

religious society in whose affairs Mr. Wilks felt the deepest interest. The reverend gentleman, who had a curious drawing way of forcing the words out of his mouth, owing to his keeping it in a great measure compressed while he spoke, remarked as he inspected the cheque—"This—is—a—very—handsome—donation—my—man.—I'll—write—and—thank—Mr. R———for—it." "Very good, Sir," said the rogue, with the politeness of the class of persons to whom he wished for the time to be understood as belonging—"Very good, Sir," and he made a lacquey's bow, and quitted the room. In the course of five minutes afterwards he returned in breathless haste, saying he had entirely forgot that his master had particularly desired him to pay an account of ten pounds to a tradesman in the neighbourhood, and that as he had not the requisite amount with him, and the residence of his master was two miles distant, he would feel particularly obliged, and so would his master, if Mr. Wilks would give him ten pounds out of the hundred for which he had got the cheque; assuring Mr. Wilks that the moment he went home, the ten pounds would be returned to him in a two-penny letter. Mr. Wilks at once handed him the ten pounds, and the fellow quitted the apartment, renewing his protestations as he reached the door, that in a few hours the money would be returned to Mr. Wilks. He had scarcely got to the street, when the idea flashed across the mind of the reverend gentleman, that he had possibly been duped. He mused for a moment, and then felt assured of the fact. Striking the palm of his hand on his knee, so as to suit the action to the word, he exclaimed in his own peculiar way, "I'm—done; I'm—done; I'm—done." The loss of his money he regarded as nothing; but he never could forgive himself for being so easily duped by a lacquey-looking rogue.

Mr. Wilks' influence over his congregations was perhaps greater than that of any other minister over his flock, that could be named. They regarded him with mingled feelings of the deepest respect and the warmest affection. He was their "dear friend," as well as "beloved pastor." No one will be surprised, therefore, especially when I add that their confidence in his judgment was unbounded, on being informed that his will was, in almost every instance, a law to them. Large as were his congregations both in the City Road and Tottenham Court Road, and unwieldy as they were in many respects, Mr. Wilks preserved the greatest union and harmony among them during the long period he was their pastor. The differences and dissensions which have taken place among them since his death, are unhappily too well known, not only to the religious portion of the metropolitan community, but to the public generally.

But it was not merely as regarded the externals of church government, that Mr. Wilks exercised a powerful influence over the minds of his people. He was eminently successful in the conversion of sinners, and in the edification of the saints of God. His influence as a preacher of the truths of the gospel, was in these respects singularly great, as hundreds who are still alive are ready to testify.

His preaching was eminently calculated to be useful: he constantly aimed at awakening the conscience and reaching the heart. His views of truth were sound and clear, and feelingly though sometimes roughly expressed. His matter was spiritual, solemn, and searching. His illustrations were often homely, but his character was so highly esteemed by all who knew him, whether as a man or as a Christian, that what would not have been tolerated in others, either occasioned not a thought, or was overlooked, when coming from him.

Mr. Wilks had a most intimate knowledge of the workings of the human heart. Few men have proved more successful in tracing its various windings, or in exposing the fallacies in which the saint as well as the sinner is in the habit of entrenching himself. With thousands it was matter of surprise, how the reverend gentleman was so successful in holding the mirror up to the minds of all classes and descriptions of his hearers. To me, the things is of easy explication. He had most carefully studied the workings of his own mind: he had most attentively watched the operations of his own heart in every variety of circumstances in which he found himself placed; and understanding the philosophy of human nature sufficiently well to know that it is essentially the same in one man as in another, except where grace has made the difference, he inferred from his own experience in his unconverted as well converted state, what passed in the heart of others.

Mr. Wilks carefully prepared himself by previous study for his pulpit ministrations. His preparation however, was chiefly confined to the matter and arrangement of his discourses. He always regarded mere style as a thing unworthy of thought in one who was called to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. Hence his diction had nothing of polish in it. He not only did not deal in rounded periods or euphoniously constructed sentences, but he never felt a desire to be considered eloquent, in the sense in which the world usually understands the term. He was, however, eloquent as regarded the impression his preaching made and the effects it produced. His diction was plain, but not slovenly. It was always clear from its very plainness. Much of his preaching was of a colloquial kind: he often spoke from the pulpit to the two thousand people who attended his ministry at each of his chapels, just as if he had been sitting in his own easy chair in his study, and conversing with a private friend. He scarcely ever delivered a sermon, in the course of which he did not say something pointy; something that would make an impression on the mind likely to be retained. He was exceedingly partial to the use of short quotations from our most popular hymns, in illustrating his positions. And at the conclusion of his discourses, instead of desiring the congregation, as is usually done in the chapels in London, to sing, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," or some other lines of a doxological character, he always gave out four, five, or six verses—now and then as many as eight—of one of the ordinary hymns, suitable to the sermon; the same as at the commencement of the services.