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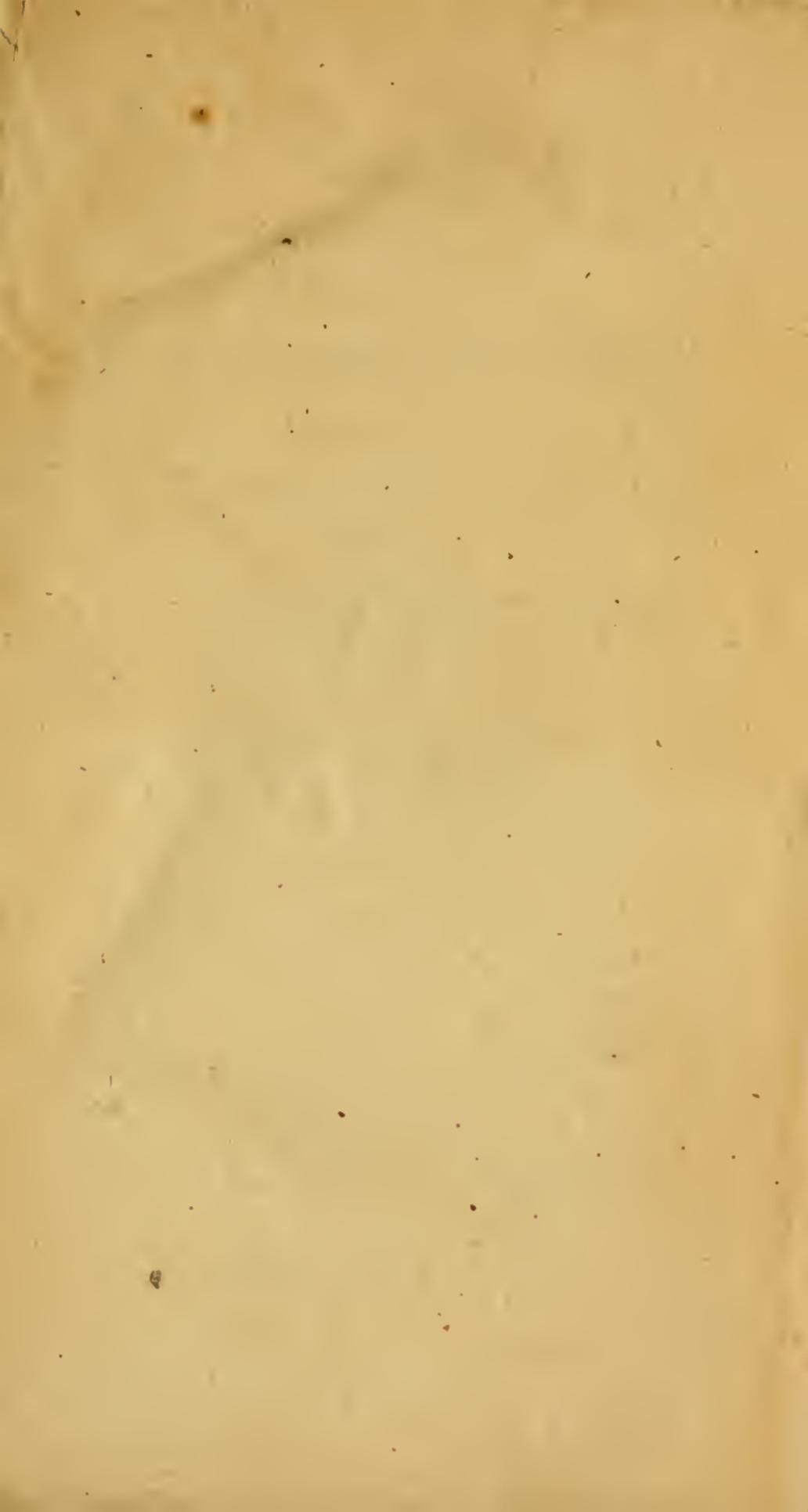
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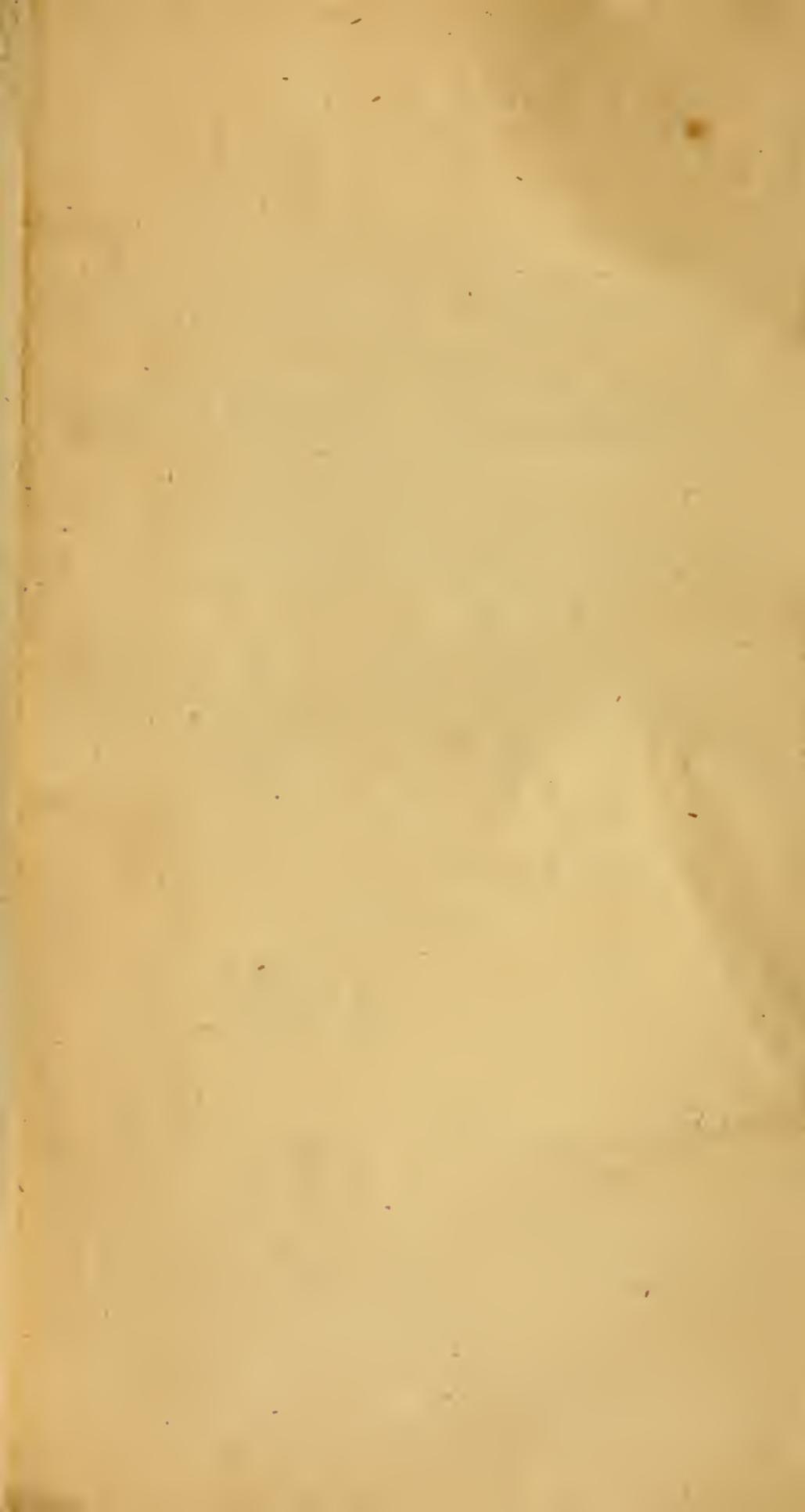
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✓
PARTICULARS
OF
THE LIFE OF A
DISSENTING MINISTER.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF. [Charles Lloyd ✓]

With occasional REFLECTIONS, illustrative of the Education
and professional State of

THE DISSENTING CLERGY,

And of the CHARACTER and MANNERS of

THE DISSENTERS

in general.

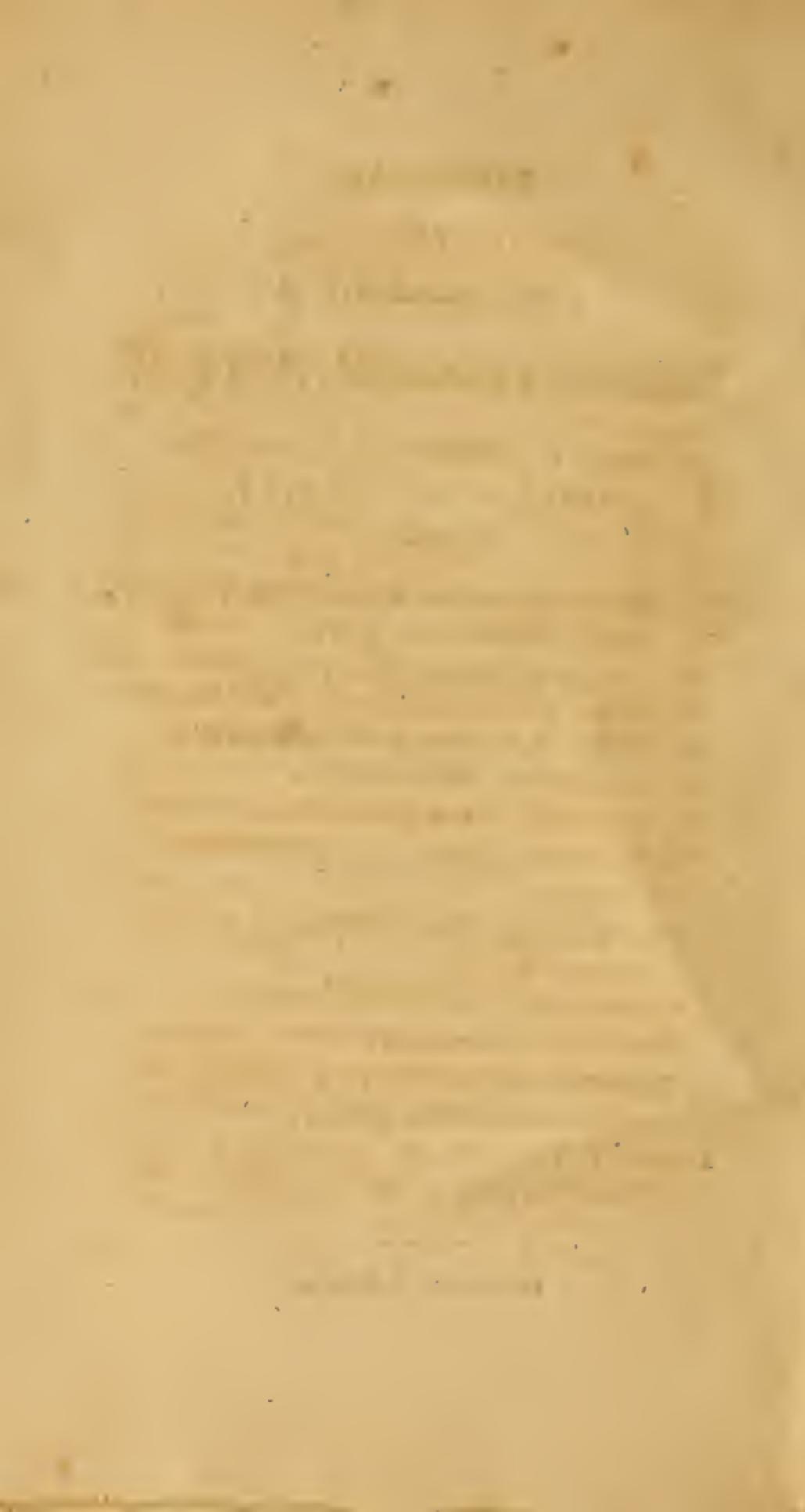
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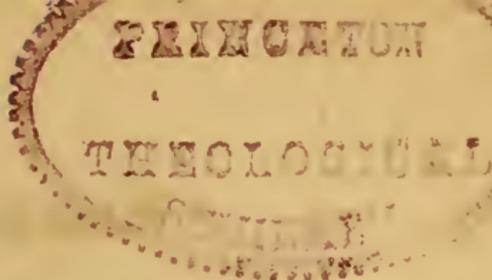
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DEDICATION

TO MY

CHILDREN.



My Dear Children,

I INSCRIBE this to you, who know the author, that you may learn to respect the principles of conscience by which your father has ever endeavoured to direct his conduct, and which, if they shall be allowed to direct your's, will support you under as great calamities as he has endured, should they, contrary to my earnest wishes and prayers, visit you in your future lives. As you have little other hope before you but that which may arise from your own exertions and virtues, it may not be unserviceable to you to observe how diligence, economy, and independence of mind, exercised on my part and that of your mother, have hitherto supplied you and me with many things necessary to respectability and comfort, under the most unfavorable circumstances that commonly attend any condition of human life.

But I have a higher motive in calling your attention to this little work. Most ardently do I wish that the account here given may soften your hearts to kindness and respect for the ministers of religion, so that you may, whether you shall be in prosperous or adverse situations, form exceptions to the generality of the Presbyterian Dissenters, who view the instructors, whom their cause demands, pining in difficulties, with few attempts to alleviate them, and fewer attempts of that nature, unattended with a want of regard to their feelings, that renders their greatest difficulties the least of their evils. The descendants of Dissenting Ministers are not less liable to this censure than others, as my experience loudly testifies. It seems as if they are resolved to have their turn in the bitter work of tormenting a set of men, whose want of wealth subjects them to indignities, while their virtues and acquirements most certainly place them far beyond the community which they instruct almost gratuitously. But I beseech you, by the "mercies of God," that you "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake," and that you make the extent of your ability the measure

of the remuneration which you shall make them. They cannot be rendered rich by any liberality, if such a word can be employed justly on this subject. Be, in this respect, exceptions to the body to which you will probably belong; do honor to your own generous feelings; and help to rescue the denomination from disrepute by the exercise of the noblest virtues, on this and every other occasion.

Your acquaintance has been chiefly among the members of the established church, and this has been favorable to your manners and characters in many respects. The narrowness of party spirit, the unpolished demeanour, of many among Dissenters, whose intercourse is much confined to one another, and especially the illiberal treatment of their ministers, which too much prevails among them, are not to be found, or not in an equal degree, among churchmen. It will be well if you can derive all that is good from every party. But the frankness of the English character, the generosity and nobleness of British feeling, which are to be sought for almost exclusively in the church community, should not dazzle you, and lead you to undervalue other equally

estimable properties to be found in the sect with which you and I are connected. Dissenters assert the right of private judgment, the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the necessity of free inquiry. Among them is to be found the greatest portion of the spirit of inquiry, and of ardor for religious truth. They are generally, if not universally, advocates of civil and religious liberty; while their private morals are comparatively correct, independently of the mental irregularities which I have pointed out to you. Let these noble principles of your party be cherished by you with earnestness and zeal: and let the frank and honorable manners of the prevailing party be ingrafted on them, which, being thus blended together, will render you all that your father wishes you to be, if you add that which, I hope, is not confined to any party—true piety.

You are aware that I design none of you for my own profession. If I were rich enough to render you independent of that profession, I know of no mode of life which I would sooner recommend to you, as it is highly favorable to the cultivation of virtue and in-

tellect. But even then I should like to see you occupying your own chapels, and collecting in them those who might be sensible of the advantage conferred on them, and of the duties which are incumbent upon the people as well as the pastor. As it is, I have too much tenderness for you to encourage your subjection to such hardships as your father has sustained. They have not yet overcome me, but none of you may, perhaps, be able to suffer, at least without greater distress, the evils which have befallen me, and which you have no right to hope that you would escape. But, as you have an education that might render you equal to the profession, let that knowledge which belongs to it be an object of your diligent acquisition. Theological pursuits concern every man that can follow them with success. Let it be your aim to be respectable as thinking and accountable beings to the utmost extent of your power, and as useful in every capacity as your opportunities will allow. This will be to your father a full compensation for every thing. He expects it of you, and has reason to expect it. Whether he shall see you adorning your age and country

by your virtues and talents, it is impossible to decide. He will please himself with the anticipation, which you will not surely frustrate. Farewel! You have the best wishes of your ever anxious and affectionate father,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I CAN ascertain no particular motive which induced me, almost two years ago, to begin this book. I believe that it originated in little better than whim, which certainly did not propose to proceed to any thing like a conclusion, and more certainly never contemplated publication. It was continued merely because it was begun, and in consequence of the interest which its subject insensibly generated. That interest has not entirely lost its hold of my mind, and now induces me to communicate to the world what came into form with so little design of any kind. But the public is by no means expected to feel the same concern in the perusal as I felt in the composition. I am not so little acquainted with the nature of the human mind as to form so preposterous a hope. However, if I did not persuade myself that my narrative and reflections are of a nature to excite considerable attention, I should not, for obvious reasons, venture to commit them to the press. Such a step would, in that case, frustrate all

hope of acceptance or advantage. At the same time, I do earnestly beg the reader's indulgence, on account of the danger to which self-love is calculated to lead those who may be influenced by it. It may have seriously affected my judgment, whatever may be its soundness in other respects, and have induced me to form a wrong opinion of the subject and execution of my little work, and of its tendency to please and instruct. Such plea for indulgence I may properly urge, and shall not, probably, urge it in vain. The reader will not give me the advantage in benevolence over himself, but will repay, in indulgence, all the good-will which I can assure him I have towards him in this publication.

The account which I give of myself may appear sometimes to border on romance. But let the facts be considered, and they will not be found of a nature too extravagant for reality. It is true that I am anonymous, and on that account my assurances cannot carry with them so much weight. Let it, however, be recollected that my name may not continue for ever, nor even long, concealed. When it shall be detected, all the infamy of deception, if I

deceive, will attach to my real character. No, I would not, on any account, render myself liable to the accusation of a disregard to veracity. Therefore, I may, perhaps be believed, when I declare that the following account is no romance, but records incidents which actually took place in my life.

The whole was written in the midst of a most laborious employment, which took up the greatest part of my time. It was sent to be printed, nearly in its present form, in less than a fortnight from the first moment in which it was undertaken. But some circumstances produced delay. It has, in consequence of those circumstances, undergone some revision, which has not, I fear, banished all the numerous faults which it doubtless contained. It is now hazarded with all remaining "imperfections on its head."

What has been just observed is not designed as an apology; much less is it urged as a proof of merit. It can serve for neither the one nor the other purpose. It is told because it is the truth. The work is submitted to the reader under no claim to privilege, though it does not disdain to solicit indulgence. The

public has a right to judge of it with the same strictness as if it had undergone a greater portion of labor and revision. At the same time, the public has a right to reserve to itself the prerogative of mercy, especially if a work possesses, as I hope this does, a general title to approbation. To imperfection, leniency may be extended, for imperfection is allied to every work of man. So far *my* plea extends, and so far it will assuredly be allowed. Deliberate incorrectness and misrepresentation imply moral culpability; wanton carelessness involves intentional disrespect. These I ought to remove, and, if they remain, they deserve no excuse. For such blemishes I ask not pardon, and cannot hope to receive it. But for more venial faults I am a humble supplicant, and am satisfied that I shall not supplicate in vain. To brave censure is arrogance, which I wish to escape. For want of power to please, I throw myself on the reader's compassion. For every thing else, I must be content to endure.

My design has been more to describe a class than an individual, to paint manners than to detail incidents. Perhaps a degree of infor-

mation, not to be found elsewhere, may be found here, respecting a body of men who form an important part of the community at large. I would convey pleasure and instruction. But the subject can scarcely furnish both.

In several parts of the ensuing pages an intimation is given that another volume will follow, if this should be well received. The materials for that volume are much larger than those from which the present is constructed. But it is intended, by every practicable means, to restrain the price so as not unreasonably to tax the public favor and curiosity. The contents of a future number will be far more interesting than the particulars which are now presented. They will illustrate more fully the condition of Dissenting Ministers, and the manners of Dissenting Societies. They will also describe still more important transactions of my life, an account of which my friends have some reason to expect from me. But they will exhibit transactions calculated to excite stronger feelings, and to stimulate more violently the emotions of compassion and indignation.

The truth, however, will be told, and nothing else. Such are the expectations which I hold out. If there is no wish to have them realised, let them not be encouraged. For every mark of approbation I shall be truly thankful, while severity of condemnation will certainly humble me. My future determination will be formed on the proof which I shall discover of the one or the other. I feel no violent pleasure in the prospect of enlarging my work, considered independently of the favor which may stimulate me. It would grieve me to be forced, by deserved censure of this part, to desist, as it will gratify me to be called upon to persevere. To go on, however, will not, of itself, much amuse or delight me. Mortification and satisfaction will greatly, if not wholly, depend on the nature of the public judgment.

PARTICULARS
OF THE
LIFE OF A
DISSENTING MINISTER, &c.

CHAPTER I.

*Preparatory Studies to the End of my first
Academic Year.*

TO most men the period of youth brings pleasant recollections. Mine was not without its pleasures, but they were mixed with a greater degree of anxiety than usually falls to the lot of that age. The account which I shall give of it will, therefore, be brief, as I shall have to record too many circumstances of vexation and sorrow, which happened during the last twenty-five years of my life, to render it desirable to detail largely those that occurred in my more early career. If it were possible to excite feelings of satisfaction in the mind of the reader, without deceiving him, my nature is sufficiently benevolent to induce me to make the attempt. It is with pain that I describe such events as must produce contrary feelings; but, as I cannot relate any thing *but the truth*, and my days have been filled with evils that admitted of but little alloy, the story to be told must necessarily

be productive of melancholy emotions, although it will not, probably, be without considerable interest.

One man may not much surpass another in the sum of happiness which is allotted him by the universal ruler. It is possible that all men enjoy more good than evil on the whole of the present life: but it would be no impeachment of infinite wisdom and benevolence to grant that some difference may subsist in the various conditions of men in this respect, independently of their virtues and their vices; and that as little felicity has been apportioned to me as to most of my species. With such a question, however, I will not occupy the attention and time of the reader. On my own mind there is a deep impression that I have endured much, both at the commencement and during the progress of my mortal probation. The tale which will be here told, may not produce the same conviction on those who peruse it. Yet, be the effect what it will, veracity shall not be sacrificed, from a misanthropic wish to gain suffrages in favor of my conclusions, or from a selfish desire to excite pity and secure compassion.

Being left, on the death of my father, with very scanty resources, in a distant province of the empire, an uncle, who possessed comparative wealth, in a moment of sorrow for the loss of a most beloved and respected brother, and in a moment of unusual generosity, engaged for my future education. My father had pointed out the course of life for which he de-

signed me, and his voluntary representative urged me to pursue it. My own taste, in a great measure, induced me to approve their intentions, and to adopt their plan, while my inexperience rendered me unable to comprehend all its inconveniences. Alas! with the knowledge which the trial has produced, my election would have been very different, although the sum of happiness accorded to me might not have been increased.—The ministry, among *Rational Dissenters*, as they call themselves, was my destination.

Of the most happy circumstances of my youth may be reckoned the opportunity of being placed under the care of a learned, skilful, but severe school-master, who taught the dead languages with sound taste, with uncommon accuracy except in one respect, and with particular success. Since that time, my opportunities of observation have been extensive. Many lads have come within my knowledge whose taste was more cultivated, whose accuracy in prosody was more minute; but never have I seen any who surpassed his pupils in skill at analysis, who could parse with more knowledge and dexterity. I have known none equal to them in this respect, not excepting such as were instructed at the most celebrated public schools; none, but the pupils of his pupils, who have equalled and even surpassed any whom he has taught. Under this master I acquired an exact acquaintance with a few of the writings of the Greeks and Romans, which constituted the whole of his course of education.

4

Having a thirst for knowledge, it was not difficult for me to pick up, without any assistance but that which was supplied by my own readiness of comprehension and by some degree of desultory industry, no inadequate acquaintance with ancient and modern geography, with history, and with English poetry. At the same time, as my uncle had a good taste for theology, I was stimulated to read books of divinity and to study psalmody or sacred music. From the first was derived a considerable knowledge of morals and religious controversy, and the last enabled me to sing at sight most plain tunes that I could procure. The taste for both pursuits has remained with me, in no small measure, to this day. Even some of the books then read continue to be favorites with me, and the taste, at that time acquired, is not likely to abandon me till the grave shall receive my mortal body.

During my juvenile education, much was done and much was endured. The ability and skill of the master compensated for his irregularity of attendance, and the quickness of the youth supplied the deficiency of books, of encouragement, and of direction. The pine flourishes amid the wastes of nature, and the inclemencies of climate. The growth of my faculties was not much stunted by the barrenness which surrounded me, or by the neglect of culture to which it was doomed. I wish the comparison would hold in other respects.

Four or five years, from the death of my father,

brought me to the end of my education at school, and to the commencement of my eighteenth year. The severity of the master, and the capriciousness of the uncle, wrung tears of deep affliction continually from my heart, without destroying the elasticity of my mind, and without materially impairing the cheerfulness of my temper, which was naturally mirthful and gay. Indeed, during all the scenes of my sorrows, my spirits have ever maintained their equality to every situation, and my disposition has been always ready to receive diversion from every pleasant occurrence. Almost at the very moment that all my muscles are quivering with the anguish of unkindness, I can laugh at every thing that is ludicrous, and join in every scene of joy and merriment. My character is a compound of exquisite, and often contradictory, feelings. My mind is liable to be plunged into unbounded grief, and to be elevated into unrestrained gladness. Alas! grief and suffering have, too generally, constituted my portion of existence.

At the time which had now arrived, my most serious difficulties began. Before this, I had suffered much. But the circumstances of my life had hitherto been, in a great measure, arranged and conducted by others. My fare was plain, but I had been used to it, and it was provided without my contrivance and foresight. My habiliments were rustic and unfashionable, but they were warm and cost me no thought, except that they sometimes mortified my vanity on

account of their want of elegance, of which I had acquired some imperfect ideas. Those things, however, occasioned no good ground for lasting regret, nor did they to produce it. But now real perplexity commenced.

My uncle, how consistently with his engagement to be responsible for my education I do not decide, now disclaimed all further obligation to charge himself with my expenses, and to provide for my future instruction. There was no other on whom I could much depend. Not quite twenty pounds formed the whole sum which my father had been able to bequeath me, as my portion. With this sum I had to support myself during four years of preparatory studies, for the ministry; four years to be spent in the acquisition of mathematical and theological knowledge; four years that might seem to demand extraordinary resources for securing comfort, and respectability, and the means necessary for mental cultivation. I review this portion of my life with amazement and horror. From nothing, every thing was to be supplied. Are there any who have had so much to achieve with such scanty equipments? Have any had before them so dark and intricate a journey, which, without much guidance or direction, they have accomplished with success? Notwithstanding every impediment, I contrived to grope out my way.

The relation who now abandoned me, however respectable for talents, and attainments, and virtue, in

other respects, employed the irritability of conscious unkindness to add to the distress which arose from the difficulties which I had to encounter. My memory furnishes me with a perfect recollection of my departure from his house in the autumn of 1784. It was a period of undescribable distress. Every feeling was in direct contrast and opposition. The ingenuousness of youth inspired unfeigned gratitude for past obligations, while indignation was roused by, and spurned at, unmerited harshness of treatment. Reproaches for services received stopped the accents of acknowledgment which were ready to escape from my tongue. My heart was torn by contradictory emotions. Tears offered themselves for my relief, and would have flowed abundantly, had I not been forced to wipe them away by the scoffs with which they were observed and answered. I proceeded on my melancholy journey in a state of suffering which none can comprehend who have not experienced it.

At no subsequent part of my life have I experienced many acts of unmixed kindness. I have conferred more obligations than I have received. Such as I have accepted have generally been rendered the source of great distress to my feelings, as they have been accompanied with something that ever betrayed in their donors what served to point them with a sting. It has been my own endeavor, if I have, at any time, done any good, to let the good be unmixed; to bless

and profit without inflicting, by any circumstance, a wound on the heart, the pang of which is doubly felt when it arrives in company with a favor.

CHAPTER II.

WITH such scanty means and under such unfavorable circumstances as have been partly described, I began my more serious studies. At the institution into which I was admitted, the fees of the tutor were defrayed out of certain funds established for that purpose. The students had an annual exhibition or allowance of ten pounds a year each, with occasional donations, to some or to all, of a guinea or two, and seldom more!

It has been already observed that my mind has ever been equal to the circumstances in which I have been placed, although they have never been very happy or prosperous. Early opportunity of exercising its powers of this nature presented themselves. At the age of seventeen or a little more, I had to direct myself, and to provide my own food and clothing for four years to come out of the small sum mentioned. That which seldom disturbs young persons of a

similar age occurred to my thoughts and powerfully impressed me. I felt deeply the necessity of the most rigid economy, and practised it with unvarying self-denial and heroic firmness. No propensity was indulged but that of making a respectable figure. As far as it was practicable, my dress was minutely attended to, and it is incredible with what care I managed to make it last long, and appear respectable. I succeeded to a miracle, and had the character of a Beau, among my fellow students. My efforts have, no doubt, been equalled by others who had similar principles in similar circumstances. What difficulties will not resolution and perseverance subdue! Yet I look back upon the exertions which my struggles cost me with something like incredulity, and can scarcely believe the story which Truth only induces me to detail.

Here it may be worth observing how advantageous, in some circumstances, an honorable birth and a creditable family may sometimes prove to young persons of good principles, while it is certain that these accidents, unaccompanied by virtue and ingenuousness of mind, too generally lead to pride, to embarrassment, and to vice. Born, as I was, of one of the best and most ancient families, in the province which gave me birth, though, in my time, reduced by generosity, improvidence, and extravagance; educated with a strict regard to the dictates of conscience, and the principles of virtue and religion, I found myself en-

duced with a certain sense of respectability, a feeling of importance, and a taste for elegance, which naturally arise from such circumstances, while they were chastened and disciplined by truth, integrity, and honor.

These qualities led me to husband my resources, and, at the same time, to employ them towards securing consideration and respect. Had my views been less serious, had my taste been less refined, the narrow means with which I was supplied would have failed. I should have dragged on my existence, for four years, in beggarly slovenliness and slothful dependence. As it was, my time was spent in rigid self-denial, in scanty neatness, in incredible and undeviating economy. Such efforts are, sometimes, produced by accidents in life, especially when they are qualified and controlled by the early and effectual adoption of honorable principles!

With ten pounds a year, and a few occasional donations, I contrived to pay for lodgings, food, and fire, for two or three years. Less than twenty pounds a year, arising from these resources and a very small addition from my own scanty property, furnished me with all my support, including clothing, books, and travelling expenses. All were brought within the narrowest practicable limits. My studies were not neglected amid the anxiety that lay at my heart, and the efforts of contrivance imposed by inadequate resources. To the learned languages I was devoted

from taste and hereditary ambition. The mathematics were cultivated from a sense of honor and fear of disgrace. Theology seemed necessarily to form a part of the education of a scholar. From the beginning, I contrived to effect an alliance between divinity and literature, to unite the study of revelation with polite learning.

The reader will allow me in this place to speak the dictates of a more mature judgment, the language of no inconsiderable experience.

To the classics an inadequate attention is paid at the seminaries of education supported among Protestant Dissenters. Scarcely one of our ministers in ten can *read* either of the learned languages, I mean those of Greece and Rome, without exciting feverish irritation in accomplished scholars. Total inattention to *quantity* is almost universal, or I have been unlucky in my acquaintance and observation. This deficiency is so entire that it is not even suspected by themselves to exist, and a mixture of barbarism, self-complacency, and self-consequence ensues, which cannot fail to disgust. It is not pleasant to speak humiliating truths of men who are otherwise highly respectable. But it is impossible not to lament, and consequently not to wish to remove, imperfections that tend to degrade characters distinguished for virtues and attainments. The whole truth would not bear detailing. Scarcely any portion of the learned professions has less deserved the reputation of a *learned education*. It

may perhaps be allowed me to speak more particularly to the general subject, while it gives me no pleasure to enter further into special detail.

1. In a divine, the knowledge of the ancient languages appears to be intimately connected with his professional studies.

It would be almost an insult to observe, that the revelation of the Son of God is conveyed to men in one of the learned languages. It must be unsatisfactory to himself, destructive of his usefulness as a teacher of others, and disreputable to him among the well-educated of his profession, if a Christian minister cannot peruse and illustrate the very words in which his religion, and that of his flock, is given. The criticisms of the learned should, at least, be comprehended by him, or they must remain of little use and advantage. Without a knowledge of Greek, even the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament cannot be so satisfactorily scrutinised and understood; the text of the Word of God will be but imperfectly studied and determined; the labors of a Griesbach will be entirely thrown away, with all their important influence on sacred learning; the most useful of the fathers will lie unknown; indeed, little good theology can be acquired without the *Greek* language, while it is scarcely necessary to prove the usefulness of an acquaintance with the *Roman* classics, through which the refined tongue of the most refined people is generally learned.

2. Classical literature is of most importance to a dissenting divine, as it enables him, in some measure, to make up, as an instructor of youth, the deficiency of emolument so notoriously disgraceful among that body. To what it may be owing I know not; but the fact is certain, that, among ministers and laity of the nonconformists, a taste for science prevails to a greater degree than a taste for literature, and their clergy are better mathematicians and experimentists than scholars. Nothing can be more preposterous, or less advantageous. The one qualification can scarcely be called into exercise, with any degree of profit, whereas the other could never fail to increase their fame and their income. The illiteracy of this body is become notorious, and the sect is held very cheap, in the eyes of the learned and judicious, on that account.

Too many things are aimed at in our seminaries. Three or four instructors are retained, who have each two or three departments to occupy, as may be seen in a prospectus of the course of study pursued in any of our places of education. The number of tutors may not be too great, but the number of branches of learning and science may, with advantage, be curtailed, by one half of their amount. Many of them are of no consequence to a theologian, as they may be acquired by private industry, during the course of study, or during the course of life. At our universities great scholars are made,

and great mathematicians. This is effected by bringing education to a focus, by concentrating the efforts of instruction, by directing the attention of students to a few objects. If I meant to raise a laugh, it could be done by merely giving, in detail, the logic, the ecclesiastical history, the Jewish antiquities, &c. &c. &c. to which *our* instructors seem to force their ingenious pupils to attend. What a noise about nothing! What laborious idleness! What mischievous industry!

As a friend to learning and religion, this subject has great interest in my heart. Most grievous to my feelings has my intercourse, with my brethren in the ministry, been rendered on its account. They rank among the most amiable of mankind, and the most respectable for general knowledge. In an acquaintance with their profession, they often make a surprising progress, according to their means and resources. More learning is not necessary to render them acceptable preachers, as the people are not judges of their proficiency. With inferior literature they often make more acceptable ministers, because they have, on that account, a less refined taste. Our people are not absolutely ignorant and uncivilized, so as to be pleased with pure vulgarity; the zealots of the day, only, deserve this character. The body of Presbyterians are in a certain state of cultivation. It is that middle state which divides vulgarity from refinement. They are in that degree

of civilization which may be expected from their condition in life, as they are composed principally of the middling class.

Of this state of culture it is remarked, that it departs from simplicity by way of distinguishing itself from the inferior orders, who possess simplicity even to rudeness and disgust. The middling ranks of life please themselves with show, and are fond of gaudiness and pomp. It happens to higher ranks, as it does to ages of superior refinement, to cultivate simplicity, with which they blend a superior taste, which banishes the vulgarity of a less refined state of society, and gives the mind a sort of rarified and spiritualized pleasure, not to be found in the more showy customs and manners of those who stand between them and the common herd.

The oratory, which delights these different conditions of life and society, is essentially different. The mean and ignoble can digest the offscouring of all language and images. The great can relish nothing but the attic simplicity of true learning. The mass of men, who stand in the midway, delight in language loaded with ornament, in images highly colored, in metaphors of high sound, without observing much their want of propriety and singleness. A less learned ministry, though not an unlearned one, makes its way, to admiration, among them. And it may be reckoned upon, almost infallibly, that their popular preachers are deficient in taste

and learning, and therefore exactly suited to the class of men to whom they address themselves, while their more learned preachers are too simple for them, and yet not formed to address the lower class of men.

But what these more popular and less learned preachers gain in acceptableness, they clearly lose in respectability. They are popular, but not instructive: and a visit to our congregations would shew that the Christian knowledge, to be found among them, is in an inverse ratio to the popularity of their ministers. A fine flourishing congregation means, generally, one in which there is scarcely any knowledge of the principles of religion, and as little practice of its peculiar duties. In vain will the study of the Scriptures, or attendance on the peculiar ordinances of Jesus Christ, be sought among them. They are dissenters without knowing any ground of dissent. They attend their chapels, to hear the florid sermons already mentioned, but not to worship God. They speak of the sermon, but never of the devotion. They never quarrel with their ministers for neglecting the instruction of the young, but for not indulging the meretricious taste of their half-polished parents. The duties of family religion are almost unknown, and a sermon and a prayer, read on Sunday evening, make up the sum total of domestic devotion.

The reputation of the body is also lost among

the world which surrounds them. The illiteracy of the preachers is not atoned for by their pulpit fluency, and the ignorance and irreligion of the people afford but a poor proof of the excellency of their instruction.

In my opinion numbers ill requite us for want of piety and Christian knowledge. Declamation is but an ill substitute for literature, taste, and refinement. It is devoutly to be wished that, though our numbers should be reduced, our respectability may be increased, that our weight may be advanced, that our knowledge may be improved, that our devotion may be invigorated. We should hold a higher place in society, if our moral and intellectual character were of greater repute, and if the learning and taste of our ministers were of more unequivocal estimation.

To speak unacceptable truth is not pleasant to my mind. But, if I speak, it must be faithfully. If I offend, it matters not, if I likewise correct. If the fame of my party should be diminished by my observations, it is of little consequence, if I can improve their character. If they come to have merit, they will also come to have respect, and perhaps even numbers.

To make apologies was no part of my intention when I began to give the public this account of myself. If that which I write needs an apology, it should be suppressed. It is my opinion that all

which is contained in this book is worthy of attention, and calculated to create interest. But I will return from my digression, and proceed with my story.

The first tutor, whose instruction I enjoyed at our seminary, was a man deeply read in Rabbinical learning, and profoundly acquainted with the Hebrew tongue. Such was the bigotry of the town, towards the beginning of the 18th century, that the Jews could obtain no place of residence but from the preceding dissenting pastor, who let to them some houses with which the chapel was endowed. Our tutor had contributed to protect them, and had formed much acquaintance with their men of learning. By such, and other means, he had acquired an admirable proficiency in the language of the Old Testament, which he read after the pronunciation of the German Jews. He was a strong advocate for the use of the vowel points, and would not willingly consent to relinquish them.

It has ever been a subject of deep lamentation with me, that I made but little use of the superior learning of this gentleman, in this part of my studies. From some unaccountable cause, my mind had a deep aversion to the study of Hebrew. To pass examination was my utmost aim. And at no subsequent period have I attempted to remove the deficiency. My course has been one of incessant toil; my aversion is not now conquered; and I con-

sider it too late in life, surrounded as it is still with never-ending occupation, to make myself master of this language, so necessary to every accomplished theologian. But I would earnestly recommend it to our professors and students, to relinquish some of their *Jewish antiquities*, and of their *experiments*, in order to become illustrious Hebricians and skilful Hebrew teachers, of whom there are so few, in this day, among the clergy of every name.

Our tutor was, also, a good mathematician, and my progress, in the inferior branches of mathematical science, under him, was more to my present satisfaction than that which I made at any subsequent period of my life. With Maclaurin's Algebra, I became pretty well acquainted. The course of our studies, at this time, was selected with judgment. It embraced a few most important points. We read Greek and Hebrew, studied chronology and mathematics, and transcribed original lectures on devotion, which were very valuable. We wasted no time in petty studies with our tutor, who had no assistant. Our number amounted to five only, of whom, however, not one has made any figure in the world. One great fault was committed by all: too much was given to rambling and sauntering, to which we were led by the delightful walks and grounds which surrounded the place. It was an universal error, which influenced the inhabitants,

young and old. There was also too much dalliance with the young ladies of the place, who were universally without beauty. Yet our morals were uncorrupted. I do not believe that any one of our students had acquaintance with the disreputable part of the sex, although they abounded. On the whole, the first year was a year of solid improvement. At the same time, I must confess, that a very disproportionate attention was paid to my favorite Greek, and I do not know that I made much progress in my acquaintance with it during that time. It was with me a period of vanity, which is ever unfavorable to proficiency. I felt that I knew more Greek than all the students, and suspected that I was not second to our tutor. Emulation was wanting, and I had not yet sufficiently appreciated the advantage, or tasted the pleasure, of this most important study. It is long before we are convinced that we know but little.

To this year I look back with no common satisfaction. It was one of advantage, and of comparative happiness. No equal portion of my time, preceding or succeeding, has brought me equal profit or enjoyment. These days, however, were to have an end. Our tutor, after one year of superintendence, was weighed down by study, by anxiety, by indisposition, and by age. Before we commenced our studies, in the subsequent session, and in a few days after our return, he died.

He was truly my friend, and my father's friend. There was, in his time, a constellation of illustrious ministers in our province, which disappeared about the same time. No stars of magnitude have since occupied their stations in that hemisphere. Their names are held in profound veneration in their district. But they deserve a more lasting remembrance. If I were adequate to the task, and could be furnished with materials, they should be made as celebrated, as scholars and preachers, though not as authors, as our Lardners, and Taylors, and Bensons. With what veneration was I wont to hear their names pronounced, in my youth! With what veneration shall I carry their remembrance with me to the grave!

During the whole of the first year of my novitiate, nothing happened that is worthy of particular record. It was a year of study and amusement, in which I added to my stock of knowledge, and enjoyed tranquillity and happiness. At this time a disposition to write blank verse seemed to have taken possession of my mind, which has continued to amuse me at many subsequent periods of my life. But it is not my intention to suffer a line to appear before the public. Indeed, of the verses at this time composed, I retain none, nor do I remember the subjects of them, further than that they were always given to my fellow students, to be presented, if they pleased, to any of the ladies with whom

they rambled in the walks and grounds. None were made for my own use.

One thing of a very foolish nature I may venture to relate, which to some may appear an unimportant occurrence, and which to me gave, at the time, undescribable pain, and continues to suffuse my cheeks with the blush of shame whenever I call it to mind. My tutor's daughter had rather a remarkable physiognomy, and one of my fellow students had a serious attachment to her. To produce a laugh for a moment, I drew a rude profile of the lady on my slate, and held it up, at the time of the lecture, to the view of her admirer. Without further reflection, I laid by the slate and departed. With a degree of want of generosity, that I even now deem culpable, he contrived to shew the picture to his friend, and to her brother, a spirited seaman, who recognised the caricature, and resented it as an insult on one whom he greatly loved. In the course of the day, a letter was presented to me, expressive of great indignation, the contents of which I have forgotten, except part of one sentence which purported, that a continuance of such conduct would "kindle a fire in his breast, which all my influence could not quench." With the fool-hardiness of an inexperienced youth, I defied his resentment, and announced myself ready to meet it in what way he thought proper. The consequence was, a generous declaration of the brother that the answer was

spirited, and a discontinuance, on my part, of all such merriment in future. Some shyness ensued between the parties, which was entirely removed when all participated in unfeigned grief for the death of our venerable and excellent tutor.

I class the death of this good and great man under the first year of my studies, because he never resumed his labors, and our second year was spent under other instructors.

Having brought my story to the middle of my nineteenth year, and the end of the first year of my studies for the ministry, it may not be unacceptable to throw together a few thoughts on the time at which ministerial preparation should commence.

The youth designed for the universities are supposed, in general, to commence their academical career about their eighteenth year. This meets my entire approbation. Among the dissenters, it is begun, too often, two years sooner. The course of study, necessary to obtain a Bachelor's degree at Oxford and Cambridge, continues for three years, and the Universities are left when the student arrives at twenty-one. The dissenting student also leaves his college at twenty-one, because his course is extended to four or five years. But the two cases are widely different. The candidate for orders, in the establishment, is ordained deacon at twenty-two and a half, or at twenty-three years of age, whereas the dissenting minister commences his

labors at the close of his studies, and settles with his flock at the age of majority. There are errors, seemingly, in both arrangements. The candidate for episcopal orders studies for three years only, and undergoes no preparation for the ministry, properly speaking, as he does not professedly receive theological instruction while he remains a student. All the proper qualifications for the pulpit are supposed to be acquired by solitary study, during the interval between taking a degree and taking orders. This time can, but seldom, be employed advantageously, and industry without direction, let it be never so diligent and persevering, must greatly miss its aim. The consequence is too visible, and I could give much detail of the inadequacy of our young clergy for their important profession. But the age at which they are placed at college, and the age of ordination, are proper and judiciously determined. However, the period of college education should be extended two years, to be spent, under experienced tutors, in theological study. Thus, the necessary qualifications would be acquired, and an important period of life would be spent to the best advantage. "Workmen, that need not to be ashamed," would be provided for our established church. And I cannot help suggesting, that provision should be made, for the entire expenses of theological students, during two years after taking their degree, which the nation would be very well able to make,

and which would be made with every prospect of advantage.

The error of dissenting ministerial education consists in admitting students at too early an age. The period of eighteen ought, surely, to be adopted, with the same term of study as now established. At twenty-three, our young men would be well adapted for their labors. The time, from twenty-one to twenty-three, is now painfully employed in providing discourses for the pulpit, which would be employed much better in the acquisition of knowledge. Besides the loss, as I may call it, of this invaluable portion of time, a distaste of study may be, too probably, acquired, and a dissipated turn of mind is in danger of taking place. In every point of view, the age of twenty-three or twenty-four is much to be preferred for the commencement of ministerial engagements.

It is obvious to object, that the ministry, among dissenters, is so ill requited, that there would be great difficulty in inducing young men of promising abilities, and the parents of such young men, to look forward so long to an employment so unprofitable. But a remedy to this evil may easily be found. The Body should make provision, not only for the college education of their candidates for the ministry, but for their *previous education for two years*, so that they may be supported, from sixteen to eighteen, without any further expense to their

families: And a few schools, under able masters, should be selected and encouraged, at which these young novitiates should be placed for those two years. Great advantages would arise from this plan. The discouragement, arising from long expectation, would be removed, and our ministers would stand a good chance of becoming sound classical scholars, which, on the present plan, they very seldom do. They would also become pastors at an age more proper and more favorable to their usefulness, with superior qualifications for their employments, and more decided habits of application and study.

I cannot help thinking that this previous provision for the good education of our students demands the serious attention of our people. Many collateral benefits would be reaped from it, of which the chief would be, the acquisition of good schools among the party, which would flourish, if thus superintended and patronized, and secure a more respectable education for the children of our laity than can be expected from seminaries, which depend on private patronage, and which are continually dispersing with the retirement of their individual governors. In nothing have we been so inattentive to our respectability as in respect to our schools, which are always mere *ephemeræ*, without the chance of any permanent character or fame. We are not deficient in readiness to endow colleges. But our

schools are our disgrace, left without support, and superintended by those only who are forced on the employment by scanty resources. The consequences are such as might be expected. The expenses of individuals for education are enormous, and yet the culture of our youth is despicable. If I could draw the attention of the establishment, and of the Dissenters, to these observations, my labor would be happily employed.

During the whole of this year, nothing was done in composition, as far as I recollect, by any of the pupils, except a poetic translation of Æneas's speech, Æn. i. 202—211, which was proposed to all, and given in by myself alone. The classical deficiency of the whole number was such, that no other seemed able to *translate* the passage. My success was, indeed, very small; but, small as it was, it surpassed that of my fellows, who did nothing. One couplet only do I remember, which may put my readers in possession of the measure of the literary taste and acquisitions of the young scholar at eighteen:

—————Penitusque sonantes
 Accessis scopulos; vos et Cyclopea saxa
 Experti; revocate animos.—————

————— have tried
 The sounding rocks and Cyclopean shelves;
 Take courage comrades, and rouse up yourselves.

The only comment on this was, that *shelves*, in this connection, had no sense, which I endeavoured to disprove by some authority or other. Nothing

was said of the false quantity of the word Cyclopean.

This leads me to remark more at large on the universal disregard of prosody in all the schools and seminaries of Dissenters. It is a curious phænomenon, for which it is not easy to account. The fact is certain, in general at least, if not to the extent which I have stated; and, as I have not seen any reason for its existence offered, I may be allowed to suggest what has presented itself to my mind.

It must be granted to me that Dissenters are more inclined, than others of the community, to adopt speculations of improvement, and to encourage schemes of innovation. This is ever the case with every minority in a community. It naturally springs from the comparative oppression under which they labor, which generates a spirit of complaint and dissatisfaction. From this disposition, much general good has arisen, and some partial evil. It has produced improvements, and encouraged futile speculations. The circumstance which I have mentioned seems to be one of the evils which have proceeded from it.

The fathers of nonconformity were accurate scholars. The ministers had received the advantage of a regular education. For a long time *they* appear to have educated their youth with precision. They carried with them the methods of instruction

which had accompanied their own education; and it appears that our clergy for some time were not much behind their contemporaries in exact literature, except that some inferiority might be expected from their less ample *establishments* of education.

It is well known to many of my readers, that, during the eighteenth century, a set of men arose who affected to have discovered *compendious methods* of teaching the learned languages, which consisted, to a great degree, of a comparative, if not total, neglect of quantity in reading the classic authors. Perhaps a disproportionate attention had been paid to this article, in some instances, and this was made a handle and a pretext for discouraging it entirely. It is not for me to scrutinise the motives of Burgh, of Clarke, and of Holmes. Whether they were mistaken zealots, eccentric projectors, or interested impostors, willing to give success to their own academies by deluding the uninformed, it is, perhaps, impossible at this distance of time to decide. But they produced an effect which has been attended with serious consequences.

With the world in general, however, they could not prevail. The learned were not to be deceived. The public schools were left uncontaminated by their innovations. But the Dissenters appear to have felt the influence of their plausible professions, which influence has not ceased entirely to this day. Compendious methods are not now without their

advocates among them, who still propose their empiricisms to the patronage of the credulous.

Of the whole body of Dissenters; their ministers are most affected with the spirit of innovation. These seem to have adopted, in their practice, the plan of compendious education, which was so plausibly presented to the world. They were, generally, the instructors of Dissenting youth. The laity were not backward to encourage a scheme, which promised to abridge their expenses, while they and their pastors were unapprehensive of the consequences to the literature of their body. It is, at least, a fact, that the compendious methods were generally adopted in their places of education, and that, at this day, prosody is generally neglected in their schools.

The system has still its strenuous advocates, as might be expected where there is a consciousness of inability to remedy it; while that inability must preclude the remedy as long as it remains, which will be for some time, and until our *instructors* have themselves been reformed. That event is not to be hoped for under our rising minister-schoolmasters, who are, even now, generally ignorant of quantity. Another race may rescue our sect from this reproach; and, if I could contribute, by my observations, towards so desirable a consummation, I should have another reason of joy for communicating them to the public. They are meant well, and will, I hope, be perused candidly.

Of the five students, who were assembled during this first session of my course, three only had arrived at their second year, and not one of them afterwards deviated notoriously from the path of moral propriety. One may be considered, perhaps, as having laid some foundation for a suspicion of intemperance. Not one, at the same time, has made any considerable figure in the world. Not one, except myself, could justly lay claim to even a moderate share of literature; and, whether my humble pretensions may be admitted by the public, is a question of considerable doubt, and, as yet, by no means decided. But enough has been said of this first year.

CHAPTER III.

Second Year of Preparatory Study.

THE incidents of such a life as mine are necessarily few and unimportant, except to those connected with me, and to those who take some pleasure in religious biography. The opinions and sentiments which may be interspersed through my pages, I consider of more consequence, and of more general utility. The next period which this work comprehends is the second year of my academical course, extending from the nineteenth to the twentieth of my age.

The death of our tutor placed us under the superintendence of new instructors. They were two. One was a neighbouring dissenting minister, who attended two or three days in a week, and merely heard us read—as boys, at a village school, do the Testament,—the Lectures of Doddridge. Our number was considerably increased, consisting of about twelve pupils. Few could *read* the lectures without continual blunders. Fewer understood their plan or intention; and I believe that not one received the least benefit. We played tricks, laughed, and quarrelled, continually. All had some religious opinions, though various, descending from the mystic heights of perfect Calvinism, to the less elevated regions of Arianism and Arminianism. More ignorance, and more dogmatism, could not well be collected together at one place, although they ever accompany each other.

By way of reproach, a few were distinguished by the honorable name of *the scholars*, which they, with sufficient vanity, readily accepted. The rest received and accepted, with seeming complacency, the less respectable appellation of *ignoramuses*. These appropriated to themselves, however, the proud possession of *heart-knowledge*, whilst they conceded to the former the humble property of *head-knowledge* only. Alas! neither possessed the one nor the other in any enviable degree. There was a striking contrast in the manners of the two

factions, and, indeed, in their morals also. The pretended scholars were considerably polished, and truly correct in all their outward conduct. The ignoramuses, with all their heart-knowledge, were a rude, brutish, smoking, sottish, crew. It is not my intention to be severe, but I must adhere to the truth. Some of the ignoramuses were preachers *before their arrival*, and continued to hold forth, occasionally, in direct contradiction to an established rule, that none should exhibit in the pulpit till the fourth year, and without the consent of the chief tutor. This rule was always very indifferently observed, and it was said that the gentlemen *above*, who had the supervision of the institution, connived at a breach of their own regulation. However it was, none but the scholars strictly abhered to this wise law, and of them I never heard any complaint, except in one or two instances. It is with shame I think of the despicable condition of the ministry, and the depraved taste of the people, when such instructors could be encouraged, or even tolerated. The stupidity and illiteracy of these *guides*, who certainly could not read, without egregious blunders, a chapter in the New Testament, was beyond all description.* Surely no part of the Christian world

* The account above given is not exaggerated. On mature deliberation, I do not think that it even equals the truth. But, to prevent misapprehension, it is just to ob-

exhibits such a total want of proper qualifications in their teachers. Such men go not forth from the filthy monasteries of Spain and Portugal. The specimens of burlesque exhibition, in *Friar Gerund*, are decent to what these sprigs of evangelism bel-
lowed forth from their unhallowed lungs. But such subjects are too humbling to be protracted to any length of description. Such we were, and such was our theological training, in my second year. The tutor himself was respectable, and by no means concurred in such irregularities.*

serve, that it by no means applies to other Presbyterian seminaries, in which sound learning and taste have been successfully employed, and have produced some of the brightest ornaments of the dissenting cause and of human society. These have deserved, and do deserve, the warm-
est applause, as that which I have described deserved, in my time, the severest censure.

* The illiteracy of the Catholic clergy may, perhaps, be fairly presumed from the deficiency in classical know-
ledge which was exhibited by the emigrants, both clergy and laity, who arrived during the Revolution from France, one of the polished nations of Europe. Those alone who made the examination can be duly apprehensive of that illiteracy. Although the public religious service of their church is in Latin, it has been my fortune to meet with few who understood the Latin lan-
guage in a tolerable degree. It may be questioned if the majority comprehended the service which they read to their congregations, or the private devotions of the Breviary which they are under obligation to say daily, without neglect, except for an allowed reason. Of all my acquaintance among them, and I knew many, not one understood Greek, nor do I recollect but one or two that knew the Greek alphabet.

The other tutor was a man of sound learning, and considerable science. He was, however, irritable from indisposition. When he preached, it was with Latimerian simplicity, with Baxterian earnestness. Oh! what anguish of soul did that young professor feel, and evidently manifest, at our lectures. A few received the greatest advantage from his fretful, but indefatigable, pains and assiduity. My heart abounds with gratitude to him for arousing, in me, the taste

It is easier, generally, to state facts than to ascertain their causes. In this instance, however, the cause may be discovered with comparative ease. In Catholic countries, little reference is made to the Greek text of the Scriptures, as the Vulgate Latin is invested by the Church with paramount authority. Besides, in them, little theological controversy takes place, and, if comparative religious liberty, as in France, leaves room for religious discussion, the disputes which may subsist are usually subtle, metaphysical contests, and not critical and philological argumentations. To whatever cause it may be attributed, it can scarcely be denied that but little of what is called literature has been found, for a long while, in all Catholic countries. German scholars, whose fame is so illustrious, have been almost uniformly protestants. Bavaria and Austria can boast no names of literary renown.

Something, however, may be attributed to the influence of liberty. It may be fairly predicated, of the Catholics of the British dominions, that they excel those of other countries, although this may not be wholly independent of the effect of competition, as the religion of Rome is not here possessed of overwhelming authority, which annihilates competition. It may be national partiality that dictates these observations, and this additional remark, that I am doubtful whether there is in Europe one properly learned Catholic out of the United Kingdoms, at least, one tolerable Greek scholar.

for literature, which, in the former year, had lain dormant, while my time was otherwise usefully spent. Gladly would I give his fame to the world with that distinction, which true genius and erudition ever deserve. Many will remember him with enthusiasm, if they should peruse this allusion to him. He died of that decline which had swept away nearly the whole of his numerous family.

Never, however, was labor lost as in this instance. Not above five or six of our number could translate a plain passage in a Roman author. Two or three only had sufficient acquaintance with Greek to make out a verse in the New Testament. The major part did not comprehend the *axioms* in Euclid's Elements; and some did not understand even the *terms* employed in mathematical science. On most all his efforts were wasted. They despised every species of improvement, and looked on the acquisition of knowledge as little less than criminal. No exhortation could excite the smallest diligence. Their only aim seemed to be, to *pass* through the seminary for the sake of the reputation which it was supposed to confer. This state of things continued during the whole term of my studies, and has not, probably, improved since, under instructors who formed a part of these *heart-knowledge men*, and who have never acquired a moderate acquaintance with science or literature. To this pass is an institution come which might supply our churches with many useful

and enlightened ministers. How the managers of it can account for such superintendence is not for me to conjecture. Public servants, in all departments, pay little regard to the service of their constituents.

To this year I look back with a mixture of regret and pleasure. It was useful to me in various points of view, and added much to my stock of learning, taste, and general knowledge. In these respects I was indebted to the watchfulness and pains of my excellent friend, the tutor, whose fame I am recording. My happiness was, however, considerably lessened. My mind dwelled on the state of my resources, which were continually diminishing. My sensibility was affected by the troubles and vexations of my friendly instructor, who was brutally requited for his pains by the scurrility and indiligence of his unworthy pupils, who eyed him with hatred because he did not class with those who arrogated to themselves the possession of heart-knowledge, and who hated instruction, because they knew not its advantage, and had not ability to profit by it. I had my share of obloquy, also, as his friend, and for reasons similar to those which directed it against him. It was a scene of tumult and insult which I could scarcely brook, and which gave to my inexperience incredible anxiety. A son of mine should never enter such a place of education, or rather *such a society* of men under pretended tuition. Every evil might be expected to arise to morals and manners,

to disposition and happiness, from association with such ignorance and brutality. *Our* party was often sufficiently revenged for their sufferings; but revenge is a mortal enemy to happiness. Endurance and resentment were equally hostile to my peace.

One thing appears to me extraordinary in the manners of the people of the town where our seminary was stationed. Scarcely any notice was taken of the young men by any class or denomination. Indeed no place could be more unliterary, though flourishing greatly in trade and commerce. This had an unfavorable effect on the suitability for promoting the good of society, of the candidates for the ministry. The situation was not convenient for the institution in many other respects, nor would it have been placed here, but for the advantage of the instruction of our late tutor. The experiment did not succeed, and the seminary returned to its former situation in a more favorable town. But this was after my time. I will, however, take this opportunity of paying a deserved tribute of praise to the inhabitants of the latter place, who, without distinction of religious denomination, or station and rank in the world, have ever cherished these sprigs of divinity with the utmost liberality and hospitality. A literary taste has prevailed here to a much greater degree for ages; and the institution is considered as an honor to the town, and as favorable to its cultivation. But no advantages are without their

alloy. A greater degree of dissipation has crept in than had prevailed in the former place, and, if possible, an abated attention to study has supervened, although a greater polish of outward manners has taken place.

Let me recommend it to the dissenting inhabitants of the towns which contain our institutions, to extend a discreet hospitality to our future ministers. They will render a considerable service to our clergy, and fit them greatly for their future professions, by a conduct that may conduce to their own improvement, while it produces a public advantage. It is probable that a taste for literature and science may be excited among their own youth, while some assistance may be derived towards its cultivation.

The second year of my novitiate brings few occurrences, of any consequence, to my recollection. It revived my taste for the learned languages, added a good deal to my stock of knowledge, principally by the opportunity it gave me of associating with my respected tutor, and diminished my conceit of myself, by observing *him*, at least, possessed of far greater acquisitions than my own. Our lounging perusal of the lectures of Doddridge was not without useful consequences to me, as I was induced, by the advice of this tutor, to read many of the books referred to in them. I recollect having perused a considerable number of answers to deistical writers, especially all those of Leland, and the history of my

country, in the voluminous pages of Rapin and Tindal.

The general feeling of my mind, however, is, that it was a year of far greater profit than happiness. During its continuance I found but one friend, my tutor; although one fellow student became a pretty intimate acquaintance, with whom I have continued in occasional intercourse, which has not produced much advantage or satisfaction.

Nothing was done in composition in all this year. Our plan was not sufficiently arranged, and there was a good deal of uncertainty as to our future instructors. Indeed the management of the institution has always been extremely deficient and erroneous on this point. Too much is left to depend on the fitness of ministers, settled with congregations in the district; and inadequacy is tolerated for the sake of easing the funds of salaries, which are less ample on account of the provision which the tutors derive from their ministerial situations. This should not be, if the interest of learning is of any consideration. The institution wants reform. Its number of students is too large, amounting to twelve or fourteen, which is a superabundant supply for the congregations that may want their eventual labors. Every purpose of such supply would be answered by a decreased number. About eight would be sufficient, two of whom should go off yearly, which would suit the course of four years which is established, and render the im-

mediate employ of the young men, as pastors, more certain. An effort should be made to grant sufficient salaries to two tutors, who should have no other occupation, except the supply of a chapel belonging to the seminary. All precariousness of finding suitable instructors would be thus avoided; the young men would, in that chapel, have sufficient opportunity for exercising their talents as preachers; more attention would be paid to study; and a freer scope would be given to discussion, as the tutors would not be fettered in their speculations by any fear of giving offence to a flock on whom they might depend. The last consideration is of great importance, as much inconvenience has arisen from the want of liberality of the tutors, whose services have been obtained, less on account of their fitness for their occupation and enlargedness of mind, than on account of the convenience of paying them inadequate salaries, the scantiness of which has been made up by their ministerial emoluments. In this way, men of an illiberal turn of mind have been retained, who have carried their bigotry into their lectures, and whose greatest object has been to keep well with their flocks by their orthodoxy, and not to furnish enlightened pastors for our churches. The terms of admission have been narrowed; and young men of a free turn of thought have been plagued and thwarted, to the great diminution of their happiness. Who would believe it, that, on the present plan, the

respectable P—— board has put at the head of its institution avowed Calvinists; that students have been rejected for want of belief in the Trinity; and that ——— has known, and countenanced, such a dereliction of every principle of liberty, of every right of private judgment? Had the constituents been Calvinistic, they might lay down such restrictions as a part of their plan. But the P—— board cannot have adopted such restrictions, and they are abused when such restrictions have the sanction of their governors and visitors.

Independently of the illiberality and bad faith discovered in appointing Calvinistic and Trinitarian tutors in a seminary of presbyterian denomination, the effect appears to be unfavorable to learning and piety. The confessed inferiority in literature of Calvinistic ministers among dissenters is likely to prove unfriendly to the literary proficiency of young men whose education is conducted by them. But this is of secondary importance. If it should be shewn that the piety of candidates for the ministry may be checked by their superintendence, the evil becomes too serious to be despised.

I am aware that a very different idea prevails on this subject. The fervent devotion of orthodox Christians is thought capable of deeply impressing those who witness it. To deny this, as a general proposition, is not my design; but, in the case now contemplated, it admits of serious doubt, if not of

clear confutation. It will probably seem right, on reflection, to review the question, and to allow it more consideration than has generally been given it.

A seminary supported by the presbyterian interest is naturally intended for the education of presbyterian, that is, of unorthodox and antitrinitarian, ministers. It is contrary to the professed liberality of the denomination to render their places of education exclusive. But young men, of, what are sometimes called, liberal sentiments, will predominate in them. They cannot, consistently, be rejected. What is likely to be the effect on the piety of these, evidently designed for the future pastors of their churches, if they are brought up by orthodox instructors?

1. The principles of piety which accord with their religious sentiments cannot, under such circumstances, be inculcated on them. Surely this is a most grievous evil, as long as young persons want to be constantly reminded of whatever is grave and serious. It will be allowed that the priests of Fohi would teach devotion ineffectually to Christian disciples. Whatever fervor they might display, their lessons, being founded on unadmitted principles, would not carry conviction, would not deeply impress. This illustration, it is granted, is somewhat extravagant; but there is a sufficient dissimilarity between Calvinistic and Trinitarian principles and those of antitrinitarians to render the lectures of orthodox teachers inefficacious on those who reject their creed. Besides

founding their precepts on maxims not acknowledged, they would neglect to dwell on such as would be admitted, of which the disciples would greatly stand in need. If it were possible to abstain from topics likely to give disgust instead of producing impression, yet, if such topics as might produce effect were not enforced, young men must be in a deplorable state of neglect thus left unreminded, uninterested. They require to be constantly aroused, to be continually excited to reflection on the principles of piety, or they will be induced, by the heedlessness of youth, to forget God, and to banish all serious and devotional feelings.

2. The very appearance of devotion and piety of Calvinistic instructors, would tend, when connected with inadmissible principles and sentiments, to create disgust in the minds of young persons, on account of that connection. Rejecting the religious views on which the piety of their governors would be founded, they would be in danger of rejecting all piety with them. The effect might appear as objectionable as the cause. It is a fact that such has very frequently been the consequence, and the youth of free opinions, who, by some chance, have been placed under the tuition of evangelical instructors, have not been eventually the most serious men or pious ministers. Were it not an invidious task, this position might be supported by copious examples. But conviction is more likely to arise from adverting to the nature itself of the case.

Is it not obvious that serious men, dwelling on admitted topics, would prove the most impressive inculcators of religion on the minds of their disciples? Do not young persons need to have serious principles impressed on their hearts continually, which could not be done by those who should be conscious that they produced no effect, on account of their own unacceptableness. Indeed, it is likely that the task, in such a case, would be unattempted, and thus the young, in their utmost need, would be left untaught and unaroused.

One necessary qualification in an instructor is acceptance: another is earnestness and zeal. Both must be wanting when much discordance of principle occurs; and both would meet in him whose principles suited those of his disciples. From him the lessons of piety would not produce disgust. They would not be associated with principles disapproved, which have a tendency to create dislike to any thing founded on them or connected with them.

I therefore think that this subject requires reconsideration. It is surely a hasty conclusion that a pious disposition is likely to be fostered by orthodox tutors in those who reject their principles. The contrary effect seems most likely to arise from such a plan. If this should appear well founded, our churches are not likely to be furnished with serious pastors if they are brought up under the superintendence of Calvinistic professors.

The effect of inattention to composition was evidently seen in the following year, when it began to form a part of our course of study. Some instances of unskilfulness in that department will come to be mentioned in their proper place. The effect is felt, I doubt not, by the pupils who survive, even to this day, wherever they are stationed as pastors. I have to regret many years of anxiety which I spent over pulpit compositions, which might have cost me much less labor, and possessed far superior merit, had it not been for this neglect. Indeed, I retain none of those discourses which were prepared during the first years of my ministerial career. A humbling perusal of them has long consigned them to the flames. The evil was, however, lessened to me by a turn to write verses; by a desultory habit of drawing up essays, in the manner of the papers in the Spectator, which was derived from its perusal at school; and by a regular plan, which I pursued during every year of my preparatory studies, of reading daily one of the articles subscribed with the letters forming the name of the Muse Clio, in that instructive and amusing work.

Some taste for good writing was thus acquired, but the habit of ready composition could not be gained, on account of the infrequency of the attempt. Another daily custom, not disadvantageous to me, may here also be recorded, as it began during this year. It was to read some passage daily in one

or other Greek author. If these minute details should suggest any useful hints to my young friends, who may be undergoing a course of study, they will have been introduced with some advantage.

I can scarcely form any estimate of the proficiency which I had acquired, when my second academical year was completed, which brought me to the half of my twentieth year.

Of the classic authors I had increased my knowledge in some degree, having read a good deal of Cicero's Orations and other works, and several of the Orations of Demosthenes and of Isocrates. Virgil, Horace, and Sallust, Homer's Iliad, and Xenophon's Memorabilia, I had read at school.

During this year I had gone through the greatest part of Simpson's Geometry, and had commenced the study of Trigonometry.

My taste, and the course of our studies, had produced a greater acquaintance with Theology; the Greek Testament was very diligently read, but not in any order.

My friendly tutor was pious and devotional. The family that furnished my lodgings was serious. In other respects, there was very little attention paid to the properly religious culture of myself or others. There was certainly a deficiency in this point, although too much rigor, with respect to devotional exercises, might be attended with ill effects even on young men designed for the ministry. A disgust for devotion,

which might arise from rigor, would be to them most unfortunate. If they should acquire a gloomy severity, or become devotees, genuine religion would suffer more than it would gain from such friends. The mind should be led to contemplate serious subjects by the grave and religious conversation of instructors, and the practice of devotion should be fostered by their seasonable example. On such accounts, tutors should be selected for their unquestionable seriousness, as well as for their competent learning: neither ought to be dispensed with.

But this period of my life must now be closed, or the reader may be fatigued, an effect which it is far from my intention to produce in any part of this work.

CHAPTER IV.

Third Academic Year.

No one can conceive the anxiety which a youthful mind of sensibility endures from apprehension of insufficient resources. Its effects are deadly on every effort of intellect. My scanty means were now alarmingly diminished. Dependence stared me in the face, the thought of which pierced me to the heart.

Even dependence was a precarious resource, as I knew not on whom to depend. Several wealthy relations had more disposition to blame a profusion, which never existed, than to give their aid in difficulties, which were impending. A brother had the heart to render every assistance, while his ability was circumscribed. To him, however, I looked with confidence in his readiness, though without hope in his power. Alas! that brother is now no more. The beauty of his form was almost unequalled. His learning was extensive, and his taste refined. His mind was of the first magnitude, and his heart of the best order. To him I looked then. On him I long relied, till death demolished the distinction between the sublimest beauty and the vilest dust. My thoughts and affections are enshrined in his tomb.

With such prospects, I began my third year at college, the twentieth and twenty-first of my age.

There was little variety in the course of this period. Our studies were similar to those of the last session. Plato's Dialogues replaced our former Greek authors. Conic sections claimed our attention in the mathematical department. Fluxions never made a part of our studies.

A regular tutor in theology was now established at our head, of whom the less is spoken the better. Our other respectable and learned instructor continued to attempt our improvement, with mortifying

success. Our cabals increased, and my happiness was diminished. In our squabbles I committed errors, which sufficiently punished themselves.

Composition came now to be regularly demanded, but it was attended with no other benefit but that which arose from the habit, and from the public reading of our productions, which might certainly, and probably did in some instances, produce a degree of care and attention. Alas! no corrections were attempted by the instructor, whose department it was to revise what we had written. Whatever solitary judgment we might exercise, it was not cultivated by any direction from superior taste and experience.

With what pity and contempt do I call to recollection the barbarism, and vulgarity, and nonsense, which were emptied forth from the library tribune on the heads of the rude mob of pretended students, who sat below, to hear without knowledge of grammar, to comment without one principle of taste! Better had it been, perhaps, in some respects, if the neglect of the former years had continued, than that this caricature of oratory and preaching should have been so unblushingly exhibited. What have I heard under the names of sermons and orations! It is a fact that one read something by way of sermon, which he seemed to have cabbaged from a visitation discourse of one of our ancient dignitaries. Would you believe it? Such was his blindness, that he intro-

duced a sentence to this purpose, speaking, I think, of religion:—"This is a dish to be set before your *parishioners* of greater worth, &c." My hair stands on end as I state the fact!

When I little expected it, soon after the commencement of this year, I was chosen afternoon teacher of a school, set up by the two tutors, in which employment I continued till towards the end of the next.

The instruction of youth has been the "bane and antidote" of my life. It has thwarted my studies, and favored my progress in learning. It has retarded, and promoted, my fame. It has produced emolument, and prevented it. It has lessened, and increased, my happiness. These are seeming paradoxes. But, when the reader has reflected on the scantiness of my resources, and the respectability with which I have contrived to live on my double character of minister and schoolmaster; on the various nature of the studies which are suited to the one and to the other; and on the different repute which arises from each respectively, my assertions will no longer appear contradictory.

To my new employment I devoted myself with an assiduity proportioned to my sense of the seasonable supply which it would secure to my resources. The duties required were not new to me, as I had often sustained the whole business of the school which gave me the knowledge of the rudiments of

the Roman and Greek languages; the master of which had other avocations, and committed to me the charge of his pupils. The happiness and the misery of my life began, from this period, to be amalgamated together. The expectation of reasonable profit served to balance the irksomeness of a most laborious employment, which I, however, discharged with diligence and fidelity, with some cheerfulness in the hope of support, with ardor in the hope of fame.*

* A long course of experience has now convinced me that diligence, and skill, and ability, are not so conducive either to the emolument or reputation of a Dissenting schoolmaster, as other qualifications of less worth, which are held in greater estimation. It seems to be of the nature of every minor party to seek for its ends by address and dexterity. They have nothing else left them, as power and numbers are on the contrary side. Without a degree of virtue, which can scarcely be expected in the greater proportion of most communities, this must happen; and, when the disposition is once admitted, it naturally produces habit, and acquires ascendancy in the general cast of character. Its operation will be discovered in cases that are unconnected with the party contest, and will influence the ordinary intercourse of life. On this principle, the skill and management, to use no harsher terms, of the Dissenting character may be accounted for. They proceed from their condition as the smaller party, which first prompts the use of occasional expedients, and at length produces general habit. This principle accounts also for the manœuvres of Dissenting schoolmasters, who, in the absence of learning, employ such means as will secure repute and consequent success. Indeed, if they had possessed more learning, it would scarcely serve their turn. To appreciate learning, education is necessary, and those who judge of it must have

Before I quitted my academical course, I may be fairly considered as having spent two good years in the business of instruction. By the time I had seen twenty-one years and a half, so much time had been thus employed. About four years only, since that time, have been free from the cares of that occupation. I am now forty-four years of age, nearly the half of which has been thus most laboriously and irksomely spent.*

The events which took place during my pedagogical labors, while my novitiate for the ministry en-

requisite qualifications for judgment. A few only of the Dissenting community have any tolerable cultivation. Their men of wealth may be said to rise from the *ranks*. If their children should have literary advantages, the influence of fashion and other causes is such, that *they* frequently desert the body among whom they have been brought up. The few who are able to appreciate the literary repute of tutors, either scorn those who subsist in their own party, and place their sons elsewhere, or are, by their numbers, able to patronize a few only of their instructors who merit countenance. It follows therefore, of necessity, that most Dissenting masters must depend on the support of the less educated of the body, and, with them, something independent of learning has preference. They must be pleased, and methods of pleasing them must be adopted. We find, in fact, that effectual methods are adopted which are followed by fame, and honor, and emolument, and every thing. It is apt to raise indignation, although it should do no such thing, to see men who would not make a scholar to the day of doom, by little arts of shew and flattery, gain the praise of learning, while the really learned live and die totally neglected.

* This was written at the beginning of the year 1811.

dured, are not worth recording. I could give some detail, to shew that my stipulated remuneration was never received. I was entitled to one third of the profits, which was diminished by items of expense which I considered as not fairly included, and by an omission of arrears in which I thought I had a just interest. But such matters are not worth remembering. In about a year and three quarters, I received about seventeen pounds, which helped to carry me forward, without dependence, nearly to the conclusion of my course.

This circumstance in my life I have ever considered fortunate in one view, while it probably thwarted my prosperity in another. It led me to consider this employment as my chief resource for life, and qualified me greatly for its duties, while it withdrew my attention considerably from my ministerial functions, and was the cause of less success as a public instructor. Perhaps neither my fame nor prosperity has been, on the whole, diminished. But both have, certainly, been of a different character. My happiness has, doubtless, been of less magnitude, and my peace has been incalculably impaired.

I quitted the charge both willingly and unwillingly. The school never flourished after my resignation, which was accompanied, or soon followed, by that of my respectable tutor, which accounts for the fact.

One pupil, who read Greek, and soon became a theologian, left off attending the school, and contented himself with receiving my private instruction till the end of my course. I think this some honor; it is at least true.

The common condition of mankind is one of compensations. For the advantages which are enjoyed by them many evils must be endured: and yet no evils are without their alleviations. Happy is the man who can secure many blessings with but few inconveniences to lessen their value. The cares of riches, and the frightful *ennui* of inoccupation, render them less desirable objects. Ingredients, incompatible with each other, must meet,—and they never can meet,—in order to give man a life of undisturbed tranquillity, of unmixed enjoyment. Activity of mind must accompany affluence to render it blessed: and how can the mind *gain* activity, when surrounded with every convenience that generates sloth and indifference; how can it *retain* it, when it ceases to be stimulated?

On the contrary, scanty resources arouse exertion, which fails not to amuse, and often to satisfy. The consciousness of merited applause compensates, in some measure, for the apprehension of future difficulties. Different situations in life have not many respective advantages, on a fair calculation. Yet, if we may judge from universal predilections and antipathies, poverty, in the present state of society,

must be an evil; and competency, at least, a blessing. In competency are to be found, perhaps, most of the blessings of every condition, with a smaller number of the usual inconveniences which befall mankind. Affluence has great advantages and disadvantages. Never was there a more reasonable prayer, in every view, than that of Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me."

My accession of means of creditable support only changed the nature of the evils of my life, at this time. The anxiety, attending an irksome occupation, replaced that which arose from apprehension of difficulties or of dependence. The want of authority increased it to an insufferable degree. When any thing which appears unsupportable takes place, we ever wish to alter the course of our lives, little reflecting that change will not remove our infelicity if we can but escape that which, for the present, oppresses us. We know that now we are unhappy, and hope, *against hope*, that another mode of prolonging existence, may make existence worth desiring.

After about a year and a half spent as afternoon-teacher of this school, I quitted it to have more leisure for study and amusement, and to avoid suffering and mortification. Much did not seem to be now wanting to carry me to the end of my preparatory career. My hope was not much disappoint-

ed. I left my college without having experienced want of any thing that my œconomical plan required, but I left it in debt, amounting, in all, to nearly ten pounds.

This so fortunate escape, however, entailed upon me much subsequent difficulty. Although I was not applied to for payment, owing to the liberality of my creditors, the debt was to be paid with interest, and it was long before I found means, out of my scanty earnings, to satisfy my honor, and to cancel the demand.

Such circumstances may appear almost incredible. But I appeal to one half of my brother ministers, if they have not found a debt of *ten pounds*, contracted during their education, a weight which has continued to oppress them for years. In my case, no want of œconomy ever prevented me from satisfying every claim. Such is the scanty provision made for our ministers, that no saving is ever practicable in any situation, without some income besides that which arises from their professional engagements. Little preference is to be given to any local settlement. It is nearly immaterial whether the salary be 40*l.* or 150*l.* per annum, and these are about the extremes of our receipts. Privacy and œconomy are necessary in both, and the degree of each will be regulated by public expectation, which brings all nearly on a level. A sort of habit of pinching their ministers pervades the body of Pres-

byterians, whose want of liberality, in this respect, is as conspicuous as the exercise of it is in other instances. In this no sect of religionists can bear a comparison with them. If a congregation of them finds itself in a capacity to raise 200*l.* per annum, from whatever sources, it instantly thinks of retaining two ministers. What would be a small provision for one is divided, and two are invited to starve on their ostentatious penuriousness. If the minister is content, they will even present him with fifty pounds a year, under every change arising from increased wealth or multiplied numbers. Additional subscribers serve only to ease the amount of original subscriptions, and any discontent with such conduct would cost the poor pastor his situation. Sources of complaint would soon be found out, which would not be quieted but by the appointment of a successor, to whom, however, a more liberal offer must be made, and yet such only, as might merely procure his acceptance. I speak truth, and appeal to my fellow ministers for its confirmation, with confident expectation of the concurrence of the liberal among the laity.

Our sermons and orations were generally designed to support our party doctrines and party quarrels. Their stupidity was only equalled by their malignancy. It is not long since I chanced to meet with an oration of my own, of most humble manufacture, though of ingenious plan. It attempted to draw a

parallel and a contrast between Popish and Calvinistic infallibility, giving the preference greatly to the former. My wonder cannot be effectually expressed, when I consider its merits and its effects. Of the former it had little, and that little was balanced by a thousand egregious faults. Yet it silenced the party declamations, as it was felt to surpass every thing which could be brought in hostility against it. Such was the condition of our academical proficiency in the important department of composition. That such a thing should be crowned, by the consent of friends and foes, with victory! Alas! how humbling is such a victory! But what can be said of the defeat? Both mark, with indelible disgrace, a place of education where either could occur.

Of all the students of these two years, I recollect not more than one who has done the least credit to the institution, and that one has devoted his fine talents long ago to the service of mammon. The rest have either forfeited all claim to esteem, for want of good morals, or are now dragging on a miserable existence in the humblest stations among their brethren. They have brought a lasting disrepute on the seminary which pretended to foster their talents, so that it is a sufficient reason to suspect a man's adequacy for ministerial engagements, to know that his education was there conducted.

The evil must be traced to deficient management, to imperfect plan, and to despicable tuition. Our respectable tutor, however, must be rescued from all suspicion. Under such management, and on such a plan, all his labors must have proved nugatory. Let others answer for themselves. I expect their hostility, but cannot help it.

Here I close my account of the third year of my irksome course at this seminary. I review it without satisfaction, although it effected some improvement in the progress of my mind. Oh! that I had spent it under more favorable auspices!

The tediousness of these details may be compensated by the useful improvements which they may suggest. If the body to which I am attached should be brought to adopt measures conducive to their respectability, by such or other means, they may be thankful to those who solicit their attention, and pardon me for stating offensive truths, by which, however, offence is not designed. Had I a less respect for this illustrious band of Christians and patriots, I would not trouble them with observations which can render me no service, and which contemplate their advantage only.

CHAPTER V.

Commencement of Preaching, during the last Year of my academical Course.

THE period of education, for whatever calling or profession, is certainly a most important one. But its importance arises from its conduciveness to the success, and happiness, and usefulness, of that line of life to which it is preparatory. The calling or profession itself must embrace a still higher interest, and the account of it should obtain a deeper attention. I am about to introduce the reader to the commencement of my professional labors, without dismissing yet the course of my preparatory studies. In the fourth year, according to our plan, we were admitted into the pulpit, and had leave to lend our assistance, where it might be wanted within a convenient distance.

The plan of education had undergone no alteration. The tutors were the same, during my fourth year, as during the two preceding ones. I do not remember that a book was added to our library, which consisted of a considerable number of volumes. We saw none of the literary journals but by chance.

During the fourth year we were called *Divinity Students*, because we now commenced preachers. And this was all the alteration in our condition.

Nothing was done to qualify the young men for the pulpit. Readings, in Doddridge, in the usual unprofitable way, constituted all the theological instruction. Neither eloquence nor elocution were otherwise cultivated than as solitary taste might induce every individual to apply to them, of which there were very few examples.

Having mentioned our library, I must do it justice by observing that it contained the stamina of a good one, especially in Divinity. Former donations had greatly enriched it, and it had received additions frequently till about the year 1784. From that time till I left it, it remained *in statu quo*. While it had a sufficient number of authors in divinity, it wanted many good works. If the same inattention to it should continue, all modern discoveries in theology must be inevitably unknown to the young candidates, and the number of volumes from various casualties will as inevitably diminish. While every town in the island is forming Book Societies, and establishing libraries, this seminary will be taking a retrograde course, and its cultivation will be in an inverse ratio to that of the community.

Of classical books there was a most lamentable deficiency. There does not appear to have ever been any ambition to enrich it with these treasures; any attempt to furnish it with them. No edition, of repute, of one ancient author was, I think, to be found in it. Not one copy of the Greek Testament do I

remember, but the common ones. My memory may fail me, and I should be glad to find myself wrong. Mill was there, and, it is possible, there might be something better.

There was a small and impaired philosophical apparatus: an air pump, an orrery, a pair of Senex's globes, a telescope, a microscope, an electrifying machine; all out of order. At some former time, something had been expended on such necessary objects. But the spirit had evaporated. If these were repaired or exchanged, and a few articles added, enough would be found for every purpose of ministerial education, if they were diligently used. Much science may be dispensed with, in a course of education of this nature. It may be the object of subsequent acquisition. If our young men were rendered good scholars and mathematicians, good historians and divines, it would suffice; and these studies would fully occupy four or five years spent at college. What shall we say of the almost total neglect of them?

The increase of books and instruments depended on the forfeitures of the pupils for non-attendance on the lectures, in which they took no interest. But, as their finances were low, this source had little effect. Surely a reformation of management and plan is become absolutely necessary, or the institution must sink into utter contempt.

During much of this year I travelled, once a month, to supply congregations, once under the pastoral care

of my father. I had to travel, on the Saturday, fifty-miles on horseback; to ride from fifteen to twenty on the Sunday and Monday; to remain with my friends for the week; to repeat, on the following Sunday, the journey of the preceding; and to return on the second Monday from my setting out. My horse cost me half-a-guinea, my expenses amounted to about the same sum. For this trouble, and to defray this expense, I was paid seven shillings, or seven and sixpence, each Sunday. My friends found my maintenance in the interval. Of course, this was a ruinous speculation. I should have felt the result affecting my finances seriously; but the different societies contributed something towards my indemnification, and I returned, generally, about five shillings richer for my expedition, if *wear and tear* be taken out of the calculation.

This engagement had nearly entangled me with these good people, who were very desirous to engage my constant services on my removal from college. I had stipulated with their minister that no presumption should be cherished respecting my intentions of becoming his colleague, because I thus occasionally supplied them. At the same time, I had promised not to form any irrevocable determination to refuse their invitation, before hand, if they should eventually give me one. At no time did I give them or him any further hope, but always expressed that the probability was much against my settlement with

them. They begged that they might be allowed an opportunity, by marks of kindness, to diminish that probability; and to produce, if possible, a determination in their favor. The year went on under these circumstances. But, when it was concluded, instead of leaving me room for gratitude for uncommon civilities, I was openly told, by the minister with whom I had so stipulated, that my services had given the people encouragement, and that, if I did not mean to meet their wishes, I ought to have declined supplying them. The civilities shewn me, and the aid given towards defraying my expenses, were construed into a tacit engagement with them for future services. Reference to our original arrangement was ineffectual, and, when I finally took my leave, much clamor and obloquy were raised against me.—Of such instances of duplicity, I have a long catalogue to record.—My health and taste led me to look elsewhere. At this moment, I am in doubt what might have been the determination most conducive to my prosperity and happiness. It is probable, however, that, whatever evils I may have since endured, my settlement there would have left regret in my mind, and this would have been sufficient to embitter my future days, unless I could have effectually reconciled myself to my lot in process of time. I retain no resentment for the ungenerous advantage taken of my assistance, which was accorded from friendship, and with much inconvenience. The eagerness to retain

me, on the part of the society, was too flattering a complement, to myself and to my family, to be recollected with animosity.

I am now come to the end of my academical course. Some reflections may be allowed, before I proceed farther with the account of my life.

1. The reader must observe a lamentable deficiency of instruction during the course of my studies. The evil is too general among our sect, and arises from a radical defect in our management. Sufficient provision is not made for professors. Men of real abilities and erudition will not accept of situations so circumstanced. Such must be retained, to whom it is *convenient*, from other causes, to accept the employ. Ministerial occupations are necessary as aids in order to subsist: on which account our tutors and our seminaries are seldom even stationary. A reform must take place, or our reputation for learning and science must fade for ever. Let a proper situation, with all just attention to economy, be first provided, and let the next object be, to secure sufficient funds for the handsome maintenance of a competent number of tutors of good literature and manners. Let there be no ministerial labor attached to a professorship, but such as regards a college-chapel, for the accommodation of the seminary. Let no ministerial jealousies, of the superior learning of adequate instructors, be employed to keep them in the shade, and to condemn them to obscurity. Then, and not

till then, our institutions will answer their purpose, and be creditable to our learning and reputation.

2. The plan of education should be simplified. If something should be sacrificed to polished manners, which are now entirely overlooked; if gentlemanly and palæstic exercises should be somewhat encouraged, as things which cannot afterwards be cultivated; no encouragement should be given to literary or scientific pursuits of *secondary value*. Such should be left to the taste and choice of individuals, but never made the objects of academical education. A few things alone should enter into our plans. 1. The classics; the classics without end. 2. The mathematics; and the mathematics over and over. 3. Astronomy and philosophy. 4. Theology; to which every thing should be subservient. The last may be partly, but not altogether, dispensed with, in lay education, which is generally short and scanty among this people. Bring your views to a focus. Concentrate your efforts. You will have eminent men, in this way, for those things which are of most importance; while smaller objects will of themselves come to be acquired. In our present methods, no eminence can ever be attained.

3. From my observations may be deduced the inference, that our young candidates are lamentably deficient in previous suitableness for academical studies. To this, principally, may be traced their contempt for learning, and most culpable indiligence.

Not one half of those whom I saw could translate the plainest Latin, or understand the simplest principles of grammar. They found some alleviation of their illiteracy, which it was too late to remove, in a sturdy denial of the advantage of literary acquirements. This is a point that should be thoroughly reformed. Our resources are thus ignominiously wasted. The honor of academical preparation is acquired by such as are still mere laymen, and who ought to continue lay preachers, if they must preach, while those who are of more worthy character have that honor diminished, by being so participated. Our seminaries are disgraced, and our body and our ministry become objects of obloquy and contempt. Let no candidate for the ministry be admitted whose previous learning is not unequivocal. Shut your doors on all but those who may fairly promise to adorn your institutions.

4. Let there be regular, literary, and scientific, degrees conferred at our colleges. These, not being countenanced by law, will not be of much value, except, at the place of education, and among our own body, though they will give some credit to those who obtain them, in the estimation of the world. If they are rigidly withheld from the undeserving, they will excite emulation and serve to discriminate the pretensions of the worthy and unworthy, when they mix with mankind. At the end of the third year, let the approved students become B.A.; at the end

of the fourth, M.A.; but let no one take a degree who has been unable to obtain his B. A. at the end of the third year, except in extraordinary cases, where superior diligence has been observed to wipe off the disgrace attached to having been *plucked*, when the first degree may be accorded at the end of the fourth or fifth year, but no further honor should be in that case conceded on any account. 'This should be an affair of great solemnity and exactness, and extraordinary inadequacy should be punished, at the end of the third year, *with expulsion*. In time, these degrees may come to be sanctioned by the legislature, even if it should demur at first. Perhaps, even at the commencement, that favor may be obtained, and surely application should be made forthwith for that purpose. It is the policy of wise governments to encourage the spirit of science and literature, even in sectaries. Such are the best means of checking the progress of enthusiasm and irregular dissent. But let them deal impartially, and, with proper restrictions, accord such honors to all sects as soon as they seek them. Let there be some check on all, that they may not bestow degrees on the undeserving. These academical distinctions are scarcely useful, but as the encouragement and reward of study and merit. Honorary degrees must ever be of dubious repute, and should be sought elsewhere.

5. The scanty provision, made for students, is also much to be lamented. Besides the misery which it

entails on generous minds, it damps all ardor in literary proficiency. I feel too painfully the recollection of this evil to be able to speak of it with sufficient composure. Alas! what do our youth endure on this account? Have mercy on them, ye men of liberal spirit, and rescue, into credit and comfort, your future ministers. I recommend them earnestly to your patronage, on which they have, of right, an undoubted claim.

6. Nearly connected with the last article, is a recommendation which I will venture to hazard to the reflection of my fellow Dissenters.

The legislature, with generous liberality, grants assistance to the Irish Catholics towards the education of their priesthood. The same consideration would be extended, without doubt, to the Protestant Dissenters, if respectfully requested. The same reasons support both cases. It is of importance that the people, however distinguished by peculiar opinions, should be well instructed, and that their ministers should be well qualified for their occupation. It is thus that ministerial illiteracy and scandalous preaching are to be eradicated. Besides, this part of the community is deprived of the advantage of education at the Universities. Perhaps it would be vain to expect the doors of these to be thrown open for the admission of every sect. They would scarcely acquiesce in our participation of their endowments. But they would view, without envy,

a boon which could not injure them, while it would accommodate and benefit us beyond calculation. Surely the experiment ought to be tried, which would trench very little on the resources of a wealthy nation, to which we contribute our full share. Having to sustain our own clergy, our means are not sufficient for their honorable education. Let us cast ourselves on the generosity of our country, and accept such aid as it may, in its wisdom, grant. It seems as if all other schemes would be inadequate to secure our respectability and honor. This, under proper regulations, would be efficient to remove our disgrace, and the public objection and contempt.

7. Care should be employed towards obtaining, for our institutions, an adequate supply of proper philosophical instruments and books. There is every-where a lamentable deficiency in this respect, which is a radical and fatal deficiency. A *good library* is itself a stimulus to diligence. Without it, little can be done by every attention of our tutors, and all the ardor of our youth. Much might be done, by those who wish for improvement, without instructors, if books, and other means of study, were provided. Little can be done without *them*, under any circumstances. In every prospectus of a seminary among us, and in every account of the resources attached to them, I see no fund for this purpose, which should be secured in the very first

instance. Of this our predecessors were aware, and books were accumulated in their days. Does the progress of improvement stand still with us alone? The increase of books, in our seminaries at this day, should bear some proportion to their increase in general, which is far from being the case. In an especial manner, let there be an accumulation of *Classical, Mathematical, and Theological Works*. The first, especially, should claim our attention, because of their importance, and because of their paucity, at present, in our institutions.

I have adverted to many objects of consideration, and our means may be inadequate to the acquisition of all. Increased exertion and additional sacrifices must be made if they are to be attained. Yet, let us not shrink from our duty; let us adopt as many of the regulations suggested as may be practicable, leaving others to be secured by our successors. Let us approximate to perfection; much may be done, with respect to all, by earnestness and zeal.

To state projects, although chimerical, is not always without its use. It may furnish us with an apprehension of what is desirable, if it does no more. It may give us an idea of perfection, if it should not be, at present, attainable. It may stimulate to exertions, which may prove successful in a degree, if not to the degree which we wish. My projects appear feasible, and need conviction and effort only to be carried into effect.

I now bid farewell to the place of my education for the ministry. It has afforded me much pain and pleasure. It has given me many advantages, though not so many as I ought to have received. The reader has probably experienced a similar mixture of pain and pleasure, of advantage and disappointment, in perusing, as I have in writing, my account of the four years of which the course consisted, and may be equally ready to pause at their conclusion, as I am. Let him, however, be forewarned that I have not in reserve any better supply of amusement or instruction, in the memoirs of my future years. He will soon have an opportunity of judging for himself.

It may possibly appear to some of the readers of this work that, in my preceding and in my following reflections, I have fallen into a tone of censure which might have been well spared. A re-perusal of what I have written suggests to me that such may be the feeling excited, even in persons who are not disposed to misconceive me. I can safely declare that I am actuated by compassion towards misfortune and unhappiness, and not by a spirit of unjust reproof. It is true, I see error, but I do not discover intentional fault, in the people with whom I am connected. Besides, I must beg to be allowed to say, that my sentence against them is not to be applied too largely. It should be divested of much of the generality which I may seem, in some places, to have given to it. My

observations have arisen from the acquaintance with the people which I have personally enjoyed, and that acquaintance must be necessarily circumscribed. It is evident also that I must hitherto have contemplated, principally, the district in which my education was conducted. Other parts, under very different circumstances, can be only partially and accidentally concerned. Lastly, large exceptions must be made in favor of numerous individuals in so considerable a body, who, at all times, are excluded from the reproof that applies to the community.

To praise does, most certainly, give me far more pleasure than to reprehend. Gladly do I bear testimony to the worth of the dissenters in general, without seeing any inconsistency, in this declaration, with the remarks contained in this book. There is as much excellence to be found among them as among any religious denomination. They have, in their number, men of superior and illustrious merit. Their ministers are often learned, and generally intelligent. As men, *they* are the best, far the best, that I have met with. They are the best friends and companions in the wide creation.

CHAPTER VI.

From the Conclusion of my Academical Studies to my Settlement as a Minister.

THE interval between my release from the seminary, and my settlement as a minister, consisted of somewhat less than two months. Yet, during so short a period, I had to endure much pain, and anxiety, and mortification. In consequence of an unfortunate entanglement, which is not mentioned for good reasons; of the journeys above noticed, in the depth of winter; of attention to the business of school; and of somewhat excessive study, which a consciousness of the defects of education produced, my health was alarmingly impaired. The blood, one while, would gush out at my nostrils; at another, all the symptoms of a dysentery appeared; and, for a considerable time, the vitiated state of my habit shewed itself in violent inflammation of the eyes. At last, a settled dyspnœa ensued, the symptoms of which will remain with me, and probably carry me to the grave. I felt much external soreness of the chest, which continued down, at the termination of the ribs on the right side, to the back bone. In this condition, I removed to the house of a relation at Bristol, and drank the waters of the Hot-wells.

From this relation I experienced much unkindness, and had reason to repent that I had received the

obligations of a hospitality which was grudgingly bestowed. My spirits failed, and the entrance of any one, into the room in which I sat, rendered me unable to speak. I mention these circumstances because they form a part of my life, some of the incidents of which I have undertaken to give to the world, and because they give me an opportunity of recording the benevolent attentions of a friend whom I unexpectedly gained at this place. This was the late revered Doctor Wright, a physician of great practice, and of unbounded humanity.

This gentleman deeply sympathised with me in my suffering, without pretending to understand my complaint, which has never been explained to me. His attendance on me was assiduous, for which he would accept no fee. To lessen my expense, he obtained my medicine from a druggist, which, however, produced no alleviation of my disorder. He made me welcome at his house, where I often shared his hospitality. He carried me almost daily, in his chariot, to the Wells, where he had many patients. His carriage stopped at my door in going and coming, because he saw that walking did me injury, as it has done on all occasions ever since, although I have, for many years, enjoyed what is called high health. His friendly attentions and effectual assistance followed me after I removed from under his paternal inspection. Indeed, he was to me as a father. Many, besides me, experienced the

fostering care and assiduity of this best of men, and most humane and skilful of physicians.

As a dernier resort, after confessing that he did not understand my complaint, and could render me no assistance, he directed a surgeon to bleed me. Almost instant relief was the effect. The operation was repeated again and again, with equal success. My health was placed, in a short time, on the footing which has continued, with little variation, ever since. I was not quite twenty-two years of age, and an unvitiated constitution aided to restore me, as far as a rooted malady would admit. I may describe my case imperfectly. In fact, I never could give an intelligible account of it to Dr. Wright. Can the faculty, at this distance of time, comprehend its nature, or derive any information from the description which I have given? At the time, my fancy impressed on me a conviction, that I should die of a rupture, or opening, at the end of the long ribs, near the pit of the stomach, at which place I imagined that there was a collection of matter formed, which would force itself out, and which I attributed to leaning on my desk. My fancy produced one effect, and induced me never after to support myself against any thing before me in my studies.

As I am anonymous to the reader, although I may not continue unknown, I do not allow myself to name those who have contributed to any of my mis-

fortunes. The same reason, however, does not prevent me from giving the names of my benefactors, when I think that the occasion requires it. My testimony may do them but little good, yet it can do them no injury. Due praise may be recorded by an unknown name. Accusation should be authenticated, because, without such support, pity, and even a sense of honor, may acquit the guilty, and ward off deserved chastisement.

On this account, I readily mention the Reverend Mr. Wright, among those who shewed me kindness during my stay at Bristol. He had the reputation of maintaining some stateliness towards his brother ministers, who accused him of acting the high priest. Perhaps my pretensions were too slender to make his superiority equivocal; but, more probably, the accusation was founded in misapprehension of his character. To me he shewed nothing but affability, which I owed, perhaps, in some measure, to his veneration for the name of my deceased father. He was a very able preacher, and gifted, in prayer, beyond any of our ministers with whom it has ever been my lot to be acquainted. He was certainly a very able theologian, and had no reason to yield to his excellent brother in this respect, who was as well versed in divinity as in medicine. These were, in truth, and in the most respectable sense, *par nobile fratrum*. Of them I would say, "may I die their death, and may my last end be like theirs." They

were equally good and great, and have left few of equal excellence and fame in our churches.

While I continued at this place, the unkindness of my relation induced me to wish ardently for the restoration of my health, not only for the sake of the good which health comprehends, but for the sake of escaping from his grudging hospitality. This might have given an elasticity to my frame, favorable to an event so desirable; but it was counteracted by the small hope which my disordered spirits led me to entertain of any settlement. Harrassed by distaste of my present mode of existence, and hopelessness of a speedy change, I met a stranger, one morning, on the draw-bridge, over which we were both looking on the river and shipping. By chance, we fell into discourse, and were interested. Some degree of confidence was imperceptibly inspired; we exchanged addresses; of him I had no previous knowledge; his name I had heard; with my name and family he was familiar; he had well known my father; of my destination he had previously endeavoured to gain some information, and had been told of my present residence. It was his intention to find me out before chance brought us together. His friendly concern for me led him to be inquisitive respecting my prospects. I had no secrets. All my mind was soon disclosed to him. The very situation, which he had in his view for me, before he knew me, was still unoccupied. He offered his service to pro-

cure my introduction into it, which I gratefully accepted. His recommendation was favorable. In a short time I had an invitation to preach to a Society at ————. My arrangements were few and speedily made. I quitted Bristol, much recovered in health and spirits.

Reader, do you wish to know the name of the man who thus gave me his hand to conduct me over the threshold of life? He has been long numbered among the dead. His memory remains engraven on my heart, and in the recollection and esteem of many more. His name shall be recorded in these pages, which, however, will not long preserve the characters of which they speak. He was the Rev. Nat. Philipps, of Derby.

My journey was through Worcester, in the beginning of August, 1788, which was filled with the King and his court. It was my good luck to see, for the first and last time, our puissant monarch, George the Third, who was soon attacked by that malady which has since secretly and publicly so often visited him. This was to me no very cheering journey. My destiny was perfectly new to me. The people, among whom I at last arrived, were literally unknown to me, even by name. None of the circumstances of the situation had been disclosed to me.

In due time, without any incidents on the road worth recording, *except as above excepted*, I arrived at the place to which I was bound. It was deserted by the people, who had proceeded to different places

to have a view of "majesty." The master and mistress of the family, to whom I had been recommended, were of the number. The town was at all times dull, with little business. The grass appeared, in one of the wider streets, green among the stones. However, I was received as a person expected by the domestics, and was entertained as well as I could expect. Although I arrived on approbation only, the event was my settlement as pastor of a congregation of Protestant Dissenters. Before I enter upon the detail of my life here, it may be right to make the reader a little better acquainted with the state of my mind, and the complexion of my character.

I was in my twenty-second year. The frugality, with which I had spent the last four years, fitted me for a residence among a very plain and rustic people, although the studies which I had been pursuing made their undescrivable ignorance exceedingly irksome. My vivacity had not been much checked by my difficulties, and was now even increased by the dreams of usefulness which floated before my eyes, and by the prospect of an independence, which appeared to me ample. Forty pounds a year seemed fully adequate to my wants and wishes, while I little dreamed that, out of this sum, I could scarcely afford one shilling to purchase a book, however necessary to my professional occupation!!

My books consisted of little more than a Con-

cordance and a Greek Testament, with a very few which had served me in my preparatory course. No supply could be procured within the sphere of my acquaintance, and, indeed, the place was altogether free from the *vice* of reading and literature, although there was a small book club, of which I soon became a member! For some time I did not perceive the deficiency, in any great measure, as I was forced to bend all my efforts on pulpit compositions, of which I had but about fifteen specimens, long ago consigned to the flames. For some time I had no acquaintance and sought none: my spirits were, however, buoyant, and carried me through a period which, in other circumstances, would have been intolerable. I thank God, I have ever found *strength sufficient for the day*.

My religious opinions had undergone no material change since the days of my youth, when I listened to the controversial argumentations of my uncle. My morals were altogether pure. The effect of a religious education, on the last, has never failed. My views of religious doctrine were soon, however, to undergo a total revolution. At this time, I honestly maintained, on the question of man's accountableness, the side of the Libertarians. On the person of Christ, I embraced the views of the moderately high Arians. On infant baptism, I entertained no serious doubts.

The ministerial character appeared to me very important, as several of my family had sustained it,

which could not fail to make a deep impression. Without many qualifications for my profession, I had an ardent zeal for the interest of religion, which was afterwards crowned with considerable success. My inexperience led me to expect much greater, and, like Melancthon, I dreamed that the world, the flesh, and the devil, would be no match for me. Like Melancthon, I found, eventually, that one of them, in some shape or other, was too hard for the sanguine preacher.

My taste for literature was now decided, by the reputation that its supposed existence gave me here, which excited my vanity in no ordinary degree. Yet, no progress whatever was made in it during my stay in this place, on account of my laborious task of composition, and the hard duties which my zeal imposed on me. But the predilection was of great advantage, as it produced, in after times, some degree of, perhaps, successful application.

In politics I was a Foxite, and utterly disapproved of the Regency Bill of that day, not so much from an understanding of the question, as from abhorrence of the base spirit of chicanery and perfidy which dictated it, and appeared to me, at all times, to actuate that party. Being of a frank and open disposition, I had an enthusiasm of admiration for Mr. Fox, which has never abated; and a chivalrous attachment to the Prince of Wales, in whom I have ever been most ready to pardon every defect, while his generous

virtues have always interested my affections and my understanding. Before that time, I had thought but little about him; ever since, I have stood forth, not only as his defender from calumny, but as his zealous panegyrist. And now, in my more mature years, when youthful vivacity does not lead captive my imagination, I prefer the generous and splendid taste of this Prince, to a more calculating and niggardly prudence, which ill befits a throne, and which, by generating selfishness, preys more deeply on the happiness and resources of a nation in order to satisfy private avarice, than a spirited display of taste, which promotes ingenuity, and leaves the heart susceptible to the emotions of humanity towards a suffering people. Yes, generous Prince, thou art the object of my enthusiastic attachment, in youth, and in mature years. May God grant thee an opportunity of restoring peace and happiness to thy country, which bleeds at every pore. My station is too humble to lend any aid to the interest of thy government. But thou wilt not have one subject more devoted than the writer of these pages, who cannot be suspected of flattery, because he is beyond thy power of remuneration, which is, doubtless, great, and will be as generously exercised.*

* This ardent eulogium on the Prince of Wales was written in the beginning of the year 1811, when the whole of this work was drawn up. Now, in the end of the year 1812, I leave it unaltered, although I think some explana-

CHAPTER VII.

Commencement of my Ministerial Function.

ON my arrival, I found that the people had been long in a state of confusion, from dispute with their

tion has become necessary. If I thought that the Prince, become the unrestricted Regent of the United Kingdom, has adopted principles of government hostile to those which ever actuated the most enlightened statesman and most benevolent man, "take him for all in all," that this or any other country has produced; if I thought that he has cancelled any of his promises or pledges, or disappointed the expectations, which he had once made or excited, I should be most decidedly for erasing the praises bestowed upon him in the above sentences. It would be impossible for me to retain my esteem for him on account of political sentiments no longer preserved, although my opinion of personal qualities that once excited my approbation would remain undiminished as long as they continued uneffaced. The complexion of politics has strangely varied. It is not easy, under present circumstances, to consider the *opposition* of this day, as actuated by the generous principles which rendered their deceased leader so unrivalled in fame, and so powerful in his ascendancy over my understanding and affections. To understand the *opposition*, as it is called, is now become a difficult task. It is made up of parts not a little heterogeneous, if it really consists of Lord Holland and Mr. Whitbread on one side, and of Lord Grenville and Lord Ellenborough on the other. It is, however, certain, that the position of the Regent is unfortunate, to say the least, to be in the hands of the Liverpools, and Eldons, and Castlereaghs, and Ryders. But I will still presume that the prince is unfortunate only. He has given no proof of dereliction of former principles. He has only *not* acted upon them, which, perhaps, has not properly been in his power. Until I have proof of change, I give him my confidence, and abide by the opinions expressed in the text.

former minister, who still lived on the spot. The occasion is unknown to me. It was probably similar to others which continually occur in our societies, where the factious dispositions of popular assemblies are ever at work, and render the life of a minister so irksome and so precarious. This is an evil arising from the noble privilege which we enjoy, of choosing our own pastors. Few advantages are secure against abuse. Few are more abused than this advantage.

The people were indifferent, and lately much scattered by the establishment of a society of Huntingdonian Methodists. The expectation of a new minister, on probation, brought together scarcely forty persons. The late minister was not of the number. This threw a damp on my spirits, for the first time. Had matters continued thus, it is probable I should soon have taken wing.

The spirits of the people were unquestionably bad and bitter. The mutual dislike of the quondam minister and flock was such, as rendered all reconciliation impracticable. My disposition would have led me to attempt it, at whatever hazard to myself, had it not been hopeless.

Without experience, without guidance, and without advice, I resolved to conciliate the absentees to the interest, and to obtain the neutrality at least of the late pastor. Both attempts were attended with success. Most of the congregation returned by degrees. The pastor attended the public service, and commu-

nicated with the society. My visits to him excited jealousy in those who were hostile to him, but they became frequent. Seldom a day passed, eventually, in which I did not call upon him. He was a man of very decent manners, with too much of the courtliness, to use no other word, of the ministers of the last age. He had some knowledge, and a great deal of anecdote; and he had, what I could find no where else, a considerable library of useful books, which he lent me under strict conditions. I had a respect for him, and more pity than respect. His case was undoubtedly hard, and he was rather advanced in life. Of the first I have an imperfect idea, of the last a complete recollection.

The effect of early instruction had been impressed on my mind by reading and observation. I thought that I foresaw, in our younger people, a future respectable congregation. Their parents were, without question, beyond all amendment. Much complaint could not be made against their morals. But their knowledge was small beyond conception. Their occupations were not very respectable, but their wealth was considerable. My resolution was formed, to attend to the instruction of the young, with whom I took incredible pains, for I had to teach them to *read* the Scriptures, when I lectured them on their contents. About forty were mustered, in three bodies, comprising lisping children, and youths of eighteen years of age. To the first, I gave plain

catechisms; to the last, the Bible, with occasional lectures on various subjects, which many were induced to transcribe.

The effect of this attention to the children of the society was, increased civility from their parents, and a more constant attendance on the public service. Those things, which are themselves effects, become causes of others, and a constant succession of occurrences is thus produced. The attentive presence of the congregation was followed by the visits of others to our place of worship. That induced me to attempt an evening service, which succeeded to draw together a congregation of occasional attendants, but from which no material good appeared to ensue. On the subject of evening services, I will trouble the reader with a few reflections.

1. I do not hesitate to condemn my own undertaking. By it I was forced to attend less carefully to the instruction of the younger people, on which much, very much, depended. With three services a day to conduct, how was it possible to examine forty young persons and children, most of whom had not leisure to meet me, except on the first day in the week? Besides this, the labor was almost intolerable. That which should have been a work of delight and pleasure, was thus rendered most irksome and tedious. It was well that it did not produce a fatal effect on my health, so lately restored. To crown the whole, the business of prepa-

ration for three services, when I had no stock of compositions, and had little skill in writing, must have rendered my ministrations far less respectable to myself, and less edifying to the people. In fact, I was obliged to read over again sermons that were but lately delivered before, and to speak almost extempore in the evening lecture, for which I was very ill qualified. However, my services gave considerable satisfaction to all but myself. In no long time, I discontinued the evening congregation for the reasons already stated, and would seriously advise young ministers never to make such an attempt, from conviction that, in their hands, it must be attended with little good, and much evil.

2. To evening services, in general, I have strong objections, though, in particular cases, they may be desirable and useful. It has come to my knowledge that they give opportunities for much irregular and immoral conduct. They labor under many of the inconveniences attending our theatrical representations, which are exhibited, in modern times, at a late hour. This has ever appeared to me the most valid objection to such exhibitions, which, under proper regulations, might be productive of some advantage.

War and luxury have tended to corrupt the morals of our common people. But I attribute, without hesitation, much of the debased and abandoned morals of the lower order of the people to

the evening meetings among our religionists, the prevalence of which is exactly coeval with the increased corruption of our countrymen. On this account, I deprecate the enthusiasm which has for half a century prevailed, and by which our national character has been perceptibly deteriorated. Signs of increased wickedness are evident. All the signs of reformation are, at least, doubtful. Some individual good may have been done. The general corruption is unequivocal. When the phenomena are concomitant, it is fair to suspect their mutual influence, and the reason of the thing, in this case, corroborates the conclusion.

No time can be so usefully employed as that which is given to domestic instruction. For this the inferior ranks have no other time, but the Lord's day, which they can effectually employ. But it is on our servants that the worst effect is produced by its neglect. Favorable occasions for debauchery are offered them by the too common custom of giving them the Sunday evening, under pretence of attending public worship. While *they* have this resource, however inadequate, their *employers* are less scrupulous about detaining them at home all day in domestic occupations. Luxurious dinners have ensued in our houses, which formerly contented themselves with more frugal preparations. The attendance of *families*, on public worship, has become less regular, and the attendance of *servants* has been either dis-

continued, though they pretend to avail themselves of opportunities in the evening, or gives occasion for much mischief. Besides this, the domestic advice, which was formerly given in every creditable house, and which would be attended with more effect than sermons, must necessarily be given up, because the servants are not present; and, if they should be present, it is received with contempt, because these servants have been taught, at these *opportunities*, as they are called, to scorn every thing that does not proceed from those *who have experienced the work of grace*. It is a fact, within my knowledge, that many heads of houses are quite discouraged from advising and rebuking, because they see that their lessons are received scoffingly by their conceitedly-sanctified domestics, who look upon such lectures as of no value, because they esteem them *legal*. The mischief of such a state of things is incalculable. In what view soever we take these evening opportunities, they are of evil effect. But their chief mischief is, that they preclude domestic instruction, if to be attended by *families*, or render it ineffectual where it may be given. Surely nothing can be substituted for family religion. The public morals are incalculably injured by its neglect. Better far would it be to have no public worship, than to have no family religion. Family religion is the soul of morality, the vital spring of good manners and of serious piety. I

offer these observations to those who do not encourage our evening religious parties, and to those who do. They may induce the one more earnestly to protest against the reprobated practice, and the other to begin its discontinuance. Of particular cases I say nothing. They may be supported by their particular circumstances. As a general practice, the holding of evening religious assemblies is bad, and tends to corrupt, and not to amend, the morals of the community.

The effect of my labors was visible in the improved manners of the young, and in the evident increase of the number of worshippers attending our services. About forty only were assembled to hear the first essay of the young candidate. Before I relinquished my charge, nearly 200 constituted the regular assembly. The Body was, however, hopelessly ignorant, while a few individuals had attained to considerable information.

At this time and place I formed an acquaintance with a sensible person employed in the Excise, who became a very regular attendant on our worship, and an approver of our general doctrines. When my acquaintance commenced, he had what I considered as three capital defects. *He was an unbeliever in Revelation*, from disgust of the doctrines which he supposed it to inculcate. By considerable pains to free the Christian religion from the imputation of teaching the received opinions, which appeared to

him so objectionable and monstrous, I had the good fortune to remove his disgust, and to convince him that the revelation of Christ is worthy of God. He no longer hesitated to receive it, supported, as it appeared, by so much convincing proof of its divine authority. He commenced a worshipper of God, *the father*, as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

He was addicted to the unprofitable vice of swearing, which undermines the principles of piety in the mind, and generates a disregard to the authority of the divinity. But he ceased to call the name of God in vain, and was considered a remarkable instance of change from impiety to decency and propriety of conversation, and I was often congratulated on the success of my expostulations.

He devoted much of his time to riotous company and excess in drinking. But he became an example of complete sobriety and correct conduct. His wife, who had no predilection for such as departed from the established worship, encouraged his reformation by joining him in attendance on our services, and by favoring my unremitted visits at her house. By often spending my evenings there, I had the satisfaction to see him weaned gradually from other company, and satisfied with the moderate enjoyment which home supplied, and which I did not refuse. The result was, his additional comfort, and decreased expense, which was very convenient in his circumstances. With him I corresponded after my

departure, but have now lost sight of him. He had been brought up among rigid Calvinists, who had filled his mind with a disgust of religion. He presumed that his father would prefer his continuance in irregular courses to his reformation of manners in connection with heretics. His mind was strong, and capable of high improvement. His heart was equally capable of high virtue. I shall remember him as long as the powers of memory shall remain, and would gladly renew my acquaintance with him.

In the society were four women, at least, of considerable understanding. Their characters were different, but they all entertained rational views of religion, and zeal for its genuine success. With them my intercourse was pleasant and improving. Would it could be said that there were four of equal cultivation and merit of the other sex! I have since associated with a religious community where the case was exactly the reverse.

One man, however, of the regular flock, had acquired a considerable portion of valuable knowledge. But of the best knowledge he was altogether ignorant. He was advanced in years, and in duplicity and malignity. I had the good fortune to keep on the best terms with him to the last, but could not shut my eyes to the moral deformities which centered, in an unusual proportion, in his character. He had retired from business, but not to cultivate religion and sincerity. He was a pro-

verb for every thing that was disagreeable, although no man accused him of want of strict justice in his transactions. The former ministers had often smarted under the malignity and tyranny which he ever attempted to exercise. He was, indeed, a "Diotrephes, and loved the pre-eminence." How I regretted to see united, so much ability with so much unworthiness, so much rationality of view with so much obliquity of temper and conduct! He was, in some measure, our prop and stay, and our bane and plague, a thorn in the flesh of every one who had any connection with our interest. Such men are not unfrequent elsewhere among us, though few can be said to equal this man.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ministerial Ordination.

THE first occurrence, which occasioned me some difficulty since my ministerial engagement, arose from a wish, expressed after I had accepted an invitation to be settled pastor to the people, that I would submit to be ordained in the usual form. To render this matter more intelligible, some detail may be necessary.

Ordination, in some mode or other, had continued among the Presbyterians long after they had lost all attachment to the church discipline and government, which once distinguished their sect. The form had remained long after they had abandoned all right *to impose articles of faith*, to demand an account of *conversion and spiritual experiences*, and particularly of a special *call* to preach the gospel. About this time, however, many demurred to undergo what they considered as unscriptural imposition, and I was one of the *doubters*.

Previously to ordination, none were allowed, in this and other congregations, to administer the particular ordinances of religion, which seemed to be considered as of more solemn import than the ordinary acts of worship and devotion. Hitherto, I had not christened any child, or distributed the Lord's Supper; but, on such occasions, had exchanged with a neighbouring minister, who had received the important qualification of ordination. Being now chosen pastor, I wished for the end of an inconvenience, which I had felt more heavy, because I esteemed it unnecessary. The people, also, with a right feeling, wished to obtain the services of their own minister.

The aged person, whom I have mentioned, was the only avowed Socinian in the society. From him I expected no difficulty, trusting to the freedom of his sentiments for a liberal indifference, which

I felt, without adopting sentiments, in other respects, equally free. His acquiescence, owing to the various ramifications of his connections in the society, would have left me no difficulty. But this man had his prejudices; "he had never known such a thing," and declared that he "could not, *in conscience*, sit down with me at the Lord's Table, if I should venture to administer the Sacrament unordained."

Religious scruple, at all times, had commanded my indulgence. The matter was not, altogether, a point of conscience with me, especially when serious offence might be given by singularity. I resolved to consult some ministers of whom I had a good opinion, who pressed my conformity, but supported their opinion by arguments that tended to increase my unwillingness. One, especially, wished to retain the custom for its decency and solemnity, an argument which leaves a great deal to fancy. But his chief argument was, that the door to the ministry was thus rendered less open to unsuitable pretenders. As I had ever held that societies have a right to judge, for themselves, of the suitability of their pastors, however crudely they may judge, it seemed unjust to shut a door which they might choose to open. This seemed a species of priestcraft, a craft which I had ever held in utter abhorrence. The argument also failed to prove the thing for which it pleaded. For it is notorious that no check

is given, by ordination, among those Dissenters who uniformly adopt it, such as the Independents, Baptists, and Methodists, to the admission of every species of illiteracy and ignorance. Nor would my friend have presumed to question the right of a society to entertain *any* man, as minister, however unqualified. All that he could do was, to absent himself from the solemnity of ordaining an illiterate person, which could make no alteration in the case, as there would be no want of those who would have no such scruples.

Without being precisely of his opinions, in many respects, I personally consulted Dr. Priestley among others, and had with him, on that occasion, the only interview with which I have ever been favored. Rather contrary to my expectations, he urged my compliance, but with great moderation. I had hoped to obtain his concurrence with my own opinion, and to produce an effect, by it means, on the mind of my scrupulous opponent.

The sincerity of this man's scruples of conscience, however, I seriously doubted. Not willing to carry my point peremptorily, I thought it right to sound his inclinations concerning the *expense* that must be necessarily incurred, if an ordination should take place. It was calculated that it could not fall short of ten pounds, which, of course, the society must defray. Ten pounds were words that operated as a talisman. Scruples vanished. The idea of ten

pounds freed me from all embarrassment. I was no longer incapable of every duty of a minister, and the scrupulous Christian sat down, very contentedly, and received, without further hesitation, the Holy Sacrament from my unconsecrated hands.

This difficulty being removed, various infants underwent the ceremony of being sprinkled with water issuing from my fingers. Every thing appeared to proceed smoothly, when a message was delivered to me that my presence was requested, without delay, to christen a child that appeared in danger of death. This I had not foreseen, and the shock to my feelings and principles was violent. I gave an instant negative to the invitation. The family was of some consequence, and the partizans and branches of it soon surrounded me to expostulate with me. None of us believed in original sin, and, for my own part, if I had believed, the connection between the ceremony required and original sin, could never have reached my organs of perception. As it was, I could only ask, "what possible good can it be to christen a dying infant?" The answer was, "it will, without baptism, be denied Christian burial." "But I will officiate at its interment; and have you not a good burying place?" "None have ever been interred in it." "Well, let us make a beginning in this case." "No! the family burying-ground is in the parish church-yard." "Surely, that cannot signify, when I tell you that it is exceedingly against

my inclination to christen the child. It encourages a superstition, which it is high time to explode." "The mother is greatly affected by your refusal, and we know not what may be the consequence. 'This is no time to reason with her.'—I instantly complied. But that, I think, was the last child whom I was persuaded to treat in the same manner.

This event had a great influence on all my opinions, and on my future destiny.

Baptism had excited my notice among other branches of theology, and I had read several things on the subject. I had been differently affected as I read different treatises. A confused recollection of various arguments now obtruded itself on my mind.

The previous question of Emlyn had been very early considered by me, and produced no small impression. While that impression lasted, I had read a most able treatise, written by Mr. Foote, of Bristol, who, on Hoadly's principles respecting positive institutions, very luminously treats of the two points usually discussed, the *subjects* and the *mode* of baptism. At the time, I saw as Mr. Foote taught me; but, after perusing the work, I reflected that it was of no consequence to settle those points, if baptism is not a rite of perpetual obligation, which I fully believed it not to be. I always made a point of conscience to follow my full convictions, let the subject be of whatever importance. Under the

belief that baptism was not designed, by its Institutor, to be perpetual, Mr. Foote's treatise had only a temporary effect on me. I thought him right, but judged it of no consequence whether he was right or wrong. In short, all his arguments vanished soon out of my sight.

Time led me to doubt the validity of Emlyn's position. Although I now concur in his conclusion, I arrive at it in a way somewhat different from his, as will be shewn in the sequel. His premises I abandoned, and, at that time, his inference appeared unfounded, on that account. But Mr. Foote's book also had lost its effect, and I imperceptibly acquiesced in the validity of the views which I had entertained from my youth, and did not hesitate to christen infant children.

But now, when this shock was given to my feelings, and I was called on to deal in a seeming *charm*, my recollection became very busy. Emlyn had lost his hold for ever, but on that very account Foote began to disturb my understanding. I resolved to give the subject a complete investigation.

The arguments for immersion of adults came now quite fresh into my memory, as I began to recollect the contents of Mr. Foote's book. In a little time, I felt that I wanted no information on that side of the question. Just at that period a work on Baptism, by the Reverend John Palmer, was advertised. I had heard him preach at Bristol with great satis-

faction, and now said, "this sensible and learned author will convince, if any thing can convince, me,—I will procure the book." This almost decided my mind. "Is this all that can be said by a rational and candid man for infant baptism." So I reasoned. The die was cast, and I for ever gave up the question.

While this was passing, I cultivated, with more assiduity than before, the acquaintance of an ingenious Baptist minister, who lived a few miles from me. His conversation served to confirm me, and his conversation effected a still more important turn in my views. He was fast renouncing his orthodox faith, but was not disposed to adopt my Arian sentiments. They soon lost their hold of myself. I believe that we mutually assisted each other in abandoning the views of the person of Christ which we had adopted, and in embracing those which we have ever since maintained. About the same time, my ideas underwent a total revolution on the subject of human liberty, and I have no reason to doubt of the conclusions which were then made.

It may appear that, by a man whose income was forty pounds a year only, no apprehension of the future could be well entertained. Such a pittance could be replaced by almost any mode of life. My friend, who had more experience and ampler resources, determined on abandoning the ministry, which his change of opinions rendered no longer

eligible. It was my lot to fight with all the difficulties of my profession.

I had undertaken my mode of life from choice, and retained a fondness for it, which was increased by the success of my first efforts.

My taste for literature led me to think no other profession compatible with the course of study to which I was devoted.

An affection for my congregation had an interest in my heart like a first love, and my reluctance to leave it was very great. The determination was formed, of honestly avowing my change of opinion on the subject of baptism, and of offering to officiate, as usual, with that exception. A neighbouring minister agreed to exchange with me when any occasion of christening required it; and I submitted it to the society—whether we might not go on, in this manner, as we had done at my first settlement.

A meeting of the people was called, for which Diotrephes was prepared. He begged that all the *women* might remain, to express their opinions. After my letter was read, he put two questions to the people assembled.

“1. Do you wish to have your children baptised? What do you say, mothers of children?” The answer was of course in the affirmative.

“2. Do you prefer to have them baptised by

your minister?" The answer, of course, was here the same.

The assembly was dismissed, and the man's son-in-law was deputed to inform me that the congregation would dispense with my services at the end of one quarter of a year.

It was now time to consult my friends. Not one of them gave me the least hope that any congregation of the *Presbyterians* would receive me with such an unhappy change of opinion. To disconnect myself from this body was painful to me, in no small degree. My acquaintance was among them only, and I respected them highly for their general candor and comparative learning. At the same time, I began to question the extent of their liberality, when I experienced so feelingly the want of it.

Of the Baptists I knew nothing, but that they are generally Calvinistic. The names of Gale and Foster, in former times, were known to me, and those of Foote and Toulmin, at a more recent period. The former of these two was no more. To the latter I made known my case, who had received some anecdotes from me, through a third person, for a work which does not appear to have seen the light. By his means I was recommended to a respectable society of Baptists, of liberal sentiments, who then, for the first time, came within my knowledge. With them, after a while, I was settled.

While I was in this perplexity, my people began to express their concern that I was going to leave them, to whom I frankly owned that I did it with reluctance, and in consequence of their own resolution to dispense with my services. Great was their astonishment at my declaration. "*They* had understood that it was an *act of my own*. *They* had never expressed a wish that I should remove. The matter might be very well arranged in the way I had at first proposed." On this an explanation took place. They had only answered the questions put to them, but had authorised no one to tell me that I was dismissed. I was besought by them to allow them to call another vestry meeting, when they would give me a cordial invitation to continue my labors among them. "Who," said they, "will take such pains with our children?" It was too late to consent to this, as I had promised to supply the congregation which had invited me. The civilities which I received were numerous during my further stay, and on my departure a large body of these plain and well-meaning people, with their children, accompanied me to the coach. I shall never forget them, though the last weeks of my residence with them were some of the bitterest of my life. My stay here was exactly one year and three quarters, and I left them in my twenty-fourth year.

Reflections on this period have been made during

my narrative. Many others will suggest themselves to the reader, whom I must now release from his attendance on the events which befel me at this place. A new scene offers itself to his attention.

CHAPTER IX.

Settlement with a Congregation of General Baptists.—Account of the People.—Voluntary Removal, and reasons for it.

IN proceeding to my destination, I visited, for the first time, the *great city*, and became acquainted with several persons who have, ever since, formed a most respectable portion of the circle of my acquaintance. It was in May 1790. Here I might have remained with a respectable society, had it not been for my previous engagement. To my promises I have ever paid the strictest regard. This was the second time in which I neglected and sacrificed my comfort and fame, in order to answer the expectations which I had raised, when there would have been very little trouble to disengage myself. It appears to me dishonorable to endeavor to obtain freedom from engagements, in order to promote self-interest only, even when our release is attended with few difficulties. Such punctiliousness has seemed, at times, to disserve me. But I have

retained my self-esteem, which I value above every advantage.

It may be concluded, as I have avowed myself bound to follow the dictates of conscience in every matter of a religious nature, that, when my mind was no longer influenced by the arguments of Emlyn respecting the perpetuity of baptism, and when the baptism of adults by immersion appeared to me to be the only Christian baptism, it may be concluded, on these accounts, that I was now, on conviction, a Baptist, and it will be concluded also that I submitted to that rite in the form which appeared to me right. Such certainly was the fact. Some friends advised me to pass through the water in London, which would have saved me much subsequent anxiety. But I thought it best to give proof of my conviction among the people to whom I was going to minister.

After a short stay in London, where I preached twice, and I have never repeated it, I proceeded to my intended settlement. The idea that I had followed the dictates of conscience, and made some sacrifice to it, gave an uncommon elasticity to my character, and I entered on my professional labors without any disgust with the world. But my troubles had not ceased, and occasion was given me very speedily to lament the hardships of my fate.

To preach to the people was, of course, my first

employment. These *liberal* Baptists had established a *strict* communion, that is, they admitted no man to the Lord's Supper that had not been previously baptised. This appeared to me such an exercise of dominion over the faith of Christians as could be founded in power only, exercised with a total disregard of right and equity. But it was not the time to contend, nor was there any occasion, as I had no opportunity to offer myself for communion. It seemed, however, a subject fit for discussion at a future time.

After officiating as a preacher once or twice, it began to be rumoured abroad that the minister was *an unbaptised man*. It was suggested that he could not preach before he had made *public profession of Christianity*. The ministers, in the connection, were written and spoken to, one of whom dispatched a pastoral letter to the people, to charge them not to elect *any* man, as their minister, who was not baptised, or was not ready to be baptised, *with imposition of hands*.

This imposition of hands had been mentioned to me before, and I had protested against it, as superstitious. They could not say that it was a Christian institution, but it had been received in their church as an appendage to baptism. My arguments went to shew that, for the same reason which induced me to reject infant sprinkling, I rejected imposition of

hands, because it wanted *scriptural authority*. In short, I had declared that I would be baptised, but that no man's hands should come on my head.

Affairs were in great perplexity, on this account, and a set of *preachers*, among the people, contrived to confound and embarrass things that did not require any remedy but Christian charity. On this the *subscribers*, few of whom were members of the *church*, took up the matter with spirit. They declared that they would not trouble themselves about questions of church discipline and established practices, but would have a minister who met their approbation in his public ministrations. They assured the church that they would elect a minister, and support him, independently of them, and *they* might seek what remedy they pleased. The *congregation* was decidedly on my side. However a compromise was entered into, that, as the *church* were interested in the public instruction, though they contributed little or nothing to the support of the cause, they should have a right to vote along with the subscribers. In event, a pretty unanimous invitation was given me to be the preacher of the society, but that the church should choose whom they might as administrator of their religious ordinances. That I may bring this business to a conclusion here, I will pay no great regard to time, but put together every thing that occurred to its end.

By consent it was understood that the people,

meaning the subscribers and church members, whether subscribers or not, should choose the *preacher*; that the church should provide the *administrator* of the Lord's Supper, whom they called *elder*; and that every individual should be *baptised* by any elder in the connection. And I think this a very equitable arrangement, although it may generally be contrived that the same man may sustain all these characters, and perform all these duties. Yet the division of the offices was here become necessary. I could not be elder, because I could not submit to ordination, which was necessary, in the esteem of these good people, to valid administration. I could not *baptise*, because they insisted on imposition of hands on the baptised, which certainly I could not conscientiously perform.

The person who acted as elder, at this time, was an aged man, minister of a neighbouring congregation, who had a district under his charge with the name of *messenger*. This sect, or at least a part of it, think that there are three orders of ministers in the church of Christ. *Deacons*, who may baptise; *elders*, who may, besides baptising, do what pertains to the Sacrament; and *messengers*, who have a supervision of churches, though those churches do not devolve on *them*, exclusively, the ordination of the other functionaries. In fact, they are Episcopalians, or Lutherans, in church discipline, without adopting the name of bishops,—whom they call

Messengers, as the Germans name them Superintendents,—and without claiming for the messengers the exclusive right of ordination.

The good old messenger was a man of sense, and much liberality. In rationality of views he outran the people, but had great awe of them, and perhaps an undue desire of popularity among them.

He would not baptise me without imposition of hands done after baptism; and, indeed, declared that he could not *conscientiously*. It was, however, evidently his earnest desire that I should become the minister of the society, for which he labored with zeal and effect. He wished me to be a member of the church, and declared that if any other minister would baptise me simply, the church could not have any right to reject me as a communicant. The matter was so arranged, and I was not the only one that did not receive imposition of hands. Thus I was the means of excluding from this people all further claim to impose this unscriptural condition of church membership. All my attempts to introduce open communion were, however, without effect. In time, I was pressed to accept of the eldership, which I declined if ordination was a previous qualification, and continued the instructor only of the people, because they considered ordination as indispensable.

These minute details serve to throw light on the character of a body of people but little known, and

to elucidate the history of religion in this country, where much yet remains to be done in order to free Christianity from degrading additions.

This people were generally plain and rustic, but superior in information to those whom I had last instructed. There was a great variety of religious sentiments among them. Their ministers had labored, principally, to make them abhor the doctrines of Calvin: his tremendous predestination, his original sin, and particular redemption. But their chief aim had been to make Baptists. They had great zeal on this head, and seemed ready to compass sea and land to make one proselyte. A few only believed the divinity of Jesus Christ. The body of the church were Arians. Among the hearers there were Socinians and Deists. It was comfortable, on the whole, to converse with them, but difficult to preach to so heterogeneous an assembly.

One man among them deserves to have statues erected to him, as a first rate patriot and philosopher, as a good and enlightened man. It is not necessary to record his particular opinions. He had a due respect for the character of Jesus Christ, who would never have been commissioned to bring the will of God to the knowledge of men, had the world been like my heavenly friend. Would I could give his name to the world, which I am prevented from doing by my design of not giving local particularity to this work! He understood meta-

physics better than any man I have ever met with. He was in trade, but he was truly a gentleman, in a far better sense than most of those who claim that name. One other man like him have I met with in the course of my life, of whom these memoirs will make mention in due time. My divine friend was self-taught, but he was well taught. To him I am indebted more than to any man. If I see him no more in this world, I will endeavour to meet him in a better. It is beyond my power to describe the various qualities of intelligence, benevolence, acuteness, and industry, which make up the character of this more than human being.

My income at this place was somewhat more ample than that which I had been used to receive, but it was certainly not more adequate to my expenses, which were considerably increased. I had before paid but sixteen guineas a year for the general use of a parlor, for a bed-room and a small room adjoining which were entirely my own, and for my board. This left me about twenty-three pounds a year for other necessaries and conveniences. But, on my first and last removal, I had been allowed nothing for travelling expenses, so that now I found myself ten pounds more in debt, without having discharged what I owed on quitting the place of my education. I received here, in the first year, about sixty-five guineas, and sixty guineas a year afterwards, and certainly saved enough, before the first year was

completed, to pay the last debt of ten pounds which I contracted. But my expenses became heavy. A parlor and a bed-room cost me nine pounds a year, and my board was also to be defrayed, which was not economically provided. An additional bed-room, for the use of a brother, who came to visit me for three months, cost me at the rate of eleven pounds a year more, besides the increased outgoings for board. This induced me to accept of a part of a vacant house, belonging to one of my friends, where I kept a servant, and where my expenses were not diminished, although I paid nothing for lodgings.

After considering all these circumstances, in less than a year and a half, at Michaelmas, 1791, I rented a good house, with a large garden, for twelve guineas a year, and resolved to take pupils. Thus, at the beginning of 1792, I became a regular school-master, which occupation I have pursued, ever since, with little interruption.

Now my taste for literature was roused into activity, and I felt that I had an adequateness for tuition, which might procure me additional profit and fame. It was my resolution to try all that this situation could offer, with a determination to change it for a more favorable one, if it disappointed my expectations. Several pupils were placed, on very low terms, under my instruction. As the accommodations expected were plain, and my house was cheap, I reaped some benefit from my labor, and certainly meliorated,

during the year, my worldly condition. Not being able to manage to my mind with servants, I married, in the summer, a very deserving and respectable woman, who lived with me sixteen and a half of my latter years, when she was taken from me, leaving me a large family. Alas! she was a loss indeed.

During the time in which I was settled there, I became a writer in a periodical publication, without any emolument, and furnished, among other fugitive pieces, two letters on the slave trade, which gained considerable celebrity, and produced a sensible effect on the country. It is my intention to republish them, with other pieces already given to the world, if a second volume of these memoirs should ever be drawn up. The fate of *this* will determine whether another part shall ever be offered to public attention.

The success of my ministerial labors was far less now than it had been, although I spoke extempore one part of the day, in order to gain the attention of this rustic people. Something was done towards exciting attention, and the effect is, to this day, felt, of discourses and conversations which had for their object to impress the people with a belief of the importance of worshipping one God, the father only, and of relying on the unpurchased mercy of God for acceptance with him. Some may remember my efforts to this effect, which were more remarkable, because they were altogether new and untried before.

Most of the people differed but little from me in sentiments, but the importance of the subject had never struck them. They had never considered that the difference is immense between the worship which is paid to *one person*, and that which has *three persons* for its object, and between *a free* and *a purchased* salvation.

At this time, politics created a more than usual animosity in this country. The French revolution roused the English nation into admiration or hostility, according to the different views which were taken of it, and according to the different sentiments which were previously entertained respecting the rights of mankind. The Whigs, among whom Protestant Dissenters class themselves, hailed it with enthusiasm; the Tories and the retainers of the court, who have too often no feeling but interest, no character but adulation, deprecated it as subversive of all exclusive privileges. It was my lot to think, on this occasion, as I hope, with the wise, and to consider that revolution, as I continue to do, as the sublimest effort of a nation to obtain justice and happiness. Its ill success has not diminished my admiration of it, because I consider the disappointment which it has experienced as originating in causes independent of its own character, and because I do not yet think the failure decided and final. I attribute the events which followed it as not flowing from it, but as the fruits of a most monstrous combination of Kings against human hap-

piness, and especially of the criminal, unnatural, and impolitic accession of the English government to the coalition of European despots. It is my serious conviction that, to this country principally, God will look for an account of the atrocities of France.

Among my compatriots, I suffered my share of obloquy on this occasion, which was rendered more unpleasant, because it met rather the approbation than discountenance of a few persons of most weight in our religious community, who lived long enough to see their error, though not till it had, among other things, rendered my situation painful. This was one reason of my removal, at the beginning of the year 1793, after a residence, among this people, of about two years and three quarters. But it may be right to state my inducements for change in a more detailed form.

1. The reason above-mentioned had some, though not much, influence on my determination. Independently it would have been ineffectual. I would have waited, at my post, for more favorable times.

2. My expectations of success, in my ministerial profession, were somewhat disappointed.* These

* The conclusion which I drew at the time seems not to have been just. The appearances on which it was founded were not examined with sufficient calmness and discrimination. Since the above was written, which was dictated under the impression of the justice of my original deductions, I have had an opportunity of reconsidering the circumstances and of consulting the opinions of others

expectations were probably sanguine, not to say extravagant. I have learned to form a juster view of mankind, and of the efficiency of public instruction. This cause would operate a much less effect on me, at this more advanced season of my life, and I should now weigh its circumstances with more deliberation.

3. There was not a field for the exercise of my talents, such as they were, as an instructor of youth, nor a sufficient remuneration for my exertions. My hopes of a competent number of pupils were small, nor could any sanguine expectation have a chance

who had witnessed them. It is with real satisfaction I now think that my exertions, whatever may have been their intrinsic character, were on the whole prosperous, and tending clearly to the increase of the number and information of the people among whom I labored. An early acquaintance with this fact might have occasioned me no small hesitation, but would not, probably, have changed my determination. However, while the knowledge of this fact affords me pleasure, it suggests an observation which may produce a good effect. It is, that the ministers of religion should not precipitately decide on the degree of their usefulness as the instructors of mankind. Appearances may deceive them. They are influenced by many circumstances of a temporary nature. The progress of the good which may arise is generally slow, and time must be allowed for its full developement. Few well intended and judicious efforts are ultimately lost. Young men, who are sanguine and impatient, should be especially on their guard, lest, by an inconsiderate despondency, they should withdraw the sickle from the harvest, when it is fully ripe, and cause to themselves and others inconveniences which might be avoided, if they should persevere till the crop were secured.

of fulfilment. The studies, which I was directed to propose to their pursuit, were humble, and by no means suited my taste for learning, or ardor for the reputation of a respectable classical teacher. I knew my *fort*, and was convinced that my humblest neighbours, who undertook to instruct, had, in the department which was allotted me here, as well-founded a claim to approbation and support. This had an important effect on my resolution.

4. The prospect of a family seemed to make it necessary that a better dependence should be provided.

My ambition did not lead me to make the pastoral office a first object of attention. I was now convinced that no ministerial situation would secure, independently, any thing like a respectable maintenance. On that account, an appointment in a large place and populous district, appeared indispensable. Where this could be obtained, it was of no material consequence what prospect there might be of professional emolument, which could not answer my purpose, or that of any one who has but a small dependence on a private fortune. For these reasons, some more and some less cogent, my resolution to remove was fixed, and I have had no reason, on the whole, to repent of it.

CHAPTER X.

New Settlement.—Doubts respecting an Order of Ministers.—Doubts removed.

RELYING on promises, which were never realised, my removal took place, and my lot for eight years was that of a schoolmaster in an advantageous situation. A quarter of a year was consumed in preparations, without any source of income. Some debt was as yet unpaid. How I managed to furnish a house, to support an establishment, and to make every demanded payment, I can scarcely comprehend. The whole sum, which my credit obtained from my relations and friends, did not exceed sixty-six pounds. How greatly was I indebted to an independent spirit, and to a well-exercised economy! How admirably was I seconded by my dearest and tenderest friend!

One of my prospects was the supply of a congregation, with a salary of fifty pounds a year, which entirely failed through the treachery of one of those who encouraged me to change my situation. When I had arranged all my plans, and entered into every necessary previous engagement, the same person announced his intention to withdraw the encouragement which he had promised, of placing under my care his two sons, and on which my success seemed most to depend. These were dreadful blows, which served further to lessen my opinion

of the worth of mankind. Still my mind was equal to the occasion. It rendered me superior to despondency, and a lesson was taught me, of more value than most which I had learned, viz. to depend on my own exertions, and to trust to my own talents and assiduity alone. By their means, such as they are, I have ever since mastered most of the difficulties of life. They are little subject to the evils which flow from the caprice of our fellow creatures, or from the uncertainty of sublunary things. Such was my confidence in my skill as a tutor, that I never once despaired of ultimate success, and the event realized all my reasonable expectations, although a sanguine temper of mind certainly induced me to be, on the whole, not well satisfied. In this I was most certainly wrong, and my removal at the end of eight years from this place, was one of the greatest errors of my life. But it is not necessary to anticipate what will come in due time to be told.

In a short time after my last settlement, I began to question the expediency of an order of men called ministers. Authority for such an order, there certainly is none in the Christian Scriptures. Their best foundation is expediency, of which I now began to doubt. It seemed as if the progress of religious information had been more retarded than promoted by their means, and I witnessed the duplicity and selfishness of many of my brethren, which did not contribute to weaken my doubts. The talents of

the rest of society appeared to be laid up, because the burden of religious instruction was committed to a priesthood. With uncommon ardor did I figure to myself a reformed and enlightened world, if these were discarded; and if our weekly assemblies were addressed by our physicians, and lawyers, and philosophers. Men, without professional prepossessions or antipathies, and without interest, would investigate truth; would propose it courageously; would teach candor, and love, and peace! What a fairy-land presented itself to my imagination, heated with projects of benevolent reform!

Having laid it down as a rule, that the dictates of conscience must be followed, and that no religious article is to be deemed unimportant, I hesitated not to disclose my views. For one year, I had, unexpectedly, served a society that allowed me the liberal remuneration of one guinea a-week; and, by that arrangement, contrived to save a considerable sum out of the usual contributions, which were given, with what equity I know not, to my successor. Though I had been disappointed respecting a stated engagement on my first settlement, my occasional assistance was very often requested, by which I gained no despicable means of adding to my resources. But now all this was abandoned, for I considered no sacrifice too great when conscience was to be obeyed; and this sacrifice, however insignificant it may appear, was serious in my circumstances, when my

family was rapidly increasing. I did not "consult with flesh and blood," but determined to "obey God rather than man." Nor let me be condemned. I even recommend the same course to every man. Nothing but an obedience to the dictates of conscience can secure self-esteem, or the approbation of God. It is, indeed, recommended to all to examine all things with more care than I frequently did. Precipitation has induced me to adopt, for a time, opinions and practices which I have seen reason, on more mature reflection, to relinquish. On which account, I recommend sober deliberation. But I would warn all against unworthy practices with conscience, and to err rather by encouraging its liveliness and delicacy, than by suppressing its suggestions.

In this state of mind, I never refused my *services*, but resolutely refused all *reward*. No arguments were sufficient to change my determination. However, I rather considered the order of ministers as not expedient, than *unlawful*. They might be set up, by religious communities, without crime, but not without folly. They had a claim to remuneration, if they chose to be retained; but I thought that they would have a greater claim on the gratitude of mankind, if they withdrew from their occupations, and followed such as might be more useful to others, and equally advantageous to themselves. This was my sentiment for years, till a particular circumstance completely changed my views.

A congregation, within the distance of a walk, or about four miles from the town in which I resided, had been supplied by me for some time, when it came to the resolution to invite me to undertake the stated charge. As I looked upon it as the duty of *every man*, who had information to give, to render his utmost assistance towards reforming and improving his fellow men, my services were ever ready on every occasion that called for them. But, as I would receive no recompense, I had given, gratuitously, to this society, such aid, as I could command, refusing any remuneration, even in the form of presents. When the resolution to invite me was entered into, it was thought that there would be an indelicacy in making the offer, without insisting on my acceptance of a salary. The people feared lest they should be looked upon as having mercenary views, and sent me their request through my friend ———, clogged with this condition. It did not appear to me that a change would be produced in *their* determination, which was as generous, at least, as my sacrifice of all emolument. I was not prepared to give up *my own* opinion. Even if I had then been convinced of its fallacy, I should have feared the imputation of maintaining my doctrine no longer than till I was tempted, by interest, to abandon it. I did not hesitate to refuse the salary, but accepted the invitation, if I might accept it by itself. My offer, thus restricted, was refused, and another mi-

nister was chosen. This sensibly affected me, and caused me to doubt the tenableness of my opinion.

I freely confess that this was the most effectual *practical* argument that ever assailed me. My duty to preach and instruct the world had not lost hold of my mind, even while I considered its rewards as inexpedient. I, at this time, felt a more powerful impression of it on my heart. But it now appeared that the performance of my duty was rendered impracticable by the opinion which I entertained. Only occasional opportunities, at most, of exercising what talents I had, would henceforth be offered, and invitations to officiate, even *occasionally*, were sparingly made, as my brethren were loath to ask what they were not allowed to recompense. Most truly do I declare that all my feelings were strongly agitated. It was never my intention to cut myself off from the Christian ministry. But this seemed to be the effect of my singular opinion. The example, which I thought, that I was giving, had no influence, while I was manifestly deserting my post. My reflections began to surmise, that there was something in the habits and manners of the world that would ever prevent men from gratuitously endeavouring to diffuse light among their species, and that the race of human beings would scarcely listen to what no man thought it his business professedly to study. I began to foresee that religion would soon become an object of indifference, on my plan;

and that, instead of numerous assemblies of Christian worshippers, the land would soon be without any gathering together of the people in the presence of Almighty God. Some qualification for their instruction was necessary. No one would acquire it, however able, who was occupied with other engagements. Professed preparation was the only resource, and that preparation might, and, as it seemed, must, be encouraged and rewarded. The inexpediency of a salary, voluntarily given, disappeared. Nay, its *expediency* became apparent, as, without its acceptance, religion would, probably, be forgotten. Time has strengthened these convictions in my mind. Many other considerations have also presented themselves to it. My fantastical and impracticable notions have no longer any influence. I have profited less than most persons by my profession, which has never brought me, on an average, the one-twentieth part of the support of myself and family. But I am now inclined to adhere to its just demands, and to exact its proper remuneration.* Time has effected

* Let me request the attention of the candid and considerate part of the Society of Free-Thinking Christians, to the reflections which this subject has suggested. Their plan is not *original*, as they will here find one example of a minister who can plead some disinterestedness in acting on their principle before their formation into a society, and, probably, before they had the scheme in contemplation. They may be assured that they will find their design *as useless and abortive* as he found a similar attempt to be. From their principle a very material

as many changes in the state of my views as in those of most men, and I advise young persons to deliberate long before they venture on innovations, while I exhort them never to sacrifice conscience, from an attention to which my greatest happiness has flowed, although I have experienced temporary inconvenience from adherence to it. But I must observe, that my greatest inconvenience has arisen from precipitation, and not from attending to the sober dictates of conscience, which produce only honor and happiness.

discouragement has already arisen to one effort within the writer's knowledge to diffuse rational information.

One principal brother of their community had it in his power to foster and nourish up a society of Christians, who are not in general less free-thinking than himself. His countenance, had it gone no further than to attend on the public service, would probably have given success and permanency to the infant cause. The influence of his most honorable character and most respectable situation in life cannot fail to give repute to whatever he may undertake. It has given it to the Society of Free-Thinking Christians to as great a degree as such a society can attain it. In the case alluded to, he has kept aloof, and neglected to give the chief, if not the only, thing which was wanting to secure success. That being wanting, success, I fear, can scarcely be expected under all the circumstances. But the Society of Free-Thinking Christians may never peruse these observations.

CHAPTER XI.

Death of Infants.—Passion for Agriculture.—It leads to a Change of Situation, which I consider as the greatest Error in my Life.

I DO NOT attempt to preserve the order of events, nor to give the dates of occurrences, during the eight years of my abode at the place in which I had now pitched my tent. The events themselves alone can interest the reader, which I detail faithfully. Perhaps even *they* are too unimportant for detail, which induces me to be more copious in the reflections and reasonings, that relate to them, or arise from them. It is as much my object to describe my mind and character, as to develope the circumstances through which I have passed. From some or all of them the reader may derive improvement.

One of those things which so often occur in families, befel us in about four years after our removal. It pleased God to take from us our second child, a very beautiful boy, at sixteen months old. The afflictions which I had endured had been numerous; but one of this nature was quite new. We werè not prepared for it, as his illness was of about ten hours' continuance only.

The appearance and removal of infants are circumstances in the divine government, which admit of no satisfactory solution, while they furnish no reason for complaint. The dominion over which God presides,

requires infinite intelligence to comprehend, as well as infinite power to sustain and direct, it. Human beings have some power and some wisdom; but each of them is very limited. As well therefore might we quarrel with what we cannot perform, as with what we cannot understand. After seeing intelligence, wisdom, and benevolence, in those things which we can fathom, we ought to conclude, that the same wisdom, intelligence, and benevolence, would be found in all other cases, if they were once thoroughly apprehended, and we should attribute it to our own ignorance, that any imperfection seems to subsist in the works of God.

That a child should be allowed to make its entrance on the stage of life, for a little while, where it probably suffers far more than it enjoys, and causes more anxiety than satisfaction to all that surround it; that it should be removed just when it has connected itself with the habits of relations and friends, and attached them to it just sufficiently to excite sorrow for its loss: What account can be given of such circumstances? Must they not be referred to a wisdom which we cannot develope; to a plan of benevolence of which we do not see the end? In the death of children we acquiesce for reasons that arise out of our ignorance. On the death of others our understandings are more completely satisfied. One thing is more certain and satisfactory, however, in the former than in the latter case. We can have no possi-

ble apprehension of the future misery of a child. How consoling is this thought! Had I believed in original sin, how could I have supported this affliction? Benevolence of nature has led some of the advocates of a gloomy scheme of religion to conclude, that infants are of the number of the *elect*, without seeing that their reasons would plead as strongly for *the election of all men to eternal life*. If I could have believed that God could leave *man* out of the purpose of election, I could admit that God could, with equal justice and benevolence, *damn infant-man* to all eternity. The utmost that I could hope would be, that *some*, of infant age, might be saved. My child *might* be of the number. But I could have no foundation for hope that *mine* had any particular pretensions to such a distinction. It could have no claim to preference, especially if preference, in election, admits of no claims, and is decided by no reason.

In such cases of affliction, however, we seldom reason much, and our reasonings would produce but little effect. We are wounded in some of our strongest and best feelings, and *submit* as our best consolation. Time, by exhausting our ability to dwell on the same subject, by presenting new objects of attention, and by inducing new habits, obliterates the traces of those to which we have been accustomed, and restores the tranquillity which we have once lost. Other sorrows replace the last, and change effects our perfect cure, as far as a cure can be effected in a

state of discipline, of which endurance evidently forms a necessary portion. Our life is composed of vicissitudes, which are wisely ordained, and demanded by our condition. Unless a stability and uniformity of happiness were our portion, change is a friendly appointment, and comes seasonably to our relief.

The loss of a child would long have preyed on my affections, had it not been succeeded, at no very distant period, by the loss of my most beloved brother. The first was obliterated by the poignancy of grief which the other event produced. The beautiful *infant* was forgotten when death destroyed all that was beautiful and excellent in human form, by making *this man* his victim. But it is not consonant with the purpose of this work to introduce the reader to any circumstances, except as they had an influence on my own character and happiness. Of his perfections I shall, therefore, give no further account.

This last event sensibly affected me. My attachment was no common one, for it had for its object no common person. It was followed by no common sorrow. The circumstance, however, tended to influence my future life in a considerable degree. By bequest, I was made the possessor of a considerable estate in land, so circumstanced, indeed, as to increase my consideration rather than my income, which is, to this day, but little assisted from that source, although it promises a comfortable provision for my children.*

* Such was my prospect in the beginning of the year

But the chief effect that flowed from this accession of property was the change that was operated on my inclinations and wishes. An unconquerable desire to become a cultivator of the earth arose out of the possession of land, on which I might exercise my invention and gratify my inclination. This is a subject that deserves a particular discussion, as the *rage* for farming has, of late, seized on persons of every description and every profession. It is not confined to those whose education has fitted them for the pursuit, and whose ardency has, by its general prevalence, been perceptibly increased. It has seized the philosopher, the tradesman, the lawyer, the physician, the statesman, the divine.

It is a useful folly, but generally ruinous to him who cherishes it. The literary man, or the man of business, carries into his schemes a spirit of enterprise, which strikes out many new ideas and inventions that prove beneficial in their results, although they have

1811, when the above was written, a season of comparative tranquillity and happiness. The tale to be told in another number of this performance will evince that my sorrows are but in their commencement when I begin to promise to myself a turn of fortune. All hope has now nearly abandoned me. To complete my afflictions, the prospects of my children are blasted, and I must leave them to their own resources and the protection of a benevolent Providence. What I could do for them I have done, and will continue to do, as long as my life and abilities are lengthened out. They will have been virtuously principled and respectably educated. I look forward, however, to another volume, for the developement of these circumstances, with faint expectation.

been attended with ruinous expenses, in the first instance, owing to unskilfulness and errors. These persons also employ calculation and strict accounts in their occupation, which the mere farmer too often neglects. The latter is satisfied with general results, and pursues particular practices, which, in many given circumstances, may be unprofitable. Calculation, on the contrary, leads to the abandonment of unprofitable husbandry, or to the adoption of its use in circumstances only which secure advantage. In this way, practices come to be suited to the soil and other accidents, by which a larger produce is obtained, and profit at last secured by an arrangement of methods which would otherwise be less productive and less profitable. From improvements of this description, a similar spirit is acquired by the more practical farmer, whose improvements are likely to combine private interest with public advantage. It is very certain that most of our improvements in agriculture have been derived from the enterprise and speculation of men, who were not originally brought up to agriculture, as mere farmers have generally been content with the routine in which they have been bred. No men can be less active or less given to hazard experiments, which would have a much fairer chance of success in their hands, if they had the spirit to attempt them. This has been the case, till of late, at least, when more adventurous projectors have given a stimulus to the farmer's exertions. It is very true,

at the same time, that our speculators have seldom much benefited themselves. The public have been the gainers, and those who have adopted experiments already proved and no longer attended with uncertainty.

The ill success of experimentalists has arisen from their ignorance of customs, and of the market price of the articles which they vend or purchase; from errors committed in pursuing an untried path; from dependence on punctuality in those whom they employ, which is not to be found among rustics in an equal degree as in those employed in trade and manufactures. But two causes, especially, have operated to their disadvantage. One is a more elegant and expensive mode of living, and a more profuse expenditure in their experiments than are suited to such an occupation. The other is an inaptitude to manage and direct a set of men, with whose manners they are unacquainted. The first is to be found in our projectors personally, and is subject to control and correction. But, for the last, there is no remedy but long experience, which frequently brings failure of means before it brings adequate skill and dexterity. Our peasants may not differ from those of other countries; but it is very certain that they require constant observation, if they conceive that their employer does not well know how their work should be done, or what quantity they ought to perform in a given time. Perhaps their selfishness may be owing to their igno-

rance and their misery, which certainly are undoubted and general. Their conceit is also great. Practices which they have not seen, are an object of their scorn. Although they are not interested in their result, they co-operate in them with reluctance, and will thwart their success when they can, from prejudice and conceit. Great is their joy if any prove abortive. Such is too often the influence of prejudice, ignorance, selfishness, and conceit.

In my case, without meeting with many, if any, untoward circumstances, and without experiencing the usual difficulties of sanguine experiments, the event of changing my mode of life was highly injurious to my resources.

After succeeding, to a great degree, as an instructor, my employment grew irksome when other views had gained ascendancy. Some degree of literary fame, which I once so ardently coveted, had now no charms. The expostulations of friends were fruitless. No occupation appeared suitable to a refined taste, to a literary turn, to a philosophical mind, but agriculture. The observation of Franklin on the subject had more weight than all reasoning and all experience. The reputation of my pupils, who proceeded to the universities of England and Scotland, availed nothing. To make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, appeared more worthy of my diligence than to train the tender mind, to give growth to ideas, and principles of moral action.

Eight of the most improving years of my life were spent in the station which I was now quitting, but eight years of incessant toil and uninterrupted attention and assiduity. My increasing family had been creditably supported. My debts had been all paid. My prospect was as good as at any period of my life. Two hundred pounds formed the net property which I had realized by my occupation. I had many enlightened and virtuous friends around me, in whose society I enjoyed the "feast of reason and the flow of soul." Books, of all kinds, were within my reach. But I was not happy.

1. My employment was too laborious, and not sufficiently profitable. The irksomeness of it was indeed great. The competition was hot, and I often wonder how my institution was able to succeed, in so good a measure, in the midst of others of all descriptions, especially in the very neighbourhood of a public school, in the height of its fame. By patronage it did not succeed, as I had few patrons, and those who favored me were persons of the most insignificant influence, or calculated to do me injury with the public. Is it vanity to attribute success to some degree of merit, that of diligence, at least, if not of ability? But there was such an air of giving me countenance in the persons who committed their sons to my charge, as gave me the deepest disgust. I have lived to see this carried to as great a height, but I have learned to despise the littleness from which

it issues. Among Dissenters this air of patronising their ministers generally prevails, owing to their deficient education, and owing to the habit of supporting them. On this account, I always prefer to have pupils from members of the establishment, who have never attempted to treat their own ministers degradingly, and who have never dreamed of the attempt towards ours. There is much more of what is called gentility among the latter than the former; yet I do not think the balance of character and merit is much with them. They differ in character, as do their children, who constitute pupils of different complexions, but, on the whole, equally desirable. To instructors, however, the members of the establishment are more pleasant as parents and guardians of their scholars. I have now learned to take these things more equably, and to be less hurt at the *protection* of my friends, who have always done me more injury than my enemies, if I ever had any.

2. The peace and profit of agriculture incessantly presented themselves to my mind. I conceived that my children would be brought up in health and content in the midst of rural scenes, and that their morals would be uncontaminated by the vices which I observed in towns and cities, and which impressed my mind, ever ready to exaggerate, with terror on their account. The necessaries of life were advancing in price, which began to torment and alarm me for the future fate of my family. The advanced price

of these things, at the same time, promised to reward my industry in the occupation which I coveted. Indeed, I should have profited, in one year, by agriculture, more than I had gained in eight as an instructor, if the price of articles had continued but one year longer, as I shall soon explain.

3. The influence of prevailing example and taste had its full effect on my resolution. It was the *rage* with many to turn cultivators. One son, in most respectable families, was to be educated *a farmer*.

4. I had some knowledge of the occupation, and now diligently studied it *in books*. The annals of agriculture were at my fingers' ends, and I have now by me various plans for the management of my estate with advantage, which I drew up from study of the annals. My knowledge of the manners of my native district was considerable, and seemed to preclude the impositions practised on those whose education has been unconnected with agriculture.

5. My estate wanted a tenant. In fact, a man, without property, had undertaken to occupy it and failed, which brought it into a disrepute that was by no means deserved, and continues to render it less productive to me, because I at last let it on a long lease, when its bad reputation was not removed. Better would it have been for me to have given it for a year or two without rent, than to have occupied it, as matters turned out. Such were the reasons which induced me to turn farmer. They operate on my

mind even at this day, notwithstanding my experience. My predilection for agriculture remains, although I know the evils attending the occupation to a person of my habits. If an advantageous opportunity should offer itself, I would yet accept it, in preference to every thing. Now, however, my knowledge and experience would be considerably enlarged, and my deliberation would be more mature. This is all I can say of almost every circumstance of my life. My objects have not been ill chosen; but I have adopted them, in many instances, with too much haste.

Although the eight years which I last spent were the most important in my life, they were marked with fewer incidents than any equal portion of time which I have lived. To literature I then attended with more diligence and success than I had ever done, and my advantages were more ample. My religious opinions underwent no very material change. My scruples, respecting the expediency of a pensioned ministry, were adopted and abandoned in that time. Indeed, my religious views, except on one point, seem to have been then settled, subject probably to little change for the rest of my earthly journey.

My removal, this time, was a very serious error. The first which I made was forced on me. The second was dictated by sound views of prudence and propriety. This last was the creature of a too

lively imagination, and of feelings too powerfully agitated and interested. It is not constitutional with me to regret deeply what I have done honestly, though precipitately. Although, therefore, I condemn the determination now adopted, it does not disturb my tranquillity.

I am capable of exquisite enjoyment, and equally liable to exquisite misery. My situation has never been favorable to the former, and the latter has generally predominated in my fortune. Because I would not torment the reader, I have, on purpose, suppressed many things which would exemplify the life of comparative anxiety and unhappiness which I have led. On the whole, I can say that my days have been "few and evil."

If the reader has sufficient patience, I will now lead him to one period more of my existence, after which I will close this work for the present. From the history of every man, many moral lessons may be deduced, if it be given faithfully. The incidents of mine are few; but they are important as an elucidation of the nature of my profession, and of the state of my party in religion. The occasional reflections depend on their own truth, and are little influenced by the importance or insignificance of the facts on which they are grafted. To a philosophic mind many profound observations are suggested by the history of the most insulated character, one that may

have been but little connected with the rest of human kind. A life which tends to illustrate the manners and institutions of a community will more powerfully and abundantly excite them.

CHAPTER XII.

Success of Farming, with Agricultural Speculations.

BEHOLD me now returned to my native place, after having taken a large circuit through several districts of this flourishing island. At three places had I set up my household gods, and rather improved my circumstances in each, without materially increasing my happiness. In the last, indeed, I had enjoyed some of the first luxuries of life. I had experienced the endearing charities of a husband and a father. I had now therefore a far larger circle to conduct than in former instances, and a longer journey to accomplish. But, without any serious accident, yet through much difficulty and danger by sea and land, we arrived at our destination; and the reader may imagine me, at last, "in my own ground."

Economy had never lost its ascendancy and influence with me. By attending to it, I escaped much difficulty in my new establishment. Our habitation was accommodated with the least possible

expense, which saved me the loss which I must have sustained in disposing of my domestic and other effects, when I eventually quitted this residence. Not quite sanguine enough to be unapprehensive respecting some obstruction to my complete settlement here, I purchased as small a stock for my farm as was consistent with the hope of a return. But I resolutely put a crop into the ground, in as perfect a condition as could be wished. Having the advantage of great popularity in my native place, which was surrounded with the friends of my family, and the sheep of my father's flock, my neighbours gave me the most generous assistance; so that, at a small expense, the completest crop was sown that my farm had ever received. Their ploughs, and harrows, and carts, with suitable teams and attendants, were sent on my land, to be under my direction without any charge. Nothing was unfavorable. The season was the best in the memory of man, and the produce, in harvest, was abundant beyond all experience.

That I may dismiss my agricultural story at once, my narrative, on this head, shall be without interruption till its close.

The bounty of heaven proved the greatest discouragement to my speculation, and the public good effected my individual loss. I sold the produce of my land for a sixth part of the price of the grain which I had sown. Seed-barley had cost me twelve

and thirteen shillings a bushel, and I had to sell the increase for two shillings and half-a-crown. The whole return scarcely paid my expenses, though it was unusually abundant. Every body remembers the years 1800 and 1801. Such a fall of prices had scarcely ever been witnessed. One year's continuance of the advanced prices would have put hundreds in my pockets.

As it happened, *I lost the rent of my farm*; supported my family *out of my small capital*; and spent, during the two years that I remained, all that I had brought with me.

At the end of one year, however, I let my farm, at an unreasonably low rent, on a lease of twenty-one years, of which circumstance I feel the effects to this day. But I believe that I pursued the best course, and made the best bargain that the time would allow. I am not sorry that my tenant grows rich by his occupation, although I would gladly share in his prosperity.*

* Here I beg leave to state that this property consists of between three and four hundred acres, that it is elevated as to situation, but proper for plantations, which may turn to good account to such as possess the means of attempting that method of improving its value. It has been in the possession of my ancestors for many hundred years, on which account, however unphilosophical and even ridiculous, I greatly value it. But it is a property which does not suit the state of my family, for each of whom I wish to make some provision, although

recent circumstances have rendered my efforts almost hopeless. The title is good, and I would engage to procure the resignation of the lease. The fee-simple may be had for three thousand guineas, although I think it ought to fetch a larger price. To a wealthy man, such a sum laid out, even in speculation, would be a trifle.

To give the reader a specimen of the speculations in which I at that time indulged, in which I still indulge, and which I would carry into execution, if greater riches were my portion; I will here shortly state how this land might be employed, so as to produce a very ample future fortune, without injuring its present value.

It is high land, and much of it is fit only for sheep and for plantations. It certainly has been, at a recent period, covered with wood. For a long while, the pasture would not suffer by a growth that would even shelter and nourish it. Two hundred acres might be thus managed without diminishing the rent and produce of the estate. The expenses would be less than in most other districts, as the price of labor is low, and plants are to be had in the greatest abundance, on very moderate terms.

It is, I believe, agreed that plantations thrive best when they are made originally very thick, and I would allow the sets to be about five yards distant, which would give about 900 per acre; indeed 1000 might not appear too great a number; and the whole would consist of 180,000 or 200,000 on the 200 acres. The expense of the original purchase of the farm, and of planting 200 acres, would not exceed 7000*l.* while the rent of the whole would not be lessened. The interest of money would be 350*l.*, and in twenty years the plantations would come to be thinned, and produce for many years more than all the interest of capital. In fifty years, should 100,000 only be left, the value, at only one pound a tree, would amount to 100,000*l.*, and double that sum, if they should be sold at two pounds each, of which little doubt can be entertained. Such appears to be the capacity of high land to become more productive of profit than the best under any other management. The chief inducement to the speculation would be the very low price of the first purchase, and the smallness of the first expenses. Twenty pounds an acre

would comprehend every thing. Whatever may be urged, by way of declamation, against such schemes, and whatever extravagance may be detected in my calculations, I am so convinced of their general utility and practicableness, and even of the private advantage to be derived from them, with such a prospect as we have of a scarcity of wood, that, if I had the necessary sum to spare, I would not hesitate to try the experiment on the scale recommended. At any rate, my property, in fifty years, would treble all the costs and charges. Gladly would I relinquish the speculation to any one who would give me a tolerable price for the land. Want of personal ability only could induce me to do so.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rescue of young Candidates for the Ministry from the Effects of Intolerance.

ON my arrival in my native place, one of my first acts was to invite a young man, whose story I had heard and shall here briefly relate, to take lodgings in my vicinity, in order to receive such instruction as I could give him, that he might be qualified for admission into one of our seminaries as a student for the ministry. To him another was soon associated, whose circumstances were the same, which circumstances I will also briefly describe.

I have already mentioned a school, attached to the seminary in which I was educated. It had become the custom for young persons who had their eye on the seminary to spend some time at this school, which was certainly the greatest

possible disadvantage to them; for, if they had gone first to a place of repute and merit for classical instruction, they might have better dispensed with instruction at the seminary, which, most assuredly, afforded none worth seeking. These two young men had placed themselves at the feet of the Gamaliel of a tutor at this school, with every encouragement to expect admission at the seminary, in due time. One of them had quitted a situation in London in consequence of a promise of such admission, made to him, or his friends, by this Gamaliel. But, before the time of fulfilling this promise arrived, the first young man became suspected of a change of religious sentiments, from Calvinism, which the nurse had taught him, to something like Socinianism. He had maintained, in dispute, the opinion preferred by Dr. Priestley in his Institutes, that creation is coeval with the power that produced it, by which the difficulty is avoided of an eternity spent by the Creator in inactivity, whatever difficulties may attend itself. Without much ceremony he and his friends were given to understand that he could not be admitted, as a student for the ministry, at that institution. He quitted the school, on this assurance, and accepted my invitation; was received, afterwards, at another seminary; and now makes a very respectable figure as a scholar and minister.

The other young man had no change to make; but an honest avowal of heretical opinions,—which,

if it should be allowed to be imprudent, cannot be stigmatised as criminal, at all events,—operated the same effect on him. He also accepted of my offer of assistance; was admitted elsewhere; but, in consequence of the deep mortification and real inconvenience which this proceeding occasioned, and in consequence of an originally delicate constitution, and some subsequent events, he sank into a decline during his future studies, *and died*, without commencing a minister of religion. I witnessed the effect of his too acute feelings on his frame, and was not surprised when I heard of his death.

The disgrace of this transaction was shuffled from the tutor to the visitor, and from the visitor to the tutor, both of whom I consider as equally culpable. A direct appeal was made by a minister of the district to the visitor, who referred its decision to the tutor. The tutor pleaded the sanction of the visitor. But the cream of the farce is, that *the recommendation*, which form required, of one, if not of both, of these young men, when they made application for admission, was *signed by one of the tutors*, who the next year took an effective part in the rejection of two other candidates, of unquestionable learning, on similar grounds. Such effects are produced by a zeal for orthodoxy, and a desire of having the *reputation* of orthodoxy.

This business was laid before the patrons of the institution, who agreed to countenance their visitor.

He urged, not the justice of his cause, but the necessity of supporting the tutors: and here a plan of well-concerted malignity was exhibited. The delectable tutor brought a direct charge of *infidelity* against the young candidate, who had maintained the coeternity of creation with the Creator, and for that very sentiment, which will ever divide the thinking part of the world, and has no connection with belief or unbelief in religion. I am prepared to give a more detailed account of this transaction; and it is not improbable that such an account, with authentic names and dates, may form an appendix to another volume of these humble memoirs, if this should be encouraged.

A similar rejection took place in 1802, as I have hinted, of which some account has been already given to the public. The *two* tutors were openly implicated in *this* year's business, which I have traced to a high authority, while an equally high authority has declared, that it was "uncountenanced by the directors of the Institution, and originated in *self-assumed* power." I reserve this affair also to a future occasion. The result of the whole was, a declaration by the tutors, that they were *directed* to reject all candidates that should have already *avowed* Socinian sentiments, but that they were not to expel such as embraced them after admission. To be assured of their previous soundness, they put questions to the young candidates, on the sub-

ject of their views of God, as consisting of *three persons*. The bigotry, duplicity, and malignity, of these transactions, excite my utmost indignation. The reader cannot fail to unite in the same feeling. This is not an Institution supported by Calvinists and Trinitarians; and these restrictions have been adopted without honesty and without consistency. *One* of the persons concerned dares not avow the share which he has had in them. I am beyond the influence of his resentment, and, if I were not, I would disclose the truth. Gladly would I be called upon to make the public better acquainted with the circumstances which are connected with these practices. But enough has been said to develope my connection with them. It is said that these things have now been set on a more honest and equitable footing. I pray God it may be so.

CHAPTER XIV.

Disgraceful Intrigues.—Congregational Secession.

MY father's flock now surrounded me. They were under the pastoral care of a man of unquestioned ability and learning, and they were very respectable for information and numbers. This gentleman had been my father's co-pastor before.

his death, and had continued ever since to minister among the people. Owing to their diffusion over a considerable part of the country, there were several places of worship, and sufficient occupation for two ministers. My brother, their last joint-pastor, had been dead some years, and the vacancy had been filled up, in the interval, by occasional supplies. To have served them, during my stay, would have been truly acceptable to me. I naturally looked to it, not as a resource, for the emolument was trifling, but as an employment in my profession, and as a gratification to my affection for my native place. The expectation of the majority of the people directed them to me, thus returned so seasonably among them.

But the minister had other views, of whom I will speak with all possible lenity, because I revere him as my schoolmaster, and have once been used to revere him as a Christian, and a Christian minister. I was not asked by him, my father's co-pastor, to officiate, on my arrival, to a society, formed under the auspices of my family; and supplies were procured from a considerable distance. To procure the supplies had been devolved on him by the consent of the people. Much surprise was excited among them by this circumstance. At last, however, I was invited by the congregations assembling at *two* of the places of worship, to preach to them at a time when the stated service did not take place.

I referred them to their pastor for his consent, which was not denied. On this, he also applied for my assistance in the *stated* services, and obtained my compliance. For some time tranquillity prevailed. He was always reckoned a man of candor, and had no pretensions but to *Arian orthodoxy*. I really think him still a man of candor, led astray by an object which might very well influence a *father*. It was not my intention to accept of a joint-pastorship with him, for I had already perceived that my stay would not be long. I could have set his heart at rest, in a moment, on the subject which interested him. But he had a sort of passion for intrigue; he was a true French politician; he would never gain an object by fair means, however probable; but would attempt finesse on every occasion. My temper was always free, and my disposition open, to a fault, though not at all disposed to yield the victory to *mere address*.

He began to sound the people, how they liked their present supply: then to ask, how they liked *a Socinian*, though I had cautiously avoided to carry any peculiar sentiment into the pulpit. Sometimes he would ask how they would like *a Baptist* for their minister. These things gave me the greatest pain. I declared that I did not intend to stay there. But this did not put a stop to intrigue. Partizans began to spread reports of *heresy*, and their minister, with whom I had amicably discussed

the question of philosophical necessity, some years before, furnished the unlearned multitude with *this topic*; and preached, with unusual vehemence, in favor of *free-will*. The neighbourhood rang with the *blasphemous opinions* that were lately brought into the country, though no one ever heard me publicly canvas such questions. Some indiscreet expressions of one or other of my four pupils were charged to my account. I was little less than hunted down as worse than a malefactor. To experience this from my father's co-pastor, and from some of my father's flock, whom he had reared, and nourished, and served almost gratuitously! it was too tormenting.

These small manœuvres and little practices went on while I was supplying the societies *at the request of the man* by whom, and in whose favor, they were promoted. Many of my friends, and of the friends of my family, participated in my indignation, and attempted measures that should recompense *in honor*, what I suffered *by obloquy*. Never had my moral character been impeached. Indeed, on that score, my reproachers were completely in my power, had I sought retaliation. My heretical opinions were not unacceptable to many; while others, very candidly, looked on them as not very material, since the body of the people worshipped one God, the Father, and had no predilection for the doctrine of atonement to divine justice by

the death of Christ. My preaching was not doctrinal.

My friends, in one of the united societies, proposed to invite me as one of *their* pastors, and an *unanimous* request to that purpose was made to me in due time. Another of the three congregations acceded, by *a large majority*, to the same design. To the two first I sent an unequivocal answer, that I could not accept an honor which I thankfully acknowledged, as it was my fixed resolution to choose a residence elsewhere. This induced them to urge my acquiescence for so long a time as I remained among them. But I assured them that there was no likelihood that my compliance, how much soever I wished it, would give any tolerable satisfaction. I discontinued officiating, except to these two churches.

After some time, the *third* society, which was the largest, was called together by their pastor, and himself put the question, if they concurred with the other two united churches in inviting me to officiate as their minister. This question was answered in *the affirmative*, by a considerable majority of the members assembled. This was an unexpected result. The minister, who had himself called the assembly, protested against their decision, on the ground, that the numbers congregated were not sufficient.

Soon afterwards, on a day when the Lord's Sup-

per was by him administered to this people, at the close of that solemnity, without previous notice, and without consideration of the presence of hearers and spectators, he begged the *communicants* to continue in their places, while he laid before them a subject of great importance. With much acrimony, he then deprecated what had been done by the other congregations, begged them to stand by him in his advancing years, and disclosed his wish that *his son*, who was then pursuing his studies, might be elected as his associate. It was never my desire to obstruct this plan; and, if nothing had been done but what was necessary to procure the election of the son, I should have looked on the whole as very natural, and deserving of every indulgence. But the hypocrisy, the falsehood, the calumny, and malignity, displayed on that day, changed every sentiment in my breast. They are well remembered by hundreds. But I have promised to speak with tenderness, and beg to be forgiven if I have reluctantly employed indignant terms.

The result of these proceedings was, my total discontinuance of services to *all* the branches of the united societies, the election of the son, by such as acquiesced in that measure thus conducted, and the secession of a most respectable portion of the people in each congregation. To this course I was, at first, averse. But the wound was too deep to be healed; indignation was too much roused to be

appeased; secession appeared, at last, the only remedy. Great was my affliction at this event, which affected me the more, because the churches had been formed by the talents and diligence of my father. But the irremediable state of affairs, and the interest of what I considered *truth and virtue*, reconciled me to the measure.

CHAPTER XV.

Perpetuity of Baptism?

BEFORE this time, a material change had been produced in my opinion *on the subject of Baptism*, a subject which had occasioned me so much perplexity in early life. To such vicissitudes all men are liable, who think for themselves, especially those whose minds are sanguine, whose dispositions are precipitate. It is the price which they pay for honest purpose, and conscientious inquiry. If I had it to pay again, I would willingly submit, rather than sacrifice integrity, which is of more value than all things besides.

The conclusion of Emlyn now appeared just, but I inferred it from premises that seemed to me more legitimate. I do not yet see sufficient grounds for

his *data*. Nor am I affected by the reasonings of the Rev. Gilbert Wakefield, which involve one of the most monstrous of religious positions, the doctrine of *imputation*. Besides, I am satisfied that he has totally misinterpreted some passages of the Scriptures, especially 1 Cor. vii. 14. See Monthly Rep. vol. iv. pp. 444, 445.

It appears that this question had been debated between my father and a brother of his, who had been brought up to the ministerial profession. Among the papers of the former, which had now come into my possession, I found a letter from the latter, containing an ingenious argument against the perpetuity of Baptism, which I have never seen in any author, and which flashed conviction into my mind. I will give it from recollection, as I have not the letter. The idea is his, the amplification is mine.

He argued conclusively, as others have done, that *believers* are the proper subjects of Baptism, but that such believers only are contemplated as became converts from another religion to Christianity, by means of miraculous evidence: and this he deduced by ingenious and original inference from the very words of the institution, as given by the historians of the New Testament. Their different words were placed by the side of one another, in the following method:

MATTHEW,
Chap. xxviii., v. 19,
20.

19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *to the end of the world, or the Jewish age.**

* *Note.* The Jewish age or dispensation. This interpretation must be laid to my charge. If it be not well supported, my respectable relation is not accountable for its failure. The age, *ὁ αἰὼν*, this age, *ἐυτος ὁ αἰὼν*, generally, if not always, signify, I think, the Jewish dispensation. The age to come, *αἰὼν ὁ μελλων*, clearly signifies the Christian dispensation. The last phrase occurs but twice or thrice in the New Testament. On some other occasion I may take an opportunity of discussing this question more at large.

MARK,
Chap. xvi., v. 15,
16, 17, 18.

15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16. He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils;

18. They shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

LUKE,
Chap. xxiv., v. 47,
48, 49.

47. That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48. And ye are witnesses of these things.

49. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

ACTS i., v. 4, 5, 8.

4. And, being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5. For John truly baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

8. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: And ye shall be witnesses unto me both at Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

I will not make my respectable relation accountable for the following observations on these passages, though the substance of some of them was derived from his ingenious letter. Perhaps the reader will find some also in addition to the arguments which affected my mind, and which were found in his disquisition.

1. It can scarcely be denied that the four passages are, in substance, *the same*, and that they were spoken on the same occasion. They are independent relations of the commission given to the apostles to preach the gospel, and supplied by three writers.

2. They evidently relate to that *commission only*. They are appropriate and special, referring to one specific case, and have no relation to the general characters and duties of Christians. The words of Luke, compared with those of the other two evangelists, shew them to intend the peculiar commission and duties of *the apostles*, because their miraculous qualifications are expressed. In Mark the peculiar *effects* of their preaching are described, as they would shew themselves *in those that should believe*.

3. Luke has mentioned only the commission generally, adding the miraculous qualifications which would sanction it; but omitting *baptism* by name, the *faith* that should precede it, and the *signs* that would follow that faith. This is remarkable, as he, undoubtedly, relates the very same command which the other evangelists give with so many particulars.

4. Hence it is clear that Baptism is included in the commission of the apostles, and was a part of *their office*, and a rite to be performed by them alone, or at most by such as should witness, or hope to witness, *the signs* which are promised in respect to those *that should believe*. The command extends only so far as to include those whom *the signs should follow*. This reasoning appears to me so conclusive, that I hesitate not to confine baptism within the apostolic age. Its institution applies to no other period: and I doubt not that its continuance in practice was owing to the pretensions of the following ages to miraculous gifts.

Some, who have denied its perpetual obligation, have supposed it an initiating ordinance designed to introduce *any* men to Christianity who may have professed *another religion*, and therefore to be properly administered to those, *in after ages*, who may be in that predicament. For this I see no reason in the words of the institution, which are appropriate, strictly, to the apostolic age, as they comprehend that *faith* only which was attended with *signs*.

To that age it was particularly suitable, when a public profession was proper on many accounts, when the world was generally unbelieving, and when vast numbers were converted, and by that circumstance gave weight to the testimony which they bore to Christianity. In after ages conversions are few

and isolated. They attract no observation of *signs*, such as followed them at that time, for such signs have *ceased*. Such might be the reasons for the institution of a rite of temporary obligation. But, whatever were the reasons, the fitness of it to the time, and the specific nature of the words in which it is commanded, which describe, exclusively such circumstances as could then only take place, are, to me, irrefragable arguments for considering Baptism as of temporary obligation and of peculiar design.

5. Arguments, drawn from the constant obligation of *belief*, are of no consequence. It is not the adoption simply of the truth of the Christian religion that is intended; it is the belief of those persons *whom the signs should follow*, that is mentioned in the institution: and, whatever extravagant inferences men may attempt to draw from this position, it is incontrovertibly true, as long as the words remain as they stand. The same may be said of *repentance* as a qualification for Baptism. For the repentance intended is not that which describes the rejection of sin, by those who offend God through mere immoral conduct, but that conversion from false religion and idolatry which took place in those who were converted to Christianity in the apostolic age. This is very evident from proper attention to the circumstances in which the term is applied in the Acts. On this point I will quote the words of the Rev.

Timothy Kenrick on Acts ii. 38, which are exceedingly just, and are of more weight, as they have no connection with the question on which I introduce them.

Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“The repentance to which Peter here exhorts his hearers, is not a general reformation of character and conduct, although the word sometimes undoubtedly has that meaning, but a change of principles on a particular subject, namely, the divine mission of Jesus. Nor does the remission of sins, here promised as the consequence of repentance and baptism, signify the removal of moral guilt in general, but merely a recovery from that sinful state to which all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, are represented as being reduced, so long as they are out of the Christian covenant. This sense of the word *repentance* occurs in other parts of the book of Acts, as xvii. 20. ‘But the times of this ignorance God winked at,’ where heathen idolatry is spoken of, ‘but now commandeth all men every where *to repent* ;’ that is, to abandon their idolatrous errors, and to embrace the Christian religion. And, in the same manner, xxvi. 20, when Paul says, of himself to Agrippa, that he shewed first to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance ;

he means that they should forsake their errors as Jews or heathens, receive the Christian religion which God now offered to them, and walk in a manner becoming their new profession."

To ask, have not men *now* need of *faith*, *now* need of *repentance*, is to play on words. The faith which was followed by *signs* is now *not* required, because it is impossible. The repentance which related to a state of *previous idolatry and unbelief in Christianity* is *not* now to be demanded, as such unbelief and idolatry no longer prevail among Christians. Nor would such an acknowledgment of their previous condition be of any use as a testimony from even heathens to the power of Christianity, as a system of religion founded on *miracles*, which was evidently the original intention of such acknowledgment. But it is not necessary to remove minor difficulties. What subject is without them? It is enough that a question be supported by preponderating evidence; and that evidence appears to me to support the temporary obligation of Baptism, as it is clearly found in the very words of its original appointment.

The discovery to which I have referred supplied me with these views, and reflection has enabled me to enlarge them. They still hold their power over my convictions; and, as I have ever followed the dictates of my conscience, through good report and evil report, I have abandoned both infant and adult Bap-

tism, and practise neither. The first appears to me never to have been instituted, and the last to have been instituted to answer a temporary purpose, to draw attention to the religion of Christ, and to the *signs* by which it was confirmed.

This was my view of the subject when so much obloquy and opposition were raised against me as *a Baptist*. During the whole contest, I scrupulously concealed this change of opinion, as I would owe nothing to prejudice, even when the truth might, in some measure, remove it. For the good people would, doubtless, have been much less shocked by an *Antibaptist*, than by an *Anabaptist*, as they would call an advocate for the baptism of adults by immersion. I was aware, also, that I should scarcely have been believed as sincere in the rejection of my former opinion, under such circumstances. It would have been attributed to motives which I have never allowed to influence me. A wish to gain a point, or a lust after popularity, or a mercenary view to the emoluments, such as they were, of the pastoral office, among the good people, would have been charged to me. For such and similar reasons, I kept my opinion to myself.

But, when the secession took place, I had no longer need of concealment, in order to guard my honor. Those who stood my friends were too liberal to make any concession necessary. When they considered me as a Baptist, their regard was sincere,

and their attachment was uninfluenced by that consideration: and, when I made them acquainted with my actual opinion, their regard was not increased, nor did they find any particular pleasure in the intelligence, further than as they rejoiced in every proof of my integrity. There was no particular facility given them, respecting their children, by my now avowed opinion, as they would still have to seek for an administrator of infant baptism, which they did not renounce. All men were acceptable to them, if they had candor and the spirit of inquiry, and especially if they held the same views with themselves respecting the great and important principles of Christianity, the worship of one God, and the acceptableness of sincere virtue in his sight.

This argument for limiting the practice of baptism to the times of miracle, to which it was designed to call the attention of mankind, and without which it could have no appropriate design, renders its administration at all other times, and in all other circumstances, *except to those that believe, whom the signs shall follow*, irrelevant and unauthorised. I have explained it to some who may, from that circumstance, if they should read this book, be directed to the author of it. But, when I have so important a question to propound, that possible detection can not deter me. Nothing of consequence has ever been urged, to my knowledge, against the validity of my reasoning. One person, indeed, has hinted

that, by "them that believe," the apostles themselves are designated. To such a suggestion I do not reply. However, the suggester allowed that, if my reasoning cannot be refuted, baptism is irrevocably abolished.

I had thus the pastoral charge of a people strongly attached to me, who possessed an unusual degree of religious information, and maintained a most respectable moral character. Two societies were formed on a broad and liberal foundation. No creed was adopted to try the principles of the members. All were to be received who manifested a due regard to a virtuous conduct. The sentiments generally prevailing were, however, strictly Unitarian. Two places of worship were in due time erected, while we conducted our worship, *pro tempore*, in registered dwellings. My labors were extended to several places convenient for preaching, and the care of a small congregation at some distance, which was without a minister, devolved on me. Our success was rapid and considerable. The whole country was roused to inquiry; and curiosity, or a better principle, brought people to our assemblies from the distance of many miles. My services were extemporaneous, and not disapproved. When, on the completion of our chapels, we were formed as churches, eighty persons sat down at the Lord's Table in one of them, and sixty in the other. They are now instructed by one of those young men that were rejected for want of orthodoxy at our seminary, who completed his education at a distant place.

My earnest prayers for their success ever attend them. I do not think that such a body of men is to be found elsewhere in the island of Great Britain. On the whole, I thank God for having made use of me in a work which I consider as most conducive to the information, to the moral worth, and to the happiness, of the country.—My regret for being forcibly obliged to leave you, most respectable and enlightened men, will never cease but with my breath. I have suffered much with you, and received much happiness from you. This was the most important era of my life. And here I close my narrative.



CHAPTER XVI.

Biographical Sketches.—Conclusion.

I HAVE much to say of the persons whom I knew in the course of my pilgrimage, and with some of whom I formed an intimate friendship. The subject would lead to an inconvenient detail, on which account I will select a few characters only.

Of N. D. I have already spoken, as a most enlightened, self-taught, and virtuous philosopher. His favorite authors, in metaphysics, were Hobbes and Edward Search, alias Abraham Tucker, esq. whose work ‘the Light of Nature pursued,’ deserves

to be more generally perused. Although the author seems not to have had much veneration for revelation, he has written little that needs to offend a religious ear, and has displayed much ingenuity. N. D. and myself enjoyed once the melancholy luxury of surveying his gardens and grounds together, which are situated near Dorking. I am told that *my* good friend, *his* admirer, is now spending a calm old age, out of business, and I am sure that, if he does, he enjoys *otium cum dignitate*.

T. K. was a man of rigid integrity, but not of placid manners. The maxim, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is surely a false maxim. If it should be observed, the characters of the dead would furnish but little instruction. It should be, *nil nisi verum*. This amendment justifies my free, but faithful, delineation of T. K. His beneficence was large, but his benevolence was not equally unequivocal. He was liberal and charitable from principle, but appeared less affected by the generous emotions of the heart. His merit was great, and who can be answerable for constitution and temperament? He did more good than he would, perhaps, have done had he possessed more sensibility. His beneficence was, at least, more discriminating and more effective. He was a zealous and successful minister, and commanded high admiration when he could not secure attachment. He had more reputation than influence, more industry than abilities, more acquire-

ments than taste, more general information than learning, more perseverance than sagacity. His manners were correct, but not polished; his instructions were more sensible than amusing; his preaching was more edifying than ornamented. He was ever chaste in his compositions, but never splendid. He endured much, and did much good; but was more missed than lamented at his death. He was my friend, and did me essential services. How many can bear the same testimony, whom he faithfully and effectually assisted! He has left many behind him equally beloved, but few equally useful. He will live long in the memory of numbers, as an able minister of the New Testament.

D. R. was a counterpart of my respectable and noble friend N. D. His abilities were of a superior order, but his acquirements were less extensive. As an agriculturist, he possessed more spirit than all his more powerful neighbours; and, in an obscure district, though a simple tenant, pursued improvements on an extensive scale, and with a discrimination and judgment that secured advantage. He was the greatest commander of mankind I ever saw, and had more ascendancy over the minds and characters of others than any man that I have observed. All his wishes were executed, and yet his address was the essence of placidity and mildness. But his talents, his genius, were his chief recommendation. *He* also was a philosopher. He was more, for he

was a Theologian and a Christian of the first order, with comparatively few sources of information but conversation and the Bible. Of these he made the best use. His mind could turn every thing to advantage. He lives, and lives a blessing to all within his influence, and is "a light which enlightens every man" that has the happiness of his acquaintance.

T. E.—Of all my friends this man had my warmest attachment. He was of sterling worth and integrity, and valued for perfect simplicity and honesty of character. He had been bold in the avowal of obnoxious sentiments during a part of his younger days, but, like most men, exercised more discretion in advanced life. He had more ingenuousness in the adoption of truth, than talents in its defence. But he had, what is above all talents, an upright mind. He was exact, to minuteness, in economy, but he had the generosity of a prince. He had not much to give, but he gave willingly and heartily. His care increased his fortune, but he owes nothing to address. He lived respectably and like a gentleman, while he maintained the most rigid self-government. He was a good man and a sincere friend. What signifies it, if he should not be a deep scholar or popular minister? Yet his learning was creditable, his services were decent. His family and friends esteem and love him. Strangers have not had much opportunity of appreciating his

worth. This man I am happy to address by the name of *friend*.

* *.—The greatest part of this gentleman's life was spent in England, and yet he had not divested himself of a foreign accent and pronunciation, but in the least degree conceivable. His enunciation was likewise naturally bad. Greater impediments to public speaking could scarcely be conceived: but still he was a most interesting man and ingenious preacher. His irritability was incredible, while his attachments and friendships were most ardent. No man had a greater power of fermenting up his mind, if I may so speak, into irascibility; and yet he was benevolent, and, in seasons of calmness, placid and gentle beyond all conception or belief. He possessed uncommon quickness and acuteness, though it might be observed that he *repeated himself* considerably, and appeared to have prepared and studied the observations which he made with so much ability and happiness. He would be diffuse on subjects which pleased him, but not very ready on such as occurred on the spur of the moment. His conversation was unequal, of which he was aware, and therefore managed to start topics on which he could make a display, and on which he was always interesting, and sometimes brilliant. He struck those who heard him but seldom, as uncommonly splendid; but those who were with him

often were disposed to view him as a less shining conversationist. On the whole, he was an interesting man, an elegant, if not a profound, scholar; seldom little, and occasionally great; frequently hasty, but generally obliging, gentle, and benevolent. He took an uncommon interest, from the first of our acquaintance, in the concerns and welfare of myself and my family. My affection and gratitude will never be obliterated.

*** was a man of extraordinary caution and unconquerable timidity. He was a great man, with no ordinary measure of littleness and trifling. His learning was considerable, but he carried it into minutenesses which were sometimes unpleasant. He conceived clearly, and expressed himself exactly: but his clearness of conception, and exactness of expression, were accompanied with a solicitude to be understood, which bewildered his hearers, and occasioned a weariness that banished all recollection of his best attempts to instruct. He produced, at best, but a confused idea of the drift of his reasonings, and of the course of his arguments. His education had been conducted in a circle entirely unconnected with men of a liberal turn of mind, and he displayed the effects of the contractedness of the manners of his youth after he had mixed in good society, and after he had acquired a vast store of learning, and especially of theological learning. While every one respected his talents and admired his erudition, while

every one paid homage to his acquirements, his caution scarcely allowed him to speak without undue deference; his fear of giving offence bent him at the feet of opulence and reputation. He submitted to court those who would, otherwise, think themselves honored by his notice, and was of small consequence, because he knew not how to assert his dignity. Never was a great and learned man of less estimation. It required reflection to do justice to his eminence. His humility bordered on servility, his caution on abjectness. His minute economy prevented him from being respectable, but did not prevent him from exercising charity and generosity. He was a good man and a great man; but, while he was ever esteemed in the former character, the latter was overlooked. When the littleness which accompanied his manners shall have been forgotten, he will be celebrated for his erudition and abilities. Although he has not made himself much known while living, his death will furnish treasures of knowledge, which will instruct posterity, if his minuteness of elucidation, and his anxious correctness of style, should not obstruct his usefulness and fame.

But I must not amplify my report of the good men, of the illustrious philosophers, and of the eminent scholars and theologians, whom the accidents of life have placed within my knowledge. In such a station as has been allotted to me, it may be extraordinary that I should have opportunities of obtain-

ing their acquaintance. It was but slight. It was, however, rendered productive of much insight into their characters, as I have ever possessed a considerable degree of observation, and a memory from which few things, once observed, have made their escape. But the reader must be relieved from any further attention to my views of men, and observation of manners.

A few reflections will now release all parties from the weariness which this work has occasioned. I am tired of its composition, and would scarcely have attempted it, had I foreseen how far it would have conducted me. A toilsome occupation leaves me but little leisure for writing, less for curtailing what I have written, and scarcely any for adorning or correcting my composition. I rely on the interest only of its details and reflections, and am not sanguine in my reliance on *that* resource.

1. It is evident that few modes of life are more precarious, and more inadequately remunerated, than that which I have chosen. Its uncertainty is uninterrupted, as every deviation from previously adopted opinions, every error of judgment, throw a man on the wide world, to contend with all its difficulties, while it furnishes no possible resources against a turn of fortune. Liberty of thinking is accorded freely to a Dissenting Minister in my connection. But he thinks at his peril in many cases; and, with the most uniform steadiness of situation, he has to struggle

unremittingly with scanty means and insufficient resources. If he buys a book, it must be at the expense of his appearance and that of his family; if not at the expense of their privation of necessaries, certainly of comforts. His education fits him for literature, which can never be pursued but under every disadvantage of want of leisure, and want of books and society. He must labor for nine-tenths of his income, as none is provided but such as a humble clerk would refuse to accept in the counting-room of a shopkeeper. The experience of a large majority of my brethren can confirm this truth, which, as it is truth, I will venture to proclaim, however it may operate on my condition. Even their usual occupation, of instructors of the young, is irksome. It is seldom prosperous, and the trust reposed in them, when a pupil is committed to their care, is attended with so much ostentation of patronage and favor, as gives more pain to their feelings, than it does good to their circumstances. Generally a hard bargain is driven with them, so that they can scarcely put a morsel of bread in their own mouths. The upshot of my story would set this matter beyond all doubt, as, after a most laborious life of forty-four years and upwards, I am now nearly in the very condition, so far as my efforts are concerned, as I was when I first began them.

2. The learning of our clergy must be an object of great wonder, to those who will consider under

what circumstances it is acquired. God knows, it is scanty. But education has not been provided to secure it. Books and society are denied. Leisure is unattainable. The merit of no body of men is therefore more undoubted. If they are not profound, they are not contemptible, as scholars. Their information, under all disadvantages, is considerable. Their compositions, if rather florid than refined, are numerous, far more numerous, for the pulpit, than those of an equal number taken indiscriminately from the clergy of the establishment. What would the virtuous industry of such men do if they were liberally educated, and only moderately maintained? I plead their cause from conviction that they deserve well of their race and age, and from knowledge that they are undervalued by the world, and unkindly used by their party.

3. The want of feeling of our societies may be perceived from hints interspersed through this work. I appeal to their own consciousness, if they do not dismiss their ministers on most frivolous pretexts. Let them offend the pride, or disclose the injustice, of a powerful man, and occasions will not be wanting to make their situation too irksome to be retained. Every minister maintains his rights and independence at his peril. Their own recollection will furnish our people with examples of ministers who have removed to them under expenses more than

equal to their first year's remuneration. No thought of defraying them is suggested, and the minister would be branded with selfishness if he should quicken their recollection. The salaries, so inadequate and pitiful, are *kept back*, till the interest forms a considerable deduction from the stipulated sum. I will not give instances, though such are in my possession that would scarcely obtain belief. If I should, hereafter, lengthen out these anecdotes of my life, I may present the world with some, in an authentic form.

Besides, on the dismissal of a minister, the inconvenience, the magnitude, or health of a family, the loss of property by the sale of effects, are seldom taken into account. The distance of hundreds of miles to which he may be forced to remove is no consideration. Even his character fails to escape from being traduced, and, if he has an imperfection, he is blasted for ever.

But I will not, even by truth, wound my reader's mind. He will probably feel pity and indignation at this recital. Let him not, however, condemn Dissenters as altogether worse than other men. Many are truly excellent for morals and intelligence. It is the natural consequence of their popular constitution that, while they are imperfect characters, they should act as I have described. They have done much good to the world by their generous principles

of religion and politics. Their ministers are the greatest sufferers from their defects. All have defects, and those who feel their influence have a right to complain. My share in the evils which I have described is now trifling, though I have endured my full portion. My condition calls not for pity so much on these as on other accounts. Yet my observation is not less vigilant, and my regard to truth induces me to report it.*

* That the complaints respecting the distresses and mortifications of Dissenting Ministers are well founded and of long continuance, will appear from the following most interesting letter. The writer of it died, as it appears, in a few years after its date, leaving a most honorable fame, principally on account of his Treatise on the Temptation of Christ, &c. See Month. Repos. vol. v. p. 326.

The letter here given to the public was addressed to the Rev. Mr. Leeson, John Wilkes's travelling tutor, and found at his death among his papers. Mr. Leeson, it seems, had once been a Dissenting Minister at Thame, or its neighbourhood, in Oxfordshire, and distinguished for his learning, taste, and virtues.

The letter here introduced is applicable to my subject in part only. But the whole is so curious and interesting, especially the paragraph which gives an account of the first appearance of Methodism at Norwich, that I venture to believe that the reader will not merely excuse but applaud the insertion of it here. No other opportunity may ever offer itself, and none ought to be lost. The original may be seen by applying to the printer.

I cannot help observing, before Mr. Dixon's letter is introduced, on the admirable moral character, and on the profound learning which he so plainly discovers. If something is not done to preserve the ministers of our denomination from the rapid degeneracy which prevails

4. I have no hesitation in declaring that I think our ministers have a fair claim on legislative encou-

among them, we shall soon have but a very few who will bear any comparison with the ill-treated T. Dixon.

“ Norwich, Sept. 28, 1751.

“ Reverend Sir,

“ I am really ashamed to have been so long silent to a gentleman for whom I have a very high esteem, and to whom I am under great obligations for the benefit of your friendship and conversation. This silence has long been a burden upon my mind, and I have often sat down with a full intent, as I thought, to relieve it; but, being still in hopes of giving you a more favorable account of the situation of our affairs, I put it off from time to time. Soon after the receipt of your's (of the date of which I must not remind you) I perceived some rising complaints, which I did not at all relish; so that I only continued here to prevent the strange appearance going forward and backward in so little a time might have. Things continued in this state, and I in suspense of mind, till the beginning of March, when Mr. Taylor went to London, leaving me to supply for him myself, or to procure assistance, as I was disposed, or as I was able, promising to assist me in like manner when I should undertake a journey. I was glad of the opportunity, being determined to preach twice every Lord's day, and every Wednesday, during his absence; and, if I was not approved or more thinly attended than usual, I resolved to leave the place at or soon after his return. This scheme I was not permitted to pursue, for, before Mr. Taylor had been gone one Lord's day, some persons, dreading the utter desolation of the congregation, if I alone preached for two or three months, sent, without my knowledge, for a minister from Yarmouth to help me, and prevent so dire a calamity. Just at this time a very good friend of mine from Lancashire (who married Mr. Taylor's daughter) being in town, and, upon account of his relationship, being fra-

ragement. Let the reader hear me before he condemns my position.

quently in the family into which Mr. Taylor's son is married, he heard the tongues of the family go very freely against me, declaring, That the congregation would dwindle and be ruined; that it was a pity so fine a congregation should be so poorly served; that several persons would not attend, only they did not choose to go to church, or to the Independent meeting; that strangers were surprized I should be chosen, &c. My friend replied, There would be no great difficulty in getting rid of me; that he believed, nay he knew, I should be as forward to leave the place as they were to desire it. Of that, they said, they should be glad; and requested him to let me know it. I commissioned him to inform them that I would go away at Midsummer, or upon Mr. Taylor's return. This raised a great hubhub in the congregation. My friends told me, that if I went away at that time, and in that manner, it might do the congregation a considerable injury, as it would probably cause many to withdraw from it, some out of respect to me, and others because they would no longer be joined to a number of people, who, if they cannot have every thing their own way, will again raise the very same disturbances the first opportunity; that they would talk over the matter seriously with my opposers, represent the circumstances of things and the dangers that might justly be apprehended. But, as some of the foremost in the opposition were then going to London, that remonstrance was delayed till their return. This was said to be done out of tenderness to them, and at the request of their relations and friends. For, as they had a real concern for the welfare of the congregation, though very imprudent in the methods of promoting it, any intimations of its sustaining any loss would make their journey absolutely miserable. I don't find that this remonstrance has since been made, which is what does not perfectly please me, especially as I understand that the same disposition, at least in some, remains: and what

Such encouragement is given in Ireland with great advantage.

pleases me still less is, that, though Mr. Taylor promised to help me through all difficulties in his power, yet, since his return, he has never mentioned the affair to me but with reluctance, and when I have forced him to it: and, though all the last year he warmly urged my ordination, and said it would be most creditable and most agreeable to the people to have some eminent *London* ministers brought hither to perform the ceremony: (I opposed indeed this unnecessary ostentatious proceeding) yet since his return he has not mentioned one syllable about it; which I think gives occasion to suspect the worst. Indeed an affair has happened which induced him to talk of leaving the place, and he has told me it is as much as he can do to maintain his own ground. These things have been the more disagreeable, as I have reaped no one advantage, and have suffered many inconveniences by coming hither; such is the additional expense, that I am really as yet out of pocket, and I board very inconveniently. None of the people will take a boarder if they do not stand in need of the profit of one; so that, though my landlady is as obliging as can be desired, I live in a very small house, am cooped up in a garret, up the stairs to which I cannot walk erect, and have not the least breath of air, and being only separated by a plaster-wall from stocking-looms and twistering-mills. I often cannot so much as read without having the head-ach, and frequently I can do nothing at all. Want of air, I believe, contributed not a little to bring out the scurvy in a very uncomfortable degree the last winter, and to all appearance I shall have it worse this. I have been told that I ought to be very thankful for my present settlement; but I have not yet tasted that peace, tranquillity, and satisfaction, which I experienced at Thame, when I was favoured with your agreeable and improving converse. Though I was at London this summer, I could not possibly proceed any further, as I only staid there three days, and went with no other

Such encouragement is due to our people in fairness, who support a national religion without de-

view but to have the benefit of the passive exercise of a coach, which I had gratis, and was free from travelling expense going and returning. When I was at London, I preached before my friends Mr. Fleming and Mr. Smith, who declared they could find no fault with my manner of speaking. Indeed, I am perfectly weary of the complaints that are made, and if they do not cease I shall not be able, or not willing, to bear them long. The people that object here are not the most judicious: they have little or nothing to do but tittle-tattle, slander, and censure, in which they exercise themselves very diligently. They seem incapable of telling well what they would have. Their objections both against me and Mr. Taylor, (for against him there have been several and not very gentle objections,) so far as I can perceive, are such as might be completely avoided by some foppish glib-tongued dancing-master, who had but sense enough to avoid some of the grosser absurdities of Calvinism: and, in the case of Mr. Taylor, I may say, that judicious and correct preaching is not with them the *sine quâ non* in a minister. It must be acknowledged, that the majority of the congregation are more sensible and rational, and endued with all necessary candor; but, not caring to contend with the impertinencies of the disturbers, they are become indifferent, inactive, and too careless of the affairs of the congregation; and, having entirely laid aside the prejudices of education, they will scarce think it worth while long to support a cause conducted by an overbearing, trifling, and ridiculous, management; so that dissolution seems to be sown; and, before ever I was sent to, they were very much unconcerned as to procuring any minister at all.

“ For some time in March last I was strongly inclined to offer myself again to Thame, had I not known that Mr. Smith, a Yorkshire minister, was expected there as a candidate about that time. At present, if I am not much better pleased with this place than in time past, I

iving directly any benefit from it, on account of their religious scruples.

am determined to give over preaching; it being, I imagine, no difficult matter to fall into some employment more to my own satisfaction, as well as more consistent with health, considering my disposition to the scurvy.

“I wonder that I have heard nothing from Thame since Mr. Smith was amongst the people there; from the manner in which I am informed they rejected him, I conclude, that either from their not being able to keep up their subscriptions, or from their growing indifference to the Dissenting cause, they have come to a resolution to drop it; it may therefore be needless to acquaint them with what Mr. Ward writes to me from Yeovil, in Somersetshire: ‘Are they now supplied at Thame? There is a person in this country who would suit them in sentiments, character, and circumstances. The distance is indeed very great, but the thing might be put to them.’ Please to give my service to them, and it may do no harm to inform them of this.

“For a few weeks passed, there has been a Methodist Preacher in this city: he preached four or five times every day; but constantly morning and evening on the hill upon which the castle stands, when he is greatly crowded, especially on the Lord’s days; it was computed that the last Lord’s day he was attended by 8 or 10,000. The mob is thoroughly in his interest, as appeared when some young gentlemen very imprudently fired some crackers amongst them; when in the bustle the preacher was thrown from his table and received a slight wound in the leg. Some of the gentlemen lost their hats and wigs, and had their coats tore to pieces, being likewise much bruised; and probably a few lives were saved by rolling down the hill, the descent of which is nearly perpendicular. No worse consequences have attended this affair than the breaking a few windows in the house where the preacher lodges. Upon this disturbance the preacher changed his discourse to the stoning of Stephen. The

The patronage of learning, in the clergy of every denomination, appears compatible with the interest,

magistrates have no further interposed than civilly to desire him to finish his exercise before the darkness of the evening, lest, upon being interrupted, the irritated mob should carry terror and desolation through the city; with which request he has complied. He is so illiterate that he does not speak true English. He teaches faith, regeneration, and instantaneous conversion, from whence good works will flow; but morality, without the immediate extraordinary operation of the spirit, is of no avail. Three hundred at least he converses with in one day, who come to him one by one, inquiring what they must do to be saved. He sells six-penny worth of hymns, which, for the illiterateness of the composition, and the strangeness of the sense, if they have any, are perhaps not to be matched. Some of the people had got a notion that he was an angel, or superior to a man; but, having been so happy as to touch him, they declare that he is indeed a man, though much beyond any man since the time of our Saviour and his Apostles. We are not apprehensive of his doing us any harm, but, if any of our people should be disposed to follow him, we should think it a real advantage to be rid of them. I think the Methodists behaving peaceably should not be molested. While I injure no man, I have certainly a right to attend upon that preacher whose nonsense most exactly suits my nonsense.

“ You will excuse my sending these things in a cover, which Mr. Taylor gave me with his proposals to transmit to you, attended with his service. Perhaps, having Buxtorf, you may not think it worth while to subscribe, but I should be glad to know what you think of the usefulness of Mr. T—r’s Concordance. Mr. Taylor put me upon doing the Greek Concordance in the manner he has done the Hebrew one; but I scarce think there is the same necessity for putting the Greek Concordance into the same form. Buxtorf, you know, had put the Hebrew words into a very neat order, according to the conjuga-

and conducive to the credit, of a liberal government. There can never arise any rivalry between those who dissent and those who are more liberally patronised by an establishment.

Many great characters, who could not be suspected of hostility to the church, have recommended such an attention, on the part of the legislature, to the comfort and respectability of Dissenters, who

tions and tenses, the affixes and suffixes; so that Mr. T—r had only the English to add. But the Greek Concordance lies in the same promiscuous and confused order which the Hebrew Concordance did before Buxtorf meddled with it. It will be very tedious, and I am afraid will require more confinement than will be consistent with my health, to reduce the Greek verbs into the order of the moods and tenses, the nouns into that of number and case, and the adjectives into that of number, case, and gender; and then to add the English in the manner as Mr. T—r has done; and, after all, it might not be esteemed useful and necessary. However, as I have done a few words for my own amusement, I have sent you a specimen of a noun, an adjective, and a verb. You will be so good as to acquaint me whether a Greek Concordance upon this plan would be serviceable. I fear Mr. T—r's Concordance will not go off so as that he will be much a gainer by it. I suppose you have read Mr. T—r on Atouement. Sykes will publish on the same subject this winter. Any observations you have made in the course of your studies will be extremely agreeable. If I do not soon hear from you, I shall be afraid either that I have offended you, or that you are not well; either of which would give very great uneasiness to one who flatters himself that you still reckon him amongst the number of your most affectionate friends and obliged humble servant,

“ T. DIXON ”

are a part of the community as well as others, and who ought not to be treated "as bastards but as sons," if they are but younger sons.*

I will not urge such ungenerous arguments as those which suppose that Dissenters would be thus won from their dissent, and tamed into abject submission to every measure of government. For such a supposition would lead me to deprecate the very thing for which I am pleading. Nay, I will suppose that they will continue equally erect in mind, and equally vigilant in their observance of public measures. In this conviction, I will intreat my dissenting brethren not to be alarmed at this proposal. The treaty must be on liberal principles.

Yes, I will urge a contrary supposition, which will answer my purpose as completely as the other. The country may be assured that all hope of the extinction of manly dissent will ever prove fallacious. Experience is, of this, a sufficient proof, and a little consideration of the variety, prevailing in the construction of the minds of men, confirms the position. Uniformity of opinion can never be obtained. Since then the case is hopeless, why should not the best be made of it? Why should not the evil, if it be one, be rendered as little destructive of happiness

* The reader cannot confound the measure here recommended with the *Regium Donum*. It has no feature in common with that equivocal donative.

as possible, by the accordance of every aid to its alleviation?

I do not plead for ungenerous concessions on the part of the legislature, nor for an indiscreet use of its liberality. Neither would I countenance any unmanly submissions on the part of our body.

The arrangement may be made with credit to both parties. One may be bountiful, while the other remains independent. The mite that would be thus given to us, younger sons, would not deprive the elder children of their bread, nor burden a wealthy nation. Let the mesuré be attempted temperately, and it may succeed. If it should fail of success, a generous public will not take any undue advantage of an attempt so fairly claiming their protection.

Farewel, Christian reader! I shall not be sorry to have an opportunity of conducting you through the other scenes of my life, although you may think that you have already a pretty clear conception of *The Life of a Dissenting Minister*. If you have learned nothing else, be assured that this learning has been within your acquisition, as this account, with but little change, will suit the generality of the order. It was a *desideratum*, which has been now, in part at least, removed. Farewel, till I shall, at your command, should it ever be given, bear you company through far more interesting but not less melancholy scenes, which will suggest many serious reflections. When

we next meet, I shall present you with numerous *authentic documents* illustrative of the dissenting character, and of the condition of the dissenting clergy. The particulars without such documents would be beyond credibility. The authenticity of the narration, however, will not, by forcing belief, tend to elicit gratitude, or to produce pleasure, with respect to many. Yet, if some men shall appear in a very different character from that which they have so successfully assumed, I shall not be to blame. I must speak the truth. Farewel.

Final Note.—The Title of this Book appears to need apology, as far as it speaks of THE DISSENTERS IN GENERAL. To the author the character of the *other* Dissenters, not of the Presbyterian sect,—more recently called *Unitarians*,—is not much known. From credible report he has reason to believe that the other denominations are guiltless of the faults which have been attributed to the Presbyterians respecting their ministers. As to their religious opinions, he thinks the orthodox sects mistaken. But, if he has been rightly informed, they have a larger share of moral merit than their brethren in the article of kindness and justice towards their pastors; from which might be inferred their general superiority in right and proper feelings, if nothing is to be ascribed to the prevalence of enthusiasm, and if facts do not indicate a general moral inferiority. Surely, without proof, enthusiasm deserves not to be honored with so respectable an influence, whatever other effect it may produce; and the orthodox Dissenters must be proved guilty of deficiency in other virtues before they can be deprived of the credit of generous feeling towards their teachers, if it be true that they are more sensible of the force of the Christian

maxim, than their brethren, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and that the ministers of Christ ought to be "highly esteemed for their works' sake." Feeling appears to form a very small trait in the composition and character of the non-orthodox nonconformists; and it certainly is less displayed in their religious capacity than in any other. Kindness cannot be more meritoriously exercised than towards the helpless, especially if they also deserve it by their virtues. Those who neglect it, in such circumstances, have to boast of little that is truly Christian.

To flatter any party would be mean. To pronounce condemnation would be unjust, unless it be merited. But justice should be done in spite of partiality, and in spite of a deliberate conviction of the truth of particular opinions.—The remarks contained in this work on the *learning of Dissenters in general*, are deemed equally applicable to all sects of them. *Liberality* is not an exclusive possession; but it does not appear to be much cherished by any party of Christian professors.

ERRATA.

- Page 1, the contents of the first Chapter should be, *Introduction.—Story commences.*
- Page 8, the contents prefixed to Chapter I. should be inserted at Chapter II. viz. *Preparatory Studies to the end of my first Academic Year.*
- Page 23, line 17, for *eighteenth*, read *nineteenth*.
line 23, for *twenty-one*, read *twenty-two*.
- Page 51, line 18, insert a semicolon between *schoolmaster* and *on*.
- Page 52, line 15, note, for *contest*, read *contests*.
- Page 66, line 2, for *complement*, read *compliment*.
- Page 92, line 16, for *nearly 200*, read *above 100*.
- Page 98, line 19, for *it means*, read *its means*.
- Page 116, line 27, for *attribute*, read *consider*.
- Page 122, line 20, for *were given*, read *was given*.
- Page 144, line 24, note, for *five yards*, read *two yards and a half*.
- Page 153, line 8, for *the two first*, read *these*.

