

Church Committees, where secular interests were quickly apprehended and settled, could form but an imperfect idea of the extreme caution with which he deliberated before taking any new step in life,—of the patient candour with which he examined his motives, and assured himself, before proceeding, that these were consistent with Christian profession.

A mature Christian looking over his voluminous early diaries would say that his danger then lay in a tendency to morbid self-scrutiny. Each day's actions passed in review at night, with the motives that prompted them. These were brought to the test of a strict rule, and examined as in the presence of the holy and omniscient Lawgiver; and often heavy censure was passed upon himself.

A corrective to this too depressing self-examination was supplied, however, by bodily activity, and by contact with his fellow-Christians in their efforts to do good.

Among the strong and guiding influences of my father's youth, his friendships must be reckoned. He was intimate with Dr. Clarke and his family; but his own chosen and chief associates were three young men—two of them some few years older than himself; Edward Thornton, whose father was related to Dr. Steinkopff, and intimate with Cecil and Venn; Joseph Henry Butterworth, the son of one whose name is well known in connection with philanthropic enterprise, and at whose house he was introduced to many great and good men; and Charles Stoke Dudley, now the only survivor of the group, waiting in extreme age for his summons to rest from a long life's labours in behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Two of those four close companions were members of the Church of England; Mr. Dudley was a Friend. In happy fellowship with them, my father's loving spirit imbibed a deep catholicity, and he learned to value essential truth and goodness wherever he found them. With Mr. Dudley he would occasionally sit for hours in the silence of the Meeting-house; and his friend, in profitable reciprocity, would accompany him to hear Mr. Benson's strong arguments and eloquent appeals to the conscience. Many an evening, too, was spent in Mr. Dudley's domestic circle, where my father's spirit owned the charm of piety, united with intelligence and good breeding.

But though thus loving, his heart clave closest to the church of his first choice, and he was soon greatly occupied in serving her institutions and in promoting her interests. As time wore on and my father became well-known and highly respected as a manufacturer and merchant, openings were presented for changing his course in life. Friends urged him to enter a path that could not fail to lead to municipal honours; and three times he was earnestly solicited to go into Parliament. Such proposals were not set aside with impulse and haste, but were gravely considered; the decision in each case being determined partly by considerations of health; but mainly by the belief that to concentrate his energies upon schemes of usefulness in connection with Christ's Church was the best way of bringing glory to God. With this view he became, in the year 1817, a Class Leader in the Methodist Society. This was at the instance of the Rev. Jabez Bunting, whose discerning eye and strong hand led him, in the following year, to the meetings of the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. From the date of their early acquaintance, my father prized Dr. Bunting's friendship as one of the chief blessing of a life crowned with goodness and with loving kindness.