MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF THE LATE
REV. W. WOOD, F. L. S.
AND MINISTER OF THE PROTESTANT DISSenting CHAPEL,
at MIL-HILL, IN LEEDS.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED,
AN ADDRESS,
DELIVERED AT HIS INTERMENT, ON TUESDAY, APRIL 5;
AND
A SERMON,
on occasion of his death,
PREACHED ON SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 1808.

By CHARLES WELLBELoved.

Recordatione nostro amicitiae fruor, ut beate vixisse videar, quia cum Scipione
vixerim; quocum mihi id fuit, in quo est omnis vis amicitiae, voluntatum, studiorum,
sententiarum summa consensio.

Cic.

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1809.
Rev. William Wood A. M. S.
TO THE
CONGREGATION of PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,
ASSEMBLING AT
MILL-HILL CHAPEL, IN LEEDS,
THE FOLLOWING
MEMOIRS
OF
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF THEIR LATE REVERED
FRIEND AND PASTOR:
TOGETHER WITH
AN ADDRESS AT HIS INTERMENT;
AND
A SERMON,
ON OCCASION OF HIS LAMENTED DEATH,
DELIVERED AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
ARE INSCRIBED WITH SENTIMENTS OF
MOST SINCERE ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE,
BY THEIR OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL
SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.
MEMOIRS,
&c.

THAT the lives of studious and literary men are commonly barren of interesting incidents, is an observation so trite as scarcely to bear a repetition; nor would it have been here repeated, but for the sake of remarking that it is not from those incidents alone which are usually considered interesting, that both pleasing information, and valuable instruction are to be derived. The splendid achievements of the hero—the virtuous efforts of the patriot—the skilful intrigues of the statesman—the hazardous wanderings of the traveller, may excite more general curiosity, and furnish a larger store of amusement; but men of the most retired habits, and in the humblest walks of life; men whose intercourse with the
world has been circumscribed within the narrowest limits, may afford the biographer an opportunity of enlarging the history of the human mind, may contribute something to the advancement of piety and virtue, may impart some aid in the successful investigation of truth, and in the communication of it to others. Some there must ever be, and these the great bulk of mankind, "who have no memorial, who are perished as though they had never been, and are become as though they never had been born, and their children after them:" whilst others who have not indeed "borne rule in kingdoms, nor been men renowned for power, nor rich men furnished with ability, honoured in their generations and the glory of their times," yet "giving counsel by their understanding, wise and eloquent in their instructions, have left a name behind them that their praises might be reported. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore."(a)

Amongst these may be placed the subject of the following pages. Born in a comparatively humble station of life, devoted from his youth to a profession which forbids all ambi-

(a) Ecclesiasticus, xliv. 3—14.
tions views, and renders vain all hope of worldly pre-eminence, exercising that profession during the greater part of his life in one Christian society, and regularly occupied in the discharge of its duties, or in imparting to a few favoured pupils a portion of that store of knowledge which by the industry of many years he had been accumulating; he cannot be expected to supply any of those events by which the biographer usually engages the attention and interests the passions of his readers. Yet such were the excellencies which endeared him while living to a large circle of friends, and which now that he is no more in this world, render him an object upon which their memory loves to dwell; such was the originality of the few productions which he committed to the press, but which owing solely to the particular nature of the topics on which they treat, are now not generally read or known; so ingenious and important were the opinions he had formed upon subjects connected with general science, as well as with his own profession, that the exertions of friendship to offer some public tribute to his memory, will, it is ardently hoped, not merely interest and gratify those who long knew and revered
him, but be the means of reviving attention to some truths, which though immediately connected with events that have long passed, will always be of general utility, of suggesting some hints which may lead to further inquiries, and of conveying both to the public and the private instructor, to the minister of religion and to the teacher of youth, some information which may be useful both to themselves and to those entrusted to their care.

The Rev. William Wood was born at Collingtree, a village near Northampton, on May 29, O. S. 1745. His father Mr. Benjamin Wood, was a member of the Christian society at Northampton, of which Dr. Doddridge was the minister; and being a pious man, paid peculiar attention to the religious instruction of his children. While engaged in the usual occupations of his business, he was accustomed to employ them in reading to him some work of piety, to which he fixed their attention by frequent questions and remarks, and thus imprinted upon their tender minds lessons of the most salutary nature for the future conduct of life. Happy the children who are thus early taught the love and practice of religion! Erroneous.
speculative opinions may indeed at the same time be frequently inculcated, but the more important instructions of practical truth will, in after life, counteract the influence of these, or give consistency and worth to the character if a purer system of faith shall have been adopted. Dr. Priestley was accustomed to speak in terms of the warmest gratitude of that near relative who instilled into his tender breast, with opinions which he afterwards abandoned as in the highest degree erroneous, sentiments of deep piety to God; and Mr. Wood also, who soon relinquished the calvinistic principles in which he was instructed by his father, and at length became a firm and consistent believer in the unity of God, most strictly considered, and in all those doctrines necessarily connected with that great truth, never ceased to feel and to acknowledge the debt he owed to his parent for this early assiduity in forming in him a religious character. What might not be expected from similar attention on the part of those whose lessons of early piety may be enforced by the most pleasing views of the divine character and government! How glorious the harvest which might arise from the seed of the
word of God, committed to the youthful heart without any mixture of tares!

Of Mr. Wood's childhood little else is known than, that he very early discovered considerable talents, and that he passed, with great credit, through the ordinary course of school education, under the late Dr. Stephen Addington, at Market Harborough. At the age of sixteen he entered the Dissenting Academy in Wellclose-square, London, at that time under the care of the Rev. Dr. D. Jennings, and the Rev. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Morton Savage. In the following year, 1762, upon the death of Dr. Jennings, the academy was removed to Hoxton: Mr. Savage was appointed to the office of theological tutor, and with him were associated as tutors, the one in the belles lettres, the other in mathematics and natural philosophy, the Rev. A. Kippis, and the Rev. A. Rees. Among his contemporaries in the academy were, Mr. J. Alexander, author of a paraphrase on 1 Cor. xv. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Samuel Wilton, Mr. Forsyth, late tutor at Daventry and Northampton, Mr. Beaufoy, late Member of Parliament for Yarmouth, and Mr. T. Jervis, formerly tutor to the present Marquis of Lansdowne,
and recently chosen to succeed to the pastoral office at Mill-Hill Chapel, in Leeds. With some of these he continued to maintain a pleasing intercourse through life; but with the last he formed a close and intimate friendship, which subsisted without interruption till death.

To the excellence of his conduct as a student, as also to the talents and virtues by which he was throughout life distinguished, this "friend of his youth, and companion of his early studies," has borne his affectionate and public testimony: (See Athenæum for May 1808.) and the writer of this memoir has perused with pleasure and advantage the notes which Mr. Wood had preserved of the able lectures delivered in the academy, and listened with admiration to the account of his own private studies, both upon those subjects which regularly claimed his attention, and those which, though they be essential to form the general and polite scholar, are unavoidably excluded from the necessarily contracted plan of an academical course. Mr. Wood had not chosen the work of the ministry as an idle occupation; he was well aware of the importance of that work, and of the necessity, not of natural talents
alone, but of much acquired knowledge, to its proper discharge. He had resolved not to engage in it, unprepared to secure his own credit, and the real advantage of those who might be committed to his care; and he was fully sensible that the instructions of the ablest tutors, (and such instructions he enjoyed) would be of little avail without the constant personal diligence of the student. By his own unwearied assiduity therefore he aided their judicious efforts, and the consequence was, that few young men ever left their preparatory studies, better qualified to discharge the weighty duties of the pastoral care, and to pursue those interesting subjects of enquiry, to which the lectures of a public tutor are only initiatory.

He preached his first sermon at Debenham, in Suffolk, on the 6th of July, 1766, and a more appropriate subject could scarcely have been chosen for such an occasion, than that which he selected. His text was taken from Luke ix. 26. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his father's, and of the holy angels." The ministry of the gospel exercised in cir-
circumstances which, in general, would be esteemed most honourable; connected with personal credit and worldly emolument, requires in those who undertake it, unbending firmness and immovable integrity. The scoffer is to be silenced, the vices or the follies of the times, by whomsoever they may be practised, or countenanced, are to be boldly reproved: many gratifications in which others may without criminality indulge themselves, are to be refused, and the whole deportment is to be under such regulations as may excite the sheers of the gay and thoughtless. Considering the frailty of human nature, it is not a just matter of wonder if the christian teacher be in danger of being ashamed of his master's words, and tempted to withhold the voice of warning and of counsel, or to relax in that strictness of conduct which his profession demands. But the danger is much more serious to those who have to encounter, not only the trials which are shared by such of their brethren, as the protection and patronage of the state hold up to public esteem and reverence, but those also which arise from their conscientiously separating from what they regard as a corrupt
establishment; who not being in any degree withheld from enquiry, are liable to adopt such views of the Christian doctrine as the generality of men, satisfied with the creed of their forefathers, or their instructors, cannot appreciate, and which they who are interested in the continuance of ancient systems, carefully represent as false and dangerous; to whom prejudice imputes principles which they have not adopted, and on whom bigotry attempts to fix a stigma, which shall point them out to general contempt or hatred. Among these Mr. Wood deliberately threw in his lot, and upon entering on his office, wisely considered the difficulties and dangers to which he was about to be exposed, and fortified his mind to meet them. He pursued truth without hesitation. He professed what he discovered without fear. He soon experienced some of those trials which they are called to bear who prefer a good conscience to the approbation of relatives and friends, and afterwards bore his share of reproach with "a sect that is everywhere spoken against," with a firmness that gained him the esteem of the liberal-minded, and with a mildness of temper and a purity of conduct which obtained the
respect of the bigot. He considered, from the first, the dishonour and the danger of denying, in any respect, either of principle or practice, the Master whom he had engaged to serve, and throughout life, he seized every proper occasion to shew that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

The remaining part of the year 1766, and a great part of the year 1767, was spent by him in the neighbourhood of London; and during this period he preached before the principal congregations in the metropolis and its vicinity. His talents were noticed and admired, and he obtained the friendship of some of the most eminent of the Dissenting Ministers. Of this number was the late Dr. Price, who was then settled at Newington-Green, and for whom he appears to have frequently officiated. The friendship of such a man, was, in itself, an honour and an advantage to one just entering upon the world; and as it continued unimpaired till the Doctor's death, many occasions occurred in which Mr. Wood was greatly indebted to his kind exertions. Among other instances of this nature was, a recommendation to the important place which
his friend the Rev. T. Jervis so ably and so honourably filled in the family of the late Marquis of Lansdown.

In the month of September of this year, he removed to Stamford, in Lincolnshire, as successor to his excellent friend the Rev. J. Ralph. Here, connected with a small but affectionate society, he spent somewhat more than three years. During this interval he was ordained, together with his late tutor the Rev. A. Rees, at the Meeting-house, in St. Thomas’s, Southwark, and his testimonial was signed by the principal Dissenting Ministers then in London. Among other names, are those of Pickard, Furneaux, Savage, Kippis and J. Palmer.

From Stamford he removed to Ipswich, in Nov. 1770, as assistant to the Rev. T. Scott, the well-known translator of the book of Job, and to succeed in that capacity, the Rev. R. Lewin, then lately invited to Liverpool. In this situation he had not been long placed, when he received an unanimous invitation from the Congregation assembling in the Old Meeting, in Birmingham, to take the pastoral charge in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. Howell. The probability that so flattering a proposal
would not be rejected gave great uneasiness to his friends at Ipswich, and every possible exertion was made on their part to induce him to continue with them. In an address to him upon this occasion, which deserves to be cited, as it contains so honourable a testimony to his judgment, and to that conciliating temper by which he was eminently distinguished through life, they observe: "The distracted situation from which our society has been so happily delivered by the unanimous approbation of Mr. Wood's abilities in the pulpit, and agreeable conduct in private life, calls for the utmost exertion of our abilities (if possible) to retain a gentleman, who has to all appearance (under providence) the power of being the happy instrument, not only of healing all our breaches, but of binding up a society which was on the borders of dissolution. We therefore sincerely and heartily solicit his continuance with us. And as an inducement thereto, we do unanimously and earnestly desire that he may be made joint-pastor with the Rev. Mr. Scott, and we do also assure him that we will do everything in our power to make his future residence amongst us in all respects comfortable and
happy." At the same time, many of the old subscribers signified their intention of raising their subscriptions, and many more offered to become subscribers, if this application should prove successful. After much deliberation he appears to have resolved upon removing; but before he had formally accepted the invitation to Birmingham, an event happened which rendered fresh deliberation, and minuter inquiries necessary, and increased the zeal of those to whom his services had been so acceptable and important. Mr. Howell, with whom he had been requested to share the pastoral charge resigned, and the subscribers belonging to the Old Meeting, now, "cordially united in inviting him to accept either the sole-pastoral or the co-pastoral charge of the congregation, as the circumstances thereof might require." This offer was not to be lightly rejected; the situation was honourable and advantageous, and opened a wide field for usefulness. But some circumstances which have not come fully to the knowledge of the writer, caused him long to hesitate, and although he was at length induced to comply with this offer, it was not without some degree of reluctance. He wrote to signify
his acceptance of the invitation, and being engaged to pay an afternoon visit, took the letter with him, for the purpose, as he passed, of putting it into the Post Office. When he arrived at the office he found he had neglected to seal the letter, he therefore resolved to keep it till the following day. But the next post brought some information which induced him to alter his purpose; he gave a decided refusal, and agreed to continue at Ipswich as joint pastor with Mr. Scott, of an affectionate and grateful society. Of such minute links are parts of the great chain of human events composed! Upon such trifling and unimportant incidents, as they appear to us, does the great plan of Divine Providence in the disposal of his creatures depend! The past life of every one will furnish instances of a similar kind sufficient to show how completely we are instruments in the hands of God, and to excite astonishment and gratitude.

His continuance at Ipswich, however, after this event was not long. At the close of the year 1772, Dr. Priestley resigned his situation of Minister at Mill-Hill Chapel, in Leeds; and in consequence of the joint recommendation of
himself and Dr. Price, Mr. Wood was invited to succeed him. On January 10th, and 17th, 1773, he preached, as a candidate, at Leeds; and on the 30th of May, entered formally upon the office to which he had been unanimously chosen. The excellent discourse which he delivered upon that occasion, was soon afterwards published. In it he justly and eloquently describes, and earnestly and forcibly urges the reciprocal duties of a Christian Minister, and his hearers. The subject is by no means uncommon, and in the treatment of it novelty was not to be expected, perhaps not to be wished, yet this discourse displays the ingenuity which characterized all the author's compositions, and discovers a mind deeply impressed by a sense of the magnitude of the pastoral care, zealous to discharge all its important offices, possessed of a manly independence, and at the same time well informed of the nature and limits of the authority, with which, according to pure Christian principles, the minister of the gospel is invested.

When he undertook the charge of this numerous and highly respectable congregation,
he had nearly completed his 27th year. At such an age to be placed in such a situation, and as the immediate successor of Dr. Priestley, was a flattering distinction, and as such he acknowledges he felt it; but at the same time he "was not unapprized of the unremitting care which it behoved him to take, that no one might have just reason to despise his youth." He had not been long settled in this honourable and difficult station, when, to use nearly his own words in relating this curious anecdote, (b) the conviction of the necessity of unremitting diligence, care and circumspection was quickened and confirmed by the blunt, but honest and pleasing address of an entire stranger, who afterwards proved a respectable beneficed Minister of the established church. "I wished," said he, "to see the successor of Dr. Priestley, and I have no other apology to make for my present freedom. You fill an important place: I don't know how you fill it." They who were most interested knew, and rejoiced at having found in him a successor to that great and good man, in every respect so well qualified to supply their loss; and the conti-

(b) See Sermon on the death of Dr. Priestley, p. 9.
nually increasing affection and respect of that numerous and enlightened congregation, during the long space of thirty-five years, is a most pleasing and satisfactory testimony to his having filled that important place ably and well.

When he had been settled in Leeds about two years, he published a small volume consisting of twelve sermons on social life. These sermons were composed solely for the pulpit, at different intervals, and not in the order in which they were published. An incident which painfully affected his mind and disqualified him for the labour of invention, was the occasion of their being transcribed for the press (c); and thus several solitary hours, which, by an inferior mind, would have been devoted to unavailing regret, were employed by him in a manner highly becoming his own character, soothing to his own feelings, and beneficial to the world. The subjects which compose this little volume, are, "General Benevolence, Mutual Edification, Universal Sympathy, Compassion, Courtesy, Sympathetic Joy, Religious Conversation, Truth, the Fear of Man, Excess of Good-nature, the dangerous

(c) See Preface and Sermons on social life, p. ii.
Influence of little Faults, and Faults which on account of their supposed minuteness, are generally overlooked." All these, of great importance to the direction of the social principle, and to the comfort of social life, are treated, if not in the most masterly manner, yet with great elegance, precision and force. They shew that the preacher's heart was alive to the tenderest and the best feelings, and are admirably adapted to promote the harmony and the highest good of society. It is not unusual for men of eminence to undervalue their early works; more extensive reading, maturer judgment, and a more accurate acquaintance with mankind, discover to them errors and defects, where the world at large, who have not made a similar or equal advancement, see only excellencies; and what the world still, and not unjustly, continues to esteem and value, they treat with indifference, and consider of little worth. It was thus that Mr. Wood was inclined to speak of this early production; but though it may not exhibit his best thoughts upon all the important subjects of which it treats, it contains much ingenuous and useful reflection, upon topics intimately connected
with the dignity and the comfort of life. It is much to be regretted that this volume is out of print and scarce. The following is the judgment passed upon it by a contemporary critic: "These discourses are not indeed highly oratorical or pathetic, but they abound with manly sentiments, and judicious observations, expressed in easy, perspicuous, and spirited language: they place several common topics of morality in a new light, and treat of several not usually discussed from the pulpit. . . . . These are discussed in a manner which will probably lead those who are fond of ancient systems and forms, to throw them by, under the degrading appellation of light moral essays; but, in our opinion, they entitle the author to the character of a useful and elegant preacher." Month. Rev. vol. 53. p. 424.

On the 29th of September, 1780, Mr. Wood married Louisa-Ann, the second daughter of Mr. George Oates, of Low-Hall, near Leeds. This gentleman was engaged in the Leeds trade, and his house (which is still continued by two of his grandsons), was one of the oldest and most respectable in that town. Being possessed of excellent abilities, and much general informa-
tion, he had great influence, and was ever regarded by his neighbours as a leading man. In religion he was a steady dissenter, and in politics a whig of the old school. In this connection, which lasted six and twenty years, Mr. Wood experienced much domestic felicity; and it was a matter of no little importance to his comfort, that he became by this means united in closer ties, to a considerable part of his congregation. The fruit of this marriage were four children, three of whom survive their parents.

To so upright and consistent a minister of the gospel of peace, animated by the divine spirit of his great Master, the miseries of the long contest between this country and her American colonies, were the occasion of deep and unaffected concern. His liberal and enlightened views were wholly at variance with the selfish and tyrannical politics of the day, and he thought it his duty openly to protest against them, and to use his endeavours, as far as his influence could extend, to inculcate a temper more becoming in men and christians. At a meeting of the Associated Dissenting Ministers, in the West-Riding of Yorkshire, held at Bradford, July 4th, 1781, he delivered an excel-
lent discourse "on the christian duty of cultivating a spirit of universal benevolence, amidst the present unhappy national hostilities." At the request of the audience it was afterwards published. Neither the ingenuity nor the eloquence displayed in this discourse, nor even the importance and continued necessity of the lessons it contains, have, it is to be feared, preserved it from the fate of similar productions. It was read, admired and forgotten. It is, however, one of the most interesting of his productions, and the truths it inculcates are unhappily no less disregarded now then they were at the time of its publication. The great object of the preacher is to shew that a spirit of universal benevolence is an indispensible part of the christian character, and that the frame of the world and the constitution of its inhabitants are evidently formed and wonderfully contrived to bring that spirit into exercise. Commerce, which is so generally prostituted to the most selfish purposes, and which has so frequently been the means of tyranny, injustice and oppression, he proves to be "that social chain which surrounds the globe, and was intended to bind all its inhabitants into one harmonious
body. If it were not," he adds, "for this comprehensive and powerful connection, the communication of mankind with each other would be extremely limited, and their benevolence would necessarily either be confined within the same bounds, or if it were enlarged by the principles of religion would be nothing more than a speculative ineffectual feeling.—But by the means of commerce, a field is opened for the actual exercise of universal benevolence, and the doctrines of the gospel are intended to impel it to action, to give it a proper direction, and to arm it against the obstacles which are thrown in its way by selfishness and vice." He proceeds to shew that the disposition of the terraqueous globe is expressly designed to promote a commercial intercourse, and thus to render the various tribes of men, notwithstanding the distance of their habitations, and the diversity of their language and manners, all members one of another. How much is it to be lamented that the practice of mankind should continue to be at variance with the soundest maxims of philosophy and religion, that the wise contrivances of the Author of nature should be perverted to
mutual unhappiness, and the voice of reason and the gospel neglected or despised! Mr. Wood had, at that period, cause to lament the selfishness and infatuation too evident in commercial concerns; but he lived to see those concerns still more degraded and perverted; he lived almost to hear the yell of war raised by an assembly of merchants, in the centre of the metropolis of a country which is indebted to commerce for her envied superiority, and which glories in her profession of the gospel of Christ.

In the following year he was engaged at Pudsey, near Bradford, in the ordination of the Rev. W. Turner, jun. of Newcastle, in conjunction with the Rev. P. Holland, the Rev. J. Dawson, and the Rev. W. Turner, sen. of Wakefield. On that occasion Mr. Wood delivered the usual prayer, which was printed with the rest of the service. The whole of that publication is interesting, and deserves the frequent perusal of all who are engaged in the work of the ministry, but particularly of those who are just entering upon that important work, many of whom, in consequence of the present disuse of this apostolical ceremony, have no opportunity of receiving those salutary counsels
of age and experience, which are so well adapted to shew the serious nature of the ministerial office, and to produce constant circumspection and diligence in the discharge of its various and momentous duties.

It may not be improper here to observe, that, with the truly excellent person who was the subject of this religious ordinance, Mr. Wood maintained, till the time of his death, the most pleasing and friendly intercourse. Fine talents and amiable dispositions on each side; a cordial union of sentiment upon points of the greatest interest, both religious and civil; and an enlightened zeal in the cause of truth and of virtue, excited and cherished mutual esteem; and gave birth to a friendship which time invigorated; and death alone could interrupt: But Mr. Dawson was his neighbour as well as his friend; and very frequent personal intercourse produced, on the part of each, an affection truly fraternal. Besides a similarity of taste; a common attachment to the study of the works of nature, and unanimity concerning principles of the highest importance to the happiness of man, both as a citizen of this world and
an expectant of immortality, there prevailed a striking resemblance of temper, each being distinguished by almost uncruffled cheerfulness, the consequence not of natural temperament merely, but of conscious integrity, and the most pleasing views of the moral government of God.

From the time of his leaving the academy, but especially of his settling at Leeds, Mr. Wood ardently devoted himself to the studies immediately belonging to his profession, or intimately connected with it. Few men were ever better qualified for the investigation of theological truth. With considerable attainments in classical literature, and an accurate knowledge of the Hebrew language and the Greek of the synagogue, were united a sound understanding, a correct judgment, a comprehensive mind, a well formed taste, and unwearied perseverance. From the principal sources of biblical criticism he could draw with ease, and for the minutest and the most patient investigation he was suited as well by habit and disposition as by extensive and accurate learning. But to very minute verbal criticism he was no friend, he thought that it too often lead into useless speculations,
and obscured rather than illustrated the truth; he was fearful that it might induce students in theology to expect in the sacred writers the same precision and accuracy in the use of words, which are to be found only in the most accurate and philosophical authors, and consequently that instead of the real sense in which the sacred writer employed his terms, the ideas affixed to them by the critic would be too frequently substituted. It was therefore not from the general meaning of particular terms in classical or contemporary writers, nor even from the signification which they commonly bear in scriptural use, that he ventured in every instance to interpret passages of doubtful import; he trusted for assistance rather to the general nature and design of revelation, to the scope of the writer's argument, and the habit and disposition, as far as they could be discovered, of the writer's mind. To theological studies conducted upon the most comprehensive and enlightened plan he paid during many years almost unremitted attention, and though he gave not to the world any of the fruits of these private and to him pleasing labours, and has left amongst his papers no
curious and elaborate dissertations and criticism, the effects of his pursuits were evident in the clearness and correctness of his views on such subjects, in the occasional illustrations of scripture which he placed before his audience from the pulpit, but especially in a long and interesting course of lectures which in the year 1785, he began to deliver to the younger part of his congregation.

These lectures were delivered once a fortnight, and occupied several years. Having given a general view of his very extensive plan, he proceeded to state the arguments for the existence of a God, and to enumerate and illustrate the attributes of the great first cause. Of the common distribution of these attributes into natural and moral, he disapproved. This appeared to him an inaccurate division, founded on an improper pursuit of the analogy of human nature, and he therefore represented all the divine perfections as alike natural to the divine essence. From the consideration of the providence of God, the transition was easy, and natural to the consideration of the nature, frame and expectations of man; and several lectures were employed in a full and ingenious
investigation of this highly favoured creature; first, as a sentient, and secondly, as an intelligent being. To these succeeded an enquiry concerning morals; the various systems both of the ancients and moderns, were impartially stated and discussed; their merits and defects ably and candidly pointed out, and the truth, as far as it could be obtained, established. The future destiny of man was of course the next object that claimed the lecturer's attention: and the deficiency of natural religion upon a topic so intimately connected with the dignity and happiness of the human species, naturally led him to examine the evidence of revelation, from which alone any certain knowledge concerning a life to come can be obtained. Having, as is usual, stated the presumptive arguments in its favour, he advanced to those which are more direct, both internal and external; the former of which, though essential, not being of themselves sufficient, his principal enquiry turned upon the latter. The external proofs are miracles and prophecy, and to an examination of these many lectures were judiciously appropriated. But at the very outset a considerable difficulty occurred, What
is a miracle? Various definitions have been given, not one of which appeared to the lecturer perfectly satisfactory. These he recited to his class, and stated his objections to each; and having remarked that the difference and the error arose from writers having, in this instance, pursued the a priori method of investigation; first settling the character of a miracle from what they supposed to be the established nature of things, and then applying the facts to this preconceived idea; he determined to try the better method by induction, the method so universally and successfully adopted by all natural philosophers. We have a number of facts, he observed, which lay claim to the character of a miracle related in the sacred writings; the only method of proceeding with certainty, in our investigation of the subject, is to take a view of them all, and to observe what is the particular circumstance in which they differ from events which are confessedly not supernatural. He accordingly collected and arranged, in four classes, all the miracles recorded in the New Testament. The first class consisted of those in which Christ is represented as the agent, as, the cure of diseases,
acute and chronic; the production of things, as of wine at Cana; influence exerted on the minds of men; as in the case of the clearing of the temple; and self-preservation in dangerous circumstances. Of the two latter kinds of miracles of the first class, doubts may be entertained whether such ever occurred, and of the two former Mr. Wood conceived it evident that the agency of Christ extended no further than to predict the event. The second class consisted of those miracles which had a clearly express reference to Christ, and pointed him out to mankind as a divine instructor, in which, however, he did not appear in any respect as the agent; as the circumstances at his baptism, his transfiguration, &c. The connection of these with a person who laid claim to a divine revelation, constituted their miraculous nature; without such a connection they would have been wonders not miracles. In the third class were placed those miraculous events in which the apostles appeared in some degree as agents, similar to those of the first class; and to the fourth were assigned those in which they were not the agents, but the subjects. From this classification he was led to divide miracles in
general into two kinds, perfect and imperfect. Perfect miracles he defined to be those in which the person who is invested with a special divine commission is considered in a popular sense as an 'agent. These (with the single exception of Christ’s walking upon the water, which may perhaps be more properly referred to the other kind) are in no respect different from prophetic gifts, a perfect miracle being a prophecy instantaneously fulfilled. Nothing is more determinate than the powers of the human mind with respect to future events, nothing can be certainly foreknown which is not a continuation of a long series of uninterrupted facts. It is of no consequence whether the event thus foretold or pre-signified be agreeable or contrary to the regular course of nature, it is sufficient that it cannot be foreknown by any man without a divine revelation.

Imperfect miracles he defined to be those of which the person who is invested with a special divine commission is only the object.—They are imperfect because the evidence which they afford arises entirely from their connexion with the other, and because it is not easy always to determine their nature. With respect to
some of them: a warm enthusiastic imagination may impose upon a man, and induce him to apply them to himself, as marks of a peculiar divine favour, without any foundation; but this is not the case with miracles of the first kind, since no enthusiasm can give a man the foreknowledge of a future event not connected with some known past event, or certainly to be deduced from it. They form however all together an aggregate evidence, which when impartially considered must impel conviction.

The miracles recorded in the Old Testament were next examined in a similar manner, and with a similar result. It appears worthy of being here remarked, that by a process somewhat different, the late Rev. and learned N. Cappe arrived at the same conclusion, and it was no little satisfaction to Mr. Wood to find during a conversation that passed between them whilst he was engaged in these lectures, that the opinion he had formed upon this important subject exactly coincided with that of so able a divine.

The authenticity of the books in which these miracles are recorded naturally formed
the next subject of enquiry, and this necessarily involved an examination of the sophistical and contradictory hypothesis of Mr. Hume.

An investigation of the argument arising from prophecy similar to that which had been pursued upon the subject of miracles next occurred. It had already been shewn that a perfect miracle is nothing more than a prophecy instantaneously fulfilled, having for its object in most cases some appearance of the natural world. Comparing prophecy with this idea of a perfect miracle, Mr. Wood defined it to be a miracle of which the true character does not appear, or which is not completed till a considerable time after the delivery of the prediction. And it has for its object generally some event or series of events depending upon the volition of mankind. The reason of this difference with respect to the particular objects of a perfect miracle and prophecy is obvious. In the case of the perfect miracle the object is more simple and less likely to be attributed to different causes. There can be no suspicion of collusion nor any thing attributed to the influence of enthusiasm on the minds of men, which might have been alleged had the effect
taken place on the actions of mankind. In the case of prophecy, the actions of mankind are better adapted to the purpose, because in this situation the former objections will not apply, and these actions are so complex that they cannot be attributed to guess or to a superior knowledge of the course of nature. Having made some general remarks upon the nature of the evidence arising from prophecy, the lecturer proceeded to collect and arrange all the prophecies recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Those of the Old Testament he divided into three sections. The first contained the prophecies which were fulfilled in the time, and within the experience of the persons to whom they were delivered, e. g. the birth of Isaac. The second, those of distant completion which relate to the secular history of different kingdoms, as the Jewish, the Babylonian, &c. and under the third were placed those which are thought to refer directly to the appearance of Christ and the future progress of his gospel. The prophecies in each of these sections having been all separately and carefully examined, and their completion so far as they were fully understood having been traced by the aid of
sacred or profane history, those only remained to be considered to which a double sense has been generally affixed. These occasion considerable difficulty to the commentator, and have furnished to the adversary of revelation, the means of raising a plausible objection; but the proof from prophecy both of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as the lecturer well observed, is complete without them, and the evidence for the divine mission of Christ, rests upon grounds independent of Jewish prophecy from which it cannot be overthrown.

The proof from miracles, is by no means satisfactory, if any other than the author of nature can control its operations. The cases therefore of the magicians and necromancers of the Old Testament, and the demoniacs and the tempter of Christ in the New, required consideration, and they were discussed with all the particularity which their importance deserves. The nature of the heathen oracles also, and the question concerning the continuance of miraculous powers in the Christian church, formed the subjects of one interesting lecture. In this part of the course Mr. Wood collected all the passages which are usually supposed to
refer to the existence of a powerful malignant spirit, who interferes in the affairs of the world, and examined them upon a plan similar to that which has been more largely, and very successfully adopted upon the same subject, and others connected with biblical criticism, by his excellent friend the Rev. J. Simpson. The result was, that there is nothing either in the Old or the New Testament to justify the opinion that any such spirit is permitted to control the laws of nature, or to influence the minds of men. It is worthy of observation that in explaining the case of the temptation of Christ, he took the same ground with the late Rev. N. Cappe, and having stated to his class the common opinion, and the hypothesis of Mr. Farmer, represented it as most probable, that the whole history of that extraordinary event is no more than a figurative representation of what passed in the mind of Jesus in consequence of the circumstances in which he found himself after his baptism, when he was publicly declared the Son of God.

Having thus prepared the way, by establishing the possibility of a divine revelation, by shewing the proper proofs upon which it
ought to rest, and by obviating such objections as might arise from some circumstances attending the evidences of the Jewish and Christian religions, he proceeded to the examination of every book both of the Old and New Testaments, in the order, as far as he could discover it, of their respective publication. The history of the Jewish nation contained in their sacred books, he divided into certain epochs, and at the conclusion of each epoch pointed out the history of the other nations of the world, during the same period, particularly of those nations with whom the Jews were in any manner connected. The civil and religious institutions of Moses appeared to him to demand a very close attention, and several lectures were devoted to the arrangement of the Mosaic laws, and a full and clear account of the ritual worship of the Jews and their civil government. These lectures formed of themselves an interesting course of the most important part of Jewish antiquities and conveyed accurate information upon many curious and interesting subjects which are but partially understood, even by intelligent and enlightened readers of the Old Testament, in consequence of the detached and
scattered manner in which they are treated in the four last books of the pentateuch. Of the high antiquity of the book of Job, Mr. Wood had no doubt, and he therefore went through a careful examination of it immediately after he had finished the book of Genesis. The writings of David and Solomon, were fully considered, at the conclusion of the reign of the latter monarch, and from these and from every other book of the Old Testament, was carefully collected and arranged in proper order, all the information they contained concerning the character and government of God, the duties and the expectations of man. Having finished the examination of the writings contained in the Old Testament, he drew from other sources the history of the Jews to the time of Christ, and treated somewhat largely concerning the authenticity, the genuineness, and the contents of the apocryphal books.

Preparatory to his lectures on the New Testament, and as intimately connected with those which had gone before, he next took an extensive view of the philosophical and religious opinions of the principal heathen nations of the world, the Chaldeans, the Per-
sians, the Greeks, and the Romans; and of
the popular religion about the time of Christ.
He detailed also the principles which were at
that time maintained by the religious sects
into which the Jews were divided, and de-
scribed the civil state of the world at the same
period. He then passed on to the considera-
tion of the history of the life of Christ, to which
he devoted several lectures, having previously
discussed the genuineness of the two first chap-
ters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and
given a succinct view of other histories of the
nativity and infancy of Christ, at present uni-
versally acknowledged to be spurious. The
history of the propagation of christianity by the
apostles, and their various epistles, together
with the apocalypse, were next largely exa-
mined; and, finally, the whole doctrine of the
New Testament, arranged under proper heads,
was exhibited with every passage distinctly
noticed, by which each doctrine is supported.

As it had been one great object in con-
firming the truth of revelation, to establish the
doctrine of a future state, concerning which
natural religion affords only some faint inti-
mations, the language of revelation upon
this important subject, required particular attention. The Jewish revelation appeared to Mr. Wood to be silent upon this interesting question; in the interval between the captivity and the beginning of the Christian æra, he thought the Jews had learnt to expect a life after the present; but the clear and explicit discovery of a future retributory scene he attributed solely to Christ and his Apostles. He pointed out to his hearers every passage in the New Testament in which this doctrine appeared, and then entered as largely as their respective importance demanded upon the speculative enquiries grounded upon this doctrine, such as, Whether immortality be the peculiar effect of the gospel, or a positive constitution of nature: When the state of retribution is to commence; and what is to be the duration of the punishment of the wicked. Thence he proceeded to state and to examine the opinions which have been and are still held concerning the person of Christ; to fix the meaning of the term spirit, as used in the Old and New Testament; to enquire into the design of Christ's death; the doctrines of original sin, grace and election; and finally,
to show the obligations and the design of the positive institutions of baptism, and the Lord's supper.

It was his intention next to lead his class through a course of ecclesiastical history. How far he proceeded in this course cannot now be easily ascertained, but there is reason to believe that several circumstances arose which prevented him from concluding the extensive and very useful plan which he had at first marked out. The manuscript copy of his lectures finishes with the history of the church about the time of Constantine.

After so full an account of these labours, it would be needless to speak of the advantages with which the younger part of the congregation at Mill-Hill Chapel were favoured, or of the knowledge and ability of the lecturer. Upon every subject indeed to which Mr. Wood turned his attention he threw some new light. His comprehensive mind enabled him to embrace it in its fullest extent, and his powers of accurate and clear discrimination, to exhibit it to others, or to pursue it in private, in an arrangement the most natural and perspicuous. But his utter disregard for literary fame, which ren-
dered him averse from appearing at all before the public, and a determination never to obtrude upon the world any work, which owing to its subject might claim general attention, that did not contain his maturest thoughts, prevented him from being generally known as a Theologian. No one however could enjoy the benefit of his friendship, or even of his occasional society, without discovering that his merit as such was uncommonly great. Dr. Priestley knew and esteemed him highly in this character. In a letter addressed to him by that eminent person, without date, but written it is probable about this period, he says, "the account you give of the young persons in the congregation, and of your classes affords me great pleasure. I hope I was not misinformed when I was told that you intended to publish your lectures. We cannot have too many works of this kind written by liberal minded men. There is a deluge of things on the other side." And in the same letter after noticing a request from Mr. Wood, that he would procure for him the loan of Stephens's folio edition of the New Testament, he observes, "I am glad to find that you have a turn for works of this kind.
There are too few of us that have it. The clergy are taking the lead of us in biblical learning. But then they have the means for it which we have not, and their subscriptions &c. tie up their hands from other enquiries." In another letter written in the year 1791, he says, "I hope also you apply yourself to your great work on the Old Testament. I was much struck with the idea you gave me of it." And in another letter written after his exile to America, he says: "I am now about sending to the press, A Comparison of the institutions of Moses, with those of the Hindoos and other ancient nations. I remember that when I was with you last, you had given much attention to the Old Testament, and the law of Moses. I wish to know whether you will make any public use of what you had drawn upon those subjects. I have been methodizing all the laws of Moses, and have added some notes to explain what seemed most to require it, intending to add this to my comparison, &c., but I fear it will swell the work to too large a size, and therefore shall probably only give the titles of the sections, and the places where the particulars may be found."

It is not improbable that these lectures
would have been published, had not circumstances arisen which rendered it necessary for Mr. Wood to give almost the whole of his attention to subjects of a very different nature. To have prepared them for the press would indeed have been a long and laborious exertion, as it was not his practice to commit the whole lecture to writing, but only the heads of those topics upon which he meant to dwell. The greater part was delivered extemporaneously, in such a free and familiar manner as could not fail of rendering his instructions intelligible to every mind; and at the same time with so much earnestness, and such a flow of natural eloquence as engaged and fixed the attention. It is indeed a subject of just regret that these lectures were not permitted to extend beyond the little circle for whose immediate benefit they were composed, as they would have instructed, it is presumed, even the ablest teachers, and afforded a treasure of valuable information to those young persons who are laudably desirous of forming an extensive and accurate acquaintance with subjects peculiarly interesting to rational and accountable creatures.
It has been stated that one great object which the writer of this memoir has in view, is to show some of the excellent methods which his late revered friend pursued, either in the acquisition or the communication of knowledge. He cannot therefore here omit to notice an expedient to which Mr. Wood had recourse whilst engaged in the study of the Old Testament, and of which he was always accustomed to speak as having been peculiarly useful to him. Of two copies of the common version of the Old Testament, he formed a harmony of such parts as were capable of it, and disposed such as were not into a more regular and commodious order than that in which they commonly appear.—The first part of this harmony consisted of an arrangement of all the Jewish genealogies in Genesis, Numbers and Chronicles, so as to exhibit at one view the several tribes of the chosen people, through all their descents. He next selected from the four last books of the pentateuch, the history of the Jewish people from the birth to the death of Moses, which he divided into five periods. He then placed in regular order all the laws of that eminent legislator. All those
passages descriptive of the character of God, together with those which prescribed the duties to be paid to him, and those which prohibited idolatrous practices, came first. To these succeeded such as related to the structure of the place in which God was to be worshipped, and its furniture; and to these whatever related to the dress and the service of the priests. Next were arranged all the laws respecting the purity which was an essential prerequisite for every act of religious worship, which was followed by the description of the ceremonial worship, including all the various kinds of offerings, the regular festivals, and the sacrifices appointed for different kinds of impurity and sin. And as the maintenance of the priests depended in a great degree upon the offerings of the people, the laws relating to the descendants of Levi were introduced immediately after those relating to offerings.

Having thus collected and reduced to a systematic arrangement all the religious institutions of Moses, he brought together in the next place, in a similar manner, the laws relating to social duties, under the heads of General Benevolence, Assault and Murder.
In the third section he placed whatever the Jewish legislator had prescribed concerning property; the conduct to be observed towards strangers, the poor, and enemies; and the laws respecting domestic relations and the duties arising from them. The whole was properly concluded by the various penalties and sanctions by which obedience was encouraged and enforced.

The history of the Jewish people from the death of Moses to the death of Saul not being attended with any peculiar difficulty as to the succession of events, but running on generally in regular order through the books of Joshua, Judges, and 1 Sam. was omitted in the harmony, and the books of Psalms and Proverbs next engaged Mr. Wood's attention.—The Psalms he arranged under two general heads, I. moral; II. devotional Psalms. The devotional Psalms he again divided into two classes: i. Psalms of General Devotion, which are either 1. private or 2. public; and ii. Psalms of special Devotion, formed on the history of the Jews, and consisting of 1. Psalms written before the accession of David to the throne. 2. Such as related to the history of David before
the death of Saul. 3. Such as related to the history of David after the death of Saul; and 4. such as related to the history of the Jews after the death of David.

The Proverbs collected by Solomon and others, occasioned him more trouble, and this part of the harmony is left incomplete. Mr. Wood appears, however, to have thought that they may all be classed under thirty different heads.

The next and last part of this useful work consists of an arrangement in parallel columns, of the history of the Jewish people, from the death of Saul to the restoration. The corresponding passages in the books of Samuel, the Kings and Chronicles, being placed together; the contemporary histories of the kingdoms of Judah and of Israel being ranged in parallel columns on the same page; and all the various prophecies being introduced according to the time, as far as he could discover it, in which they were delivered.

Nothing human is perfect, and it is therefore very probable that a better arrangement than that which has now been described may be adopted: one differing in several respects
from it; the writer knows by experience may be formed. In what respects his plan differs from that of his venerated friend, cannot here be stated; he looks forward to a time when it may be in his power to lay before the public the result of his own investigations. He has inserted this account not as a guide, but as an incitement to others; to afford some idea of a method of studying the Old Testament, which he knows to be attended with the best effects, and which he would earnestly recommend every theological student to pursue.

While Mr. Wood was thus usefully and pleasingly occupied in studies peculiarly connected with his profession, he devoted no small part of his time and attention to the pursuit of natural history, and particularly of English botany. Circumstances apparently trivial, have often been the means of directing men of genius to enquiries which have eventually been eminently productive of their own fame, and serviceable to the cause of truth, of literature, or of science. To a circumstance of this nature, Mr. Wood owed his attachment to a branch of knowledge which afforded himself a never-failing source of rational pleasure, and
enlarged in a variety of ways, his usefulness. Upon recovering from a dangerous fit of sickness, not long after his being settled at Leeds, he was advised to take frequent exercise on horseback. For some time the variety and beauty of the neighbouring country, and the important end which this exercise was designed to accomplish, gave some interest to his rides; but at length they became tedious, and he sought for relief in the study of botany. The neighbourhood was favourable; it abounded with plants, and supplied him with objects sufficient to excite and keep alive his curiosity, and thus the exercise necessary to his health, which before occasioned weariness, became the means of pleasure and improvement. His acquaintance with this branch of natural history gradually led him to the study of the rest, and while these furnished him with the means of relaxation from severer occupations, by the habit of arrangement which they encouraged, afforded him no little assistance in all his enquiries. He rendered his knowledge of nature subservient also to the great purpose of public religious instruction; frequently drawing from the works of God clear and impressive elucidations
of his word, and lessons of piety and virtue which forcibly arrested the attention, and remained deeply imprinted on the hearts of his hearers. As a specimen of his manner in this respect, it may not be improper or useless to select a passage from a discourse which he has in several places been heard to deliver, and which is one of a set of sermons intended, had his life been spared, for publication. The subject is the paternal love of God; the text the first petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven."

Having in a very striking manner shewn the imperfections which necessarily attended the worship both of the Heathen and the Jew, he proceeds thus:

"The Christian, if he conduct his devotion on the principles of the New Testament, may always offer his petitions in the full assurance of faith. He knows what he really wants, he is taught what is essential to his happiness, and he is assured that nothing which truly answers this description will ever be denied to the pious worshippers of God. For the God to whom he addresses his prayer is a father, and in this intimate relation he discerns every kind, every tender, every beneficent disposition."
“The strong and durable affection of a parent to a child is one of the characters by which the human race are distinguished from the brutes. It is a mark of their supereminent dignity in this lower world. It is a source of amiable qualities and delightful emotions to which the lower ranks of irrational animals are entire strangers... The insect and the worm are led by the blind but irresistible force of instinct to provide for the continuance of their kind; they deposit their eggs with sagacious attention in those situations where their young offspring may readily obtain their food... But this offspring they are destined never to know, in many cases never to see. When they have fulfilled the great purposes of nature, most of them shrink, before the winter’s increasing cold, and survive not the declining year. Their young are warmed into life by the following summer’s sun, but never know a parent’s care, are never cherished with the tender fondness of a parent’s love; before they awake to sense and to motion the parent has ceased to be.

“If we ascend to a higher degree in the scale of living existence, we shall find the parental affection still wanting. The finny inhabi-
tant of the stream or the ocean, the serpent and the lizard with all their kindred cold-blooded tribes are not indeed doomed to so short an existence. They live year after year, and year after year give birth to a new race; but they are never able to distinguish their own from the rest. Some of them take a long tedious voyage, and surmount, what to an ignorant eye would appear an impassable barrier, for no other end than to place their spawn in those shallow waters which are most favourable to its growth; others carefully cover it with sand where it may feel the first influence of returning spring, but when they have done this they leave it for ever; for it’s future fate they have no concern, to the quickening young they afford neither sustenance nor protection.

"The anxious delights of parental tenderness are known only to those higher orders of animated being whose generous blood sublimed by the action of perfect lungs gives warmth and vigour to the heart. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the forest are all inspired with this genial breath of heaven, and rise almost to sentiment, to reason, and to virtue, in their care of their helpless young. The most
timid become courageous, the most stupid become sagacious, the most savage soften into tenderness. They nurse and feed them with unwearied assiduity; they exert all their art and all their power to preserve or to rescue them from the gripe of a hostile intruder; in some cases they give them the first rudiments of instruction to fit them for their destined mode of life. But all this laborious care, all this painful solicitude endures only for a few weeks, or at most for a few months: it is bestowed only upon weakness, it is withdrawn at the first appearance of sufficient strength.——The power which once defended is then employed to repel and to banish. The full grown young are driven from the nest or the den where they first felt vital warmth; the parental heart no longer acknowledges, the parental eye soon ceases to know them. Some of them are doomed to solitary wanderings, till at the appointed season they find themselves a mate. Or if they mingle in a common flock, or a common herd, their relation to all is exactly the same; they obey that instinctive feeling which connects like with like, but of
kindred blood they have no knowledge, from kindred attachment they obtain no advantage.

"It is in man alone that parental love is formed into a durable habit. It is not merely in the helpless state of infancy, nor in the thoughtless days of childhood, nor yet during the dangerous inexperience of youth that the domestic tie is felt and obeyed: in the season of full grown manhood it continues to bind and to delight. The connection still subsists when the personal circumstances are entirely changed; when the shoots are become strong and vigorous, and the original stock is grown weak and helpless; when that which once needed and received, is able and required to give assistance and support. In every varied scene the parent finds that, like Jacob of old, his life is bound up with the life of his children; when they prosper he is scarcely sensible of any evil, when they suffer, he knows no pleasure: to promote their good is the chief object of his daily care;—Oh! bless my children, heaven! is the last prayer of his dying lips.

"How great then is the satisfaction of the pious mind when it contemplates the God
whom it worships in the character of a parent. From a relation so intimate, how elevated must be our hopes! How firm and durable our trust! On what can we rely if we doubt a father’s love? Where can we seek for refuge but in our father’s house? What can be so consoling to weak and dependant creatures as the assurance that “like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him?”

It was no small pleasure and advantage which he derived from his attachment to the study of natural history, that he was introduced by this means to the knowledge and the friendship of many eminent persons, to whom it is probable he must otherwise have been for ever a stranger. Among these the justly celebrated President of the Linnean Society held the first place. In Dr. Smith, he found not only a similarity of taste, and an ardent love, and a profound knowledge of those most pleasing works of nature which he himself delighted to explore, but the same deep veneration of the great and good Author of nature, congenial views concerning the character and the perfections of the world’s great Ruler, and the true happiness of
the subjects of his moral government, and manners and dispositions mild and amiable, as were his own. Dr. Smith, it is hoped, will excuse a stranger, who has taken the liberty of thus publicly mentioning his private friendship. To the writer of this Memoir it cannot but be highly gratifying, to record how much one whom he valued and loved, was valued and loved by the wise and good, and judging by his own feelings he cannot suppose it will be displeasing to any one to be spoken of as the friend of Mr. Wood.

The centenary of the Revolution was an event which could not be passed over in silence by one who had early imbibed the love of civil and religious liberty, and who was firmly attached by subsequent conviction to the genuine principles of the British constitution. Mr. Wood partook of the feelings which then generally prevailed, and on the two Sundays which succeeded the 4th of November, 1788, delivered two excellent sermons, which were afterwards published. In the first of these, having noticed the subject of the late commemoration, and shewn the propriety and the duty of referring all events to the divine
direction, he proceeds to point out the value of civil liberty, and dwells upon the peculiar excellencies and advantages of the British constitution: he traces its rise and progress in a brief but clear manner, contrasting at the same time the very different process through which the other European Governments passed, and the very different character in which at that time they appeared. With becoming candour he notices the despotic rule at which the Stuarts aimed, and by which the liberties of the country were endangered; and with an animation which the subject could not fail to inspire, he celebrates the deliverance from that danger which was effected by the illustrious Prince of Orange. The conclusion is an impressive exhortation to pursue a virtuous conduct as best adapted to the enjoyment, the security, and the transmission of the privileges which have been confirmed to Britons by the glorious Revolution. The second discourse is devoted to the consideration of religious liberty, of which he clearly shews, that neither the polished nations of antiquity, nor even the Jewish people had any knowledge. He asserts
it to be an essential part of Christianity, and establishes the right of every one to claim and to exercise it. He goes on to trace the history of the infringement of this right in every age of the Christian Church, exposes the dangers by which it was threatened, and the attempts which were made in this country to destroy it, and shews the important effects of the revolution, especially of the Toleration Act which followed it, in securing the invaluable privilege of private judgment to every British subject. The conclusion is a fine and eloquent specimen of the truly candid, liberal and enlightened spirit by which the preacher was ever actuated.

In the following year Mr. Wood was actively engaged in the application of the Dissenters to Parliament, for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. In order clearly to shew what part he took on this important occasion, it is necessary to observe, that a motion for the repeal of those acts had been made in the House of Commons on the 28th of March, 1787, by Mr. Beaufoy, and ably supported by Mr. Fox and others. But as this application originated at a General
Meeting of the Deputies from several Congregations in and near London, held at Dr. Williams's Library, "a notion was entertained and advanced in argument, that the application having been made by the London Dissenters only, the Dissenters in general were neither earnest in their exertions, nor unanimous in their wishes for redress; and Lord North found fault with them for not proceeding in the way of general petition. In consequence of this the London Committee determined to apply to their friends in the country, in order that their concurrence might be obtained in any future application. Upon the recovery of the King from his severe and melancholy indisposition in 1789, a numerous Meeting of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was held at Leeds, on the 24th of April, to present their congratulations to their Sovereign, and it was then suggested that there would be a singular propriety in availing themselves of an occasion on which, from the avowed object of their meeting, their loyalty could not be questioned, of expressing their public concurrence with the application of the London
Committee. In both of which measures they were followed by various districts." (d) Mr. Wood was on this occasion in the chair. During two succeeding years, he was indefatigable in the ablest exertions to establish the right of those with whom he was connected, to a perfect immunity from all civil restrictions in their peaceable dissent from the established church, and to assist in wiping away a stain which has too long defaced the character of a nation admired and envied for the freedom of its government. Several excellent papers were composed by him upon this occasion, of which the reply to a letter addressed to the Committee by Mr. Wilberforce, assigning some very extraordinary reasons for his opposition to the repeal; and a declaration signed by himself, and four other Dissenting Ministers of Leeds, occasioned by the remarks of the Clergy of that parish upon the resolutions passed at a Meeting of Dissenters held at Wakefield, are particularly deserving of remembrance. He attended in London as secretary with the delegates from the West-

(d) See Report of the Committee read at a General Meeting, &c. &c. held at the Chapel in Hanover-square, Newcastle, Feb. 24, 1790.
Riding of Yorkshire, at the time of the last debate upon the subject in the House of Commons, when Mr. Fox's motion "having to encounter the full weight of ministerial influence, was consequently negatived by a very great majority." Upon his return to Yorkshire a Meeting of the Committee of Protestant Dissenters, in the West-Riding of the County, was held, when a very interesting report of what had passed was read by him, the causes of the failure of the applicants were ably stated, and the means of securing success at some future period, were briefly suggested. No long time, however, had passed, before the general defection of one denomination of the Dissenters, the strange and gloomy aspect of public affairs, the violence of party spirit, the fears of some, and the misrepresentations of others, forbad all hopes of success, convinced the most strenuous and sanguine advocates of religious liberty, that no exertions, however ably and wisely directed, could avail, and determined them to wave their just claims, and to wait till that which they had so often asked in vain, should be restored to them unsolicited. The sentiments
which in common, it is believed, with all his brethren, Mr. Wood at length adopted, he has thus admirably expressed in the sermon preached on occasion of the death of Dr. Priestley.

"On the subject of a religious Test as a condition of admission to a civil office, he spoke and wrote with considerable warmth, and not entirely without asperity. He felt it to be a reflection on himself and his brethren, no less unjust, than degrading and severe. But his warmth was the effervescence of a noble mind, excited for a moment by a generous impatience under unmerited suspicion and distrust, which soon cooled down to the mild temperature of Christian benevolence. And after an interval of fourteen years, there is, I trust, no intelligent Dissenter who does not think on the subject with tranquil indifference. We had misconceived the prevailing spirit of the times. We judged that what did not openly appear, had ceased to exist. We were disappointed of our expectation; but our disappointment has not diminished our attachment to our native land. We are still sensible of her invaluable blessings. We do not
quarrel with the great and substantial good she offers to us in common with all her other children, because she adds to it a trifling inconvenience, and has given us a slight affront. We shall, I sincerely hope, never again repeat our request. If a free communication of every secular advantage should be offered to us by a confiding country, it will be received by us with a dignified complacency, and a cordial return of beneficial kindness. But we should forget what is due to ourselves, were we to discover any anxious solicitude, and to sue a fourth time for what, weighed in opposition to our legal rights, is less than the small dust of the balance.” *(c)*

On the 28th of August, 1794, died the Rev. W. Turner, of Wakefield; and on this occasion Mr. Wood was requested to deliver the funeral sermon. This was afterwards published, accompanied with Memoirs of his life and writings drawn up by his son, the Rev. W. Turner, of Newcastle; the whole forming a very interesting and appropriate tribute to the memory of one who will ever be esteemed a bright ornament to the christian ministry, and the dissenting name.

*(c)* Sermon on the death of Dr. Priestley, p. 39–41.
In the succeeding year, he was again called to perform a similar office, but in circumstances far more melancholy. Mr. Turner had attained to a good old age, and his long day of labour and of usefulness was ended sooner than his day of life; but Mr. Ralph, of Halifax, had scarcely passed the meridian of his years; time had in no degree impaired his faculties, or disqualified him for the active service of his brethren. He was pursuing with zeal and ability the duties of his profession, surrounded by "a numerous uneducated family," when by one of those dispensations of providence which appear to be designed to throw some degree of darkness over the ways of God towards man, in order that our faith and piety may be exercised and proved, he was speedily taken from this uncertain scene of being. With this excellent person, Mr. Wood had been "strictly and cordially connected from his entrance into public life, he had seen him in a great variety of situations and circumstances, he had always the happiness to possess his confidence, and from him he had been accustomed to ask and to receive counsel, in every season of doubt and embarrassment. In the removal
of such a friend he felt a heavy loss,” and wisely “distrusting his power over his own feelings,” when speaking upon the mournful occasion to the afflicted relatives and friends, from the place which he had so lately and so ably occupied, he described in general terms the character which alone can be a sure preparative for the hour of death, leaving it, as he safely might, to his hearers, to make the intended application. This Sermon was also published, and is a striking and very affecting memorial of his esteem and friendship for that truly excellent person.

A short account of Leeds was this year contributed by him to Dr. Aikin’s History of Manchester. The nature of that work admitted only of a brief and general view of the state of that extensive and flourishing Town. The statement of its population may be relied upon as then accurate, Mr. Wood having not long before been engaged in making an enumeration of all the inhabitants, by means of a personal application at each house.

In the year 1796, he had the unhappiness to lose an amiable and very promising son, at the early age of 12 years. This was a severe
trial, but the unobtrusive and sincere piety which ever glowed in his bosom enabled him to bear it with composure and fortitude:

It was also no small source of alleviation to him, that at this time he was most actively and beneficially engaged in the education of young persons. For many years his attention was principally directed to theological pursuits, or those intimately connected with them, and to the theoretical, and also as far as his situation would allow, the practical study of the works of nature; but his rising family rendering it necessary that he should employ his talents in such a manner as might be of pecuniary advantage, he resolved to devote himself for a few years to the education of female youth. To this he was in some degree induced by a regard to his own daughter's improvement, who was at that time nearly of an age to require and to benefit by his instructions; but the principal motive by which he was guided, was a desire to impart valuable information to those whose early and powerful influence over the infant mind renders it in the highest degree desirable that they should be well furnished with useful
knowledge. He saw with concern the finest talents too generally wasted upon mere personal accomplishments; and minds capable of the greatest comprehension, lost amidst the most trifling occupations. He contemplated with pain the dissipation and folly which were the inevitable consequences, and the effects which a total want of preparation for the discharge of the maternal duties, must have upon the generations to come. He resolved, therefore, that to at least a small circle of female youth, he would endeavour to open some sources of rational and refined enjoyment, worthy of their capacities and their destination, and communicate such a degree of sound and useful knowledge, just and important principles as should prepare them for the discharge of the most important duties of social and domestic life. For such an employment no one was ever better suited. Possessed of the purest habitual cheerfulness of temper, delighted with the innocency and inquisitiveness of youth, and never more happy than when promoting their comfort; fond of those subjects of instruction to which it was most proper to turn the attention of his pupils,
clear and accurate in his own conceptions, and patient in assisting the conceptions of others, he was peculiarly qualified to undertake the labours which, happily for many young persons, he was compelled to assume; and whilst the clearness and extent of his knowledge commanded all the respect which an instructor could desire, his concern to render his instructions intelligible, and to imprint them deeply upon their memory produced an affection on the part of his pupils little less than filial.

His course occupied three years, and comprehended lectures upon History, Geography, Natural Philosophy, Grammar, the Belles Lettres, Natural History, the Human Mind, Moral Philosophy, and the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. In common, it is believed, with all other instructors who are not content with the too general routine of school reading, who themselves think much upon the subjects they undertake to teach, and are anxious to convey full and accurate information, Mr. Wood found it very difficult to make a proper selection of class books for the use of his pupils. Of the numberless volumes which issue from the press
ostensibly indeed for the use of young persons, but in reality, it is to be feared for the sake of profit to the author or bookseller, few can serve the purposes of an enlightened instructor. Persons engaged in teaching, are in general the only persons qualified to compose for the use of teachers, but the daily labour of instructing seldom affords them leisure sufficient for the task; this falls therefore frequently into the hands of those who are incompetent to the business; and works are obtruded upon the public, read by instructors, and put into the hands of youth, containing materials arranged and collected without judgment, as injurious to the cultivation of a good taste, as they are ill-adapted to convey clear and accurate knowledge, and to assist the memory. Mr. Wood was anxious to make the best selection in his power for the private use of his pupils, and his knowledge and judgment enabled him to guard them against the errors into which they might otherwise have been lead. In his hands the evil which has now been mentioned became a source of good. His pupils learnt to read with caution, to place no implicit reliance on any author
however high his reputation, but to examine and judge for themselves.

The books which he selected to assist him in reading with his pupils, a full course of history, were a View of Ancient History, in two volumes, published by Rutherford, but written, it has been said, by Logan, the poet, Gillies and Mitford's histories of Greece, Leland's history of Philip, Gast's history of Alexander, Beckford's history of Rome, in three volumes, Gibbon's Decline and Fall, abridged by the author of the preceding, Mehegan's history of Modern Europe, an elegant and admirably arranged compendium, worthy of a better translator than has been found in Fox; Robertson's Charles V. and Goldsmith's History of England. These, with a few others, he used as his text books, but always with a strict attention to a very clear and accurate arrangement of periods, first, of universal history, and next of every particular country, the history of which he thought deserving of attention, and likewise with considerable additions of his own, delivered in conversation. These additions were highly interesting and important, they were designed to point out the connection
of the great and leading events in the whole progress of the history of the world, to teach his pupils to trace effects to their causes, to hold up to their view in their true colours the characters of which the pencil of history has not always exhibited. A faithful delineation, to deduce from what is usually narrated some lessons of wisdom, and not unfrequently to furnish some critical remarks upon the most celebrated historians.

In Natural Philosophy he was for some years compelled to use, as his principal work, Nicholson's Introduction; but afterwards he found the Scientific Dialogues, by Mr. Joyce, of greater service, as they require no more mathematical knowledge then he thought it necessary or proper to give his pupils. Fourcroy's elegant Treatise on the Philosophy of Chemistry, furnished him with the leading principles of that extensive and ever-varying science. Locke's Essay was his text book upon the subject of the human mind; and Paley and Priestley supplied him with the foundation of his instructions in morals and the evidences of natural and revealed religion.
The Lectures of Blair afforded him some little aid in the different branches of the Belles Lettres; but he did not confine himself to these. Scarcely a day passed in which he did not read with his pupils the best translations of the Greek and Roman poets, or our own classical writers both in verse and prose; his original remarks on which were adapted to convey much information upon subjects of polite literature, to improve the judgment, and to correct the taste.

In teaching Grammar he found it necessary to put into the hands of his pupils established and popular works upon the subject; such as the introduction by the late Bishop of London, and the Grammar and Exercises compiled by the excellent and judicious Mr. L. Murray. To these he afterwards added the small, but very ingenious and useful work of Mr. Dalton, of Manchester. But upon this, as upon every other branch of instruction, he communicated much original information. To the subject of Universal Grammar he had given all the attention it so justly claims from the philosopher no less than the instructor of youth; he had embraced with full conviction
the principles so ably unfolded and established in the Diversions of Purley; and by means of that habit of easy and luminous arrangement which he had acquired in the pursuit of natural history, he discovered some principles which had escaped the sagacity of others, and threw much light upon points which are generally acknowledged to be involved in obscurity. From his imperfect recollection of the substance of many conversations, the writer of this memoir cannot but feel regret that other occupations, and the growing infirmities of age prevented his late friend from making some of his opinions, on these subjects, more generally known.

His method of teaching Geography was peculiarly excellent. It requires but little experience in the business of education, to be fully convinced that the systems of geography which are commonly compiled for the use of instructors and their pupils, are of comparatively small value, conveying partial or erroneous information, and in a manner by no means adapted to impress what may be deserving of remembrance, upon the mind.
They are generally either mere tables, designed to be learnt by rote, or tables accompanied by a mass of ill-digested, and often incorrect details of natural history, civil history, statistics, &c. &c. or elegant dissertations suited to the proficient, rather than to the learner of the science. These, therefore, Mr. Wood rejected, and formed for himself a plan which was admirably adapted to render this branch of knowledge as interesting as it is useful, and to convey the most important information in such a manner as to imprint it indelibly upon the memory. Geography, he observed, in the strictest sense of the word, signifies a description of the earth, including its general form, and the divisions which have been made upon its surface, either by the hand of nature or by the institutions of men. His first object, therefore, agreeably to this definition, was to make his pupils accurately acquainted with the part which nature had performed. With a map of the world before him, he pointed out to them the four great receptacles of all the waters which diversify and fertilize the surface of the earth; he then traced every smaller subordinate
receptacle or basin formed by the confluence of many streams, and falling generally through one mouth into the ocean, and from the character and situation of these, he taught his pupils how to judge of the other natural features of the globe, such as the elevation of the land, and the course which that elevation follows. In a similar manner he traced the most prominent characters by which every separate region of the earth has been marked by the hand of nature. But Geography is a term capable of a more general signification, according to which this science comprehends an account of the soils of the earth and its inhabitants, whether rational or irrational. These indeed properly belong to the province of natural history, yet it appeared to him as part of the business of a teacher of geography, neglecting their division into classes, orders, genera and species, to point out the countries in which they respectively prevail, and to direct his pupils to such as were distinguished by their usefulness or rarity; and so far and no farther he appeared to them as a Mineralogist, a Botanist, and a Zoologist. Mankind, however, claimed a larger share of his attention;
In reference to them alone the general form and the natural divisions of the earth, which he had traced for his pupils, are of importance. In determining the bounds of their habitations, men will generally be observed to follow the guidance of nature, and in fixing the places of their collected residence, to be almost universally directed by the same hand, establishing their cities upon the banks of a river, or a lake, or on the shores of the ocean. The information which he had previously imparted upon Natural Geography, was now therefore of great importance. Associated with the grand divisions of nature, the civil and political divisions were more clearly understood and more easily remembered, whether nature had been followed or deserted; and referred to some striking character of the natural world, to the coast of a well known ocean or lake, to the banks of a river, or to the foot of a chain of mountains, the situation and importance, and all the distinguishing characters of a city, or a town, were subjects of interesting knowledge, and readily laid up in the memory. The civil divisions were pointed out by the instructor as they were originally formed, and
all the changes which they have undergone by the gradual diffusion of the first settlers, or by subsequent conquest were briefly noticed; and so far and no further, he assumed the character of the Historian; and lastly, he gave a full detail of the civilization, government, religion, and particular habits of life by which the various communities of men are distinguished, selected from the best travellers, and the most eminent writers upon political economy. A mere outline of this admirable system was prepared by him for his pupils; the map of each country was the lecturer's usual text, and the knowledge he imparted was drawn chiefly from the sources of his own recollection.

Having found in the study of the works of nature not only a constant source of pure enjoyment, and habitual cheerfulness, but also considerable aid in the investigation of other important branches of human knowledge, and many powerful incitements to piety and virtue; he regarded it as an indispensible part of his duty to introduce those who were under his care to the means of engaging in so pleasing and useful a pursuit. Natural history therefore formed a regular part of his course, and
such was the ardour by which his own breast was animated, whenever he spake of the works of nature, that it was scarcely possible for any one to be much in his society without catching some portion of his spirit. In the prosecution of this branch of knowledge, his pupils enjoyed great and enviable advantages. In the study of Botany, he was not content that they should be able to learn by the assistance of Dr. Withering's useful work, the plants which might attract their attention; he exercised them frequently in original description, and thus taught them how to examine for themselves with accuracy, and to communicate with clearness to others any discoveries which they might chance to make. In the other divisions of this engaging science, he for the most part followed an arrangement of his own, of which he furnished his pupils with the outline, and this he filled up chiefly from the works of Buffon and Pennant, and the very useful abridgement of Linnaeus, published at Edinburgh, in two octavo volumes, under the title of "Elements of Natural History." The want of a proper Elementary book he felt and lamented. To supply this desideratum he was
himself well qualified, but other unavoidable occupations did not allow him sufficient leisure. One eminent living writer he frequently spoke of in private, and once publicly, as "possessing all the qualifications necessary for this task, and peculiarly fitted for the execution of it, by being accustomed to the consideration of entering into the imperfect views, and supplying the wants of the uninstructed mind. That writer's plain and elegant style and happy talent for familiar illustration would," he observed, "be most beneficially employed in conducting the unpractised naturalist through the three kingdoms of nature, in explaining the principles on which the classification of their various parts has been conducted, and in selecting such details as would render the whole equally interesting and instructive." To the mind of every reader this merited encomium will immediately suggest the name of Aikin.

After such an ample detail of the plan of instruction which he adopted, and which has been thus largely stated with the hope that it may be found useful to those who are engaged in the same important occupation, it will be readily acknowledged that they who were hap-
pily under his care enjoyed peculiar advantages in the improvement of their mental powers. But it was not in the very extensive and judicious plan which he adopted, that all his excellence as an instructor consisted; the manner in which he carried this plan into execution was equally admirable. His patience was inexhaustible, and wherever he discovered a desire after information he would place the subject which he had before him in every possible light, that it might be clearly seen and fully comprehended; he never willingly suffered his pupils to leave him without having formed the most just conceptions of what had been proposed to them, he varied his illustrations in order that it might become perfectly familiar to their minds, and never relinquished the point till, as he used frequently to say, “he read intelligence in their countenances.” He was generally happy in pupils worthy of himself. Those of them who resided with him soon learnt to consider his roof as the parental roof; they left it with similar feelings of regret, they remembered it with similar emotions of pleasure; from their instructor they had experienced the tenderness and solicitude
of a father, and while he lived he received from them all the pleasing attentions which a father can claim.

The circumstance which next brought him before the public was the death of the Rev. Newcome Cappe. The age and character of Mr. Wood, as well as his former connection and intercourse with this truly venerable person, pointed him out as best qualified to commit his remains to the earth, and to pay that tribute which was so justly due to departed learning and piety. This mournful office he performed on Wednesday, December 31, 1800, in a manner most impressive, and in the presence of a great concourse of people. When this ceremony was finished he delivered a Sermon adapted to the occasion, and containing a highly-wrought but just eulogy of his late revered friend. "An eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures" were the words which he selected as his text, and none more appropriate could have been chosen. In fewer and in better terms the public character of Mr. Cappe could not have been comprised. This Sermon was shortly afterwards published, with a suitable dedication to Mrs. Cappe, and with an
appendix containing brief memoirs of Mr. Cappel's life. In the course of these, some interesting particulars are given, and a masterly analysis of the few works which he published; especially of his last sermons, which excited general admiration, and had he been of less retired habits, would have procured for him the friendship of some of the most distinguished characters in the country. The whole publication is worthy both of the lamented subject of it, and of the author.

On the following Sunday Mr. Wood, delivered a sermon at Mill-Hill Chapel, upon the commencement of the 19th century. It was written hastily and with no view to publication, but the just and striking sentiments which it contained, together with the peculiarity of the occasion produced such an effect upon the congregation, that immediately after the service, they earnestly and unanimously requested that it might be printed. With this request the preacher complied, and although this discourse has a constant reference to a season of such rare occurrence as the close of one century, and the commencement of another, yet it contains such liberal, just, and enlightened views,
and such serious and striking reflections as must always render it an interesting publication. A curious note occurs in which a calculation is made of the years of peace and war, during the preceding century, in reference both to Great Britain and to Europe, in order to justify the following melancholy assertion in the discourse: "From the beginning of 1701, to the end of 1800, our own nation has suffered under not less than forty-five years of actual war, and not one third of the century has blessed Europe at large with universal peace." If present appearances be considered both as to the animosities which now actually rage, and the commotions which are likely to arise in consequence of the unprincipled and inordinate ambition of the present Ruler of France; how dreadful will be the account of peace and war when balanced at the conclusion of the century, upon which we have now entered.

Of these two publications, the judgment of the venerable and amiable Lindsey will not, it is hoped be uninteresting, especially as it will afford additional proof of the modesty, the candour, and the piety of that truly consistent disciple of our meek and humble master. He thus writes to Mr. Wood.
"Dear Sir,  

London, Feb. 19, 1801.  

'I have seldom been more affected and edified than with the perusal of the two most valuable discourses with which you have favoured me.  

'That on the commencement of the 19th century shews the very high advantages which the constant attendants at Mill-Hill Chapel enjoy in sitting under such a preacher, who like our great master takes occasion from every circumstance of time and place, and avails himself of every incident that presents itself to make his lessons of the sublimest morality sink deep, and take effect in the hearts of his hearers.  

'And in your portrait of Mr. Cappe, you have done to him that justice which he never did to himself, in exhibiting those great natural and acquired talents and abilities, and those excellent and continually improving christian dispositions, which would have fitted him for the most eminent services to mankind, both from the pulpit and the press, but which were almost entirely lost by an unfortunate modesty of temper, and the want of opportunity to draw them forth. I cannot help in particular
regretting that, with respect to those serious doubts on the subject of Christianity, which you tell us he entertained on his first thoughts of engaging in the Christian ministry, and by most diligent study and application happily overcame, that we have no memorials of what these doubts were, or how he got the better of them, as I am persuaded the history would have been peculiarly useful in the present day. And I am the more concerned, as I do not apprehend that any of the manuscripts which he has left behind him, touch at all upon these points, or the discussion of difficulties of this sort, but relate chiefly to the right interpretation of particular passages of the scripture. Instead of complaining, however, we ought to be thankful for what you have preserved of a character so excellent, which must excite to piety and virtue, and to a study and esteem for those scriptures which alone can effectually teach them; and for that interesting and most engaging example of his manner of public instruction in those discourses on the Providence and Government of God, which Mrs. Cappe was the happy instrument of giving to the world: of whom, in the dedication of your
sermon, you seem to have laboured how to speak in those terms that indeed her super-
eminent merit called for.

"You make me feel ashamed for the rank you give me in classing me with those excel-
lent creatures Jebb and Priestley; humbled moreover to find myself cut off from that use-
fulness I earnestly wished to retain till the thread of life itself was cut; happy, meanwhile,
if I may but take to myself that consolation of our christian poet—

"They also serve, who only stand and wait."

"I remain, &c. &c.

"T. LINDSEY."

In the summer of the year 1801, Mr. Wood was highly gratified by a tour into the
Highlands of Scotland, in company with his friends Mr. and Mrs. Garforth. He visited
Edinburgh, went northward to Inverness, crossed to the western shore by that curious
chain of lakes which so remarkably intersect the whole country, sailed over to the Isle of Mull,
and thence to Staffa, and having visited the most remarkable scenes which in this large
range attract the notice of the traveller, he
returned by way of Glasgow into England. There were few events of his life of which he was accustomed to speak with greater pleasure than of this interesting tour. Whatever excursion he made, it furnished him with subjects of pleasing reflection, and of instructive conversation in the interval between that and another; but this supplied him for the remainder of his life with topics delightful to himself, and full of amusement and information to others.

In the same year he published a Liturgy consisting of five forms for the use of the congregation at Mill-Hill Chapel. This is for the most part compiled from the service of the established church, the Liverpool, Shrewsbury, and other Liturgies before published by the Dissenters, and from an excellent service composed by the Rev. J. Simpson. The compilation is made with great judgment and taste, and the reader, it is presumed, will not be uninterested in perusing the observations which it has drawn forth [from the Rev. C. Wyvill, whose friendship Mr. Wood had the happiness, during many years, to enjoy. In a note
affixed to a letter written to him by Mr. Wood, and published in the 6th volume of the Political Papers, having with the usual neatness and accuracy which mark the short biographical notices interspersed through these volumes, given the leading features of his correspondent's character, he adds: "It is part of the praise also which justly belongs to Mr. Wood, that he stands among the foremost of our Protestant Dissenters who have recommended or adopted a Liturgy, wholly freed from the impure alloy of controversial matter, mixed with the expressions of Christian piety and benevolence. On these principles, which are those of Locke, Clarke and Newton, the Liturgy of the Church of England had been before improved by the venerable Lindsey, and his worthy successor Dr. Disney, for the use of their congregation in Essex-street. In their form of social worship the Christian will find his peculiarities of opinion neither asserted nor condemned; but if he be humble, benevolent, and pious, he will be well satisfied to find there whatever can conduce to the better purpose of an increase of his pious, benevolent and humble disposition. In our excellent Li-
Liturgy, thus freed from controversial matter, there is a noble simplicity, an affecting eloquence, and a venerable air of antiquity, well suited to excite the best emotions of worship; and it will be difficult, indeed, for any private individual to compose another Liturgy on the same liberal and candid principles, and capable of producing an equal effect on the minds of men accustomed to reverence that form of devotion. But Protestant Dissenters, feeling no such prepossession, might probably be led with less difficulty to adopt a form of devotion which their own pastor had composed with that generality of language which, in social worship, both reason and religion require. And therefore it was a truly laudable effort of zeal and of candor in Mr. Wood that he thus composed, and in his Congregation, that they adopted the respectable Liturgy now used at Mill-Hill Chapel; and there they have exemplified a second time, and under a different form, those principles of gospel worship in the latitude of gospel language, from which Christians never should have departed."—Political Papers, vol. vi. p. 67, 68.
The arguments by which the use of printed forms of prayer in social worship is recommended, are certainly numerous and powerful; yet if not contrary to the principles upon which Protestant Dissenters meet together, as may perhaps not unreasonably be suspected, it is so abhorrent from their general feelings and habits, that it cannot be expected soon or widely to prevail amongst them. Let Liturgies be drawn up with ever so much caution, they will unavoidably partake of the nature of a confession of faith, and may be felt as a painful restraint by those who succeed the original composer; and on the other hand, prejudices in the breasts of some of the worshippers, never wholly subdued, may break forth; objections, founded upon better grounds may be felt by others; or even the caprice of some who are by no means what ever to be completely satisfied, may soon render it necessary, in order to preserve the peace and union of a society of Christians, who acknowledge no human authority in their worship of God, to withdraw the most perfect forms that can be composed.

The restoration of Peace in the year 1802,
was an event so gratifying to Mr. Wood's natural feelings, and so congenial with his steadiest principles, that he could not fail publicly to congratulate his hearers upon the cessation, though it might prove only temporary, of the dreadful miseries occasioned by a war so extensive and sanguinary; and to raise their ardent and grateful thanks to him who "maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; who breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, who burneth the chariot in the fire." Ps. xlvi. 9. This beautiful and very animated discourse coming from the heart of the preacher, deeply affected the hearts of his hearers, and at their request it was given to the world. A hymn composed for the occasion is affixed to it, which shews that if Mr. Wood had cultivated his talent for poetry, he would have been a favoured votary of the sacred muse. But a better specimen perhaps is the hymn which he composed for his annual collection for the Leeds Infirmary; and which is attached to those copies of Mr. Cappe's Selection, which belong to the Congregation at Mill-Hill Chapel.

In the following year an event occurred
which enabled Mr. Wood to be of eminent service to the cause to which he was attached, and of which he was so bright an ornament. In consequence of the resignation of the late Rev. G. Walker, the office of Theological Tutor in the Academical Institution, at Manchester, became vacant, and it was debated amongst the leading Trustees, and the principal supporters of the institution, whether, considering the difficulties they had already experienced in providing tutors, and the comparatively little zeal which the Dissenters at large manifested in its success, it would not be advisable to relinquish it altogether. This Mr. Wood, with a few others, strenuously opposed, and such was the weight of his opinion, and the authority of his counsel, that not only the proposal for discontinuing the institution was abandoned, but the most lively interest in its support was immediately and widely excited. By his advice, principally, it was removed to York, and from this period till his death he never ceased to feel the warmest concern in its welfare, nor did he spare any exertions to promote its success. And by the judicious counsel which he occa-
sionally offered to the Trustees; by the important assistance which he frequently rendered to the writer of this memoir, who ventured upon the arduous office which he holds in this institution, chiefly in consequence of his encouragement; and by the affectionate admonitions which, in the discharge of his duty as visitor, he gave to the students, he was a principal cause of whatever credit the institution may thus far have enjoyed. The zeal which he himself felt, he communicated to the Congregation at Mill-Hill, and to some other Dissenters in Leeds; and no place in the kingdom, excepting Manchester, has contributed so constantly and so largely to the funds by which it is supported. A bequest of many valuable works in theology, which are now placed in the Library, will remain a constant memorial of his attachment to its interests.

Upon the death of Dr. Priestley, in the year 1804, Mr. Wood was lead no less by his own respect for the memory of that great and good man, than by the circumstance of his having succeeded to the same pulpit, and by the earnest request of the older members of the
society, who remembered with pleasure and with gratitude the instructions which he had so zealously and so ably dispensed to them, to pay to his eminent virtues and talents that tribute which they so justly deserved. He was not insensible of the arduousness of the task, but he performed it with singular felicity. Fully apprized of the nature of the audience which he was about to address, aware that it would be composed not merely of those who knew and knowing revered the character of the deceased, but in part of those also who had formed their conceptions of him from the mis-representations and calumnies which had been long, and generally and industriously diffused, who held what they knew of his doctrine in abhorrence, considered his opinions as not only false, but of a most dangerous tendency, and regarded himself "as a pestilent man, and a mover of sedition," he resolved, if possible, to conciliate, and to remove these unfounded prejudices. He appeared as the apologist for both his principles and his conduct. He held up to view his large and varied talents, he showed him to have been a strenuous defender of natural and revealed
religion, a laborious and a sincere enquirer after sacred truth, a firm believer in all the clear and undoubted doctrines of the gospel, a zealous advocate for genuine Christianity, and a true lover of the British Constitution. At the same time he candidly admitted that some of his opinions were rather the speculations of an inquisitive and active mind, than the dictates of revelation; but maintained and proved, that however obnoxious they might appear to some, and be represented by others, their tendency was not unfriendly to human happiness or virtue, and that they supplied himself with "the purest principles of moral conduct, and the strongest motives to religious obedience." The concluding passage of this discourse is peculiarly beautiful and eloquent. The wise and conciliatory method which the preacher adopted, was not ineffectual. The strong attachment which many of the audience had formed to that eminent person, whose character had been so ably drawn, and so successfully vindicated, was proved to be reasonable and just, and the prejudices which others had conceived against so much real worth and excellence were either removed or lessened.
Having long determined that with the completion of his daughter's education, he would relinquish altogether the labour and anxiety of tuition, and having already contracted his plan as far as could be done by considerably diminishing the number of his pupils, he was induced to engage in some literary undertakings, by which his time and talents might be not only profitably, but pleasingly and usefully employed. At the solicitation of the late Editor of the Annual Review, he consented to conduct the department of Natural History. While he thus enjoyed the opportunity of seeing valuable and expensive works upon subjects relating to his favourite science, he gratified and instructed the public by his able analyses of them, and by his free and judicious remarks upon their merits or defects. He was not to be dazzled by the splendour which works in this engaging science are now made to assume, nor to be lead away by the authority of a name however great. He weighed well the intrinsic worth of whatever came before him; neither by fear nor affection was he induced to compliment the author, at the expence of the public; but wherever he de-
tected ignorance he exposed it, wherever he discovered error he candidly pointed it out, and wherever he found science, learning and merit, he held them up to the esteem they deserved. He did, not while living, object to its being generally known that he was so employed, and all the criticisms he furnished to that useful work, are so creditable to his candour, his judgment and his taste, that, now being dead; his friend, than whom no one is more desirous of his fame, feels no hesitation in thus publicly announcing him as their author.

But the work in which he engaged about this time with the greatest satisfaction, and with unwearied diligence, was that truly national publication the Cyclopædia, carried on under the very able and laborious superintendence of his friend the Rev. Dr. Rees. For this valuable work he wrote the articles in Botany, from the beginning of the letter B. nearly to the end of C. with the exception however, of the greater part of those which relate to the physiology of plants. The ability displayed in these articles will be a lasting and an honourable testimony to his skill as a Botanist. It has been already observed that soon after his set-
tling at Leeds he formed a strong attachment to the study of natural history, and devoted to its pursuit as much time and attention as the important duties of his profession would allow. Almost every branch of natural history he successfully investigated, and had his other necessary avocations, or his health in later years permitted, he would have communicated to the public some very interesting results of his inquiries. In all his investigations it was a leading principle with him to call no man master; to no system therefore, however high the reputation of its inventor, or however general its reception, was he blindly attached. He studied the works of nature for himself, and the clearness of his mind, and the correctness of his judgment, enabled him to detect some errors into which the greatest naturalists had fallen, and to select those striking marks which nature herself has imprinted upon her works, to guide and facilitate the student’s researches, and to assist him in communicating his discoveries to others. The classification which he had thus formed for himself, of the principal subjects of Natural History, but particularly of Quadrupeds, always
appeared to the writer of this narrative, as singularly just and elegant, and he regrets that neither his own memory, nor the papers of his late friend, will enable him to describe it in that accurate manner in which alone it should appear before the public, since it would undoubtedly be highly gratifying to the lovers of natural science. The author had himself intended to revise it, and to present it to the Linnaean Society, of which at its first formation he became a member. Of all the branches of Natural History Botany was that which Mr. Wood most zealously pursued, and the reasons are obvious: The objects to which this branch relate are easily attained by persons whose residence is generally fixed, and whose pecuniary resources are small; in almost every situation, they are to be found in number and variety, sufficient to excite and to reward investigation; their beauty and elegance are generally attractive; they solicit attention when every appearance of nature is gay, and disposes the mind to pleasing impressions; when least attractive they excite no feeling of disgust, and their examination, their removal, and their preservation offer not the slightest shock to humanity.
To this branch therefore Mr. Wood devoted his chief attention, and few men were better acquainted with the plants of his native country than he was, notwithstanding the confinement to one spot, during the greater part of the year, which his profession rendered necessary, and the limits which that profession also most commonly placed to his occasional excursions. For several years he had access to a large and curious collection of foreign plants, and this opportunity was not unimproved; extensive reading aided by his own observations, as far as this valuable collection allowed, and also by frequent intercourse with the friend to whom it belonged, a botanist of great and merited fame, enabled him to attain very considerable knowledge of the science in general. To rank however with a Jussieu, or a Wilkdenow, a Lamarck or a Smith, he did not aspire; an accurate knowledge of the physiology of plants is not to be learnt in the retirements of the closet of a divine in a provincial town, nor can scientific botany in its utmost extent be attained within the necessarily contracted bounds of a dissenting minister’s research. Among practical bo-
tanists Mr. Wood held a high rank; by masters in the science he was greatly and justly esteemed, and his labours in the Cyclopædia are pleasing proofs of industry, taste and knowledge. The articles which he composed are valuable for the extreme accuracy with which he has distinguished, by almost endless labour, the different species of every genus; confounded as they are by the varying and sometimes contradictory descriptions of scientific writers; and they will frequently be interesting even to those who are not attached to the same pursuit, from an occasional vivacity of manner, and the communication of curious and practical knowledge.

The last sermon which Mr. Wood printed was preached both at the Old and New-Meeting-Houses in Birmingham, June 9, 1805, in aid of a collection for the Protestant Dissenting Charity School supported by their joint contributions. The sale being confined to the town in which it was delivered, it has not been generally known. It was esteemed by the preacher as his best performance; and it is indeed a very striking and satisfactory vindication of the ways of God to Man, in “ordaining
that the progress of human society shall raise some and depress others, assign to a few an abundance of this world's goods, and place the rest in a variety of situations from that of moderate ease to the apparently rigid lot of obtaining their daily bread by daily returns of exhausting labour."

Mr. Wood's life had been hitherto such as, considering the usual course of events, might be justly termed a happy life. And such, with deep and pious gratitude to the great Disposer of his creatures, he always acknowledged it. In childhood he had been taught the fear and love of God, and the practice of virtue, and from the good way in which he had been encouraged to go, he had not materially at any time declined. He had devoted himself to a profession which, when it is conscientiously embraced, and its duties zealously performed, preserves from temptation and evil, improves the moral and the spiritual powers, allows and encourages the due exercise of the mental faculties, cherishes a manly and ennobling spirit of independence, and though it be far from lucrative, keeps the mind free from all that anxiety and dis-
traction of thought which are not unfrequently
connected with the more profitable concerns of
trade. In the exercise of this profession he
had acquired the growing esteem and love of
those amongst whom he ministered; and the
warm and sincere affection of his fellow la-
bourers. His income was indeed limited, but
his wants were comparatively few; and by pru-
dence and economy he was enabled to exercise
the hospitality that was becoming his character,
to raise his family in a manner truly respectable,
and to live in that degree of comfort to which
splendour is commonly a stranger. His family
were numerous enough to make the domestic
hearth cheerful, yet not so numerous as to pro-
duce any great and lasting anxiety concerning
their future condition in the world; he had the
satisfaction to see them grow up around him
amiable and respected, with the fairest pros-
pcts of success, of usefulness, and of comfort.
In his own temper there was nothing to ruffle
the peaceful current of domestic pleasure, and
the harmony and affection of his family were
in constant unison with his own placid dis-
position. He had a heart formed to admire
the works of nature, knowledge to discover the wisdom which they display, and ardent and genuine piety to raise his love and admiration of their great and benevolent author; and the opportunities which he enjoyed for contemplating these, especially in their more grand and impressive forms, by being occasional afforded greater and more exquisite enjoyment. To affliction he was not a stranger, but his trials of this nature had not been either numerous or of long continuance; to the occasional attacks of a painful disease he had been for some time subject, and his constitution was visibly impaired by them, yet his faculties were uninjured, his mind was in full vigour, moderate and pleasing employment, domestic kindness, and sincere but unostentatious piety, kept him ever resigned, contented and cheerful. Threescore years he had now seen, and it did not appear improbable that he might add to these ten years more, and thus attain to the full age of man; but the providence of God had otherwise determined, his days were hastening rapidly to a conclusion, and the house which had been so long the house of pure and almost uninterrupted enjoy-
ment was destined soon to become the house of sorrow, sickness and death.

In the months of July and August, 1806, Mr. Wood had been, according to his annual custom, on an excursion from home, and at the Meeting of Ministers which was held at Leeds soon after his return, appeared in his usual health and spirits. He was, however, at that time apprehensive of an attack from the gout, to which disease he had been long liable, and from which he had severely suffered. His apprehensions were too soon justified. In a few days after this he became so alarmingly ill, that his recovery was not expected. He had not been long in this very dangerous state when the affectionate partner of his life, who had recently returned from attending her sister during a long period of illness, from which she had happily recovered, became herself the prey of disease. So important was it to the life of her husband that his mind should be kept free from disturbance and alarm, that, in an early stage of her disorder, it was thought proper to remove her to the house of a neighbouring friend, where, after a few days, she died. The mournful office of committing the remains of this
truly amiable and excellent woman to the grave, and afterwards of endeavouring to improve this awful dispensation of Providence to those who had so long known and esteemed her, devolved upon the writer of this narrative, and the impression it made upon his mind can never be effaced. In whatever circumstances her death had happened, such an office would have been to him of a painful nature; but the early hour which was necessarily chosen for her interment, in order that his revered friend, whose sick chamber was not far removed from the grave, might hear nothing which should excite any suspicion of what had taken place; the silence and secrecy which accompanied the performance of the solemn rites; the thought of what his friend was then actually suffering; of the painful communication which he was soon destined to receive; and the apprehension that the tomb, in which his beloved partner was now deposited, would very shortly open again to receive him, were circumstances peculiarly distressing, and excited such painful sensations as no words can fully describe.

Some suspicion of what had taken place appeared however, to have entered the mind of
Mr. Wood the day after his wife's death. This preyed upon him to such a degree that in the afternoon he seemed to be dying, and those who attended him had not the least expectation that he would live through the night. The following morning, almost immediately after the funeral, he sent for his eldest son, and, having dismissed the nurse, told him that he was prepared to hear that his mother was dead. But such was the precarious state in which he still continued that his son felt himself constrained to conceal the truth from him. He then said: "Thank God, had I known yesterday that she lived I should have been better, but I durst not enquire." The mournful event was at length gradually and judiciously disclosed to him by one of his medical friends: the feelings of nature were for a time obeyed, but the dictates of reason and religion soon prevailed, and with the most devout resignation he acknowledged the infinite goodness of God, and that under his government all must be right.

Some time after this he wrote to his sister-in-law, Mrs. G. Oates, of Bath, in the following very affecting terms:—"I have, I hope, learnt to bear my heavy loss with sub-
mission to the will of heaven; but I dare not give way to much reflection upon the subject. I rather strive to turn my thoughts to the many blessings which are yet left me, and to the consoling instances of kindness which a lively sympathy with me has produced. The unremitted affection of my children was for some time the only thing that reconciled me to life. The substantial respect shewn me by my congregation at large gradually excited in me a desire to be further useful in the way of my profession."—It is indeed scarcely possible for those who had not an opportunity of witnessing the kind attentions of the congregation to conceive of their number and extent. They were an honourable testimony both to the merit and the success of their highly valued friend and pastor.

After many months of suffering and of danger, during which all hope of his recovery was frequently relinquished, by the blessing of providence upon the very able and unremitting attention of his medical friends, Mr. Wood was so far restored in the summer of 1807 as to be capable, after a short visit to Buxton, of entering once more upon the duties of
his office. Still however he was feeble, and apprehensive that unless he could gain more strength he should scarcely be able to struggle with the severity of the ensuing winter, and he was therefore desirous of spending some time by the sea-side. But as the expences attending his long illness, notwithstanding the constant and generous exertions of his numerous friends, had been very considerable; he doubted of the propriety of incurring the additional expence necessarily attending such a journey, in the state of health in which he then was. While he was thus hesitating he received the following very unexpected letter:


"Sir,

"We are desired by a correspondent of ours to send you thirty pounds. His name is not to be mentioned. We have inclosed the half of a thirty pound bank note, the receipt of which we will thank you to acknowledge that we may then send the other half.

"Our friend hopes that you will not lose the present season for sea bathing which he understands is recommended to you on account,
of ill health, and wishes you may find great benefit from it.

"I am, Sir, respectfully,
for Company and Self,
Your most obed. Servt.

S. OLDING."

It is difficult to say which is most deserving of admiration the generosity of this present, or the delicacy with which it was conveyed. It removed of course every scruple from the mind of Mr. Wood, and having passed some time on the coasts of Durham and Northumberland he returned home with his health restored to nearly its usual state. For a long time the friend to whose generosity he had been thus indebted was concealed, and Mr. Wood never had an opportunity of acknowledging the obligation; soon after his death the secret accidentally transpired, and it is now so generally known, that the writer of these memoirs hopes he may be allowed thus publicly to state that it was the Rev. Dr. James Scott, Rector of Simonburn, in Northumberland, and a very frequent resident in Leeds.

This pleasing anecdote is one amongst many others which, if it were thought neces-
sary, might be produced to shew the high estimation in which he was held by some who differed very widely from him upon subjects which too generally separate man from man; and also to illustrate a very striking part of his character exhibited in his own conduct towards such as had embraced religious opinions utterly irreconcileable with those which he had adopted. No one could be more firmly attached to the principles of religious truth which he professed, and no one could defend them with more firmness upon all proper occasions; but from an early period of his life he thought it possible, as he felt it to be desireable to maintain his own opinions, and to pay due respect to the opinions of others: to obey God, without forfeiting the esteem of man. He made the trial, and it rarely failed to succeed. At Stamford and at Ipswich he reckoned amongst his friends several who had adopted creeds at variance with his own; and soon after his settling at Leeds he formed an association of the principal dissenting ministers of different denominations, in that town, who agreed to meet once a month at each other's houses, for the purpose of friendly con-
versation. These meetings took place with little interruption during a long course of years. Religious topics were excluded by tacit consent, and general subjects furnished the means of a very pleasing interchange of sentiment; mutual esteem was thus formed and cherished, and religious prejudices were either prevented or removed, far beyond the little circle of those who thus exemplified the spirit, whilst they obeyed the injunctions of their common Lord.

It had been the constant practice of Mr. Wood to notice in his public services every occurrence connected with the Christian society for whom these services were performed, which was of a nature to suggest useful reflections to his own mind and to the minds of his hearers. When therefore upon his recovery from the dangerous sickness, by which he had been so long interrupted in the discharge of his ministerial duties, he again appeared in his proper place and character, he was desirous of publicly testifying his gratitude to God and his submission to his will, and of offering such thoughts as the afflictions by which he had been tried naturally suggested; but he was unequal to the task, and was reasonably appre-
hensive that, in the state in which he then was, the exertion would immediately overpower him, or bring on a relapse which might prove fatal. He therefore wisely refrained, hoping that at a period somewhat more distant he might be able with less hazard, if not with equal effect to notice publicly the visitations and the goodness of God. It had been his invariable custom at the beginning of every year to give some serious and suitable advice to the younger part of his hearers, and he chose that occasion in the beginning of the last year, to discharge in a brief but very striking and impressive manner, the obligation under which he had long felt himself. This sermon, at the request of some of the young persons to whom it was addressed, he permitted to be transcribed, and a few extracts from it will, it is hoped, be both acceptable and useful. He selected for his text the 15th verse of the 23d chapter of the Book of Proverbs: "My son if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." The exordium is as follows:

"At the beginning of the last year I was prevented by the effects of a long and severe illness, from addressing the younger members
of this Christian Society, as till then I had regularly done for the space of thirty-three years. In the progress of that illness I had relinquished all expectation, I might have said all hopes, of ever again speaking from this pulpit. It has pleased the Almighty disposer of all events to spare me some time longer, and to grant me a considerable renewal of my health and strength. I trust that a lively sense of his goodness will continue to operate upon my mind as an additional inducement to spend the remainder of my life in a course of as much usefulness as the situation assigned me and the abilities given me will enable me to effect.

"To the special improvement of those who habitually attend the public worship of God in this place I am bound to devote my utmost exertions by every sacred tie of duty and gratitude. The affectionate attention I received from them both collectively and individually, in a season of heavy affliction is such as I can never forget nor ever fully repay. The life which has thus been unexpectedly preserved cannot, after all, be long; at the age of sixty-three the best part of it must have been already spent, no small portion of its activity must have
been exhausted, and much of that which is left must be sensibly impaired. But whatever be its continuance or its powers they are all yours. It will be my delight to conduct your public religious services, in the manner which shall appear most conducive to the advancement of your truest interests. I shall esteem it to be particularly incumbent upon me to be attentive to those who are yet only preparing for the most important duties of life, who have characters to form, salutary principles of action to fix and strengthen, many errors of inexperience to rectify, and much useful knowledge to acquire. In your welfare, my youthful friends, I cannot but feel myself peculiarly interested. I have received most of you into my arms when you were helpless infants, unable to reason or to speak, and barely conscious of your own existence. I have witnessed your parents solemn dedication of you to God and their deliberate engagement to train you up in the christian doctrine and the practice of the christian duties. I have given a figurative representation of the natural effects of such instruction and such discipline by administering to you the visible rite of christian
baptism. I have seen you grow from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to youth, and have the satisfaction to see you now appear in this assembly as professing Christians. Your parents, I trust, have fulfilled their baptismal vow, they have enabled you to read the holy scriptures, they have given you some acquaintance with the gospel of Christ, they have brought you up in that purity of morals of which the baptismal water is only a significant visible emblem; as your Christian minister it is my duty to co-operate with them in instilling into your minds those divine principles which will preserve you from the dangerous influence of temptation, and direct you in the practice of the various duties which are constantly increasing upon you, as your mental capacities expand and your sphere of action enlarges; which will brighten your youthful prospects and exalt your youthful joys; which will fit you to appear with dignity, usefulness and self-satisfaction in the active pursuits of manly life; will ensure the serenity, the pious resignation and respectable cheerfulness of your old age; or, if length of days should not be allotted you, will take away the terrors of an earlier death."
He then proceeds to shew that a regular attendance upon the public services of religion are adapted to afford that consistent, comprehensive and well-digested knowledge of religious truth, which will raise the young to eminence in their christian character, and give them capacities for extensive usefulness. After which he continues thus:

"But at your time of life even such an attendance will not, I am apprehensive, fully answer every purpose. The sermons delivered on the sabbath are unavoidably detached, and in general are most properly miscellaneous; to you it will be highly advantageous to be instructed in a more regular and more familiar manner. As soon as the severity of the winter is over, I shall make you a proposal of this kind, and invite you to a more private explanation of christian principles, to be delivered to you in a few distinct sets or classes, suited to your different ages, your past advantages with respect to education, and your prospects of future rank in the present life. In the mean time, permit me to offer you some general hints of advice and admonition. You will, I am persuaded, give me full credit when I assure
you that I am earnestly solicitous for your happiness, no less in this world than in that which is to come. I regard you with that kind of affection which you receive from your parents, though not altogether in an equal degree. I speak to you as a father to his children, and 'if your hearts be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.'"

The counsel which he offered was most judicious and salutary. They to whom it was originally delivered will not be displeased to have an opportunity of fixing it more deeply upon their minds; whilst other young persons, into whose hands these memoirs may chance to fall, may improve by the wisdom and experience of one who, though he was most affectionately attached to the youth who had grown up under his own observation, and had begun to form their character after his instructions, was yet most anxiously desirous of the improvement and the comfort of the whole rising generation.

"Let me exhort you," said he, "to a decided and in some measure to an independent character. I by no means wish you to be vain, self-sufficient and tenacious of your own opi-
nions; you cannot be too humble, too modest or too diffident of your own judgment; you cannot form too low an estimate of what you have already acquired, or have hitherto done, In your early years your acquisitions must be comparatively small, your beneficial actions cannot have been very numerous, your inexperience must have led you into many errors, the liveliness of your spirits into some indiscretions, the warmth of your passions into a few, I hope but a few, irregularities: of none of these am I disposed to be a severe censor; for I know that I myself was once also young, and I remember what I then thought, how I then felt, and how I then frequently acted. But at the same time, I assure you, that you can scarcely form too high an opinion of your actual capacities and powers; you will always be satisfied with doing little, if you be not convinced that you are able to do much. Remember that you are human beings, and that with proper diligence and with similar opportunities, you may always do whatever has been done by men. Whatever be your situation in life, whether you are to obtain your needful
support by the daily labour of your hands, or possess higher advantages from the external rank of your family and friends, turn your first attention to the particular kind of application which will lead you to eminence, which will make you expert workmen, ingenious designers, ready accountants, intelligent merchants, skilful practitioners, or accomplished scholars. To which ever of these pursuits you are professionally led, resolve never to relax your endeavours till you can vie with those who have attained to the highest excellence; never think you have made sufficient improvement while you see any superior to yourselves, and you may be assured that your success will be equal to your exertions; you will at length rise to the height of those to whom you once looked up with aspiring emulation; you will acquire that kind of personal independence which is suited to your rank in life; instead of seeking you will be sought; instead of soliciting, you will be courted; instead of receiving, you will always be able to confer an obligation. But do not mistake me, I do not promise that by these methods you will always secure yourselves from disappointment, and that you will
never be liable to distress. In our present state of moral discipline, "the race is not constantly to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all." But this I do assert, that if you uniformly act as if you were entire masters of your own destiny, and persist in a course of unwearied diligence, you will take the measures which are most usually blest with success; and should you at any time encounter unexpected calamity, you will always have numerous resources within yourselves, and may look with the greatest confidence for the occasional assistance you may need from other men. But in all circumstances, let your chief reliance be on your own powers, on your own exertions, on your own unwearied and unyielding perseverance. It must be through your own fault if you are ever found altogether helpless. Only begin betimes; let it be the pride of your youth to be able to provide for yourselves whatever you want, and you will never be abandoned to hopeless distress. You may sometimes fall, but you will never be entirely cast down, you may meet with a mis.
barriage in some of your concerns, you may be obliged to yield to insurmountable obstacles in the prosecution of some of your schemes, but you cannot be deprived of your general skill, of your habitual activity, or of your acquaintance with the numerous methods in which you may beneficially employ your actual capacities and powers."

He then went on to shew, that this true and dignified personal independence cannot be acquired unless there be combined with it a strict and unbending integrity; and that if his young hearers were desirous of giving to the character he had exorted them to form its highest finish, they must superadd to it the knowledge and the practice of religion.

"It is," he observed, "by well constituted principles alone that you can preserve that self-possession and independence which I have so earnestly recommended to your youthful ambition, and if I be not grossly deceived, these principles are most easily to be obtained from the gospel of Christ. Be not averse then, be not careless and indifferent, above all be not ashamed to acknowledge a religious character. As it is certain you will be more
esteemed by the wise and good, so you will not fail to find in your future experience, that you are more respected by the foolish and dissolute, in consequence of its being generally known that you make a point of acting from conviction, and of being governed by principle. But for this purpose you must read the scriptures and form a religious faith for yourselves. The name and external profession will of themselves avail you nothing; you must understand the purport and feel the importance of the christian doctrines before you can be stedfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Let me entreat you then to examine, that you may acquire a capacity of coming to a fixed judgement. It will be my delight to guide you in your enquiries, but I have no wish to dictate to you any sentiment or opinion. I am not very desirous that you should think in all or in most cases as I do. I had much rather that you should draw different and even opposite conclusions with regard to many speculative points, than have reason to believe that you have personally drawn no conclusions at all, but have passively acquiesced in the unex-
amed decisions of any other person. My only desire is, that you should have a character, a faith, and a conscience which are all really your own; on which you can always act with firmness, and to which you will not be afraid to appeal whenever your conduct is brought into question. The more I have studied the scriptures, the more carefully I have considered the design of the christian revelation, the more diligently I have investigated the distinguishing nature and character of true religion, the more am I convinced that its essential doctrines are few, and entirely within the comprehension of a plain understanding. These offer themselves to our notice in every part of the New Testament, with scarcely a shade of difference. There is if I mistake not, one rule by which you may be guided in all your religious enquiries, without danger of hurtful error, Has the doctrine on which you are called to form a judgment a practical tendency? Does it directly lead you to the diligent discharge of your respective duties? Will the belief of it powerfully incline you to fear God and keep his commandments? Will it give you reason to rejoice in his government,
and dispose you to a patient and cheerful resignation to his will in all conditions, and under all circumstances? Will it expand your bosoms and warm your hearts with a generous benevolence to your fellow men? Will it assist you in the regulation of your appetites, passions and affections? If such be its evident tendency, it is certainly your interest to believe it, and if you are wise you must wish it to be true. Such I am persuaded are all the essential doctrines of the gospel. But there are many other particulars on which it may be desirable to form some satisfactory opinion. These, however, you may examine at your leisure; to these you may give more or less attention according to your respective present attainments and future opportunities. You may forever remain ignorant or in doubt concerning them, and yet be real Christians; you may make them the subject of continual study, and imagine that you receive them on the fullest evidence, and yet make no progress in the Christian character. But whether they be true or false it will not become you in your present state of imperfect knowledge and unripe judgment, to speak of them with a
tone of dogmatical decision. In all your spec-
culatve enquiries it will be your honour to
be cautious and modest; but in your practical
conclusions, it will be equally your interest and
your honour to be firm and unyielding. It
has been the great object of my present address,
to persuade you to acquire a capacity for pro-
viding for all your own real wants, and of
thus becoming truly independent to convince
you that, for this purpose, you must act on
principle, and maintain a character of unim-
peachable integrity; and finally to assure you,
that in both these respects you derive the most
effectual assistance from a careful study of
the christian scriptures, and a steady cultivation
of the christian spirit.—It was my original in-
tention to have offered you some further advice,
but neither your time nor my strength will
allow me to proceed. What I have already
delivered is of the most importance. "If your
hearts" in this respect "be wise, my heart shall
rejoice, even mine;" for I know that you will
then be equally wise for time and eternity."

Such was the excellent counsel which he
bequeathed to the younger part of his audi-
ence. It was received with the deepest atten-
tion and will, no doubt, be long remembered and carefully obeyed. But the plans of extended usefulness which he had thus formed, and which in this discourse he partly unfolded to his youthful hearers, he was not permitted to carry into execution. He had indeed good reason to expect that he should pass through the winter in safety, and with the return of milder weather, have strength sufficient for the revision, and delivery of the lectures originally drawn up for those to whose children he now meant to address them. His mental faculties were in full vigour, and the general state of his health was apparently better than it had been in several preceding winters; he was delighted with the prospect of further activity, while those to whom that activity was to be devoted were indulging the pleasing expectation of soon listening to the important instruction he had promised. But in the counsels of providence far other events were determined. He was spared, however, to bear in public that testimony in favour of peace, which in private he frequently delivered with uncommon earnestness and force. He saw
and lamented the many pernicious consequences of the war system, which had been so long pursued; as a citizen he was alarmed for the character and the fate of his country; as a man he felt for the numberless evils which were thus brought upon the human race. It was, therefore, with peculiar satisfaction that he beheld a large and respectable body of clothiers, many of whose families were deprived of the means of daily subsistence, assembled in the cloth-hall, at Leeds, for the purpose of uniting respectfully, and according to the genuine spirit of the British Constitution, in a petition for the speedy restoration of peace. This assembly was congenial with the principles he most warmly cherished, and with all the feelings of his heart; and upon that occasion he delivered to a few of the principal conductors of it the following short but excellent address:

"Gentlemen, in the present state of my health, I cannot, with prudence, expose myself to the open air in the cloth-hall yard. But I should feel myself wanting in my duty to you, to my countrymen, and to mankind, if I did not come forward as a man, as a christian, and
as a minister of religion, to express my hearty concurrence with you in the prayer of your intended petition, a draught of which I have read; and of the resolutions which are to be proposed at the public meeting, which also I have seen. It is my firm conviction, that if the measures which you are now pursuing, had been taken in the time of the late ministry, and before the death of the ever-to-be-lamented Mr. Fox, you would at this time have enjoyed the blessings of peace. I will only add my earnest wish, that you may obtain all the success which your peaceable conduct and regard to the public good, I doubt not, will merit."

About the end of the month of March Mr. Wood felt what he considered as symptoms of an approaching fit of the gout; although he continued cheerful as usual, and able to employ several hours daily in writing for the Cyclopædia. On Sunday, March 27, he went through the services of the day with an uncommon degree of animation, and it was the general remark of all his hearers, that even in his earlier days he had not addressed them with greater force and energy. In the minds of some, this gave occasion to very painful
rebodings. It happens, not unfrequently; especially in the case of persons who have been subject to disease, that the whole frame appears endued with uncommon vigour very shortly before an attack which is to terminate in dissolution; whilst, therefore, this extraordinary effort pleasingly recalled to memory the days that were past; it excited apprehensions too well founded, that the light in which, during so long a season they had rejoiced, and which after burning dimly had thus unexpectedly brightened, was about to be extinguished. "It is like a taper," said one of the audience upon leaving the chapel, "which emits a sudden gleam and expires." The comparison was too just. On the following morning Mr. Wood received from the writer of this memoir a letter upon business of importance, to which he immediately replied. After mentioning his intention of visiting York, when the weather should become milder, he adds: "I am at present much indisposed with a flying gout, which often affects my stomach, and renders it peculiarly desirable for me to avoid every thing that is likely to give me much anxiety." There is reason to believe that the writing of this
letter was the last occupation in which he was engaged. During dinner on that very day, he was suddenly seized with a violent sickness which continued for many hours; an inflammation of the bowels, which baffled the most skilful and unwearied efforts of his medical attendants, was quickly succeeded by mortification; before he could be informed of his danger, he sunk into delirium; and in the afternoon of Friday, April 1st, he breathed his last, so quietly, that the friends who were around his bed were not sensible of the moment of his departure.

Many eminently good men have looked forward to this solemn period with alarm: they have been apprehensive lest, through the unavoidable infirmity of human nature, or the pains of death, they should be unable to display the fortitude and constancy which may then be expected in them, and to do sufficient credit to those principles which were designed, and are so admirably adapted to give to the dying believer victory over the grave. From this trial the subject of these memoirs was preserved. Yet such had been the uniform tenour of his life, so conscientiously had he
Discharged all its important duties, with such calmness had he spoken of his departure during that season of affliction when he expected that his departure was at hand, so firm was his confidence in the divine goodness, and so unwavering his hope of a blessed immortality, that had it pleased the Disposer of all events to have kept him longer upon the bed of sickness, and permitted him to be sensible of the approaches of dissolution, there is no reason to doubt that he would have conducted himself in that trying scene in such a manner as should have illustriously displayed the unspeakable advantages of rational piety, and of those expectations which it is the privilege of the true christian alone to enjoy.

The sensation which his unexpected death occasioned, was a satisfactory and striking proof of the high esteem in which he was held by all who knew him. As he had lived generally beloved, so he died generally regretted and honoured. The scene of his interment peculiarly interesting. His brethren of different denominations, with whom, during many years he had maintained a constant and friendly intercourse, attended his remains as they were con-
veyed to the house appointed for all the living, and with the tears of a large and respectable society, who stood around the grave of their lamented pastor and friend, were mingled the tears of those who had no other connection with him than as a townsman and a man. And if genius, learning, piety and benevolence be qualities entitled to esteem; if the faithful servant of God, the enlightened and liberal teacher of divine truth, the sincere christian and the warm friend of human kind, be deserving of honour, deep and unaffected grief was the natural feeling of those who stood around that grave; and lasting, grateful remembrance is a tribute which he who is buried there will justly claim from all those to whom his excellencies were known.
AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED

AT THE INTERMENT

OF THE

LATE REV. W. WOOD,

ON TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 1808,
In publishing the following Address, the Author has yielded to the repeated solicitations of many of those to whom it was delivered. It was written in great haste, and with no view to publication, and at the same time under the uncertainty of the writer's being called to pay any other public tribute to the memory of one whom he so highly valued. These circumstances will account for the great similarity which will be found between this address, and the sermon which follows it; and will also, it is hoped, recommend both to the candour of those, who may not feel the same degree of interest in the character here delineated, as will be felt by those to whose observation it was familiar, and by whom it was highly and deservedly esteemed.
ADDRESS,

THUS end all our personal attentions to our parent, our instructor or our friend. Laid in that silent grave he asks of us no more, for him we can do no more. These are the last offices required of friendship and affection, they are the last that friendship and affection can perform. We can no more administer to his pleasure, we can no more by a tender and ever watchful solicitude prevent his wishes; we can no more sooth his sufferings and beguile his hours of pain, we can no more gladden his heart by a wise and practical attention to his faithful and affectionate counsels:—these pleasing services, these delightful duties are all over, and nothing is now left for us but to conceal him whose presence has long been the source of our highest gratification, from our own view, and from the view of others. And thus terminate in this world, all our social connections, all our sweetest friendships; and such are the
melancholy offices which we expect our surviving friends will one day perform for us. And can any one to whom God has imparted the common affections of human nature, and the means of forming any of the pleasing and interesting relations of human life, stand near an opening grave with a heart unmoved? Can any one who knows what mean the domestic and the social ties, the tender charities of parent, brother or friend, behold such a scene as this and refuse to weep with those who cannot fail to weep? or can any one who considers the frail and uncertain nature of human life, who marks the progress of death around him, who has reason (and what truly pious creature of God has not reason) to rejoice in his existence, and sees how short and how precarious that existence is, and feels that he may be the next victim upon whom the appointed destroyer may be commissioned to seize, can such a one contemplate the scene now before us, even though the inhabitant of the grave, and all the mourners who surround it may have been altogether strangers to him, without emotions of sorrow and of sympathy, without receiving some impressions favourable to piety and goodness! Every
service of this nature proclaims the dissolution of some social bond, tells us that some heart is pierced with sorrow, and announces to us that some rational creature of God is removed from the scene of probation and summoned to his account. Every service of this nature confirms the truth of that solemn declaration, which if we do not disbelieve, we are yet too apt to neglect, that it is appointed unto all men once to die, and loudly warns us to prepare for the judgment which is to succeed.

But to the lamented inhabitant of that grave, to the friend whose obsequies we are now performing, none who hear me were strangers; all knew and all admired his virtues, and all who are here assembled are come to deplore his loss, and to render to departed excellence the tribute of their tears. Of no unknown, of no common person are those remains which we are now committing to the earth, nor is it altogether to the common topics which such scenes as these suggest that you are prepared to listen, or indeed that I am disposed to confine your attention. In that grave lies a friend whom I have long known, revered and loved, and in whose converse I have experienced some of the purest of my
pleasures. In that grave lies one who was united by similar ties of affection to many who surround it, who sustained a yet higher relation to them as the faithful servant of God, the able minister of divine truth. Shall I then say: Bear with me while I endeavour to render this melancholy office less painful to myself, by yielding to the influence of the warmest affection, and dwelling for a few moments upon some of the excellencies which distinguished his character? I need not ask this of you. This will be in unison with your feelings upon this occasion as well as my own, and will afford you a soothing though mournful satisfaction under the present pressure of this reflection, that in the person of our friend we shall behold these excellencies no more, till we meet him in a world where all his virtues will be improved, and shine forth without any mixture of imperfection.

Educated under some of the ablest instructors of the last generation, to whom as being designed for the christian ministry, amongst protestant dissenters, he could have recourse, our departed friend came forth to the work of that ministry, well qualified to discharge all its important duties; his mind stored
with useful learning, his judgment formed upon the most liberal and enlightened principles, his zeal for the solid and lasting improvement of those who should be committed to his care, sincere and ardent. When he had been several years engaged in that ministry, the removal of the distinguished Priestley from this highly favoured congregation, opened the way for his settlement amongst you: and a connexion of more than ordinary duration, was continually, receiving additional strength by unremitting kindness and attention on your parts, and on his by a faithful, regular and uncommonly able discharge of those duties which had for their object your perfection, your peace of mind, your everlasting welfare.

The voice which is now hushed into silence will never cease to vibrate in your ears, the very striking and impressive manner in which the most momentous truths have, sabbath, after sabbath, been unfolded and recommended to you, will never be forgotten; the ingenuity and force with which the lessons of eternal wisdom have been set forth and inculcated, will never cease to be the subjects of your grateful and admiring recollection. God grant that the great
end which our departed friend proposed by every means which he so carefully employed to convey to your minds, and deeply impress there the great truths of the gospel, may not have been used in vain! God Almighty grant, that those principles of rational piety, of active benevolence, of social and of personal virtue, which he taught you to consider as deserving of your constant and most serious regard, which by every motive he could suggest, he urged you to adopt and practice, may be immovably implanted in your breasts, govern your whole temper and conduct, and render you his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord!

You will bear me ready witness, my friends, that I am not guilty of flattery, when I add, that my departed friend endeavoured to instruct you by example no less than by precept, and was so far as the inevitable frailty of human nature would permit, in every respect, such as he exhorted you to be. Did he recommend piety to God? To God he was himself pious; pleased to trace his perfections most perfectly harmonizing in his words and in his works, cheerfully paying to him the homage of a contented and a grateful heart, and humbly sub-
missive to those mysterious dispensations which removed the friend, the child who largely shared in his paternal affections, the companion of his life, and the partner of his bosom. Did he invite you to rejoice in the hopes and privileges of the gospel of Christ? In his own habitual moderation with respect to the pleasures of this life, in his own habitually cheerful temper, in his resignation and patience in the hour of affliction, he proved to you how full of comfort and joy those hopes and privileges are. Did he faithfully tell you what the Lord your God requires of you, and exhort you to unwavering obedience? In all the important relations which he sustained, he endeavoured to be a pattern of good works, and in his own temper and conduct exemplified the duties which he enjoined upon you. Equally removed from ostentation and severity, pretending to no greater degrees of holiness than are really attainable in the present imperfect state, and at the same time far superior to all the false maxims and artificial glosses which are too commonly suffered to influence the practice of the world, his religion was the fruit of a rational
piety and a sober judgment; adapted to awe and silence the scoffer, and to lead the humble, teachable and well-disposed mind, to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reasonableness of his piety, the soundness of his judgment, the extent of his knowledge, the cheerfulness of his temper and the delight with which he viewed the happiness of those who are in the morning of their days, admirably qualified him for usefulness far beyond the line of his professional duty, and particularly for that most important office of instructing the young. In the light which he thus diffused, many of you, my young friends, rejoiced, and amidst this scene of sorrow, no grief is more lively and sincere than that which fills your breasts as you contemplate the narrow abode in which your instructor and your friend is deposited. Your tender hearts can never lose the impression of his kindness, his patience, his anxious solicitude to improve your understanding, and to confirm your love of virtue; you can never forget the concern which he manifested for your happiness, and the delight with which he viewed your innocent joy! His labours, I am confident, will not be
lost; you will lay up those lessons of wisdom as your choicest treasures, and in the relations which you may hereafter fill, you will so diffuse their influence, that in the future assembly of the just made perfect in heaven, many, besides yourselves, shall gratefully own their obligations to him; for no small share of the happiness of their mortal life, and of their eternal reward.

That all the duties of his station were most punctually fulfilled, you, my brethren, will willingly testify; but his active mind could find leisure for other pursuits, and he rose to eminence in some of the most pleasing branches of human knowledge. He delighted in the works of God, and largely investigated them, and thence he drew not only the most satisfactory pleasure, but lessons of considerable value and importance to you; and of late years the knowledge he had acquired has been imparted through different channels to the world, and justly entitled him to a distinguished rank amongst the promoters of the knowledge of nature, in this country. The loss therefore extends far beyond ourselves: Science bends with Filial Affection and with Friendship over that grave,
and drops her tear also upon the remains of her lately favoured son.

In thus submitting to the guidance of my feelings upon this mournful occasion, and indulging the remembrance of those excellences by which our departed friend was justly endeared to us all, I have indirectly suggested a very powerful means of consolation and support. Who can doubt that our loss is his unspeakable gain? Who can for a moment hesitate to believe, that, if he be not already entered upon his reward, he is destined in the counsels of God, and in his own due time, to receive a crown of glory which shall never fade? "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," is the blessed sentence, which if he have not already heard, will, we have reason to be confidently assured, be addressed to him hereafter by the righteous Judge of all men. Check therefore the wish that would recall him to this changeful and imperfect scene. Repress the sigh that would seem to indicate regret that he is removed from intercourse with you, to live to God. Cherish the remembrance of all that you loved and admired in him, and be imitators of him as
for as he followed Christ. Call to mind the lessons of heavenly wisdom which he has so long and so faithfully delivered to you, and let not your neglect of the great duties which he so affectionately and so impressively enforced, render this a final and compleat separation! It cannot be long before all who are present at this solemnity shall have finished their course also, and be called to the same scene of righteous retribution. It cannot be long before those who lately rejoiced in the society and the counsels of our friend, shall be where he is; and, if not unworthy, shall be united to him in bonds of purer affection, and enjoy an intercourse with him far more delightful than they have experienced here, and engage with him in the noblest employments, in the unwearied service and the unceasing praise of Him who sitteth upon the throne for ever and ever. In this delightful expectation, which if we be wise cannot fail of being realized; what a source of consolation is opened to us, what an incitement is proposed to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! A few more years shall pass, and the faithful disciples of Christ shall be united to those, who through faith and patience
have already, we trust, inherited the promised. A few more years and our sorrows will all be ended, and to the joys, which in their best state are imperfect, and liable, when we least expect it, to be disturbed and dissipated, will succeed those which are eternal, of the intensity of which no tongue can tell, no heart can conceive! With what rapture will the pious parent there embrace the children of his affection, who under the influence of those principles which they derived from his early and judicious care, have passed with honour and with safety through the dangers of this world, and secured the great end after which they were taught to aspire? How inexpressibly joyful will be the meeting of those, who having here sustained the various relations of social and domestic life, and been united in cordial love and friendship, awake to the renewal of the pleasing intercourse which death had interrupted, in a world of perfect bliss and harmony, with no distressing fear of future separation! How will be, who pointed out to you the way to eternal life, and encouraged you to walk therein, hail your safe arrival in those happy mansions where no temptation
can enter; and where, having fought the good fight of faith, you shall receive the prize! And with what unutterable delight will you recall the sacred truths which have conducted you to happiness, and listen again to the voice, to which in this place you listened with grateful admiration, no longer warning you of danger, and animating you to maintain with perseverance the important conflict with every evil principle, and confirming your good purposes by the promise of an abundant reward to all who should be faithful unto death, but congratulating you upon the blessed termination of your trial, rejoicing with you in clearer views of the divine character and government, and in the dissipation of all the doubts and difficulties which once perplexed you, and raising with you, and all the redeemed of the Lord, the song of thanksgiving and of praise!

And whence is this transporting expectation derived? Whence but from that blessed gospel, which it was the earnest endeavour of him, who has illustrated its power in purifying and elevating the conduct, and who is now, I trust, experiencing the reality of its promises, to recommend to your reverent attention. Oh my
friends, let not his labour prove to have been in vain! Bind this gospel to your hearts. Take it for a guide unto your feet, and a lamp unto your path. Walk in obedience to its precepts, and secure the blessing of its animating discoveries. In your brightest days it will enhance and sanctify your joys. In the seasons of darkness and distress, it will give you strength to bear all that God appoints, and wisdom to improve all the means he affords to prepare you for eternal life and happiness; through every intricate path of human duty it will conduct you with safety, and with honour, and when you pass through the valley of the shadow of death, it will inspire into your hearts such confidence in God, and such delightful hopes of immortal blessedness, that you shall fear no evil. Let God's most holy word be your guide now, and it will conduct you hereafter unto glory.

Such exhortations as these are, I well know, not new to you. Frequently and affectionately, have they been urged upon you by the tongue, which has, in this world, for ever ceased to move. But now, if at any time, they must appear to you of infinite moment; now, if at any time, they will make a deep and lasting
impression, not to be effaced by any of the
temptations and vanities which the world may
throw in your way. How far was it from your
thoughts, when you last attended in this place,
and listened with delight to the words of sacred
truth, which flowed from the lips of your long-
esteemed pastor and friend, that your next so-
lemn assembly would be for the purpose of
following him to his grave! Fearful as some of
you were that the extraordinary animation which
he discovered portended the approach of that
fatal event which has actually taken place; yet
no one, I apprehend, thought it so near as to sug-
gest the mournful probability that he was then
delivering to you his dying admonitions. By a
dispensation of providence, in which the greater
part of those who are now present are deeply
concerned, you have been again taught the
frailty and uncertainty of human life; let not
the important lesson, I beseech you, be read to
you in vain! let it excite you to holy watchful-
ness and care, to a due improvement of the
advantages you still enjoy, to a practical remem-
brance of the counsels which you have received,
and urge you to lay open your hearts to every
sacred influence, that you may perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. As our friend has been thus unexpectedly removed from the scene of his duties, so may you be removed from yours! Consider, seriously consider how soon your change also may come, and give all diligence that you also may be able to render your account with joy!
A SERMON,

ON

OCCASION OF THE DEATH,

OF THE

LATE REV. W. WOOD,

DELIVERED AT LEEDS,

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 1809.
SERMON.

HEBREWS XIII. 7.
REMENBER THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR GUIDES, WHO HAVE SPEKEN TO YOU THE WORD OF GOD, WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW, CONSIDERING THE END OF THEIR CONVERSATION.

VERY painful are the duties which in consequence of the inroads of death, the faithful minister of the word of God is not unfrequently called to perform; yet such is their importance, so much useful instruction is connected with them, that he cannot refuse the task, however distressing it may prove. On such occasions the frailty of this mortal frame, the certainty of its dissolution, the wisdom of making provision for an endless life to come, the absolute necessity of christian practice, and the infinite value of christian hopes, are subjects which irresistibly claim his attention, and are urged by him with peculiar propriety and force. The hearts of his hearers are softened to receive the salutary impressions
of sacred truth, whilst the lively concern they feel in the departure of a relative, a friend, or a fellow worshipper, disposes them to serious thought, and gives unusual weight to those instructions which are wisely adapted to teach them how to secure the great end of an existence so precarious and transitory. But circumstances sometimes occur which render such a service peculiarly distressing, and call for instruction of a peculiar nature. A numerous and rising family deprived of a father's support, and a father's authority: bereaved of a pious and intelligent mother, whose strong affection and whose hourly care are so important, so necessary to the formation of virtuous propensities in the youthful breast; a youth entering upon a scene of extensive usefulness and qualified to be an honour and a blessing to society, removed from the hopes of men, and prematurely brought down to those silent abodes where there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, are amongst those dispensations of providence, which the christian teacher will feel himself called upon, either to reconcile with the acknowledged benevolence of the government of God, or to employ
as the means of humility and devout resignation. And should the hoary head not found in the ways of wisdom, be laid in the silent grave; should the corrupter of those who had the misfortune to fall within his influence, the faithless husband, the profligate father, be brought to the house appointed for all the living; should the unhappy youth, whom no holy counsels could guide, no wise authority could control, no parental tears could move, be snatched away in the midst of his crimes, and called to his account before he has seen half his days; these awful examples will furnish the judicious instructor with lessons of infinite importance from the delivery of which, however painful the duty, he will not recede.

You, my Christian brethren, are no strangers to the impressive lessons which the house of mourning supplies, these were all faithfully pointed out to you, and during a ministry of nearly five and thirty years continuance, many have been the occasions of awakening your sympathy, of directing you, in some very dark and distressing scenes through which some of the families that compose this Christian assembly have been lead, to place your pious confi-
dence in God, of inciting you to a due neglect of the vanities of a world so changeful and transitory, and of exhorting you to set your affections upon that more durable state in which alone the real treasure of a rational creature will be found. During that period every house connected with this christian society, has been the house of mourning; and at different times each individual has been called upon to exercise submission to the divine will, and to consider the end of all things; but the instance of mortality which has now occurred almost equally affects you all; you have to mourn a common loss, to learn in common, resignation to that providence which has unexpectedly removed from you, an able and zealous instructor, a faithful and judicious friend. On many occasions have you sympathized with each other, you all now claim sympathy with yourselves. Your claim is just, and cannot be disregarded. Widely as your late Pastor was known, will his loss be felt and his death lamented; and the friends of rational religion and of virtue, mingle their tears with yours, and deplore the stroke which has so suddenly brought down to the grave, one who was so bright an ornament
of our common faith, so valuable a member of society, so excellent a preacher of righteousness.

By your partiality, and that of the much esteemed relatives of my ever to be lamented friend, the duty of paying a public tribute to his memory, and of deducing from this mournful event, some useful instruction devolves upon myself. Had I consulted my own feelings I should have declined an office which I cannot discharge without the deepest sorrow; I should have committed the exhibition of so much worth and excellence to some one more able, (to no one more desirous and willing could it have been committed) to do it ample justice. Sixteen years ago, when I was scarcely half the age of your late revered pastor, he began to favor me with his friendship, and ever since that period it has been on both sides most sincere and steady, and to myself I must again own, productive of the most important advantages. To it have I been indebted for much judicious counsel, assistance in some cases of difficulty, and many hours of pure enjoyment. I flattered myself with possessing no small share of his confidence: he freely opened to me R
his heart, he shewed me his whole character, and the more I saw of it the higher rose my admiration and esteem. Some of its excellencies I delineated to you on that day, never to be forgotten by me; when I performed the mournful office of committing his remains to the earth; but neither the time allotted to the preparation of the service, nor that which it was proper to employ in its performance, were sufficient to enable me to discharge all the duty which I owe to justice and friendship, nor fully, I apprehend, to gratify your expectations. It will not therefore, I trust, be unsuitable to the occasion on which I again meet you, if I dwell more largely upon some of the leading features in the character of the friend who is removed from us; both to justify that remembrance of him which you are disposed to cherish, and also to incite you so to consider the end of his conversation, that you may be animated to the most strenuous endeavours to walk worthy of that gospel in which you have been so ably instructed, and thus prepare for renewed intercourse with all the good whom you have loved and honoured here, in a world of perfection and of joy.
Devoted from his youth to the service of the sanctuary, our departed friend, in very early life, laid a wide and firm foundation, on which might be raised the superstructure of an academical education; and having, at a proper age, become a member of a seminary in the neighbourhood of London, from which have issued some of the brightest ornaments of the dissenting interest, he found in the talents and exertions of the tutors who presided there, no reason to regret that he could not conscientiously avail himself of the advantages which the national seats of learning possess. Under these able tutors he made the proficiency which was justly expected from excellent natural abilities, joined with steady diligence; and he entered upon the ministry of the gospel, a scribe well instructed unto righteousness, and able from the treasures of his knowledge to bring forth things new and old.

But to pass with credit through these preparatory scenes, and to form an extensive acquaintance with theological and moral science, he did not consider as sufficient. He had seen the finest talents neglected, and the amplest stores of knowledge lying comparatively use-
less for want of that propriety and energy of manner, which is essential to the effectual communication of religious instruction to a mixed assembly. He was from the first aware that hearers are in general ordinary men, and not philosophers, and that truth cannot be expected to make its way to their minds, unless it be accompanied with a pleasing address, and presented in an engaging form. He had also observed no small number of instances, and since that period they have been greatly multiplied, in which error and absurdity of the grossest kind received the admiration which was due to reason and to truth only, in consequence of the captivating address, and the zeal and earnestness which their advocates have displayed. It was therefore his determination that truth should not suffer in his hands, nor the cause of religion and virtue be impeded by the neglect of those useful, those honest arts, which are necessary to ensure for the lessons of the public instructor, a favourable reception. And if I be not misled by the partiality of friendship, his labours to secure this laudable purpose, were as successful as they were wise. He spake so as to command the attention of an admiring
audience, and urged important truths in such a manner, that the lowest as well as the highest, persons of the least mental cultivation, as well as men of literature and science, could bear with understanding and delight. To his attainments of this kind, he used to attribute a great portion of his success and acceptableness; and upon his brethren in the ministry who were much younger than himself, and especially upon those who were preparing for the same important office, he strenuously inculcated the wisdom, and the necessity of not depending merely upon the importance of their subjects, but also of cultivating the graces of eloquence, in order to arrest the attention and steal upon the heart.

As at the bar eloquence is employed occasionally by the legal advocate, to supply the deficiency of evidence, and to make the worse appear the better reason; so in the pulpit it is to be feared that the minister of religion has not unfrequently employed it to set forth crude and hasty thoughts, and to compensate for the want of sound and valuable truth. To no such degrading purposes was it applied by our departed friend. His were the words of wisdom;
the doctrines he taught you were the result of long and patient investigation, and the precepts he inculcated, deduced by unwearied study from the word of God, the truest philosophy, and an intimate and extensive knowledge of human nature. And although their effect must have been considerably weakened by a cold and injudicious mode of delivery, yet under the least favourable circumstances they would have gained the attention of those who had understanding to discern the excellence of truth. His pulpit compositions were not merely well known topics set forth by the ordinary graces of style; to every subject he gave some new illustration, and held it forth under an aspect in which it had been not generally contemplated: and no one I am persuaded could habitually and seriously attend upon his ministry, but his mind must have been enlightened, whilst his heart was improved. A lively imagination, a fertile genius, an intimate acquaintance with the works as well as the word of God, a ready conception, and a nice discrimination of character enabled him to give to every important topic, which claimed his attention, in this place, a peculiar degree of interest; and to subjects the most trite, an engaging air of novelty.
I cannot here omit another striking characteristic of your late pastor's mode of public instruction. His discourses related almost exclusively to religious practice, rarely to what are called religious principles. He wished to make you practical Christians rather than experienced controversialists; and whilst all his public services proceeded upon a system of religious truth which he had carefully deduced from the pages of revelation, and tended silently to recommend that system, and to impress in the most effectual manner all its essential principles upon your minds, he rarely thought it necessary or wise to point out to you the speculative errors which abound in the world, or to explain and defend that creed which in the exercise of private judgment he had adopted for himself. He appeared amongst you when you chose him to fill the honourable station he held here as a preacher of righteousness, and he very plainly informed you of the duties, which in that character he considered himself called upon peculiarly to fulfil. "What," said he, when he first addressed you from this place as your appointed pastor, "what is the Christian religion but a practical system, intended to teach
us the path of our duty, to deter us from the practice of vice, and to conduct us to the highest perfection of our natures. For this cause the son of God was invested with a commission from heaven; for this cause he was furnished with an astonishing degree of divine knowledge and power; for this cause he laboured with incessant diligence through the whole course of his ministry, and for this cause he willingly endured the agonies of death. His public discourses consisted chiefly of rules for the direction of human conduct, of powerful motives to the practice of universal virtue, of lively displays of the nature and attributes of the deity, and of severe reprehensions of the vicious and the ungodly. The sermons of Christ were never employed about those matters of doubtful disputation which have occasioned such violent contention in the christian world. The son of God was not commissioned to entertain mankind with curious questions and nice speculations, but to lead them to repentance and the practice of virtue. And in this respect we think it our duty to follow closely the steps of our Divine Master. We wish to preach to the heart. We endeavour to choose such subjects as are likely
to have the greatest influence on the life and character, and our grand object is to lead our hearers to a just sense of the importance of religion, to an awful idea of the perfections of God, and to a warm esteem for universal excellence." By these principles his public services have ever since been regulated, with an effect, I trust, proportionate to his wishes, adequate to his labours, and productive of your continued progress in virtue, your firm establishment in every good word and work.

Let none who were strangers to our departed friend, if in this assembly there can be such, suppose from what I have now said, that he was indifferent to the profession or the progress of religious truth; or that he viewed with unconcern the diffusion of error. By the conscientious exercise of the right of free enquiry, he had in early life, departed widely from the creed of his fathers, and in pursuing his investigations he at length became firmly convinced of the truth of that doctrine which teaches the strict and undivided unity of God; the proper humanity of the great messenger of the New Covenant; and from which, as necessary deduc-
tions, are derived the most pleasing views of the character and government of the Supreme Ruler. In proportion as this doctrine prevailed, he believed that the virtue as well as the comfort of mankind would be greatly promoted, and the interests of religious conduct, as well as of religious faith, would be advanced. But he knew that his stated hearers were for the most part attached to this doctrine no less firmly than himself, and he therefore considered it as no other than a waste of their time, and a perversion of a custom established principally for the sake of confirming them in holiness of heart and life, generally or frequently to employ the few moments consecrated to religious instruction in discussing before them any points of speculative theology. He lead your devotions to the one true and living God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; he held up to view the character of Jesus, as a man approved of God, commissioned by divine wisdom and power to declare the will of his heavenly father, and enforcing by his spotless example every precept which he inculcated; and he shewed you how the doctrine of Jesus had been confirmed by the gifts of the spirit, which the father had
communicated. To the virtuous he exhibited God as approving, in infinite mercy, their sincere and earnest endeavours to walk in all his commandments blameless, and engaged by the perfections of his nature, no less than by the declarations of his inspired messengers, to bestow upon them the highest proofs of his favour in a world of perfect joy. To the sinner he represented the constant inspector, and the impartial judge of all, not desirous of his death, but willing that he should repent and live, and ready at all times agreeably to his most gracious promises to receive the returning penitent, upon no other terms than that he turn from the errors of his ways, and walk in holiness and righteousness all the remaining days of his life. And he instructed those to whom he dispensed the word of truth, to bear it continually in mind, and to suffer the important doctrine, to produce its proper influence upon their temper and conduct, that God will bring every work into judgement with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, in order that he may render unto every man according to his deeds. These he regarded as the leading principles of the gospel; with these all his instructions har-
monized. He studied no disguise before you, my brethren, or before the world; he used no artifices to gloss over opinions which are at variance with fashion, interest, and prejudice. His religious principles were well known, and although he took no pains to obtrude them upon others, he avoided no opportunity when fairly called upon, to state and to defend what appeared to him the dictates of the word of God. He believed that he had found the truth, and rejoiced that the truth had made him free, and highly gratifying would it have been to him, if by any exertions on his part this freedom could have been communicated to others; but he abstained upon principle from all unprovoked attacks upon established errors and deeply-rooted prejudices, because he was fully persuaded that in the present state of the world it is better to allure men from error, and by a cautious and conciliating temper to soften their aversions to truth, than by open and avowed hostility, to alarm their fears and to call forth an obstinate and determined opposition. Such I know were the views by which he was actuated, and what may have appeared to some lukewarmness and indifference to the diffusion
of a rational faith, was the result of the most mature deliberation, and an observance of the baneful effects of inconsiderate zeal, and adopted by him, as the surest, if not the speediest means of overthrowing the empire of error. Worldly policy had no influence over his mind; he loved the pure and unadulterated gospel, and ardently desired its general acceptance, and he took those methods of recommending it to others which he believed prudence dictated, and wisdom enforced, as the only methods of securing ultimate success.

In a regular course of private instruction he had placed before you all the doctrines of revelation, and shewed you the principles on which the prevailing errors may be refuted; in his frequent intercourse with you in social life he openly maintained, and occasionally justified the system to which he was himself attached, and which he wished you, from a clear conviction of its truth to adopt; but in the public exercise of his ministry, he did not hold it right to appear frequently; if at all, in the character of a controversialist.

I confess myself an admirer of his conduct in this respect; but at the same time I readily
concede, that in the great diversity of temper which prevails in the world, it may be judicious and necessary for the friends of truth to pursue different methods to serve her cause, and whilst some are to be won by a mild and cautious conduct, others may require all the efforts of a warm and active zeal to rouse their attention, and dispose them to enquiry. Amongst the early disciples of our Lord, there was a Son of Consolation, as well as a Son of Thunder; and in the glorious work of the reformation a Melancthon was an instrument no less necessary than a Luther.

When your late revered pastor first addressed you in that character from this place, and as a proper introduction to his future labours pointed out to you the reciprocal duties of a christian minister and his hearers; he not only stated and justified the mode of instruction which he had resolved to adopt, but he invited you to a strict observance of his character and conduct, and avowed himself bound not only to instruct you, but to exemplify all his instructions in his own conduct. In the words of the great apostle whose character he loved to study, and of which he appeared to have
formed the most just conceptions, he thus ex-
horted you: "Be ye followers of me as I also am
of Christ." "Yes, my brethren," he observed,
"the faithful Christian teacher professes to follow
the example of the Son of God. He lays no
claim to respect on account of the supposed
sacred nature of his office, independent of his
own private character, but is assiduous in the
discharge of the several duties of his calling,
and is anxious lest after attempting to teach others
he himself should be found reprobate. We confess
indeed that the heavenly treasure is put into
earthly vessels, that we are tempted like the
rest of our brethren, and meet with many ob-
STRUCTIONS in our labours after perfection; but
we testify also with a humble boldness, that we
durst not teach another if we were not desi-
rous of teaching ourselves; that we durst not
preach against irreligion, if we ourselves were
guilty of impiety; that we durst not make our
boast of the law, if through breaking the law,
we were willing to dishonour God. We should
be afraid of assuming the Christian ministry, if
we ourselves were not in love with the Christian
temper. We should tremble at the thought of
speaking to a Christian congregation, if we
were not conscious of some correspondence between our words and our actions. We could not presume to exhort you to be followers of us, unless we could immediately subjoin, 'as we also are followers of Christ.' I appeal, my friends, with boldness; to you who have known and observed him through the whole of his long and important connexion with this christian society;—Has not his habitual conduct justified this striking and solemn declaration? Have you ever had reason to believe or suspect that his actions were not consonant with his words? Has he ever recommended any duty to you, whether religious, social or personal, from the performance of which you could abstain, and plead that his conduct, if it did not justify, at least palliated your negligence and criminality. No, my brethren, you listened to him here with confidence, that he would not shun to declare unto you the whole counsel of God; you looked to him with respect and affection in the general intercourse of life, as a pattern of good works, your guide in the practice as well as in the knowledge of your duties.

"And not merely as your religious instructor was he justly endeared to you. His expe-
rience, his knowledge of the human character, his prudence, his zeal for everything in which your welfare was concerned, qualified him for a judicious and faithful adviser in matters not immediately connected with his profession. He was what he himself, in a service similar to that in which I am now engaged, has described one of the friends of his youth to have been, "a friend who never failed to blend his interest with that of his confiding and confided associates, who declined no labour, and refused no inconveniences to procure for them a substantial service; who anxiously rescued their reputation from every unmerited reproach, and who was never severe but from compassion for misconduct, which a transient severity was most likely to mend." To the young he shewed peculiar complacency, his warmest desires were for their welfare, his most anxious care was to render his experience subservient to their benefit: with their innocent gaiety he was sincerely delighted, and never was he more happy than when promoting their enjoyment. Some whom I now address, had the happiness and the privilege to listen to him as their tutor, and were introduced by him to an acquaintance
with subjects of high importance. These can testify the assiduity and kindness with which all his labours for their improvement were conducted; these can bear witness to his solicitude to impress upon the tender mind those great principles which are so necessary to the comfort and usefulness of life. But it was not for these alone that he was solicitous. He felt the liveliest concern for all who in the midst of temptation have a character to form, upon which their own happiness and the welfare of others so intimately depend.

But I must be allowed to mention another part of his character which was peculiarly interesting—his habitual cheerfulness. And such were the advantages which he had himself derived from this habit, such the valuable and pleasing effects which it produced upon those with whom he occasionally or daily associated, that he did not think it sufficient to set before you in himself an example of this virtue, but addressed to you the most ingenious and persuasive exhortations to obey the apostolic precept, and to "rejoice evermore." He shewed you that habitual cheerfulness was an art, and taught you the rules by which skill in the
practice of the art might be acquired. You saw these rules daily observed by himself. You saw him "accustomed to take the most pleasing views of the divine nature and government; aiding, preserving and confirming his faith in the divine benevolence by a regular application to some useful employment; choosing with wisdom and pursuing with moderation the amusements necessary to diversify the regular business of life; occupying his leisure hours by those researches into the works of God which have a direct tendency to harmonize the mind by satisfying the understanding and exalting the heart; and in the bosom of his family performing his important duties, sustaining his proper part, and cultivating and exercising that steady cheerfulness which gladdened the breast of every one connected with him."

I should consider the task which I have this day undertaken to perform as in a most important respect incomplete, were I not to bear my testimony to the excellencies of my lamented friend in the more extensive and public connexion of social life. No one ever better understood the civil constitution under which he lived, and no one ever more highly
valued it. But his admiration was not blind and indiscriminating; he saw and lamented the corruptions which a want of vigilance had suffered to invade the spirit of the constitution, and which were highly detrimental to the operation of the just and original principles upon which it was established, and injurious to the happiness and dignity of the most numerous and the most useful branches of the community. While he rendered unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, he carefully and conscientiously devoted unto God the things which are God’s. In the sacred concern of religion he could call no one upon earth, Master, Christ alone sustained to him that character, and to his laws alone in concerns of this nature he rendered obedience. The religious establishment of the country did not appear to him to form an essential part of the government of the country; and, therefore, having in youth been instructed to worship God, according to the custom of his fathers, who had separated from the established church, and having in after-life examined the principles upon which that separation was founded, and approved them for himself, he continued
peaceably to profess the opinions which he had formed by the exercise of private judgment, molesting no one in the enjoyment and the exercise of the same inalienable right. Conscious of the integrity of his views, and the purity of his intentions, feeling a strong attachment to the genuine principles of the British government, and a sincere desire to perform all the duties of a good citizen, and at the same time knowing that similar feelings and desires prevailed amongst those who, like himself, conscientiously abstained from communion with the established church, he regarded it as an act of injustice to be deprived of any of the rights to which, as a Briton, he had a claim; and so long as any hope of redress remained, he exerted himself with zeal and wisdom, in a constitutional manner, to remove from himself and his brethren the unmerited reproach under which they suffered. The result is well known, and of himself and others it can only be said, that "they have done what they could."

Such in part was the character of our departed friend. If any one think that I have over-rated his excellencies, I will only observe,
that he knew him not as I did. If any one enquire whether there were not faults to counterbalance those excellencies, I shall think it sufficient to reply, that our friend was a man;—but he was a good man. From the frailties common to human nature he was not free; but he had the means of correcting them in his power, and these means he steadily employed. He never said or thought of himself that he had attained to perfection, I have not said or thought it of him; but this he did, forgetting the things which were behind, he pressed forward to obtain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and it is not the friend who was accustomed to behold him almost with sentiments of veneration, who alone will acknowledge that his exertions in this great and noble work were neither few nor unsuccessful.

Such was he who was so lately your guide, my christian friends, who spake to you the word of God. Such his conversation, exemplifying the precepts which he inculcated upon you. He can guide you no longer, he can speak to you the word of God no more. Chained in the silence of death is that tongue
once so eloquent; cold that bosom which
glowed with the purest affection, with the
warmest desire for your present and your eter-
nal welfare; inert as the earth which covers
it is the seat of that rich intelligence, of those
vigorous powers which were employed to in-
struct you in the doctrines of heavenly truth;
dull and motionless that eye which dropt a
tear in commiseration of your sorrows, and
glistened with delight as it beheld you rejoicing
in the bounties of divine providence. But
shall that tongue be for ever silent? Shall
that bosom be for ever cold? Shall those
powers be for ever suspended? Shall that eye
be closed to open not again for ever? No,
Christians—we have better hopes, we have more
consoling expectations. Our friend—our in-
structor is not lost. He either lives with God,
or is destined to be raised to the possession of
immortal blessedness; and if ye be followers of
him as he was of Christ, God will bring both
him and you into his presence, where there is
fullness of joy, and place you at his right hand
where there are pleasures for evermore. The
tongue, now silent, shall hail your arrival in the
mansions of the blessed, and join with you in
extolling the unbounded goodness of God; the bosom now cold shall glow with delight it never felt before, while it shares with you the joys which are reserved for the upright in heart; all the powers which you have here admired, and by which you have been here instructed and improved, shall be regained to be suspended no more for ever—to advance through endless ages in the resemblance of the great original of perfection. Comfort one another with these Christian hopes. Your present bereavement is justly the subject of your sorrow; but consider under whose direction this and every event takes place—receive the consolation which the gospel offers, and submit to the influence of those invaluable privileges in which you have been so ably instructed.

Soothing as it is in this hour of sorrow to call to mind the virtues of our departed friend, to dwell upon the various excellencies by which his character was distinguished, and for which he was so generally respected and beloved, I should consider myself as very deficient in the discharge of my duty, if I did not endeavour to render this subservient to your good. On this occasion it were neither possible nor desirable to omit the remembrance of him who has been your
guide, and who has spoken to you the word of truth; yet with this we must not rest satisfied, but considering the end of his conversation, we should be incited diligently to follow his faith, and resolutely to practise those duties which gave a lustre to his life, and were the perpetual source of consolation and of joy. And what, my friends, was the end of his conversation? You saw it in his habitual cheerfulness, in his calm submission to the will God, in the persuasion which he openly expressed, and which was evident in the whole of his temper and deportment, that every thing in the divine administration is for good: you saw it in the ever growing respectability of his character, in the unfeigned respect, the warm affection he received from men, in the satisfaction which could result only from the assurance that he should receive from God the honour after which his heart aspired: you saw it in the hour of his affliction, when the sweetest delights of his life were torn from him, when the tenderest ties of love and friendship were broken, when he was “made to possess months of vanity and wearisome nights were appointed to him,” when amidst all the de-
pression of disease his cheerfulness forsook him not, and in the prospect of death he was serene and happy. You would also have seen it in the unruffled calmness of his soul—in the joyful anticipation of the blessedness about to be revealed to him. Had the providence of God permitted him to be sensible of the approach of that hour which has at length borne him from this scene of mortality—had not the rapidity and violence of the disease, which has so fatally terminated, prevented him from exemplifying on the bed of death the power of that sacred doctrine which he cordially embraced, and faithfully delivered to you, to make even the darkest scene of human suffering pleasant.

Was such the end of his conversation? You cannot be indifferent to the possession of such inestimable blessings. Follow his faith. Look to God as he looked to him, as your tender Father and the equal parent of the whole family of mankind; accustom yourselves to contemplate the wisdom and benevolence displayed in his works, the infinite kindness which marks all his dispensations. Let your faith in the promises, which he has made by his
Son, be ever lively and strong; let your devotion be habitual, your reverence of his laws the ruling principle of your lives, cherish a spirit of universal charity, live for the common good, be diligent in your respective callings, moderate in the gratification of your passions, indifferent to a world, the fashion of which is continually passing away, and place your treasure, and your warmest affections in heaven. You also will do honour to your christian profession, and enjoy that peace of God which passeth all understanding. Rational and pleasing views of the divine government, habitual cheerfulness, peaceful reflections, pleasing hope, patient consolation in the hour of sorrow, support in the day of adversity, and hope in death, are blessings of inestimable value. You cannot but wish them yours. Follow the faith in which you have been instructed; copy the example which has illustrated and enforced the precepts of divine truth that have been inculcated upon you; live under the constant influence of the doctrine which is according to godliness, and such also will be the end of your conversation, such the happiness to cheer you now, such the blessedness you may confidently
expect hereafter.—Even the most corrupt forms of christianity, if they be adopted with sincerity, are capable of producing much elevation of mind and dignity of character. They all embrace the doctrine of future retribution, and teach that God is the inspector of every man’s conduct, that he may be the impartial rewarder of every man’s work. But with these leading principles there are such various mixtures of gloomy or presumptuous opinions, as to endanger the respectability and comfort of this life, and to embitter the hour of departure out of it. But you have been instructed in principles wholly free from the gross imperfections which too generally debase our common faith—you have been taught to form the most pleasing and encouraging conceptions of the divine character and government, you have been urged to the practice of your duty by motives most interesting and persuasive. Little error, I am persuaded, has mingled with your creed, proportionably pure and exemplary should be your conduct. Let your conversation be agreeable to your faith, and it will be a perpetual source of comfort and of joy.

You are called upon, my Christian friends,
by the event which has taken place, to enter upon a very strict and impartial examination of yourselves. Numerous and of long continuance have been the advantages with which this religious society has been favoured. Many have been the eminent and pious ministers who have been your guides, or the guides of your fathers, and spoken to them and to you the word of God. No important truth has been concealed from you—no holy precept to correct your temper, to regulate your conduct, to promote your holiness, your virtue and your enjoyment, has been withheld from you. None have been more faithfully directed to the knowledge of their duty—none have been more affectionately or more forcibly urged to the performance of it. Have your improvements corresponded with your invaluable privileges? You have had the means of becoming the lights of the world. Has your light so shone before men, that they seeing your good works have been lead to glorify your father who is in heaven? The learning, the ability, and the zeal of your ministers are talents for which you as well as they are to render an account. They are means of improvement which you cannot
with impunity neglect. To have been faithfully instructed in your duty, and yet to violate its most sacred injunctions—to have been urged by the most affectionate counsels—to have been invited by the most engaging example to obey the will of God, and to discharge all the various obligations which he has laid upon you with holy diligence and zeal, and yet to be unmindful of God, and devoted to the world, would manifest an obduracy of heart with which none of you, my brethren, are, I trust, chargeable, and insure a severe condemnation, to which I earnestly pray that none who now hear me may be obnoxious! You know the equitable maxim upon which the future decision of your impartial judge will be founded—that “of him to whom much is given much will be required.” You cannot fail to applaud the maxim—take care that its application to yourselves be not such as you will have cause to lament. Enquire, therefore, my friends, with the strictest impartiality whether your character is suitable to the extraordinary advantages with which you have been favoured. Have you done honour not only to those Christian principles which you have received in common with all who profess faith
in the Son of God, but also to those pure and animating doctrines, in the open avowal of which you have regularly assented in this place? Embraced with full conviction of their truth, and allowed to exert their genuine influence on the heart and life they tend to elevate the mind, to purify the affections, to excite great watchfulness, to encourage the most active benevolence, to administer the most perfect consolation, to lead to security, to happiness, to everlasting honour. Have these blessed effects been visible in your temper and behaviour? When the bigot has called in question the soundness of your creed, has he had no ground to charge you with carelessness of conduct? When he has accused you of deserting the faith delivered to the saints, have you been able to exhibit such fruits of the faith you have adopted, as have been creditable to your principles? The situation you hold, the part you have to act, is important to yourselves; it is important to the interests of truth; it is important to the future honor of those who have spoken to you the word of God. Examine yourselves therefore whether you do indeed feel and act, as may justly be expected from you. Diligently call to mind the advantages which have
either prepared you for higher services and more exquisite satisfaction, or are laid up to appear against you in the day of retribution. Let the attainments you have already made urge you to go on to perfection, and let the defects with which you may find yourselves chargeable, incite you to a more diligent use of the means of holiness and virtue you still enjoy. Let the time past suffice in any respect to have wrought the will of the flesh, and let the time to come be distinguished by a strict and uniform obedience to the will of God.

Full of days as well as of honour, was our departed friend. Unexpectedly indeed, but not prematurely, was he brought to his grave. They who knew him and loved him, indulged the pleasing hope that his life would have been extended and his usefulness prolonged, although he had exceeded the term which limits the mortal existence of by far the greater part of the human race. But he has left behind some of you, my friends, who entered upon life sooner than he did, whose years have been more numerous than his were. You, my aged brethren, cannot fail to be deeply impressed by this mournful event. Long have you sat under his instructions? with
him you have passed the best of your days, by his counsel you have been guided in the practice of your duty, and incited to secure those blessed hopes which are the comfort of your declining years. His departure, while it occasions to you the deepest sorrow, must powerfully remind you, that your's also is at hand. I trust, my friends, that this is not the source of the slightest pain to you; upon the past, I hope you can look with satisfaction; that you can call to mind few of the advantages you have enjoyed, neglected, or unimproved; that you can sincerely bless God for all he has given, devoutly praise him for all the discipline by which you have been exercised, and rejoice in the expectation of his favour unto eternal life. I trust that you can rise from the rich banquet of life, with hearts truly grateful to the benevolent master of the feast, and resign without regret your places and your enjoyments to others. You would not remain in this imperfect state always. Beautiful as is this part of the creation of God, numerous as are the joys which it contains, you have had abundant experience that it is not fitted for the eternal residence of an immortal mind; you have had many.
trials to incite you to wish for that rest which remaineth for the people of God. May he whom you have served grant unto you all the consolations which your declining years can require, guide and support you through the valley of the shadow of death, and be your abundant reward in that unchangeable and happy state, where the uncertainties and sorrows of this present life, the pangs of disease, the infirmities of age, and the interruptions of affection and of friendship shall be for ever unknown.

My younger friends will permit me to address to them also particularly the word of exhortation. Well may you lament the loss of your affectionate instructor, your sincere and zealous friend. Under his eye you have grown up, and by his judicious and affectionate counsels, you have been warned of the dangers to which you are exposed, and incited to the pursuit of wisdom and of happiness. In the days of your infancy, when you were not conscious of the solicitude that was felt for you, he devoted you to the service of God, and earnestly intreated for you the richest blessings which heaven has to bestow:—He urged those who have watched over your unfolding powers, and directed your
rising affections, to train you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and aided them in guiding you into the way of virtue, of safety and of peace. He saw you with delight pursuing the way of wisdom, and rejoicing in your existence;—he did all he could to increase your enjoyment, and to promote the natural liveliness of your temper, and he taught you how to secure the happiness you experience in these days of activity and of health, even in the vicissitudes of a changeful life; he urged you to fear God and keep his commandments, and in his own example proved to you, that if you obeyed his counsels you must be happy. Keep in mind the words of wisdom which he so frequently addressed to you; take them for your guides and instructors in the hazardous scenes in which you are now moving, and you will continue to be happy here and prepared for eternal happiness hereafter. And let the event which has taken place, be not the cause of sorrow only, but the means of inciting you to great circumspection and care. Remember that the narrow abode in which you so lately saw your venerable friend and teacher laid, is the house appointed for all the liv-
ing; and that at no very distant period you also will make your bed in the grave. He was not far from the natural limit of human life; but how many have you seen him commit to the same silent mansion, who were as young and as active as you now are, and who had as fair a prospect of continued health and enjoyment as is now presented to you. I wish not to throw the slightest shade over the bright hours of your morning of life, but to add, on this solemn occasion, my feeble endeavours to those which have been so often exerted in this place, to lead you to early wisdom and piety. In the service of God, in a constant attention to your duty, in making provision for an endless life to come, there is nothing to destroy or diminish your enjoyment; there is every thing which can ensure your comfort, and render your happiness real and permanent. In every stage of life, he only is truly happy who is equally prepared for a continuance in this world, or a departure out of it.

One other reflection suggested by this event is of great importance to us all. "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Our fathers have ceased
to have any interest in all that is wrought under the sun, and the prophets die as do other men, but the word of God abideth for ever: the promises of the gospel are immutable and everlasting; they perish not with those who are appointed to proclaim them. They are left for our instruction and for our comfort, and they will remain for the instruction, and the comfort of generations who shall succeed us. On these, therefore, place your chief dependence; in every vicissitude of life make these your stay and support; by these let your temper and your conduct be uniformly regulated; during the few remaining days of your earthly pilgrimage, the peace of God shall dwell in your hearts and minds;—and when you also shall be called to follow those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, you will have that delightful confidence in the faithfulness of God, to accomplish all that he has taught you to expect—which will cheer the dying hour, and be a pledge of immortal and uninterrupted joy.