

ANDREW FULLER.

ANDREW FULLER.

BY HIS SON,

ANDREW GUNTON FULLER.

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PREFACE.

I HAVE long felt that if any further presentation of my father's life were made, a more special reference than has yet appeared to his *home life*, and its influences upon the various aspects of his public engagements, was desirable, and this could scarcely be supplied with so much advantage as by one who has been an actual sharer in its conditions.

There is no division of a man's life so marked and characteristic as that which is made by the door of his own house, on the two sides of which are witnessed sometimes two distinct men, and always two distinct phases of character which act and react on each other.

We all feel that home has sanctities which must not be invaded ; but home has other sanctities which it is no invasion to lay bare ; witness the tender and touching scenes of home life in the patriarchal biographies, and the magic beauty and healthful influence of those mere

sketches given us of the domestic life of the friend of Lazarus.

But "what reliance," it may be asked, "can be placed on personal reminiscences of a period so far back?" Those who like myself have lived long enough *to live in the past*, and who have a deep and yearning interest in its occult treasures, will bear witness to the strange power that they possess to recall scenes which through many years have been entirely hidden in the deep cells of memory, and that the explorers are as men going from room to room of an old mansion, one opening out into another, and finding streams of light bursting through nooks and corners of windows long blocked up, and revealing objects which are at once recognized and clutched with a miserly grip, and which awaken echoes sacred to one's ear: "I hear a voice you cannot hear, I see a hand you cannot see."

I *knew* Mr. Fuller, knew him as a father, lived in the same house with him, and witnessed scenes of his life which were witnessed by no other person now living. More than that, I remember him, and can recall his words and acts, and even looks and tones of voice, with a vividness which at times renders it almost incredible that so great a part of a century has passed away since I stood by his dying bed. Whilst, in addition to this, I am in possession of a record of incidents of no common interest. During a sojourn of a few months

in London in 1820, learning that the Rev. W. Ward, one of the Serampore missionaries, was about to preach at Wesley chapel, City Road, I went to hear him. After the service, on introducing myself, he invited me to call and see him. He seemed to regard me with much emotion as the son of his beloved friend, and producing a folio MS. volume, said, "This is a copy of all the letters your father wrote to us at Serampore transcribed by a Hindoo. I purposed giving it myself to your mother, but shall not be able to spare the time, and will intrust it with you." I have the precious volume still in my possession, and shall avail myself (as my son has done in his memoirs written for the Bunyan Library) of some of its contents to enrich the present volume.

In estimating the power of home influence it is difficult altogether to separate from it my father's pastoral work, which was of that free, homely, and tender nature that greatly resembled the family relation, and which, though I could not share in its dispensation, attracted my frequent notice. However careful he was to keep what were called "Church matters" sacred to those whose church relation gave them special claim, he could not in occasional references in conversation with my mother conceal his deep anxieties, his lively satisfaction, or his opinion of characters. This I can truly say, no harm ever came of these unwitting confidences,

gathered less from words than from those emotions which commanded sympathy.

I trust it may not be deemed impertinent to the occasion if, in recording so much of parental life as the reminiscences of seventy or eighty years may supply, I should adopt a more personal and homely style than would be seemly in other portions of the narrative.

I cannot close this introduction without a grateful acknowledgment of kind and valuable aid from my friend, the Rev. J. F. Jones.

A. G. F.

WOLVERHAMPTON,

August, 1882.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND SURROUNDINGS OF EARLY DAYS.

ANDREW FULLER was born on the 6th February, 1754, at Wicken, a small agricultural village in the Fens of Cambridgeshire, equidistant from Ely and Newmarket.

Both by his father and mother he was descended from a line of Puritan ancestors ; by the latter from John and Joan Malden, intimate friends of Francis Holcroft, A.M., and Joseph Oddy, ministers of considerable note among the "ejected" of 1662, who were for many years imprisoned in Cambridge castle. Mr. Holcroft was an accomplished scholar and powerful preacher ; Mr. Oddy, a popular preacher, to whose labours in conjunction with those of Holcroft nearly all the older Nonconformist churches in the county owe their origin.

John and Joan Malden were buried near the tombs of those distinguished men, which may still be seen in a plot of ground adjoining the churchyard of Oakington, about five miles from Cambridge, on the Kettering line.

It was purchased by Mr. Holcroft as a burial-place for himself and his friends.¹

On his father's side Mr. Fuller's earliest known ancestors, John and Elizabeth Fuller, were members of the Church of England. Their son, Robert Fuller, born 1696, married Honour Hart, a member of the Independent Church at Isleham, and daughter of Robert Hart of Swaffham Prior, who was converted to God by the preaching of Mr. Holcroft in Burwell Wood. Their son Robert, Mr. Fuller's father, married Philippa, daughter of Andrew Gunton, a member of the Church at Soham, whose wife was Philippa Stevenson, a granddaughter of John and Joan Malden before named.

The circumstances of Mr. Fuller's parents were straitened, or in all probability his birth would have taken place at the home of his ancestors of several generations, a farm bearing the name of Padney, two or three miles from the village of Wicken. His mother was a woman of excellent Christian character, to whose influence the fact is most largely due that all her children became consistent members of Baptist churches. She survived her son Andrew by twelve months, dying on the 27th May, 1816, in the ninety-third or fourth year of her age. Some idea may be formed of the tenderness and simplicity of her character from a conversation in which she took part on the occasion of his funeral. As her two sons Robert and John, with myself, were standing beside her bed, to which she had been confined

¹ An interesting volume by the Rev. Dr. Stoughton gives a graphic description of these tombs, accompanied by a lithograph.

some years, Robert said, "Well, mother, we have had a great loss in Andrew's death." "Ah, my dear, I feel it very much indeed; and to think he should be called before me." "He was a great man, mother." "What did you say?" "He was a great man." "I don't know what you mean." "Why, he wrote many books that are thought very much of." "Well, well, I don't know much about that; he never said anything to me about what people thought of them. I know that he was a good man, and a good son to me."¹

Both Mr. Fuller's brothers followed the occupation of their ancestors; the former at Islcham, a few miles from Wicken, and the latter at Little Bentley in Essex, and both were deacons of the churches with which they were associated; John especially leaving behind him at the church at Thorpe a memory devoutly cherished as that of a man most useful and active to the close of a long life.

There being no school nearer than Soham, a distance of three or four miles, Andrew Fuller daily walked to that town together with his two brothers; but here he received only the common rudiments of an English education. His real education was obtained gratuitously from the surroundings of his early life, and his most effective schoolmasters were the farm labourers and village companions amongst whom he lived.

His youngest days were spent in that district which

¹ She once remarked of her sons John and Andrew, "They have the *blee* of the Stephensons" (her mother's maiden name). *Blee* is a Saxon term signifying "aspect."

produced the Cromwells. Some years ago, when at Wicken, I paid a visit to the old parish church, and saw in the register the names of many of the Cromwell family. The vicar also pointed out to me, beneath the communion table, the burial-place of Henry, the second son of the "uncrowned king," and informed me that his skull was sold by an old sexton for the sum of five shillings! It is perhaps not impossible that some of those influences to which is attributable the Cromwellian sturdiness may have served in some small measure at least to mould the character of Andrew Fuller.

To some people the name of "the fen in the Isle of Ely" is suggestive of the wretched swamp so vividly described in Kingsley's "*Hereward, the last of the English*:" wild, weird, and dismal; fit only for the abode of water-fowl and reptiles, and inhabited by a people driven by relentless invaders into places accessible only to themselves.

The aspect of the country is, however, so much changed that it presents at this time one of the most picturesque scenes of which England can boast; not romantic, it is true. Hills there are none nearer than those gentle elevations known to all Cantabs by the imposing name of "Gog-Magog" hills. But a vast expanse of country is visible from a rise of a few feet bounded by elevations, on which are to be seen ancient churches, notably those of Swaffham Prior, and that queen of cathedrals, Ely Minster, which is almost everywhere conspicuous. It still serves as a landmark to the whole district, in traversing which, it is even now not without its

use, while within the memory of those who, in my young days, were wont to relate their adventures in "flood and field," it ranked among the necessities of daily fen-life.

Although the dreary morasses and interminable swamps of Anglo-Saxon times have for ages yielded to drainage and culture, there is a marked difference between its present aspect and that of a hundred or even seventy years ago. The extensive lakes or "meres" of Whittlesea, Ramsey, and Soham, with their sedgy banks and lofty reeds and bulrushes, extending their swampy borders far into the mere, have since then disappeared, and with them many a scene of wild and bold adventure, as with leaping-pole in hand the denizen of the fen, defying ague and flood, would make his short cuts from place to place across the tributaries of the Ouse and the Nen, and subsequently, guided by the well-known lines of the "Forty-foot" or the "Hundred-foot" drains, or the innumerable windmills on their banks, constructed for pumping superfluous waters from their tributary streams into these wonderful receptacles, which convey them in straight lines of many miles, to the Wash.

From any elevation you survey a prairie-like tract of country, abounding in apparently endless straight lines of rough grass intersecting each other at right angles. These are called "droves," and along them carts may be seen tracking their uneven way. Through the almost jet-black remnants of buried forests, now reduced to peat, relieved by the bleached *débris* of river shells, the lines of deep ruts with the rich and fresh green on either edge, and the high reeds and bulrushes marking the sluggish

track of every dyke, present to the eye a rich and varied carpet, comprising scores of square miles.

In a rainy season it was not an uncommon thing for the *posse comitatus* of a district to turn out by hundreds in the dead of night, the darkness being relieved only by the light of lanthorns. Armed with stakes or slips of wood they devoted their utmost vigilance and energies to the work of "tittling the banks" of streams swollen by the rains, to prevent a disastrous overflow which might destroy thousands of heads of cattle and imperil human life in the lower villages and hamlets. Keenly watching the appearance of a faulty place, even though no larger than a rat-hole, they carefully and rapidly plied it with moist clay, running with the utmost speed from one to another, and perhaps compelled at last to save their lives by a precipitate retreat. A hundred and twenty years ago, when Andrew Fuller was a youth, the mere of Whittlesea alone, now entirely under cultivation, would, in wet seasons, extend its boundaries to a circumference of forty or fifty miles. These scenes of activity, exposure, and danger, in which the young athlete bore a full share, exerted a strong influence in forming the character of the fearless polemic of after days.

In addition to this it is not difficult to trace many features of his character, notably the simple, unpretending naturalness of habits which always distinguished him, to the associations of *farm life*. He was daily in the company of his father's labourers, with whom he freely conversed. One of these was a man of strong religious convictions, to whom the boy gradually opened his mind,

though in one instance he walked several miles for that purpose and then had nothing to say. Talking to him one day while threshing, the youth came almost within reach of the flail while in full swing. "Ain't I in your way?" he asked. "No, not at all," was the reply. Still the flail advanced, till it swept his coat. "I told you I was in your way." "No, you're not, but I shall soon be in yours if you don't take care."

Often after hindering the man by his conversation he would do an hour or two's threshing for him. Of another of these labourers, less shrewd than this man, I have heard him relate that when mowing grass in a field, to save himself the trouble of carrying his scythe away, he laid it in the growing crop, carefully observing that it was *just opposite Ely Minster*, and great was his astonishment when the implement could not be found until the crop was nearly cleared.

Not only did Mr. Fuller associate with these farm labourers, but he also shared in their work. I remember once to have been with him waiting for a coach at a junction of two roads a few miles from Kettering. He stood leaning upon a gate watching some mowers, and was accosted by one of the men with the remark that it was "very easy for a gentleman to do the looking on part, wouldn't he like to try his hand at it?" at the same time winking at his companion, who like himself had evidently dim visions of a "footing." "Well," said my father, "I think I have seen as hard work as you seem to make of it; I don't mind trying what it is like." With that he took the scythe and mowed away with such

rapidity and cleanliness that the men stood looking on with open mouths. "Oh, sir," said one of them, "you have had a scythe in your hand afore to-day." "Yes, my friend, before you were born."

In his earliest days Mr. Fuller was accustomed to surmount difficulties. His physique was at the beginning of his ministry that of a countryman; he was rather tall, well built, a man of strength and robustness.

There was a pleasing gravity and a deep yet tender seriousness; his appearance and manner giving the idea that he recognized the reality of life. Of real wit and repartee he was fond; he could appreciate a humorous saying, and would heartily join in the laughter which it excited, while all frivolity and silliness he hated. As he was physically, so he was mentally, strong and well proportioned; not quick to see into the heart of things, nor in arriving at conclusions, but slowly penetrating beneath the surface, and holding convictions when formed with the grip of a giant. In discussing a debateable question with Robert Hall, the quick acuteness of that great man and the volubility of his utterance confused him. "Put it down, brother Hall, and I will answer you," was his reply.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY CHARACTER AND RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS.

ANDREW FULLER has been compared with John Bunyan, and both have been represented as having spent their early days in the grossest sins. Undoubtedly they were both at times addicted to lying and swearing, and though they afterwards looked back upon these sins with the greatest abhorrence, it is clear that in neither case was there any of that wilful viciousness which often accompanies immorality. In the days of my father's boyhood such was the condition of public morals that profanity was indulged in everywhere, in both the upper and lower circles of society. Brutal sports were the favourite pastimes of the poor, and drunkenness was almost universal. The customs and habits of the time ought certainly to be taken into account in estimating the character of its youth.

When in his forty-fourth year Mr. Fuller, referring to his early character, says, "At this distance of time it is not easy to recollect all that happened; but I remember many of the sins of my childhood, among which were lying, cursing, and swearing. It is true as to the latter it

never became habitual. I had a dread upon my spirits to such a degree, that when I uttered an oath or any imprecation it was by a kind of force put upon my feelings, and merely to appear manly like other boys with whom I associated. This being the case, when I was about ten years old I entirely left it off, except that I sometimes dealt in a sort of minced oaths and imprecations when my passions were inflamed.

"In the practice of telling lies I continued some years longer ; at length, however, I began to think this a mean vice, and accordingly left it off, except in cases where I was under some pressing temptation."

It has been stated by the late author of "Rab and His Friends" that Andrew Fuller was a boxer. This was alleged on the authority of Charles Stuart, M.D., of Edinburgh, an intimate friend of his. I cannot but think however that this was a mistake of Dr. Stuart's, or an erroneous construction of his words, when he said that he had been addicted to *wrestling*, and had difficulty in withstanding the temptation to it even under his deepest religious impressions when he heard the shouts of those engaged in it. I have never heard or read anything to lead to the supposition that he ever *fought* in his life. But I have seen him in the middle of the night leave his house, cross the road to a group of combatants who had awaked him from his sleep, fighting it out in front of the Red Lion public-house, and by his influence separate the parties, and even make them shake hands over it.

An incident of his later life occurred illustrative of the hold which these early habits retained over him. Being

the guest of a stalwart farmer, who was a deacon of the Baptist Church at Chipstone, on the occasion of the meeting of the Northamptonshire Association, the conversation over their pipes on the preceding evening turned upon old days and pursuits. The worthy farmer, referring to the wrestling bouts of his guest, said, "I have wrestled in my time and should like to have a try with you." "With all my heart," was the reply. It was arranged that they should rise early in the morning and try conclusions in the orchard. Both were stripped for the contest, when my father observed some people walking along a foot-path on the other side of the hedge to an early prayer meeting. "Brother," said he, taking up his coat, "this will not do; those people will think we are fighting, and we must avoid the appearance of evil." He then walked into the house followed by his friend, who called after him, "You were afraid I should throw you." It is worthy of notice here that the records of the church at Soham in the year 1773, the year before Mr. Fuller entered upon the pastorate, contain the following entry: "*Laid brother — under admonition for the sin of wrestling.*" It is however fair to say that it was the invariable accompaniments of the exercise, drinking and quarrelling, that made the church apply the principle, "touch not, taste not, handle not."

Andrew Fuller was a lad of bold, fearless character, and many were the acts of daring and danger in which he was engaged. On one occasion he came upon a nest of young adders, which he attacked with a stick; the mother reptile shortly came to the rescue and reared

herself up in readiness to strike, when a well-aimed blow with the stick dealt out to her the fate of her progeny.

When a boy of about ten years old he was bathing with a number of companions of similar age near a mill-dam, and the hat of one of them falling into the stream he had the pluck without being able to swim to attempt to recover it. He went so deep that the water began to run into his mouth and to lift his feet from the ground, and was saved by the timely assistance of the millers, who ran to his rescue.

He was however the victim of an idiosyncrasy out of all harmony with such antecedents and with the quotation he often made from Lady Huntingdon, who "thanked God she was born before nerves were in fashion." I have known him to leave the table when a damson pie was opened and poured forth its luscious fluid, and after his death my mother gave me an explanation of this, to which he never cared to allude. One day, being alone, on his way to school he called at the house of an indulgent aunt at Padney, and she furnished him with a small bottle of damson wine, which she stowed in his breeches' pocket; on getting over a stile, utterly oblivious of the contents of his pocket, he crushed the bottle, and was horrified by the sudden crash of he knew not what, and the flow of what he supposed to be his blood; a feeling of revulsion was produced from which he never wholly recovered.

He and his brothers imbibed an early taste for reading, greatly stimulated by the activity of his mind and fed by the very scanty supply of books that came within their

reach ; none of these were devoured with greater avidity than such works as Guthrie's "Grammar of Geography," which at that time attracted deserved attention by its minute and comprehensive details of the social character of every known country of the globe.

They were one day snugly ensconced in the warm shelter of a rick, so absorbed in the perusal of this book that the shrill voice of their mother calling them to dinner was not heard. Turning the corner of the rick she suddenly came upon the delinquents. "What are yew all dewing, yew sorry boys? here have I been shouting till I'm hoarse ; yew think o' nothin' but your beuks." Andrew, being the youngest, and therefore probably the most presuming, smiling in deprecation of the good mother's anger, said, "Mother, we were just reading about the women of England ; shall I read a line or two?" Having gained her attention, he read to the effect that they were soon angry, but very kind at heart and their anger soon over : a conclusion promptly illustrated in the present case.

In attempting to give some idea of Andrew Fuller's earliest religious impressions, which finally led to his conversion to God, the biographer is enabled to write with perfect confidence by the aid of a series of letters which he addressed to a friend in the year 1798. His parents being Dissenters, and his mother a member of the Baptist church, he was of course compelled regularly to attend their place of worship, and it is highly probable that the preaching to which he listened while a boy proved a hindrance rather than a help to him in his

searchings for the truth. Mr. Eve, the minister, was a Baptist professing doctrines of high Calvinism: his sermons were addressed almost exclusively to the "elect." He said nothing to arouse the unconverted, and, consistently with his principles, entirely neglected to point sinners to the Lamb of God.

The boy's first thoughts on those subjects seem to have been suggested to his mind when he was between thirteen and fourteen years old. He had heard the preacher talk about faith and began to wonder what it was. He was occasionally overwhelmed with strong conviction which rendered him extremely unhappy. "One winter evening," he says, "I remember going with a number of other boys to a smith's shop to warm ourselves by his fire. Presently they began to sing vain songs. This appeared to me so much like revelling that I felt something within me which would not suffer me to join them; and while I sat silent in rather an unpleasant muse, those words sunk into my mind like a dagger, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' I immediately left the company; yet, shocking to reflect upon, I walked home murmuring in my heart against God, that I could not be let alone and suffered to take my pleasure like other young people."

His love of reading and the scarcity of books within his reach induced him to peruse those of a religious character; of these he mentions particularly Bunyan's "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners" and "The Pilgrim's Progress." But that which exerted at this time the most powerful influence upon his mind was Erskine's

"Gospel Sonnets," that part entitled "A Gospel Catechism for Young Christians ; or, Christ all in all in our Complete Redemption," entirely riveted his attention. He says, "I read, and as I read I wept. Indeed, I was almost overcome with weeping, so interesting did the doctrine of eternal salvation appear to me ; yet, there being no radical change in my heart, these thoughts passed away, and I was equally intent on the pursuits of folly as heretofore."

He had feelings of deep respect for Christian people, and was grateful to the few who spoke to him about religion, though their representations but little served to help him. One morning when deeply distressed, and whilst despairing of being able to do anything for himself, the words of Paul suddenly occurred to his mind, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." He stopped and thought : a passage of Scripture had *suggested itself* to his mind ; surely this must be a good omen. Why should it have occurred to him if it was not the voice of God revealing to him the glorious fact that he was already in a state of salvation ? He eagerly clutched at this idea, and was at once overcome with joy. He continued his walk feeling a new creature ; indignation on account of his sins overmastered him ; he felt like a victor, but, alas ! was doomed to a bitter disappointment, for the evening of the same day found him pursuing sinful pleasures as eagerly and thoughtlessly as at any time in his life ; and for six months afterwards he had no serious thoughts.

Notwithstanding this disappointment he could not but

think that those words of the apostle coming into his mind did mean something ; he concluded that just then he was in a state of salvation, but had backslidden. And this persuasion was confirmed by another supposed revelation which came to his mind in the words, "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." Again he was overcome with joy, but again his "goodness" was "as a morning cloud and the early dew." In a few days it was all forgotten, and he felt as hopeless and helpless as ever. It was not uncommon in the circle in which he moved to accept an incident, such as the accidental opening of the Bible on a page displaying some text strikingly appropriate to the state of mind or circumstances, as a token of special Divine guidance in a difficulty, and suggesting a solution of it.

After these experiences he became more than ever addicted to evil. Having reached his fifteenth year, his passions had grown more strong ; his circle of ungodly companions was extended ; his daring spirit led him into scenes of recklessness and danger ; he was in peril of becoming fascinated with the love of gambling—of course, in some such simple form as "pitch and toss"—religion was altogether forgotten.

But the Spirit of God, though having apparently left him for a time, had not forsaken him. After a few months of this terrible license, he was again tortured by convictions of sin. Now they followed him up with unprecedented rapidity. Like the waves of the ocean, they came and overwhelmed him, wave followed wave in

quick and wild succession ; no sooner had one broken upon his soul than another came. What had he done? What could he do? He dared not promise amendment, feeling that again he would break his vows. He could not presume to hope for forgiveness in the course which he was then pursuing. "At one moment," he says, "I thought to give myself up to despair; 'I may' (said I to myself) 'even return and take my fill of sin.' I can but be lost. This thought made me shudder at myself; my heart revolted. 'What,' thought I, 'can I give up Christ, and hope, and heaven!' Those lines of Ralph Erskine's then occurred to my mind—

'But say, if all the gusts
And grains of love be spent,
Say, farewell Christ, and welcome lusts—
Stop, stop! I melt, I faint!'

I could not bear the thought of plunging myself into endless ruin."

The anguish which he experienced at this time can be imagined only by those who have had similar struggles. Yet in all this there was none to help him. Mr. Eve continued to preach, and he continued to hear; but though the sermons were designed to congratulate and comfort the chosen few, there was nothing in them to help the poor struggling lad, who needed only that a friendly hand should be stretched out to save him. The shadow of that grim, stern theology in which he was brought up fell upon his very soul. It was interpreted as closing the door of the kingdom of God in his face. He imagined that there must be some

kind of qualification to *entitle* one to salvation, and was not conscious of possessing any such qualification. He did not know, nor was he likely to know, that *any* sinner had a warrant to believe in Christ. He felt that if he *might*, he would cast his soul upon Him, but that his desire received no encouragement from those to whose teachings he listened. At last, however, he was driven to such dire extremity that, whether lawful or not, he determined to venture, and came to this resolve, "I must, I will—yes, I *will*—trust my soul, my sinful, lost soul, in His hands; if I perish, I perish." And then, as he looked away from self, and fixed his eyes upon a crucified Saviour, his guilt and fears began to dissolve, like the snows of winter under the silent influence of the springtime warmth, and he found how true were the words of Christ, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He distinctly says, "I should have found this rest sooner if I had not entertained the notion of my having no warrant to come to Christ without some previous qualification. . . . I mention this because it may be the case with others who may be kept in darkness and despondency by erroneous views of the gospel much longer than I was."

From this time his former wicked courses were forsaken, he had no longer a desire for them, they lost their influence upon him. To those evils, a glance at which would before have set his passions in a flame, he felt no inclination. He knew what it was to be dead to the

world by the cross of Christ, and felt a strong determination to devote his future life to "God the Saviour of all men."

His father had some years previously removed with his family to Soham; and one of his farm labourers, a man of genuine Christian character, now rendered most valuable assistance to Andrew in his religious life. In April, 1770, when sixteen years of age, he was baptized by Mr. Eve.

Immediately after making this public profession of his faith in Christ he became the subject of great and strong temptations. His old companions taunted him and cursed him for having been "dipped." "My heart," he says, "instantly rose in the way of resentment, but though the fire burned, I held my peace; for before I uttered a word I was checked with this passage, which occurred to my mind, 'In the world ye *shall* have tribulation.'" Being made painfully conscious of his own weakness, he was led to think of those words, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths;" "and," he says, "these words made me weep for joy, and for forty-five years I have scarcely entered on any serious engagement without thinking of them, and entreating Divine direction."

In addition to this, his old habits, though apparently entirely shaken off, would sometimes remind him of their existence; "the flesh lusted against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," and for several years, afraid of being drawn aside by former temptations, he made it a practice, whenever a feast or holiday occurred, to go to

a neighbouring village to visit some Christian friends, and returned home after the sports and festivities of the day were over.

In looking at these early religious experiences of Andrew Fuller, one the most distinctive of his character is clearly indicated. He would not, could not, be satisfied with a partial conversion to God. Those mere sentiments with which not a few are contented failed to suffice for him. He would not say, "Peace, peace, where there was no peace." He would have either the *real* thing or nothing at all, and fought, single-handed though he was, with undaunted courage and unswerving persistency, until he had by the grace of God beaten back the last of his enemies, and become more than a conqueror through Christ.

It was a good thing both for the church and for the world that he had to face a battle so stern and so terrible. Many of the foes which threatened to destroy him he slew not only for himself but for succeeding generations of men. Those stones over which he had stumbled he cast out of the way, lest they should prove stumbling-blocks to other anxious spirits. At that threatening and forbidding system of theology which seemed as with two-edged sword to protect the cross of Christ from the intrusion of unbidden pilgrims, he struck blow after blow until it almost disappeared. And the complete triumph which he won prepared the way for many of his brother men, by proving that the gospel of the Son of Man was not that poor shrivelled thing which he had long apprehended it to be.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE AND WORK AT SOHAM.

WHEN Andrew Fuller joined the Baptist church at Soham, he became at once very deeply attached to a number of his fellow members. Although he had obtained but little encouragement from Mr. Eve in his religious struggles, he found him to be a constant friend and an excellent pastor. But there was especially one man, Mr. Joseph Diver, with whom he became united by a close and intimate friendship. He was baptized on the same day, and being a man of more than common wisdom and thoughtfulness, being devoted, moreover, not less to universal practical godliness than to searchings for truth, although then about forty years of age, his was just the companionship which the young man needed. They continually sought each other's society, and he says, "I account this connection one of the greatest blessings of my life ; notwithstanding the disparity as to years, we loved each other like David and Jonathan."

Notwithstanding the straitness, and perhaps sluggishness, of this church at Soham ; though but little engaged in aggressive work, and though having but little fulness of

life ; it could boast of one redeeming feature—the family relationship was well developed ; there did prevail a spirit of brotherly affection, and it might be truthfully reported, “We are at peace amongst ourselves.” But this unity was suddenly broken by a painful occurrence, which resulted in the resignation of Mr. Eve, and threatened the complete dissolution of the church.

In the autumn of 1770 Andrew Fuller was informed that one of the members had been guilty of drinking to excess. He felt it to be his duty to admonish his brother, and to point out the evil of his conduct. This he did, but the offending member assured him that he couldn't help it, that it was no fault of his, that he could not save himself from sin, and went so far as to tell his youthful reprover that *he* was not his own keeper. This aroused Andrew's indignation. He told the man that he could keep himself from such sins as those, and that his way of talking was merely to excuse what was inexcusable. He laid the matter before Mr. Eve, who highly commended him, and said that it was possible for men to keep themselves from open sins. “We have no power,” he explained, “to do things spiritually good, but as to outward acts we have power both to obey the will of God and to disobey it.” The case was brought before the church and the man excluded, the excuse which he had made being regarded by all as an aggravation of his offence ; but this being done the question was taken up by many members of the church, amongst whom was Joseph Diver, as to “*the power of sinful men to do the will of God, and to keep themselves from sin.*”

The general opinion was that men could not keep themselves from evil, and that although they were altogether blameworthy for their evil propensities, yet if they were restrained or conquered, it was altogether to be ascribed to God and not to them. In support of this theory many Scripture passages were quoted—the prayer of the Psalmist to be *kept back* from presumptuous sins ; the declaration of the prophet, that “the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps ;” the case of Hezekiah, whom the Lord left “to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart ;” and the acknowledgment of such men as John Bradford, who on seeing a man going to be publicly executed said, “There goes John Bradford by nature.”

Mr. Eve still clung to his previously expressed opinion. He distinguished between internal and external ; and contended that whilst men had no power of themselves to perform anything spiritually good, they could yield external obedience and keep themselves from open acts of sin. And he, too, quoted Scripture in support of his theory.

Andrew Fuller for some time took sides with the pastor, but he was by no means satisfied. In whichever way the question was considered, there were great difficulties which he could not explain. He spent many hours in prayer and meditation, but he could find no escape until partially convinced by the arguments of Mr. Diver, who was one of the most earnest advocates of the general opinion in opposition to that of the pastor.

For twelve months this controversy continued to agitate

the minds of the members of the church, and in October, 1771, Mr. Eve resigned the pastorate, and left it in a wretchedly divided condition. This was a great blow to Andrew Fuller. He was most heartily grieved to lose the minister. Indeed, the whole controversy, although he could not forbear to engage in it, was most painful to him. In a letter dated 1815 he says, "I never look back upon these contentions but with strong feelings; they were to me the wormwood and gall of my youth; my soul hath them still in remembrance and is humbled in me. But, though during these unpleasant disputes there were many hard thoughts and hard words on almost all hands, yet they were ultimately the means of leading my mind into those views of divine truth which have since appeared in the principal part of my writings. They excited me to read and think and pray with more earnestness than I should have done without them; and if I have judged or written to any advantage since, it was in consequence of what I then learned by bitter experience, and in the midst of many tears and temptations. God's way is in the deep."

It was now fully expected that the church would be dissolved, and for several weeks he attended an "Independent" ministry in the neighbourhood. There were, however, some of the members who continued "to be of one mind," and who regularly met together for worship, conducting the services themselves. At last they appointed a day for fasting and prayer, and invited all the members to unite with them. Andrew went to this meeting, and continued to worship there, his friend

Diver being made a deacon, and being called upon every Lord's day to expound the Scriptures for the edification and instruction of his brethren.

Andrew Fuller being at this time in the seventeenth year of his age, it was thought that he should without delay turn his thoughts to some means of gaining a livelihood. A proposition was made to him that he should forthwith be apprenticed to a business to which he had previously been inclined. But it so happened that in the morning of the day on which this suggestion was made he had had a somewhat singular experience. As he was riding out on business that passage occurred to him, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Upon these words he thought with unusual freedom of mind; he felt that he could preach on the text, and indeed did preach to himself as he rode along. Having finished his business, he returned home and went to meet his mother, who had been on a visit to London; and it was as they then rode together that she introduced the subject of apprenticeship. She referred to the wish he had often expressed for trade, and told him that having had an interview with his uncle, he had procured for him a good situation in the city, where, instead of paying a premium, he might in a little time receive wages, and at the same time learn the business. The removal of Mr. Eve from Soham and the unsettled state of the church served to increase her anxiety that he should not remain there, and she pointed out the great advantage which would be enjoyed in London by constant opportunities of hearing the gospel

in its purity. "That which my mother suggested to me," he says, "was very true. I had always been inclined to trade; but how it was I cannot tell, my heart revolted at the proposal at this time. It was not from any desire or thought of the ministry, nor anything else in particular; unless it were a feeling toward the little scattered society of which I was a member; a kind of lingering to see 'what would become of the city.' I said but little to my mother, but seemed to wish for time to consider of it. This was Saturday evening."

In this, together with what followed, it is surely not difficult to trace the hand of God, for all things seemed to work together to lead his life to its true mission. On the very next morning, as he was on his way to the weekly service, he was met by one of the friends, who informed him that Mr. Diver had sprained his ankle and would not be able to attend the meeting, and that "he hoped the Lord would be with you."

This was evidently intended as a request that his young friend would take his place. And he, remembering his thoughts of the previous morning, determined that if called upon he would make his first attempt to address the meeting. After singing and prayer, he was requested by one of the deacons to read some part of the Scriptures "and, if he found liberty, to drop any remarks which might occur as he went on." Taking for his text Psalm xxx. 5, he did find liberty to drop some remarks. He spoke for about half an hour with such an amount of success that very shortly afterwards he was again requested to speak. Being encouraged by the

freedom which he had previously experienced, he consented to do so; but his second attempt was by no means so successful as the former one; liberty of speech entirely forsook him, he returned home in a state of great dejection, and for more than a year afterwards could not be persuaded to do more than engage in prayer at the meetings.

Early in 1773, however, Mr. Diver being again absent through affliction, he yielded to a most pressing invitation to take his place. He spoke from the words, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "On this occasion," he says, "I not only felt greater freedom than I had ever found before, but the attention of the people was fixed, and several young persons in the congregation were impressed with the subject and afterwards joined the church." From this time he began to entertain serious thoughts of the ministry, but was by no means determined to pursue the sacred calling. He had of course received no academical training, and could hope to receive none; he was however gradually led on step by step, his friend Diver taking one of the Sunday services and he the other.

In January of 1774 a lady member of the church died, leaving a request that he might be allowed to preach the funeral sermon. To this the members gladly consented. And indeed previously to the funeral, having devoted a day to fasting and prayer, they called him to the ministry. He accepted the call, "and from that time," he says, "*I exercised from the pulpit.*"

Being now devoted to the ministry he made it the one

business of his life ; he spent his time almost altogether in prayer and reading and thought, and could find no rest until his mind was made up as to the doctrine he should preach.

First of all he brought himself face to face with the great Calvinistic controversy. He had been brought up in the very atmosphere of hyper-Calvinism. This doctrine, as he had heard it expounded week after week from his childhood, did not admit that it was in the power, and declared that therefore it was not the duty, of the unregenerate to do anything spiritually good ; and consequently did not allow that they should be addressed in religious discourse, except in regard to *external obedience*. They were exhorted to abstain from gross sins, but nothing was said to "warn them to flee from the wrath to come," or to encourage them to trust in Christ for salvation. And such a firm hold had this doctrine gained upon the young preacher at Soham that, in spite of his own experience, for some years he *dared* not invite the unconverted to trust in Christ. Undoubtedly his ministrations did lead to many conversions, but he *dared* not invite them to come. Soon, however, he began to doubt as to whether or not he had learned the truth. The distinction of duties into internal and external, making the latter only concern the unconverted, began to wear a suspicious appearance ; but perceiving that this doctrine would affect the whole tenour of his preaching he moved with slow and trembling steps, and was a long time before he experienced the satisfaction of full conviction.

During the first year of his ministry books and pamphlets on various subjects were put into his hands, which led him to turn his attention to many other questions. "The pre-existence of Christ's human soul before He was born of the Virgin Mary," and "The Sonship of Christ," were by this means suggested to his mind, and he did not shrink from giving that most sedulous attention which he considered was demanded by everything pertaining to the person of Christ.

Concerning the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, he quickly came to the conclusion that such a notion was altogether without foundation, and that it tended to undermine His proper divinity. He met a number of his ministerial brethren who strongly favoured the doctrine of "the *pre-existence*," and he says: "When they put it to me, I offered to prove that it led to Atheism or relinquish the argument. They accepted my offer. I began by saying:

"'You suppose the human soul of Christ to be a party in the everlasting counsels of God?'

"'Yes; God could not take counsel with Himself, for a council implies more than one; but God is one.'

"'You do not suppose the soul of Christ to have *always* existed?'

"'No; it was created, and therefore could not be eternal.'

"'Then you must suppose that, till the great God had a creature to take counsel with, He had no plan; that prior to this act of creation, He was without counsel, without plan, without design! But a being without plan,

purpose, or design is not God!!! Thus you are landed on Atheism. The truth is, God never was without His plan, purpose, or design. By applying, too, those passages of Scripture which express the pre-existence of Christ (and thereby prove His divinity), to the pre-existence of His *human soul*, you undermine His divinity and favour the Arian hypothesis.' ”

This was the first polemical contest in which he took a leading part, and young as he was, he won a signal and easy victory.

On the question of the Sonship of Christ he also, after much research, came to a decided conclusion.

The question was *Whether Christ was ever called the Son of God in respect of His pre-incarnate being?* He found such proof as to satisfy him that He was so called—that He was the Son of God, antecedently to His being born of a woman, and that in calling God *His own Father*, He made Himself equal with God. His early initiation into these subjects greatly aided him in writing his treatise on Socinianism.

In regard to these controversial subjects, he says: “In reviewing some of these questions which occupied my attention at so early a period, I have seen reason to bless God for preserving me at a time when my judgment was so immature. When I have seen the zeal which has been expended in maintaining some such peculiarities, I have thought it a pity. They have appeared to me as a sort of *spiritual narcotics*, for which when a man once gets a taste, he will prefer them to the most wholesome food. It was in recollection of these things that I lately wrote

in an *Essay on Truth* as follows : 'A man who chews opium or tobacco may prefer them to the most wholesome food, and may derive from them pleasure, and even vigour for a time ; but his pale countenance and debilitated constitution will soon bear witness to the folly of spending his money for that which is not bread.'" He elsewhere says, "Bunyan would have called them 'nuts that spoil the children's teeth.'"

In the spring of 1775, Mr. Fuller having served the church at Soham for more than twelve months on probation, and having then attained his majority, received and accepted an invitation to the permanent pastorate, and on May 3rd was publicly ordained. A number of Baptist ministers attended and took part in the service, Mr. Robert Hall, of Arnsby, who had travelled a distance of 70 miles to be present, being amongst the number. This excellent man took a deep interest in the young pastor, and continued to him both father and friend until the time of his death. It is well known that he recommended the young man to read "Edwards on the Will," as bearing upon the controversy which had led to Mr. Eve's resignation ; and that he, knowing but little of books at that time, obtained a work entitled "Veritas redux," written by Dr. John Edwards, of Cambridge, an episcopalian high Calvinist ; and was greatly puzzled to discover why Mr. Hall should have recommended him to read such a book.

Still these great questions occupied his constant attention ; he was altogether powerless to solve them. He read Bunyan, Gill, and Brine ; he observed that Bunyan, whilst

maintaining the doctrines of election and predestination, advocated a free offer of salvation to sinners without distinction ; he found the same apparent incongruity in all the old writers which came in his way, but he could not reconcile the two things : he did not fail to observe also that the Scriptures abounded with invitations to sinners, and supposed that there must be two kinds of holiness, one of which was binding on all men, and the other of which was binding only on the converted, and concluded that the scriptural exhortations to repentance and faith referred to some kind of repentance and faith which could be exercised without the grace of God.

In the autumn of this year he visited London, and discovered to his great astonishment that the question was one of general discussion. He met with a pamphlet by Dr. Abraham Taylor on what was called the *modern question*. He read it with the utmost avidity, but was not much impressed with the arguments until he came to that part which shows that the addresses of John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles were directed to the ungodly, and meant nothing less than *spiritual* repentance and faith, *inasmuch as they were connected with the remission of sins*. He now became more than ever perplexed ; he read and examined the Scripture passages referred to, and the more he read and thought, the more he doubted the justice of his former views. These doubts became deepened by the perusal of a sermon by Mr. John Martin on “the consequences of not submitting to the righteousness of God :” his conclusions were similar to those of Dr. Taylor, and Mr. Fuller could not answer

the arguments of either. He was almost convinced that his views had been unscriptural. Sometimes he conversed about the subject with his friend Diver, but determined not to introduce the question in the pulpit until his judgment was fixed. After much anxious thought he did come to the settled conviction that his old ideas were wrong, and forthwith relinquished them.

About this time he became acquainted with Mr. Sutcliffe, of Olney, and Mr. John Ryland, jun., of Northampton, both of whom became most intimate friends, and who, together with Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, had begun to doubt the system of theology which they had formerly taught. With these brethren he had, however, but few opportunities of conversing, and applied himself to writing initial and somewhat desultory thoughts which were afterwards shaped and published under the title of "*The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation*," the nature and influence of which will be shown in a future chapter.

In 1776 Mr. Fuller married Miss Sarah Gardiner, who was a member of his church at Soham. She was a woman of amiable and retiring disposition, and won the affections of all who knew her. By this first marriage he had a numerous family, most of whom died in early life.

With most constant and affectionate zeal he laboured for the church over which he was placed. He would not suffer his earnest desire to find rest from the agitation of theological doubts to hinder his practical usefulness. He was always ready to render assistance to any of his members in the time of distress, and was most conscien-

tious in his preparation for the public services of the Lord's day. He laboured with some evident success, but in the face of many painful trials. There was a certain disaffected class in the church by whose complaints and reproaches his life was made unhappy. He was a man of sensitive feelings, and could not endure the fact that the people amongst whom he laboured should not all reciprocate his ardent love. The remuneration which he received for his services was so slender that it was impossible for him to provide for the expenses of an increasing family. He commenced a school, which did not prosper, and discontinued it after one year's trial. His household was conducted in the most simple and inexpensive manner; yet he could not subsist on the £15 per annum which was all that the church could afford to give, and the inroads which he was compelled to make upon his little property, when added to his stipend, were insufficient to save him from poverty.

In the month of July, 1780, he sustained a severe loss through the death of his devoted friend Joseph Diver. They had stood together in all their mental perplexities and in all the church difficulties. Whilst not a few of the members were alienated from their pastor by his altered mode of preaching, and gave expression to their dissatisfaction, not only by personal antagonism, but also by great laxity in their morals, this one man stood by him through all. And when the broken-hearted young man had seen the last of his friend on earth he bitterly bewailed his loss, exclaiming: "Oh, my brother Diver, when shall we recover our loss in losing you? What

disorders have we now in the church ! our hands, hearts, and heads, how full ! Oh, my father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof ! Methinks I shall go all my days in the bitterness of my soul. Ah ! we took sweet counsel together, and walked together to the house of God ; but all is over, as he said on his dying bed, ‘I have done with *that* life.’ Alas ! he has done with all of us.”

Towards the close of 1779 Mr. Fuller received the first intimation from the church at Kettering of their earnest desire that he should become their pastor. There appeared to be every reason why he should at once comply with this request. The church at Soham was composed of only about forty members, some at least of whom exhibited great bitterness of spirit because their preacher had become accustomed to invite sinners to put their trust in Christ for salvation. The miserable pittance which he received was, as we have shown, utterly inadequate to supply his wants and those of his family, whilst the people were altogether deficient in that enterprise which was necessary to afford full play for his abilities. On the other hand, the church at Kettering was much larger, and occupied an important position in the Baptist denomination. The people had repeatedly heard him preach, and expressed themselves as most highly gratified ; whilst a much larger stipend was offered for his services. But such was his determination to do nothing but by the guidance of God, that for about two years all the representations made by the friends at Kettering failed to induce him to remove from Soham.

A glance at his diary from June, 1780, to January, 1782, in which are many allusions to this question, indicates an amount of anxiety which appears to be altogether out of proportion to the circumstances of the case. The following are brief extracts :

“My heart often aches in thinking of my situation. Lord, what is duty? O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes.”

“For some days past have been tenderly concerned about my situation. O that the Lord would bestow upon me His counsels and His care! I am afraid of pride being in my motives both ways. O that God would hear and help me! The parable of the talents has been something to me. I am frequently told that my talents are buried here, but I do not know. O that I may not have to go upon *this* principle! O that some plainer path might appear if I must go.”

“To-night it seems as if it would break my heart to remove. The seal and fruits of my ministry are dear to me; yet how it can be otherwise I cannot see.”

“It seems as if the church and I should break each other’s hearts. To-night I have been but truly charged with an ‘irregular mind.’ How heartily could I embrace death, if it pleased God to send it! How far are peace and happiness from me!”

“The thoughts of my situation now return and overpower me. To-night I was exceedingly affected in prayer, earnestly longing that I might know the will of God. I have entered to-night into a solemn vow, which I desire it may please God to accept at my worthless

hands. With all the powers of my soul, with the utmost effusion of feelings, I have vowed to this effect before the Lord: 'O Lord, if Thou wilt give me so much light as plainly to see what is my duty in this case; then, if I do not obey the dictates of conscience, let my tongue for ever cleave to the roof of my mouth! let my ministry be at an end! let me be made an example of Thy displeasure against falsehood!' The case of those who asked counsel of Jeremiah (chap. xlii.) seemed to excite in me a jealousy of my own heart; but, so far as I know anything of myself, I am resolved to stay or go, as it should please God, did I but know His will."

"I went to the meeting to-day with very little premeditation, thinking an upright heart would be prepared. I assigned two reasons for my removal—the complaints some have made of non-edification, and my wasting my property every year. Neither of these objections being answered, the church despairs. All is confusion! Ah! what can I do? what can they do? My heart would say 'Stay;' would freely go and gather them together, and pour oil into their wounds. My judgment only forbids me. . . . No, no! surely I cannot go. My heart is overwhelmed! Lead me to the rock that is higher than I! I have been pouring out my heart to the Lord since I came from the meeting. Think I could rather choose death than departure! My heart is as if it would dissolve! It is like wax—it is melted in the midst of my bowels!"

"To-night I stopped the church and asked them if they could prove it wrong for me to leave them: I

assured them if they could I would abide with them, whatever was the consequence."

About this time he received the following letter from his friend Mr. Hall, of Arnsby:

"I was at Kettering soon after Mr. Wallis received your letter. My advice was then earnestly solicited, and on the Church being stopped to determine whether they should write to the young gentleman so strongly recommended from Bristol, the question was put to all the members—Yea or Nay. It was an affecting, solemn time—they knew not how to give you up, yet were afraid of consequences attending a further waiting.

"I then gave my advice as cautiously as I could, which was in favour of waiting till the Association, by which time you would probably see more plainly the path of duty. All were willing, provided there were any hope. The hearts of the people are strongly united to you. And yet if you could see to your full satisfaction that you ought to abide where you are, I am persuaded they would not harbour a wish to remove you. They dread displeasing God by too great anxiety for a creature. They know that God without you can make them happy, but not you without Him. It is what God has done for them by you which is the endearing consideration. Their unanimity is the result of the advantage arising from your ministrations among them distinct from what they ever felt or feel from any other."

In addition, and perhaps as the result of Mr. Fuller's deep mental distress, he was for some time confined to his house by bodily affliction, and began to think and

almost to hope that his troubles would be ended. "It seems to me," he said, "if I leave it must be in a coffin." He however recovered from this sickness, but with no settlement of the question which disturbed his mind.

On the 24th of May, 1781, he visited Kettering for the purpose of attending the meetings of the Association. On this occasion he confessed to Mr. Wallis, a deacon of the church, that it would be desirable for him to remove from Soham. He had also a long conversation on the subject with Mr. Hall, and after the public services consulted nine of his ministerial brethren, who sat in committee to consider the case. They unanimously advised his removal; but, notwithstanding this, on his return home, he found his mind as much as ever in a "strait betwixt two." Subsequently the matter was referred to the arbitration of three chosen ministers, who should consider the case as represented both by Mr. Fuller and the church at Kettering. The result was that one *justified* the removal, but hoped that he would continue a little longer at Soham; another condemned the proposed change; while the third could not tell what his duty was.

It was then agreed that the advice of Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, should be sought. His decision was that Mr. Fuller ought to continue at Soham for one year longer; this he determined to do in spite of the remonstrances of Mr. Hall, and urged the friends at Kettering to banish from their minds all thoughts of securing him as their pastor. This was a grievous disappointment to

them, but they acquitted him of all blame, and were convinced that he had acted only under a sense of duty.

He found, at the expiration of that term, that the causes which had urged him to think of leaving were not at all diminished, and he finally decided to accept the renewed and pressing invitation of the church at Kettering.

It was pithily remarked by Dr. Ryland, "Men who fear not God would risk the welfare of a nation with fewer searchings of heart than it cost him to determine whether he should leave a little dissenting church, scarcely containing forty members besides himself and his wife." His long-continued indecision was the more remarkable, as he was a man of more than ordinary decision of character.

It would, perhaps, be impossible to over-estimate the value to himself of Mr. Fuller's experience at Soham. His pastoral and pulpit duties occupying but a portion of his time, and there being in so small a town but few demands upon him outside his own church, he had frequent opportunities for reading and study. Having been denied the benefits of an academical training, and being conscious of the value of a classical education, he made considerable progress in the study of the Greek language, and, aided by his friend, Dr. Ryland, gained a sufficient mastery over the Hebrew to enable him to refer to the original of the Old Testament Scriptures. In addition to this he read, and not only read but also digested, a whole library of theology, and during these seven years became established in those great truths

with which his name is associated. His opinions, though constantly being developed, were never afterwards materially changed. Had he been at first called to a wider sphere of work in which his time would have been fully occupied in the discharge of public duties, it would have been impossible for him to lay so good and firm a foundation as that upon which his mental character was subsequently built. His life at Soham was attended with many painful trials, which also served to prepare him for future usefulness, and perhaps the most important part of his education for the works of pastor and writer took place in these years 1774-1782.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AND WORK AT KETTERING.

IT is exactly one hundred years since Mr. Fuller removed to Kettering. It was then a little town having a population of about 3,500, and had none of those appendages which give life and grace to every country town in the present day.

Of ecclesiastical buildings there were the parish church, the graceful tower and spire of which are still the admiration of the district; the "Great Meeting," an edifice still standing to tell of Puritan days, then the scene of the labours of the Rev. T. N. Toller, the Independent minister, who with his son occupied its pulpit just a century; the "Little Meeting," a Baptist offshoot from the other in 1696, like many of its class of that period, out of sight of the street, the minister's house being built in front of it. There was also a small Methodist Chapel.

In May, 1805, a small group consisting of the minister, deacons, and a few other friends were gathered to witness the laying of the foundation stone of a Baptist Meeting to

contain 900 persons (a wall or so of the old edifice being retained). The ceremony was performed in a heavy fall of snow.

Among that group was a little fellow six years old, in a sort of Joseph's coat, led by his mother's hand, to whom it has been a life-long remembrance.

Soon after the opening of the New Meeting the burly and genial Mark Wilks, of Norwich, brother of the quaint and eccentric "Matthew" of "Tabernacle" renown, visited my father, when the same little sprite followed the two divines up and down the edifice. "Well," said Mr. Wilks, "it's very plain; I see no ornament about it." "No," said his friend, "we did not concern ourselves about that; we aimed at comfort and convenience, and such as it is we have paid for it amongst ourselves."¹

If the surroundings of Wicken were fitted to train a hardy and courageous race of youths, those of Kettering, though not more romantic, were well adapted to foster the emotional and tender feelings of that susceptible nature, so conspicuous in the subject of this memorial, and which refined a somewhat rugged exterior as is witnessed in the disparity of his portraits at the earlier and later periods of his life.

¹ Some six or seven years after, the same *dramatis personæ* were at Yarmouth, and Mr. Wilks driving his friend in a gig. On leading the horse out of an inn-gateway the ostler allowed one wheel to go over a high stone. "You great blundering blockhead," said Mr. Wilks, "couldn't you do better than that?" "Brother Wilks," said the grave monitor by his side, "you know not what manner of spirit you are of, what will that man think——" The remainder of the sentence was lost in the distance.

Within two miles of the town, richly displayed on its eastern side was the spacious park attached to Boughton House, the seat of the great Duke of "Mountague," as it was called in his time. He is known as "John the Planter," he having, tradition says, planted 100,000 trees with his own hands. His praises were in the lips of all the older inhabitants.

The "vistas," groves extending many miles, presented a scene of exceeding beauty; and contiguous were the woods of Weekly Hall and Corby reaching on to Rockingham "shire" or forest. This palatial residence is now the property of the Duke of Buccleuch.

Mr. Fuller testifies to the influence of these woodland scenes over his spirit, in lines of which these are a part, written in a solitary walk in Corby wood after the death of his first wife, a most amiable and lovely woman cut off in the midst of her days :

" I roam amidst the dreary woods ; here once
I walked with her who walks no more with me ;
The fragrant forest then with pleasure smiled,
Why wears it now a melancholy hue ?
Ah me ! nor woods, nor fields, nor aught besides
Can grateful prove where grief corrodes the heart."

This may not be poetry, but it seems to breathe something of the spirit of the line: "*Non omnes arbusta juvant humilesque myricæ.*"

Within the verge of the park on the Kettering side stands the quaint little church of Warton, containing a group of the choicest works of Chantrey. These, however, had less attraction for Mr. Fuller than the scenes of

nature, if we may judge from an incident of a walk in Oxford with the Rev. James Hinton, who tried to attract his attention to the sumptuous buildings before them. Mr. Fuller said, "What is your idea of justification? Let us go home and talk about it; that is more to me than all these fine buildings."

At Kettering, as at Soham, Mr. Fuller ministered to the church for twelve months before he was publicly recognized as the pastor. This recognition took place on October 7, 1783; the services being conducted by a number of ministers to whom he became greatly attached, and with whom for years afterwards he joined in their ardent investigations of truth. His old friend Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, was requested to give the "charge" to the pastor; but such was his high esteem for his younger brother, and such his confidence in him, that he refused to give a *charge* and consented only to express a *wish*, which he based upon the words of the apostle, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit." Messrs. Ryland, jun., Sutcliffe, and other ministers officiated.

A small Baptist church, at this time under the pastoral care of Mr. Satchell, afterwards joined the larger community. Mr. Satchell was a man of high culture. His son, who had received at his hands a sound classical education, was an efficient deacon under the ministry of Mr. Fuller, after whose death he removed to London.

Mr. Fuller entered on his labours as a devoted servant of the church "for Jesus' sake." Writing to Mr. and Mrs. Chater and Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, of Serampore, he gives his thoughts and experience on

Christian fellowship. "Next to communion with your God and Saviour, cherish love to one another. Good sense and good temper may preserve you from falling out by the way, and exposing yourselves to the censure of spectators; but this is not enough. The apostolic precept which is so often repeated, 'Little children, love one another,' includes more than an abstinence from discord, or the routine of civility. You must know one another, and love each other in the Lord. To do this you must often think of the dying love of Christ towards you. When I have sometimes surveyed the church of which I am pastor, individually, my mind has revolted from this member for this fault, and from another for that; but, when I have met them at the table of the Lord, one thought has dissipated all these hard things: 'Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood!' Oh (thought I), if my Saviour could find in His heart to lay down His life for them, who am I, that I should withhold the tenderest regards from them? If He can forgive them, shall I be unforgiving? Nay more; if He could lay down His life for *me*, and forgive *me*, who am I, that I should cherish a hard and unforgiving heart towards my brethren?" Nothing could exceed the tender watchfulness exerted over the members of his church and congregation. Even in the midst of the urgent claims of the mission work he would, either in person or by letter, seek that which was gone or going astray; recording more than once that it gave him far greater satisfaction to restore a wanderer to the fold than to receive a new *accession*. His eager, all-absorbing

passion for the complete salvation of the people to whom he ministered is made abundantly evident by many of the entries in his private diary.

He writes on *April 11, 1784*: "A tender forenoon in public prayer. My heart aches for the congregation, young and old; especially for some who seem to be under concern. O that Christ may be formed in them! But I am so carnal, that I fear God will never do anything by me. Had a pretty good forenoon in preaching on being *Sick*, but a poor afternoon on Christ's being the great *Physician*."

"*April 13th*.—Devoted this day to fasting and prayer, in conjunction with several other ministers, who have agreed thus to spend the second Tuesday in every month, to seek the revival of real religion, and the extension of Christ's kingdom in the world."

"*June 21st*.—Much affected to-day in visiting some poor friends; especially in going to see a little boy of seven or eight years old, in a decline, not likely to continue long. My heart felt for his everlasting state. Conversèd with him a little on divine subjects."

"*July 18th*.—A good forenoon in preaching from 'All my springs are in Thee;' but a better time in prayer. Found my heart go out for the children and youth of the congregation; owing, perhaps, to my having spoken last night at the grave of the little boy mentioned June 21st. Poor child! he seemed to like that I should talk with him before he died."

Thus he prosecuted his pastoral and ministerial work, most grateful and joyous when he had experienced "a

good time " in preaching or in prayer, and most deeply dejected when he had felt no "tenderness of heart" in conducting the public services. He was a constant visitor, especially at the houses of the poorer members of his church, and acknowledged that he gained much good from the practice. The griefs and sorrows of his people became his own, and he entered into their joys with all his heart. Knowing that the success of his work depended in no small measure upon his own spirituality, he hungered and thirsted after righteousness. Every hour of the day the care of the church was upon him. He thought but little of popularity, but earnestly desired to accomplish great things for the glory of God.

His correspondence with his friends in India contained many records of his own work at home. The following is to Mr. Ward, December, 1803 :

"Three persons whom I baptized this summer had something peculiar in their cases. One was a man of sixty, a son of one of our old members, who had lived all his life a drunkard and a thief. His wife, old likewise, was reached by grace, and her baptism proved his conversion. The poor man seemed contented to go to hell while his wife was going with him, but could not bear to go alone ! Another was our servant maid, which is a second instance that the Lord has given us of late, in consequence of their living in our family. The third is the wife of Captain Tomlin,¹ who is brother to Mrs. James Hobson ; his wife lived at Walgrave Lodge, with

¹ A fine young soldier, who distinguished himself at Reggio in Calabria, and died from fever after the action.

her husband's relations. She heard brother Hobson pray in the family, and pray for her and her husband, whose life and soul were in danger. The poor woman was cut to the heart, that another should pray for her and her husband, and that she could not pray for either herself. She would go alone under the hedges and weep on this account. The result is, she herself prays and has laid hold of eternal life."

"*To Mr. Ward, August 27, 1808.*—As to myself I feel a good deal dejected at times, thinking I shall never be of much use; my writing and preaching seem to want something, and God withholds His blessing from me. I was thinking this week on John xv. 8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' Fruit is more than regularity of conduct or respectability of character. We may be kept from God-dishonouring crimes, and yet be 'unprofitable servants.' Much fruit is necessary to do honour to a gardener; here and there a berry may ascertain the nature of a plant or tree, but it is the loaded branch that honours him that planted it. I have been thinking also of Psalm xcii., 'Fruits in old age.' I am turned of fifty-four, I want to find the cluster mentioned in Romans v., 'Patience, Experience, Hope,' &c."

"*To Carey.*—I have lately found some encouragement in my work, having for more than a year past been more than heretofore led to insist on the gospel way of salvation, through a crucified Christ. I think I have seen of late some of the effect among the young people. During the past year, we had a female member die. She had

for the last twenty-five years been a useful, good woman, but her husband was a perfect sot. She by her industry nearly maintained her husband, and brought up four children. She lived to see her daughter married, and her sons settled in business. Her eldest son has been baptized, the second son a hopeful character. Her daughter's husband was about a year ago a wicked Antinomian, but God has met with him, and he is become a little child; I baptized him lately. Soon after his baptism the mother died. Her poor old sot of a husband then remembered her counsels and prayers, and even he is become a new man. He weeps like a child, and wonders at himself; he never understood the gospel, he says, before, though he has heard it many years. And now the married daughter weeps and says, 'I can see the change in my husband and in my father, but what am I!' The youngest son seeing his father weep asks what is the matter? 'Oh, James,' replies the poor old man, 'come to Christ! come to Christ!' I preached a sermon to the youth last Lord's day, 1 Thessalonians ii. 19, 'For what is our hope, or joy,' &c. I think we must have had nearly a thousand. They came from all quarters. My heart's desire and prayer for them is, that they may be saved."

He says in a letter about a year after, "We rejoice to hear of your prosperity, and hope the cause of God is going on with us. I think I have seen more of it in my own charge within the last year than I have seen for many years."

Mr. Fuller's power as a preacher had been felt and

acknowledged from an early period. It consisted less in the observance of rules of oratory than in the strong, nervous utterances of a heart fraught with a deep and abiding sense of the truth and importance of the message he had to deliver, and sustained by a mental vigour and soundness of judgment which helped him to penetrate to the depth of any subject which he handled. Yet he was not insensible of the value of those canons of logic and rhetoric acknowledged by the best public speakers of every age. A translation of Cicero's Dissertation on the qualifications of an orator found an early place on his scantily furnished shelves.

Few men were more gifted with the power of discerning the various attributes of a subject, and of unfolding the hidden beauties of a passage, though no one more heartily despised the trickery, too common with a class of preachers of his day, of eliciting the admiration of their hearers by the clever discovery of things that are not there.

Citing the advice of an old minister, he thus writes to a friend, "Quote a few well-chosen passages of Scripture, but trouble not many! Quotations when made without necessity, as where the thing needs no proof, or without being appropriate, tend to break the thread of discourse and so become tedious, and sink an audience into inattention, if not into sleep."

It was not often that Mr. Fuller's preparations for the pulpit were elaborate, except in the case of the prophetic descriptions of the Apocalypse and their symbolic reference to the events of history.

His sermons generally consisted of a few leading thoughts transcribed in shorthand. These were well digested before his entrance into the pulpit, and the inspiration of the occasion relied upon for the rest. No paper was in requisition to embarrass his utterance.

If there was one theme beyond all others on which he insisted, and on which he dilated with all the fulness of his heart, it was the sacrifice and mediation of Christ. Here he was at home, and again and again does he insist upon it in his private records and his correspondence. His ministry also was a constant exemplification of it, yet it never exhibited a weary iteration of phrases or commonplaces. There was life and reality in his utterances.

Many have been the instances known to the writer through draughts and copies of letters of the solicitude he cherished for the welfare of the young.

When on a visit to Edinburgh in 1813 his time and attention were absorbed in the business of the mission and on visits arising out of it. Writing to Mrs. Fuller he says, "The Northamptonshire militia are here, and I have been to the castle to see them. I saw four Kettering lads, viz., Serjeant Spence, Serjeant Katterns, a young man of the name of Smith, and Benjamin Benford. I have invited them to come to meeting and have given Benjamin a Bible. Serjeant Spence says, 'There is more profession here than in England, but they rest upon *assenting to the truth*, and their preaching does not interest the heart. They speak much of *believing*, but do not preach experimentally.' I said, 'Perhaps they mean

more by believing than you do.' To this he assented." Probably the serjeant had been only among the Scotch Baptists who were strongly tinctured with Sandemanianism.

Benford I knew well, and remember his enlistment. My father must either then or subsequently have given one other Bible, as the following gratifying incident will show. Having an engagement in 1873 to render a Lord's day service for the late Rev. James Mursell at Kettering, I received an earnest request to visit a very old man, a soldier, at the point of death. The poor man seemed much moved when I accosted him, and, producing an old pocket Bible from under his pillow, said as audibly as his failing breath and energies would allow: "That book was given to me 60 years ago by your father at Edinburgh Castle. It has been a blessing to me, and I shall die with all the more comfort that his son has come to see me in my last moments." He was not one of the four above mentioned.

The first two or three years of Mr. Fuller's life at Kettering were passed in comfort and tranquillity, greatly in contrast to the chequered and painful experiences through which he had passed at Soham. The members of his church were attached to him as he to them by bonds of closest friendship, but in the spring of 1786 commenced a series of domestic trials which completely overwhelmed him.

He had buried three children in their infancy, but was now called upon to suffer the loss of a dear child about six years of age whose feeble health had long been a source of anxiety to her watchful parents. As he looked upon

her pale face, he felt that he could not bear to lose her, and was tormented with fears as to what would be the future of her soul.

He says, "At the time of her birth I committed her to God, as I trust I have done many times since. Once in particular, viewing her as she lay smiling in the cradle, at the age of eight months, my heart was much affected. I took her up in my arms, retired, and in that position wrestled hard with God for a blessing; at the same time offering her up as it were, and solemnly presenting her to the Lord for acceptance. In this exercise I was greatly encouraged by the conduct of Christ toward those who brought little children in their arms to Him for His blessing."

Sometimes during her last illness he would pray with her, and explain in simple language how that Jesus was her Saviour, and how that by trusting in Him she might go and live with Him. "Thus," he says, "I tried to reconcile her, and myself with her, to death without directly telling her she would die."

But the long-continued strain of anxiety was too much for him, there being no hope of his child's recovery; he himself was stricken down with sickness, and was unable to watch over her. Five days before her death he was compelled to take to his bed, and was scarcely able to attend her funeral.

His diary of this time contains amongst others the following entries: "On Tuesday, May 30th, as I lay ill in bed in another room, I heard a whispering. I inquired and all were silent!—all were silent!—but all is

well. I feel reconciled to God. I called my family round my bed. I sat up, and prayed as well as I could ; I bowed my head and worshipped a taking as well as a giving God."

"*June 1st.*—I just made a shift to get up to go and attend the funeral of my poor child. My dear brother Ryland preached on the occasion from 2 Kings iv. 26, 'It is well.'"

"*3rd.*—To-day I felt a sort of triumph over death. I went and stood on her grave with a great deal of composure. Returned and wrote some verses to her memory."

In March, 1791, he lost his old and most valued friend, the Rev. Robert Hall, of Arnsby, and with deepest emotion delivered the funeral "oration" at his grave. This was another severe trial, for he owed more perhaps to the counsel of that great and good man than to that of all his other friends combined. He had for some few years past been watching with great admiration, yet with no little solicitude, the brilliant powers of his friend's son, Robert Hall, jun. On May 7, 1784, he wrote in his diary: "Heard Mr. Robert Hall, jun., from, 'He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow'; felt very solemn in hearing parts of it: *the Lord keep that young man.*" "*May 8th.*—Had conversation with Robert Hall on various subjects; some tenderness and earnestness in prayer after his departure." After the death of his old friend and counsellor he became closely attached to this "promising young man," not less for his own sake than in memory of his beloved father.

The following year brought with it another trial which pressed heavily upon both the minister and the church at Kettering. Mr. Beeby Wallis, for twenty-four years a deacon of the church, who had been the principal means of introducing Mr. Fuller to Kettering, and who was always a devoted friend to his pastor, died on April 2, 1792. And it was in the house of this worthy man that the *Baptist Missionary Society* was formed, about six months after his death, an enterprise which ever had the warmest sympathy of his widow, who survived him twenty years.

But still the cup of his sorrow was not full. He had in this same year to suffer a trial far greater than any which he had yet endured.

Mrs. Fuller was seized with an affection which for a time deprived her of her senses. After a week's unbroken delirium she seemed to recover, but quickly suffered a most distressing relapse, and during the months of July and August her mind was constantly deranged. As is customary in such cases, she had a most strong and unconquerable aversion to those whom in her rational moments she loved with greatest intensity. Her husband and children were her worst enemies, and for some time dared not to approach her. She imagined that he was not her husband, but an impostor, who had entered the house and taken possession of all that belonged to her; supposing at other times that she had wandered from home, and had fallen among strangers. Her frequent attempts to escape rendered it necessary that she should be watched day and night.

About a fortnight before her death he writes: "She had

one of the happiest intervals of any during her affliction. She had been lamenting on account of this *impostor* that was come into her house, and would not give her the keys. She tried for two hours to obtain them by force, in which time she exhausted all her own strength and almost mine. Not being able to obtain her point, as I was necessarily obliged to resist her in this matter, she sat down and wept, threatening me that God would surely judge me for treating a poor helpless creature in such a manner! I also was overcome with grief; I wept with her. The sight of my tears seemed to awaken her recollection. With her eyes fixed upon me, she said: . . . 'Why, are you *indeed* my husband?' 'Indeed, my dear, I am.' 'Oh, if I thought you were, I could give you a thousand kisses.' 'Indeed, my dear, I am your own dear husband.' She then seated herself upon my knee and kissed me several times. My heart dissolved with a mixture of grief and joy. Her senses were restored, and she talked as rationally as ever."

On Thursday, August 23rd, my father being worn out with fatigue, went to rest between nine and ten o'clock at night, but an hour after was called up just in time to witness the convulsive pangs of death, which in about ten minutes carried off her who had faithfully shared his joys and sorrows for sixteen years.

The anguish endured by the affectionate husband during these long and dreary months, it would be impossible to depict. Still he bore up with fortitude and resignation, inspired with unwavering confidence in the goodness of God. Sometimes his afflictions were almost

too heavy to be borne, but he says, "I feel, however, some support from such Scriptures as these: 'All things work together for good,' &c. 'God, even our own God, shall bless us.' It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

The babe to which Mrs. Fuller gave birth on the day of her death lived, and was called *Bathoni*—the same name, except the difference of sex, which Rachel gave to her last born child.

But Mr. Fuller's domestic afflictions were not yet over; he had already said, "They have almost overwhelmed me, and what is yet before me I know not." He had again to pass through the fire, and to submit to a trial more severe even than that of losing his beloved wife.

The love which he cherished for his children was remarkably intense, and his solicitude for their welfare perhaps too great. His oldest son, Robert, was a lad of fine and manly parts—tender, loving, and unselfish. He had expressed a desire after the ministry, and bore a character which rendered it not improbable that he would give his life entirely to the service of God. He had, however, made no open confession of Christianity, and his father being most careful, in the absence of any evidence of decision for God, not to influence his mind in favour of the ministry, obtained for him a situation in the warehouse of Mr. Burls, of London, stipulating however with him, that if his son should at any time express a determination to give himself to the ministry, and should appear a proper object of encouragement for that work, he would at once release him from his engagement.

Very shortly his pleasing hopes were terribly blighted. The youth did not apply himself to his duties with any degree of diligence, and became so dissatisfied with his occupation that his removal became absolutely necessary. Another situation was procured for him at Kettering, but with no greater success. The lad gave evidence of such a restless and roving disposition, that it was clear he would not and could not settle down to any ordinary occupation. His poor father's heart was almost broken ; when he saw the dutifulness of other people's children his sorrow was only aggravated. Writing to a friend he says, "Those who have had no instruction, no pious example, no warnings or counsels, are often seen to be steady and trusty ; but my child, who has had all these advantages, is worthy of no trust to be placed in him. I am afraid he will go into the army, that sink of immorality ; or, if not, that being reduced to extremity, he will be tempted to steal. And, oh ! if he should get such a habit, what may not these weeping eyes witness, or this broken heart be called to endure ! O my God, whither will my fears lead me ? Have mercy upon me, a poor unhappy parent ! Have mercy upon him, a poor ungodly child !"

One of these fears, but fortunately the less terrible, was realized—he entered the army. Being an apprentice his discharge was obtained, but he immediately enlisted again in the Marines, where he continued for about two years. He then wrote to his father, expressing great sorrow for his waywardness, and beseeching that he might again be liberated. A second time his discharge was procured, and, returning home, another situation

provided for him. Still he was restless and discontented, and his father, seeing that there was no hope for him to settle in business, made arrangements for him to be taken into service on board a merchant ship; but being on shore one day before he joined the ship, he was impressed for a common sailor on board a man-of-war; and shortly afterwards a report was received at home that, having been guilty of some misdemeanour, he had been tried, and sentenced to receive three hundred lashes, and that the punishment being too severe, he had immediately expired.

"Oh," said the stricken father, "this is *heart trouble*! In former cases my sorrows found vent in tears, but now I can seldom weep; a kind of morbid sickness preys upon me from day to day. Every object around me reminds me of him! Ah! . . . he was wicked; and mine eye was not over him to prevent it. . . . He was detected, and tried and condemned, and I knew it not. . . . He cried under his agonies, but I heard him not. . . . He expired without an eye to pity, or a hand to help him! . . . O Absalom! my son! my son! would I had died for thee, my son!"

Whilst yet mourning for his dead, lost son, his astonishment and joy were unbounded when one day he received a letter from him, proving that the rumour had been entirely unfounded.

Three years afterwards Robert deserted in Ireland, and suffered a punishment so terrible that he was totally unfitted for service, and some months later was discharged, and called on Dr. Ryland at Bristol. He was

at once sent on to London to meet his father. Another situation was obtained for him, but even this was in vain, for when he found himself sufficiently recovered, he asked leave to visit his uncle at the other end of the town, and, not returning, left his friends in doubt as to where he was, whether in the army or navy.

It transpired that he had again enlisted in the Marines, with whom he had gone to sea ; and after the lapse of four years wrote to his father, telling him that he was about to sail for Lisbon, and expressing a fear that that would be his last voyage.

In reply to this letter his father wrote as follows :—

“MY DEAR ROBERT,

I received with pleasure your dutiful letter, and I would fain consider it as a symptom of a returning mind. I cannot but consider you as having been long under a sort of mental derangement, piercing yourself through, as well as me, with many sorrows. My prayer for you continually is, that the God of all grace and mercy may have mercy upon you. You may be assured that I cherish no animosity against you. On the contrary, I do from my heart freely forgive you. But that which I long to see in you is repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, without which there is no forgiveness from above.

“My dear son, you had advantages in early life, but, being continually in profligate company, you must be debased in mind, and in a manner reduced to a state of heathenism. In some of your letters I have observed you dashing, as it were, against the rocks of fatalism,

suggesting as if you thought you were appointed to such a course of life. In others I find you flattering yourself that you are a penitent, when, perhaps, all the penitence you ever felt has been the occasional melancholy of remorse and fear.

“My dear son, I am now fifty-five years old, and may soon expect to go the way of all the earth ; but before I die, let me teach you the good and the right way. Hear the instructions of a father. You have had a large portion of God’s preserving goodness, or you had ere now perished in your sins. Think of this, and give thanks to the Father of mercies who has hitherto preserved you. Think, too, how you have requited Him, and be ashamed for all that you have done. Nevertheless, do not despair. Far as you have gone, and low as you are sunk in sin, yet if *from hence* you return to God by Jesus Christ, you will find mercy. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. If you had been ever so sober and steady in your behaviour towards men, yet without repentance towards God and faith in Christ, you could not have been saved. And if you return to God by Him, though your sins be great and aggravated, yet you will find mercy.”

As the young man had foreboded, this proved his last voyage. He died off Lisbon in March, 1809. From the testimony of his captain and one of his messmates, we learn that his conduct was good, and such as to procure him much respect ; and from letters addressed to his father and sister a short time before his death, we *hope still better things* ; we hope he was led to see the

error of his way, and to make the Lord his refuge from the tempest and the storm.

His death under such circumstances was less painful than it would otherwise have been. In a sermon preached the Lord's day after the news was received, on Romans x. 8, 9, "The word is nigh thee," &c., his father seemed to take comfort from three thoughts: "That the gospel is suited to *sinners of all degrees*, it asks not how long, or how often, or how greatly we have sinned; that it is suited to the *helpless condition of sinners*; that it is suited to sinners *in the last extremity*, it answers to the promised mercy in Deut. iv. 29: '*If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him.*' Some are far from home, and have no friend in their dying moments to speak a word of comfort, but this is near. When Jonah was compassed about by the floods, when the billows and waves passed over him, he prayed the Lord, and the Lord heard him." Here he gave vent to his feelings, and many who knew the cause wept with him.

In 1845 I was visiting Falkirk, where I met with Mr. Waldy, a deacon of the Baptist church, who asked me if I knew my brother Robert. My reply was, "No; he left home finally when I was very young, but he used to nurse me as a babe, and seemed very fond of me." "Well," said he, "I did know him; he and I were messmates on board one of His Majesty's ships while watching the Dutch fleet off Holland, to prevent their junction with the French. We were exceedingly intimate, and opened our minds much to each other. He was a very pleasing, nice youth, and became a true Christian man."

In December, 1794, Mr. Fuller married Miss Anne Coles, the only daughter of the Rev. William Coles, pastor of the Baptist Church at Maulden in Bedfordshire. In reference to this event he writes: "Of late my thoughts have turned upon another marriage. That passage which has been with me in all my principal concerns through life—'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths,' has recurred again."

"I devoted this day to fasting and prayer on account of my expected marriage, to entreat the blessing of God upon me and upon her who may be connected with me, and upon all that pertain to us."

"*December 30th.*—This day I was married, and this day will probably stamp my future life with either increasing happiness or misery. My hopes rise high of the former, but my times, and the times of my dear companion are in the Lord's hands. I feel a satisfaction that in her I have a godly character, as well as a wife. . . .

"I bless God for the prospect I have of an increase of happiness. It is no small satisfaction that every one of our relations was agreeable; that there were no previous prejudices to afford ground for future jealousies."

There is still on record in my father's handwriting a conversation between him and his mother in prospect of his second marriage. "Well, Andrew, they say you are going to marry." "Yes; so they tell me, mother." "Well, we were told that the lady prefers a minister, and not *any* minister either." "She must be a singular character if any minister would please her." "Well, I

wish your poor children well." "Have you any reason to fear the contrary?" "I don't know; I know I should not have made a good step-mother." "And so from thence you judge that others will be the same. For my part I am persuaded now that I should be a kind father to any family that should be put under my care." "I believe you are better tempered than I." "I have been a sort of father to all my wife's younger sisters, and they always loved me as much as they did their father." "I believe they might." "Would you wish me, mother, to live all my life single?" "My dear, I wish you to do that which will render you most happy." "Thank you, mother."

Until I went to school away from home I never heard of any difference in the relation of one brother or sister from another. And most spontaneous and hearty has ever been the testimony of both my sister and brother of the former family of the cordial love between them and my mother.

I may be permitted here to pay a just and loving tribute to one of the noblest and truest of mothers, as well as the best of wives, to whom my father, not less than myself, owed a large measure of what was worth living for. Of an almost painfully retiring disposition, not highly "accomplished," but well read and of sound and accurate attainments, she was a true help-meet to her husband, not only as an amanuensis, but a discreet adviser, and tenderly mindful of his health and comfort amidst his multifarious labours. Of her devoted piety and concern for her children I had early proofs. One

instance has ever been deeply engraved on my memory. I could scarcely have reached my fourth year when I witnessed her pacing her bedroom with clasped hands as she was pouring out her soul to God, and looking at me as she passed. "Mother," I said, "who are you talking to?" "To God, my child, about you." And taking my hand in hers, kneeled down, and gave me such a practical lesson in the spirit of prayer as could never be forgotten.

In one of those quiet hours which I spent with my mother in her early widowhood, and when we together mourned the loss of my father and my sister Sarah, who a year after, at the age of nineteen, followed him, she touched on the tender memories of the past and the feeling with which her new-made husband would confide to her ear the sorrows that had overwhelmed him in the affliction and death of his late wife ; it comforted him, she said, to tell her the sad tale. Her first child was named Sarah in memory of the deceased.

In those sad but precious hours my mother gave me a traditional account of an ancestress of four generations back, who was wont to gather round her her grandchildren and great grandchildren under the shadow of a patriarchal pear-tree, and relate to them some of the stirring incidents she had witnessed of the Civil War, when concealing her younger brothers and sisters in a ditch from the rude assaults of Rupert's Cavalry. My mother died October, 1825, having survived her husband ten years.

The public worship of the church at Kettering was

characterized by great seriousness and solemnity, but there was little of life in the singing, whilst the arrangement of one "long" prayer, instead of its division into two or more parts as in modern usage, was wearying, especially as it was offered in a standing position, sitting being reserved for singing. The only justification that could be pleaded was probably in the line of Watts, "And sit and sing herself away!"

In prayer the back was towards the minister. If this custom had the disciplinary merit of inflicting on late comers general observation, it had the serious disadvantage of diverting the attention of the worshippers.

There were other arrangements not very conducive to the efficiency of the services, especially with children. The pews next the walls were square, which compelled part of its occupants to sit with their backs to the minister. Of course this position was assigned to the children, in preference to putting their seniors to inconvenience. Its influence on the minds and characters of the young seemed not to be taken into account.

The effect of a window some twenty feet in length on each side of the pulpit, so common in all the old meeting houses, torturing the eyes of the congregation and obscuring the face of the minister, could not be without an injurious influence in more than one sense.

Notwithstanding these, and perhaps other usages on which modern appointments are an improvement, there was a quiet power which hardly consists with the restless transit from scene to scene of the present day. There seems hardly time to digest, still less to assimilate our

spiritual aliment. It is like a continental *table d'hôte*, where you have not time to see what one course is made of, before it is whipped away and another thrust before you.

The *machinery* of the psalmody was something ludicrous. Two books were in requisition—Watts's "Psalms and Hymns," and Rippon's "Appendix." The former consisted first of a metrical version of the Psalms, followed by first, second, and third books of hymns, to which were appended several newer hymns as supplementary to the "first book." There was invariably a clerk or precentor, who would announce the hymn thus : 116th hymn, first book, long metre ; or 119th psalm, eighteenth part, long metre : read several verses, and then, with due regard for the natural obfuscation of the people's intellects, *parcel it out two lines at a time*. The singing of a line occupied nearly double the time that is usual in modern practice. There was in use at Kettering a larger proportion than in some other places of the staid old tunes, such as *Bedford, Abridge, &c.* There was, nevertheless, an itching among the singers for a class of tunes with fugues and endless repetitions, which were applied indiscriminately to all kinds of words ; repetitions of two lines, repetitions of one line, repetitions of half a line, repetitions of half a word, repetitions of such words as, "blast them in everlasting death," without any apparent thought of their awful meaning.

Mr. Fuller disapproved of the use of "things without life-giving sound," considering their use in worship as not in harmony with the *simplicity* of the Christian dispensation.

I was present on an occasion of his preaching at a village in Northamptonshire, when a portentous array of instruments, almost rivalling in variety the band appointed to do homage to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, discoursed wonderful music in the gallery. My father inquired at the close if they always had them. "No, sir; it was because you were coming. We had them to draw a larger congregation." Of course the compliment was duly appreciated.

He had an ear for music, and once tried his skill on composition. It was a simple, plaintive air, set to a hymn of Ralph Erskine. Taking it to a musical friend who remarked that it was in a "flat key," "very likely," said he, "I think I was born in a flat key."

I have witnessed some ludicrous effects in attempting to sing at funerals in the absence of any one qualified to "raise" a tune. There seemed to be a sacred obligation to pay the deceased or his relatives the homage of a funeral dirge. The sexton in attendance (who served every burial place in the parish) could perform that service within certain limits. On one occasion Mr. Fuller gave out a hymn, a tune for which did not come within the range of the official's knowledge. "Sir, there ain't ne'er a tune to that hymn. Please to give out 'Naaked as from the yarth we came.'" A suitable common metre hymn having been found, the charming voice was heard in response.

On all occasions of death in the parish, the "passing bell" was rung, and the funeral toll wherever the burial took place,

From the entrance of Mr. Fuller on his charge of the church at Kettering till within a short time of his death, he occupied the Lord's day morning with exposition. In a deeply interesting address to the church on the publication of his discourses on Genesis, he says of these morning exercises, "They have enabled us to take a more connected view of the Scriptures than could be obtained merely by sermons on particular passages, and I acknowledge that, as I have proceeded, the work of exposition has become more and more interesting to my heart."

It is not too much to say that this exposition of Genesis is unrivalled in its life-pictures of patriarchal history, and is unquestionably the most popular of all his publications.

The only other published exposition was that of the Sermon of Christ on the Mount, the Acts of the Apostles, the Apocalypse, and a number of isolated passages contributed to various magazines. One on the book of Job, of more than common interest, was lost by the destruction of a printing office by fire.

Sleepy hearers were not often found in Mr. Fuller's congregation. Yet if anything could extenuate the evil, it would be the custom of afternoon services, then almost universal for the accommodation of village hearers, who returned early enough to hold or attend evening services in some large room or barn. There was no evening service except once a month at each of the places, when the Independent and Baptist congregations united, leaving one of the ministers at liberty if he chose to visit his village friends.

One hot summer afternoon, my father observing more than one asleep, just as he was naming his text, made a sudden stop. Having gained their attention, he said, "My friends, I have been afraid lest I should preach you to sleep, but it cannot be my fault this time." On another occasion being interrupted by the sonorous felicity of one man, he suddenly struck the side of the pulpit. The man called out, "Coming, John!" thinking it was his morning summons from a workmate.

An uncouth spectacle presented itself every Lord's day for many years to Mr. Fuller's vision which would have severely tested the powers of endurance of any one of weaker nerves. A blind man sitting in a conspicuous place in the front gallery had a habit of swaying himself backwards and forwards, beginning with a slight nod of the head which increased till the upper part of his body became nearly horizontal, when the vibrations gradually decreased in range till they finished off like those of a spoon in a teacup. This would occur two or three times during a service. He would often be seized in the street with this strange impulse, and stop short to indulge it. Poor Joe said he liked to hear Mr. Fuller preach, and though it at first tried the preacher's nerves, he did not forget that the poor man had a soul of as much value as that of any one there, and endured the infliction till it became too habitual to attract his notice.

There was one vice against which especially Mr. Fuller maintained an habitual protest, as one to which professors of religion were liable all the more from other avenues of evil being closed against them by the position

they had assumed. *Covetousness*, he was wont to say, defied the application of those rules of human judgment which were often an adequate check on other sins.

A prominent member of a church at a distance from Kettering was the sole trustee of an endowment to the minister and the poor of the church. This for several years was unappropriated, though the trustee was a man of property. The affair becoming a public scandal, Mr. Fuller remonstrated with him, but to no purpose; he could never bear to part with money. One day meeting him my father accosted him: "Mr. —, that money of Mrs. —'s will damn your soul." The man turned pale, and I believe it was not long before some, if not all that was due, found its way to the recipients.

The admonisher was an example of the disinterestedness he urged upon others. On one of his journeys by coach, he met with a number of Irish reapers returning home. They bitterly complained of the greater portion of their wages having been paid them in one pound country notes, which they could not get exchanged in Dublin without a considerable loss, if at all. Mr. Fuller, happening to have an unusual number of guineas about him, exchanged them for these notes, most of which he knew, but risking others. Of course the gratitude of the poor men was unbounded.

Mr. Fuller's public ministrations, not less than his private intercourse and contributions to the press, were earnest upon this point. The character of Laban in his exposition of Genesis is admirably portrayed and the lesson it yields applied.

My father would sometimes say respecting the common effects of prosperity, "As the purse gets heavier the strings draw closer."

Mr. Fuller was a warm friend of the Bible Society, but had a great dislike to attending its meetings. He never was a "platform man," and had a special abhorrence of the mutual flatteries and apologies prevalent at their meetings, apologies not for absence but for being there.

At a meeting of the local auxiliary in Kettering Church it was hoped that the presence of such men as Legh Richmond and Mr. Brotherhood, incumbent of Desborough, also the Hon. and Rev. Littleton Powys,¹ would have been some security for an exemption from this sort of infliction; but there was one well-meaning clergyman who greatly annoyed Mr. Fuller with fulsome compliments on his writings.

We observed at the breakfast table that morning my father absorbed in a paper he had been writing, and was trying to commit to memory, a process altogether new,

¹ This excellent man, a brother of Lord Lilford, was rector of Titchmarsh, near Thrapstone. In going from his residence to church, he always met a group of people on their way to Thrapstone Meeting. Though he considered them as his parishioners, he more than once when a certain part of the road was impassable from the floods, after crossing himself, sent his carriage back with them. On one occasion he asked one of them, an intelligent woman, how it was that they left their own parish and went to Thrapstone to worship. The good woman replied that at Thrapstone they heard the gospel preached! "So you would, I think, at Titchmarsh Church, at least I have tried to preach it." This led to a friendly discussion and to an entire change in the views and teachings of the worthy rector, who from that time forth was among the most pronounced of the Evangelical clergy.

but which he thought desirable in prospect of speaking before so many clerical hearers. He read the paper over for the opinions of my mother and the family. Of course his contribution to the meeting was chiefly on the translations of the Scrampore missionaries. In connection with this work, he alluded to the moral condition of India and especially to the practice of Suttee. In this description occurred the sentence, "Women were burnt alive with the dead bodies of their deceased husbands."

Immediately there was an outcry—"Father! were they both dead and deceased?" "Oh, how stupid I must have been to have read this over and over again and not have seen this redundancy!" And drawing his pen across the word "dead," read it over a few times in its amended form to make sure of it. We were all at church, and of course eagerly listened to father's speech. Out came the crucial sentence with the measured tread of a cavalry horse at slow time: "Women were burnt alive with the *dead* bodies of their *deceased* husbands." My father was not slow to learn on his return home that there had been young witnesses of his march past.

The presence of young men as students resident in our family is well remembered from an early period.

These were nearly all probationers for missionary labour. Mr. Fuller in a letter to Mr. Ward says, "We have two young men on probation; but they are very 'fresh' at present; they need to be somewhat 'pickled' before they are sent out." Whether the following interlocution were a part of that interesting process I cannot say: "Well, sir, may I ask what subject you think of

preaching on to-morrow?" "Oh yes, sir; it is *about one thing being needful*." "And what do you consider that to be?" Oh, Christ, sir, of course." "Indeed! that's worse than the Socinians; they do allow Him to have been a *man*, you make Him out to be only a *thing*!"

The best remembered of those who lived with us for that object was Lawson, one of the most valuable members of the Serampore family, a devoted missionary, a man of refined and poetic taste, in early life an artist of no mean acquirement in wood engraving. He proved of vast use in the construction of types for the translations. He endeared himself much to our family.

Besides these young men who came for some instruction prior to entering on some field of ministerial labour at home or abroad, Mr. Stennett, whose services were specially engaged as assistant to my father, was an able and interesting preacher, and a pleasing addition to our family circle. The Rev. John Keen Hall, M.A., a nephew of Robert Hall, was Mr. Fuller's assistant for some years before his death. He was a man of powerful intellect and great attainments, and for fourteen years during which he was his successor, he maintained a commanding position both in the church and the town. His premature death was an irreparable loss.

Perhaps I may be allowed here to introduce some characters and scenes not generally familiar to most of the readers of this narrative.

Among Mr. Fuller's members were several farmers of the old school. One of these was distinguished for the chastened liberality of his harvest-home,

We will pass by the rollicking scenes of bringing home the last load, the riders on it drenched with water thrown up by the villagers in passing, and walk into the spacious room called "The Hall," an apartment once forming a part of a large aristocratic mansion, but now devoted on every Lord's day evening to the purposes of public worship and preaching.

On this occasion a table was improvised reaching nearly from end to end of the room, around which were gathered a large number of farm labourers, and at the upper end friends of the farmer especially invited to a sumptuous banquet.

At the close of supper, which would be at an early hour of the evening, commenced the singing of hymns, followed by more elaborate sacred music, for which purpose a staff of "singing men and singing women" was especially invited, being the choir of singers at the Meeting House at Kettering.

It was now that the presidency of the old patriarch, with his snow-white hair descending to his shoulders, arrested universal attention, as with clear and ringing tones, conveying the grateful feelings that swelled in his heart, he gave out the well-known harvest hymn—

"To praise the ever bounteous Lord,
My soul, wake all thy powers ;
He calls, and at His voice come forth
The smiling harvest hours."

Those who heard would not soon forget the rich and hearty country twang which announced the concluding verse—

“ Then in the last great harvest I
Shall reap a glorious *crop* ;
The harvest shall by *faar* exceed
What I have sown in *hoope*.”

After some choice pieces of sacred harmony had been sung, much to the wonder and pleasure of the assembled rustics, the good old farmer would read with much unction a psalm of thanksgiving, such as the hundred and fourth, or the sixty-fifth, and after a short and appropriate prayer dismiss the assembly at what would now be deemed an early hour.

No doubt there were those present who would have liked a more varied entertainment, but whatever might be the views of the worthy host upon that point, a knowledge of the promiscuous character of his guests would not allow him to risk a departure from the rigid rule prescribed by his one resolve, that nothing incongruous with deep gratitude to the Lord of the harvest should be transacted, while the absence of any “public” in the village was a security against the too prevalent mode of winding up a festivity.

The whole scene, with its open-hearted hospitality and simple unaffected piety, presented as near a resemblance as the distance of time, place, and customs could well do, to the charming description of Boaz with his reapers and gleaners accosting their master with the salutation of “The Lord be with you,” and receiving their response, “The Lord bless thee.” No penurious grudging, least of all the modern prohibition of the few handfuls carried away by gleaners, was known here, though there were

not wanting occasional instances of sly plunder of the sheaves ; but open-hearted and open-handed generosity such as Arcadian song "transmits from ancient uncorrupted times."

Mr. Fuller was particularly desirous of doing something for the instruction of the young people of the town, but his numerous engagements making it impossible for him to devote any amount of time to this work, he was for a while at a loss to determine what could be done.

"I have been thinking of a plan," he says, in a letter to a friend, "for disseminating truth among our little lacemakers. A quantity of white wrapping paper is used in the sale of small parcels of lace-thread, so I will draw up a number of little hymns, the most impressive that I can either find or make, and get them printed on one side of the paper. Then every child that comes for a small quantity of thread will find it wrapped up in a paper containing a short impressive hymn addressed to its heart."

In the year 1807 he was commissioned to attend to a little matter of business of a character so peculiar that few men would either be intrusted with it or undertake its great responsibility : and which certainly no man could have managed with greater skill or success. A missionary in India having recently become a widower, and being stationed four hundred miles up the country, right away from all other Europeans, addressed a letter to an intimate friend in England, imploring him if possible to send out some suitable person, who would be willing to become his wife and share his labours.

This letter being handed to Mr. Fuller when on his way to London, that great city where every imaginable kind of commodity may be procured, he undertook to do the best he could in the matter.

On his arrival he mentioned the case to a minister, who said that he could find the very person who was wanted. "There is," he said, "at this time in our church a godly young woman, who has long wished to go to India to serve the mission in any capacity, and she can be well recommended for character and ability." An interview was at once appointed, and Mr. Fuller met the lady.

"Well, Mary, and so you would have no objection to go to India?"

"No, sir; if I could be of any service to the family at Serampore, I should wish to go, were it only to wash the disciples' feet." "Do you happen to know Mr. C.?" "Y-yes, I know him." "And have you heard of his bereavement?" "I heard of it lately, but wished to go to Serampore long before I knew of that event." "Well, we do not say that you should join Mr. C.'s society; we hope you will be advised in everything by the family at Serampore after your arrival; and if Mr. C. should offer you his friendship, you will be at all liberty to act for yourself. But should you be inclined in that case to accede to his wishes, and to join hand and heart in his missionary labours, it will give us great pleasure and satisfaction."

Well might Mary hesitate in her reply, when asked if she knew Mr. C. Well might she be so particular to make it known that she desired to go to India long

before hearing of his bereavement, for it so happened that to her Mr. C. had first made an offer of marriage, and that she had declined it because he was going to India. She had, as Mr. Fuller afterwards discovered and explained, said "no," as women often do to save their modesty and to try whether he was in good earnest ; and that "he, like some other men, expecting to be sure that she would have said 'yes, and thank you, sir,' took her 'no' as final, and so they parted."

She went to India and married Mr. C., who was perfectly satisfied with the manner in which the business had been conducted. And who cannot picture them as they talk of "marriages being made in heaven"? More than one other negotiation of this sort fell into Mr. Fuller's hands.

Mr. Fuller remained at Kettering until the time of his death, his ministry in that town extending over a period of thirty-three years. They were years spent in hard and continual toil, the fruits of which are now enjoyed to a greater or less degree in almost every part of the civilized world. It seems almost incredible that any man could have accomplished so much as he did ; sometimes, nay often, his duties were so numerous and so varied, that his work became a burden almost too heavy to be borne.

In March, 1800, when engaged in controversy, compiling his memoirs of Mr. Pearce, and discharging all his regular duties, he was solicited to give his assistance to a new periodical work, and being compelled to decline, excused himself as follows :

"My labours *will* increase, without any consent on my part. As to magazines, there are several to which I contribute, for the sake of the mission and other public interests; and through such a number of objects as press upon me daily, my own vineyard, my own soul, my own family, and congregation are neglected. Every journey I take only makes way for two or three more, and every book I write only occasions me to write others to explain or defend it. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. 'I gave my heart to know wisdom, I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.' Some are pressing me to write more largely on the mediation of Christ, and others to review the second edition of Mr. Booth's 'Glad Tidings.' Controversies perplex me; and I am already engaged with a gross and subtle sophist. My northern correspondents are ever raising objections against my views of faith, &c.; all of which I could answer, but cannot get time. I have sent your remarks to my friends at Edinboro'; they will serve as a tub for the whale to play with, and perhaps for a time he will let me alone.

"Pearce's memoirs are now loudly called for. I sit down almost in despair, and say, 'That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is lacking cannot be numbered.' My wife looks at me with a tear ready to drop, and says, 'My dear, you have hardly time to speak to me.' My friends at home are kind, but they also say, 'You have no time to see or know us, and you will soon be worn out.' Amidst all this there

is, 'Come again to Scotland—come to Portsmouth—come to Plymouth—come to Bristol.'

"Excuse this effusion of melancholy. My heart is willing to do everything you desire that I can do, but my hands fail me. Dear Brother Ryland complains of old age coming upon him, and I expect old age will come on me, before I am really old. Under this complicated load my heart has often of late groaned for rest, longing to finish my days in comparative retirement."

This "effusion" was not long after followed by a severe illness, the issue of which was doubtful. Under it he managed to write a line to his friend Sutcliffe: "I perceive many are apprehensive that I am going after dear Pearce. If it be so, I hope to go where he is gone and to be what he now is. I know whom I have believed, and have no misgivings."

Of his most abundant labours—his voluminous literary works, his indefatigable zeal as secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society, his journeys, his controversies, all prosecuted under the burden of physical suffering, and in spite of physical weakness—we shall speak in subsequent chapters, not forgetting that the care of many churches, both at home in England and abroad in India, was upon his shoulders whilst engaged in his ministerial, pastoral, and social pursuits in the town of Kettering.

CHAPTER V.

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

OF all the labours in which Mr. Fuller was engaged during the course of his busy life, there was certainly none into which he threw himself with such indefatigable zeal, for which he suffered so great an amount of self-denial, or which furnishes so lasting and worthy a monument to his memory as that of the Missionary enterprise. He was one of the first to advocate the formation of that society, which was organized in the house of one of the members of his church, on the 2nd of October, 1792 ; and which, for nearly a century, has continued year by year to extend its operations into every quarter of the globe.

In the present day it is difficult for one to form an idea of the obstacles which had to be surmounted by the originators of this society ; the condition of the Baptist churches a few years before being such as would have rendered their proposal altogether impracticable, and even then they presented for the most part an apathy as fatal as direct hostility.

Dr. Ryland, in his memoirs of Mr. Fuller, gives an

account of their condition. After describing their method of church government, and showing the distinction which existed between *Particular* and *General* Baptists, he speaks of the rapid spread of ultra-Calvinism in the ranks of the former body. He says :

“The *Particular Baptists* espouse the Calvinistic sentiments on what are called the five points : namely, (1) That the *elect* were eternally fore-ordained to holiness, obedience, and happiness, as the *end*, through sanctification and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, as the *means* of obtaining that end, to the glory of sovereign grace. (2) That the peculiar blessings of *redemption*, purchased by the death of Christ, are actually imparted only to the elect, all of whom shall *certainly* enjoy them. (3) That mankind are so *universally* and *totally depraved* that they never *can* be brought back to God, without the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit. (4) That the *special* operations of the Divine Spirit are invincibly efficacious, and *cannot* be *frustrated* by the rebellious will of man. (5) That all who are truly regenerated shall persevere in grace, to glory.

“In their zeal for these doctrines, some good men towards the beginning of the last century were driven into an extreme, so as to deny that all who hear the gospel are called to that exercise of repentance and faith which is connected with salvation !”

He then refers to what was called the *Modern Question*—whether it be the duty of all men to whom the gospel is published to repent and believe in Christ—and says : “Through the influence of Mr. Brine and Dr.

Gill, who both took the negative side of the question (though the latter never wrote on the subject), this opinion spread pretty much among the ministers of the Baptist denomination. And, though the controversy had subsided, and was but little known among the people, yet the preachers were too much restrained from imitating our Lord and His apostles in calling on sinners to 'repent and believe the gospel.' Many of these ministers, indeed, endeavoured to address the consciences of men, as far as their system would allow; and some of them could hardly refrain from expressing themselves inconsistently with their creed. They were aware that the divine law requires such obedience as no bad man will yield to it; but though they considered all mankind as bound to love God supremely, yet they supposed *that the faith connected with salvation could not be a duty*, because Adam, as they then thought, had not *power* (that is, he had no occasion, or opportunity) to believe in Christ."

The Doctor adds that "some of the Calvinistic Methodists, especially in Lady Huntingdon's connection, were becoming tinged with false Calvinism. These were not led into it like the admirers of Mr. Brine and Dr. Gill, by reading a great deal of controversial divinity, or by a polemical discussion of the five points disputed between us and the Arminians; but by a vague, crude idea of the term *power*, which led them to suppose that nothing could be a bad man's duty but what he *could* perform without any special influence from God. The same idea was spreading faster than we were aware among our

churches also ; the ministers might distinguish between repentance and faith, and other internal duties—allowing the latter to be required, while they scrupled exhorting men to the former ; but had things gone on a little longer in the same direction, we should soon have lost sight of the essence of duty, and of the spirituality of the divine law, and consequently men would have been treated as though before conversion they were fallen *below* all obligation to anything spiritually good, and as though after conversion they were raised *above* all obligation to anything more than they were actually inclined to perform. Thus *inclination* would have been made the measure of *obligation* ; duty would have been confined to the outward conduct ; the turpitude of sin unspeakably lessened, and grace proportionately eclipsed, both as to the pardon of sin and as to the application of salvation to the soul.

“Such was the state of our churches, when God was pleased to call my dear brother (Fuller) by His grace, and to bring him into the ministry ; and, soon after, into connection with the Northamptonshire Association.”

That this account of the condition of the Baptist churches was in no measure exaggerated was abundantly proved by the nature of the controversy excited by Mr. Fuller's work, entitled “The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation,” which was published in the year 1784. In this treatise he strongly advocated the positive side of the Modern Question, and contended that it was the duty of all to whom the gospel was published cordially to accept it. Perhaps never during the last hundred years have

the Baptist churches of England been involved in so great and earnest a controversy. Four or five champions, each representing an army of followers, quickly entered the lists against the author of this work, and defended the doctrine evidently espoused by a great number of the members of the churches, *that it was impossible for any but the elect to embrace the gospel, and that therefore it was useless and criminal to invite the unconverted to put their trust in Christ.*

Under these conditions it is not at all surprising that the first proposals to carry the gospel to the heathen were stoutly and persistently rejected. No wonder that Carey was denounced as an enthusiast. No wonder that when he first suggested his scheme to the ministers of the Northamptonshire Association he found no encouragement; for, with but a very few exceptions, those men dared not urge to repentance and faith even the regular members of their own congregations. What could be more unscriptural than to preach the gospel to the heathen? If there should happen to be any amongst the millions of worshippers of false gods who were "eternally fore-ordained to holiness, obedience, and happiness," "the peculiar blessings of redemption purchased by the death of Christ" would be actually imparted to them, "and they would *certainly* enjoy them," for "the special operations of the divine Spirit" were "*invincibly* efficacious, and could not be *frustrated* by the rebellious will of man." And as to any who were not favoured with *divine* election, it was *impossible* for them to believe in Christ.

It required seven or eight years of fermentation of the leaven denominated "Fullerism" to bring the churches to the state in which the year 1792 found them ; and the probability is that a less pungent and practical appeal, which would have failed to arouse a controversial and even a hostile feeling, would scarcely have yielded the results that may be ascribed to the publication of "The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation."

The question has been raised as to whether the origin of the Missionary Society was due to Carey or Fuller. With which of them originated the thought of the extension of gospel ministrations to the heathen world cannot be determined by us, as it was not known even to themselves. It appears to have been suggested by the writings of President Edwards, of Yale College, U.S., which were eagerly read in this country during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

But if the question be in whose mind the idea first assumed a definite shape, in whose heart the fire was first kindled to consecrate himself to the work, and who first exerted himself to secure the co-operation of his brethren in the formation of a society, the honour must unquestionably be given to William Carey.

The mention of the proposal, however, fell upon the minds of Pearce and Fuller like a spark on an inflammable substance. It is true, indeed, that the latter foresaw difficulties which caused him to hesitate, but all misgivings were quickly dispelled, and these three men working together as one, would not, could not rest until, having cleared away all difficulties, they had brought

together the churches and communicated to them somewhat of their own enthusiasm. The *idea* was born in heaven ; it was a seed dropped from above, to germinate in soil prepared by Him who "hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and things that are not to bring to nought things that are."

ALL the surroundings of this enterprise seemed unfavourable to its success. It was first suggested to, and subsequently undertaken by, a local association of churches, small in number and smaller still in social position and influence—a part, moreover, of a body the least distinguished by factitious celebrity, a body and a section of it that alike required to be educated.

And what of the *men*? Carey, an untutored country shoemaker, with not even the standing acquired by numbers of working-men through the institutions of a manufacturing district. His ideas of the physical globe were of a crude and elementary character ; and as he pursued his researches with a view to find out on which spot of the huge thing he should settle to pursue the one great object of his life, he constructed a leathern representative of our planet, on the surface of which he traced the outlines of countries, distinguishing by marks of his own those which stood most in need of gospel light. The walls of his workshop were hung with rude maps and cuttings from newspapers ; and ever and anon, as sitting on his bench with elbows extended or his hammer going, he would cast an anxious and inquiring look upon his treasures, whilst his thoughts made excursions, many of them of a most wild and unpractical character.

And what of Fuller? Brought up as the descendant of a line of working farmers, who from time immemorial had earned their bread by the sweat of their brow, he had received only an ordinary education. He had no position but that which he had won for himself; no *wealth*; and apparently nothing which could justify a prediction of success in such a project.

But after the lapse of about a quarter of a century what do we see in these men? A neat little gentleman in the saloon of the Governor-General of India who attracts the notice of a noble friend of the Governor. He inquires, "Who is this gentleman?" and receives the reply, "Dr. Carey, the Professor of Sanscrit, Bengalee, and Mahratta in the College of Fort William. He was once a shoemaker." The last word is overheard, whereupon the subject of conversation steps forward and says, "Excuse me, my Lord, I was only a cobbler."

The other man has become one of the most acute and practical theological writers of the age, who though learned in no tongue but that of his native land, has not brought that into discredit, and in all his voluminous writings, circulated throughout the United Kingdom and America, has left not a single sentence of which the question has to be asked, "What does it mean?"

This, then, was the condition of the Baptist churches when the proposal was first made by Carey to carry the gospel to the heathen world; they had for more than two generations been nurtured in a spirit of selfish protectionism, and Fuller, Ryland, and Sutcliffe were the Cobden, Bright, and Villiers of "the Bread of Life."

We feel justified in naming these men with such special prominence, because they constituted the trio on the bank who "*held the ropes for those down in the mine*"—to use the well-known figure of Mr. Fuller expressive of his sense of responsibility when asked why he did not obtain further assistance in his arduous labours. Others there were, not less interested in the great work, but on these three rested the chief responsibility.

Writing to Dr. Ryland, Mr. Fuller said : " I allow you and brother Sutcliffe to excel me in wisdom, especially in foreseeing difficulties ; but I fancy I excel you both, if it be an excellence, in courage. I therefore wish to advise with you both, but to execute without you."

In a powerful discourse on the " Pernicious Influence of Delay in Religious Concerns," Mr. Fuller said :

" Had Luther and his contemporaries acted upon this principle, they had never gone about the glorious work of the Reformation. When he saw the abominations of Popery he might have said, These things ought not to be ; but what can *I* do ? If the chief priests and rulers in different nations would but unite, something might be effected ; but what can *I* do, an individual and a poor man ? I may render myself an object of persecution, or, which is worse, of universal contempt ; and what good end will be answered by it ? Had Luther argued thus, had he fancied that because preachers and prelates were not the first to engage in the good work therefore the time was not yet come to build the house of the Lord—the house of the Lord, for anything he had done, might have lain waste to this day.

“Instead of waiting for the removal of difficulties, we ought, in many cases, to consider them as purposely laid in our way in order to try the sincerity of our religion. He who had all power in heaven and earth could not only have sent forth His apostles into all the world, but have so ordered it that all the world should treat them with kindness and aid them in their mission ; but, instead of that, He told them to lay their accounts with persecution, and the loss of all things. This was no doubt to try their sincerity ; and the difficulties laid in our way are equally designed to try ours.

“Let it be considered whether it is not owing to this principle that so few and so feeble efforts have been made for the propagation of the gospel in the world. When the Lord Jesus commissioned His apostles He commanded them to go and teach ‘all nations,’ to preach the gospel to ‘every creature ;’ and that notwithstanding the difficulties and oppositions that would lie in the way. The apostles executed their commission with assiduity and fidelity ; but since their days we seem to sit down half contented that the greater part of the world should still remain in ignorance and idolatry. Some noble efforts have been made ; but they are small in number when compared with the magnitude of the object. And why is it so ? Are the souls of men of less value than heretofore ? No. Is Christianity less true or less important than in former ages ? This will not be pretended. Are there no opportunities for societies or individuals in Christian nations to convey the gospel to the heathens ? This cannot be pleaded so long as opportunities are

found to trade with them, yea, and (what is a disgrace to the name of Christians) to buy them and sell them and treat them with worse than savage barbarity. We have opportunities in abundance: the improvement of navigation, and the maritime and commercial turn of this country, furnish us with these; and it deserves to be considered whether this is not a circumstance that renders it a duty peculiarly binding on us. *Haggai. i. 2.*

"The truth is, if I am not mistaken, we wait for we know not what; we seem to think the time is not come, the time for the Spirit to be poured down from on high. We *pray* for the conversion and salvation of the world, and yet *neglect the ordinary means* by which those ends have been used to be accomplished. It pleased God, heretofore, by the 'foolishness of preaching' to save them that believed; and there is reason to think it will still please God to work by that distinguished means. Ought we not, then, at least to try by some means to convey more of the good news of salvation to the world around us than has hitherto been conveyed? The encouragement to the heathen is still in force—'*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*;' 'but how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?'"

Mr. Carey was present and heard this sermon, as also were many of those who had refused—some of them not in the kindest manner—to listen to his proposal. The

impression produced by the sermon was most deep ; it is said that the ministers were scarcely able to speak to each other at its close, and they so far committed themselves as to request Mr. Carey to publish his "thoughts."

182 This was in the year 1791. In the following spring Mr. Carey preached his memorable sermon at Nottingham, taking for his text the words of Isaiah : "*Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations. Spare not ; lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes, for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.*" The sermon, divided into two parts—" *Expect great things from God,*" and "*Attempt great things for God,*" was as animating as it was criminating. Many who had openly opposed the project wept for shame ; others, who had treated it with indifference, were scarcely less affected. Old prejudices fell away, and it was resolved "that against the next ministers' meeting at Kettering, a plan should be prepared for the purpose of forming a society for propagating the gospel among the heathen."

The fine old house, with its goodly front and picturesque surroundings, now, and from the jubilee year of 1842, known as "*The Mission House,*" was the scene of the great event—the formation of the first of modern missions. In the back-parlour of that house, then occupied by the widow of Beeby Wallis, the most active of Mr. Fuller's deacons, assembled twelve plain, unpretending men, chiefly ministers, to attempt that which to many seemed the most pretentious and utopian of projects—

the conversion of the heathen. Where a commencement was to be made, and by what means funds adequate to such an undertaking were to be obtained, were alike in the obscure future; they themselves contributed all that they could afford, but being all poor men, the first list of subscriptions amounted only to the well-remembered sum of £13 2s. 6d. It was determined that the society should be called "The Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen." The Rev. Andrew Fuller was appointed secretary, and the Rev. Reynold Hogg treasurer; and then, after much prayer and earnest wrestling with God, the meeting was adjourned for a month, to be held at Northampton on October 31st.

On this date the same men again meet together, and receive with deep gratitude the sum of £70 from the branch society at Birmingham. Still they have no definite plans before them. Whom they shall send, and whither he shall be sent, are altogether undetermined. And at the third meeting, held in the month of November, it is resolved that they shall gain what information they can from books of travel, Christian merchants, or from such persons as would at least favour the design of converting the heathen, and to consider the qualifications for a missionary. Meanwhile two brethren, Stedman and Saffery, were selected for an evangelistic tour through the length and breadth of Cornwall, preaching in the streets, the municipal halls, and other rooms in every town and in many villages of that county.

It is well known how this question was settled by the

providential appearance of Mr. Thomas ; how that Mr. Carey offered himself to accompany him as a missionary to the East Indies ; how that the services of these two men were gladly accepted by the committee ; and how that with only £115 in hand it was resolved that they set sail forthwith for India.

The valedictory services are thus described in the old minute book : "The forenoon was spent in prayer. At two o'clock Mr. Thomas preached from Psalm xvi. 4—'Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god ;' proving how this truth was exemplified in the state of the heathen, and exciting the compassion of Christians to endeavour to rescue them from their miserable situation. Mr. Hogg preached from Acts xxi. 14—'The will of the Lord be done.' After this Mr. Fuller addressed brethren Thomas and Carey from John xx. 21—'Peace be unto you ; as my Father hath sent me, so send I you.'"

It is perfectly well known what difficulties were encountered in securing for the missionaries a passage to India, and how at last, on the 13th day of April, 1793, they embarked on board the Danish ship *Kron Princess Maria*.

It was with a true, unselfish gladness that they left their native land. They looked *forward* to the strange country, and not *backward* upon old England ; and on the morning of the day on which they sailed their joyous feelings were well expressed when one of them wrote : "*The ship is come, the signal made, the guns are fired, and we are going with a fair wind. Farewell, my dear*

brethren and sisters, farewell! May the God of Jacob be ours and yours by sea and land, for time and for eternity. Most affectionately adieu."

There was one heart quickened to an intense passion by this movement; a heart which from the first throbbed with deepest love to the souls of men at home and abroad.

"That dear man of God, Mr. Pearce," writes Mr. Fuller in 1794, "is resolved to go to India if his brethren in the ministry will give their consent. He requests that a day may be set apart for fasting and prayer by the committee, when he promises to open his heart, and to be decided by our advice. We have fixed on November 12, at Northampton.

"Though I am persuaded the Lord 'will take it well that it was in his heart,' yet at present I do not by any means think it desirable. His post is of great importance; I could not conduct the mission without his assistance. He is very useful at Birmingham. His learning, piety, character, and popular abilities promise to render him one of the first ministers of the denomination. I admire the disinterestedness, ardour, and magnanimity of his soul, however, though he should never go."

The *seraphic* Pearce, as he was called, died in 1799. The tidings reached Mr. Fuller at Glasgow. "O Jonathan," he wrote, "very pleasant hast thou been to me. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan! Thou wast slain upon thy high places!"

Carey, in anticipation of the event, addressed to him the following remarkable epistle:

"TO BROTHER PEARCE, DEAD OR LIVING.

"From the last letters I received from you, I fear you are removed from us to that world of realities where unutterable joy always fills the soul. I am at a loss how to address you, whether as an inhabitant of earth or heaven. If I had reason to think you tabernacled with men, should address you as usual—should send you some short account of India and the mission—should inquire how the churches prosper, and communicate something of my inmost soul to you—should tell you of this—and this, &c., &c. Thus I should indulge myself in familiarity with my very dear brother, and should feel pleasure in communicating my very inmost heart.

"But who knows where the spirit of the just made perfect will be stationed? for all the world is full of God, and where God is there are rivers of pleasure flowing for evermore. If so, you may, if you be indeed delivered from the burden of the flesh, be happy anywhere; and is there any impropriety in supposing that happy saints are stationed near those scenes on which their hearts were most intently fixed while living. If the idea is unfounded and wrong, yet I must indulge the reveries and suppose my dear, my generous friend to be near us in India. Methinks I see your spirit, which was here long ago, now at full liberty. Seas nor continents can restrain it longer. 'Tis now itself: it flies one hour to Mudnabatty; inquires there of Sook-mun and Hurry Charrun, how they are affected with gospel truth. Anon it goes to —. Yes, my dear brother, I hear the rebuke of your friendly spirit, I feel admonished for my guilty sloth. I think, had Pearce

been here how would he have felt at this and this, &c. ? I really think it possible that you may be now hovering in my room or seated by my side. Oh, had you but the organs of speech, or were you but visible in your unembodied state, how would I have indulged myself in your society ! I would inquire, would attend, would—but I conclude, for whether in the body or out of the body, I am very, very affectionately yours, W. CAREY.”

Reference has been made to the fact that Mr. Fuller was appointed secretary to this missionary society, and we need have no hesitation in saying that seldom has the wisdom of an appointment been more abundantly proved. His sense of the responsibility involved, and his determination not to shrink from it, are indicated by the words of an address which he delivered to a number of his ministerial brethren shortly after the departure of the missionaries. “Friends,” he said, “talk to me about coadjutors and assistants ; but, I know not how it is, I find a difficulty. Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us, and while we were then deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, ‘Well, I will go down if you will hold the rope.’ But before he went down he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us at the mouth of the pit to this effect, that while we lived we should never let go the rope. You understand me. There was great responsibility attached to us who began the business.”

As secretary to the society, the work necessary to be done at home pressed far more heavily upon him than upon any man in England; to him of course was intrusted the entire management of the accounts and the general correspondence. The number of letters written by his own hand to the missionaries was almost legion; whilst perhaps an equal or greater number were written to the friends of the enterprise at home. Upon him devolved the chief advocacy of the society's claims with cabinet ministers, members of Parliament, and East India directors; nor were there wanting bitter and subtle enemies, both at home and abroad, who left no means untried to accomplish the ruin of the mission, and whose machinations were successively exposed and defeated by the unwearied pen of the secretary. "In all our committee meetings," says Dr. Ryland, "our concerns were managed without debate or contention; and this, not because others had not full liberty to state their opinions, but because we all felt as brethren; and if his opinion was treated with peculiar respect, it was because we found, by constant experience, that such was the soundness of his judgment, that we scarcely ever had cause to regret a compliance with his advice."

In addition to all this, and whilst still having the oversight of the church at Kettering, and publishing more numerous works than many a man whose whole time is devoted to literary pursuits, he spent not less than a fourth of his time in journeys to collect funds for the support of the society. For this purpose he went five times into Scotland, once to Ireland, repeatedly to London, and

once at least into Lancashire, Yorkshire, Norfolk, Essex, the West of England, and Wales.

These journeys were made under circumstances the most difficult and trying ; there was of course no “Flying Scotchman” or “Flying Dutchman” spinning along at the rate of sixty miles an hour—indeed the stage-coach system was but approaching its efficiency, and many were his hours both of day and night, summer and winter, which were occupied by this slow style of travel. More than that, wherever he went, his works having gone before him, he was surrounded by eager controversialists whose desire for combat he could ill afford the time to gratify ; whilst the reputation for uncommon wisdom which he had won brought round him a great company of those who sought counsel on matters personal, religious, ecclesiastical, and political.

Mr. Fuller was not a man who would have chosen to undertake these journeys ; and nothing but a sense of duty could have induced him to spend so great a part of his time away from home, especially for the purpose of begging. In reference to his first journey he says, “I am going among faces which I have never seen. My spirit revolts at the idea, but duty calls. . . . May the God of Israel preserve my family, friends, and connections during my absence.” And when he had reached Aberdeen he wrote to his wife expressing the utmost satisfaction that he was then at the farthest distance, and that all his future movements would be *towards home*. The immense sums of money collected by him sufficiently indicate how successfully he appealed to Scotch generosity ; but he was

always most careful that his solicitations should not be too persistent; indeed more than once he absolutely declined to receive donations which were offered without a willing mind. On one occasion he called at the house of the Rev. Mr. Cecil, a celebrated clergyman of the Church of England, and asked for a subscription for the mission. Mr. Cecil not only refused, but also spoke in slighting terms both of the movement and of the body from which it emanated. "However," he said, "there is one great man among you, and his treatise, entitled 'The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation,' is one of the most masterly productions I know." "For all the faults in that work, sir," said Mr. Fuller, "I am responsible." Mr. Cecil rose from his chair, expressed the most eager apologies, and earnestly pressed a subscription. "No, sir, not a farthing! You do not give in faith." And it was not without considerable persuasion that the perhaps too sensitive collector could be induced to receive the money.

Mr. Fuller's first journey was to Scotland in the year 1799, and was occasioned by a somewhat singular circumstance. The Rev. Messrs. Innes and Ewing, of Edinburgh, had visited Birmingham in the year 1794, where they met with Mr. Pearce, whose ardent zeal for the mission was in some measure imparted to them, and on their return home they advocated the claims of the Society with no little success. In the following year Mr. McLean also, whilst in London, learned so much, that on his arrival home he determined to overlook the points of difference between the Scotch and English Baptists, and

stimulate his people to aid the mission. The result was that a number of influential men in Edinburgh became heartily in sympathy with the enterprise, amongst whom were Dr. Charles Stuart, M.D., Mr. Campbell, Dr. Erskine, and Mr. Haldane. On one occasion Mr. Robert Haldane happened to inquire of Dr. Stuart what news he had concerning the society. The doctor replied, "Dismal intelligence ! The funds are low, and no success as yet." "As to funds," said Mr. H., "I always intended to give them something, but never did. Could you desire Mr. Fuller to draw on me for £100 ; and tell him that if he would come down and preach, I am persuaded my brother would welcome him and so would Mr. Ewing." Dr. Stuart wrote at once, and Mr. Fuller expressed his willingness to do as desired. And one evening, when he was in the company of a number of friends, a lady inquired, "Oh, sir, why did you not come here before ?" "Why, madam," was the reply, "every man, as Sir Robert Walpole said, has his price ; and till that gentleman there sent me a hundred pounds, I did not know it would be worth while to visit you."

Mr. Fuller set off for Scotland on October 2nd, the anniversary of the formation of the mission, and "worked his way out" *via* Hull and Newcastle, in each of which towns he preached three or four sermons, and took an equal number of collections. On arriving at Edinburgh he was received with the utmost kindness, some of his theological opponents being the most cordial in their welcome. Glasgow was also visited, and great enjoyment experienced in the society of the venerable David Dale,

a man of great wealth and of distinguished piety. He wished Mr. Fuller to *draw upon him* at any time to meet difficulties, which generous offer was declined. Mr. Fuller preached almost every day in the week, often two or three times, and generally to crowded congregations. The largest audience he had at that time ever seen was gathered together at the Glasgow Tabernacle, and that although many hundreds went away for want of room. He returned to Kettering with upwards of £900 for the mission, leaving the savour of his presence behind him, and a most earnest desire that he would speedily repeat his visit.

The warmth of his reception and the success of his labours induced him to make the same journey three years afterwards. On August 25th, 1802, whilst on his way, he writes home from Barton, Lincolnshire: "I begin to feel awkward, having reduced my four guineas to four shillings; I am afraid I should be in the situation of a number of small ships hereabouts at low tide—run aground! I am thinking whether I must not take a walk before dinner, instead of having one! If I could but get over the water I should do."

Instead of again visiting Newcastle, he made for his destination by way of York, "where," he says, "I determined to stop a day, and try what I could do among the serious Church-people. I understood there were no Dissenters here, except a few Socinian Baptists." Even here he was received with much kindness by the clergy, and went away with twelve guineas.

On reaching Edinburgh he preached twice, in the

morning to about fifteen hundred people, and in the evening to about four thousand, when they had a collection of £130. From thence he made for Dundee, in company with Mr. Wardlaw, "a young minister who agrees to accompany him his whole journey in Scotland." Concerning him he afterwards writes, "Mr. Wardlaw and I set off for Glasgow, twenty-seven miles. This young man is a promising character; he was brought up for the Burgher Secession, but has left it for the Tabernacle connection. He has a place now building in Glasgow which will hold ten or twelve hundred people. He read the hymns and prayed for me during the journey, which has been 150 miles since last Monday, and has added about £70 to my stock."

Whilst Mr. Fuller was at Glasgow, the pastor of a church which professed to be in fellowship with the English Baptists brought a message that they would be glad to hear his faith, and if it accorded with theirs to have him preach and join them at the Lord's Supper. He assured them that he did not come to Glasgow as a candidate for their pulpit, and that it was indifferent to him whether or not he occupied it. Subsequently a deacon came with the decision of the church, which was to the effect that if he would not make a confession they could not admit him. "Very well then," he replied, "I shall go to the Tabernacle, and consider your conduct as a renunciation of connection with us as English churches, for it implies you have no confidence in us." The Baptists repented, but it was too late. He preached in the Tabernacle in the afternoon to four thousand, and in the

evening to nearly five thousand, and collected £200. On the following day two deacons of the church called upon him, assured him that the refusal of their pulpit was against the will of the church, expressed a wish that he would overlook it, and preach there in the evening. This he did, and collected £45.

He again visited Scotland in 1805, with greater success than ever. Writing from Dundee on July 11th, he says : "While I was at Edinburgh I called on Mr. McLean, and sat an hour with him. We had much explanation in a very friendly way. They make a collection for us next Lord's day. They said I should do but little this time ; but if it do not amount to as much or more than heretofore, I am mistaken. Mr. Haldane's people are proposing to send out three missionaries of their own ; and I told them I hoped they would give nothing which would interfere with their own undertaking ; yet our collection on Lord's day was upwards of £120. If the people *will* give, how can I help it."

His fourth journey was in 1808, and there appeared to be no limit to the generosity of those to whom he appealed. From Hull, Newcastle, Alnwick, and Berwick, he received £200. During a fortnight spent in Edinburgh the collections amounted to about £800. The people of Aberdeen contributed between £80 and £90. On one day in Glasgow two collections realized more than £300, whilst after an evening service conducted at Paisley they collected £114 ; in all £2,000 clear !

Mr. Fuller visited Scotland again, and for the last time, in 1813. Now as formerly he had not the slightest diffi

culty in raising funds ; he had not to beg, but simply to preach, and then receive the hundreds of pounds which were gladly brought to him ; and the sum realized even by his fifth visit to the same people could not have amounted to less than £1,000. From Dundee he writes, "Have just arrived here and seen a Mr. Chalmers, a clergyman of Kilmany, an extraordinary writer. His eloquence is like that of Mr. R. Hall. P. S.—Chalmers is a fine character." Mr. F. spent a night at his house.

Throughout the length and breadth of England he also travelled, and never in vain. To London he went repeatedly. In one fortnight he travelled 400 miles, preached sixteen times, and collected £130 in the Eastern Counties. In the following spring (April 13, 1811) he wrote Dr. Ryland, "We are in great straits as a society for money, upwards of £2,000 in drafts on us is just arrived. I fear we shall be considerably more than aground. We must work to replenish the fund this summer, even though the failure of trade should render it like rowing against wind and tide."

On May 26, 1814, he writes : "Between now and the first week in August I have no rest. I give you my routes that you may write no letters to me at Kettering while I am out, and may write if occasion should require to other places. June 6th I set off for Essex, where I shall collect between the 8th and the 20th. From thence I go to London to the annual meeting on the 22nd ; come down to Kettering on the 24th or 25th ; set off for the North of England on the 27th for five Lord's days. I expect to spend the first at Liverpool ; the second at

Manchester ; the third at Leeds ; the fourth at Newcastle ; and the fifth at Hull." The first part of this proposed journey had to be relinquished owing to sickness, but he proceeded to the North, and on July 19th wrote from Durham : "I have written this day an application to the East India Directors for permission for Mr. Yates to go to Serampore. My hands are full. In the last three Lord's days, and on the week-days between them, I have collected about £500, and after doing a little more in this neighbourhood I hope to reach home about the 19th inst." He came back to Kettering with £600.

In addition to all this Mr. Fuller was "set for the defence" of the mission, and very great was the labour involved in protecting its interests.

Early in 1805 an insurrection broke out in Vellore, in which a number of British soldiers were massacred ; and though it was clearly proved that not a single missionary had approached that part of Hindustan, yet an attempt was made to lay the entire blame on the operations of the mission. This was wholly on the authority of *private letters*, no official communication having been received by the East India Company. For the purpose of working upon the fears of the Government and E. I. Co., pamphlets were published by individual writers, whilst the *Edinburgh Reviewers* joined in the attack and directed their bitterest sarcasm against Carey and his coadjutors. The *Quarterly Review* rendered good service in the defence of the missionaries. Replying to those who called them *fools, madmen, tinkers, Calvinists, and schismatics*, the *Quarterly Review* says : "*These low-born and low-*

bred mechanics have translated the whole Bible into Bengalee, and have by this time printed it. They are printing the New Testament in the Sanscrit, the Orissa, Mahratta, Hindustanee, and Guzarat, and translating it into Persic, Telinga, Karnata, Chinese, and the language of the Seiks and Burmans; and in four of these languages they are going on with the Bible. Extraordinary as this is, it will appear more so when it is remembered, that of these men, one was originally a shoemaker, another a printer at Hull, and a third the master of a charity school at Bristol. Only fourteen years have elapsed since Thomas and Carey set foot in India, and in that time have these missionaries acquired this gift of tongues. In fourteen years these low-born and low-bred mechanics have done more towards spreading the knowledge of the Scriptures among the heathens than has been accomplished, or even attempted, by all the world besides."

Mr. Fuller received a letter from Mr. Grant informing him that a public meeting of the proprietors of India stock was called to inquire into the causes of the Vellore mutiny, and that his presence would be required in London to resist attacks which it was expected would be made against the mission. He at once hastened to town, and writes as follows:

"Next morning I met three of the London Missionary Society. They were very urgent on me to act on the offensive. 'You are guided,' said they, 'by Mr. Charles Grant, a timid and irresolute man. He hopes to get the threatened discussion on June 17th put off. We had rather it should come on, and if they would not bring it

forward, we could and would. Eleven proprietors can at any time call a meeting or court. We could find eleven friends among the proprietors who would call a court, and make a motion that as rumours had gone forth unfavourable to the missionaries it should be inquired whether they had any share or blame in the Vellore mutiny.' I was so far of their mind as to wish the business to come to some issue, but did not like to provoke, or be plaintiff in the discussion ; but as they had an appointment to meet Lord Teignmouth, and I Mr. Grant that day, we would meet again.

"Mr. Grant expressed a hope that the threatened discussion on the 17th would pass over. I, impressed in a measure with the conversation I had with the others, answered, 'I hope, sir, it will not ; I had rather they would say all they have to say, than otherwise.' He looked hard at me. 'You think,' he said, 'that I am timid and irresolute. I will just show you two or three letters which will convince you of the prejudices and power which you have to encounter. You wish the discussion to come on, but you do not expect any other surely than that you will be outvoted in the Directory. What do you mean to do then ?' 'Appeal to the Board of Control, and perhaps to the king !' 'I do not think you have any reason to hope for the king's interference. I will just show you two or three letters which will convince you of what you have to encounter.'

"These letters convinced me that our principal danger arose from the Board of Control, who had actually been calling out, 'Why don't you order all those missionaries

home?’ Also that the strongest remonstrances (arguments I should rather say) had been sent in answer by Mr. Grant, showing that these men were not intemperate incendiaries, nor heady, nor ignorant; that no ill effects had ever arisen from their labours; that they were—several of them—men of learning, and by their good conduct had recommended themselves to the India Government. I saw also by these letters that Lord Melville, late Mr. Dundas, actually rules India (his son is the president of the Board of Control), and that Mr. Grant had been writing to persons on your behalf who would with most effect speak to Lord Melville. On seeing all this (which was a kind of panoramic view of the army of Xerxes, and of the opposition of the 300 Greeks at the Straits of Thermopolæ), I could but thank Mr. Grant for his great kindness, and declare my readiness to follow his advice. This was on Wednesday, June 10th. He then recommended me to get my statement printed, but not distributed until I had seen him again, and the time fixed for this was Tuesday morning, June 16th, the meeting at the India House being on the following day.

“On leaving Mr. Grant I went by appointment to meet the three friends who had waited on Lord T—— At the same time I soon found Lord T—— had made them out of conceit of their strength as much as Mr. Grant had me. Having seen Mr. Grant on the 16th I found the threatened discussion would evaporate in nothing. He then directed me to send printed statements to all the directors, to all the members of the Board of Control, to the principal

members of administration, to several of the nobility, and to certain female branches of the royal family. Moreover I must write inside the cover to all the directors and the president of the Board of Control, that I and another member of the society would in a few days wait on them, and if agreeable would be glad of a few minutes' conversation on the subject. Thus I had two or three weeks' work cut out ; and as Mr. Grant told me, I must expect it to be up-hill work, but it would have a conciliatory effect with some, and enable us to judge of the degree of opposition we might have to expect.

"Next day (the 17th) I found the motion was made at the India House, but our good friend Parry, the chairman, had talked beforehand with the mover, and had so neutralized him that his motion passed over as mere milk and water, and no reflections whatever were thrown out against the missions.

"My next object was to circulate the statement and to visit the parties with Mr. Burls. We waited on fifteen or sixteen out of the twenty-four, eight being missed as not at home ; four or five were friends, four or five enemies, the rest a sort of neutrals. But the person of greatest importance was the president of the Board of Control. Mr. Grant being anxious for me to have an interview with him, I found him (Mr. R. Dundas, son of Lord Melville) an open, intelligent, well-behaved man. Having asked him if he had read the pamphlet, he replied that he had carefully read it ; and instead of thinking the conduct of the missionaries improper, it appeared to him to have been highly proper. ' But, Mr. Fuller,' said he, ' the minds

of the Hindoos are attached to their superstitions, and require to be treated with prudence and caution. I saw a paper, written I suppose by some of your people, in which there were some strong things.' F.: 'Do you recollect any of them, sir?' D.: 'Yes, it was said, "Your shasters are founded in fable, and are fit for women and children rather than men," or to this effect. To be sure, this is true, but it is provoking; if we were told so, we could not bear it.' F.: 'It happens, sir, that I have seen that paper and can tell you the history of it; it was not written by any of the missionaries, but by a converted native since dead. The language may seem strong to us, sir, but we mustn't compare a high-spirited Englishman with a Hindoo; they will bear that and much more without any tumult being excited. The tract seems to have been translated, and sent over by some person in India; I met with it in the India House.' D.: 'I acknowledge we have had no account of these things but by private letters.' F.: 'It is our request, sir, not to be judged by private letters and rumours, but by explicit accusations, which we may be able to meet.' D.: 'That is but fair.'

"I one day called on the Marquis Wellesley, and sat half an hour with him. I told him what had befallen you since his departure, and he told me very frankly the principles on which he acted in his conduct towards you, viz., that he thought it his duty to facilitate your labours, so far as he could do it without implicating Government, or causing it to be considered patronizing you. I said we desired only to be protected like other subjects, and that only while our conduct was deserving.

"I parted with him by asking his lordship's offices with the present Government; which he promised to render, and offered me access to him on any occasion.

"In an interview with Lord Teignmouth, who had been Governor-General, he read to me a representation which he had drawn up in favour of missions; but said, 'You'll not expect me to tell you what use I intend to make of it in your favour.' It went to prove that our footing, as a nation, in India was very precarious, unless we had a body of the people attached to us, and which could be done only by Christianity. He first prefaced it, however, by stating that missions were right, and whatever was right would be found to be wise; but added, 'As the *policy* of a measure may be thought necessary to be established, I will undertake to prove that, independently of every other consideration, it is sound policy to encourage Christian missions in India.'"

Little was it suspected that these "letters from individuals," which prejudiced the minds of the directors, were in fact preliminary to a course designed to crush not only the Baptist Mission, but every organization for the propagation of the Christian religion, to recall every individual who dared to interest himself in the moral and spiritual welfare of the natives of India.

The first in the field was one of the directors. In a pamphlet addressed to the chairman, he insisted on the danger of *interfering* with the religious opinions of the natives of India, and proposed bringing forward a motion on the subject at a general court of proprietors. Mr. Fuller was prompt to meet the danger. On reaching

London, he says, in a letter to Mr. Ward, "I called on the secretary of the London Missionary Society (Mr. Burder), found that he was aware of all that was going on, and busy in circulating our address to the proprietors of India stock. I then procured and read the pamphlet; also another, more immediately aimed at you, by a Major Scott-Waring. . . . I shut myself up and began to answer them. About the 19th December I was informed that some of the directors talked of recalling Brown, Buchanan, and Carey. . . . I then waited on Marquis Wellesley, who was decidedly averse to such a measure as the most impolitic as well as unjust, and promised *if the ministry asked his opinion he would give it against such a measure*. Called also on Lord Teignmouth, who was very frank. He read me a memorial which he had presented to the directors on the subject, and I was elsewhere assured that he had also presented one to the Board of Control, and that the board disliked the pamphlet.

"On December 21, 1807, a meeting was called by the friends of missions. They did little else than appoint a committee to watch the motions of the enemy. By this committee I was requested to answer the two pieces.

"December 23rd, several of us went to the India House, and seated ourselves in the gallery. One of the directors made a speech; but declined a discussion, only requesting the chairman to assure him that no interference would be allowed in future in the religious opinions of the natives. The chairman refused any other than a general answer—that the directors would do that which appeared to be the best, or to that effect."

Another assailant was found in "a Bengal officer," who evidently thought more highly of Hindooism than of Christianity.

Answers to the three pamphlets were written by Mr. Fuller, under the title of "Apology for the late Christian Missions to India." Referring, in a letter to Dr. Marshman, to a threat of these men that if defeated at the India House they would bring it before Parliament, Mr. Fuller says, "We do not fear them. We will play the man and fight for the cause of our God, and Jehovah do that which pleases Him. Mr. C. Grant delivered a very able speech before the directors. Lord Teignmouth is a firm friend on the Board of Control. Government, too, is more favourable of late."

Early in 1808 a renewed attack was made and defeated, and later in the year, at a court of proprietors, another effort was made for a recall of the missionaries, on the testimony of "letters just received from India," accompanied by a translation of a tract issued by the missionaries, in which the religion of the natives was abused in inflammatory language. Lord Teignmouth, in a friendly pamphlet on the subject, admitted and much regretted the indiscretion of the missionaries "in one instance." Mr. Fuller took care to inform his lordship that "the tract had been mistranslated, and that the inflammatory passages were not in the original. He has sent for the original and got it, and if Fernandez's¹ translation will bear the test he will make good use of it with the Board of Control; and I should not be sur-

¹ A son of a Calcutta merchant, then on a visit to England.

prised if it were better for us than if we had not been misrepresented." Mr. Grant writes: "After so much labour and so many prayers what shall we say—not to the malice of enemies—that was to be expected—but to the imprudence of our friends?" The chairman, well informed on the subject, covered the assailants with confusion. The enemies of missions were defeated.

The friends of Christian missions were on the alert early in 1812, in the anticipation of the renewal of the East India Company's charter in the following year. Writing to Dr. Marshman, May 15th, Mr. Fuller says: "About a month ago I was sent for to London, on account of an application about to be made for the renewal of the Company's charter, that I and my brethren might take measures to get a clause inserted that should give protection to our missionaries, and permission to send more, as occasion required, in British ships. Sutcliffe, Hinton, Ryland, and myself were all there. We had meetings with various friends to missions, and an understanding with different societies, though each applied only for itself. "The Society for Missions to Africa and to the East" had a public meeting, the object of which was to impress the public mind out of doors, as the members of Parliament said, which would enable them to defend it indoors. The resolutions of this society, which were framed by Wilberforce and his friends, were so worded that if their requests were granted ours would be included in them. We had at that time drawn up and sent letters to the premier, Mr. Perceval, and to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, as

president of the Board of Control, offering but not pressing for an interview. We then drew up a letter to be printed and sent to members of Parliament. While this was executing I was arrested in my course by a bad cold, so that I could not go out of doors ; however, I kept the printer at work, got everything ready, with your last memoir of the translations, signed all the letters as secretary, and then thought I might leave town. I did preach next Lord's day, but had nearly lost my voice. On Wednesday I was to have gone to Nottingham and Derby ; but from that day to this I am confined in my room.

"On Saturday, the 9th inst., Mr. Perceval wrote me a respectful letter, assuring me of his disposition to give every attention to the subject. Mr. Guttridge and another, as deputies from the Dissenting body, waited on him at our request. He talked freely with them on the subject. He was not for bringing religious rights into discussion before the House ; but as the charter would allow various privileges to traders, he thought it must extend protection to them all, amongst whom religious people would be included. This was about Saturday the 9th ; on Monday the 11th Mr. Perceval was shot through the heart by an assassin, who secreted himself in the lobby of the House of Commons."¹

¹ Though Mr. Perceval's letter was dated the 9th, it was not received until Tuesday morning the 12th, it being, I suppose, too late for post on Saturday. On Tuesday morning I was returning from a walk when the postman put the letter into my hand, at the same time informing me of the tragical event. On handing the letter to my father at the breakfast-table I repeated what had been

The statesman so ruthlessly sacrificed to private resentment was by no means a popular man. A little episode I witnessed in the street, trifling as it was, was an echo of a widespread feeling among the classes who most fearfully suffered from a policy of which he was a strenuous advocate. "Have you heer'd," said a gossip to her neighbour, "old Peercival's dead? We shall have a big loaf now." While some discharged the heartless pun: "Aye, he didn't 'perceive all,' did he?" The condition of the poor was at the time lamentable; few of the labouring classes knowing the taste of wheaten bread, barley being their staple food, and of that a scanty supply.

In a letter addressed to the Serampore missionaries early in 1814, Mr. Fuller says: "We have had a very busy year in 1813; the new charter has filled our hands, heads, and hearts. I was the greater part of the spring in London. We consulted with different bodies of men who had one common interest, as the Evangelical Church Society, London Missionary Society, and the Methodists. We had interviews with the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and with Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister. We gave the former to understand that we were far from wishing to give trouble to His Majesty's Government, but if we were to make the attempt, we could have a great number of petitions for what we sought. He was not well pleased with this, and told us of his having been lately told me, on which he made no remark. He was just then slowly recovering from the illness mentioned above, and it was not till it became the subject of conversation at the table that he woke up to the consciousness of the fact.

informed of a disturbance in Calcutta, occasioned by some of your preaching. Lord Liverpool appeared to be sincerely friendly to the mission, and assured us of his doing everything in its favour that could be done; but added, 'We cannot allow you to send missionaries without leave; and when there they must, in common with merchants and all other Europeans, be under the control of Government.' We alleged that it was very arbitrary to be subject to removal from a post on mere suspicion. He replied that it was not peculiar to us as missionaries, and if we had just ground of complaint, we could obtain redress either from the Board of Control or by our friends in Parliament. We complained of the hostile spirit of the directors. He answered that we should not in future be left in their hands, but in those of His Majesty's Government, who (he was so free as to say) existed in a manner by public opinion. 'When,' said he, have you ever asked for relief as Dissenters, but we have been willing to the utmost of our power to give it you? We have redressed the grievances of which you have complained in every instance excepting Jamaica, and that is equally beyond our power as it is beyond yours.' In short, we were almost melted down by the candour, openness, and kindness of Lord Liverpool. When I was at Hull in 1811 I became acquainted with Mr. Thomson, M.P., and banker of that place; he heard every sermon I preached, and besides giving me twenty guineas, gave five guineas at a time at every public collection, forty guineas in all. Calling on him in London, after having seen

Lord Liverpool, I entered on the business. He spoke of a warm dispute between the Directors and the Board of Control—that is, between the Company and the Government. ‘If they come to an agreement, the new charter may be hurried through, giving you little or no time to object; but if they do not agree, their conflict will give you time to take measures accordingly.’

“I communicated these remarks to a few of the leading men of the other societies, who were quite undecided what course to take about petitioning. I had scarcely left London before I saw in the papers that Lord Castlereagh had brought forward propositions for a bishop and three archdeacons to be sent to India, and this was all. This was the best thing that could have befallen us; it operated like an electric shock through the land, and united all the friends of Christianity in a determination to petition without a moment's delay. Churchmen, Dissenters, Methodists, and almost all parties in Scotland were all alive, and poured in such a flood of petitions as was scarcely ever seen. The Legislature for eight or ten weeks were overwhelmed with them; there were seldom less than nine or ten petitions presented in a day; it was not a shower, but a set rain. Lord Castlereagh smiled, and remarked that he feared that they should have to throw the poor bishops, like another Jonah, into the sea. The adversaries of the mission had their patience worn out. One of them gave notice of a motion in favour of ‘the liberty of the Hindoos.’ He waited a week or two in hopes that the petitions would cease, but they kept on; at last he

gave it up. While these things were going on everything was done that could be to influence the minds of members of both Houses. In this business I was engaged for weeks, and truly we found that such was the effect of the petitions, both on Lords and Commons, that we met with a very respectful reception in almost every instance. They seemed to think that if they did not grant our requests the nation would rise up against them; yet nothing threatening or disrespectful appeared in any of the petitions.

“In another interview with Lord Liverpool we pressed our two points—namely, liberty to go out, and security against arbitrary removal—and resolved not to *consent* to anything short of them, but *accept* what we could get. I told Lord Liverpool that I did not conceive how it was possible that the Board of Control, any more than the Directors, could be judges of the qualifications of a missionary. He admitted it, and allowed that they must be governed by respectable *testimonials*. He was pleased to say that *our* testimonials would doubtless be respected. Our friends in London were of great use in this business, and were very diligent. The bill passed in June by a decided majority in our favour, but yet subject to these two restrictions against which we had protested.”

Among the opponents of the mission whose utterances Mr. Fuller included in his “Apologetic Defence of Missions” was Dr. Barrow, who delivered a “prize sermon” before the University of Oxford, from which Mr. Fuller culls the following sentiments in reference to a Church Establishment for India. “No translator, Indian or Euro-

pean, should be employed on the occasion who was not ready in his official labours to suppress any heterodox and peculiar notions of his own. Missionaries of various interests and parties ignorantly or wilfully differing on these comments, their opinions and their designs should not be suffered to appear amongst those whom we wish to convert. If, indeed, we permit the ministers of various sects and denominations, Lutherans and Calvinists, Arminians and Baptists, to inculcate their respective tenets without restraint, the unlettered Indian will not be able to determine what that Christianity is which we would persuade him to embrace; and the more learned, convinced that the doctrines of all our teachers cannot be equally true, may be led to conclude that all are equally false. If one preacher be of Paul and another of Apollos, no convert may be of Christ. I would recommend one uniform attempt to the exclusion of all others, where we have the power to exclude them, to be made by the ministers of the National Church under the authority and regulations of an Act of the Legislature."

In commenting on this document, Mr. Fuller asks, "How many ministers of the National Church does Dr. Barrow think would engage in this undertaking? If there be a sufficient number to justify his proposal (of excluding all others), why do they not supply the Episcopal mission on the coast of Coromandel? The worthy successors of Schwartz have long proclaimed the harvest in India to be great, and the labourers few." He quotes from their own reports of other fields of episcopal labour—Tanjore, Jaffna, Ceylon, &c.—languishing for want of men to work

in them, and adds, "Such was the report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1803. Did *any* ministers of the Established Church offer themselves for the service? I do not reflect on the English clergy. There are many among them who, I am persuaded, would willingly engage in any service which appeared to be their duty, but who from the purest motives might consider themselves called to labour in another quarter. Neither do I reflect upon the society; for how can they send out missionaries till there are missionaries to be sent? I only ask, how could Dr. Barrow, with these facts before his eyes, propose to take the *whole* work of evangelizing India into the hands of the ministers of the National Church, when that part of it which had a special claim upon them was known to be standing still for want of assistance? . . . The work is not in the power of any one denomination, nor, as I suspect, of all united, but if, like her that anointed the Lord's feet, *we do what we can*, we shall be approved.

"For many ministers and members of the Established Church I feel a most sincere regard; and sorry should I be to wound their feelings. It has afforded me pleasure in this otherwise disagreeable controversy that its tendency is to unite the friends of Christianity in a common cause. If in my remarks on the Episcopal mission in the East I have seemed to interfere in concerns which do not immediately belong to me, it is because I have found it necessary, in order to repel the propositions of a writer WHOSE AVOWED INTOLERANCE KNOWS NO LIMITS BUT THE WANT OF POWER."

One of the most remarkable circumstances connected with Dr. Barrow's sermon is that it was delivered by the desire of Dr. Buchanan! It cannot, however, be supposed that the latter could endorse the intolerant sentiments to which he gave utterance.

Mr. Fuller, writing to his friends at Serampore, says, "I do not suspect Dr. Buchanan of a design to exclude you," and adds, "Let the Church of England do what it can. Let it send out ministers who are willing to spend and be spent in the work, and we with all our hearts shall pray for their success. From missionaries of this description we should have no apprehensions. Such men would not wish to 'exclude' those who are already employed, whether they could fully accord with them or not. . . . Nay, more, their language already is, 'GOD BLESS ALL MISSIONARY INSTITUTIONS! MAY THE WORK OF GOD PROSPER IN ALL THEIR HANDS!'"¹

From the very beginning of the Baptist Mission a strong affinity grew up between it and the Moravian Mission. Although the community of United Brethren have always been Episcopalians in their form of Church government, and no denomination of Christians is more staunch than the Baptist in its repudiation of that form, considering every pastor a bishop, this difference opposed no obstacle to the warm admiration cherished by the founders of the Baptist Mission of the apostolic labours, the simplicity, and self-consecration of that devoted body of men. It is true their bishops assumed no territorial title, nor was there anything in their posi-

¹ The Rev. Basil Woodd.

tion to check the freest intercourse with their brethren, or with those of other Christian communities.

When the funds of the Baptist Mission had swollen from the fraternal contributions amounting to £13 2s. 6d. to a few hundreds, and ere yet any field of foreign labour had been decided on, a grant of £5 was made to the Moravian Mission, as a token of Christian love and appreciation of their work; and some time afterwards a further grant of £20 towards their relief from great pecuniary straits. Several references are made to the "United Brethren" in Mr. Fuller's letters to the missionaries. In one to Mr. Ward, in 1804, he says, "There is a lovely man among the Moravians in Ireland, and another, Mr. Kelly, the son of a judge, and an Independent. They are doing much good, but the Sandemanians say they do not preach the gospel."

Writing to Dr. Marshman, he quotes from Horne's "Letters on Missions," a mention of several Moravian missionaries as having been murdered by Esquimaux, and that a similar number from home immediately offered to take their place. "This was noble. A religious connexion that can furnish this," says Mr. Horne, "are fit for missions."

At a committee meeting at Northampton, July, 1807, which was kept in fasting and prayer in reference to the hostility of the East India Company, "a letter was read which was addressed to them from Hernhutt," very encouraging as to the state of religion in various parts of Europe, even in those places where war has been most desolating, and exhorting us and all Missionary and

Bible Societies to "go on without relaxation or discouragement." This address was sent not merely from the Moravians, but from a body of evangelical men assembled from almost all the nations of Europe.

"It was resolved that a letter be drawn up to the brethren at Hernhutt, and that it be sent with a set of the 'Periodical accounts' to the care of the Rev. Dr. Steinkoff, minister of the German congregation of the Savoy, London."

The family compact at Serampore, for so many years the glory of the mission and a source of its efficiency, was to a large extent borrowed from the Moravians.

Great additional work was thrown upon the secretary of the mission by the disastrous fire which broke out in the printing office at Serampore. The building, 200 feet long, was totally destroyed. Paper, type, MSS., and books were also consumed; and the total loss amounted to £10,000. After such splendid generosity had been shown it seemed an impossible thing to raise such a sum. As soon, however, as the intelligence was made thoroughly known in England, the Christian people of all denominations became eager to repair the loss. Among the contributions were more than one from the clergy of the Church of England, of whom the Rev. Basil Woodd, of London, collected in his church more than £130. One thousand pounds followed another thousand in such quick succession that in a little more than six weeks after the news of the fire was known Mr. Fuller suggested that as the entire amount had been collected, *they were bound in all honesty to stop the contributions.* He says:

"I trembled lest we should be injured by the applause of men, and should incur the displeasure of God. Another thing strikes me: when the people ascribed 'tens of thousands' to David, it wrought envy in Saul, and proved a source of long and sore affliction. If some new trials were to follow I should not be surprised."

The strong sympathy awakened in the enterprise by this calamity did not die out after the losses had been repaired. The General Baptists at once began to stir themselves; the church at St. Mary's, Derby, under the pastorate of Mr. Pike, sent to Mr. Fuller requesting that they might send a missionary of their own body, under the auspices of the society; or if that was not thought expedient, that they might have a native, chosen by the missionaries, to whom they would give £14 a year, and with whom they might correspond, they acting as translators between them. To the first proposal Mr. Fuller answered that there would, in his opinion, be an objection, as it might lead to disputes, and unanimity was of great importance; to the second proposal he said there could be no objection, and that it would be gratifying to the society.

Thus did Mr. Fuller exert himself in behalf of that society, in the work of which he took such intense interest, and in the success of which he cherished the most unbounded and unfailing confidence. Truly, in his abundant labours prosecuted under the burden of physical weakness and suffering, and under the depressing influences of domestic anxiety and heaviness of heart, he was sustained by the hand of God. And when

we look at the present position of the Baptist Missionary Society, with its costly buildings and influential officers ; with its great staff of missionaries, and still greater staff of evangelists labouring in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and in America ; with its 500 stations and 40,000 converts ; with its annual income of nearly £70,000,¹ we cannot but remember with deepest gratitude and most lively admiration the indefatigable zeal displayed by its first secretary, who, when prejudice was strong, and sustained by strong interest, at times almost single-handed, fought its battles and protected its life ; and who, while sustaining the care of an important church, and circulating literary works, the excellence of which is proved by their long-lived influence, was for this cause “ in labours more abundant, in journeyings often, in perils amongst false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, and in watchings often ; ” and who, in spite of all, would not, did not, relax his hold of the rope which he had vowed to grasp until called away to his great reward.

The influence which these labours exerted upon his own spiritual experience is indicated by the following letter addressed to a friend :

“ From the year 1782 to 1792 I experienced a great degree of spiritual darkness and dejection. I had sunk into carnality and folly in many instances, and brought such a degree of guilt, shame, and remorse, and distance

¹ It seems only, as Mr. Gladstone says, a “ measurable distance ” of time since, at a breakfast of the Society at the “ City of London Tavern,” afterwards the Wesleyan Mission Hall, the surprise and rejoicing of the assembly was evoked by the astounding report that the income of the society had reached £14,000 !

from God upon me, as deprived me for several years of all pleasure in my work and in almost everything else. But a little before the death of Mrs. Fuller I began to recover the lost joys of God's salvation. The trials in my family had a good effect, and my engagement in the mission undertaking had a wonderful influence in reviving true religion in my soul ; and from that time, notwithstanding all my family afflictions, I have been one of the happiest of men. 'Then shall I run,' said the Psalmist, 'in the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart.' And truly I know of nothing which has so enlarged my heart as engaging in a work the object of which is the salvation of the world. I have often observed that many good people miss their objects and live in doubt about their own Christianity all their days, because they make this their direct and principal object of pursuit. They read, hear, meditate, everything *in order to find out whether they be Christians*. Let them but seek the glory of Christ's kingdom, the spread of His cause, &c., and a knowledge of their own interest in it would be among the things which would be 'added unto them.' If we are so selfish as to care about nothing but our own individual safety, God will righteously so order it that we shall not obtain our desire, but shall live in suspense on that subject ; while, if we have served Him and sought His glory, and the good of others' souls as well as our own, our own safety would have appeared manifest.

"It is thus that God interweaves the good of His creatures, ordering it so that the happiness of one part shall

arise from their pursuing that of another, rather than in the direct pursuit of their own. It is thus in domestic felicity, and thus in religion. Blessed be God for thus encouraging a principle which, if it did but universally prevail, would be productive of universal peace and happiness.

“ ‘ God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him ! ’ ”

CHAPTER VI.

SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE.

WHILST Mr. Fuller's influence was being felt in aid of the mission throughout the united kingdom, it was also felt, and perhaps not in a less degree, by the missionaries in India. Many hundreds of letters did he write to them, conveying a vast amount of information, messages of hearty encouragement, of solemn warning, and practical counsel. So greatly were these epistles prized by those to whom they were addressed, that they were transcribed by a native "writer" ignorant of the English language, filling a folio volume of more than 600 pages. This book now lies before me, and I cull from it a few of the letters, and extracts from others, which may prove of some general interest.

[*To Mr. J. Fountain, Mudnabatty.*]

"Kettering, September 7th, 1797.

"You will excuse me, my dear brother Fountain, if I do not write you a long letter. Writing is labour to me, on account of a complaint which, perhaps, ever will attend my head. I received your letter from Madeira,

and two from Mudnabatty. Be assured they afforded me and all our brethren great satisfaction—not only to hear that you were safely arrived, but to find that your heart was in your work. We had no opportunity of proving your ministerial abilities, but from the taste we had of your prayer and conversation we did not much hesitate on that subject. If your heart be in the work, I doubt not but you will be able to increase in the knowledge of the Lord, and to communicate that knowledge to the poor heathen.

“All that we felt any hesitation about was your too great edge for politics. The mission has awfully suffered in Africa through that folly. The loss of £300 or £400 is the least thing to be considered; though, considering that as public property, it was grievous that it should be so thrown away. Mr. Grigg asked me in one letter what I thought of his conduct, and thus I wrote him: ‘I think it wrong for any individual, in any nation, or under any government, to indulge a restless, discontented, complaining spirit; and still more to be stirring up others to do the same things. But if this would be wrong in any man, it must be more so in a Christian minister and a missionary. You should have avoided everything that would impede your main object. If Free Town had been the seat of your labours, you should have avoided these things; much more as it was not, but merely a friendly shelter to you in the rainy season. I do not think that a Christian, or a Christian minister, forfeits any of his rights as a man or as a citizen; but I think that Christianity teaches, in many cases, voluntarily to forego the exercise

of those rights for the sake of attaining a greater good. What if the benevolent Howard, in exploring the dungeons of the wretched all over Europe, had embroiled himself in every nation in attempting to correct their governments? Would he not have defeated his ends? Could he have had admission into any nation after a single attempt of the kind? Was it not to his honour to forego many of his natural rights and to submit to the laws, even under despotic governments, for the sake of doing good to men's bodies? But if so, would it not be to the honour of a Christian missionary to do as much for the good of men's souls? Rather, would it not be greatly to his shame if he did otherwise?' But all is in vain: he is gone to America in pursuit of liberty. Well does the apostle charge us who have engaged to be soldiers of Christ, not to *entangle ourselves in the affairs of this life*.

"It gives us great satisfaction to find that Brother —, whose mind also used to be pretty much engaged in those sort of things, has dropped them for things of greater consequence. May you, my brother, follow his example. We have heard nothing of you at present—except a little too much freedom in speaking on political subjects after you arrived—but what is favourable. We have not had opportunity of knowing much of you; but it affords us good hope of your being a useful missionary that you seem to love and revere the counsels of Brother Carey. A humble, peaceful, circumspect, disinterested, faithful, peaceable, and zealous conduct like his will render you a blessing to society. Brother Carey is greatly respected and beloved by all denominations here,

I will tell you what I have forborne to tell him, lest it should hurt his modesty. Good old Mr. Newton, in a letter to Mr. Ryland, dated August 8th, 1797, says: 'Mr. Carey has favoured me with a letter, which, indeed, I accept as a favour, and I mean to thank him for it. I trust my heart as cordially unites with him for the success of his mission as though I were a brother Baptist myself. I look to such a man with reverence. He is more to me than bishop or archbishop—he is an apostle. May the Lord make all who undertake missions like-minded with Brother Carey!'

"You will see some things in Brother Thomas worthy of imitation. He possesses a familiarity and an affection in his address which is very desirable, and of which I conceive you are not wholly incapable.

"When I heard, by your letter from Madeira, of the unkind treatment that you met with on board, I felt almost sorry that you went in the steerage. Yet I find the disposal of public money to be a delicate undertaking.

"We have allowed for you £50 per annum for the present, which is rather more than Brother Carey asked for; and, while you are single, I dare say you will be so considerate and regardful of the undertaking as not to think we slight your services in allowing you no more. If God should provide you with a companion, we shall not be backward to give you every possible encouragement. If Brother Carey's plan, indeed, should be put in execution, you will have all things common. At all events, we shall be happy to see you happy, and to con-

tribute anything in our power to render you so. The Lord be with you, my dear brother.

“I am yours very affectionately,

“A. FULLER.”

[*To Mr. Fountain, in a letter to Carey.*]

“Now, my dear brother F., let this be the last letter in which I shall have occasion to write to you on a certain subject. Our brethren who are coming to join you, Brother Ryland says, are not infected with ‘the political mania.’ Deal not in sarcastic sneers against the government, be it what it may, by which you are protected. Give no offence to Jew or Gentile, governed or governors. If you still think, however, that this sarcastic way of thinking, speaking, and writing is consistent with the duty of a Christian and a missionary, avow it fairly, and you and I will discuss the subject as brethren on Scripture grounds. We all love you; only cultivate goodwill towards men, and a respect towards civil governments, whether it be in the hands of kings, companies, directors, or whoever it may be, and all will be well (Titus iii. 1-3). Write to me as often as you can. I am a dull flint; you must strike me against steel to produce fire. Ask me as many questions as you please; I do not engage to answer all, but those that I like I will do what I can to answer. Be assured I have done all that I could from the time you left England to encourage Miss T—— to come to you, and now I expect she is going. The Lord go with her, and bless you both. Many in Eng-

land and Scotland think I speak very respectfully of you, who, if they had seen all your letters, would, for aught I know, have withdrawn their support from a missionary society who continue to employ such a missionary. David Dale, of Glasgow, a most excellent man, who gives us unsolicited twenty guineas per annum and £50 extra for the translations, wrote to me on hearing some of Grigg's squabbles, 'Have your missionaries to learn that Christ's kingdom is not of this world?'

[*To Mr. Ward.*]

" . . . Buonaparte has been threatening us with an invasion—excuse my heterogeneous materials, I write anything that occurs—and we are now all in arms expecting him, or rather his army without him, every week. I hope, if he should attempt it, we shall be preserved; for though great is Britain's sin, yet God is doing great things among her people. We are not greatly alarmed. The Dissenters have generally come forward in the volunteer corps, and, I think, now stand so well with Government as to have nothing to fear as to their privileges. Some years ago your friend Mr. Fawcett published a piece on *Anger*. The king—who is said to be subject to passion—read it with much interest, and sent the author a diploma. Mr. F.'s modesty induced him to decline the use of it, but he declined it in a letter to his Majesty written in such a manner as to give no offence. His Majesty, in reply, desired him, it is said, to ask any favour of him in future, and he should be happy to oblige

him. Last spring a young man of Halifax, son to one of Mr. F.'s friends, a dissenter, was guilty of forgery, and was condemned to death last August. Great was the distress of the family, of course. Mr. F. addressed a letter to the king, stating some extenuating circumstances, and intreated, if it might be, his Majesty's pardon. It was granted, to the astonishment of the country, since a case of forgery has never been pardoned before during his Majesty's reign. I forget the young man's name. The king has several Dissenters, I am told, in his family, and is determined that the other servants do not interrupt them in the enjoyment of their religious privileges. We have presented him with a Bengalee Testament, which he received very graciously. We accompanied it with the following address: 'The Baptist Missionary Society humbly intreat that this copy of the translation of the New Testament into the Bengalee language may be accepted by your Majesty as a token of their dutiful regard to your person and government; and beg leave to express a desire that your Majesty may live to see the principles it contains universally prevail throughout your Eastern dominions.' He told Mr. Bowyer, who presented it, that he accepted the book with pleasure, and requested him to return the managers of the society his best thanks for it. . . .

"Robert Hall has lately preached some missionary sermons for us. He last week made the annual collection at Leicester. He grows in spirituality."

[*To Messrs. Thomas and Carey, and their families.*]

“Permit me to conclude with expressing my earnest desire, as it is the matter of my daily prayer, that you may watch against everything that may prove a stumbling-block in the way of your usefulness ; everything, under God, depends upon your conduct—even an imprudent action may overturn all you are doing ! It made me and many more tremble for the cause of Christ, that was in your hands, to hear of Brother C——’s refusal to drink a certain health in the ‘Earl of Orford.’ Let nothing but conscience induce such conduct ; and beware that conscience itself be not misguided. Would Paul have acted so ? Such a refusal in India would probably put an end to your being suffered to continue. A great responsibility lies upon us both to God and men ! Beware that you give no offence to Jew or Gentile, or by any means retard the work of the Lord.”

[*To Mr. Marshman.*]

“We learn from Mr. Maylin that Carey, Marshman, and Ward appear almost old men ; and no wonder, for they will sit up till two in the morning ! Read the Commandments and proceed no further, for there it is written, ‘Thou shalt do no murder.’”

[*To Mr. Carey.*]

“Your proposal of a mission to Ceylon is what we cannot decide upon—1. The climate is very hot ; 2. We incline to think Hindustan is a larger field than we can

occupy with our utmost strength ; yet 3. If when more missionaries arrive you should think you could spare one or more to that country, we shall leave it to you. But we shall send all we send, to you. Such is the opinion of Brother Sutcliffe and myself. Mr. Scott,¹ in a letter to Brother Ryland, says, ‘ I own I should be backward were I concerned in your society to do anything, however promising the opening, that should lessen the means of pressing the advantage in India. Many years must be waited ere such an opening can be expected. I augur most important and extensive good effects. You go the right way to work—the Word of God translated and dispersed, and attempts to get helpers of the natives. *I trust no day passes but your missionaries are remembered by me.* Whatever our little differences in sentiment may be, I am assured we are agreed in this—Send Lord ! work Lord ! by whom thou wilt send and work ! Be thou exalted Lord in Thy own strength, so will we sing and praise Thy power ! I shall be thankful, should I live, if seven years put any of our missionaries in as promising a situation as yours are.’ ”

[*To Mr. Carey.*]

“ I have been to Olney to advise with brother S. on missionary concerns ; and lo ! while I was there, in bolted Carey ! Do not be alarmed—it was not your angel, but what did our hearts more good than if it had been : it was your letter of October 10, '98. Well, God always causeth us to triumph. He is making room for you in India,

¹ The Commentator.

Blessed be God for giving you favour in the eyes of men, and still more for giving you hopes of some of them being real Christians. . . .

"The fruits of Brother Ryland's labours at Bristol appear to good purpose, not only in a number of spiritual young men in the Academy, but in so charming a group of missionaries as are now going. Brother Sutcliffe has baptized nine lately. He is appointed to supply you with books, and I doubt not but he will magnify his office. Pearce is a wonderful Christian ; he preached here last autumn like an apostle, from Psalm xc. 16, 17. Hall, who preached after him, was dismayed at the thought of following him ; not so much at an idea of inequality of talents, but of spirit and unction. But whether we shall ever hear him again, God only knows."

[*To Mr. Ward.*]

"We have had many fears about your colony being taken, but the good understanding which exists between you and Messrs. Brown and Buchanan, and through them with the Government, makes us easy. God has given this favour in the eyes of men no doubt for gracious purposes. I have a hundred things to rejoice in, among which the state of things with regard to that dear youth Felix Carey, and I hope his brother William will soon follow. O my dear brother, God has honoured you much in making you instrumental to the good of these dear children as well as in other respects : praise Him, for His mercy endureth for ever ! It appears to me a token for good that what success you have hitherto met with has appeared to be

indirect and preparatory for something future. Brother C. and T were looking for Hindoos : God gave them a Fernandez, a Cunningham, &c., by means of whom a kind of establishment is given to the recording of his name in Dinagepour. You were anxious to settle up the country : God impelled you to settle where you are, *that the sacred Scriptures might be printed without molestation.* You still kept praying for the poor Hindoos : God gave you Felix and William.

"This moment a letter has arrived from Ryland containing Brother Marshman's journal. I must leave off writing and look it over. O blessed for ever be the Lord, and blessed be you ! Surely I never loved you all so well before. To say, 'Give my love to Brother Marshman,' is feeble. If I could send my soul over in a letter, it would come and mingle with your souls, with your labours, with your sorrows and your joys. There is a fitness in your corresponding with me, Bro. M. with Bro. Ryland, and Bro. B. with Bro. Sutcliffe. I do not wish it otherwise ; I love you all I think alike. Poor Bro. Thomas ; his affliction, I am inclined to think, accounts for many of his eccentricities. Those seasons of dejection in which he could do nothing, and for which I once thought hard of him, might be owing to something tending to what has taken place."

[To Mr. Ward.]

"You requested me to send you some kind of a likeness of a certain friend of yours. I hope to send it by

Mr. Chamberlain, and you may hang it up where you please, and write underneath if you chuse it, 'A fine new missionary! Brethren and sisters, walk in!' It was taken by Bowyer¹ at his own desire, and presented to Mrs. F., who now at my request presents it to you, with more than a shadow of Christian love: only she says she will give it (being an article too high in value, you see, for private property) to the mission, to use as a piece of furniture.

"Well, we have sent you £700 in dollars; and your drafts have reduced our fund about £500, and a good part of this will go in sending out Brother and Sister Chamberlain. I have just taken a passage for them to New York. They could not go by a Danish ship, and though it is *possible* that our East India Directors might permit their ships to take them to a Danish settlement, yet it is possible they would not; and on the question being brought before them they might do something against us."

[*To Mr. Ward.*]

"Since writing the last time I have read a pamphlet of sixty-four pages, written by an evangelical churchman affrighted at the increase of the Methodists and Dissenters, and proposing a *comprehension* of them in the Church! I wrote at the end of it, Jer. li. 9. It is a book going round in a reading society. There is a Dr. Parr, a very learned, eloquent, but irreligious clergyman, who was a great friend of Fox; and who, if the king dies

¹ Miniature portrait painter to George III. and George IV.

soon, and the Whig party come into power, may stand a chance of a bishopric. This said Dr. Parr has, in a work lately published, expressed a wish also for a comprehension, viz., of the Irish Catholics and the English Unitarians, who might unite with the bishops and crush the Evangelical faction ! All these schemes will fail ; or if anything be done, it will be to unite the irreligious and drive the religious from amongst them, and so compel them to unite with one another."

[*To Mr. Carey.*]

"On my return from London I left my 'Memoir of Translations' with Morris to print. Intending to take my triennial tour through Scotland in October, as soon as the memoir was printed, I sent some to all places whither I intended to go. A hundred were sent to Edinburgh. Dr. Stuart was so struck with them that before I arrived he had printed a new edition and filled Scotland with them. 'Never' (exclaimed all denominations), 'never was anything equal to it since the days of the apostles.' Money poured in like rain in a thunder-storm. Those who had been disputing for years about discipline, weekly communion, &c., seemed half ashamed. 'What little things' (said one of them) 'are we employed about compared with this. I wish you could come oftener than once in three years.' 'Tell your friends,' said Dr. Stuart, 'when you write to them, to go on, and we will furnish them with money.' Thousands flocked to hear, and in some instances thousands went

away—from large places too—because they could not get in. Some of my sermons were from the following passages: ‘To whom, Lord, shall we go? Thou *hast the words of eternal life.*’ ‘In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel,’ &c. ‘Herod died and was eaten of worms, but the word of the Lord grew and multiplied.’ ‘We who were sometime afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.’ After travelling 1,200 miles, and preaching forty-two sermons in about six weeks, I arrived safe at home on the 12th November with a clear £2,000 besides expenses. My health, too, was better than when I set off—never better in my life.”

[*To Mr. Ward.*]

“On Tuesday, July 8, I set off in company with Dr. S—— and his eldest daughter, on a three weeks’ tour through Scotland. On Thursday we travelled through Fifeshire towards Dundee. Calling at Cupar to breakfast, Dr. S—— called on an old friend of his, and he came to our inn. I perceived he was a violent Sandemanian. He and Dr. S—— talked and I sat silent, and was, I believe, unknown. I had there an opportunity of observing the spirit of this system undisguised. The doctor, who is still half a Sandemanian, knowing that an observer was in company, sat on thorns while his friend poured out his heart in a most unreserved manner. There was no religion now; at least no man worth notice save Walker, of Dublin. Now Walker is so particular as to refuse to pray in public. He has a society

with whom he prays, and spectators may come within a little distance, it seems, but must not join them. If he had a family and they were unbelievers, they must not join him in family prayer. I asked Cooper, of Dublin, last summer, who is gone nearly as far as Walker, whether he would pray in his family if he thought his wife an unbeliever. He answered, "No." The consequence is, all family worship is given up among the Sandemanians, or thereabouts. Prayer, praise, &c., instead of being considered a *moral* obligation, which it is equally right to attend to, and to join any person in, as in relieving the needy, are accounted Christian *institutions*, and which ought not to be performed but with Christians any more than the Lord's Supper. If indeed we, by praying with an unbeliever, gave him to think that we acknowledge him as a Christian, it were wrong; but surely there is no need of this. When, in a mixed assembly, I express what I consider to be the desires of Christians, and personate them, I also pray *for* the others; and as many as can find in their heart to unite with me, let them. If I were at the head of a family where all but myself were unbelievers, I would pray with them, but it should be *impersonally*; making no use of such terms, I mean, as '*we* pray thee,' or '*I* pray thee,' but '*do*' and '*give*' and '*forgive*,' &c. But to return. The doctor, knowing me, kept throwing cold water on the conversation of his friend, and would have gladly turned it into another channel, but could not. After he was gone I told the doctor I had a fine treat. 'Yes,' said he, shaking his head, 'I suppose so.' 'Truly,' said I, 'the

faith of a Sandemanian cannot be said to be dead or inoperative ; it works like fire under a cauldron, causing his blood to boil against all who do not accord with him.' ”

[*To Mr. Ward.*]

“The Church Society for Missions to Africa and the East have presented their request ; and Lord Liverpool, the Minister who was waited on by the London M. S. deputation, intimated that they intended doing something for Christianity in the East, perhaps in an *Establishment for India*. By the way, I learn that Dr. Buchanan has got the ear of that Society (though not of the B. and F. Bible Society), and that it is they, as prompted by him, that have got the ear of Lord Liverpool. The issue we do not yet know, but if there be an ecclesiastical establishment for India, you must be on your watch against them. They are all exceedingly hungry after your labours, or rather the honour of them. I have been amused in thinking and hearing so much on the subject about ‘respectability.’ When we began in 1792 there was little or no respectability amongst us—not so much as a squire to sit in the chair at our meetings, nor an orator to address him with speeches. Hence good Dr. Stennett advised the London ministers to stand aloof and not ‘commit’ themselves.

“When your translations began to make a stir, though we had no ‘respectability’ in us, yet it seemed as if something of the kind would be bred amongst us. Hence the eager struggles of B. and B. on your side

of the water, and of the Church party in the Bible Society, to which Mr. Hughes condescended to lend himself, on ours. Here was a feather, and surely you publicans, you low-minded Anabaptists, will not pretend to wear it. 'Give it us—us respectable men ; it will just fit our hats.' 'Be you our journeymen,' said B. and B. to you. 'Let us have the translations, and you confine yourselves to the mission,' said the other to us. But as we had made shift to do without 'respectability' at the beginning, both you and we were for going on in the same track."

*[From the Baptist Missionary Society, met at Kettering
September 29, 1812, to the Missionaries and the
Churches in the East.]*

"DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—Being assembled as a society on the twentieth anniversary from our first formation, we address ourselves to you in a brotherly epistle. We cannot review these twenty years without blessing God for what we have seen and heard. We bless His name that so many of your and our lives have been thus long spared, and rendered subservient in some good degree to the extending of His glorious kingdom in the earth.

"Considering that several of us are drawing towards the period of our labours, we have at this meeting taken measures which we hope may, with the Divine blessing, provide for futurity. The seat of the society will, it is hoped, continue in the association where it originated, and where we trust it will be conducted in the same

quiet and harmonious way which it has hitherto been ; but we have agreed to enlarge the committee, by adding to it some of our brethren from different parts of the kingdom who appear best suited to the work, and to have had their hearts most interested in it. Their names you will see in the resolutions. Many of these brethren cannot, for local reasons, ordinarily assemble with us for consultation, but they can receive and communicate intelligence, and promote the object in their several connexions. It is for this reason that in the present addition our choice has principally fallen on ministers, and ministers of middle age, whose activity and prudence may serve to promote the object, and when such of us as have hitherto conducted the business of the mission shall be removed or laid aside, some of them will, we trust, be able and willing to take our places.

“It is an encouragement to us that there is manifestly an increasing interest in the work. We have not had occasion to urge, nor scarcely to entreat, the religious public for contributions ; but, as in the case of the Macedonian churches, the “entreaty” has in many instances been on the other side. Besides the churches from which the parent society was formed, you know the willingness of our brethren in *Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Yorkshire, Somersetshire*, and other places, who at an early period entered into our views, and communicated freely of their substance. You know of the annual subscriptions in the Metropolis, which with collections, donations, &c., have gradually increased to upwards of thirteen hundred pounds. You know of the collections

at *Norwich, Cambridge, Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Plymouth, Newcastle, Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed*, and other places. You know of the unexampled exertions of *Scotland*, of some liberal contributions that have been received from Ireland, and of the almost unsolicited kindness of the churches in *North America*. To this we can now add that some of our churches in the *Eastern, Southern, and Western* counties of England appear to feel an increasing interest in the work ; liberal collections have been made at *Manchester, Leeds, Sunderland, North and South Shields*, and in various parts of the Principality of *Wales* ; auxiliary societies are formed and forming in *London* and its vicinity ; in *Norwich, Cambridge, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh*, and in places less distinguished by their population. When the late disastrous intelligence¹ reached us (about three weeks ago), a strong sensation was felt through the kingdom, not only in our own denomination, but amongst Christians of every name, each vying with the other to repair the loss. Great, it is true, have been the difficulties of the country in respect of commerce, yet amidst them all the contributions of Christians have increased beyond all former examples. In the past year we had, as you know, great pecuniary difficulties ; but our wants have been generously supplied, and our hands strengthened. In respect of the recent calamity, we doubt not but the loss will be amply repaired.

“ But passing over our own affairs, permit us to say a

¹ The fire at Serampore, which destroyed the printing office and materials.

few things relative to yours. Beloved brethren, it is in our hearts to live and die with you. We are aware of your exposedness to temptation, and of your being the subjects of indwelling sin. On some occasions, considering the conspicuous situation which you occupy, we tremble for you; on others we bless God who hath hitherto preserved you. The late serious calamity seemed light to us in comparison of what it would have been had it affected your lives or characters! Truly we rejoice over you. How should we do otherwise when God is manifestly with you? Go on, beloved brethren; let neither the oppositions of open enemies nor the intrigues of professed friends divert you from your object.

"It must afford great satisfaction to you who have borne the heat and burden of the day, as well as to us, to see young men rising up amongst you who are now co-workers with you, and some of whom may be your successors in the work. You can hardly conceive how intimately we are acquainted, not only with you who went out from us, and with your female companions, but with your younger *Careys*, your invaluable *Fernandez*, your *Aratoons*, and *Peters*, and *Forders*, and *Peacocks*, and *Krishnoos*, and *Sibukrams*, and *Kangalus*. Our thoughts rove with delight from station to station. We seem to be present with you in all your domestic circles, rising seminaries, and religious assemblies, at *Serampore* or *Calcutta*, in the villages of *Jessore*, at *Rangoon*, at *Goamalty*, at *Dinapore* or *Sadamohl*, at *Balasore* or *Cuttack*, at *Cutwa* or *Lakrakomda*, at *Patna* or at *Agra*. We rejoice in your little groups of Christian soldiers in

your modest but zealous native preachers, and in all your fellow-helpers through the country. To each and all we say from the fulness of our hearts, 'Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"With a few words to the *churches* which God has graciously given you and us as the reward of our united labours, we will conclude our present epistle.

"Very dear brethren, you did not think till of late that the religion of Jesus Christ was so interesting that it not only makes known salvation, but unites the saved in bonds of tender affection. You now perceive that it is a religion adapted for the whole world, and which if truly embraced would heal it of all its maladies. You feel that men of divers nations, and languages, and castes, and complexions, and manners are one in Christ Jesus.

"So we feel to you, and you to us. It was the hope of your salvation, founded on the numerous prophecies in the Holy Scriptures, that, twenty years ago, induced us to send our beloved Carey and Thomas, men whom if we had felt only for ourselves we could ill have spared ; but your salvation outweighed all other considerations. It was this induced them, and after them your *Wards*, and *Marshmans*, and *Chamberlains*, with others of their fellow-labourers and female companions, to quit their native shores, and all that was dear to them on earth, to cast in their lot with you, and this while you were yet enemies of God by wicked works. We rejoice that God has blessed them, and made them blessings to many of you. If you continue grounded and established in the

faith, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by a becoming conversation, this shall be our reward.

“Remember, dear brethren, that the unbelieving world, whether Hindoos, Mussulmans, or Europeans, will hate you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you ; only let it be *falsely* and for Christ's name's sake, and great will be your reward in heaven. It is one mighty evidence that Christianity is of God, that it produces the same effects in believers, and kindles the same dislike in unbelievers, as it did eighteen centuries ago. It has afforded us much pleasure to read the accounts of the patience and firmness of the brethren when persecuted for Christ's sake in *Fessore* and *Burbhoom*. Be of good courage. ‘Ye have not yet resisted unto *blood*, striving against sin.’ ‘Be faithful unto death, and you will receive a crown of life.’

“Know also that your greatest danger does not arise from the persecutions of the wicked, but from things in and amongst yourselves. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. It is a serious thing to profess to be a Christian, if after this we turn away from the truth, we plunge ourselves into double destruction. Read and well consider the warning language of the Apostle Peter, ‘For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have

known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.' You must lay your accounts with some such characters from amongst you, 'men of corrupt minds, who will endeavour to draw away disciples after them.' Take heed not only that you are not the persons, but that you be not drawn away by those that are. Cleave with purpose of heart unto the Lord ; make the Holy Scriptures the man of your counsel. Our brethren the missionaries will teach you the good and right way, but neither they nor we wish to be considered as your oracles. Esteem them highly in love for their work's sake, but follow them no farther than they follow Christ ; consider nothing as oracular but the Scriptures. From them learn the truth in meekness, and regulate your lives. Let your minds be baptized in the sentiments which they teach. They are 'able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' Let the doctrine of Christ crucified be your meat and drink ; this will preserve you from fatal errors. That doctrine that would lead you to entertain low thoughts of God, high thoughts of yourselves, light thoughts of sin, or mean thoughts of Christ, is not from above, but from beneath.

"The door at which Satan has commonly entered into the churches, so as to corrupt their doctrine, worship, discipline, or practice, and thereby to effect their ruin, has been a spirit of *vain speculation* and *idle dispute*. Hence the apostle charges his son Timothy, saying, 'Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.' Reckon those questions

'unlearned' which are foreign from the Scriptures. Beware of corrupting the simplicity of *Christian worship* by mixing with it any of your old superstitions. It was thus that Christianity was corrupted by the Roman Catholics, and reduced to a species of idolatry. Mix none of your own devices with the worship of God. God is jealous of His honour, and will accept only a pure offering.

"Study the things that make for peace. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. Bear and forbear, and forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake forgiveth you. Beware of high-mindedness, cultivate the spirit of a little child. Think of the exhortation of the apostle, and 'Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not usurpation to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' In few words, be peaceable subjects, kind masters, faithful servants, tender parents, obedient children, just in your dealings, chaste in your intercourse, exemplary in your families, and holy in all manner of conversation. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Grace and peace be with you. Amen."

CHAPTER VII.

MR. FULLER'S WRITINGS.

WHILE Mr. Fuller made no pretensions to scholarship, or to the graces of composition, every one acquainted with his voluminous writings has been struck with his clear, nervous grip of the English language, and the felicity of his choice of words to convey his precise meaning—a characteristic of his writing most obvious where the subtle intellect of an opponent placed before him distinctions or definitions requiring more than common penetration to detect and expose a sophism. For the power to grapple with such cases, and at the same time to present the subject in its most practical and attractive form, he was far less indebted to early training than to his native perspicacity and strong sense.

If the object of Biblical criticism, which forms a large portion of his literary labour, be the clearer understanding of the true meaning of the Scripture, Mr. Fuller might be said to have attained, to a more than common measure of its results with a very small amount of literary qualification. Yet of this he had acquired, by the aid of his friend Dr. Ryland, sufficient to enable him frequently to appreciate a verbal criticism.

There is still extant among his papers a small elementary book of the Hebrew language, with the first and twenty-third Psalms written in Hebrew, with interlinear translations for his express use, by the doctor, with the unrivalled beauty of penmanship characteristic of him. Another memorandum-book by Mr. Fuller shows his proficiency in writing, and the care with which he entered on the study in the comparison he makes of the views of Dr. Taylor and others on the power and uses of the Hebrew alphabet. This is followed by an ample vocabulary. There is also another book of his writing containing the elements of Greek.

The subjects of his pen are largely polemical, though this feature of them was earnestly deprecated by him; but the sluices once open, a tide of tributary streams, in addition to that counter-current which was naturally to be looked for, almost overwhelmed him, though he was conscious of nothing he could wish unwritten.

It is impossible to enumerate, still more to describe, all that Mr. Fuller has written, distributed as much of it has been through a variety of magazines and reviews. The chief of them have, however, been published in the uniform edition of his works, in five volumes octavo, in 1831, afterwards printed in one volume imperial octavo. A reference to his principal treatises, with a small selection from his sermons and pamphlets, must suffice.

Mr. Fuller's first publication, though not his first composition, was a sermon on *Walking by Faith*, a worthy introduction to the larger treatise immediately following it; laying a foundation broad and deep as to the general

character of faith, and applying its principles to the varied experiences and requirements of life.

The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation (1785).

The author of this treatise tells us in the preface that it was written in 1781, yet a paper which he has endorsed with the date of 1776, the year after his entrance on his pastorate, contains the elements of it, written probably at intervals, and neither designed nor adapted for publication, and must have been written in the 23rd year of his age. In the year that he assigns to his composition of it he was in deep trouble, partly arising from the disaffection of some of his members at the change in the tone of his preaching, and partly from the utter inadequacy of the miserable pittance supplied to him for the support of his family. Whether it would ever have been issued but for the urgent entreaties of his friend Robert Hall, of Arnsby, and other ministers of note, is doubtful. He had many misgivings, not as to the truth or importance of the positions which he had most carefully thought out, but as to the reception they would meet with, especially among the churches of his own connection; and although his church at Kettering was free from any disquietude as to the influence of these doctrines, and could estimate the favourable light in which a new-comer was regarded in neighbouring churches, yet it was not without painful forebodings of the reception of his treatise, both in the immediate circle of the associated churches and of the denomination at large.

In a record of his feelings on this subject dated August 20, 1784, he writes: "Many misgivings of heart about engaging in defence of what I esteem truth, lest the cause of Christ should be injured through me. Surely if I did not believe *that* in defence of which I write to be important truth, I would hide my head in obscurity all my days."

The following day he adds: "The Lord direct my way in respect of publishing. Assuredly He knows my end is to vindicate the excellence of His character, and His worthiness of being loved and credited."

"23rd. The weight of publishing still lies upon me. I expect a great share of unhappiness through it. I had certainly much rather go through the world in peace, did I not consider this step as my duty. I feel a jealousy of myself, lest I should not be endued with meekness and patience sufficient for controversy. The Lord keep me! I wish to suspect my own spirit, and go forth leaning on Him for strength."

"26th. I felt some tenderness to-day at the church meeting, but much depression of spirit now generally attends me. I feel a solid satisfaction that the cause in which I am about to engage is the cause of truth and righteousness; but I am afraid lest it should suffer through me."

At length the dreaded day arrives when the die is cast. On November 22nd a walk of fourteen miles to Northampton gives him opportunity for thought. "Some prayer that God would bless that about which I am going viz., the printing of a manuscript on faith in Christ being

the duty of unregenerate sinners." His forebodings fell far short of what he had to endure, for when the work came out of the hands of the printer, had a shell been cast into the camp, the consternation produced could not have been greater.

The object of the treatise is to show the solemn obligation of all to whom the gospel is made known to believe or cordially to accept it. It opens with a definition of that wherein faith consists, distinguishing it especially from a *belief in our own relation to Christ as His true disciples*, faith not terminating in *ourselves* as its object, but *on Christ*. "*If by appropriation*, for which some have contended as the grand essential of faith, be meant the hearty acceptance for *ourselves* of all the blessings and all the responsibilities of the gospel, it is undoubtedly of the essence of true faith; but that is widely different from a persuasion of our personal share in spiritual blessings."

This point he argues on four grounds :

"I. Nothing can be an object of faith except what God has revealed in His word ; but the interest that any individual has in Christ, and the blessings of the gospel more than another, is not revealed. God has nowhere declared, concerning any one of us as individuals, that we shall be saved : all that He has revealed on this subject respects us *as characters*.

"II. The Scriptures always represent faith as terminating on something without us, namely, on Christ and the truths concerning Him ; but if it consist in a persuasion of our being in a state of salvation, it must

terminate principally on something within us, namely, the work of grace in our hearts; for to believe myself interested in Christ is the same thing as to believe myself a subject of special grace.

"III. To believe ourselves in a state of salvation, however desirable when grounded on evidence, is far inferior in its object to saving faith. The grand object on which faith fixes is the glory of Christ, and not the happy condition we are in as interested in Him.

"IV. All those exercises of faith which our Lord so highly commends in the New Testament—as that of the centurion, the woman of Canaan, and others—are represented as terminating on His *all-sufficiency* to heal them; and not as consisting in a persuasion that they were interested in the Divine favour, and therefore should succeed."

Mr. Anderson, an American writer, thought he had found a *via media* in the idea that faith must consist, in part at least, in the belief that Christ is ours on the mere ground of Christ being exhibited as the free gift of God. "I am persuaded," says Mr. A., "that He is *my* Saviour, nor can I, without casting reproach upon the wisdom and faithfulness of God, entertain any doubt about my justification and salvation through His name." Mr. Fuller pertinently asks, "Has God *promised* justification and salvation, then, to every one to whom Christ is exhibited?" In every stage of this discussion the author urges the vast importance of just views of the nature of faith.

The conclusion to which the arguments of the work

lead is this, that "it is not only the duty of ministers to exhort their carnal auditors to believe in Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls; but *it is at our peril to exhort them to anything short of it, or which does not involve or imply it.*" "I am aware," says the author, "that such an idea may startle many of my readers, and some who are engaged in the Christian ministry. We have sunk into such a compromising way of dealing with the unconverted as to have well-nigh lost the spirit of the primitive preachers; and hence it is that sinners of every description can sit so quietly as they do year after year in our places of worship. It was not so with the hearers of Peter and Paul; they were either pricked in the heart in one way, or cut to the heart in another. Their preaching commended itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. How shall we account for this difference? Is there not some important error or defect in our ministrations? . . . I refer to those who are commonly reputed *Evangelical*, and who approve of addresses to the unconverted. I hope no apology is necessary for an attempt to exhibit the scriptural manner of preaching. If it affects the labours of some of my brethren, I cannot deny but that it may also affect my own. I conceive there is scarcely a minister among us whose preaching has not been more or less influenced by the lethargic systems of the age."

Mr. Fuller concludes his reflections with these words: "The ground on which they" (the primitive preachers) "took their stand was, *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.*

From hence they inferred the impossibility of a sinner being justified in any other way than for the sake of Him who was *made a curse for us*: from hence it clearly follows, that whatever holiness any sinner may possess before, in, or after believing, it is of no account whatever as a ground of acceptance with God. If we inculcate *this* doctrine, we need not fear exhorting sinners to holy exercises of heart, nor holding up the promises of mercy to all who thus return to God by Jesus Christ."

Several replies, rejoinders, &c., not only on the main points in discussion, but on various collateral topics, kept this controversy open more than twenty years.

In November, 1785, Mr. Fuller expresses himself as much grieved to find the spirits of the people in a certain neighbourhood hurt by controversy. "I find," he says, "there are several whose conversation turns almost entirely, and on all occasions, on these subjects. It seems to be one of Satan's devices, in order to destroy the good tendency of any truth, to get its advocates to hackney it out of measure, dwelling upon it in every sermon or conversation to the exclusion of other things. Thus, by some in the last age, the glorious doctrines of free and saving grace were served, and thereby brought into disrepute. If we employ all our time in *talking* about what men ought to be and do, it is likely we shall forget to *put it in practice*. The Lord deliver us from that temptation!"

Greatly, however, as this is to be deplored, it is not more than might be looked for in the excitements to which such an inroad on prevailing opinions and practice had

given rise. A revolution was in progress, during which the rules of thought and expression by which even religious men are governed were held in abeyance; and many on either side, who would have preferred a quiet and reflective thought and discussion, felt themselves driven by the warm and perhaps unscrupulous attacks of others into the arena. The good that may arise from the discussion of any important subject will rarely reach us pure and simple: it will come through the seething cauldron of men's prejudices and passions. It was pre-eminently so in this case. Had the project for introducing the gospel to the heathen been proposed to the churches of the Northamptonshire Association at that time, it must have fallen through.

A larger space has been accorded to the notice of this treatise than can be assigned to any other because of the position it occupied, not only in the sphere of the author's labours, and the twenty years' work it entailed to meet all the side issues it raised, but from its special adaptation in opening the way for the great work of his life and that of his colleagues—the founding and maintenance of the Baptist Mission. This gave occasion for a sermon by Mr. Fuller, on the *Pernicious influence of delay in religious concerns* (1791), founded on Haggai i. 2, "*The time is not come,*" &c. The effect of this discourse was most thrilling and powerful, and greatly helped forward the missionary project.

The year which marked the formation of the mission also produced from Mr. Fuller's pen the most popular, if not the most effective, of all his controversial works,

and led to his celebrity in circles beyond his own. This was

*Calvinistic and Socinian systems examined and compared
as to their moral tendency (1792).*

Three things appear in this title which would seem to militate against its influence: The apparently illiberal use of a name denied by those whose system is attacked, and the limited range of opposition to it implied by the term Calvinistic; also the invidious character implied in a moral comparison.

Mr. Fuller anticipates all these objections in his preface. Of the first he says, "The term *Socinian* is preferred in the following letters to that of *Unitarian*, not for the mean purpose of reproach, but because the latter name is not a fair one. The term, as constantly explained by themselves, signifies *those professors of Christianity who worship but one God*. For what professors of Christianity are there who profess to worship a plurality of Gods? Trinitarians profess also to be Unitarians. They as well as their opponents believe there is but *one God*. To give the Socinians this name, therefore, *exclusively*, would be granting them the very point in debate." If he had thought the use of the term Unitarian consistent with justice to his own argument, he would have preferred it. For the rest it was— notwithstanding the sneer of Dr. Toulmin about "holy ground"—the precise ground of attack chosen by Dr. Priestley, and that as opposed to *Calvinism*.

The work comprises fifteen letters on the influence of the respective systems on the conversion of profligates;

the standard of morality ; love to God and man ; veneration for the Scriptures ; cheerfulness of mind ; motives to gratitude, obedience, and heavenly mindedness ; and tendency to infidelity.

Messrs. Toulmin, Kentish, and Belsham replied, and Mr. Fuller rejoined with greater ease than with some antagonists against his first polemical publication. Dr. Toulmin argued the efficiency of Unitarian doctrine from the successes of the apostles !

Mr. Fuller writes, in probably his first letter to " Thomas, Carey, and their families," March 25, 1794 :

" My *Calvinistic and Socinian Systems Compared* has gone off with a strange rapidity. A second edition is in the press. I suppose it has been out of print these two months. I imagine I could have sold five hundred more by this time if I had them. I have received incessant testimonies of respect from all parts of the land, and from almost every denomination. Belsham and other Socinians have been pleased to say it is the best written piece that ever appeared against them. I have not heard at present, however, that any of them have engaged to answer it. Dr. Priestley charged me with a misquotation, and refused to read any further. I vindicated myself in a private letter to Mr. Palmer, of Hackney, who read it to the doctor. The doctor shuffled, and said he did not mean what (in page 1 of preface) I had made him to mean. Mr. Palmer informed me that he behaved very unworthily upon the business, and appeared not in a very good temper. I mean to justify that quotation in the second edition

Dr. Priestley said to Mr. Palmer that he should not write any more upon the subject, but should leave it to younger men. I seem to feel the ground on which I stand, and hope to be able to defend it. . . . Dr. Priestley has this week sailed for America. I do not blame him. He has printed a farewell sermon, in the preface of which he assigns the reasons of his going. Some have accused him of timidity on account of the reasons he gives, but I consider such accusations as brutal and malevolent. It is to the disgrace of England to have driven him away! Such treatment is enough to make a bad cause appear a good one. I am glad he is gone to America. He will have justice done there. There let him write; and if our cause cannot stand in the fair field of argument, let it fall."

Probably of all the discourses of Mr. Fuller, none was more able or of more lasting value than one delivered to the associated churches at St. Alban's in 1796, entitled, "The nature and importance of a deep and intimate knowledge of Divine truth;" Heb. v. 12-14. He lays the foundation by insisting on *the oracles of God as the Source of its knowledge*; explains its first principles, and urges the importance of being well grounded therein, not as a final acquisition, but as demanding constant development, which can only be reached by studying systematically and regarding the harmony and connection of the truths of the gospel. "If as ministers we go about to depict either the character of a bad man or of a good man, a state of unregeneracy or a work of grace, and instead of drawing from real life only copy from some

accounts we have read or heard, we shall neither convince the sinner nor meet the case of the believer ; all, to say the least, will be foreign and uninteresting.

“ If we adopt the principles of fallible men without searching the Scriptures for ourselves, and inquiring whether or not these things be so, they will not, even allowing them to be on the side of truth, avail us as if we had learned them from a higher authority.”

The eighteenth century closed upon these devoted men and the churches they represented with the loss of one of the brightest ornaments of the Church of God, and the *Memoirs of Samuel Pearce, M.A.*, were written by Mr. Fuller.

One qualification was conspicuous above all others in the biographer of this “ seraphic ” Christian and preacher, viz., an entire and unbounded sympathy with the devoted character of the subject of the memoir.

The town of Birmingham has been and is distinguished by the connection with its history of illustrious men in various departments of life, but none ever reflected a more divine lustre on the sphere of his labour than Samuel Pearce. In these memoirs Mr. Fuller allows him very largely to speak for himself. Describing his evangelistic labours while at Bristol Academy, he says, “ Being sent by my tutor to preach two Sabbaths at Coleford, I felt peculiar sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week to going from house to house among the colliers who dwelt in the Forest of Dean, conversing and praying with them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction I have ever known in discharging the duties

of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded by thirty or forty of my smutty neighbours, I have felt such an unction from above that my whole auditory have been melted into tears while directed to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

He "panted," as he said, for the life and labour of a missionary, but his premature decay laid a forbidding hand on him. He made in Birmingham the first addition (of £70) to the Baptist Mission, and formed the first auxiliary.

The Gospel its own Witness (1800).

Some of the sweepings of the French Revolution seemed to have been collected and made up into a compound by that clever master of gibes and biting sarcasms, Thomas Paine, whose writings were exercising a wider influence than their argument entitled them to. In this treatise Mr. Fuller grapples with his smart sophisms, and often turns his weapon against himself. But he does much more. Taking the high ground of the moral evidences of the Christian religion, which must after all be its most convincing attestation, especially in the case of the great mass of the people, who have neither the opportunity nor the material for a study of external evidences, Mr. Fuller contrasts Christianity with the meagre recognition of a nominal Deity without attribute or homage. He contrasts the lives of the principal apostles of Deism with those of the advocates of Christianity in every age.

Perhaps the most remarkable chapter of the work is that in which the writer deals with a favourite argument of Paine derived from astronomical science, on the magnitude of creation and the all but certainty of its being peopled by intelligent beings, picturing every world as having "an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a Redeemer."

Mr. Fuller shows that on the supposition of a plurality of intelligent worlds being a proved fact it does not follow that the conditions described in this rhodomontade were applicable to other worlds than this: all others might be sinless. Moreover, before we could allow the doctrine of a plurality of intelligent worlds to overturn our hopes of eternal life, we are bound, in the exercise of common-sense, to have something better than supposition to guide us. But admitting it were a proven fact, nothing could impart a more grand illustration to many of its most glowing descriptions; for example, the descriptions of the extent of Christ's mediatorial dominion—Phil. ii. 8-10; Col. ii. 10; Eph. i. 20-22. It is impossible in this brief notice to convey any adequate idea of the force of the arguments. Dr. Chalmers acknowledged it as the nucleus of a portion of his great work on astronomy in relation to Christianity.

The Backslider: an inquiry into the nature, symptoms, and effects of religious declension, with the means of recovery (1801).

This is a searching treatise, of which there are few that might not benefit by the reading. The writer tells us that it was occasioned by his deep impression of the

unhappy condition of many of whom he had thought highly, and with whom he had walked in Christian fellowship.

Dialogues, Letters, and Essays on various subjects (1806).

In this collection, chiefly of his contributions in various magazines, the writer, under the assumed name of Gaius, which he commonly employed as his signature, treats of the leading topics of interest in the religious circles of the time, which for the most part he had discussed in "The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation," &c.

Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis (1805).

Of all the writings of Mr. Fuller, there are, perhaps, none so deeply interesting to the general reader as this.

In an address to the church under his care he says, "It is now upwards of twenty-two years since I first took the oversight of you in the Lord. During the last fifteen years it has been, as you know, my practice to expound on a Lord's day morning some part of the Holy Scriptures, commonly a chapter. From all that I have felt in my own mind, and heard from you, I have reason to hope these exercises have not been in vain.

I have not been in the habit of writing dedications, but feel inclined in this instance to deviate from my usual practice. Considering my time of life, and the numerous avocations on my hands, I may not be able to publish any more of the kind; and if not, permit me to request that this family book may be preserved as a memorial of our mutual affection, and of the pleasures

we have enjoyed together in exploring the treasures of the lively oracles."

No description could have supplied in so terse and comprehensive a manner the key to the feeling of the writer in prosecuting this important portion of his work, of feeding the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made him overseer.

There may have been exponents of this portion of Scripture who have brought to the study of its pages more critical acumen and more fulness of exegesis, but the whole range of expository lore might be fairly challenged to exhibit a more thorough identity of spirit with the scenes of primeval and patriarchal life than this. The simplicity of his own character, its freedom from the trammels of conventional life, due to a large extent to his earliest home training, his robust and manly grasp of the relation of these early denizens of the world to their God, shine conspicuously in every page; while its harmony with evangelical truth, and the susceptibility of all its principles of a perfect adaptation to the most modern phase of Christian family and social life, are strikingly apparent.

Apology for the late Christian Missions in India (1808).

This is a polemical work of no ordinary power and acumen, in reply to a threefold attack of which the particulars have already been given.

To an accusation of one of the directors of interference "with the religion of the natives," Mr. Fuller shows conclusively that the question he raises is not whether the natives of India shall continue to enjoy the most perfect

toleration, but *whether that toleration shall be extended to Christian missionaries,*

Strictures on Sandemanianism (1810).

The system of religion called Sandemanianism was taught half a century before by Messrs. Glass and Sandeman, and now advocated by Mr. M'Lean.

Its leading feature is that faith has no moral quality, but is simply an act of the understanding without any holy affection, which, it is alleged, would be as much opposed to justification being the result of Divine grace as if it were by the works of the law.

Although this proposition, right or wrong, seems so simple that it need not involve much discussion, its ramifications are so intricate, that in the hands of two such able controversialists it became a lengthened discussion. No opponent of Mr. Fuller ever gave him so much trouble to unwind his subtil distinctions. Mr. Fuller says, "I know not of any writer who has given such a definition of faith as this would represent. No more holy affection is pleaded for in faith, than unholy affection is allowed to be in unbelief; but the design is manifestly to exclude *all* holy affection, from faith as being favourable to self-righteousness. If, therefore, *repentance* be considered as necessary to forgiveness, seeing it must be allowed to include holy affection, it will be considered as favourable to self-righteousness."

Mr. Fuller's "letters" were directed largely against the spirit of exclusiveness engendered by the system, which was fruitful of jealousies, misrepresentations, and endless

divisions. The spirit of it entered largely into the *Baptist* community in Scotland, and like other extremely isolated bodies they degenerated into a more intense self-righteousness than that which they denounced, and were constantly splitting into new churches of perhaps a dozen individuals, representing some form of belief supposed to be wanting in the others. This seems now to have almost worn itself out.

Exposition of the Apocalypse (1814).

In the general principle of interpretation of the prophecy, Mr. Fuller followed the line of Bishop Newton and others, in assigning to the various events of a political as well as religious nature which affected the interests of the Church from the first age a correspondence with the symbolic language of the prophecy. It is perhaps one of the best commendations that can be bestowed in an age when interpreters become prophets, to say that Mr. Fuller has never pushed his conclusions with dogmatic assurance.

Sermons on Various Subjects (1814).

This volume contains nearly thirty sermons, including those given in this list, and fifty-four sketches added in a subsequent edition.

Several of these discourses are of great excellence, but the space available will not admit of special notice.

Essay on Truth.

The small treatise bearing this title is singularly comprehensive and terse; embracing in its range the great question—What is truth?—its importance, causes of error, and why permitted.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOSING SCENES.

MANY of Mr. Fuller's letters and other records refer to the pressure of his multifarious labours in terms rather adapted to a man farther advanced in years. He began when he had scarcely reached his 50th year to speak as one who was drawing near to the close of life. He had more of the heat and burden of the day than his proportionate share, and he was "as a servant earnestly desiring the shadow;" yet between whiles, during perhaps the exhilarating scenes and intercourse of travel, we find him "as well as ever in his life!" His journeys for the mission, especially in Scotland, were an immense relief from his sedentary life at home of twelve hours a day at his desk, and, so far as they went, were an antidote to the organic disease which fastened on the liver, entailing a lengthened period of intense suffering; and no form that it assumed was more distressing than the utter prostration of his spirits. Yet there was work to be done, and work that no one but himself could do, and do it he would, so long as he could hold a pen. One strand of the "threefold cord that is

not quickly broken " was loosed by the death of Sutcliffe. In immediate prospect of this event he writes to Ryland : " I have just received an alarming letter from Olney, and must go if possible to see our dear brother to-morrow. . . . Well, the government is on His shoulders, ours will soon be from under the load ; but while we are reducing in number and increasing in labour, it may be the heavier for a time. God grant we may finish our course with joy."

The writer of this letter had little more than ten months of life before him, nor were his symptoms such as to hold out the prospect of a much longer time. But there is work to be done, and he girds up his loins to do it. He writes : " June 6th I set off for Essex, where I shall collect ; thence to London to the annual meeting on the 22nd ; come down to Kettering on the 24th or 25th ; set off for the north of England on the 27th for five Lord's days at Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle, and Hull."

He travels through several of the Midland counties to the annual meeting in London. He returns to fulfil the last loving behests of friendship at Olney. After this he starts for Lancashire and the north. A new missionary requires a passage. Mr. Fuller applies to the Directors according to the provisions of the Charter granted only a year ago. This is ungraciously refused. He must go from Durham to London—no slight journey in those days. Has an interview with the Earl of Buckinghamshire. This successfully concluded, he returns home, and the following week assists in the

"designation" at Leicester of one of the most valuable of missionaries, Mr. Yates. He parts with old friends as one that will see them no more; he tells them his work is nearly done, but that he could not spare time to nurse himself, and must work as long as he could.

On returning home he is taken seriously ill. Some missionary students left by Mr. Sutcliffe, and sent to Kettering three months ago, must be transferred to Bristol Academy; he can scarcely write a note with them.

Partially recovering, he starts again for the north, and writes a short memoir of Sutcliffe.

He writes to a friend: "I feel as one who has the sentence of death, and whose great concern is whether his religion will bear the test! Almost all my old friends are dead or dying. Well, I have a hope that bears me up; and it is through grace. In reviewing my life I see much evil. God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Who would expect to hear of another visit to London, where he preached one of the most powerful discourses for the British and Foreign School Society! People said he excelled himself.

Within three or four months of his death his labours at the desk held him twelve hours in the day with missionary correspondence, and preparation of a volume of sermons and other works for the press.

Near the end of March he preached at Clipstone at the ordination of the Rev. J. Mack, whose redemption from military service to enter that of the Christian ministry Robert Hall and he had effected.

His ghastly, cadaverous appearance startled his friends

and he was as one speaking from the tomb. On descending from the pulpit he said, "I am very ill—a dying man." In leaving he said, "All is over—my work is nearly finished. I shall see you no more; the blessing of the Lord attend you. Farewell!" Many were the tears shed by those who had hung upon his lips, now "sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more."

Notwithstanding this, he was able to take a farewell of his own charge the next Lord's day morning, in a tender and pathetic discourse, from "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne," &c. (Isa. lxvi. 1, 2), and in the afternoon to unite with them at the table of the Lord. They knew that his work was now done. He came into the house to die. Placing his hand on his breast he said, "All misery centres here." "Bodily misery only, father?" "Yes, I can think of nothing else. 'My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct.'"

He dictated to his old friend Dr. Ryland a touching letter, calling to mind their joint labours and enjoyments in the work of God, and asking "one last testimony of brotherly love and of the truth of the gospel," that he would come over and preach his funeral sermon from Rom. viii. 10.

He says, "I have preached and written much against the *abuse* of the doctrine of grace; but that doctrine is all my salvation and all my desire. I have no other hope than from salvation by mere sovereign and efficacious grace through the atonement of my Lord and Saviour: with this hope I can go into eternity with com-

posure. Come, Lord Jesus, come when Thou wilt ! Here I am ; let Him do with me as seemeth Him good."

Referring to some hyper-Calvinists who had spoken disparagingly of the doctrines of "Sutcliffe and others," as detracting from their usefulness, Mr. Fuller says, "It is singular that the Mission to the East originated with men of these principles, and without pretending to be a prophet, I may say if ever it falls into the hands of men who talk in this strain, it will soon come to nothing."

The letter closed, he raised both hands, repeating with emphasis, "If I am saved, it will be by great and sovereign grace ! I have no raptures, but no despondency. My mind is calm. My God, my Saviour, my Refuge, to Thee I commit my spirit. Take me to Thyself. Bless those I leave behind."

Sitting up by the bedside he said, "All my feelings are sinking, dying feelings." Seeing his wife deeply affected he said, "We shall meet again. All will be well."

Being somewhat relieved by a warm bath, he observed to his medical attendant, "I do not recollect before to have had such depression of animal spirits accompanied with such calmness of mind."

The dreaded day—dreaded by all but himself—arrived when he must submit to the test the hope with which he had declared he could "plunge into eternity." It was (as in the present year) Lord's day, May 7th. A profound silence reigned in the room. Nothing was heard save the measured breathing of the dying man. He seemed to have lost his consciousness, and to have

entered on the borderland between worlds. No one thought now of trying to win his attention, when the sound of solemn psalmody was heard through the wall that separated the apartment from the congregation assembled for worship. His attention was roused; he tried to raise himself. Turning to my sister Sarah he said, "I wish I had strength enough." "For what, father?" "To worship, child." "Come, Mary, come and help me." He was by careful and united effort raised up. He seemed to sing "with the spirit and the understanding" without the bodily accompaniment; then, joining his hands as in earnest prayer, the only words distinctly heard were "Help me!" and within half an hour from the time of rousing himself he joined the "everlasting song."

Never, perhaps, had the choirs of earth and heaven been in nearer proximity—the dying pastor was the connecting link. If the eye of our faith sees that which is invisible, it will scarcely be a gratuitous imagination that hears in like manner the mingling of heavenly with earthly harmonies as we approach the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect.

The congregation were then listening, as well as the perturbed state of their minds would admit, to a solemn and appropriate discourse from Mr. Hall, on walking without fear through the valley of the shadow of death, with the presence and support of the Chief Shepherd, when some one was seen slowly and stealthily wending his way towards the pulpit, and mounting the steps.

The preacher stopped, and listening to the low whisper that greeted his ear could with difficulty announce the tidings. It was needless to do so. An audible wail went up as they too quickly interpreted the movement. The service was closed with a few tender and touching words, and a short pouring out of the heart to Him who gave and had taken away.

As the assembly slowly and silently dispersed they met many of their friends from the Independent meeting, who had been listening to similar sentiments from their own minister, than whom few more keenly felt the blow. But one sentence passed from one to another, "He is gone." Mr. Toller, on the next Sabbath, preached from the words of the old prophet, "Alas, my brother !"

The evening mail took the tidings to London, and the morning to the north. A week elapsed before the funeral, which brought, including those in the town and district, thousands of people from various parts of England and some from Scotland.

The galleries were supported with extra timbers. The large windows beside the pulpit were removed, and a tent sheltered from a drenching rain the great throng outside, few of whom probably could hear much that was said. The funeral was attended by several clergy of the Church of England and a great number of ministers of different denominations.

Dr. Ryland fulfilled the wishes of his friend by preaching on the words, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Robert Hall delivered what was termed a funeral

oration over the grave. Whether it was from excess of feeling, it is difficult to say, but it was far from equal to his usual utterances. Indeed, he must have to some extent felt this, for no persuasion would induce him to consent to its publication.

On retiring home I went direct into the parlour, where I saw Mr. Hall leaning on the mantelpiece, his shoulders heaving with the emotion to which he was giving vent. I retreated unobserved, closing the door against intrusion. The scene imprinted itself on my mind too deeply to be forgotten.

Mr. Hall, however, in an estimate of Mr. Fuller's character subsequently written, expresses himself with much felicity. "Were I making his eulogium, I should necessarily dwell on the spotless integrity of his private life, his fidelity in friendship, his neglect of self-interest, his ardent attachment to truth, and especially the series of unceasing labours and exertions in superintending the Mission to India, to which he most probably fell a victim. He had nothing feeble or indecisive in his character; but to every undertaking in which he engaged he brought all the powers of his understanding, all the energies of his heart; and if he were less distinguished by the comprehension than the acumen and solidity of his thoughts, less eminent for the gentler graces than for stern integrity and native grandeur of mind, we have only to remember the necessary limitation of human excellence. While he endeared himself to his denomination by a long course of most useful labour, by his excellent works on the Socinian and Deistic controversies, as well as his devotion

to the cause of missions, he laid the world under lasting obligations."

Mr. Toller in his sermon on the day preceding the funeral, quoting Mr. Fuller's utterance, "If I am saved at all it must be by great and sovereign grace," says, "Here the dying minister, the dying friend, speaks all my heart; here I come nearer to him at his death than I have ever done through the whole course of his life. . . . It is not the voice of congratulation on the best spent life, however just, that is most acceptable in those awful moments to pious minds; *that* is often heard with trembling diffidence and conscious apprehension of contaminating motives and counteracting defects. The sweetest music in the ears of expiring piety must be struck from another string: 'This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' In all probability my bones will be deposited not far from his. God grant that I may die in the same temper and the same hope, and that our spirits may be united in the day of the Lord. Amen."

The Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society passed the following minute, May 22, 1815:—

"This Committee learn with deep regret the decease of the late Rev. Andrew Fuller, secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society; and impressed with a sense of the valuable services rendered by that excellent individual in promoting the translation and publication of the sacred Scriptures in the East, desire to unite their condolence on this afflictive event with that of their Baptist brethren,

to whom he was more particularly allied, and of the Christian world, by whom his memory will deserve to be held in affectionate and grateful veneration."

A tablet was erected to his memory beside the pulpit, expressive of the reverence and love of the Church and congregation, and their high estimate of his character and work as a pastor, a writer, and secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society.

It is somewhat remarkable that the town of Kettering, the population of which in Mr. Fuller's time did not reach four thousand, should be associated with the names of so many distinguished Nonconformists. Besides Mr. Fuller's friend and colleague, Mr. Toller, who like himself occupied this place as a sphere of labour, the town claims among its natives Dr. Gill, the learned commentator; Mr. Brice, a London minister of some note; William Knibb, a man whose name is entitled to rank with Wilberforce and Clarkson as the devoted friend of the enslaved negro; and one whose modesty I will not wound by any more definite mention than that as a Hebrew scholar he is second to none of his colleagues now occupied in the noble work of revising the text of the ancient Scriptures.

APPENDIX.

SOME special features in the character and opinions of Mr. Fuller, of much interest, could scarcely find a place in the foregoing pages. Of these were

His Political Views.

It would not be easy to gather these from a comparison with any standard now recognized. He professed to be a Whig, but of so moderate a type that, equivocal as the term is in modern nomenclature, it would scarcely be assigned to him. He had an almost instinctive dislike to party politics in any sense; and in all his career as the secretary of the mission nothing gave him so much anxiety as the political bias of one or two of the missionaries. In the case of Mr. Fountain (otherwise a most valuable missionary) it reached such a pitch that, all entreaty and remonstrance notwithstanding, it seemed an absolute impossibility for him to write a letter to a friend in England without sneers and banter about the King, the East India Company, or some official, English or colonial. While Mr. Fuller was doing his utmost to allay the apprehensions, real or pretended, of susceptible

functionaries, Fountain's letters, opened at the post-office here or in India, threatened to neutralize all the secretary's disclaimers of political aims and professions of profound loyalty to the Government. Yet Mr. Fuller, in his letters to the elder missionaries, kept them posted up in European history, particularly that of the French Revolution, and did not hesitate to apply the epithet "baggage" to the Empress Catherine of Russia, or to express by implication his disapproval of the annexation system of Lord Wellesley when denouncing the submission of Carey to an unworthy trick of the Rev. Dr. Buchanan, in manipulating a speech of his before the assembled magnates of India in the college of Fort William, by which Carey was made greatly to please the Governor-General by flattering expressions of his policy.

The bias of Mr. Fuller's politics was deference to the "powers that be." He had seen so much of what he regarded as license rather than liberty that it disgusted him. In a treatise on "Backsliding," he says, "There were many in the early ages of Christianity who despised government, but were they good men? Far from it. They were professors of Christianity, however, for they are said to have 'escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ,' and, what is more, they had attained the character of Christian teachers, but of what description? 'False teachers.' When a man's thoughts and affections are filled with such things as these the Scriptures become a kind of *dead letter*, while the speeches and writings of politicians are the *lively oracles*."

In enforcing quiet obedience to authority, he admits a different element under special conditions in the reservation—"Whatever may be the duty of a nation in extraordinary cases," &c. And in the succeeding paragraph he says, "Nor does the danger belong exclusively to one side. We may sin by an *adherence* to the measures of a Government as well as by *opposition* to them. If we enlist under the banner of the party in power, *considered as a party*, we shall be disposed to vindicate or palliate all their proceedings, which may be very inconsistent with Christianity."

He had also witnessed that in the conduct of leading Whigs which greatly alienated him from them. He gives, in his correspondence with Mr. Ward, a remarkable example of their intolerance which contrasted unfavourably with the conduct of such men as Lord Liverpool.

The atmosphere of the times was one of concentrated "loyalty" under the constant apprehension of invasion. A volunteer corps, under the command of one of Mr. Fuller's friends, and officered by more than one other of them and by some of the Independent congregation, kept up a constant demonstration of loyalty that seemed to smother any decided form of Liberalism in the town, and I remember a respectable man, coming as a tradesman to the place, being a "marked man" because he advocated "a reform in Parliament."

Civil and Religious Liberty.

Mr. Fuller was a vigorous advocate for the preservation of civil and religious liberty whenever its interests

seemed to be in danger. In 1800 it became known that a bill was preparing to be brought into Parliament, founded on a report which had originated with the bishop and clergy of the diocese of Lincoln, complaining that great irregularities had arisen out of the practice of village preaching, and that the Toleration Act had been perverted by persons taking out a license to preach, merely for the purpose of being exempt from civil and military service. And the project had in view chiefly the restriction of the itinerant labours of the Methodists and others, which proved an annoyance to the clergy.

Mr. Fuller addressed a letter on the subject to a distinguished member of Parliament which, though a model of courteousness, clearly and boldly attacked the hidden and unworthy object of the bill. "What, then," he asks, "have the Methodists done to deserve the restraint of the Legislature? Have they not wrought much good by their wanderings? There may be some things among them which we do not approve; but still we should be very sorry to see their religious liberties abridged. The Act of Toleration might not originally be intended to include them; but if it were now construed so as to exclude them, the consequence would be that they must become Dissenters in order to be comprehended under its provisions."

Referring to the complaint of the clergy of the small number of worshippers in their diocese, he says, "Well they may complain, for those counties are almost in a state of heathenism: not owing, indeed, to village preaching, but rather to the want of it. Huntingdonshire,

Rutland, Lincolnshire, and the Isle of Ely are remarkable for profaneness, beyond any other district in the kingdom : yet the clergy have nearly had these counties to themselves, there being very few Dissenters in them. Why, then, do they want to punish us for the effects of their own remissness ?”

“Is it not manifest,” he adds, “that evangelical religion is the only thing that will suffer by this bill ? The clergy talk of Deism and Socinianism ; but they will not be affected by it. What, then, has evangelical religion done against the State to provoke this treatment ? It cannot be that it fosters political principles which give offence, for the friends of evangelical preaching, both in towns and villages, are not the men who have distinguished themselves in political disputes. Nor has political dispute anything to do among village preachers. Neither do they who go into the villages, so far as my knowledge extends, ever rail at the clergy or at the Church ; they direct their whole aim in promoting repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The whole of the projected measure appears to originate in the jealousy of the anti-evangelical clergy, who wish to curry favour with the State, that they may be permitted once more to renew the work of persecution, from which for upwards of a century they have, sorely against their inclination, been compelled to desist.

“The Toleration Act may have been infringed by persons obtaining licenses to preach merely to be exempt from civil offices ; but if no person were eligible to apply

for a licence without the recommendation of three respectable ministers of their own denomination, it would sufficiently guard against abuse. And if any have gone into the villages, and railed against the clergy or the Church, there is no remedy for this but what would equally affect others. Let the clergy act in character, and it will not hurt them, but fall on the head of the accusers."

The bill, so much dreaded by all Dissenters, the Government at once abandoned. It entirely defeated its own object, and led to an extension instead of an abridgment of the Toleration Act.

An attempt of Lord Sidmouth in 1811 to circumscribe the liberties of the different classes of Dissenters gave rise to an opposition far more formidable than that which met and defeated those of a few years before. Professing much concern for the respectability of all who undertook to preach the gospel, he brought in a bill to lay them under restrictions of a most galling and intolerable character. A rumour had got afloat that Mr. Wilberforce was acting a double part—while openly opposing he was secretly abetting the course taken by Lord Sidmouth.

Mr. Fuller brought this under his notice, and received from him a very long letter, most solemnly and unequivocally denying the truth of the rumour, and satisfactorily explaining some circumstances which might seem to give a colour to it. He says, "I was from the first unfeignedly and warmly hostile to it both in heart and conduct, and in every quarter where I thought efforts likely to be of any avail I used my best endeavours in opposition to it.

On Mr. Perceval, for instance, I urged and explained in the strongest manner the evils to be apprehended from it."

On the statement of Mr. Fuller that the measure bore with especial hardship on the Wesleyans, Mr. Wilberforce adds, "With respect to my opinions and feelings concerning the Wesleyan Methodists, it is gratifying to me that I can speak of what I have *done* rather than what I have *thought* or felt about them. You, I find, remember something about a measure started many years ago by Mr. M. A. Taylor; but perhaps you never knew that I was myself the instrument of preventing him proceeding with that measure, to which he was strongly urged by some persons of superior talent and weight. That far more formidable attempt against religious toleration was aimed, indeed, more peculiarly against the system of Methodists; and though from the manner in which that service was performed, it attracted no public observation, I have long thought that this was perhaps the greatest service that I ever rendered my country; and I know not if there is any event of my life on which I look back with equal pleasure.

"Some days before I had first heard of this injurious report, I had transmitted to Lord Sidmouth a most interesting and pleasing account of their proceedings in Cornwall which I had received from a correspondent in that county, with a view to impress him with the value of their labours on the one hand, and of their apprehensions from his bill on the other.

"I remember well that in the first interview (a short

one) between Lord Sidmouth and myself, any one would have supposed from his language (and I firmly believe he had not the least idea of deceiving) that the leaders of the Methodists, whose names he mentioned, and with one of the chief of whom he had been conversing above an hour only the day before, were satisfied that his intended bill would do them no manner of harm; indeed, any one who had not lived as long in public life as myself would have supposed the same of some other leaders."

The following extract from a letter to Mr. Fuller of the Rev. John Owen, chaplain to Dr. Beilby Porteous, Bishop of London, and secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, will show both his and the bishop's opinion of a further measure for the restriction of religious liberty.

"Fulham, March 27, 1804.

"I had great pleasure in communicating the substance of your letter to the Bishop of London. As I was prevented from seeing him personally on the subject, I did it in writing. I shortly after received a note from him, a copy of which I will subjoin that you may form your own judgment of the services which the parties chiefly interested in the question may expect from him.

"Dear Sir,—I am well acquainted with the Act you mention, and very much disapprove of it as being too severe, and inconsistent with the principles of toleration established in this country. I should be sorry if it were confirmed by our Government, and hope it will not, but can say nothing more at present than that it is now under

consideration, that I shall attend the discussion of it as often as I can, and that when the business is finally decided I will let you know.'

"Allow me, sir, to assure you on my own part that I read the first account of this legislative measure with the truest abhorrence. Impressed as I have long been with the meritorious exertions of many Christian societies in this country to convey the gospel to the heathen nations, I deprecate from my heart every attempt to fetter or discourage them."

After speaking in the highest terms of eulogy of the Baptist missions he writes, "It would ill become one Christian minister to use the language of compliment to another ; I shall content myself, therefore, with assuring you that any communications with which you may honour me shall have my best attention."

Diplomas.

The publication of Mr. Fuller's polemical and other writings, not less than his arduous labours in the missionary cause, attracted the notice of his Transatlantic brethren, and a diploma of Doctor of Divinity was forwarded to him from the College of New Jersey. This title he never used, and in a letter to Dr. Hopkins of New England, dated March 17, 1798, he says, "One of our ministers has told the world that a *diploma* was conferred upon me by the College of New Jersey. I do not know that it is so, as I have received no direct account of it. If I had, I should have written them a respectful letter, expressive of my gratitude for their

having offered such a token of respect, and acknowledging what is the truth : that I should esteem it as coming from that quarter which, beyond any other in the world, I most approved, but declining to accept it, partly because I have not those qualifications which are expected to accompany such titles, and partly because I believe all such titles *in religion* to be contrary to our Lord's command, Matt. xxiii. 8."

In 1805 he received a similar document from Yale College, accompanied by a letter from President Dwight, and presented by Professor Silliman.

In his reply Mr. Fuller declined the honour, and referred to his having, eight years before, felt it to be his duty to do the same thing in a letter to Dr. Hopkins, of New Jersey.

Some years after this, in a letter to Mr. Ward on the subject of the diplomas at Serampore, he says :

"What shall we say and do about these double D's, *alias* 'foolscap' ? Dr. —, as if he wished for some of his brethren to keep him company, no sooner hears of them than down you go 'Dr. Marshman,' &c. Now to me they are odious. Every one of them half robs me of a Christian brother. I therefore dub them not till they first dub themselves by acceptance, or till everybody about me has done it."

Dr. Ryland, though he accepts it, compares the flavour of it to "a mouthful of mutton fat," to which he has a strong aversion. Referring, in a letter to Mr. Fuller, to certain ill-natured rumours, he, after an elaborate explanation of his difficulty, says, "Will you say of your

friend that you knew he disliked it, but that he had not firmness enough to persist in refusing it."

Christian Friendships.

Mr. Fuller had a soul formed for friendship. Not only was this displayed in his communications with Pearce, Marshman, and others, with whom he had been long associated, but it was evinced also in his relations to those just entering on a career in which they needed special sympathy and encouragement.

His valedictory addresses, as the organ of the Society, on the relation of missionaries and their wives to each other, could hardly be read without tears; but even these were, from their publicity, deemed wanting in the elements of personal application to the details of the new life on which they were entering, and were commonly supplemented by more private counsels on their deportment to each other; to those with whom they might sojourn before their departure, not forgetting servants; to their fellow passengers on board ship; that the law of kindness should ever be on their lips; that on their arrival, if at Serampore, no jarring note should disturb the family concord prevailing there. And all this was done with a delicacy and loving sympathy that won all hearts. Nor were his counsels wanting to those on the other side of the ocean, as to their reception of those who like themselves had left home and warm friends for new and untried scenes.

Mr. Fuller's laborious and successful effort in reconciling two most obstinate dissidents is thus graphically

described in a letter of his to Mr. Ward, who was acquainted with the parties concerned :

“ Found — and — at strong variance, not on speaking terms with each other ; an old sore, too, that had been gathering a year or two. The church unhappy on account of it.

“ After seeing things in all their bearings, I determined to do my utmost in the time I was there to convince each of his sin, and to bring them together. In the first two days I did nothing but load each with censure by himself, and express my apprehension that there were no hopes of them. The last day I got them together. They were each very fierce for nearly two hours. By that time they began to be sick of their antipathy. I put a few tender questions. They wept one at another. In that state I took hold of their hands and joined them ; they sobbed and said nothing, but only wished I would pray for them. I did so, and they forgave each other with much weeping ; said afterwards they had had differences and reconciliations before, but hoped this would be lasting, because ‘ there was so much of God in it.’ I saw them six weeks afterwards on my return, both very amicable.”

Notwithstanding these demonstrations of benevolence and the outpourings of his Christian love, it cannot be denied, nor ought it to be overlooked, that he occasionally evinced a stern and somewhat repulsive bearing, too often the accompaniment of unbending integrity. This is his own record concerning it : “ Whatever powers I possess of some kinds, I am often at a loss

in steering my course through the intricacies of life so as to avoid giving offence. There is something sanguine and ardent in my temper, accompanied with an aptness to speak what I think, sometimes without sufficiently considering whether it will not hurt the feelings of others. This I reckon a weak side, and generally endeavour to watch against it."

Mr. Fuller was on terms of intimacy with many of the Evangelical clergy of the Church of England—Newton, Scott, Berridge, Legh Richmond, Basil Woodd, and Overton, Richardson, and Graham of York. The three last-named gentlemen were exceedingly fond of a "crack" with him whenever he passed through York. There was no restraint in the expressions of their distinctive views on Dissenters and Churchmen.

Of Newton he says, "I have received a letter from Father Newton, highly approving of 'The Gospel its own Witness;' and understanding that a second edition of that work was now at press he proposes a few emendations. The worst of it is that advice offered by such venerable men as he and Dr. Erskine, and with such a degree of friendship, can hardly be refused; and yet if I were to follow everybody's counsel I might alter all that I have written." After giving his opinion of Mr. Newton's suggestions he adds, 'Such would be my answer to Mr. Newton if he were a *brother*; but he is a *father*, and so full of love and kindness that I know not what to do with him."

From the Rev. Legh Richmond he received the following on forwarding some pleasing tidings from India,

accompanied by specimens of type re-cast from the ruins of the fire at Serampore :

"I received your papers with thankful pleasure ; they seem like specimens dropped from the midst of heaven by the angel in his flight with the everlasting gospel in his hand. . . . Happy are they that can cultivate true brotherly love and respect, though they cannot in everything think and act together. There is still a wide field for mutual operation ; there may be a few hedges and ditches to separate portions of the land, but it is all one farm. Glory be to the Chief Husbandman and Great Shepherd ! His grace and mercy be on such *subordinate* husbandmen and shepherds as you, and far more so your unworthy fellow labourer, L. R."

Mr. Fuller describes an interview with the venerable Mr. Berridge, Rector of Everton. After a conversation rich with love to Christ, and a facetiousness chastened with a holy unction, being very weak he declined Mr. Fuller's request to pray, and referred it to him. Before rising from his knees he said, "O Lord God, this prayer has been offered in the name of Jesus ; accept it, I beseech Thee," &c., for five or six minutes. "We then," says Mr. Fuller, "took leave with solemn prayer for blessings on each other, as if we had been acquainted for forty years. The visit left a strong and lasting impression on my heart of the beauty of holiness—of holiness almost matured."