

Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.

by George Burder



We are strongly inclined to make ourselves acquainted with the history and character of our instructors. If we derive much pleasure from the writings of an author, we are naturally inquisitive respecting him, especially if he be a writer on theological subjects. We wish to know what are his qualifications for the sacred office of a teacher of religion; and we scarcely admit his claim to that character, until we can form a favourable opinion of his piety and talents. Hence the peculiar value of ecclesiastical biography, which becomes the more interesting, when the subject of it has acquired great celebrity in the church of Christ; when his writings are read by thousands of thousands; when his works, after having stood the test of a century, not only maintain their place in the public esteem, but become more and more valuable in the opinion of wise and good men. Such is the rank which the following *Works* of Dr. Watts hold in the literary and religious world. It may therefore be reasonably expected, that a new and standard edition of his writings should be accompanied with a full and impartial account of their author. This we are now enabled to effect, in a manner superior to that which was in the power of those worthy men, Dr. D. Jennings and Dr. P. Doddridge, who superintended the first edition of his works. The *Life of Dr. Watts*, prefixed to that publication, was by no means calculated to satisfy the mind of an inquisitive reader; nor was it worthy of the great and good man whose memoirs it contains. (Note: As an apology for the first editors of his works, it may be observed, that they state it to have been the wish of Dr. Watts, that no history of his life should be published; that he absolutely declined providing any materials for that purpose; and that he desired his character might stand in thw rold merely as it would appear in his works...) Since that period, several writers have favoured the public with larger accounts of his life, particularly Dr. Gibbons, whose memoirs were derived from an intimate acquaintance with the Doctor himself; from his brother, Mr. Enoch Watts; from original letters; and from other authentic sources of information. Dr. Johnson also, in his *Lives of the Poets*, has with a masterly pen drawn the character of our author—a character which, perhaps, does him the greater honour, as the writer was far from being partial to that religious body which produced, and has been so much honoured by, Dr. Watts. From these memoirs, and some others of less consideration, the editor has compiled the following pages, which he trusts will present to the reader a fair and full delineation of one of the most excellent and

useful characters that ever adorned the Christian church.

Southampton had the honour of giving birth to Dr. Isaac Watts. He was born there July 17, 1674. His father was a very worthy and respectable man, who presided over a boarding school of considerable reputation. He was a dissenter, and had suffered imprisonment for his nonconformity; during which, it is said, that the mother of Dr. Watts has been known to sit on a stone, near the prison door, suckling her son Isaac.

The inclination of Isaac Watts to literary pursuits discovered itself at a period unusually early. Before he could speak with perfect plainness, he would say, when money was given to him—"A book, a book—buy a book." His early desire of learning was gratified by his intelligent father, so that he began to learn Latin when only four years old. His education was first entrusted to the superintendence of a worthy clergyman, the Rev, John Pinhorne, master of the grammar school at Southampton; of whose able attention to his improvement, the Doctor bears honourable testimony in a Latin ode, inscribed to that valuable man. It is unnecessary to say, that young Watts made a considerable proficiency in the learned languages; his works are the best monuments of his classical acquirements.

The marks of superior genius were soon discovered by his worthy parents. Mrs. Watts, it seems, sometimes employed the pupils, after school hours, in composing a few fines of poetry, for which she would reward each of them with a farthing. On one of these occasions, Isaac being requested to do the same, produced the following couplet:

"I write not for a farthing, but to try
How I your farthing writers can outvie."

About the same time, his piety, as well as his talents, became conspicuous. In an acrostic on his own name, we have the following lines, predictive, as it were, of his future character in the church—*the sweet singer of the British Israel*.

W ash me in thy blood, O Christ,
A nd grace divine impart;
T hen search and try the corners of my heart,
T hat I in all things may be fit to do
S ervice to thee, and sing thy praises too.

The promising talents of Isaac Watts soon recommended him to the attention of the neighbouring gentlemen. It was to the honour of Dr. Speed, a physician of Southampton, that he proposed to support him by subscription at one of the English universities; but his attachment to

the cause of nonconformity, though at that time oppressed, would not suffer him to accept the generous offer. "I am determined," said he, "to take my lot with the dissenters."

Having well studied the principles of nonconformity, on which, probably, the sufferings of his father had afforded some useful lessons, and being satisfied that those principles were most congenial with a kingdom "not of this world," he readily declined the flattering prospects of elevation and emolument, which his abilities and the proposed patronage offered to his view; and in these principles, candid as he was to pious christians of every denomination, he continued stedfast to the end of his days. In consequence of this resolution, having already made considerable advances in classical learning, he was placed under the care of the Rev. Thomas Rowe then pastor of a dissenting congregation at Haberdashers' Hall, London, and tutor of a seminary for the education of students in divinity. Here his conduct was in all respects so excellent, that his tutor declared, he never gave him any occasion of reproof, but his behaviour was so exemplary, that he was often proposed as a pattern to his fellow-students. While he was a student in this academy, he became a member of the church, in his nineteenth year, under the pastoral care of his tutor.

The diligence and success with which Mr. Watts pursued his studies, may be judged of by the dissertations which he left in manuscript, some of which may be seen in Dr. Gibbons's work. "These," says Dr. Johnson, "shew a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study." Happily for those who wish to imitate this successful student, the methods by which he rose to eminence may be learned from his writings, especially from that admirable work, "The Improvement of the Mind."

From hence it appears, that his method of study was to impress upon his memory the contents of whatever books he read, by abridging them; and sometimes, by interleaving them, to amplify one system with supplements from another, of which Dr. Gibbons has given some curious and instructive instances. He abridged Theophilus Gale's learned treatise, "The Court of the Gentiles," and it is much to be regretted that his abridgment should be buried in oblivion. He epitomized a treatise of Lewis de la Forge upon the human mind, and extracted a number of "Logical Questions from Burgendicius and Heereboord," two celebrated foreign writers. The Westminster Greek Grammar he interleaved, and improved by extracts and corrections from the grammars of Dr. Busby and Mr. Leeds. His labours in this way amounted to several considerable volumes in MS. and it is probable that he pursued the other methods recommended in his

treatise, such as making indexes and tables of contents to books that wanted them; writing annotations in the margin and blank leaves, either to confirm, illustrate, or confute his author, as he thought necessary.

It is peculiarly worthy of remark, with what zeal and modesty, piety and candour, he sought for truth, particularly in the study of the scriptures; constantly imploring the teaching of the Holy Spirit as his guide; always proposing his own opinions with diffidence, and defending them with moderation. It is equally to his honour that all his studies, and even his amusements, were directed to one end—the grand aim of his life and ministry. Even his lighter compositions discover a vein of seriousness; and he seldom translates or imitates a heathen poet, but he either makes him a Christian in the end, or shews his deficiency in not being one. The classics have doubtless their use, as well as beauties; but it is much to be feared, that their indiscriminate perusal leads many of our youth into the paths of vice, strewn with the flowers of Parnassus; and it is truly disgraceful to divines (professionally such), when they copy the licentious and profane sentiments of the gentile poets. Surely if Virgil and Horace had been christians, they would never have celebrated the pagan idols, as some of their modern imitators have done; at least, we have no example of this kind in the *early* converts to Christianity. They would rather have spurned the whole rabble of fictitious deities, in the spirit of Watts himself:

"Thy name, Almighty Sire, and thine
Jesus, where his full glories shine
Shall consecrate my lays."

During the time of his studies, Mr. Watts cultivated an acquaintance with the Muses; or, as he modestly expresses it, was "a maker of verses," from fifteen years of age. His Latin epistle to his brother Enoch "going a voyage" is dated in his seventeenth year (1691), and his verses to Mr. (afterwards archbishop) Horde, his Latin epistle to his brother Richard, the physician, with several other pieces, both Latin and English, published in his Lyric Odes, were written, we believe, before he was twenty.

The only circumstance our author seems to have regretted in his early studies is, that they were *midnight* studies, and against this he cautions future students very pathetically, as indeed many others have done, who have felt their pernicious consequences to the close of life.

When Mr. Watts had finished his studies, at the age of twenty, he returned and spent two years under his father's roof, where, instead of

entering immediately on his public work, he endeavored to improve himself farther in the branches of knowledge immediately connected with his profession; and now a circumstance occurred which laid the foundation of his future popularity as a Christian poet. He attended the same ministry as his father, who was perhaps at this very time a deacon of the church. The poetical compositions here sung were of a very humble class, and our young poet could not help expressing his disgust at them, regretting that his favorite part of worship should be so miserably performed. His father, knowing his poetical turn, desired him to try if he could do better. He did so. One hymn after another was produced and approved; and he was encouraged to proceed, till, even before he left his father, he had composed a considerable number of his hymns, though he did not publish them for several years after.

From his father's house he was invited by Sir John Hartopp, Bart. to reside in his family at Stoke Newington, as tutor to his son, where he spent five years very agreeably in superintending Mr. Hartopp's studies, while at the same time he did not neglect his own. He now felt the want of good elementary books for a liberal education, and here probably laid the plans, and collected part of the materials, of several of his subsequent publications, particularly his Logic, Geography, and Astronomy.

Mr. Watts's long silence, after completing his studies with such eclat, and in the prime of his health, can only be accounted for from his extreme diffidence. On the day, however, which completed his twenty-fourth year (1698), he preached his first sermon; and his ministry meeting with great acceptance, the same year he was chosen assistant to Dr. Chauncy, pastor of the independent congregation in Mark-lane, London. His ministerial labours, however, were soon interrupted by a painful illness, of five months continuance; in which he learned that patience in suffering was a part of Christian duty no less important than activity in labour.

His health being gradually restored, he returned to his public duty; and upon Dr. Chauncy's resignation, in January, 1702, Mr. Watts was called to succeed him, in the same church of which the famous Dr. John Owen had formerly been pastor. This call, with great diffidence and modesty, and after much deliberation, he accepted on March 8th, the very day on which King William died—a day very discouraging and alarming to the dissenting interest.

Mr. Watts, who had not entered upon the service of God without duly counting the cost, was not to be discouraged by difficulties, nor deterred by opposition. His public declaration of acquiescence in the choice of the church (of which some abstracts are here subjoined) will

gratify every reader of spiritual discernment.

"BRETHREN,

"You know the constant aversion I have had to any proposals of a pastoral office for these three years. You know also, that since you have given me a unanimous call thereto, I have proposed several methods for your settlement without me, but your choice and your affections seemed to be still unmoved. I have objected my own indisposition of body, and I have pointed to three divines, members of this church, whose gifts might render them more proper for instruction, and their age for government. These things I have urged till I have provoked you to sorrow and tears, and till I myself have been almost ashamed. But your perseverance in your choice, your constant profession of edification by my ministry, the great probability you shew me of building up this famous and decayed church of Christ, and your prevailing fears of its dissolution if I refuse, have given me ground to believe, that the voice of this church is the voice of Christ; and to answer this call, I have not consulted with flesh and blood: I have laid aside the thoughts of myself to serve the interest of our Lord. I give up my own ease for your spiritual profit and your increase. I submit my inclinations to my duty, and in hopes of being made an instrument to build up this ancient church, I return this solemn answer to your call, that, with a great sense of my own inability, in mind and body, to discharge the duties of so sacred an office, I do, in the strength of Christ, venture upon it; and in his name I accept your call, promising, in the presence of God and his saints, my utmost diligence in all the duties of a pastor, so far as God shall enlighten and strengthen me; and I leave this promise in the hands of Christ our Mediator, to see it performed by me unto you, through the assistance of his grace and Spirit."

Ten days after this he was ordained in the method customary among dissenters, by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," or the elders, that is, the pastors, of neighbouring churches, The ministers engaged on this occasion were, the Rev. M. Clark, T. Collins, T. Ridgely, B. Rowe, and T. Rowe, his tutor.

His ministerial work; was again soon suspended by a painful and alarming illness, from which his recovery was very slow and gradual. It was therefore judged necessary to provide him an assistant in the person of Mr. Samuel Price, in July 1703, who, ten years after, was ordained co-pastor with him; and the most cordial friendship subsisted between these amiable men for the remainder of their lives.

In June 1704 this congregation removed, on account of the decayed state of the building, from Mark Lane to Pinner's Hall, where Mr.

Watts, when able, preached every Sunday morning, till the people built a new meeting-house in Berry Street, which was opened in 1708, and became the future scene of his ministerial labours.

We must now introduce our young divine to the reader as an author of the first eminence in a certain line, and of great respectability in almost every walk of literature: Dr. Jennings, who preached his funeral sermon, questions whether any author before Dr. Watts ever appeared with reputation on such a variety of subjects as he has done, both as a prose writer and a poet.

It has been observed of literary men, and particularly of divines, that from the even tenour of their lives they afford little interest to the reader. This may be true of minor writers, whose works frequently die with them; but cannot apply to such characters as Watts, many of whose writings have produced far greater benefits to mankind than the noisy exploits of heroes and statesmen, and will probably remain coeval with our language. His labours have been the means of instructing thousands of the rising generations in the first principles of morals and religion; and while he has taught our children to read, he has instructed our philosophers in the art of reasoning. His sermons and treatises have taught theology to our divines, and his psalms and hymns have led the devotion of millions in their public worship, and animated the praises of thousands on their dying beds.

The year 1706 introduced to the world his first work, the *Horæ Lyricæ*; and, excepting the years of his indisposition, Ave shall find few that were not distinguished by some valuable production.

The preface to the Lyric Poems contains a defence of sacred poetry, which one would be tempted to think Dr. Johnson had never read, though he incorporated the poems in his poetical collection; or it is difficult to account for his saying of devotional poetry, "the paucity of its topics enforces perpetual repetition; and the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction." On the contrary, our author has shown that the sacred poet possesses advantages almost infinite, in the variety as well as the dignity of his topics; and that they reject no embellishments, though they require them to be used with judgment. So a fine person, though always commanding respect, will appear to most advantage in a dress of becoming dignity and splendour. The best answer to the objection of our critic (as well as to his predecessor *Boileau*, who urged the same objection) is to be found in the odes themselves, where the various topics of divinity are treated with unprecedented ability. Nothing uninspired can be more sublime than the third hymn, on God's dominion and decrees, particularly from the seventh verse.

"Chained to his throne a volume lies
With all the fates of men," &c.

The following piece on the "Divine Judgments," in Pindaric measure, is in the true spirit of that poet, and the concluding lines breathe the most exalted piety:

"Be thou my God, and the whole world is mine:
While thou art Sov'reign I'm secure;
I shall be rich till thou art poor;
For all I fear, and all I wish, heaven, earth, and hell, are thine!"

It is not our design, however, to write a commentary; if any part of the volume be thought to need apology, it may be the Hymns on Divine Love, on the model of the Song of Solomon. To those who admit this book into their sacred canon, that may be deemed sufficient authority; and others may be referred to some of the compositions of David, Isaiah, and Hosea. The fact is, "to the pure all things are pure;" while a defiled imagination will find food for its licentious appetite in the songs of heaven. Nothing is more offensive to the ears of the world, than the language of a saint upon the verge of glory. It being observed to Dr. Finley (a late president of New Jersey College, in America) in his last illness, that he always used the expression "*Dear Lord*" in his prayers, he replied, "Oh! He is *very dear—very precious* indeed!" That such expressions should ever excite a carnal idea, can only arise from an extreme carnality in our affections. Old-Testament saints are described as those who *love* the Lord, and to the New-Testament believers he is *precious*. We are not, however, pleading for the frequent and indiscriminate use of such expressions, which, though they appear decorous from the lips of genuine piety, are exceedingly disgusting from the mouths of light and wanton professors.

"As a poet, (says Dr. Johnson), had he been *only* a poet, he would probably have stood high among the authors with whom he is now associated. For his judgment was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice discernment; his imagination, as the Dacian Battle proves, was vigorous and active, and the stores of knowledge were large by which his fancy was to be supplied. His ear was well tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious."

In a following paragraph, however, some abatements are made in this poetical character. Though "his imagination was *vigorous* and active," it is asked, "who does not wish for a greater measure of vigour in his writings?" Though "his ear was well tuned," yet "his rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent." These little inconsistencies shew the difficulty of acting the professional critic, when a man is obliged to

find fault with others to shew his own sagacity. It must be owned, however, he was not always exact in his rhymes, and he offers an apology for it in his hymns, namely, the frequent recurrence of scriptural and theological terms, which admit few words to rhyme with them. Our author also constantly prefers sense to sound; and we may add, that, in his time, it was allowed to make those accommodations in the pronunciation of certain letters which would hardly be now tolerated; such, for instance, as the two sounds of *y* in *sky* and *free* to each of which he admits the word *liberty* as a sufficient chime.

But we must proceed to his *Hymns*, of which the occasion has been already intimated. A curious letter from his brother Enoch is preserved, in which he urges him to the publication of his Hymns, and the whole is so interesting and lively that we shall subjoin it to this memoir. But notwithstanding this and other solicitations, the first edition of his Hymns was not published till 1707, when the copy-right was sold to Mr. Lawrence, the bookseller, for 10£ only, as was Milton's *Paradise Lost* about half a century before for 15£—*Query*. Could these copy-rights be now re-assumed by an individual, with the then supposed perpetuity of copy-right, at what price would they be estimated? A few thousands would not pay for either.

Sometime in 1712 we find our poet at Tunbridge Wells, and in a cheerful moment writing a few verses on Lady Sunderland, whose person and accomplishments were then the admiration of the fashionable world: The only instance in which we find him indulging his muse in any thing like gallantry, or mere compliment; and this was on a peculiar occasion. Some anonymous verses having been attributed to Mr. Watts, which he thought bordered on profaneness, he wrote these to shew that a poet might flatter very sufficiently without borrowing any of the attributes of Divinity.

In September, Mr. Watts was seized with a most alarming fever, which shook his constitution, and left a weakness upon his nerves which he never wholly recovered. His sweet and profitable reflections during this long illness, are preserved in his *Miscellaneous Thoughts*, No. XLVII, wherein he describes the hurry of his spirits in a nervous fever—the inward peace of mind he enjoyed—and his prospects of returning health.

Painful and distressing as was this affliction, it was attended with a most consoling circumstance—his introduction to the acquaintance of Sir Thomas Abney, Knt. and Alderman, and then Lord Mayor of London, in whose family, at Newington, he spent the remainder of his days; and where he enjoyed every comfort which generous opulence and Christian friendship could afford; with every convenience for

retirement, study, and composition.

Before this illness, our author had been encouraged by the rapid sale of his Hymns, and the general approbation they had met with, to attempt a version of the *Psalms*, upon a new plan. By this time they had been nearly half composed, and the long cessation of his public labours now gave him the opportunity, as his health gradually recovered, to complete his design by the year 1719, when they were first published, and four thousand sold within the year. "If an author's own opinion may be taken," says the Doctor in one of his prefaces, "he esteems it to be the greatest work that ever he has published, or ever hopes to do for the use of the churches." Dr. Rippon adds, "they had not long appeared at the bar of the public, before the general voice (with one or two illustrious exceptions) pronounced a flattering verdict on them—a verdict the wisdom and justice of which have now been sanctioned by the *imprimatur*, I had almost said, of half a world."

One of the above exceptions was the Rev. Thomas Bradbury; an independent minister of eminence; who, though he at first encouraged that design, afterwards animadverted very severely on its execution; but he was a gentleman singular in his taste; and among other eccentricities would never suffer his clerk to sing a triple time tune, which he humourously used to call "a long leg and a short one." Mr. Bradbury, greatly preferring a *translation* to an *imitation* of the Psalms, was satisfied with singing the bald version of Dr. Patrick to his dying day.

Our author's plan and method of interpretation are fully stated in his preface to the first editions of his Paraphrase, and in his Essay on the "Improvement of Psalmody," which is "An Inquiry how the Psalms of David ought to be translated into Christian Songs, and how lawful and necessary it is to compose other Hymns according to the clearer Revelations of the Gospel, for the Use of the Christian Church."

Various opinions have been formed of the Doctor's Psalms and Hymns. Those ministers who think that the words of the inspired penman, or rather a literal translation of them, alone ought to be sung in public worship, of course decline the use of Dr. Watts. The established churches of England and Scotland still adhere to this plan of a close version, and we believe most of the protestant churches on the continent. But those who are offended with the freedom assumed by our author should recollect that he presented to the world, not a version, but an *imitation* of the Psalms; a kind of paraphrase, in which, of course, the author's private judgment of the intention of the sacred writer would be given, except in those psalms, the application of which to the Messiah is justified by the New Testament writers.

The "general opinion, however, of both the Psalms and Hymns, best appears from their adoption by millions of Christians in this and other countries, whose devotions have been animated by that strain of evangelical piety which distinguishes them, and which has given a superiority, in that part of worship, to congregations where they have been employed, above others, where the dull and flat stanzas of Sternhold and Hopkins are yet continued. If, however, good men are still of opinion that a literal translation is most appropriate to the worship of God, they would do well to encourage the best poets to try their skill in versifying a corrected translation of David's sacred odes.

Of the comparative merits of the Hymns and Psalms, considered as poetic compositions, different estimates have been formed. If the former excel in vigour of imagination and originality, it must be remembered that the latter were a paraphrase, and, as such, necessarily restricted by the text. A little more variety was, however, admitted in the measures, and some elevation was certainly derived from the sublimity of the inspired text.

It could not have been later than this period that the Doctor composed his *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*, which have been the delight of infant minds from that day to the present, and probably will be for ages to come. They have received honourable mention from the pen of Dr. Johnson, and high encomiums from Dr. Gibbons and unnumbered others. A pious Welsh divine says, "I have seen the sweet delight and joy with which they have been read by many of the young. On the hearts of five children in my own connexions they have, by the blessing of God, made deep impressions; and one of these the other day died comfortably, repeating them within a few minutes before his departure." A thousand such testimonies might be produced; but the following instance of the conversion of a mother by their means is still more striking:—A poor wretched girl, religiously educated, but now abandoned to misery and want with an illegitimate child, was struck with horror at hearing this infant daughter repeat, so soon as she could well speak, some of the profane language she had taught her by example. She trembled at the thought that she was not only going to hell herself, but leading her child thither. She instantly resolved, that the first sixpence she could procure should purchase Watts's *Divine Songs*, of which she had some recollection, to teach her infant daughter. She did so, and on opening the book, her eye caught the following striking stanza:

"Just as the tree cut down, that falls
To north or southward, there it lies:
So man departs to heaven or hell,

Fix'd in the state wherein he dies."

She read on—the event was her conversion, and she lived and died an honourable professor of religion.

It is impossible to calculate the number which has been dispersed of these humble compositions; but we have authority for saying, that by two societies alone (the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, and the Religious Tract Society) more than 100,000 have been circulated—that not less than thirty editions are kept in print in England only, and that the annual circulation in this country considerably exceeds 50,000, besides the multitudes printed in Wales, Scotland, and America.

During the first years of his ministry, Mr. Watts delivered a series of discourses to a number of young persons, who associated for prayer in the vestry of his meeting-house. These were afterwards, and probably during his long confinement, corrected and arranged in a little volume called *A Guide to Prayer*, in which the subject is scientifically considered, and we are taught to pray by rule without a form, as a middle way to avoid the incoherence and incorrectness which had been complained of in extemporary prayer, without the mind being fettered with the strictness of a liturgy. Readers will think differently of this work, according to their respective systems; but all must own that the author's method was judicious, and that his directions are full of piety and wisdom.

In 1720 Mr. Watts published his *Art of Reading*, at present one of the least valuable of his works, as some of the rules are become obsolete, and every thing valuable has been copied into some or other of the numerous spelling-books which have succeeded during almost another century. The plan of this little book was laid, as himself informs us, in his long illness. While confined from public work, and kindly nursed in the family of Sir Thomas, he compiled it for the use of his daughters, the three Miss Abneys; and when, a few years afterwards, this amiable family instituted a charity school at Cheshunt, the work was finished and published for their use.

The next year (1721) our divine engaged in more important labours, and published the first volume of his *Sermons*, the occasion of which himself explains. His repeated afflictions had very much circumscribed his public labours. For a long time he was unable to preach at all, and when he did it was with such weakness and pain, that after preaching he was often obliged to retire to bed, and have the room closed in darkness and silence; and as he was incapacitated for public labour, so he was for the more private duties of his pastoral office, such as

visiting his flock at their habitations, and conversing with them. This filled him with anxiety and regret, and induced him to present his people with a volume of discourses from the press, that they might read in their families the same truths, which they had heard with so much pleasure from his lips.

In reviewing these discourses it may be justly remarked, that they possess uncommon excellence, and in some respects, notwithstanding the many volumes of sermons since published, have never been exceeded, or even equalled. The beautiful perspicuity and simplicity of their style renders them familiar to the meanest capacities. Their originality of thought, and the happy illustrations that abound in them, discover the genius of the writer; but the fervour of his exhortations, his close addresses to the conscience, and the rich veins of evangelical truth and Christian experience in every discourse, shew the Christian divine in full proportion. The only thing that can be justly objected to is, that they contain redundancies of expression, and some slight inaccuracies, not exactly conformable to the critical taste of the present age. It is to be remembered, however, that they were written or revised in the chamber of sickness; many of them perhaps with an aching head, and a trembling hand. If they do not, in general, smell of the lamp of study so much as some productions of the present age, they partake more of the holy unction.

As to the delivery of these discourses in the pulpit, Mr. Watts, in part, read them; not confining himself wholly to his notes, but amplifying, or altering, as he found inclination or occasion, and that with the utmost ease and freedom. In a few instances he confessed himself a little daunted when he saw men of the first literary eminence before him; but he recovered himself, he says, when he recollected the words of the Lord to Jeremiah, "Fear not their faces, lest I confound thee before them."

He used very little action; but in the art of pronunciation, Dr. Johnson (from the information of his friend Hawkesworth) preferred his delivery to that of the celebrated Dr. Foster. It is probable, at least, that it was better adapted to the gravity of the pulpit, and it is certain that his discourses were far more evangelical. In prayer he was remarkably distinct, perspicuous, and solemn. It is particularly remarked, that Mr. Watts, both in prayer and preaching, frequently paused to give his hearers the better opportunity of understanding and recollection. This indeed does not accord with the rules of Greek and Roman orators, who addressed rather the passions than the understanding, and whose object was to bear down all opposition, like a mighty torrent. The gospel, however, being designed to produce more important and permanent effects, disowns and renounces this species of eloquence,

and founds all the duties of our religion on a knowledge of its leading principles. It does, indeed, address the passions, but it is through the understanding; and bears down opposition, not by the force of oratory, but of evidence.

In 1722 our author published his excellent "Discourses upon Death and Heaven," which had been preached on the death of good Sir John Hartopp and his Lady. If in these sermons we meet with some conjectures on the employment of heaven, not expressly sanctioned by the scriptures, let them be treated as the conjectures of a Christian philosopher and a saint, who had himself stood long upon the verge of eternity, and looked farther, perhaps, within the veil, than any of us can pretend to do. The celebrated professor Frank was so pleased with these discourses, that he procured a translation into the German language, and his successor, Dr. Rambach, wrote a recommendation of them in very strong and emphatic language.

But the principal work of this year was the "Christian Doctrine of the Trinity," which, without departing from the received opinions on that subject, affords perhaps the best scriptural view, and the ablest defence of that doctrine ever written. It is true, that our divine does not enter into the peculiar systems of the Nicene or Anti-Nicene fathers; but he produces the evidence of the inspired writers arranged in a series of propositions, which demonstrate the great leading features of this doctrine with an evidence little short of mathematical, to those who admit the supreme authority of revelation. In one chapter indeed he refers to "the pre-existence of Christ's human soul," as an idea that he thought would much elucidate the many obscure texts; but does by no means insist on it, as in some of his subsequent publications; and, this excepted, there is, perhaps, no passage that can justly offend the most orthodox reader.

In the next year (1723) appeared a second volume of Sermons, on the Christian Morals, which we have no hesitation in preferring to all which have yet appeared upon these topics. The very subject is indeed considered by a certain class of professors as legal, though largely treated in most of our Lord's discourses, and more or less in all the apostolical epistles. Nothing, however, can be more truly evangelical than these discourses. All his morals are founded on the gospel, his motives derived from it, and the doctrine and example of our Redeemer furnish its standard and its measure.)"

This was a year of peculiar affliction to our author, in the death of his beloved friend and patron, Sir Thomas Abney, a man of a generous public spirit, and of the most exemplary piety. It was happy, however, for the family to possess among them such a son of consolation; a man

who well knew how to pour the balm of the gospel into hearts bleeding with affliction; and it was happy for him that Lady Abney and her daughters possessed minds so congenial with that of the worthy Knight. In short, our amiable author had been long incorporated in the family; and they were all so united in the bonds of Christian friendship, that death alone could separate them.

The year 1724 produced his admirable discourse on Logic, which, while it exhibited the true method of reasoning, rejected that wretched system of quibbling and dispute which had hitherto disgraced the schools. It is true, as Dr. Johnson remarks, the great Locke had written upon the subject, and prepared many of the materials; but it was left for Watts to simplify his system, and to reduce it to general use. It was soon introduced into the University of Oxford; and in the year 1741 Bishop Seeker assures the author, it was "by no means the only piece of his read there with high esteem." After perusing this work with much attention, the late Lord Barrington calls it a book by which not only the youth of England, but all who are not too lazy or too wise to learn, may be taught to think and write better than they do; and adds, "I intend, as some have done Erasmus, or a piece of Cicero—to read it over once a year.

The next year produced the "Elements of Geography and Astronomy," which now, through the rapid advances of science, may be numbered among his least important publications; as may also his "Dissertations on the Trinity," of which the second part was this year printed. When the first were published is not so certain, but we shall defer our remarks on these pieces till we come to consider the Doctor's last sentiments on this subject.

In 1726 appeared his "Defence against the Temptation to Self-Murder;" and in 1728 a useful "Discourse on Charity Schools." In this last year our author received, unsolicited, and without his knowledge, diplomas from the Universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Dr. Johnson justifies this bestowment of literary honours, and wishes they were always conferred with the same judgment. The only circumstance which needed apology was the delay; that, while so many persons of inferior talents had been thus honoured, a man whose praise had long been in the churches of England and Scotland; of Holland and America, had been so long neglected.

In 1729 the Doctor published a short "Caveat against Infidelity! and a guard against Apostacy;" and the next year a judicious discourse on the "Composition and Use of Catechisms; but the catechisms themselves, or part of them, must have been previously published, because a second edition of them accompanied these discourses. Dr. Rippon; is

"pretty certain" that these little formularies were composed at the request of Sir Gilbert Elliott; and it is no small commendation of them, that though perhaps a few words may have been changed to advantage, they have never been equalled, for simplicity and suitableness to the young minds for whom they were composed. For this reason, the first catechism especially has obtained more extensive circulation than any other, except those adopted by the national churches of England and Scotland.

Of these compositions and his "Children's Hymns," Dr. Johnson says, "He condescended to lay aside the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man, acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer, who is at one time combating Locke, and at another time making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach."

"A short View of Scripture History," which, as being written in the form of question and answer, is a kind of sequel to the above, must have followed within a year or two, and is allowed to be, according to Lord Barrington's account of it, "a book very instructive and entertaining to people of all ages and conditions;" at least it is certainly so to the young and uninformed. His lordship promises to keep a copy of it in his own study, as well as to leave it in his "nursery, hall, and parlour." (Note: Gibbons, p. 406).

The year 1731 produced two valuable works, the first "An humble Attempt toward the Revival of Practical Religion. The first part is addressed to ministers, and this part was originally intended to have been delivered at the ordination of Mr. Oakes, at Cheshunt; but the Doctor being at that time confined to a bed of sickness, enlarged and amplified it to its present size, in which it certainly merits the attention of every minister or candidate for the sacred office. The second part was delivered in several discourses to the congregation in Berry-street, from that striking question of our Lord, "What do ye more than others?" From which he considers the peculiar obligations of some Christians to eminent piety, arising from their peculiar advantages, and this he applies particularly to the case of protestant dissenters, for whose use the address was primarily intended.

Another production of this year was, his "Essay on the Strength and Weakness of Human Reason." A copy of this work, presented to Dr. Gibson, then Bishop of London, was the occasion of commencing a

correspondence between them, which we shall have farther occasion to notice.

In the year 1732 died Miss Elizabeth Abney, one of the daughters of Sir Thomas, for whom the Doctor preached a funeral sermon, afterwards printed in his "World to Come."

The next year produced his "Philosophical Essays on various Subjects;" to which is added a System of *Ontology*, which has been much admired. In the "Essay on Space," he has been charged with confounding the idea of *space* and *empty* space; but treating space as an abstract idea, must it not be considered empty? otherwise we confound it with universal being. The most admirable thing, however, in this volume, is the striking lesson of humility he draws from these speculations, by shewing the contracted limits of the human mind, and the uncertainties attending all the deductions of our debased reason, unaided by revelation.

The year following (1734) produced his third volume of Sermons and a small volume of Miscellaneous Thoughts, in prose and verse, which he called "Reliquiæ Juveniles." Many of these pieces are highly beautiful; some few are on literary subjects, but the far greater part contain the effusions of piety from the lips of a man of genius. They ought to form part of the library of every young person of taste and seriousness.

Soon after this followed another excellent, though anonymous, little work, called "The Redeemer and Sanctifier;" since, in 1736, Bishop Gibson acknowledges the receipt of this book as a present from the author, and says he had read it "with great satisfaction and delight." He adds, "the seeing so shameful a departure from true Christianity on the two points which are the subject of your book, has long been a sensible concern and grief to me, and especially when I see it countenanced and propagated by many who call themselves *Christians*, but are in reality little more than deists; for (says he) if the great work of our redemption, and the blessed fruits of it are to be laid aside, I cannot see that the name of Christian signifies much," The good Bishop particularly laments this defection among some of the dissenters, who had been, he confesses, hitherto, "without exception, zealous for them." This work was written partly in the form of dialogue, and the debate conducted with a good deal of spirit and ingenuity.

To shew how much our author was now esteemed in the literary as well as the religious world, we need only refer to the Gentleman's Magazine, Mr. Cave, the original printer and proprietor, and perhaps

the editor of that respectable publication, in order to excite emulation, and procure for his miscellany productions of real genius, proposed to give certain rewards to his poetical correspondents, and wrote to Dr. Watts, requesting him to decide upon their respective merits. His natural modesty revolted at the idea of becoming a literary judge; but, on being pressed, he gave his opinion with so much candour and judicious discrimination, that all parties expressed their gratitude, and cheerfully acquiesced in his decisions.

Anno 1736 was a year of pain and suffering, as we find from one of the pieces in his "Remnants of Time," published since his decease, and which form a proper Appendix to his Miscellaneous Thoughts.

"Lord, I am pain'd, but I resign
To thy superior will:
'Tis Grace, 'tis Wisdom all divine
Appoints the pains I feel."

After six other stanzas, equally sweet and pathetic, he concludes with this encouraging idea:

"Is not some smiling hour at hand
With peace upon its wings?
Give it, O God, thy swift command,
With all the joys it brings!"

Early in the next year the Doctor lost his father, in a good old age, himself being in his sixty-third year, and surrounded with infirmities: His admirable letter to his father, in dying circumstances; will be appended to these Memoirs.

Whether this affliction prepared him for the work we know not; but the next spring (1737) produced his beautiful "Essay on Humility, as exemplified in the character of St. Paul;" a piece in which his own character, though undesignedly, is displayed in its true colours, and to the best advantage. Bishop Gibson, however, in perusing this admirable Essay, properly enough remarks, there was no occasion to apologize "for descending to the lowest scenes of life; for (adds the prelate, very justly) it is a fault, both in preaching and in writing upon practical subjects, when we keep too much to general reasoning, and do not bring down our doctrines to common life."

The year 1738 produced a small "Essay on the Holiness of Times and Places," and the year following an Essay "On Civil Power in Things sacred;" in both which, as might naturally be anticipated, he took the medium between scepticism and superstition, licentiousness and tyranny; and in the latter work the doctrine of Toleration is discussed

with great moderation and ability. One of his American correspondents, however, Dr. Colman, of Boston, made some judicious remarks upon the latter publication, which are worthy to be transcribed. "The Essay on Civil Power in Things sacred," says Dr. C. "I take to be your own (though published anonymously) by the preface and two first sections. I think what is said, sect. iii. to be absolutely necessary to the being of a Christian state, and that the laws of a land should enjoin, strictly and peremptorily, the worship and swearing by the one and only Lord God; and that they that deny him, and would swear by any idol god, should not be acknowledged as subjects of the state. I cannot think there may be heathens, serving other gods, and yet useful members of a state: They must be dreadful snares and pests to the places where they dwell, and fatal to them, as God warned his Israel of old. I fear also (adds Dr. C.) the appointment and support of preachers of natural religion, and the laws of the land, with a command to people to attend them, and on the Lord's-day in particular, would soon turn out the requisite sanctification of it in private and public. The honour of the Lord's-day, and means of grace, forbids the intrusion of other authorised civil and moral public teachers."

But the most important publication of this year was his "World to Come," already mentioned as containing his funeral sermon for Mrs. S. Abney. The first of these sermons, "On the End of Time," is most invaluable. On this work the above Dr. Colman observes, "I think you never wrote, nor did I ever read, discourses more adapted to young and old, high and low. In such a flame one would wish to expire: I am ready to say on it, It is finished—yet may you live to add more!" Dr. Watts's able and affecting defence of the scripture doctrine of eternal punishment, particularly attracted the notice of Bishop Seeker, who characterizes it as written "in a strong and awful, yet compassionate and good-natured manner."

In this year, if not sooner, appeared the "Essay on the Strength and Weakness of Human Reason," in which he candidly weighs the question of its sufficiency for our salvation. This essay is written in the form of conferences between a Christian clergyman and a candid enquiring deist; a third speaker being introduced as moderator. The names of the interlocutors, Pithander, Logisto, and Sophronius, sound barbarous to English ears, and foreign to real life. Dr. Johnson thinks our author was peculiarly unhappy in coining names, though perhaps his censure is too generally expressed. The dispute, as might be expected, is conducted in a very liberal and candid style, but the speeches are rather too long, and a little too formal for a free conversation. The arguments, however, are well supported, and enlivened by some strokes of genteel wit, insomuch that Lady Hartford

says, she never read any thing more entertaining or instructive. In the preface to the second edition, the Doctor informs us the principal objection he had heard was, that his deist does "not argue so strenuously" as persons of that character generally do, but is too soon convinced. The Doctor, however, hopes to be forgiven in representing Logisto as too fair and candid a disputant: though he might easily, as he observes, have "drawn the teasing saw of controversy further," and produced "a wrangling dialogue" more agreeable to the usual practice of disputants, but certainly less valuable to the reader.

In 1739 the Doctor was visited by the celebrated Mr. Whitefield, then in the zenith of his popularity, and just before he embarked the second time for America. The Doctor had heard of him, not only at home, but by a letter from Dr. Colman, of New-England; and took this opportunity, in a friendly manner, to caution his young admirer against the dangers of popularity, enthusiasm, and intemperate zeal. This is mentioned in a correspondence between the Doctor and Bishop Gibson, in which the latter complaining of the young apostle, the former replies, "I said many things to warn him of the danger of delusion, and to guard him against the irregularities and imprudencies which youth and zeal might lead him into; and told him plainly, that though I believed him very sincere, and desirous to do good to souls, yet I was not convinced of any extraordinary call he had to some parts of his conduct. And he seemed to take this free discourse in a very candid and modest manner." Those who knew the disposition of this amiable and popular man, will easily believe, the concluding sentence of this paragraph; and those who know how much he afterwards lamented his own intemperance of zeal, in some instances, will regret that the Doctor's good advice was not more closely followed.

The year 1741 produced one of the most important publications, not only of Dr. Watts, but in the English language, the first part of the "Improvement of the Mind," which he confesses had been the labour of more than twenty years: The second part was left in MS. and published by the editors of his works. Dr. Johnson says of this treatise, "Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his 'Improvement of the Mind,' of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's Conduct of the Understanding; but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with deficiency in his duties if this book is not recommended."

The "Harmony of all Religions" appeared in 1742, wherein the author endeavours to shew that true religion is the same under every dispensation since the fall, differing only in the manner and

circumstances of revelation. The law being the type, and the gospel the antitype, of our salvation.

About this time, Mr. Toplady informs us (and he had it from the Countess herself), the Doctor was favoured with a visit from the pious Lady Huntingdon, whom he thus accosted: "Madam, your ladyship is come to see me on a very remarkable day." "Why is this day (said she) so remarkable?" "This day thirty years (replied the Doctor) I came hither to the house of my good friend, Sir Thomas Abney, intending to spend but one single week under this friendly roof; and I have extended my visit to the length of exactly thirty years." Lady Abney, who was present, immediately addressed the Doctor: "Sir, what you term a long thirty years visit, I consider as the shortest visit my family ever received." "A coalition like this (says Dr. Johnson), a state in which the notions of patronage and dependance were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial."

In 1745 the Doctor published his "Sermons on the principal Heads of Christian Doctrine." In addition to what has been already remarked on the Doctor's other Sermons, we may add, that in these discourses, while he discovers the most laudable zeal for the grand essential doctrines of the gospel, he shews the greatest candour, and the most amiable modesty, on inferior points; always urging the importance of revealed truth; but never contending strenuously for his own particular explications.

In the same memorable year appeared Dr. Doddridge's admirable work, entitled, "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." The political events of this year are almost forgotten, with the very name of the Pretender, through whose insurrection so much blood was shed; but when shall this work be forgotten? Never while the Christian religion and the English language have existence.

But wherefore connect the name of Doddridge with that of the subject of these Memoirs? Because they are so connected in the history of literature, that while the name of one shall live, the other can never die. As it respects the present work, Dr. Watts has the honour of forming the plan, and suggesting many of the materials; and when complete, he recommended it most cordially to the Christian world.

It may be worthy a remark, that two years previous to this publication, some of Dr. Doddridge's works had found their way into Holland, as those of Dr. Watts had some time before; but Mr. Tinon, the bookseller, of Amsterdam, was afraid to publish them in the Dutch language, without a recommendation from Dr. Watts, as a certificate for their orthodoxy; while at the same time, in this country, his own

orthodoxy was called in question among many of his brethren!

The year 1746 produced the Doctor's treatise on the "Freedom of the Human Will," in which he endeavours to justify a liberty of indifference; and it must be owned he has written with his usual candour and ingenuity: But President Edwards, of America, hath since supported the opposite hypothesis with such prodigious strength of argument, that it is likely, had the Doctor lived to read this masterly treatise of his friend, his own would have been materially altered. It was certainly the Doctor's design to obviate the infidel objections against the character of God, drawn from the doctrine of necessity; but in doing this it requires, perhaps, more than human skill, to avoid weakening the other attributes of Deity, and to preserve

"A God full orb'd.

In his whole round of attributes complete."

The year following (1747) produced the "Evangelical Discourses," some of which had been preached many years before; also an "Essay on the Rational Foundation of a Christian Church." There is something so engaging in the manner in which the Doctor treats this subject, that those who differ the most widely from him on the affairs of church government and ecclesiastical discipline, must acknowledge the ingenuity and candour of his statements. His representation of the Lord's Supper as the memorial of a departed friend, has something very endearing in it, without rejecting any other object referred to by this ordinance in scripture.

There are a few other of the Doctor's publications, to which no date can positively be affixed, and which therefore may be mentioned here; such particularly are his "Discourses on the Passions, and on the Love of God." The former, in the first edition, was inserted merely as an introduction to the latter; but in the second it was considerably enlarged, and forms a valuable philosophical essay, the best upon the subject in our language. The "Discourses on the Love of God" were also improved and printed separately, as they have been generally since, though often bound together. Their tendency is practical, and their great object, to lead men from "the frigid zone of Christianity" (misnamed rational religion) into the warmer region of Divine Love, which is here shewn to be the proper climate of the Christian. In the sixth discourse particularly "the affectionate Christian vindicated," and the religion of the gospel shewn to be the religion of the heart. The Doctor proves that Christianity not only admits, but demands the warmest of our affections; and that the cool and cautious religionist errs just as far from true reason as from piety.

The Essay on "The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind," is another publication without date; yet two things may be remarked, that it appeared before his "Orthodoxy and Charity united," and that he lived to publish a second edition of it.

A principal subject of this work is the doctrine of the fall; and in the preface to the second edition he remarks—"I have endeavoured, throughout this whole composure, to *relieve* and *soften* all the harsher and more obnoxious parts of this doctrine of original sin, and several other articles of our religion dependent upon it; and this I did attempt here and there by some *new* sentiments, which I was sensible must run the risk of severe trial, and bear the test of ancient prejudice. But this freedom of thought seemed to be necessary, where former solutions failed." Among the new sentiments here referred to, is the "singular opinion," as Doddridge himself calls it, "that the sin of Adam has subjected all his posterity not only to death, but to the utter extinction of being; the consequence of which is, that all those who die in their infancy fall into a state of annihilation, excepting those who are the seed of God's people, who by virtue of the blessings of the covenant made with Abraham, and the promise to the seed of the righteous, shall, through the grace and power of Christ, obtain part in a happy resurrection, in which other infants shall have no share."

How far it may be necessary or allowable to "relieve and soften" the apparent harshness of scripture doctrines, admits of considerable doubts. We observe nothing like it in the conduct of St. Paul, who was the great controversialist of the New Testament. He seems rather to delight in bold and strong assertions, on the authority of the Holy Spirit, and this method seems to be most consistent with the scripture plan of humbling sinners, and bringing them as penitents to the footstool of mercy; as well as with that of leading believers to live by faith, and credit the word of God on its own authority, rather than its apparent harmony with our reason. As to the opinion respecting infants, it yields such cold consolation to the heart of a parent, that it will most probably still remain singular. What parent would not rather leave his deceased infant in the hands of God, trusting to his sovereign mercy, than suppose his future happy existence depended on his own salvation?—an opinion, by the way, which, if minutely traced, would have to combat objections little less formidable than those against the common notions of original sin, which our author, in this "very ingenious" work, as Dr. Doddridge justly calls it, has taken such pains to soften.

"It was not only in his *book*, but in his mind also," says Dr. Johnson, "that orthodoxy and charity were united." The great object of this piece, and of the Doctor's life, was to place the doctrines of the fall—

the atonement—divine influence—the necessity of repentance, faith, and holiness (which formed his system of orthodoxy), in a point of view consistent with their truth and importance; while he endeavours to lessen the smaller differences among Christians respecting inferior points of sentiment, or rather forms of expressions, and to promote charity and forbearance toward one another, The Doctor thought (and who does not think?) that the chief difference between real believers lies rather in terms than things; for we find the same men who wrangle with each other in their sermons or conversation, agree very cordially in their devotions at the throne of grace. Habits of education, and of reading, create these differences in their statements; but when they come before God, under a proper sense of their own vileness, they forget their party shibboleth, and melt down their differences in the sacred fire of scriptural piety. The seventh Essay, "against uncharitableness," should be read and studied by every religious disputant or controversial writer.

To this work is appended an ingenious Essay, entitled "Self-Love and Virtue reconciled only by Religion, or an Argument to prove that the only effectual Obligation of Mankind to practise Virtue, depends on the Existence and Will of God;" a piece that merits the high commendation it has received.

We now come to the Doctor's more obnoxious publications on the Trinitarian controversy; and to enquire particularly what were his last sentiments on this important subject.

Dr. Watts studied the doctrine of the Trinity, as some Indian devotees are said to have contemplated the sun, till their own sight was darkened. The Doctor had read upon all sides of the question, was grieved at the angry spirit in which the controversy was conducted, and imagined, good man! that it was possible to reconcile contending parties by some modest and candid statements. "It is my opinion," said he, "that a fair, easy, and intelligible scheme of the Trinitarian doctrine, agreeable to holy scripture, would be the noblest and the securest guard against the Arian and Socinian errors, for then there would be no pretence to deny it." This may be true; but the question is, who shall draw up this "easy and intelligible scheme" of a doctrine, on all hands confessed to be a most sublime and incomprehensible mystery? What was the Doctor's success, with certainly the best qualifications for such an attempt, we shall now proceed to enquire.

It has been already hinted, that he discovered his peculiarity of sentiment respecting the pre-existence of Christ's human soul (which laid the foundation of his future system), in his treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity, first published in the year 1722; at which time, it

appears by a note on that passage, that the first part of his Dissertations was then written; though we are not able to state exactly at what period it was published.

The first Dissertation is entitled, "The Arian invited to the Orthodox Faith," in which the Doctor attempts to lead him, by "a plain and easy method," into "the proper deity of Christ." This he does, in the first instance, by a string of queries founded on his "Christian Doctrine" just mentioned, which certainly place the arguments for the proper divinity of Jesus in a very striking point of view. He then introduces his hypothesis of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, prior to the creation of all things; supposes a personal union to take place between this glorious created Spirit and the Supreme Divinity, in consequence of which the sublime works of creation and providence are attributed to this complex person—the God-man—the Son of God: And from this divine union he derives the efficacy of his atonement and satisfaction for mankind. In the second Dissertation, the author pursues the Socratic method (for which he was eminently qualified) to shew the possibility of such a union between the divine and human natures, and its consistency with reason, in which he argues with great shrewdness and perspicuity. In the third Dissertation, he justly considers the worship of Christ as founded on his godhead, and very ably proves that no mere creature, however highly exalted, can be made the object of religions worship without idolatry. Here ends the first part of the Dissertations. In the preface to the second part of his Dissertations, he first avows his strong attachment to the *indwelling scheme*, which, it seems, ascribes the Godhead of Jesus to his union with the Divine nature, and not to his being a distinct person in that nature, as Trinitarians generally speak; for in this preface he confesses he was before engaged in no one particular scheme: "I thought (says he) the general doctrine of scripture was plain and evident, but as to the modus of it, I was much in doubt." About this time, however, Mr. Tomkins, an ingenious writer of the Arian cast, attacked our author's book, in "A sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian," and *drove* him, as he says, to adopt the hypothesis above mentioned.

It is certainly no part of the biographer's office to defend or refute the peculiar tenets of the subject of his memoir; yet, as in writing the life of a general or a statesman, it is expected that some attention should be paid to his schemes and plans for the public good, so in the life of an author an impartial account of his writings should be given, with the same freedom of remark as in the other cases.

How far it may be necessary to adopt any human explication of this divine mystery, may be seriously doubted; but, surely, the Doctor was under no necessity to recur to this particular hypothesis, which is no

more without its difficulties than the more commonly received opinion; and this circumstance it would not be justice, to our young reader especially, to conceal.

As to the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, however convenient it may be to account for some circumstances, as his appearance under a human form, &c. it is very difficult to conceive how he could be the second Adam, the son of our first progenitor, if in his human nature he was formed before him. If the soul be the chief part of the Man, as we usually consider it, then very imperfectly, and by a strong figure only, can he be the *Son* of Man!

As to the necessity of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, to form a party in the covenant of grace, if we admit any distinctions in the Divine Being sufficient to warrant the use of the personal pronouns *we* and *us*—*I*, *thou*, and *he*—which are common and frequent throughout both Testaments of Scripture—that is surely sufficient to admit the idea of a covenant between those parties; and if there be a difficulty in conceiving the human nature to be pledged to such engagements, especially to sufferings and death before it was called into existence, there is no less difficulty in the contrary supposition; for a creature could not be at liberty to refuse the suggestions of the Divine Will: The moment that it is made known to a perfect creature, he must acquiesce in it.

Another strong objection to this hypothesis, or at least to the use made of it by Dr. Watts is, that it inverts the Scripture economy. *There*, we find the human nature of our Lord first obeying, suffering, dying; and then, in consequence, raised to the throne of glory: But this scheme represents his human soul, immediately on its existence, endued with divine powers to create and govern the world; and becoming of course, in its union with the Deity, the object of religious adoration. Afterwards, indeed, this exalted spirit is supposed to stoop so low as to assume a body, an essential part surely of human nature, and necessary to its perfection! And it is not easy to conceive how it could be an act of great humility for one who was properly a servant (because a creature) of however high rank, to assume a servant's form; but it is a much greater difficulty to explain how Jesus could be exalted to new and superior honours, if indeed his human soul had been employed, as this hypothesis supposes, as the Creator and Governor of the Universe!

As to the distinction between a real, modal, or scriptural Trinity, it is too metaphysical for Christianity, which was intended for the simplest of the common people; and, probably, it would puzzle the most acute philosophers to define a medium between real and modal. That hypothesis, however, which represents the human nature as united to

the Divine, without personal distinction, supposes the Father himself incarnate, subject to sufferings and death; and confounds the distinction between the sacred Three.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not founded on a few detached passages of scripture. It is woven into the constitution of the sacred language of the Old Testament; and in the New, though not systematically defined, it is constantly implied, and in many places sufficiently expressed, as the Doctor has largely shewn, though he has weakened the force of his own argument by reducing the doctrine to little more than a trinity of names. (Those who wish to see what some of Dr. Watts's pious and learned contemporaries thought of his Trinitarian writings, may peruse Dr. Abraham Taylor's "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity vindicated, in opposition to Mr. Watts's scheme of one Divine Person, and two divine powers." Mr. Hurrion, also, a very able writer, published a set of discourses entitled " The Scripture Doctrine of the proper Divinity, real Personality, &c. of the Holy Spirit, stated and defended.")

The preface to the second part of these Dissertations is dated in May 1725; and the following are the subjects herein discussed: First, the sentiments of Jews and Christians relative to the Word or Logos. This, numbering from the former Dissertations, is called the fourth, and contains a great deal of curious learning, and favours the pre-existence of Christ's human spirit; but as it is chiefly collected from human writers, and those the most mystical and obscure, is not very important to our subject. The fifth Dissertation enquires into the scriptural doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and sufficiently proves, what no judicious Trinitarian would controvert, that this name is often used impersonally for the gifts and graces of the Spirit conferred on men. Sometimes, however, the Doctor candidly confesses (as in that contested passage, 1 John v. 7.) the Father, the Word, and the Spirit "are represented personally" for they are called "three witnesses, or three persons bearing witness." The sixth Dissertation considers, however, the precise sense in which the term person is used in scripture, and ought to be used in this controversy.

Here our author properly remarks, that "the distinctive character of a person is the application of the personal pronouns *I, thou, he;*" and these "three pronouns being frequently applied in scripture to the Father and the Son, and the pronoun *he* to the blessed Spirit, we therefore call them *three persons*. But then he goes on to shew that we do not take the word *person* exactly in the same sense, and include precisely the same ideas, as when we call three men, or three angels, three distinct persons. All this is certainly just, and admitted by the most orthodox Trinitarians. Dr. Hopkins, of America, in his "Body of Divinity," says, "It is thought that the use of the above-mentioned

personal epithets (I, thou, he, &c.) is a sufficient warrant to distinguish the Three in the Divine Trinity by the word *person*. But it must be carefully observed, that when this word is applied to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three distinct persons, it does not import the same distinction which is expressed by it when applied to men. It means nothing inconsistent with the highest perfection, or with these three being really and perfectly one God. Nor is it pretended, that this word, when used in this instance, can be so defined as to give any clear and adequate idea of a subject so mysterious, and infinitely incomprehensible."

So far we seem agreed; but what then do we mean by distinguishing three persons in one Divine Essence?—Simply this; that there is such a distinction as that, while we maintain each of the Divine Persons to be truly God, and equally entitled to divine honours, yet certain things may be predicated or denied of the one, which cannot be so of the others; thus, for instance, the Father is impassible—the Son incarnate—the Spirit sent by both; and this distinction is sufficient also to attribute to each a distinct, economical character; the Father elects—the Son redeems—the Spirit sanctifies.

But if, as the Doctor attempts afterward to shew, the word *person* is more strictly applicable to the Father, and in a more lax and figurative sense to the Son and Spirit, so that in fact, as he sometimes expresses it, the Deity consists of one divine philosophical person, and two divine powers (analogous to the mind and will in man) then the Father (for instance) may be said to have become incarnate with as much propriety as the Son; and all the acts of the Son may be attributed to the Father, as justly as the acts and determinations of the mind and will may be attributed to the man himself; and this seems to be a millstone about the neck of this hypothesis, from which nothing can disentangle it.

In these remarks we have anticipated the substance of the seventh and last Dissertation, and shall only give a few extracts from the conclusion. "Far be it from me," says this amiable divine, "to assert this explication of the Trinity with any positive airs, or in assured language: All that I aim at is, to gain and give as clear and distinct ideas as I can of the words which the Scripture uses, that, as far as possible in explaining the word of God, I might secure myself and others from talking without ideas." This modest paragraph is sufficient to shew that our author had nothing of the character of a heretic about him. Err he might, and probably, did; but he never discovered a desire to form a party—to make a division in the church—or to exalt himself. His fault seems to lie in the vain hope of penetrating within the veil that human weakness has drawn over this and many other divine

mysteries. Systems of divinity, like other systems in science, have their use, and should not be rashly ridiculed or condemned. But if they are deduced from Scripture only, as certainly they should be, they must have their blanks. For, as in drawing maps of this terrestrial globe, there are many parts which must be marked , or unknown countries; so, in a system of Bible Theology, there are many parts which can only be tilled up by conjecture, and are therefore best left blank. Or, we may borrow an illustration from the sister science of the stars: Our astronomers have covered the celestial globe with the monsters of imagination, and as they have enlarged their discoveries, have planted them with almost innumerable stars; yet still there are many void spaces in the celestial concave, and probably will be so till another state supplies us with superior modes of discovery.

To apply these illustrations to the subject before us. We have the outlines of this doctrine in the Scriptures, drawn in strong and bold characters. We know that the same infinite nature, and the same divine honours, are ascribed to Father, Son, and Spirit—and yet that to each are ascribed distinct works and characters; we therefore conclude that these three divine persons must be God—and one God, because revelation plainly enjoins us to worship one God alone. But if we go farther, to enquire into the modus of the Divine Being, all systems fail us, and we are lost in clouds and darkness; even that hypothesis, on which the Doctor too much flattered himself, becomes as obscure and unintelligible as the most vulgar notion.

These difficulties were no doubt strongly felt by our author, and occasioned the final paragraph of this work, with which we shall close our review of his Dissertations, cordially uniting in his concluding sentiment.

"After all, I am free to declare that I am not so fond of any particular hypothesis, but I shall be ready to relinquish it for another, that will afford a better interpretation of all the scriptures that relate to the blessed Three, and a happier solution of all the objections that have been raised against this article. I should rejoice to see so clear and bright an explication of it arise in the Christian world, as shall overcome and scatter all the difficulties and darkneses that have hitherto hung about it; and shall set it in so divine and triumphant a light, as shall penetrate every soul, diffuse universal conviction, and demand a ready and unshaken assent. But, perhaps, it is above the privilege of a mortal state, to expect the accomplishment of such a wish. In the mean while, let us pay the homage of our understandings to the Supreme Incomprehensive, by firmly believing what God has plainly revealed, and wait for the favours of higher illumination in the regions of light and immortality. Amen."

The "Useful and important Questions concerning Jesus the Son of God" are dated 1746, and may properly be noticed here. In great measure they go over the same ground with the Dissertations; but the main point laboured is, to shew that the term "Son of God" does not expressly relate to his Deity, but to his mediatorial character and miraculous conception. On this head the Doctor is by no means singular. Many eminent divines, and, of late, all those of the Hutchinsonian school, maintain the same. The sacred student should however know, that although it is certain Jesus was declared to be the Son of God, both in regard to his incarnation and resurrection, there are many passages which seem to imply that he was so in a much superior sense, and that his sonship implied his divinity,—or, which is the same thing, his equality with God the Father.

That the divinity of Jesus was not so clearly taught by himself as by his apostles, if true, may easily be accounted for; because he did not seek his own honour, but upon the most important occasions. It is also, however, certain that his apostles before the death of their Master were but slow in apprehending his instructions on these, as on other subjects; but nothing can be inferred hence against the importance of this truth, unless we would also infer, that the doctrine of his sufferings for our sins was equally unimportant.

To these "important questions" is subjoined a short "Essay on the true Importance of Human Schemes to explain the sacred Trinity," in which our author shews, that "no such scheme of explication is necessary to salvation;" that it may, however, be "of great use to the church;" but that such explications ought to be proposed with modesty to the world, and never imposed upon the conscience.

As to the doctrine itself, whatever God has clearly revealed is certainly important, and the perspicuity of the revelation will generally be found in proportion to its intrinsic moment. But truth is important to us only as it affects the heart and life. The scriptures rest the importance of this doctrine on the due rendering divine honours to the sacred Three; and, in particular, to the Son of God, whose humiliation being extreme, peculiar care is taken to secure his glory; and the Father hath committed the great work of judging the world into his hands expressly for this end—*that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*. While, therefore, we honour the Divine Persons by a life of holy obedience and communion, trusting our salvation to the Saviour alone, and daily imploring the agency of his Holy Spirit, we can hardly depart far from the essential doctrines of the gospel. But the danger of speculation is, that it is apt to lead us from the plainest and most important truths, to enquiries more curious than they are useful;

though on different minds this effect may be produced in various degrees: Dr. Watts is, perhaps, an instance almost singular, of a Christian preserving close and daily communion with God in the midst of the most abstruse theological enquiries.

Under the second head of enquiry the Doctor exclaims, "If it were possible (and such is avowedly the Doctor's aim) to exhibit a scheme of explication which should be so plain, so easy, so agreeable to the light of nature, and yet so happily correspondent with scripture as to captivate the assent of learned and unlearned at the very proposal of it, what a glorious advantage would the church of Christ obtain toward its unity and peace!" Alas, good man! this flattering reverie proceeds upon a principle, which never has been realized, that the doctrines of Christianity want only to be clearly stated, in order to be universally received; whereas it is certain from the scriptures (as the Doctor himself acknowledges) that the fault lies in the corruption of human nature. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither indeed can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Nor does it appear to be the design of Providence to represent the doctrines of the gospel with that overpowering evidence which is here supposed. Our life, in the present state, is a life of faith; we are to receive the truths of revelation upon the authority of the Revealer, and not because they are "plain, easy, and agreeable to the light of nature."

As to the last question, whether it be lawful to impose any human explication of the doctrine upon our fellow-Christians, if it refer to an imposition attended with penalties on their refusal, there can be no dispute; but how far we have a right to name the terms of communion with our fellow-Christians, is a question of more delicacy, and with which we shall not interfere.

The last piece published by the Doctor on this subject, and probably his very last piece, is entitled, "The Glory of Christ as God-man, displayed in three Discourses;" to which is added, "An Abridgment of Dr. Goodwin's Discourse of the Glories and Royalties of Christ." In this discourse our author produces, more at large, the arguments in favour of his darling scheme of the pre-existence of Christ's human soul, which also, it seems, was maintained by Dr. Thomas Goodwin and some other eminent divines, without departing (it should seem) from the usual Trinitarian doctrine. This it does not necessarily reject; though it so far smooths the way to what is called "the indwelling scheme," that of late years, few, perhaps, have embraced the one without sliding into the other.

For the sake of our young readers, we have shewn that this hypothesis is not without its difficulties; those who have leisure to pursue the enquiry farther, we refer to the piece before us on the one hand, and to the authors in the margin on the other. (Dr. A. Taylor's Scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity; Mr. John Hurrion's Scriptural Doctrine of the proper Divinity, etc.; President Edward's Miscellaneous Observations, Part 3.)

In order to conclude this subject, and that we may not have occasion to recur to it again, we may observe, that there is another paper, printed in the fourth volume of his works, entitled, "A solemn Address to the great and ever-blessed God," prefixed to some papers on the "Trinitarian Controversy," which (say his executors) it was not judged necessary to publish. These papers, Mr. Palmer informs us, on the authority of an eye-witness, contained nothing new, but some farther thoughts in confirmation of the Doctor's former writings.

A living writer, however, under the name of Gabriel Watts, (but no relation, we believe, to the Doctor's family,) has lately pretended to give us the very papers which were suppressed, from a printed copy, of which he renders the following account. The tract is entitled "A faithful Enquiry after the ancient and original Doctrine of the Trinity, taught by Christ and his Apostles;" the copy from which this was printed (he says) was found in a bookseller's shop in Southampton, in 1796, with the author's name (Isaac Watts, D. D.) and the date (1745) written at the bottom of the title-page. In a blank leaf of this book was also written the following note: "The doctor printed off only fifty copies of this work, and shewed them to some friends, who all persuaded him that it would ruin his character in his old age, for publishing such dotages, and at length he was prevailed on to burn them; so that the whole impression of fifty was destroyed without publication, except this single copy of it, which by an accident escaped the flames."

This curious note, written nobody knows by whom or when, has however some gross inconsistencies attached to it. The pamphlet is dated 1745; but in 1746 and in 1747 the Doctor published his "Questions relative to the Son of God," and his treatise "on the Glory of Christ as God-man," which we have just reviewed, and in which the very same sentiments are advanced; but why suppress the one in 1745, and immediately after publish the same opinions in two other works? For, upon comparing this pamphlet with the others, it appears that he had incorporated the substance of this imperfect tract (for it is but the first part of a work after all) into his other publications with considerable enlargements. For instance, What is said in the enquiry (§ v.) about the title Son of God, will be found in the "Important

Questions" much enlarged, and the same passages of Scripture quoted and explained. So also what is said of the Holy Spirit will appear, on examination, little more than an abridgement of his fifth Dissertation published above twenty years before. Why then burn this tract, which is but a slight sketch of the controversy, and preserve the treatises in which the same principles are at large defended?

But here arises another difficulty. Mr. Gabriel Watts more than insinuates that these are the very papers left in manuscript, which the executors declined to publish. If they were, it fully exonerates them; for Mr. Watts allows that to those "acquainted with his (the Doctor's) other essays on the Trinity, it exhibits *little* of a speculative nature which is entirely *new*." But how is it that this tract should be found in MS. if actually printed by the Doctor three years before his death? Why preserve a manuscript already printed, and carefully destroy the printed copies?

In short, the probability is, that this may be the tract suppressed, and that some officious disciple of the Doctor's procured a copy and printed it, either without his consent, or subsequent to his death; and on that account, as well as from its being the first part only of a work, which he probably intended as an abridgment of his other writings on the subject, it was judiciously suppressed. The address, however, prefixed to this paper is so curious and interesting, that we shall here insert it, and then take our final leave of this subject, with a few observations.

A SOLEMN ADDRESS TO THE GREAT AND BLESSED GOD.

"RIGHTEOUS art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet I may talk with thee concerning thy judgments." Permit me, O my God and Father, to plead with thee concerning the revelations of thy nature and thy grace, which are made in thy gospel; and let me do it with all that humble reverence, and that holy awe of thy majesty, which becomes a creature in the presence of his God.

Hast thou not, O Lord God Almighty, hast thou not transacted thy divine and important affairs among men by thy Son Jesus Christ, and by thy Holy Spirit? And hast thou not ordained that men should transact their highest and most momentous concerns with thee, by thy Son and by thy Spirit? Hast thou not, by the mouth of thy Son Jesus, required all that profess his religion to be washed with water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Is it not my duty then, to enquire, who or what are these sacred names, and what they signify? Must I not "know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ thy Son, whom thou hast sent," that I may fulfil all my respective, duties

towards thyself and thy Son, in hope of eternal life? Hath not thy Son himself appealed to thee in his last prayer, that eternal life depends upon this knowledge? And since thou hast made so much use of thy Holy Spirit in our religion, must I not have some knowledge of this thy Spirit also, that I may pay thee all those honours thou requirest from this divine revelation?

Hast thou not ascribed divine names and titles, and characters to thy Son and thy Holy Spirit in thy word, as well as assumed them to thyself? And hast thou not appointed to them such glorious offices as cannot be executed without something of Divinity or true Godhead in them? And yet art not thou, and thou alone, the True God? How shall a poor weak creature be able to adjust and reconcile these *clashing* ideas, and to understand this mystery? Or must I believe and act blindfold, without understanding?

Holy Father, thou knowest how firmly I believe, with all my soul, whatsoever thou hast plainly written and revealed in thy word. I believe Thee to be the only true God, the Supreme of Beings, self-sufficient for thine own existence, and for all thy infinite affairs and transactions among creatures. I believe thy Son Jesus Christ to be all-sufficient for the glorious work of mediation between God and man, to which thou hast appointed him. I believe he is a man, "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." I believe he is one with God; he is God manifested in the flesh; and that the man Jesus is so closely and inseparably united with the true and eternal Godhead, as to become one person, even as the human soul and body make one man. I believe that this illustrious Person is hereby possessed of divine dignity, sufficient to make full atonement for the sins of men by his sufferings and death, even though sin be accounted an infinite evil; and that he hath all-sufficient power to raise himself from the dead, to ascend to heaven, and fulfil the blessed works for which thou hast exalted him, and to govern and judge the world in thine appointed time.

I believe also thy blessed Spirit hath almighty power and influence to do all thy will, to instruct men effectually in divine truths, to change the hearts of fallen mankind from sin to holiness, to carry on thy work of illumination, sanctification, and consolation on the souls of all thy children, and to bring them safe to the heavenly world. I yield myself up joyfully and thankfully to this method of thy salvation, as it is revealed in thy gospel. But I acknowledge my darkness still. I want to have this wonderful doctrine of the all-sufficiency of thy Son, and thy Spirit, for these divine works made a little plainer. May not thy humble creature be permitted to know what share they can have in thy Deity? Is it a vain and sinful curiosity to desire to have this article set in such a light, as may not diminish the eternal glory of the Unity of the True

God, nor of the supremacy of thee the Father of All?

Hadst thou informed me, Gracious Father, in any place of thy word, that this divine doctrine is not to be understood by men, and yet they were required to believe it, I would have subdued all my curiosity to faith, and submitted my wandering and doubtful imaginations, as far as possible, to the holy and wise determinations of thy word. But I cannot find thou hast any where forbid me to understand it, or to make these enquiries. My conscience is the best natural light thou hast put within me, and since thou hast given me the scriptures, my own conscience bids me search the scriptures to find out truth and eternal life. It bids me try all things, and hold fast that which is good. And thy own word, by the same expressions, encourages this holy practice. I have, therefore, been long searching into this divine doctrine, that I may pay thee due honour with understanding. Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship, whether he be one pure and simple Being, or whether thou art a threefold Deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Dear and Blessed God, hadst thou been pleased, in any one plain scripture, to have informed me which of the different opinions, about the Holy Trinity, among the contending parties of Christians had been true, thou knowest with how much zeal, satisfaction, and joy, my unbiased heart would have opened itself to receive and embrace the divine discovery. Hadst thou told me plainly, in any single text, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three real distinct persons in thy divine nature, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts, nor embarrassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inventions of men, instead of divine doctrine; but I should have humbly and immediately accepted thy words, so far as it was possible for me to understand them, as the only rule of my faith. Or hadst thou been pleased so to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease find out, and with certainty infer his doctrine, I should have joyfully employed all my reasoning powers, with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference, and ingrafted it into my soul.

Thou hast taught me, Holy Father, by thy prophets, that the way of holiness, in the times of the gospel, or under the kingdom of the Messiah, shall be a highway, a plain and easy path; so that the wayfaring man, or the stranger, *though a fool, shall not err therein*. And thou hast called the poor and the ignorant, the mean and the foolish things of this world, to the knowledge of thyself and thy Son, and taught them to receive and partake of the salvation which thou hast provided. But how can such weak creatures ever take in so

strange, so difficult, and so abstruse a doctrine as this; in the explication and defence whereof, multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtleties of dispute, and endless mazes of darkness? And can this strange and *perplexing* notion of three real persons going to make up one true God, be so necessary and so important a part of that Christian doctrine, which, in the Old Testament and the New, is represented as so plain and so easy even to the meanest understandings?

O thou Searcher of Hearts, who knowest all things, I appeal to thee concerning the sincerity of my enquiries into these discoveries of thy word. Thou knowest me, thou hast seen me, and hast tried my heart towards thee: If there be any lurking hypocrisy in my heart, any secret bias towards any thing but truth, uncover it, O Father of Lights, and banish it from my soul for ever. If thine eye discovers the least spark of criminal prejudice in any corner of my soul, extinguish it utterly, that I may not be led astray from the truth, in matters of such importance, by the least glance of error or mistake.

Thou art witness, O my God, with what diligence, with what constancy and care, I have read and searched thy holy word; how early and late, by night and by day, I have been making these enquiries. How fervently have I been seeking thee on my bended knees, and directing my humble addresses to thee, to enlighten my darkness, and to shew me the meaning of thy word, that I may learn what I must believe, and what I must practise with regard to this doctrine, in order to please thee, and obtain eternal life!

Great God! who seest all things, thou hast beheld what busy temptations have been often fluttering about my heart, to call it off from these laborious and difficult enquiries, and to give up thy word and thy gospel as an unintelligible book, and betake myself to the light of nature and reason; but thou hast been pleased by thy divine power to scatter these temptations, and fix my heart and hope again upon that Saviour and that eternal life, which thou hast revealed in thy word, and proposed therein, to our knowledge and our acceptance. Blessed be the name of my God, that has not suffered me to abandon the gospel of his Son Jesus! And blessed be that Holy Spirit that has kept me attentive to the, truth delivered in thy gospel, and inclined me to wait longer in my search of these divine truths, under the hope of thy gracious illumination.

I humbly call thee to witness, O my God, what a holy jealousy I ever wear about my heart, lest I should do the slightest dishonour to thy supreme majesty in any of my enquiries or determinations. Thou seest what a religious fear, and what a tender solicitude I maintain on my

soul, lest I should think or speak any thing to diminish the grandeurs and honours of thy Son Jesus, my dear Mediator, to whom I owe my everlasting hopes. Thou knowest how much afraid I am of speaking one word, which may be construed into a neglect of thy blessed Spirit, from whom I hope I am daily receiving happy influences of light and strength. Guard all the motions of my mind, O Almighty God, against every thing that borders upon these dangers. Forbid my thoughts to indulge, and forbid my pen to write one word, that should sink those grand ideas which belong to thyself, or thy Son, or thy Holy Spirit. Forbid it, O my God, that ever I should be so unhappy as to unglorify my Father, my Saviour, or my Sanctifier, in any of my sentiments or expressions concerning them.

Blessed and faithful God, hast thou not promised that *the meek thou wilt guide in judgment, the meek thou wilt teach thy way*? Hast thou not told us by Isaiah thy prophet, that thou *wilt bring the blind by a way which they knew not, and wilt lead them in paths which they have not known*? Hast thou not informed us, by thy prophet Hosea, that *if we follow on to know the Lord, then we shall know him*? Hath not thy Son, our Saviour, assured us, that our *Heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him*? And is he not appointed to *guide us into all truth*? Have I not sought the gracious guidance of thy good Spirit continually? Am I not truly sensible of my own darkness and weakness, my dangerous prejudices on every side, and my utter insufficiency for my own conduct? Wilt thou leave such a poor creature, bewildered among a thousand perplexities, which are raised by the various opinions and contrivances of men to explain thy divine truth?

Help me, Heavenly Father, for I am quite tired and weary of these human explainings, so various and uncertain. When wilt thou explain it to me thyself, O my God, by the secret and certain dictates of thy Spirit, according to the intimations of thy word? Nor let any pride of reason, nor any affectation of novelty, nor any criminal bias whatsoever, turn my heart aside from hearkening to these divine dictates of thy word and thy Spirit. Suffer not any of my native corruptions, nor the vanity of my imagination, to cast a mist over my eyes, while I am searching after the knowledge of thy mind and will, for my eternal salvation.

I entreat, O most merciful Father, that thou wilt not suffer the remnant of my short life to be wasted in such endless wanderings, in quest of thee and thy Son Jesus, as a great part of my past days have been; but let my sincere endeavours to know thee, in all the ways whereby thou hast discovered thyself in thy word, be crowned with such success, that my soul being established in every needful truth by thy Holy

Spirit, I may spend my remaining life according to the rules of thy gospel; and may, with all the holy and happy creation, ascribe glory and honour, wisdom and power, to thee, who sittest upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Many things here mentioned are already animadverted upon as they occur in our author's previous writings, we shall add two or three additional observations.

1. The Doctor seems to suppose that it is the office of the Holy Spirit, not only to lead into the essential truths of the gospel, which are indeed so plain that "he who runs may read;" but also into its higher and more philosophical principles. On this point, however, we may observe, that while the Spirit of God leads the humble Christian into all *the truth*, so far as it is important to his salvation, he never encourages idle or presumptuous curiosity. Job, it should seem, erred on this head, in attempting to push his enquiries too far into the mysteries of Divine Providence; and he was silenced, not by an explication of his difficulties, but by being reprov'd for his presumption: *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* When Daniel, after being favoured with extraordinary prophetic revelations, which he heard but understood not, said, *O my Lord, what shall the end of these things be?* he received for answer, *Go thy way, Daniel—Go thy way till the end be: For thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.* When Paul was taken up into the third heaven, he was permitted to make no discoveries; and though John was allowed to write his sublime visions, it was in language so enigmatical, as only to be understood when they are fulfilled. We are taught to live by faith, and not by sight, in the present imperfect state.

2. Our good Doctor seems to have imbibed too much the spirit and language of holy Job in this respect also, when he justifies himself rather than his Maker. Assuming, perhaps, rather too confidently, his own integrity and purity of intention, he thence infers the certainty of divine direction; whereas many reasons may be given to justify the wisdom and goodness of God in not granting his request; especially as perfect knowledge is the privilege of the heavenly state; *What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.*

3. It appears that our author was by no means settled and confident in his own opinions. After so many years earnest enquiry after truth, he was yet a learner; and near the close of his long and studious life lamented that "a great part of his days" had been "wasted in endless wanderings, in quest" of satisfaction on this subject. No great encouragement by the way for others, in this respect, to imitate his

conduct; although in other respects so bright an exemplar of Christian graces.

4. It is clear, however, the Doctor never degenerated into the Arian or Socinian systems, though his opinions have been supposed to lead toward them. But little before his death, and while he was attacked by the Trinitarians, he also sustained a controversy with Mr. Tomkins, who laboured much to draw him into Arianism; but though the Doctor certainly departed from the common hypothesis, nothing could induce him to give up the Deity or the worship of Jesus Christ; or to suppress those ascriptions of praise to the divine Trinity in his doxologies, notwithstanding he might think some of them rather incautiously, because unscripturally, expressed.

We cannot, perhaps, conclude this subject more properly than by adverting to some lines, which the Doctor in his early days had written upon the great Mr. Locke, who before his death, was supposed to have indulged some dangerous speculations, partly also on the same subject.

"Sister of Faith, fair Charity,
Shew me the wond'rous man on high,
Tell how he sees the Godhead, Three in One:
The bright conviction fills his eye,
His noblest pow'rs in deep prostration lie,
At the mysterious throne.

"Forgive," he cries, "ye saints below,
The wav'ring and the cold assent
I gave to themes divinely true:
Can you admit the blessed to repent?
Eternal darkness veil the lines
Of that unhappy book;
Where glimmering reason with false lustre shines,
Where the mere mortal pen mistook
What the celestial meant!"

In applying these lines of our author to some of his own writings, we do not mean to insinuate (as he does of Mr. Locke) that it is needful "to invoke charity, that by her help" we may "find him out in heaven;" the scenes to which we are now proceeding, as well as the whole tenour of his life, preclude the possibility of doubt on that subject.

Having now bid adieu to the Doctor as an author, we return with him to the scenes of private life, and find him in the same happy and pious family to which his illness providentially introduced him in 1712, and where he finished his days, after six and thirty years abode. Sir

Thomas, we have observed, was soon taken from him, but his excellent relict, who was "a widow indeed," survived the Doctor about a year. "A coalition like this," says Dr. Johnson, "a state in which the notions of patronage and dependance were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial."

In adverting to the Doctor's private life, which has been yet but very slightly noticed, we must take a retrospective view. The delicacy of his constitution, and repeated sicknesses soon brought upon him the infirmities of age; yet the goodness of God, and the kind attention of his friends preserved his feeble frame to a good old age; and though the taper of life burned slowly to the socket, its flame was brilliant to the last. In health he was remarkable for vivacity in conversation, and for ready wit; though he never shewed a fondness for displaying it, especially in satire, to which his amiable temper was naturally averse. "Wit fell from him," says Dr. Gibbons, "like occasional fire from heaven; and like the ethereal flame was ever vivid and penetrating."! His long and repeated illnesses gave him little opportunity for visiting; but whenever he went into families, he filled his pockets with hymns and catechisms, and where he was known and expected, the young people flocked around him to receive them.

In early life it has been said that an attachment was formed between our divine and the pious and amiable Miss Singer, afterwards Mrs. Rowe; if this was ever any thing more than a Platonic passion, which is doubtful, it certainly subsided into a pure and sincere friendship—in consequence of which that lady, at her death, committed her papers to his care. It is probable, however, that his frequent afflictions prevented him from seriously thinking of altering his condition, and after his kind reception into the Abney family, it became the less desirable.

A few interesting anecdotes of the Doctor may here be properly introduced. He was low of stature, (but about five feet,) and his bodily presence was weak; yet there was a certain dignity in his countenance, and such piercing expression in his eyes, as commanded attention and awe. Being once in a coffee-room with some friends, he overheard a gentleman asking, rather contemptuously, "What, is that the great Dr. Watts?" and turning round suddenly, and in good humour, repeated a stanza from his Lyric Poems, which produced a silent admiration:

"Were I so tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean with my span,
I must be measured by my soul:
The mind's the standard of the man."

Dr. Gibbons informs us that, like other men of genius, our author was

a dabbler in the mimic arts, and copied some antiques that shewed him master of his pencil. Of course he was an admirer of Raphael's Cartons; and once, on being shewn that which represents St. Paul preaching at Athens, he exclaimed, "I'll tell you what he is saying, *Behold he cometh!* and were we to think as long as we will (says Dr. Gibbons), we could not perhaps conceive any words more suitable to the aspect and attitude of the speaker, and the solemnity reigning upon the countenances of the hearers."

By the way we may remark, that as the great apostle of the gentiles is reported to have been a little man, of similar stature and appearance with our author, so it was his opinion that St. Paul's infirmities were also similar to his own; for his biographer tells us, that the Doctor explained "the thorn in the flesh," to be a state of nervous debility, such as he was himself latterly afflicted with to a remarkable degree.

"As the Doctor was free and cheerful in conversation, so his remarks were constantly directed to some valuable end. On his last visit to his father at Southampton, a servant in the family was ordered to accompany him a day's journey homeward. On this occasion, the Doctor entered into such a serious discourse with him as was the means of his conversion, and Richard Ellcock (such was his name) lived and died an honourable Christian.

The Doctor was blessed with a retentive memory. Dr. Gibbons mentions hearing him readily repeat in conversation, in the latter part of his life, several verses from Juvenal, though he had never read them since he was a young man.

We have remarked, that in his latter days he was a good deal engaged in controversy. Flattered on the one hand by innumerable admirers, and on the other teased by the envy and jealousy of his rivals in popularity, his delicate mind, naturally irritable and shattered by sickness, must have very sensibly felt his situation; though, it is said, Lady kept from him, as much as possible, every thing she thought calculated to give him uneasiness. It was indeed the Doctor's own disposition, not to pain a worm, but to sympathize with every feeling of human nature; and though his means of benevolence were small, his income not exceeding one hundred pounds per annum, yet one-third of it he constantly disposed of in charity, and offered to decline his salary when he found himself no longer able to fulfil his public service.

The account of his last illness and death cannot be given better than in the words of his friend, Dr. Gibbons, and his faithful servant and amanuensis, Mr. Joseph Parker.

"It is a glory (says our author in one of his discourses) to the gospel, when we can lie down with courage in hope of its promised blessings. It is an honour to our common faith, when it overcomes the terrors of death, and raises the Christian to a song of triumph in the view of the last enemy. It is a new crown put upon the head of our Redeemer, and a living cordial put into the hands of mourning friends in our dying hour, when we can take our leave of them with holy fortitude, rejoicing in the salvation of Christ. No sooner does he call but we are ready, and can answer with holy transport, Lord, I come."

"What the Doctor so justly and properly describes, that he himself exemplified in his last hours. As his day of life was eminently bright and useful, so its setting was remarkably serene and happy. His weakness was such as greatly to interrupt him in the pursuit of his studies, though not so great as to deprive him of his intellects, or to leave him to any strange chimeras of fancy, which I have frequently, heard, but without any kind of ground attributed to him. He saw his approaching dissolution with a mind perfectly calm and composed, without the least alarm or dismay, and I never could discover, though I was frequently with him, the least shadow of a doubt as to his future everlasting happiness, or any thing that looked like an unwillingness to die. How have I known him recite with a self-application those words in Heb. x 36. *Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise?* And how have I heard him, upon leaving the family after supper and withdrawing to rest, declare with the sweetest composure, that if his Master were to say to him he had no more work for him to do, he should be glad to be dismissed that night? And I once heard him say with a kind of impatience, perhaps such as might in some degree trespass upon that submission we ought at all times to pay to the divine will, "I wonder why the great God should continue me in life, when I am incapable of performing him any further service." He has been heard to say, "I bless God I can lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether I awake in this world or another."

Again, "I should be glad to read more, yet not in order to be confirmed more in the truth of the Christian religion, or in the truth of its promises; for I believe them enough to venture an eternity upon them." When he was almost worn out and broken down by his infirmities he observed, in conversation with a friend, "that he remembered an aged minister used to say, that the most learned and knowing Christians, when they come to die, have only the same plain promises of the gospel for their support, as the common and unlearned; and so, said he, I find it. They are the plain promises of the gospel which are my support, and I bless God they are plain promises, which do not require

much labour or pains to understand them; for I can do nothing now but look into my Bible for some promise to support me, and live upon that." When he has found his spirit tending to impatience, and ready to complain, he would thus check himself, "The business of a Christian is to bear the will of God as well as to do it. If I were in health I could only be doing that, and that I may do now. The best thing in obedience is a regard to the will of God, and the way to that is, to get our inclinations and aversions as much mortified as we can."

"I visited the Doctor on his death-bed (says his biographer, Dr. Gibbons, who directly contradicts the story relating to a visit paid by the Rev. Geo. Whitefield to Dr. Watts just before his death, and the conversation said to have passed on that occasion. Dr. Gibbons says "Mr. Whitefield never visited the Doctor in his last illness, nor had any conversation with him for some months before his decease.") where I found him exceedingly weak and low, the lamp of life very feebly glimmering in its last decay, but he was still in the perfect possession of his understanding. He told me in answer to my inquiry whether he had any pain in his body, that he had none, and acknowledged it as a great mercy. To my second question, how was it with his soul, whether all was comfortable there, he replied it was, and confessed it to be a great mercy. Mr. Joseph Parker, a person of most respectable character, and the Doctor's amanuensis, as has been before, mentioned, for about one-and-twenty years, sent the following intelligence concerning him, to his brother at Southampton, but the day before his death, November 24, 1748.

"I wrote to you by the last post that we apprehended my master very near his end, and that we thought it not possible he should be alive when the letter reached your hands; and it will no doubt greatly surprise you to hear that he still lives. We ourselves are amazed at it. He passed through the last night in the main quiet and easy, but for five hours would receive nothing within his lips. I was down in his chamber early in the morning, and found him quite sensible. I begged he would be pleased to take a little liquid to moisten his mouth, and he received at my hand three teaspoonfuls, and has done the like several times this day. Upon inquiry he told me he lay easy, and his mind peaceful and serene. I said to him this morning that he had taught us how to live, and was teaching us how to die by his patience and composure, for he has been remarkably in this frame for several days past. He replied, "Yes." I told him I hoped he experienced the comfort of these words, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He answered, "I do." The ease of body and calmness of mind which he enjoys is a great mercy to him and to us. His sick chamber has nothing terrifying in it. He is an upright man, and I doubt not but his end will be peace. We are ready to

use the words of Job and say, "We shall seek him in the morning but he shall not be." But God only knows, by whose power he is upheld in life, and for wise purposes no doubt. He told me he liked I should be with him. All other business is put off, and I am in the house night and day. I would administer all the relief that is in my power. He is worthy of all that can be done for him. My lady sends her compliments, and am your very faithful and truly afflicted servant,—*Joseph Parker.*"

On the 26th of November, the day after the Doctor's decease, Mr. Parker again wrote to the same person.

"At length the fatal news is come. The spirit of the good man, my dear master, took its flight from the body to worlds unseen and joys unknown yesterday in the afternoon, without a struggle or a groan. My Lady Abney, and Mrs. Abney, are supported as well as we can reasonably expect. It is a house of mourning and tears, for I have told you before now, that we all attended upon him and served him from a principle of love and esteem. May God forgive us all that we have improved no more by him, while we enjoyed him!"

Thus did this great and good man, after an eminently holy and useful life, finish his course with joy, and the last sight of him to the eye of faith was not unlike that which the corporeal eye of Elisha had of Elijah, when he ascended in triumph to the heavenly glory.

Dr. Watts was very honourably interred among the worthies in Bunhill Fields, his pall being borne by six ministers, two from each of the three principal denominations among the protestant dissenters, presbyterians, independents, and antipedobaptists. Dr. S. Chandler delivered the oration at the grave! (Note: Dr. Samuel Chandler in the oration at the grave, delivered the following just commendation of the deceased: "We here commit to the ground the venerable remains of one, who being intrusted with many excellent talents by him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, cheerfully and unweariedly employed them as a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God in his Master's service, approving himself as a minister of Christ in much patience, in afflictions, and distresses, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, and who, amidst trials from within and from without, was continued by the kind providence of God, and the powerful supports of his grace to a good old age, honoured and beloved by all parties, retaining his usefulness till he had just finished his course, and being at last favoured, according to his own wishes and prayers, with a release from the labours of life into that peaceful state of good men, which commences immediately after death. O how

delightful is that voice from heaven which has thus pronounced, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.*") and Dr. Jennings preached the funeral sermon from Heb. xi. 4. *He being dead, yet speaketh.* Several other sermons were preached on the same occasion in different parts of the kingdom, but we shall give an extract only from that of Dr. Jennings, who from personal knowledge was well qualified to delineate our author's character.

"Though that which gave him the most remarkable pre-eminence was the extent and sublimity of his imagination, yet how few have excelled, or even equalled him, in quickness of apprehension and solidity of judgment? And having also a faithful memory to retain what he collected from the labours of others, he was able to pay it back again with a large increase. I question whether any author before him, did ever appear on such a variety of subjects as he has done, both as a prose writer and a poet. However, this I may venture to say, there is no man now living, of whose works so many have been dispersed, both at home and abroad, that are in such constant use, and translated into such a variety of languages; many of which will, I doubt not, remain more durable monuments of his great talents than any representation I can make of them, though it were to be engraven on pillars of brass." In addition to this encomium on his character as an ingenious man and a scholar, he considers him in the more exalted light of a Christian, ("the highest style of man,") and instances in the various Christian virtues and graces which distinguished him.

Dr. Gibbons and Mr. Palmer have both enlarged upon the features of the Doctor's character, but, as we have given a full-length portrait in the history of his life and actions, we shall only add the masterly sketches of two writers of the first literary rank, and who being both members of that establishment from which he conscientiously dissented, could have no temptation to partiality.

Dr. Samuel Johnson says, "Few men have left behind them such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons to the enlightened readers of Malebranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reasoning and the science of the stars. His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attainments, rather than from any single performance; for it would not be safe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits."

Here the Doctor enters into a critique upon our author's poetry, which has already been cited, with some animadversions, and concludes as follows: "He is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed by his verses or his prose, to imitate him in all but his Nonconformity; to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God."

While there is something meanly depreciating in the idea that "youth and ignorance" may be pleased with the poetry of Watts, there is a strong censure implied upon his brother poets, for there are "few"—very few indeed—"with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased." But the reflection in the last paragraph upon his Nonconformity is so evidently out of place, that one would wonder how even Johnson, with all his prejudices, should have introduced it. Thus much is evident, that Dr. Watts's character, like that of the prophet Daniel, was so singularly irreproachable that, except in a matter of conscience, nothing could be alleged against him.

(Note: We cannot pass over this uncritical insinuation of Dr. Johnson, without a remark. This we shall borrow from the Rev. S. Palmer, in the Life of Dr. Watts by Dr. Johnson with Notes, &c

"Is not this exception a striking proof of Dr. Johnson's bigoted attachment to the national established mode of worship? "Reverence to God (or rather for God) and benevolence to man," are the two grand essentials of religion. He that possesses these is a true Christian, whatever be the external mode of worship which he adopts. Neither his Conformity nor his Nonconformity will exclude him from the divine favour, nor ought it to be matter of censure to his fellow-creatures. If a man, in uniting with any Christian community, appears to follow the dictates of his own conscience, and to act conformably to his principles, he deserves the esteem of all parties, and to object to his peculiarity of religious profession, is the mark of a little mind.—That Dr. Watts was conscientious in his Nonconformity there can be no doubt. Dr. Johnson acknowledges that 'any denomination of Christians would have been glad to have received him.' If he could have conformed to the national church, doubtless he might have had preferment in it equal to what some of his fellow-students obtained. He neither had, nor could he expect any such emoluments among the dissenters. On what principle then could he 'resolve to take his lot with them' but that of conscience? If he had complied with the terms of Conformity while he thought them unlawful, he had violated his conscience, and lost his integrity. Was not his Nonconformity then laudable?

"Supposing him to be mistaken in his judgment of the matters in

debate between the Church of England and Dissenters, that 'reverence for God,' which Dr. Johnson acknowledges he possessed, was the very thing which made him a Dissenter. He made the word of God the rule of his faith and practice. He could not submit to human impositions in matters of religion. He dared not yield to such terms of communion as the holy scriptures have not prescribed. His judgment did not approve many things which the Church of England enjoins, and his conscience would not allow him to profess to believe as true what he thought to be false, or to practise as right what he apprehended to be wrong. Why then is he censured for his Nonconformity? And why is it suggested that it would be *unhappy* for any to imitate him in it, though they should be actuated by the same noble principles? An inspired apostle has said, 'Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing that he alloweth.' And again, 'This is our rejoicing the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have our conversation in the world.' The principal source of *happiness* is 'a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man.' He that has this must be 'happy,' and he ought to be respected. Dr. Johnson therefore had much better have said, 'Happy indeed is that reader who is disposed by his verses or his prose to imitate him in his impartial enquiry after truth, and in following the dictates of his own conscience, in his reverence towards God and his benevolence to men, whether he be a Conformist or a Nonconformist.'")

The encomium of another eminent literary character, Dr. Vicessimus Knox, is far more liberal. "For my own part," says he, "I cannot but think this good man approached as nearly to Christian perfection as any mortal ever did in this sublunary state; and therefore I consider him as a better interpreter of the Christian doctrine than the most learned critics, who, proud of their reason and their learning, despised or neglected the very life and soul of Christianity, the living, everlasting gospel, the supernatural influence of divine grace; and be it ever remembered, that Dr. Watts was a man who studied the abstrusest sciences, and was as well qualified to become a verbal critic, or a logical disputant on the scriptures, as the most learned among the Doctors of the Sorbonne, or the greatest proficient in polemical divinity. I mention this circumstance for the consideration of those who insinuate that the doctrines of grace cannot be entertained but by ignorant, as well as fanatical persons; by persons uninitiated in the mysteries of philosophy."

After perusing these panegyrics it may be thought we should have followed such examples, and not have marked our author's frailty by our observations. This, however, is not according to the example of the

sacred penmen; nor does it answer the grand end of biography, which is to exhibit models within human imitation; not that we should copy blemishes, but they convince us that the model is not inimitable. They serve us also as waymarks to caution, us against those errors into which the greatest and best of men have been betrayed.

Anticipating the partial eulogium of his friends, the Doctor had provided for his tomb the following modest inscription with the date of his dissolution, which was engraved on it at the joint expence of his kind friends, Sir J. Hartopp and Lady Abney.

ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

Pastor of a Church of Christ in London, Successor of the Rev. Mr. Joseph Caryl, Dr. John Owen, Mr. David Clarkson, and Dr. Isaac Chauncey, after Fifty Years of feeble Labours in the Gospel, interrupted by Four Years of tiresome Sickness, was at last dismissed to Rest.

November XXV. A.D. MDCCXLVIII. ÆT. LXXV.

2 Cor. v. 8. Absent from the body, present with the LORD.
Col. iii. 4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, I shall also appear with him in glory.

IN VNO IESV OMNIA.

A few years ago, a small marble monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey; but it is by no means worthy of the illustrious man whom it is intended to honour. We are sorry to add, it is already mutilated by the hand of wantonness. It would be highly creditable to the body of Protestant Dissenters, were they to procure another monument, more worthy of Dr. Watts, in St. Paul's Cathedral. But the most honourable and the most durable monument of his uncommon worth, we have now the happiness of presenting to the world in his admirable WORKS.

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