



# MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

# JAMES HEALD

OF PARRS WOOD.

BY

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## MEMOIR OF JAMES HEALD.



OF the many names of prominent Christian laymen which have lately dropped from among the living, few have left a more sensible blank than that of JAMES HEALD, of Parrs Wood. His personal excellence, his high social position, his peculiar gifts, his manifold representative character, his eminent services to his religious Communion, and the long term of those services, all conspired to mark Mr. Heald out among his brethren. It may be said, without disparagement to any who are gone, or who still live, that his death removed the foremost man in the more recent history of Methodism. And those who honoured him while he remained, and now mourn his loss, naturally desire that some memorial of his honourable and useful course should be preserved.

But Mr. Heald himself seems not to have had any such tribute in his expectation or in his

desire. He has made no provision of any kind for his biography. Either he never kept a diary, or, if he kept one, it has been carefully suppressed; for there are not three lines extant in his handwriting which have any kind of reference to himself. This is a circumstance for which it would be hard to find a parallel. And in the case of one who was so intimately connected with the secret and public history of every Methodist movement of the last forty years, who enjoyed the friendship of some of the greatest men in the Connexion, who entertained them so much, and in so unreserved a manner, in his own house, and who, in addition to this, was a member of the Legislature during some eventful sessions, it is also matter of regret. Mr. Heald's recorded judgments would have been more valuable than those of most men. He was known indeed to disapprove of autobiographies in general, and especially of those sealed up for posthumous service; but it may be fairly said that he has gone to the opposite extreme. Apart from the public loss, it is a special disadvantage to the writer of his Memoir. It has reduced him to depend almost entirely upon such family reminiscences as may be gathered up, common report, and the results of his own personal observation during the last

seven years. Let this be remembered by any who may mark the absence from these pages of incident and anecdote.

Mr. Heald's ancestry may be traced to Derbyshire. His father, James Heald,—the son also of James Heald,—came from Chinley to Manchester, where he engaged, with some others, in calico-printing. After a few years he removed with the fruits of his labours to Portwood, near Stockport, and set up a business of his own, which rapidly prospered. He subsequently purchased property at Waterside, where he was the means of introducing Methodism, being a Methodist himself, and constantly entertained the preachers of the Gospel. The tradition of him runs that he was a man of great energy, untiring industry, and so upright in his commercial dealings that he was wont to be called "honest James Heald." Reserved in temperament, and with some stern features in his character, he was also a man of deep and tender feeling. A still more pleasant tradition is preserved that, when he came to his end,—he died of heart-disease, in 1816, at the age of fifty-seven,—he called his household around him, and, literally "leaning upon the top of his staff," prayed with them and commended them all most solemnly to the blessing of God; immediately afterwards departing in

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the peace of the Gospel. His discretion was shown in early life, when he married Lucy, the only daughter of John Norris, a Methodist preacher, whose record is found thus in Atmore's *Methodist Memorial*:—

“JOHN NORRIS. He came into the vineyard as an itinerant preacher, at the Conference of 1778. He was a deeply pious man; a lover and a witness of the doctrine of Christian Perfection. He loved God with all his heart, and was wholly devoted to His service. After spending about four years in calling sinners to repentance, and preaching Jesus to a lost world, he died, as he had lived, ‘full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,’ in the year 1782, at Epworth, in Lincolnshire.”

The daughter of this excellent man was worthy of such a father. She became the mother of fifteen children, eight of whom reached mature age. Six of these were daughters, to whom reference will be made hereafter. The eldest son, the late Mr. George Heald, was the father of a numerous family, in the line of which the family name and possessions are transmitted. It may be added that the name of the good old Methodist preacher is perpetuated in that of Mr. William Norris

Heald ; nor is this the only instance of its preservation in the family.

James Heald was the second son of this union, and was born at Portwood, March 1st, 1796. It may be supposed that the influence of such parents, especially of such a mother, would early prepare the way for the Spirit's saving grace. It was certainly so in his case: the Holy Ghost was with him from his earliest years. Sent to Rochdale for education, he did not leave behind his good impressions, nor, as too often happens, lose them at school: they were rather deepened than otherwise; and his youthful heart was filled with filial confidence towards God. But he had, like most others, to pass through a sharp crisis when boyhood ripened into youth and approached adult life. He did not glide insensibly into a confirmed religious character. The struggle took place when he was engaged in his father's works at Waterside: greatly aided by the prayer and counsel of a godly uncle, named Crompton, he was enabled to apprehend the love of God toward man which appeared in Christ and the blessed method of that love, to make the universal atonement his own by faith, and in the enjoyment of Christian liberty to consecrate his heart to the service of his Saviour.



The whole of his subsequent life showed that this conversion was once for all; he never needed another great change; but, having entered into a living fellowship with Christ, abode in Him to the end. Thus it may be said at the outset that Mr. Heald's religious course was complete in its outline according to the standard of the Word of God. He was dedicated to God in baptism by Christian parents, received and rightly used the beginnings of Divine grace, took upon himself the vows of religion as soon as he understood them, assumed his direct and personal relation to Christ, the "Head of man," entered into the full privilege of the filial life of regeneration, and grew up into Him through all manifold varieties of a probation which extended over the threescore years and ten, and left him "perfect in Christ Jesus," to be "found in Him" at the final ingathering of the children of God.

Meanwhile, all things smiled on his prospects as a man of business. His education had been perfect as a preparation for commerce. He has been heard to say that nothing in arithmetic or calculation ever had any difficulty for him; and that such studies as had a practical bearing on commercial economics had for him a special charm. His father's energy had laid such a

foundation as any young man of his discretion and ability might have built upon with sure results. But his heart was not altogether in this manner of life. Trafficking in markets or on the exchange, and the supervision of multitudes of servants or work-people never wholly suited his disposition. His taste was for another ancient and dignified kind of business, banking and financial operations; and his remarkable skill, amounting almost to genius, in this line, turned long afterwards to the advantage of very many. He left his father's occupation: induced partly by indifference to it; partly by the influence of a severe affliction which befell him just at this time; and, more perhaps than he was then aware, by a secret, growing, and unconquerable desire to be more directly engaged in the service of the Gospel. Be that as it may, in 1817, about a year after his father's death, he definitively wound up the business at Water-side, and finally gave up all direct connection with manufacturing and commerce.

This done, he removed to Manchester, and commenced a course of study under the guidance of the late Rev. Dr. Burton, with whom he had some family connection, intending, it would seem, to enter the ministry of the Established Church. What led his thoughts in that

direction does not appear: that he had then, and retained through life, a warm admiration for much in the constitution, doctrine, worship, and formularies of the English Church, and that he had his full share of the hereditary kindness and even reverence for that Church which early Methodism transmitted to her children, needs no proof for those who knew Mr. Heald well. But he was a thorough Methodist, and it is probable that, as in the case of one of his early friends, the late Mr. John Fernley, the movement towards the orders of the Establishment was rather passive than active, the half-formed resolution of a youth which never carried with it the consent of the inner man. One cannot help speculating what kind of clergyman he would have made, with his high and unbending principle, his tender evangelical grace, and rare sagacity of judgment: what kind of country parson, what kind of dignitary! Nor can one help thinking what kind of Methodist preacher, with those qualifications, he would have been! But all such imaginings are to no purpose now.

There were those watching young James Heald who, perhaps, knew him better than he knew himself, and discerned the elements of rare usefulness to his own community that lay

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in him, waiting for circumstances to call forth. Just at this time he had a long and earnest conversation with the already venerable Rev. James Wood: a conversation to which Mr. Heald touchingly referred when on his deathbed as having riveted his attachment to Methodism, and greatly strengthened his Christian devotion generally. "From that time to the present," he said, "I have firmly held by three principles. I have laid them before scores of people, to whom they have been a means of grace. These are the foundations of my attachment to the Methodist Society." I wish I could give my readers either the sound words or the substance of these "three principles" or "things to consider," as the dying man called them. He had not strength, however, to put them into form, and they are now not to be recovered. Probably they expressed in terse and pithy words such principles as these: That a young man, entering on life, under whatever conditions, circumstances, and advantages, should make it a supreme law to renounce self in entire consecration of all to God; that, in the case of such a young man brought to the knowledge of salvation in a Christian community, that community has the first claim on his devotion and service; and, lastly, that the Methodist Society in par-

ticular affords every such young man as James Heald, indeed every young man, and generally all persons, the utmost possible advantages for the promotion of Christian knowledge, the attainment of Christian blessing, and the discharge of Christian duty. If those hints are rightly conjectured, they are things which many a young man in our days would do well to consider. Another circumstance also tended to determine his course. The Rev. Richard Reece, then Superintendent of the Oldham-street Circuit, was privy to the agitation of his young friend's mind, and divined what was the secret of his hesitation about preaching. After using other means, as we may suppose, ineffectually, he adopted a characteristic expedient of his own. He announced one evening from the pulpit that on the next morning, at five o'clock, "Brother James Heald would preach in the morning chapel." The young brother heard this with no small amazement. We cannot say what his thoughts were through that night,—we know that it was a sleepless one,—but the pious congregation which used in those days to go to the early service found that the extemporised appointment was kept, and probably much to their spiritual advantage.

From that time Mr. Heald was a local

preacher; his name was at once put on the plan, where it continued to appear down to the last, though in his later years a certain infirmity in his throat allowed him to preach but seldom. There are many still living who remember his early ministry of the Word; and they agree in their testimony that it was earnest, impressive, graceful, rather popular, deeply theological, and entirely evangelical. Both as a maker and as a preacher of sermons he held a higher place than many of the present generation might expect to hear assigned to him. He read good divinity; and was a thoughtful though silent, enthusiastic though undemonstrative, admirer of those masters in the pulpit whom it was his privilege to hear in the Stockport and Manchester chapels. Their influence upon his style, if not upon his delivery, was very marked. I have sometimes been present, in these last years, when the subject has been mentioned to him, and fair opportunity given for the revival of his own reminiscences. But his never-failing reserve when the subject was himself, allowed but little to transpire. Of those great preachers themselves he would talk with effusion; and of his profound appreciation of their power; but never of their influence for good on his own exercises. Others who are lingering behind him, however,

are not so silent, and they give a glowing account of Mr. Heald as a preacher. As to his faculty for the construction of a sermon, and his method of pouring into it the manifold treasures of the Gospel, there is still better evidence. I have lying before me some fifteen or twenty manuscripts, some of them nearly fifty years old, containing the outlines, seemingly, of the first sermons he made. They are very carefully written, though only as first drafts, and some of them on miscellaneous scraps of paper. There are three editions of one of them, evidently a favourite with the preacher, probably with the people, and it shall be laid before the reader :

“ ‘ *The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth* ’ (3 John 1, 2).

“ Though several are mentioned of this name, it is doubtful whether any of them can be identified with the person mentioned in the text. He seems, however, to have been held in high esteem by the Apostle, and the Church generally, on account of his decided and distinguished personal piety, and the unbounded hospitality which he showed to the itinerant preachers of Christ’s Gospel : this latter grace, the grace of hospi-

tality, being everywhere commended. He gives us an opportunity first to illustrate the state described as the prosperity of the soul; then to show the character of the Apostle's good wish; and to make some remarks suggested by it.

“ I. *What are we to understand by a soul prospering, or a state of spiritual prosperity?* ”

“ If we mistake not, the Apostle furnishes us with a sufficient illustration of his meaning by some corresponding expressions which we find in the connection of these words. And, since we are never so safe in the interpretation of Scripture as when we follow the hints which the Spirit Himself supplies, we shall look in our discussion to the connection of the text, and avail ourselves of the clue it holds out for our guidance. For, let it here be remarked, and never be forgotten, that awfully mistaken indeed is that man who introduces his own sentiments or views of interpretation, and wilfully overlooks or rejects the sacred key which God always provides for unlocking the mysteries of His kingdom. What then is implied in this phrase? ”

“ 1. It implies, first, a state of spiritual health as opposed to sickness, which is here really that of life as opposed to death. Hence it is (1) a spiritual relish for Divine things: ‘Blessed are



they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.' (2) It is a state of religious and vigorous activity in every good word and work. (3) And it is also the spiritual beauty of perfect life. But this is superinduced by:—

“2. The reception of the truth in the heart: ‘Of the truth that is in thee.’ He walked ‘in the truth:’ what this is, St. John informs us in the Second Epistle; it is walking ‘as we have received commandment from the Father;’ as also in other verses of the same Epistle. It is also, as described in the context, the doing ‘faithfully’ or truly ‘whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers.’ We must remember all that ‘truth’ means here.

“3. This cannot be received but by the Spirit of health, of power, and of a sound mind. And,

“4. It produces a character that is here called ‘beloved;’ and we must remember what is the peculiar meaning of this term when applied to men in the Scriptures.

“II. *The Apostle's good wish or prayer furnishes us with some good practical lessons.*

“1. The wish (1) sprang from a deep desire for the higher welfare of Gaius: not only his bodily and spiritual health, but his spiritual prosperity. The nature of his desire is suf-

ficiently plain. (2) Mark its benevolence and ardour: 'I wish above all things;' and what this literally meant.

" 2. It teaches us (1) that there is no evil in praying for temporal blessings when we pray for them in submission to the will of God and our own salvation. If otherwise, they become, not a blessing, but a curse. (2) The enjoyment or deprivation of the blessings of Providence is no certain indication of our spiritual state before God. We may roll in wealth and luxury, or we may be poor; and, in either case, have no religion and *vice versâ*. (3) We are taught above all things to seek for and live in the enjoyment of spiritual health and prosperity, and with ever-increasing concern labour that all we have may be consecrated to the service and glory and praise of God. (4) What a blessed and 'beloved' sight it is to behold a man influenced by a conviction of the truth of these things, and so entirely living in the will of God as to feel that he can cheerfully leave his health, or the want of it, to God's good pleasure, only desirous that His will be done! (5) 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.' The rule we must receive, and carry away with us is this: to measure everything by this standard, '*As thy soul prospereth!*' "

This sketch needs no apology. It will be read with interest by all; and perhaps with profit by some young preachers, who would do well to lay to heart the pithy lesson in the introduction, and to mark the preacher's care and skill in applying his own principle. This specimen is by no means the best that might have been chosen. There are more than a dozen very much more elaborate and theological; but any one of them would have exceeded the space that could be afforded, and moreover they are all so disfigured by interlineations, erasures, amendments of construction, and the innumerable artifices by which a cunning workman in this craft strives to make his work more perfect, that they would scarcely admit of transcription. The handwriting of the above shows that the sermon was one of those that went through life—at any rate through his preaching life—with Mr. Heald. The editions are in very different styles of writing; and there are tokens that his ideas of analysis and symmetry in the proportions of a sermon underwent considerable improvement. For instance, the subdivisions of the first head passed through several permutations before they took their present form. The preacher was evidently embarrassed by the "beloved;" he saw that he had a good point in making this character of

inspiring love part of true religious health and prosperity, but at the same time felt that St. John did not precisely in that meaning use the term. Hence the idea was reduced to a very subordinate place, where perhaps it should have remained ; then it was elevated again ; and, after some vacillations, finally left where it is. Any brother who may adopt this sketch, and let the James Heald of forty years since preach by proxy, must make a careful note of this point.

Another admirable sermon, on the text, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," would amply repay copying, were it not rather fragmentary, and in fact unfinished. Two propositions are laid down : that the will of God is the salvation of all men, and that God has connected the salvation of all men with "the knowledge of the truth." The former gives the preacher an opportunity of bringing out the pith of his sound Methodist theology. The purpose of God to save the world at large is (1) exhibited in connection with the mediation of Christ, viewed in the universal relation of His Person, the Love that sent Him, and the declared design of His sacrificial Atonement ; (2) it is illustrated by the character of the Providential government of God, as the universal Benefactor, founded on

that mediation ; (3) it is regarded as proved by the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to "convince the world," and whose influence is "given" in measure "to every man to profit withal;" (4) it is "shown" in the positive and negative expressions of the Divine will concerning the salvation of all kinds of sinners, and the means of grace as the appointed channels of that will ; and, lastly, it is proved by the testimonies of those who, like St. Paul, have been themselves saved, and whose unfailing instinct to desire the salvation of all others is itself a demonstration of the merciful will of God ; for, the preacher triumphantly concludes, "Shall God be behind His creatures in this love?" The sermon seems to have been exhausted with this copious and good outline, some parts of which are filled in with such an exhibition of the relation between sin and the Atonement as reflects much honour on Mr. Heald's theological accuracy.\*

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\* This sermon, like several others, was written on backs of letters and loose pieces of paper, obviously with the design of more finished subsequent treatment. On the reverse side of one of the sheets I find the following characteristic note, which, as lawful spoil, I shall subjoin :—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE to acknowledge the honour of an invitation from the Committee, which you represent, to attend their Annual

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It may be supposed that such a preacher would be a very critical and discriminating hearer. This was the case. His memory was retentive of the sermons of the past. Few men would extemporise a sounder judgment of the points of affinity and of difference between the Buntings, and Watsons, and Dixons, and Lesseys, of old time. He made conversation on this subject very interesting and very instructive when it took such a turn; and it was never difficult to direct it that way. Mr. Heald was very watchful and very jealous over the rising ministry of his own community in particular. On the whole, he took a cheerful and even sanguine view of it; very rarely did he express any suspicion as to its decline; and never did

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Meeting, as fixed for the evening of Wednesday next. My engagements, though apparently frivolous, perhaps, in comparison with those of others, are yet, I assure you, many, and to myself important and pressing; in addition to which, I utterly despair of rendering the Committee, or the *Cause*, any manner of service by my attendance. If, however, you are kind enough to think otherwise, I will endeavour, on the 9th, to attend your call, trusting that the same 'charity' which has led you to 'hope all things,' will have prepared you, when brought to the test, to '*endure* all things.' My mother joins me in respects to the family; and I remain,

"My dear Sir, though in much haste,

"Very faithfully yours,

"WILLIAM MACLARDIE BUNTING.

"*Manchester, 5th November, 1825.*"

he allude to the subject in a tone of asperity or unkindness. His language would border on querulousness sometimes when he has been led to think that overmuch rhetoric was stealing into our pulpits; though, as a wise man, he knew how to distinguish between the true and the false in pulpit oratory. He was generous in his admiration of our good models, while severe on those who vainly imitated or burlesqued them. But he was still more disposed to be morbid—or, rather, unduly apprehensive—as to the encroachment of a style of hyper-intellectual preaching; though, on this point also, the wise integrity of his judgment kept him from harsh censure, and he has been heard to regret that he ever allowed himself to pre-judge such ministers as were supposed to be deeply literary or philosophical in their pursuits. The fact is, that Mr. Heald had but one desire on this subject: that the Methodist ministry should retain its high repute for plain, clear, straightforward, convincing, and converting power as one of the Holy Spirit's most approved instruments. There are some who, applying to one age a standard of judgment applicable only to another, think that they observe the signs of a declension in this respect. The subject of this Memoir was not among the number.

Mr. Heald's interest in preaching resulted very much from his own spiritual dependence on it as one of the ordinances of God for the nourishment of his soul. This may seem a trite remark; but there was something special in the relish with which he waited on the exposition and enforcement of God's truth. His countenance, not always a very eloquent tell-tale, never failed in God's house to betray what was going on. It was a joy to see his face when the Word was enlarging his views, deepening his convictions, and kindling his heart; not so when his own infirmity of hearing or any weakness in the preacher marred that effect. If it were possible to him to be caustic, it would be when he had been defrauded of that meat which he looked for in God's house in its due season. He could say a keen word about the preacher who should set before him a rich and savoury text, and nothing rich or savoury besides. But such words were rarely spoken. He was accustomed to number it among the subjects of his daily thanksgiving to God, that he had enjoyed all his life long the privilege of a profitable ministry.

Returning to Stockport, Mr. Heald almost at once took the prominent place in the Methodist Society there which he ever afterwards held.



He was immediately entrusted with the leadership of a class ; and by degrees with every office in which he could serve the spiritual and economical interests of Methodism. For a full half-century he gave it his sympathy, his prayers, his counsel, and his substance. He had much to do with the building of its beautiful places of worship. He stood by the good Cause through evil and through good report ; he reflected on it the lustre of a stainless character, while he rejoiced in receiving from it still more than he gave. A long succession of ministers found in him a cautious, judicious, and always trustworthy friend and adviser. He was a labourer among those who laboured, and a counsellor among those that took counsel. If his policy and course of action did not always commend themselves to others, or if he was sometimes in advance and sometimes in the rear of projects which others formed, in every case his integrity was approved. There was never but one opinion on this point,—that he was a most sincere, devout, and faithful servant of Methodism ; and that no motive tinged by self ever interfered with the performance of what he judged to be his duty.

Perhaps there was no office in which Mr. Heald felt so full delight as in that of a Classleader :

in some he might be more conspicuous, and in some might exercise gifts more peculiar to himself and almost unshared, but in this he found usefulness to others and the edification of his own soul united as in no other. He was eminently fitted for this service. When he undertook it first he had the unction of a warm and sympathising heart, and a sagacity not to be measured by his years. As time rolled on, the fervour did not abate, notwithstanding the crust of reserve that seemed to hide it; and of course as time rolled on the ripeness of judgment grew always more ripe. These two chief requisites for the office were combined with a more than ordinary feeling of the closeness and sacredness of the relation between a leader and his little flock. He felt as a father towards all and each of them. They were members of his own family, servants of his household, and out-door dependents, besides others less nearly connected with him. Over all he watched as one who must give account. The reports of his class-meetings, given by those who once attended them, would surprise those who only knew Mr. Heald as a public man, and marked his dignified bearing and his self-contained reserve. He was simple as a child in matters pertaining to the communion of godliness. He had a very

plain theory as to the love and joy and peace that are the first-fruits of the Spirit in the believer. Therefore he was not content with those who failed to show these evidences. Hour after hour he would spend with the doubting who feared to trust their Saviour, striving to win their confidence for Him who loved and waited for them. Sometimes the little upper room at Parrs Wood witnessed scenes that will never be forgotten. He has been known—I have it from one who well remembers—to return from such meetings with a heart so full as to be incapable of words: unable to do anything but assemble his household for prayer and praise.

After this it will be easy to believe certain other reports of his remarkable power in prayer: that is, in ministerial, official, and intercessory prayer. By more than one minister who knew him well in Stockport has this been impressed upon my mind: one, in particular, observing, that for sustained fervour, comprehensiveness, propriety of Scriptural diction, and most of the best qualities of extempore prayer, he never knew Mr. Heald's public prayers surpassed. The class at Parrs Wood was a large one, composed mostly of the humbler order of people. He was the beloved and revered leader of more than one generation; nor was it until about

three years before his death that he gave up the office, when unable to discharge its duties with effect. May the Head of the Church raise up among us many more such leaders, with the same combination of qualities! A greater or more needful blessing could hardly be asked for modern Methodism.

Parrs Wood has been mentioned by anticipation. This property Mr. Heald purchased in 1825; and left Portwood, with his mother and sisters, to enter into residence there immediately. He was then about twenty-nine years of age; and from that time forward, for nearly half a century, he was known to the public, within Methodism and outside of it, in connection with the familiar Parrs Wood. At this period began his public career as such.

But, before alluding to that, I must dwell on the tranquil and uniform course of his home-life, which was to him the life within life. He was a man greatly beloved of his family and household; nor did he ever appear to so much advantage as when in the midst of his own kindred. For nearly twenty years his venerable mother was spared; and she was always the head of the house to him. Four sisters also lived with him, between whom and himself there was a closer than usual bond. He never suf-

ferred them to feel the loss of a father, nor did he in anything separate his own interests from theirs. It may be said, on the authority of the survivors, that there was not a more united and peaceful home to be met with than Parrs Wood at that time. After a few years the circle lessened, being reduced in the happiest possible way, by the marriage of two of the sisters. One of them became Mrs. Holy; who still lives, after having known many and heavy sorrows, in which she has been abundantly supported by Divine grace, and very much through the instrumentality of the unfailing sympathy of her brother. Another of them, Dr. Wood, now of Southport, was so happy as to obtain as his wife. Two sisters had been married before Parrs Wood became the family seat. Between them also and their brother the most affectionate relations were maintained. It may be added, that both Mr. Mounsey and Mr. Parker, the husbands of these sisters, were indebted to Mr. Heald for the best services one man can render to another,—spiritual guidance and comfort in time of religious distress. A manuscript memoir of Mr. Parker remains in evidence as to the interest his brother-in-law took in his conversion, and the religious tie between them afterwards. The same may be said of Mr.

Mounsey. At the time when death approached, he sent from Leeds for Mr. Heald; and kept him near till the end, as a friend and intercessor at the Throne of Grace. When death came, the sufferer was able to rejoice as he had never rejoiced before; and his brother and friend in this hour of need felt himself richly recompensed for his sacrifice and service.

In illustration of Mr. Heald's character, as well as for its testimony to the character of the late Mr. Parker, a few extracts may be given from the memorial sketch drawn up for the funeral sermon of the latter. It must be premised that the unnamed evangelical friend is the writer, Mr. Heald himself:—

“In the neighbourhood in which Mr. Parker had recently fixed his residence, he appeared as a father among his people, interesting himself in their concerns, and supplying them with the means both of temporal and spiritual improvement. Of his concern for the latter he has left a lasting monument in the erection of an edifice in the village of Warwick, by which he has provided for the religious instruction of the rising generation, and for the publication of those truths which are ‘the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.’ Nor ought the sentiment ever to be lost sight of which Mr.

Parker both felt and expressed with reference to the Sunday-school at Warwick,—that if his intentions concerning it were fulfilled, it must be in consequence of those engaged in conducting its affairs becoming decidedly devoted to God, and labouring under the influence of religious principle to promote the everlasting salvation of the children committed to their care. In this responsible and somewhat expensive undertaking Mr. Parker was influenced neither by vain nor by ambitious motives ; but, as he himself testified in circumstances when no veil can be of any use, ‘for the glory of God and the salvation of those by whom he was surrounded.’”

It would be interesting to pursue the memoir at length, especially in those parts of it in which Mr. Heald is unconsciously depicting himself. But space will allow only of a few paragraphs that describe Mr. Parker’s religious character and Mr. Heald’s own influence in bringing it up to the standard of Christian privilege. Many will read this sketch to whom, it is far from improbable, this part of it may be the most useful of all ; such, namely, as diligently attend to the duties of religion, and walk in the fear of God, without claiming and enjoying their privilege to rejoice consciously in the Divine

favour. The illustration afforded by his two brothers-in-law tended to impress the importance of this very deeply on Mr. Heald's mind. He kept it in view in his intercourse with godly men outside of the Methodist circle, who seemed to lack nothing but the blessed knowledge of their privileges; to have everything but the knowledge of what more they might have. I distinctly remember hearing him refer to some remarkable instances in which he was able to aid the imperfect apprehensions of gentlemen with whom his Parliamentary duties brought him acquainted; but the details are too indistinct for further reference. This much is certain, that Mr. Heald's character, and the high estimation for probity and sincerity in which he was held, gave him a great advantage,—an advantage which he was careful unostentatiously and courteously to turn to account,—and there can be no doubt that his usefulness in this way was far beyond the record of it: to be known or revealed only in the great day. But to return to the promised extract:—

“It may be necessary to observe that whatever excellence Mr. Parker possessed was of the grace of God. And, although it is of that grace as conspicuously and satisfactorily displayed at the close of his life that we shall principally



speak, it appears that from an early period he feared the Lord, and sought the knowledge of his God. This fear served to preserve him from thousands of the snares into which many fall at the commencement of their career, and to protect and guide him through the vicissitudes of his future life. This measure of the grace of God which was in him led him always to entertain the deepest reverence for Divine institutions, particularly His Word, His Sabbath, and His House. The first he held in the highest veneration, never questioning its authenticity nor cavilling at its truth, but in the attitude, and with the disposition, of a disciple attentive to hear what God the Lord should say concerning him. His observance of the Sabbath was truly exemplary: both by his example and his influence he promoted the cheerful and gracious design of the institution. Of his respect and love for the House of God the most convincing proofs were given in the diligence with which he attended its ordinances, and his reverential manner and demeanour while engaged in them. . . .

“In this state of mind that affliction commenced which terminated in the bereavement which his friends and the public so much deplore. During its continuance he became increasingly

impressed with the importance of religion, and with a conviction that the experimental enjoyment of the favour of God was essential both to his safety and to his happiness. For this he prayed and strove, availing himself of the help of Christian friends by whom he was surrounded. For some time his mind seemed at a loss respecting the nature of saving faith, and of the way in which the Spirit of God witnesses the fact of our sonship upon our simply believing the record which God has given concerning His own Son, our Saviour. It was his temptation to rest in the consciousness of the sincerity with which he desired and purposed to love God, rather than to expect the fulfilment of the promises God has made to those who come directly to Christ, and simply believe on His name. When at length he was driven from this hold, he sought and waited for the salvation of God, as if this gift was to be received without any co-operation of ours in the act of believing, staggering at that which is written, 'By *grace* are ye saved through *faith*.'

"These difficulties, however, gradually disappeared as he began to understand that, 'with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,' and that, in order to this, and when we abandon every other ground of hope in seeking the sal-

vation of God, 'the word is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our heart; that is, the word of faith.' After this manner he was led on by the good Spirit of God, until, after many blessed anticipations of the joy and peace of faith, he was led one evening to resolve that he would not rest until he found the 'pearl of great price,' convinced that all along he had been deprived of its enjoyment by not venturing to commit his soul into the hands of Christ. He and his friends then engaged in prayer; and, after wrestling with God for nearly two hours, he was enabled to believe, and 'with the mouth' to make 'confession unto salvation.'

"That was a most memorable night to all present. After several of his friends, with himself, had engaged in prayer twice or thrice, and at different periods were alternately under the influence of hope and of fear, and through fatigue were ready to give up the exercise, he perceived the fact, and begged them to continue, assured that if he could believe he should see the salvation of God. The Lord saw the travail of his soul, and at length hastened to deliver. A blessed manifestation of His favourable presence was felt by all; and he that had been so long the subject of doubt and fear began to testify: 'I cannot but believe. God is my strength and

my song ; He also is become my salvation.' From this time his faith strengthened ; he was enabled to leave the issue of his affliction in His hands, whose he was and whom he served.

" Greater things were reserved for him both to see and testify. It appeared as if the Lord, determining to remove this His servant, made haste to answer in blessings upon his soul the thousands of prayers which had been offered, seemingly unanswered, on his behalf. The last Sunday of his life was a day never to be forgotten. . . As he approached the time of his dissolution his sufferings increased, and on the last day the Lord permitted him to be severely harassed by the Tempter ; but he held fast faith and patience. His last dying testimony, to hear and convey which he called his friends around him, was : ' The Lord is *very gracious*. *Bless the Lord, O my soul !*' In this state of exaltation our friend passed away."

The mother of this family, who was esteemed by it as its best ornament, though on account of her infirmities a hidden one, was spared till January 24th, 1844, when she was peacefully called home, by paralysis, in her eighty-fifth year. Her end was in keeping with the tranquil and devout tenor of her life, the record of which, were it preserved, would be that of as complete

a religious course as it is ever given to a Christian matron to run. One of her grand-daughters has thus summed up her character: "She brought up a large family in the fear of God, and in habits of strict industry. Eight of her fifteen children lived to mature age. She was remarkable for her veneration for sacred things, her love of order, punctuality, and extreme conscientiousness. In short, she was in all things a pattern to her household: an humble, retiring Christian matron. . . She passed away with perfect calmness, in the faith of Christ her Saviour. As soon as she died her son James knelt down with the other members of the family, and gave thanks to God for her holy life, godly example, and peaceful end." The truth of this testimony seems to beam forth from the silent portrait of this beautiful old lady. I cannot help recalling to mind that once, sitting near it, I heard from Mr. Heald and his sister such a description of the scene mentioned above as I shall never forget. But what impressed me most at the time, and must be mentioned now, was the evidence Mr. Heald unconsciously gave of a touching filial reverence. He seemed to be a child again when speaking of his mother. In God's good pleasure, the scene of his own departure was almost an exact reflection of hers.

Parrs Wood itself is a beautifully-situated residence, in the midst of grounds which to a quiet taste are nearly perfect, and are capable of being made to answer all the demands of a taste more ambitious. The owner took a genuine and pure delight in every corner and every aspect of them,—a delight which was always increased by seeing others share it. The house itself showed everywhere proofs of a cultivated mind: its library was carefully selected, its paintings were collected with care and at no small cost, and its general appointments were such as to give nothing but pleasure. There good men and great men were often found as guests. Circumstances were perpetually occurring which brought the leading ministers of the Connexion to Parrs Wood; and at the time now referred to Dr. Clarke, Mr. Bunting, and Mr. Watson especially were much in the habit of coming on public service or for private counsel.

It has been implied in previous pages that Mr. Heald was never married. So far as any record remains, it would seem that his mind never seriously inclined that way. There was a time, indeed, when his sisters tried pleasantly to instigate him to matrimony; but his answer was such as effectually to suppress any further effort of the kind, while it was at the same time deeply

gratifying to their sisterly affection. These sisters, Maria and Margaret, were spared to be Mr. Heald's most faithful companions, and more than friends. The elder was taken away seven years since, through much suffering but in great peace. The younger was with him to the last ; and nothing more comforts her than the remembrance of some of his parting words : " We have been more to each other than husband and wife could have been ! " She is now alone in Parrs Wood, a solitary but not uncomforted mourner. Long may she be yet spared, for devotion, and for patience, and for charity !

With Mr. Heald's occupation of Parrs Wood began his public life proper. Having no commercial or professional engagements to absorb him, he dedicated himself to general interests as the duty of his life. This he did as part of the Christian principle by which he was in all things guided. It was not that he was insensibly drawn into public affairs, nor that he yielded to the pressure from without which is always brought to bear on the man of leisure and known ability : he reckoned himself a steward in charge of his talents, means, and opportunities. Hence he soon made himself known and felt in the local affairs of the neighbourhood ; he was also for a term of years a repre-

sentative of his borough in Parliament ; and, above all, was identified for the whole course of his life with every important movement of his own denomination in the Christian Church. For a reason already stated, only a brief sketch of his active labours under these heads can be now given.

In the public institutions and charities of Stockport Mr. Heald began from his youth to take a lively Christian interest. There was not one of them with which his name was not connected, and with most in a very influential and leading capacity. The Stockport Infirmary heads the list. This excellent institution, known at first as the Dispensary with Fever Wards, numbered him among its committee-men as early as the year 1820. In 1828 he became its treasurer ; and he identified himself with its interests as the manager of its funds until his death—a term of treasurership which is not often exceeded. His energy within two years bore its fruits in the erection of the noble Infirmary which more worthily met the requirements of the district: if not the originator, he was at least the main promoter of this fine building, being with his family the largest contributor. He clung to this charity through many vicissitudes, and relieved its necessities occasionally by very



ample gifts. He lived to see it in great prosperity. In his unwearied devotion to this good cause he not only did his duty, but he stimulated many by his calm energy, and has left a good example to others enjoying such opportunities as he enjoyed. It may be added that the feeling of true charity for the afflicted of all kinds which made this Dispensary his care through life, disposed him to help every similar institution that claimed his aid. The proofs lie before me of the extent and the catholicity of his lesser benefactions. The neighbourhood in which he lived may well rejoice in the number of charitable and philanthropic organisations which it supports, to the glory of God and the good of man ; but there are very few which did not send their tribute of thankful remembrance to Mr. Heald's family after his death. It is not implied that he gave abundantly or profusely, either of his time or of his substance, to all of them and to all of them alike. There were some to which he gave a small subscription or donation : rather as a duty than as a pleasure ; or to put it in better terms, not so much because he was deeply interested, or spontaneously quick to give, or fully sympathised with the object, as because his principle hardly allowed him to refuse any plea which the general voice approved.

Mr. Heald's contributions of time and of substance have been referred to almost exclusively. But these were far from being all that he had to give to the claims of philanthropy, charity, and religion. He was a public speaker of no mean order; and in a cause that thoroughly commanded his judgment, and through his judgment his heart, his public speaking became oratory of a very effective kind. And this he gave freely in earlier years and middle life to those who sought it. Not that he ever became in this sense what is called "a public man." At the root of his nature there was a certain diffidence and reserve which forbade his being a ready and popular pleader on platforms. When pressed by the urgency of a good cause, he was not wanting; but he never "naturally cared" for this kind of usefulness, perhaps never estimated highly enough the talent for it that he possessed.

The same remarks may be applied to that kind of public usefulness which has its wide sphere in the committee-work of modern philanthropy and religion. Mr. Heald was never seen to more advantage than when he made a sacrifice of his love of retirement, and gave the benefit of his ripe judgment and imperturbable calmness to these meetings. But here a few sen-

tences may be quoted from the brief but complete and graceful sketch furnished by the Rev. J. Dury Geden for the funeral discourse:—“Mr. Heald was born to direct and rule. He was a master in the sphere of public counsel and administration. Both in and out of the Church his penetration, his forethought, his practical wisdom, his power to combine attention to detail with large views of the scope and bearing of questions, the singular clearness and vigour of his style as a speaker, and, not least, his perfect possession of the knowledge when to speak and when to be silent, gave him enormous power not only in debate but also in popular meetings and assemblies.” In times of agitation and perplexity, when the meetings of the Church were disturbed by unholy contentions, Mr. Heald’s calmness and magnanimity were often conspicuous, and sometimes most serviceable. On this point, as also in reference to his general usefulness in his own religious Society, the following words, part of a copious Resolution of the Stockport (North) Quarterly Meeting, furnish a tribute that ought to be quoted:—“He sustained for many years the office of Circuit Steward, discharging its duties with great judgment and diligence, and ever evincing the deepest interest in the affairs of the

Circuit. In the erection of chapels, in the management of trust-estates, in promoting the great Missionary cause in connection with the several branches and anniversaries of the Circuit, in maintaining peace and order in periods of wide-spread agitation, in aiding the successive Connexional celebrations which have taken place, and in other ways, his firm principles, his wide influence, his eloquence, his sagacity, and his liberality, have been invaluable."

In the multifarious occupations entailed by such a variety of local interests, Mr. Heald's life at Parrs Wood passed on with a certain active monotony. Through a long flow of years he enjoyed almost uninterrupted health; and filled up his days with engagements that had more than the ordinary amount of reference to the public good. Meetings, either in Stockport or in Manchester, constantly required his presence. The time he could secure for himself was occupied largely with correspondence; and of that correspondence a considerable part was of a kind which is peculiar to wealthy Christian men: having to do with applications of all kinds for charity. It was Mr. Heald's practice to pay attention to every such application: it is a high tribute to his character that this may be said; for, in such cases, the temptation must

be strong to evade what sometimes amounts almost to persecution by using a very summary dispatch with such appeals. It argues a confirmed habit of charity, and a strong charitable principle, and no small self-restraint, deliberately to consider the force of every appeal that is made to men in Mr. Heald's position. He did weigh more or less carefully every case; and, if his judgment approved—not otherwise, for he has been heard to say that the mere impulse or instinct of giving was a stranger to him—he sent relief. Those who were in the habit of calling at Parrs Wood, were familiar with the sight of Mr. Heald's and his sister's embarrassments when post-time demanded the closing of letters. Not many evenings passed without some generous responses to applications for aid.

Allusion has been made to Mr. Heald's remarkable skill and success in banking affairs. In the year 1839 his ability was put to a severe test. A bank, then in its infancy, in which he was largely interested, passed through a crisis in its history. Mr. Heald was called upon to assist in its reconstruction and directorate; and was to a great extent instrumental in bringing it through its difficulties. His high reputation for integrity, and the unbounded confidence

placed in him throughout the district, was a most important support to the institution under its heavy pressure. His influence attracted to it a very wealthy and influential section of the community; and its subsequent prosperity was his reward. To the time of his death,—that is, for thirty-four years,—he remained a director of this bank. Besides an official recognition of Mr. Heald's services passed at the time of his death, many private expressions of respect were communicated by individual gentlemen with whom during this long space he had been commercially connected. From one of them I make the following extract:—"Those who were in intimate and confidential communication with him necessarily saw him under a wide variety of circumstances; sometimes such as might have called forth expressions of disappointment and impatience. But he never forgot that he was a gentleman, and a Christian. His calm and dignified Christian character always stood out in bold relief; and, when others of equal integrity and honour were tempted to give expression to strong feelings, he exhibited in a marked degree those high principles on which his character was based." Testimonies might be multiplied; but they are needless. It is well known to all that during the half century

of his commercial and monetary transactions the highest and purest principles of honour governed him. He was just to the uttermost farthing. His standard was high, and his theory of right in money matters more strict than that of many; his practice was in accordance; and very few could so well sustain the ordeal of the Christian law, so far as concerns the obligations of right as between man and man.

Mr. Heald's Parliamentary life extended over five years, from 1847 to 1852. Mr. Percival Bunting, who knew him perhaps better than any now surviving, has furnished the following contribution on this part of his history:—

“For many years before Mr. Heald entered Parliament, he had been urged, from various quarters, to stand as a candidate for senatorial honours. But, with a modesty which was remarkably associated, in his case, with great strength of character, and with a certain self-confidence, the result of his clear perception and firm hold of principles, he long shrank from the responsibilities of the position. He was accustomed to succeed, and would not rashly encounter the chance of failure. Although well versed in public questions, and very decided in his opinions, and persuaded of the necessity,

notwithstanding its attendant disadvantages, of government by party, he hesitated to pledge himself, even generally, to the support of any possible leader or administration; and, above all, his one aim being to serve the interests of religion, he wished to be elected, if at all, on that specific ground, and with the clearest understanding between himself and any constituency before which he might present himself, that this was his aim, and that it was exclusive.

“All difficulties seemed removed when a large section of the electors of his native borough of Stockport invited him to stand for it. There was every probability of success; his opinions were well known and had been often tested, while his general independence of thought and action were commonly recognised and respected; and there could be no possible mistake, in his own neighbourhood, as to what were his motives, and what would be the paramount effort of his more public life.

“So he encountered what to him, and to all truly Christian men, must be the pangs of a contested election. He saw during the struggle,—but only sternly to rebuke, and resolutely, as he best could, put them down,—much self-interest, much fierce party-spirit, much undue



influence, much 'excess of riot,' and much wasteful, if not profligate, expenditure. Both sides were tainted by these things, less or more,—his own certainly less than the other, because so many religious men, usually of opposite or doubtful politics, rallied round him, men of influence who aided his own strenuous efforts to make the election pure and free. Of course, he was systematically abused and libelled, but took no trouble to contradict falsehoods. It was the period when the hungry cry for 'Free Trade' had not yet been appeased, and Richard Cobden himself was, together with another worthy man with 'Radical' views, put up as a candidate. I never admired Mr. Heald more than I did during this, to all but himself, exciting contest. His opinions about the subject of the great party-cry, like those I suppose of most intelligent men, had been very gradually formed, but were by this time matured. He did not choose, however, to be returned on a party-cry of any kind. People must accept him on the strength of his general character, or, if they so preferred, reject him. And, accordingly, it was not until success was well-nigh sure, and shortly before the decisive day, that, in casual conversation, he gave utterance to the sentiment that 'trade ought to be as free as air,' and so

stimulated his supporters to the effort which won the fight. I hope ever to remember the evenings at Parrs Wood which followed those hard-working and tumultuous canvassing days ; the patient, godly sisters, who waited, not without eagerness, for his return, and for the tidings of the day ; the anxious friends in council ; the staid but interested servants ; the family prayers, generally led by himself with affluent but precise expression, and with all fulness, tenderness, and reverence of heart ; then the morning devotions ; and then off, for yet another day, into the fever of the fray ; *he* calm, as though in his closet, yet sagacious, provident, and active, beyond the wisest and warmest of his supporters.

“A course so commenced ran smoothly and happily along. In the House of Commons he put on no peculiarities, and aired no crotchets. He spoke but seldom, never I think, except once, on any question of purely secular politics. That exceptional speech was on the Ballot. Like John Wesley, he thought ‘everything ought to be done openly and above-board ;’ and he expressed himself with such force and clearness as, I think, made many who sat on the same benches with him regret that he did not more frequently address himself to that class of topics. But he was better occupied : it was well under-

stood that, with a strong general bias to one side and system, he was independent of all considerations but those of Christianity and of social order and happiness. The Whip respected and liked his often difficult, and sometimes recalcitrant, subject. Those of like religious sympathies and aims, on both sides the House, gathered round him, and he was so thoroughly catholic in his spirit that he easily, and as of nature, mingled with them. That Christian men should be shy of each other, because one trusts and the other doubts 'a man that shall die,'—some temporary leader of a party, forced into prominence by his own eloquence or dexterity, by chance, or by the intellectual or moral poverty of the age! So these good men 'spake often one to another,' and prayed together, and then voted against each other, one short hour afterwards, with admirable consistency, constancy, and mutual good-will. I could tell on which side of the House there were more of them, but will not. Doubtless the fact was accidental; possibly it was exceptional.

"He held his seat for one Parliament only. I have spoken of those evenings at Parrs Wood, just before his triumphant return. I remember, still more vividly, the afternoon, years afterwards, on which, two hours before the poll closed, but

when his defeat was certain, I went home in a cab with him from the scene of his disappointment, and the long evening that followed. He *was* disappointed, for he had acquired Parliamentary tastes and habits, and was quite sensible that he had run a course of honour, usefulness, and what he considered to be success. This course was now abruptly and unexpectedly ended. The occasion called him out ; and, with more of demonstrativeness than was usual with him, he went through a retrospect of his motives for going into the House of Commons ; glancing back, at some length, at his early religious history and connections. And his Ebenezer was raised in commemoration of the troubles, rather than of the more pleasant passages, of his life.

“Once more, and very shortly after he ceased to represent Stockport, he was tempted to become a candidate. It was for Oldham. He took his stand there also on distinctively Protestant ground ; giving prominence, however, to the other class of questions which most interested him,—that relating to the social welfare of the people. He was defeated, and bore his defeat as formerly. I conjecture that he has been about the only defeated candidate whose supporters instinctively felt that the best proof of their esteem for him, and of their gratitude for

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his services, would be the presentation of a curious and costly copy of the Bible. He left it an heirloom to those who should come after him."

It needs hardly to be said that as a public man Mr. Heald was faithful to the claims of his religious community. Methodism possessed in him for nearly fifty years a firm, consistent, judicious, liberal, and never-changing friend. His sagacity and soundness of judgment were very early developed; and his acquaintance with the Methodist system, in itself and its workings, in its relations to Church and State, in its influence upon England and the world, and in its general position among the evangelical forces of Christendom, was speedily matured. This was not so much the fruit of reading, though he always read the literature of the Body more than any other kind of literature, as of the thorough training he received from the leaders of Methodism with whom, publicly and privately, he was constantly in intercourse. But, in referring to Mr. Heald's life as a servant of Methodism, there is no special or minute narrative to be given; his history is bound up with the history of the Connexion during this half century. He was in all its counsels. He aided in the projection and

accomplishment of all its schemes ; and, as a conservative among conservatives, gave his utmost strength to the resistance of the violent changes which from time to time some attempted to force upon its constitution. He was in full vigour at the several crises of its peril, and was behind none in those efforts which, by God's blessing, triumphantly saved it ; and in the times of its great joys, such as the Centenary Celebration, none more heartily or more liberally rejoiced. Methodism has never been bereaved of a more loyal and true-hearted friend. His enthusiasm for it was quiet and deep in its strength, but its strength was such as defied every opposition, and sustained every test.

Two of its institutions were perhaps more prominently than others the objects of his regard : its Missions to the Heathen, and its Theological Colleges. Mr. Heald's love to the Missionary Cause generally, and to the Methodist Missionary Society in particular, was one of his first religious enthusiasms, and his zeal in this service never faltered. He knew Christianity only as a revelation of truth and grace for all mankind. He knew the Churches only as a number of visible organisations belonging to the invisible Kingdom of Christ, their ulti-

mate object being to prepare for the final manifestation of that Kingdom. Accordingly, he regarded its Missionary Society as being the crown of Methodism. To him the Home and Foreign Work were one: they were to each other as cause and effect, as means and end, in fact as complementary parts of one system, each necessary to the other's perfection, and both conspiring to one perfect whole. Hence the Missionary cause had all his convictions and all his heart. He read very much on the subject privately and kept himself familiar with current Missionary literature, and Reports, and journals and communications from abroad. He never appeared to greater advantage than on Missionary Committees or on Missionary platforms, or in the chair of Missionary meetings. He gave freely to this cause: on special occasions—such as the extinction of debt, the opening of special Missions in France, Italy, or elsewhere—he was ready with his thousands. No man ever more gallantly defended it when it was calumniated: in short no man could be found with a more genuine love to the Missionary cause, in all its counsels, operations, difficulties and successes. The Resolution of the General Committee sums up in a few words all that needs be said on this subject:—

“Mr. Heald was, from his early days, in frequent association with the friends and supporters of Methodist Missions ; and, in the first Report of the Society, dated 1818, his name is found among the subscribers. From that time onwards his support has been constantly given to it in connection both with the place of his residence and with its central organisation ; and for many years past he and his family have stood in the front rank of its benefactors. When special occasions arose to call for the united efforts of the Methodist Connexion, either to relieve the Society from embarrassment or to provide means for extending its operations, he repeatedly afforded special assistance and encouragement.

“For more than forty years Mr. Heald has served the Society as a member of the Committee of Management (with such intervals as its rules require) ; and for more than ten years as one of the General Treasurers. In both capacities his judicious advice and well-deserved personal influence were cheerfully placed at the disposal of his brethren, and were very conducive to the welfare of the Society ; but especially in times of difficulty, when his presence and conciliatory temper appeared to the greatest advantage.”



Mr. Heald also took an active part in the original formation of the Theological Institution. The number is fast lessening of those who remember the early struggles of the cause of ministerial education in Methodism. It is needless to revive the memory of the various kinds of prejudice excited against it; some based upon honest but ignorant dread of the effects of culture; some upon a jealous suspicion of the ministerial order; some upon fear lest a certain peculiarity of the old type of preaching should be effaced. Mr. Heald, as an enlightened man, felt all the importance of a thorough preparation and discipline for the work of the modern ministry, and was among the foremost to aid the movement. With the Didsbury Branch especially he was connected, to its great advantage, from the beginning. He was for some time a prudent administrator of its finances; attended the committees regularly; and took a quiet, observant interest in the prosperity of the students. He was never weary of listening to whatever details might be brought before his attention, and his sympathy and counsel were always ready. On the retirement of Dr. Hannah—between whom and Mr. Heald there had subsisted a very intimate bond for a long course of years—the family at

Parrs Wood contributed generously towards the provision of a house for his successor. Among his last acts of thoughtful liberality to the College may be mentioned his joining several other gentlemen in providing funds for the distribution of books, &c., among the most deserving students. Successive Governors and Tutors have been in the habit of relying much upon his judgment and kindness, neither of which has ever failed them.

Though these two Institutions have been singled out, it may be added that not one of the various organisations of Methodism has failed to express its obligation to Mr. Heald's help while he lived, and its acknowledgment of his charity in death.

For several years before his decease, Mr. Heald had been subject to bronchial and throat affections which occasionally confined him, especially during the winter, to his house. From his seventieth year his hold of life seemed to become more precarious, and he gave many tokens that he found it so. He could no longer lead his class; a disability to which he did not easily reconcile himself. Neither was he any longer to be depended on for public meetings and committees of any kind: this deprivation was felt by these meetings more than by him.

Of all the many committees of management which were accustomed to the benefit of his counsel, there was not one that did not find out how great the loss was. This withdrawal from public life, however, never became habitual or confirmed. Any urgent claim in his own neighbourhood, any family call, any Connexional necessity would rouse him to something like his old energy; and it was during these last years that he rendered in London some of his most valuable services as a counsellor. Still, it was evident to all that Mr. Heald was slowly and calmly failing from among men. He moved about, indeed, with the same upright carriage and dignified gait; attended to some of the more pressing demands of public business; visited Southport and other places according to medical advice; and showed that he did not willingly succumb to physical infirmity.

During these last few years the ministers around had the privilege of paying him visits which were generally pastoral in the strictest sense. He who received and they who paid these visits alike found them profitable, and valued them much. This intercourse tended constantly to deepen their respect for Mr. Heald's religious character. It was impossible to be near him without being sure that he walked

humbly with God ; that he was all that is meant by the Scriptural expression, *a devout man*. He prayed much in secret, and hence it was his habit to sanctify all social fellowship by prayer : this became as it were the natural conclusion of all intercourse with him. His conversation showed that his meditation was habitually in the Word of God, and that he occupied himself comparatively little with any reading that was not religious and edifying. Not that other books were neglected. Few things gave him greater pleasure than to read a stirring volume that was recommended or brought to him. His neighbours found out that his sympathies with general literature were much deeper and wider than might have been supposed from his habits ; and that he was always glad to read what was worth reading and to converse on any subject worth talking about. In common with others I had good opportunities of catering in this way : and I do not remember more than one volume sent back unread, and that one was Max Müller's *Science of Religions*. But, after all, the Bible was the book ; as the margin of his own copy amply shows. Not that he was indifferent to public affairs, especially as connected with Christ's Kingdom. His interest in these was intense to the last ; and for the affairs of the

Empire, and of Methodism particularly, he always had a willing ear and a most eager curiosity. Social intercourse with select friends was always a delight to him ; and there were few topics of general conversation which failed to kindle his enthusiasm ; but he found most pleasure in an hour spent on any subject that touched the spread of religion in the world. In fact Mr. Heald lived amidst the realities of the unseen state. The powers of the world to come swayed all the habits of his life.

Nor must it be supposed that this is a description of what Mr. Heald became when comparatively laid aside, and sent into providential retreat. These simple, yet rare, qualities of his religious nature had marked him through life. Few men have run a more equable or unvarying course. There were no abrupt transitions in the constitution of his piety. What decline and death found him, a long life of even devotion had made him. He had lived by rule ; and that the simple oracle of the Gospel. All his private and family and public affairs were "sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." In the administration of his substance, and the dispensation of his charities, he acted, as has been seen, by fixed rule. That rule—its measure and proportion—none knew but himself.

It may have been often by others surmised and judged : judged sometimes by a judgment not charitable. Mr. Heald fixed his principles as a servant of Christ, and was content with an untroubled heart to await his Master's approval.

Having thus insensibly glided into the character of its subject, this Memoir may fitly introduce here whatever else need be said upon it. I cannot do better than add a quotation from the sketch already referred to :—

“Mr. Heald was not an ordinary man. No one could meet him, however casually, without feeling that he must rank above his fellows. His aspect, gait, and bearing all betokened intellectual and moral superiority. He possessed a robust mind. If the processes of his intelligence were not rapid, they were healthy and vigorous. The advantages of his early education he had used to great advantage subsequently, though the area of his reading was never large. But he had an intuitive perception of the nature and relations of things. He studied the world and mankind, and knew them both. Impostures, pretences, conceits, visions, had little standing ground with him. Though not formally in business he had much to do with monetary affairs, both in Manchester and elsewhere ; and few men had a higher or more deserved reputa-

tion for the peculiar qualities of understanding and character which such affairs demand for their successful treatment. The soundness of his judgment was always remarkable. He was slow in forming an opinion ; but when the facts were fairly before him, and he had taken his own time to weigh them, he rarely erred in his conclusions. Like most men of any force, he had a strong and energetic will ; and it is not wonderful if he sometimes asserted it in a manner that was unacceptable to others. At the same time he was never violent or arbitrary ; and nothing was more admirable in him than the grace with which he would surrender even cherished plans and sentiments when convinced by argument that he was wrong."

During these last years this character was gradually moulded into its perfect form. Things temporal became less, things eternal more, in his thoughts. The reserve that had sometime been apparent passed away, and gave place to a remarkable openness and simplicity, especially in private converse. The gravity remained to the last : Mr. Heald was not often excited by anything to actual and broad mirth ; the natural expression of his joy seldom went beyond a smile. But his smiles were as much the token of "a merry heart" as the loud laughter of

others. Not that he was a stranger even to this latter. It would be injustice to his memory to leave the impression that his habit was ungenial, or that grace had suppressed the outward evidences of that geniality. Like every fine nature, his had a strong sense of humour in its composition. He knew full well when and in what way and within what limits to unbend. Among the little ones and young people he could be as sportive as they. And in his own house, where he was always a most hospitable host, he never lacked the amenities which grace that position. No table was the scene of more cheerful conversation than his; and in the anecdote and free discussion and manifold pleasantries of such social fellowship he had his full share. But now the time had come when these scenes became few. Mr. Heald's habitual sedateness was less often brightened from without. His humility became more than ever a marked feature. Always lowly in his estimate of himself, he now was most evidently clothed from head to foot with humility. His conversation was about others more than himself; and about others unvaryingly in a kind spirit. When it flowed into a channel—as was sometimes the case—which might tempt him into censoriousness and harsh judgment, it was



his practice, as many could not fail to see, to suppress his words and thoughts, and bury his temptation in silence. He considered the things of others much ; and, not able to extend abroad his active sympathy, was indefatigable in his solicitude for the infirm and the suffering of his own wide family circle. He manifested very beautifully some of the most attractive graces of the religious character. His love to God, and gratitude for His mercies, his child-like devotion to his Saviour and trust in the Gospel, constantly made his heart soft, and caused his eyes to overflow with tears. His besetting infirmity, according to his own account—which, however, those who knew him best do not confirm—was sometime impatience, or what he reckoned impatience ; but, amidst many heavy sufferings, and depressing discomfort worse to bear than acute suffering, his patience gradually had a “perfect work.”

This leads to the final seal which was set upon his character by death. After having spent a summer more than ordinarily free from disease, or the outward signs of it, Mr. Heald was smitten by paralysis on Wednesday, Oct. 1st, 1873. On the previous Sunday morning he was in his usual place at the College Chapel, Didsbury, and entered with manifest feeling

into the services of the occasion. The sermon—Mr. Geden was the preacher—was very seasonable and useful to him, and he had a gracious season, as was apparent to those who were with him throughout the day: it is very pleasant to remember how happy was his last Sabbath on earth. After dinner on Wednesday—the forenoon of which had mostly been spent in writing to friends—he felt the touch of the invisible finger; and with great self-possession, as far as that word is appropriate, prepared for the end. There was from the beginning but little hope of recovery; and after nearly a month of alternate stillness and struggle, he entered into rest on Sunday evening, October the 26th.

On Sunday morning he received, with his sister and household, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; on which occasion it was touching to see how self-abasement and religious exultation were mingled in his looks and words. His peace continued for a season undisturbed. To a friend who saw him a few days after, he said: "The light that shines upon my soul is very clear. It is not always equally bright; but it is always there." And to another, on a subsequent occasion: "You have seen many in my circumstances—come very near the margin. I hope you have seen many—I dare say you have

—whose experience has been what mine is.” Then, speaking slowly, but with much distinctness and feeling, he quoted the lines :—

“ In age and febleness extreme,  
Who shall a helpless worm redeem ?  
Jesus ! my only hope Thou art,  
Strength of my failing flesh and heart :  
O ! could I catch one smile from Thee,  
And drop into eternity ! ”

adding, with tears in his eyes, “ That is my experience.”

Dr. Wood, of Southport, his brother-in-law, came over to minister to him, and watched his case through all its phases to the close with skilful and tender care. From his account it appears that Mr. Heald was sometimes severely assaulted. I quote Mr. Geden again :—“ It will be no marvel to Christian men to learn that Mr. Heald, being what he was, and suffering from such a malady, was the subject during his mortal illness of sore spiritual conflict and temptation. On numerous occasions he gave those who watched around him to understand, with less or more distinctness, that that was his experience. The holiness of God, the obligations of Christian discipleship, and the realities of the eternal world, seemed to come upon him with the blaze of a new apocalypse, and he was overwhelmed. ‘ I cannot tell you,’ he said, more than once,

referring to his spiritual wrestlings, 'what I have gone through, God only knows how terrible the struggle has been.' But the victory was decisive and abiding. He never lost his confidence in Christ. He never doubted his acceptance with God. On the contrary, for the most part he literally 'rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'"

In the midst of this conflict with the last enemy there were intervals of perfect calmness, in which Mr. Heald exhibited the most lively interest in passing things, and gave attention to many matters that the suddenness of his attack had prevented his settling. The affairs of this life, as such, he put from him with great aversion; with them he had no more to do. But acts of kindness and benevolence were daily thought of and done that have made many others thankful. The great change, however, was passing upon him; and he constantly felt the return of the shadows of death. Many of his remaining hours were spent, not so much in unconsciousness, as in a half conscious state, which shut out everything but ejaculation and prayer, and the sighs which await deliverance.

The strain of the last part of this crisis was joyful. Sometimes he blessed and praised God in a state of ecstasy, calling on all around him

to join. These notes of exultation were heard day and night. The victory seemed to be complete. "Blessed be God!" was his constant watchword; and he desired this to be repeated to him every morning as the *motto for the day.*" Dr. Wood adds that when the last Sunday dawned, after many hours of severe agony, he asked, "Is this the Sabbath? The blessed Sabbath! God's holy day! Come this day, Lord Jesus!" He was heard, and the Saviour,—long waited for reverently, humbly, but most ardently,—came at eventide. In allusion to his prayer in the morning, it was observed just before he departed: "Your heart still says, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'" when he faintly but audibly responded in the affirmative, and soon afterwards, without a struggle, fell asleep, most assuredly "in Jesus." Mr. Heald's remains were laid in his family vault at Chapel-en-le-Frith. An appropriate discourse was delivered by the President of the Conference, the Rev. George T. Perks, M.A., on the Sunday morning after, in Tiviot Dale Chapel, Stockport, when the sketch was read to which these pages have referred. A large congregation testified to the profound respect in which his memory is held.

This memorial is only a slight tribute to the

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character of Mr. Heald. His long, active, and consistent course might perhaps have furnished materials for a narrative which would have set the history of Methodism in the framework of a private life. Instead of that, attention has been diverted to the unity of that life in its devotion to the Kingdom—or, as men call it, the Cause—of Christ. As to the nature, depths, and fruits of that devotion all must judge for themselves,—rather there is One that judgeth, with whom that matter must be left. But the unity it gave Mr. Heald's course was most evident to all who knew him. He was not set apart to the Christian ministry, and therefore had not that specially absorbing obligation on him which that service implies. But, short of that, he was bound up heart and life with the advancement of the Gospel in the world. He was a layman ; and never failed to show his solicitude that the old order of Christ's appointment for the government of His Church should be maintained. He had a well considered theory on this subject in its application to his own religious Body. But the usefulness of his life was not to be measured by his official fidelity to any one office. As to the results of this life, they were not manifested in any one special form, nor gathered up and made perpetual in any one special monument, but dif-

fused through innumerable channels. Both the character and the work are now with God. They also remain with us, as an example to encourage and stimulate all who are called with similar advantages of position and wealth and influence to serve Christ in His kingdom and their generation.

After an interval of two years a beautiful chapel is in course of erection at Didsbury by Mr. Heald's representatives. This will be the best possible monument to his memory ; and all the more appropriate as it will confer a great benefit on the college with which he was so closely connected, as well as on the population of the neighbourhood.

