

Mr. Wilks was remarkable for his disinterestedness. In no action of his life, during the half-century he presided over the congregations in Tottenham Court Road and the City Road, was he known to have his own personal interests in view. Even though he procured an increase of salary for his colleagues in office, not only would he not solicit, but he would not accept, any addition to his own. And what is more, though his salary never exceeded two hundred per annum, upwards of one hundred of it were regularly given away in charity.

His goodness of heart, no one who knew him ever questioned. A more truly kind-hearted man was not to be met with. Yet singular as it may appear, with all his kindness of disposition, he often conducted himself in the roughest and even rudest manner which it were possible to conceive. The law of kindness was, indeed, in his heart: but there was not the slightest trace of it on his lips. It was the remark of all who ever had any intercourse with him, that a kinder heart and harsher manner were never exhibited in the same person.

He was a most diligent reader of the Bible.—In a brief memoir of him, written by the late Rev. Mr. Sharp, of Crown Street Chapel, Soho, it is stated, that he read it fairly through four times every year, and that on one occasion he read it through in the almost incredibly short space of thirty days!

His texts were often of a most curious kind, and such as none but himself would have thought of choosing. When about to preach the annual sermon in Surrey Chapel in 1812, on behalf of the London Missionary Society, he gave out to the astonishment of all present, the following verse from Jeremiah—"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven, and to drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." And yet the Evangelical Magazine of that day represented the sermon as the most ingenious and most effective ever preached before the institution whose cause he advocated. In 1824, Mr. Wilks preached to a crowded audience at Bristol, a most impressive sermon, from the single word, "Afterwards."

To learn that any of his people, whether members of the church or hearers only, acted inconsistently with the christian character, was on all occasions, the source of the deepest sorrow to him. When such information reached him he often made use of it in his pulpit ministrations, but without, of course, making such pointed reference to the individual, as that the congregation could discover who the party was to whom he referred. An instance of this kind occurred, on one occasion, under circumstances which would cause a smile, were it not too affecting to think that any regular attendant on an evangelical ministry, should speak or act inconsistently with the christian character. As he was one day passing along one of the streets in the neighbourhood of St. Giles's, he saw two women, in the humbler ranks of life, carrying on a most animated war of words with each other; and so equally were they matched, that it would have been difficult for those most versed in such matters, to say which of the belligerents was the

most skillful and effective in wielding the weapon of singularly coarse abuse. Mr. Wilks interposed, and by dint of remonstrance and the threat of calling the police, eventually succeeded in inducing one of the "vituperative" parties to quit the scene of conflict. "Now, my good woman," said Mr. Wilks, to the remaining militant, "are you not ashamed of yourself in having made such a disgraceful exhibition?"

"It was the other woman who was the cause of it all," was the answer; the party wishing to shift the blame from herself to her antagonist.

"But you ought not to have followed so bad an example."

"Hooman natur, Sir, could not stand yon woman's tongue," observed the quondam warrior, still attempting to justify or at least to extenuate her conduct.

"But religion ought to have taught you better," suggested Mr. Wilks. "May I ask," he added, "what religion you are of?"

"The religion of the Tabernacle, Sir. I am a regular hearer of Mr. Matthew Wilks; and a very excellent preacher he is, Sir."

It were easier to imagine than describe what were Mr. Wilks' feelings on ascertaining that one of the parties to the unbecoming exhibition he had witnessed, was one of his stated hearers.—The woman never having seen the reverend gentleman, except in his gown and with his bands, and even then only at a distance of nearly the whole length of a large chapel, did not recognize him in his ordinary clothes. Mr. Wilks, in the excess of his grief and mortification at the discovery, alluded to the circumstance in his sermon on the following Sabbath day, and fixing his eye on that part of the chapel where the free sittings were, and where there was always a great number of women in the same rank of life as she who had described herself as his "regular hearer," he assumed that the majority, if not the whole of that portion of his audience were as bad as she, and then read them one of the most severe lectures ever delivered, on the flippancy, the coarseness, and the venom of woman's tongue when unrestrained by religion.

Mr. Wilks was fearless and straight forward in the expressions of his opinions on all subjects and on all occasions. He never hesitated to rebuke to their face his brother ministers when he thought there was any thing inconsistent in their conduct. Sometimes this caused unpleasant feelings towards him on the part of the persons so rebuked. In various instances his reproofs were resented, and his right to administer them openly questioned. But the only person, so far as my knowledge goes, that ever fairly put Mr. Wilks down, when he was acting the part of a censor of other men's conduct, was the Rev. Robert Hall. Mr. Wilks, one day, in the presence of several ministers and other religious men, addressed Mr. Hall, as follows, immediately after the latter had been indulging in those sarcasms, jokes, and ill-natured remarks at the expense of other men, to which he was so much in the habit of giving utterance:—"Mr. Hall we all admit you are a great man; some of us think you are a good man; but