

*For Mrs Foster
with the love of
Mary W. Dwight*

M E M O I R

OF

REV. LOUIS DWIGHT,

BY

WILLIAM JENKS, D. D.

R-D.

M E M O I R

OF THE

REV. LOUIS DWIGHT,

LATE SECRETARY OF THE

BOSTON PRISON DISCIPLINE SOCIETY,

PREPARED, AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY,

BY

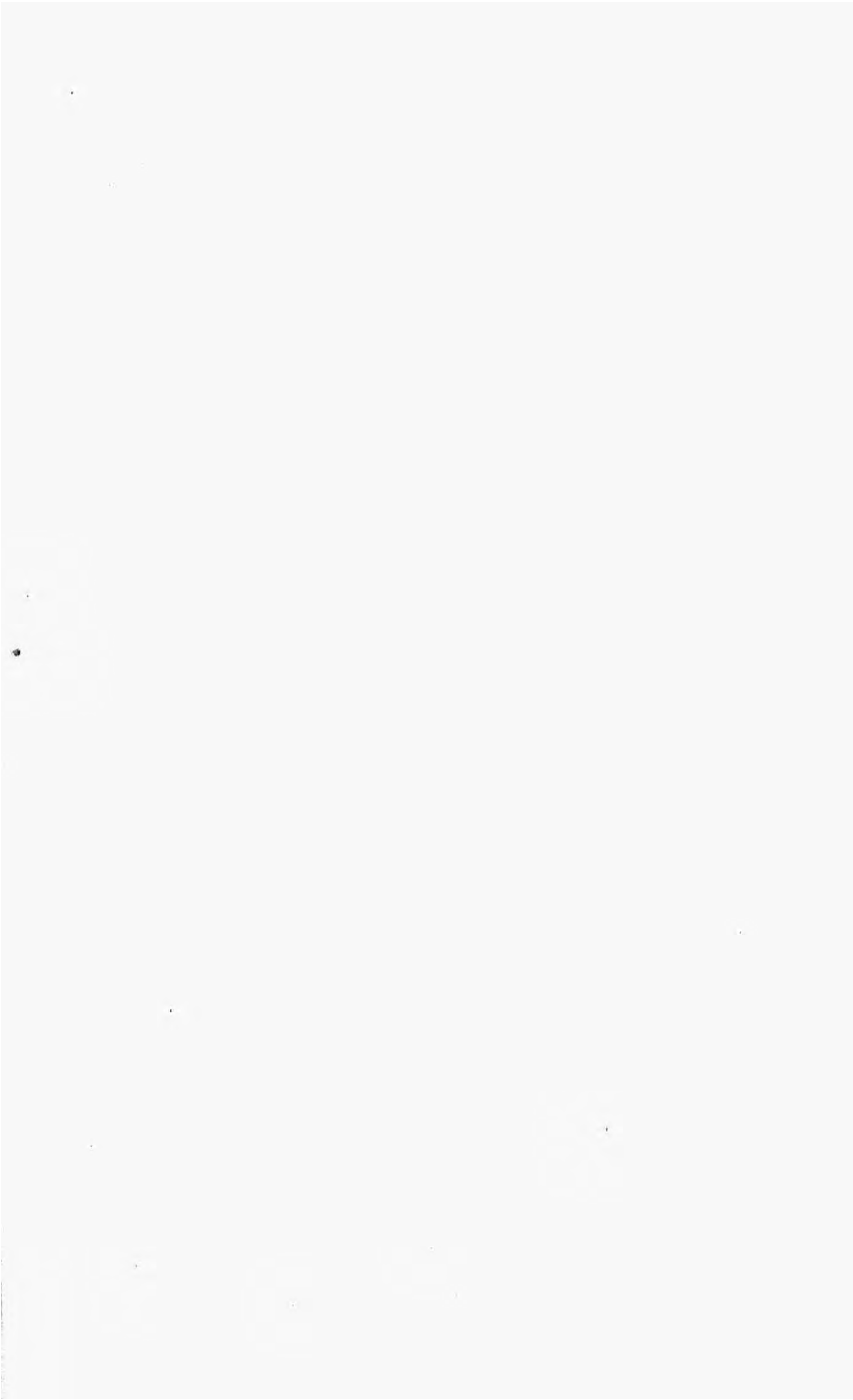
WILLIAM JENKS, D. D.,

ONE OF ITS VICE-PRESIDENTS.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN.

1856.



MEMOIR OF REV. LOUIS DWIGHT.

BY WILLIAM JENKS, D. D.

SEVERAL months after the lamented death of Mr. DWIGHT, who had been Secretary and principal Agent of the Boston Prison Discipline Society from its institution, it was resolved, as a last and crowning effort, to reprint and circulate its whole series of Reports, which, indeed, had been principally prepared by himself, and of which he had gathered the chief materials. And it was at the same time thought fit, that a brief Memoir of his life should accompany the publication. In compliance with this arrangement, the following notices are presented to the reader.

So familiar has the subject of Prisons and Prison Discipline become to the great body of the community, and so greatly has it attracted the attention of the governments of most civilized countries, that a recurrence to the original causes of movements now witnessed might seem irrelevant, antiquated and inapposite.

At the hazard, however, of incurring such censure, it must be remarked, that not mere human policy alone, and a regard to the safety of human life and property, important as these considerations confessedly are, prompted the modern spirit of reform in prisons. It is traceable, clearly, to deep Christian principles.

No one, indeed, who is imbued with those principles, can look with indifference on the evils introduced into the world by the transgression of the natural and moral laws of God. The degradation and sufferings of uncounted multitudes arise out of this, as it is the fruitful source of disorder, disease and calamity. Nor

can the entire cure be wisely expected but as the result of those life-renewing principles which distinguish the Gospel of CHRIST:—

—'ollis cœlestis vigor
'Seminibus'—

These, planted by Divine grace in the human soul, prepare the individual, or a community, for permanent prosperity and happiness, and for permanent usefulness.

JOHN HOWARD, who is worthy to be ever named with reverence and high esteem, imbibed these principles most thoroughly. They entered into his public as well as his private life. They animated him to undertake vast labors, endure severe hardships, and to make great sacrifices of personal ease and wealth, in accomplishing an enterprise which has scarce a parallel among human efforts. The highest eulogy of his life and spirit can scarcely be accounted an exaggeration, and in every civilized country his name is in honor.

Much of his spirit was, without question, possessed and displayed by LOUIS DWIGHT.

To the formation and development of any human character very many circumstances providentially combine. All of them it is not given us to know. But, among the subjects of human curiosity, the diligent observer of men and their actions will be ever gratified with opportunities of tracing the influence of circumstances; and the philosophical inquirer will neglect no proper occasion of assigning to them their native and relative importance.

The family of Mr. DWIGHT was of the old Puritan stock of New England. Its history, previous to the early settlements here, is not at present known. But JOHN DWIGHT, his first ancestor in America, is found in 1635 united with those who settled the town of Dedham, in Norfolk county, Massachusetts, and who had tarried awhile with the earlier inhabitants of Watertown and Roxbury. These settlers, having obtained their grant for a plantation from the General Court, which that year held its session at 'Newtowne,' now Cambridge, entered into a mutual Covenant for the government of themselves, and required all to subscribe it who might afterward unite with them, in the determination that none should be permitted to join them but such as bore the required character.

The early constitution of towns in New England, or at least in Massachusetts, was admirably calculated, in addition to the care given to the education of children, to draw out gradually whatever talent for public service every man might possess. How and when the office of 'Select-man' originated, it may be difficult to determine, although the ancient 'tythings' of the Saxons accustomed small communities to feel responsibility, and devolved on individuals a care for others; yet that, and the office of Representative to the General Court, operated, from generation to generation, in training up

—'men who their duties knew,
'And knew their rights, and knowing dared maintain.'

JOHN DWIGHT held the office of select-man for sixteen years, and died in 1653. He was a member of the First Church in Dedham from the year 1639. His son TIMOTHY, the common ancestor of the late eminent and excellent President of Yale College and of LOUIS DWIGHT, was a select-man for twenty-five years, was also for ten years town-clerk, and represented Medfield, an offshoot of Dedham, in the General Court. In 1718 he died, at the age of 83, having been a church-member for sixty-six years, and characterized as 'a gentleman truly serious and godly, one of an excellent spirit, peaceable, generous, charitable, and a promoter of the true interests of the church and town.'*

JOSEPH DWIGHT, Esquire, grandson of TIMOTHY, by his son HENRY, was of Great Barrington, born, however, in Dedham. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1722, was appointed a judge of the court of common pleas in the county of Worcester in 1739, became a brigadier-general, and was at the taking of Louisburg in 1745, having command of the artillery of the State. After the Canadian war, in which he was engaged, he purchased land in Berkshire county, of the court of which he was made judge, and also judge of probate; and died at his residence, 1765. 'His personal appearance,' says Dr. ALLEN, 'was fine. He was dignified in his manners, an upright judge, and an exemplary professor of the religion of the gospel.' He was the grandfather of LOUIS, who possessed and highly prized his portrait.

* One of his sons, *Josiah*, was graduated at Harvard College in 1687, was the first minister of Woodstock in Connecticut, and afterward of the third parish in his native town.

The religious views of these men were in accordance with those which distinguish the early preachers of Dedham, whose printed Sermons have been reproduced and given to the present generation by the Reverend Dr. BURGESS of that town. The perusal of these singularly evangelical documents will show, that their authors drew their theology from the pure fountain of Divine Truth; and their serious, considerate hearers were trained up in that reverence for the Sacred Oracles, which was a striking characteristic of the Puritan Fathers of New England.

HENRY WILLIAMS DWIGHT, Esquire, second son* of the judge, and father of LOUIS, was of Stockbridge, and for many years clerk of the county court; 'a man of strict integrity, and much respected in the community,' writes his grand-daughter,† 'for his noble qualities of mind and heart.' He married ABIGAIL WELLS, a lady of Hartford, Connecticut, who, on her marriage, went to her husband's residence, and there abode until her death, after having been left a widow for many years. Of their three sons, LOUIS was the youngest, and was born at Stockbridge, in Berkshire county, March 25th, 1793.

The character and influence of a Mother are of indescribable importance in the moulding of the mind, heart and life of a child. LOUIS is spoken of by one who recollects his early years, as a boy of gay and cheerful temperament, sound constitution, amiable deportment, and benevolent propensities. As such, he became the favorite of his deeply religious mother, so far as a conscientious parent can exercise such a predilection. And his return of affection and deference was fervent, uniform and permanent. The writer was introduced to this lady not long before her death, and witnessed the ardor of her interest in her son's usefulness. But her private journal exhibits it in a far more striking degree. Extracts from it have been obtained, and will occasionally enter this brief narrative.

In the year 1804, this affectionate mother was left a widow, 'with her three sons to educate and provide for, the youngest of

* He had a sister who married the Hon. Theodore Sedgwick, and became the mother of Miss Sedgwick, an authoress of extensive celebrity, and whose society was not without its influence on the taste and manners of her cousin, Louis.

† Miss Dwight, from whose valuable 'Memorials' of her father much that follows will have been taken.

whom was eleven, and the eldest sixteen years of age. Through the long and painful illness of her husband, she had displayed entire submission to the will of God, while she was to her sick and suffering friend the "ministering angel" of his bodily and mental wants. Deeply depressed, at times, and suffering from a lingering consumption of the lungs, he stood constantly in need of sympathy and consolation. It was then that all the beauty and strength of her character shone out, through the dark cloud that overshadowed them.

'There are many expressions in Mrs. DWIGHT'S journal, written during this period of severe trial, which show that she suffered intensely; but that she was able, while her own heart was bleeding, to cheer her husband in his hours of depression, provide for the wants of her sons, and superintend her household. She was placed in a situation where a weak woman would have been crushed to the earth; but she felt beneath her "the everlasting arms," and upon their omnipotence she leaned, in the exercise of an exalted Christian faith.

'The last words of her husband—words which his children remembered till their own hour of death—were those of the Apostle, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" In saying farewell to her who had for so many years rested on him for support, the dying husband and father bade her not be anxious for their children. "God will provide for them," were his words, and with this thought he could leave them, and,

—"sustained and soothed
By an unflinching trust, approach his grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

'Deprived, at an early age, of their natural guide and protector, the fatherless boys were left with one who was worthy of their deepest respect and strongest affection. Her sons seemed to have felt that every quality which gives sacredness to the name of *Mother*, was possessed by her who gave them birth.' The eldest entered Yale College in the autumn after his father's death. And not a long period had elapsed before a place was found for the youngest, between whom and his mother the relation, as has been intimated, was 'one of peculiar tenderness, confidence and sym-

pathy. The lessons she wrote upon his heart faded not while life lasted; and the effect which her advice and unconscious influence exerted on his character was not for time merely, but for eternity.' On parting with him, as he went to reside in the family of Rev. Dr. BACKUS, at Bethlehem in Connecticut, his mother utters her feelings in her journal thus: 'March 11, 1806. This day my youngest son, LOUIS, I fear an idol in my heart, has left me. As the image of his father, I cling to him, and find his company very necessary to my peace; and I would now, dear JESUS, commend him to Thy blessed protection. Shall affection hold him when duty bids me let him go? No. I am not alone. My blessed Saviour is ever near. Be pleased, O LORD, to bless him, and return him again to me in safety.'

The cherished youth, after but a few months' absence, returned in safety, to excite anew his mother's affection, and call forth her adoring gratitude. For, while at Bethlehem, at school, in the pious family which had received him, he 'had become deeply interested in that subject which had been from his earliest childhood presented to him. His individual responsibility to God, and his own wretched failures to love the LORD with "his whole heart," gave him great distress. The teachings of one, so admirably calculated to guide him as Dr. BACKUS, to whom, and to his wife and children, Mr. DWIGHT's attachment was through life strong and unabated, were most beneficial at this time; and he returned from school to his mother, with his whole heart overflowing with a new-found joy, and prepared to sympathize with her as he never had done before.'

Her journal of July 5, 1806, has this record: 'Praise the LORD, O my soul! Let all my powers be called forth to magnify the dying love of JESUS, blessed Lamb of God, who suffered for sinners! Glory, glory to Thy name, O holy Immanuel, for the distinguishing and incomprehensible plan of redemption! This morning is more blessed to my soul than I find words to describe; and if the wealth of the Indies had been offered to me, mean and despicable would the treasure have appeared, compared to the rich gift which God has now bestowed upon me, a weak, unfaithful, widowed mother. What joy can surpass mine? A child born into the family of God! A poor depraved worm washed in the blood of JESUS! Blessed am I when I go out, and blessed

am I when I come in, if I have raised up one child for the kingdom of Heaven! Not unto me, not unto me, but unto Thy name be all the glory!’ * * * ‘Now, O blessed Saviour, I commend this dear child to Thee. I have received him anew from Thee, with a tenfold joy—a joy which as far surpasses that of the day of his birth, as the light of the sun exceeds the intensest midnight darkness. I give him back to Thee. Oh, make him a burning and a shining light. Clothe him with the “whole armor of righteousness.” Keep him from temptation. Strengthen his faith. Enable him to lay hold of Thy promises. If Thou hast begun a good work in him, Thou wilt carry it on; and blessed, forever blessed be Thy name!’

Such were, and most justly, the pious joy and devout aspirations of a Christian, widowed mother, on perceiving evidence of a regenerate heart in her son. Similar expressions occur in her journal, when, about a year after, this son made a public profession of attachment to his Saviour, and was united to a branch of His visible Church, a young, but sincere and devoted disciple, as his subsequent life testified. Ever after, CHRIST was ‘precious’ to him, and he was never ashamed of His name or cause. Possessing much of the prompt decision and resolute perseverance which eminently distinguished his surviving parent, his character advanced to a maturity which, in early manhood, marked him as one designed for uncommon usefulness.

But further trials seemed necessary; and the providential ‘hedging up’ of the way was yet to be experienced. ‘In the year 1813, when Mrs. DWIGHT had hoped to welcome home her son in health, and with flattering prospects before him, having completed his collegiate course at Yale College, a great trial awaited her on his account. A severe hemorrhage of the lungs, brought on by inhaling the “exhilarating gas,” while attending a chemical lecture, had broken his naturally strong constitution, and he returned to his mother weak and ill, apparently unfitted for all active duties. At this time of bitter disappointment in her most cherished hopes, the mother made the following entry in her journal: “Nov. 29, 1813. Just returned—my two sons—one, mended in health in spirits; the other, unable to study, or prepare for the sacred calling which has long been his choice. It is not in man to direct his steps; but He, who has brought him thus

far by a way he has not known, I trust, will re-establish his health, in His own time, and fit him to be a laborer in His vineyard."

'The journal continues: "Nov. 30, 1813. My dear son LOUIS has just left for a distant clime. May God give him health, and go before him, as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night."

'The mother's prayer was answered; and her son returned from a southern tour much improved in health. It is thus noticed: "May, 1814. Yesterday was returned to me, after an absence of nearly six months, my very dear son LOUIS. In all his way, Thou greatly blessed triune God, Thou hast protected and abundantly blessed him. Shall I ever again distrust Thy faithful promises to the widow and fatherless ones?"

'Though Mr. DWIGHT did not regain his former strength, and it was still doubtful whether he would ever be able to assume the duties of a settled pastor, he decided to pursue the study of theology, and entered the Theological Seminary at Andover. While pursuing his studies there, in 1819, it became a subject of consideration with him, in what part of his Master's vineyard it was his duty to labor. The weakness of his lungs seemed to unfit him for the effort of public speaking; and an offer had been made him of the agency of the American Tract Society. Accustomed to consult his mother—for, during the years of his studying at Andover, and after he had entered upon the more active duties of life, the letters which were exchanged between them, show a degree of affection and confidence, as beneficial to the one as it must have been delightful to the other—he wrote to her, asking her advice on this question, and whether she would be willing to give up her long cherished plan of seeing her son a settled pastor of the Church of CHRIST. She wrote in reply, "I have ever said, let the LORD direct! He has led you in paths not known, and brought you into His vineyard, praised be His holy name! I cannot interfere, after this surrender."

'With a true mother's heart,' writes her grand-daughter, 'she added, "Come *home*, and tell us what the LORD is about to do. We will not detain, if He summon you to the field; we will help on the harness and armor in His strength." Thus did this heroic woman, or, more truly, this noble Christian mother, animate her son to wage war against the gigantic evils of the world. Had his Master called him to preach the Gospel in a foreign land, where

she could never again have seen his face, she would have smiled through her tears, and bade him God speed. It was from such a mother that Mr. DWIGHT, says his daughter, 'gained the courage and indomitable perseverance which enabled him to set his face like a flint against the abuses of society. Thus, undismayed by difficulties, undeterred by calumny, he could, through the bitterest opposition, go calmly forward in his great business of Prison Reform, until he had finished the work God had given him to do.'

While Mr. DWIGHT was a student at Andover, there was a serious attention to religion among the pupils of Phillips Academy, then under the instruction of JOHN ADAMS, Esq. In this 'revival' Mr. DWIGHT took a lively and affectionate interest. Among those who were then under religious impressions was N. P. WILLIS, who has distinguished himself since as one of the poets and prose-writers of our country. In giving attention to him, and counselling him with fidelity, Mr. DWIGHT became known to his father, Deacon NATHANIEL WILLIS, Editor and Proprietor of the 'Boston Recorder,' one of the first, if not the first, of the now numerous religious newspapers, which are exercising so great an influence throughout our own country and no small part of Christendom. This acquaintance drew after it important personal consequences. 'There was,' says Mr. WILLIS, in a letter to the writer, 'about the same time a revival in Park-street Church in Boston. Mr. DWIGHT was frequently at my house, and was always engaged in attending meetings, and counselling inquirers, particularly those in my own family who were religiously impressed, and his faithful and affectionate manner greatly endeared him to me.' With that Church he became afterward united, and continued in its communion, an active, and most useful and conscientious member, for the rest of his life.

'After he had decided to become an agent of the Tract Society, his mother fearing lest he should give up entirely the preaching of the Gospel, wrote to him, "I hope that your engagedness in this Society, though important in the extreme, and successful as I find, and in which I bid you God speed, will not take your attention from preaching the glorious Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST." This was the cause nearest her heart, and to which she wished her sons to be devoted. She did not desire for them wealth or fame,

as she records in her journal; but only that they might faithfully and well act their part in life, and especially that they might carry the glad tidings of salvation to the wretched ones of the earth.'

While we have thus been noticing the family, early life, and habits of thought and action, which resulted in the formation of the religious character of Mr. DWIGHT, hints have been given of his natural temperament and advantages. Affectionate and kind, he was yet resolute and firm. Of a pleasing address, he yet would sacrifice no conscientious conviction. Faithful to his engagements, what he did he did with vigor and thoroughness. What he felt he was ever ready to declare, in a proper time and place, with frankness. His feelings were vivid and strong, and his friendships tender but permanent. His piety and attachment to the doctrines which distinguished the 'Puritans,' no one who knew him could doubt. The ardor of his zeal often, indeed, carried him beyond his physical strength, as, on many occasions, his family and friends perceived, and were not backward in expressing their fears.

Thus, 'in 1822, after he had recovered from a severe illness, one of his most intimate friends writes to him: "I must not say that your zeal in the cause of your Saviour is too great, for the human heart cannot contain an excessive measure of this zeal; but I do believe, my dear friend, that you should check its strong control on your actions and industry. You tax your impaired constitution too heavily, when you allow it to display all the energies and all the fervor of your heart. Have much care over yourself in this respect, and, although you may be very impatient under the restrictions of your benevolent and soul-rejoicing labors, recollect that you may thus last the longer, and that the amount of your usefulness, instead of being lessened, may be much increased. It would indeed have been a great affliction to *me* to have had you, whom I love so much, taken away in the midst of your usefulness, and in the morning, and vigor, and loveliness of your life; but, though I rejoice at your recovery, I will not congratulate *you* upon it. Why not? Because, incomprehensibly to me, whose natural heart cannot discern spiritual things, you are as willing to die as to live, and more, you 'long to depart and be with CHRIST.'"

'This earnest entreaty of his friend,' observes his daughter who transcribes it, 'that he would not overwork his body in the cause

of benevolence, might well have been addressed to him through life. It was the remark of his physician, when called to attend him in his last illness, "He has worked too hard in his day." Doubtless his life was shortened by the exertions of the last few years, in the relief of the degraded and intemperate ones of the city in which he lived. These exertions, in the heat of summer, brought on the attack of paralysis, which was ultimately the cause of his death. Life to him was valuable only as it could be employed in benefiting others. "Give me a long life, if it can be filled with acts of benevolence, but let me not outlive my usefulness," was his wish and prayer; a prayer, God in mercy granted; and, when the pulse grew feeble, and the hand lost its strength, the faithful laborer was called *home*.

'The principle that governed Mr. DWIGHT, in every important act and decision of his life, was that which governed PAUL, when he exclaimed, "LORD, what wilt thou have me to do?" In reference to his place of residence, in 1823, he wrote to her who was to share his home, "we are not to be governed, in the consideration of those great subjects on which our usefulness depends, (for our usefulness is the chief end of our being, since by this alone we can promote the glory of God,) by feelings of personal attachment or private friendship." To the same friend he wrote from Andover, in reference to the suffering that might await him in life: "I welcome suffering, if it may be the means of giving me a fellowship with my Saviour's sufferings, and of causing me to esteem Him the Chief among ten thousands, and never again to forsake Him; but to serve Him faithfully while I have my being; to be like Him in forbearance and forgiveness, and especially in purity, and to be prepared to meet Him in heaven." The thoughts of a future existence gave him always intense happiness. Upon this subject he wrote, in the same year, to his dearest friend: "I love to think of the capacity of your spirit for happiness, and of the full glory with which it will be clothed, if you are a child of God, when 'this mortal shall have put on immortality.' If we should be so happy as to pass through this world with honor, and meet, in heaven, the forgiveness and approbation of our Saviour, how would we look back upon the scenes of this earth, and wonder that heaven did not engross our thoughts before we reached it!"'

While Mr. DWIGHT was employed as Agent of the Tract Society, 'he received an application from the Directors of the American Education Society, urging him very strongly to become their Agent, and presenting motives which they thought would prove most powerful with him, the probabilities of increased usefulness. In the letter addressed to him on this subject, one of the Directors writes, in behalf of the Board, "March 27, 1823, I am aware that your present station is important, and that the friends of religion may have some objection to your coming, if you should be inclined to do so. But you are aware that the field of usefulness here is very extensive, and that we have comparatively few men of the right stamp.—Every thing seems yet to be done. A man of much less experience might go on with your work, now that the foundation is laid, than would be required for this station."

'These arguments proved effectual, and Mr. DWIGHT accepted, the same year, the agency for the American Education Society. There is abundant proof, in letters from clergymen, and those who were best fitted to judge, that his services were of great value to the Society, while he continued their Agent. Not contented with discharging the public business of his office, he was in the habit of corresponding with a number of the young men who were aided by the Society. One of these beneficiaries, in a letter written at Mr. Dwight's invitation, complains of his own want of time for letter-writing, and adds, "You, notwithstanding the great duties of your station, and that you have half a world as correspondents, are always ready to give instruction, where it will be kindly received and properly improved. This I can say from experience."'

Mr. DWIGHT was ever happy in conciliating to himself warm and devoted friends. 'There are,' his daughter writes, 'letters of enthusiastic friendship received by him while he was in Andover, and afterwards, from men of noble natures, which show not only deep and strong affection, but also singular respect. One,' she adds, 'whose extensive means of usefulness and greatness of heart have caused thousands to bless his name, writes to me, July 10, 1855: "Your father and I loved each other. It was thirty-five years, last winter, that we began to love each other. He was my friend, the friend of my soul. The first time I saw him,

in the winter of 1819–20, he visited me in my own house. He found me in deep affliction. I was seeking anxiously the light and peace of religion. I shall never forget his judicious and affectionate advice to me, at that time when I so emphatically needed such advice. It was then, that, in accordance with his entreaties, I established family worship.” Such expressions are found in the letters exchanged between this early friend and Mr. DWIGHT, as indicate a friendship more like that between David and Jonathan, than is often found in this practical world. The depth of tenderness that existed in Mr. DWIGHT’S nature was indicated by the outpouring of it, at that time, without restraint, in his letters to his friends; and the affection received, in return, was as cheering to him, in his arduous duties, as “water to a thirsty soul.” Time, and the many changes of life, did not weaken these early ties. “Once a friend, a friend for eternity,” seemed to be his motto; and those who loved him in early life, and at the commencement of his labors, went with him, shoulder to shoulder, and hand to hand, in his life-long toils. And when this brave and resolute heart ceased to beat on earth, and the strong arm that had been stretched out to help the wretched dropped powerless, those true, life-long friends mourned for him as for a brother lost—or rather, *absent*. If a cup of cold water given to a disciple meets with a reward, the refreshing soul-draughts, offered daily by the hand of friendship, will be returned in full measure.’

We are now approaching the period in which the life and efforts of Mr. DWIGHT become of interest, in relation to the cause, to the advancement of which he devoted the vigor and maturity of his years. But it is important to dwell somewhat longer on the providential preparations for the eminent services he rendered. On the 20th of May, 1824, he married LOUISA H. WILLIS,* daughter of the gentleman who has been mentioned, as the Editor and Proprietor of the ‘Boston Recorder.’ Mr. WILLIS had been intimately conversant with the labors of Mr. DWIGHT in the agencies of the Tract and Education Societies, which he had now sustained for several years. He had noticed in his son-in-law a peculiar aptitude and ability in collecting and arranging

* Mrs. Dwight died April 6, 1849.

statistical information, and condensing accounts of facts—invaluable to the editor of such a publication as his—and, feeling the want of an assistant, engaged him in that office. ‘But the arduous duties of an editor proved too much for his already enfeebled constitution.’ After the trial of a few months, ‘his health was impaired,’ Mr. WILLIS remarks, ‘and I was obliged,’ says he, ‘very reluctantly to part with so valuable an assistant.’

‘Mr. DWIGHT had suffered, while in college,’ as we have seen, ‘a severe hemorrhage of the lungs. From this,’ writes his daughter, ‘he had never entirely recovered; and the confinement of the desk brought on another attack of bleeding. In July, 1824, he speaks of a severe pain in the chest, which was the premonition of the disease that, soon after, compelled him to relinquish his editorial duties, and threatened suddenly to terminate the life, which had opened with so bright a prospect of usefulness. His physicians and friends seem to have regarded his recovery as doubtful, or even improbable; but that indomitable energy, which characterized him through life, did not permit him to concur in this decision, or to give up his hold upon life without taking the most efficient means for his restoration.

‘He had always considered horse-back exercise as the sovereign remedy in diseases of the lungs. He therefore procured an excellent saddle-horse, and, taking leave of his young wife and friends, all of whom looked sadly upon him as “a doomed man,” he started upon the faithful animal on a journey towards Stockbridge, about one hundred and fifty miles distant from Boston, where he believed his native air, and the attentions of a devoted mother,* would restore him, if any thing on earth could do so.

‘The letters written to his wife upon this journey are full of the deepest gratitude to God, and express an entire dependence upon the mercy of his Heavenly Father. Though his earthly hopes had so suddenly and sadly become clouded, he calls upon his friends to bless the LORD for His tender mercies towards him; and asks, in his first letter to his wife: “What shall be the effect of this chastisement upon our religious character, if we are Christians?” And in another, written to her soon after this sudden separation, when it seemed doubtful whether death would not

* Who lived until about the year 1840.

soon finally separate them, he observes: "I wish you to be grateful for the sweet peace which has been bestowed upon me during my illness and separation from the objects of my strongest earthly attachment;" and adds, that he "should have been *anxious*, if he could not have commended *all* to a wise and merciful Providence."

‘He writes from Stockbridge, August 2, 1824, that he is astonishingly improved; and, after a month, spent among the beautiful hills of his beloved Berkshire, he returned to Boston, with strength recruited, and new hopes of life and usefulness.

‘This return was, however, only for a short time. Mr. DWIGHT was sensible, that to recur to a sedentary life would, after his recent experience, be suicidal. The God of providence, to whom he committed his ways, had other plans for His servant. The experiment of horse-back exercise had been so successful, he was encouraged to think that a longer journey, in which he could combine usefulness with considerations of health, would accomplish his complete restoration.

‘Accordingly, October 28, 1824, he once more bade farewell to his friends in Boston, and commenced, in the same manner as before, a journey of many months, during which he intended to visit some of the Southern States, and carry Bibles to those who were without them in PRISONS.

‘Though it was only with great care, and by avoiding over-exertion, that he could hope to recover his health, he wrote from New Haven that, directly after his arrival there, he visited the prison, and spent an hour in conversation and prayer with a poor woman, who was under sentence of death.

‘Before carrying out his plans in reference to visiting prisons in the Southern States, Mr. Dwight desired to obtain the sanction and coöperation of the American Bible Society, and to procure, through their means, a large number of Bibles for distribution among the prisoners. Dr. WOODS and Dr. PORTER, his esteemed friends and instructors in Andover, furnished him with letters, earnestly recommending him and his cause to the Managers of this Society. There was a meeting of the Managers in New York, November 4, 1824, at which a large number of the most respectable citizens were present, and at which Mr. DWIGHT’S proposed visit to prisons was discussed. Powerful speeches were

made in favor of the plan ; and, in conclusion, one of the leading Managers, Mr. THEODORE DWIGHT, said, " It will soon be put to us, as Managers of this Society, by the Saviour of the world, whether when sick and in prison ye visited Me ? " The question was finally taken, and the resolution unanimously passed, expressing the most cordial approbation of the plan, and authorizing Mr. DWIGHT to obtain " any quantity of Bibles, which he should find necessary, from the depository of the National Society. " Thus, at the very commencement of his work, before the grand object of his life had become fully developed, he received the encouragement of sympathy and coöperation from some of the noblest and best of men.

‘ With such delightful proof of the confidence of men whom he most highly esteemed, and strong hope of the complete restoration of his health, he writes to his friends at home : “ In this employment I find, at every step, the approbation of my conscience, and an increasing conviction that it is *the work* which my LORD would have me perform ; and I already begin to see in what manner I may be able to promote, with the blessing of God, the lasting good of thousands. ”

‘ This,’ his daughter remarks, ‘ was at the very commencement of his labors in behalf of prisons ; but how completely his *heart* was already engrossed in his work, as well as his *time*, the following extract of a letter written from New York will show. “ 1824. I accept of no invitation to dine or take tea. I make no visits of ceremony or pleasure. I see few persons, except on my own appropriate business. All this is almost literally true. I cannot accomplish much without adhering to this general rule. In my business I am happy and successful. ” This withdrawal from the usual pleasures of social intercourse was not owing to any dislike of his toward society, for few men loved better to meet their friends ; but he felt that the *consecration to his work* must be *entire*, and that nothing, which took time and attention from that, could be indulged.

‘ In the condition of the prisons which he visited in New York, especially in that called Bridewell, Mr. DWIGHT found motives for effort greater than he had imagined could exist. He writes to his friend, after describing the terrible condition of the prisoners : “ I have been thus minute, that you may feel that my labor is not

in vain, if I apply myself with diligence to alleviate the suffering which I witness. I hope I shall have health and strength to make a fair report, as well as to do good in this way; and if to do good is the principal object of life, my wife will be willing that I shall persevere in my employment, though it carries me farther and farther from her."

'In visiting the several prisons, both of States and Counties, which could be found upon his journey, one great object was to distribute Bibles; but Mr. DWIGHT soon found that many abuses, and the terrible neglect of prisoners must be reformed, before the light of holy truth could penetrate into their minds and hearts. He made arrangements to have the convicts supplied with Bibles, either by the State, or from the American Bible Society; and, though immediate relief to their bodily sufferings was impossible, the purpose was maturing deep in his own soul to devote his life and strength to their cause. In answer to a friend, who writes to know where he "spent Thanksgiving-day," that anniversary so honored and beloved by all New Englanders,' and, happily, becoming dear to the inhabitants of many States of our Union beyond the bounds of New-England, 'he replies: "I was occupied, several hours of it, in the Walnut-street prison (where are confined more than five hundred prisoners), preparing Bibles for distribution." Truly,' adds his daughter, 'his meat and his drink was to do the will of his Father. To the same friend he writes: "I am grateful that you could write as you did concerning your willingness to give me up to the cause of the suffering and miserably guilty portion of our race; for whom there cannot be much compassion, and for whom there has been so much less exertion in this country than in Europe. I trust it will not be in vain that you thus cheerfully surrender your best friend to these neglected and degraded ones."

'During this journey, Mr. DWIGHT did not limit his efforts in behalf of prisoners, to the distribution of Bibles. Though his lungs were feeble, and exertion, at that time, was considered injurious to him, he writes of having preached two Sabbaths to the prisoners in the Baltimore Penitentiary, and of experiencing no ill effects from the effort. In the different prisons he visited, wherever he found a good opportunity, he was most happy to avail himself of it, in addressing the prisoners, and preaching to them

the glorious Gospel. After visiting the Baltimore jail, he writes : " Jan. 20, 1825. You will probably know, at some future day, if my health is spared, what I this day witnessed. There is but one sufficient excuse for Christians, in suffering such evils to exist in prisons, in this country, as do exist ; and that is, that they are not acquainted with the real state of things. In one or two years, I hope it will be more apparent than it is now, that I am not spending my strength for nought."

From Washington he writes, Jan. 28, 1825 : " In one small room, I have seen, since I wrote you last, three women and four children. Two of these, white women, were wrapped in blankets, like Indian women, apparently with no other clothing. When I looked into the room, they sat down upon the floor to hide themselves. The children were three brothers and their little sister, the oldest twelve, and the youngest four years old ; committed to prison, without a parent, to keep them from the hands of a *trader in human flesh*. They were children of a white man, and a black woman, his slave. Their father is dead, and gave *his own offspring* their freedom, in his last will. But his executor, to save his REAL estate, would sell *his children* to pay his debts. The Marshal of the District of Columbia, to save his children from *bondage*, committed them to *prison*. Here I saw them. The little girl was sick, and lying in faintness on the floor. The other children were standing around her. For that sick child there was no bed in the narrow and dark cell. Nothing was spread over her, and she had on but a single garment. The garments of the women and children are never washed while they remain in prison, and they are furnished with no water, except what is furnished in their cups. I have written too much already ; but there are other circumstances, in relation to their misery in this room, which I cannot even mention. If there are not lessons of contentment and gratitude for *us* in this story, I have learned no such lessons. Do you ask what *I* did for these children ? I could do nothing. Places might have been found for them ; but then a *prowling wolf* would claim them as *property*, and sell them as slaves. Could nothing be done for them in prison ? I hope so ; but it is hope against hope ; for I find it exceedingly difficult to get any one to go near them. And as to my ability to relieve them, I have seen so many in similar circumstances, that I am constrained to go on

my way with an assurance, that when I shall bring before the Church of CHRIST a statement of what my eyes have seen, there will be a united and powerful effort in the United States to alleviate the miseries of prisons. This expectation is my support."

'It was such scenes as these, which he witnessed during this journey through the Southern States, that showed Mr. DWIGHT the fearful and imperative demand there was, in our Christian land, for some one to interpose in behalf of this most degraded and miserable class of human beings. When speaking to a respected friend of his plans and wishes in relation to prisoners, soon after his return from this journey, his friend seemed to think it was a "Quixotic attempt" in *him*, to endeavor to raise such an immense mass of sin and wretchedness as he had described; and said to him, "What do you expect to do for them? And how do you intend to relieve them?" His answer was: "I can not tell *now* in what way I shall be able to do this; I only know that they are the most miserable and degraded of the human race, and that no one in this country is doing any thing for their relief. This is enough to make *me* wish to do what I can for them." Could we visit now the prisons which he visited in that year, 1825, and contrast their *present* condition with what it was *at that time*, the devotion of his life to the cause of the prisoner would not seem to us a "Quixotic scheme."'

But, for a further illustration of character and feelings, we must dwell somewhat longer on Mr. DWIGHT's interesting journey in the South. 'While he was in Richmond, in February, he received intelligence of the birth of a daughter, and writes to his wife: "I have this day visited the prisons in this city, and held two short services with those whose circumstances, if I could relate them to you, would make you willing that I should be as sent to preach the unsearchable riches of CHRIST to those who have seen the face of no other Minister or Christian, nor heard the voice of prayer, during *three long years* of imprisonment. When I am preaching to them, and imploring the blessings of salvation upon them, it is then, and afterwards, that I have more than usual assurance, that GOD will hear my prayers for protection and consolation to my dear wife and child."

'The temptation to return immediately to his home and friends, and to take in his arms his first-born, was very strong; but he

felt that, by doing so, he should neglect what was always to him a louder call than any other, the call of those miserable beings, whose sufferings, by witnessing and exposing, he might be able to relieve ; and he continued his journey *away* from those, *towards* whom his heart attracted him.

‘Firm in his constant faith in the support of “the everlasting arms” for his wife and child, he writes, Feb. 17, 1825 : “I am fixed in my purpose, through the mercy of Him, whose ways are all kindness, to commit you to his care, with perfect confidence and joy.” His letters, at this time, are full of the overflowings of a grateful heart towards the Author of all his mercies. He writes : “I am oppressed with my unworthiness of the favors I am continually receiving ; and I know not what to render to God for all His unmerited love. I will endeavor to show, in my love to poor prisoners, in my visits to their miserable abodes, something of the sweetness of that love which is exercised towards me.” Most gladly would he pour, from his own overflowing cup of happiness, some sparkling drops into the cup of those, who had hitherto drained nothing but bitterness and misery.

‘Though so far from his home, and his wife and child, and so often surrounded by scenes of wretchedness, calculated to depress the spirits, Mr. DWIGHT seems to have had within his own heart, or rather, springing directly from the Eternal Fountain of happiness, a constant well-spring of joy. He wrote, 1825 : “While riding alone through the woods of South Carolina, beneath the lofty pines, I could not restrain the feelings that burst from my heart, with strong crying and many tears, while I blessed God, and committed you to his kind care. It was the thought of having such a Father, always present, almighty, and infinitely good, to whom I could commend the absent wife and unseen infant. I believe I dedicated my *all* to God, feeling not that it was a *duty*, but an infinite *privilege*. Perhaps, if I should hear that the child or the mother were removed from this world, I might find that the dedication was very imperfect ; but it appeared to me to be a blessed privilege to give up *all* to God. It was not because I was anxious concerning you, and felt that God is my only hope ; it was because the character of God is perfect, so kind, so condescending, so *wonderful in love* ; because goodness and mercy have followed us from the beginning, and God remains *the same*. It

was because our little infant was born *immortal*; and if we sincerely dedicate her to God, and strive to train her up for heaven, she will be a child of God, an heir of glory. I cannot describe the thoughts and feelings of that hour. It was one which I shall long remember, and which I hope will often return. I must believe it to have been the effect of the operations of the Spirit of God. I know no higher honor, I ask no higher happiness, than to be under the influence of this glorious Being."

'The object, to which Mr. DWIGHT had devoted his time for so many months during this journey, seems constantly to have increased in his esteem; and the thought of devoting to it the energies of his body and mind, appears to have afforded him great happiness. He writes from North Carolina: "April 17, 1825. It is a gloomy morning. We are prevented from travelling by the storm, and I now retire to my bed-room, and leave an odious *trader* in *human flesh*, that I may think of the dear objects of my love, and express to them some of the many thoughts that are passing through my heart. While I see a wretch, who can find his happiness in buying men, women, and children, separating them from their kindred, and driving them, like cattle, along the roads, I am happy that I have an employment very different in its character; and, if I engage in it with prayer, and a grateful sense of the Divine Goodness in giving it to me, I can meet my family, and rest in its bosom, with other reflections than those of a slave-trader."

'After an absence from Boston of more than six months, during which time he had ridden more than one thousand miles on horseback, and visited the jails and State prisons that lay along his route, Mr. DWIGHT returned to Boston in May, 1825, with his health apparently restored, and with the satisfaction of having accomplished the other great object of his journey.

' "From seeming evil still educing good,"

the All-merciful Father had led him, through illness and separation from home and friends, to visit the most wretched and degraded ones of earth, in whose cause he labored for thirty years with untiring devotion. Immediately after his illness he had expressed the belief to his wife, that it would prove to be a blessing in disguise. That it did so prove, many, who were

through his means relieved from their miserable condition, and instructed in the glorious Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, could testify.'

It is ever pleasing to one of serious, religious views, to mark the steps by which the providence of God is exhibited, in the development of human talent and character, and the direction of human efforts. A man's way is thus often hedged up, as it were; and circumstances, as they recur, exercise a greater power, than preconcerted plans. In fact, we are compelled to admit, that 'man's goings are of the LORD,' and therefore to ask, 'How can a man then understand his own way?'* The benevolent attention of HOWARD was directed to the state of prisons and prisoners by the circumstance of his becoming, in 1773, sheriff of Bedford county, in which he lived. This personal event proved a guide and stimulus to his beneficent zeal, until, by the consecration of his life, and labors, and property to an almost single object, he was enabled to render an important service to his country, to Europe, and to the civilized world.

Our own esteemed countryman, too, the late excellent Dr. JUSTIN EDWARDS, disabled from exercising his ministry, like Mr. DWIGHT, from enfeebled health, and compelled to travel, succeeded in fixing public attention, in a memorable degree, on the sanctification of the Sabbath, and the cause of Temperance—doing, perhaps, more extensive good, throughout a large portion of the community, than he could possibly have done, by the sole labors of the pulpit, in the confined field of his own parish, for a long life.

In the life of Mr. DWIGHT, we cannot but notice a remarkable, providential preparation. To illustrate this has been, in a great degree, the object of much of the preceding narrative. Let the reader, then, contemplate the religious training of his youth, his early, conscientious readiness to assume the responsibilities of a Christian profession, the watchful care and guidance of a devoted Christian mother, of which we have so many proofs, and the happy influence of a religious community, in the country, away from the pollutions of vicious examples and enticements to irreligion and sin, and he will not wonder at the result. Nor is it to

* Prov. xx. 24.

pass unnoticed, that, among the happy influences to which we might allude, was the fact, that the mother of his lamented father was the widow of a devoted missionary,* and his own birth-place the field of that missionary's labors.

Thus it was, that the family stock, the local position, the influence of home, the instructions of the school in a clergyman's family, the power of church-fellowship, the character of collegiate acquaintances, the contemplated employment of future life, and the force of religious association with professed students of theology—all combined to train his soul for the promotion of the glory of God in the advancement of the welfare of man—since 'the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.' †

Constrained to abandon the pursuit of his favorite plan of life, we find him, nevertheless, ready for such religious occupation of his time and talents, as God, in His providence, seemed to point out. He aids in counselling and directing serious inquirers, serves the important purposes of the Society for preparing and distributing religious Tracts, then the Association formed to encourage, guide and maintain the pious youth, whose inadequate pecuniary means would otherwise prevent their seeking the sacred ministry as a profession. In these labors he was exercising a public spirit, accustoming himself to intercourse with varied characters of men, acquiring address, tact, facility of utterance and action, and gaining, under constant subjection to his Heavenly Master, which is every where apparent, a degree of self-reliance, or reliance on the righteousness of his cause, and confidence in his own principles. Who can hesitate to discern the tendency of all this?

Then, his Southern journey, how strongly does it recall the expression of ABRAHAM'S servant, 'I being in the way, the LORD led me!' ‡ From that journey he returned prepared to engage vigorously in the interesting employment of his whole subsequent life.

For the communication of the facts he had accumulated, the community in Boston had been for some time preparing. For it would be an erroneous impression, were it to be supposed that all

* The Rev. *John Sergeant*, preacher to a branch of the Mohegan tribe.

† 1 Tim. i. 5.

‡ Gen. xxiv. 27.

extra-official attention to prisons commenced with Mr. DWIGHT ; or that his labors first excited the public notice of their condition. It had been the practice, from an early period, to make the execution of a malefactor an occasion of religious instruction, and the ministers of the Gospel freely lent their aid to prepare the condemned criminal for death. Not long after the institution of the 'Society for the moral and religious instruction of the Poor,' in Boston, it was found expedient to advance beyond this, as the Annual Reports of that Society show. Indeed, in February, 1818, the General Court had appointed a most respectable Committee, consisting of Chief Justice PARKER, Judge JACKSON, and Solicitor-General DAVIS, 'to revise the criminal code of the Commonwealth.*' The condition of the prisons of that day entered into the considerations which grew out of this service. Visits of a religious nature were made to the old jail in Boston by Rev. Mr. BINGHAM, in 1819, and at length a regular religious service was, for a time, established. The writer, under whose agency the efforts of the Society just mentioned were made, had, as early as 1797, possessed himself of a copy of HOWARD on Prisons, and visited personally the old Boston jail, before that den of pollution was abandoned for the then new prison in Leverett street. With him Mr. DWIGHT communicated freely, on returning from the South ; and he well remembers the impression made on the minds of a number of gentlemen, assembled at the house of Deacon GRANT, so highly distinguished for his persevering philanthropy, when Mr. DWIGHT exhibited the skeleton-keys fabricated by the ingenious artisans in the State prison. Then was seen, and in the clearest light, how unwisely the employment of prisoners had been conducted.

The formation of a distinct Society was soon resolved on,† and its first Annual Report appeared in 1826, Mr. DWIGHT being appointed its Agent. With what vigor and success he entered on the work fully appears in this document, and his private feelings are exhibited in his correspondence.

'While visiting,' says his daughter, 'the prisons of Connecticut, in the autumn of 1825, Mr. DWIGHT wrote: "I had rather be the honored instrument of turning a single soul from the error

* See the Charge given to the Grand Jury of Suffolk, in 1822, by the Hon. Mr. Quincy, then 'Judge of the Municipal Court for the Town of Boston.'

† It was formed on the 30th of June, 1825.

of his ways, than to be the proud monarch of the universe. I had rather be an obscure and humble minister of CHRIST, than any thing else on earth. I had rather spend my life in contending against 'the world, the flesh, and the devil,' in their influence over man, than in any other way. I had rather be immersed in prisons, contending against sin, than to receive the honors of LA FAYETTE."*

'To her, from whom his devotion to the prisoner separated him many months in the year, he wrote: "Let us hope that your self-denial in giving me up, to continue my efforts in that which is bidden me to do, may result in salvation to those who would otherwise die in their sins. If, beyond this world of separation, in the presence of God, we should find those to whom the benefits of redemption are made effectual through our instrumentality, what would be all the self-denial and separation during these first years of our existence? It is not too much to hope for or expect, that, directly or indirectly, we may promote the salvation of men; and, if it should prove so, it is *worth living for*, while all the riches, and honor, and wisdom, and pleasure, which have not the glory of God for their object and end, are in vain."

'Nov. 6, 1825, he wrote from Hartford: "I returned, last evening, from Newgate. After spending nearly a week in its filth, investigating subjects more loathsome than its polluted air, I found myself at night entirely prostrate, desiring only to be at rest. This morning I was refreshed, but it has required the whole day to restore me to my wonted strength. Our minds have been so entirely engrossed, night and day, during my absence from Hartford, that I required two or three days and nights for repose. I do not know that I was ever so completely exhausted. I feel the need of your prayers that I may be supported, guided and blessed in this arduous work. I need a double portion of wisdom and grace. There are many miseries to be relieved; many dark places, which are full of cruelty, to be exposed; many minds to be made acquainted with the facts, before the most miserable portion of the human family will be relieved. I have often said, that every week was bringing to light facts of more

* Who had, at that time, it will be recollected, revisited America, and had been every where received with deserved but extraordinary honors.

importance than any week which had gone before ; and this remark is as applicable, or *more so*, to the last three weeks, than to any previous period. How great the necessity was for these investigations, I had never known. How great good is to result from them, and how much strength, and patience, and perseverance, and wisdom I *need*, no one can tell. I feel the need of wisdom and grace from ABOVE."

'Jan. 6, 1830, he wrote from Fairfield, Conn. : "I am exceedingly tired to-night, having been all night, on Sabbath night ; most of the night, last night ; all day, on each of the days, for three days past, in the cold, travelling over rough roads ; and after exploring several towns to-day, with the Commissioners for locating the Work-house, I have spent the evening in addressing a large company in the Court-house, as the Court is now sitting here ; so that I am literally exhausted. Last night, after getting into the house from a cold stage, at one o'clock, there was no fire ; and after getting into bed, and putting on a buffalo skin, I could not and did not get warm." Such,' remarks his daughter, 'were some of the sacrifices of personal comfort, that the investigation of prisons, in the winter time, when travelling was performed in stage coaches, required of him ; but they were sacrifices which he delighted in, rather than lamented, in view of the object before him. No complaints escaped his lips, or were written to the confidential friend, but only expressions of a joy that such a field was open to him. In the same letter from which the above extract is made he wrote : "It is indeed pleasant to labor in the service of CHRIST, and of the poor convict, when the result is the making of so many and such valuable Christian friends, who otherwise might be strangers to me. How different it is, in this age, to labor in the good cause of promoting the happiness of men, from what it was when our blessed Saviour was here to suffer on earth, and labored for our good, and was crucified !"

'In a Report of a Committee of the New Jersey Legislature, February, 1830, concerning the State prison, whose abuses Mr. DWIGHT had been active in exposing, there was a flattering, or rather a very favorable notice of his labors, and of himself personally. In reference to this, he wrote to his wife on the 17th of that month : "It will probably afford you some gratification to see the notice which is taken of my labors ; and yet it is very doubtful whether

more good would not have been done, if that part had been omitted. It seems out of place to notice an individual, a sinful man, at the conclusion of a subject of so much importance to the security, happiness and morals of the State. If the Legislature will build a *New Prison*, it would be more to me than a thousand such flattering declarations." These were always his sentiments in regard to public praise. It was a very "small thing" to him to be "judged" faithful "by man's judgment." Compared with the voice of an approving conscience, the applause of thousands would have made no music to his ear. Appreciating most highly the approval of those worthy associates who aided him in his work, he did not rely even upon *that* for his peace of mind; but while his heart warmed with gratitude towards those *steadfast friends*, he looked higher and *above* for his reward. While this was true, no man could have felt more deeply than he the entire sympathy and encouragement which he met with, in the city of Boston and elsewhere, from men of noble hearts and cultivated minds. Never could he speak of such without enthusiasm, and the depth of his feelings found expression in his daily petitions to God for blessings upon them and their families.'

Thus endeared to those who knew him intimately, and who confided in him implicitly, and witnessed the faithfulness of his devotion to the cause he had undertaken, it might be hoped and expected, that his course would have been approved by all. Yet, in the process of the investigations which were made, different opinions with regard to the best mode of conducting prisons arose, and this occasioned difficulty. The views of Mr. DWIGHT were always expressed with an earnest frankness;* and in his yearly Reports, drawn up, at first, by himself alone, and afterward with the aid of other members of a Committee for the purpose, of which he, as Secretary, was ever one, appear without disguise.

* So, in the recently published 'Extracts from the Diary and Correspondence of the late *Amos Lawrence*,' that munificent and lamented philanthropist, and keen judge of human character, his biographer remarks, p. 219, 'In a letter, dated June 3, [1846,] Mr. Lawrence bears testimony to the character and services of the late Louis Dwight, so long and favorably known as the *ZEALOUS* Secretary of the Massachusetts Prison Discipline Society. "I have this moment had an interview with Louis Dwight, who leaves for Europe in two days. My labors and experience with him, for nearly a quarter of a century, enable me to testify to his ability, and unceasing efforts in the cause."' See also at p. 308.

But it is not designed, in this brief Memoir, to enter into these discussions. His several Annual Reports will sufficiently exhibit them.

In the well-written and deeply interesting 'View of the character and public services of the late JOHN HOWARD, Esq., LL. D., F. R. S.,' by Dr. AIKIN, published in 1792, the author has remarked: 'As Mr. HOWARD was so eminently a *religious* character, it may be expected that somewhat more should be said of the peculiar tenets he adopted. But, besides that this was a topic which did not enter into our conversations, I confess, I do not perceive how his general plan of conduct was likely to be influenced by any *peculiarity* of that kind. The principle of *religious duty*, which is nearly the same in all systems, and differs rather in strength than in kind in different persons, is surely sufficient to account for all that he did and underwent in promoting the good of mankind, by modes which Providence seemed to place before him.*' But, in the 'Memoirs of HOWARD, compiled from his diary, his confidential letters, and other authentic documents, by JAMES BALDWIN BROWN,' the distinctive religious views which HOWARD entertained are very marked and prominent. From this account it is rendered clear, that this distinguished lover of mankind was deeply imbued with the principles of the old Puritans of England, usually denominated *the doctrines of grace*. These, which had supported martyrs at the stake, in the detestable persecutions of the sanguinary MARY, of England, and characterized the 'Leyden Pilgrims,' were imbibed by HOWARD; and they descended, from his own ancestors, as we have seen, to LOUIS DWIGHT.

BROWN'S Memoirs of HOWARD exhibit a philanthropy grounded on love to CHRIST, and exercised for His sake, and in imitation of Him, and in dependence on His grace. Strong, religious motives, therefore, entered into the efforts he made; and on his monumental tablet he, by his last Will, required that there should be inscribed, 'CHRIST is my Hope.' His compassion for the wretched he regarded but as a Christian duty, to which he was bound by the ties of gratitude for his own hope of salvation.

From the private letters that have been transcribed and inserted in this Memoir, it is abundantly evident, that Mr. DWIGHT'S labor

of thirty years and more, in the cause of prisoners, prison-discipline, penitentiaries, and hospitals for the insane, was an effort of philanthropy truly Christian. His interest in the subject originated in this principle, and by this principle that interest was sustained.

Thus we have found him declaring, in the intimacy of private friendship, that he had ‘rather be the instrument of the conversion of one soul, than to be monarch of the universe.’ No one who knew him can doubt his sincerity in this remark, for his life uniformly proved it. He was not a man to sink the Christian minister in the secular business of a Society of his fellow-citizens. To Societies of a religious stamp and tendency his energies were given, and mainly for religious purposes; and although, to adopt the most inharmonious couplet that COWPER ever wrote:

‘A business with an income at its heels
‘Furnishes always oil for its own wheels:’

yet his case was one, in which philanthropy had no personal wealth of his to tax for its necessary expenditures—what he did must be done by some common interest. HOWARD was disposed and enabled to expend thirty thousand pounds sterling,* ‘during the short period of sixteen or seventeen years, for the sole purpose of relieving the distress of the most wretched of the human race.’ † As our American philanthropist had not such treasures to expend, he made the needful effort to form an Association for the purpose; and succeeded. For this he is reproached by Mr. ADSHEAD as ‘a salaried man.’ Had no salary been attached to the service, Mr. DWIGHT could not have performed it; for he had a family to support by his own industry. But he did perform it, to the acceptance of his employers. ‡

* One hundred and fifty thousand dollars, nearly.

† See *Brown's Memoir* abridged, p. 346.

‡ Mr. *Dwight* received a moderate compensation for his services from the voluntary contributions of public spirited individuals, made for the very purpose of enabling him to devote to the great cause, in which he was engaged, his whole time and talents; which must otherwise have been first employed in procuring the means of subsistence for himself and his family. Whatever may be thought of this by Mr. A. or his associates, it is not generally deemed among us to afford any occasion for censure or reproach. On the contrary, it is regarded as a proof of the merit and public services of Mr. *Dwight*, and of a just appreciation of them by the contributors.

That degree of public sympathy, which was enjoyed by Mr. DWIGHT, during his course of effort in relation to prisons, has important bearings. It was not merely his own integrity, and zeal, and perseverance, and consistency of aim and object, that, from year to year, caused a perceptible advance in the popularity and success of the cause he had espoused, and in which his experience qualified him to be an adviser of no little influence; but, in the attraction of the public attention to the subject, its great importance was perceived and felt by public men. Legislatures were moved. Governors, and the Justices of Courts, willingly lent their aid. The fearful influx of ill-educated and abandoned foreigners excited alarm. Escapes from badly constructed or decayed prisons, the skill and cunning of burglars, pickpockets, and villains of other classes, all conspired, when placed in broad daylight before the community by the successive Reports of the Prison Discipline Society, to excite respect and esteem for the individual, who was intelligently and religiously engaged in preparing, recommending and effecting thorough reforms. Hence the erection of new and costly buildings on the plan he had judged most eligible, and of which, with the aid of a professed civil engineer, he repeatedly furnished models. Certainly it is to the honor of the community in the several States of the Union, that such judicious liberality of expenditure has so extensively prevailed. The same is also true with regard to Penitentiaries of various design, and Hospitals for the Insane.

‘Philanthropy,’ says a modern author, ‘is of two species. There is that which flows from sentimental humanity, and that which originates in Christian principle. These, as differing in their origin, differ in their essential natures, and respective results. The operations of the one are bounded by the earth; those of the other extend to heaven. There is, however, one thing common to both; if matters are to be conducted with reasonable success, they must submit to be guided by the dictates of common sense.’

And here it may be expedient to remark, that, whatever pertinacity of opinion, and devotion to religious ‘results’ may be ascribed to Mr. DWIGHT, a crowning excellence of his character was practical wisdom. Hence, a communication from his respected father-in-law expresses his high estimation of the deceased for his ability to give advice with prudence, and mentions instances within

his own observation, in which this inestimable quality of mind had been exhibited with admirable success. And should such a man be suspected of wilful misrepresentation? The suspicion could exist only in the mind of a *stranger* to him. A whole life testifies against it.

Mr. DWIGHT severely felt the imputations suggested above, cast on his motives and on his communications. And possibly the imputations themselves may have had a cis-Atlantic origin; for they are accompanied with a threat,* which it was afterwards attempted here to make good in vain.

It is doubtless this to which his daughter alludes, in the following extract from her communications: 'There was one strongly marked characteristic of Mr. DWIGHT, which enabled him to overcome the most perplexing difficulties, and to conquer opposition, when many men would have yielded in despair; which was a constant and pervading cheerfulness. This was partly constitutional with him, but, to a great degree, it was the result of a child-like religious faith, which, *literally* and *fully*, believed in the promises of GOD, as recorded in His own Word. Doubts and fears, in early life, he had suffered from intensely; but his soul had thrown off its heavy shackles, and, rejoicing, he went forth to the labor of life. Amidst the severest discouragement, away from friends and in ill health, he could still maintain this cheerfulness, and smile while those around him were sad. Had this happiness depended upon external circumstances, it would have often failed him utterly; but he bore within him that which outward events could not reach. Twice only, since the memory of his children, did this cheerfulness fail him. Once, when the most malignant

* See Mr. *Adshad's* 'Prisons and Prisoners,' printed in London, 1845, pp. 128, 129, &c. 'We have, however, reason to know,' says the author, 'that the Reverend Secretary will not be suffered to revel in the aboundings of his devices, as an able hand on the other side the Atlantic will strip the mask from the Prison Discipline *Imposture*.' At the annual meeting of the Prison Discipline Society in Boston, in the year 1847, two or three individuals undertook to carry this threat into execution; and, in pursuance of it, made the grossest and most unfounded charges against Mr. *Dwight*, in a spirit sufficiently indicated by the language of the threat itself. But these charges were completely refuted, and the attack signally defeated. It was never afterwards renewed; and Mr. *Dwight* continued to hold the same place and perform the same duties as before, retaining the entire confidence of the Society and of the Public until his death, more than seven years afterwards.

aspersions of men, who could not appreciate his character and motives, were cast upon him ; then his health failed, and with it his cheerfulness. Once also again, under the pressure of that disease which deprived him of life. During the thirty years in which he fought manfully against the evils and crimes that encountered him, his faith, that he should come off the victor, did not fail ; but *hope* was within him, the “ anchor of his soul, both sure and steadfast.” ’

The life and works of HOWARD are the foundation on which modern attention to prisons and prison discipline rests. They formed both a model and text-book for Mr. DWIGHT. And not long after the publication in England of BROWN’S Memoirs of HOWARD, he abridged and published that invaluable work. The edition, which was given, 12mo, in 1831, from the house of LINCOLN and EDMANDS, Boston, is now out of print. It is a highly suggestive book, and deserves to be perpetuated in new editions ; for the desirable work which it illustrates is far from being complete.

Mr. DWIGHT had much of HOWARD’S love of order, method, and accuracy of minute detail. Though a theologian, and habitually, when health allowed and opportunity was given, a preacher ; yet he was not the recondite scholar, nor studiously devoted to books. His life was eminently active, not sedentary. The providence of GOD, as we have seen, so ordered it. But of its usefulness, precisely in this peculiarity, what candid man can doubt ?

In 1846, as Secretary of the Prison Discipline Society, he visited Europe, to inspect several of the principal prisons, both in Great Britain and on the Continent. The results of this visit appear chiefly in his Report for the year subsequent to it. Indeed, the whole series of these Reports is, virtually, his biography for nearly thirty years. For that important portion of it, the writer refers to them, and deems it superfluous to go over the ground they cover. It was, in fact, observable, as is remarked in the very apposite and just ‘ Obituary,’ which is appended to them, that he should have been led, as if anticipating that this effort was to be the last of his public labors, to take a review of the whole course. And what a result—involving an expenditure of five millions of dollars—not on railroads, nor commercial objects, nor objects of a political

nature ; but on those to which that Christian Gentleman, JOHN HOWARD, devoted time, property, labor, and even life !

‘ On the 13th of June, 1853, as Mr. DWIGHT was returning from the Court, where he had been attending to the case of a poor drunkard, he was attacked with paralysis, which made him unable, for a few days, to pursue his customary duties. He recovered from this attack, apparently, in a few weeks, and was unwilling to abate any of his common occupations. In vain did his friends and children urge him now, at least, to *rest*, after so long labors. His only joy was still in laboring for others ; and he appeared to have recovered to such a degree, that his children ceased their opposition to his finding his happiness, as for so many years he had done, in works of benevolence. Friends could see that his step had lost its vigor, and his eye its lustre ; but to the hopeful heart of a child, the father seemed still to be the same, through the months of the following winter, and that hopeful heart whispered, “ He will still live for years, to be thy joy, and guide, and truest friend.”

‘ When the spring opened, with its blossoms and green fields, these fond hopes all withered. Still, though strength was evidently failing, the strong resolution to do what seemed to him duty, enabled him to dictate to his daughter the Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Prison Discipline Society—to which he had given the vigor of his manhood, the labor of his life. Though his voice had lost its wonted cheerfulness, and even dictation, for a long time, wearied him, he walked about the room, thus relieving the nervousness produced by keeping one position ; and, for two or three hours every morning, he was in this way able to continue his dictation. As long as any power for exertion remained in the feeble frame, it was given to promote the one great object of his heart’s devotion.

‘ But there came a time when, in still feebler tones he said, “ I am *weary*.” Those words sounded like the knell of death to the ear of one who *never* before heard them from her father’s lips. Still, the lamp of life, which had shone into so many a dark dwelling, and lighted so many a sad hearth, did not suddenly go out. There were a few gleams to be cast over unfortunate ones, before it should be finally extinguished on earth, or rather removed to shine as a star in heaven.

‘On the 29th of May, 1854, Mr. DWIGHT attended the annual meeting of the Prison Discipline Society, and took his accustomed part in reading extracts from his Report. Though his feeble tones warned those who heard him that “the golden bowl would soon be broken, and the silver cord be loosed,” they felt that it was fit that voice should give its last tones to the cause he loved.

‘On the last Sabbath in May, and the first in June, Mr. DWIGHT had consented, at the earnest entreaty of friends, to stay away from his accustomed duties at South Boston, where, for many years, he had preached the Gospel to the Insane Poor. The pain to him of absenting himself was so great, that it seemed doubtful whether the suffering of remaining away from his usual place of usefulness would not outweigh the benefit derived from rest. On the 11th of June, a bright and beautiful Sabbath morning, he begged his friends not to oppose him in his earnest wish to go to the Asylum at South Boston and preach to the inmates, as he felt better than for many days, and could not consent to stay any longer away from his post of duty. The plea was urgent ; and, accompanied by his daughter, he drove to South Boston, took his accustomed place, and preached once again, to those who had so often listened to his voice, the love, compassion and sympathy of JESUS, as shown in His temptation. Though very pale and weak, he was able to perform all the usual services ; and, at their close, many of his auditors crowded about him, thanked him earnestly for coming to preach to them, and with true affection seized the hand that had ever been stretched forth in kindness to them.

‘In returning home after these fatiguing services, Mr. DWIGHT said to his daughter, “I hope you will never again seek to dissuade me from preaching. This has done me more good than any medicines. You may aid me much in assisting me to perform my duties, but do not attempt to keep me from them ; for this is my happiness.” But though the will was strong, the power to force his weakened frame to further services was exhausted ; and that night he became very ill with a congestion of the brain, from which he never recovered.

‘The nature of his disease was such that he spoke but little, and seemed, during the greater part of the time, unconscious of what was going on around him. A few evenings before he died, he began to repeat, in a loud and very distinct voice, the LORD’S

prayer ; and then besought the blessing of God upon those poor prisoners who, in the wanderings of his mind, he thought listened to him. After a few minutes' silence, in the same loud and distinct tone he prayed for the poor children of the Institution where, in imagination, he was preaching and praying. The tones were earnest and hopeful ; and though we who listened knew, that the sick man was not heard by those for whom he prayed, we rejoiced that his last audible prayer was offered for those in whose cause he had expended all the energies of his manhood.

‘ On the evening of the 12th of July, 1854,’ his daughter, in conclusion, adds, ‘ as the shadows of night deepened, the soul of him we loved was called to its eternal Home ; and the smile upon his lips seemed to say, “ O Death, where is thy sting ? O Grave, where is thy victory ? ” ’

The author of the ‘ Obituary,’ of which mention has been made, and who is presumed to be his beloved Pastor,* remarks that Mr. DWIGHT was ‘ a man of prayer.’ This was, indeed, his striking characteristic. It is intimated, in connection with this, that he exerted himself to sustain the daily morning-meeting for prayer held in the Old South chapel. He was, indeed, one of its originators. And there is good reason to believe, that the keeping of a day of annual fasting and prayer for Colleges, which God has so observably and extensively blessed, in remarkable revivals of religion in many of these institutions in the different States of this Union, originated with him.

His father-in-law, Mr. WILLIS, also remarks : ‘ Upwards of twenty years ago, while conversing with Mr. DWIGHT about the usual manner of celebrating the Fourth of July with feasting, drinking, and burning of powder, it was suggested that there might be such a thing as a Religious Celebration of Independence, more becoming a Christian people, as for instance, a Public Address, appropriate Music, and Thanksgiving and Praise to God for our blessings as a free people. He fully embraced the idea, and was requested to deliver the first Address, which he did in Park-street Church, to the acceptance of all present, a numerous assembly ; a collection was taken for the Colonization Society ; and the practice was observed for some years afterward, until the Anti-Slavery excitement seemed to overwhelm it.’

* The Rev. A. L. Stone, Pastor of Park-street Church, Boston.

Mr. DWIGHT's philanthropy, it is presumed, will appear from this whole narrative to have been, not simply an 'amiable enthusiasm,' or mere sentimentality, or impulsive compassion, without judgment or discrimination. On the contrary, it was eminently practical and utilitarian. 'At Stockbridge he was as a father and benefactor to the orphan and friendless.' He was an excellent economical adviser, 'often, in Boston, counselling and assisting young men commencing business without experience; and was discreet, patient and persevering in his efforts to do good. In fact, he seemed habitually mindful, as every Christian should be, of that comprehensive principle of his religion, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is *sin*.' Many instances have been mentioned by Mr. WILLIS to the writer, of the kind and effective services he rendered to discharged prisoners of good behavior. One relates to an individual, who, after a time, became the Editor of a public Paper; of others it is stated, that they were gradually furnished with means of gaining an honorable maintenance by their humble industry; and there were others, for whose good behavior he became bound to the Municipal Court, and thus prevented their incarceration, which would have been ruin to their families. Many of these cases were known also to the writer.

At the same time, the great cause of Christian Missions, abroad and at home, that of Temperance, Emancipation from Slavery, Revivals of religion, wherever experienced, Sabbath schools, and, in general, all the various subjects of modern interest that engage Christian effort, shared his thoughts, desires, prayers and exertions, as opportunity and means were providentially afforded.

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of the Prison Discipline Society, held on Monday, July 17, 1854, the following Resolution was passed unanimously:

'*Voted*, That the Prison Discipline Society recognize, with a spirit of submission to Almighty God, the recent providence of His hand, which has removed by death their late Secretary, the Reverend LOUIS DWIGHT, from the sphere of his long continued and most valued labors; and that the Society desires to record their deep sense of the zeal, energy, self-denial, and unremitting toil, which have marked his career in their service from its beginning to its close; and, to that end, that this Vote be entered upon the Records of the Society, and a copy of the same be sent to his family.'

After the funeral service mentioned in the 'Obituary,' his remains were conveyed to the Cemetery of Mount Auburn, where Mr. WILLIS has, in grateful remembrance of the filial and effective devotion of his son-in-law, placed a stone upon his grave, with the following inscription :

DIED,

JULY 12, 1854,

LOUIS DWIGHT,

AGED 61.

FOUNDER, AND THIRTY YEARS SECRETARY

OF

THE PRISON DISCIPLINE SOCIETY.

A BENEFACTOR OF MAN.

A FRIEND TO THE PRISONER,

A REFORMER OF PRISONS,

A PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.