

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR.

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SOME MEMORIALS OF THIS GODLY, ABLE, PROFITABLE MINISTER OF CHRIST, WILLIAM LYFORD, BEING THE WHOLE OF WHAT WAS DELIVERED CONCERNING HIM, AFTER HIS FUNERAL SERMON, BY W. H., D. D.; TOGETHER WITH TWO REMARKABLE CLAUSES TAKEN OUT OF HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

AND it was in the same state of comfort, namely, the looking for the appearance of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, which did uphold our dear deceased friend and brother, whose funeral we are now to solemnize, in the long time of his sickness; and in whatever former trials the Lord was pleased to exercise with him, he still had an eye to that blessed hope, which he did so firmly believe was laid up for him. There are material pithy expressions of his own, to this purpose, with which I think fit to acquaint you, out of two or three of the last Christian letters I received from him. In one of them he thus expresses himself: "However it shall please God to dispose of my health, I rest comfortably assured of his everlasting love to me in his Son, Christ Jesus; who loved me, and gave himself for me." In another, thus: "In the use of the means I wait, what the Lord will do with me: I know it shall be well with me at the last, having so many pledges of his everlasting love to support me." In a third, he hath these words: "My wasting continues, and my stomach also fails me, but my God fails me not: in him I have refreshings, in the consideration and experience of the great things he hath done for me here, and in the contemplation of far greater things yet prepared for me." Some few days before his dissolution, being desired to give some that visited him a little taste of his present hopes, together with the grounds of them, for their comfort and instruction, he cheerfully answered, "I will let you know how it is with me, and upon what ground I stand." Then stretching forth his hand, he spake to this effect: "Here is the grave, the wrath of God, and devouring flames, the just punishment of sin, on the one side, and here am I, a poor sinful soul, on the other; but this is my comfort: the covenant of grace, which is established upon so many sure promises, hath saved all. There is an act of oblivion passed in heaven: 'I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remem-

ber no more,' saith God. This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, among whom I am one. For I find the Spirit, which is promised, bestowed on me, in the blessed effects of it upon my soul, the pledges of God's eternal love: by it, I know my interest in Christ, who is the foundation of the covenant, and therefore my sins being laid on him, shall never be charged on me." When the time of his dissolution approached, he called for his nearest relations, his wife, and children; he commended them to God, the living God, the everlasting Father, with blessings, and prayers that they may have their part and interest in the everlasting covenant, laying a charge upon them all, that they should continue still to give themselves to reading the scriptures. When the earthly house of his tabernacle was even upon the point of being dissolved, with much ado he uttered these words: "My dissolution is more comfortable to me than my marriage-day. 'Now thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'" 1 Cor. xv. 57, 58.

Though it was the desire of our deceased brother, that I should not make any solemn narration of his demeanour here among you, yet I cannot but speak something of him, that we may glorify God in him, and for him; and to stir up myself, and you, to an imitation of those graces of God, which were so eminent in him. We are to take special notice of it, that by the strength of God's grace, he remained steadfast and unmoveable in the articles of our holy religion, in these declining times. Being asked at one time, Why he continued so resolved in his way, when many in divers things altered their opinions? His answer was this, Because he grounded himself upon the word of God, which is not altered. He was not a reed shaken with the wind, but a pillar in the house of God. He could profess with holy Job, according to his degree and measure, "But he knoweth the way that I take, when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold; my foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined, neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job xxiii. 10—12. He could profess with the Psalmist, "I have stuck unto thy testimonies, and thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart." Psal. cxix. 31, 111. With those sincere converts, "He continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers:" (Acts ii. 42,) in breaking of bread, when as we have so many half-ministers of late, who only preach the word without administering the seals, the sacraments which are annexed to it. He had a singular dexterity in catechising, in opening the grounds of our holy religion, in a perspicuous clear manner, to the capacity of the meanest. He did feed Christ's lambs, as well as his sheep. He took great delight in it, he would often say, "That if he had done any good here among you, it was by catechising." Where let me in a word commend this necessary part, though so generally neglected, of our ministerial function, to his fel-

low-labourers, who have so lovingly assisted him for so long time together; that they would effectually set themselves to it, that so they may, by God's blessing, reap the like benefit and comfort that he did. How cheerful was he in his going out, and coming in among you, in public, and in private! How was his heart lifted up in the ways of the Lord! He served the Lord with his spirit, in the gospel of his Son; he was a workman that need not be ashamed; he preached in demonstration of the Spirit, and in power; he was able to convince gainsayers. In his sermon, which he was importuned to print at Oxford, after he had preached it there, how does he woo those that are off from family exercises, to remember from whence they are fallen, and to do their first works. His words are to this effect, When you were wont to pray with your families, to repeat sermons, to instruct and catechise your children and servants, was not that your best time? and it is a great pity they did not listen to the voice of the charmer, who charmed so wisely. He went over the whole body of divinity among you. He acquainted you with the whole counsel of God. He spent himself for you. God grant your profiting may prove in some sort answerable to his endeavours. He was constant in the duty of prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; it was a branch of his daily devotions, that God would be pleased to assist him mightily in his last conflict; and he did, as he told some of his friends that were about him, reap the benefit of it. He was so far from being affrighted at the approach of death, that he lifted up his hands, and his eyes, and with a serene cheerful countenance yielded up his soul into the hands of his faithful Creator and Redeemer. He was daily mindful of you, the people of this place, of which he had the pastoral charge, in his prayers. Not long before his departure, he lifted up his heart to God, for a good successor for you, as Moses, the servant of the Lord did, when he was to be gathered to his fathers. Num. xxvii. 16, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out and in before them; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." The Lord make good that gracious promise to you, "And I will give you pastors after mine own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jer. iii. 15. Only acknowledge your iniquity, as the prophet exhorts, (verse 13,) That you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and that you have not obeyed his voice, which so oft sounded forth unto you in his ministry. Now suffer, I beseech you, one word more of exhortation, and it is that of the apostle; "And we desire, that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. vi. 11, 12. O that this may be the issue of our thoughts and meditations, as touching our deceased brother, and fellow-labourer, and your faithful minister, of our coming to the house of mourning, of our accompanying the hearse, of our solemn assembling of ourselves in this place, that we may be excited by occasion hereof, and so effectually wrought upon, that we may tread in his steps. *Non est amicorum prosequi defunctos ignavo questu, sed, quæ voluerint, meminisse, quæ*

*mandaverint, exequi.* It is not sufficient for friends, that they wail and mourn over those that are departed from them after a dull and fruitless manner, but it is by all means required that they follow the counsel and good advice they gave them, that they imitate the good example they left behind them. Let us think with ourselves, that we hear our deceased brother, and your pastor, speaking thus to us, as the apostle did to the Philippians: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." Phil. iv. 8, 9. And then we shall be in a capacity to expect the blessing there promised, and the God of peace shall be with you.

EXTRACTS FROM THE AUTHOR'S WILL.

*The first clause.*—I give and bequeath unto the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, in Oxford, for the time being, and their successors for ever, the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds, to be paid unto them by my executrix, within seven years, next after my decease; and by them, or my executrix, and overseers, to be laid out, to raise an exhibition for, and towards the maintenance of a godly poor scholar of that college, in manner and form as is here expressed, that is to say, my will is, that the scholar, to be chosen from time to time to partake of this yearly exhibition, shall be nominated, and chosen by the votes of the President, the senior Dean of Arts, and the Moderator of that form, whether logic, or philosophy, wherein the said young scholar shall be a disputant, or by any two of them. And my earnest desire, and will is, that the scholar to be nominated from time to time, to partake of this small encouragement of studiousness and piety, be such a one, and so qualified, as may give the best evidences for the present, of his sobriety, ingenuity, studiousness, and proficiency, and for the future, the best hopes of being a godly, able, and profitable minister of the gospel, in the church of Christ. It being dedicated to God, by way of thankfulness, for his mercy to me, in that college, and in way of restitution, for a sum of money, which, according to the corrupt customs of those days, I received for the resignation of my fellowship in that college.

*The second clause.*—And now I commend myself and them all, my dear wife and children, unto God's grace and mercy, giving thanks unto him from my soul, for revealing his Son Jesus Christ in me, and to me, and for justifying me, and his whole church, freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and for honouring me to be a minister of the gospel. And I do humbly beseech the God of all grace and mercy, to continue and preserve the power and purity of his gospel in this land, together with a faithful and learned ministry to dispense the same. Also, my humble prayer to the God of all grace is, that he will be pleased, out of the riches of his grace and goodness, to guide and preserve all my poor children, and all his people, into all saving truths.