that of a child. In this view of it it is equivalent with adoption, and in this condition we may and do receive the paternal forgiveness day by day,—though not the judicial clearance. Justification is the act of the judge relieving us from the sentence of condemnation, and bringing us into a state of favour; while subsequent acts of pardon are the expression of the Father in passing by our transgressions. Still, I repeat, the two terms are substantially the same thing, and justification is pardon. They are certainly never enumerated together as two distinct blessings. We never read of par-

don and justification. I know it has been common with some of the old divines to represent them as distinct; to consider justification as given to us on the ground of Christ's active obedience, and pardon on the ground of His passive obedience, or sufferings unto death. No such distinction, however, is made by the apostles; and as Dr Wardlaw says in reference to this subject, there is no need for our being more minute in our distinctions than these inspired men. Our being introduced into a state of pardon through the atonement of Christ is justification.”

In the fifth chapter of the “Anxious Inquirer” there is another illustration of Mr James's want of firmness and clearness in his statement of Christian doctrine. It was, no doubt, his conviction that faith is Trust in Christ, based on the belief of certain truths about Him; and this is very distinctly taught on page 59. But on pages 57 and 58, it would appear to an ordinary reader as though the writer accepted that definition of faith which makes it nothing more than the intellectual belief of the truths that relate to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of mankind. He says—

“You will probably wish to know a little more about this transcendently important state of mind; and I shall, therefore, set before you—

“1. What you are to believe. Faith, in general, means a belief of whatever God has testified in His Word; but faith in Christ means the belief of what the Scripture saith of HIM; of His person, offices, and work You are to believe that He is ‘the Son of God.’ ‘God manifest in the flesh;’ God-man—Mediator: for how can a mere creature be your Saviour? *In faith you commit your soul to the Lord Jesus.* What! into the hands of a mere creature? The divinity of Christ is thus not merely an article of faith, but enters also into the foundation of hope. You are required to believe in the doctrine of atonement; that Christ satisfied Divine justice for human guilt, having been made a propitiation for our sins; and that now His sacrifice and righteousness are the only ground or foundation on which a sinner can be accepted and acquitted before God. You are to believe that all, however previously guilty and unworthy, are welcome to God for salvation, without any exception, or any difficulty whatever. You are to believe that God really loves the world, and is truly willing and waiting to save the chief of sinners, and that He therefore is benevolent to you: and thus, instead of dwelling in the idea of a mere general or universal love, you are to bring the matter home to yourself, and to believe that God has

good-will towards you, has given Christ to die for you; you are a part of the world which God loved, and for which Christ died, and you are not to lose yourself in the crowd. You are not to consider the scheme of redemption for any body, or for every body, but yourself; but you are to give the whole an individual bearing upon yourself. You are to say, 'God is well disposed towards me; Christ is given for me; died for me as well as for others; I am invited; I shall be saved if I trust in Christ; and I am as welcome as any one to Christ.' Faith is not a belief in your own personal religion, this is the assurance of hope; but it is a belief that God loves sinners, and that Christ died for sinners, and for you amongst the rest: it is not a belief that you are a real Christian, but that Christ is willing to give you all the blessings included in that term. It is the belief of something out of yourself, but still of something concerning yourself. The object of faith is the work of Christ for you, not the work of the Spirit in you. It is of great consequence you should attend to this, because many are apt to confound these things. If I promise a man alms, and he really believes what I say, and expects relief, *I, in the act of promising him, am the object of his faith*, and not the state of his own mind in the act of believing. If, therefore, you would have faith, or, possessing it, would have it strengthened, you must fix and keep your eye on the testimony of Christ, which you find in the gospel."

The sentences that I have italicised obviously imply a different theory of faith from that which is stated in the rest of the paragraph.

The paragraph generally describes faith as a belief of Christian truth; the italicised passages imply that it is a belief in Christ himself *founded* on the belief of Christian truth. This latter, which is the only sound view, is very clearly enunciated in the next paragraph, which describes *how* a sinner is to believe:—

"I will now shew you how you are to believe. But is this necessary? There is no mystery in faith when we speak of believing a fellow-creature. When the rebel is required to believe in the proclamation of mercy sent out by his sovereign, and to come and sue for pardon; or when the beggar is required to believe in the promise of a benefactor who has promised him relief, does it enter into his mind to ask how he is to believe? What, in each of these cases, does faith mean? A belief that the promise has been made, and a confidence in the person who made it that he will fulfil his word. Behold, then, the whole mystery there is in faith! It is a belief that Christ really died for sinners; that

all who depend upon Him alone shall be saved; and a trust in Him for salvation. Yes, it is, if we may substitute another word as explanatory of faith, TRUST in Christ. Faith, and confidence in Christ, are the same thing."

In explaining *how* a sinner is to believe, the author had in his mind a different kind of belief from that which was present to him when describing what he is to believe.

Let not these observations be thought idle or hypercritical. If I might be pardoned for speaking again of the time when the "Anxious Inquirer" was my trusted guide through anguish and fear to a quiet trust in Christ, I would refer to the difficulties by which I was personally and for some time beset, through mistake on this very point. I supposed, in common with many others, passing through a similar experience, that faith in Christ is a belief of the doctrines enumerated by Mr James in the chapter on Knowledge. That error would naturally be confirmed by very much that I have quoted from the chapter on Faith, and as the truer teaching in the same chapter was inconsistent both with my own ideas and with the previous statements of the author, it was not unnatural that I should fail to notice, or at any rate to receive it. Hence I continued to suppose that I was to be saved by believing the history of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great evangelical doctrines concerning His nature and death. Conscious that I had not attained the rest and strength which ought to follow "saving faith," I began to think that perhaps my belief was powerless, because it was the mere result of education, and not of independent inquiry. Under this impression, I turned in my boyish simplicity to Paley's "Evidences of Christianity," hoping that, when I had verified for myself the historical foundations Christian truth, my belief would rest on a right basis and exert greater power.

There is another defect which was perhaps almost inseparable from the general structure of the book. Notwithstanding the author's earnest entreaties, that his readers would look to Christ, and not to anything in themselves for salvation, there is very much that is calculated to confirm the common error of losing sight of Christ through looking to ourselves to discover whether we are

looking to Him. The act of faith is so repeatedly discussed, that the mind is likely to be diverted from the object of faith. There is a curious slip in the illustration of the difference between faith and assurance, at the end of the chapter on Mistakes. It is said, that if the ringleader of a revolt, having read a proclamation of amnesty, and having satisfied himself that it really came from the king, laid down his arms, and so fulfilled the conditions of pardon, he would not be much troubled about “assurance “he is conscious he has done what the monarch requires, and he feels he has what the monarch promised. . . . *Faith and compliance with the monarch’s demand would he all that he would concern himself about.*” Now, whatever anxiety the supposed rebel might have to discover adequate proof of the authenticity and unlimited reference of the proclamation, he would have none at all about his own faith in it; and it should be the aim of the Christian teacher so to represent the power and grace of the Lord Jesus, and the unconditional freeness of His gospel, that the troubled and guilty heart, forgetting itself altogether, shall trust everything to Christ. That this was Mr James’s own clear and full opinion, needs no proof or illustration; but, perhaps, it may fairly be objected to certain parts of the “Anxious Inquirer,” that faith is discussed in a manner that is likely to detain the mind with questions about the validity of its own trust in Christ, when, with simple unconsciousness of self, it should be rejoicing in that infinite love which asks for nothing as the condition of conferring pardon and the new life, but that the soul, without further solicitude, should leave all its sins where God has placed them—on the head of His own Son; and should begin at once to endeavour to live a Christian life, expecting God to supply the strength which alone can make the endeavour successful

If, in resuming the attempt to point out some of the excellencies of this remarkable book, I occupy less space than has already been covered with the discussion of some of its deficiencies, it is not through any want of appreciation of the elements of its power. In addition to what has been already said on the writer’s manifest earnestness, which at once commands the confidence and deepens

the anxiety of the reader, the practical wisdom of his method and order, the admirable common sense with which he sets aside discussions which might have perplexed but could not have aided those for whom he wrote, there are several other characteristics of the "Anxious Inquirer" which help to explain its popularity and usefulness.

From Mr James's Autobiography it appears that his own spiritual life had not passed through the precise chronological development, which some systematic writers on conversion have insisted upon. He had known the uncertainties and vicissitudes, the temporary victories and the subsequent defeats, the vacillation and inconstancy which most commonly mark the first efforts of the soul to forsake sin and live for God. In the almanac, winter melts into spring, spring brightens into summer, and summer ripens into golden autumn, by regular gradations. But the seasons are too wilful to obey the almanac: far on in spring, sometimes in the very heart of summer, we have cold winds and wintry snow; and often in March or April we are gladdened by days of warmth and sunshine that seem to have missed their way, and to belong rather to July. It is just so in the rise and progress of religion in the soul; and it is one of the great excellencies of the "Anxious Inquirer," that it prescribes no exactly-defined experiences through which the mind must pass in order to arrive at rest in God. The reader is not distressed by the apprehension that perhaps in his case one link in the chain has a flaw in it, and that all the links that follow are therefore worthless. The endeavour to manufacture faith in Christ and love toward God, by an elaborate process of spiritual chemistry, is a most perilous mistake; and I repeat, that the "Anxious Inquirer" is free from the imputation of encouraging this delusion.

Closely connected with this great merit is another: the book insists with uniform and unhesitating resoluteness on the duty of *immediate trust* in Christ. No excuse for deferring this is recognised as valid; it is a duty, and must be fulfilled at once. There is no minister who has had much practical acquaintance with the difficulties which impede the return of the heart to God,

who has not been perplexed by the subtlety of the pleas by which continued unbelief is defended. "I have not sorrow enough for sin," says one, not remembering that Christ was exalted to give repentance as well as remission of sin. "My heart is so hard," says another, forgetting that it is just because the heart is so hard that we should give up all our efforts to soften it, and trust in Christ to soften it for us. "I am not conscious of believing," says another, "and therefore cannot trust in Christ to save me," not having learned that it is with our sin and weakness and danger that we are to approach Christ, and that we shall never be conscious of faith until *after* we have trusted Him.

It is in the same spirit that Mr James repeatedly reminds his readers that the ground of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not lie in any personal qualifications or experiences: it is not sorrow for sin, confession of sin, abandonment of sin, or any irresistible persuasion of personal and special interest in the mercy of God, that is the true foundation of faith in Christ; but His sufferings and death to atone for the world's transgressions, His infinite mercy towards our race, and His infinite resources for our salvation.

Most excellent, too, is all that is said on the difference between faith and assurance; about which, however, all teaching, even the clearest, seems almost in vain. The following passage is one of many in which this distinction is explained:—

"Faith is such a cordial belief that Christ died for sinners, as leads to a dependence upon Him for salvation; assurance, as the word is usually understood in religious discourse, means a persuasion that I do so believe, and am in a state of salvation: faith means a belief that Christ is willing to receive me; assurance means conviction that He has received me; that, in short, I am a Christian. Now, it is manifest that these two are different from each other: one of them, that is, faith, signifying the performance of an action, or coming into a certain state; and the other, the consciousness that I have come into that state. It is also equally evident that faith must precede assurance. We must first believe that Christ died for sinners, before we can know that we have believed. The first simple act of faith is a belief that Christ died for all sinners, for the whole world; the next, as arising out of it, if it be not indeed included in it, is that He died for us as part of the world.

‘I believe,’ says the sinner, who is coming with confidence to Christ, ‘that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” (John iii. 16;) then, as I am a part of the world, I believe He loved me, and is willing to save me this is faith. The soul then feels joy and peace in believing, love to God, gratitude to Christ, hatred of sin, subjugation of the world, fellowship with the righteous. ‘Now,’ says the person, ‘I know I believe, I am conscious both of the act of believing, and also of its gracious effects:’ this is assurance.”

The homely and direct mode in which speculative difficulties are removed, I will not say solved, the practical wisdom of many of the “cautions” given in Chapter IX., would repay careful study, and might greatly assist persons whose children and friends seek their advice in religious troubles. There is much, too, that deserves notice in the hopefulness with which the reader is encouraged to anticipate the happy issue of his anxieties, and in the skill with which considerations, calculated to repress despondency, are so stated as not to enfeeble a solitary motive to earnest solicitude. The profusion of Scripture quotations will not be overlooked by those who remember with what eagerness their souls clung, in their early conflicts, to every Divine promise of pardon and to every inspired explanation of the Christian method of redemption. The style in which the “Anxious Inquirer” is written, notwithstanding the sentence about subjective and objective religion which occurs in the chapter on “Mistakes,” and which has moved Mr Ruskin’s mirth and provoked his criticism—I think that the eloquent critic would have cancelled his sarcasm, had he known or remembered that myriads have been consoled by this little book in the most terrible of human sorrows, and assisted by it to trust quietly in God, and live a holy life,—its style I say is, on the whole, clear, unaffected, and vigorous. Finally, it is short enough to be read through and through, even by persons who have very little time to consecrate to purposes of devotion.

I am thankful that this imperfect discussion of one of the most remarkable uninspired books which any section of the Christian Church possesses is but an introduction to the author’s own

account of it. A separate chapter in the Autobiography is devoted to the "Anxious Inquirer."

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I come now to a work, compared with the usefulness of which that of all my other books is but as the small dust of the balance; a work, the results of which fill me with adoring wonder, gratitude, and love. I will first state the circumstances which led to the writing and publishing of it. About the year 1832, or it may be a year later or earlier, a series of special religious services was held in Birmingham. The ministers of the neighbouring towns, for many miles round, were invited to attend for solemn conference on subjects connected with their ministry. Three mornings were thus spent, much, I believe, to the edification of those present. The utterances of the heart were free and flowing, and an unrestrained exchange of sentiment took place on the most momentous of all topics. I wish these meetings were more frequent. The one held a few years ago at Chester was a season of uncommon solemnity. They should not be periodical, or they would become formal. But occasional gatherings of the labourers in the Lord's vineyard would give a new impulse to zeal, and a new encouragement to hope. The evenings of these three days were devoted to the congregations, when addresses were delivered on subjects bearing upon conversion, and the Lord's Supper was administered. One of the addresses, delivered by Dr Ross, then of Kidderminster, now of Sydney, to the thoughtful but undecided hearer of the gospel, produced a very deep and general impression, so that many persons were brought under most serious concern about their souls. I am persuaded that occasional special religious services, when conducted with judgment, and in which the pastor himself, whatever auxiliary help he may obtain, takes a leading part, are rational, scriptural, and useful. Churches, like individuals, are in danger of sinking into a lukewarm state; formality settles down upon them, and stagnancy is the result. True, the best state of things is where the stated ministry is such as to keep up perpetual freshness, vigour, and vitality in the church. Happy the church, and happy its pastor, where such ministrations are enjoyed. But even

here some occasional means to bring out the awakened are desirable. In all our congregations there are many who have been impressed by the word, and who go on in this state of mind without coming to any decision. They are concerned; they do not totally give up religion nor wholly embrace it. Now, one of the great benefits of special services is, that they bring such persons to a point, and lead in very many cases to decision. Such have been the results in my own case. Autobiographical.

After the services to which I now allude as having been held in the town, very many came to me at the time appointed for seeing them, deeply anxious about their souls' salvation. I conversed with them, of course; but as one is wont in dealing with inquirers, I lent them books to read. I made use of Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," which, notwithstanding its formal divisions and systematic form, is an admirable book, and has been greatly honoured and blessed of God. It is certainly too long, and contains too much for a mere inquirer. Hence, now when I use it, which I frequently do, I tell the persons into whose hands I place it, not to read more of it than about the ten or twelve first chapters. An inquirer that has not yet found peace with God, need not be led through the whole course of Christian life. I still found the lack of some little work, suitable for persons inquiring after salvation, which should be long enough to lay open the scheme of salvation, with the perplexities and difficulties that beset the entrance upon the narrow way of life eternal, and the encouragements which should animate the inquirer in his struggle for the crown of glory. As I knew of none that exactly met my desires, I set to immediately to write something more suited to the object. I believe I was animated by a pure desire to glorify God in the salvation of souls. Perhaps there was less admixture of self-seeking and vain-glory in the writing of this book than in any other of my works. I wanted to lead the anxious into peace and joy in believing. Of course, I had no anticipation of the wonderful success which followed its publication. How could I? Had the veil been then lifted up, and had it been shewn me in perspective what a course that book was to run, I should have regarded it as

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a dream. The first two editions were printed and published by myself, and sold very rapidly. The Religious Tract Society caught sight of it, and proposed to purchase the copyright. Aware of the facilities possessed by that invaluable institution for getting their works into a much wider circulation than any private author can do, I immediately consented; and have ever been thankful to God for this arrangement. I place this society next in value and importance to the Bible and Missionary Society. It is a fountain of blessings to the world, and seemed raised up of God especially for the times in which we live, when the press, that source of sweet waters and bitter, is sending forth such floods of demoralising publications. *I* above many authors have cause to speak with gratitude of its worth and operations. It has extended my usefulness to the remotest boundaries of the globe, wherever the English language is known. It has sent out several of my publications,—my Pastoral Addresses, “The Young Man from Home,” and some other minor things; but the “Anxious Inquirer,” in the extent of its circulation and amount of its usefulness, swallows up all the others. It has procured the translation of this work into Gaelic, Welsh, German, French, Swedish, Malagasy. Besides these languages, it has by other means been preached in Dutch, Singalese, and one of the East Indian dialects. The number of copies issued from the society’s depot up to the present time is more than half-a-million. To me it has ever been a source of joy and thankfulness to consider that, apart from the direct usefulness of the book, it has been to the Tract Society a source of considerable profit; thus enabling that institution to extend its usefulness in grants and gratuities to all parts of the world.

It is delightful to me to know that the circulation of this work has been more extensive in America than it has been even in this country. If I speak of its usefulness, it is not in a spirit of boasting and vain-glory, but with a feeling of the profoundest humility. None but myself can conceive of the degree in which God has deigned to honour and bless this little unpretending publication. For this He has employed persons of all ranks in

society and all denominations of religion. Clergymen of the Established Church have not scrupled to use it, though penned by a Dissenter. They thought it to be an instrument adapted to their purpose, and have manifested as much zeal in its distribution as any of the ministers or members of my own denomination. Had I preserved all the letters I have received, both from other countries and my own, of its usefulness, they would have formed a book. I sometimes regret that I have not done so; but perhaps it would have ministered to my vanity. I have often reproached myself for insensibility and want of gratitude in not feeling more when accounts came of its usefulness. The tidings have become as common things. A fiftieth part of the intelligence which has reached me would fill some men's breasts with gladness and gratitude. It has never been my practice to send instances of good from the perusal of it to the periodicals of the day. One instance out of many I may here relate. In one of the back settlements of America, where a stated ministry had not yet been fixed, a single copy of the “Anxious Inquirer” had found its way. It was lent from one person to another, and seven-and-twenty persons were thus hopefully converted to God by the perusal of the solitary copy found among them. Autobiographical.

While engaged in the preparation of this Memoir, I received a note from a gentleman in the north of England, who informed me that eight or nine friends who happened to be together were conversing about their religious history, and they discovered that they had all found in the “Anxious Inquirer” the guidance and stimulus by which they had been led to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. In a subsequent part of the Autobiography I find two other facts illustrating the usefulness of this remarkable book, and think it best to insert them here:— Editorial.

A scene once occurred at a meeting of the [Congregational] Union in London which made a deep impression on all who were present. A Dutch minister, by the name of Dr Beets, a poet and a highly respectable member of the Established Church, sent in word Autobiographical.

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to the secretary that if permitted he should wish to be present and address the meeting. He was introduced and allowed to speak. He announced his name and position, and declared that he had come from Holland, not only to be at the meeting, but to meet me and to present to me two volumes of my works which he had translated into Dutch, and to inform me of the benefit which had resulted from my "Anxious Inquirer" in the language of his country. He knew of twelve students for the ministry who had been converted by the perusal of that book. He addressed me and the meeting in terms so impressive and affecting as to call from myself a response which, together with his own words, melted the whole audience into tears. Dr Leifchild (I think he was the person) rose, and said that such was their emotion, it was impossible to go on with mere dry business till their feelings had a little subsided, and suggested that they should all unite in prayer, which they accordingly did. Dr Beets has since translated other of my books into Dutch.

It is a little remarkable, that at another of the meetings of the Congregational Union, a Mr De Leifde, from Amsterdam, was present, who had come over to England to solicit subscriptions for carrying on an extensive system of home operations in Holland. His address after the dinner at Hadley's Hotel was most deeply interesting and affecting. Many were weeping, and all rejoicing. And on relating his conversion, he told us he had been a Socinian, but that some one lent him a little book with an earnest exhortation to read it. That book was the "Anxious Inquirer" in Dutch. It was the means of his conversion, and from that time he had devoted himself to the work of evangelising his country, which he stated is overrun with Socinianism and Rationalism. He sat next to me at the dinner, and laid his hand upon my shoulder, when, with much emotion, he owned me as his spiritual father.

The day of judgment alone will disclose what has resulted from the issue of this little and apparently insignificant publication.

Now, I am extremely anxious to call attention to the fact of the usefulness of this work, as demonstrating what kind of religious truth, and what method of presenting it, God blesses for the conversion of souls. This is a momentous lesson to learn. The salvation of souls is the supreme end of the ministry. He who does not see this, has mistaken the whole scheme of Christianity. The ends of the ministry must of course be identical with the ends for which Christ died upon the cross. If He died to save sinners, ministers must preach to save sinners. To convince men of sin and righteousness and judgment, to bring them to repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to build them up in their holy faith and guide them onwards to eternal life, must be the design of ministerial instruction. It is greatly to be feared that the orthodox doctrine of conversion—that is, the turning of the sinner by the regenerating power of the Spirit from sin to God through Christ, in other words, the necessity of an entire inward change of heart—begins in many of our Dissenting pulpits to be merged in vague general notions of a religious state, which implies no quickening from a death of sin to a life of righteousness. I hold by the nature and necessity of regeneration and conversion, as set forth in the writings of the Evangelical school, whether Episcopalian, Dissenter, or Methodist, and I hold that this is the teaching of the Word of God. This, and only this, is the teaching which God has blessed in every age, country, and church of the world. Do we not see in the preaching of those by whom this doctrine, if not formally denied, is neglected, an obvious want of spiritual effect? Where are the sinners turned from the errors of their ways? What do we see there of broken-heartedness on account of sin, of joy and peace in believing, of true holiness and righteousness? Are the churches of such preachers fields which the Lord hath blessed?

We do not mean to deny that conversion is not the only end of the ministry. The child must not only be born, but fed, nursed, and educated. Christians are to be edified, as well as sinners regenerated. The flock of Christ is to be fed with truth and defended from error. There is to be in the ministry both an evan-

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gelising character and an instructive one. It has been thought by some that these, though not of course opposed, are so dissimilar as almost to require distinct and separate instrumentalities. This, however, is quite erroneous, though a class of itinerant evangelists, well skilled in dealing with the souls of men and in methods of awakening them from the slumber of sin, might be useful as an auxiliary to our stated pastors. Still the pastor must be both the evangelist and the subsequent instructor. No doubt a great portion of every faithful minister's labours should be devoted to the conversion of the unconverted classes of his hearers. In most ordinary congregations, these greatly outnumber the true Christians. Surely, surely these ought not to be neglected. I have ever taken the views of holy Baxter on this subject, as enforced in the following quotation from his "Reformed Pastor:"—

"It is so sad a case to see men in a state of damnation, wherein if they should die they are remedilessly lost, that methinks we should not be able to let them alone either in public or private, whatever other work we have to do. I confess I am forced frequently to neglect that which should tend to the further increase of knowledge in the godly, and may be called stronger meat, because of the lamentable necessity of the unconverted. Who is able to talk of controversies, or nice unnecessary points, yea, or truths of a lower degree of necessity, how excellent soever, while he seeth a company of ignorant, carnal, miserable sinners before his face that must be changed or damned I Methinks I even see them entering on their final woe! Methinks I even hear them crying out for help, and speediest help! Their misery speaks the louder, because they have not hearts to seek or ask for help for themselves. Many a time have I known that I had some hearers of higher fancies, that looked for rarities, and were addicted to despise the ministry, if he told them not somewhat more than ordinary; and yet I could not find in my heart to turn from the observation of the necessities of the impenitent for the humouring of these, no»- to leave speaking to the apparently miserable for their salvation to speak to such novelists; no, nor so much as otherwise should be done to the weak for their confirmation and increase in grace. Methinks as Paul's spirit was stirred within him when he saw the Athenians so addicted to idolatry, so it should cast us into one of his paroxysms to see so many men in great probability of being everlastingly undone; and if by faith he did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it should more effectually untie our tongues than they tell us that Cræsus'

danger did his son's. He that will let a sinner go to liell for want of speaking to him, doth set less by souls than the Redeemer of souls did, and less by his neighbour than internal charity will allow him to do by his greatest enemy. Oh, therefore, brethren, whomsoever you neglect, neglect not the most miserable! Whoever you pass over, forget not poor souls that are under the condemnation and curse of the law, and may look every hour for the infernal execution, if a speedy change do not prevent it. Oh, call after the impenitent, and ply this great work of converting souls, whatever else you have undone.”*

Now, then, assuming the position that conversion should be a leading object in the ministry of every faithful preacher of the gospel, we come again to the inquiry, what kind of truths, and what methods of preaching them, are likely to accomplish this end? It might seem almost unnecessary to ask such a question. But if one may judge from the preaching of many, there is yet some need of setting this forth. Autobiographical.

I now come to the “Anxious Inquirer,” and I might have taken up Doddridge’s “Rise and Progress,” Alleine’s “Alarm,” Baxter’s “Call,” and, among modern publications, “The Sinner’s Friend,” “Come to Jesus,” with all the innumerable religious tracts that are being issued by the various societies in this day. But I dwell upon the “Anxious Inquirer,” not from any spirit of vain-glory, God is witness, but because it is a work widely circulated, well known, and greatly blessed.

Now, let any critic, or other person of sound judgment, examine the book itself. He will find no literary talent, no philosophical research, no profound theology, no novelties of sentiment, no pretension to logic, rhetoric, or poetry,—nothing but one of the simplest and most elementary treatises in the English language;—a book which contains nothing that can puff up its author with pride—a book which any one of the thousand of evangelical ministers of all denominations would have written, had he sat down with such a purpose,—the mere alphabet of the Christian religion, which, whatever cause its success might occasion to its

* There is a blank left for the quotation in Mr James’s MS., and nothing to indicate to what particular passage of the “Reformed Pastor” he alludes; but there can be little doubt that he was thinking of the extract given in the text.—ED.

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author for adoring gratitude, can certainly yield no materials to feed his pride. Yet this elementary, this simple, this humble, this comparatively insignificant little book, has been honoured of God to do a mighty work in the earth in the way of converting souls. What, then, are its contents? what the truths it illustrates? The spirituality and eternal obligation and unabated requirements of the moral law—the tremendous evil and awful consequences of sin—the condemnation of the whole human race by the law they had violated—the atonement of Christ, by His death on the cross, for the sins of the world—the infinite love and grace of God, in His willingness to receive the chief of sinners—the nature and necessity of repentance and of the new birth—the justification of the sinner in the sight of God by faith without works—the indispensable necessity of the work of the Spirit of God to enlighten, to renew, and sanctify the soul; together with some instructions calculated to remove perplexities, to overcome difficulties, and to afford encouragement to the soul convinced of sin and inquiring after salvation. Such are the truths, and the method of presenting them, contained in this work. There, of course, are not to be found theological subtleties, or matters of controversy. If, then, these truths are thus powerful to awaken the conscience, when set forth in a book, and addressed to the soul through the medium of the eye, how much more powerful for this end might it be expected they would prove when addressed to the soul through the medium of the ear! Faith more frequently cometh by hearing than by reading. For one converted by reading, scores, if not hundreds, are converted by hearing. It is the preaching of the cross—not, of course, as the results of the “Anxious Inquirer,” and other similar works prove, to the exclusion of reading—that is the power of God unto salvation. But, then, it must be the preaching of the cross. There are certain truths, and these are set forth in this little treatise, that constitute the converting element of sermons; I say, the converting element, i.e., the truths, and manner of discussing them, that are adapted to convert the soul to God.

And here be it remarked, it is not only the truths themselves, but the manner of treating them, that constitutes the convert-

ing element. If the doctrines which are unto salvation be treated in a mere argumentative form—if they are set forth in an abstract or in a cold, heartless manner, or are addressed simply to the intellect, or are garnished with rhetorics or ornamented with poetic imagery, so that the imagination shall be appealed to rather than the heart and conscience, little, even with the gospel, can be expected in the way of conversion. It is the gospel addressed in simple earnestness to the soul that will move it. Now, I would by no means set up the “Anxious Inquirer” as a perfect standard for the manner of treating gospel truths and commending them to the heart and conscience. Yet I may, without the least violation of modesty, affirm that there is some measure of simplicity in the work. There is a plain, affectionate earnestness in the work. And do not these two words, “affection” and “earnestness,” include the very essentials of a successful ministration of the gospel? They are intimately related; for can there be affection without earnestness, or earnestness where there is no affection? In listening to some preachers of the gospel, you perceive a deplorable want of both these. All is didactic, heartless intellectuality. The preacher is a lecturer on the gospel; and the sermon is a mere lecture: all true—perhaps clear—but there is nothing which makes the audience feel that the preacher loves them, is intensely anxious to save them, and is preaching to them the gospel for this very purpose. No minister can be a good and effective preacher of the gospel who does not produce on the minds of his hearers the conviction—“This man is intent on saving our souls. He would save us if he could.” What can interest us like the interest manifested for us! How weighty a motive-power is the exhibition of a sincere and ardent affection! To see a man rousing up all the energies of his soul to do us good—using all the powers of persuasion, the tear starting in his eye, the flush spreading over his face, the very muscles of his countenance work, till we seem to feel his very hand laying hold with a grasp of our soul to save us from perdition! Oh, the force there is in such preaching! This gave the charm, the power, and, in subordination to the Spirit of God, the success to Whitfield’s preaching.

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Now, may I not lay claim for something of this in the “Anxious Inquirer?” Must not the reader feel that the author loves him, and is in earnest for his salvation? Does not the book engage his attention, as the appeal of one that is concerned for his welfare? Must he not say, “Well, if no one has before cared for my soul, this man does. Here I have found a friend who is concerned for my eternal wellbeing?” May I not ascribe much of the success of the book to its affectionate earnestness? And may I not again and again repeat the inference, that if this is successful in a book, may it not be expected under God to be still more successful in a sermon?

TO THE REV. DR PATTON,
ON PUBLISHING THE “ANXIOUS INQUIRER” IN AMERICA.

“EDGBASTON, *April 14, 1834.*”

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—You requested me some time since to forward the sheets of any work I might in future send from the press, to secure the copyright on your side of the Atlantic. I have taken your advice, and have herewith sent you about half of a little thing I have prepared for inquirers. I do not know that it is of sufficient magnitude or value to sell for anything in your literary market; but if it be ever so small a sum, it will be a drop in the stream of holy liberality, and may serve by that drop to water the parched places of the earth. If you can obtain anything for it, you may appropriate it to your Education Society. The title I propose is this: ‘The Anxious Inquirer after Salvation Directed and Encouraged.’ The treatise is after the plan of Dr Henry’s book; but I have always found that volume too lengthy, and there is also a want of perspicuity in the style. I have aimed at great simplicity and conciseness. The other portion shall follow as soon as it is out. I have forwarded a copy through the medium of two different houses, lest a single one should fail.

“We are still much in a bustle about our claims as Dissenters. I think it likely we shall succeed, though perhaps not this session of Parliament. Religion is stagnant, I fear. There is but little doing. Men are almost wholly taken up with ‘the things that are seen and temporal.’

“Before you receive this, you will have seen our brethren Reid and Matheson. I hope their visit will be productive of benefit to the churches of both hemispheres.

“I have sent you a copy of a most delightful work not long since

published in this country. Oh, what men were those missionaries! May God pour out His Spirit upon all living labourers, and make them more like those who have entered on their rest!

“Kind regards to Mrs Patton, in which my wife unites.—Your affectionate brother,

“J. A. JAMES.

“*P.S.*—I will send the volumes by the next parcel. The remaining chapters will be: Mistakes—Perplexities—Discouragements—Cautions—Encouragements.”

CHAPTER III.

BEREAVEMENT.

FROM 1834 to 1841, the period included in this fourth Book, dark and heavy clouds rested upon Mr James's heart and home. The sufferings of his daughter, who had been an invalid almost from childhood, greatly increased, his own mental depression was aggravated by the appearance, in 1840, of symptoms of a disease threatening him with protracted physical torture, and at last Mrs James, whose energy and wisdom had been his strength and support through these troubles, sickened and died. His admiration of her intellectual vigour and moral worth has been already recorded, and is fully sustained by the testimony of all who knew her.

She inspired an almost idolatrous affection—an affection so mingled with respect for the dignity and firmness of her character, that it deepened into reverence. Having no young children requiring constant attention at home, she was able to devote the greater part of her time to the visitation of the sick and the poor. Nor was she satisfied with offering spiritual consolation to the distressed, she generously employed her wealth in conferring substantial relief. A letter, which I insert here, addressed by her, at the beginning of her fatal illness, to her friend Mrs Wills, of Bristol, will shew that she had tenderness as well as strength.

“EDGBASTON, *December 21, 1840.*

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—When I look at the date of your letter, I am grieved that it has not sooner been acknowledged; but the truth is, that my debility has so much increased as to make writing a painfully fatiguing occupation. I have determined, therefore, while I can write, to assure you of my unabated affection and grateful recollection of the various instances of your love and kindness in times that are past. May you and yours, my beloved friend, be long spared to do much good, and to enjoy much happiness in the favour of God! Pray for me, that my affliction may be greatly sanctified. There is much dross to be consumed; hitherto the fire has been gentle, but I must expect to feel it more; and if the purpose of the gracious Refiner is accomplished, and during the process He shall sit by and say, ‘Fear not, I am with thee,’ I hope I could welcome the trial—perfect weakness upheld by omnipotent strength will bring glory to my God.

“Until the last month I have been free from pain, but now the old pain in my back is returned, and for several hours each day tries me very much, and leaves a distressing weakness. But I am thankful that my mind is generally peaceful; I dare not say that I have the full assurance of hope, but I have a clearer view of the evil of sin, a longing after perfect holiness, and a conviction that none but Christ can save my soul. I am surrounded by an abundance of temporal mercies, and the unbounded kindness of my friends humbles me in the dust. Who, and what am I, that God’s people should thus favour me! Public, social, and domestic prayer is presented from our large church; may it be graciously heard, and may I be enabled to leave them a dying testimony to the power of the gospel and the grace of the Saviour! Oh, what a prospect there is before us—to be with Jesus, and to be *like Him*—to be perfectly holy ourselves, and all around us holy!

“You see, my dear friend, that I write to you with all the freedom of long-trying friendship. I rejoice in the general welfare of your whole family, but sympathise with dear Mrs — in her affliction; give my Christian love to her; I pray that the Sun of Righteousness may soon arise on her with healing in his beams, and restore to her the joy as well as the reality of His salvation. If it were not too large to send by the post, I would forward her a work which has much cheered me. You can easily procure it; it is ‘Scripture Portions for the Afflicted, especially the Sick,’ published by the Tract Society. Give my kindest love to your dear boy; may he love and serve the God of his fathers!

“I have written as much as my strength will allow. Affectionate remembrance to your dear husband, and each member of a family I highly respect for their works of faith and labours of love. Farewell, my dear friend.—Your tenderly attached,
“A. M. JAMES.”

The winter passed, and spring came, and instead of any promise of returning health, there was an increase of weakness and disease. For several months before the end, all hope had fled.

The following letter, written by Mr James, February 1841, to Mrs Gregory, on the death of her husband Dr Olinthus Gregory, indicates how his heart was affected by the prospect of his loss:—

“EDGBASTON, *February 16, 1841.*

“I am not, my dear madam, so occupied and engaged by my own deep and still deepening sorrows, as to be insensible to the sorrows of others. Amidst my own thickening gloom, I have often thought of *you*. I have accounted it my privilege to know as a friend the inestimable man whom it was your richer privilege for so many years to possess as a husband; and knowing your incalculable loss, I am prepared to express for you a sympathy which is far more than compliment. I need not tell you of his rare gifts, and the rare graces with which they were combined, which made him at once the object of admiration and esteem to men of science, and of affection and confidence to men of piety.

“Among some of the pleasantest recollections of my life of the same kind, are those evenings spent with him, and I now anticipate that glorious communion of spirits made perfect into which he has now entered. In him we saw an exquisite specimen of sanctified intellect—loftiness of philosophy combined with the humility of true religion.

“I am sure that to some it might seem almost unkind thus to aggravate your sorrows by setting before you thus such excellence you have lost. No, my dear friend, it is not unkind. You love to hear from others now, as you love to repeat to yourself, his greatness and his goodness. He has a space in your memory around which you are glad to collect your own thoughts and the expressions of your friends—not, indeed, to pay him more than may be given to a creature, but to glorify God in him. He is gone, but who took him? His God. To whom and to what? To Himself. How many reasons for submission are to be found in these two considerations! Harken to the language which the Redeemer addressed to the beloved apostle in the isle of Patmos, Behold, I am above, far over men, and have the keys of hell and of death, ‘and of the unseen world.’ Mark that—which holds the keys of the grave, never trusts them out of His hands, and therefore the portals of the tomb are never opened but by Himself. Yes, He has turned the key, in the present instance, to admit to glory a soul which He had redeemed, sanctified, and matured for it. As for yourself, my dear madam, the widow’s God is your God—put thy widow’s trust in Me. What more could He have said? The arm of flesh may fail, but

the arm of the Spirit can never fail. 'He liveth, and blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted.' Oh, dwell upon these rapturous and comprehensive exultations. He liveth; die who will, God lives; and shall we feel all bereft and desolate while God lives, and is our God? Is there not enough in God to supply us, without a husband or a wife being added to Him? Do we so reckon of Christ and His salvation as to imagine that we cannot make ourselves to live with content, during the few fleeting years that we are to spend upon earth, with such a portion? Weep, my good friend, you must, you ought—God expects it as well as allows it; but weep not only as a woman and a widow, but as a Christian. The widow of such a man should be no ordinary widow. I am expecting the trial which you are experiencing. May God prepare us for the cup which He is preparing for us! I think I can trust Him, but oh, the drinking of it is yet to come. Well, there is grace enough in Him if there is grace enough in me, or us, for this. My dear and inestimable wife is calm, serene, and hopeful. Her eye never turns back to life, or scarcely for a moment. She feels, she speaks, as a dying woman, and a dying Christian too. I am preparing a book for widows; I wish it was out. In the meantime, may I recommend to you the perusal of John Howe's letters to Lady Rachel Russel on the execution of her husband. May He that comforteth those that are cast down be your support! Remember me to you children. May the want be greatly sanctified to them! My dear wife sends her sympathy with that of, my dear madam, your sincere friend,

"JOHN ANGELL JAMES."

In the Carr's Lane Church-book there is a very affecting letter of sympathy addressed by the church to its pastor, on Good-Friday, April 9, 1841; how it came to be written, is thus explained by Mr James in "Faith Triumphant:"—

"In her love and solicitude for the welfare of the church, she requested me, some months before her decease, to bear from her sick-chamber to its members a message expressive of her affection for them; of her gratitude for the sympathy they had shewn; and of her ardent prayers for their increasing holiness. The message was delivered at one of our sacramental seasons, and produced a state of feeling not easily to be described through the whole community, then assembled round the table of the Lord. On the following Good-Friday, which was but a few days afterwards, when the church was again assembled for the purpose of solemn humiliation and prayer, they adopted, after the pastor had retired, the following letter, which was presented to him by the deacons:—

“TO OUR HONOURED AND BELOVED PASTOR IN HIS AFFLICTION.

“We, the members of the church, placed under your pastoral care by the Great Shepherd, and now assembled together as one body, desire to unite in one heart, and with one voice to express our affectionate sympathy with you, now that you are bowed down in submissive suffering under the hand of your gracious Father. We have long been the anxious witnesses of your affliction, and have watched with you, and felt for you, under all the vicissitudes of hope and fear, which have alternately flattered or depressed you. We feel, too, that our efforts to mitigate your sorrows have been but feeble and ineffectual; our pity can but weep where most it loves; but we have remembered you and yours, in our approaches to that throne of grace, whereon is seated One that knows and loves you well; who, in the person of His beloved Son, is touched with the feeling of your infirmities; who pitieth you as a father pitieth his children, and who can effectually help you; and we believe that fervent prayer has availed much to the strengthening your faith, and causing consolation to abound where affliction has so much abounded.

“But it is not our only object at present, dear sir, to express our sympathy for *you*, though this were worthy a more full and a more tender effusion of our hearts.

“On the last Sabbath, when we were holding communion with the Friend of sinners, and with each other, you delivered to us a message from one whose name is, and ever will be, dear to us. The expressions of her love overwhelmed our hearts, and the admonitions that accompanied them filled our spirits with Solemn awe. The scene will never be forgotten by us, and we pray and hope it may always be practically remembered,

“We now beg leave to acknowledge *through you*, Mrs James’s tender and affectionate remembrance of us, and to express our grateful reception both of that and of her more solemn admonitions. But we cannot be content with this simple acknowledgment: we look back with thankfulness to the *Giver of all good* through a course of twenty years—(and in the retrospect how short it seems!)—we feel that you and we have derived unnumbered benefits from the relationships in which we respectively stood to the object of our present affection and sympathy—we rest with mingled emotions of delight and sorrow upon the recollections of the graces with which the Great Head of the Church has qualified her for her important and responsible station as the help-meet of our beloved pastor. To speak particularly of those graces by which the church has been instructed and comforted, would be grateful to our hearts, but we feel that the mention of them would disturb those

sacred feelings of humiliation, which would not for a moment relinquish the position of a penitent before the cross, nor forget the prayer of the publican. We would therefore magnify the grace of God in her, and trace up every benefit and blessing to His bounteous hand; but surely we may, we must love the instrument through whom they have been received.

“Many of us in the humblest stations of life, and many others better known in the world, shall ever cherish the most lively and grateful recollections of kindness to us in the chamber of sickness, or when overtaken by the various forms of human calamity and distress; when the appearance of our sympathising friend was as though an angel of mercy had visited our habitations, sent from above to pour consolation into our wounded hearts; and our faith in the gracious retribution and promises of God is now strengthened, when we see or hear that the merciful obtaineth mercy—that the consolations which have been dispensed by her to others, now abound richly toward herself. We pray that the same holy consolations may yet abound more and more in the experience of our dear and honoured friend, until, as a living temple of the Holy Spirit, she is filled with all the fulness of God, even of His light and love, and joy.

“We again unite in one heart and with one voice, in offering our love and thankfulness to God, and to His suffering yet comforted saint, for all the various and numerous benefits we have received and enjoyed by her means; and we pray that our eternity may be spent together in ascribing all glory and praise to Him from whom these and all our other blessings do continually flow, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Under the same date, in a diary which he kept during his wife's illness, he writes:—

“On this day the affectionate and most tender letter of sympathy from the church to myself, in response to the solemn message which I had borne to it of her devoted affection, was read to her. It was, perhaps, almost imprudent to read this epistle to her; yet, as it was in part concerning herself, and demonstrated the esteem and affection which were cherished for her by the members, it was scarcely just to her, or to them, to withhold it; but the hearing of it almost entirely overcame her, and it was with some difficulty she recovered. Her first words were, ‘I am a poor, unprofitable servant. From the time I became the wife of a minister, it was my effort to be the servant of the church. I have done but little. But oh, the kindness of my friends in thus gathering round me now! When Christ was betrayed, it is said the disciples all forsook Him and fled from Him in His extremity, but all are trying to shew me kindness in mine.’”

The diary contains many beautiful illustrations of the earnestness of Mrs James's piety—a piety characterised, however, by great distrust of its own reality and worth. I extract one or two passages:—

“I have lately been thinking much upon Christ's human nature and sojourn upon earth, and have almost envied the family of Bethany in their attention to Him—but I shall see Him. Much of heaven is a mystery—its locality, and the state of separate spirits, and other things; but this is enough—I shall be with Christ. I am lost when I get beyond this. I have been repeating that beautiful hymn:—

“Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace,
Rise from transitory things.
Towards heaven, thy native place.

“Sun, and moon, and stars decay;
Time shall soon this earth remove.
Rise, my soul, and haste away,
To seats prepared above.”

“*April 15.*—After a night of great suffering, I found her much exhausted, but still equally tranquil. ‘I do not alter my prayer,’ she said,—“Father, glorify Thy name.” I am willing He should do this, anyhow. I alter not the condition—I do not draw back—it is all according to His covenant. Heaven will make amends for it all. It is all right.’ On receiving a little water, she looked up, and said,—“They shall not thirst any more: the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of waters.” Oh, it seems too good to be true for such sinners: but the Lamb shall do it. ‘If Socinianism be true, I am a poor, helpless idolater. I cannot form a conception of God apart from Christ. I cannot understand an Infinite Spirit. I think of God in Christ. I have been repeating Doddridge's beautiful hymn, “Grace, 'tis a charming sound.” “By grace ye are saved,” was the text of the first gospel sermon I ever heard.’

“*Evening of the same day.*—‘I was at one time of my life much troubled with that passage, “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” I have felt a little of it this evening, and I will tell you how I met it—“Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.” Now, I *desire* to come—I *wish* to come—I *do* come. I come to Him as the way, the truth, and the life. I come to Him *for* life—life spiritual and eternal. I want life, and life from Him; and thus I get rid of my fears.”

Ten days after this, Mr James wrote to Mrs Wills, reporting

the prolongation of his wife's sufferings, but thankfully acknowledging her tranquillity and happiness.

“EDGBASTON, *April 19th.*

“DEAR MRS WILLS,—On Saturday, I was requested by my beloved wife to reply to your kind inquiries directed to herself concerning her health. She begs me to present her kindest love, and to thank you for your solicitude concerning her. I can send you no other news, and, so far as she is concerned, no better than that she is drawing nearer and nearer to the kingdom. Yes, your long-trying friend, and my dear companion, counsellor, and comforter for nearly twenty years, is about to leave us, and go to the land of the holy and happy. For the last fortnight her weakness has so much increased, that it would never have surprised either us or her medical attendant, if the symptoms of the last great change had been exhibited any hour. Still, the mortal conflict may be long yet, but it seems certainly approaching its termination. Thus far of the perishing body; but the calm and happy state of the imperishable soul! The outer and inner man present a striking contrast; for the strength of grace is beautifully, gloriously triumphant over the feebleness of nature. All is peace—not a murmur, not a repining thought; no, not even a wish it were otherwise than it is. She feels as well as says, that she is just in the situation in which God would have her be, and that is enough. She has borne weakness with submission, and is now willing, if God should appoint her to it, to bear pain. ‘Father, glorify Thy name,’ is her prayer, without, as she frequently says, any conditions or qualifications.

“This, my dear madam, is the balm of my poor wounded spirit. Her state of mind is a help to me. I learn now those lessons from her bed, to which she has often listened from my pulpit. May God sanctify me for life, and labour, and usefulness, as He seems to be sanctifying her for death and glory!

“With kind regards to Mr Wills and to your son, I remain, my dear madam, your afflicted friend,

“J. A. JAMES.

“Need I ask your prayers and those of Mr Wills? Will you also remember us to all your circle?”

She lingered a few weeks longer. Under the date June 4, 1841, I find the following entry in the Church-book:—

“Mrs James having been dismissed from the church below to the church above on the preceding evening, our pastor was not present, but the following letter being received from him when we were assembled

together, the hour was spent in earnest supplication to God on his behalf:—

“TO THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN CARR’S LANE.

“MY DEARLY-BELOVED FLOCK,—Although it is not necessary for me to say to you, “Pity me, pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me,” or to urge upon you the apostolic request, “Brethren, pray for me,” yet I cannot forbear to commend myself to your sincere and fervent supplications at the throne of grace this evening, that I may be so strengthened, by Divine grace, to bear this and every other visitation of my heavenly Father as to glorify Him, and be an example of patient suffering, firm confidence, and peaceful hope in Christ, to my dear and much-loved people.—I remain, my dear flock, your bereaved and afflicted pastor,

“J. A. JAMES.”

It was his custom to read, at family prayer on Saturday evenings, the 103d Psalm. On the Saturday of the week in which Mrs James died, he hesitated, with the open Bible in his hand, before he began to read; but, after a moment’s silence, he looked up and said, “Notwithstanding what has happened this week; I see no reason for departing from our usual custom of reading the 103d Psalm: ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.’”

His grief, though profound, was not violent and uncontrolled. The discipline of the previous six or seven years had prepared him to bow, with submission, under the mighty hand of God. He describes, I think, not only what he strove for, but what, in a great measure, he actually attained, in his pastoral address to his people, issued immediately afterwards:—

“When a holy and beloved object of our affection is removed by death, we ought to sorrow; humanity demands it, and Christianity, in the person of the weeping Jesus, allows it: and the man without a tear is a savage or a stoic, but not a Christian. God intends, when He bestows His gifts, that they should be received with smiles of gratitude; and when He recalls them, that they should be surrendered with ‘drops of sacred grief.’ Sorrow is an affection implanted by the Creator in the soul for wise and beneficent purposes; and it ought not to be ruthlessly torn up by the roots, but directed in its exercise by reason and religion. The work of grace, though it is *above* nature, is not *against* it. The

man who tells me not to weep at the grave insults me, mocks me, and wishes to degrade me. I do weep; I must weep; I cannot help it; God requires me to do so; and has opened a fountain of tears in my nature for that purpose. And it is the silent, pure, unsophisticated testimony of my heart to the excellence of the gift He gave in mercy, and in mercy, no doubt, as well as judgment, has recalled. Without sorrow we should not improve by His correcting hand; chastened grief is like the gentle shower, falling first upon the earth to prepare it for the seed, and then upon the seed to cause it to germinate; though wild, clamorous, passionate sorrow is like the thunder-shower of inundation, that carries away soil and seed together. Can we lose the company of one whose presence was the light and charm of our dwelling; whose society was the source of our most valuable and most highly-valued earthly comfort; whose love, ever new and fresh, was presented daily to us in full cup by her own hand; who cheered us with her conversation; bore with our infirmities; solved our doubts; disclosed to us in difficulty the path of duty; and quickened us by her example—is it possible, I say, to lose such a friend and not sorrow?

“But, then, though we mourn, we must not murmur. We may sorrow, but not with the passionate and uncontrolled grief of the heathen, who have no hope. Our sorrow must flow, deep as we like, but noiseless and still, in the channels of submission. It must be a sorrow so quiet as to hear all the words of consolation which our heavenly Father utters amidst the gentle strokes of His rod; so reverential as to adore Him for the exercise of His prerogative in taking away what and whom He pleases; so composed as to prepare us for doing His will, as well as bearing it; so meek and gentle as to justify Him in His dispensations; so confiding as to be assured that there is as much love in taking the mercy away as there was in bestowing it; so grateful as to be thankful for the mercies left, as well as afflicted for the mercies lost; so trustful as to look forward to the future with hope, as well as back upon the past with distress; so patient as to bear all the aggravations that accompany or follow the bereavement with unruffled acquiescence; so holy as to lift the prayer of faith for Divine grace to sanctify the stroke; and so lasting as to preserve, through all the coming years of life, the benefit of that event, which, in one awful moment, changed the whole aspect of our earthly existence.”

CHAPTER IV.

AUTHORSHIP—RELIGIOUS LIFE AND WORK.

Autobio-ALTHOUGH the nervous excitement and depression, from which
graphical. Mr James suffered from 1834 to 1841, prevented him, during those years, making many public engagements away from home, his pen continued active. It was at the commencement of this period that he wrote the "Anxious Inquirer." In 1835 appeared the "Church-member's Manual," and the "Flower Faded;" in 1837 the "Christian Professor" and a "Pastoral Letter to the Churches in the "Worcestershire Association."

Of the "Christian Professor," he writes:—

In this I endeavoured to set forth, in various lights, the import, the obligation, and momentous consequence of a profession of Christianity. This was never more necessary than now. A profession subjects us to no suffering, no loss, no hazard. We seem to have no cross to take up; and are rather raised than depressed by taking up the name of Christ. Honour, and not reproach, follows us in our Christian career.

Moreover, modern practice tends to throw the door of entrance into our churches too widely open. I believe that we are too much in haste to swell the number of our church-members. Ministerial importance is increased, and proofs, as they are supposed to be, of usefulness are accumulated. Multitudes thus find their way into our churches without the wedding-garment. The admission of

members to the church has been, and is to this moment, one of the perplexities of my life. I know very well that the Lord's Supper is milk for babes—I know the apostles admitted persons soon after conversion, and who could have had but comparatively little knowledge of Christianity—I know that it is dangerous to reject a young and timid Christian. But, on the other hand, admission to the church, after profession, is generally considered by the individual as a certificate of personal religion; and should they be still in an unconverted state, in that state they will, in all probability, die; so that a too ready admission of persons to the church is, in effect, to be accessory to their self-deception, and therefore to their destruction. Hence I have often felt perplexed; and though I have been more strict than many of my brethren, there are many very many, whom I now wish I had rejected. I have sometimes, on these grounds, been ready to ask whether a great strictness of examination, so as to give the impression to the person admitted that he is a real Christian, is not an evil; and whether, in such times as these, it is not desirable to give out the idea, more prominently and impressively, that the church is not to be considered a body of truly converted persons, so as to destroy that reliance which is so general upon profession. These views led to the preaching, and afterwards to the publication, of the discourses comprehended in the "Christian Professor." Autobiographical.

In 1838 he printed his "Oration" at the grave of his friend Dr M'All;* in 1839, "Christian Fellowship," an enlarged edition of the "Church-member's Guide," and in the same year the "Young Man from Home;" in 1840, the first series of the "Pastoral Addresses," which were published monthly; in 1841, the second series of "Pastoral Addresses,"† two tracts, "Happiness, its Natural Sources," and "Believe and Live," also "The Widow Directed to the Widow's God." Editorial.

* Collected Works, Vol. iii.

† At the close of 1859, the English Religious Tract Society had issued 1,049,319 copies of the "Pastoral Addresses," 450,800 of "Believe and Live," 88,001 of the "Young Man from Home."

In his own congregation he was unusually diligent. In all the departments of pastoral duty, visitation from house to house, the conducting of Bible classes and classes for "inquirers," and the holding of special religious services, he was probably more laborious than during any other period of his history. The members in fellowship rose from about five hundred in 1834 to eight hundred and fifty at the end of 1841.

But the chief interest of these seven years lies in the profound earnestness of his own religious life. It was not his custom to keep any record of his spiritual history, but among his papers were found several loose memoranda, written at various dates, between the beginning of 1840 and the end of the following year. These indicate by what painstaking he reached the spiritual power of his last twenty years.

With scarcely an omission, except where the writing is unintelligible, I venture to print these papers in their chronological order.

The first is not dated, but was evidently written immediately after his failure through illness to fulfil an engagement at Hanley in the last week of February 1840:—

"Having been prevented by God, or His permission, from fulfilling a public engagement abroad, and being prohibited from undertaking many foreign services for the future, I have examined in what way I can be more useful at home, in what is more immediately the sphere of my labour. And the following appear to me to be subjects to which more attention should be paid, and in the more devoted regard to which some compensation will be made for the neglect of public objects:—

"1. *My own congregation.*

"In preaching, endeavour to be more evangelical, more of unctio combined with my present practical style; more of Romaine combined with Baxter.

"More solemn in manner, and less of rhetorical loudness and vehemence.

"Be shorter. Three-quarters of an hour or fifty minutes.

"Take up the whole subject more solemnly, more impressively, more in earnest.

"2. *In the neighbouring congregations*, to preach every fortnight at one or other of the following places:—Walsall, Bilston, Wolverhampton, Stafford, Bromsgrove, Stourbridge, Tipton, Brierly Hill, Dudley, Solihull, Gornall.

“To preach a week-day lecture at the Lozell’s Chapel.

“Once a month at Garrison Lane.

“Once in two months at Snethwick.

“Principal defects in preaching—not entering with sufficient frequency, fulness, and in an experimental manner, &c., &c.

“*Pastoral Duties.*

“Visit every member at his own house, except servants, during the present year.

“Meet a class of female servants, and distribute a tract to each.
Duties of servants.

“Visit every one of the districts, and invigorate them,. Meet class leaders.

“Visit a family every Monday.

“A Saturday-evening prayer-meeting.

“A solemn church-meeting for prayer and humiliation on Good-Friday. Pastor, deacons confess.

“A solemn meeting with the deacons to deliver to them an address.

“Catechising the children in some way or other.

“To labour much to promote the spiritual welfare of the church,

“Always write a New-Year’s Address, at least begin.

“A Mothers’ Society.

“Principal defect in pastor (*)

“*For the Students.*

“To lay myself out much for their spiritual welfare—to consider myself solemnly bound to this. Never a week without one or more at my house. To labour for their good.

“*Public.*

“To write, if possible, six essays on subjects connected with professors and young ministers, in Evangelical, Congregational;† to have a class of Scripture-readers.

“*As to my own Personal Habits.*

“Learn to think of death not only with composure, but even something of desire; overcome dread of death and love of life.

“Subdue besetting sins, and become indifferent to the objects of them (‡)

“Rise earlier—more meditation—prayer—devotional reading.

“In family prayer more devout.

* Unintelligible. † *I.e.*, in the Evangelical and Congregational Magazines.

‡ Unintelligible.

“Learning Scripture *memoriter*.

“Consider the propriety of monthly fast.

“All these things I do solemnly promise to review, and to add such others as occur to me, with the intention of deliberately adopting as many of them as I can.

“This paper to be reviewed every Monday morning after breakfast.

“If God will carry me through my present state of mind, all these things will I solemnly weigh, and practise as many of them as I can; and as a thank-offering give £50 to some special object, the best I can think of.”

The second was written a week or two later:—

“Having been lately visited with severe and painful chastening from God my heavenly Father, I desire with all humility and sincerity, and with a view to my future benefit, to inquire into the reason and design of these distressing conflicts. ‘Shew me, o God, wherefore thou contendest with me.’ It is certain that one end is to humble me, by shewing my exceeding and alarming weakness in body, mind, and religion; and the necessity of constant dependence on the power, grace, and faithfulness of Christ. I am astonished at myself, and almost terrified. My mind is even liable to a degree of nervousness which approaches to insanity. O Lord, uphold me; I am bowed down with a sense of my pitiable impotency.

“2. Perhaps it is designed especially to keep me humble under the constant and accumulating proofs of my usefulness by the ‘Anxious Inquirer,’ which flow to me from all quarters, and the estimation in which I seem now to be held by my own people and others, as a man of growing sanctity of character and conduct. Satan might take the advantage of me to puff me up with pride and vanity. And therefore this thorn in the flesh is sent to buffet me.

“3. Perhaps it is to increase my usefulness in the way of comforting and edifying God’s people, by speaking to them more experimentally of His power to support and comfort them, and to prepare me more effectually to be a ‘son of consolation,’ inasmuch as through life I have been more prevailingly a ‘son of thunder.’

“4. Perhaps it is to prepare me to give up my ministry and go and dwell with my divine Lord. I have had much converse with death and eternity of late, and have sometimes thought I was near the end of my labour. I desire to be still more conversant with these awful and impressive subjects.

“5. Perhaps it is to abate in me the love of life and dread of death with which I have been too much affected all my days, even since I have been a Christian and a minister. During my awful conflict, the

last two weeks I have longed for death; not, indeed, always from the best motives, but still such has been the state of my mind, that I could almost have rejoiced at the appearance of a disease which would have indicated the approach of dissolution. I have learned that there is a state to be far more dreaded than even death itself. Let me from this time give up, as I hope I shall, my unworthy dread of my latter end, and learn to think more of the glory and felicity of being with Christ.

"6. Perhaps it is to prepare me for the removal of my dear and beloved wife, whose health has been long declining. Oh, what a calamity would this be to me, to my poor shattered frame, and my dear afflicted daughter! And yet I believe God could and would support me under even this desolating stroke. I can look at it with far greater composure than I could.

"7. Perhaps it is to prepare me to be still tenderer and more sympathising to that dear object of my heart's affection than ever, and to enable me by my own increased enjoyment of religious consolation to minister to her spiritual enjoyment.

"8. Perhaps it is to settle and increase my confidence in God, my simple, unhesitating, firm trust in Christ. I have sometimes found it difficult to bring myself into this state of mind, being naturally so excessively nervous, and painfully disposed to look to the dark side of things, and to predict evil. Now I hope to enter more deeply and practically into the meaning of that important word trust. 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' I want to be able to dismiss all fears, before the promise and power of God.

"9. Perhaps it is to make me more spiritual, inasmuch as I am sure I need it, and am labouring to bring up my people more and more to this state of mind.

"10. Perhaps it is to make me more watchful, circumspect, and cautious in all things. May I often review this paper in connexion with a recollection of my late, and, indeed, still continued indisposition, and derive from its perusal and remembrance real spiritual benefit, Again I pray, 'Shew me, O Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me,' and let the designs of Thy severe but faithful love in chastening me be entirely fulfilled. Amen.

"SUNDAY AFTERNOON, March 8, 1840."

On June 3, 1841, Mrs James died, and on the 13th he wrote the following paper:—

"Having been called, in the mysterious arrangements of Divine Providence, to part from my dear and invaluable wife, whom, amidst deep and heartfelt sorrow on my own account, though with sacred joy on

hers, I have resigned to the Lord, who bought her with His blood and has now elevated her to His glory, I desire, through Divine grace, to turn this painful dispensation to some valuable purpose connected with my own salvation as a Christian, and my usefulness as a Christian minister. It is my earnest prayer, and has been, God is witness, that I may derive good, spiritual, lasting, eternal good, from it. I would not on any account allow the event to pass by unimproved, un sanctified. I dread with an intense (*) that it should be an unprofitable visitation. I beseech and importune almighty God to render it in every way subservient to my benefit. From what chastening of my heavenly Father's hand can I expect to derive benefit, if not from this? O God, my God, sanctify me wholly, body, soul, and spirit.

"But in what way shall I improve it? What special good shall I get from it? *First*, I desire to renew the consecration of myself—my body, soul, talents, time, property, influence—everything I am, and have, and can do, to the eternal God, through the mediation of the Son of His love, and the aid of His blessed Spirit, as His rightful property, to be devoted, through the remainder of my pilgrimage on earth, entirely, always, and everywhere to His glory, as the supreme end and felicity of my existence; by which I mean, that in a more true, comprehensive, and emphatic manner I will renounce all living for my own gratification, and consider myself as set apart to serve, honour, and enjoy God—seeking my happiness in *this* way, and not in any lower, though in some respects innocent manner. I now as a Christian wish to be more eminent for spirituality of mind, heavenliness of aspiration, and holiness of conduct—and as a minister more devoted to my work, laying myself out for greater usefulness, both in the pulpit and out of it. O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, give me grace to make this dedication, in sincerity, solemnity, and great earnestness, and assistance to carry it out into execution. Suffer me not, on the return of comparative composure and tranquillity, to lose the recollection of the views, feelings, and purposes of the solemn hours and days spent in seclusion during the continuance of this affliction.

"Special Things now to be Remembered.

"I have had some fears awakened during the last days of my dear wife that I am about to be afflicted with that dire disease, stone in the kidneys. I confess I am faint-hearted and somewhat distressed with an apprehension of being called to endure so much torture, especially now that God has deprived me of my dear and tender nurse. May God in mercy spare His poor, trembling servant this sore trial! May He, in pity to my weakness, relieve me from this apprehension,

* Unintelligible.

and the life which He thus spares, and the health which He thus preserves, His grace assisting me, shall be His according to the foregoing dedication. Here I give myself to Him, to serve Him with all the health He graciously vouchsafes to me. Or should He not be pleased to grant me my request, may He keep down the complaint so far as to be bearable, and not to unfit me for my work, but only to make me more diligent, devoted, and faithful in it—an example of patient suffering to my people, and a comforter of the afflicted with the consolations which God is pleased to vouchsafe unto me. Or if even this is denied me, and I must endure the unutterable anguish which some have experienced, may His consolations abound in proportion to my sufferings. I *desire* to yield myself to His disposal. A few things I should remember—

1. Not to anticipate the evil which may never happen. "Take no thought for the morrow."

2. Remember God has carried others through.

3. He can sustain me.

4. If the suffering be great, it will soon wear me out and I shall be at rest, and if not it will be bearable.

5. Endeavour to trust in God and hope for the best. But should He be pleased to relieve me, this shall remain to remind me of my dedication, and that health and strength belong to Him, and not to myself; this shall remain my bond to tie me to His service.

"All my recreations, my holidays, my periods of rest, shall be not exclusively for enjoyment, but to prepare me for service. I will now give my health to God, considering that I have one and one only object of existence left—to be *useful*. Pleasure-taking, even the most rational and innocent, on its own account, I desire to put out of the question. As one way of improvement, if God give me health, will endeavour to rise early—six in summer, seven in winter—and waste no time, considering time as belonging to God. And as temperance in appetite is of great influence on the complaint, will abstain from all gratifications of taste likely to foster it, and be rigidly abstemious. o God, here is my witness, and Thou knowest it. As I shall be much alone with my dear afflicted daughter, I will endeavour to drive away the idea of solitude by a more realising sense of the presence of God and of Christ. Will endeavour to enter into Mrs Huntington's idea, 'Felt God near; felt as if I was somewhere with God.'

"As my dear wife panted so ardently after holiness, I will strive to enter into the same idea for myself, and long to be holy in all its branches—purity, meekness, benevolence, charity, brotherly love.

"As there is something far more to be dreaded than pain, and that is *sin*, will strive to keep my eye more on sin as an object of depreca-

tion than pain, and consider that as long as I am kept holy by Divine grace I have still far more cause for comfort than disquiet.

“I will try to subdue a foreboding disposition by ‘trust in God.’

“I will labour to the uttermost after a more impressive and heart-satisfying view of the glory of Christ. I want to see the glory of Christ. I am anxious to behold by knowledge, faith, the spiritual sense, the beauty of the Saviour. I will lift up my heart to heaven. Heaven shall be my home.

“Thus will I endeavour to fulfil my consecration, as expressed in the former part. I will honour the memory of my beloved wife by becoming more holy by her death. I do not think I could better please her, if it were allowed me to hold communication with her now, than by making known such a purpose. This is the way I choose to honour her memory. Blessed saint! *thou* perhaps art made acquainted with it, and it will increase thy happiness in glory. Here, then, O God, I devote myself to Thee.

(Signed) “J. A. JAMES.

“SABBATH, *June 13, 1841.*”

These private papers are of great importance, as disclosing the real character of Mr James’s personal religious history. They are remarkably free from the mystical element. Although he had been suffering very severely from a morbid condition of the nervous system, there is scarcely any trace of those peculiar religious experiences which are very commonly associated with nervous depression. He says nothing about his vision of God becoming dim, his hope of heaven being quenched, his sense of personal safety being troubled and destroyed. He is not ambitious of spiritual raptures and triumphs. In a single paragraph he declares his intention “to labour to the uttermost after a more impressive and heart-satisfying view of the glory of Christ but the main stress of his solicitude is to be more patient and trustful in suffering, to overcome “besetting sins,” to preach more effectively, and to be a better pastor. There is an air of reality about all his regrets, and about all his plans and hopes for the future. Physical disease had not made his religious life morbid. As he himself says, in the introduction to his Autobiography, he never kept a diary. Had he kept one, I believe that its pages would have recorded, at least during the last thirty years of his life, very few occasions of ecsta-

tic spiritual delight, and very few of deep spiritual despondency. Greatly as he admired the Life of Dr Payson—it was one of his Saturday-evening books—there was very little in Mr James’s religious nature and history of that which I suppose constitutes the great attraction of that very popular biography. In his mature years, Mr James lived in the temperate zone; of tropical heat and tropical storms he knew nothing; nor had he ever to lament that he was cursed with the torpidity of an arctic winter. He loved God and hated iniquity. His religious life derived its special character from a vigorous conscience and a glowing heart, and the influence of imagination was very inconsiderable. He did not indulge in a shallow scepticism about the reality of those spiritual conflicts and glories which some devout persons have known, nor trace all their “experiences” to changes in the atmosphere, and their own physical condition; but he was equally indisposed to affect what he never felt. His religious history in his maturer years was quiet, sober, and practical, and neither to himself nor to others did he attempt to give it any other character.

LETTERS.

TO THE REV. DR PATTON

"EDGBASTON, *March 14, 1834.*

". . . I feel some degree of solicitude about the consequences of their mission, (Messrs Reed and Matheson.) We folks in this land have taken up the opinion that you Americans have some portion of national vanity, and possess a sensitiveness about your country which it is easier to offend than to satisfy. Moderate and impartial praise, it is thought, does not satisfy you; we must praise everything and largely. Now, I am a little solicitous, lest the remarks of our friends while with you, and their report on their return, should not come quite up to your expectations, and thus produce something of irritation. We can do each other no good by shutting our eyes, abjuring discrimination, and dealing only in unmixed censure or praise; for this in the one case is envious detraction, and in the other hollow flattery. I hope that our deputation will be candid in their disposition, and honest in the expression of their opinion. I think they go out as free from prejudice, as can be looked for in the ordinary circumstances of human nature, and I believe that you are prepared to receive them with an unsuspecting and affectionate confidence. On many accounts I should like to be with them, but I am most entirely satisfied I have done right in refusing to accept the appointment; for though it would be one of the highest gratifications I could enjoy out of heaven, to spend a few months with you, yet I am quite sure I have taken the path of duty in remaining at home.

"And now to the state of things in our land. We are come into the conflict with the Establishment of which I spoke to you in my former letters. The iftsenters, from the north of Scotland to the Land's-End,

are all bestirring themselves in the way of memorialising the Government and petitioning the Legislature for the redress of grievances; what these are you will learn by the accompanying copy of the petition of my congregation, which was signed by between six and seven hundred male persons above the age of fifteen. The Ministry are disposed to help us, but are so impeded by the High-Church party, that I fear we shall obtain only partial relief. The accompanying newspapers will also convey to you some idea of the state of feeling here. The *Patriot*, as you are aware, is the organ of the evangelical Dissenters; but you will be astonished to be informed, that although it belongs to both the Independents and Baptists, it is but very lately that it has supported itself. Our stamp-duty is a most serious hindrance to the success of a religious newspaper. The Dissenters are not quite harmonious in their operations; as some wish to petition, and do petition, for the dissolution of the alliance between Church and State, while the great body only *protest* against the union, and petition merely for the redress of grievances. I have enclosed a paper containing an account of a meeting at Manchester, where you will find the speeches of the party who go the whole length of praying for the 'dissolution of the union.' The Church people are exceedingly alarmed and angry. Although I have discussed the subject very coolly in the pamphlet which I send you, I am most cordially disliked by a great many on account of it. One of the most extraordinary circumstances connected with the Church of England is, the vast increase of evangelical clergymen, in connexion with a system so manifestly and notoriously corrupt as is the Church of England. I cannot interpret this circumstance; a vast nucleus of piety has been forming in the midst of surrounding evils of an enormous character. The mischief of the present state of things is, that all hopes of a revival of religion are at present checked; the heads, and hearts, and mouths of our people are full of the secularities of religion; its more spiritual matters are in danger of being sadly neglected. However, I am inclined, upon the whole, to regard the present situation of things as the commencement of a great conflict against organised systems of ecclesiastical corruption. 'The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.' Jesus can take care of His own kingdom, and *is taking* care of it. Your revivals seem for the present stopped. I am still anxious about two things in the United States—the provision of religious instruction for the valley of the Mississippi, and the abolition of slavery in the Southern States. Oh for some Dr Hewit to take up this subject, and rouse your feelings in reference to it, as he did on the temperance cause! Your exertions in the latter, or rather I should say the glory of them, is in eclipse by your system of slavery in the south, and your feelings towards the coloured people all over the United States."

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

"EDGBASTON, *March 28, 1834.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—As a member of my congregation is about to start for America, I avail myself of the opportunity of sending a letter to assure you that we still think and talk of you. The arrival of your last communication was looked for with some degree of solicitude, that it might announce to us the welcome news of your safe return to your family and flock. We congratulate you, not merely on that account, but also that the end of your absence had been so mercifully accomplished in the restoration of your health. May your life be long spared for a blessing to the church and to the world! I ought to have replied to your letter before this, but engagements come on in such rapid succession, and objects that are immediately before you press upon your attention with such clamorous urgency, that absent ones do not always receive their due share of time and notice. We were much disappointed that your stay with us was so short, having confidently calculated upon one or two weeks at least. Well, there you are then again in all the business and cares and anxieties of the faithful minister's life and labours, and indeed these cares and anxieties are neither few nor small. What a delightful thought it is they are not to last for ever! And then, the results—the glorious, the immortal results! The souls, the immortal souls saved, and reflecting the glories of their redeeming God! What a wonder it is we are not more diligent and devoted; that we can find time or interest for anything else—even for autographs! Do you know I became a little jealous over you lest this passion should engross you too much, and steal any portion of that interest and leisure which should be given to Christ and His cause? And yet I might have said his books and sermons give proof that he does not neglect his work; and as all men need relaxation from the severer pursuits of duty, *this is his*. Pardon the hint. . . . I am afraid your country is not in a sound and healthy state. Your church is more agitated than it should be, considering what are the causes of excitement. I do not see anything very serious in the new doctrines. There are a few things in Stuart's volume on the Romans, which, perhaps, I might not choose to subscribe to, but I do not see the mischief in it which some do. But I find the doctrines are but a part of the cause of contention: your missions are now added to it. I wish you could all pay still more attention than you even do now, to the state of your own population. You ought, in my opinion, to relax a little on the subject of your ministry; not that you ought to have a less number of well-educated men, but a greater number of men of good sound sense and piety, to meet the wants of your new settlements, who, if

they are not learned, might be very useful. The present increase of your population is, I should think, nearly double that of your ministers.

“To leave the United States and to come here, we are in a state of the most determined hostility,—I mean, the civil and ecclesiastical parties. The Tories are struggling to oust the Liberals, and, I think, will succeed. And the malignity of the Church party against the Dissenters is almost rabid. The Government plan of abolishing church-rates by appropriating the surplus revenues of the cathedral property, has set the kingdom in a blaze. Oh, for peace! But this cannot be looked for, while such things exist as now keep the two bodies separate. Who could imagine, if the Word of God did not tell us so, that it is through such storms and breakers that Christ is steering the bark of His cause. Yet so it is. Fifty years hence many good men who are now clinging to the corruptions of Christianity, will appear objects of astonishment to those who will succeed to their general principles, but who will renounce the grosser follies with which they are now associated.

“I am in a state of mental gestation with a small volume to be entitled ‘The Christian Professor.’ . . . —Your sincere friend and affectionate brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *August 20, 1834.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . What a thunderstorm has gathered and burst over your country and ours, but more fearfully over yours than ours, within the last twelve months! What a sudden and tremendous destruction of earthly confidences and hopes! And yet, who can wonder? I put out of consideration the proximate and commercial causes, such as the grasping ambition, the reckless speculation, and the selfish monopoly of a few large leviathan-like houses on our side of the water, and look only at the *moral* causes, the practical atheism of the world, and the wicked and shameful worldly-mindedness of the Church. Mammon has been the image of . . . jealousy, causing jealousy which our two countries have joined to worship, and the vengeance of God has been awakened, and smitten the object of our idolatry. Professors have been deep in the mire of earthly-mindedness, and have therefore suffered with their ungodly neighbours. God is now calling them to a new trial of their faith, and giving them an opportunity of imitating the Macedonian liberality, and serving Him with a zeal proportioned to their poverty. May we pass honourably through the probation! Other storms, however, besides commercial ones, are passing over your country; You have earthquakes in the Church. By the *New York Observer*,

which I constantly receive, I perceive the conflict has come on between the parties, and terminated, for the present, in the discomfiture and defeat of the new-school portion of your religious community. I cannot be supposed to be intimately acquainted with the merits of the question; but as a bystander, looking from without, I am astonished and disgusted with the conduct of the majority. I cannot help thinking that the abrogation of the Act of Union, or rather the annulling of everything which had been done under its provisions, has very much the appearance of public perfidy and treachery. If for thirty years this act has been tacitly allowed to be operative, to declare it now, and all that has been done under it, unconstitutional, has so flagrantly the aspect of a trick of party, that it will do the Presbyterian Church small honour in the eyes of the world. I admit that there were jarring elements of discord in the body, which it would have been difficult by any system to harmonise; but so despotic an excision as that of nearly half the community without a trial, is an act of power of a most astounding character. May the God of all wisdom, power, and grace overrule it for good! I am not quite sure that I do not see the slave question, in some measure, mixed up with this controversy. I think the vanquished party, if *indeed* the vanquished, will carry with them the sympathies of your friends in this country. It is a deep, if not mortal, wound to Presbyterianism.

“And now to English affairs. We are just in the midst of the rage of a general election, on the demise of the king. The High-Church and Tory party are putting forth all their strength and fury, and, to the surprise and dismay of the Liberals, are likely to gain a victory. I should not be surprised at their gaining a majority, and ousting the Melbourne Ministry. And then what is to be done I know not, unless the Tories turn Whigs in their measures, which, to a considerable extent, I am inclined to think they will be prepared to do. How delightful it is to reflect, amidst all these struggles, that there is One who is Head over all things to His Church! . . .—I remain, your affectionate friend and brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *July 10, 1834.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—In more respects than the number of your communications, with which I have been lately so peculiarly favoured, I am so deeply in your debt that full payment is out of the question, and I can only offer you a composition of five shillings in the pound, and by that you will set down the deficiency to the score of poverty, and not to that of dishonesty. All your letters and parcels have come to hand, and have really oppressed me by the kindness—the

exuberant kindness, which they express. There are moments when the affection and esteem of my friends, especially the more excellent and intelligent of them, are almost painful to me, from the perfect consciousness I possess of my utter unworthiness of it. I seem to be guilty of a fraud upon their friendship in receiving the tokens of their regard; and, at any rate, I cannot accept them, without explicitly assuring them that they are entirely a gratuity, upon which, on the ground of merit, I have no claim whatever. It is sometimes a matter of surprise to me to think upon how small a stock of moral excellence and mental wealth I am keeping up so respectable an appearance, as I perceive, by the testimony of my friends, I make in the world. Of one thing I am certain, that, if I do any good to my generation, the work is not only to be ascribed to grace, but will prove, in another world, how much of Divine agency and how little of human instrumentality there was in anything done by me. Do not accuse me of affected humility and a mock modesty. I often carry similar sentiments to the footstool of the omniscient God, as a plea for His gracious help, that men and angels might learn in eternity how much is due to Himself. . . .

“I was sorry to find by your letter, dated March 20, that you had been indisposed through the previous winter. I very strongly suspect you are overworking yourself, especially in the way of authorship. Now, my dear friend, if this be the case, I would submit it for your serious consideration, whether you should not relax your exertions. Valuable as are your productions, and great as the good is you are doing by means of the press, and reluctant as I, for one, should feel to stop your pen in its elegant and useful course, yet, if you are undermining your strength, and thus shortening your life by a continual taxing of your physical energies, you are doing a mischief which even your valuable writings do not entirely repair. If, however, you are quite sure that composition is not the worm that feeds upon the root of your strength, go on, I say, to write, for he who writes so well ought to write up to the full extent of his ability. This brings me to the subject of your publications, which I have lately received. The ‘Hints for Regulating the Intercourse of Christians’ is an invaluable book, on a very important branch of Christian duty, and which no author that I am acquainted with has discussed at length. You have fairly comprehended the subject, taking it in all its bearings and relations. Indeed, I think you have expanded the subject too much, or rather, I should say, too much for the age. Men are now so busy, either with their own secularities, or with the active duties they owe to the cause of Christ, that they have but little time, and therefore little opportunity, to read a large book. This circumstance renders much good writing less useful than it ought to be. I trust your important volume will have a wide circula-

tion in America, and I shall confer with our mutual friend, whom I expect to see in a few days, about bringing out an edition, perhaps somewhat abridged, in this country. It is what we want, and your name having become known by your admirable volume on revivals, I think the work will have an extensive sale here. Your reviews are accurate, interesting, and spirited. I think you have managed, with great ability and impartiality, the very difficult task of honestly criticising Dr Cox's book on Quakerism. It is true, I have not seen the volume, except for a few minutes in the author's hand, but your critique gives me a correct opinion of its general nature. I was afraid, from what little I saw of Dr Cox, and what he said about his production, that he would be likely to err on the side of severity, and thus limit much more than he would otherwise have done the usefulness of his volume. Your review of Burder's *Life* is exceedingly just, and is in entire keeping with the subject. I was much struck with the truth and propriety of your comparative estimate of the American and English preachers. I seem to think, that, with some exceptions, elocution is in greater perfection in all departments of public speaking on this side of the Atlantic than on yours. Nor is this at all surprising, considering the infancy of your nation, and consequently of your institutions. As to your preachers in mass, they are transcendently superior in the composition of their sermons to the bulk of Independent and Baptist ministers here.

"It has been with a joy that I cannot express that I have read Dr Cox's letter in the *New York Evangelist*, which declares his separation from the Colonisation Society, and his conversion to the cause of the Antislavery Society, and it will be with equal joy and gratitude to God that I shall read, my dear friend, a similar declaration from your pen. Do, do, my brother, give the subject your serious and prayerful consideration. Oh, if your pen could be enlisted in the cause of abolition, what an influence might you exercise over the minds of your countrymen on this question! I almost envy the fame of those who will be foremost in the ranks that fight the battles of negro freedom. Abolition will soon beat colonisation off the field, and weighty and glorious will be the laurels of those who are early in the conflict and the conquest. I foresee there will be a tremendous struggle; but what the result will be, I have no more doubt than I have that my pen is moving across this page. Your country must be foremost of all lands in the great moral renovation of the world, but she has some sins first to put away from herself. She is purifying herself from intemperance, and her next purgation must be from oppression. You have the chain of caste on the north and east, and the fetters of slavery in the south: both must be broken before the spirit of American piety will be quite free for the great

work she has to do. You can scarcely imagine what a blot these things are upon your national reputation in the estimation of the multitude in this country. If the pulpit be once engaged against slavery it will fall, and engaged the pulpit soon will be. Your effort for the Poles is worthy of you and your pen and now let that same tongue and pen, which pleaded the cause of European exiles, plead the cause of your two millions of enslaved fellow-subjects.

"I have sent you a letter of Lord Holland to myself on the subject of his presenting the petition of my congregation against the union between Church and State, and for redress of grievances. He is nephew of our greatly celebrated Charles Fox, and one of His Majesty's ministers, though, by the way, we are within a day or two in all the anxiety of suspense, in consequence of an apprehension that the Ministers are about to resign. Things are in a most unsettled state. The Church question is convulsing the nation to its centre. Our institutions are all undergoing a shaking.

"And now, my dear friend, I must bring this long letter, and this tax upon your patience, to a close, with best wishes and fervent prayers for your continued life, health, and usefulness. My wife unites with me in affectionate regards to yourself and Mrs Sprague.—Yours, as ever,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

"EDGBASTON, *February 25, 1835.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot suffer Mr Hoby, my fellow-labourer in this town, who is going as one of the Baptist deputation to the United States, to leave Birmingham without being the bearer of a letter to introduce him, and also to make inquiries concerning yourself. You will find both the gentlemen who are going out, intelligent, agreeable, and liberal, and will, I am sure, be pleased with their society. They are of high standing in their own denomination, and are much esteemed by ours. I wish they may be the means of doing good to the churches which they are going to visit. I think they would have done well to wait the result of the visit of our deputation before they undertook theirs; but they were anxious to meet the Triennial Convention at Richmond, which assembles this year, and for which, therefore, if it were determined they should be present at its meeting, they must have waited three years longer.

"Dr Reed has not yet brought out the report of his visit. We are waiting for it with some anxiety and impatience. I am inclined to think it will be likely to produce a good impression on both countries.

I trust we are all prepared to hear ourselves blamed without irritation, and our friends praised without jealousy. Perhaps we have each something to learn from the other. I am quite sure there are many things which we have to learn from you, though I should find it more difficult to find out wherein we could be your instructors.

“I was much concerned to learn, by your last letter, that you had been so seriously indisposed; I hope that you are by this time quite recovered to your usual health, and that nothing remains of the affliction but its holy fruits. God must set a high value upon holiness when, in order to produce it, He puts to so much pain the people whom He loves. It is a great mercy to grow in grace, and, when nothing else will promote it, we should be thankful even for afflictions. But, my good friend, ought you not to abstain a little more from authorship? I am sure it is impossible for you to publish all you do, among your numerous engagements as a minister and a pastor, without taxing your intellectual powers beyond your strength. Remember, that although your books will do good after you are dead, yet the living labours of a Christian minister, in a public situation like yours, are too valuable to be compensated by the posthumous effects of his writings. I think you engage in too many public services. May I then plead with you to desist a little more than you do from these, and I am sure I shall have your good wife, your congregation, and your whole denomination seconding my appeal. You are aware that Dr Urwick has anticipated my design of reprinting your excellent volume on ‘Christian Intercourse,’ with a very good introductory essay. I will send you a copy with some other things soon. I do not like to make up a parcel for Mr Hoby, as I do not know how far he will be able to find room for it without inconvenience. I can more boldly ask the favour from the house in this town through which your parcels come to me. I had hoped to be able to send you, by my friend, an autograph of James Watt, but have not hitherto succeeded. I have made application directly to his son, who lives in great splendour not far from this town, and was in expectation to have heard from him before this, but have been disappointed. I have never received any communications for you from either Miss Porter or Mrs Sherwood.

“We are all in excitement and agitation, in this country, by the conflict of parties. The struggle for power and place between them will be severe. It is a fearful state of things; the court, the aristocracy, and the clergy are confederated against the people. The animosity of the two parties is excessive—the defeat of the Tories in the election of the Speaker has mortified them excessively. The Whigs and Radicals will endeavour to give them another blow at the King’s speech. What the end will be I do not know. The great bone of contention is the

Church. Oh, how deeply is it to be regretted, though but little alas! to be wondered at, that this antichristian establishment should convulse three kingdoms! Yet, if it exist, it is no matter of surprise that it should cost the nation much peace to cast it down. I am a little anxious about the state of things in America. You have many knotty points to settle. I am jealous for the continuance of your institutions.

“I will endeavour to write again before it is long. My wife unites with me in affectionate regards to yourself and Mrs Sprague. I hope my little namesake is well and thriving. May God bless the lad.—I remain, yours as ever,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *September 2, 1835.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your last letter, bearing date the 28th of April, came to hand in due time, as did the others to which it refers; and my first subject in reply must be to apologise to you for not writing before,—but really I have such an extreme dislike to letter-writing as to require the strong impulse of friendship or the stern dictate of necessity to overcome it; and a natural propensity to procrastination, falling in with this epistolophobia, is ever seducing me into delay, against the warnings of my better judgment and my conscience. Unhappily, this dislike of the pen extends also to sermon-writing, so that it proves a temptation to me to put it off too long and too late in the week, and sometimes to the neglect of it altogether. I am not quite sure whether I have told you this before,—it is, however, the fact, and will account to you, as it has done to many of my other friends, for a neglect which I am anxious should not be attributed to a want of affectionate interest in yourself, your friends, and your doings. I must now thank you, and at the same time blame you, for your too flattering portrait of me in the *Theological Review*. It would have been well done, if it had been more true and faithful to the original. You are an excellent artist: your drawing is good, and your colouring admirable; you paint with ease and grace, and, like our late Sir Thomas Lawrence, you give the air of nobility to your portraits. I wish you had found me, instead of endeavouring to make me, worthy of your skill. I can, without one emotion of affected humility, say I am astonished at the estimate you and others form of my talent: either you or myself must be under some egregious mistake; or else, what I do not suppose to be the case, judge me to be a vain man, and say these things to please my ruling passion. I am quite sure if the world thought of me as I think of myself, I should be soon forgotten and unnoticed. However, whether I have more or less of ability to preach

or write, I desire to consecrate all to the service of Him who has made me what I am. And I hope I can look upon the superior talents of my brethren without envy or discontent. May you, my dear brother, go on to employ those with which God has enriched you for the good both of the world and the Church. I think the work in which your review appeared is greatly improving; the last two numbers contain some truly excellent and able papers. I wish it did not advocate and laud the Colonisation Society, which, I may be prejudiced, but I think is a great delusion, viewed as a means of mitigating slavery. Having adverted to your intellectual self, I must now turn to the representation of the outer man, which I am happy to say came safely to hand, and is now suspended in my study, close by the side of Brother Patton, and looks upon me daily and hourly with all the benignity which I am sure is in the heart of the original towards me. My recollection of your features is not sufficiently vivid to pronounce upon the likeness, but the execution is very good; it is really an excellent specimen of American engraving.

“A few days ago, I received two American papers, the *New York Observer*, containing Dr Beecher’s trial by his Presbytery for heresy; at the prosecution of Dr Winslow Wilson, but am a little tantalised by not having the whole. I conclude, of course, that he was acquitted. This, I conjecture, is a sort of trial of strength between the parties in that neighbourhood, and probably will lead on to a much grander strife—I see very plainly that your General Assembly must divide; and yet I do not see why. The difference does not appear to me to be of that moment to require it; at least, so far as theological sentiment is concerned. The question on natural and moral inability surely is not new, and is not of sufficient consequence to divide a church. I admit, however, that the magnitude of your body almost requires a separation, if sentiment does not. I feel exceedingly anxious about everything connected with the state of religion in the United States, because of its influence upon the great questions agitated here on the subject of ecclesiastical polity. I have lately been much surprised at reading the writings and statements sent forth by Alexander Campbell, and of the success of his measures and followers. His name is Apollyon the Destroyer, for he seems to me to have a greater talent for demolition than edification. He is a man of great talent, but is evidently propagating a system of self-deception. His immersion for the remission of sins will, I think, delude thousands of souls. What errors are broached, what systems are propagated in our age! We thought that Irvingism was dead, or that it had received a mortal wound, when the great — died, but I assure you this is not the case. It still lives in greater extravagance than ever, and is widely spread. The followers

of it have just bought a place in this town, capable of holding twelve or fourteen hundred people.

“I must now come to your deputation. Dr Spring made a very deep impression upon our congregations, both in town and country, by his sermons. He was exceedingly and deservedly admired as a preacher, but he failed as a speaker; extempore speaking does not suit him. He wants the vivacity, the energy, the fluency necessary for the platform. His solemnity, pathos, and dignity in the pulpit are very commanding; and in private he is pleasant, gentlemanly, and interesting. He and his daughter were my guests for too short a time. He spent a Sabbath with us, and preached for me, much to the gratification of my people. Dr Humphreys is quite a different man: of great worth, and much unostentatious excellence; but he produced little impression. He is a most valuable man, and we were much charmed with him in private. Of Dr Codman I saw very little. Should another deputation visit us, I trust you will overcome your nervous terror, and be one of the brethren that shall come over. I should be delighted to see you on any errand but that of seeking for health. Let us again see your face in the flesh. You shall find open houses, open arms, open hearts, and open pulpits to receive you. No American minister is known here as your Lectures on Revivals has made *you* known. Drs Reed and Matheson have published, or rather I ought to say, *Dr Reed* has published, a very interesting book of their travels in America. I think, upon the whole, you will judge it to be impartial. If I could have trespassed so far on Dr Humphreys, I would have sent you a copy. I conclude it will be republished on your side of the world. I am not quite sure we shall derive all the advantage we anticipated from the deputation.

“Our political horizon is cloudy, unsettled, and stormy. The court and the aristocracy have set themselves against the present Ministry and their measures, and the Commons are trying their strength with the Lords. How it will end I know not. A great deal of inflammatory and seditious matter is continually being poured forth at our public meetings, and it is the watchword of the Radical party, ‘Of what use is the Lords?’ The question is seriously mooted, ‘Ought we to have a hereditary, irresponsible branch of the legislature?’ The feelings between the Church and the Dissenters are exceedingly bitter, or I ought at least to say, of the Church towards the Dissenters. I am afraid that politics are making sad work with religion, both in preventing conversions and diminishing pious feeling among believers. But God reigns, and is making all things subserve His schemes.

“I send you a copy of a work on Natural Theology by Lord Brougham, which is considered valuable here, though containing some

exceptionable passages. The great celebrity of the man gives an interest to the work perhaps beyond its merits.

“May God long spare and much bless you. My wife unites in love to Mrs Sprague and yourself.—Your affectionate friend and brother,

“J. A. JAMES.

“I have not succeeded yet in obtaining James Watt’s autograph.”

TO A YOUTH* WHO HAD DERIVED BENEFIT FROM THE “ANXIOUS
INQUIRER.”

“BIRMINGHAM, *April 26, 1836.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—The perusal of your letter put a new song into my mouth, even praise to my God. I bless Him on your account. The conversion of a sinner from the error of his ways, and the salvation of a soul from death, whoever he may be, and by whomsoever the mighty change may be wrought, is an event so replete with felicity to himself and glory to God, that no Christian can hear of it without joy and gratitude; but in this case I bless Him also on my own account, that He has made me the honoured instrument of starting your soul in its everlasting career of holiness and happiness. I sincerely thank you for making me acquainted with the delightful and interesting fact; it drew tears into my eyes, and caused my heart to rise in adoring wonder before God. It is another testimony added to the many I have already received of the Lord’s condescending grace in employing my little book as an instrument in gathering His elect people to Christ. Give Him all the praise. Instrumentality is all that I can speak of in reference to myself—and surely this is honour enough for the creature, without his attempting to rob God of His glory, to invest himself with the sinful spoils. I consider you now as another of my spiritual offspring, whom, though I may never see till I meet you in the mansions above, I regard with something of paternal love, and for whom I shall pour out a father’s prayers. May I, with congratulations, mingle a few words of caution? ‘Look to yourselves,’ said the beloved apostle in writing to his converts, ‘that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward,’ (2 John 8.) I do not write this because I suspect the sincerity of your profession, or stand in doubt of the reality of your conversion; but because I have had sad experience, in the course of my ministry, of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the disappointment that sometimes follows the most sanguine hopes. ‘Ye did run well,’ said Paul to the Galatians, who would once have plucked out their eyes for him, but ‘I now stand in doubt of you.’

* Mr Foster, who is now a respected member of Carr’s Lane church.

Begin your religious career in a spirit of holy jealousy over yourself. Work out, *i. e.*, finish up, your 'salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do of His good pleasure.' That passage should be your motto, and your directory. See what a combination of duties it presents. 'Work,' *i. e.*, labour, strive. 'Work out,' *i. e.*, persevere to the end, 'with fear and trembling,' *i. e.*, be jealous of yourselves, be apprehensive, for it is God that 'worketh in you, to will and do,' *i. e.*, depend entirely upon His grace, for He is the fountain of all spiritual influence. It is a striking exhibition in Scripture language, of the connexion between the diligence of a rational creature and the dependence of a needy one. Do not consider that the work is done, but that it is only just begun. I have sometimes seen cases in which there has been great solicitude till a profession of religion was made, and then it ceased, and the mind relapsed into indifference, and reposed upon its profession in spiritual sloth. Be as anxious as ever. Never cease to be the anxious inquirer after salvation. Seek after *eminent* piety as well as sincere religion. Consider prayer as the life of religion. Let your religion be of the *useful* kind. You are converted not only for yourself, but for the Church and the world. Study the Scriptures much. In this day, the multitude of uninspired books that are published take off the minds of Christians too much from the Word of God. As a new-born babe, desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby. I rejoice with your honoured parents over the church in their house, which they are favoured to possess, that you are now another member, the last without the pale, added to its fellowship. I ask, as my reward, your prayers; and especially that God would go on to bless that book for the conversion of others, which has been effectual for yours. May your path be that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. May you meet in heaven, and if God's will be, on earth.—I remain, your affectionate friend,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

"EDGBASTON, *December 18, 1837.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Some little time ago I was apprised by an American pastor of the deep affliction into which it has pleased our heavenly Father to plunge you by the removal of your excellent and beloved wife. I need not say that you have my sympathy and my prayers. I have passed through the trial before you, and know by experience what a desolation is occasioned by such a stroke. It is a sorrow which knows not consolation's name, except as uttered by Him who comforteth those that are cast down, and healeth the broken in heart. You, my brother, are now called to sit alone, or

to see only in your dear children so many memorials of the loss which they and you have sustained. May God be with you in your solitude, and give you, by a deeper sense of His presence and a sweeter assurance of His personal love, that which alone compensates for the treasures He has taken from you. To point out to you who know them so well, and have dispensed them so long and so judiciously, the comforts of the gospel, would be a waste of time. I would therefore only say, and say in the spirit of prayer, may you be able to appropriate to yourself all that you have been the honoured instrument of communicating to others in the way of spiritual consolations. May your most soothing sermons and advice to the tried, the tempted, and bereaved flow back in full tide to your own soul and widowed heart. May your people see in you a bright and edifying example of pious submission to the will of God. May you be enabled so to demean yourself under this chastisement of your heavenly Father, as that your conduct shall, through the whole future course of your ministry, give effect to all you shall say on the subject of resignation and holy joy. We, as ministers of Jesus Christ, are in a peculiar sense not our own. The prophet Ezekiel was called to surrender his wife and forbidden to mourn, in order that he might be an example to the people. It may be so with us. Our Master layeth His afflicting hand upon us, and then comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' If He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; if He was made perfect through sufferings; if He was prepared to sympathise by experience; shall we think it hard to follow Him in the path of tears? Oh, my brother, if this should be a means of making you a holier, a more experimental, a more useful minister—if this should prepare you for a career of still greater success in your high office—if this should make you a vessel still more meet for the Master's use—how will you rejoice when the clouds and sorrows of time have been all lost amidst the light and joys of eternity! Your sainted wife is now perhaps in the secret of her early removal; she has probably been told the reason of her death, and is lifting her heart to God with adoring wonder over some vast depth of wisdom, affecting not only her and your eternal interests, but the interest of her Lord and of His Church. Believe, only believe that it is so, and by faith have fellowship with her in the bliss of knowledge. Let not your heart faint when you look round upon your motherless children. Say not, 'Who shall take care of them, who shall be their instructor and guide?' God will provide. Trust Him with yourself, trust Him with your children, trust Him for all that is future. He will honour and reward your confidence. *'He* lives, and blessed be the rock, and let the God

of our salvation be exalted.' Seek in still greater diligence and devotion a relief from sorrow. Sit not down to brood in musing indolence over your affliction. Heavy strokes are apt to stun and paralyse us, and we are prone to throw all up and indulge in melancholy and fruitless reverie. Take some new scheme of public usefulness in hand. Let not weeping prevent sowing; but go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and you shall return with joy, bearing your sheaves with you. Select some topic for a course of sermons, with the purpose of giving another volume to the Church and the world, as able and as interesting as your last on Christianity, for the copy of which I thank you. I shall be anxious to hear from you. I want to know how you are, how you bear this stroke, how the outer man sustains it, and how the inner man endures it. Write soon, and tell me both of your sorrows and supports. I shall wait with some impatience for the letter.

"Dr Bedford has sent you a copy of his Course of Congregational Lectures, which, I think you will agree with me in thinking, do him great credit. Both his matter and manner, his arguments and composition, are admirable. It is a valuable, a standard book. May God pour His blessings upon it, both in your land and in ours! What is to be the end of your present great schisms? Will the parties coalesce? Oh, what a world! to what a Church we are connected and live in! Yet Jesus reigns! There is our confidence and comfort.

"My dear wife unites with me in every expression of sympathy and affection, both to yourself and your children. And now, commending you to the God of all consolation, I remain, your affectionate friend,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO MR HART.

"EDGBASTON, *December 17, 1838.*

"DEAR SIR,—My numerous engagements prevent me from replying to my correspondents so soon or at such length as they often deserve. This must be my apology for both a late and a short letter.

"If you search the Scriptures, you will find that joy and peace are to come into the soul of the Christian by *faith*. What is faith? The belief of the gospel testimony concerning the person and work of Christ. The object of faith is Christ, as He is made known in the Word, not as He is pictured out in the imagination. Faith does not, so to speak, conceive of Christ as nailed to the cross, crowned with thorns, streaming with blood, and look at that object, as it is presented to the imagination, with the design of working up the feelings. For do consider how little it is of Christ that can be so conceived of. He is God as well as man, and faith believes this; but can you picture out His divinity to the imagination. He suffered more in His soul than

He did in His body; and though you might attempt to conceive of His tom and lacerated body, you cannot conceive of His agonised soul. It is by believing, then, that we are to be saved, comforted, and edified, not by endeavouring to conceive of Him by imagination. Suppose some unknown friend in America, whom you had never seen, had worked hard and suffered much for you, and had left you in his will a thousand pounds; would not the *belief* of this comfort and please you, without any conception of the man's person, or house, or anything else about him in the imagination? Learn to distinguish between the exercise of faith and imagination. You pray to God, trust in God, delight in God, but do you conceive of God in the imagination? No; you believe in the truth concerning Him. And so you are to do with the truth concerning Christ. Stephen's was a bodily sight of Christ. Ministers do not, in looking upwards in prayer, intend by that a sight of Christ or God, but do it merely to raise their minds above surrounding objects. It would be better to close their eyes. If you are not satisfied with what I have written you, you had better consult some minister upon the spot, or wait till you have one of your own, which I pray God may be soon. I remain, yours truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *July* 22, 1839.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I embrace the opportunity of Dr Patton's return, to send you a few lines to acknowledge the receipt of your valuable present of a copy of Dr Griffin's *Life and Sermons*, and to express my sentiments and sense of the worth of the volumes. You have had a choice subject committed to your hands in the memoir of such a man, and you have done it well,—making him chiefly his own biographer, and only introducing such judicious and connecting remarks as may weave the whole into one web of continuous narrative. I had been long acquainted with Dr Griffin through the Park Street Lectures—which, by the way, are not his best productions—and his single sermons, copies of which I have received from yourself and other friends. He was one of your best and most impressive preachers. His conceptions are original and vivid, and expressed in well-selected and well-compacted language. I have not had time yet since the arrival of the book to go through it, but so far as I have gone I think highly of it, and feel much indebted to you for so valuable an addition to my library.

“I am glad to find, by your letter accompanying the books, that your health is tolerably good. May it be long spared! I am not surprised you still feel and, as far as in submission to the will of God, deplore the

hiatus made in your domestic comforts. Oh, what a desolation is made in a man's possessions and prospects in that hour when the seal of silence is put on the lips, and the stamp of death is fixed on the countenance of a beloved wife! But there is One, and but One, who can ever make up that loss; and *He* is infinite! May this event be blessed for your spiritual good, and more effective ministerial labours! I have watched the prospect of the collision between the new and old schools, to which you allude in your letter, with some degree of interest. My sympathies, as I think I have before told you, have been far more with the former than with the latter. I like their theology better, and I like their conduct better. The vote of excision was a most violent and unjustifiable proceeding. Perhaps there may have been some blame on both sides. The decision of Judge Rogers, I see, has been impeached, and in a sense overruled, by a subsequent one of his brother judges. There must either be two bodies, or a reconstruction and reorganisation of the Assembly. I do not see any ground of separation, so far as theological sentiment is concerned. The difference of opinion is not so great as to render separation necessary, and therefore not to justify it. I see there has been a meeting at Oxford, Ohio, to consider the propriety of reorganising the whole body, by a number of ministers who declare they will not unite with either party. Will this spread?

“As regards our country, the strife between the two opposing bodies, Church and Dissent, is almost as fierce as ever; and yet I think there is an under-current flowing from many individuals longing for a better understanding between the good of both parties. There is a determination on the part of the Church, if not to put us down, of which they despair, yet to keep us down. Blessed is your land to be free from the influence of a State religion. I am happy to say that our churches are beginning to enter with considerable spirit into the subject of revivals. Protracted meetings are now becoming very common. Dr Redford about two years ago set the example, and has been followed by many of his brethren, with considerable success. Finney's Lectures has been very extensively read, and will be more so by our ministers, and has helped on the movement. It is a most extraordinary book—perfectly unique—rough, coarse, full of exceptionable passages, and containing many questionable sentiments; and yet withal, a heart-stirring book. It has certainly given an impulse to many of our pastors. Your neighbour, Mr Kirk, and Dr Patton of New York, have also been very useful in assisting at our meetings. Both of them have been in Birmingham, and have produced considerable impression. They have, I think, done a great deal of good. Dr Patton preached for me on Sunday last, and will preach again on Sabbath-day next. He is going

to publish an edition of Finney, somewhat revised, with notes, to which I have given a short introduction, at once cautionary and recommendatory. We have had a protracted meeting in this town, with blessed results. Mr Kirk was here. I have met with some works of Dr Skinner, who is now in this country, with which I have been much pleased, and hope to see him before he leaves England. . . .

“Our political affairs are gloomy. The lower classes of the people are sadly discontented and disturbed. We have had rioting in our town, attended with burning of houses, and are now kept in peace only by the military. But for them, our land would be filled with confusion and anarchy in a week. Our position as a nation is rather critical, certainly very painful.—Yours, very truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *December 21, 1839.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Being about to send a parcel to America, I take the opportunity to forward you a copy of Dr Smith’s ‘Congregational Lectures on the Connexion between Geology and Revelation,’ which perhaps will subject him, on your side of the Atlantic, as well as on ours, to the imputation of heresy against Moses. The whole subject is a perplexing one. Astounding difficulties present themselves against the commonly-received opinions on the subject of creation. Perhaps geology is yet too much in its infancy to allow of the establishment of any system; and yet what is known, clearly known, of facts, must, I think, tend to a modification of hitherto generally-received opinions. However, the arrival of the book will give you an opportunity of judging for yourself. Your Professor Hitchcock will, I doubt not, be greatly pleased with it; for he has already published the same views himself. We have no need to be timid for the Bible. Let science do what it will, that is safe. The God of Nature is the God of the Bible, and He cannot contradict Himself.

“Do you ever read the *New York Observer*? If so, you will perceive that I have been called to account by both the editor of that journal, and also by an anonymous New-England pastor, for some remarks on slavery I ventured to make in a letter I published in the *Evangelist*. I have not till lately had much time to reply, but have sent back an answer in the parcel which will convey this to you. I really thought my observations were so cautious and measured as not likely to give offence,—not that I mean to say the replies have been in a tone and spirit of acerbity; far from it, they are respectful and kind; but still evidently from some one who feels them. It is impossible for any one who is not long resident in this country to conceive how much

it detracts, in the estimation of the great bulk of our people, from the excellence and influence of American example, to consider it the land of slavery. I have often said I do not mean to justify all that has been said or done by the Abolitionists; but their object is good and righteous before God and man, and thankful shall I be when your land is freed from this load of crime, misery, and curse. . . .

“Finney’s works are obtaining a wide circulation, and producing considerable effect among our ministers. They should be read with caution, for there is a strange mixture of good and bad; but he really is a most extraordinary writer. There is a great want of unction and tenderness in his words, but they are moulding the taste of many at this time, and giving to many of our preachers some of his most pungent and straightforward method of address. Dr Payne of Exeter, one of our best theologians, is preparing a volume, in which he intends

to take a review of American theology. . . .

“I am sorry to say the health of my dear wife is seriously impaired. Her constitution is much weakened, and though there is nothing that affects her life, her health will never be what it has been. My daughter continues as great an invalid as ever; thus you see the hand of the Lord is upon us. May our afflictions be sanctified, and all will be well. We unite in kind regards to yourself and family, not forgetting my namesake.—Your affectionate friend and brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. WILLIAM JAY,
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS JUBILEE.

“EDGBASTON, *February 8, 1841.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—If you are not satiated, I will not say surfeited, with congratulations, perhaps you will not refuse those of a friend, who, though he has not had so much intercourse with you as many others have been favoured to enjoy, is one amongst the thousands of Israel who bless God for the preservation of your life; and for what is infinitely more a cause of devout gratitude, the continuance of your Christian integrity and ministerial fidelity to the present time.

“The language of flattery would disgrace me, and disgust you; and I shall not employ it: and while I am sure *you* are uttering the humble confession of the great apostle, and saying, ‘Not I, but the grace of God which was with me;’ *I* would imitate the conduct of the churches of Judea towards that eminent servant of our Lord, and ‘glorify God in you.’ I bless Him for the grace that called you to the work of the ministry, qualified you for it, and that has so long and so signally prospered you in the discharge of its momentous duties; and while I look without a particle of envy on the chaplet which the public have

woven for your trow, and the honour with which they have delighted to crown you, I rejoice still more in the glory which you have been the instrument of bringing to the feet of Jesus. If I envied you anything, it would not be so much a reputation of fifty years' ever-increasing brightness, and which the breath of slander has never been permitted to approach, nor that of popular applause, though ever blowing upon it, to tarnish—it would not be so much the esteem of the world and the love of the Church—it would not be so much the veneration of your junior brethren, nor the cordial affection of your coevals, as the disposition which you now feel, while conscious that you possess all these, humbly to say, as you turn your own and direct every other eye to your Divine Master, 'Though I be nothing.' Go on, my venerable friend, thus to ascribe all to Him, to whom all is due. Go on to enjoy the grace bestowed upon you, and which is always most enjoyed when fully felt to *be* grace. May the long evening of your bright summer day be longer and, if possible, calmer still; and not a cloud of any kind come over your fast-declining sun, the setting of which will be watched with interest and pensive pleasure by many upon earth, and its rising upon another hemisphere be hailed by more with joy and praise in heaven.

"I am not so ambitious as to expect, or even to seek, as I am sure I am not so proud as to imagine I deserve, such testimonies of respect as have been heaped upon you, even though, like you, I should keep a jubilee among the people of my charge; but I am ambitious enough to seek, and through grace I hope to receive, that which, after all, is the very core of the honour that has been paid you—I mean, the acknowledgment of consistency as a Christian, and fidelity as a minister. I have had a share, though a small one as compared with yours, of popularity; but oh, how utterly worthless does it now appear to me, in comparison with the smile of an approving conscience, and the 'Well done' of an applauding Judge! 'Give me poverty, give me the curses of a wicked world, give me the martyr's stake; but, o my God, save me from unfaithfulness to Thee and the souls of men.' So said an American preacher now in heaven: and so say I

"I am prepared to sympathise with you under your domestic trial; for the candle which was the light of my tabernacle is flickering in the socket. My dear, my invaluable wife is wasting away under the consuming power of incurable disease. But shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? From her scene of suffering she sends you the Christian affection of one who is near the kingdom.

"Pardon this tax on your time, and believe me, my dear sir, your, affectionate friend and younger brother in Christ,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

"EDGBASTON, *July 31, 1841.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—This is a melancholy renewal of our long-suspended correspondence. You will have heard, I believe, before this reaches you, that I am a second time a widower. The grave has closed over that excellent woman whom you have more than once seen presiding with grace, intelligence, and piety over my household affairs. The little memoir, with the funeral sermon by our mutual friend Dr Redford, will tell you all about her; and it is not necessary that I should do that in writing which I now place before you in print. It is a glowing and a glorious narrative. She died as she lived, to the glory of the Lord that bought her, and is gone to serve Him in a higher and holier as well as happier state of existence, for which His grace had signally matured her. But *I, alas!* am left to journey sadly and wearily along the rugged path of life, weeping and alone. Well; God lives—and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted. My mind has been most mercifully sustained under the stroke, and in no small measure through the sweet and holy tranquillity with which my beloved wife descended to the dark valley. I have found that occupation is my best relief. Instead of flying in the hour of sorrow from the scene of my affliction, I remained at my post to take advantage of the softened state of my own mind, and solemn impression produced by the event in the mind of my people, and thus to endeavour to do them good. I trust my object has been accomplished, and that as my preaching has been unusually solemn and tender, my loss will be the eternal gain of many. As experience is the foundation of sympathy, even in the character of our great High Priest, much more in His people, and as you have passed like myself twice through this trial of faith and patience, you well know how to feel, for you have felt the same. If I mistake not, you are again blessed with a sharer of your joys and sorrows in the journey of life. May you be spared a repetition of the trials you have known, and the remainder of your days be spent in the quiet enjoyment of domestic comfort, undisturbed by the intrusion of the spoiler. I hope your own health continues pretty good, for it is so long since I heard from you that I really seem to know little about you.

"Have you done anything lately in the way of publication? I have sent out a little work for widows, and if I had a copy in the house I would enclose it in this parcel. Strange that this afflicted class should be the only object which the sympathy of authors has overlooked, by providing for them no specific treatise of consolation!

"You have perceived that I have been from time to time appealed

to by some of the brethren on your side of the water on the subject of slavery, especially by Mr Eddy of Newark, who addressed to me five letters in the *New York Evangelist*. They came at a time when I could not take up the subject, and I have been too unwell and too painfully occupied since; but when I can command leisure, it is probable I may reply to them. They are mild, temperate, and gentlemanly. Oh, how glad shall I be when your country shall efface the foul blot from her escutcheon!

"I cannot enlarge: to-morrow I set off on a journey to recruit my health, and have a multitude of things to attend to. I send this by Dr Parker, the medical missionary at Canton, whom I have found to be a most agreeable and devoted man.

"I beg to be kindly remembered to Mrs Sprague and your family, and shall be happy to hear from you.—I remain, affectionately yours,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO MR (NOW THE REV.) ARTHUR HALL.*

"DOVER, *August 17, 1841.*

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—With this note you will receive the book which, when I saw you at Maidstone, I promised you I would

* This letter was forwarded to the Editor, with a very interesting note, which I am glad to be able to insert:—

"THE PARSONAGE, LUDDENDEN FOOT, NEAR HALIFAX,
November 7, 1859.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I perceive, by advertisement, that you are bringing out a Life of Mr James. I doubt not you have abundance of materials for the work; but thinking the enclosed letter of Mr James's might be useful, I send it you, with the special request that I may have it again, as to me it is invaluable. It gives a good illustration of a great, good, and popular man not overlooking *individual* cases. In the summer of 1841, Mr James was on a visit to my father, who then lived near Maidstone. I was then living in sin—hating the restraints of religion. My parents requested Mr James to speak to me on my danger. He did so. I was excessively angry with what I considered then to be an impertinent interference in my private affairs. 'Whose business was it, if I chose to be lost?' Such were my feelings (boiling over with passion) when dear Mr James talked and prayed with me. The 'feeling' to which he refers was simply anger; and the copy of the 'Anxious Inquirer' he sent, I regret to say, I tore in pieces, *and threw it on, the dunghill.*

"Some years after, I went to Birmingham (1851) and saw Mr James, told him the fate of his first present, and begged another. Only a few days since I found the enclosed letter. How or why I kept the letter and destroyed the book, I cannot tell. God, I believe, has answered those prayers which dear Mr James offered on my behalf; and if the publication of the letter, or these facts, will be of any use, you are perfectly welcome to use them,

"Your task is no easy one. May the Great Head of the Church aid you in your work, that His glory may be promoted, is the sincere prayer of, yours, very truly,

"ARTHUR HALL.

Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A."

procure and send from this place. May the perusal of it be followed with a blessing upon your immortal soul! *You* are one of those whose case it describes, for many, many prayers have been presented on your behalf by your excellent parents, and also by your brothers and sisters; and, I can truly add, by the writer of these few lines. Shall all these prayers be in vain through your unbelief? I hope not. Recollect, that all the saints on earth cannot pray a person into heaven, if he continue unbelieving and prayerless himself. I was much engaged for your spiritual welfare when I saw you, and as soon as I saw you; and was pleased to witness the feeling you manifested when I spake to you. May I indulge a hope that I was directed by God to Maidstone, to be the instrument of your salvation? If so, both you and I shall dwell with gratitude upon that visit, millicens of ages hence.

“The object of the little volume I have sent is to engage you and all its readers to immediate decision—that is, to immediate surrender of the heart to God by penitence and faith. At once believe there is mercy for you through Christ, and under the influence of that faith, lead a holy life. Let there be no waiting, but a prompt and full surrender to God.

“Decide for God, for heaven, for eternity. Repent, believe, and be saved; and thus remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

“I shall follow the gift of the book with my prayers. May you be saved eternally! Our kind regards to your father and mother, and to your brother and his lady.—Your sincere friend,

“J. A. JAMES.”

BOOK V.
THE PEACEABLE FRUITS OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- CHAP. I. CONNEXION WITH SPRING-HILL COLLEGE.
- „ II. THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.
- „ III. “MY DIPLOMAS OF D.D.”
- „ IV. CHINA.
- „ V. THE CO-PASTORATE.
- „ VI. THE JUBILEE.
- „ VII. AUTHORSHIP.
- „ VIII. “READY TO BE OFFERED”—“ABSENT FROM THE
 BODY”—“PRESENT WITH THE LORD.”
- LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.

CONNEXION WITH SPRING-HILL COLLEGE.

FROM the weakness and depression described in the previous Book, Mr James only gradually recovered. Although he began about 1842 to resume his general public labours, the distressing apprehensions which had made him for several years almost invincibly reluctant either to preach or to speak away from home, had not wholly disappeared. So late as 1849, his engagement to preach at Surrey Chapel, in connexion with the jubilee of the London Missionary Society, greatly agitated him. One Saturday afternoon, about ten days before the sermon was to be delivered, two or three of the Spring-Hill students were at his table, and he happened to say that he intended to read his discourse. "Isn't that a pity, sir?" said one of the students. "Your sermons are a great deal more impressive when you speak freely than when you read." "Well, sir," was the reply, "there's something in that, but I'll tell you how it is; if I read I shall be uncomfortable for the hour and a half that I shall be preaching, but I shall be tolerably comfortable till I am in the pulpit; if I don't read, I shall be quite comfortable while I am preaching, but I shall have no sleep from now till it is all over."

But there was one invitation that he could scarcely ever resist; till within the last year or two of his life, when he found that travelling was attended not only with inconvenience but with danger,

any minister in the Midland counties could almost infallibly obtain a sermon from Mr James by asking him to preach on behalf of Spring-Hill College.

It was no uncommon thing, indeed, for his crafty admirers to make the offer of a collection for the college the bribe to induce him to pay them two visits. "Come and preach for my schools in February, and then you shall come and preach for the college in May;" or, "Come and preach at the opening of my chapel next summer, and you shall come and preach for the college within six months after," was the substance of dozens of letters, and the bait was a very killing one.

He did not wait, however, to be asked to visit a congregation on behalf of Spring-Hill; I suppose there are few ministers in any of the larger towns of Warwick, Worcester, Gloucester, Northampton, Shropshire, Stafford, Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, who have not received from him letter after letter begging to be permitted to come and preach for it. Nor was he satisfied with pleading in public for a large collection. It was his custom, when ever it was practicable, to arrange for a meeting of some of the wealthier members of the congregation in the vestry before he preached, or at breakfast the next morning, and to press upon them individually the claims of the institution. Even this was not enough; notwithstanding his infirmities, he would call at house after house, and with remarkable tact and unflagging perseverance, though never with the brigand-like violence of some of the representatives of philanthropic-and religious societies, beg for money. Sometimes, though not often, he begged in vain; sometimes he was confounded by his success. On one occasion, he called on a gentleman of great wealth and equal eccentricity, from whom he was very doubtful whether he should obtain a single guinea. Mr James's friends had told him that it was certain his visit would be a failure; however he was not quite hopeless. The gentleman received him quietly, listened to his pleading without manifesting much interest, and then rose and said, "Well, I will give you a cheque for £5000." "Did I understand you rightly, sir?" was the reply. "Yes, £5000," was the rejoinder.

In the internal management of the college, Mr James's services were still more important. He was an unfailing attendant at the meetings of the General Committee; his sagacity aided the counsels, and his unwavering attachment sustained the courage, of the friends of the college through all the vicissitudes of its history. At the foundation of the institution he was elected chairman of the Board of Education, and held the office till his death.

To this Board is intrusted the responsibility of examining and admitting candidates; and of terminating the course of any of the students whose intellectual or moral qualifications for the ministry prove to be unsatisfactory. To it are reported any grave instances of irregularity in conduct, or carelessness in study. At the expiration of a student's course, he appears before the Board to undergo the examination by which he obtains college testimonials.

As chairman of this important body, Mr James was nearly always present at its meetings, and exercised great influence on its decisions. His kindness and gentleness to the candidates for admission made the dreaded ordeal of examination before a council of theologians a very light matter; and when he was requested to convey official reproof to offenders, his affectionate anxiety to avoid inflicting unnecessary pain, deprived his rebukes of harshness and severity. His interest in the students had all the characteristics of a strong personal friendship. They were constant guests at his table. When he published a book which he thought likely to be useful to them, it was his custom to send every one in the house a copy. I believe that there are several Spring-Hill men now in the ministry who would testify that when their finances at college ran low, Mr James, having somehow discovered their circumstances, quietly assisted them from his own purse, or procured them assistance from the generosity of his friends. But the paper kindly furnished by my friend the Rev. W. Guest of Taunton, and appended to this chapter, on the influence which Mr James exerted on the life of the students, renders any further details of this kind unnecessary.

Many, however, will inquire with interest, What were the opinions of Mr James on the important subject of ministerial

education? To this inquiry, his position at Spring-Hill gives a full and unambiguous answer. It is unquestionable that his influence in the Educational Board, in the General Committee, and among the supporters of the college, was so great, that had he seriously disapproved of any part of the Spring-Hill system, it was in his power to have effected an alteration. For many years he was the main support of the college out of doors; his name procured both friends and students. More than any other man, he was responsible for everything.

Profoundly convinced that a fervent and vigorous religious life, a passion for saving men, and certain natural endowments which no culture can confer, are the indispensable qualifications for effective ministerial work, he was also extremely anxious to employ every legitimate stimulus to elevate the general standard of Non-conformist scholarship. In private conversation, and in his more formal addresses, he insisted very earnestly on the value of classical and philosophical studies. He approved of the affiliation of the Independent Colleges to the University of London. Though he saw that it was very possible for theological studies to be somewhat neglected through a student's natural ambition to take a good degree, he did not attempt to conceal his disappointment and vexation when any of the Spring-Hill men failed at the university, and a gold medalist was sure to receive from him most hearty congratulations.

There were, however, some deficiencies in the Spring-Hill arrangements which he would have been glad to see remedied.

He regretted the absence of direct and systematic training for public speaking, though he confessed how hard it is to supply the deficiency. There can be little doubt that the keenness given to the critical faculty by classical and philosophical studies, makes many a youth who, when he entered college, could speak with rough vigour, timorous and feeble. He is in continual fear about the construction and cadence of his sentences, and about the consistency of his metaphors. In his anxiety for correctness, passion is quenched. He cares so much for finish, that force is sacrificed. His thoughts being divided between *what*

he is saying and *how* he is saying it, there is a mental hesitancy which destroys the resoluteness and energy both of his thought and style. How much a tutor can do to enable a student to preserve his freedom, while increasing his accuracy, will vary with certain special qualifications of the tutor, and with the natural aptitudes of the student.

In the training for public speaking, which Mr James thought should be provided, if possible, in our theological colleges, he included the cultivation of the voice, and of general manner. Of the importance of a good elocution and graceful and impressive manner, he was never weary of speaking. In his "Earnest Ministry" he says:—"Manner is, so to speak, the harbinger and herald of matter, summoning the faculties of the soul to give audience to the truth to be communicated, and holding the mind in a state of abstraction from all other subjects that would divert the thoughts and prevent impression. It is not only the more illiterate and feeble-minded, not only the multitude who are led by feeling more than by reason, that are influenced by good oratory, but also men of the sturdiest intellect, and of the most philosophic cast of mind. The soul of the sage as well as of the savage is formed with a susceptibility to the power and influence of music, and, therefore, to the power and influence of elocution. . . . Far greater numbers of our preachers fail for want of this, than from any other cause; a fact so notorious as to need no proof beyond common observation, and so impressive as to demand the attention not only of the professors, but the committees, of all our colleges. It is too generally the case that no adequate culture is bestowed upon the speaking powers of our students, from the beginning to the end of their course of study. There is great assiduity manifested in giving them a fulness of matter, but far too little in producing an impressiveness of manner. Every assistance is granted to them to make them scholars, philosophers, and divines; but as to good speaking, for the acquisition of this they are left pretty much to themselves. Nay, it is not even inculcated upon them with the emphasis it should be, to try to make good speakers of themselves. A complete system of ministerial education must, of necessity, in-

elude some attention to elocution, which should commence as soon as a student enters college; so that, by the time he is put upon the preaching list, he may have some aptitude for the management of his voice, and not have his thoughts diverted *then* from his matter and his object to his manner. He should, by that time, have acquired a *habit* of good speaking, so as to be able to practise it with facility, and without study.”

He was also anxious for some plan to insure that all ministerial students should be engaged from the commencement of their course in religious work. Most of the Spring-Hill students have, during their first two years, taught in the Sunday school, or visited neglected districts in the town and neighbourhood, or conducted religious services in cottages; but Mr James thought that it would be well to *require* every junior student to undertake work of this kind. He knew that the spiritual earnestness of those who engaged in no such labour was likely to suffer, and that their evangelistic zeal was almost certain to decline. It is a question, however, whether the important end for which he was solicitous would not be most easily and efficiently accomplished by the private, friendly, and unofficial influence of the pastors of the students.

It was Mr James's opinion that there are some men endowed with a remarkable faculty for interesting and swaying a popular audience, who are likely to be injured rather than improved by the attempt to make them scholars. Their early education having been neglected, the dreary toils of the grammar and lexicon would quench or dim their natural fire. Though destitute of school-learning, they have had their judgment trained and their wit sharpened in workshops and factories. By hard though irregular reading, they have acquired considerable information, and in debating clubs and in mutual improvement societies, or in village preaching, have obtained a free command of vigorous and racy English. Mr James believed that by a course of instruction adapted to their peculiar wants, men of this class might be made very useful and efficient preachers; and he cordially supported the Editor of this volume in an attempt to institute, as an experiment, a “three years' course” for students who, from their age or

other circumstances, appeared unlikely to derive benefit from the full curriculum.

At Mr James's death, Spring-Hill had been in existence twenty-one years; and he must have contemplated its success with satisfaction. During that period, fifty-four students had completed their course; and while the Calendar of the London University affords proof that the college has won for itself a good literary position, he knew that there were faithful ministers, earnest missionaries, accomplished professors, who remembered Spring-Hill and the Chairman of the Board of Education with most affectionate gratitude.*

Of the fifty-four students who, during the first twenty-one years of the existence of the college, finished their course, forty-five entered the Congregational ministry; of the remaining nine,

* The following table presents a complete view of what has become of the Spring-Hill students. Of those that had finished their course in 1860, there were—

University men,		33	
Non-University men,		21	
	Total,	64	
Of the 33 University men, there have entered the Congregational ministry,	27	Of the 21 Non-University men, there have entered the ministry,	18
(Of these 5 have died since entering the ministry.)		(Of these 2 have died since entering the ministry.)	
Quitted the ministry through illness,	2	Quitted for the Establishment,	2
Quitted for the Established Church,	1	„ for other pursuits,	1
„ for other pursuits,	3		
	33		21

There have been 12 students who passed through only a portion of their course. Of these there were—

University men,		4	
Non-University men,		8	
	Total,	12	
Of the 4 University men, there was removed by death,	1	Of the 8 Non-University men, there was removed by death,	1
Removed by illness, or some other cause of supposed unfitness for the ministry,	3	By illness, &c.,	7
	4		8

two quitted our ministry through illness, three to become clergymen in the Establishment, and four to engage in other pursuits. Of the forty-five, seven have already been called away from the toils of the ministry to its everlasting rewards.

In addition to the fifty-four who continued at college for the full term, there were twelve who passed through a considerable portion of the course; of these two died, and ten left college through confirmed illness or other causes. Of these ten, one or two have since become clergymen in the Establishment, and others have become ministers among ourselves.

Mr Guest's paper on Mr James's influence over the students, may be fitly introduced by an extract from an essay read by Mr James at an important conference on Ministerial Education, held in the Congregational Library in 1845. He says:—

“We are not yet prepared for academic chaplains, or for wardens of our colleges; but there are other ways of supplying the deficiency, and accomplishing the object, and that is, *by extending the intercourse between our senior ministers and the students*. How many eminent and venerable men are there in the metropolis, and in the provinces, whose age, experience, wisdom, and general excellence might, under proper management, and with diligent application, be made to bear with the most salutary effect upon the minds, and hearts, and characters of their younger brethren! Men who have passed through the studies, the difficulties, and the perils of a college life; who know by experience all the perplexities to which the neophyte is exposed, and have a vivid recollection of all that entered into their own curriculum of study; who have since added to this the knowledge of the ministerial and pastoral character; who know with what false or correct views they set out in life, what bad or good habits they contracted, what mistakes they made, and by what means they were corrected;—of what immense advantage may all this be made to those, before whom the path of ministerial life, and every step of it untrodden, is stretched out in somewhat appalling perspective, and on which, always without experience, generally without knowledge, and often without caution, they are preparing, and sometimes eager to enter! By a reflective mind, much may be learned by reading and cautious inquiry,—but what is a book to a living instructor? How much do the living voice, and ‘human face divine,’ kindness, and gentle earnestness of manner, the look of affection, and the tone of solemnity, impress all that is said upon the heart and memory of the attentive listener! How many counsels

might be given, how much sage and valuable instruction imparted, how many difficulties removed, and how many doubts solved, during an hour or two of free and friendly conversation between a student and a wise, experienced, and communicative minister of the gospel! No lecture of the class-room can either give so much practical wisdom, or give it with such effect, as may be delivered during such a season, and by such a method of intercourse with such an adviser. 'This,' says the student to himself, 'is the man who has tried the experiment: he is no theorist, but a practitioner; he speaks experimentally; he has stood the test of thirty or forty years; has preached and warned all this time; has known the church and the world; has been blessed with popularity and success; and he is now giving us the results of his experience, observation, and reflection, which are worth listening to.' Yet, may it not be asked, rather with the intention of exciting inquiry than of casting blame, how many of the venerable, and holy, and useful ministers, either of the metropolis or the provinces, are thus making their influence bear upon the students and young ministers? It is true they serve upon committees, and carry on the machinery of the colleges; and so far their services are valuable and important; but beyond this, what direct intercourse have they with the students, what personal conversation? Do they *seek opportunities* to cultivate their acquaintance, and to do them good? Has it ever occurred to them to make their influence bear upon them?

"It will probably be asked, How would you have us act? Would it not be officious and obtrusive for any one who felt inclined to go, without special invitation of the students, or appointment of the committee, to any of their institutions, and summon the inmates to attend a lecture or receive an address? Most certainly it would, and a wise and intelligent committee would prohibit it. But there are other ways in which, without any such obtrusion, the end may be accomplished.

"It may be presumed, that all the students are members of some church, or, if not in actual fellowship as accepted members, are, when not engaged in preaching, in the habit of regular communion, under the pastors they have voluntarily selected; and, moreover, this ought to be ascertained by the committee, to whom each student should be required, soon after entering college, to make known the church with which he is in association. Every student ought to have a pastor, and the tutors or the committee ought to see and know that he has one. The very idea that he should cease to feel the obligations and to avail himself of the privileges of church-membership when he enters upon a course of training for the work of the Christian ministry; or that his habits, as a Christian, should become loose, irregular, and desultory, when he is preparing to be a pastor, is surely repugnant to all sense

of propriety. The students ought not only to be in the regular habit of communion with their own selected church, but of attending all its church-meetings. They would thus learn pastoral habits, by seeing how the business of a well-conducted church is done, and by the practical exemplification of our principles of ecclesiastical polity, which is continually going on before their eyes, would acquire, almost without effort, the faculty of government: and it would carry on this training, if the senior students were to be employed in visiting the candidates for communion in common with the other members, and in making their report to the church of the fitness of such persons for fellowship. Every student, we repeat, should, during his residence at college, have a pastor. Here, then, is a relationship established, in virtue of which the pastor should be allowed the same access to the students who are under his oversight, as to any other of his members; nor are there any of his flock, in whose welfare he should take so deep and solicitous an interest, as those who are one day to be pastors themselves. It would be easy for him, if not to visit them at the college, yet to ask a visit from *them*, at his own house: this would be at once less formal, and more efficient. How could he more usefully, or more pleasantly spend an hour or two occasionally, than by devoting it to such an occupation! He need not fear an unwillingness on the part of the young brethren to accept his invitation. The esteem in which he is held by themselves, and in which they know him to be held by the public, will cause them to feel that he is conferring upon them a favour which they ought not to be backward to accept. In the free and familiar, yet dignified intercourse of those social and precious hours, what rich communications of wisdom and experience might be made to his youthful visitors, communications on every variety of subject related either to personal godliness, mental improvement, habits of study, modes of preaching, pastoral avocation, the controversies of the day, and, indeed, everything which has a bearing upon their future character and labours as ministers of the word, and which might be of service to them to the last hour of their ministry upon earth! Of course it should be his object to make the intercourse profitable, as well as pleasant; and, though cheerfulness need not be excluded, yet his conversation should not be made up of mere humour, amusing anecdote, and the relation of facetious adventure. His time, and theirs also, is too precious to be thus wasted; both parties should consider that they are together for high and sacred purposes—he to impart, and they to receive, the words of wisdom and the counsels of experience.

“It would not be desirable, however, to confine this intercourse with the students to those ministers who are their pastors; it may happen, and probably does, in the metropolis as well as in the provinces, that

the greater part of the *alumni* are connected with only one or two churches, or at any rate with very few, and it would be therefore throwing too much of the duty and responsibility of such supervision upon one or two men. It would tend much to keep alive the interest and efficacy of ministerial intercourse, and carry out to a greater extent the spiritual objects of our collegiate system in reference to the students, if the committees were to consider themselves charged, as they certainly ought to do, with the religious superintendence of the institution, and were, in pursuance and discharge of this solemn trust, to appoint from their own body a quarterly visitation of the college, for the purpose, not of superseding the tutors, but of upholding them in their truly onerous and important duties. If such a plan were adopted, especial care should be taken to secure the cordial co-operation of the students, by making it in every respect agreeable to their feelings. There must be no suspicion that the visitors come in the character of inquisitors, spies, accusers, or informers, or even of reprovers; but simply as friends, counsellors, and guides. Their sole business should be such as shall make them welcome, and render their visit an object of desire, and not of dread. It would be also well for them not to invest themselves with an air of authority, or with the stiffness of formality; but to appear with the easy affability of a friend, and the affectionate tenderness of a father. The first hour of such visitations might be spent at the tea-table, in the flow of appropriate, friendly, and profitable conversation, and in answering such questions as would arise out of the topics of discourse. With a circle of twenty or thirty students gathered round an experienced minister of the gospel, there will be no lack of subjects of interest. But this holy *conversazione* should be followed by exercises of devotion, and a solemn yet affectionate address. What a fine opportunity would be afforded to a man who felt the responsibility of his situation, and cherished an intense longing for the right formation of character in so many aspirants to the sacred office, to breathe into *their* souls the enthusiasm of his own! If the visitors entered thoroughly into the object of such addresses, and prepared for them, not elaborate and ornate discourses, calculated more to excite admiration than to produce impression, but solemn, affectionate, pungent appeals to the heart and conscience—appeals which should be of such a character as to leave the students as much without the power as without the will to criticise—appeals which should compel them to steal away in silence and in tears to their closets and their knees; what results might not be expected? As it would fall to no man, even in the country, more than once in two or three years to deliver such a charge, he might well spare the time for so important an occupation, and summon all the energies of his soul to

produce an address which shall enter into the student's innermost soul—shall make him in the same moment tremble and rejoice, and which, while it displaces from the field of vision all the little objects of a vain and low ambition, shall fill it with the one grand object of winning souls to Christ, and shall present that object invested with its own incomparable glory and surpassing importance. What preachers might we not look for from a succession of such addresses, delivered by our greatest and holiest men, all bearing upon the heart and conscience of the students,—addresses which shall not be mere fireworks of eloquence and oratory to amuse their imagination, but live coals, taken as with a seraph's hand from the holy altar of devotion, to kindle them into flames of fire! Verily, we have no need to wonder, and no right to complain, that our rising ministry fall below some of the older ones, if the older ones do not take pains to make them better than themselves. It was said of Earl St Vincent, under whom Nelson was a pupil in the art of naval war, that he formed a greater hero than himself, and then admired him without envy. So ought it to be with the senior pastors of our churches. Useful and happy is that minister who, when the student's eye is looking round for an object to gratify the pan tings of his youthful ambition, shall so fix it on the glory of the cross, that he shall never after be able or willing to escape the fascinations of that stupendous object. The men who have done most for their denomination, not only as scholars and as authors, but those who have served it well as preachers and as pastors, and who, in attracting attention to themselves, have fixed it upon their whole body, breathing their own spirit into the souls of our students, and stamping their own character upon these young minds while they are in a soft and tender state to receive the impression; and they should never forget that he who in the midst of such a circle is so employed, is not only speaking to the twenty or thirty individuals before him, but to the thousands whom they will at some future time address, and by this means learn to address more effectually, and is, in fact, perpetuating through many generations his own individual usefulness.

“To doubt whether our young brethren would value such attention from their seniors, would be a reflection on their piety, humility, and good sense, which all that know them would be unwilling to cast. Wherever the experiment has been tried, it has demonstrated the contrary. If, without being suspected of egotism or vain-boasting, the writer of this paper may refer to his own practice, he may be permitted to state that he has made it a matter of sacred duty, arising out of his official connexion with Spring-Hill College, and his pastoral relation to many of its inmates, to maintain with his young brethren the intercourse here recommended. It has been his custom, when other

duties did not interfere, to invite two or three of the students every Saturday to partake with him of the humble fare of his own simple table, on which no luxuries are placed, not even wine, and which, therefore, could offer no inducement but the fatherly affection and friendly counsels of the host, whose invitations have ever brought around him, most willingly to them, and most agreeably to himself, the objects of his solicitude. During the dinner-time, and for another hour afterwards, the conversation is carefully directed to such topics as are likely to be of service to the guests, either in the way of promoting their personal religion, or their future ministerial and pastoral usefulness. There has been no lack of subjects to discuss, or disposition to discuss them; the tendency to practical mistakes, generally the result of youthful ardour and inexperience, as disclosed by passing remarks, has been corrected; juvenile indiscretion restrained; bashfulness and timidity encouraged; and, amidst and above all else, usefulness, as the great object of the Christian minister, has been held up to view with as much enthusiasm as the host himself could command, while the means to obtain it, illustrated and confirmed by experience, have been pointed out. The time allotted to these interviews having expired, one of the young brethren prays, and he is followed, without their rising from their knees, by their friend who has received them at his house. He has already had his reward in the pleasure afforded by those seasons to himself, and it has been made far more ample by the grateful acknowledgments and assurances of benefit, which he has received from many who have entered on their pastoral duties. To his brethren far better qualified than himself for such offices, he would earnestly recommend the same practice, assured that they will find in it some of the most delightful seasons of sublime enjoyment, and of extensive and enduring good, which the whole course of their ministry will afford."

To these interviews the paper, written by the Rev. William Guest of Taunton, one of the earliest of the Spring-Hill students, particularly refers. It was accompanied by the following note to the editor:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—In compliance with your request, I have sought, in the accompanying paper, to give a sketch of *the influence Mr James exerted on the life of the students of Spring-Hill College* in my time. Had it not been for your own kind persuasion, the paper would have been shorter, and yet the most lengthened and elaborate statement would fail to convey a just estimate of the value of Mr James's relation to the students. Second only to his charge, as you

well know, did he regard this sphere of influence during the latter years of his life.—I am, my dear brother, yours most affectionately,

“WILLIAM GUEST.

“The Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A.”

MR GUEST'S PAPER.

Language, even when used by those who command its richest resources, is incapable of conveying a full impression of the influence of one powerful mind upon the mind of others. Who can adequately picture the benefit which a susceptible and aspiring disciple derives from constant and unreserved intercourse with one of the wisest and best of masters? This is the magnetic influence of soul upon soul; the secret force of thought upon thought; character upon character; and is hardly less mysterious than the silent and never-to-be-defined agency of the good Spirit of the Father.

Well may I feel, then, the inability of my pen to convey a just impression of the influence of Mr James on the college-life of the first students of Spring-Hill. It was clear to us that he regarded the institution 'as a sphere for the exercise of the most affectionate watchfulness and the profoundest interest. It was a new channel of usefulness, opened at the time when physical infirmities were threatening to narrow the circle of his hitherto widely-extended labours, and he threw himself into it with all the characteristic energy of his nature. It was not that the novelty of the institution interested him, nor did he regard his work in connexion with the students as a thing to be attended to by the by, as other claims permitted; but the influence he sought to exert on the college arose from a deep sense of duty to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. His sway, while not in the least obtrusive, seemed to overshadow us with holy and quickening power. His interest in us was never withdrawn; it never grew cool; it neither abated with time, nor became diverted amidst other labours.

Some of us had, by mutual arrangement, attached ourselves to the church worshipping in Steelhouse Lane; it made no difference to Mr James. His relation to all the students was at once pastoral and paternal; that also of the faithful friend and the wise counsellor. “He was one of our tutors,” writes an excellent minister, who was one of the early students, “as truly as if he had filled a professor's chair, and no small part of our training, for preaching and pastoral work, was directly or indirectly furnished by him.”

Mr James was chairman of the Board of Education. I never heard of one solitary instance in which there was anything approaching harshness in his treatment of a candidate. Tremblingly did some appear before the Board, prior to their admission to the college. They

were young, and unused to an assembly of grave and reverend divines. They were plied with questions which were sometimes curious, often irrelevant, and not unfrequently very difficult. The moment the chairman spoke, an apparently stern manner softened into the kindest considerateness. With the admirable tact which never failed him, he covered the confusion into which the candidate had been thrown. "I recollect," says the writer just quoted, "giving a crude and incorrect answer to a question involving a point of doctrine, and I have not forgotten with what a fatherly kindness Mr James noticed my error, and how his criticism was joined with words of warm encouragement. From that moment I felt I had found in him a father and a friend, and so it proved."

Nor on such occasions only would our constant friend cheer us. If we met him on our walks, whatever the weather, or however pressing his engagements, he never appeared hurried to us. His face lighted up with an expression of interest; his hand cordially pressed ours; and minute inquiries about our health, studies, and prospects, would be followed by warm wishes, and words of counsel. Sometimes he would conduct our evening worship. I love to recall the sacredness of his serious smile as he sat among us on these occasions. Then, with what touching and tender eloquence he departed from his more public custom of simply *reading* the Scriptures, and expounded the Holy Word! I well remember, to this day, his reading the second chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians: how his words gave us deeply-moving glimpses of his own exceedingly impressive views of a pastor's relation to a flock; how he lingered over the words of the great apostle,—“We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children “ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe “how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”

One mode of intercourse there was, which demands a fuller memorial, and the adoption of which was the fruit of Mr James's deep interest in the college, and of the deliberate devotion of his influence to its welfare. It was his wont, almost every Saturday, to invite two or three students to dinner. Naturally might we have supposed that after a week spent in literary labours, and manifold services for the Church of Christ, and amidst the demands of preparation for ministering twice to a large congregation, the afternoon of Saturday would have put in its plea for repose. But herein we saw how real was his solicitude for our happiness and usefulness. That day was selected because it was less likely than other days to be

broken in upon by unforeseen demands, or by visitors. It was this certainty of securing an uninterrupted interview, and our comfort, not his convenience, that guided the choice of the day. His wisdom was seen in the selection of the little party to whom the invitation was addressed. Those of us who were less earnest were asked to accompany the aspiring and consecrated; or those whose danger was a too eager devotion to literature, were invited with such as were marked for their high spiritual life. There was a pleasant action, therefore, of mind on mind; and the common identity of sentiment, which went along with diversities of character, made the intercourse touch our life at all points.

To strangers there was often an apparent hurry of manner about Mr James. But to us on these Saturday afternoons, how manifest were his fatherly affability and the glow of his welcome! "Can you tell us the way to the house of the Rev. Mr James?" was the inquiry from a labouring man, when the afterwards well-known residence was not so familiar. "Is it ANGELL James you mean?" was the answer; "oh yes, any one knows where he lives." When the good man came down from his study, with a quiet manner, and his face illumined by a smile of interest and affection, and when he cordially said, "Well, Mr So and So"—never forgetting the name of the student he addressed—we felt that his assuring ministries of kindness well sustained the prefix to his name. At the dinner-table he presided with a considerate hospitality, the charm of which was heightened by his watchful care for the comforts of his only daughter, who, though a confirmed invalid, in response to his feeling, vied with him in attentions to their guests. There was no reserve or assumption of dignity; his manner was marked by a cheerful seriousness entirely free from sanctimoniousness. With his hand on his ear, he would by patient queries draw from us information on subjects peculiarly interesting to ourselves; or he would elicit opinion, and even counsel, with unaffected earnestness, and would listen with eager attention.

Then came the moments laden with influences which to this day have moulded the public life of many of us. Inviting us to form a little circle round the fire, he led the conversation to themes full of profit. Drawn aside from the literary work of the week, we felt ourselves brought into contact with all the spiritual responsibilities of that ministry to which we were looking forward. Uniformly, and yet most naturally, would he give this useful direction to the conversation. With a manner that entirely won our confidence, he would suggest rather than teach, would indicate rather than enforce. Our own earliest and best impressions were revived and intensified, and we ourselves were led to express our convictions of the sacredness of the ministry as a

testimony and entreaty of reconciliation between an offended God and perishing men; we could not help seeing how right it was to hold fast to the fundamental doctrines of repentance, regeneration, and faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ. But while he often pleaded with us to let the truths in our sermons be seen as lines obviously radiating from the cross, and so to make Christ and His saving work the living centre of our preaching as that the hopes and purposes of our hearers might be drawn to Him, and guarded us against the modern tendency of employing a phraseology which, while aiming at novelty, falls often into the serious error of obscuring or altering the import of theological statements, he would not by one word depreciate scholastic attainments.

Not unfrequently he would call our attention to a distinguished preacher, pointing out with admirable analysis the secrets of his success; or he would bring out some pithy and striking extract to read to us in illustration of the power of the pulpit. "There was," as a beloved brother has said, "what I may fairly call a moral and spiritual mastery that he exercised over us." "The rich results of his long experience," says another, "were placed at our disposal. His wonderful memory poured forth its varied stores. Many a beacon-light did he hold before us lest we should make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. Many an incentive to 'patient continuance in well doing' did he cull from his own history, especially from the earlier years of his ministry. His constant admonition was, without *holiness* you cannot see nor serve the Lord. 'Some,' he once remarked, 'have violated principle while aiming to be useful. That is doing evil that good may come. Usefulness has been my one aim through life, but I am no mere utilitarian.'" Still the burden of his counsels to us was, as we all shall testify, to aim constantly, to aim supremely, and to aim by the consecration of every talent we possessed, at usefulness in the conversion of lost men from sin to righteousness, and from the awful perils of an everlasting perdition to eternal salvation. If there was one thing in which, above all others, by look and tone he awoke our enthusiasm, it was while speaking of the high joy—which some of us have since been mercifully permitted, through God's distinguishing grace, to understand—of being instrumentally the means of saving souls from death. Over all our conversations the remarkable thing was, and the fear of iteration does not keep me from repeating it, his heart poured the fulness of its love, and our hearts were knit to his by the glow of its genial friendliness.

We invariably knelt before God at the close of the interview. After prayer from one of us, his own tender and affectionate intercessions were presented. We then learnt 'how to pray:' the heart was stirred to its depths; the fountains of sympathetic desires were un-

sealed. "I have often," says one, "been silently melted into tears with his earnest supplications on our behalf. Far away from home and kindred, I seemed to hear a father's voice pleading for me with holy tenderness; and I cannot doubt that his intercessions 'availed much' for all of us." We usually separated about half-past four o'clock: we had met at two: he, mostly, leaving his home with us to visit some sick member of his flock.

Of course, the measure of the benefit of the intercourse on these Saturday afternoons depended upon ourselves; and there are few of us, it may be, who are not humbled as we are reminded how much greater ought to have been our improvement of these privileged seasons. But so far as my own recollections go, I do not remember any students returning to the college from these visits, upon whom there did not rest the softening traces of the interview. Well do I remember, also, how those brethren prayed at the evening meeting for prayer, which closed the duties of the week, who had come from the communion of the afternoon. No doubt is there, moreover, that the exciting, sanctifying, and manifold advantages of these memorable hours contributed very largely to prepare some for occupying so worthily the honoured positions they now fill. "I can distinctly trace to Mr James's influence," says a learned and beloved tutor in one of our colleges, "much that I shall never cease to be thankful for, and I am disposed to think that I shall err rather by defect than excess in the estimate I form of the good derived from intercourse with him. I am sure that I owe to the stimulus of these familiar social meetings more than I can express. The most solemn purposes and vows I ever recorded arose from the impression of these gatherings. . . . I can only wish that every aspirant to the Christian ministry had the privilege of *similar* counsel and stimulus."

It will be seen that the main benefit of these Saturday afternoons was their *quicken*ing influence on our moral and spiritual life. The very thing this that we needed. At a time when the heart is so eminently susceptible—when there is so much mental activity—when enthusiasm can be so readily evoked, it is like murder to mental power to make men sit as the passive or mechanical recipients of the knowledge which a more learned man has to communicate. We are always recipients of God's blessed gifts, but we are so, as the plants are of sun-light and atmospheric moisture; they are quickened into activity to take in, and appropriate, the precious influences around them. An elder will do little good who expects to communicate knowledge or lessons of experience as we can pour water into a vessel, and who does nothing to educe thought, stimulate inquiry, and keep alive a happy mental action. I make the observation merely to indi-

cate the real nature of Mr James's influence upon us. There are few of us, it may be, who can recall the information he communicated. Nor do we care to do it. We all know this, that he had the art of making us happy and active, by touching the springs of the best part of our nature; that he helped us to know ourselves; that he aided us to form or strengthen our holiest purposes; that he led us to feel more deeply, avail ourselves of collegiate advantages more industriously, watch against our peculiar perils more vigilantly, and implore the grace of the Divine Spirit, to prepare us for our responsible work, more fervently and importunately.

Two prominent characteristics there were, however, which marked Mr James's influence upon the students, and which demand special mention. There was a *rare discernment of character*. With a marvellous intuition did he see the peculiar weakness, or peril, of every one of us. If there were any whose subsequent course justified his fear of the absence of Christian enlightenment; it was clear that no gifts nor scholarship could find for them a way into that innermost centre of his affections, in which he had the peculiar faculty of making men feel they had a place. He was the last man in the world with whom hypocrisy could feel at home. We were all sensible that he knew us almost better than we knew ourselves. This gave him singular power over us. We felt he had taken the trouble to understand us. Men who would not have borne an indiscriminating censor, yielded full response to his counsels. The showy and superficial were stimulated to dig deeper. The scholarly became anxious to make full proof of their ministry in winning sinners to Christ. The devout were impelled to study harder, while they prayed none the less. It is a high thing to say this. Interest in the collective body of an institution is not always followed by careful thoughtfulness for its individual members.

The other characteristic I refer to was *sympathy*. Mr James was no severe judge of a student's failings. The timid forgot that they were in the presence of a man who had a world-wide reputation. We saw no airs of importance in him. There often seemed a childlike and most beautiful unconsciousness of his fame. He forgot himself in his visitors. Out of scores of interviews, I can hardly bring to mind one where he made mention of, much less paraded, the multitudinous duties that lay upon him. He saw so clearly the snares of our student-life, he felt so solemnly the weighty responsibilities which were before us, he entered so warmly into the high joys and rewards of our subsequent ministry, he was so manifestly anxious that we should reach the highest point of eminence and usefulness,—that his intercourse with us can be expressed by no other term than that of a lively and unmistakable sympathy. And so was it to the end, as later students will testify.

During the latter years of his life, I ever saw in him the same prompt interest in others. While he talked of his years, perhaps too frequently, because the reference would mislead a stranger, those who knew him better regarded it as almost an apology on his part for the confidence with which he gave advice. When the snows of age were upon him, they chilled not the responsive attention with which he entered into the history of your plans, fears, wishes, and hopes.

There were other modes whereby the pastor of Carr's Lane cooperated with the three beloved and honoured tutors who at that time presided over our studies. "It gradually became the custom of Mr James," writes Professor Creak, M.A., of Airedale College, "to join the tutors and students at the prayer-meeting held at the commencement of each term of our studies. The addresses delivered on these occasions were remarkable for the intense solicitude with which he pressed upon us the solemnity of our work, and sought to transfuse into our souls the earnest desire for usefulness so conspicuous in his own prayers and labours. These were hallowed occasions when the lessons of wisdom, enforced by our esteemed friend with the ardour of a mind deeply imbued with apostolic singleness of aim, were accompanied by the devout breathings of our tutors, commending themselves and the students afresh to the care of the Father, and the teaching of His Spirit, to fit us for the service of Christ."

It was therefore this profound interest that the saintly and now sainted man took in the college, this quiet, pervasive, and holy sway that he so deliberately, and with such self-sacrifice, sought to exert over us, and above all, these constant opportunities of contact we had with him, that constituted the secret of his influence upon us. The readers of this biography will have before them a complete view of the character of him to whom I am permitted, on behalf of those who studied with me, to raise this loving, though humble memorial. I will therefore but advert to that one element of his character which gave him such ascendancy over us. This was his *uncompromising fidelity to his convictions*. We saw, from our close communion with him, that while he was never captivated with the merely popular, was never impetuous, often extremely cautious, he gave himself unhesitatingly to that which he believed to be the duty of the time: that when once he was convinced a course would tend to the welfare of humanity, and the advancement of the cause of God, the conviction was immediately followed by corresponding exertion. We easily traced an eminent devoutness in him to no transient or ephemeral emotion, but to this fidelity to himself and to God; for we beheld in him one who most firmly believed that power and efficiency could be sustained by Divine aids alone, and who, therefore, amidst the most thronging businesses, was obviously,

and continually, drawing aside to receive the influences that descended upon his soul in the closest communion with God. We learnt as we sat by his side how this uncompromising faithfulness to conscience led him to deny himself of many an otherwise lawful enjoyment, lest his ministerial usefulness should be impaired; and when with him in society, we wonderingly saw how he would, impelled by the same sense of duty to Christ, guide the conversation for a whole evening into channels of high and profitable intercourse. Nor less instructive was that astonishing industry which sprang from the same faithfulness to personal conviction. It was evident that the hour of completion of one work of usefulness was the starting-point for another, and that he was ever seeking to interpret the mind of the Lord, and to arouse the churches to the special work of the period. To this industry we knew how largely it was owing that he was one of the most eloquent preachers of the age; how even his felicity in selecting the weightiest terms was a habit formed by the most patient carefulness; how he did everything as perfectly as possible that touched the cause of God; how he acquired a power of adaptation which could scarcely be surpassed, so that in a small congregation at a mission chapel, or a large one that represented the intelligence of the age—seated among a dozen anxious souls in a class-room, or standing before the crowds of Exeter Hall—he met the very requirement of the time; instructing, or enchaining in breathless silence, or charming by the singular appropriateness of what he uttered. And last, though not least, we were deeply assured by the teaching of these never-to-be-forgotten hours that that strenuous adherence to evangelical truth, which constituted the distinguishing feature of his preaching and writing, was the fruit of his fidelity to convictions of unusual depth and clearness. It is true that departure from evangelical truth does not often spring from an act of the understanding, deliberately substituting other truths, but from inadequate conviction—the mind having never reached, or having lost, the habit of believing, reverent, and profound thoughtfulness on the revelations of the Word of God. Pride of heart, however, and shrinking from “the offence of the cross,” may do serious violence to the clearest convictions. But while we saw in our honoured father and friend a man whose heart was touched by the lost and perishing condition of the race, and who realised the tremendous and glorious meaning of the words SIN and REDEMPTION, we learnt also how his feelings imperiously moulded his pulpit addresses, and that it was because he was true to his apprehensions of the appalling dangers of sinners that he became so decided an advocate of evangelical orthodoxy, and pointed men so urgently and successfully to flee for “refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

I am thus led to remark that, besides those more private methods of personal influence upon the life of the students, which I have spoken of, I should feel this sketch incomplete if it did not advert to the benefit which we derived from his more public services. It was our privilege to hear him as a preacher. We listened to those addresses from him to the unconverted which, for heart-searching description, solemn remonstrance, and pleading persuasion, have been rarely surpassed. We heard that voice of amazing compass and richness explaining the nature, and urging the invitations of the gospel, until the music of the word SALVATION hovered over the congregation like the lingering echoes of an angel's message. "As preached by him," writes an honoured friend, by whose side I often sat in Carr's Lane Chapel, "the gospel was always and emphatically 'the ministry of reconciliation; ' and the method of that reconciliation—the Holy One who knew no sin made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him—was seldom by any lips more lucidly or persuasively taught than by his. How admirable, too, and to us students how instructive, the manner in which he fulfilled the ministry as designed for 'the perfecting of the saints, the edifying the body of Christ.' If any Christian pastor ever shewed his people what manner of persons they ought to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, and did it in a way to enamour them of their calling, as well as enlighten them in the duties of it, he did; did it in the spirit of that apostle who says, 'Now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord,' and of that other apostle who says, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.'" Ours also was the benefit of his example as the industrious instructor of his congregation. The heart overflows with treasured remembrances as the thought of his full, critical, experimental, and tender *expositions* of the Divine Word comes over the spirit. Alike to be loved and revered was the manner and the teaching. How did we listen, with love to the instructor, to those eloquent and consecutive sermons on the doctrine of Justification by Faith; or, on other Sabbath mornings, were enabled to look into the glorious depths of St Paul's Epistles, and to realise at once their elevating and practical tendency.

Month after month we saw him at the Lord's table, where, over the symbols of the Redeemer's dying love, his face seemed to shine with the radiance of an unutterable gratitude, and where, with a melting pathos, he dwelt on the unsearchable grace of God in Christ, and the hopes of believers; or, in the sacramental address that always followed the communion, presented appeals with a view to the advancement of the piety of the church, the most faithful, stimulating, and soul-moving, I ever expect to listen to. And can we forget the in-

fluence upon us of those monthly meetings of the church, which at the time I am speaking of filled the body of the chapel, where he presided with such consummate prudence; addressed the candidates, who were almost every month led in and grouped around him, with such appropriate cautions and weighty admonitions; maintained an oversight that secured unbroken peace without compromise; and ruled with such a wise dignity as to win a respect which had not a shade of servility, and an unbounded confidence which never approached adulation? Happy were we as students enjoying the advantages of such a pastorate, and sharing the benefit of such an example! Ah, how much wiser, holier, and more zealous, might the churches have expected us to be!

It remains to be added, that Mr James's interest in us did not cease with our removal from Birmingham. "While of all men," says one,* from whose letter I have before quoted, "he could well plead the pressure of multifarious duties, I never found him reluctant or tardy to aid me when I needed his counsel. When, at Sheffield, my wife and myself were weeping over the loss of our only child, I well recollect how a sweet letter from him lightened our gloom; and often since have I been a debtor to his sympathy." It is an astonishing fact, speaking volumes for the largeness of his heart, and demanding the most grateful remembrance, that very few students ever left the college who did not share to the very close of his life in similar expressions of affection. Perhaps an additional testimony to his personal attentions to the welfare of one may convey an evidence of his thoughtfulness for all: on this ground, then, let me transcribe a leaf from my own experience. On completing my studies he weighed carefully the claims of conflicting spheres, and indicated the spot where the call was the most imperative; he came to give the charge at my ordination; he kindly delayed a journey to preside at my marriage; he travelled to Reading to preach the first sermon in the new sanctuary raised by my people for God's worship; he came afterwards to re-open the chapel, and to encourage me when I had sought in Leeds to build up the broken walls of Zion; he wrote, when unable to be present at the centenary of that church, a long and weighty letter for the occasion; he sent me a letter of sympathy, and afterwards knelt by me in prayer, when the hand of sickness was upon me, and sought sanctifying consolation for me in what he tenderly termed those "Gethsemane walks." But, truly, I am only one out of very many ministers who have gone forth from the college; I know that he loved other most excellent brethren quite as much, and, no doubt, he followed them with practical expressions of an interest and regard which went beyond those I have enumerated.

* The Rev. S. Clarkson of Salford.

I do not think, therefore, that mine is any partial eulogy; I am sure it is a most feeble and inadequate expression, on behalf of my once fellow-students, of the love and gratitude we owe him. And no tribute should be raised for such a purpose by any student of a college that owed so much to his prayers, benefactions, and exertions, every line of which is not written with the affectionate reverence of a Son for the most beloved and honoured of fathers.

I close with the words of my much-loved friend, the Rev. William Thorp of Shrewsbury, from whose communication I have previously made a quotation. "I will enumerate, as I can hastily recall them, the principal elements of Mr James's influence upon myself. First among these undoubtedly was his character. I never knew one in whom I saw so much of the mind that was in Christ, so much of the beauty and, I will add, grandeur of the Christ-like character, and saw it so uniformly as in Mr James. If I have since felt any ardent longings to possess it myself, I cannot forget that his example was one precious means of their becoming what they have been. The individual traits of excellence that I especially observed in him were—the realising sense which his faith gave him of eternal things, his unrelapsing spiritual-mindedness, his never-halting pursuit of the things which are before, his studied avoidance of everything bordering on the selfish or the mean, his sedulous practice of the things that are true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report, his tenderness that was so ready to weep with them that weep, his magnanimity that the slimy trail of envy never defiled, his charity that might have furnished the apostle with his memorable description of this grace, his circumspection, his prudence, his never-tiring industry, his intense zeal for the conversion of the heathen, and his much more than negative, his intensely positive catholicity of spirit towards all, of every name, who hold the Head, and who keep the commandments of Jesus. . . . The immense debt we owe him we can never repay, but our Master and his is now paying it on our behalf."

LETTERS TO MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES WHO HAD BEEN STUDENTS AT SPRING-HILL.

TO REV. D. G. WATT.

"EDGBASTON, *January 21, 1842.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Your two letters, one dated July and the other September 1841, both came safely to hand, and excited both my joy and gratitude on your account. I was gratified not only to hear of your safe arrival at the important scene of your future labours, and your health, but to perceive that your soul has lost

none of its interest in your great work, and I trust none of its devotedness to your Divine Master. Perhaps before I come to the contents of your epistles and to the circumstances of your station, I may for a few moments advert to my own altered condition since we parted. My beloved and estimable wife, as you had heard before your last communication was sent off, after a lingering illness of more than two years, has left me to be once more a solitary pilgrim on the road to immortality. Her affliction gave an opportunity for a bright display of rich grace in the manifestation of all the passive virtues of the Christian character. Never did grace, or at least rarely, shine more resplendently than in her. There was the sweetest tranquillity and liveliest hope, resting on the solid basis of firm faith, and maintained through many months till mortality was swallowed up in life. I wish I knew how to convey to you a copy of the memorial of her that has been published since her death. As regards myself, I have been hitherto mercifully and surprisingly sustained; and although I deeply feel, and ever shall, the irreparable loss I have sustained, and expect to go mourning all my days, yet I am not cast down, for the Lord is the lifter up of my head.

“I now enter upon a consideration of the contents of your letters. I am glad you gave up many preconceived ideas of the best mode of conducting yourself in minor matters, and left time and observation to form habits. You act wisely in being slow to draw conclusions. Many things which appear at first sight questionable, if not absolutely wrong, will present a different aspect after longer observation and closer inspection. A new-comer should defer much to the opinions of men who have been some years on the spot, in whose general judgment and sincere piety he has confidence. I am glad to perceive you think well of your colleagues. *We* have had a good opportunity of knowing Mr Buyers, and have formed a high opinion of his good sense and strong, masculine understanding. He is a clear-headed man, and I should judge of good and amiable temper. I am glad he is one of the little band with whom you are associated in that vast metropolis of Satan’s Eastern empire where you are placed. I have no need to admonish you to cultivate the best understanding with your companions, because your temper is known to be mild and accommodating. Be ambitious for the place of Christian distinction, and that is the lowest seat and the servant of all. How have our missions been hindered by the quarrels and divisions of our missionaries! Satan’s grand aim is to sow the seeds of discord between the labourers, and thus stop the work. What you see deficient in piety among any of them at any time endeavour to supply rather by the force of a modest, humble example, and by your own habitual spirit, than by reproof and

admonition, except in flagrant cases, and even then do all in love. As to the modes of operation for carrying on the work, and the comparative advantages of preaching and education, there needs he and ought to be no comparison instituted between them. Both are parts of one great system, both are sanctified by Scripture, and both are adapted to the heathen among whom you labour. I was glad to hear Mr Buyers, both publicly and privately, labours to do away with an erroneous impression which his book is supposed to have produced. He strenuously advocated the importance of schools, and made it evident that he was an advocate for this mode of communicating truth, but not to the neglect of preaching. My own opinion, however, is that our Society has been in danger, if they have not actually fallen into it, of attaching too little importance to education. I would certainly lay out still more money in this department of action. The desire of the Hindoos to obtain education as such, and especially English education, ought to be laid hold of with eagerness to train them up in useful knowledge, and, as far as can be, in the knowledge of Christianity. The atheistic system of the Government schools on the subject of religion is wicked in point of religion, and foolish as a matter of policy. I am quite desirous, therefore, to cherish in your mind a strong prepossession in favour of education. It is an adage of universal application, to Hindoos as well as to Englishmen or Scotchmen, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' My own opinion also goes to another point, which is, that it is better to educate a few thoroughly, than many only in a half manner. Even those children of the lower classes which you obtain, if thoroughly taught, especially in the principles of Christianity, may carry out much light into the mass among whom they will one day move.

"I quite agree with you that it would be well to have one of our missionaries devoted especially to the work of superintending the formation of schools, and superintending them, provided we could spare money enough to form a number of schools sufficient to occupy his time. Such a man would have a sphere of usefulness as wide and as important as any that could be allotted to him. It should be also his department to foster the talent and piety of any of the more promising boys, and thus prepare them for acting as future preachers of the gospel. I think there are two great objects ever to be kept in view by our missionaries, and these are, to make our missions as soon as possible self-supporting, and self-propagating. It is neither accordant with Scripture nor reason to suppose that the cause is ever to be dependent on agents and resources from Christian countries. How slow at this rate must be the spread of the gospel in the world! Already the machine is in danger of stopping for want of money. Hence all who are

in the field should look out for some ears of corn of native growth, which shall become seed for the country where they grew. Well may you look round on the immensity of the field and the paucity of the labourers with a feeling of dismay and despondency. But what is to be done? The directors are already exceeding their income, and the churches seem to have arrived at their maximum of subscriptions. Oh for more prayer, faith, and deadness to the world! Christians must return to simpler habits.

“The times at home are fearfully bad. Distress increasing on every hand, and men’s hearts failing them for fear. How our religious institutions are to be supported it is difficult to say.

“At Spring-Hill things are going on pretty well. Thompson, your countryman, will prove a clever man. He is now supplying Nile Street, Glasgow, where, it is probable, I think, he will have an invitation to settle. —’s health has failed, and he has given up the ministry for trade. I do not think he would have succeeded as a preacher, and perhaps he was of the same opinion. Coles goes on thoroughly well. He will make an excellent missionary. I wish they would send him to Benares, but I suppose he must go to Madras. But I will try hard to send you Fairbrother, who answers so well to his name. He is a lovely fellow. Griffith’s destination is altered from Africa to the South Seas. Two of Micaiah Hill’s sons were received upon probation last Tuesday as missionaries. They appear to be two very excellent young men. Mr East, as you know, has obtained a co-pastor, a Mr Haven, from Hadleigh, in Suffolk, a truly devoted, pious, and excellent man, who, I am persuaded, will do much good.

“At Carr’s Lane we go on much as usual. God, I trust, is with us, and giving testimony to the word of His grace—but not, that I am aware of, in any extraordinary manner. Dr Wardlaw, you probably know, intends soon to resign his pastoral charge.

“I had forgotten to caution you against over-exertion, especially during the heat of the day. It is the opinion of some, that not a few of our missionaries have injured themselves by want of caution in this respect. Idleness is one extreme, but rash exertion is another.

“I was sorry to read your reiterated request for a copy of the charge I delivered at your ordination, because I do not know where to find it. When I meet with it I will copy it, and send it by some conveyance to you. And now, may God, in His rich mercy, bless you. May our divine Lord so replenish you with His divine benediction, as to qualify you for, and help and bless you in, your momentous undertaking.—I remain, your sincere friend and brother in Christ,

“J. A. JAMES.

“Kind regards to your co-workers.”

TO THE REV. J. COLES, BELLARY,
ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

“EDGBASTON, *September 4, 1850.*

“MY DEAR AND MUCH-AFFLICTED FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I have been much distressed by the sad intelligence of your heavy and incalculable loss. God has indeed laid His hand upon you in this painful bereavement, and I cannot allow you to mourn unpitied and without this expression of my deep sympathy with you. I knew the excellence of your wife, and how truly and tenderly you loved her, and I can therefore in some measure estimate the weight of your sorrows. And then, having drunk twice of the same bitter cup, I can enter by experience into your case. Still your lot is more sorrowful than mine was in consequence of your being in a strange land, and having three little children left upon your hands. Dark, dark indeed is the cloud which has thrown its shadow upon your path and your prospects. Still you can say—

“I through the cloud believe Thy grace.
Secure of Thy compassion still!”

“Yes, my good brother, there is grace behind the cloud, and wisdom too, though veiled in mystery. Now, more than ever, is the time for faith and confidence. Trust in Him *now*, when you have little else to trust in. The cistern is broken—the water is spilled—but there, full in your view, amidst the broken fragments, is the glorious and infinite fountain; there is God with all His attributes—Christ with all His offices—the Spirit with all His influences—the Bible with all its promises—and heaven with all its glories. In mercies lost forget not mercies left. Surely, surely you will not allow yourself to think that all is gone, though so much is taken. Your dear wife is removed to heaven—you are following her—and, till you meet, will be still God’s honoured servant. You are still upheld, and will be, I hope, in Christian integrity, and better lose a wife, and all your children—and your own life too—than your character. Don’t puzzle yourself about the mystery of the event. It is God that has done it, who never does a foolish or an unkind action. You may not see the reason, but it is God’s doing, and there is all reason in that, and with this assurance may be as well satisfied as though you saw ten thousand reasons. I hope you will not give yourself up to indulge and nourish grief. Submission and occupation will be the best balm for your wounded spirit. Christ’s service will be your best cordial.

“Don’t let weeping prevent sowing; and then, sowing in tears, you will reap in joy. Need I say that you are now placed in new circumstances, and are surrounded by new temptations. May God watch

over you, and preserve you! Many are the trials of a young widower: watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. When I came into your circumstances, I constantly and earnestly prayed to be kept not only from sin, but from folly, and through much grace I was preserved from both. Your three babes will in due time need that you should provide them with a second mother. May you be wisely directed; but be cautious, for their sakes as well as your own. Your circumstances in India will perhaps require this sooner than would be necessary or decorous in this land, and provided you make a prudent choice, all considerate persons will not only justify you, but commend. We have been deeply interested, and since the intelligence of Mrs Cole's death arrived, affected, by the beautiful picture and very touching history of the orphan twins. We shall take care of them. May my little namesake, to whom I beg my fatherly love, be a good boy—a holy man—a useful minister. And now, my dear brother, farewell till I write again. God comfort, sanctify, and bless you, and if this dark dispensation make you through grace a better missionary than ever, your glorified wife, you her bereaved husband, and her sorrow-stricken mother, will still have cause to rejoice and bless God. Poor Mrs M'Turk! oh, how I feel for her; but she bears it wonderfully, though sometimes her heart seems broken. My kind regards to Mr and Mrs Wardlaw.—Your most sympathising friend,

“J. A. JAMES.

“Be thankful that your dear wife ascended in such glory to glory. What a blissful departure, hardly like dying!”

TO THE REV. W. GUEST, LEEDS.

“EDGBASTON, *April 30, 1855.*

“MY DEAR MR GUEST,—It was with great reluctance I declined the offer held out to me to be present at the approaching solemnities of your centenary services; for if I could have added little to their beneficial effect, I certainly could have derived much benefit from their operation on my own mind. I am more and more deeply convinced of the importance of availing ourselves of some suitable occasion for that kind of fraternal intercourse among the ministers of the gospel, which is likely to rouse each other's minds to the great ends of our vocation, and to stimulate them to a greater zeal in accomplishing them. I am sorrowfully impressed with the fear that the work of genuine conversion goes on but slowly among us at present, and it becomes us all most anxiously and inquisitively to search for the cause. Do we bring forward with sufficient prominence, simplicity, and earnestness, the great themes of redemption and regeneration, which are God's

own appointed means for the renovation of the heart and the salvation of the soul? I have been lately looking into that incomparable biography, the 'Life of Doddridge,' by Orton, and was much impressed with the following passage. 'He saw,' says his biographer, 'and lamented the sad deviation of many ministers from what he thought important truths of the gospel; insisting upon them much less than they should have done, or in such a manner as if they were making concessions to an adversary rather than opening their hearts to their hearers on a favourite topic. He saw persons refining upon a plain gospel till it was almost evaporated and lost.' 'I hope,' said he in a sermon before an assembly of ministers, 'we shall never practise so dangerous a complaisance to unbelievers of the present age as to wave the gospel that we may accommodate ourselves to their taste; which, if we do, we may indeed preserve the name of virtue, but I fear we shall destroy the thing itself,—lose it in our congregations, and probably in our own hearts; for I confess it seems to me much more probable that the doctrines of natural religion alone should be blessed as the means of reforming the heathen who never heard of eternity, than they should have much effect upon those who under the profession of it slight its most glorious peculiarities, as if the religion of Jesus were a mere encumbrance, which while we own it to be true, we might nevertheless forget without great danger or inconvenience. Indeed, the gospel is a great thing, or it is nothing. I am more and more convinced of the need of keeping to the good old evangelical and experimental way of preaching, and look upon most of the new-fashioned divinity, of which some persons of different extremes are so fond, as a kind of quackery which bodes ill to the health of the soul and of the church in general.' How applicable these remarks of the saintly and scholarly Doddridge are to the present time I need not point out. Oh what a revival in our ministry might be looked for if all its members would but agree to read devoutly through within the next six months the life of this great and good man,—his sermon on the 'Guilt and Danger of Neglecting Souls,'—and Baxter's 'Reformed Pastor!' We all need rousing up to a solemn consideration of the object of the Christian ministry, and as solemn a review of the manner in which we are seeking to accomplish it. Never were there so many and such powerful influences counteracting the efforts of our labours, and never was there needed more power in the preacher, and more earnest prayer for the Spirit of God. We live in extraordinary times, and neither ordinary men nor ordinary efforts will do now.

"May God be in the midst of you at your approaching meeting, and leave you in no doubt whether the cloud of His glory resteth upon you. May a new baptism of the Spirit be granted to all assembled, that

you may enter with renewed ardour and more entire self-consecration upon your work. May it be the honour of Leeds to begin a revival of religion in our churches. It must begin somewhere, and why not there? and at some time, why not now? We want more of the Spirit of Carey's immortal admonition, 'Expect great things, attempt great things.' I shall think of you and pray for you, and shall be happy to catch a reflection of your light, and a radiation of your heat. If you think it worth while to remember me to the brethren, give my fraternal love to them, and say how I honour the men who are carrying out the designs for which the Son of God expired upon Calvary, and how intensely I long for their success in bringing sinners to Him for salvation.—With kind regards to Mrs Guest, believe me affectionately yours,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. W. GUEST, LEEDS.

"EDGBASTON, *November 28, 1855,*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am really much concerned to hear from you so indifferent an account of your health, and intended to have told you so before this; but I really am so pestered with correspondence that I am often guilty of putting by letters and forgetting them which far more deserve attention than many I am compelled to answer.

"You have evidently overtaxed your strength, and have been rather a spendthrift of your energies. Don't you often feel what a clog this poor materialism of ours is to the ethereal spirit which animates it?

"Well, we shall be delivered by and by from the burden of the flesh, and serve God without let or hindrance. Yes—but we shall not convert souls to God in heaven; this noble work is to be done on earth, and makes one long to remain on earth to do it.

"Your account of things at Leeds is as regards your congregation very delightful. Now you must rest. Your strength at present is, to sit still. In quietness and confidence you will be established. You are now to stop preaching for a while to preach still better when you preach again. But do not be in haste to begin. *'Festina lente.'*

"I suppose Mr Barker sent you our regulations for the admission of students. I wish both your young friends were coming to us. But I conclude this is too late now for us to hope this. We are anxious to have a tolerably good number for our new college next year.

"I am much as usual, tolerable in health, but suffer inconvenience from my constitutional complaint. Not many conversions in the ministry of either Mr Dale or myself. Oh, how we need the shower! May it come! Kind regards to Mrs Guest.—Yours very truly,

"J. A. JAMES."

CHAPTER II.
THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

THERE was no subject nearer to Mr James's heart, none with which his name is more closely identified, than that of Christian Union. His endeavours to remove the estrangement and mutual suspicions of Christian brethren professing different creeds, and adhering to different forms of ecclesiastical government, were not suggested merely by his judgment and conscience, but by the strong impulses of his kindly and generous nature. The firmest attachment to his own theological opinions and denominational principles was associated with a cordial admiration of upright and honourable Christian men belonging to all evangelical communities. "He loved the universal Church better than any part of it." As might have been expected, he has detailed at considerable length in his Autobiography, his connexion with the formation of the Evangelical Alliance. But, before he arrived at this important chapter, he was becoming weary of writing; and I am glad that, in addition to information derived from other sources, I am able to supplement and illustrate Mr James's narrative, by extracts from a letter kindly furnished me by Dr King of Glasgow, with whom he had frequent conference in the early days of the Alliance, and for whom it was his habit to express the warmest affection and esteem.

The autobiographical chapter on the Alliance commences thus:—

No thoughtful Christian can be otherwise than afflicted by the multiplied sects, divisions, strifes, and controversies of Christendom. Strange and mournful it is that the prayer of our Lord for the visible unity of His people should not yet have been answered in any tolerable measure. I do not think that professing Christians are sufficiently impressed and afflicted by this state of things. They are not only reconciled to it, but often compare it to the varied colours of the rainbow, adding, by variety, to the beauty of the Church. This is a fatal mistake. It is disfigurement, not loveliness, that is much to be deplored, and we ought to do all we can to remove it. All cannot be right. There must be much error afloat in these diversities. I have often reflected upon these things. One morning, at my private devotions, I was much led out in prayer on this subject, and a suggestion came forcibly to my mind to do something to affect a union of Christians in some visible bond. I rose from my knees and sketched out a rough draft of a scheme of union. The May meeting of the Congregational Union soon followed. At that meeting I called the attention of the brethren present to the subject before them. Indeed, this was my chief object in going to the meeting.

It was at the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union, held in London in May 1842, and in seconding a resolution of fraternal welcome to Christian brethren from Berlin, Canada, Van Diemen's Land, Scotland, and Wales, who were present in the Assembly, that Mr James developed his scheme. He said,—

“Though pressed for time, I cannot sit down without disburdening my heart on a subject which has induced me to leave the privacy from which I rarely emerge, and perhaps shall emerge more rarely still. It is this,—the Union has done much, but it may do more, in my opinion, notwithstanding the divided and distracted state of the Protestant Evangelical body. There is, in spite of the bigotry, prejudice, virulence, and hostility which is manifested in every direction, an under-current flowing, a yearning for more extensive union. Who could listen to the short paragraph from the letter of Dr Chalmers without feeling that there was there manifested a desire for union? And is it not in the power of this Union to bring about, by God's blessing, a Protestant

Autobiographical.

Editorial.

Evangelical Union of the whole body of Christ's faithful followers, who have, at any rate, adopted the Voluntary principle? In my judgment, the time is come when such a union may be attempted; and I know of no body that could attempt it with more rational hopes of success than that which is now assembled. Is it not the reproach of Christianity, of Protestantism, and of our own body in connexion with other sections of the Christian Church, that we are so divided, that there is no recognition of one another as Christian brethren? It appears to me that we have it in our power to raise up a defence against Infidelity, Popery, Puseyism, and Plymouth-brethrenism, by bringing about a union of all Protestant bodies of Christians holding the Voluntary principle. How many are there who would unite, if for nothing else, upon the basis of a simple mutual recognition! How many are there who would rejoice to acknowledge others holding great leading sentiments, and to be acknowledged by them as brethren in Jesus Christ! Let the imagination only dwell upon the scene presented by a meeting in Exeter Hall, where certain great principles of Protestant and Evangelical religion should be acknowledged as the basis of union, all who held those principles recognising each other as brethren. Let six ministers of different denominations address that meeting, each following his address with a prayer. Let the members of various churches be invited to attend such a meeting; and let us exhibit it to the world as the Union of the Protestant Evangelical bodies of Christians. It would have a power which nothing that had as yet been presented to the world had ever exerted upon the public mind. We should strengthen ourselves and strengthen each other. The work must begin somewhere. Why should it not begin here? What materials are there for the formation of such a union? Think of our body in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, the Baptist body, Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion—think of the north of the Tweed, the Secession Church,—shall I speak prophetically and prospectively?—the Voluntaries that are to be, if not already Voluntaries to a certain extent, and who, I know, are not unprepared to unite upon such principles as these, if such a union could be brought about. In Ireland you would find the Synod of Ulster, or, at least, many members of it, prepared to unite with you. Think how glorious would be the spectacle of such a union, how great the honour conferred upon any body who should bring about such a convocation! I do not despair of the time coming round when Dr Chalmers himself will again visit this metropolis, not to employ his mighty eloquence against the Voluntary principle, but to vindicate that which he once laboured to depreciate. Let us only carry out the principle of a great Protestant Union; and we may yet have representatives from all bodies of Protestant Christians

to be found within the circle of our own United Empire. I do seriously refer it to the consideration of the brethren of the committee, whether such a convocation be practicable—desirable we must all admit it to be—whether it be practicable; and I do submit that at our meeting at Liverpool in the ensuing autumn it should be a subject of grave and serious consideration.”

After the meeting, Dr Leifchild came to Mr James, and begged him to follow up his proposal, and lay it before the public. Adopting this hint, Mr James wrote the following letter, addressed to the secretaries of the Congregational Union, and had it inserted in the *Congregational Magazine* for July 1842:—

“PROPOSAL FOR A GENERAL PROTESTANT UNION.

“TO THE SECRETARIES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

“DEAR BRETHREN,—You will probably recollect, that, in the few remarks I made at the late meeting of our body, I gave utterance to an opinion that it was both desirable and practicable, to form an association, bearing the title which stands at the head of this paper, and for purposes which shall be stated in its contents; and that it is in the power, and would be for the honour of your Committee to attempt it. Owing to the press of business, and the shortness of time, I had no opportunity then to explain and enforce my views; and I therefore now avail myself of the columns of our denominational organ of communication, to make you and your readers better acquainted with the object of my wishes.

“It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on the present divided, and perhaps, I may add, distracted and alienated condition of the great Protestant body; which in fact may be rather represented as a collection of *dissecta membra*, than as a *body*; and this remark applies with truth to the various communities which have separated from the two national Establishments, in their relation to each other, as well as in their relation to the churches from which they have alike conscientiously seceded. Holding in common, both as Christians and as Protestants, all fundamental doctrines, how little intercourse or visible communion do they hold with each other? Nay, is there at the present moment any mutual, public, palpable recognition of each other, as brethren in Christ, and as members one of another? Is not each section shut up within itself, and separated from all others, almost as entirely as so many isolated and independent, though, perhaps, friendly States, each with its local government, but the whole without any confederation for defence against common foes? Thus neglecting and

forgetting our Lord's prayer for the unity of His Church; allowing' the spirit of sectarianism, with its attendant evils, to go on growing unchecked; rejecting a means of strengthening the whole; and furnishing to the foes around a vantage-ground for assailing all. It would be needless to dilate on the sagacity of our common enemies, in perceiving this our weak point, or on their skill in availing themselves of it, in strengthening themselves, and attacking us. Infidels, Papists, Puseyites, and last, though in some respects not least, the Plymouth Brethren, assail us with the charge of sectarianism. We are insultingly taunted with the sneer of 'a house divided against itself, and the asseveration that we are so unlike and so hostile, such bigots for division, so infected with jealousy and the odium, theologicum, that we cannot unite; and have carried our Protestantism so far, as not only to abjure the notion of unity, but even the wish for it. 'The Brethren' are busy and successful in plying against us the assertion, that we have all of us lost both 'the outward and visible sign of brotherhood and the inward and spiritual grace,' though they are themselves as sectarian a body, without its name, as any in existence.

"How desirable, then, at all times, and especially now, the project of doing something for wiping out this stain and rolling away this reproach, and proving by some public demonstration, that we are, if not perfectly of one mind, yet of one heart; and that though we inhabit separate dwellings, each being regulated by its own independent and uncontrolled domestic economy, we form one municipal corporation, and live in all the confidence and kind offices of good neighbourhood. What an argument would it snatch from our quadruple foes, if we could be seen by the world united by any legitimate bond, if it went, and possibly it could yet go no further, than to acknowledge our members as brethren, and our pastors as ministers of Christ, who recognise and love each other for the truth's sake that dwelleth in us? Is it not possible to exhibit in beautiful reality a union founded on the aphorism of Father Paul, which has been so often repeated on platforms to grace a speech at a Bible meeting, and so seldom remembered afterwards?—'In things essential, unity; in things indifferent, liberty, and in all things charity.'

"Of course, whatever union is brought about, it must be without compromise. We cannot enter into any fellowship with persons of other sentiments, by sacrificing our own. The wisdom that cometh from above is 'first pure, then peaceable.' And notwithstanding the present divided state of the Protestant Evangelical body, and the apparent tact and taste for separation, is there no yearning after union? No voices sounding abroad over our separate camps the inquiry, 'Why cannot we be one?' No Noahs sending forth the dove over the

troubled waters to search for the olive branch? Are not the Christian elements in many, very many bosoms, rising into the ascendant above those of a sectarian nature? Are there not some upon the watch-tower in silent meditation, and holy observation, looking out upon the dark and stormy horizon to see from what quarter the signs of light and peace will shew themselves? I am sure there are many.

“To such, my honoured brethren, I submit through you, the following scheme for consideration and discussion:—

“NAME—PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL UNION.

“PURPOSE AND OBJECT OF THE UNION.

“If at present it could proceed no further, the MUTUAL RECOGNITION as *brethren in Christ* of all who agree to the principles hereafter stated; and as *ministers* of Christ, all godly men, who hold and preach these principles, by whatever forms of ordination they may have been introduced to their office.

“PRINCIPLES OF UNION TO BE THE BASIS OF SUCH RECOGNITION.

“1. *General and Protestant Principles*—

“The inspiration of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

“The Holy Scriptures are the sole and sufficient rule of faith in matters of religion, whether relating to doctrine, morals, or worship.

“The indefeasible right, and incumbent duty, of every man to read the Scriptures, and to judge of their meaning, to the exclusion of all authoritative, traditional interpretation whatever.

“2. *Theological Principles*—

“The Trinity of co-equal persons in the Godhead.

“The atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ by His sacrificial death.

“The doctrine of salvation by grace.

“The justification of the sinner by faith alone.

“The indispensable necessity of regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit.

“FORM OF RECOGNITION.

“We acknowledge, as true Christians, and as our brethren in the Lord, all who believe and profess the foregoing principles, however in other matters they may differ, and without at the same time expressing our approval of other sentiments, either theological or ecclesiastical, with which these principles may be associated in the case of those that profess them.

“We also acknowledge as true and valid ministers of Christ, those

who are partakers of apostolic spirit, and are the preachers of apostolic doctrine, by whatever form of ecclesiastical order they may have been introduced into their office.

“We acknowledge it to be equally our duty and our privilege to love as brethren all who are thus united, and all others not united, who agree in the fundamental doctrines of Divine truth; and while we conscientiously adhere to our distinctive denominational principles, and shall not cease to maintain, defend, and propagate them, we will endeavour no less conscientiously, to check the spirit of sectarianism, and to promote the diffusion of a spirit of charity.

“EXHIBITION AND OPERATION OF THE UNION.

“At present, little or nothing can be done in the way of action, and perhaps nothing more than *public recognition*. For this purpose, let a biennial or triennial meeting be held at Exeter Hall, none to be admitted but accredited members of churches; the meeting to be of a devotional character, four or six ministers of different denominations to deliver an address of a given length, on some subject bearing upon the occasion, and to present a short prayer; and for the sake of enlivening the meeting, let there be a hymn or two sung.

“PARTIES TO BE ADMITTED TO THE UNION.

“Any that can agree to the basis laid down. The following may be expected the whole body of Congregationalists in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland—the Baptists—Lady Huntingdon’s Connexion—the Calvinistic Methodists—the United Secession Churches in Scotland and England—the Moravians—perhaps the Synod of Ulster; and should a new secession take place from the Church of Scotland, these also would probably join. Gladly should I see the Wesleyan body in such a union, and the pious clergy of the Churches of England and Scotland.

“GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

“Such, my brethren, is the scheme which I have formed in my own mind, as an object of my heart’s desire. Be it that it is only a vision destined to expire in the imagination in which it was conceived; it is at any rate an innocent, and to myself, a lovely one. I feel a gratification in having proposed it. I should have been unfaithful to my own convictions, and have repressed the yearnings of my heart and the admonitions of my conscience, if I had not laid the project before you and the public, even as I have laid it before God. Could it be accomplished, how would it silence the sneers of infidelity, neutralise the arguments of Papists, refute the objections of the Plymouth Brethren, and strengthen and consolidate us all against the arrogant assumptions of the Puseyites.

And while it would be a defence to us against our foes, what a beneficial influence would it exert upon ourselves. Without weakening our attachment to truth, it would promote in us the spirit of love, and thus prepare us to come eventually to a closer agreement on those points which now separate us. Conceive what an impression would be produced upon the public mind, by such a scene as Exeter Hall would present in this holy fellowship of brethren—the long lost wonder of a united Church would be restored, the echoes of the ancient exclamation would be awakened, and thousands of voices would again be heard to say, ‘See how these Christians love one another!’ What a rebuke and refutation, I repeat, would it give to the, proud isolation of Puseyism. The public, when they saw this arrogant and malignant spirit retiring within the schools of Oxford, to adopt the ceremonial, and imbibe the intolerance and maledictory exclusiveness of its Roman master, would place in striking and beautiful contrast with it, the brightening and extending charity of other denominations, and in seeing them all come forth to such a noble fellowship of love, would be at no loss to determine who were in possession of the true catholicity.

“And who can tell, if the scheme should be commenced, when and where it would stop, or what the last circle of the widening undulation would touch or embrace? Might it not be hoped, or is it calculating too largely upon the charity of the present age, and anticipating too speedily the glories of the coming ones, to expect that Christians of other countries, to earth’s remotest bounds, would solicit to be admitted into ‘the holy league?’ Shall Papists have a bond of union that crosses mountains, oceans, and continents, and which, defying all barriers of nation, custom, language, and climate, comprehends within its mighty circumference the inhabitants of the poles and the equator, and Protestants make no effort to set up a recognition which shall do the same?

“Who shall make the trial? Who will contend for the honour of sending abroad the sound of union, and the invitation to unite, over the discordant elements of the Protestant body? I propose it to you, my beloved brethren, to commence this work of faith, this labour of love; and may you not only enter upon it, but go through it with the patience of hope. You are the secretaries of a committee and of a body that delight to honour you; whose confidence and affectionate esteem you largely possess; and without wishing or intending any invidious comparison, you have one scribe among you whose heart is so richly imbued with the spirit of love, whose mind is so skilful in all its ingenious and honourable devices, and withal, his pen so conversant with its mellifluous vocabulary, that it seems as if he were given us for the purpose of carrying on the blessed work of union in this divided world, and almost equally divided Church.

“Confer, then, my brethren, upon the scheme,, or any other and better one of a similar kind, for I am zealous only about the general principle, not about the details. It be practicable, accomplish it: and if not, and we *must* still give up the hope of seeing the bow of many colours upon the cloud, and of hearing the still small voice succeeding the storm, let us at any rate pray that a wiser, holier, and happier age than our own may soon arrive, when what is impossible to us shall be possible to others, and the prayer of our Lord be answered, ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’—I remain, dear brethren, your friend and brother,

“J. A. JAMES.

“EDGBASTON, *May* 31, 1812.”

Of this letter he had a number of copies struck off, and addressed them to the principal ministers of the various evangelical denominations, not excepting the evangelical clergy of the Church of England.

The letter attracted general attention, and received many replies, approving generally of the plan. At the adjourned meeting of the Congregational Union, held in Liverpool in the autumn of the same year, the Rev. W. Bevan moved—

“That this assembly would thoughtfully call to mind the will of the Lord Jesus, that His Church should be one, so solemnly expressed in His intercessory prayer for His flock; and the tendency of the true Christian spirit to unite believers in love, notwithstanding differences in sentiment or practice on subordinate points. The meeting would be humbled and afflicted before God, that so little of this fraternal and uniting spirit is at the present time apparent among even real Christians, but that, on the contrary, bitterness, alienation, and strife, have been greatly increased by recent controversies and changes. Yet this meeting would express the conviction that more of the true Christian spirit exists than appears, and great pleasure that the subject of union among evangelical Protestants has been of late publicly discussed;_and the meeting would recommend this deeply-interesting subject to the consideration and prayers of all the churches and pastors of this Union, affectionately advising them to promote, with the utmost cordiality and vigour, any practicable proposal for harmonising and uniting movements among Protestant evangelical Christians of all denominations.”

In support of this resolution, Mr Janies made a speech of some length, of which the following extract contains the most important passage:—

“In the first place, I would state that the project which has been laid by myself before the public through the medium of the secretaries of the union, is not my own. My esteemed friend, Mr Fletcher, had the thought in his mind before it came to me. I take no credit to myself, either for desiring union, or for sagacity in discerning the best means to promote it. Should it be, however, through my humble instrumentality any progress should be made towards an object, the consummation of which we all so devoutly wish, I shall be thankful to God, and I am quite sure my brethren around me will be equally thankful. It does occur to me as somewhat striking that our body, which has been represented, reviled, and held up to public obloquy as the most schismatical of schismatics, should be the first publicly to hold forth the olive-branch of peace, and to stretch out to the whole Christian world the hand of fraternisation; and it is somewhat striking too, that from the very meeting at which we are assembled primarily for the promotion of our own distinctive and denominational principles, there should go forth a scheme for a general union of Protestant bodies of Christians. Here is a plain demonstration, not merely to ourselves, we do not need it, but to the world, that Independency does not necessarily contain in it the germ of all that is discordant and dissevering, that it does not separate us from the whole body of Christians, and draw us into our particular section of the Church, there to work by ourselves, and against all others. So that it appears to me, that if anything practicable could be adopted by this meeting, it would have a blessed effect even as regards the character of the denomination to which we belong. Now, sir, in the drawing up of the scheme which has been referred to, I was guided by one or two principles. First, there must be no compromise. We cannot for the sake of union and peace sacrifice truth. The basis, whatever it be, on which we unite, must be strictly evangelical. No union of Protestants can be founded on any other basis.

“In the next place, it struck me, that if we aimed at anything, it must be, not what we desired, but what we are most likely to secure, and that by attempting too much we should fail in everything. I agree with my friend Dr Fletcher, that at present we can hope for nothing but a demonstration of union, which in fact does already exist, though it is not sufficiently apparent. I want union to come up from beneath that load (shall I call it?) of prejudice, or ignorance, or whatever it be that keeps us from each other; I want the world to see

that there is a tie which binds us together. I go further than Mr Massie. It is not enough that there should be simultaneous prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church and upon the world. We want something that the world should be able to take up, and to look at, something which should induce it to exclaim, 'See how these Christians love one another!' This can only be secured, I think, in some such manner as that which I have proposed. What it may lead to, it is impossible at this present moment to conjecture. Let us first acknowledge each other as brethren, then let us act together as brethren; but till the acknowledgment be made that we are one in all the fundamentals of Christianity, we shall not be prepared to act together. Action must follow recognition. I go for no society. There have been Protestant unions of all kinds, which have done very little good, either to Protestantism, or that which is of still greater consequence, to evangelical religion. Therefore I go for no subscription, no society, but simply for a demonstration. That, I suppose, we are all prepared to make, and I am quite sure that the effect of making it would be exceedingly beneficial. Perhaps it would be interesting to all present to know what have been the impressions which that letter has produced, and what the feelings which it has called forth. First, let me speak of Ireland. I received a letter from a minister connected with the Synod of Ulster, hailing the scheme with delight, and saying in effect, 'We are prepared in the Synod of Ulster to uphold the scheme, and go with you.' In Belfast there is a newspaper published called *The Banner of Ulster*. In that paper the scheme was published at full length, and it was accompanied by a long and able comment from the pen of our brother, Mr Godkin. He has also addressed a letter to the *Congregational Magazine*, suggesting a plan of union. In addition to that a letter has been addressed to myself personally by another esteemed member of the Synod of Ulster, also hailing the scheme. This morning, since I have been in this room, I have received a letter from another gentleman in that country, expressive of similar sentiments. This shews the state of mind, at least of the Presbyterian body, in Ireland in relation to this question. From Scotland I have received a letter from a member of the Secession Church, hailing the scheme; and the writer expresses his conviction that that body would gladly join any movement for the demonstration of opinion. From Wales I have received a letter from a gentleman connected with the Calvinistic Methodists, urging me to go down to the meeting of their Association, and assuring me that that body would co-operate in the proposed union. I have also received many letters from members of my own denomination, approving the scheme. Now, sir, I have nothing farther to say upon the subject. The scheme is in the letter;

it is simple, as it strikes me, practicable, and I am sure if it could be accomplished the most blessed effects would result from it. The movement must originate somewhere. Shall it not originate with the body among whom the thought was first cherished? Somebody must begin in every good work. I would recommend that our friends the secretaries should correspond with other religious bodies upon the subject, that we may not appear to claim all the merits of the proposal for ourselves. Might there not be a conference of the representatives of different religious bodies in London for the purpose of forwarding the object? My proposal does not extend merely to the mind of individuals, but to the mind of bodies; and my first object would be to induce public bodies to declare their adhesion to the scheme. I do not, of course, expect that the Church of England as a body, whatever may be the feelings of many of its members, will look with a friendly eye upon the movement; but with the exception of the Church of England, I think nearly all the great bodies of Christians will heartily co-operate. I really believe that the Methodist Societies will be induced to come into the scheme. In a conversation which I had not long since with an excellent Methodist brother, he expressed his regret that the scheme had not been proposed earlier, in order that it might have been brought before the meeting of Conference. Under all the circumstances I think the scheme is accomplished, and if carried to a conclusion, I feel certain that it will be beneficial, not only to us as a denomination, but to the whole of the Protestant body, preparing it for that which its prospects and hopes require."

He subsequently moved,—

"That in order to carry the foregoing resolution into effect, this meeting urgently recommends the Committee of the Union without delay to correspond with various religious bodies and churches in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, in order to ascertain their views of the desirableness and practicability of obtaining a general, united manifestation of attachment to the general principles of Protestantism."

To return to the Autobiography.

On the first day of the year 1843, Dr Leifchild convened a meeting for Christian union in Craven Chapel, at which four addresses were delivered, and prayer presented, by ministers of various denominations. This meeting was characterised by the most cordial feelings of the true brotherhood of Christ, and it was evident that the subject of union had taken hold of many Christian hearts.

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graphical.

Hitherto, the subject of my proposal had continued in the hands of the secretaries of the Congregational Union. Early in the year 1843, they called a meeting of Christians of various denominations in the Centenary Hall of the Wesleyan Body, where they formally resigned the subject to a committee then appointed, which, in furtherance of its commission, convened a public meeting in Exeter Hall, in June following. Never before, or since, was such an assemblage convened in that building. Befusing to take the responsibility of soliciting or denying applications, tickets were granted to all who requested them, and eleven thousand were distributed. The crowd was so great that people's clothes were in many cases torn from their backs. On this occasion, the speakers were—Drs Alder (Wesleyan), Cox (Baptist), Harris (Independent), Messrs James (Independent), Hamilton (Presbyterian), Noel (Episcopalian), Isaac Taylor (Episcopalian). This was a great meeting, but, after all, it was not a business meeting. "It stood forth," says Dr King, "as a mighty fact, a majestic rock, but equally isolated as imposing, and forming no part of a mountain chain." Resolutions, approving of Christian union, were passed, but no organism was formed, no plan for further action submitted. Here it seemed as if the scheme would stop with this magnificent demonstration of Christian recognition. Just about this time, a meeting was held in Edinburgh, on July 1843, to celebrate the bicentenary of the Westminster Assembly.

Editorial. In reference to this meeting, Dr King writes,*—

"The immediate object of the commemoration was calculated to associate only Presbyterians. It was attended, however, by evangelical Christians of various denominations, who were attracted to it by a natural curiosity to witness the large though sectional demonstration; or who, differing from the Westminster divines on subordinate points, agreed with them in essential doctrines, and venerating their memory, were desirous to give honour to whom honour was due. Happily nothing occurred to wound the feelings of such parties—to incense the members of any Christian communion. A delightful harmony characterised all the meetings. Becoming sentiments of respect were expressed for Puritans of the seventeenth century not Presbyterians, as

* In his letter to the Editor.

well as for Congregationalist churches of our own day. Even the eulogies which were passed on Presbyterian church-government were temperate, breathing a candid catholic spirit, and tending to heal rather than aggravate divisions. The animus manifested has evident and important relations to union; and how pleasing to mark such an improved temper in our times, to note the unmistakable progress of Christian charity.

“The late Professor Balmer was one of the speakers at the bicentenary meeting. He had not been engaged to deliver any address, but being present, was urged and induced to make some observations. The topics belonging to the occasion were not new to him; all questions bearing on spiritual and ecclesiastical concord he had long and earnestly pondered, and he delighted his audience with valuable thoughts from the rich stores of his reading and reflection, clothed in graceful though extemporaneous language, and breathing enlightened benevolence with ardent piety.

“Dr Balmer, no doubt, regarded this incidental service as unimportant, and anticipated from it no great results. But ministers never know when the seed sown shall produce fruit, nor where the harvest shall be most abundant. The esteemed Professor was listened to with much interest by the audience generally. Some expository remarks which he made on Phil. iii. 15, 16, particularly impressed one of his hearers, John Henderson, Esq. of Park, as presenting the duty and benefits of Christian union in a most striking and persuasive light. Yet it was not the exposition, but the passage expounded which produced the effect; and however eloquent any appeals may be they are not likely to be greatly useful further than they are scriptural, and the just account of their success is, that ‘the word of the Lord has free course, and is glorified.’ To the impression so made on Mr Henderson’s mind the Alliance dates its origin. He not only proceeded at once to take steps for the promotion of union, which resulted in the Alliance, but he has tendered to the cause ever since the aid of his felicitous discretion, practical efficiency, and munificent generosity, without which the most sagacious plans and the most fervent oratory might have perished with their utterance. It gratifies me that I have cause to speak of Mr Henderson in a contribution regarding Mr James, because they were most attached friends and fellow-workers; and nothing drew out more their friendship and fellowship than the joint promotion of the visible and cordial unity of the Church.

“Mr Henderson purposed, in the first instance, to offer a prize for the best essay on Christian union, having the passage in Philippians for its text or motto. The time requisite, however, for writing and afterwards examining the competing essays must have occasioned undesir-

able delay. A single successful essayist abo, with whatever ability he might write, could not alone exemplify the union which he inculcated. I suggested to Mr Henderson that he might apply to ministers of different denominations to produce the desired publication jointly. By executing this work in concert they would so far carry into effect what they proposed, and would happily exemplify the union of which they expounded the nature and obligations. This suggestion was adopted. In 1845 were published in one volume, 'The Essays on Christian Union,' by eight authors, of whom only two survive—the rest, with the publisher, are fallen asleep. Dr Chalmers, when solicited to furnish one of the essays, said to me, 'This is a praiseworthy scheme; Mr Henderson is highly to be commended for his generous endeavours to promote harmony among us. At the same time, the question as respects your particular denomination and ours should not be one of *co-operation* but of *incorporation*. There is sin in our separation,—I say there is sin in our separation. I cannot suppose Paul to be here and to approve of our disseverance. The differences between us are so many straws, and I would consider it an honour' (emphatically suiting his action to the sentiment) 'to gather them up and cast them into the fire.'

"Mr James of Birmingham was among the first mentioned as one of the most desirable writers to be secured for the contemplated publication. His name was a household word throughout Christian society. It had become thus widely known and beloved by his excellent treatises, all teaching the doctrine and imbued with the spirit of 'the common salvation.' What he wrote he *lived*. In all his personal bearing and social intercourse he magnified his office,—reflecting its greatness and its goodness in his deportment, loving all who loved his Master, beaming benevolence around him, and amid all incitements to contention striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Such a man, wherever he walks, treads down bigotry and intolerance. His simple presence in society is an antidote to its feuds. He cheers good wherever he finds it, making all philanthropists feel that he is one of them; and no party spirit in a rival sect can be so extreme as not to look with deference on such a minister and on the ecclesiastical association honoured with such ministers.

"Besides, Mr James had taken active measures to advance the peace of Jerusalem. He had originated a proposal for a Union of Evangelical Protestants, to advance Protestant objects, as well as for mutual recognition. He had submitted his scheme to his brethren at the metropolitan meeting of the Congregational Union in 1842, and also published a letter in the *Congregational Magazine*, which was afterwards sent in the form of a circular to leading ministers of various evangelical denominations. These are a sample of Mr James's active efforts to

promote union; and I might easily shew, if space permitted, that though they had not caused any formal and permanent organisation to be framed, they were yet greatly influential, and led to numerous and valuable results.

“His well-known modesty induced a conviction that if he were asked in writing to prepare an essay he would very probably decline; and having once committed himself to refusal, might be less easily persuaded to comply. By the advice of Mr Henderson, I therefore went south to urge on him this service, and to deliberate with him on the general subject in all its phases. Long he pleaded excuse and withstood entreaty, naming dozens of ministers whom he pronounced more competent than himself for the duty in question. At last, however, he yielded to importunity and gave his consent. His essay is admirable in itself, and proved more important than any of the rest in respect to its issues. There was appended to it a proposition transmitted by the Rev. Dr Patton of New York, ‘to call a convention of delegates from all evangelical churches to meet in London for the purpose of setting forth the great essential truths in which they were agreed.’

“Mr Henderson was very solicitous that this idea should not fall to the ground, the more so that it met with extensive favour and elicited many expressions of desire to see it carried into effect. But how was it to be realised? How was it to receive shape and be set in motion? ‘Who was to be the world’s convener,’ I have said elsewhere, ‘and take upon himself the consequences and responsibilities of associating in this cause the ends of the earth? The object shone before the friends of union like the sun and moon: but like these great lights, it appeared from want of a pathway to be lamentably inaccessible.’”*

“This volume,” writes Mr James in his *Autobiography*, “of course, kept the subject before the public mind. Scotland was much moved by it, and the Congregational Union, at its autumnal meeting at Leeds in October 1843, passed resolutions,† moved by

* *Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Alliance*, p. 13.

† “1. That the meeting recognises with great joy, in the meeting for Christian Union held in Exeter Hall, on the first of June last, and in those held in Edinburgh in July last, for celebrating the Bicentenary of the Meeting of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, as now reported, renewed proofs of the essential unity of the evangelical churches of the Protestant Reformation; as well as of an evidently growing disposition among the various denominations to cultivate the harmony and co-operation so urgently required for maintaining the great Protestant cause in these remarkable times.

“2. That this meeting hopes to see the cause, thus auspiciously commenced, carried forward on a wider range, and to more practical results; and the meeting

me, still more warmly approving the principles of Christian union, and expressing a desire for a representative meeting of delegates from all parts of the world.”

The difficulty, however, as Dr King’s letter has stated, was to determine by whom the great convention should be called. Dr King proceeds to say,—

“In pondering the subject, I came to the conclusion that a preliminary conference on a smaller scale was indispensable, and that a smaller meeting must prepare for the greater. This impression I communicated to Mr James. He agreed with it; but represented that the state of parties in England did not allow them to take the initiative, and therefore the first move must be made in Scotland. I then suggested that the invitation might issue from Scotland, but be addressed to brethren in England, and might point to some English provincial town as the place of rendezvous. After much and varied consultation, in which distinguished men of various religious bodies in Scotland took an earnest part, this plan was adopted, and Liverpool was selected as the scene of our assembling. Having proposed the letter of invitation, I was appointed to write it; and after it had obtained the sanction of Scottish friends and of Mr James and others in England, it was published with a goodly list of signatures, and distributed generally over the kingdom.

“Scarcely had this manifesto appeared when serious difficulties arose and many objections were started. Not a few hinted that obstructions were insurmountable, and that the enterprise must be abandoned. Some on their way to Liverpool stopped short in the journey, and returned home. On the very eve of the meeting in the Music Hall all was uncertainty and speculation as to the number who would attend, the course they would adopt, and the temper and effect of their deliberations. Anticipations inclined mostly to the side of terror. I remember well how apprehensive Mr James was, and with what tremulous emotion he depicted the danger of widening the breaches we were seeking to close. Fears fled before facts. The conference began with cordial salutations, and ended with exulting joy. And no one who was there can forget the manifested delight of such men as Mr James,

feels a full persuasion that the churches and pastors of the Congregational Union of England and Wales will be prepared to sustain and assist in a general convention of delegates from evangelical churches in various parts of the world, for united counsel and action in defence of the essential truths and principles common to them all, whenever Providence may prepare the way for so important a movement, or in any other less extended movements of a similar character and design.”

over the attainment of long-cherished aspirations,—friend hailing friend in evangelical jubilee, and proving in its richest terrestrial fruition the luxury of love!”

Mr James’s own remembrances of the Liverpool Conference were not less happy. He says:—

Never had there been such a meeting in the history of Christianity. For the first time since the Church had been divided into sects, did these sects agree to rise above, without abandoning, their peculiarities, and recognise each other by the one original name of the disciples of the Saviour, and merge all designations in that of *Christian*. Two hundred ministers and laymen came together from all parts of England, and Scotland, and Ireland, and some from the mountains of Wales. We knew not what we were to do, but we went with the desire of union in our hearts. I recollect that in the railway carriage in which I travelled to Liverpool were five other brethren, who, with myself, started the question, “What are we going to do?” None of us could answer the inquiry. Perhaps to wrangle over our Shibboleths and Sibboleths, and place ourselves wider apart by the very attempt to come together. Perhaps to demonstrate that God is able to do above all we can ask, or even think. As we met, the first thing was to pray. As the acknowledged originator and proposer of the scheme of union in England, I was most unexpectedly called to occupy the chair, and preside over the meeting. I endeavoured, but in vain, to excuse myself, as I was totally unprepared with any address. I opened the meeting with a few sentences to the following effect:—

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“BELOVED AND HONOURED BRETHREN,—Called most unexpectedly to myself to occupy a situation of which I am utterly unworthy, and to which I am no less unequal, I cast myself upon your candour to bear with my feebleness in the discharge of its sacred and momentous duties. It is impossible for me to forget the responsibilities I have incurred in consenting to take the chair on this occasion. In every chorus of human voices, the harmony depends upon the key-note being rightly struck; that note I am now appointed to give—and it is LOVE. The concord of the meetings which we have in prospect, and of which this is the introductory one, can be maintained only by remembering the

apostolic injunction, 'forbearing one another in love.' Composed as the meeting is of brethren of so many branches of the Christian Church, and therefore differing from each other in so many minor points, and assembled to consider how far it is practicable to devise any scheme of union that shall comprehend us all, we shall do right in first approaching together the throne of Him who is light and love to invoke in prayer His own blessed Spirit upon us. Union in prayer prepares for union in everything else that is holy and good, and we never approach so near to each other as when we draw near together to the common centre of our union. A new scene in the history of the Christian Church now presents itself to us; may we have grace so to conduct ourselves in passing through it as to raise the ancient admiration from those who shall hear of our proceedings: 'See how these Christians love one another!'"

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These few brief remarks, through God's grace, had their appropriate effect. Fears sunk, hopes rose before the magic power of that one word "*Love*." We felt as if we *were* one, and as if we were now prepared to shew our oneness to the world. The subsequent meetings were of the most thrilling and of the most intense interest. It seemed as if the reign of truth, love, and peace were really begun. We seemed reminded of the day of Pentecost, for though we saw no tongues of fire on each other's heads, our countenances were irradiated with a smile that looked like a reflection of the light of God's own countenance. What strains of fervent charity flowed from every lip that spake, and were meant by those that sat in silence. All hearts were fused by a celestial fire into a commingled stream of holy love. There was no artificial rhetoric; all that was said was the eloquence of sacred feeling. There was one scene which those who witnessed it can never forget, no, not in heaven. The difficult and delicate question came up, "On what basis of doctrine shall we found our union?" Just think of nearly twenty different denominations asking such a question. We all felt a transient doubt, a momentary trepidation. We felt we had now reached what might prove a rock on which we should split. Is it possible, we asked, we can agree upon any basis? Can we draw up articles of union and peace without any compromise of individual opinion? The trial was made. A large sub-committee was appointed to sit and draw up

the creed and confession of the Alliance—a designation which, after much discussion, had been agreed upon for the association. They were to sit in the afternoon, and bring up their report in the evening. We met, we feared, we prayed. Difficulties were found in the way of satisfying all parties. Doctrines were first to be decided upon,—what, how many, or how few; their terminology, or the very words in which these doctrines should be expressed. We saw the time going on, and we could not produce on all points consentaneousness of opinion. Anxious fears took possession of many hearts. We had come within a quarter of an hour of the time when we were to meet the general committee, and we were not yet agreed. The time had expired, and the larger body were in convocation waiting anxiously for our report, Silent prayers from every heart went up doubtless to God for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Within the next quarter of an hour these prayers were answered—the coveted harmony of minds was produced—all agreed—all was satisfied, and the doctrinal basis was adopted, which was to be presented to the general body. A feeling of wonder, love, and gratitude filled every heart. They returned to the general body, which was anxiously waiting, and somewhat fearing. An awful silence pervaded the assembly while the report of the sub-committee was read. It was declared that the sub-committee had been unanimous in their judgment of the articles and expressions then submitted. Still the basis had to pass the ordeal of examination and adoption by the whole assembly. Discussion commenced, but did not last long. There was no disposition to captiousness. There were no hair-splitting divines whom no terminology could satisfy but that which is supplied from their own theology. Autobiographical.

The question that the report brought up by the sub-committee should be adopted as the basis of the Alliance, was carried unanimously. A burst of rapturous feeling followed which it is impossible to describe. Some clapped their hands, some shouted, some burst into tears, all seemed enraptured. Why this gush of emotion? It had been predicted that men of nearly twenty denominations could never agree on a doctrinal basis; it was impossible;

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they could meet only to quarrel. This prophecy was now falsified. It was an accomplished fact now that they could agree, that union without compromise was not only a possibility, but a reality.

Thus, with some other meetings and matters, terminated the meeting at Liverpool, at which the Alliance was formed. We returned to our homes, exclaiming, "What has God wrought!" Other meetings were subsequently held in Birmingham in 1846, and subsequently in Manchester, and other places, when, at length, it was proposed to hold a great assembly in London, at which delegates should be present from all parts of the world favourable to the cause. For hitherto it had been rather an English Alliance than a general one of the Christian world. A correspondence had been opened with the brethren in the United States, who approved of the scheme, and promised to attend a general meeting in London. This was accordingly held in London, in August 1846, in Freemasons' Hall. Never had there been such an assembly convened before.

"There," says Dr Massie, in his History of the Alliance, "were the associations of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of the continent of Europe, of cities and countries most distinguished in history, and honoured for their ecclesiastical annals in their religious celebrity, The mountains of Switzerland, the valleys of France, the plains of Germany, sent forth their choicest heralds; Nismes, Lyons, Montauban, Paris, Berlin, Frankfort, Basle, Geneva, Lausanne, Halle, Erfurt, Wurtemberg, and Leipzig, were represented by their honoured sons and faithful leaders. The Rhine and the Elbe, the Danube, the Saone, and the Seine, poured in as tributaries, with the Hudson and the St Lawrence, the Ohio and Mississippi, with African and Asiatic streams, to swell the confluent well of consecrated affection and wisdom. From these, and other localities far apart and secluded, did the thousand members of the Conference travel; some of them five thousand miles, and many of them through difficulties, and dangers, and privations calculated to try the constancy of love and the strength of faith. There, in that conference, were the Tholucks and the Monods, the Buxtons and the Bairds, the Buntings and the Beaumonts, the Buchanans and

the Cunninghams, the Noels and the Bickersteths, the Cummings and the M'Leods, the leaders and heads of the people, whether of their tribes or of their hundreds, and all seemed united in fervent and devout expectation that God would bless them, and make them a blessing, and that from this day forth He would bless the whole house of Israel. At that conference the meetings were surpassingly interesting. In different rooms the praises of God were sung in English, German, and French, and tended to remind us of the day of Pentecost, when every one heard in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. The harmony, however, was a little disturbed by the difficulties which arose with our American brethren on the subject of slavery—difficulties which were never finally overcome, and which proved fatal to the cause of the Alliance in the United States. The plan of a general alliance was then adopted, on the basis agreed to at Liverpool.

Such was the commencement of the Evangelical Alliance, and these were its palmy days. What might not have been looked for from such a beginning? Alas, alas! that the fond hopes and bright visions thus raised, should be doomed to disappointment! Its first days were its best. It seems to have come too soon. The Christian Church was not prepared for it. Sectarianism on the one side, and ecclesiastical bigotry on the other, were, and still are, too rife for its extensive success. Its seed, like that of the kingdom, fell among thorns—the thorns of religious controversy. It found favour neither with Churchmen nor Dissenters, and from that time to the present has been continually losing ground. It committed two faults at first. It aimed to take the public mind by a coup de mam, instead of by more progressive steps. It began with a blaze instead of a spark. Had a few like-minded men first met, and consulted, and prayed, and worked together quietly and secretly, trusting to God and the goodness of their cause, and commending it to others by its operations and its fruits, it would, perhaps, have succeeded better. Too much publicity was given to it at once. The plant should have been nurtured in the shade, before it was exposed to the full blaze and ardour of the noontide sun of publicity. Then it was far too expensive in

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graphical. its procedure. It was reckless of expense in the way of printing and other matters. And it began on too refined a principle of action. The cry was, "We do not want to become a *society*. We unite for union's sake." This was too ethereal, too sublimated. It was called a Do-nothing Society. Before its formation, while the correspondence was going on with Scotland, I entreated our friends there to take up the continent of Europe as its object,—to seek the diffusion of evangelical principles, both among Papists and nationalists there. I brought forward the same proposal after it was formed—but it was disregarded. At length, however, in one way or other, the continent is its chief object, especially in its attempts to gain for it the precious boon of religious liberty.

Editorial. This chapter cannot be better closed than with the following sentences from Dr King's letter:—

"Mr James's interest in the alliance was consistently sustained. He rejoiced to attend its meetings as long as he was able; and effectually contributed, by his advice in private and his eloquence in public, to its permanence and prosperity.

"And now he is gone—gone, and yet not gone—dead, yet speaking. He lives, and will live in his influence. As it has extended from land to land, so will it from age to age; and children's children will respond to his exhortations in deeds of beneficence and songs of salvation. May he live in our zealous imitation, as well as loving remembrance of his excellences; and following him in faith and patience to the inheritance of the promises, may we meet at last where Christian union is perfected, and all distinctions are merged in a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing!"

LETTERS ON THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

"EDGBASTON, *June 27, 1843.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER PATTON,—In your letter of 28th March you say I am in your debt at least two letters; surely this must be a mistake. I am confident that I have written to you, whether my epistle has reached you or not. Your piece of music has come to hand, but I have not yet heard it played, and therefore cannot give any opinion of its merit. Anything that can meet, rebuke, and bring into ridicule or contempt the arrogance of Prelacy is entitled to public

countenance, provided it be a legitimate mode of warfare, and there is nothing unlawful in music, and therefore I am very willing to tune and to turn all the pianofortes in existence against this proud and domineering spirit. I am not at all surprised at the alarm, or at any rate anxiety, which the present efforts of Romanism and Puseyism are making in your country. It is not only Protestantism but Republicanism that is threatened by these twin systems of mischief. I do not think your constitution would or could remain unchanged if Popery or Prelacy in any form were to gain the ascendancy. The genius of a democracy does not suit the priestly domination of Rome or Oxford; and all your senators ought to be alive to this, and all your people too. Still it is not by the Orange mobs of Philadelphia that Popery can be arrested. Such outrageous violence as was manifested in that city rather helps than hinders the cause of the 'man of sin,' by turning public sympathy towards the cause. Your proposal of a Protestant convention came to hand just at the right time. You are aware of the movements that have been made in this country for bringing about a visible union among all evangelical Protestants, which originated in a paper I published in our *Congregational Magazine*. The subject has been taken up in Scotland by the different bodies, or rather I should say by a few of the ministers of the different bodies—Drs Chalmers, Candlish, Wardlaw, and some others, who, at the suggestion and expense of a wealthy individual, are about to publish a volume of essays, each taking a branch of the subject, and sending it out in his own name. I have written one of the essays, and shall print a long extract of your letter in the form of an appended note to my piece; thus I shall make your proposal known through the length and breadth of the United Kingdoms, and bring it for consideration fully and fairly before the public. The subject is not quite new; one of our most able and influential ministers and myself have talked it over, and, indeed, I think he regretted that we had not tried the scheme rather than the meeting we held at Exeter Hall. It would entail so much expense, time, and labour, that it becomes us to inquire well and calmly into the probable results, and consider whether these would afford an adequate compensation.

"It cannot be questioned that Popery and Puseyism are advancing in all parts of the world. Systems that we thought had grown old and effete, are renewing their youth; controversies that we supposed had been settled, are reviving with all the fierceness of polemical war; and elements of mischief which we imagined were extinct have burst into a flame, and are threatening a conflagration. We need not be panic-stricken, but we ought to be serious and on the alert. The absurdities that are coming forth from the Puseyite writers are astounding; and we are ready to ask, Is this really Britain in the nineteenth century of

the Christian era? There is a singular conflict of events; the disruption of the Scotch Church presents a singular contrast in the north with the state of things in the south. But God reigneth.

“Our body has been made a little anxious by the rising up in some quarters of a tendency to what is known I believe with you by the designation of self-conversionism. I think Finney’s books have done a little harm in this country, and I regret I ever gave a recommendation to his lectures, though what I wrote was as much in the strain of caution as of commendation. The sentiment here that has given uneasiness is a virtual denial of the Spirit’s work in conversion. The Spirit is in the mind, not *with* it. God brings the sinner under the power of the word, and then the truth converts him; and there is no other influence exerted by the Spirit upon the mind of the converted man than upon that of the unconverted one. Dr Wardlaw and the Committee of the Scotch Congregational College expelled eleven students lately for this heresy. America gets the blame of this, and by participation we. I who have recommended American theology come in for a share. I do not think it has spread very widely here, but it is usually connected with revivalism, which makes it seductive and mischievous.

“I wish much to be informed about a Mr Elihu Burritt of Worcester, near Boston, your wonderful blacksmith, whose learning is prodigious. I received from him the most extraordinary letter I almost ever read, both in thought and diction. I have sent it to one of our periodicals, and the perusal of it has excited great astonishment in many minds. Please to tell me all about him. I know he is learned, and can read fifty languages; but is he esteemed among you? and what is he doing in the way of serving God and man? I know also he is an Abolitionist, for his letter is chiefly on slavery. I have lately seen an interesting American, who is the master of your Deaf and Dumb Asylum, brother of Theodore Weld, one of your most vigorous writers. And we have had also in Birmingham, and are to have here again, a Mr Lord, nephew of the President of Dartmouth College, lecturing on the Middle Ages—a cleverish man, but though a minister, much more adapted for a lecturer than a preacher. Do you know him? He is, I think, from Boston—a very *liberal* and *philosophical* man, but upon the whole, sound. Your friend from Canada, I think it was, by whom you *intended* to send the numbers of the *Biblical Repository*, left them behind. So I am still wanting them. Did I tell you how it was the ‘Congregational Lectures’ came to you opened and cut? I sent them by Mr Lewis Tappan, who said he should like to read them. I will send you Dr Bedford’s, and also the new forthcoming series by Dr Halley, when an opportunity presents itself. Baird’s book on America is very well

written, and is very well received in this country. And now may our common Lord bless you and yours. Remember me to your son. I am glad he is likely to make a useful minister of Jesus Christ."

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

"EDGBASTON, *January 27, 1844.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,— I send you herewith the last volume of 'Congregational Lectures,' which you will find an able, scholarlike, and theological discussion of the interminably controverted subject of baptism, by Dr Halley of Manchester. I believe there is one volume yet wanting in your set—you told me what it was in one of your letters, and if I do not forget, it was Dr Redford's, but I will wait for a confirmation of my recollection before I send it off. I now allude to another volume which accompanies this, in which you will feel, and have a right to feel, a still deeper interest,—I mean a volume of *Essays on Christian Union*, of which I have already given you previous notice. The work is attracting attention in this country and Scotland, and will make its subject matter of reflection and discussion. Chalmers and Candlish, the two great leaders in the Disruption of the Scottish Establishment, have not, in their share of the volume, done justice either to their subject or themselves. But your eye and heart will be on *your own* part of the volume. I am happy to say the idea is attracting attention, as you will see by the extract from the *Free Church Magazine* which I send. I have within a day or two received a letter from Dr King of Glasgow, the author of one of the *Essays*, and the manager of the whole affair, who speaks with great delight of the proposal, and is most anxious to know what steps can be taken to carry out the project. All idea of a meeting in the present year must be abandoned. So grand a scheme cannot be precipitated. Men must look at it much, and often—must ponder it deeply, and talk of it with one another, and see their way clearly before they will move. It must be deposited like leaven in the public mind, and be allowed time to ferment and permeate the mass. Hasty attempts to accomplish such a pihn will be sure to be abortive. I hope it will be taken up by the periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic, and become matter of conversation in the private circles of our ministers. Whenever it shall assume a practical shape and bearing, great care must be taken in selecting the basis of union. It must be wide enough to embrace all *evangelical* Protestants. Popery in all its shapes and modifications must be the object of our antagonism—not *Prelacy*. If we take up the latter, we cannot carry Episcopalians with us. Not, indeed, that I expect any disposition on their part, or at least the bulk of them, to confederate. Nor will Protestantism alone, unassociated

with evangelical sentiments, do; this is too broad, as it will include the Socinians of America and England, and the Bationalists of Germany. It is true, genuine, primitive Protestantism would exclude them, but not *modern* Protestantism. I think the *basis* more easily defined than the *object*. I feel at a loss for something practical. A convention that shall be only declaratory is hardly sufficient; we want something organised—permanent—aggressive, and yet I know not what. Let us ponder and pray. The 'Father of Lights' may dart a ray of His own wisdom into some mind, that shall illuminate us all. Could you not prepare some resolutions in your General Assembly on the subject? You and I are committed in a great measure to it. May God direct us! But oh, how oppressively do I feel my own insufficiency for this, and every other good and especially every great work! What should we do without that assurance, 'My grace is sufficient for thee!'

"I am afraid there is a season of stagnation both in America and England as regards revivals. It is a pretty general complaint here, that there are few conversions. It is especially so with myself. I seem to preach with no results. Few are awakened, and believers, I am afraid, lukewarm and worldly. What is it that hinders the progress of the work? I believe nothing is a greater obstacle both with you and with us than *politics*. What a snare are these to men's souls; how they engross the mind and *keep* out religion where it has never entered, and *drive* it out where it has gained a footing!

"The Puseyite heresy is keeping our Establishment in the flames of contention. The *surplice* controversy is raging furiously! Alas, alas! to see a Church divided, and a nation convulsed about such a trifle, as whether a man shall preach in white linen or black silk! What little matters will men quarrel about when they leave the great things of God's truth! It is difficult even to conjecture what the end of the schism will be in the Anglican Church; and yet I am sorry to say our unestablished denominations are not in a high state of prosperity. The opposition to Dissenters is more fierce than ever. This is sure, of course, to be the consequence of the spread of Tractarianism. Such an overwhelming opposition of property, and rank, and influence is brought to bear against us, that in small towns and villages, the cause of Nonconformity is almost crushed in many cases. Then we are not agreed among ourselves. Many of us are opposed to a confederation, half religious, and half political, entitled 'The Anti-Church and State Conference.' This has had its influence in originating a new periodical, in which moderation is to be arrayed against ultraism. Oh, how much there is to make us long for that world,

“Where joy, like heavenly dew distils,
And all the air is love! ‘

“When are you coming over again? For, if we meet, it must be in, England, as I shall never visit America.

“My kindest regards to Mrs Patton and your family. The Lord bless you, and still make you a blessing.—Yours, as ever,

“J. A. JAMES.

“It has occurred to me since I wrote the foregoing, that a Protestant association, to promote the Protestant cause by the press, in the way of sending forth reprints of old standard works, and offering premiums for new ones, which should call forth all the talent of the Protestant world in America, Germany, France, and England, and procure translations into vernacular tongues, would be a grand object. Think what ten or twenty thousands a-year spent in this way might accomplish, together with the activity and energy which it would call forth. The Papists are seizing the press, and sending forth their ablest works. Let us do the same. The greatest difficulty in such a scheme would be where to fix the executive, and the selection of works; but turn this over in your mind. Do not put anything I have said in print, but start the subject yourself.”

CHAPTER III.

“MY DIPLOMAS OF DOCTOR OF DIVINITY.”

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I HAVE always had some doubt of the propriety of this academic honour, grounded on our Lord's injunction to His disciples not to be called Rabbi, which in conventional usage signified teacher or doctor. I am aware that the case of the apostles and that of modern ministers is not precisely parallel, nor perhaps are the reasons as forcible for the non-reception of this distinction by the latter as by the former. Still, the general ground of both is the same, which is, that no titles of distinction are to exist amongst the teachers of religion, since they suggest the idea of superiority, and foster pride and vanity. To what an exorbitant extent of mischief has this love of distinction by rank, office, and title, in the matters of religion, reached in Christendom! “If those rulers,” (Matt, xxiii. 8,) says Scott the commentator, “were proper for the apostles and primitive disciples, they must be still more suitable to the case of all other teachers and Christians; and it is evident they were given with a prophetic view to the enormous abuses and fatal effects that have since been witnessed in the Christian Church, from the ambition and lust of dominion in some, and the abject subjection of others to them.”

It is pleaded that the application of this term in modern times, means something essentially different from what it did in Jewish history. Among the Jews, it implied not merely eminence of

knowledge, but *authority* in teaching. The words of the Rabbis were accounted, by their infallibility, the word of God. And, therefore, our Lord forbade only the application of the term in that sense in which it was used and understood by the Pharisees and their pupils. The universal precept, founded on this local one, meant no more than that no teacher of religion was to be called by a designation, or honoured by a distinction which implies undue authority, or demands undue submission. This, I admit, has some force; but still, even the modern application of the word doctor, intends a pre-eminence which I think the spirit of our Lord’s prohibition forbids. Autobiographical.

I am quite aware that it is argued that these diplomas are to be regarded as mere academic and literary honours and distinctions, conferred as the reward of merit. This may be said of mere secular degrees, such as B.A., M.A., LL.B., or LL.D.—these are all simply literary; but it is not the same with D.D. This is in its true meaning a religious distinction, never conferred but upon a minister of religion, and intended to raise him in public estimation above his fellows. It does therefore appear to me to be in opposition to our Lord’s injunction to His disciples. I have ever felt this so powerfully, that, if on other accounts I were entitled to the degree, I could not accept it. More than thirty years ago I came to learn that some of my friends were wishing to obtain a diploma for me from the Glasgow University. As soon as I was acquainted with their intention, I immediately stopped it.

Several years after this, my friends in America moved the college of Princeton, New Jersey, to confer a D.D. upon me; which accordingly came. I locked it up in my drawers, and said nothing to anybody about it, and hoped that nobody would know it. However, it oozed out. The kindness of my Scotch friends, especially Mr Henderson and Dr King, applied to the University of Glasgow for a D.D. to be conferred upon me, and obtained it.

No sooner was this announced in the papers, than I wrote to say I did not mean to assume it. By this determination I inflicted some pain upon those generous individuals who had sought to honour me. I was much grieved at this, but could not consent to

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oblige them at the expense of principle. The next attempt to honour me in this way was made by Jefferson College, in the United States. From that institution, a diploma, entirely unsought, I believe, by any one, arrived. But none of these things moved me. I could not consent to wear the title. And, moreover, apart from this conscientious scruple, I never thought myself warranted on the ground of any superior learning or attainment to be thus called Babbi. True it is I have written books on religion, not a few, but they are all of a practical nature, and contain no profound theology, nor any new elucidation of holy Scripture. Perhaps I might lay claim to as much of this, and therefore as good a claim to the distinction as very many on whom it is conferred, and who now consent to wear it. This, however, is saying very little. As regards some who are now called Babbi, I wonder they do not blush at this iteration of their own distinction. May I but be considered as a faithful, earnest, and successful minister of the new covenant, and be accounted such by the Great Master, and I am quite content that my name shall stand, wherever it is recorded, without any academic affix!

Editorial.

An extract from an earlier passage of the autobiography will appear in a general review of Mr James's connexion with the Carr's Lane Church, in the chapter on his Jubilee; but at this point Mr James's recollections of his life, from which this volume derives its chief value, terminate.

CHAPTER IV.

CHINA.

IT is probable that Mr James's strong interest in Chinese missions originated in his college friendship with Morrison. For very many years China was never a day out of his thoughts; the vastness of its population fired his imagination as well as affected his heart; in his public and in his private devotions he was incessantly praying that China might be brought to Christ. He did not forget other regions of missionary enterprise; he had correspondents in the South Seas, in South Africa, and in India, but the evangelisation of China was his ruling passion.

In 1852 and 1853, intelligence reached this country of the most interesting and, startling character. The officers in one of her Majesty's ships reported that the Yang-tse-Kiang was covered with the wrecks of demolished idols; that Buddhas, twenty feet high, were floating outward to the ocean; that a great religious revolution had begun in China, which threatened the complete overthrow of idolatry. Missionaries sent home word that in one of the remote provinces there had appeared a powerful political party in open revolt against the government, and professing a new religious creed. It was said that the rebels proclaimed the unity of the Divine nature, and were furious iconoclasts; that they acknowledged the doctrine of the Trinity; that they received the Lord Jesus Christ as the universal Saviour; asserted the authority of the moral law as expressed in the Ten Commandments; insisted

on the necessity of penitently confessing sin; and taught the immortality of the soul. With these truths, however, they mingled many grievous and grotesque errors.

Hung-tseu-seuen, the leader of the new movement, had acquired some knowledge of the Christian doctrine from a tract called 'Good words to admonish the age,' written by Leang-a-fah, the first Protestant Chinese convert, who had been baptized by Dr Milne at Malacca, in 1816. In 1834, Leang-a-fah and three friends distributed ten thousand copies of this tract, among the young men assembled in Canton for the triennial examinations. This aroused the wrath of the mandarins, and ended in the flight of Leang-a-fah to Singapore, the severe punishment of one of his friends, and the death of another; but before the good work was stopped, one of the tracts had fallen into the hands of Hung-tseu-seuen, and issued in unexpected results. In 1837, this young man was seized with fever, and while his brain was on fire with disease, the new truths he had read in Leang-a-fah's tract were interwoven with wild and insane fancies; he imagined he was taken up into heaven; that he received wonderful revelations, and was intrusted with a commission to overturn the idolatry of his countrymen. After his recovery, he wrote and circulated several books propounding the principles of a corrupted Christianity, and he travelled about the province of Kwang-se, propagating his opinions, and preparing the way for revolution. In 1850 there was a change in the policy of the imperial government, in consequence of the accession of a new emperor; and it seemed a favourable time for rousing the popular discontent against the Tartar dynasty. Suddenly a great army of insurgents poured out from the mountainous district of Kwang-se, and instantly swept to destruction the troops which attempted to resist their progress. So general was the sympathy which the movement immediately commanded, that many persons anticipated the destruction of the Chinese government, and an entire change in the national religion.

The tidings produced great excitement in England. Mr James, while cherishing the hope that the revolution, if successful, would overthrow many of the obstacles to Chinese evangelisation, saw

that its success was still very doubtful. He prayed and hoped for the best, but trembled. While his mind was divided between hope and fear, he received a letter from his friend Thomas Thompson, Esq. of Poundsford Park, boldly proposing that an immediate appeal should be made to the Christian zeal of the Sunday schools of this country to send A million new testaments to china. As the New Testament could be printed for fourpence, the scheme would require between £16,000 and £17,000. To this letter he sent the following answer:—

TO THOMAS THOMPSON, ESQ.

“PARK, NEAR GLASGOW, *August 27, 1853.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter followed me to this place, where I am spending a week with my friend, the wealthy and benevolent John Henderson.

“Your proposal is a noble and vast conception. It would be a gross and guilty neglect on the part of the Christian Church to suffer the revolution in China to occur without some attempt to turn it to the advantage of that cause which all events are intended to subserve. It is the greatest providential movement of modern times, and is pregnant with results of a most momentous character. Still it is yet only partially developed—it is *in transitu*, and how it may determine it is impossible to say. Should the insurgents be ultimately defeated, and the rebellion crushed, there will in all human probability be, for the present, insurmountable obstacles thrown in the way of propagating Christianity, inasmuch as it will be identified with the insurgent cause, and be proclaimed as treason to the throne and to the empire. The balance is yet trembling, and on what side it will preponderate waits to be seen.

“Under these circumstances, I am inclined to think we had better wait for future developments. For should the progress of the revolution be arrested and its present work unravelled, any labour we might take in the way suggested in your letter would be wasted energy. Should Pekin be taken, the success of the movement would most likely be complete, and we might go forward without hesitation. A very short time will decide this.

“In the event of such an occurrence, it becomes a question in what way the appeal should be made, and to whom. *You* say the Sunday schools might be called upon to take up the work. But why these? Would it not be better to appeal for joint action to the whole Christian Church both in America and these United Kingdoms? Would it not

be a beautiful spectacle of Christian union to see the followers of the Redeemer throughout the world associating for the conversion of China? Recollect it is a pure biblical effort, like that of the Bible Society, requiring no sacrifice of opinion from any, and admitting without compromise the aims of all. The Bible Society might be applied to for a contribution, and it would doubtless grant one. Yea, I am not quite sure whether it would not be desirable to make that institution, representing, as it does, the Catholic Church, the central agency for carrying out the scheme.

“The cost of carrying out the scheme would be about £17,000. Surely this is not too much for the whole body of the faithful to raise for such an object.

“I submit these things for your consideration, and shall be happy to hear from you again. I feel quite prepared to follow up your suggestion in any way which upon mature deliberation may be thought best. I intend to return home next week, so that a letter may be addressed to me at my own place of residence.

“I beg my Christian respects to Mrs Thompson.—Yours very truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

Mr Thompson, who had been all his life an energetic friend of Sunday schools, clung to the idea of letting the million Testaments be the gift of the Christian children of England. But Mr James was strongly convinced that it would be best to place the scheme in the hands of the Bible Society. The confidence felt in that institution by evangelical members of the Established Church, as well as by all the Eree evangelical Churches in this country, and its perfect organisation, were the principal considerations which determined his preference; and Mr Thompson soon gave way. On September the 14th, in the *British Banner*, and on the 15th, in the *Patriot*, Mr James addressed the following letter to the “Protestants of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,” developing his scheme:—

“We live in an age of wonders, but the greatest of them all is this movement in China. It is indeed ‘the wonder of wonders.’

“‘The Chinese revolution,’ says the *Times* newspaper, ‘is in all respects the greatest revolution the world has yet seen.’ Such a testimony, by such a witness, in addition to all that has been said by others still more competent to give evidence, deserves and demands our profoundest attention; for it is true, as it is important. God is evidently

coming forth from His place to do one of His greatest works in the earth, and, with a voice loud and awful as thunder, is summoning the Christian Church to do something worthy of Him, of itself, and of the events that have occurred. We must be stone-deaf not to hear, and insensible even to death itself not to feel, the calls of God upon our devoted attention. The letters of Drs Legge and Hobson which have appeared in these columns, leave us no longer in ignorance or in doubt of the marvellous change which is coming over the Chinese Empire, not only politically, but morally considered. If anything more be necessary to complete the proof that Christianity, however corrupted, has much to do with this great movement, it is a document which I have lately read, which is an autograph letter of one of the insurgent chiefs, given to Dr Charles Taylor, when lately at Ching-Keang, which has been sent by Dr Lockhart, our medical missionary at Shanghai, to Mrs Lockhart, now residing in this neighbourhood, and of which the following is a translation:—

“Lo, the fifth arranger of the forces attached to the palace of the celestial dynasty of T’hae-ping, who have received the command of Heaven to rule the Empire, communicates the following information to all his English brethren. On the first day of the fifth moon, (June 5,) a brother belonging to your honourable nation, named Charles Taylor, brought hither a number of books, which have been received in order. Seeing that the above-named individual is a fellow-worshipper of God, (Shang-te,) he is therefore acknowledged as a brother: the books likewise which he has brought agree substantially with our own» so that it appears we follow one and the same road. Formerly, however, when a ship belonging to your honourable nation came hither, (the *Hermes*,) she was followed by a fleet of impish vessels belonging to the false Tartars: now also when a boat from your honourable nation comes among us, the impish vessels of the Tartars again follow in its wake. Considering that your honourable nation is celebrated for your truth and fidelity, we your younger brethren do not harbour any suspicions. At present both Heaven and men favour our design, and this is just the time for setting up the Chinese and abolishing the Tartar rule. We suppose that you, gentlemen, are well acquainted with the signs of the times, so that we need not enlarge on that subject; but while we, on our part, do not prohibit commercial intercourse, we merely observe that since the two parties are now engaged in warfare, the going to and fro is accompanied with inconvenience; and, judging from the present aspect of affairs, we should deem it better to wait a few months, until we have thoroughly destroyed the Tartars, when, perhaps, the subjects of your honourable nation could go and come without being involved in the tricks of these false Tartars.

Would it not in your estimation also be preferable? We take advantage of the opportunity to send you this communication for your intelligent inspection, and hope that every blessing may attend you. We also send a number of our own books, which please to circulate among you.'

"From this interesting document the facts are clearly and fully established, that the new faith of the insurgents is substantially Christian, as evinced by the acknowledgment of the writer in his admission of the sameness of their religious books with ours; that they on this ground recognise us as their brethren, and are therefore, of course, prepared and ready to enter into fellowship with us, and receive our books. Thus everything proves that the insurgent party, with all their adherents, are accessible to the influence of British Christians, and that 'a wide and effectual door is now set open' to the entrance of Christianity into China. It is pre-eminently beyond anything that has taken place in the history of modern missions 'the Lord's work, and is marvellous in our eyes.' There is in this movement less of the hand of man, and more of the finger of God, than in anything that has recently occurred.

"And, now, what is the duty of the Church? What *can* we do? What *ought* we to do? What, in the name and by the help of the Lord, *shall* we do to help on this great work? What does our Divine Lord expect from us? What will He approve and bless if we do it? We have missionaries, I know, of various denominations, which must be indefinitely multiplied, and from various countries—able, devoted, long-tried men, who will do all they can, and who will feel a fresh stimulus to their work in these great events. But what are they among so many millions of the population? And into how limited a portion of the Chinese territory can they penetrate? They are divided into sections, and though they are held together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, they, like ourselves, from whom they go forth, are separate in action. Is there nothing to be done at this juncture by the union and co-operation of all at home and all abroad for the conversion of China to the pure faith of the gospel of Christ? I say, for the pure faith of the gospel of Christ. For it is evident, that though the new faith of this body comprehends the *elements* of Christianity, it is, for want of the New Testament, in an imperfect and corrupted form. What they want is, the *Christian* Scriptures. They know more of the Old Testament than of the New. Protestants, now give your serious attention to what follows. I have lately received a letter from that active and devoted friend of Christian enterprise, Thomas Thompson, Esq. of Poundsford Park, containing the noble proposal to *raise a fund immediately for printing and circulating in*

China a million copies of the Chinese New Testament, and earnestly soliciting me to lay the subject before the public, through the medium of the press, and to call out the Sunday-school teachers and scholars to do the work. The project of circulating a million copies of the New Testament is itself a vast idea. Is it practicable? Easily. Is it worth the effort, the pains, and the cost? Transcending all we can calculate. Shall it be done? Will not voices as numerous, though far more intelligent, as those which, in the eleventh century, under the wild enthusiasm of Peter the Hermit, shook the plains of Clermont, and raised the thundering shout, 'God wills it!' again say, 'God wills it?' What might not a million copies of the New Testament, poured into China at such a time as this, accomplish for the cause of Christianity, in correcting the false notions of the insurgent leaders, of the nature of our holy religion, and in circulating a pure Christianity among their followers I Unhappily, Christianity is now presented mixed up with fables, and associated with fanaticism, war, and massacre. It is infinitely important that we should lose no time in presenting it pure and uncorrupted in its own inspired records.

"Mr Thompson proposed that this work should be done by the Sunday schools and their teachers. In my reply to him, I suggested that, while they need not be excluded, the work should be done by the whole Christian public, and would afford a beautiful, glorious, and useful object of Christian union and co-operation. To this, in a subsequent letter, he entirely assents. Suppose, for instance, that a public meeting was called at Exeter Hall expressly for this object, which should combine the various denominations in this plan, to give a million copies of the New Testament to China. What a blessed spectacle of confederated zeal! There is Christian *union* for *action*—action of the most momentous character, and which implies and requires no compromise of principle in any one. What is this but a smaller temporary Bible Society for China, created for the occasion, having at once the form, features, spirit, and object of the greater and permanent one? And if it were thought more desirable, let this effort be made in connexion with and under the direction of the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which it may itself be a kind of affiliated branch.

"It will be seen by calculation, that as a Chinese New Testament can now be printed and sold for fourpence—*mirabile dictu!*—the million copies will require, all expenses included, about £17,000. Such a sum, for one object, seems large; ah, but what an object! Was such a sum ever yet expended upon the Bible, with such a prospect of immense results? Were the friends of the Bible ever yet invited to such an effort? It would facilitate the raising of the requisite means, if, instead of taking down the individual subscription in the usual *money*

form in pounds, shillings, and pence, they were entered in the numeral one of so many copies. My friend, Mr Thompson, has commenced this subscription list himself, by promising to give one thousand copies; and I shall be most happy to give five hundred. There is something in this mode of contribution that more powerfully interests the imagination. A poor man, for example, entering his name for only a *single* copy, is better pleased with the idea of giving a single copy of the New Testament to an inhabitant of China, than giving fourpence to a common fund for that purpose. We know, of course, it amounts to the same result; but we are influenced by the forms, as well as essences of things; and giving sixty copies of the Scriptures to sixty Chinamen, sounds in the ear pleasanter than giving a pound to a fund for purchasing a million copies. It brings out more forcibly the value and importance of individual effort.

“As regards the distribution in China, this might be intrusted to a committee, formed of the missionaries of all denominations in that empire. How would it delight these holy men, and strengthen their hands in their great and noble enterprise, to be the almoners of such a gift to the nation for whose conversion they are labouring!

“Protestants, can you need *motives* to induce you to engage in such an enterprise? Look at the events which have called forth this appeal. What mind but the Infinite One can calculate or comprehend their stupendous importance and infinite results? I am astonished at the comparative apathy with which the intelligence is received and dwelt upon. It is a new epoch in our world’s history, pregnant with ineffable and inconceivable consequences, both to the world and to the Church.

“How consentaneous and homogeneous this effort with the movement itself, which has had its origin more by the press than by the living voice of the missionary. The Chinese are a reading people, and are fond of books, and will soon read with avidity the inspired records of that faith which has been set forth by their leaders and embraced by the insurgent party.

“The insurrection *is essentially a Protestant and not a Popish movement*. The Jesuits have had nothing to do with it, and they will stand aghast with amazement and mortification. But at the same time they will lose not a moment in endeavouring in some way to influence, direct, and pervert it. All the machinations of the Vatican, stirred up and inspired by all the art and cunning of the father of lies, will be employed to turn it to the purpose of the Church of Rome. I have not the shadow of a doubt that emissaries from the camp of the Papists are on the way to Nankin, if they are not there already, to gain the ear of the chiefs of the insurgents. There is, however, this hope, that

they will not succeed. The Chinese converts are such determined and relentless iconoclasts, that they will not receive the images of Rome nor tolerate their worship. Yes, but Rome, to gain her ends, will conceal for a while every sign and symptom of her idolatry. Trust not to this; like her master, she can transform herself to accomplish her purpose into an angel of light. Be up and doing, in the way of arming the Chinese population against Popery with the sword of the Spirit. Circulate the New Testament at once, and the whole Bible in due time. Be beforehand with Rome. The revolution has commenced in connexion with portions of the Scriptures; keep up that connexion. Already the Chinese of the revolution consider our Sacred Book as theirs, as the bond of friendship and the symbol of a common faith. Let us lose not a moment in bestowing as a great national gift the volume of our common faith. Rome would barter much of her territory and her power in other parts of the world for China. For a long succession of ages this empire has been the object of her ambition, her efforts, and her hopes. Let us disappoint her expectations; and what is so legitimate and so probable a way to do so as a wide circulation of the New Testament. Let this be one of the operations and triumphs of the jubilee year of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

“What will be so likely to impress the mind of the Chinese with fervour, both for this gift of the Word of God, and the givers of it too, as the fact, *that all sections of the Christian Church had united in this labour of love?* They already know from our missionaries that on some points we hold different views of the meaning of the Word of God; but this ranted action will convince them that we are agreed on the *authority* of the Word itself, and that we live in unity and love, and for our common faith can act together. One of the first acts and arguments by which the Jesuits will attempt to prejudice the minds of the Chinese against the Protestants will be our divisions, and sects. And how can we better answer this than by reminding them of the million copies of the Word of God, which, by this holy and loving association of *all* sects and parties, we had sent amongst them?

“Let it not be said, ‘The issue of the contest is not yet known, and that it would be premature to make the effort till we know how it will terminate.’ This was my own impression when the subject was first proposed to me by Mr Thompson; but, on further reflection, and on conversing with some friends about it in the counting-house of my excellent friend, John Henderson, Esq. of Glasgow, I am led to the conclusion that no time is to be wasted by delay. Should the present Government suppress the rebellion, of which, from the testimony of Dr Legge, I see no great probability, the opportunity will be lost of pouring into China the pure Word of God; while, on the other hand,

should the insurgents be successful, the door will remain permanently open for its introduction without hindrance or molestation.

“Protestants! I appeal to you, then, for the support of this project. A nobler one was never presented to your attention. What a platform does it afford for our union without compromise! Conscientious or prudential scruples keep many of you from coming within the bonds of ‘The Evangelical Alliance while others are kept back from it by the question—*Cui bono?* We are told, and perhaps with some truth and force, that union for union’s sake, without action, is too abstract an idea for so busy and practical an age as this. Well, then, here is an object of immense importance, which, while it unites our hearts, may engage our activities. It was my intention at one time to make the proposal to the Evangelical Alliance to take up the subject; but on consideration, I deemed it best to throw it open to the whole Protestant body, and which, if it see fit, may not limit itself to the circulation of one million of copies of the New Testament, but go on in this glorious career till it has filled all China with Bibles.

“As *Christians*, how we must exult in this wonderful movement! There are many things in it which we lament, but there are others in which we must rejoice, even with joy and singing. The Christianity mixed up with it, which is now so corrupted and disfigured, will, we hope, by God’s grace and His Word, throw off the slough of its corruptions, and come forth pure. How fervent should be our prayer for God’s blessed Spirit to come down upon the work, and how strong should be our faith in a glorious result! It is worthy of remark, that this movement, though it originated from one of the converts of a missionary connected with the London Missionary Society, is not in direct connection with that society or any other. The prejudiced eye of sectarianism has no reason for looking askance from it; religious bigotry can raise no murmur, indulge no suspicion, fling no objection against it. There is no room for even the ordinary operations of jealousy or envy. It is an event that belongs to our common Christianity, in which all Christians may feel, and should manifest, a common interest; and let all come forward to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

“Christian men and Protestants of all denominations! in the name of our holy religion—the spread of which is now so likely to take place over so vast a portion of the earth,—in the name of the great empire of China, now by the mysterious providence of God opening for the reception of the gospel of Christ—and especially in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose kingdom seems likely to be established upon the ruins of the idolatry of half the pagan population of the globe,—I call upon you, and conjure you, to give the subject of this paper your serious and prayerful consideration.

J. A. JAMES.

“P.S.—As this is an appeal to Protestants and Christians generally, I shall feel gratified if the editors of other religious newspapers would, provided they deem the proposal worthy of notice, recommend the consideration of it to their readers in any way they may think proper.

“Should the proposal be thought worthy of notice and consideration, a question will arise as to the parties who shall take the initiative. Perhaps no better plan for this could be devised than referring it to a conference between the secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Protestant Alliance, the Evangelical Alliance, and of the various missionary societies. Or it could be taken up by a few unofficial laymen, who might issue a circular of invitation in their own names to others. But probably it could be best accomplished by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It comes within the comprehension of their object, and they have an extensive machinery of organisation by which it could be worked out.”

The proposal was formally adopted by the committee of the Bible Society on the 19th of the same month. In the *British Banner* of the 21st, appeared a letter from Mr James, announcing the result of his appeal to his own congregation on the previous Sunday.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘BRITISH BANNER’

“SIR,—In addition to my letter in the PATRIOT on Monday, I find it necessary to write one more, for which I beg room in your columns, which have already been thrown so widely open to me. I hope it will not be requisite to trouble you or your readers with much more on this momentous subject; but having adopted the *grand idea* of a million copies of the New Testament for the largest empire on earth, and at a time when that empire seems preparing to receive them, I will, at the hazard of being reproached with ‘*boring*’ the public, leave no effort untried to make it a ‘great fact.’

“I am perpetually receiving letters and newspapers from various parts of the country approving the scheme, giving names of subscribers, and earnestly inquiring how to proceed. For self-defence, therefore, I must now inform the public that the subject is in the hands of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who have taken it up, and purpose to carry it through, and to whom all further communications should be made. It is no longer Mr Thompson’s scheme nor mine, but theirs. I will, however, here state, for the information of my honoured brethren in the ministry—with whom and our Sunday-school superintendents

and teachers the success of the proposal will, under God's blessing, depend—my own method of procedure. After the morning sermon yesterday, which was founded on the words, "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not," (Gal. vi. 9,) I gave a brief statement of the religious aspect of the revolution in China, and of the proposed scheme of supplying the Chinese with the New Testament, and begged the congregation that they would go home and ponder the subject, and after dinner write down upon a slip of paper their names, with the number of copies they would subscribe. Having thus appealed to the congregation, I addressed the Sunday-school teachers and children, and told them that they would not be shut out from the privilege of sharing in this great and good work. Considerable enthusiasm was evidently excited, though I was not particularly impassioned beyond what is my usual custom when I have anything important to accomplish. In the evening, just before the second hymn was given out, the deacons went round with the boxes which are usually employed at collections to gather up the papers. On counting the numbers, it was found that nearly *twenty-five thousand copies had been subscribed*, which in money value reaches the sum of somewhat above £410. I confess I was as much surprised as I was delighted, especially as it is but a fortnight since we had our missionary anniversary, when we raised nearly £500 for the Missionary Society. It is not, however, to parade our doings that I transmit this statement, but *to prove how easily the proposed million of New Testaments may be raised*, yea, a million copies of the *whole* Bible, if the ministers of religion will take up the work, and throw their souls into it. The people are willing, waiting, eager for the opportunity to do something. By this morning's post, a friend has written to me, saying, 'Put my name down for 10,000 copies.' Is not God, by His providence, doing some great thing in China, and by His grace drawing the hearts of His people into fellowship with Him? I am now somewhat anxious lest we should be seduced into a dependence upon these efforts alone, instead of a simple reliance upon God's grace. Let us devoutly remember that man's doings, even in circulating the Holy Scriptures, without God's Holy Spirit, will do nothing effectual for the conversion of the world; and that, therefore, the more we *do* the more we must *pray*. A single copy of the New Testament will do more, with God's blessing, for China's conversion than a million copies without it. Let us therefore pray without ceasing.—Yours, &c.,

"J. A. JAMES."

The two next letters were printed in the *Patriot* of the 26th, and the *British Banner* of the 28th of September:—

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘PATRIOT.’

“SIR,—I am grateful for the support you have rendered by your very able advocacy to the realisation of my friend Mr Thompson’s noble idea of pouring at this juncture the New Testament Scriptures into China. The *British Banner* has done good service in this cause, so has the *Christian Times*, and the *Watchman*, and the *Record*, and some provincial papers. The project is laying firm hold on the public mind. Help is offered, spontaneously and most cordially, from various quarters. Well indeed might it be! It is no bubble of enthusiasm—no mere vision of a heated imagination—no impracticable suggestion of a wild and dreamy inventiveness; but a project as useful as it is vast, and as attainable as it is useful. It will, however, require prompt, immediate, and combined action. Again I say, no time is to be lost. The golden opportunity is now in our hands, and if not improved it may be ages before it returns. We must not sleep over the matter, nor merely talk about it, nor merely praise it; we must *act*, all of us—*each* of us. All can do something, and all must do what they can. Still we want leaders. They are ready—they have offered—they are able—they are willing. The British and Foreign Bible Society have come forward, as it might have been expected they would do. When were they backward to respond to any call for help to circulate the Word of God? What have they not *already* done for *China*? We have only to read the resolution passed by the committee, in which they have embraced with ardour Mr Thompson’s proposal, and held it up for public support, and also the letter of Mr Brown, the secretary, to be convinced of the willingness of this institution to become Britain’s almoner to China of this million copies of the New Testament.

“*Gentlemen of the Committee of the Bible Society—*

“I begin with you. May I, without presumption or impertinent officiousness, venture to offer you a few suggestions? Would it not be desirable for *you*, without delay, to appoint a sub-committee of your own number for carrying out this special object, apart even from the general purposes of the jubilee? I am not unaware of the seeming complexity which this, by possibility, may introduce into your operations, already so multiform. The scheme, however, is so vast, the object to be accomplished so momentous, the opportunity so favourable, and the urgency so pressing, that you may justly consider a little extra labour in this case well bestowed. We want immediately a body, in whose wisdom, zeal, and ability we all have confidence, to concentrate and guide our operations; and where can we find such a body, so speedily and so satisfactorily, as among you? Would it not, also,

conduce to the success of the project, if a circular were issued by such a sub-committee to the auxiliaries and subscribers, earnestly recommending its support, and inviting contributions? I do not forget that you are still in the midst of your operations for the year of jubilee, and that you may, perhaps, hesitate about the propriety of proposing a new object. But it is not altogether new. China was among the objects you presented to the public, as what you contemplated by the celebration of the jubilee; so that it is only an enlargement of one of the branches of your programme. Besides, the benefactions of your friends for this happy season of your existence are already nearly completed. Let this come in as a *supplemental* effort to all that has been done and is doing. Have faith in God, in His people, and in your friends. Be not afraid. Call upon us to come forward and trust in you to carry out our own purpose. Depend upon it you will not be disappointed. Let the trumpet-call be sounded from Earl Street, and you may rest assured it will be returned in ten thousand echoes from the country on the 12th of October.

“Ministers of Religion of every Denomination—

“Much will depend upon you! If the scheme find favour in your eyes, its success is, by God’s blessing, determined. Is it not worth your consideration, and worthy of it? It is, at any rate, no trifling thing. All its terms are vast. The New Testament—a million copies—China. You are invited to aid in nothing *little*. Call out the energies of your private friends and your congregations. Preach about it, and circulate in your various circles an interest in it. Open subscription books for your people to enter their names for the number of copies each will subscribe for. There is scarcely a congregation in the kingdom so small or so poor but what might send five hundred copies of the Christian records to five hundred Chinese families; and there is scarcely a congregation that would not do it, if their minister earnestly asked them to do so. My honoured brethren, lend your aid!

“Men of Wealth—

“What would a thousand, or even ten thousand, copies be to you? Imitate the example of the Earl of Gainsborough, and give us your individual names and contributions to this cause.

“Committees, Superintendents, and Teachers of Sunday schools—

“*You* cannot, must not, shall not be left out! It was Mr Thompson’s original proposal to leave the work in your hands. But it was thought that it was a work too heavy for you to bear up alone, and it was also considered that it would be depriving many who are not teachers

of a privilege in which they would wish to share, to confine the effort exclusively to you. But you must have a share, and a large share too, in the blessed work. Is there a child in your schools who would not willingly give a penny a-week for *four* weeks, or a halfpenny a-week for eight, to bestow a copy of the New Testament upon a Chinese boy or girl? Ask for only *one* copy from each child, and what an aggregate would result! Already the work is begun in this way. One offer of this kind has come to hand, and it is a noble one:—

“CHESTERFIELD, *September 19, 1853.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—The Brampton (near Chesterfield) Wesleyan Methodist Sunday school respond to the call for China. They will give five hundred copies, and would have liked to have given one thousand copies of the New Testament to the Chinese; but for the other five hundred they pray the God of all China to open the hearts of all Sunday-school teachers, scholars, and those interested in the training up of youth, to disseminate God’s truth, but especially to aid now in sending a million copies of the Chinese New Testament,—to strike while the iron is hot. Now is the time, I believe, the thing can be easily accomplished, and by Sunday-school teachers and scholars. We are longing for Christ’s kingdom; we pray that He would soon come and reign; we esteem it a high privilege to give; we would be the first to hold up your hands in this noble work, and we pray that God would for Christ’s sake bless you, and keep you, and strengthen you until the summons arrives, and that we may meet in heaven.

“Excuse this hasty scrawl; I am so much pressed to-day in business, but not so busy as to forget to put this into the post; I am so anxious that you should have this quickly. Please direct us how to proceed in the payment, for we are ready with that also.—I remain, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

“THOMAS IRVING, Superintendent, so called.

“The Rev. J. A. James.’

“All honour to the Brampton Wesleyan Methodist Sunday school and its energetic superintendent. Let this example be as setting fire to a train, or rather, the first spark which shall kindle the flame of a noble sacrifice on the altar of our Sunday-school system.

“*Heads of Families—*

“How much might *you* do! And how can you better train your children to Christian activity and benevolence—to interest in the cause of Christ, or to noble deeds—than by engaging them in this magnificent work? Here, too, I have a letter in point:—

“ST JOHN’S WOOD PARK.

“MY DEAR SIR,—We have already contributed to the Bible Society, and now send as a jubilee memorial our desire of presenting five hundred copies of the New Testament to the Chinese. Accredit me, dear sir, yours devotedly,

“HENRY THOMPSON.

	Copies.
“Henry Thompson, St John’s Wood Park,	150
Mrs Henry Thompson, do.,	100
Master Henry Heugh Thompson, do.,	50
Miss Charlotte Elizabeth Thompson	50
Master James Stratten Thompson,	50
Miss Fanny Thompson,	50
Miss Eliza Mary Thomson,	50
	500’

“Another beautiful instance of this kind is recorded in the *Banner* of last Wednesday.

“These are delightful instances of family fellowship in a great and good cause. In one of those, a Christian household will furnish five hundred Chinese families with a copy of that book which is ‘able to make them wise unto salvation.’ I would here make a proposal, that the heads of all Christian families would, on Sunday morning, the 2d of October, at the hour and before the exercise of domestic devotion, take down the names of all the members of the household, not excluding the servants, and the number of copies they are willing to subscribe for, and then present the list on the family altar as an offering to God, sanctifying the gift by the Word of God and prayer. What a scene would this present to heaven in the families of the godly upon earth!

“Before I conclude this letter, already too long, I may be permitted briefly to point out one circumstance connected with the present rebellion in China, eminently favourable, as a collateral fact, to our attempts in evangelising its inhabitants; and that is the prohibition by the insurgents of the use of opium. The use of this deleterious drug had become so common, and was becoming so much more extensive, as to throw a still more formidable obstacle in the way of moral reformation than even drunkenness is in these kingdoms. The consumption of this poison, except as medicine, is now amongst the prohibitory precepts of the new code of morals put forth by the party seeking the dominion of the empire. Let us all now be up and doing. Enough of writing in newspapers and other periodicals. Let us proceed to action; and let the British and Foreign Bible Society lead us on to the glorious achieve-

ment, under the sweet sounds of the jubilee trumpets and the inspiring watchword, 'A million copies of the New Testament for China!'—
Yours,

"J. A. JAMES.

"P.S.—Those friends who have addressed letters to me, with offers of contributions, are hereby respectfully informed that their names and amounts of subscriptions shall be forwarded to the sub-committee of the Bible Society, as soon as such committee is formed and announced; to whom I shall then hand over the management of this great concern, contented to be lost in their mighty shadow, and thankful for the honour of having brought under public notice the conception of Mr Thompson.

"It is, of course, understood that the promises are upon the condition that the million copies, or very near to it, are subscribed for."

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'BRITISH BANNER.'

"SIR,—Without waiting for your promised and published opinion of my proposal for this great object, I trouble you with a word of explanation, to remove a misconception which the gigantic nature of the project may produce, and has already produced, on some minds.

"Among the numerous letters of approval of the scheme which are daily reaching me from various quarters, one of them, from a member of the Society of Friends, suggests that, from calculations he has made, it will require a ship of more than 200 tons to carry out the million copies of the New Testament to China, and that the duty upon the paper would amount to nearly £3000, which, however, he thinks, might, by application to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, be remitted in the way of drawback. Nevertheless, my correspondent expresses his willingness to co-operate in carrying out the scheme. For his information, therefore, as well as others, I remark, that the books must of necessity, on various accounts, be printed in China, where, notwithstanding the present rather high price of paper in the empire, books can be printed at a much lower rate than in this country. Dr Dick's volume on the Solar System has been translated into Chinese, and, with the diagrams, has been published at the wonderfully low rate of one penny.

"This fact of our having to print the books in China, is an additional motive for losing no time in carrying out the proposal. It is a case to which applies, with great propriety and emphasis, the proverb, 'He gives twice who gives quickly.'

"Offers of assistance are coming in fast. One gentleman writes, 'I shall subscribe for 500 copies at least.' Another says, 'I shall sub-

scribe 1000 copies for myself, and another 1000 for my wife.' A third, wealthy and profusely generous, will enter, I know, largely into the scheme. By much prayer, much faith, much labour, and much union, a pure Christianity, by God's grace, may now be introduced into China. Let us up and be doing.

"J. A. JAMES.

"P.S.—Since the foregoing letter was written, I have received the following communication, which will shew that this scheme is attracting notice in high and influential quarters:—

"9 CAVENDISH SQUARE, *September 18, 1853.*

"DEAR MR JAMES,—I see from the papers that there is a subscription for sending Bibles to China. As I am going, dear sir, immediately abroad, I am anxious to send you my contribution to the excellent scheme, and therefore have the pleasure to enclose you a cheque for £20.—I remain, dear Mr James, sincerely yours,

"GAINSBOROUGH."

The editors of the *Patriot* and the *British Banner*, and, indeed, of all the newspapers representing the great evangelical communities, cordially supported the scheme, and their columns were filled week after week with communications which shewed the interest it had excited among all ranks, and in every part of the country.

It so happened that this appeal for the million New Testaments was made when the Bible Society was in the midst of its jubilee celebrations. In their report for 1854 they state its results:—

"Not in vain did your committee again cast themselves on the liberality of the Christian public. With little effort on their part, but with much noble, and generous, and self-denying effort on the part of others, the calculated amount necessary for the proposed million of New Testaments has been promptly raised; and a noble surplus is found, which, after meeting the further requirements of the project, will be wholly devoted to the spreading of the Scriptures in China. The intensity, activity, and rapid result of this new effort of Christian zeal has perhaps never been surpassed; contributions have flowed in from all quarters, and from all classes, in almost endless variety of amount. In this, as in the general Jubilee Fund, the poor man has vied with the rich, the child with the aged sire, the colonies with the mother country, and even foreigners, in climes far distant from each other, have pressed to take, though it may have been but an humble part in this magnificent act of charity.

“The amount of the united special funds, as made up at the close of the society’s financial year, has already been announced to you. This amount has since been increased as follows:—

“General Jubilee Fund,	£67,040	0	5
China Fund,	32,183	16	6
Making a total of	£99,223	16	11”

While the society’s general Jubilee Fund amounted to £67,000, the special China Fund amounted to £32,000, thus providing for the printing, not of “one million Testaments,” as originally proposed, hut of TWO MILLIONS. The society immediately invested £30,000 in the 3 per cents, on account of the Chinese Testament Fund, of which £5000 was sold in the year 1857, and £5000 in the year 1858. The accruing dividends, with the subsequent contributions, have increased the original fund from rather more than £32,000 to £44,383, 5s. 6d., of which £22,570 remained in hand on March 31st, 1860. How those copies of the Word of God already issued have been distributed, will be seen from the following extract, printed in the Bible Society’s last report, from a letter of the Rev. W. Muirhead:—

“I have visited the literary examinations at a place called Kwanshaw, forty miles off. I took six hundred copies of the New Testament, and fifty of the Old, with me. On reaching the city I was amazed at the number of students gathered together, and was told there would be at least ten thousand in the course of the month, as they included the graduates and aspirants from thirteen different districts. I began the work of distribution, and was pleased at the eagerness of the students in general to receive a volume of the Sacred Volume. My plan was to load a boatman and a native agent with as many as they could conveniently carry, and to take twenty or thirty copies in my own hand. Walking along the streets I met the students in every direction, when I requested them in a polite manner to accept a copy. In a few minutes the supply was exhausted, and we either returned at once to the boat for more, or I stood up in some public place to address the students and others on the great truths of salvation. In this way I spent three or four days, and proceeded on missionary work to another part of the country. But as this was too good an opportunity to be neglected, I returned in a short time to Shanghae, and arranged with a missionary brother, Mr Johns, that either he or I should go again to Kwanshaw

for the same purpose. He immediately agreed, and left last week with three thousand copies of the New Testament.

“The students are the most appropriate class of Chinamen amongst whom to distribute the Sacred Volume, as they can most readily understand it, and, through God’s blessing, may exert an influence over the scholars under their care, and in the communities around them.”

The next extract is from the secretary of the Corresponding Committee of the Bible Society at Canton:—

“Colporteurs stopped at a large trading place, Tin-po. A church member, named Yeung, is a shopkeeper there, and found them quarters. The village elders called this man before them, and inquired about his becoming a Christian. He related that he went as a blind man to Dr Hobson, who healed him, and instructed him in the doctrines of salvation, and that he was baptized and became a disciple of Jesus Christ. They inquired about the two colporteurs; if they wished to open a preaching place, and whether the foreign teacher was coming to Tin-po. He explained that they came for a few days only, and had books to distribute—that the foreign teacher was unable to leave Canton at present. The elders answered that they knew the fame of Dr Hobson, who was a man of great benevolence; he had healed others of their town. They also ordered the inhabitants not to molest or hinder the colporteurs, and promised that if the foreign teacher visited the place they would issue similar instructions. The residents received their books gladly. A few of the gentry inquired about the Testament; some of the people came to their house to converse about the doctrines; they stayed several times till nine o’clock at night.”

It would be a mistake to estimate the importance of this unique and successful movement merely by the money which was contributed, or even by the vast number of Testaments which it has placed at the disposal of Chinese missionaries and colporteurs. Mr James’s proposal created a deep and general interest in missions to China, out of which may some day arise efforts to evangelise that country of a far grander magnitude than Protestant churches have ever yet attempted. Just as the Testaments were beginning to be distributed, events occurred which for a time disturbed missionary operations. On the 8th of October 1856, the *Arrow*, a vessel with a register from Sir John Bowring, the Governor of Hong Kong, and with an Englishman for her

master, was boarded while at anchor near Canton by a Chinese officer. Twelve of the crew were seized and carried away; it was alleged that the British flag was flying at the time, and hauled down by the Chinese. Apologies having been refused by the brutal Yeh, the Imperial High Commissioner, and Governor of Canton, hostile proceedings immediately commenced, and the war, in which France and England united, was protracted till nearly the middle of 1858. On the 21st of June that year, a treaty of peace was signed at Tien-Tsin, and the western powers secured freedom and protection throughout China for Christian missionaries, and toleration for such Chinese as should be converted to the Christian faith.

These surprising concessions awakened in England the greatest astonishment and delight, and greatly stimulated missionary enthusiasm; in Mr James's heart the intelligence rekindled the fire of youth, and he wrote a pamphlet glowing with passion and radiant with hope, imploring the Protestant churches of Great Britain, Ireland, and America to accept at once the obligation imposed upon them by the opening of China to the gospel. "In default," he says, "of some voice of more commanding power than my own, I have determined to call the attention of the churches to their duty and their privilege in reference to recent stupendous events affecting China. Disabled by the visitation of God for much bodily labour in His cause, I must, if I would do anything, employ my pen. If intense interest in the spiritual welfare of China qualify me for the task of urging the claims of that country, I am not unmeet for it; for I can truly say that a day never passes over my head during which I do not let my thoughts fly to it, and my earnest prayers ascend to God for it. Perhaps I may, without assumption or arrogance, affirm that the subject belongs to me, since God by my pen, no long time since, called forth between two and three million copies of the Scriptures for China, and raised for the Bible Society between £30,000 and £40,000 for this purpose. Having thus sent forth the call for a million Testaments, (for such only was the original requirement,) I seem almost authorised to raise another call for a hundred missionaries."

He was not content with merely publishing his pamphlet, but posted several hundreds of copies to the most prominent men in the various evangelical denominations of England and Scotland, accompanying them in many instances with private letters, urging and entreating an immediate response to "God's voice from China." Many of these letters were answered in a manner that indicated that his earnestness and fervour had touched the hearts to which he appealed: all the prelates of the English Church, with one exception, courteously acknowledged his communications; several of them with great cordiality.

The recent interruption of friendly relations between China and western Europe has again checked our missionary exertions; but the hope may be justly cherished, that whenever the people of that great empire shall be accessible to the influences of Christian teaching, Chinese missions will be supported with an enthusiasm and a generosity which shall demonstrate that Mr James did not write and speak and pray in vain.

CHAPTER V.
THE CO-PASTORATE.

IT is with a trembling hand that I commence this chapter; the most fervent language of affection, veneration, and gratitude would fail to convey the impression which Mr James's magnanimous conduct towards myself has engraved for ever on my memory and heart.

To record the innumerable acts of kindness and proofs of generous confidence, which are instantly recalled when I review the pleasant years during which I was permitted to share his anxieties and labours, is impossible. And not a solitary act or word or look can be remembered which inflicted—even on the quick sensibilities of a youth just escaped from six years of college seclusion, and unacquainted with the ways of men—the slightest transient pain.

In this chapter I shall venture, for the sake of my own congregation, to give many details in reference to the history of the relation between Mr James and myself, in which strangers will feel little interest; should another edition of this "Life" ever be called for, many of these may be cancelled. It will also be necessary, in order to do full justice to the nobleness of Mr James's character and the tenderness of his sympathy, to insert, without mutilation, letters which no inferior consideration could have induced me to place before the public.*

* Samuel Palmer's prefatory advertisement to Job Orton's interesting letters may serve to protect me from censure:—

"The publication of the following letters to the Editor may need an apology,

Though it was not till towards the close of his ministry that Mr James became anxious to share with another the responsibilities of the pastorate, he had twice or thrice sought and obtained some relief from the pressure of his general ministerial work by securing an assistant. In the year 1813 he was released by the church from the obligation to preach three times on the Sunday, and allowed a fixed annual sum to enable him to provide supplies for the afternoon. Mr Berry, formerly resident tutor at Homerton College, and subsequently to that, pastor of the Independent Church at Camberwell, who was residing in Birmingham in consequence of ill health, being able to preach once in the day, became permanent afternoon preacher, and his services proved very acceptable to the congregation. When the new chapel was about to be opened, he resigned his engagement, that Mr James might obtain an assistant who would be able to give him more help in the visitation of the sick, and the superintendence of the numerous institutions which gather round every vigorous Christian Church.

Mr Adams of West Cowes in the Isle of Wight was chosen for the vacant position, and came to Birmingham in January 1819.

since so many parts of them relate to his own personal concerns. Being apprehensive of incurring censure on this ground, I have been doubtful, as matters of this kind are inseparably interwoven with the greater part of this correspondence, whether it were not most advisable to suppress the whole. And yet, upon repeated and the most impartial reviews of what I had selected and transcribed, many things appeared full as interesting as most in the preceding letters, so that I thought the suppression of them would diminish the value of the publication; and to some of my friends it might appear a false delicacy, if, after printing so many letters of my correspondent addressed to other persons, I should present them with none which I had received from him myself. Nor was this merely my own opinion. Though I have left out many passages which appeared the most likely to be objected against on the above ground, some readers will probably think that others are retained which prudence and delicacy would have suppressed. Possibly this may, in some instances, be the case; but different persons will judge differently on the same particulars. As to myself, I cannot but apprehend that, in general, those articles which are the most personal, are capable of being applied to some useful purpose, especially by my younger brethren, whose situations and circumstances may be similar to what mine were at the time the letters were written; and that others may profit by the opinion, the advice, the approbation, and even the censures of my worthy friend—the last of which I as readily inserted as either of the former.”

Mr Adams, "holy Adams" as he was universally called, was a very singular, as well as a very excellent man.

The following sketch of him is extracted from a letter written by Mr James to the Rev. Thomas Mann, and inserted by him in his Memoir of Mr Adams, published in 1849: *—

"It is now nearly five-and-forty years since I became acquainted with this saintly man, and I have still a vivid recollection of the impression produced by his appearance and conversation when I first saw him. While a student under Dr Bogue, at Gosport, who had also been his tutor, I visited Winchester with some of my fellow-students to take out our licence at the quarter sessions as preachers of the gospel, which was then required by law. We were received with the most affectionate cordiality by Mr Adams at his humble lodgings, and made welcome to such hospitalities as his means enabled him to afford. It was impossible not to be impressed with his peculiarity of manner and with his indifference to the ordinary circumstances of neatness and comfort; but I felt that I was in the presence of a man who seemed to belong less to this world than to the region of unsullied purity, and who was less fitted to converse with the inhabitants of earth than with the spirits of just men made perfect. His conversation turned upon the object of our visit, and I well remember with what devout earnestness he endeavoured to impress upon us the solemnity of the oath which we were about to take, in order to a legal qualification for our office, as dissenting ministers. As long as I was under his roof it seemed to me as if I were in company with one of the holiest men I had ever conversed with; and yet over all this there was a certain air of uncouthness, which, but for his eminent sanctity, would have occasionally called up a feeling approaching the ludicrous. From that hour my mind was made up as to the character of Mr Adams. I knew him at once, and all my subsequent acquaintance only served to deepen and confirm my first impressions of his distinguished excellence and great peculiarity.

"During my residence at Gosport I saw him occasionally, and also heard him preach and pray. His prayers struck me more than his sermons—their unction was rich, and there seemed to be on his mind such a reverential awe of God, blended with so much filial confidence, that I thought I had never heard anything like it before. The students all had the same opinion of him, and even they who were most disposed to smile at his eccentricities were checked by a sense of his most extraordinary piety.

* Memoir of the Rev. Richard Adams, of the New Forest, by Thomas Mann. London, Ward & Co., 1849.

“After leaving Gosport I saw little of him, except at the missionary meetings in London, when it appeared to me as if both his peculiarities and his sanctity had kept pace together in their growth. The emotions of his devout mind at these seasons and scenes of religious excitement were often too strong to be repressed, and he evinced by his looks and gestures that his soul was in more intimate communion with God than with the multitudes by which he was at that moment surrounded, but from which he was abstracted in a world of his own. His feelings were so far visibly and variously expressed under the influence of what was going on as not unfrequently to assume the air of the grotesque, and, in some persons who did not know him, to lead to the supposition that he was a person of disordered reason.

“I little supposed at that time I should ever stand in a relation to him which would make me so much more intimately acquainted with him. Being in want of an afternoon preacher and general assistant, my attention was directed, I forget by what means, to Mr Adams. This was now thirty years ago, when he must have been about five-and-forty years of age. His first sermon produced a very considerable impression, as did his prayers also. The people also felt as if a man of no ordinary piety had come among them. It was not talent—genius—elegance; it was something higher than all these,—it was holiness—unction—spiritual power. But it is a little singular he never seemed to rise to the height of that discourse afterwards. It is true, his time of preaching was the afternoon, which is always a most unfavourable time for preachers, and especially for those who depend for the success of their discourses more upon the state of the heart than the power of their intellect or the previous preparation of their discourses. His preaching did not prove attractive. Whatever was the cause, he could not, as he told me, do justice to himself. His discourses were rather loose and rambling, though always spiritual and devout, and by no means devoid of thought, for he was an excellent theologian.

“His intercourse with the people, particularly those more eminent for piety and the poor, was much enjoyed, and proved very edifying. His usefulness, however, lay chiefly with those who had been recently brought under concern about religion. Thus his services were invaluable, not only in leading inquirers to a more intimate acquaintance with Divine truth, but in giving them a more clear insight into their own hearts. How gladly and how thankfully would I still avail myself of the services of such skill in that most difficult of all pastoral avocations—the dealing with inquirers after salvation, and candidates for church fellowship! Persons who had been under his training were

always likely to be clear in their knowledge of the truth, and deep in their experience of the power of religion.

“It is almost needless to add I had the most entire confidence in his fidelity as an assistant—I mean in his unwearied endeavours to promote my comfort, usefulness, and harmony with my flock. He was in this respect as far from selfishness as I can conceive a human heart to be in this world of imperfection. He forgot himself in his labours for me. I knew that wherever he was and whatever he was doing he was doing all he could to raise me in the estimation of the church. It would seem as if he knew not, *by experience*, the meaning of the words envy and jealousy. If any other man than John the Baptist ever used, In sincerity and satisfaction, the expression, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease,’ it was this humble saint of the Most High God.

“In his concern for my usefulness he would often point out what appeared to him to be deficiencies and faults in my sermons, both as to matter and manner; but it was done in such a kind, modest, and unassuming way, that instead of offending me it always increased my affection for him, and as he was generally correct in his criticisms, inspired me with confidence in his judgment.

“Mr Adams’s piety, as is evident from all this, was of an unusual elevation. Devotion was his element. He entered more deeply than any one I ever knew into the meaning of that sublime and expressive phrase, ‘communion with God.’ I am sure. I speak truly when I say that, besides frequent days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, he spent hours every day in pouring out his heart to God in secret. His piety, however, led to some irregularity of habit. If his heart were enlarged in morning devotion he would give scope to his feelings, regardless of the progress of the hour, and would thus keep breakfast waiting for him at his lodgings to an inconvenient lateness; or if a sudden impulse came upon his mind, he would rise in the middle of the breakfast and retire for prayer, leaving the meal unfinished sometimes for hours. All this was wrong, and fitted him more to be a hermit than a member or society.

“In him devotion was united with the greatest tenderness of conscience I ever knew, and with the greatest regard, even in little things, for the comfort of his fellow-creatures. It will, perhaps, appear ludicrous to some, but it seems to illustrate his conscientious benevolence, to say, that if there were orange-peel or a stone in the path which would be likely to occasion a fall to any one, he would be sure to displace it. If there were a cellar-window in an insecure state, and which would endanger the passers by, he would go in and expostulate, but always in the most gentle manner, with the owner or occupant of the house. As

another illustration of the tenderness of his conscience, I may mention the following facts. While he was in Birmingham he was robbed of some money by a fellow-lodger or servant. He informed me of the fact, and mentioned the name of the individual whom he had suspected of being the pilferer. I thought nothing more about the matter, but about a year, or it may be more, after he had left our town, I received a letter from him, informing me that he had lately been spending a day of fasting, examination, and prayer, and had been making diligent search after any sins of heart and conduct which, through inadvertence at the time, had escaped his notice, and which, therefore, had never been confessed and repented of. In the course of his self-scrutiny he had recollected the suspicions he had entertained of his fellow-lodger being the thief who had robbed him, and the mention of his suspicions to me. Now, as he had no positive evidence that the money was taken by this individual, he considered that this was a sin against that law of charity which 'thinketh no evil,' and having confessed it to God, he could not be easy till he acknowledged it to me. Having mentioned the circumstance also to the person who was the occupant of the house, he was at the trouble of writing another letter to him on the same subject and for the same purpose; and I am certain that if he could have conceived that the suspected person had ever been made acquainted with his opinion concerning him, there is no language of concession and humiliation he would not have been willing to employ in expressing his sorrow for having cast such an imputation upon him. It must be recollected that he had not subsequently obtained evidence to prove that his suspicions were groundless—on the contrary, there was still strong probability that they were well founded; his idea was, that in the absence of positive proof of guilt it was a sin to think evil of another, and especially to speak it. Many will, no doubt, be inclined to smile at this moral fastidiousness; but who that acknowledges the authority of conscience will not admire this instance of entire subjection to its control? How sensitive and delicate must have been that conscience which shrank with pain from so slight a touch of iniquity as that I have just narrated! How different a world should we live in, and how much holier a Church should we witness, if all men were as anxious as this eminent Christian thus to maintain a conscience void of offence both towards God and man! Another instance of his scrupulosity I remember. He once had in his possession a five-pound note issued by a provincial bank that had failed. He went, with other persons in similar circumstances, to prove his debt. Being called upon to make oath, which was then the law in reference to bank debts, he considered it too light a matter to be accompanied by the solemnity of an oath, and chose rather to suffer the loss of the

dividend than offend the delicacy of his moral perceptions by obtaining it in this way. Now, we may be of opinion that his scruples were groundless, but still we cannot but be struck with the self-denying morality which would sacrifice his little all, for such it probably was, rather than retain it at what he considered the expense of religious principle. Should it be supposed, as it will be, no doubt, by some, that Mr Adams's conscientiousness was in excess, this, in an age when a depth of it must be mentioned as one of the things that are wanting to give beauty and power to the Christian profession, may well be excused.

"In that branch of religion which has special reference to what is called Temper our dear friend stood pre-eminent above most. His was indeed 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ.' His kindness, long-suffering, and forbearance was such that I am not quite sure he would have killed a wasp that stung him, or have killed a dog that had bitten him. I cannot imagine the amount of provocation which would have excited him to anger or have inflamed him to passion. I never once saw him, on any occasion, perturbed in the smallest degree with wrath, nor do I recollect ever hearing him speak evil of any one, in the ordinary meaning of that expression. Malice was quenched in benevolence. His desire to do good was ever thoughtful, inventive, and active, though his efforts were not always, perhaps, judicious. He usually kept some halfpence in his pockets for the relief of beggars, who never appealed to him in vain. The boon of charity was always accompanied by some lesson of piety. I have seen him stand in the streets, and, in a few sentences, preach the gospel to a mendicant, whose eye, perhaps, would be more fixed on the halfpenny than his ear was on the homily the good man was delivering. No matter that: he had discharged his duty,—had spoken a word for the Master he loved to serve, and had preached a short sermon to a poor sinner, who would in all probability hear one nowhere else.

"Mr Adams, as may well be imagined, was singularly qualified to carry consolation to the chamber of sickness, and other scenes of suffering humanity. There was a kindness in his looks, a tenderness in his tone, an aptness in his words, which was well adapted to soothe and comfort the children of woe. Yet he was so drawn out in compassion as sometimes to weary the patient by the length, not only of his prayers, but of his visits; nor was this the only complaint I sometimes heard of him, for he sometimes forgot the hour, and made his entrance when the friends were preparing to go to rest.

"Our dear friend, as all who knew him will bear testimony, was a cheerful and happy man, and could allow the quiet, calm, and peaceful smile to relax into laughter, occasionally loud, but always somewhat

grave. There was neither gloom nor melancholy about him, though oftentimes an air of deep solemnity.

“His personal habits were not to be commended as regards external appearance. His extreme absence of mind led him to neglect too much his dress, and to be sometimes otherwise too indifferent about himself. During his residence in this town, some friends, perceiving that he had no outer covering except a shabby old cloak, provided for him a new great coat, which was neat, graceful, and becoming. I never saw it on his back but once, and what became of it, and why it was laid aside, I know not. While residing in Hampshire, long after his leaving Birmingham, I have been told a lady of wealth and piety was fond of his society as a man of eminent religion, and used to invite him to her religious parties, for the sake of his expositions of the Scriptures, and his prayers; but he often came with such utter neglect of personal apparel, that she provided him with a new suit of clothes, in order that he might make a better appearance in her drawing-room. He came once or twice in the new clothes, but, to her great dismay and displeasure, she saw him enter one day in his old suit, and being asked why he had not put on the dress the lady had given him, he really did not know the condition in which he then stood before her, but supposed he was then clad in the new habiliments. The fact is, a poor necessitous man had begged a coat of him, and he had given away the new instead of the old one without being aware of it. It is not improbable that in some such way as this the new surtout given him at Birmingham had disappeared.

“In reviewing the character of Mr Adams, then, vidle I am entirely convinced he was *one* of the holiest, if not *the* holiest man I ever knew, I am still of opinion there was a tinge of monachism about him, and a kind of pietism that fitted him more for the cloister than for the pulpit. His eccentricities hung like a thin cloud over his excellences; and though it could not conceal them, yet somewhat dimmed, at least to public observation, their brightness, and hindered their effect upon others. Many men with less than one-half of his intense devotion, are abundantly more useful. He seemed more fitted for communion with God than with man: more adapted to hold intercourse with the church, or, I should rather say, with the better portion of it, than with the world; meaning, by that expression, to convey the idea that there are many professors of religion in whom the spirit of the gospel is so low, and the spirit of the world so predominant, that among them this eminent saint would have found himself as little at home in his own feelings, as he would have been found welcome to theirs.

“The last time I saw our friend was in the autumn of 1845, at Southampton, whither, having heard I was to preach there, he had

come to meet me. He appeared not so much altered as I had expected to find him, considering the years which had elapsed since I last saw him. He greeted me with the same affection, and I looked at him with the same veneration, as we had long cherished towards each other. He seemed to enjoy the sermon, which was delivered in Mr Adkins's chapel; and with the same respectful fidelity as he had used in former years, he begged me, to use his own words, to preach it somewhere with a little more explicit introduction of the divinity of the Saviour, which he thought the subject admitted of. We had some very delightful communion at the house of a friend; and thus terminated our intercourse for ever upon earth.

"I shall ever hold the name and memory of Eichard Adams in affectionate and grateful remembrance. How much of the undeserved and unexpected success which God, in His sovereignty, has been pleased to crown my very imperfect services in His Church, I owe to his prayers, I know not—that I shared largely in his intercessions I am sure—and if the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, I may conclude that *his* were supplications which God delighted to honour."

Mr Adams continued in Birmingham about four years, and then returned to the Isle of Wight. After a short interval, he was succeeded by a student from one of the London colleges, who remained only a few months, turned out badly, and ultimately went to America. For more than twenty years Mr James discharged, without assistance, the duties of his large and oppressive pastorate; but becoming conscious of the increase of physical infirmities, and anticipating with a constant and almost morbid dread their rapid development and aggravation, he repeatedly declared to his people his desire for a colleague who might, after his retirement or death, become his successor.

In 1847, a student was received into Spring-Hill College, to whom, from the commencement of his studies, Mr James manifested great kindness. In the early days of the youth's religious history, the "Anxious Inquirer" had rendered him too important a service for him to be without grateful affection for its author; but through his previous associations he had caught the distrust with which Mr James's Nonconformity was then regarded by some extreme Anti-State-Churchmen, and he seldom went to Mr

James's Saturday dinner without coming into very definite and vigorous though friendly controversy with his kindly and venerable host.

After a few months, reports reached Mr James which made him fear that his young friend was in danger of drifting away from evangelical truth into scepticism or heresy; and one Saturday he sent a note to the college requesting me—for I cannot longer tell the story in the third person—to come alone that afternoon to dine with him. I wondered what would be the explanation of this. At dinner there was as much freedom and cordiality on his part as usual, perhaps more. After dinner, he asked me to walk up-stairs with him into his study. As soon as we sat down, he drew his chair to the front of the fire, and bringing his great face close to mine he said, "Mr Dale, may I speak plainly to you?" "As plainly as you like, sir," was the reply. Then came out what he had heard, and what he feared. I answered him very frankly, and, as he might have justly thought, somewhat presumptuously; but, instead of reminding me of my youth, and the crudeness of my intellectual condition, he talked with me as familiarly and freely about the points on which we differed, as though he had been a lad of my own age; with far greater toleration, indeed, of what he thought my mistakes, than a lad of my own age would probably have manifested.

He was chairman of the Board of Education, and some of his *practical* recommendations to which I demurred he might have authoritatively enforced, but with admirable patience and wisdom he never passed beyond simple argument and advice. Though his counsels, I am sorry to say, failed to influence me, the discovery which I made that afternoon of the simplicity and generosity of his temper, and his genuine and deep concern for what he believed to be my spiritual and intellectual perils, effected a complete revolution in my feelings towards him; from that time, though it was only gradually that I came to feel his power, I venerated his goodness, and felt that in any trouble he would be a most faithful friend.

A year and a half afterwards, at the close of the long vacation in 1849, Mr James wrote to me to say he was very unwell, and

that he wished me to come down from London to preach for him on the following Sunday morning. Not having entered the theological class, and, therefore, never having heard any lectures on preaching, I was surprised by his letter, but came down, preached on the Sunday morning, and was his guest for two or three days. After supper on Sunday evening, we sat talking for a couple of hours about preaching; one of us with the ardent hopfulness with which the greatest of all human callings is not unfrequently anticipated, the other with the solemnity produced by the memory of many years of ministerial responsibility, but brightening often into a most genial sympathy with the sanguine enthusiasm of youth.

He explained, with characteristic simplicity and frankness, the principles by which he had been guided in the structure of his sermons, and threw out many suggestions on the art of preaching, which seemed to me at the time very valuable for their good sense and practical wisdom. The details of the conversation have faded from my memory; two things only can I remember with any distinctness,—the warmth and animation with which, in responding to some vehement expression of my sense of the nobleness and glory of the preacher's vocation, he said that a passion for preaching was a sure pledge of success; and the earnestness with which he spoke of "usefulness," as the one great end which a minister should propose to himself in all his labours.

Rather more than a year after this, he begged me to listen to "no hint or solicitation about settling with a congregation, without first consulting him and, in November 1851, he wrote me the following note:—

"EDGBASTON, *November 11, 1851.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I shall be obliged to you for a sermon next Sabbath, but I cannot yet say whether it will be in the morning or evening.

"I now touch upon a more serious subject. Do you remember, that many months ago I requested you not to hearken to any hint or solicitation about settling with a congregation till you had spoken to me? Perhaps you would conclude that I had some intention, not expressed in a suggestion so vague and general, but certainly implied. If so, your impression was correct. I had. I really meant, that provided all went on at college as had hitherto been the case, I should like, after

the present year of your studies was finished, to have your occasional help at Carr's Lane, without altogether breaking up your college life. So that by the end of *another* year you might be wholly, if you saw fit, an assistant to me.

"I confide this to your own bosom. Say not a word about it to any one. But at some convenient season we will talk it over. . . .—
Yours faithfully,

"J. A. JAMES."

The proposal, though it did not startle me quite as much as it would have done but for his previous very emphatic request that I would not commit myself to any engagement without consulting him, occasioned me great perplexity. I had come to regard Mr James with great affection and respect, and felt it would be a great honour and happiness to lighten his labours and to commence my ministry under the guidance of his experience and wisdom. But this settlement at Carr's Lane, as soon as my college course was over—it had then nearly two years to run—would cross some of my most cherished plans; it had been my intention to study in Germany for a few sessions after leaving Spring-Hill; this would have to be abandoned. Like most students, I had my visions of the kind of congregation to which it was my ambition to minister, and those visions were very unlike the reality which now seemed inevitable. The movement to evangelise the irreligious masses of our manufacturing population was at that time gathering great strength, and supposing my vocation lay in that direction, my scheme was to find a small congregation of poor people in the heart of a manufacturing district, and to make it the pivot and centre of an active system of evangelistic labour among the surrounding myriads of working people; this dream, too, had to be abandoned, and it was abandoned very reluctantly.

No choice, however, seemed left me, and so, during my last year at college, it was arranged that I should preach for Mr James on the first Sunday morning of every month, and occasionally at other times. To this arrangement he refers in a note written to me in September 1852, when the college session was just beginning.

“EDGBASTON, *September 17, 1852.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—I believe you perfectly understood the proposal I made to you for your future services at Carr’s Lane—to preach during the last year of your studies every Sunday morning when the Lord’s Supper is administered, and as often as I may require additional help, i.e., on Wednesday evenings, and at other times on the Sabbath—of course, asking moderate demands. . . . I do not wish to interfere with your preparation for the master’s degree—to which your reading must be most directed during the year. . . . I would carry on my classical studies, were I in your place, with great diligence. Try to be a good and accurate scholar. I deem this of great importance. Your course of reading for the degree will not only furnish much knowledge in philosophy, but be an admirable mental discipline. But take care of your health. Don’t overdo it. Attend to exercise. I forgot to ask if you smoked. If you have contracted this habit, I beseech you to break it. To me it appears of so much importance that it would tend to disturb our intercourse if you were addicted to this habit. You are not so far committed to it, even if you have begun it, as to find it difficult to destroy the pipe. You can have but little idea with what disgust and loathing it is regarded by many of our people, to whom your company would be less pleasing if you carried this habit with you.

“May I suggest a hint as to your delivery? Your voice is musical, your flow of language easy and elegant, your style good; but both manner and matter a little too equable. It is the flow of a river, graceful, and somewhat majestic; but it wants the occasional rush, rapid and cataract, more elevation occasionally, more impassioned intonation, more solemn point and appeal. You can be a *very* good speaker. We do much by pathos, by *heart* as well as head. Feeling, if I have any *power* at all, has constituted no small share of it.

“As you will have to preach often to the same people, I hope this will not interfere with your preparation for the degree. I do not by any means wish that it should. . . .—Yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

The next letter was written in answer to some inquiries of mine suggested by impressions, inaccurate as they proved to be, which I had received concerning Mr James’s plans for the future from a gentleman with whom he had been conversing about his intentions:—

“EDGBASTON, *May 30, 1853.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—As I do not receive my letters on Sundays, I had

not read yours of Saturday when I saw you yesterday, or I might have then alluded generally to its contents, though they require a more lengthened reply and more extended explanation than I could have given during the few minutes we were together in the vestry.

“First of all, let me say that I approve, admire, and commend the frankness with which you have expressed your views on several points. Candour and explicitness should characterise our whole conduct towards each other in the important relation in which we now stand, and I therefore thank you for your communication, and beg that in future the same open-heartedness may guide your whole behaviour towards me, and I shall avail myself of the same privilege of friendship of placing before you anything that strikes me as requiring explanation or alteration. Ingenuousness is the best security, as it is the truest expression of sincere and hearty friendship.

“Your letter affords me the opportunity of laying before you what I ought to have done before,—my whole object, purpose, and plan in reference to my future connexion with you. I seemed to take it for granted that you knew all about it, for what has been long our intention to do we are apt to suppose is already done. I have ever wished to help my people in the selection of my successor, that they might not, after my death, or when I am incapable of the duties of the pastorate, be left to the hazard of a schism and division in the exercise of their choice. Yet observing how often a co-pastorate had proved a source of uneasiness both to the ministers and the churches, I hesitated about a step of such importance. My hopes, however, prevailed above my fears when I saw the budding excellences of your talents and disposition, and after much and earnest prayer to God, I determined to try the experiment. I thought I saw in you one who, without servility or forgetfulness of what was due to himself, would regard me with some of the respect and deference as well as affection due from a son to a father, one who would not be a suspicious, jealous, and sensitive stickler for the last and least punctilio of his rights. All I have seen and heard confirms me in the conviction that in this view of you I have not mistaken your character. To carry out my purpose, you will recollect I proposed to you that you should come for a year as my assistant, to preach once for me on the Sabbaths when the Lord’s Supper is administered; and on other occasions when wanted, leaving you still at college to pursue your studies till the end of your curriculum. I stated that I would go no further in the way of positive engagement, but that if your services continued to prove acceptable, I should then more fully engage you as my assistant for another year. I am not quite sure whether I ever till now explicitly informed you what services I should require of you during the second year. These I will mention

presently. As the expiration of the first year was to determine whether our relationship should proceed further, so the expiration of the second was to determine the same thing. The second is a kind of probation, both for you and me to ascertain whether we can, with mutual assent and consent, and consent of the church, and with entire confidence of all parties, come into the co-pastorate. The expiration of the second year will, if I live so long, bring me to my jubilee, when, if our way be clear, it is my intention to share the pastorate with you, or, if we should not see fit to come together, with some one else. But in order to prevent all collision between two co-ordinate powers, it appears to me that the plan of Dr Cox of Hackney is a very wise and good one. He has invited Mr Kattens, who is not a young man, to be his co-pastor, at the same time reserving to himself the presidency at the church meetings, and I believe the Lord's Table, except when he invites Mr Kattens to take his place, which, of course, he sometimes does. And he also considers that his voice in all church matters is to be considered next to the New Testament, the *ultima lex* for guiding the decisions of the church. This is not for the sake of power but of peace, to shut out the occasion of contest between the two pastors. The younger one may well consent to this, considering that it cannot be long before he will not only be supreme, but alone.

“Well, now, *we* are about to enter upon the second year of our engagement, and my proposal for that year is to divide the services of each Sabbath, alternating between the morning and evening, and the same as to the week-day service; *i.e.*, he who preaches on the morning of one Sabbath preach on the evening of the next, and he who preaches one Wednesday evening be silent the next; and each to take the whole day when the other is out, either occasionally for a single Sabbath, or during their annual excursion. All this must, of course, depend upon the approbation and decision of the church. You must also relieve me from Bible classes, attention to the schools, and some portion of the visitation of the sick, burials, and marriages. . . . And now, my dear young friend, I have told you all that is in my heart towards you—all? No, not all, for I cannot do this. I cannot tell you how much and how earnestly I pray for you, how deeply solicitous and how tremblingly anxious I am for you—for your piety, your soundness of sentiment, your usefulness, your happiness. The hope that you may suit me and my church is indeed a blessed one. It would be wormwood and gall to my cup if anything should disappoint my expectations concerning you. No father ever felt more solicitous about a child of promise on which his heart was set than I do about you. It is a matter about which we should both be incessant and importunate in prayer: a matter on which the serenity of my evening and the brightness of your morning of life

depend; and in which the comfort and respectability of both are involved: and not only so, but also the peace and prosperity of a large and at present flourishing church. Oh, let us be devout, and carry it to God. Let us be jealous, not indeed of each other, but of ourselves. I am anxious, but I am hopeful. I am sure the welfare of the church lies very, very near my heart. I can still live and labour for it, or, if God wills it, I can die for it; but I can neither live happily nor die comfortably if its peace be disturbed or its prosperity be destroyed or even hindered. May God bless you with all wisdom and grace, and make you and keep you a holy, devoted, successful minister of the New Covenant many years after the hand which pens these lines shall have 'lost its cunning,' and shall have given itself in fellowship to the worms of the earth!—Your affectionate friend, and as yet your pastor,

“J. A. JAMES.”

My college course ended in June 1853, and at the church meeting previous to the first Sunday in July, the church was requested to sanction my appointment as assistant minister. Among Congregationalists the assistant minister is only a private member of the church, who aids the pastor in certain kinds of ministerial duty; he may not have been ordained; in many churches, custom would prevent him presiding at the Lord's Supper or administering baptism. He has no pastoral authority; he is not chosen or appointed by the church, but by the pastor whom he assists. Though, however, he occupies no recognised office, it is obviously required by the spirit and principles of Congregationalism, that the church should be invited to express its opinion on his appointment; and hence the resolutions which were forwarded by Mr James with his letter of July the 2d. The resolutions themselves it is unnecessary to insert.

The letter dated July the 14th was in answer to my acceptance of the invitation; that of July the 27th was written just as he was leaving home, and immediately before my work in Birmingham was to commence; that of August the 23d was written from Mr Henderson's of Park, near Glasgow; and the last of this series was written in answer to a desponding letter of mine, written to him while I was away from Birmingham for a few days in February 1854.

“EDGBASTON, July 2, 1853.

“MY DEAR YOUNG BROTHER,—I now forward you a copy of the resolutions which were passed at the church meeting last evening; and it will be to you, as it was to us, matter of most fervent praise that they all passed not only *unanimously*, but most cordially.

“The reading of this document can convey to you but an inadequate idea of the feeling of the church. I send you the *letter* of what was done; the spirit cannot be thus forwarded,—all hearts were full to overflowing. Is it not of God? Is it not a token for good? Have we not been led thus far by the Divine head of the Church? And may we not take encouragement from this, to hope that He will make our path as plain for the future as He has for the past; and that our course will be as plainly indicated at the close of the *second* year as it has been at the close of the first? Surely you must be encouraged by the thought that, out of such a church, numbering now above nine hundred members, not one opposing hand was lifted up, not one dissentient voice threw in a discord to the general harmony. I see in all this an answer to the intensely fervent prayer which I have, without ceasing, presented to God. And now, my dear brother, may you come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ! May your mind be rightly directed in the answer you give to me! I can anticipate but *one* reply. You have already, I am sure, carried this matter to Him whose blessing alone can make anything we do profitable to ourselves or glorious to Himself. Still invoke His direction and benediction. May He who sent forth His seraphim to purify the lips of the prophet, and to prepare him first to receive and then deliver the message of the Lord, purify *your* mind and heart to know and fulfil His counsel!

“It is a solemn crisis in the history of us both. I trust we feel it to be so. My prayers are intensely earnest that, it may be for God’s glory and the good of the church, as well as for our mutual comfort. I feel it to be an explicit and unambiguous notification to myself of the approximating close of my ministry. I seem to be entering on the last stage of my journey, and deeply serious do I feel in these circumstances. Of course, the ministry never can appear in such a light as when the greater part of it is viewed as past.

“May you set out with these impressive contemplations!

“Before we see each other, I may perhaps offer a few suggestions in reference to your future course. In the mean time, I am sure I need not entreat you to be much in prayer for the Divine unction to rest upon you. I hope we shall often pray together, and help each other to cultivate a spirit of deep devotion.

“I congratulate you on your success at the university examination. When Henry Martyn, whose memoir I recommend to you, came out of

the Senate House with the honour of senior wranglership, his reflection was, 'I am surprised now to find what a shadow I have grasped.' May you have an equally deep impression of the vanity of earthly things! It is the knowledge you have acquired, rather than the honour of getting it, that is to be chiefly valued.

"I hope you are getting health by your vacation, and that you will come-home strong to labour. I am going to preach to-morrow twice from 1 Thess. v. 25, ('Brethren, pray for us.') This is to follow up the pledge of the church given last evening. . . .—Yours affectionately,

"J. A. JAMES."

"CARR'S LANE, July 14, 1853.

"MY DEAR YOUNG BROTHER,—I received your two letters, the one addressed to myself, and the other to the church, and am thankful to our heavenly Father for their contenta I had little doubt of your acceptance of an invitation which, without any presumptuous attempt to pry into the secrets of Omniscience, or to interpret the will of God by events accordant with our wishes, may, I think, be considered as sent by Him as well as by us. In this case I think we may say that *vox populi* is *vox Dei*. It is a rare occurrence that so large a church should be so perfectly and cordially unanimous, and must be as great a satisfaction to your mind, in the decision to which you have come, as it is to mine. You will very naturally suppose that I must feel some solemnity, which, though unmixed with suspicion or misgiving, cannot be unaccompanied with solicitude in thus sharing with another the labours of my pulpit and the affections of my people. There is, however, as little of this in my heart as can ever be expected in any similar case. My first dependence for our entire good understanding is upon Him, who has both our hearts in His keeping, and next, upon the kindness, frankness, and amiableness of your disposition, together, of course, with those Christian graces which the great Sanctifier has wrought in you. Our piety is the surest guardian of our peace. The more we are baptized with the Spirit of holy love to Him, who is Himself light and love, the less likely shall we be ever to come into a state of alienation and contention. Seraphs in heaven ever walk together and are agreed. May we approach them in the fervour of their love and purity! then we shall also come near to them in their unbroken harmony. O my brother, it is in this we are all most wanting. Our principal defects as ministers lie chiefly in our character as Christians. We should be all better preachers, and better pastors, if we were holier men. And it is my hope and my prayer, that the intercourse which you and I may hold, may improve us both, and help to keep up the divine life within us. I am myself deeply sensible how far short we all are in this respect.

A minister's heart should, so far as human instrumentality goes, be the central fire of the church. I have no doubt you have found it the most difficult thing you had to do at college to keep up the spiritual pulse in good and healthful tone. Aristotle, Locke, and Cousin afford small helps to faith, hope, and love. Yet they will assist you in dealing with human intellects. You enter upon your ministerial career with advantages of this kind, of which I knew very little at the outset of life. I had but a small capital to begin with, but I have contrived to work it well. *One* thing I *did* possess, and have retained, and that is a clear understanding of the object of the ministry. 'They watch for souls as they that must give account' has been my motto; and a constant aim at conversion, in the good old Puritan meaning of that term, has been my aim. I very early read 'Baxter's Reformed Pastor,' and I moulded my preaching after that model I have always considered that a minister does as much by his heart as he does by his head. If mind is moved by mind, heart is moved by heart. True it is that the converse is also a fact, heart is moved by mind, and mind led by the heart. A cold intellectuality—a mere scientific mode of preaching will do little good. My 'Anxious Inquirer' is but an embodiment of my preaching. And how marvellously has God honoured that unpretending work! Now, it may be supposed that what reaches the soul through the eyes, will also reach it through the ear. I am sure it is the gospel in all its fulness, earnestly, feelingly, but powerfully preached, that God will bless for the conversion of souls. Don't imagine I am writing a lecture, I am only giving you my ministerial experience. You know me and my congregation, and know that through God's most surprising grace, I have done something, and this is how I have done it. And then I have been enabled to keep hold of the hearts of the people, by my own heart being much shewn to them in all my intercourse with them. They knew I loved them, and love begets love. Indeed, it is this which I sometimes think has led me into a degree of familiarity which I would advise you to restrain. My tendency is to too much openness and frankness. My affability has perhaps degenerated into an undignified *freeness of manner*. I would not be lordly, reserved, stately. I would not assume either the odour of sanctity, or the pomp and air of officiality; but if I were to go over life again, I should be a little more reserved. My kindness should not be less fervent, nor my affability less easy and gentle; but they should be more restrained and elevated. Akin to this, I have permitted my cheerfulness, to which I am naturally prone, to partake of a little too much facetiousness. I don't think I ever approached the character of a jester. Broad farce and buffoonery I ever condemned in others, and avoided in myself; but I have been somewhat more jocose than I now

quite approve. Not that I do not like and approve a good laugh—I enjoy it; but it has sometimes trenched on seriousness. If the deacons must be ‘grave,’ surely the bishop should be [[σεμνός]]—a word that signifies dignity. And now I mention these things that you might give them due consideration, and if they strike you with any force as applicable to me, to profit by them. A cheerful man, you and I, and all Christians, as well as all Christian ministers, ought to be. Nothing spectral should be in us.

“As to my habits in my intercourse with my people, these have been somewhat restrained. I have abstained from evening parties, as I deemed them most profitless to myself and others.

“To sit three hours in mere chit-chat, or hearing young ladies play on the piano and sing, was a waste of time I could not endure. I never supped out except at the Book Society Meetings, and then I invariably left at half-past ten. Nor have I been in the habit of frequenting dinner parties. I do not like this meal away from my own table many times in one year. Perhaps I have erred in being too little with my people. This, however, is to err on the right side. No one could ever call me a gossiping minister. Many, I am persuaded, make themselves too familiar with their people in this way. A dignified reserve is better than a jocular familiarity. By these means I have, through God’s blessing, I believe, maintained the respect as well as the affections of my people. If I do not mistake you, your danger will lie on the side of mine.

“You will, I am sure, take all this in good part as coming from one who is jealous over you with a godly jealousy. . . .

“This has been written at several times, for I am very busy.—Yours
J. A. JAMES.”

“EDGBASTON, *July 27, 1853.*

“MY DEAR YOUNG BROTHER,—I have just written a sermon to be preached on Sabbath morning next, from 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11, [‘Now, if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him; but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren;’] with what reference I need not say, and it has been followed by an intense prayer founded on Rom. xv. 29. May the exhortation to the church be felt and followed by them, and the petition to God be answered in the letter and spirit of it! You are aware, of course, that you are expected to enter on your ministry at Carr’s Lane on Sabbath week, and that you are looked to for the whole service for the time of my absence, both Sabbath-days and week-days. This, I am aware, is a hard service, but the God whom you serve will help you in it, and through it. You are coming to a people who are prepared

to receive you, and who will welcome you to their pulpit. Much prayer, I am quite sure, will go up to God for you. There is little ground for the fear mentioned in the text, yet I have thought it not unreasonable to require for you a warm-hearted, confidential reception. You may return to us, therefore, full of confidence both in God and His people.

“*I have this day been looking out for lodgings for you, and have found what, I think, will suit you, in Francis Street; that is the street just opposite Mr Keep’s house, leading into Monument Lane; but, of course, nothing is determined upon till you come. Were I at home I would wish you to come at once to my house; and if you have not provided for your reception, and will let me know, I will procure some friendly Gaius to take you in until you have determined for yourself. . . . —Yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

“PARK, GLASGOW, *August 23, 1853.*

“MY DEAR YOUNG BROTHER,—I have lately led so rambling a life, and have been so perpetually in locomotion, that I have had but little opportunity for corresponding with any one, or I possibly might have forwarded you a few lines before this. It is true I have but little to communicate, beyond the information that I have had a most agreeable journey from the outset to the present moment. The sojourn with Mr Backhouse at Scarborough, and the rambles with him and my son around the ruined abbeys of Yorkshire were delightful. I am now confined to the house by the first day’s rain I have had since I left home, and this gives me leisure for writing up my correspondence.

“Yesterday was fine, when we had a glorious view of the mountains round Loch Long and Loch Lomond. I forget whether you have seen Scotland. If you have not, you have a great treat before you; and if you have, the repetition of a former enjoyment. I am aware the surprise and novelty of a first view of fine scenery can never be repeated; but the quiet, calm, minute gratification resulting from it is ever new and ever fresh. I confess to so much delight, that I am somewhat fearful occasionally of being too sensuous, and stopping in the vestibule of the temple of God without passing on by faith to the Adytum, the Holy of Holies, where the God of grace reigns upon the mercy-seat between the Cherubim. And, after all, it is not from the sublime or beautiful of nature the soul derives her sustenance, or her highest enjoyment. Not a ray of mercy beams upon the dark and troubled conscience, not a whisper of consolation is heard by the broken or contrite heart.

* I let this passage stand, as it is an illustration of the minute and kind attentions which, through the whole time of our connexion, Mr James was constantly shewing me.—ED.

“I hope you have found this initiation into the duties of office, if not easy, yet not oppressive. I am aware it was not wading into the waters of the sanctuary when they were only ankle-deep, but plunging into them when they were even to the loins.

“I learn nothing but satisfaction with your labours, and am glad to hear that, as the best proof of the pleasure of the people in hearing you, the congregations are good. I am more and more convinced that the substantial verities of Divine revelation, are the most direct and surest way to the affection, the esteem, and the confidence of the people. This I know from experience, as well as by report. I do not say it in the way of boasting, nor from an impulse of vanity, but in order to bear witness to the truth of the assertion I have just made,—the kindness and respectful, almost reverential, attention I receive, astonishes and humbles me; and I cannot but perceive it is a tribute, not so much to talent, for I am not above multitudes of my brethren in this respect, and far, very far below many of them, but to supposed *usefulness*. The ‘Anxious Inquirer’ has sent my name everywhere before me, and prepares everywhere the kind of reception I have alluded to. There is a species of sanctity in this reception to which I have little claim, a most exaggerated idea of my usefulness, but still this exists. Oh, is there, can there be anything comparable with this? How much better than adulation and flattering compliments! One look, one word, one smile, which says, I owe you something, for my soul’s welfare is worth volumes of mere encomiastic language. May you, my dear brother, have much of this!

“I have been thinking much in what way you may be useful to the young men of the congregation. It has occurred to me that by another year you could form a class, distinct from and above the Brotherly Society, and take them through some course of study, perhaps of a somewhat metaphysical character, such as mental philosophy, or ‘Butler’s Analogy,’ for which your education has peculiarly fitted you. I should like you to share with me attention to inquirers. It has often occurred to me that we do not individualise our hearers sufficiently. There is too much collective teaching, and not enough of class instruction. Impressions die away for want of being fostered and deepened by private and personal intercourse. In the earlier period of my ministerial career I was very deficient in this part of my duty, but have endeavoured to supply the deficiency in more recent times. You will also do much to establish yourself in the affections of the people by visiting the sick. Here I have been wanting in my later years, which may be accounted for, if not excused, by my being engaged so much in public business and authorship. It has occurred to me whether

a certain portion of the town might not be assigned to you as your particular charge.

"I have been considering the case of the Lozells. As regards the Sabbath, the arrangement is already settled between us, but nothing has been said of the week-day services. To give the cause all the advantages we can secure for it, I think it desirable to have *one* service which might combine both prayer-meeting and sermon, *i.e.*, an address, which might be held simultaneously with Carr's Lane Wednesday evening service, and which I would share with you, taking it alternately.

"However, this may not be thought necessary when we come to consider matters more maturely. I will converse with Mr Williams on the subject. We cannot commence our labours there till the second Sabbath in September, in consequence of the Lord's Supper; and it just occurs to me that on the days of the Supper it will always be necessary for me to preach in the morning, or else we must get a supply for the Lozells from the college.

"I am glad to hear you have found lodgings in Frederick Street, though, as I do not know at what house you have obtained them, I must send this to my own residence, and direct it to be forwarded to you. May the good Lord abundantly bless you.—Yours very truly,

"J. A. JAMES."

"EDGBASTON, *February 4, 1854.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad to learn that this temporary suspension of home duties and the recreative influence of agreeable society have contributed to restore your health and spirits, and that you have the prospect of returning 'strong to labour.'

"Your complaints of a want of apparent usefulness, while I am sorry that there should be in your estimation any ground for them, please me much, because I see by them what way the mind points. It is, my dear friend, a good sign, and seems to me to indicate a coming blessing. It would be a portent of no equivocal nature if you were satisfied with large, attentive, and applauding congregations, and with the universal esteem and regard of the whole church, while, at the same time, there were no proofs of usefulness in the way of conversion. Here, as it strikes me, is the low ambition of many young ministers—to be contented with an admiring crowd. But do not be discouraged. There may be seed germinating that does not yet appear above ground. I am often of the same mind with yourself, and am ready to think I am doing little in bringing sinners to the Saviour. I believe that, so far as preaching goes, Mr ——— converts more souls than I do. How is this? I will tell you. He dwells more upon elementary truths than we do.

He preaches the law in its spirituality and extent to produce conviction of sin, and the gospel in its fulness and freeness for pardon. He commends himself to every man's *conscience*. We are afraid of being thought to deal in old truths. I sometimes am ready to think I have lost the power of getting at the conscience I once had. I must go back again to regeneration, justification, and all the truths that cluster round these central doctrines; and I mean to do so. When you come back I will shew you a book I have got from America.* I wish to preach at the Lozells next Sunday *evening*, to go on with the lecture on Joseph. . . . —Yours most truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

At the close of the year's assistantship, it was determined, at Mr James's suggestion and request, that the church should be convened to consider the expediency of inviting the assistant minister to the co-pastorate. As I was away from home, he communicated to me the result of this meeting in the following letter:—

“EDGBASTON, *July 11, 1851.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Mr Wright, I find, has anticipated me in communicating the joyful result of last night's church meeting; but as he gave no details, I am sure the communication of them will be as delightful for you to receive as it is to me to make. I have rarely sat down to the writing of a letter with such thankfulness as I do to this.

“I preached twice last Sabbath with immediate reference to the church meeting, and the momentous purpose for which it was called. The morning discourse was founded on Acts xiv. 23, [‘And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed,'] and was a right down Nonconformist sermon to vindicate our practice in the popular choice of our ministers. In the evening I preached from Phil ii. 1, 2, [‘If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,'] endeavouring to shew the importance of harmony in a church, and how much and for what reasons it contributed to the joy of its pastor. On Monday evening the deacons met for tea, and arranged the proceedings of the evening. The weather was most unpropitious, as it poured with rain. But the enthusiasm of the church was not to be extinguished by torrents; it was actuated by a love that many waters could not quench. As the choice depended upon numbers, it was arranged that for the more expeditious and facile method of taking them, the brethren should all sit together on the right hand side

* Spencer's Pastoral Sketches.

of the desk,* and for the first time perhaps in the history of the church the two sexes were divided, and appeared in their separate array. It was rather a curious as well as novel, and, on the part of *the* sex, rather a tantalising concern. After my prayer and address, the first business was the counting, to ascertain if the numbers came within the prescription of the deed; for if it did not, the business would have been immediately arrested, and the meeting postponed to collect a larger number. We felt, of course, some little solicitude on this point, but a few minutes relieved us of this; and when it was announced that more than two-thirds of the male members were present, a sense of joy lifted up the whole church, and many turned towards each other with a look and a nod of silent but expressive congratulation. Mr Phipson, as senior deacon, then read the first and most important resolution, to invite you as co-pastor. His speech was tender, and not too long. He was followed by Mr Cocks. I then put the resolution. In an instant up flew a little forest of hands and arms, for the brethren were not content with lifting up the former, but, to give emphatic expression to their suffrages, held up their arms, and seemed to me to give their hands a shake, as if to say, 'Let that be taken for the lifting up of our hearts, our whole hearts.' Then came the call for the negative, if any. I looked round; not a hand was to be seen. I could not refrain the manifestation of deep emotion, and after uttering an audible 'sentence of thanksgiving to God, sat down mastered by my feelings. That God should have so united the hearts of nearly a thousand members, for the women voted with their souls though they were not allowed to do so with their-bodies in the choice of a pastor, must, I think, be taken as bearing out the *vox populi, vox Dei*. Yes, my brother, we cannot interpret it otherwise than that *our* choice is God's choice. While thus absorbed in my own feelings, I heard a burst of song spontaneously uttered by the church in the doxology.

"The other resolutions were all passed with equal unanimity—not a single negative given to any one of them during the whole evening.

"Then came the affixing the signatures to the document, and not a man left the place till he had recorded his name as well as given his vote for you.

"Never was there such a church meeting before. It was full to overflowing with holy joy and thanksgiving. After it was over many gathered round me to express their congratulations, and well they might. Oh, how many prayers that meeting answered, how many anxieties it relieved, how many hopes it excited! And now, my dear

* By the custom of the Carr's Lane Church, only the male members vote; and a certain proportion of the whole number must unite, to make the election of a minister valid.—Ed.

brother, what say you to this? Does it not cause gratitude and love to our adorable Lord? Does it not fill your heart with thanksgiving and your mouth with praise?

"You need not be told that I invite you to be my co-pastor. If you do, I relieve your anxiety by saying, 'Come and labour with me in the gospel of Christ. Come and be the evening star of my life. Come and help me amidst that growing weakness which I must soon expect. And may our good Lord bring you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ!'

"I cannot enlarge as I am just going off to Tamworth, and have been hindered nearly all the morning from writing, and have now written so fast and so badly that I am afraid you will not be able to read what I have written. . . .—I am affectionately yours,

"J. A. JAMES."

Whether he had forgotten that he had preached on *1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11* on my election to the assistantship, I cannot tell; however, he preached on the same text again on my election to the co-pastorate; and I know that the tone and spirit of all he said of me in private sustained his public expression of affection and confidence.

From the commencement of the co-pastorate he never took for granted my consent to any of his own plans about the action of the church or the management of any of its institutions, but invariably waited till we had discussed them together. In committees, and in conferences on questions of public interest, when the weight of his judgment had almost silenced those who differed from him, it was not unfrequently my ill-fortune to feel obliged to state distinctly and fully the reasons against the course he proposed; and I never feared that this would irritate or annoy him, for he did not imagine that our mutual friendliness was to be maintained by concealment and compromise. At one time, in a series of sermons on the Epistle to the Romans, I happened to express opinions on an important theological subject, seriously out of harmony with those held by many members of the church and congregation, and not absolutely identical with his own. It would have been foolish and impertinent to seek an occasion for the statement of doctrinal views with which I knew he did not coincide; but when the occasion came it did not seem right to shelter the discrepancy by silence or evasion. He was not ignorant of the

disturbance and alarm which these sermons excited, and though substantially my opinions were not very unlike those held by himself, our modes of stating them greatly differed. His conduct, through that time of disquietude, was singularly noble. Without compromising his own convictions, the whole of his personal influence was exerted to soothe and tranquillise the agitation and excitement. I cannot omit to mention, that, through his own request and by his own act, the sum devoted by the church to the support of its ministers was divided equally between us when the co-pastorate began; and that gradually his own pastoral income was diminished, and that of his colleague increased, until at his death the elder minister received from the church less than one-half the amount that was received by the younger. To the close of his life not a passing shadow clouded the kindness of our mutual relations; and if any wish to know how it was that we worked together so happily, I can give a very definite and satisfactory reply.

In his heart of hearts, the aged minister loved and trusted his younger colleague—was his generous, unflinching champion against all suspicion and unjust censure—was ingenious in his devices to secure for him public respect and honour—was open and frank in the private discussion of questions on which they disagreed—never suggested, because he never supposed, that the authority of his own age, reputation, and experience could justify him in requiring the younger minister to sacrifice or trifle with his convictions of truth or duty. In one word, Mr James had a noble, generous temper, and in all his conduct towards me, there was never the faintest trace of suspicion or selfishness.

The letter dated March 1, 1855, was written to me while away on my wedding tour; those dated May 28 and June 2, 1856, were written in answer to a letter written to him from Ireland during my annual holiday, the contents of which are sufficiently indicated by the replies they elicited. The letter from Hastings was written to me when he was away from home in the summer of 1856.

At the close of the year 1857, I was invited to become the pastor of the church assembling in Cavendish Street Chapel, Manchester, and on many accounts had a very strong persuasion

that my usefulness there would be greater than at Carr's Lane. After much agitating reflection, I went away from home to give the question a more quiet and thoughtful investigation than was possible while I was in daily contact with Mr James and the members of Carr's Lane Church. I finally determined to place before Mr James himself my reasons for believing that the claims of Manchester preponderated, and to trust the decision to his own judgment. His two letters, dated December 24 and December 26 1857, conveyed me his decision, and determined my course.

The letter on ministerial assistants to Dr Fletcher was written, I believe, about the year 1830; but as it affords important illustration of the views Mr James then held on the subject of this chapter, it has been reserved for insertion here.

“EDGBASTON, *March 1, 1855.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I had been waiting with some degree of impatience for intelligence from you, having till your letter arrived no answer to give to the numerous inquiries which were made concerning you and yours.

“I need scarcely say how large a portion of my family and personal devotions was given to the subject of your union on the day of its formation, or how sincerely I now congratulate you on the event so interesting to all the feelings of your heart, so important to your future happiness and usefulness in life. I hope and believe that you have not now to search for evidence that nothing is a matter of indifference to me that concerns you. Your marriage is an occurrence in which not only you and the object of your dearest earthly affections have a stake, but I also, and the whole church of which you are one of the pastors. We have, however, confidence first of all in God, that His grace will be so richly bestowed upon you as not to allow the cares and comforts of domestic life to damp your ardour in the discharge of the functions of the still higher relation in which you stand to Christ and His church; and then we have confidence in you, that the most assiduous and delightful attention you pay to the comfort of her you have chosen to be the companion of your pilgrimage will not make you less watchful for the salvation of immortal souls. Much prayer has gone up to the fountain of wisdom and grace that you may give full proof of your fitness to rule the church of God by the discreet and holy manner in which you govern your own household. Our example, both in our individual and domestic conduct, is known, and must be influential for good or evil. Our households should be patterns for the

flock. The apostle's language in 1 Timothy iii. seems to imply all this. In going through life I have endeavoured to bear this in recollection; and though I could have lived in somewhat more showy and expensive style, I have chosen rather to be known for a dignified simplicity. I have marked the tendency of the age to indulge a taste for a little more worldly conformity than I thought compatible with the Christian profession, and I have determined that I would abstain from even the appearance of this evil. In this I was nobly sustained by both my wives—women of considerable property, of tolerably high connexion, of sound sense, of sincere piety and patrician bearing. I owe much, very much, to both these excellent women. Their prudence was exemplary, never obtruding themselves on the congregation, never demanding deference, though it was conceded to them, and never backward to give their influence to all that was holy, benevolent, and useful. Fifty years hence, when hoary with age, and crowned with the honours of saintly piety and ministerial usefulness—when ripening for heaven amidst the respect and affection of your friends on earth, may it be granted to you to speak of that dear young woman whom Providence has placed at your side, as I now speak of those whom I have had and lost; with this difference, however, that you may have to bear this testimony to *herself*, living and sharing with you the fruits of a pious old age, while I am permitted only to bear my testimony to the *memory* of departed excellence.

“And now to one or two topics of your letter. You say nothing about the indisposition with which you left Birmingham; therefore I hope, despite of the weather, you have lost this.

“I think your choice of Cambridge and Oxford as objects of interest during your journey, was a wise one. These can be seen when the country is wrapped in the wintry, sheet of snow, or bound in the icy chains of frost. I am glad you heard Newman Hall, and I am not sorry you learned from him, if nothing else, the advantage in homiletics of announced divisions of discourse. What you say is very true, that they often break the force of an address. This, however, depends on their nature and number. If they are *conjunctive* and not *disjunctive*, they aid the memory without materially weakening the effects of the sermon at the time. Besides, the mental capacity of the audience should also be taken into account. An overwhelming majority of our congregations consist of persons who, if they are to travel through a sermon at all, and not to lose their way on a plain, which has neither roads nor milestones, must travel by the easy stages of these divisions. Still an occasional deviation from this plan introduces variety of manner. I think it judicious and useful sometimes to expound according to the Scotch method of lecturing, verse by verse—sometimes to extract the essence

of a passage and dilate upon it with great breadth; but as a general rule, divisions are the most useful style of preaching. I think I told you that one of the best educated members of our church once complained of your deficiency in this, and said for want of it he could not carry away so much of your sermons as he could wish. Mr Jay, in his autobiography, has some useful remarks on this. . . .

“And now a little about myself. I went through the two sermons with as much ease as I did before my illness, although one of them was a funeral sermon for Mr Lee, which occupied nearly an hour. I am getting on, or rather Hudson is, with the book very fast. I have received from Mr Bolton, Mr Jay’s son-in-law, a copy of a funeral sermon for Dr Spencer, the author of which gives a most striking account of him, and which will enrich my little volume. I have looked over again ‘The Whistling Thinker,’ and shall take it in.

“And now, may God preserve you and your bride during the remainder of your journey, and may you return strong to labour in the work of saving souls. My kindest regards to Mrs Dale.—Yours most affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

“EDGBASTON, *May 28, 1856.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . Well, now to your letter. First of all, I am thankful you have had a pleasant voyage and reception. It is well you went over on Saturday, and not on Sunday, for we had quite a hurricane on the latter. I think the excursion will do you more good than my London journey did me. I took a sad cold, and was very unwell on Monday; but preached on Sunday evening, and returned next day. I have been improving all the week. Mr Scales preached for me on Sunday evening, and Mr Barker takes next Sunday morning. But I am getting off from you to myself. You were in one of *my* gloomy moods when you wrote your letter, or perhaps I had better and rather say you were passing through the searching and purifying fire, under the observing eye of the great Refiner. I am not surprised by these mental conflicts, nor grieved by them. Perhaps you needed them; and, indeed, we need not say ‘perhaps,’ for it is certain, or else you would not have had them. Few young men have set sail on their ministerial voyage with a smoother sea, a fairer wind, or fuller sails. If there has not been splendid success in the way of conversion, there has been general acceptance. You have heard no complaints—you have witnessed no neglects—you have felt no chilling indifference towards you. Your congregations have equalled if not excelled mine, and that when you were expected in the pulpit. Nothing, then, can have discouraged you but the lack of direct conversions by your

ministry. But have not I equal cause to be disheartened? Are not the instances of *your* success equal to mine? yea, are they not more numerous? Besides, does either of us know yet what really exist? I am, while I write, thus condemning myself, for there are times when I am ready to think my usefulness is over, and that I may almost as well give up. And here let me say, perhaps we have both been too anxious about results—too anxious *on our own account*. Is our anxiety for Christ, for souls, or for ourselves? I have lately thought in reading the New Testament, that the apostles do not seem to have perplexed themselves so much about success as taking the right means to obtain it. To preach and to make known Christ was their aim, and they seem to think they had done a great work when they had done this. May we not both learn something here? I believe we may. This comforted the apostle. 'We are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, both in them that are saved and in them that perish.' It is a great thing to diffuse this odour. Let our sermons, our conversation, our whole character and conduct, be scented with this perfume, and we may be sure of acceptance and favour with God.

"Now, my good friend, let me expostulate with you on your supposition that you could be as useful for Christ in secular life as in the office of the Christian ministry. How could such an idea find lodgment for a moment in your mind? That Christian laymen may be very useful in the cause of religion, cannot be questioned, and that many of them do far more good than *some* preachers, is quite clear. But, then, let us not make the comparison between men of distinguished talent out of the ministry and of no talent in it. Our inquiry should be, whether men gifted to be preachers by voice, manner, talent, and piety, as ministers, are not blessed with powers and opportunities for usefulness, that far exceed those of almost any laymen whatever. *You* are one of those who are adapted and qualified for the work of the pulpit; and you may well ask in what sphere of activity could you be so well employed for Christ and His Church as that which you now occupy. But against all this you reply the paucity of instances of success which have attended your labours. To *your* reply I bring as mine, what I have said in a former part of my letter. It is really too soon yet for you to ascertain the degree of your success, or the defect of it.

"Let me now ask if you could make your sermons a little more telling—if you could add to the efficiency of your public services. Two things have sometimes occurred to me. Your prayers want a little more simplicity, and to be a little more petitionary. They are too much in the style of elaborate and elegant compositions. We all might learn something from the dignity and simplicity of the Church of England. Then, as to your sermons. There is in you what I have

often felt to be in me, a certain kind of—I hardly know how to put it in a positive form, and I must therefore adopt a negative one—a want of solemnity.

“We preach on high, sacred, and momentous topics of religion in much the same tone, manner, and spirit, as we should do on any secular topics. It seems to me we approach what is light and flippant in manner. Then we are not sufficiently textual. We also need a little more of the experimental, the aesthetic. We preach too little to the *heart*. Our sermons are too religiously scientific, or rather too scientifically religious. You want also a little more pathos. In your comparative seclusion, your ‘retreat,’ your season of reflection and self-examination, you may turn over all these ideas and suggestions. You are made for the pulpit, and in the pulpit you must remain; and you will not easily find a pulpit to which you are more suited, or where you will be more welcome, than that in Carr’s Lane Chapel. Continue your attachment to evangelic truth, both as that which will promote your own personal growth in piety, and your success in the ministry, and you have nothing to fear excepting *from* your own fears. Watch against a liberalism, to which, I think, you have some little tendency, and see what in every case of great moral renovation, either in particular ages and churches, or in the long period of the Church’s history, God has blessed for the conversion of souls; and there is before you, if God spares your life, a long career of comfort and usefulness in His vineyard. ‘You see how long a letter I have written to you;’ but do not suppose I shall always thus tax your time, your patience, and, I may add, your labour in deciphering what I have written. . . .—Yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

“EDGBASTON, *June 2*, 1856.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—On reading again your letter, there appear to me some matters on which I did not appropriately touch, or touch at all, in my reply to it. I particularly refer now to that part of it in which you speak of your difficulty in maintaining that glow of intense earnestness which you deem essential to right ministerial work. Now, it is impossible, with the view I entertain of the object of our ministry, that I should for a moment attempt to lessen in your estimation the really awful weight of responsibility that lies on one whose business it is to save souls from eternal ruin. I do think with you that we ought ever to maintain a solemn and intense ardour for their salvation. I wonder I or any one can be so easy as we are with such destinies intrusted to our care. It seems to me sometimes as if the weight of our ministry ought to be felt by us as a pressure of which we could never

rid ourselves. But then, shall I deem myself disqualified and give up the pursuit of the object, because my fervour is not equal to my sense of obligation and my wishes? Certainly not. My business is to mourn and seek to supply my deficiency—yet to go on. Is it not the same as regards our personal salvation? Does it not seem sometimes as if, with such an object as eternal salvation before us, we should be in an incessant glow of zeal, love, hope, joy? Yet we are not. And shall we on that account give up the pursuit, because we feel our pursuit so far below what it should be?

“May I suggest that the present state of your mind is not all its own mere weakness, but is either the effect of Satanic influence seeking to embarrass, to discourage, and to weaken you; or else, which I would fain hope is the case, the effect of God’s Holy Spirit deepening your sense of obligation, and elevating your desires and aims. Perhaps, also, there may be in you a little too much of the subjective in religious experience—a tinge of mysticism which turns away the eye of the mind from the great objective realities of our faith. I have sometimes thought your mind is still struggling with unacknowledged, perhaps almost unsuspected, doubts on some points of dogmatic theology; and I do not think your Unitarian association likely, though it is professedly only a literary one, to be of service to you. Not that I suspect you of heterodoxy, or tending to it. But it is probable that in your earnest inquiry after truth, and your anxiety to examine all that can be said against it, you are giving to the difficulties and objections that can be brought against it more weight than really belongs to them. Your mind is so strongly analytical, that you are likely to see difficulties where others who possess less of this power are at ease in their conclusions. The class of authors you have been lately reading ought not to be passed over. Maurice, and Jowett, and others of that school, should be known—*well* known, and studied by our strong-minded young ministers. But this requires great firmness in established opinions to withstand the seductions of the error, which is set forth by their genius with no inconsiderable attraction of logic and rhetoric. I wish that with them you would read Howe, Baxter, and some parts of Owen, among the ancients, and Fuller, Wardlaw, and Chalmers, among the moderns. I know that among most of our young men there is an extreme aversion to go in the ruts; but is there not also a danger of getting off the rails? There is a richness and fulness of Divine truth in the old writers, which, with all their antiquated style and scholastic technicalities, and somewhat narrow views, the moderns lack. And, oh! their devotion—their communion with God—their sustained and elevated piety! This, this is what we want—this is our deficiency. We cannot live upon our own public services—and these are so frequent

and so urgent as to leave us little time for anything else. I hope by the time you get this you will have lost some of your groundless apprehensions of unfitness for the ministry. I believe the dread of *unfitness* is just God's own method of producing a greater fitness: and that your Irish journey will prove to have been the means of inestimable benefit to your own personal godliness and your ministrations to the people of our joint charge.

"Let me now mention a subject which has long pressed heavily upon my mind, and which has been this morning brought before me by our friend Phipson, and that is, the want of pastoral visitation. Some murmurs now and then are borne to me by those who have intercourse with the people of their being neglected. They expected that with two pastors they should be better shepherded. Now, to a certain extent their expectations should be realised—but to the full measure of their minds it is impossible.

"With a church of more than a thousand members, scattered over the whole expanse of this large and continually-extending town, it is impossible to devote much time and attention to individuals. And, moreover, how little do the members care to visit each other! Still there is some reasonable ground for complaint, which we must endeavour to meet. The church is neglected by us, and we must try to make up our deficiency. I can hardly think that our various institutions, classes, public business, and a variety of other matters, can be admitted as any excuse for neglecting the church committed to our care. Nor do the deacons and the superintendents of the districts *do* their duty. All are wanting. And all must be stirred up to greater diligence. On your return we will talk over this matter afresh, and see whether our organisation cannot be improved. . . .—Yours affectionately,

"J. A. JAMES."

"HASTINGS, *August 11, 1856.*

"My dear Friend,— A neat and really elegant place has been erected [here], which is now occupied by Mr Griffin, late of Manchester, whom I heard preach last Sabbath morning, when he gave us one of the best sermons of the best kind of preaching I have heard for a long time. I esteem it a privilege, I assure you, to have heard two discourses of this sort since I left home. The other was by Mr Kaleigh,—at Union Chapel, Islington. I am more than ever convinced that this is the kind of preaching which is wanted in the present day—a combination of the intellectual, doctrinal, experimental, and practical—sermons coming from the head through the heart, or from the heart

* Then of Glasgow, now of Canonbury.

through the head. It is the old substance with new accidents—the matter of the past age in the style of the present. I wish we had a great deal more of it. I do not think our present race of preachers take sufficiently into account the importance of the heart—I mean their own heart—as an aid in the production of effect. From the heart to the heart is the great canon. Our hearers love to feel as well as to think; and a great many of them, I am sorry to say, are *more* desirous to feel *than* to think. . . .

“I am going to preach to-morrow evening to the thoughtful and impressed but undecided hearer, and expect, if the weather be fine, a large congregation. I am more and more bent on the conversion of souls. I do not seem as if I had any business in the pulpit if I forget this. My mission always has been, and I believe will be to the last, to reach the unconverted. I believe this is also *your* aim. Never give it up. I know we are both a little discouraged, sometimes, we do not accomplish it in a greater degree at Carr’s Lane. Still let us go on. God will not leave us without His testimony to the propriety of such an aim. And then we are at the head of a great piece of machinery, which is accomplishing this end in some measure through our means. . . .

“EDGBASTON, *December 24, 1857.*

“MY VERY HEAR FRIEND,—Your welcome letter has lifted a load from my heart, to be replaced by another. I have just risen from my knees to bless God (which, in fact, I did also the first moment after I had read this disclosure of your heart and decision of your judgment) for His great kindness to me and my church in retaining you amongst us. How great has been my anxiety He best knows to whom it has been expressed morning, noon, and night. Think not, however, that I am *now* altogether free from it, for that other load which I now am conscious of is the solicitude I feel lest, as you have intrusted the decision to me, I should do that which at any future time *you* should see cause to regret. That the balance of probabilities of usefulness lies on the side of Birmingham, all things taken into account, I have no doubt.—The first consideration, I know, is your connexion with Carr’s Lane. This takes precedence of all matters in judging of your duty. It is not, of course, for me to limit the power and resources of the Almighty, and say He could not find for us another man whom He could enable to bear the weight and promote the prosperity of our church; but I may and do say, I know not the man who is more likely to do so than yourself. The late decision was not obtained by my influence, nor that of the deacons, but was the free expression of the church

“I have not time to enter into a consideration of your candid, impartial. and wise comparison of the two situations. I will enter more

fully into them when we meet and talk over the matter. I have had a business of importance, which called me out soon after I received your letter, and have had since then to put a few thoughts together for a sermon to-morrow morning. I must, therefore, refer only to the proposal you make of abiding by my own decision. My only ground of sVmnVing from this is lest my own wishes should so bias my judgment as to prevent my seeing in its true light the evidence that lies on the side of Manchester. I tremble lest I should so determine as that in promoting my own comfort, and even in thinking I was promoting yours, I should so advise as to keep you from a more successful and more happy career of ministerial labour. If, therefore, you refer it to me, I most heartily say, 'STAY WITH US.' If, however, it would be more satisfactory to you to have the opinion of those brethren whose minds are not liable to the same warping influences as mine, I will lay the matter before them. *MY mind is made up.*

"Abounding thanks to you, my dear friend, for your generous consideration of my comfort; but I should be sorry if that had more weight than belongs to it upon your decision, but it will certainly bind me closer to you than ever. But again I say, shall you, come what will, be satisfied, in looking back upon the present state of the case, with leaving it to my decision? Will you not be ready to say, if anything should happen, now altogether unlikely—'I wish others besides, not so interested and partial as Mr James, had been called in?' If you *can* leave it with *me*, under God's influences, IT IS DECIDED, and you are still what I have prayed you might be—my co-pastor for a little while, and *the* pastor of Carr's Lane Church soon.—Yours most affectionately,

"J. A. JAMES."

"MY STUDY AND ORATORY, *December 26, 1857.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have again read your letter, and have again also prayed that I might be able to give such a deliverance upon its contents as shall be for God's glory, your guidance in the way you should go, and the good of the cause of Christ at large, as well as the welfare of the church at Carr's Lane. Perhaps you will, in consequence of subsequent events, attach less weight to the perfectly unanimous vote of the church at your election to the co-pastorate than at one time you would have done; but whatever little disturbance there was of that unanimity at one time, it has of late all but entirely returned, and in very many quarters the attachment of the people is stronger than even in the ardour of their first love. This *I* consider should have great weight, and go far to satisfy *you*, as well as me, that you are where the Divine Master would have you be. This returning and all

but universal confidence seems to have come at a time when it may be almost regarded as an intimation of His will.

"Next to this, I place the avowed strong feeling of reciprocal attachment of your own mind and heart to the church. Had there been anything of even incipient alienation from us, any diminution even of former regard, any consciousness that your labours were losing that power which cordial affection for the object of them cannot fail to impart, in that case I should not hesitate to say that you would be likely to be more useful at Manchester than at Birmingham. But nothing of this kind exists. The first love is *still* the first love increased.

"I honour you for pausing in those circumstances, and asking, not where can I be most comfortable as a man? but most useful as a minister? You had so much to attract you and to attach you to your present situation, that it could be nothing but a question of duty which would lead you to ask, 'Ought I to leave it?' I am far more desirous that this matter should be decided by the *judgment* and the *conscience*, and not merely by the heart.

"I still could almost have wished I had called in the judgment of brethren whose names you mentioned,* more, however, for the reasons I have already specified than for anything else. One of them, Dr Redford, I HAVE consulted; to him I read your letters, and he without hesitation said I ought to take the responsibility upon myself, and immediately decide the matter the way I do. Before, however, I do this, I will refer to one or two points you have laid before me.

"The gist of the difficulty in your mind lies in two things. First, a doubt of the adaptation of your style of preaching to our congregation, and a supposition that it is better suited to a Manchester audience. I am most decidedly and firmly of opinion that the habitudes of thought in the two congregations are very much the same—that what will suit one will suit the other. I believe that those you have been accustomed to preach to, and who are likely to be your future hearers, are as to their tastes and capacity precisely what the Manchester people are. If you can please the one, you can as surely please the other. This will strictly apply to your remarks on your natural tendency to dwell on 'doctrinal subjects.' I am quite sure the congregation at Carr's Lane will not object to sound *doctrine*; and though in one or two points which came out in your exposition of the Romans there was a little

* I had said in my letter, that while personally I should have no hesitation in accepting his own decision as absolute and final, he might, if he shrank from the responsibility of determining the question alone, lay it before the Rev. Dr Bedford, late of Worcester, the Rev. R. D. Wilson, then of Wolverhampton, now of Birmingham, and the Rev. D. K. Shoebottom of Dudley.

difference of theological sentiment to what I hold, they do not touch the substance or core of evangelical truth, and form in my view no valid reason why you should not continue the pastor of Carr's Lane Church. You speak of your tendency to 'speculative preaching.' In the modified sense in which I understand that word as used by you, and interpreting it by the recollection of four years' listening to your sermons, I do not see anything in that which induces me to shrink from the responsibility of advising you to remain in Birmingham. I have heard no speculations which I thought unwarrantable in a public teacher of God's truth. I have often been much struck with the practical manner in which you have treated doctrinal subjects, and the power of your hortatory and applicatory appeals to the conscience. . . . "So much, then, for my views of your adaptation to the meridian of Birmingham. Here you have acquired a name and a weight, which I doubt not you would soon do in Manchester, and start perhaps with some advantages which as a young man just come from college you did not have. . . .

"Looking at all these matters, my dear friend, can you hesitate on the question, which is the sphere in which you are most likely to serve, not the interests of a single congregation, but of a whole denomination, and thus the cause of Christ? If *you* are at a loss, and I believe this to be the case, and the reason of your hearkening at all to the invitation from Manchester, I am not. As I said in my last letter, I say also in this. My mind is made up. I believe you will be serving Christ better by remaining. I still say, if it will satisfy you more for me to consult the three brethren you have named, I will do it. But great as is the responsibility I incur, I take it up and recommend you to remain where you are, as my beloved co-pastor of the church in Carr's Lane.—Your affectionate friend and loving brother,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. DR FLETCHER,

ON THE EXPEDIENCY AND DESIRABLENESS OF MINISTERIAL ASSISTANTS TO THE
PASTORS OF LARGE AND WEALTHY CHURCHES.

"BIRMINGHAM, *October 28.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have reflected much and often, since I saw you, upon the subject of our conversation relative to your wishes of obtaining an assistant; and the more I have thought upon the matter, the deeper and steadier are my convictions of the utility, and, I may add, the necessity of the plan. I will give you *my views of its advantages*, and then *meet the objections to it* which may be founded upon conjectural and anticipated evils.

“The ADVANTAGES are so numerous that they require classification, in order to be adequately enumerated. The *first* class is composed of such as affect *yourself*. Your health would be benefited by being relieved from the necessity of ever preaching three times on the Sabbath, which I presume you are *sometimes* obliged to do, as things are. Three public services in one day may do very well, and be borne without injury, in small places, and even in large ones, where men have iron constitutions and sinews of brass, but your place is large and your frame delicate and sensitive. And then there atfe seasons of indisposition, in which, as a sermon delivered at such a time is a dreadful expenditure of strength, more than ten discourses preached in good health, you ought to be relieved, and your people ought to be most willing to submit to the sacrifice. To preach under bodily infirmity in a house where a *whisper* may be heard almost to the extremity may be harmless in most cases; but in these circumstances to address fifteen hundred or two thousand people is to throw two shovelfulls of earth at once out of a man’s grave. Your *pastoral avocations* are, of course, in proportion to the extent of your church, which is always very large, and they make an incessant and ever-wearing demand upon your strength; and, in addition, your extra-ecclesiastical services in the way of visiting the sick and aiding the operations of the Christian Instruction Society, altogether produce an amount of exertion which should be shared with you by some able-bodied and able-minded assistant. Few churches are yet sufficiently aware of the value of a good minister, to be willing to prolong his life and usefulness at a little expense of property and a little occasional sacrifice of mental gratification.

“2. Consider next the advantage it would be *to your church*. In those seasons when indisposition or absence from home renders it necessary that a supply should be procured, and often at a short notice, here would be one at hand, who could either occupy the pulpit himself, or exchange with some neighbouring minister. The trouble of procuring help in such cases is often very considerable, and even then but indifferent aid can be sometimes obtained. But it should also be remembered that the sick, the poor, and the afflicted of every class would be by this means much better attended to, the young and the anxious inquirers after eternal life would have more enlarged opportunities of instruction. Even in the quietude of past ages of the church, when no public institutions, or almost none, demanded and shared a pastor’s time and attention, and he was left all at leisure for attending to the state of his flock, it was but a very inadequate portion of practical care that he could give to each of three or four hundred members. How much less, amounting to scarcely any, can he give to them now, when hardly a day or an evening occurs in a week of

which, in the metropolis or in large towns, he must not give a large portion to the public. Who will venture to say that it is his duty to withdraw from societies on which the world's welfare so much depends! And yet, if he do not withdraw, he must support them with time taken from his flock. I am myself the pastor of a large church in a large town, and I find myself frequently in a most painful conflict between the claims of the public and those of my church, and am often reduced to the strait of neglecting one or the other.

“3. I may very properly state next, the advantage which would be derived *by the public*. Home operations, or exertions for the benefit of our own teeming, and, alas! it must be added, immoral population, are assuming a prominence and importance altogether new, in consequence of the rise and progress of the Christian Instruction Society. Help is much wanted for this valuable scheme. I would not exclude the agency of the laity, for this is the life's blood of the plan, but I would give a more regular and a healthier circulation, by the introduction of clerical influence. Without watchfulness and care, that which is really a great good, may become a great evil. Many will not be content merely with running to and fro that knowledge may be increased, but will ascend unsent, and in some instances unqualified, into the pulpit, or that which leads to it. Would it not tend to check this evil, and, at the same time, do great good, if we had a number of young ministers employing their talents on the Sabbath-day, when not occupied in their own places of worship, in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ in the dark places of our cities and large towns? HOW MANY CHURCHES THERE ARE IN LONDON, LARGE ENOUGH AND RICH ENOUGH TO EMPLOY SUCH! Is it not to be deplored, that in a city where such myriads are perishing for lack of knowledge, and where the places of worship are so inadequate for the population, a single house of God should be shut up any part of the day? There are, perhaps, twenty churches at least, in the metropolis, which could support a young minister who could preach once a day for *them*, and twice a day for the Christian Instruction Society. What an amount of good might be expected from such efforts as these! Here, also, is so much added to the moral machinery of the day, to the committees of Bible associations, tract societies, Sunday schools, &c. We are told there are too many ministers educated, and yet London alone is supposed to contain seven hundred thousand souls who go to no place of worship, and, indeed, have none to go to. Ye rich and large churches, I appeal to you in the name of Christ, and on behalf of these crowds of neglected immortals! Consider my proposal. Do not throw it aside, with a sneer, as one of the visionary speculations of an active and enterprising age, or the mere theory of a speculative and restless imagination.

“4. The advantage of such a plan would not be inconsiderable *to the assistant ministers themselves*. However well our Dissenting colleges may be conducted, and however great might be the benefits of a literary kind which the students may reap within their walls, there are certain kinds of knowledge, or rather of wisdom, not to be gathered in academic bowers. The scholar, the philosopher, the writer, the controversialist, even the preacher and the expositor, may be formed there, but *not* the PASTOR. His character can be formed, or, at any rate, formed well, only by observation and experience. A man of extraordinary knowledge of human nature, of instinctive habits of prudence, perspicacity, and government, may at once be fitted to pass from the secluded shades of scholastic pursuits to the chair of presidency in a Christian Church; but not so the multitude. How many of our ministers, who are acceptable as preachers, fail as pastors! This is the rock on which they split. And who can wonder, when they consider that many have passed from the humblest occupations to the college, and from the college to the rule of a church. Would it not be of vast and incalculable advantage to such ministers, unskilled as they necessarily must be in the art of government, to serve as assistants to a judicious pastor for two or three years, and thus have an opportunity of learning by observation, before they attempt to learn by experience, which in important matters is always hazardous, how a religious society should be conducted? Our settled and matured pastors would thus become the tutors of pastors, and prepare for the churches a race of men, of whom it would be said, as it was of David, ‘So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.’ Something of this kind is much wanted in the formation and completion of the ministerial character; and it is inconceivable of what service our senior brethren might be in this way to their juniors.

“5. If this be correct, *our churches and the whole denomination* would participate in the benefits of the scheme. For my own part, I am jealous for the respectability of the Dissenting body, and not only so, but am also fearful. I have many apprehensions, and they are principally founded upon an incompetent ministry. Incompetent, not in consequence of any fault or defect of our tutors, not for a want of learning, but in consequence of rash, untried, youthful minds, who know not how to rule the Church of God. It is beyond description painful to see how, in some cases, the peace of our churches is not only put in peril, but actually destroyed by the want of aptness to govern which is evinced by the raw academic, who, with whatever store of Greek, or mental philosophy, or biblical criticism he might have left the college, was deficient in that which tutors cannot supply,—a knowledge

of human nature, or a habit of sound discretion. Prudence, where it is wanting in the original constitution of the character, is rarely supplied except by our being placed in a situation where we have it constantly before our eyes, and thus catch it by imitation.

"The American churches, amongst other things in which they excel us, are before us in the plan now recommended. Many of their pastors in the large cities and towns have assistants, with a view, not only to the aid they may give, but to the improvement they may receive.

"But it is time to meet and answer *objections*.

"1. It is expensive. I recommend it only to large and affluent churches, such, my dear friend, as yours, to which the sum of a hundred a-year can be no object.

"2. It may expose the church to the danger of schism and strife, vexation and irritation in the election of the assistant minister. In answer to which, I remark, that the church should not elect the individual, but leave this entirely to their pastor, who, of course, will take care not to elect any one that would be unacceptable to his people. On every account it is best for the society not to entangle itself with two ministers. The pastor should engage and dismiss his own assistant, by which means incipient mischief may be at any time stopped.

"3. Might not the assistant become at length a rival with the pastor in the affections of his people? Such a thing is *possible* in any case, even in *yours*, my friend, who have as little ground for apprehension as any man living; but it is only just possible, certainly not *probable*. Besides, I do not contemplate a permanent settlement of any *one* assistant, because then one part of the object would be defeated. Three years would be long enough, or two, for a young man to be in this subordinate situation, and he may then look out for a pastorate.

"4. Would it not be a temptation to a pastor to leave his pulpit more than he otherwise would do? Not if he be a wise man or devoted minister. He should give his assurance that this shall not be the case, and with his word his people should be contented. Moreover, should he fall at any time into and under this temptation, a respectful hint given by the deacons would correct the evil.

"5. Young men could not be found. This cannot be proved but by experiment. If there be the superabundance of ministers in the present day which has been talked of, the presumption lies on the side of supposing that there would be no difficulty on this head. The churches in London have peculiar advantages from their vicinity and easy access to our two largest colleges. I am aware that this is an age when there is no lack of self-supposed maturity, and even precocity, on the part of young men for public stations, both civil and sacred, but I do believe there are not wanting a goodly number who, like the young

and eloquent Apollos, would be thankful to sit at the feet of some Aquila, to be taught the way of ruling the Church of God more perfectly.

“My views are now before you, my dear friend. Make what use of them you please; and should you think them at all likely to be serviceable, you have my full permission to forward this letter for insertion in the *Congregational Magazine*. If it should catch the attention of any of my brethren, and lead to practical results, or to discussion, I shall be glad. I am convinced of the utility of the scheme, and am anxious to see it reduced from theory to practice.—I remain yours most truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE JUBILEE.

IT is an almost universal custom among Nonconformists, when a minister has presided over the same church for fifty years, to hold special religious services in celebration of his JUBILEE. The aged pastor reviews his ministerial history, bears grateful testimony to the goodness and fidelity of God, and addresses to his congregation, from whom death or the infirmities of old age must soon separate him, affectionate and solemn counsels. He speaks with the trembling earnestness of one who knows that he will not often speak again. The people listen with reverential love. A few gray-headed men can remember when the minister came to them in the strength and ardour of his youth, and while he recalls former times, pleasant voices long since silent seem to be heard once more, the house of God seems filled again with the forms of parents, children, friends, who are lying now under the grass in the graveyard, and the old men feel that their years are nearly spent, and that death and judgment are at hand. Younger people pause in their eager haste to get rich, or to enjoy the bright but transient pleasures of this world, and are thrilled with admiration for the enduring grandeur of a life which has been wholly consecrated to the filling up of "that which is left behind of the afflictions of Christ" "for his body's sake, which is the Church," and to making known "the exceeding riches of His grace."

Before narrating the proceedings in honour of Mr James's Jubilee, it is desirable to give a brief sketch of the visible results of his fifty years' pastorate. He came, in 1805, to a church of fifty members; in September 1855, it numbered about one thousand; the congregation had increased from about one hundred and fifty to seventeen or eighteen hundred. The increase in the size of the church, was not more remarkable than the development of its Christian activity and generosity, and its prolonged peace, which, through the whole fifty years, was scarcely ever threatened with interruption.

I have presided,—writes Mr James in his autobiography,—at the election of deacons eight or nine times, and never had any disturbance or dissatisfaction generated by the procedure. Autobiographical.

During these years, we sent off between twenty and thirty of our members, who resided at Smethwick, to form a separate and independent church in that village, where, for forty years, we have held worship by our village preachers. And at the time I am now writing, that church has grown to considerable numbers, power, and usefulness. They have recently erected a handsome and commodious place of worship, and are in a very flourishing condition. We have done the same in one of the suburbs of our town called the Lozells. There had been preaching on the premises of Mr Millichamp many years. The congregation was continually augmenting, when Mr M., having purchased a plot of ground, generously offered a piece of it for a chapel, if our congregation would build one. The offer was accepted, and a small place erected, which has since been enlarged. Between twenty and thirty of our members were dismissed to form a church there, which has since attained to some degree of strength; but for want of a minister thoroughly adapted to the locality, it has not increased so much as under more favourable circumstances it would have done.

For many years we conducted, by some of our members, a Sunday school and preaching in the neighbourhood of Great Barr Street in this town. At the commencement of our operation, this was one of the most demoralised parts of Birmingham. Mr Der-

Autobio-
graphical.

rington, who had been an operative, was induced to address the children, in the first instance, then the parents and neighbours, till at length he became the regular local preacher for the neighbourhood, as a town missionary supported by the Carr's Lane Church. A small chapel was erected in Garrison Lane, which soon became too small for the congregation; and, at length, the very neat and commodious one in Palmer Street was built. Mr Derrington's labours have been very successful, as not less than a hundred and thirty members have by him been introduced into the church in Carr's Lane. He is supported by our church still. The church is not yet entirely separate and independent. Mr Derrington administers the Lord's Supper ten times in the year, and in the months of May and October the members come to the communion of the mother church in Carr's Lane.

We set up another preaching station and Sunday school in Bordesley Street, where we have erected a neat little chapel and convenient school-rooms, and where our able and devoted missionary, Mr Carter, is labouring with great success. Chapels were also erected by us at Yardley and Min worth, and one purchased at Great Barr, besides another small one near the Canal, and originally intended for the spiritual benefit of the coal-boatmen.

Thus our church has ever been a working one, for I have to the uttermost encouraged a spirit of activity and liberality. It has ever been carrying on home missionary operations, and has become a *mother* church. From us has sounded out the word of the Lord all around.

Autobio-
graphical.

To this account it is necessary to add, that a large majority of the members who formed the nucleus of the church in Francis Street, Edgbaston, were from Carr's Lane; that Mr James, shortly before his death, laid the foundation of a new and beautiful chapel at Acock's Green, and that a church has since been founded there, under the pastorate of the Bev. Dr Alliott, nearly all of whose original members were also from Carr's Lane; that he warmly promoted the project for erecting a new chapel in the Moseley Koad, and that when the new church there is constituted,

the members who will be dismissed to it from Carr's Lane will know that in leaving their old associations they are fulfilling Mr James's most earnest wishes.

The two town mission stations referred to in the autobiographical extract have lately been formed into two independent churches, with the missionaries for pastors. One of them received about one hundred and ten members from the mother church, and the other between fifty and sixty.

In his Letters on the spiritual state of our churches, which appeared in the *Evangelical Magazine* a few months before his death, he says:—

“When I became pastor of my church, more than fifty-three years ago, the only object of congregational benevolence and action was the Sunday school, which was then conducted in a private house, hired for the purpose. There was nothing else; literally, nothing we set our hands to. We had not then taken up even the Missionary Society. And *our* state was but a specimen of the inactivity of the great bulk of our churches, at least in the provinces, throughout the whole country. We may well wonder what the Christians of those days could have been thinking of. Now, look at the state of things at the opening of the year 1859. If I allude to my own church, it is not for the sake of ostentation or self-commendation; for we are not one whit better than some others. Ours is but a specimen and average of the rest. We have now an organisation for the London Missionary Society, which raises as its regular contribution nearly £500 *per annum*, besides occasional donations to meet special appeals, which, upon an average, may make up another £100 a-year. For the Colonial Missionary Society, we raise, annually, £70. For our Sunday and day schools, which comprehend nearly two thousand children, we raise £200. We support two town missionaries, at a cost of £200. Our ladies conduct a working society for orphan mission schools in the East Indies, the proceeds of which reach, on an average, £50 a-year; they sustain also a Dorcas Society for the poor of our town; a Maternal Society, of many branches, in various localities; and a Female Benevolent Society, for visiting the sick poor. We have a Religious Tract Society, which employs ninety distributors, and spends £50 nearly a-year in the purchase of tracts. Our Village Preachers' Society, which employs twelve or fourteen lay agents, costs us scarcely anything. We raise £40 annually for the County Association. We have a Young Men's Brotherly Society, for general and religious improvement, with a library of two thousand volumes.

“We have also night schools for young men and women, at a small cost, and Bible classes for other young men and women. In addition to all this, we raise £100 per annum for Spring-Hill College.

“I again say that this is but an average of congregational exertion and liberality in this day of general activity. Yea, many churches of our own and other denominations perhaps greatly excel us. And, after all, we none of us come up to our resources, our opportunities, or our obligations. We all could do more, ought to do more, must do more. Still, compare this with what my congregation did with its single object, the Sunday school fifty-three years ago.

“In addition to this, there are, in all our congregations, many and liberal subscribers to our public societies, such as the Bible Society, the Society for the Conversion of the Jews, and all other objects of Christian zeal and benevolence. What, I ask, does this manifest and prove?”

Of the affection with which Mr James was regarded by the members of his church and congregation, their reverence for his character, their high estimate of the power and worth of his ministry, many proofs have already been given in this volume. He regarded them with reciprocal love. It was not because he was never invited to leave Birmingham that he remained there to the end of his days. Once, indeed, he seemed on the point of removing. In 1826, his friend Mr Wilson, who, ten years before, had tried in vain to induce him to become the pastor of Paddington Chapel, earnestly pressed him to become the first minister of Craven. The chapel was as large as Carr's Lane, and it was certain that his preaching would at once attract a crowded congregation. Just at that time he was rather vexed by what he thought the indifference of his own people to the heavy debt incurred in the erection of their new place of worship, and by the extent to which they permitted him to share their pecuniary responsibilities. Mr Wilson's urgency, and the noble prospects of usefulness at Craven, were, however, overborne by the strength of his affection for his old flock. In declining this invitation he made a large pecuniary sacrifice. His income at that time from Carr's Lane was £300 per annum; he was offered £700 at Craven, with the prospect of £1000. Whether he received a formal invitation to succeed Rowland Hill at Surrey Chapel, I have not been able to discover, but proposals were certainly made to him,

which, if encouraged, would have led to this; and he once informed me that, on the death of Dr M'All, the question was put to him whether it would be possible to induce him to remove to Manchester. Perhaps some may think that, on the whole, he might have effected more good, if, after creating a large congregation in Birmingham, he had left the work of sustaining it to some man endowed with a less brilliant eloquence, and gone elsewhere to inspire and strengthen some feeble and struggling church. Here, in Birmingham, it cannot be expected that such opinions should win many suffrages. In this town, he gradually became invested with a power to which even his eloquence was feebleness. The stainless reputation, and incessant labours of fifty years, won for him a homage, and gave him a moral and spiritual influence in Birmingham, which the brightest genius might have coveted in vain.

At the close of the first forty years of his ministry, he preached a sermon on the text, "For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the work of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through the great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing." The sermon, in which he gave a brief history of his pastorate, and enforced the practical lessons suggested by the solemn review, was printed in the form of an address, and entitled "Grateful Recollections."

Ten more years of ministerial happiness and prosperity passed by, and then came the celebration of his Jubilee. The excitement and enthusiasm of his people about this event made him troubled and anxious. Writing to myself about a month or five weeks before the jubilee services were held, he says, "I am really becoming quite nervous about the whole affair, and feel that my kind and generous and noble-hearted people have gone too far in the splendour of their gifts. I am afraid there is too much of glorying in man. The subject has a little entangled my imagination and my conscience; I find it difficult to shake it off when I go to bed, and it in some measure disturbs my sleep. This I know is my weakness, but I cannot help it. I pray against it, I struggle against it, but it comes back upon me."

About the "gifts," the "splendour" of which disturbed him,

there was much difficulty. After many impracticable propositions had been suggested, discussed, and abandoned, it was finally resolved that the testimonial should consist of a copy of Bagsters' Comprehensive Bible, Roberts' "Illustrations of the Holy Land," a silver vase, and an oak cabinet.

The balance of the Jubilee Fund, amounting to upwards of £500, it was determined to place at Mr James's disposal. On the second Sunday of September 1805, he had preached his first sermon as the settled minister of Carr's Lane congregation, and his Jubilee sermon was preached on the morning of the second Sunday of September 1855. The sermon has already appeared in the "Collected Works,"* and is characterised by great pathos and vigour. In the evening a sermon was preached by his colleague. On the Monday evening a discourse was delivered to the children of the schools and of the congregation; after the sermon the children of the congregation passed in files before the desk, and received from Mr James's own hand a little book, written for the occasion. On Tuesday morning he laid the foundation stone of the Congregational Church in Francis Street, Edgbaston. In the evening a meeting for prayer and thanksgiving was held at Carr's Lane. On Wednesday morning Dr Bennett preached in the same place, to a large congregation, on 2 Pet. i. 12-15. After the sermon, congratulatory addresses and letters were read from twelve of the ministers of New York, from Dr Bedford of Worcester, from the church assembling in Ebenezer Chapel, Birmingham, from the Rev. R. A. Vaughan, B.A., and from the Carr's Lane Brotherly Society. In the evening a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, for the presentation of the testimonial. The magnificent building was filled in every part, and hundreds who were anxious to be present were unable to obtain tickets. Ministers of every evangelical denomination, among whom were many of the former Spring-Hill students, settled in distant parts of the country, filled a large portion of the platform. After devotional exercises, the chairman, W. Beaumont, Esq., one of the deacons of the church, made an admirable introductory speech.

* Vol. iii.

The following letter was then read from the Rector of St Martin's:—

“EDINBURGH, *September 10, 1855.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—It is not without much hesitation that I venture to obtrude even a few lines upon you, expressive of my sincere regret that absence from Birmingham will deprive me of the delight of being present in some nook of the Town Hall on Wednesday evening, at the Jubilee meeting of our beloved friend and brother, Mr James. His own flock will not, I trust, deem a Church of England minister obtrusive in desiring to sympathise in their joyous gratitude to the great Head of the Church, for raising up and preserving to them such a man as John Angell James, not more honoured among his own denomination of the Church of Christ than by multitudes of the wise and good of every name and land. On such an occasion, we behold not the Dissenter or the Churchman—but the man of God—the faithful and honoured servant of Christ—claiming our tribute of grateful love for this, not the least of his many invaluable services, that, by the consistent tone of his life, no less than by the powerful advocacy of his lips and of his pen, he has in the town of Birmingham, drawn so close the bonds of Christian brotherhood, and recognised in our common union with the Lord Jesus Christ a tie which shall bind us together in blissful and endless fellowship, when our divisions and their causes shall be forgotten for ever. It is my earnest hope and prayer, that your week's proceedings may be sanctified and sweetened by the presence and blessing of our God and Saviour; and that His honour may be promoted in the honour given, for His sake, to my beloved friend, His servant.—Believe me, my dear sir, very sincerely yours in Christian brotherhood,

“J. C. MILLER.

“JOHN KEEP, Esq.”

Dr Urwick of Dublin, who was once a member of Carr's Lane, proposed, and the Rev. J. B. Marsden, incumbent of St Peter's, the historian of the Earlier and Later Puritans, supported the first “sentiment,” which read thus:—

“We are deeply convinced that the spiritual strength and success of whatever human agency may be employed in the service of Christ and the Church, are wholly derived from the Spirit of God; and while we heartily congratulate the Rev. J. A. James on having completed the Jubilee of his pastorate, and rejoice with him in the results which have followed his work, and in the love and confidence which thousands of Christian people in this country and in different parts of the world

entertain for him, we desire to give special emphasis and prominence to the expression of our gratitude to God for having made him in early life a Christian and a Christian minister; for having through so many years protected the purity of his character, and sustained the vigour of his ministerial labours;—and to God would we most solemnly and devoutly ascribe all the glory of the success with which these labours have been crowned.”

Then followed addresses and resolutions from the great societies which Mr James had supported, and from various communities of Christian people both in England and America,—from the English Religious Tract Society,* the London Missionary Society, from Presbyterian Clergymen in Philadelphia and its vicinity, from the Wesleyan Methodist Ministers and Circuit Stewards of the Birmingham District, from the Ministers and Officers of the Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, from the Baptist Ministers in Birmingham, from the Board of Education of Spring-Hill College, from the Students of Spring-Hill, from the Warwickshire Association of Ministers and Churches, and from the Carr’s Lane Church and Congregation.

The Chairman then presented to Mr James the testimonial which was intended to form the enduring memorial of the affection of his people, expressing the hope that to these gifts his eye and heart would turn in seasons when he might need a visible token of sympathy, and that they might ultimately descend as an heirloom to his posterity.

Agitated by emotions which he could with difficulty control, and welcomed by the loud and repeated cheers of the immense assembly, Mr James then said—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I must be more or less than human if, on the present occasion, I were not oppressed and almost overwhelmed by emotion. I wish it were possible for me with a calmer mind, though not with a colder heart, to survey the scene by which I am at this moment surrounded. My feelings, I can assure you, are not altogether those of unmixed delight. My consciousness of utter unworthiness of this demonstration of respect and affection is so intense, and my fears so great that the glory which belongs only to God should be given to

* The address from the American Tract Society arrived too late to be read at the meeting.

one of His dependent creatures, that these considerations shed a few drops of corrective and salutary bitterness into the full and otherwise intoxicating cup of delight which is now presented to me. With unutterable astonishment at the honours which are now heaped upon me, I blush over them; and that, from a conviction of their excess above all I desire or deserve; and am truly ashamed to receive them. True it is, that for fifty years I have endeavoured, by God's help, to serve my flock in the oversight of their spiritual interests, and have not 'shunned to declare the whole counsel of God,' so that I may perhaps say, 'I am clear from the blood of all.' True it is, that I cannot doubt I have, by God's grace, promoted their interests for both worlds; and no less true is it, that I have also attempted to be of some service to the cause of religion and humanity at large. The greatest modesty and the profoundest humility cannot, need not, deprive me of this conviction, nor blind my eyes to the evidence of some degree of usefulness; yet I feel that were I all in myself, and had done all for others which my friends in looking at me through the magnifying power of their affection have been too ready to suppose, yea, had I a thousand times exceeded all this, I should still possess an irresistible persuasion, that, with thankfulness for what had been accomplished, there should be, as I am sure there is, a feeling of deep self-abasement that I had not done more, and had not done it better. In reference to those services to which the kind, beautiful, and affectionate address just read so tenderly alludes, I would adopt the language of the apostle, and say, 'Not I, but the grace of God by me.' If in any degree I shine, and with any radiance, it is by reflection from the Great Sun of Righteousness, of which I am but an humble satellite. With these convictions, and jealous for the honour of Him who will not give His glory to another, I am tremblingly anxious that my flock should, as far as possible, forget the servant, and think chiefly of the Master. In the full blaze of His glory would I be thankfully and effectually lost sight of, as much as an insect when floating upon the boundless ocean of the sun's meridian splendour. Let all that has been done, or that you imagine has been done, by my instrumentality, during the fifty years I have been with you, lead you to honour Christ as the sole Agent and Author of all. Then I will joy and rejoice with you all; but if it lead you to honour only me, the highest distinctions you could confer upon me, will be to me for a grief, a shame, and a lamentation; and while rejoicing multitudes are uttering their jubilant voices, I shall hang my harp upon the willow, and mourn apart. Of the chorus of joy this evening, be this the theme,—and I will be the leader, and strike the highest and the loudest note of praise—'Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thee give glory.'

“Should any person deem the proceedings of this evening a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ,—and I will confess I am not altogether free from such an apprehension,—my friends will, at least, bear me witness, that it was their doing,—the doing of their fervent and irrepressible regard, and not my own. I never expected nor desired such notoriety; it has come to me without being sought by me. I should, perhaps, on some accounts, have preferred a less elaborate mode of celebrating the event which has brought us together this evening; but I have sacrificed my own wishes to what I knew to be the sincerity, the ardour, and intensity of others; and when strong affection seeks for the most emphatic expression, it must be left to itself to determine in what form it will embody its utterance; and provided that no principle of Christianity be violated and no law of religion transgressed, it must not be judged by a test too rigid, nor condemned with a censure too severe. If I have done wrong in accepting such honours and consenting to such publicity, it is an error which, as I have never committed before, I never shall again, unless I live with you to celebrate my centenary. I am solicitous that the services of this evening should be considered as a public testimony, borne to religion itself, rather than as a wreath around the brow of one of its advocates; a tribute offered in the place of public concourse to the wisdom that cometh from above, rather than to one of its teachers. Taking other grounds—if these honours should, as they do, proclaim that, by earnestness on the one part, and kindness and forbearance on the other, it is possible for a pastor and his flock to live together in undisturbed harmony and affection for half a century,—if they should shew that gratitude still lives in this cold and selfish world, and this should stimulate to those offices of love which are calculated to excite it, and should prove that, notwithstanding the fickleness of humanity and its morbid sensitiveness, peace and good-will may be maintained with the greatest amount of religious freedom,—if this public expression of regard to an aged minister should teach his younger brethren that, provided they are diligent and faithful, they will not, when they are old, be cast off or forsaken either by God or man,—they will have a beneficial use, far beyond that which is more immediately contemplated, and serve a valuable purpose, both for the churches of Christ and the world at large.

“I now turn my attention to the splendid gifts in which my beloved flock have embodied and expressed their affection, and of which you, sir, in your kind address, and in so graceful a manner, have begged my acceptance in their name and on their behalf; and which I now publicly, humbly, and thankfully accept—accept, not, indeed, as rewards of ministerial labour, but merely as tokens of affectionate

respect. You, my friends, have too high an idea of the rewards due to the services of a Christian pastor to suppose, for a moment, that he can find an adequate or appropriate reward in such things as these, however precious or however costly they may be. For this you refer me, even as I look myself, to the more august scene, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, and when, if I have been found faithful, I shall receive, not silver and gold, but a crown of glory that fadeth not away. If there be one of these materialities to which a fastidious taste is likely to object, it is the splendid vase which now glitters before your eyes, and which, perhaps, does seem a little more in keeping with civic than with ecclesiastical distinction. But here affection has displayed its ingenuity as well as its liberality, for it has so constructed the article as to contain, according to your representation, sir, in its several compartments, a pictorial compend of my ministerial history, even to a representation of the very desk upon which I have written all my sermons and all my books. There is another item of these costly presents on which I must remark,—I refer to the sum of money placed at my disposal. Ten years ago, you, my generous and large-hearted flock, when I had spent forty years among you, marked that era by raising £500 to found a scholarship in Spring-Hill College, to bear my name in perpetuity; and now you have raised nearly double that sum. Part of this will go, as you have stated, to defray the expense connected with this Jubilee, and incurred by these presents, and the remainder you have now placed in my own hands, to do with it as I may determine. Had Providence been less bountiful to me than it has, I should have felt justified in appropriating this sum to my own personal use; as it is, however, every farthing of it will be appropriated—with the addition of a thank-offering of my own for the mercy of this season—to the use and benefit, in some permanent way, of my brethren in the ministry. Valuable as these gifts are, they are less precious than the affection from whence they spring. Silver and gold can neither be substitutes for love, nor can they adequately express it. In looking on these beautiful articles, it will ever be a consolation to my mind to consider that, at the expiration of my fifty years' residence among my friends, I was not deemed less worthy of their respect and regard than I was at the commencement of this term.

“And now, having first of all given thanks to Him ‘from whom cometh every good and perfect gift,’ and by whose grace ‘I am what I am,’ I would attempt to express my gratitude to you, not only for these presents, and the affectionate address by which they have been accompanied,—not only for all the trouble the committee have taken to render this season and scene in every way gratifying to my feelings,—but for fifty years of such unequivocal instances of respectful regard as

leave me now at a loss for words to express my sense of obligation. I will, therefore, simply say, in language uttered on a former occasion, but now repeated with a deeper emphasis—Your fathers bore with the inexperience, if not with the indiscretions, of my youth; you and your children are bearing with equal patience the infirmities of my age. I thank you for all your kindness; injuries I have received none.

“The expression of my gratitude cannot, however, be confined on this occasion to the circle of my own congregation. To those generous friends in this town belonging to other congregations, and even to other denominations, who have so spontaneously and so liberally come forward to do me honour, I thus publicly make my respectful acknowledgments; especially to the rector of St Martin’s, for his kind and catholic letter of congratulation, addressed, first of all, to the committee, and now to this meeting; and also to my esteemed friend and co-secretary in the Bible Society, the Rev. J. B. Marsden, for the favour of his presence, and the affectionate and generous sentiments to which he has given utterance this evening; who, if his penetrating glance and just discrimination can find something, both in the Earlier and Later Puritans, to censure—as he certainly may—has also found much to admire and to praise, and has with elegance and candour exhibited, on the page of his beautiful history, with his impartial pen, their virtues as well as their faults, and who is present this evening, by his friendship to honour one of their descendants. This, I hope, will be received as evidence that, while as consistent men—one a Churchman and the other a Dissenter—we have held with firmness our principles, we have in each case made charity to triumph over bigotry. Oh, what are the points that separate the Evangelical Churchman from the Evangelical Nonconformist compared with the great truths which unite them—but, as the municipal and parochial regulations which distinguish town from town, and city from city, compared with the glorious British Constitution, which gathers them all up into the fellowship of rights, privileges, and common loyalty and patriotism, of a nationality which is one and indivisible!

“To the various public bodies who have done me such unmerited honour, both here and elsewhere, I return my best thanks for their addresses of congratulation, whose kind fellowship with me and my friends in the joys of this season fills me with profound astonishment that they should have deemed me worthy of such notice. Most of all has my surprise been excited by those addresses which have come from the United States of America—a proof that there is a bond between Christians which oceans cannot separate, nor national distinctions weaken. So far as the matter goes this evening, it is delightful to see the British Lion and the American Eagle reposing in fellowship beneath

the cross, and both animated by the dove-like spirit of Him that died upon it. O my brother Patton, pardon me if I ask, not with a frown upon you—for I know the Abolition principles which fill and warm your heart and actuate your life—but with a sigh and blush for your country—when shall the fellowship of the two countries be complete by the removal of the last fetter from the last slave, and America be in reality what she is by profession—the land of freedom as well as the land of temperance?

“On some accounts I feel it to be an addition to the honour of this occasion, that it is conferred upon me in this magnificent hall of civic and popular convocation; as it proves that, through God’s grace, I am not myself ashamed, nor deemed by others unworthy, to lift my head among my fellow-townsmen. During my fifty years’ residence in this town, I hope I have been enabled so to conduct myself as to secure the character of a peaceful citizen, and thus to obtain a place among its useful inhabitants.

“Further, the joy of this Jubilee season is heightened by its being celebrated in association with my much-esteemed colleague. By the mercy of God, he has dissipated the clouds which were gathering round my setting sun, and gives a bright star to the evening of my life. May his ministry be more lengthened and useful than my own, and his Jubilee as happy!

“And now, in conclusion, I would turn for a moment my attention and yours from this interesting scene and occasion to one infinitely more august,—when the Chief Shepherd shall appear to call the nations to His bar, and deal with pastors and their flocks, ours among the rest. In that awful, yet glorious day, the meanest individual in this vast assembly, though now lost amid the multitudes by whom he is surrounded, shall, if he receive the grace of God which bringeth salvation, and teaches men to live a sober, righteous, and godly life, be lifted from his obscurity, elevated to the throne of Christ, and be covered with His glory, and shall receive from the hand of his Divine Lord tokens of affection and marks of distinction, compared with which those that have been conferred upon me this evening are not worth a wish or a thought. Then, when kings and priests, warriors and statesmen, philosophers and scholars, poets and orators, that have not believed God nor honoured Christ, shall be passed by in silent contempt, or receive only the language of condemnation, shall this humble follower of the Lamb hear the Judge saying to him, before assembled worlds,—‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’”

Another “sentiment,” expressing the kindly feeling of the

church to the junior pastor, having been proposed, supported, and responded to, a vote of thanks to the chairman closed the business of the evening. The doxology was sung, and the Rev. J. Gawthome of Derby pronounced the benediction.

These Jubilee services had a moral significance and grandeur which produced a profound impression on all who took part in them; and out of them sprang an institution which the English Congregationalists greatly needed. Mr James had long thought of the desirableness of establishing a general fund which should enable aged or infirm ministers who had no income except that which they derived from their congregations to retire from their work: and he determined to make the cheque of £500 presented to him in the Town Hall the nucleus of a "Pastor's Retiring Fund," should it appear probable that the churches of the denomination were inclined to adopt the scheme. The balance of the Jubilee Fund afterwards somewhat increased, and from his own pocket he made it up to £1000. Great difficulties had to be overcome in devising a safe and equitable plan for effecting the object. That ultimately agreed upon is thus described in a paper read by Dr Ferguson at the autumnal meeting of the Union, held at Blackburn in 1860:—

"It is provided that only duly accredited pastors of the Congregational or Independent denomination in England, Wales, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man should be eligible to participate in the benefits of the fund; should be not less than sixty years of age; should have been engaged in the pastoral work of the ministry for not fewer than twenty-five years, without following any trade or profession, except that of a schoolmaster; should be of irreproachable moral character; and whose views of Christian doctrine and practice are in consonance with the 'Declaration of Faith, Church Order, and Discipline,' adopted on May 10, 1833, at a general meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales; that such pastors as have been annual subscribers, or have availed themselves of life assurance for the benefit of their families, or whose churches may have contributed, by annual collection or otherwise, to the fund, should, other things being equal, have the priority of claim; that no minister should be entitled to a grant whose entire income from all other sources should exceed £100 per annum; that, in making a grant, due regard should be had to the

efforts that the church from which the pastor retires may make to facilitate his resignation; that in determining the amount of grant to a retiring pastor, consideration should be given to his previous average stipend, as well as to family claims, age, and infirmity, nor yet overlooking the length and efficiency of his ministerial service; that the grant should in no instance exceed the sum of £50 per annum, and should be regarded in the light of annuity rather than an annual grant, and be continued for life; that the property should be vested in four trustees, and the affairs of the Association be conducted by thirty-six managers, one-third of whom should reside in London, and two-thirds in the country, one-half of each being laymen, and the other half ministers; that the managers should be members of Congregational churches; and that at an annual general meeting of the members of the Association they should present a statement of their proceedings, with the audited accounts of the year."

The deed of settlement was signed during the session of the Union, by-laws were adopted, treasurer and secretary appointed, and it was announced that the fund collected, of course, by voluntary contributions, had already nearly reached £15,000.

It is a pleasant thought, that while the scholarship at Spring-Hill College, founded to commemorate the close of the first forty years of Mr James' pastorate, will afford education and maintenance through all coming years to an unbroken line of students for the Christian ministry, the "Retiring Fund," originated by the testimonial which he received from his people at the celebration of his Jubilee, will afford comfort and peace to many aged pastors who have spent their strength in Christ's service, "taking no thought for the morrow," seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and believing that all other things should be added to them.

LETTERS REFERRING TO THE JUBILEE.

TO THE REV. J. C. MILLER, M.A.

"MALVERN, *August 22, 1855.*

"MY DEAR MR MILLER,—A day or two before I left home for this place, I called at the rectory, when, to my regret, I found you had left Birmingham for Scotland that morning.

"The object of my call was to thank you for the truly kind, Chris-

tian, and catholic manner in which, you had expressed yourself to my friends in reference to their intended celebration of my Jubilee. It was only one more act of generous and magnanimous friendship added to the many that preceded it, though it exceeded them all. Apart from the reference it bore towards myself, though, of course, I could not be insensible to that, it delighted me as a beautiful exhibition of that charity which is the very soul of our Divine Christianity. In a world yet, unhappily for the credit of our common faith, so much under the mean and degrading tyranny of a low and narrow sectarianism, it is delightful to witness these triumphs of holy love, and thus to anticipate the scenes and the feelings of that blessed world where the divisions of the Church and the distinctions of party will be known no more.

“I can truly say, I glorify God in you. I have watched your course ever since you have been in Birmingham, with admiration and pleasure, not only on account of the extensive circle of ministerial usefulness of which the Divine Head of the Church has made St Martin’s Church and its rector the centre, and which you have obtained grace to occupy with such efficiency, but equally on account of the example you have given of consistency as a clergyman of the Church of England, and catholicity as a minister of the universal Church. I know some of the perplexities you have had to encounter, and the difficulties which have beset your path; and I equally know the firmness, guided by prudence, with which you have been enabled to persevere in your course of Christian liberality. Your eagle flight you did not allow to be arrested or turned aside by the pecking and twittering of birds of feebler vision and less daring pinions. You know, in some degree, but not in all, the place you fill in the minds and hearts of the evangelical Nonconformists of our town. I believe, that, from many of their hearts, closets, and family altars, supplications are continually going up to the fountain of light and love on your behalf. They know how much of the good feeling towards us of many of your brethren is owing to you. Do not therefore, my dear sir, be discouraged if now and then you are called to suffer under a want of sympathy in your noblest feelings from some of your brethren in the Church of England. Depend upon it, when we meet our Master, we shall have no rebuke for having shewn too much love to the weakest of His servants. How many practical mistakes would be corrected if we kept that interview perpetually before us, and were to judge of things more as we may anticipate we shall judge of them then! Long, very long may God continue you in Birmingham, for a still greater blessing to that important town; and when the hand that pens these few lines shall have lost the little cunning it ever had, may your bow abide in strength, and the arms of your hands be made strong by the mighty God of Jacob. I hope you are laying in a good stock of

health for home duties, by the invigorating breezes of the mountains and lakes, which I shall never see again.

“If it be not troubling you, and wearing out your patience by this long scrawl, I will refer, for one moment, to the subject which has led to this letter,—I mean my Jubilee, to which you have so generously alluded. I am ashamed and grieved at the notoriety which my friends have given, and are still giving, to this event. It is, I assure you, no simulated modesty, no affected humility which compels me to say, I blush over my own fame—shall I call it?—from an entire consciousness how little I deserve it; and I now wish I had forbidden all this publicity. Believe me when I say it is not *my* doing; and could I have foreseen what my friends intended to do, and all the real concern it now produces, I should have passed over the year almost in silence. To me it seems as if a fast were more suitable than a festival, because of the many and great imperfections which the review of fifty years brings out upon my afflicted sight.

“Pardon this intrusion, and with kind respects to Mrs Miller, believe me, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR MORISON.

“EDGBASTON, *September 25, 1855.*

“Many, many thanks to you, my dear, kind friend, for your solicitude and inquiries about your present correspondent, and the deep interest you have taken in those events and scenes of his history which have lately occurred.

“I believe many will be astonished, and some half offended, at the publicity and notoriety which have been given to the fact of a minister of Jesus Christ having completed fifty years of his life and labours. And I am sure none will be more astonished than that poor, unworthy labourer himself. A tenth part, yea, and a much smaller fraction, of what has been done never approached the horizon of my imagination in the most anticipative moods of my mind. And when I discovered what my friends intended for me, I was really in distress. True, I could have resisted it, and refused the expressions of their kindness; but I should have given pain to those to whom, as far as I can influence their feelings, I owe nothing but pleasure. I have all along been sensitive and jealous for the honour of God, and was alarmed and afraid lest the Master should be robbed of His glory, and the servant invested with the sinful spoils. At one time I was sinking into a nervous dread and apprehension of this kind. God mercifully released me, and under the hope that my people would glorify God in me, I was sustained amidst scenes of excitement enough to crush me to the

earth. If I know my own heart, and am not grossly and grievously deceived, whatever may be the case with others who have looked on, and who may be disposed to exalt me above measure, as regards myself I am deeply humbled by all this, and was never lower in my own estimation than I am at this moment.

“I am grateful to God for the measure of strength He has granted to me. I praise His holy name hourly for His goodness, and desire to devote the remainder of my days with more unreserved consecration to His service.

“All this about my poor unworthy self. Well, I come now to express my tenderest sympathy with you under these attacks of your disease. You are a perfect wonder to me. God is magnifying His power both in your body and mind, in enabling you to work on amidst so much disease. Pray, did you, or some one else, write that admirable critique on [?] in the *Evan.*? Whoever did it has my

thanks for its discrimination and fidelity.

“And now may the good Lord bless you and hold you up. My love to your wife and the young—disciples shall I call them! Ask them from me if they love Christ.—Yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

CHAPTER VII.

PUBLIC SPIRIT—AUTHORSHIP.

THREE or four centuries ago, when the clergy were almost the only educated men in the country, there were very adequate reasons for their active interference in all public affairs. Whether, in these days, it is a minister's duty to assume a prominent position in every secular or semi-religious movement with which he may have sympathy; whether he is likely to promote or to hinder his success in the highest duties of his office, by plunging into municipal and political conflicts, by pronouncing publicly on every question and every agitation which attracts the attention of his neighbours, are questions which deserve grave consideration. On the one hand, he must not renounce his duties as a citizen; on the other, it is doubtful how far he has a moral right to use his ministerial position and influence to add impetus even to very excellent popular movements. To live a monkish and recluse life will injure a minister's own spirit and temper, and make him less able to understand and to affect ordinary men; to be incessantly engaged in public work of a non-religious kind will deprive him of the power which he should derive from the special sanctity of his vocation.

Mr James somehow succeeded in hitting the mean between these two extremes. He took his fair share of public work. He never concealed his politics. Sometimes, when social and semi-

political questions closely related to the religious and moral welfare of the country were debated in a town's meeting, he fought for his own convictions with resoluteness and vigour. And yet he never lost his ministerial character. Without putting on priestly airs, or assuming a sanctimonious tone, he maintained his true position. He could speak in a town's meeting without preaching; but he never spoke in a manner that would diminish the influence of his preaching. He could talk familiarly, and sometimes raise a hearty laugh; but seemed never to forget that he would have to speak to some of those that heard him from the pulpit, next Sunday, and that there must be no startling discord between his tone in the Town Hall and his tone in Carr's Lane.

Of several public movements of a purely philanthropic nature, he was a persevering and energetic supporter. He hated slavery with a perfect hatred. Coloured men were welcomed to his table and his pulpit; he glowed with indignation when denouncing the crimes of America against her coloured people; and in his letters to his American correspondents, earnestly remonstrated with them on their national sin, and urged them to do their utmost for its removal.

The Temperance Reformation found in him one of its earliest advocates. So far back as 1834, an extract from a letter written by him to E. C. Delavan, Esq., appeared in the *Quarterly Christian Spectator*, (published at New Haven,) expressing the most ardent sympathy with the movement. He writes:—

“I offer to your country my sincere congratulations, and the humble testimony of my delighted admiration, on the signal, wonderful, and most beautifying success of this great plan of national reformation; and which even at this present time, to say nothing of what will be done in years to come, is a more glorious achievement than that which effected your political independence. It is at once far more difficult and far more honourable for a people to throw off the yoke of their vices, than that of their oppressors; and there seems to me nothing impossible in the career of either moral or political greatness to that country which, by one grand co-operative effort, can, by the blessing of God, deliver itself, as yours is now doing from the curse of intemperance. For the sake of the world, my dear sir, and

all future generations of mankind, I beseech you to go on in this splendid course of national virtue. I have patriotism enough to wish this laurel had been plucked by my own country; but since this is not granted to us, I rejoice that it is yours. It is a precious one. Preserve it from fading by a relaxation of zeal in the cause, and deem not the honour complete till the world shall talk of the United States as a land without a still, and without a drinker of ardent spirits. If you ever arrive at this elevation of moral greatness, your example must and will be felt in the world. Self-preservation, if nothing else, will drive other nations into imitation of your example. In this, as in other instances, you are raised up by the Euler of the universe to be a model to the civilised and uncivilised world. Experiments are carried on at this moment upon your territory, the results of which are to be felt to the end of time. If I could think it right to envy any one, I should envy you Americans, in reference to several things which are connected with your internal history.”

He was also a strong friend of the Peace Society. Not that he professed the extreme doctrines of non-resistance. His intellect was not of the make to render that possible. The hard and narrow exegesis which requires us to suppose that the precepts of Christ absolutely and universally forbid the resistance of evil, demands a logical hardihood of which he was incapable. His peace principles were not fastened by iron links to particular expressions found in the New Testament; they were the fruit of a heart warmed with the purest Christian charity. He did not suppose that an inexorable command forbade him ever to defend property, liberty, and life; but he was so full of gentleness and self-sacrifice, that he thought it better to endure suffering than to inflict it, and would not resort to violence except when the highest interests of mankind required the forcible vindication of injured rights and the forcible resistance of cruel aggression.

The list of his publications during the last eighteen years of his life is a long one. His “Memoir of Elizabeth Bales,” and “The Path to the Bush,” appeared in 1842; “Grateful Recollections: a Review of the First Forty Years of his Ministry,” in 1845; “Pastoral Inquiries: a New Year’s Address,” in 1847. In 1847 he also published “The Earnest Ministry,” the extension of a sermon

originally delivered at one of the anniversaries of Cheslmt College. This impassioned appeal for greater ministerial devotedness has had a very large circulation. John Henderson, Esq. of Park, distributed about two thousand copies among the members of different denominations in Scotland, and about four thousand more have been sold in England. In this book Mr James's opinions on all questions connected with ministerial work and success are most fully developed. In the same year he published his Sermon on the death of Mrs Sherman.*

"The Church in Earnest," now in the fourth edition; an Address to the Christian Young Men's Association; and a Tract on the Sabbath, were published in 1848;—A New Year's Pastoral Address, and his Missionary Sermon at Surrey Chapel, in 1849;—"The Olive Branch and the Cross;" "The Chief End of Life: a New Year's Address to Young Men;" and "Protestant Nonconformity in Birmingham," in 1850;—his Sermon at the Jubilee of the Bev. J. Gawthorn;† a Pastoral Address on the Papal Aggression; and a volume of Lectures to Young Men, entitled "The Young Man's Friend and Guide through Life," in 1851;—a Lecture on Character, delivered to the Young Men's Christian Association; a volume of Lectures to Young Women, entitled "The Young Woman's Friend and Guide through Life;" his Funeral Sermons, for the Rev. T. Weaver,‡ and for his brother, James James, Esq.;§ and "The Course of Faith," in 1852;—"Christian Progress;" "The Oar and the Rope;" a Pastoral Address on the Institutions of the Carr's Lane Church; his Sermon on the Centenary of the Bristol Tabernacle;|| and his Sermon on the Death of the Rev. R. Keynes, in 1853;—a Pastoral Address to the Church; his Funeral Sermon for the Rev. W. Jay of Bath; and his Charge at the Ordination of his Co-pastor, in 1854; in the same year also appeared Mr Jay's Autobiography and Memoir, edited by Mr James and Dr Bedford. Dr Spencer's Pastoral Sketches, with an Introduction; his Sermon on his Jubilee; his Address to Children on the same occasion, and his Funeral Sermon for Mrs Bedford of Worcester, were published

* Collected Works, vol. ii.
§ Ibid., vol. iii.

† Ibid., vol. ii.
|| Ibid., vol. ii.

§ Ibid., vol. ii.

in 1855;—"Christian Hope;" "The Voice of God from China;" and his Funeral Sermon for Joseph Sturge, in 1858;—his Letters on the State of the Churches, republished from the Evangelical Magazine; and his Essay on the Character of Richard Knill, in 1859.

A detailed criticism on Mr James's writings will scarcely be expected from his biographer. It will be sufficient if I say that I believe his preaching was strengthened and elevated by the careful preparation required for printing; that had he written less, instead of being more efficient in the pulpit, his power there would probably have been greatly diminished.

The edition of his Collected Works, now being issued in bi-monthly volumes, under the editorship of his son, T. S. James, Esq., is the worthiest and noblest monument that human hands can raise to his memory; and I trust that the editor will close the series by a review and estimate, which no man is better able to produce than himself, of the value and characteristics of his father's writings.

CHAPTER VIII.

“READY TO BE OFFERED”—“ABSENT FROM THE BODY,
PRESENT WITH THE LORD.”

“HAVING a strong persuasion from certain symptoms in my constitution, which it might not be possible nor important to describe, that I am approaching the conclusion not only of my labours, but also of my life, and deeming it probable that my last illness may be of such a nature as to give me little opportunity to express my views and hopes and counsels in prospect of dissolution, I have determined thus to commit them to paper, in order that they might be read to you after my decease, when the circumstance of my removal to the eternal world, united to the calmness with which I now give utterance to my dying testimony, will tend, by the blessing of God, deeply to impress your minds.”

These affecting words were written in December 1840, and form the opening paragraph of a letter written by Mr James to his Church and Congregation, to be opened and read after his death. Though this conviction that he had only a few months or weeks to live did not permanently retain its strength and vividness, it did not leave him altogether. During the last twenty years of his life, his conviction that it was possible he might be overshadowed at any moment by the awful presence of death and eternity, filled his heart with awe and fear. If he had ever been dazzled by his popularity as a preacher, he was now weighed down by the tremendous responsi-

bilities of the ministerial office. Anticipating his own appearance before the judgment-seat of Christ, and “knowing the terror of the Lord,” he persuaded men. He “watched for souls” as one that would have to “give account.” After the death of the second Mrs James, and when his apprehensions in the prospect of public services away from home were beginning in some measure to subside, he instituted a searching inquiry into his obligations as a Christian and a Christian minister, and the following paper, written early in 1842, records the results:—

“Directions for my Spiritual Conduct.

“1. More time for prayer—reading—meditation.

“2. Cultivate more spirituality.

“3. Seek to have the graces of faith and trust much strengthened. Cheerfully trust God.

“Depend not on secondary sources of consolation j rest on God. Passages to be much dwelt on—

“‘ Fear not, I am with thee.’

“‘ Let him take hold of my strength.’

“‘ Grace sufficient.’

“‘ Able to do exceeding abundantly.’

“All this to oppose a distrustful state with respect to the prospect of suffering from apprehended disease.

“Endeavour to appear to be trustful before people.

“4. Consider self now as having done with even much worldly enjoyment. Set apart for God.

“5. Realise the approach of death—eternity.

“Domestic.

“To endeavour to make the house as cheerful as possible. To be as punctual, solemn in family devotions as if many more. To continue the practice of not supping out.

“Some things which appear to me desirable to be done, as the results of my present affliction, with regard to the church and congregation, in order to render it productive of spiritual benefit.

“1. A special solemn church meeting, to represent to the church my great desire for their increased holiness. Increased prayer. Heart religion. Week-day attendance. Get up a spirit of prayer in the church for the Spirit’s power. Going round to the families. Promote early prayer-meetings in districts.

“2. *Congregation.*—A series of very rousing, searching sermons, with

a view to revival. Four last things—death—judgment—heaven—hell; endeavour to make these very impressive—simple, yet solemn. Have inquiry-meetings with these.

“3. *Young people.*

“Meet young females not members, between 14 and 21, once a fortnight; young men once a fortnight.

“*A mothers’ society in honour of her memory.*

“Meet the church in classes once a month on Tuesday evenings. Recommend books: all read together.

“*General.*

“Give up all facetiousness, but still cheerful

“Waste no time.

“*Dedication.*

“DESIDERATA FOR THE PRESENT YEAR, 1842.

“*Preaching.*

“A course of sermons on the person, work, and offices of Christ.

“The course on faith for week-day sermons.

“A continuation of Old-Testament history not exceeding three quarters of an hour in sermon. Avoid loud speaking, and be solemn.

“*Pastorate.*

“To meet the poor and overlooked members, on Monday evening, to tea, in parties of twenty, at the vestry.

“To go through all the districts once each this year.

“To form something of Sisterly Society, or Female Missionary Working Society.

“To preach to mothers, and form a Maternal Society.

“To visit the sick and negligent more.

“To meet and address the children of the members at one of the church meetings, about May or June, from age of seven to fourteen.

“To keep up Wednesday afternoon tea-drinking with friends and families.

“*Sunday-Schools.*

“To meet superintendents twice, and teachers twice.

“To address the Sunday-school children twice, all above eight.

“*Inquirers.*

“To write an address—Instruction—Experience—Conduct—Dis-sent.

“To make this the basis of instruction privately, and give it them. Lord’s Supper—neighbourhood. Once a month—Stafford—Wolverhampton. Begin to return, if God will, to labour in other places. Evenings—work, except Saturday, given to God for . . .

The impressions produced by his own illness, and by Mrs James's death, were not permitted to disappear. Other bereavements followed. In the autumn of 1847, his son married a lady whose singular gentleness and goodness attracted universal affection; she died within three months after her marriage, and his distress appeared almost inconsolable. In a preface to a Pastoral Address which he published a few weeks after her decease, he said:—

“To myself, the late bereavement is one of peculiar grief; in addition to the happiness which the union had bestowed upon my son, it brought no small share of enjoyment to myself. With no inmate of my dwelling, except servants, but an invalid daughter, who had welcomed in the dear departed an affectionate sister, I had pleased myself with the hope that we had both found one who, from the nearness of her relationship, the amiableness of her disposition, and the contiguity of her dwelling, would be a frequent visitor to us, and relieve the somewhat desolate aspect of our own abode. Take a vision she lighted upon us, and like a vision she has fled; and thus was extinguished before we had time to prepare ourselves for the event, that new light which we thought God had kindled to shed its mild ray upon our dwelling. It has been otherwise determined by Him who never errs; and ten short weeks were all that was allowed us to enjoy this new mercy. Nothing now remains for us but to pray for submission, and by Divine grace assisting us, to practise it: and seeing we have lost her life, to see to it that we do not also lose her death.”*

Early in 1852 he sustained another most painful loss. For thirty-seven years his labours and his anxieties had been lightened by the practical wisdom, resolute energy, and more than fraternal affection of his brother, Mr James James; to whose sagacity, general ability, and public spirit the Carr's Lane Church owed much of its efficiency. He was a man of vigorous intellect, great firmness of purpose, and the highest integrity. On his judgment his brother had placed almost implicit reliance. He died when the infirmities of advancing years were beginning to make Mr James sensible that, in the cares and perplexities inseparable from his ministerial and public position, he needed whatever relief the counsels and co-operation of able and energetic laymen could afford.

* Works, p. 368.

For several months his sorrow weighed so heavily upon him that his strength appeared permanently broken, and I am not sure that after this his spirits ever altogether regained their former elasticity.

But his closing years were not without consolation. His son married again, and his love for his daughter-in-law, and for the children that soon added brightness to their house, opened to him new springs of happiness. The intense mental depression which had accompanied the physical prostration of former times had passed away; and although there was seldom much elevation and excitement of religious joy, he was kept in perfect peace. He lost none of his interest in public affairs; his ardent sympathy for every great Christian enterprise burned to the last undimmed; the warmth of his affection for those he loved was not abated; his heart clung fondly to his sick daughter, his son, his son's wife and his little grandchildren Angela and Mabel; but the distractions of human life seemed latterly to have lost their power to trouble him. His intercourse with God was close and constant; and long before he died, he appeared to have entered into rest. He had always anticipated with an almost morbid dread the sufferings of a protracted illness and the agony of dissolution, but could he have foreseen the tranquillity of his last days he would have said, "He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me! He shall set me up upon a rock." "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil."

Year after year, however, his physical weakness and sufferings increased. He became quite unable to travel far from home, and at times he suffered great pain even when driving about Birmingham in his own carriage. Between 1853 and the time of his death he had several alarming attacks of low fever and general prostration; one of these attacks, which occurred in the autumn of 1858, excited so much apprehension that his friend, Dr Miller, offered prayer for his recovery on Sunday morning in St Martin's. It was in acknowledgment of this expression of fraternal regard that Mr James wrote the following letter:—

TO DR MILLER.

“EDGBASTON, *September 25, 1858.*

“DEAR MR MILLER,—If I have not till now *expressed* my obligations to you for the public, Christian, and most generous manifestation of your interest in my welfare, I can assure you I have constantly and deeply felt them. Notwithstanding your truly catholic spirit and large-heartedness above most, and the many personal proofs of this which I have received, it was what I could have no right or reason to expect that you should mention my name to your congregation, and solicit their prayers for my recovery. Thanks, many thanks, servant of Christ, for this expression of fraternal affection, for one who, though serving *your* Lord and *mine* in another part of His great vineyard, humbly hopes he is a fellow-servant.

“It is not, my dear sir, the gratification that this token of your esteem for me yields to me as a personal favour, that alone makes me rejoice in your kindness; but it is the beautiful illustration and exhibition of Christian charity which it has given out to the world. It has shewn, that amidst much alienation and even hostility in the divided Church of Christ, love has not altogether forsaken our world and fled back to her native skies. How little do all our differences in minor matters appear to one who has been looking into eternity, and listening to the heavenly harmonies, as in some faint degree I have been doing the past few weeks! You, my dear sir, have obtained grace not only to be a champion for *truth*, but to be an advocate for *love*; and I am confident, that amidst the sarcasms and the censures of some brethren not so fully enjoying as yourself the liberty that is in Christ, you find your reward in the smile of a God of love, and the testimony of your own conscience. It is my earnest prayer that your precious life may be preserved to a good old age; that each succeeding year may be more rich in usefulness and ministerial comfort; and that this town may never lose the advantage of your powerful and efficient ministry, till that ministry shall end in your eternal rest and Divine reward.

“I mend, but it is very slowly, but as fast as infinite wisdom, power, and love see to be best.

“I beg my kind respects to Mrs Miller and your family.

“Please accept the volume which accompanies this.—Believe me, with high esteem and regard, yours faithfully and gratefully,

“J. A. JAMES.”

Notwithstanding increasing bodily infirmity and the development of painful disease, Mr James’s mind retained its clearness and vigour.

During the summer of 1859 he complained of great feebleness and languor, but though he was visibly wasting away, neither his friends nor his medical attendants supposed that the end was so near. On the second Sunday of September, he preached in the morning, at Carr's Lane, one of the annual sermons for the London Missionary Society, and the sermon produced such an effect upon the congregation that immediately after it was over, one of the deacons who was sitting behind me begged me to persuade Mr James to publish it. On the following Sunday, (September 18,) he preached in the evening at Carr's Lane.

On Sunday morning, (September 25,) he preached at the Congregational Chapel, Francis Street, Edgbaston, on a very favourite text, "The common salvation;" and those who were present have often spoken of the solemnity with which he declared, that if he knew he was preaching for the last time, he could choose no subject more in harmony with his own feelings. It was the last sermon he ever delivered. In the evening he was present at the service at Carr's Lane. The preacher was conscious at the time, that an unusual seriousness rested both upon himself and the congregation; and evidence has since been disclosed that the power of the Holy Spirit was working mightily in some hearts that night. It was the last time Mr James worshipped in the sanctuary where his ministry had accomplished such great results. When listening to a sermon, it was his habit—I have often observed it—to bow his head as if in earnest prayer when the preacher began to appeal with any directness to the consciences of his hearers; and I cannot doubt that on that Sunday evening it was in answer to his silent intercessions that the earnestness of the preacher was intensified, and the hearts of some of the people filled with penitence, and led to trust in Christ.

Mr James was also present at a prayer-meeting held in Carr's Lane Library, on Monday morning at twelve o'clock, and spoke to those who were there of his strong persuasion that he should not be with them much longer.

On Tuesday morning he was so unwell that he was unable to fulfil an engagement to meet Dr Miller to arrange for some special meetings for united prayer, and wrote him the following note:—

TO DR MILLER.

EDGBASTON, *September 27, 1859.*

“MY DEAR DR MILLER,—A new malady has come upon me within the last day or two, and I am really too ill to fulfil my engagement to see you this morning; and, indeed, I begin to feel that I must retire from all confederated action and public exercises, except a sermon once a-day in my own pulpit, and even from that ere long.—Yours faithfully,

“J. A. JAMES.”

Symptoms appeared on that day (Tuesday) which awakened, for the first time, the serious apprehensions of his family; but these passed off, and on Wednesday, though feeble, he was free from pain, and alarm subsided. He was still, however, very weak, and feeling unable to attend the church meeting in the evening, he wrote me the following note:—

“HAGLEY ROAD, *Wednesday.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I enclose you some documents relative to church affairs.

“During the last two or three days, I have been *very* unwell with new maladies. I cannot be at the church meeting this evening, and it is very doubtful if I shall be able to preach on Sabbath. I am sorry to throw so much upon you, especially in this season of your domestic anxiety. I am glad to learn from Mr Berry this morning that Mrs Dale is better. As we hear every day from various sources, we do not increase the trouble of your servant by sending.—Yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

On entering his study that afternoon I found him sitting at the table with one of his little granddaughters on each knee, bending over a book of pictures, and talking to them with great cheerfulness about the wonderful things at which they were looking. The gray head and furrowed but happy countenance between those two childish eager faces, made a picture that will never be effaced from my memory. When the little children had kissed him and run away, he began talking solemnly, but not sadly, about his consciousness of increasing weakness. Gradually his thoughts moved towards the highest regions of saintly contemplation, and I was so impressed with the unusual glow and brightness of his faith and hope, that I said to him, “Mr James, you have an

extraordinary measure of happiness and joy in God to-day; I remember that when I first came to college your sermons seemed to indicate that you were almost permanently under the shadow of religious despondency; and I cannot help thinking of the contrast." He smiled, and said, "Yes; I used to be clouded sometimes; and now I am afraid that my joy only rises from the hope and prospect of release; I want to slip away and be gone."

"On Wednesday evening," writes his daughter-in-law, "I sat with him for some time, and read to him the opening address delivered at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, to which he listened with intense interest, and afterwards commented with much enjoyment on the principles which it so forcibly laid down,—that the one only *indispensable* condition for Christian fellowship was mutual acknowledgment of Christ as Son of God and Saviour of the world—that this one truth united the highest and lowest intellects, the most exalted and the feeblest piety—and that the difficulties in the way of Christian union arose from the perpetual attempt to treat other truths as equally important to spiritual life and the unity of the Church.

"On Thursday morning I had a long conversation with him in his study. I began by expressing my hope and belief that his more recent symptoms were passing away, and he replied that—but I prefer giving you his own most precious words, even in disjointed sentences, to altering them in the slightest particular, in order to give them a more connected form:—'I am a wonder to myself—you know that on former occasions in illness I have had so much gloom and depression, and now it is all gone—I am perfectly peaceful, nay, happy—I am sure that many must have been praying for me—I am sure that other prayers besides my own are being answered in me—as some good men said'—and here he paused for a minute, and then proceeded with a sweet smile on his face, 'No, it is not presumption in me to use the same words, "I am like a letter signed and sealed, and waiting for delivery."' 'Dear papa, not to be delivered yet, I trust.' 'I have but one wish *now* on the subject, and that is, that I may be spared a long time of uselessness. To live and not to be able to work would be *very* painful to me; but I have worked long for God in action, and if He wills that I am soon to glorify Him in suffering, I know that He will help me to do so.'

"Then, leaning back in his chair, he clasped his hands with the most beaming smile on his face I ever saw on any countenance, and said, 'Oh, to have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ! Oh, the blessedness of such a support! Oh, cultivate it in

health, that you may possess it in sickness!’ I have no language in which to describe his looks—his voice—while uttering these words! I felt they were spoken by one almost in heaven, and yet I little realised how soon he would be there.

“I saw him again on Friday, before leaving home as I expected for a few days, and again he spoke of his desire to depart, and his willingness to remain, and of the entire and perfect peace which pervaded his soul.

“I may mention that one of my sisters, who saw him on Thursday, told him she felt he would be spared to see a revival of true religion here, and a new work begun in China; and he replied to her, ‘I shall see them *there*;’ and again on Friday, when another sister told him of the death of a young man whom he had visited many times during the summer, and whose last regret was that he had not seen Mr James again before he went to heaven, he replied, speaking of the young man’s mother, ‘Tell her I shall soon see her son in heaven;’—and these were the last words I heard him utter.

“Throughout Friday he was bright and happy—wrote several letters, and in the evening listened to some Missionary Reports read aloud by a friend staying in the house.”

The letters he wrote that evening were to his brother, the Rev. Thomas James; to the Rev. W. Bolton, on the death of his mother; and to the Rev. W. C. Birrell of Liverpool, in reference to the Life of Richard Knill. To his brother he wrote—“My condition just now is very low—not my spirits. I am peaceful, I may say happy, quietly and contentedly waiting to see how it will go with me. Through mercy I get tolerable nights, but I believe it is the beginning of the end.”

To Mr Bolton he wrote:—

“EDGBASTON, *September 30, 1859.*

“MY DEAR MR BOLTON,—So your dear and excellent mother has, at the call of her heavenly Father, ascended to the seat prepared for her in His celestial mansion. What a mercy to have had such a mother, to have had her so long, and to know that heaven has her when you can have her no longer; and to crown all, that you shall join her in the blessed world of light, love, purity, and joy!

“What we owe to the Bible and God’s grace in Christ Jesus, as there revealed! What a dark object is the grave when seen by the eye of sense and reason, but how changed when seen in the sunshine of revelation! Receive my sympathy for your loss, and my congratulation for her gain. May the Lord the Spirit not only comfort you under this bereavement, but sanctify you by it! for comfort is not the

highest good we should seek from affliction, but sanctity,—‘that we might be partakers of His holiness,’ says the apostle.

“You may be thankful for having been spared the trial of long watching her sufferings.

“As regards myself, I am incurably ill with calculus in the bladder, and diabetes, and believe I am fast decaying. But have good hope through grace and everlasting consolation.—Yours very truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

The following is an extract from the letter to Mr Birrell:—

“I think it probable that with these few notes on dear Knill’s life and labours, I shall lay down my pen, which has written much; would God that it had written better. But while I say this I am not without hope, yea, I may add conviction, that it has in some degree written usefully. In some humble degree I have aimed at usefulness both in my preaching and writing; and God has, to an amount which utterly astonishes and overwhelms me, given me what I have sought. It seems a daring and almost presumptuous expression, but with a proper qualification it is a true one—that usefulness is within the reach of us all; the man who intensely desires to be useful, and takes the proper means, will be useful. God will not withhold His grace from such desires and such labours. O my brother! how delightful is it, notwithstanding the humbling and sorrowful consciousness of defects and sins, to look back upon a life spent for Christ! I thank a sovereign God I am not without some degree of this.”

“On Friday evening,” writes Mrs T. S. James, “he conducted family prayer as usual, and when his daughter took leave of him for the night, he gave her as a good-night text the words, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ Between nine and ten o’clock, sickness and pain in the chest suddenly came on, and his kind friend and neighbour Dr Evans was hastily summoned, but before twelve the symptoms had subsided, and at his own earnest request he was left with only the attendance of his old and attached servant. Throughout the night he was greatly tried by pain and sickness, but had evidently no idea that death was approaching, and would not suffer the servant to send either for Dr Evans or Mr Bindley. He spoke much to her of the support he experienced from the consciousness of the presence of God, and repeated at intervals two verses of the hymn,

‘Begone, unbelief, my Saviour is near;’

and also quoted several texts, which as yet are only gradually recurring to her mind.”

He was so far from supposing that the end had really come, that he would not permit either his invalid daughter or his son to remain after Dr Evans had left him; but “about six in the morning a sudden and unexpected change took place, and his servant sent in all haste for his son and medical attendant, but they only arrived in time for his son to receive one look of love and word of recognition before he sank into unconsciousness, and about seven o’clock he quietly and painlessly passed away.”

The intelligence spread through the town and through the whole country with extraordinary rapidity. Members of Mr James’s church who were away from home heard of their loss the next morning from pulpits in distant parts of the kingdom. The services that day in Carr’s Lane will never be forgotten by those who were present. The whole congregation were in deep mourning, and at the Lord’s Supper the grief which had been restrained with difficulty through the preceding service found expression in the audible sobbing of many of the communicants. A meeting for special prayer was held on Wednesday evening, and with tears the church entreated God in His great compassion to have pity on them in their bereavement, and to forgive them for not having derived more benefit from the holy example and the earnest exhortations of the pastor who had been taken to his rest. Many who had never renounced sin, and heartily devoted themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, came to fear that having resisted the solemn and affectionate appeals of him whose voice they were never to hear again, they might continue to the end of their days among the ungodly; and at subsequent church meetings we have learned that, mingling with the profound distress of that week, there was a mighty tide of spiritual power by which many were quickened to a new life.

It had always been Mr James’s earnest desire that his mortal remains should lie in the vault beneath the front of the pulpit. At the close of the charge delivered at the ordination of his col-

league, he said, with deep emotion,—“Rich in years, in honour, and in usefulness, may you come at some far distant day to your end; and then, after labouring with me in the same pulpit, come and lie down with me in the same grave, at the foot of it so shall we resemble warriors resting on the field where they fought and conquered.”

And there, according to his wish, his body awaits the resurrection of the just. The Home Secretary, Sir G. C. Lewis, in consideration of the eminent position Mr James had long occupied in Birmingham, and of the serious inconvenience which would be inflicted on large numbers of the inhabitants if, after the service had been celebrated in the chapel, the funeral procession had been obliged to go to the cemetery to inter the body, granted permission to reopen the vault in which Mr James had wished to lie. The funeral took place on Friday, October the 7th. The ministers of the town of all Protestant denominations, the municipal authorities, representatives of the great religious institutions which he had served, the deacons and a long procession of the private members of his church, and hundreds of other persons, accompanied the mourning family from his residence to the chapel. The whole town spontaneously expressed veneration for his character and grief for his loss. One who had come from a long distance to be present, thus describes the scene—

“Desiring to perpetuate the remembrance of the honours that gathered around the obsequies, and to indicate the impression made by them upon a visitor, I devote a page to record the scene. Under skies that harmonised in their still and shrouded aspect with the funereal gloom, groups of mournful faces gathered at an early hour. Shops here and there, throughout the town, had remained unopened; and drawn blinds everywhere, betokened an unusual presence of death. The area of the Jubilee Chapel in Edgbaston was full; there were there ministers, students, officers of churches, and the teachers of the Carr’s Lane Sunday-schools, waiting to join the mournful procession. At eleven o’clock the coffin, containing the honoured form of the revered dead, upborne on the faithful shoulders of members of the church, was seen leaving the door of that dwelling which for fifty-three years had been his home, and in the presence of uncovered heads was placed in the hearse. It would have been vain to attempt to estimate the length of the moving

procession, composed as it was of the authorities, clergy, and other distinguished inhabitants of the town, and of a long line of Christian men, emulative to testify the love and honour they bore. There was no part of the long route which was not lined with sorrowing countenances; but, as the files approached the main thoroughfares, the spectacle grew overpoweringly sublime. It was noon, but all business was suspended; not a vehicle was seen; the streets were cleared for the procession. Except one or two which, however, were partially darkened, the whole of the shops were closely shut up. Upper windows in the houses were filled with persons in mourning apparel. Every standing point was thronged with spectators. I had seen the Queen of England passing between these crowds, but the difference in the expression of their countenances on this occasion, was so inexpressibly touching, that with great difficulty I kept back an outburst of tears. On the face of the aproned artisan, there rested a reverential sorrow. Women took up the corner of their shawls to wipe away their tears. The little children were obviously subdued into wondering seriousness. The deathlike silence over these crowds in that great mart of industry was deeply affecting.”*

The chapel was thronged in every part. The coffin having been placed in front of the pulpit, selected passages of Scripture were read, and the Rev. Professor Barker of Spring-Hill College offered prayer; other passages of Scripture were read, and then followed the funeral oration, delivered by Mr James’s colleague in the pastorate. While the preparations were being made for lowering the coffin, the congregation rose and sung—

“Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb!

Take this new treasure to thy trust,

And give these sacred relics room

A while to slumber in the dust.”*

As the coffin descended into the vault, the words of interment were pronounced:—“Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our beloved and most revered Father in Christ here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself.

* A Tribute to the Memory of the Rev. J. A. James. By the Rev. W. Guest, now of Taunton.

“I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

After this, the Rev. Dr Tidman, Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society, offered prayer. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,” which are our strength and solace in every time of trouble, having been invoked, the assembly of mourners slowly and silently separated.

LETTERS.

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“EDGBASTON, *April 14, 1842.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER PATTON,—I have received your letter of the date of March the 2d, which has somewhat surprised and grieved me by its contents. I am reluctant to speak or think ill of Mr —, for all I saw of him while here led me to respect him as a man of much Christian integrity, charity, and simplicity; but the account which you have forwarded me has shaken my confidence in my own views of his character. During his residence in this town I had much conversation with him on the subject of Perfectionism, but I most certainly never professed myself a believer in that doctrine, even in the modified and clarified form that it assumes at Oberlin. I had previously heard, that as held by many in the United States, it is only another name for Antinomianism, and this I stated to Mr —, who was anxious to convince me that the Oberlin views were defecated from the dregs of that lax and impure theology; and as a proof of this read, I recollect, a passage of Mahan’s book, in which the author exonerated their system from the charge of a tendency to licentious practice. After this he lent, or sent me Professor Cowles’s book. With the apparently holy tendency of that little work I was certainly much pleased, and did not fail, I dare say, to express myself to that effect to Mr—; but certainly I never intended in anything I said to convey my approbation or belief of the doctrine in question. That perfect sanctification is required by the law of God—that provision is made for it in the scheme of redemption—that there is nothing *impossible* in it arising from any defect in the natural faculties of man—and that on all these grounds it is obviously man’s duty, are propositions the truth of which cannot be gainsaid; but that it is ever attained in the present world, I do not believe, and never did believe. The nearest approach

I make to this doctrine is, that it is not in itself to be considered impossible, and, therefore, in that sense it is attainable. It must be in some such sense I have written to Mr —; and if, as I conclude to have been the case from what you have stated, he suppressed so important an exception, when reading the commendatory part of my letter, as an objection to the doctrine which Mr Cowles's book was written to support, he did not deal honourably with me, or honestly with my communication.

“Your information of the course which Oberlin theology is running is affecting and alarming. However, I have sufficient confidence under God in the logical accuracy, the metaphysical acumen and theological sobriety and orthodoxy of the great body of your ministers and professors, to resist the spread of opinions so unscriptural and unphilosophical as those you mention. I am not for limiting the range of theological investigation, nor for shielding the venerable systems of antiquity from the most rigid scrutiny—*nothing* is true merely because it is *old*, nor is *everything* true that is *new*—let all be tried; but still I believe that the system of Calvinism is not a mere vapour arising over the lake of Geneva, which a gust from Oberlin will dissipate.

“I have long been of opinion that Calvinism, as it was put forth in the writings of the divines of the seventeenth century, and in some of the symbols of orthodox churches down almost to the present time, needed to be accommodated more closely to the mental economy and the Word of God; and by many modern writers, both in your country and ours, this has been done; and though I should receive with gratitude fresh light from any quarter, not excepting Oberlin, I do not expect much accession to our present knowledge of it as a *system* of dogmatic theology.

“I perceive by the New York Evangelist, that the Anti-Slavery cause is progressing in various ways in the United States, though perhaps not quite so obviously in the form of Anti-Slavery *organisation*, I am persuaded there is a growing conviction of the iniquity of slavery, and an increasing desire to get rid of it. The debate raised by Mr Adams on presenting the petition for the dissolution of the Union, does him great honour, and will do the Anti-Slavery cause great good. I have no fear of a war with your country. The case of the Creole will make your Southerners bluster a little, and the claim of our Government to a right of search will add to it, but it will end in wind. Your Government will never go to war on a question in reference to which your own people are so divided, and on which so large a proportion of them are with Great Britain. Neither country is in a position for war, I am confident the matter will be somehow or other settled. May God preserve us in peace! . . .

TO THE REV. C. M. BIRRELL OF LIVERPOOL,
ON THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER.

“BIRMINGHAM, *January 31, 1843.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have intended from day to day, ever since the arrival of your most welcome letter, with its mournfully interesting accompaniment, to acknowledge with much gratitude your obliging communication.

“I congratulate you that you had such a brother—I sympathise with you that you have lost him. The narrative is deeply affecting; he was indeed a bud of promise, but taken to open and bloom in Paradise. I bless God for my share of instrumentality in recovering him from sin to holiness, and from Satan to Christ. ‘Blessed youth, though unknown to me on earth, thou shalt be in my crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord at his coming!’

“And you, too, my dear sir, do you owe anything to my pen? Thank God for this grace also to His servant, though it be ever so small a share of that tributary influence which contributed to your conversion. The name of Mr Birrell of Liverpool awakens too much affectionate esteem in my mind to leave me indifferent under his own assurance, that I in any degree helped to lead him first to the cross, and then as the consequence of this to the pulpit. May God long spare you, my dear sir, to labour successfully for immortal souls! Little did I think when I was distributing as I have done ‘The few counsels to Believers,’ that I should ever receive such a communication from the author as your pen has sent me.

“I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs Birrell, but seventeen years ago I spent a day with her excellent and eminent father and mother in Edinburgh. I beg to be most kindly remembered to her.—And am, with fraternal love, yours truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE SAME.
ON IRRELIGIOUS MARRIAGES.

“35 HIGHBURY PLACE, LONDON,
“*October 14, 1844.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—In the multiplicity of my engagements, I came away from home without replying to your letter, the subject of which is not more important than it is perplexing.

“While I have, in various ways, protested against the practice to which you refer, I have never seen my way clear to make it a matter of church discipline, and that for several reasons, which I will now mention. First, I hold, in common with all others, that when a member

is suspended or excluded from fellowship, he cannot, of course, be restored but upon a profession of repentance, accompanied by fruits meet for it. But is it not a strange and unseemly thing to expect a married man to say he is sorry he did marry? And even suppose he should go thus far, and *say* he is sorry, what fruits can he offer to prove the sincerity of his affirmation? He cannot divorce his wife.

"Second, Again, is it not a supposed sin, the reality of which cannot in all cases be proved? Where there is infidelity, immorality, or a total neglect of religious ordinances, *here* is proof positive and palpable; but where there is a regular attendance on the means of grace, though no *profession* of religion, there may be piety without our knowing it; and are we to insist, in such a case, upon the persons being in fellowship?

"Third, Suppose the intended party against whom exception is taken belong to another communion, as is sometimes the case, how is the evidence of piety, or the want of it, to be ascertained?

"Fourth, Innumerable cases occur wherein the religious party hopes the other is converted, or is likely, from present appearances, to become so, and goes forward with the approbation of conscience; and it seems hardly right in such cases to excommunicate.

"I might, had I time and leisure, say more, but I have neither, and have written this in so much haste, and amidst so much interruption, that it is hardly worthy your notice, and yet, as I am on my way to Norwich, I know not when I shall have time to write more.

"I therefore cannot, on these grounds, make the matter a subject of church discipline. In haste.—Yours very truly,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

"EDGBASTON, July 3, 1843.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . It is now I cannot tell how long since I heard from you, long enough to make me blush, much longer than ought to be necessary for that, and therefore I cannot reply to old topics, but must enter on new ones, and in this world of movement one need never be at loss for novelties. First, to begin with your side of the water, and what concerns yourself. By a letter which Mr Joshua Wilson read to me, and which he had lately received from you, I find, as well as from the newspapers, that Albany has been visited with the *revived* influence of *revivals*, and, indeed, that this has passed to a very considerable extent over the land. Some of the accounts have startled me. A man swearing or drunk in the week, and at the Lord's table on the Sabbath, such doings, I am quite sure, are not with *you*. It is a pity they should be with anybody. I do not think an apostolic example

will bear tills out. I am become cautious about the fruits of revivals. I have had an experiment before my eyes, and am incbnd to think, that while measures *ought* to be used for reviving a dull state of things, and producing a deeper impression than ordinary upon the minds of the unconverted, yet a little caution is necessary in gathering the fruits into the Church. However, I think, from your volume on this subject, and what I presume you are not prepared to retract—you and *I* should not differ. *You* cannot *do* or *approve* what has been done by some in Albany. I suppose there is a downward tendency in all regular routine business, not excepting preaching, praying, and seeking the salvation of souls—a tendency, I mean, to the temperature of freezing point—which requires occasionally some unusual efforts to send out the mercury, and yet we *ought* always to be up. I think in our own churches there is a considerable flatness just now, at least, in many places, which perhaps requires a degree of attention.

“I presume there is none of the attractions of cohesion becoming apparent between the two American Presbyterian Churches. So far as the accounts of the two bodies contained in the public prints go, there is neither attempt nor wish to unite. Perhaps it is better that you should be as you are. You are large enough to be separate, if you can but maintain good temper and good conduct towards each other. Pray, does it interrupt the flow of brotherly and neighbourly good feeling? Do neighbouring ministers, who belong to both churches, keep up friendly intercourse with each other?

“Thus far I had written when your letter, June 5, arrived I am glad to learn you are in good health, and that your family enjoy the same blessing, and especially that on some of them the shower of heaven has fallen during the late awakening. I hope my namesake will be added to the number. Your account of the revival confirms what I had previously heard. . . .

“You speak of Puseyism in America. I do not wonder at this. It might be expected, that, as Episcopacy is not sustained with you by any State support, it should seek to strengthen itself by high spiritual claims and pretensions. It is sadly rampant here, especially among the younger clergy. But it has received one or two severe checks in the *Quarterly Review*, the leading High Church and Tory periodical, and in the suspension of Dr Pusey from preaching for two years by the convocation. One thing is alarming. A tutor—I mean, a son of the great Wilberforce—has lately been appointed to the Prince of Wales, our future king, who is a Puseyite. But the most extraordinary event that has transpired here is the disruption of the Church of Scotland. That between four and five hundred ministers of that body should secede on the ground of the independence of the Church is an extraordinary

event. It is true their position in claiming spiritual freedom and temporary support was a false one, but still they are an illustrious band of confessors. You will have heard, long before this reaches you, of the death of my venerable friend, Thomas Wilson of Highbury. After a lingering and painful illness of two years' standing, he is dismissed to his rest, full of honour. Joshua succeeds to a large portion of his father's property and spirit. He is most happily married.

"I am still as I was, a widower, and shall in all probability remain such to the end of my life. My daughter is still a great invalid, and is now away at the sea, and will be for months to come. I have none but God dwelling with me, and He is everything. I beg to be most kindly remembered to Mrs Sprague and your family, and remain very truly yours,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO THE SAME.

"EDGBASTON, *January 29, 1845.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your mild and gentle rebukes contained in your letter forwarded by Mr Goddard have produced the effect which reproofs administered in such a spirit usually do, and have led, as you will now see, to confession and amendment; but while I thus submit to your chastened reproach for my long neglect of your last two letters, if not more, I may, without impeaching the sincerity of my contrition and acknowledgment, put in one word by way of explanation, if not of extenuation, and that is, such a surfeit of letter-writing brought on by our penny-postage system, as makes me turn sick at the very thought of writing a long epistle. We are flooded now with letters on all subjects, so that what does not demand an immediate reply is often postponed till a spirit of procrastination creeps over me, and, like other sinners, I am the less disposed to amend the longer I postpone it.

"I am glad to find, by your communication, that you are still 'strong to labour;' and able, as you see your shadow lengthening on the plain, to rejoice in an ability as hale and vigorous as ever to work for Christ. Long may it be so! You occupy no inconsiderable sphere of activity and influence, and your life is of some consequence in another and a wider circle than that which is drawn round your own fireside. It is a mercy to *you* to be brought nearly to fifty years of age, and a still greater one for me to be brought on near sixty, without any serious mistake. I often think and say, that in looking back, I see many things which, if I could go over life again, I could correct and do better; but then again, perhaps I should commit still greater blunders, so that while I am humble, and much there is to make me so, I am thankful.

“The termination of your presidential election, to which, when you last wrote, you were looking forward with doubt and dread, has taken place, and realised the worst fears of the Whig party. Well, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and there is God’s hand, as well as God’s wisdom, even in this. What a blessed thing it is to be let into the secret of God’s government of the world, to know what is His line of policy, and by how certain, though to us unknown methods, He is working out His plan and purpose! ‘Christ is head over all things to the Church.’ There it is: and it is enough.

“I am glad to find the two divisions of your Presbyterian Church are approximating, first, in sentiment and feeling, and by this means are preparing the way for re-union; but if the unity of the Spirit is better produced by separate organisation, then remain and love at a little distance, rather than come near to quarrel.

“Now a little about myself, my country, and the general aspect of affairs here. Through Divine goodness, I am able to go on with my work. My health continues pretty good, and I preach, as far as I know, with as much vigour at times as ever; but as I am now in my fifty-ninth year, and as my work, by my connexion with a local college as chairman of the Board of Education, and other new matters, is very much increased, I sometimes feel that I must look out for a co-pastor; but it is a step on which such consequences hang, both as regards my own comfort and the peace of the church, that I am afraid to take it, and am praying and watching and waiting for the will of the Lord in the movement of the cloudy pillar.

“What a state our country has been in, and still is, in regard to ecclesiastical matters! The disruption of the Scottish Church is a grand and important movement; it is a wave that will roll further than many expect or wish. Our own southern Establishment is convulsed to its very centre. The Puseyite leaven has produced a fermentation which is agitating the whole mass. What it will come to, and where it will end, the most sagacious calculators and the most far-seeing prognosticators cannot divine. It has produced so much alarm, that I think the bishops now and the Government will attempt to arrest its progress; not, however, by any legislative measures, but in an equally effectual though more silent resistance. Puseyism will be a bar to preferment; and that is a powerful consideration with the adventurous, and there are some such who speculate upon the chances of getting on and up in the State Church. Still there is an infatuation come over the public mind in reference to this matter, which will not easily let the matter drop. The middle classes of the laity are in some places resisting it to turbulence and mobbing, but I fear it is creeping about among the upper classes. There are certainly elements of mischief at work in the Church,

which bode no good for it. It is a house divided against itself. And yet, withal, I do not think Dissent is gaining ground. The property and the people who hold it, are continually going off from us to the Church, and many of those who go verge right over to Puseyism.

"Still there are signs of good. There is among a large portion of evangelistic Christians, a strong desire for a closer union with each other. I send you herewith a volume of essays on Christian Union, in which you will see one by your present correspondent: the others, with the exception of Mr Wardlaw, are all by Presbyterians of the Free Church of Scotland, and several other Presbyterian bodies in that country. The volume had its origin in the catholicity and liberality of a Scotch gentleman, who was so interested and impressed by the speeches delivered, by various Presbyterian clergymen, at the bi-centenary meeting held at Edinburgh two years ago, to celebrate the meeting of the Westminster Assembly, that he determined to devote £300 to promote union: and this volume is the fruit of his generosity. Just as my essay was going through the press, I received Dr Patton's letter, which you will find appended. It is a good and a grand thought. Difficulties will, of course, lie in the way of realising it; but could it be brought to bear, it would be a noble achievement. I doubt whether a simple declaration is all we should seek. This would not be enough to draw us together; but could we not form a Protestant Association to sustain and extend the cause of Protestantism by the press, in the way of re-printing old standard works, and offering premiums for the publication of new ones, and thus call out the talent of the whole Protestant world, in England, America, France and Germany? The Catholics are at the present moment doing this, and calling out thus most effective and even voluminous publications. I think ten or twenty thousand pounds a-year thus spent, with all the activity and energy which it would engage, would do much to arrest the swelling tide of Popery. Will you turn the subject round in your mind?

"I beg to be kindly remembered to Mrs Sprague and your family, and am, as ever, affectionately yours, J. A. JAMES."

TO THE REV. E. R. CONDER, M.A., OF POOLE, (NOW OF LEEDS.)

"EDGBASTON, *February 10, 1845.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am not surprised that you have already found out how much greater are the difficulties of the pastor than those of the preacher. It is, indeed, far easier and far more delightful to teach men than to govern them. Even after forty years' experience, discipline often makes me tremble. I am afraid your venerable and most estimable colleague has too much of the milk of human kindness in his nature ever to be in danger of erring on the side of excessive severity.

Partaking more of the father than of the judge, he has, perhaps, held the reins of government with rather too slack a hand, and suffered the church to get a little beyond his control; and now that you are seated by him upon the box, or rather have come into his place as coachman, the horses will not like to be too hastily pulled up. I see, from what you say, it will require great prudence in you to carry out your views and wishes and not give offence, and, at the same time, not to seem to reflect on Mr Durant’s administration. You must not be in haste to reform, but bring about a better state of things gradually.

“I will now take your queries in order.

“If a report be in general circulation, charging moral delinquency upon a member, it ought instantly to be investigated by tracing it, if possible, to its source, and ascertaining its correctness, as far as this can be done, before a regular examination. This should be done by the pastor and deacons. Justice to the accused requires he should be cleared, if innocent—justice to the church, that he should be corrected, if guilty.

“Unpunctuality in the payment of debts, if so notorious as to bring scandal, should be noticed first by a private remonstrance, delivered by the pastor and one of the deacons; if persisted in, the individual ought to be requested to see the whole eldership.

“It is a matter of no consequence that information comes from a person who is not a member, if he be a veracious person, and is prepared to substantiate his allegation. In many, if not most cases, the only witnesses are non-professors.

“The details into which it may be necessary to descend, in the investigation of any case, must be regulated by the nature of the case. To criminate or clear is the object sought, and you must go to any length necessary for this.

“There are some cases so notoriously bad, that the honour of the church requires expulsion as soon as the crime is proved; but these are of unfrequent occurrence. In most cases suspension, to give the offender an opportunity of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, is the best mode of proceeding; but then, if there be no confession of sin and marks of sincerity in a few months, the individual ought to be expelled. Suspension is not so much a punishment—a sentence by itself—as a space given for repentance.

“We never pass votes of censure; but we sometimes rebuke an offender by the discipline committee.

“I think the pastor and deacons, or discipline committee, as the case might be, ought to have the power of suspending an individual from church privileges, with the view of ascertaining the nature of an allegation, and whether it is necessary to proceed further.

“I could not consent to receive or retain a member who kept a

public-house, except in cases where the regulations are so strict as to render it all but impossible for such an establishment to succeed. The case is different with a wife, who is not her own mistress; but then she ought peremptorily to refuse to sell liquor on the Sabbath, and leave that to her husband.

"I can conceive of cases, but they are most extraordinarily rare, in which the pastor and deacons, or discipline committee, should have the power of requesting a member to withdraw.

"I have now gone through your interrogatories, and will come to our plan, which, indeed, you perhaps recollect. At the church meeting in February we always elect a discipline committee for the year. A list of names is proposed by myself, which always comprises four of the deacons and five other members, who, with the pastor, constitute this committee. Whatever cases of delinquency occur are examined by this committee. For instance, if I heard of the bad conduct of a member, which required investigation, I send for the secretary, and request him to call the committee together. When assembled, I lay the case before them; and one or two members are requested to inquire into the case, and, if true, to request the attendance of the person at the next meeting. At that meeting we have sometimes witnesses adduced. And, when the case is discussed, we form our opinion, and come to a conclusion; and send up a report to the church, if it be a matter which requires suspension. Sometimes it is enough to rebuke the offender, and let the matter drop. The church invariably acts upon the recommendation of this committee, and excommunicates or suspends as we recommend. We have found this plan to work well hitherto. If a person were to refuse to be answerable to this committee, the church would instantly expel him for contumacy; and some, rather than undergo an investigation, will do this. There is an advantage in this over the plan of confining the persons investigating, before it comes to the church, to the deacons—the responsibility is shared with them, and the church is likely to be more satisfied with the conclusion. We change the committee usually every year.

"I hope this will help you. What you have to guard against is, a too great laxity, on the one hand, and a fidgety looking out for cases, on the other. Did you ever talk over the whole matter with Mr Durant? I would advise this—submit to him every plan. Mr Brown is a sensible man, talk with him also.

"Next Wednesday week, Mr Creak is to be ordained; and that day fortnight, Mr Hill. I have conditionally promised to be at both; but I am becoming so nervous and poorly, that I am almost afraid, especially for Mr Hill. May the Lord direct you!—Yours most truly,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO MRS MATHESON,
ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. DR MATHESON.

“EDGBASTON, *February 2, 1846.*

“MY DEAR MADAM AND DEEPLY-AFFLICTED FRIEND,—If, in the multitude of your sad and troubled thoughts, you can listen to the words of sympathy and receive the expressions of tender condolence, I now offer them. God has indeed afflicted you; but it is your consolation to know, that it is God which hath done it: and may you be able to look up to Him with profound submission, and say, ‘I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because *Thou* didst it!’ It is a deep and painful mystery, and to us on this side of the cloud it is all darkness and distressful gloom; but to him who has been taken, and who sees the other side, it is all light and splendour and glory. You have no refuge, resource, or consolation, but in God, and in *Him* you have all these. Thousands pity you and pray for you. Oh, how fervently have I knocked at the door of mercy for you! God *will* hear all these prayers. You will be supported and provided for, and your dear babes too. Jehovah is the widow’s God, and the Father of the fatherless. He has not put off this tender and touching title, this endearing character and relation. Honour Him, my dear friend—glorify Him in the fires, by giving Him your confidence. They that know His name will put their trust in Him, and *you do* know His name. He lives, and blessed be your Rock, and let the God of your salvation be exalted. I wish I knew what best would comfort you, what most readily and effectually would reach your riven heart, I would select the softest, sweetest accents of consolation. What better can I do than direct your eye and heart and arm to the glorified Man of sorrows, who, touched with the feeling of your infirmities, bends from His throne, to offer, to convey, to impress the sympathy of His holy and merciful heart! He knows what He has done, why He has done it, and how to comfort you under it. He loves you too well, and the dear departed, to have done it for anything but for good. You will justify Him in the end. You will then see, what you must now believe, that in some way or other it is for His glory and your good. I know that it is a triumph of faith almost too great to be expected from you, to believe that such a bereavement can be for good.

“I feel as if I had lost a dear friend. I loved him, respected him, confided in him. Alas! for the society;—but you and your dear children! Well, cast yourself and them upon God—tell Him He is your husband and their father, that you and they have no other, and see if He will disown you. No; never. He can, He will provide. He is what He was on Mount Moriah, *Jehovah Jireh*. Lay hold, and keep hold by faith, of this title.

“If my prayers are worth anything, they shall be yours. My love to your dear children.—Your tenderly sympathising friend,

“J. A. JAMES.

“Accept the little volume which I send with this.”

TO THE REV. DR SPRAGUE.

“EDGBASTON, *September 1, 1847.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Permit me, first of all, to acknowledge—which I do with many thanks—your kind remembrance of me in the various offerings of your prolific pen which have lately come to hand, and which fully sustain your literary reputation, and corroborate the declaration of your welcome letters, that your energies are unimpaired. I rejoice to find you so diligently sowing beside all waters, and I trust that the harvest of good to others, and of legitimate fame and reward for yourself, will be reached in rich and ripe abundance.

“It is a great thing to live and labour for God and souls. This only is to work for immortality. But how difficult to keep the waters pure—to live only for Christ!

“Your little work addressed to a young man’s conscience, is a gem, which I must have published in this country, and try to help you to do good here.

“It is but fair I should send you a quid pro quo; and yet this is rather assuming that I give you what can be considered as of equal value—but the expression hardly implies equality. Such as it is, I lay it before you; at any rate, the subject is momentous to the last degree. I only regret that I have not done justice to it. Far, far mightier intellects than mine must fall below such a theme. Ah, my friend, as you and I draw nearer and nearer to the closing scenes of our ministry, even the importance of that ministry itself magnifies upon our view and presses upon our heart. How little we seem to act as men who profess to be labouring for eternity—men upon whose lips hang the destinies of immortal souls! Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Where is the Lord God of your Edwards and our Whitfield? I am happy to say that there seems a disposition in this country to enter into the subject of my little work, as is evinced by the fact that, although the work was published only in May, I am now preparing a third edition. May God sanctify the perusal of it!

“Your representation of the state of religion in America, is but a counterpart of what it is here. All is dulness, and the wind seems blowing upon the valley of dry bones. The Wesleyan body had a decrease last year of five thousand. Neither we nor the Baptists are doing much, and the evangelical clergy of the Church of England as

little. The excitement of the age is bearing down religion. Men's minds are wholly engrossed by the things that are seen and temporal.

“The Church partakes of the spirit of the world, and worldliness in a variety of forms is eating out the core of personal godliness. As a pastor, I have perhaps as little to complain of as most, but still I see the effect of the existing state of things upon my flock. Amidst all, however, there are some few elements of character conspicuously visible in the present generation of professing Christians. Zeal and liberality are rather growing than in a state of decadence. The aggressive operations of the Church upon the territories of the prince of darkness are nobly sustained, though perhaps not yet with proportionate success.

“I conclude you have not entered upon a very serious consideration of the present movement for Christian Union. I am a little afraid we shall not make very rapid advances towards our great desideratum. But even to fail in such an attempt appears to me more honourable than not to make the effort. Though I am by no means convinced that our plan has been in all respects the wisest that could be devised. Dr Candlish, in his essay on the subject of Union, published in Scotland, said, that perhaps all denominations must be first taken down before they can all unite. We may none of us be yet in a condition for general union. The strife between the friends and opponents of State endowments is waxing stronger and stronger, and the late general election has given political strength to the latter.

“I am happy to hear so good an account of your domestic affairs. May your ‘Angell’ be one in nature as well as in name, and a far better and holier man than’ he from whom he has borrowed his cognomen. You say he is preparing for college. This does not imply that he is on his way to the pulpit; if it did, I would have dedicated the little volume I have sent, to him. May God convert him by His grace, and then call him into the ministry. Give my love to him, and tell him I shall pray to God on his behalf for these two things.

“I have lately had a very agreeable change in my domestic affairs by the marriage of my son, who, with his bride, is now travelling on the continent. It is a union to my satisfaction. My daughter is still a great invalid, and is now in London under the care of a physician; so that I dwell much alone—but He whose company is a substitute for all others, is with me.

“I beg my kindest regards to Mrs Sprague and your family. Shall you ever cross the Atlantic again? If we ever meet on this side of the grave, it must be in this country. If not, we shall meet in a far better one.—Yours most truly,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE SAME.

"BIRMINGHAM, *September 18, 1851.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I am not quite sure you will think I am sincere in the use of this epithet, and of these relationships—for you will be ready to ask how so long a silence on my part can really consort with friendly and brotherly feeling. I fall under your rebuke, and confess to its justice. I can set up no defence—and can scarcely frame an excuse. The best apology I have to offer—and poor and feeble enough it is—that with advancing age I have a growing dislike to correspondence, which is strengthened by the all but overwhelming pressure of the penny postage. I know not whether your country is favoured with this facility for epistolary intercourse—if so, you will be prepared to sympathise with us in this land to which it has brought such a vast assemblage of letter-writing, with really very little diminution of outlay.

"Your letters, with the pamphlets which have often accompanied them, have demonstrated to me that you are not only alive and well, but active and useful. You have indeed the 'pen of a ready writer,' but I am glad that you are employed, if I mistake not, upon something more substantial and permanent than mere pamphlets. For these, however excellent and acceptable, rarely have vitality sufficient to keep them alive beyond the day of their production, and cannot be expected to float upon the stream of time to posterity. If I mistake not, you are engaged on an American Ministerial Biography. This is a great idea, and can be made eminently serviceable to the future by preserving the precious remains of the past. A well-written life of a good man is calculated to produce the lives of many good men. May God give you health, and wisdom, and grace, to finish the work in such manner as shall be for His glory and the good of His Church!

"As regards myself, I am thankful to say I am in tolerable health, and, considering that I have entered upon the forty-eighth year of my connexion with my church, in pretty good working condition. I go through my Sabbath-day services with about as little fatigue as for many years past, and, blessed be the God of all grace, with, I believe, as much acceptableness to my flock. My family remain as they were,—my son a widower, after a short season of three months' happiness—my daughter unmarried, but somewhat better in health than she was in former years. I have not done much since I last wrote, in the way of authorship, except publishing a plain, practical monthly sermon to young men,—a class of persons in this country and in our congregation more hopeless than any other. It is really fearful to think how indifferent they are to the claims of religion, and how few of them we gather into our

churches! I calculate that two thirds of the members of all our churches are females. I suppose this is the same with you in America, as well as with us.

“The state of religion in our country—if we mean by this the conversion of the impenitent, and the high-toned devotion of the professors—is low. I do not think I ever preached with less saving results since I was a minister; and this is the case with most others. It is a general complaint. We have no diminution of Christian activity and associated effort; but individual piety is undevout and feeble. A spirit of worldliness characterises the Church, and its separation from the ungodly is less conspicuous than it ought to be. But there is a still more serious ground of apprehension in the minds of some of us, and that is for the orthodoxy of some of our young ministers. It is obvious to every one that a spirit of scepticism is coming over our land and yours from Germany and France, and all the great verities of religious truth are to be tried over again. This is finding its way into the minds of some of our young men—who, by the German mode of thinking, aided by your Emerson and Parker, and our Carlyle, are not satisfied either with established doctrine or commonly-received phraseology. Religious truth it is supposed cannot stand still while all around it is moving onward. I am myself far more apprehensive of mischief from this source than I am from Popery; though, indeed, this latter has risen up with a front and audacity that astounds many and alarms more. But people whose reason is more active than their fears, are of opinion that the Papacy has made a mistake in its late attempt to establish a Roman hierarchy here. Protestant feeling is roused as it has not been since the Revolution of 1688. Papacy was making its silent way unopposed before—but it is not so now. All are roused, and a flood of Protestant light will be poured over the land. It is said that your Roman Catholic bishops wanted a cardinal for America, and that the Pope refused it, and confessed he had been misled in granting one to this country. Still I have no doubt that there will be a considerable increase of Popery as long as Puseyism continues in the Church of England; but I have no fear at all of Popish ascendancy. It appears probable that the final triumph of our Redeemer over Antichrist will not be when the Papal power is in its weakness, but in some considerable strength.

“Everything here in the religious world is in a strangely unsettled state. The Church of England is shaken to its centre. The Methodists are divided in consequence of a struggle of a reform party against the conference. The Dissenting bodies are peaceable, if not pure. But one of the strangest religious phenomena of our day and country is the zeal and diffusion of a sect which is an import from your country—I mean, the Mormonites. Your Joe Smith, though he went out in infancy,

is glorified in myriads. What absurdities will not men rather receive than the truth! I suppose you know that we have had a visit from your Mr Finney. He was three months in this town, where he excited some considerable attention, but did not succeed to the extent of his expectations. Most of our ministers stood aloof from him. This I could not bring myself to do. He preached five or six times for me, and sometimes with great power. Dr Campbell of the Tabernacle thoroughly entered into his measures, and gave him his pulpit for months. Dr Bedford of Worcester also welcomed him to his congregation. He certainly was useful; but there is so much that is startling in his phraseology, at any rate, and so much that is novel in his statements, together with so much occasionally that is low and vulgar in his assertions, that I feel considerable hesitation about encouraging his return to this country, for which a proposal is now being got up. But how can he be spared from Oberlin and the American churches, if he be so powerful a revivalist? And one should imagine he is wanted at home. Yet, after all, there is so much deadness prevailing that one would welcome any instrumentality that is likely to infuse a little more life, provided it be not the life of a lunatic or a maniac.

“I have seen some of your friends during our Great Exhibition—among the rest Judge Darling and his son, though it was but for a few minutes. I met Dr Murray of New York in Scotland, with whom I was much pleased. There was also a large gathering of Americans at the Evangelical Alliance. Drs Baird and Bacon were prominent above most. You may be sure we did not keep clear of the subject of Slavery. Your atrocious fugitive slave bill came up. Still I think the discussion did good. The objection taken by your brethren was against the sweeping resolution of our British organisation, to hold no fellowship with slaveholders, who may be such, under any circumstances; and they also reprobated the strong language used on this side of the water, and the obtrusion of the subject on all Americans coming to this country, which, they said, if continued, would sever the tie between the two countries. Your brethren behaved very well, though they said something in our meetings which, perhaps, had better not have been said. The meetings of the Alliance were good, and will do good.—Your sincere and affectionate friend,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. H. MARLEN, LIVERPOOL.

“BIRMINGHAM, *October 25, 1852.*

“MY DEAR SIR,—A letter so kind and catholic in its spirit, and so flattering to myself, as yours of the date of the 15th September, ought to have received an earlier reply. But you know the current of en-

agements which in a large town is ever setting in upon the ministers of religion, and how much this is increased by the correspondence brought upon them through the penny postage. I suppose it is the custom of all to despatch those letters first which are demanded by the most pressing claims, and reserve the others ‘for a more convenient season.’ The consequence is, that they do not escape the peril of temporary oblivion. Accept this as my apology.

“And now accept my sincere thanks for your truly fraternal and Christian reference to my productions, both of the pulpit and the press. Well do I remember the sermon you mention as having been preached at Canterbury. I never felt my subject more than I did on that occasion. I believe the great Master was with His servant, and gave an unusual unction to his mind. But, sir, you know enough of our mental economy to be aware how much depends upon manner. It happens that God has given to me a voice of some compass, and much of what is æsthetical in my constitution. Stripped of this, my sermons would appear but as ordinary things.

“I am much obliged to you for the suggestion about a volume of these things; but I am sure they would disappoint everybody, not excepting even yourself, so kindly disposed to think well, ah, too well, of what I do. It is a proof that some charity is yet left in our world when a clergyman of the Church of England writes to a Dissenting minister as you have to me. As to earnestness, this is what we all want. There is a magic charm about it that will compensate for other things, and carry others away upon the tide of its own feeling.

“What you say is very true about the desirableness of a catalogue of useful books for a young minister; but young ministers now-a-days choose rather to judge and select themselves.

“I trust you are blessed by God in the conversion of souls. This is what we should all seek; but I have a painful apprehension that the work of real conversion goes on but slowly in our day. Men’s minds, hearts, hands, are all so full, that it is difficult even with the themes of eternity to gain a serious hearing, and to arrest the torrent of worldliness that is flowing through society. May the blessing of God rest upon your labours!—I am, my dear sir, with much esteem, yours faithfully,

“J. A JAMES.”

NOTE.—The previous letter is explained by the following extract from a note of Mr Marlen’s to the editor:—

“It was written in reply to one I addressed to the Rev. Mr James under the following circumstances:—About thirty years ago, or more, he was preaching in the city of Canterbury at the Independent Chapel there, on a Lord’s-day morning, to a full congregation, and there being a strong desire felt by the members of other churches to hear that gifted minister, the manager of the Wesleyan Chapel

(the largest chapel in the city) offered the use of the same for the evening service. The building was crowded, and its galleries forming a sort of amphitheatre, the appearance of the assembly, and the impression left by the service, have never been effaced from my memory. Mr James took for his text on that occasion the 2d chapter of Hebrews, and a part of the 3d verse—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" I had never heard a sermon delivered with equal power, and the treatment of the subject led me to think of the discourse as a model of pulpit eloquence. Reflecting on the effect produced on that large assembly of people, about eight years ago I wrote to Mr James, suggesting the publication of a volume of his sermons as delivered, to which the enclosed is the reply, and as it illustrates the humble estimate he had been led to form of his own gifts, its preservation may not be without its use. . . . —Excuse great haste, and believe me, reverend and dear sir, most affectionately yours,

"HENRY MARLEN,
"Incumbent of *All Saints, Liverpool.*"

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

"BIRMINGHAM, *October 28, 1853.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER PATTON,—If when you wrote your letter dated May 14, 1852, you expressed yourself in terms of mild and Christian rebuke for my long silence, and reminded me of my heavy arrears to you in the way of correspondence, what must be your feelings and words of reproach now, a year and a-half after that time? In mitigation, at least in regard to that letter and the books which accompanied it, let me say, that strange as it may seem, and unaccountable to me as to the cause, they never came to hand till this morning. Where for eighteen months they have been lying I know not, nor do I know now whence they came. How ungrateful you must have thought me in not acknowledging your kind remembrance of me! As regards my previous silence, I was not aware that it was so long since I wrote to you. Time rolls on with such rapid current that one is frequently led to neglect duties under the idea they have been already or recently discharged. And then the penny postage in connexion with the vast increase of public business has so multiplied our correspondents, and so accumulated in this way the claim upon our time, that those friends who live remotely from us are almost sure to be neglected, if not forgotten. However, to-day as soon as I had read your letter, I determined not to give sleep to my eyes till I had answered it.

"And now, first of all, let me thank you for a copy of that wondrous book which you have sent me. Modern times have produced no such phenomenon in literature. No work ever produced such an impression on the public mind of this country. 'Uncle Tom' is known in every home in this kingdom, from the palace to the cottage; and we cannot help thinking it will do more to promote the cause of Abolition than all the volumes ever published, all the sermons ever preached, and all the speeches ever delivered. I don't think the wound will ever be

healed which the pen of Mrs Stowe has inflicted on the cause of slavery. Her visit to this country excited great attention, and she was everywhere received with great love for her work's sake, and I think she will speak favourably of English and Scotch hospitality. She was to have been my guest on her return to Birmingham, but as she left England earlier than she expected, I was deprived of the honour of entertaining her.

“Your Fugitive Slave Bill is as great a disgrace to your country as Mrs Stowe's book is an honour. Oh, it is sad indeed to see a nation boasting of its liberty, and proud of its independence, exposing itself to the reproach of the civilised world for this outrageous violation of the laws of our common humanity! The conduct of some, yea, most of your ministers of religion, in reference to this matter, excites great surprise in this country.

“We have had an importation from your country to ours of this strange delusion of spirit-rapping. The testimony of one of your judges of New York astounds us. Some of our credulous people here believe it to be an operation of Satanic agency; and two clergymen of the Church of England have each published a pamphlet avowing this to be their conviction. It will, however, soon pass away here and be forgotten with other wonders, that like meteors kindle and are extinguished.

“We have now in our country your celebrated temperance orator, Mr Gough. I have heard him once, and truly, for a popular speaker to the multitude, he has unrivalled powers. His command of the audience by his humour, wit, anecdote, and eloquent appeals to the feelings is astounding. It is a combination of acting and speaking. There is an equal mixture of the ludicrous and the pathetic. He is amazingly popular, and therefore attracts large audiences wherever he goes.

“And now about yourself. What are you doing? What part of the city are you labouring in? and are you still a Congregationalist? As to myself, I have lately ventured upon sharing my labours with an assistant, whom, next year, I shall take as co-pastor. If I live as long as next September I shall enter upon my Jubilee. Oh, what a life of unmerited and unexpected mercy I have enjoyed! And this prospect of a comfortable settlement with a man to my own heart's content, is an immense addition to all my other mercies. I have printed two or three things since I last wrote, but which I have not thought it worth while to trouble you with. I am still in great mercy preserved in good health, and never worked harder than I have done of late years. Blessed be God for ability in any way to serve our gracious Lord. Since I wrote last, I have lost my dear brother James, who lived in this neighbour-

hood, and lately I have lost a brother-in-law. I came home last evening from the annual conference of our Evangelical Alliance. We still keep going on, though I am afraid we do not make much progress. I was informed at the conference, that the French Branch of the Alliance has sent, or is about to send, a deputation to the United States to expostulate with the brethren there on the subject of slavery. May God speed their way!

“And now may God bless you and yours! I shall be glad to hear from you again, if you are not discouraged by my long silence.

“My daughter unites in kind regards to yourself and Mrs Patton.
—Your sincere friend and brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR MORISON.

“EDGBASTON, *September 11, 1854.*

“MY MUCH-LOVED FRIEND,—Your truly fraternal, kind, and Christian letter demands as early and as full a reply as my poor, shattered, and enfeebled powers of body and mind will enable me to give. Thanks, many thanks, my brother, for your sympathy and the delightful expression of it. That you who have so many objects, and all of them important ones, to think about, should think of your now afflicted friend—and that you, who have so many things to do, should appropriate part of your precious time to write to him, is a proof and expression of Christian friendship which is not lost upon him on whom it has been bestowed. I hope you love me chiefly for Jesus’ sake. I had rather be loved for His sake than for my own. This is the feeling I have towards you: I love and respect you as my friend and brother, Morison—your manly intellect, and generous disposition, and loving, brotherly heart endears you to me. Yes, but I regard you as one who loves and serves Christ, and whom Christ loves and serves—and this makes my friendship sacred, heavenly, divine. Oh, how sweet the reflection that friendships in Christ are eternal! You and I are friends for ever and ever.

“Well, now, a little about myself—my poor, enfeebled self. How little did I think, when we were regaling ourselves with the beauties of Ventnor, that the furnace was heating in which my faith was to be tried. Oh, may it be found unto praise and honour at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ!

“I believe I was a little incautious in preaching too often after I left Ventnor. At Sherbourne, I was seized with an attack of low, slow, and obstinate fever. This has continued for more than a month, and has such a grip, as I think you Scotch people say, upon me, that I cannot throw it off. I am still waiting, I hope in calmness and confidence, to see how it will go with me. I seem, to myself, to be a broken

vessel; and whether I am to be mended for further service is known only to Him, in whose hands I am, and out of whose hands I would not be removed. This was commenced last evening, for it could be no desecration of the Sabbath to hold fellowship with a Christian brother. What an awful and affecting account you give of the desolation of the pestilence! God be praised, you, though attacked, were not numbered with its victims! God preserve you, my dear friend, amidst all your infirmities for many years to come! My love to your dear wife and the good girls.—Yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE SAME.

“EDGBASTON, *November 23, 1854.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your solicitude about my health deeply affects me. Who am I that I should have such a place in the minds and hearts of God’s people, His ministers, and in yours among the rest? I am sure if they knew me as God knows me, and as I know myself, they would experience some abatement in their esteem. What a mercy it is that they do not know us as we know ourselves! Well, I thank you for your kind inquiries, and lose not a post in gratifying the affection that prompted them, by saying, that through the unmerited goodness of God I continue to improve. I now preach once on the Sabbath, but do little else. Perhaps the best idea I can give you of my present condition and capabilities is, to tell you what I went through yesterday, when the ordination of my excellent co-pastor took place.

“I was in chapel the whole of the morning service; delivered a charge to the young pastor of an hour and five minutes in length; presided at the dinner for about two hours; and, after two hours’ repose, went to hear Samuel Martin preach an extraordinary sermon, of an hour and a quarter’s length; and after all this slept soundly, and am in tolerable health this morning. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together! You see, I must have some strength, left, more than either I or my friends thought I had. Oh, that God may give me a little more work to do for Him, and help me to do it better! The ordination service was a deeply solemn one; the chapel crowded to excess; about forty or fifty ministers present; the dinner without toasts, and prayer and praise and holy speaking instead. Oh, how favoured am I! How blessed of God in this harmonious settlement!”

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“BIRMINGHAM, *January 2, 1855.*

“. . . Since I last wrote I have been somewhat seriously ill. While on a journey of recreation, in August last, I was attacked with

low fever, which, hung about me for some weeks, and left me in a debilitated state. I am not able yet to engage in the full duty of my pastorate. My constitution, I think, has received a shock from which it will never entirely recover. I am, you perhaps know, in the seventieth year of my age, and the fiftieth of my ministry; and may well suppose that the elasticity of my frame is somewhat weakened. Youth may rally, but age cannot be expected to do so to any great extent. Happily both for myself and the congregation, I had engaged a co-pastor, who has the confidence and affection of the whole church, so that during my illness the pulpit was supplied, and the congregation kept up to its usual standard. This is, of course, still a great relief to me, as I have only half work to do, and when unable to do that, my colleague can supply my lack of service. I feel it some trial of faith and patience to be in any degree laid aside from my former activity. Still I am thankful to be able to do any work. I love my Master, I love His cause, and I love His service; and if He is pleased to continue me a little longer in His employ, I shall be grateful, and if not, I hope I shall be submissive to His will. If He give me life, health, and strength, I want to send out a reprint in this country, with a rather long preface on preaching, a work which has been pretty widely circulated in America, entitled, 'Pastoral Sketches,' by a Dr Spencer, who, I have been informed, is since dead. He seems to have been a skilful physician of souls, and possessed admirable tact in dealing with individual cases. Now, in this you Americans excel us, except in some few instances. Our young ministers are deficient here. Their sermons are not very well adapted to produce conviction and conversion; and as to their ability to meet the cases of awakened sinners, or all the perplexities and anxieties of the first stages of the divine life, they are quite novices many of them. Much of our preaching just now has little to do with the heart and conscience. Now, for their sakes, I should like, if God will accept the service, to send out an edition of Spencer's work with an introduction. Do you happen to have known him? Can you give me any information concerning him, which would give an interest to the work when it comes before the English public? "Everything I hear from your land, and everything I see in my own, convinces me that all the great verities of Divine revelation are to go through a fresh conflict with error. Even our reputedly orthodox men are somewhat tinged with the philosophical tendency and scepticism of the age. Amidst the ten thousand splendid novelties that are ever rising before the public mind, the old gospel is in danger of being considered effete and out of date. But of all the wonderful meteors of the age, Mormonism is the most wonderful. It is amazing that so clumsy and vulgar a delusion should have gained access to, and

hold upon men's minds. I think the community at the Salt Lake must, some time or other, come into collision with your federal government. Polygamy can surely never receive the sanction of the States, which it must in some way obtain, if the territory of the Mormons should ever become populous enough to become a State, and be received as such. And then we hear strange things of your fraternity of the 'Know-nothings.' I doubt not the reports are exaggerated, but there seems to me to be a nucleus of mischief there. We are all deeply interested in this horrid war with Russia. The war spirit is all but universally rampant, much more so than suits my taste or my principles. I am inclined to think we had no business with it. When and what the end will be, none knows, but He who sees the end from the beginning. Already the slaughter and destruction by disease are fearful, especially of the officers, which has sent 'mourning, lamentation, and woe' through the ranks of our aristocracy.

"You have said nothing of yourself and family. What are you doing? Have you a congregation, and where? or are you enjoying a quiet evening of life? Revivals are rare with you as with us. Stagnancy characterises the spiritual state of our churches. Men's minds and hearts, and hands, are all full of secular matters, and religion is made to stand by at present.

"Well, now, I must conclude with my kind regards to your family. I hope Mrs Patton and your children are all well, and doing well. The Lord whom we serve bless you!—Your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. A. JAMES."

TO WALTER, SON OF JOHN GRAHAM, ESQ.

"EDGBASTON, *January 19, 1855.*

"MY DEAR WALTER,—You will probably be surprised, but I am sure you will not be displeased, at receiving these few lines from me. I feel so deeply interested in you, that I cannot resist the impulse to express to you my good wishes for your present and eternal welfare, and to assure you that you are individually the subject of my earnest prayers.

"I need not tell you that you are the child of many anxieties, many hopes, and many supplications. You have now arrived at an age when the bud of childhood has expanded into the blossom of youth, and when the blossom of youth will soon set in the fruit of manhood. And it is quite time to ask, how you would wish it to set, and into what kind of character it is likely to ripen. All the parental expectations, desires, and solitudes of your father and mother concentrate in you. Should you be otherwise than they wish and pray for, there is no other

to whom they can turn and say, 'Whatever disappointment we may have experienced in Walter, this other son shall comfort us.' But I hope and believe you will not disappoint their fondest and largest hopes.

"Hitherto, I think, from all I have heard of you, that you are a good and dutiful son, rewarding by your dutiful conduct the care that has been bestowed upon you. Thus continue to act. The heart of a loving child is a good soil for other excellences to grow in. Ever may you be your father's joy, your mother's pride!

"But, Walter, there is another parent I want you to love, honour, and obey, and that is your Father which is in heaven. Have you yet thought of His claim upon your filial regard? Have you yet begun to remember your Creator in the days of your youth? Have you ever heard with reverent awe that demand, 'My son, give me thine heart?' 'Is true, vital religion a matter of deep interest with you? Have you ever yet felt any yearning of heart over, and after, the character of a truly pious man? If not, let me affectionately entreat you to take up, in serious thoughtfulness, this momentous subject. I can assure you, as millions more can do, that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace:

"Twill save you from a thousand snares
To mind religion young."

And then while it will bless us, it will help us to bless others. I want you, Walter, to be a good man, that you may be a useful one. You have a father who is in this respect a pattern for you. He is living not merely to get money, but to do good. Imitate his example. Say to yourself—'I will, by God's grace, be a good and useful man, like my father.' Do not be a cipher in society—be something good, and this may make you great. To religion add a thirst for knowledge, and a determination to improve. Aim at universal excellence. Be conscientious in all your conduct. Set your standard high. For all this, give yourself to prayer. Pray for Divine grace to be decided in religion, and decided in everything else that is good. There can be no religion while there is no love for prayer. How can you expect the blessing of God if you do not pray for it? And read and study your Bible. Do not be ashamed when you are at school of being considered a religious boy. May you deserve the honour!

"Give my kind regards to your good and excellent mother. I hope you will both enjoy your present situation, and return with a good stock of health.—Your friend and minister,

"J. A. JAMES.

TO THE REV. J. C. MILLER, M.A., RECTOR OF ST MARTIN’S, BIRMINGHAM.

“EDGBASTON, April 28, 1855.

“MY DEAR MR MILLER,—I acknowledge, with many thanks, the receipt of a copy of your very admirable pamphlet on the important subject of National Education—a subject as difficult as it is momentous. After you had directed my attention to them, I read your letters in the Journal, and have reperused them since they appeared in the present form; and most willingly and cheerfully say that you have brought to the discussion of the subject a degree of intelligence, analytic power, and candour which must raise you still higher in the estimation of the public than you ever stood before. You have done as much to untie the knot as can well be accomplished.

“And yet, with all that you have written, and written so well, I am but ‘almost persuaded.’ I feel a theoretic perplexity on the question, whether the education of the people is indeed a matter within the jurisdiction of Government, especially their religious education. For the introduction of a catechism, if this be intended, as your reasoning and the two bills imply, makes it essentially religious. True, you make a provision for the great principle of religious liberty, by exempting all Nonconformists from the obligation to learn the catechism. But does this go further than the present toleration of the Established Church? And is it not, in fact, the principle of the Establishment carried into the school, since the great bulk of the children will be taught the catechism, as belonging nominally to the Church of England? And without being considered ultra-Voluntaries, may not many who look upon the catechism as teaching baptismal regeneration, feel a conscientious objection to be taxed for teaching what they believe to be error?

“I feel also some difficulty on the subject from the effect a Government measure will have upon existing schools, supported to such an extent by voluntary contributions, and which have so multiplied of late, as to indicate that this system, if stimulated, may at last overtake the wants of the population.

“I am also a little apprehensive that any system of general local management will, in the present state of parties, become a fruitful source of social discord, strife, and contention. The number of bills, amounting to six, including Scotland, now before Parliament, seems to prove the difficulty of State interference, and the improbability of coming to a satisfactory conclusion. Moreover, I am inclined to think that if the State interfere at all, it should begin by protecting the labouring population against the cupidity of parents and the temptations held out by the manufacturing system. Until this is done, no measure of national education can meet the necessities of the case. It

is not school-rooms and masters we want now, but scholars. None of our schools are full; and they never will be as long as children can obtain their eightpence or two shillings a-week at the early age of eight or nine years. I doubt if either of the bills now before the House of Commons would, in the present state of our manufacturing system, add a thousand children, or half the number, unless, indeed, a depression of trade should intervene, which would throw them out of employment.

“Still, after all I have written, my mind is by no means made up to say ‘Neither’ to the bills you have so ably and impartially analysed. On no subject do I feel so much perplexity. I see and lament the evils you so accurately describe and so feelingly deplore; and I am often inclined, in spite of my theoretic difficulties, to say, ‘Let us have some parliamentary measure, for we cannot meet the case without it.’ Of the two bills, I prefer Lord John Russell’s, upon the whole, with the supplement you suggest; and upon the most careful consideration I can give the subject, I rather incline to his system of management. Town councils, I am aware, are not, in all cases—our own, to wit—the best directors of this measure; but this plan shuts out an occasion of social strife. I need not say I write only for your own eye. My mind is hardly made up; and if, upon further examination, I should see eye to eye, as I certainly feel heart to heart with you, I shall be most happy to follow and acknowledge you as my leader.—Yours with esteem and regard,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO DR MORISON.

“*Sabbath Evening*, [1855.]

“MY BELOVED FRIEND,—I am again your debtor for another letter, just like your own heart, full of love and tenderness,—and, prevented from enjoying the communion of saints in the house of God, I sit down to hold epistolary intercourse with one of them in my own. How sweet and sacred a thing is Christian friendship, and how blissful a reflection that it is to be perfected in heaven, and perpetuated through eternity! You and I are to commune with each other millions of ages hence, and by our interchange of affection, are ripening for this everlasting intercourse. Oh, the sublimities of our holy religion! How little and insignificant appear all those his charities and offices which bind man to man, compared with those that bind Christian to Christian! As there is nothing holy without the gospel of our salvation, so there is nothing holy but what is great.”

“Many, many thanks for all the kind expressions of your fraternal letter. Indeed, my dear friend, I am unworthy of them. Never, no, never was so much favour shewn to one so undeserving of it. A length-

ened affliction, which leaves its subject in full possession of his faculties and leisure, by the absence of extreme pain, to search the heart with candles, makes strange and humbling disclosures. I thought I knew myself, but I find now that, at the age of seventy, I have had much to learn. And how humbling the discoveries that have been made! I need no other argument for the doctrine of sovereign grace than the knowledge of myself, compared with the multitudinous and wondrous blessings showered upon me as a man, a Christian, and a minister.

“You have been greatly tried, my dear friend, in your congregation, by the ravages of this fearful scourge, and well have you taught the readers of your magazine to sing of judgment and of mercy. May many have their hearts tuned for melody by these effusions of yours! Mrs Ramsey’s death was affecting, and is doubtless a loss to you. But while Jesus is with us, whom cannot we spare?

“As regards myself, I am thankful to say I am, I hope, slowly improving. To-day, in weakness, fear and trembling, but with joy and thankfulness, I presided at the Lord’s table, and went through the service with tolerable ease. To-morrow, I go for change of air to Malvern. May God give balm to the breeze, and an invigorating influence to the scenery of that beautiful place! I sometimes think my healthy and hearty days are over, and that I may be called now to serve the Lord with infirmity of the flesh. But all is in God’s hands. Kind love to Mrs Morison, and to the lambs.—Your ever affectionate friend,

“J. A. JAMES.

“My dear daughter continues a great invalid. This has doubled the affliction.”

TO WALTER, SON OF JOHN GRAHAM, ESQ.

“EDGBASTON, *June 3, 1856.*

“MY DEAR WALTER,—As you are soon to leave school and return to your father’s house, I cannot resist the inclination I feel to write you a few lines of congratulation and counsel. I say, of congratulation, for is it not matter of thankfulness that you have been placed by Providence in such circumstances as to enjoy, and, I hope, to improve, the advantages of a liberal education? By the goodness of God, your father has been favoured in his worldly affairs, so as to be able to command for you the benefits of a good school. You have not been permitted to grow up in ignorance, but have had that training which will fit you to occupy a respectable station in society. I think I may commend you for having endeavoured to profit by the mental culture which has been bestowed upon you. Another ground for congratulation and thankfulness is, that you have a father’s house to return to,

and are coming home to such parents as God has given to you,—parents who are anxious for your welfare in both worlds, and have done so much to promote it.

“Perhaps, on looking back upon school-days, now coming to a close, you can find some ground of regret, however diligent you have been, that you have not been more anxious to grow in all useful knowledge and in general excellence of character and conduct. I deem a penitential sense of shortcomings in every stage of life essential to future advancement. I am hopeless of that man’s growth in days to come, who does not see something to lament in days past.

“Well, my dear Walter, let me now place before you the solemn questions,—In what state of mind are you leaving school, towards God and religion? and with what purposes are you returning to your home, not now for the holidays, but for a permanency?

“Is the great matter decided? Have you yielded yourself to God? Have you made up your mind fully, and finally, to serve the Lord? I am not without hope that this is the case. Is my hope well founded? I know you have not been destitute of serious reflection; but is there decision? I know not whether you have read my ‘Young Man’s Guide to Immortality;’ if not, I will furnish you with a copy when you come home, and beg you most seriously to read the three or four first chapters, as applicable to your age and circumstances. I will suppose that you have decided upon a life of piety and usefulness, even while at school. Permit me, then, to remark, that though you are coming home to godly parents, to a father and mother who will still pray for you and watch over you, yet the transition from school to the domestic circle has, even in the most favourable circumstances, its dangers. It will be so sweet and pleasant to nestle under the wing of such parents in such a home, that you will be in peril of so taking up with their comfort as to feel that you have no need of the pleasures of religion to make you happy. Now, let me beg of you to pray very earnestly to God that you may retain your religious impressions when you return. Be much in prayer, Walter. You can never become a Christian, nor continue one without prayer. Love to converse with God. Is it not a glorious and wonderful thing to speak to God? And never suffer a day to pass without the Bible.

“Let me earnestly entreat you to be very careful about companions. There are, alas! too few of your age who are decidedly pious. Very few whom it would be safe for you to associate with. Do not be at all anxious about society. Make books your companions. Read, and read only such books as will do you good. Avoid all the habits of young men that tend to levity, and afterwards to something worse. I do not like to see young men, just out of their boyhood, swaggering

along with a cigar in their mouth, priggish, vain, and trifling. Be attentive to whatever business your father, after consulting your own taste, shall determine upon. Make him your counsellor, and your mother your confidant. Love their society, consult their wishes, promote their comfort. Bring from school the fixed determination to make them happy. And then, do not be an idle or a selfish young man. Do not live only for yourself. *Determine to be useful.* Begin life *doing* good, as well as *getting* it. When you come home, become a Sunday-school teacher. Is it not noble work to train mind, to develop intellect, to form character? You would not be a worthy son of your father if you do not aim to be useful. *He* is one of the most useful men in our church. Grow up to be like him. A youth can be a philanthropist as well as a man.

“May God bless you, Walter! I have great affection for you and great hope *of* you. Do not disappoint *my* hope, your *parents’* hope, and the hope of your *friends*. Many prayers are presented for you, mine among the rest. I shall be glad to see you, and I cannot but believe you are coming home with a character and in a state of mind that will make me glad to see you.—Your affectionate friend and minister,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“EDGBASTON, *October* 11, 1856.

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—Several months ago I wrote you a long letter, which as I could not at the time put my hand upon the directions you gave me for the transmission of my epistles, I forwarded to your son at Hartford. Not having heard from you, I begin to think my letter never reached you. I have determined, therefore, to wait no longer, but to write again to inquire about you and yours, and to give you all the important information that I deem interesting to you about what is going on in my circle. First of all, then, about the chapel, at the laying of whose foundation you were present and took part in the proceedings. It was opened for worship last Wednesday, the 8th, when, according to the condition you imposed at the time of promising a Bible, viz., that I should preach the first sermon, I delivered a discourse from Ezra vi. 16. When I rose to the pulpit, and before naming the text, I said, ‘I owe it to a liberal friend who has made a handsome contribution to the service of this morning, to state, that the splendid copy of the sacred Scriptures which now lies before me is given to the congregation now worshipping of this house, for the use of their pulpit, by the Rev. Dr Patton of New York, who was present with us when the foundation-stone of the chapel was laid. In this act of munificence, the American Eagle and the British Lion are

seen bowing with reverence together before the Divine Lamb, and the heavenly Dove of the Word of God. May these two nations, marked out by God to be the twin evangelists of the globe, be ever held in the closest bonds of national and Christian fellowship! 'I then delivered a discourse of more than an hour and a half to a large and interested congregation. The place is very elegant, with its tower and spire—appendages, I confess, I could have dispensed with. Formerly the sarcasm was thrown upon us, that 'Dissent is the religion of barns,' now it seems to be infected with the ambition of becoming the religion of cathedrals. It is not that I altogether reject the graces of architecture, but I am afraid that our concern for them is waxing greater than our concern for the graces of the Spirit. I have delivered your photograph to the managers of the chapel, who intend to frame it, and hang it in their vestry, and they will, at their first meeting, I doubt not, pass a vote of thanks to you for the Bible. The other and still greater work which was in progress when you were here, I mean the college, was to have been opened to-morrow, when various services were to be held, and addresses delivered; but to our excessive mortification, all is postponed on account of the unfinished state of the building. Our denomination is somewhat agitated just now on the subject of religious dogmatic theology; defection being a little suspected to some extent on the part of some of our men. Perhaps there is more fear than there is any ground for. At least, so many think. I am not without some apprehension. There has been a grand quarrel between Dr Campbell and Mr Binney, the former having published a series of letters to Mr Binney in the *British Banner*. Not that he accuses him of error. Mr Binney is unsuspected, but he is one of fifteen of our leading ministers who have surprised our denomination by endorsing a suspected man. What a troubled scene does even the Church of Christ exhibit in its present condition! And what a still more troubled scene does your country exhibit to the world at this moment! We are watching the progress of the present contest with intense anxiety. The great battle between freedom and slavery is about to be fought, and if the records of the past be any guide to opinions for the future, there can be little doubt in my mind how it will terminate. I am afraid there is not virtue, courage, and patriotism enough, to say nothing of religion, in the Northern portion of your union, to do battle successfully with the South. Every conflict that has taken place yet, has ended in the yielding—the succumbing—of the former to the latter. I own the North has of late shewn signs of vigour and determination which are somewhat new. With your superior population, wealth, and intelligence, you ought to be in action, what you are in means, too strong for the slaveholding States. I wish the States of New England and their

neighbours would consider that the eyes of the civilised world are upon them, to see how they will act in this tremendous conflict; whether they will rally round the constitution to bring it back to its original sentiment and policy, which, unquestionably, were founded on the conviction and declaration that slavery is an evil, and must be eventually abolished. Whereas, the policy of late has gone in an entirely opposite direction.

“What is thought of Mrs Stowe’s new work in America? It is no disparagement to say it is not equal to ‘Uncle Tom.’ It is a book of deep interest, but in my opinion, it fails in giving a full and impressive view of the fatal effects of slavery on the whites. Yet this is its avowed design. That it does this to a great extent I admit; but I think it might have been carried further. Neither Tom Gordon nor his sister Nina are, I think, fair representations of slaveholders. There wants the epic character of Uncle Tom. There is no character that is the hero of the tale. My spiritual taste is also offended by the occasional and frequent profanity of the speakers. And I think the camp-meeting, though drawn with great power, as well as some other parts of the work, likely to turn not only hypocrisy into ridicule and contempt, but religion itself. Yet, after all, with some exaggerations and some unnaturalness, it is a powerful and interesting book, and is being extensively read in England.

“I hope you are all well What are you doing in the way of preaching? Is Emily a Christian yet? Does she love Christ more than the world? Give my love to her, and tell her I ask these questions because I love her, and desire her eternal happiness. I trust your dear wife is as well as when she was here. Give my affectionate remembrances to her. As regards ourselves, I am getting worse in the disease of the bladder. I cannot now ride in my own carriage without uneasiness. My dear daughter is very, very unwell. My son and daughter next door are well, and their two children. Let me hear from you soon.—Your friend and brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR MILLER.

“HAGLEY ROAD, *February 20, 1857.*

“MY DEAR DR MILLER,—As it is the first time I have addressed you since your new academic distinction, permit me to congratulate you on the fresh honour which is attached to your name. I wish all who were called Rabbi deserved it as much as yourself. It will not raise you in my estimation, only because nothing can. For my own sake and others’ in this town, I would rather address you as Doctor, than as my Lord. But for the sake of your church, I could wish you

were raised from the pulpit to the throne and the bench. Whenever you attain the latter elevation, I will, if I am alive and able, be among those who shall hear your first *ex cathedrâ* address. Well, whether doctor or prelate, may your life be long, and your usefulness still more abundant!"

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

"EDGBASTON, *May 9, 1857.*

". . . Beecher's name reminds me of the state of the anti-slavery cause, or rather the negro's cause, in the United States. This decision of your Supreme Court fills us with astonishment, horror, and indignation. It is, indeed, the most terrible outrage upon humanity that has been perpetrated for ages, and will do more to lower the moral character of your country than even the present system of slavery. All Europe and the whole civilised world will blush for you. It is the first time that I know of when a whole race was put without the pale of social life on account of the colour of their skin. *Will* your country submit to it? Can it be conceived that the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers will bow to so horrible a rebellion against the precepts of Christianity and the dictates of reason? My dear brother, what are the Eastern States about that they do not rise *en masse* against this dictum of a few men upon the bench? However, there is one hope. It is so bad—shews so clearly the advance of the slaveocracy in your country—that it must help on eventually the cause of abolition. The American Union of the States appears to me to be becoming an idol, before which your people are willing to make the most costly sacrifice of moral principle. Anything so that the Union be preserved. If it is attempted to be preserved in this way, God with one of the thunderbolts of His vengeance will by and by shiver it to pieces. I read with admiration Cheever's eloquent papers in the *Independent*. Oh, he is a noble champion, not only for the rights of the negro, but for the honour of your country. . . ."

TO JOSHUA WILSON, ESQ.

"EDGBASTON, *January 1, 1858.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Although by the time this reaches you a day and a half of the New Year will have passed off into the bygone time, yet as there are three hundred and sixty three more days to come, it is not too late to wish you a happy New Year. 'Few and evil,' said good old Jacob, 'are the days of our pilgrimage,' and his history had qualified him to bear the testimony. It is long since we heard of each other. Your last report of your health was better than the preceding ones, and I hope you can still give a good account of yourself and yours. I am

much the same, and am thankful to say I have no great increase of disease or suffering. Sometimes I think I get worse, and comparing myself with what I was when with you at Hastings, I must pronounce myself advancing in the road of suffering. I have lately been much ‘exercised,’ as some good people would say, about my colleague. He has received a unanimous and cordial invitation to Dr Halley’s church at Manchester, and I do not wonder it presented to him some strong attractions. Our church, however, rallied round him in such force and with such entreaties, that he could not see his way out. He left it pretty much for me to decide whether I thought he could most serve the cause of Christ at large most at Birmingham or Manchester. I looked not merely at the two congregations, though here there was a difference of numbers, if numbers only are to be considered on our side; but I took into account the state of our denomination in Birmingham, and then I also took into view the condition of our college. We are in a very critical state. Mr Rogers leaves us at Lady-day for Manchester. Mr Watts resigns at midsummer. On all these accounts I gave my judgment in favour of his remaining with us. And on Friday last his decision was made known to the great joy of our church.

“I dare say the church at Manchester will still try to get him, but I believe he will be firm. He thought his preaching more adapted to Manchester than Birmingham, but I told him what would suit one place would suit the other. I hardly think it was right of the Manchester people to try and tempt him away. We think of Conder of Poole, to take Watts’s place, though this must not be mentioned. We shall do with two tutors if possible, and some supplemental aid for mathematics and natural history. Our finances are not in a good state.—Yours affectionately,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO W. E. LLOYD, ESQ.

“EDGBASTON, *September 23, 1858.*

“MY DEAR MR LLOYD,—I somewhat blame myself for not replying to your letter before this, for though you did not ask for an answer, and there was nothing in the way of business which required one, yet pastoral sympathy ought to have been sufficiently awake and active to have sent one, especially as I too have been in circumstances to make me feel how precious a balm for a wounded spirit, and even a diseased body, is Christian sympathy. Yes, I have been, and still am, much afflicted. True, I am mercifully relieved from the suffering which I for two or three days endured, but I am still enfeebled and laid aside from my usual ministerial duties. I have preached once, and may be permitted, probably, to preach again. But I believe my work, i.e., my regular ministerial and pastoral labour, is over. My disease cannot,

I think, be eradicated; however, it may be modified, and kept a little in check.

“But enough of myself. You, my good friend, have been afflicted, though now I am glad to learn are convalescent. How highly you have been favoured by the sympathy and attention of that ministering angel who is lodging under the same roof! This individual effort to do good, or rather the effort to do good to an *individual* in private, shews that her benevolence is of the genuine kind, and not for public display. By her giving you the Olney Hymns, I am led to believe that her views are decidedly evangelical.

“Well, now, what have you and I to do besides endeavouring by God’s providential goodness to get well? Why, by His grace, to derive benefit, *spiritual* benefit, from our afflictions. Have you communed with your own heart upon your bed? Have you been taking the candle of the Lord, which is His Word, and going down into the depths of the soul to search for besetting sins and defects? Has the gold shone in the furnace, and the dross of earthliness been consumed? Have you been praying and wrestling for holiness? You know God’s design in afflicting us is, that we might be partakers of *His* holiness. An affliction sanctified is better than an affliction removed. Oh, let us long, intensely long, to be made holy, spiritual, heavenly! A Christian should be one who lives in heaven, and from thence be looking down upon earth. You men of business need thus to be taken out of the world into a sick-chamber. May God sanctify us both more perfectly! All will go on well without us in the approaching Bible meeting.—Believe me, your friend and pastor,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO HIS ELDEST SURVIVING SISTER, MRS WORSLEY,
ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

“EDGBASTON, *May* 28, 1859.

“MY DEAR SISTER,—I do not forget that to-morrow is your birthday, when you will enter on the seventy-seventh year of your age, and I now write these few lines to express your brother’s continued, sincere, and fervent affection for you, and my best wishes and earnest prayers that you may yet see many happy and holy returns of the day. And yet is it a kind wish that you may be kept longer amidst the infirmities of old age, from that blessed world where neither old age nor its infirmities will be ever known, nor any of the sins, sorrows, or conflicts with which here they are ever associated? You are another year’s journey nearer home, and may say, ‘A few more stiles to cross, and I shall reach my Father’s house.’ Does it make you long to be gone to think of the glory, honour and immortality that awaits you? ‘Ah no!’ you

are ready to say, ‘I am too earthly-minded. Even old age and the near prospect of eternity do not entirely wean me from the world.’ No, my dear sister, nor do they effect this so much in me as they ought. How we cling to earth! and yet, when we reach heaven, we shall wonder that we could endure to live on these low grounds. Well, let us confess, mourn, and endeavour to vanquish our earthly-mindedness. It is a shame that our affections are not more upon things above.

“I am glad to find you are, upon the whole, so well, and are not likely to be disturbed in your house. I shall never see you again in this world. I am in an enfeebled, dilapidated state, suffering great inconvenience and much pain night and day. Yet, I am thankful it does not yet amount to anguish. It is bearable. I sleep well, and my appetite is pretty good, but, in consequence of my being afflicted with diabetes as well as my other complaint, I am obliged to exercise great care, and much self-denial in my diet. I now do not go from home, though I generally preach once a-day, and have worked very hard with my pen. It is a great trial to see poor Sarah Ann, and for her to see me. I do, indeed, sometimes feel the want of a third person, and blessed be God I can truly say, ‘When most alone, I am often least alone, and feel how sweet, as well as solemn it is to be alone with God.’—Your affectionate brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

TO THE REV. DR PATTON.

“EDGBASTON, *June 25, 1859.*”

“MY DEAR BROTHER PATTON,—My letters are literally Angell’s visits, few and far between. But you know enough of the turmoil, and distracting and diverting engagements of one in my circumstances, to account for the putting aside of matters which may be done at any time, for those which *must* be attended to at the present time; and, by the way, I thus explained your long silence after your return to America. And I also, when I read your correspondence about the Tract Society, found that you had been much better employed than in writing to me. Your letters, on that subject, did credit to your head and your heart. I thought you clearly shewed that the operations of your society were carried on upon a very expensive scale; and yet it must be taken into account, that the colportage system, in a country like yours, where new congregations are so rapidly springing up, and but ill supplied with ministers, and where towns and villages are continually multiplying without the advantages of depôts, is a means of supplying religious instruction, and thus a means of supplying a substitute, for a while, for both preachers and shops. I was at once surprised, amused, and somewhat grieved, by the uproarious conduct of your opponents at the

annual meeting of the society. I am inclined to think that, instead of carrying on such scenes as these, you had better separate and form another society. I see no very near prospect of your altering the mode of procedure in the one for which you are battling. It is keeping open a running sore, which must be injurious to the spiritual health of both your pastors and churches.

“I perceive that the Revival feeling is a little subsiding among you—that is, as to the more conspicuous manifestations of it. I doubt not, however, that the impulse is still felt in the hearts and operations of your ministers. It was hardly to be expected that the feeling and action which were at one time maintained, can be, as human nature is, the *constant* state of things. You have perhaps read, or will have read before this reaches you, the account of the awakening in Ireland. It is in some respects more remarkable than anything which you have witnessed in the United States. Presbyterianism in the sister Isle was a dull and torpid mass. Religious routine and heartless formality characterised the churches, because it characterised their pastors. Suddenly the Spirit has breathed upon the valley of dry bones, and the skeletons are being clothed with flesh and are standing up an army of living men. The means of producing this blessed change are similar to your own,—the power of prayer. But in one very material respect the manifestation is different—I mean, in the effect upon the physical nature. The bodily contortions and swoonings, which, in bygone times, were known in America, are now common in Ireland. I cannot but regret this, as it will beget some incredulity about the spiritual nature of the work. Still, it is a wonderful work of God. I send you, by the post which will convey this to you, a copy of the *British Standard*, which will give you an account of the work, and Dr Campbell’s remarks upon it. And I mean to send you, regularly, a copy of the *Standard* in return for the *Independent*, and am ashamed that it never occurred to me before.

“There is very little stir in this country. People talk about revival, and that is all. The Spirit is not yet poured out upon us. Prayer is low. I shall send you, by the next mail, a copy of a pamphlet which I have just published, on the ‘Spiritual Condition of our Churches.’ By this post, I forward a sermon I have just sent out as a token of respect to the memory of a man very well known in America—I mean, Joseph Sturge, whose death occasioned a great sensation in this town, and I may say in this country.

“You will see, by your journals, what a horrible war is going on in Italy. Napoleon III. is at the bottom of it all. In spite of generous professions, his ambitious eye and heart are upon Italy. The friends of peace are exerting themselves to keep this country out of the strife.

The Roman Catholic countries are putting one another down. Oh, how tranquillising the reflection, ‘The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!’ Our home politics are anything but satisfactory. These rapid changes of ministry are not very favourable to national tranquillity and prosperity.

“And now as regards myself. I am become very feeble, and am consciously declining. My diseases increase upon me, and pin after pin of the tabernacle is being taken out, preparatory to the taking down of the whole, and I am calmly and hopefully looking on to the close. ‘I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him unto *that day.*’ My daughter is also getting weaker, and we have had an affliction in the death of my old servant Joseph. He died about two months since, after two or three days’ illness. All at next door are much as usual. In our congregation, affairs are peaceful, if not remarkably prosperous. Give my love to Emily, and ask her, from me, if she has yet given her heart to Jesus. It is a solemn thing to outlive a revival without being converted. My daughter is gone for a fortnight to Mrs Keep’s, the widow at Griffin’s Hill.—Believe me, your affectionate friend and brother,

“J. A. JAMES.”

BOOK VI.
SUPPLEMENTARY.

CHAP. I. HOME LIFE, BY T. S. JAMES, ESQ.

„ II. PREACHING.

„ III. PASTORATE.

CHAPTER I.

HOME LIFE. BY T. S. JAMES, ESQ.

MY father was so simple and unpretending, that I have no doubt servants, or persons of inferior perception, might have lived a long time in his house without discovering anything else remarkable in him; but I am sure they would have been struck with the love he bore to every one about him; and if they had had any sense of religion, they would have seen and felt that he lived in habitual communion with God. For my own part, on recalling all I knew of him, I find no act of his unworthy or inconsistent.

I have no information to give as to his habits of personal devotion, but I am sure that, in that respect, he performed himself all that he exhorted others to do, and that his life might be drawn from his sermons and writings. I know that he practised social prayer to a very great extent. It was his comfort, when the members of his family were leaving him, or taking any important step in life; and he indulged in it with all in whom he felt peculiar interest, such as young men, especially students, his old friends, and his brother ministers. He loved to commend them, or to be commended by them, to God, and to pray with them for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. His family devotions were most beneficial to those who shared them; they were concentrated on a few subjects, which he was careful to vary from day to day, so that in a week or so he had presented petitions upon most of the subjects of united prayer. He always made

reference to any event which was expected, either by any one present, or in the circle of his relatives; and on Monday morning, he prayed for every member of his household and his children individually, whether present or absent, according to their peculiar circumstances.

When he talked about religion, it was chiefly in reference to the events of the day, and a minister has ever on his heart some scene of death, sickness, misfortune, or affliction. His remarks were short and almost ejaculatory, and never uttered as matters of form or of course. Religious business he always transacted as business, without religious phrases; for cant of all kinds he avoided himself, and checked in others.

He was naturally of a very gentle, loving, and winning disposition; yet withal impetuous, impatient, and combative in self-defence. But so far had he disciplined himself, that I used to think it cost him less than any other man to practise forbearance and forgiveness; and I never saw in him a trace of any malignant feeling whatever. Yet there was something in all his acts, whether of goodness or of kindness, which shewed they proceeded from Christian principle, and not from natural amiability. And I know he habitually called himself to account for what he had done harshly, as well as what he had done wrongly, and for every opportunity of doing good, or shewing kindness, which he had lost.

Though very charitable in his opinions of others, and judging them much less harshly than he judged himself, he was very firm when principle required it. It was on a requisition which originated with him, that Dr Achilli brought his action against Dr Newman, which unmasked everybody connected with it; and he took care not to sit on a religious committee with a rich man who had been convicted of a gross offence against the revenue. In this last case he spoke to the gentleman himself, and gave him no other pain or offence. I have heard him condemn himself for having, in the early part of his ministry, taken part in a Bible meeting at which a nobleman of evil repute presided—a scandal which the Society has long avoided—and declare that nothing should induce him to repeat the mistake.

It is necessary to a complete delineation of his character, and it may explain his conduct on one or two occasions, to mention that he laboured under the defect of indecision, not as to his opinions or his objects, but in choosing between different plans or methods of operation. This, I think, arose from his propensity to look on the dark side of future events, and to presage every possible evil, without regarding the probabilities of the case. The slightest risk seemed to interfere with his power of judgment, and tended to make him waver even after a decision. Yet I never noticed him vacillating in his conduct, because he took the best method of avoiding mistakes, for he sought counsel in every difficultyj generally from one person only, and if he received positive advice, he followed it. But I thought that he sometimes came prematurely to a resolve, in order to spare himself the pain of doubt; and he was always inclined to middle courses and attempts to combine incompatible advantages, which sometimes resulted in twofold damage, or the increase of evil by delay. He was very sensible of this defect, and it subjected him to great pain and mortification.

In matters of right and wrong, he was always governed by abstract notions, and habitually endeavoured to bring everything to first principles; and he suffered neither expediency, habit, nor custom, to weigh with him. But his opinions on matters indifferent in point of religion and morals were adopted from authors or friends in whom he had confidence, and in great part taken on trust; and I always thought that in matters of mere taste he judged by a conventional standard, admiring what was generally admired. In those particulars he was willing to be guided by general opinion, and he was provoked by any one setting up his own notions in opposition to it. Hence his feelings and predilections were those of his position. Though anything but a formalist or a priest, he was entirely a man of his profession, and looked at all things from the point of view and through the medium proper and peculiar to an English Nonconformist Minister.

But within the limits within which he allowed his imagination to operate, he was entirely governed by it. Anything heroic

in private life, and particularly any great historical incident carried him away as completely as it could a child. When he began the praises of Howard or Clarkson, or any like-minded man or woman, he could scarcely either leave the subject, or express all he felt with respect to it; to such an extent did the horrors of gaols and the abominations of slavery crowd on his mind. On the other hand, he took the most intense interest in the great warrior and tyrant who scourged the nations in his time. He read all he could get respecting him; but Segur's "Eetreat from Moscow," and "Fouchd's Memoirs," whether authentic or not, I think produced the greatest effect on him. And I shall never forget his comments on Haydon's picture of Napoleon at St Helena gazing on the sea, and on a French lithograph of his dying there, with his son, his marshals, and his old guard assembled in the clouds to receive him. But China, as the great field for missionary labour, and for the ultimate triumph of the Cross, took permanent possession of his imagination. It was to him what India was to Burke. This was owing, I think, in great part, to Dr Morison having been his fellow-student, and corresponding with him afterwards. The numbers of the Chinese, the antiquity of their race, their early civilisation, and their unchanging manners, had always filled his mind; and when, at the close of his life, our wars with them, and their own civil conflicts and revolutions, appeared about to make way for Christianity, the prospect seemed wholly to overpower him.

I must also state, as necessary to the understanding of my father's character, that, though so amiable, tender, and loving, he was entirely deficient in sympathy for any feelings unless he himself had experienced them. He could not enter into joys and sorrows which he thought unreal, puerile, or unworthy. He could not understand seductions and temptations which had no power over him. He could not patiently listen to vain hopes and groundless fears which he had never himself known; and he never seemed to me to understand exactly the state of mind and soul produced by error, sin, doubt, or disbelief. He was accustomed to address men and women in masses with arguments which he

knew ought to prevail with them, and he could not enter into each particular case, and adapt his reasoning to it. When he succeeded, it was by exhibiting fairly the gospel of God, itself suitable to all cases, and sufficient for all emergencies. He believed it himself, declared it in love and tenderness, and left it to act for itself; and each mind he addressed received it, and appropriated it for itself.

Hence he was not generally appreciated by young persons, particularly not by educated young men, who needed and wished to have brought before them some special view of Divine truth adapted to their usual habits of thought and feeling; and this not being done, they felt that they were not understood by him, lost all interest in his conversation, and could not speak before him. It was, in fact, only matured and experienced Christians, with views and tastes in unison with his own, with whom he really had a fellow-feeling, and who, on their part, were at home with him. He preached often specially to the young, and such sermons were often very interesting, but not to the young more so than to grown-up people. The number of young persons who attended the chapel was very small in proportion to the congregation; and the young men in the church, unless in the lower ranks of the community, were very few. My father, at one particular period, noticed with dismay that no deacon had a son a member of the church.

I have another remark to make which also may appear paradoxical, that, notwithstanding the amiability and tenderness which I have already referred to, and the geniality on which I shall shortly dwell, he was inclined to asceticism in his practice, and to austerity in his opinions. But his writings and his habits bear me out in this. The Puritans were so, and the spirit of the Puritans was in him. And, so far as my acquaintance with ecclesiastical biography extends, this has been the leaning (and it seems to me it must be so) of every eminent saint, whether among Protestants or in any of the old Episcopal communions either of the West or East. I know he contended that this was not the case with him, and deprecated inferences to that effect being

drawn from his writings; but what he said shewed that he was conscious of this tendency in all his opinions and practises. He seemed to me to have attained the character which, it is said, John Calvin, in his admiration for St Bernard, wished to form in all his followers, that of a man who, while he played his part and did his duty in the world, should yet have his heart as much in heaven as if he had been in a cloister. And this is the specific state of mind my father again and again exhorts to.

I feel bound to state that these tendencies increased in him very much after the revivalist preachers from the States visited him, who (in contrast to his old friend Dr Patton, who became more hearty and genial every time he came to us) seemed to set themselves against all enjoyment whatsoever. My stepmother so far fell in with these views as to wean my father from friendly visiting. And, with reference to this, my uncle James once said to me, "My brother would never have had the hold he has on his people if he had from the first pursued this system, and it will make us a rope of sand."

His almsgiving was very great, when viewed in reference either to his income or expenditure. No relation or old friend, and scarcely any minister, applied to him in vain, and he gave even to his enemies. To do this he was very economical, especially in his personal expenses. But he shewed it only by not spending money, and not when he spent it; for he was very easy in every transaction, whether he paid or received. He lived as plainly as he could with propriety, and he gave away the remainder of his income. He held it a sin for a minister to hoard, and at least an equal sin for him to indulge in display. I never knew him so short with me as when I suggested it would be mercy to put two horses to his carriage, which he kept as a matter of necessity. When, after my stepmother's death, he was obliged to reduce his charities, he was more than ever careful to avoid outlay for his own pleasure. If he had a fancy it was for plate; but when choosing to return to Mr B. Neale's family a silver cruet-stand, which had been old Mr Neale's, (and was supposed to be the last memorial of the Christian hospitality by which his house was

honoured,) he would not replace it with silver unless he paid for it in other articles of plate.

He was very neat in his person and dress, and was very particular not to appear in the pulpit with his hair in disorder, which cost him some care, as he always wore it combed straight up from his forehead. He liked everything about him kept in good order, except that the books and papers he had in hand always lay about in confusion. He did not seem to have order and system, but he must have had it, for he kept going the great machinery of his church and congregation, with ease and comfort to everybody, and without the need of any painful or convulsive efforts.

He received little more than £100 a-year from his works, for he always published them in the plainest manner, and then sold them at such prices that the purchasers had the best of the bargain, as old Sir Oliver Cromwell insisted on selling his land. For this reason he parted with none of his copyrights, except to the Tract Society. And I should mention, the money which he received for the "Anxious Inquirer" he made a point of disposing of for religious purposes.

He diligently redeemed his time. Meals were despatched in his house in less time than I ever saw them got through elsewhere. Though a stout man, all his movements were quick; he walked and wrote fast, and he dressed with unusual rapidity. My step-mother was as active as he was, and never kept him waiting for her at a meal, or when going out with him, and she remarked with great pleasure that Bonaparte gave the same praise to Josephine. He was generally in his study soon after seven, and I believe spent in devotion the hour before breakfast, (which in winter and summer he took at eight.) He never sat more than half an hour after dinner (at two or half-past,) and not a minute after breakfast or tea. After supper (at nine) he usually read an amusing book, and I think he did so also at the end of the morning. He wrote his letters generally in an afternoon, and grumbled if he had to take up his pen after supper. Though he disliked the occupation, his letters were generally very full, and almost every one who wrote to him on a matter of personal religion was sure of being answered at considerable length.

By this diligence he always had the afternoon to spend with a friend passing through the town, whom he had asked to dine with him, or any one whom he wished to see, but he generally gave his invitations for days when he had an engagement after tea, or otherwise he stipulated for his evening. His chief relaxation was to spend half a day in the country, and he could generally make time for that, if allowed to fix the day.

Nothing seemed ever to incapacitate him from working on up to supper-time, or to dissipate his mind. He could breakfast out, and when he returned fall to work as usual. When he reached home in an afternoon after travelling all day, he had tea as quickly as it could be got and then went to his study, and generally on such occasions was later than usual at supper. He never gave up working unless physically unable to sit up, and made nothing of a headache or other ailment which would have laid aside most men.

Till the last years of his life he wrote standing, and to this he attributed his health. For twenty years he had his study on the second floor, but he was so often called down, that the fatigue of ascending two flights of stairs became too much for him. From the time of his second marriage up to 1839, when I left his house, I never knew him give up one evening to his family, and very often he had a religious engagement from home on every night in a week except Saturday evening. He made a rule of not supping out, if he could possibly avoid it, and never did so at a mere party; and in all cases ten o'clock was his time for reaching home, and he would almost have thought his character endangered by being met in the street after eleven. He was naturally fond of society, being of a friendly and genial nature, but he abstained from it, especially from about the year 1830, as I have noticed. He often said he was determined that no one should say of him, that he liked to go out to a good dinner, which he knew was the common reproach of the cloth. When the libel for which he obtained a verdict against the *Age* newspaper stated, that though he preached self-denial no man liked a cheerful glass better, he resented the imputation of hypocrisy, but as to liking a

cheerful glass, he merely said that he defied any one to prove he indulged in it. He never would dine at the only civic dinners in Birmingham to which the notables of the town were invited,—those of the High-Bailiff and the Low-Bailiff,—not even when a member of his congregation or his brother filled the office of Low-Bailiff (the higher of the two,) viewing it, I thought unfairly, as a mere matter of eating and drinking. But on occasions which could not be regarded in that light, as on the meeting of the British Association, he has dined in the Town Hall. He rarely broke a rule which he had laid down, equally for health and self-discipline, to rise from every meal with an appetite. He was always so abstemious that it was no matter of self-denial to him to give up drinking wine, but according to the opinions of all his medical advisers he injured his constitution by doing so. He felt, however, so strongly on the matter, as an advocate of the Temperance Society, that when compelled to take it temporarily he always left it off too soon. But his taking wine, even under these circumstances, was, at least on one occasion, noticed in an abstinence journal in language appropriate to the relapse of a reclaimed drunkard.

He considered it, on the other hand, a matter of duty for him to exercise hospitality, especially to ministers not of the town; and it was not only the distinguished among them whom he entertained, but the Welsh brother, with his chapel case; and he could scarcely bear that men of the latter class should be in lodgings during their stay. At one time, before the citizens of the United States became so sore on the subject of slavery, he insisted on receiving so many of them under his roof, that it was suggested he should put the stars and stripes over his door. I must, however, in justice to our cousins over the water, say that it is always a difficult matter to induce them to accept an invitation, their habits apparently rendering them most at home at an inn, and it never seeming any object to their unestablished and unendowed clergy when in Europe to lessen their travelling expenses.

His habit was to make pastoral calls on Monday, which is everywhere the parson's holiday; but he always when at home attended

his prayer-meeting in the evening; and he must, I am sure, have thought he was indeed fallen on evil times, when, shortly before his death, he gave up that meeting. If he failed in any part of his duty, it was in calling on his people. Now and then he found there were members of his church (received from other churches) whose faces he did not know, but he never neglected one of them in any sickness or affliction of which he was informed. When he was once told in a friend's house how much more than a year had elapsed since his last call, he answered, "That shews you have cause to thank God that during all that time no sorrow has befallen you, else you know you would have had me with you." He admitted that he could not do his duty in this respect, and owned that it was a great mistake to build a chapel so large that one man could not attend to the congregation, or even to the church.

He was not easy if, when he had been at home, he had not completed one sermon by Wednesday night, and I believe under ordinary circumstances he never allowed Saturday to arrive without good progress having been made in the composition of the second; and it was his rule to finish that by dinner-time; the afternoon he always from his boyhood made a holiday.

He was accustomed to walk a great deal, making all his pastoral calls on foot, until, the town increasing on every side, and he himself getting older, he found he had neither time nor strength to continue the practice, but he abandoned it very reluctantly. He resorted to country walks, of which he was exceedingly fond, as a means not only of relaxation, but of meditation; and after the fields which used to come up very near to his house failed him, he had the Botanical Gardens at hand, in the less frequented parts of which (it was not much used at first) he spent a great deal of time, especially after my stepmother's death; and he told me that he never felt greater disappointment than in finding his favourite walk there unexpectedly stopped up, owing to the land being taken from the garden.

He was most punctual in all his engagements, being always before the time, and this was particularly the case in everything connected with the chapel. Every person having anything to do

at any service would know that he would be in time himself, and reprimand any one who was not. He never allowed himself to be in a hurry on a Lord's-day, though he often was so on other days, and he always moved slowly on the chapel premises.

The Lord's-day he kept with the greatest strictness; and he seemed to consider Saturday evening, if not as a part of it, yet as not to be spent otherwise than as a preparation for it. He was displeased at merriment on that evening, and he never made even a religious engagement for it, but spent it in private devotion.

He was much teased by a narrow-minded member of his church, (who could walk very well himself, and whose wife never came out,) remonstrating with him on his being driven to the services on the Lord's-day. This dwelt very much on his mind; but he reasoned that as he could not, without the sacrifice of his health and comfort, live nearer to his plate of worship than he did, and as he could not both walk to chapel and preach, there was no reason for his being rendered miserable by frivolous scruples. But he took care not to have his carriage out on the Saturday, so that his horse kept the Jewish Sabbath, and he the Lord's-day, and the commandment was complied with as regarded its purposes of mercy. Latterly, when he from any cause hired a vehicle for the Lord's-day he bargained (for a higher price) that the driver should put up his horse and come to service,—with him, of course, for certainty,—and if I mistake not, the owner drove himself, and was glad of the terms. He always, if possible, avoided posting a letter so that it was delivered or even travelled on the Lord's-day.

He was a very regular attendant upon religious meetings and committees, and made a point of being present, if possible, at the Baptist, Church, and Methodist missionary anniversaries in Birmingham, and subscribed to all those societies. He was expected, as a matter of course, at every general meeting for a religious or philanthropic purpose; for the spirit of a citizen was strong within him. He desired to meet and co-operate with his fellow-townsmen, and in the same spirit he liked to interchange a passing bow or word with the leading men of the neighbourhood. He and the town had grown up together, and he seemed quite part

of it; he loved Birmingham, and Birmingham was fond of him, and never was private man so honoured by his town as he was at his jubilee and his funeral.

From 1817 to 1844, he alone, as a minister, represented on public and general occasions the "orthodox" Dissenters of Birmingham; for the other ministers of that class were averse to public business, and but for him all non-sectarian matters would have been left to the Established clergy and the "Unitarian" ministers, which latter were of great weight, for their character, attainments, and social position, just as their congregations contained the *elite* of the town. But through him his party held its own.

He never in my time meddled with politics, unless in leading at a town's-meeting the opposition to the present system of grants for education, on the part of the Voluntaries, who feared the effect, direct and indirect, which the system would have on religious matters. And that contest was so managed that no unpleasant feeling was excited by it, the Government measure being approved by a large majority. He told me, afterwards, that if the time were to come over again he should not take the same course. I was very much surprised to learn from Mr Recorder Hill that my father was very prominent at a town's-meeting called by the Tory party, at the end of the war with France, to make political capital out of the success which the Duke of Wellington's genius and Bonaparte's infatuation had bestowed upon them. I never heard him allude to this meeting; but I suppose it preceded, and very likely suggested, his sermon entitled "The Crisis." I need not say that he took part against the principles then in the ascendant. It required some nerve then to take that part in Birmingham; for though Warwickshire in the time of the first Charles took the Puritan side, as might have been expected from the copynt of Cartwright and his patron, the Earl of Leicester, (Mr Motley has lately shewn how much better a Protestant he was than the trimming Lord Burleigh,) Lord Brooke, and Sir Francis Nethersede, yet from the Restoration it has consistently kept up its character as a Jaco-

bite and high-flying Tory county; and our town has the distinction of having produced the last Church-and-King chapel-burning mob. He was a genuine old Whig, and was very careful to give his county vote, and insisted on travelling to poll at his own expense. Yet he allowed himself to vote for Mr Joseph Sturge and Mr Bright: for the former, because they dearly loved each other; and for the other, I suppose, because he was glad to have in the House so able an advocate of Anti-slavery and Nonconformist principles; but I know he held in perfect dread any extension of the suffrage. He was always for "Catholic Emancipation," circumstanced as the empire is; but he held that a Papist, on his own shewing, has no right to expect toleration from a man of any other faith, but is always to be regarded as the common enemy of human-kind; and he thought that Queen Pomare was right in sending the French priests away from her dominions. His opinions as to foreign politics consisted in the conviction that no nation besides our own can enjoy rational liberty in both political and social life, and a distrust of the alliance with France.

As to Church polity, he wished as much Presbyterianism introduced into Congregationalism as is compatible with its remaining true Congregationalism, of which he was an uncompromising supporter, notwithstanding his wishes for an organisation in the denomination which might be thought by some to put its principles in danger, and his efforts for closer union among all evangelical communions at home and abroad. His institution in his own church of a committee to ascertain the facts and suggest the decision in all cases of discipline was a bold step, but a very successful one. The plan, however, seemed to me put in peril by the committee being yearly in great part changed, for in no church do the men fit for such a post exceed the number of a committee, and experience in such matters is as necessary as wisdom, a varying tribunal being sure to be inconsistent in its decisions, and therefore to be suspected of partiality. His fear of discord and debate in the church induced him often to arrange matters beforehand with the influential members, to a degree which, though it secured a right decision in the particular cases, was scarcely consistent with

the system, and tended, by determining the decision of the church beforehand, to incapacitate it in the end for judging and acting for itself. This was seen by some at the time, but the thought of resistance to his wishes was checked by the conviction that he desired to carry his point merely because he thought it right, and that he was always open to reason. And Queen Elizabeth never gave way to any expression of opinion, on the part of the nation, more gracefully and heartily than he did to a general feeling on the part of his church. But he was saved from mistakes in his pastorate by his habit of always taking advice, to which I have alluded. And as to this his circumstances were peculiar. He came a very young man to a congregation consisting almost exclusively of old men, (for the younger part of it had gone off with Mr Brewer,) and he naturally deferred to men so much his seniors, eminently venerable as they were in person and character. He, however, from the first asserted the rights of his office whenever he considered principle required him to do so. On one occasion, he overruled a venerable deacon on a point in which he had been accustomed to have his own way; the old man yielded, but called on my father the next day, to say it should 'make no difference to their friendship, but he could not go to another church-meeting. Mr Brewer's quarrel, moreover, was taken up by the neighbouring ministers so far that they would have little to do with the Carr's Lane congregation. This state of things threw my father for counsel upon the leading men among his people, and it was his happiness throughout his career to have among them men who, to clear and high principle, added sound judgment and great strength of mind; and of these his brother James was the chief, both for his acquaintance with public business and his skill and discretion in managing bodies of men. And my father, as in every difficulty he betook himself to his counsellors, so he never acted contrary to their advice.

I shall ever think that other circumstances tended to the good management of things at Carr's Lane. The trustees filled up vacancies in their own body; the right of voting at church-meetings was restricted to men; and all matters of finance were decided

only by such of the male members as were seatholders. It was no small thing that in my father's time, first galleries were put up in the chapel he came to, and then in less than ten years that chapel was taken down and the present one built; and that this was done without any serious offence or even difference of opinion.

He was a thorough-going Voluntary, believing that Establishments—necessarily annihilate the distinction between the church and the world, and render good men less useful than they would have been in other circumstances. But he held these views in love. It was at the time a burden and affliction to him to feel himself compelled to write in defence of his principles, and he always considered it one of the chief infelicities of his life. For he found, as he often said, that if a man writes against “the Church,” no matter upon what compulsion, or in what spirit or manner, he is denounced throughout the kingdom. He was, in consequence of “Dissent and the Church of England,” called a political Dissenter, which is used as if it was the worst name a man could be called; though it is the friends of an Establishment who blend politics and religion, and Dissent is nothing but a protest against the profanation. I must, however, in justice mention, that my father's friends in the Establishment in this neighbourhood did not allow the controversy to make any difference in their feelings with regard to him. The following letter, which he addressed to Mr Weale, the Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, and which he most thoughtfully sent me, shews the quarter from which he was assailed, and his hopelessness as to escaping from their spite:—

“STANLEY HOUSE, NEAR STROUD,*

August 9, 1843.

“MY DEAR SIR,—When I had the pleasure of seeing you in Birmingham, our conversation turned upon the prejudice which had been raised against me some few years ago among the clergy and members of the Church of England, by a report in the *Record* newspaper of some violent things I had spoken at a meeting of Dissenting Deputies, and of which, as the allegations of that journal were entirely false, I promised, at some time or other, to give you a correct account.

“I now fulfil my promise, as I have a little leisure during a

* The residence of his friend, Mr Nathaniel Marling, now also, alas, no more.

temporary retreat from the cares and duties of my wide sphere of ministerial duties at home.

“At a Bible-meeting, held in Exeter Hall, just after Lord Grey had come into office and carried the Reform Bill, Mr (now Dr) Marsh made some kind and friendly allusion to myself,* which prompted the gentlemen on the platform to call me up, as soon as he had taken his seat. I obeyed the summons, and dwelt much on brotherly love, and expressed at the same time a wish that it might not be a mere platform charity, but carried away with us to our respective spheres of action, and brought out into all the details of social intercourse.

“On the very next day a meeting was held in London, of delegates from the various Dissenting congregations and associations in the country, who had been called up by the committee in the metropolis, to discuss the subject of their grievances, and to adopt measures for obtaining redress. At that time there was one of these associations in Birmingham, and although I was going to London for other business, yet they thought me too moderate in my Dissenting politics to come up to their views, and therefore passed me over. My own congregation were so hurt at what they considered a slight upon their minister, that they immediately appointed me *their* delegate, apart from the association, and in that capacity I went.

“On going into the London Tavern, where the meeting was held, the secretary of the London committee said to me, ‘Mr James, we want a MODERATE MAN from the country to move the resolutions we have prepared, and knowing you to be such, it is our wish that you should be entrusted with that business. We go only for a redress of specific grievances, but do not touch the question of separation of Church and State. There are some delegates from Manchester and Nottingham who wish to go further, but we cannot consent to it.’ After some hesitation I consented. In the course of my opening address, I used these very words, or words of the same import, among others of course:—‘My brethren, the eyes of the country are upon us. Let us take care how we conduct ourselves this day. We meet here in the twofold character of Christians and Dissenters. Let us not merge the CHRISTIAN IN THE DISSENTER, but exhibit both in harmony with each other.’ My whole speech was in this style, and was thought tame by many of higher temperature than my own. As soon as my resolution was

* That he should thus be called up at a meeting of the Bible Society, in addition to the representative of the Dissenters, is worthy of notice, and proves more than the several occasions on which it happened at meetings of the London Missionary Society, how great a favourite he was with the lay audiences of the metropolis.

seconded by Colonel Addison, an amendment was moved and seconded by the Manchester and Nottingham delegates, to the effect that no redress of grievances would be effectual which was not based upon the separation of Church and State. A discussion arose. The amendment was resisted by a few, but strongly pressed by others. At length it was suggested that it would save the meeting from division, and impaired efficiency, if I would consent to take the sentiment of the amendment into the original resolution. The committee as well as myself gave way; and upon a distinct understanding that the allusion to the separation of Church and State was to be considered *only as the declaration of a principle* but not as *an intention of active measures*, I moved the resolution, which was to the effect that, while such and such measures of redress were to be sought, yet no redress could be deemed permanently sufficient or safe as long as the Church was in union with the State. The harmony and almost entire union of the meeting were thus preserved.

“In a few days after there appeared one or two letters from correspondents, in the columns of the *Record*, holding me up to reproach and obloquy, as a hypocritical pretender to brotherly love, by contrasting my speech at the Bible meeting, with my conduct at the meeting of Dissenting Deputies, and affirming that I called upon my brethren *to forget their Christianity there and to merge the Christian in the Dissenter*, thus completely misrepresenting and perverting the letter spirit, and design of my address, and charging me with saying the very *reverse* of what I really *did* say.

“Unfortunately I did not hear of this misrepresentation till some months afterwards. I was simply told that I had been abused in the *Record*, and I suffered the time to go by without referring to that paper to ascertain the nature of the attack which had been made upon me, and to this day I know it only by report.

“Such, my dear sir, is a succinct and faithful statement, which, as you well know, has been the cause of no small prejudice against me in the circles of Episcopalians, and owing, no doubt, in some measure to my own silence in not contradicting the allegations of the *Record* and its correspondents; but certainly never did any man more unjustly suffer reproach than I have done in reference to this affair. It is not of course of any very great consequence to me, except as affecting my Christian integrity and simplicity, and thereby the credit of Christianity and its ministry, what may be thought or said of me in circles wherein I rarely move; and also as an advocate of Christian union, I would wish to gather out every stumblingblock I may have unintentionally cast in the way of it.

“With kind regards to Mrs Weale, I am, with much esteem, yours most truly,

“J. A. JAMES.

“ROBERT WEALE, Esq.”

One thing more only need be mentioned on the subject, and that is, that for many years the post brought my father letters in a disguised hand, addressed to him as “Brownist Teacher,” or with the addition of scurrilous epithets to his name, the contents of which, generally in doggerel verse, always reviled him for his presuming to preach, and for daring to write against the Church, and frequently avowed that the object of the writer was (as our unchristian laws prevented him from being punished for his dissent, either by Church or State) to fine him in postages. My father thought the writer was out of his mind, but in my opinion he used the slang of his party too consistently to admit that supposition, and his arguments did not seem to me much more feeble than writers of the school of Mr Gathercole are generally well satisfied with.

But, notwithstanding the pamphlet I have mentioned, and though the contest against the church-rate in Birmingham in great measure depended in its origin upon my father’s congregation, and I think their decision was taken at his house at a book society meeting, and his brother was chairman of the committee for conducting the opposition to the rate; he was regarded by many as a half-hearted Dissenter. Having mentioned that contest, I cannot help recording here, that it may not be forgotten, that the polling lasted eight days, to the total suspension of business; that the majority of plural votes, as well as of single ones, was clearly against the rate; that the Rector, Mr Moseley, was averse to the contest, and took it up only as a matter of duty, on the demand of a party who were by no means friendly to him personally; that he so conducted himself throughout (I was in the room with him all the time) that I believe every opponent of the rate who observed his conduct, ever afterwards regarded him with respect and admiration; and that when the struggle was over the bitterness on both sides ceased. My father never joined the Anti-State-Church Society, or the Liberation Society, or any

society of the kind, and for that he was reproached by men who, instead of building up the cause of Dissent as he did, had destroyed their congregations by their inefficiency, or brought their principles into mingled hatred and contempt by the violent and yet foolish manner in which they had advocated them. His letter to Mr Weale shews how he was treated by the Dissenters of Birmingham.

He seemed to me to be by nature an orator; for he was always able to divine what was suited to his audience, to adapt himself to their opinions and tastes, and to gain their confidence and sympathy, and establish an interchange of feeling with them; and he could make subservient to his purpose the occasion, all associations of the time and the place, the accidents of the meeting, and the statements and phrases of other speakers. His mind was sufficiently logical to carry his hearers with him from one point to another with conviction and delight; he had powers of imagination and description which enabled him to inspire them with pity, admiration, or reverence, the master-feelings of the soul; he was himself at once ardent and susceptible, and evidently felt all he uttered; he had a countenance of great flexibility, and a voice of unusual power, sweetness, and compass; and, with these endowments, and the advantage of the sacred themes on which he dwelt, he could lead the minds and hearts of men at his pleasure. But, in my opinion, he was not so good a preacher as a speaker; for in a sermon little scope is allowed to an orator. The preacher brings a message from God which yet has often been announced before; he may not present anything strictly his own; it is his duty not to fall in with the views of his congregation, but in great part to tell them unwelcome truths; his manner and method are restricted within narrow limits, and his habits of speaking have become fixed, from his having had to address the same people from week to week upon topics which had long been familiar to them. My father's forte lay in expository lectures upon the historical parts of Scripture, (a method which he especially recommended to students,) and in inculcating moral and religious duties; and he shewed marvellous delicacy and skill in handling topics which, in

any other hands, would have been resented. He seemed to me to fail most in abstract reasoning and in devising illustrations of his subject. As to the matter of his sermons, I recollect his saying, not long before his death, that if his time were to come over again, he should preach on moral subjects more often than he had done, though he could not reproach himself with having neglected them. Except when going through Isaiah, or expounding the epistles to the churches of Asia Minor, he avoided discoursing on prophecy or different events from the book of Revelation; and he always seemed most to delight in his subject when his text was taken from the writings of the apostle Paul. He was a very fair expositor of Scripture; he did not take advantage of his speaking with no one to contradict him; he chose to understate the meaning of his text rather than to strain it; his hearers felt that he was dealing fairly by their understandings; and their reason being satisfied, the truths he conveyed went direct upon their consciences.

He always wrote out his sermons at length, but he did not so much commit them to memory as go over them and over them again, so often that he never forget them from the time of his writing them to their delivery, and having once had not merely the thoughts but the words also in his mind, he could at any time easily recall them. When, through illness, or not having had time for study, he was obliged to preach an old sermon, he took two or three with him, and he often, as he told me, changed his sermon after going into the pulpit, and even sometimes just before rising to give out his text. He very rarely confined himself to what he had written, but he always liked to have the whole sermon in his mind, that he could leave it and return to it again at any point as he chose. He never went into the pulpit without his notes, though they rarely left his sermon-case, and indeed the writing was such that I think he could not have read it on the instant, except in the case of his more highly elaborated discourses, (originally prepared for some great occasion, and afterwards preached about the country on similar engagements,) such as "The Oath of God," a missionary sermon which he first delivered in Edinburgh in 1824.

He rarely if ever preached, even at his lecture on a week-evening, without writing out a sketch of the sermon, and he wrote out at least a great part of his speeches on special occasions. He corrected his ordinary sermons very little, and evidently did not stop to choose his words. They seem to have been finished at two or three sittings, the writing becomes gradually worse, and the omission of the little words more frequent, and sometimes the conclusion of the discourse is fragmentary; but sermons which required an hour for their delivery, owing to his slow delivery and frequent pauses, look short in his writing.

My sister tells me that he did not like to trust his memory to quote Scripture without reading it. I had noticed that he generally did so, and supposed he thought it more effective to read; but she told me that notwithstanding his acquaintance with the Bible, he could not recollect the precise words of it. He had not, I think, a good verbal memory, and he has told me that he always read the Lord's Prayer, having once, after much floundering, fairly broken down in repeating it.

To the last he continued the laborious preparation of his sermons, and in consequence they retained all their accustomed vigour and freshness; when he forgot his ailments, his voice was nearly as clear and strong as ever; and "his congregation hung upon his lips as in his prime." Professor Rogers, from whom I have quoted the last expression, remarked to me that he thought this one of the most remarkable circumstances attending him.

He employed apostrophe and interrogation more than accords with English usage, and I account for it by his having acquired the French taste in that respect. His copies of the translation of Claude's "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon," and of Saurin's "Discourses," appear, from the former being very much worn, and from his signature on the latter, to have been among his earliest purchases of theological books. And this is not to be wondered at, for the practice of reading sermons (or rather essays) has severed the ministers of the two British Establishments from their brethren in Christendom, (in this also *penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*,) and Nonconformist ministers, if they intend to speak their sermons,

are thus driven to foreign, that is in fact to French models. And those who have heard even a third-rate preacher at the Oratoire know that a French sermon in our day is still a thing of power, while an English one is dull to a proverb. I trust I shall be pardoned for mentioning that Lord Holland (the third Lord, the Lord Holland of Parliamentary history) took several opportunities of expressing his admiration of my father's speaking, and, as I have been told, on one occasion said that as a persuasive speaker he was surpassed only by Charles James Fox and Lord-Chancellor Plunkett.

My father had not heard the great Parliamentary orators of his day, and perhaps was a competent judge only of theological speakers, but his opinion was, that taking all things into account, Dr M'Neile of Liverpool came nearest of all the men whom he had heard to the ideal of the perfect orator.

If my father had thought only of his own fame and comfort, he perhaps would not have committed any of his compositions to the press, for he was very sensible of his own defects; but his sole object in printing was to do good, and trusting to accomplish that he was not to be deterred from the effort by any selfish consideration. He felt very keenly the criticisms which his first publications underwent, but he determined to be the better for them, and laboured to remove the faults which were pointed out. And he did not shrink from telling me as much, while I was yet a boy, in order to encourage me, by his own example, to derive profit and instruction from any censure passed upon me. His prefaces, almost to the last, shew his sensitiveness to remark. His books were, for the most part, sermons worked up, and sometimes he preached beforehand chapters of a work which he had in hand; and if this had not been the case, the habit of writing his sermons would make his style a spoken one. Accordingly we find in his writings the repetition of short words, chiefly particles, by which a speaker gains so much time for himself, and renders it more easy for his hearers to follow him; inverted constructions serving either to mark the emphasis or make connexions between sentences clearer; and trivial metaphors, such as "the arm

of industry," "the tear of pity," &c., expressions of course like Homer's epithets, which also help alike the speaker and hearers. A shrewd Wesleyan once remarked to me that my father owed much of his success in the pulpit to his diluting his meaning, down to the precise degree at which it was most easily apprehended by a common congregation. Any incorrectness in his diction arose, not only from haste, but from his not always using words in their usual sense; for when a word occurred to him which, reasoning from the analogy of the language, might have been correctly used to express the notion he intended, and he could find no other which did so, he seems to have determined not to waste time in seeking for another expression, but to have trusted that his meaning would be known. As if he was inclined to take liberties with the language for allowing a word which might, in accordance with its rules, have supplied a deficiency in its vocabulary, to be used irregularly to mean something else, forgetting that usage, however capricious at first, becomes law, and constitutes right. He was aware of his incorrectness, and in consequence of it was very much annoyed at his sermons being taken down in short-hand; and knowing that a lady in his congregation had, during twenty-five years, made very full notes of them, he gave her no rest until she had promised him never to part with them. He had a very low opinion of his own powers generally, and was astonished at the circulation and usefulness to which his writings attained. He was thought sometimes to refer to this ostentatiously, but his only feelings were wonder and gratitude, and in the simplicity of his heart he gave utterance to them. In p. 236 of the eighth volume of his works, he makes a very touching allusion to this subject.

To the last, he never entered the pulpit on any occasion, when he felt a more than usual effort was required from him, without timidity and apprehension. This feeling having once or twice prevented him from sleeping, he always expected it to produce the same effect, and feared that he should become ill, and be unable to go through the service; and when within three or four days of any important engagement, he went to bed in a state of alarm which prevented his sleeping properly, and in consequence

felt unwell; if this happened on a second night, he wrote off the next day to the unfortunate minister who was relying on him, that it was doubtful whether his health would admit of his coming. As soon as the letter was gone, he repented of having sent it, and said he would attempt to fulfil his promise if he died in the effort, and despatched a second letter to say he was better. But when he had thus committed himself, all his apprehensions returned, and he declared that it was physically impossible for him to go. By that time it was generally too late to write again, and it was left for his state in the morning to determine whether he went or not. But, except in two or three instances, he always proved able to bear the journey and get through the service, though he must often have occasioned great uneasiness on his arrival, as well as before it. For when from home he had always before him the terror of sleeping in a room from the window of which he could not easily escape in case of fire, and this dread in one case made him so unwell that he returned without preaching. When he did not keep an engagement, his self-reproach and mortification were so great that he became seriously ill; and it may easily be conceived that, bad as these feelings were for him, they were more trying to my stepmother, although she knew all the while that his fears and fancies were groundless. They, however, got to such a pitch at last, that he would, if she had permitted him, have always stipulated, (not when he made the engagement, for then, of course, it would have been given up, but within a week of the time for its fulfilment,) that some other sufficient minister should, to the last moment, remain in readiness to preach, if he felt himself unable to do so; and, while the dread of the case was upon him, we could not make him see that this was most unreasonable. And the most provoking thing was, that immediately after one of these scenes, his kindness always made him accept other engagements, provided they were for distant days; and he was displeased if remonstrated with on the subject, and insisted that his difficulty in former cases had arisen solely from illness, which he hoped would not happen again.

He joined the Worcestershire Association to co-operate in it

with his friend Dr Bedford. The towns and villages of that county lay in a half circle round Birmingham, and had ever commanded his services, and he had, almost from the time of his coming into the neighbourhood, been the counsellor of the churches at Worcester and Kidderminster. But he by no means confined himself to Worcestershire; Staffordshire, I think, had most of his occasional labours, very likely from a sense of duty, as he was most connected with it. In Wolverhampton, there was Queen Street Chapel, which he always liked, because the galleries of his own first chapel were removed to it, and he had always been on most friendly terms with its ministers—Mr Scales, Mr Roaf, Dr Mathe-son, Mr Smith, and Mr Wilson. Mr Scales came into the neighbourhood a little before him, and they soon contracted a warm friendship for each other, which was not weakened either by Mr Scales's removal to Yorkshire, or by both of them having written in defence of Dissent. Mr Scales did not allow his now very advanced age to prevent him from attending his friend's funeral, and he has since rejoined him. And my father's attachment to the Queen Street Chapel did not prevent him from opening and often preaching in that erected by the munificence and exertions of his friend John Barker, whose personal bearing and endowments qualified him for even a higher position than he had raised himself to in his county, at the head of the South Staffordshire iron trade. My father, also, was a great promoter, and the advocate with the public, of the John Street Chapel case, which was the precursor of the suit respecting Lady Hewley's Charities, and in connexion with which he got into a controversy with the very learned Mr Robertson of Stretton-under-Foss. The congregations at Lichfield, Walsall, West Bromwich, the Potteries, and Burton-upon-Trent, with the neighbouring town of Derby, occur to me as having habitually during my father's prime sought his advice, and received his visits. With Warwickshire he was less connected, as in the north it gradually narrows to a point, on which Birmingham is situated, away from all its other towns; and the mining and manufacturing districts of Staffordshire, Worcestershire, and what used to be the outlying part of Shropshire, have a community of feeling and interest

with it, which the other parts of the county, being chiefly agricultural, do not possess. But at Leamington he encouraged, and indeed brought back, Mr Pope to build up the church, which, though a station of great usefulness, Mr Bromley had left, at the suggestion of Archbishop Magee, to die, doing nothing, a curate on a Berkshire down. He took great interest in the chapel at Kenilworth, which was rescued from Unitarians, in consequence of their offering to teach only out of the Assembly's Catechism, which was prescribed by the founder; but notwithstanding this association of the place, a chapel was erected in Kenilworth to commemorate the passing of the Dissenters' Chapel Act of 1844, in compliment to my friends, Edwin Field, who was most active in promoting the bill, and his father, the biographer of Dr Parr. And he was always glad to visit Coventry, that ancient citadel of Puritanism, in which, though the Old Meeting, in which Tong, Matthew Henry's biographer, preached, is now held by what has been so aptly called the abomination of desolation, yet three flourishing chapels still uphold the faith of the times of the Commonwealth; and there my father had to make a protest in behalf of Nonconformists, even at a Bible-meeting. He was called upon to speak when the time had nearly expired, and his speech was to this effect,—“I rise, sir, as the representative of a very respectable part of the supporters of this society, the Dissenters, and the lateness of the hour prevents me saying more than that I am sorry they have not been thought worthy of taking a greater part in this day's proceedings. I have to move,” &c. The mistake was not made again in Coventry. Besides these places, he preached in many a Congregational and Baptist chapel in the Midland Counties, and he made a rule of paying his own expenses on travelling to preach for a poor congregation, which, he said, was a very sure way to be asked to visit them again, and to be generally popular. He also preached for the Wesleyans more than most of our ministers, except Dr Baffles, and he always lived on the best terms with their ministers stationed here. He was very much amused that permission could not be obtained for his preaching

in their chapel in Scarborough in the autumn of 1853, after, and therefore he supposed because, he had consented to be one of the adjudicators of a prize offered by seceding or malcontent Wesleyans, on some subject connected with Methodism. But the application was made on a Sunday morning, and it was necessary to get an answer immediately, and perhaps the right person to give it could not be spoken to. I should notice that he had a great esteem for the New Connexion Methodists, and always advised persons breaking off from John Wesley's body to join them; and wondered that he never found the advice taken.

During Mr Rowland Hill's life he supplied Surrey Chapel for a month every year, in consequence, I understood, of a promise given on his marriage with my stepmother, who was a member of the congregation there, and almost filled the place of a daughter to Mr and Mrs Hill. Mr Hill, at the close of his life, manifested a little coolness towards him, in consequence of the congregation in Clemens Street Chapel, Leamington, of which my father was a trustee, disusing the liturgy, which was much to Mr Hill's discomfort; my father had, however, no hand in it, and could not have prevented it, as the trust-deed did not impose the liturgy on the people, as is the case at Surrey Chapel. Mr Hill knew that in all other cases our congregations had done the same when they had the power; and I do not know what particular right he had to deprive the people at Leamington of their Christian liberty. But my father did not allow the old gentleman's complaints of dishonest trustees to offend him, and gave the address at his funeral.

He always read laboriously in preparing his sermons, referring, I believe, to all the treatises and discourses which he possessed on the subject; and, I have no doubt, deriving a great part of his matter from them, by which he would consider his congregation were gainers as much as himself. And, in accordance with this, in his Address to Students, he advises them to keep a commonplace book of reference, in the way of an index, shewing them what they had at their command on any subject. He also read a good deal of divinity as it came out, keeping up with the English theological literature of the day of his own school.

His favourite authors were the Nonconformist divines of the latter half of the seventeenth century, and those of the last seventy years: especially of the ancients, Howe, Baxter, Owen, and Manton; and of the moderns, Andrew Fuller, Moses Stuart, Bussell of Dundee, Dr Urwick of Dublin, Dr Wardlaw, Dr Chalmers, and Dr John Brown. He particularly valued the Morning Exercises and the Sermons of John Smith of Cambridge. Bichard Taylor's Works, in separate volumes, he seems to have possessed from the beginning of his ministry. He was much attached to Matthew Henry's Commentary, for devotional reading; and, for the interpretation of Scripture, he prized most highly Doddridge, Campbell, and, latterly, Albert Barnes. Macknight, Hammond, and Whitby stood near his desk. He read at family prayers, in the early part of his life, Doddridge, and, after he had adopted the plan of reading the Old Testament in the morning, Boothroyd. He made great use of Bloomfield's "Synopsis Critica," and, I think, turned to Bishop Horsley whenever he had written on the subject in hand. He went to Adam Clarke for the Arminian view of a passage, but I often heard him say he thought him overpraised. Scott he had always at hand, but his Commentary was written rather to be a sole guide, than to be consulted with others.

I find mentioned in his Address to Students the Episcopalian writers whom I considered he preferred, but I am surprised that Archbishop Leighton is omitted. Tillotson's Works alone, of all his books, bear his father's name, and I recollect they used to be much about, and that in a printed letter he mentioned that he very often read them. I have no doubt that he chose the Archbishop's clear and easy style as a safeguard or corrective for his own. Archbishop Whately's theological works he read carefully, I suppose, as the ablest living writer of the school opposed to his. In a literary point of view, Lord Bacon, Dr Johnson, Foster of Bristol, Robert Hall, and Lord Macaulay, were the chief objects of his admiration. He always purchased Isaac Taylor's books as they came out, but of no single volume did he ever make so much as that of Douglas of Cavers "On the Advancement of Society in Religion and Knowledge," and this appears in his works.

His book of reference was Dr Rees' "Encyclopaedia," which came out in his early years, and which those who are accustomed to it still prize, notwithstanding the sneers which it has ever received, appearing, as it did, during the French war, with a Dissenting minister for its editor. He was very fond of essays, especially the "Rambler," "Spectator," and "Friend," and there were few more eager readers of the Edinburgh, Quarterly, British Quarterly, and North British Reviews, for he liked a dissertation which he could read at a sitting, and which the author threw off at one heat, though often the concentrated thought of years; fragmentary perhaps, but highly wrought up, and being in prose what an ode is in poetry. His other light reading consisted of biography and accounts of voyages and travels, of which he was very fond indeed.

He could not endure fiction, and I knew him read but one novel, and that was "Rob Roy." "Uncle Tom's Cabin" he read, not as a tale, but an anti-slavery testimony. For the same reason he read little poetry, beside Shakspeare, Milton, and Cowper, and chiefly the two latter. Of hymns, (if I may be in the present day permitted to mention them under poetry,) he still preferred Dr Watts, and after him Doddridge and Charles Wesley, though single ones of different authors were perhaps his chief favourites. I say he preferred Watts, though it was amusing to hear his abuse of him on Saturdays, when selecting the hymns to be sung on the morrow, although really the only foundation for his complaints was that the doctor had not left a hymn on every possible religious topic.

His taste, as may be gathered from what I have said, was for a chaste and slightly ornamented style. He thought Robert Hall's perfect. He delighted, like everybody else, in Lord Macaulay's, but I fancy thought there was too much sugar and spice in it. With regard to his own style, it may have been that the adverse criticisms with which his first missionary sermon was attacked arose chiefly from his having anticipated the modern taste for picturesque writing. He had a great admiration for classical learning, though he pretended to no more than to read his text in the original, and enter into the English criticisms on it. He told me,

when at school, that next to seeing me a good Christian he wished to see me a good classic, and after I had left it he inquired from time to time if I was keeping up what I had learned, especially Greek.

He prized very highly originality of thought, and used to name several of our ministers living in villages or little towns in whom he had found it, (I recollect only Mr Jones of Birdbush,) but he did not give that praise to merely new-fangled phrases. But he valued learning still more, for he thought that at this time of day not much real novelty was possible; and that any man, except he was among the very noblest of his race, would attain greater power of mind, and would impart more benefit to others, by digesting, assimilating, and absorbing into his mental being the thoughts of the wisest men who had written before him, than by spinning new theories or interpretations out of his own head.

He was very affectionate in all the relationships of life, and in every respect the chief of his father's house, speaking peace to all his seed. And it was among the many mercies that crowned his lot that he had very much to delight and little to try him in his kindred. He was particularly blessed in his wives, except that the second predeceased him by nearly twenty years. He married at twenty-two, when my mother was three or four years older; she possessed a strength and refinement of mind, and a gentleness yet dignity of deportment, which gained an ascendancy over all who came into her presence, and she guided her husband's impulsive nature and gave early maturity to his character. She sustained him amidst his early efforts and discouragements. She is little mentioned in this chapter, only because I lost her when I was nine years old. His second wife had unusual perception, judgment, tact, and energy, guided by strong principle, and exerted under the sense of duty. She was a noble counsellor and fellow-worker with him, and cheered his heart and strengthened his hands in the most arduous portion of his life. Both were devoted to him, and he was always glad to say how much he was indebted to them, both for what he was and what he had done. He was also very happy in his brothers The elder, as a fellow-minister, engaged and skilled in

public matters, was always associated with him in the business of their denomination and its institutions, and gave him a home in London or the neighbourhood, which of all parts of England he most rejoiced to visit, for he liked to be at the centre of affairs. His younger brother, living in his own town, was the man of his right hand, on whom he leaned almost to the end of his journey through life, whom he watched during his fatal illness with all the tenderness and assiduity of a woman, and after laying whom in his grave he never thoroughly recovered his spirits.

My sister, his only child beside myself, was an invalid from childhood, and for the latter part of his life was confined to the house, and though possessed of great powers of observation and conversation, which fitted her to be a delightful companion for him, she was unfortunately disqualified by being always deaf, and often losing her voice, and as he was also slightly deaf, they could in the latter case hold but little communion. Nevertheless he sat with her as much as he could, (his book on Hope was written chiefly by her bedside,) though of course the sight of her as she lay, suffering and unable to converse with him, preyed upon his spirits, notwithstanding her great patience under all her trials. I think, at last at any rate, he loved people in proportion as he thought they were or would be kind to her. He long had told me that his anxiety in prospect of death, was only for his church and his daughter, and he feared he had hardly faith enough with respect to them. But when Mr Dale became his co-pastor, that part of his care was removed, and when I married, and he found he could intrust my sister to my wife's care and judgment, he told her the bitterness of death was past. He made a point of frequently visiting his relatives in his native county, which till lately was distant two days' journey, laying out his autumnal excursions accordingly, and for a long period he was with them every year. Unfortunately in his last tour, taken with the view of seeing his sister, who alone of all her generation remained to him in the west of England, he contracted a feverish attack, from the effects of which he never perfectly rallied.

A man of his loving nature was sure to have warmly attached friends, and such to him were Dr Bogue of Gosport, Dr Bennett

of Romsey, Rotherham, and London, Dr Fletcher of Blackburn and Stepney, Dr Burder of Hackney, Dr Raffles of Liverpool, and afterwards Dr M'All of Macclesfield and Manchester, Dr Redford of Worcester, Mr Parsons of York, and Dr Patton of New York. In his dining-room, he had likenesses of members of his family, and of Dr Bogue, Robert Hall, Rowland Hill, Dr M'All, Dr Chalmers, Dr John Brown, Dr Fletcher, Matthew Wilks, Mr Jay, Dr Redford, Dr Patton, and Mr Clarkson.

All these, it will be noticed, lived at a distance, except that Dr Redford, on retiring from the ministry, came to live in Birmingham, to their very great mutual comfort. It was most painful to witness the doctor's grief on my father's removal, but he found consolation in transferring his friendship to his friend's daughter, and holding each Lord's-day a service with her in her sick-room. The circumstances of their congregations kept my father and Mr Brewer apart, until they came together at the formation of the Birmingham Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society, and shortly after that my father became ill, and he had not fully recovered when Mr Brewer was seized with his last illness; but I have heard him say that Mr Brewer, after their first co-operation, declared he felt ten years younger, and my father delivered at his chapel, to the Sunday-school teachers of the two congregations, a sermon which was the germ of "The Sunday-school Teacher's Guide." And while he remained dangerously ill, Mr Brewer called on my mother, in his cordial gentlemanly and Christian way, to express his regard for my father, and to console her. There was no subject I liked to hear my father talk of more than Mr Brewer's fine person, and his noble, genial, and commanding mind and character, which he thought fitted, perhaps beyond any he had ever known, to win hearts and sway minds. And when did a minister build up a church and congregation better organised and cemented, or more flourishing in all their institutions? And it does not lessen his praise, that he had John Dickenson by his side in all his works and counsels. After Mr Burt left Birmingham, until Mr Vaughan came to it, the town had no Dissenting minister possessed at once of sufficient geniality, amiability, mental endow-

ments, and standing among his brethren, for my father to find an intimate friend in; but I must notice the cordial attachment and respect which Mr Morgan and he had for each other. When my father came to Birmingham, he found the congregations of Carr's Lane and Cannon Street worshipping together at Cannon Street, and Mr Morgan, who had very lately been settled there, and he preached alternately. Mr Morgan died a few months before him, and my father preached his funeral sermon, and engaged also to print it, but his strength proved unequal to preparing it for the press, and the manuscript bears a sad endorsement, forbidding it to be parted with. I should mention that it was a bitter disappointment to my father, that Mr Raleigh's health prevented his coming to Ebenezer Chapel.

After 1838, however, he had the happiness of having for friends at hand the professors of Spring-hill College. He particularly enjoyed the society of Professor Rogers, and during a long illness of that gentleman, shewed almost a father's fondness for him.

He was thus for great part of his life compelled to seek congenial minds among the clergy of the Establishment resident in his town, and he found such among them, and often said they were his true brethren, and the men he fraternised most with. He was on the most friendly terms with Mr Bum, who at that time stood alone in Birmingham, but at the head of a congregation such as has not since been seen in any church in the town. He next had for his friends Mr Garbet, Mr Moseley, Mr Buyers, Dr Marsh, Mr Bird, and Mr Riland, and near the end of his time Canon Miller and Mr Marsden. The society of the three last-named gentlemen was a great source of happiness to him in his declining years, and the respect which first Dr Marsh, and then Canon Miller, were never weary of shewing him, was peculiarly gratifying to him, and well illustrated Lord Coke's maxim, which if bad Latin is good morality—"Honor plus est in honorante quam in honorato."

Of his friends among laymen, I must mention two or three, and begin with Mr Thomas Wilson, and his son Mr Joshua Wilson,

whose praise is in all the churches. Their well-known house in Highbury Place received no guest more attached to its inmates, or, I believe, more loved by them. Mr Joshua Wilson's wife was a relative of my stepmother. Mr Henderson of Park, near Glasgow, gave every minister of the United Presbyterian Church a copy of my father's work entitled "An Earnest Ministry the Want of the Times," and also of Baxter's "Reformed Pastor," which he had reprinted upon his recommendation; and year by year he shewed him hospitality, or accompanied him in tours in Scotland, which my father so much enjoyed, and was so much benefited by, that all my anxiety every year was to get him to the North. Mr Henry Wright of Birmingham during his last years became quite a son to him; amidst all his own occupations he always found time when at home to look in upon him at his house, and accompany him to meetings and services at the small chapels in and about the town, bestowing on him an amount of personal attention such as I never knew in any other instance.

My father had only one severe illness after manhood, it happened in 1817, and the physician (Dr John Johnstone, Dr Parr's friend and biographer) called it a nervous fever. He was deprived of the use of all his limbs, except that, I think, he could turn his hands, and he must have been laid aside for six months. He suffered all his life from indigestion, having taken too much medicine, and particularly having used alkalies too freely. He was weakened at last by diabetes, an hereditary malady, and a post mortem examination shewed that he had two large urinary calculi. The existence of one was ascertained shortly before his death, and he bore the announcement with great fortitude. A few days before his death he began to suffer from angina pectoris of the chronic kind which afflicts old persons. But he was taken from us with comparatively little suffering by a slight rupture in the heart, occasioned by sickness, consequent on his stomach having lost its power. He had an abiding dread of two things—one that he should not be able to bear pain with fortitude, and should not afford an example of Christian patience, such as he had seen in both his wives; and the other was, that he should survive his

faculties. From both these calamities his Master mercifully-delivered him.

I may mention that early in his ministry his portrait was painted by Branwhite, and was engraved in the *Evangelical Magazine*, and it was thought very like him at that time; but the best likenesses of him were by Coleman, (the game painter,) engraved in the *Congregational Magazine*, and one on china. All three are in my possession. But they were entirely superseded by photographs, except that these were all taken in his old age. The best of them were that engraved for the *Illustrated News of the World*, and one representing him in a hearty smile, which is the most wonderful copy of a face I have ever seen. All artists declared that he was a most difficult subject to paint, owing, I think, to his features varying with his thoughts. His countenance was certainly an unusual one; and Robert Hall declared it was the most remarkable one he had ever seen, and that he was sure my father would be the first man recognised at the resurrection. To friends in the States of North America, (United or Confederate,) I would mention that he was much annoyed by engravings prefixed to their editions of some of his books, taken from his portrait by Derby, which was not done justice to by the transatlantic engravers. He declared that he never looked as badly as they represented him. The original was not a pleasant likeness, but I have seen him look exactly like it when in an unusually grave mood. He sent to New York a water-colour portrait which he had from me, but it was what is called a flattering likeness in point of age as well as of looks. I should mention in this connexion, my father's height was under five feet eight inches.

NOTE.—The value and authority of this most interesting chapter would be greatly diminished, if the Editor ventured to modify even a solitary expression. On nearly every point there is a very gratifying coincidence between the statements made by Mr James and those made by the Editor in other parts of this volume; a coincidence the more remarkable, as neither writer read the MS. of the other before going to press.—ED.

CHAPTER II.

PREACHING.

IT is not my purpose to describe in this chapter the brilliant discourses by which, forty years ago, Mr James became famous among English Congregationalists, nor do I intend to review those sermons of his later years which were delivered away from home, or on special occasions; the most remarkable of these may be read and studied in the first three volumes of his Collected Works. This chapter is intended to answer the question, How did Mr James preach every Sunday in his own pulpit?

He had a profound sense of the greatness of the preacher's vocation. Though he sometimes echoed the fashionable creed that the press has usurped or inherited the ancient supremacy of the pulpit, he never heartily accepted it. He believed in preaching as a Divine institution, for which the true ministers of Christ receive special endowments from the Holy Ghost. He thought of it, too, as the highest employment of man's natural powers, demanding from all who are called to its responsibilities and glories, the consecration of every faculty and every noble passion. He permitted no side pursuits to divert his strength or abate his enthusiasm. Theological reading, literary work, ecclesiastical business, social pleasures, were forbidden to encroach on the time claimed by his sermons. With some preachers, preaching seems a mere parenthesis in their life, interrupting the pursuits to which they give most of their energy and nearly all their heart; Mr

James expended his utmost resources in making his sermons attractive and powerful.

For very many years his preparation for Sunday seldom commenced later than Wednesday morning,* and he liked to be able to lay down his pen between one and two o'clock on Saturday, that he might have the afternoon for the students, and the evening for quiet thought and prayer. But he did not suppose that when the sermon was written all preparation for the pulpit was over. He always read on Saturday evenings books which powerfully move the religious affections, or which assert the awful dignity of the ministerial office—books like Baxter's "Reformed Pastor," Payson's "Life," Brainerd's "Life," Howe's "Blessedness of the Righteous," Owen's "Spiritual Mindedness," Archbishop Leighton's "Commentary on Peter."

To the last he wrote his sermons very fully, though, except on occasions of unusual importance, he never used his manuscript in the pulpit. When his popularity as a preacher was at its height he preached *memoriter*, and, I think, that even in his later years he generally delivered many passages nearly as he had written them. Few could speak better when altogether unprepared, but he escaped the ruin into which a fatal fluency has betrayed many a clever but indolent man, by conscientious and painstaking preparation for ordinary as well as extraordinary services. He was not satisfied when he had mastered the meaning of his text, and thought out the didactic matter of the sermon. He conceived that a preacher was not a mere quarryman, but a sculptor; and that the arrangement, language, and illustrations required as much labour as the solid thought. In this process he was guided partly, no doubt, by the oratorical instinct which was born with him, but partly, too, by the spirit he had caught from the great preachers whose works he had studied, and by the observations he had made on the style, topics, arguments, and appeals by which men are most deeply interested, and most powerfully moved. He could have written a very useful book, and I once begged him to do it, on the influence of particular

* He often began on Tuesday.

aspects of religious truth on the affections and the heart, a liomiletical treatise, discussing the substance of sermons, instead of the form.

He was so much in the habit of insisting on the importance of the preacher's manner, that some people suppose that his own power lay principally, not in what he said, but in how he said it, and that his sermons owed all their charm to his voice, tones, and gestures. This is a great mistake. He knew precisely what facts, what truths, what arguments have the mightiest control over the common heart, and these he reiterated with unwearied perseverance. It was the substance of his preaching that produced impression as well as the manner, and the impression was produced by thoroughly legitimate means. Vivid descriptions of natural scenery, exciting stories, frequently recurring appeals to the natural affections of the human heart, may hold a congregation breathless, brighten a thousand eyes with delight, or make them dim with tears, while the truth around which all these telling passages are grouped is neither illustrated nor enforced. The sermon seems powerful, for the hearts of the people were filled with agitation and emotion; but examined more closely it will be pronounced powerless, for it was not the glory of the Divine character which hushed and awed the listening crowd, but the preacher's representation of an appalling thunderstorm; it was not an apostolic appeal to their Christian zeal that flushed their cheeks with enthusiasm, but a splendid panegyric on the patriotism and daring of some popular hero; it was not the compassions of the Lord Jesus Christ which "fail not," His mercy which "endureth for ever," that brought tears, but the story of some fair girl with bleeding lungs and hacking cough, wasting away through the dreary winter, and longing for the tardy summer. It was not by such means as these that Mr James sought to produce effect.

And yet his preaching was addressed to the imagination and the passions, as well as the judgment. He knew that there are obstructions to the reception of truth which reasoning cannot remove, but which are often consumed in a blaze of feeling. Blasting is often more speedy and effectual than the pick and the spade.

Even when he had obtained the assent of the understanding, he was unwilling to leave the truth to produce its own effect. He did not think of truth so much as a living seed, which by its own vital force will germinate if once lodged in a kindly soil, but as a weapon which must be wielded by a vigorous hand and directed by a keen eye, if any results are hoped for. He asked himself what particular impression he wished to secure by the facts or doctrines which formed the staple of his sermon, and selected and arranged all his materials with an eye to this. He always meant to prevent his hearers committing some sin, or to persuade them to discharge some duty; to awaken gratitude, reverence, faith, fear, hope, or joy. He never forgot that to demonstrate is not always to convince, nor to convince always to persuade. A gulf, broad and deep, often lies between the judgment and the will, and he endeavoured to bridge it over. Hence his sermons would never by any accident be called *intellectual*. That term has been applied of late years as an epithet of honour, to describe a style of preaching which is deficient in all that distinguishes eloquence from instruction. The orator does not exert his intellect less strenuously than the philosophical lecturer, but in a different way; he appeals to the emotions of his audience, and not merely to their logical faculties. He does not analyse the process of persuasion, but persuades. He does not shew how strikingly adapted certain truths are to ennoble all that believe them, but so states and enforces these truths as to produce belief.

“Intellectual” sermons are not distinguished from good sermons of another kind by the presence of greater logical power, but by the absence of what is even better than that. Neither Shakespeare nor Sir Walter Scott were “intellectual;” neither Charles James Fox nor Lord Erskine; neither Jeremy Taylor nor Dr Chalmers; neither Robert Hall nor Edward Irving. “Intellectual preaching” is preaching in which nine-tenths of human nature are clean forgotten. “We have to do,” exclaims Mr James in his “Earnest Ministry,” “not only with a dark intellect that needs to be instructed, but with a hard heart that needs to be impressed, and a torpid conscience that needs to be awakened;

and have to make our hearers feel, that, in the great business of religion, there is much to be done as well as much to be known. We must give knowledge, for light is as essential to the growth of piety in the spiritual world, as it is to the growth of vegetation in the natural one; and the analogy holds good in another point, for we must not only let in light, but add great and vigorous labour to carry on the culture. We must, therefore, rise from exegesis into exhortation, warning, and expostulation. The apostle's manner is the right one,—'Whom we preach warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' There must not only be the directive but the impulsive manner. All our hearers know far more of the Bible than they practise. The head is far in advance of the heart; and our great business is to persuade, to entreat, to beseech. We have to deal with a dead, heavy *vis inertiae* of mind; yea, more, we have to overcome a stout resistance, and to move a reluctant heart. If all that was necessary to secure the ends of our ministry were to lay the truth open to the mind; if the heart were already predisposed to the subject of our preaching, then, like the lecturer on science, we might dispense with the hortatory manner, and confine ourselves exclusively to explanation. Logic, unaccompanied by rhetoric, would suffice; but when we find in every sinner we address, an individual acting in opposition to the dictates of his judgment, and the warnings of his conscience, as well as to the testimony of Scripture, an individual who is sacrificing the interests of his immortal soul to the vanities of the world and the corruptions of his heart; an individual who is madly bent upon his ruin, and rushing to the precipice from which he will take his fatal leap into perdition, can we, in that case, be satisfied with merely explaining, however clearly, and demonstrating, however conclusively, the truth of revelation? Should we think it enough coldly to unfold the sin of suicide, and logically to arrange the proofs of its criminality, before the man who had in his hand the pistol or the poison with which he was just about to destroy himself? Would exegesis, however clear and accurate, be enough in this case? Should we not entreat, expostulate, beseech? Should we not lay hold of the

arm uplifted for destruction, and snatch the poison cup from the hand that was about to apply it to the lips? What is the case with the impenitent sinners to whom we preach, but that of individuals bent upon self-destruction, not, indeed, the present destruction of their bodies, but of their souls? There they are before our eyes, rushing in their sins and their impenitence to the precipice that overhangs the pit of destruction; and shall we content ourselves with sermons, however excellent for elegance, for logic, for perspicuity, and even for evangelism, but which have no hortatory power, no restraining tendency, none of the apostle's beseeching entreaty? Shall we merely lecture on theology, and deal out religious science to men, who, amidst a flood of light already pouring over them, care for none of these things?"

The resources of Mr James's eloquence were very varied. As some painters are only successful with a gloomy sky and a restless sea, others with quiet corn-fields and running brooks, so some orators can only produce terror, and others only tears. Sublimity and tenderness are not often found in the same preacher, but Mr James had both. He could fire enthusiasm, or awaken pity; he could terrify, or soothe at will.

There was one characteristic of his preaching by which he often made a very deep impression, at which, perhaps, strangers have sometimes been surprised. I mean the freedom with which, especially in his own pulpit, he employed arguments and appeals derived from his physical infirmities, his domestic sorrows, his affection for his people, and their affection for him. It appears to some that the attempt to stimulate a church to greater generosity, to more regular attendance on public worship, to the maintenance of peace and brotherly love, by motives of this order, is to lower the dignity of Christian duty. Most persons would admit that Mr James availed himself of these elements of power to an extent which few other men could have imitated with safety or propriety, and that sometimes a severe taste might have complained that he himself transgressed the limits it would have been well for him to observe; but that these personal allusions should be excluded from the pulpit altogether, must not be too hastily conceded.

It would be easy to shew from the Epistles of Paul that his strong hold of the affection of his converts, his love for them, his solicitude for their welfare, the impressions produced by his manifest sincerity and goodness, were among his most valued instruments of persuasion. He had learning and genius, he could argue with irresistible cogency, he had the authority of high office, and of inspiration; and yet his eloquence, his logic, and his apostolic commission itself, appeared to him to need the corroborating power of his personal character, and of the mutual sympathies between his converts and himself. In writing to the Ephesians, for instance, he closes a magnificent train of inspired eloquence, in which he has wielded all the grandest and loftiest motives which the Divine love supplies, with an appeal to the sympathy of the Ephesian Church with his personal sufferings. He has spoken of the grace which, before all ages, chose us in Christ, and predestinated us to the honours and joys of Divine Sonship; he has identified believers with Christ in a sublime and mystical unity, declaring that the same power which wrought in Him is working in us, that we sit with Him in heavenly places, that the Church is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; he has declared, that, in our salvation and in the glory and bliss to which God intends to raise us. He will reveal to the ages to come, and to heavenly principalities and powers, His manifold wisdom and the exceeding riches of His grace; and had exclaimed that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think,—though he had just prayed that the Ephesians might be “filled with all the fulness of God;”—and then he appeals at once to their love for himself, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you.” All his calamities and persecutions, and especially his present imprisonment, had come upon him through his zeal for the conversion of the Gentiles to Christ; and so, after pointing them to the throne of heaven, he points them to the chain which for their sakes he bore on his arm, and besought them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called.

And this was Paul’s manner. He entreated the Philippian Christians to fulfil his joy by being “like-minded, having the same

love, being of one accord, of one mind." He gave pathos and power to his solemn charge to the Ephesian elders, when he met them at Miletus, by reminding them, that during the three years he had lived in their city, he had not ceased "to warn every one night and day with tears," and that he knew they should see his face no more.

It is surely a mistake to regard with suspicion the alliance between the social and the religious affections, and the stimulus and support which the spiritual life derives from admiration and love for those who are eminently good. Our complex nature is perfected by a complex system of spiritual forces. Not only the heat and light of the sun in the heavens, but the kindly dews of the earth, and the gentle breezes, feed and ripen the fruits of the Spirit. A saintly man is a means of grace to all who know him. The love and the respect he inspires, the pleasure of possessing his approbation, and the fear of incurring his rebuke, are aids to holy living. The social affections have been effective instruments of moral debasement and ruin, and they are used by God to purify and ennoble us. Mr James could not be ignorant of the strength of his personal influence over the hearts of his people, and he used it to enlarge their liberality, to rouse their activity, and to maintain brotherly confidence and love.

To return from this digression, I repeat that Mr James's preaching was addressed to the emotions, as well as the understanding and that he was able to awaken emotions of the most varied character.

Sermons of the terrific order are now seldom heard, I suppose, from English pulpits; Mr James thought it a grievous mistake and a cruel neglect of the duty which the preacher owes to the impenitent for him to ignore the severer aspects of the invisible world. There is a savage, fiendish mode of denouncing God's vengeance, which can only provoke disgust and indignation in cultivated persons, and which must produce frightfully distorted conceptions of God's character in the minds of the untaught; but those who are entrusted with the "ministry of reconciliation" shrink from half their duty, if they do not warn men of the moral

ruin and everlasting despair, which are the just and inevitable penalty of refusing Christ's mercy and resisting the Holy Ghost. The mighty spell by which Mr Finney compels the reluctant conscience to condemn sin is a power of a different order. Mr James could startle and terrify by vivid representations of the Divine indignation and wrath, but his appeals were directed to the passion of fear rather than to the moral sense. It was by pointing to the vengeance which is gathering like a thunderstorm over the future of the unsaved, rather than by asserting the righteous claims and awful majesty of the Divine Law, that he was able to awaken alarm.

But he was very far from supposing that the Christian minister should devote all his strength to sermons intended to alarm the impenitent and to persuade the unpardoned to receive God's mercy. The instruction of Christian people in the duties they owe to God and to man, had a very conspicuous place in his preaching. He thought it necessary to shew the application of spiritual principles and moral laws to the minutest circumstances of human life. He was incessantly preaching to particular classes on their peculiar duties and dangers. He did not think it a violation of the dignity of the pulpit to preach to mistresses and servants, masters and workmen, husbands and wives, on their mutual obligations. His ethical sermons were among the ablest and most powerful that he ever delivered. Whatever truth there may be in the reproach often thrown on the evangelical pulpit of neglecting the inculcation of ordinary moral duties, no one who heard Mr James frequently would bring the charge against him. Some men imagine that wherever the divine life has been implanted it will transform by its own intrinsic energy the whole character, and that to instruct those who have been renewed by the Holy Ghost in the details of moral duty is unnecessary. Would to God that this were so! But there is no pastor who is not from time to time grieved and amazed by the obliquity, or dullness, or very partial development of the moral sense, even in good people. Wherever true love to God has power in the heart, there will be an earnest and habitual endeavour to do whatever is

thought to be right; but within certain limits, the opinions of men as to what this is, will vary with their education and circumstances. Many a man who would die rather than lie like Abraham and Jacob, must be conscious that, on the whole, Abraham and Jacob were much better men than himself; but the structure of our modern social life has given us a conviction which it was impossible they should have of the inviolable obligation of truth. There are commercial transactions in which a professional man, unaccustomed to business, has at first some difficulty in discovering any wrong, which are justly felt by a merchant to involve serious guilt. On the other hand, a scholar is often indignant at the dishonesty of which business men of the highest integrity are guilty in the discussion and investigation of matters of opinion.

The contents of the New Testament afford, however, the best answer to those who deny the necessity of minute ethical teaching. Exclude the practical precepts from the Gospels and Epistles, and you diminish the New Testament to half its present bulk. The apostles are unanimous in affirming that men whose hearts have been renewed still need to be warned against particular sins, and to be exhorted to particular duties. St Paul, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, supplies a startling illustration of this statement; though he felt it necessary to threaten with the Divine vengeance certain gross sensual offences, he adds, "But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

Very few of Mr James's ethical sermons were preached on isolated texts chosen for the purpose. He expounded in course many of the books both of the Old Testament and the New, and he often said that in addition to the many other advantages of this practice, it enabled a minister to preach on particular moral virtues, and on particular moral offences, without giving the congregation reason to suppose that the infirmities or sins of any individual had suggested the discourse. His expository sermons were very unpretentious, but were marked by sound judgment, and were very instructive. He availed himself freely of the most recent, as well as the older exegetical authorities. John Owen, for whose general theolo-

gical works he felt too little admiration, he esteemed very highly as a commentator, and greatly prized his wonderful Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. For Archbishop Leighton on St Peter, even Coleridge could not have had a profounder reverence. He also greatly liked the good sense of Dr George Campbell's Notes on the Gospels. For Macknight, I think he cared but little; Matthew Henry's praises he was always reiterating; he was less enthusiastic about Scott; Dr Adam Clarke he consulted constantly, though he had but little respect for the doctor's judgment. Dr John Brown's Expository Discourses, especially those on Peter, Dr Eadie's Commentaries on several of St Paul's Epistles, Alexander on Isaiah, Moses Stuart on the Romans and the Hebrews, and several of Albert Barnes's commentaries, were among his favourite books. He greatly admired Tholuck, and occasionally used Hengstenberg and Olshausen.*

In historical sermons, Mr James was also very successful. He was equally happy in illustrating the lessons suggested by the domestic life of the patriarchs, and in painting the splendour of Belshazzar's feast, or the terrors of the plagues of Egypt, the "darkness that might be felt," "the thunder, the hail, and the fire" that "ran along the ground." Unlike many preachers who tell the story in their introduction, and fill the rest of the discourse with mere didactic matter, he interwove the narrative with the instruction, and the climax of the story was often wrought into the peroration of the sermon. Indeed, he could tell the facts in such a way that made it almost unnecessary formally to state the "moral."

The same observations apply to the sermons he preached on public events. He was not continually looking through the columns of the newspaper for tales of blood and horror to drag into the pulpit; but, now and then, when the public mind was greatly excited—whether by a continental revolution, or a financial

* I leave this passage as it stands, although it has been partly anticipated in the preceding chapter. It may be interesting to some readers to notice the coincidence between the testimony of Mr James's son and that of Mr James's colleague.

crisis—by the apprehension of war, or the hope of peace—by a royal marriage, or the death of a great statesman—or by the execution of some notorious criminal, whose dark career suggested salutary warnings—he availed himself of these circumstances with consummate tact, and as in his historical sermons, the lessons he wished to inculcate were so interlaced with the facts, and the facts themselves were so skilfully arranged, that the congregation listened with an interest that became more and more intense as the discourse proceeded. These sermons were not only popular, but calculated to do great good.

It is hardly necessary to say that, in his regular ministry, very many sermons were devoted to the encouragement of devoutness and spirituality of life. Perhaps, in his eager anxiety that his church should live under the constant control of the invisible world, he reiterated entreaties and exhortations, when his object would have been more certainly secured by less direct methods,—especially by preaching more frequently on those parts of God's revelation which fire and exalt the religious affections. He often spoke with rapture to the unbeliever of God's mercy; but it was not often that he expatiated in his sermons, with any excitement of joy, on the blessedness of Divine sonship, "the exceeding greatness of the power that worketh in them that believe," and the consciousness possible to the devout and faithful Christian that he dwells in God, and God in him. He was a Calvinist, but there was very little Calvinism in his preaching; there was neither the severity of the darker parts of the system, nor the mighty and victorious confidence of its brighter aspects. He worked out his salvation "with fear and trembling." He thought it safer to utter constant warnings against sin to preserve men from falling, than to proclaim, too often, how certain it is that those who are in Christ's hands will never perish.

At a time when there was a great deal of talk about the supposed decline of orthodoxy among the younger ministers, Mr James, in conversation with a young minister, was expressing the apprehensions which he often uttered in public; his companion, who thought his apprehensions groundless, and saw that he was

in a desponding mood, looked up and said, rather mischievously, "Well, Mr James, you know that I am more orthodox than you are."

"What! what!" was his reply, with a puzzled and amused look; "how do you make that out?"

"At least I am more Calvinistic than you."

"No, sir," said Mr James, raising his closed hand to give emphasis to his words; "I hold the doctrines of Calvinism with a firm grasp."

"But, sir, you never preach about them, and I do."

"Well," he replied, rather slowly, "there's not so much about them in the Bible."

"That proves what I say, sir," answered the younger minister; "you don't half believe them."

This conversation, though only half in earnest on one side, indicates Mr James's real position. In creed he was a moderate Calvinist, belonging to the school of his predecessor, Dr Williams, but his temperament led him to dwell much more on Christian duty than on Christian privilege.

But the sermon was far from being the only remarkable part of the Carr's Lane service. As Mr James slowly ascended the pulpit, the stranger would see in his calm and solemn countenance that his spirit was awed by a sense of God's presence; and, after the opening psalm was read,* and a hymn sung, he offered a prayer which was generally characterised by the profoundest awe and reverence for the Divine Majesty, and by earnest, sometimes impassioned supplication for spiritual blessings. The Scriptures were then read a second time, and a second prayer was offered, in which intercession was made for "all sorts and conditions of men," for the Queen on the throne, for the ministers of the crown, for

* Some changes were made in the order of service a year or two before Mr James's death. Formerly the order was, 1. The reading of a psalm; 2. Singing; 3. Prayer; 4. Reading the Scriptures; 5. Prayer; 6. Singing; 7. Sermon; 8. Singing; 9. Prayer and benediction. The present order, which is nearly the same as when Mr James died, is, 1. Prayer; 2. Singing; 3. Reading the Scriptures; 4. Prayer; 5. Singing; 6. Prayer; 7. Reading the Scriptures; 8. Singing; 9. Sermon; 10. Prayer; 11. Singing; 12. Benediction.

judges and magistrates, for merchants and tradesmen, for masters and servants, for the rich, the poor, and the troubled, for all Christian churches and ministers, and very often for some special department of Christian labour; missions in China and the East being often remembered. And again, at the close of the prayer, there were solemn ascriptions of praise, sometimes swelling into lofty eloquence, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The tones of his voice, rich and deep, his manner—never hurried and generally very deliberate—added solemnity to the devotional part of the service; and many, I should suppose, are ready to acknowledge with myself that his prayers were often characterised by even brighter excellencies than his sermons.

CHAPTER III.

PASTORATE.

FOR several years before Mr James's death the Carr's Lane Church had numbered hard upon a thousand members, and it was, of course, impossible that he should maintain a close personal acquaintance with them all. How it was that he knew so much of the circumstances and history of the people was always a puzzle to me. He was constantly bewailing his inability to sustain a regular and satisfactory system of pastoral visitation, and yet there were very few persons in the church of whom he could not give a clear account.

At one time it was his custom to sit in the vestry on Tuesday morning to converse with any of the congregation that wished to see him; but this plan did not last long. He contrived to see a considerable number of persons without losing much time by often arranging to take tea at the houses of the church members on Wednesday afternoon before the service, and occasionally requested the family he visited to invite some of their friends and neighbours. Death, sickness, or great trouble of any kind, always awakened his sympathy, and the tenderness of his heart made his visits to families in sorrow a great consolation.

For the regular oversight of the church he made a double provision. The town was divided into six districts, and two deacons had the care of each. It was their duty to ascertain the reason of

the absence of any member in their district from the monthly communion, to administer relief to the poor, to visit the sick, to report to the pastor any cases of severe illness requiring his personal attention, and to maintain a knowledge of the general character of all the members assigned to their care. Another set of districts was placed under the charge of "superintendents," private members of the church, selected for this post by the pastors and deacons. It was their duty to provide for the holding of monthly meetings for prayer, reading the Scriptures, and religious conversation in their "parishes," to exercise a kindly watchfulness over the members, to visit them all as frequently as possible, and to secure contributions for the Carr's Lane Town Mission.

Of course, the success of this machinery depended altogether upon the vigour with which it was worked; and Mr James saw the difficulty of finding men with leisure enough and power enough to enable them to discharge the duties of these offices efficiently. But while very many of the members of the church have, I fear, been overlooked, there can be no doubt that the organisation I have described has secured admirable results.

Although not maintained very regularly, it was Mr James's custom to invite the members to take tea with him about once a month in the vestry, those belonging to the same superintendent's district coming together. At these meetings, after an hour's friendly conversation, he usually delivered a familiar exhortation, which was followed by prayer. Occasionally, too, he was present at the ordinary monthly district meetings.

His arrangements for the instruction of "inquirers," and for the introduction of new members into fellowship, were such as are made by most Independent ministers. He announced on the Sunday, that on a particular evening he would be in the vestry for four or five hours, to converse with any persons under religious conviction; these he saw alone. If there were very many came, he would arrange for a series of "inquirers' meetings," at which he gave simple and impressive addresses adapted to their spiritual condition, and offered earnest prayer. After holding five or six meetings of this kind, he would ask them to come and see him

again at the vestry privately; and as one and another found rest in Christ, and gave proof of a change of heart and life, he proposed them for membership.

Some persons may read this volume who are unacquainted with the usual mode of admission into Independent churches; for their information, I will describe Mr James's practice, merely observing that every Independent church claims and exercises the right of determining the details of church order, according to its own judgment of the best mode of carrying out the laws and precepts of the New Testament; and that, therefore, this description, though probably representing in its principal outlines the method of procedure in many churches of our order, is not true of many others.

Having satisfied himself that a number of persons were really living a Christian life, he proposed them for membership at one of the ordinary monthly church-meetings; the whole list was put to the church at once, and if adopted, the persons included in it were declared to be accepted as "candidates;" he then appointed two members to visit each of them, selecting the visitors according to his own judgment of their fitness to be entrusted with each particular case. The visitors were expected, not only to converse with the candidate on his religious knowledge and history, but to inform themselves of his moral character. If the result of their inquiries was satisfactory, they reported at the next church-meeting; after their report letters addressed to the church by the candidates themselves were frequently read, and the pastor having given his testimony, the church was called upon to vote on the question, whether the candidate should be received or not. When all had been "received," they were brought into the meeting, and having been arranged before the pastor's desk, stood while he addressed them on their new responsibilities, on the joys and perils of the religious life, on the glorious inheritance of the saints in heaven, and other topics of a kindred nature; and then, having left the desk, it was his custom to give the right hand of fellowship, addressing to each a few words suggested by their age, history, or present circumstances.

At one of the earliest church-meetings at which I was present—

it was not long after I went to college—there was a singularly affecting scene. The lecture-room, in which the meeting is generally held, was very crowded, and a long line of new members stood before the desk. One of them was an old man, who had lived for seventy years without repenting of sin. Next to him stood a little girl, apparently not more than twelve or thirteen years of age, who had been taught by her mother to love Christ, and who, in answer to her mother's prayers, had been early renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then came a poor man, who had been guilty of gross and reckless sins; a few months before, he had fallen into a ditch in a state of intoxication, and, while lying there, thought he heard a voice saying to him, "If you go on in this way, you will be sent to hell;" he remembered the words when he got sober, began immediately to attend public worship, and had been living a new life ever since. The emotion with which Mr James grasped the hand of the old man, and the trembling tones with which he welcomed him into the church, the tenderness with which he spoke to the child on the blessedness of coming to Christ so early, and his joy over the drunkard who had been so strangely reclaimed, I shall never forget. Mr James then returned to the desk and implored for them all the Divine benediction, beseeching God to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Scenes of this kind were constantly recurring; the church-meetings were among the most important and powerful aids to the religious life of the people. Some of Mr James's addresses to the new members far surpassed, in all the highest qualities of eloquence, any of the sermons or public speeches that I ever heard him deliver.

It was always his anxiety to make these meetings strictly religious services, and to present the business in such a form as should render discussion unnecessary. When any of the members had fallen into sin requiring the exercise of discipline, the church uniformly acted on the report of a discipline committee, appointed by the church itself from year to year. Five of the members of this committee, including the pastor, were church officers; the other five were private members of the church. The sins most

frequently requiring exercise of discipline were drunkenness, and dishonest practices in business. By the custom of the church, insolvency was followed by immediate suspension from communion till the circumstances had been investigated.

It has been supposed by persons at a distance, that Mr James ruled the church with a very strong hand, and tolerated no antagonism, or even difference of opinion. This is a very natural mistake, but it is a mistake, nevertheless. It is true, that during the thirteen years that I attended the Carr's Lane Church meetings, no proposition coming from him was ever opposed, and it would have required some courage for a member to rise and interfere with the habitual assent of the church to the proposals of the pastor. But this power had been gradually gained by an unwearying solicitude on his part to propose nothing that would be out of harmony with the general feeling of the people.

Often when seeming to guide, he was but expressing the judgment of the church. It should not be forgotten that the church knew that it was his habit to have a free and thorough investigation of every proposal in the deacons' vestry before he submitted it to the church-meeting. Moreover, it would have been strange if in a fifty years' pastorate he had not acquired the hearty confidence of the church in his wisdom and justice. He maintained his influence by not abusing it.

This chapter would be incomplete if no reference were made to the extraordinary solemnity and pathos of his manner in conducting the Lord's Supper. Had we any record of the addresses delivered by St John to the church at Ephesus, at its meetings to break bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus, I can imagine that in their form and spirit they would be found greatly to resemble the addresses which Mr James delivered at the monthly communion. He passed from grave and penetrating exhortation to practical godliness, to such glorious visions of the throne of Christ, such affecting expressions of love and thankfulness to Christ for His sufferings and death, that his face often became radiant with an unutterable joy. There are, probably, many who never expect to experience a blessedness like that which they have sometimes known

while listening to these meditations, until with him and a multitude that no man can number, redeemed from every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation, they join in ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

I have reserved for this place two letters, written by Mr James in 1840, when under the impression that he had not long to live, to the deacons and to the members of the Carr's Lane Church. They were found with his will after his death:—

“TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING IN CARR'S LANE,
BIRMINGHAM.

“MY BELOVED FLOCK,—Having a strong persuasion from certain symptoms in my constitution, which it might not be possible nor important to describe, that I am approaching the conclusion, not only of my labours but also of my life, and deeming it probable that my last illness may be of such a nature as to give me little opportunity to express my views and hopes and counsels in prospect of dissolution, I have determined thus to commit them to paper, in order that they might be read to you after my decease, when the circumstance of my removal to the eternal world, united to the calmness with which I now give utterance to my dying testimony will tend, by the blessing of God, deeply to impress your minds.

“In looking back upon the five-and-thirty years, or nearly that term, which I have spent among you and your fathers before you, I see abundant cause of gratitude and adoring love to the Divine Head of the Church for directing my youthful feet to this town. My ministerial course among you has been one of such prosperity and comfort as rarely falls to the lot of a minister of Jesus Christ, and never, no, never, has fallen to any one who less deserved it, or had less reason to expect it. I am filled with delighted surprise, not at what I have done, but at what God has done by me. I cannot, of course, be ignorant, and I have not the hypocrisy to affect ignorance, of what has been done; but now, as in the sight of God, and perhaps shortly about to appear in His presence, I can truly adopt the language, and with it I believe the humility of the apostle, where he says, ‘Not I, but the grace of God in me,’ for I am nothing. It is impossible for me by any terms I could now select to convey to you any adequate idea of the sense I now cherish of the defects, the unworthiness, and even the sinfulness of my

labours among you, so that the success of them appears the more astonishing, and is thus more clearly proved to be all of God. It is impossible for me to doubt that many of you will be my crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ Jesus, even as you have been my joy upon earth: but even this crown I shall take from my head as soon as it is placed there, and cast down at the feet of Jesus, my adorable Lord, to whom alone the glory is all due.

“I know it will be a satisfaction to you to be assured how much you have contributed to my happiness upon earth. For all your kindnesses I thank you: injuries I have received none. All that I have had to object to or to complain of, in regard to most of you, is an over-estimate of my poor services: and yet I dare affirm, I have loved you and sought your welfare. It is pleasant to me to think of laying down the pastoral office among the people for whom I took it up; that I have never known any other flock but you; and that my bones will rest till the resurrection beneath the only pulpit that ever received me as its own occupant.

“It will be interesting and perhaps important for you to be informed how the doctrines I have preached to you appear to my mind, and affect my heart in the view of eternity; just as they ever did, only with a deeper and more solemn sense of their truth, their importance, and their all-sanctifying and all-sustaining nature. It is my comfort to know that with the reading and thinking of five-and-thirty years, I have seen no reason to expunge or change a single article of the confession of faith which I publicly uttered on the day of my ordination. I cannot now tell you how glorious the true and proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His atoning sacrifice, His justifying righteousness and regenerating and sanctifying grace, appear now to me. Yes, my dear friends, they are more than articles of faith, they are the foundation, the only foundation that I see, or feel, of hope for lost, guilty, and depraved man. I see the mysteriousness of some of these truths, but at the same time I feel their ineffable preciousness. How, with the knowledge I now have of the sins of a whole life, seen the more clearly as I draw nearer the great white throne, could I, or dare I, approach that awful seat of immaculate purity, without the shelter of the blood of sprinkling, and the covering of a better righteousness than my own? The atonement appears to me at this moment unutterably momentous, tranquillising, and delightful. Relying upon this, and this is all I do rely upon, I dare plunge into Jordan’s stream, believing that, guilty though I be,—and most guilty that is,—the hand of mercy will receive my spirit on that bank of the dark Waters which is on the side of eternity. Cling to this glorious and fundamental truth: it supports me, and it will support you. It is a doctrine to die by, and yields in

death its strongest consolation. I die, then, as a sinner at the foot of the cross, looking for life eternal through the merits of Him, who expired upon it.

“You may infer from what I have said, that I have a good and a firm hope of immortality. I bless God I have. I feel no rapture, but I have hope and peace. ‘I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day.’ I have been sometimes too much troubled with the love of life, and fear of death: but I am thankful to say that at the time I write this, both are much diminished, and if I do not desire to depart and be with Christ, I am quite willing to go when my Lord calls for me: and I encourage all the Lord’s people to trust Him for a dying hour.

“In the prospect of meeting my Lord and Master, the Supreme Judge, it must appear of small consequence to me, with what censure or applause my name may be mentioned, or my conduct marked by my fellow-creatures, whose opinions cannot follow me into eternity; but it is a cause of some thankfulness that my memory will, I believe, be respected by you. I have endeavoured in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, to have my conversation among you. Would God that my example had been a more perfect copy of Christ’s, and one that was more worthy of your imitation. Oh, that I had been more holy, more spiritual, more heavenly, for your sake as well as my own! I now see many things which I could wish had been otherwise. Still I thank God for that grace which has kept me from falling. What the tongue of slander may invent, for even the grave is not always a defence from its wickedness, I cannot predict; but while it is matter of deep humiliation and contrition that I have not lived more up to the lofty standard of our profession and our principles, it is at the same time matter of thankfulness that I know of nothing which need make you blush at the mention of your pastor’s name, or turn away with disgust from his monument.

“On account of the largeness to which the church has attained, it has been impossible for me to pay that attention to the members individually, which I could have wished, and I am now affected with a sorrowful sense of my great defects as a pastor. Forgive me, ye neglected sick and poor; load not my name with reproaches for having in any instance grieved you, if such has been the case, with the idea that your minister had neither time nor heart for you. The latter, he can truly say, he had, though far less of the former than was necessary for the comfort of so large a number as looked to him for the visits of mercy and peace.

“Had it been the will of God, I could have contentedly and joyfully

continued yet longer to live and labour among you. I am not weary of your society; you have done nothing to make me wish to leave you: but if the Lord has no more work for me to do, I am willing to go to my eternal rest. And may the Head of the Church send you, and send him soon, a successor, far more worthy of your confidence, your affection, and esteem, than I have been, because more devoted to your interests, and more able to promote them than I! Most truly can I aver that I am not jealous of my successor. Such is the love I bear you, that I could be comforted with the assurance that you would be settled with a pastor a month after my decease; nor would it disturb the serenity of my deathbed to anticipate the disadvantage to which, in every respect, I must ever stand in comparison with him who is to follow me. My earnest prayer to God for you is, that He would send you a man both of competent talents and eminent piety. Attach more importance to the latter than to the former. It has been long my opinion that it is one of the faults of the churches of the present time to attach more importance than belongs to it, to a certain kind of showy and popular preaching. Seek for a man—may God send you such a one!—who is mighty in the Scriptures and prayer.

“Be of one mind in the choice of such a man. This cometh from the Lord. Oh, how anxiously and earnestly have I wrestled with the Author of peace and the Giver of concord, that He would unite your hearts in the selection of a future pastor! May He in His great mercy prevent all divisions and strifes! Do not, oh, do not, allow any altercation to arise about a teacher of truth, righteousness, and peace. Exercise a just confidence in your deacons. But especially let your supreme confidence be in Christ, the Divine Head of the Church. He will not forsake you, if you do not forsake Him. He loves His body the Church, and you are a part of it. You cannot be so concerned for your welfare as He is. Cultivate the spirit of prayer. A good and faithful pastor will be obtained by prayer. I particularly recommend that the chapter in my book entitled ‘The Church Member’s Guide,’ on the subject of choosing a pastor, be read at an early meeting of the church after my decease; and that it be read more than once, if need be. I bequeath that chapter as a legacy to the church for its direction in this important affair. As you respect and love my memory, do not destroy my work by dividing the church. Be of one mind and one heart. ‘If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of

others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,' (Phil. ii. 1-5.)

"Dear brethren, we must meet at the bar of Christ. I think that in prospect of that awful interview, I can in some humble measure adopt the language of the apostle Paul, and say, 'I take you to record, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.' You are my witnesses that I have not been afraid or backward to bring forward any truth, however unpalatable it might be supposed to be to any that heard me. As far as I have known the truth I have declared it; not fearing the frown of man by fidelity, or courting his smile by the suppression of what I deemed it to be my commission to make known. Some of you have been the witnesses also of my fidelity in private, though here, perhaps, I have been more deficient, as we all are, than in public. And now, dear brethren, if you perish, your blood will not be upon me. Your ruin will lie at your own door. You know how constantly and how anxiously I have reminded you that to be a church member is not all the same as being a real Christian: how often and how emphatically I have told you that many will spend their eternity in the bottomless pit with Satan and his angels, who have spent their time on earth in the nominal fellowship of the Church of Christ. Once more, I tell you this awful truth. I remind you of it now, not as before from the pulpit or the sacramental table, but from my grave, and from my seat in glory. Once more, let me solemnly entreat you to examine your hearts whether ye are in the faith and Christ be in you. The mere name of a Christian will serve you in no stead in a dying hour and in the day of Christ. Nothing but the reality will stand His scrutinising search. O brethren, do not deceive yourselves: it is no easy thing to be a Christian, however easy it is to be called one.

"Many, very many of you have nothing to fear from examining into your state. Every examination will only tend to strengthen the assurance of hope in your souls. To you I say, 'We shall meet again! Yes, there is a gathering together of the saints unto Christ approaching, even as now there is a scattering. Blessed and glorious prospect! Often contemplate it. We shall meet in His presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.' What a mercy! no more separation—no more going out—but we are to be together through all eternity. What communion will there be there, with God and each other! How we shall be astonished at our own and each other's felicity and honour! With these hopes, resist the temptations and bear the trials of life. Time is short! 'Wherefore let those that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as

though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.' 'Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?'

"Farewell, my dear flock; a long—a long—but not a last farewell, from your late faithful, affectionate, devoted pastor,

"J. A. JAMES.

"Begun in March and finished
"December 7, 1840."

"TO THE DEACONS OF CARR'S LANE CHURCH.

"December 7, 1840.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—As life is uncertain, and may terminate soon with me, and in such a manner as to deprive me of all opportunity of delivering to you any parting salutation or advice, I deem it proper to leave in writing what, in taking my last leave of you, I should wish to say to you.

"In what manner I have served the church, you know, and will, I hope and believe, testify that I have not been wholly an indolent, selfish, or unfaithful shepherd of the flock which the Holy Ghost committed to my care; but even you who have met me so often in our private conferences on the interests of our body, can form but an inadequate idea of the intense affection and solicitude with which my ministry among you has been maintained. Delightful as my work has been, it has been work indeed, oftentimes amounting to the burden of the Lord. I have loved the church, and I believe there has not been a day for many years in which it has not been the subject of my prayers, both morning and evening; and this anxiety for its welfare follows me to the present moment, and in the prospect of leaving it, dictates this posthumous effort for its welfare. I am perhaps soon to meet my Divine Lord and Master, and am intensely desirous of hearing Him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

"It is a source of considerable satisfaction and gratitude to the God of peace and wisdom, that my intercourse with you has been so pleasant, and that our co-operation has been so cordial and harmonious. I leave you with sincere affection and much respect, and in a most solemn and tender manner commend the church, first of all, to the unerring guidance and omnipotent love of its Divine Head, who cares for it far more than even you or I do, and, next to Him, I commend it to your superintendence and jealous watchfulness. On you it will devolve at my decease to look after the shepherdless flock, and to look out for a successor. You will need much wisdom, grace, and a mixture of firmness and kindness.

May you have a spirit of prayer and dependence upon Christ, accompanied by an impressive sense of your responsibility! Perhaps it hardly concerns me to suggest any ideas for your direction; and yet my wishes to aid you, and help the church, go beyond my life.

"I advise you, then, to meet immediately after my removal, to agree upon a plan for procuring supplies, and appoint a secretary for managing the correspondence. My dear friend Mr Beilby is suitable for this office, as having more leisure than any other. Of course, you will devote among yourselves time for special prayer for your own guidance and that of the church, and will also appoint a special season of prayer, once a-week or fortnight, in addition to the customary prayer-meeting. I attach great importance to this. I have always been anxious for a praying church while I lived, and I am, if possible, more anxious for the spirit of prayer to remain and increase when I am gone. Prayer, if it be fervent, persevering, and believing, will obtain for you a suitable and devoted pastor.

"It would not be well for you to depend too much for assistance upon the neighbouring ministers, and thus to fill the pulpit by shifts and expedients, but to have a long list of good and acceptable ministers engaged for several weeks beforehand. Mr Barker, of the college, will be always willing to help you, and always acceptable. Respect for my memory will, I think, induce many of our most able ministers to give you a Sabbath or two from time to time, and these must be written to soon, such, for instance, as Drs Raffles, Halley, Bennett, Wardlaw, Urwick, Leifchild, &c.; Messrs Kelly, Burnet, James Hill, Sherman, Binney, Luke of Chester, Martin of Cheltenham, Ely, Hamilton, Scales of Leeds, &c. It would be well to fill up the interstices of more popular men from a distance with one from the neighbourhood. I am, of course, supposing that it may be long before you are again settled. And here I would entreat you, and also the church, to be patient. Do not expect the pulpit to be re-occupied in a few weeks or a few months. God may see fit to try your faith and confidence for a considerable time. Do not allow yourselves to be hurried into an injudicious choice.

"As to a successor, I must leave that to the Divine Head of the Church and the wisdom and piety of His people. And yet I feel disposed to say a few things upon the subject. Do not look merely for a man of pulpit talent. I am aware that you must have an individual of sufficient intellectual and physical powers to instruct the flock and command public attention; but do not make talents everything, nor be led away by what is showy rather than what is substantial. Indeed, your own good sense may be trusted for this, and for seeking after a devoted man,—one that will watch for souls, a labourer for Christ and

His cause. Never introduce to the pulpit, even for a single Sabbath, any one, with the idea of his being a candidate, about whom you have not obtained much previous satisfactory information, and whom you would deem unsuitable for the situation. Endeavour to come to as much agreement of opinion among yourselves as possible. It would be a sad thing if the deacons should be divided in opinion. Confer together in the spirit of confidence, love, and prayer. Avoid all dogmatism and an overbearing manner of expressing your views to one another. Should you unhappily not agree in opinion, do not, I beseech you, endeavour to form two parties. Forbear with one another in love. Out of regard to my memory, if you have any veneration, gratitude, and love for it, endeavour to keep among yourselves the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. A conflict among the officers would be a fearful thing for the troops. Let there be no self-will and nothing done in your own spirit, but all in the Spirit of Christ.

“Although I know the Christian Church very extensively so far as our denomination is concerned, I scarcely know to what quarter to direct your attention. Amongst all the ministers whom I know, I am not acquainted with any one who, if he could be obtained, is more likely to suit you than Mr Kelly of Liverpool. I hear also most favourable reports of Mr Alexander of Edinburgh; he is a man of great ability and devotedness; whether partaking enough of popular address, I cannot say, as I have never heard him preach. Among younger men, I might mention Mr G. Smith of Plymouth, who is rising in our denomination, and is a man of energy and ability, and Mr Martin of Cheltenham. I should advise you to consult with the following ministers on the subject,—Drs Bedford, Bennett, Fletcher, Wardlaw, and Baffles, with my brother Thomas, and Mr Joshua Wilson.

“But He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks must be chiefly consulted, and have your confidence.

“As there are not many persons in the congregation who have been in the habit of accommodating ministers at their house, all who can do so should be applied to in this emergency; but perhaps if you are not soon settled, it will be desirable to look out for some place where the supplies may be lodged—but then it must be a place of great comfort and respectability. When ministers come who are regarded as candidates for the vacant office, every attention must be paid to their comfort to give them a favourable impression of the people as a kind and affectionate community. As your finances, if the congregation keep up, are in a good state, you should pay your supplies handsomely, especially those who come from a distance, and do not scruple to ask our most able ministers from all parts of the kingdom.

“It is very evident that all this will impose some labour upon you,

and call for much time; but then it belongs to your office to do it, and you have not been called to much of this kind of work before. Remember Christ expects it of you, and again I ask it out of regard to my memory. You know how I have loved the church, and laboured and prayed for it; and oh, do take care of it now I am gone, and not suffer it to be injured by your neglect.

“Dear brethren, devote yourselves to the spiritual welfare of the flock. Be full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Be not only moral men, but eminently holy, spiritual, and heavenly. Be examples in all these things to the whole body of the members. Give yourselves much to the spiritual welfare of the body. Bear with my affectionate fidelity in saying that some of you have been a little wanting in this, perhaps not a little. Aid your future pastor in instructing the ignorant, supporting the weak, and comforting the distressed.

“May you all be able to fulfil the office of a deacon well; and procure to yourselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith! May you continue in all holiness, diligence, prudence, affection, and devotedness to fulfil the duties of your office till God shall call you to your account, and then may it be your felicity, and mine with you, to hear Him say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!’ With such prayers and prospects, and with genuine affection, does he take his leave of you for this world who was your affectionate and faithful pastor,

“J. A. JAMES.”

THE END.