

## BIOGRAPHY.

SAMUEL ANNESLEY, L. L. D.,

THE MATERNAL GRANDFATHER OF THE REVEREND JOHN WESLEY.

Dr. SAMUEL ANNESLEY was born at Kenilworth, near Warwick, in the year 1620. He was descended of a good family; for his father, and the then Earl of Anglesey, were brother's children.\* He was the only child of his parents, and had a considerable paternal estate. His father dying when he was but four years of age, his education devolved on his pious mother, who brought him up in the fear of the Lord; and as he was inclined from his earliest youth to the work of the ministry, she took care to procure him a suitable education.

His grandmother, who was a very pious woman, dying before he was born, requested that the child, if a boy, should be called Samuel; for, said she, "I can say, I have asked him of the Lord." He was piously disposed from his earliest years, and his heart set on being a preacher of the gospel; and to qualify himself for that sacred work, he began when he was only five or six years old seriously to read the bible; and so ardent was he in this study, that he bound himself to read twenty chapters every day, a practice which he continued to the end of his life. This made him a good textuary; and, consequently, an able divine. Though a child when he formed the resolution to be a Minister of the Gospel, it is said he never varied from his purpose; nor was he discouraged by a singular dream, in which "he thought he was a Minister, and was sent for by the Bishop of London to be burnt as a martyr."

When he was fifteen years of age, he went to the University of Oxford, and entered of Queen's College; where he took his degrees at the usual times; and in 1644 was ordained as Chaplain of His Majesty's ship *Globe*, under the command of the Earl of Warwick, then Lord High Admiral; who procured him his diploma of L.L.D., having had an honourable certificate of his ordination signed by Mr. Gouge, and six other respectable ministers.

He spent some time in the fleet, and kept a journal of the voyage; and is very particular as to what passed when the Earl of Warwick went to Holland in pursuit of the ships that had gone over to the Prince. But not liking a sea-faring life, he left the navy, and settled at Cliff, in Kent, in the place of a minister who had been sequestered for scandalous conduct, attending public meetings of the people for dancing, drinking, and merriment on the Lord's-day. But it was like *pastor like people*; for the inhabitants of the place were so attached to their sinful leader, that when his successor came they assailed him with spits, forks, and stones, threatening to take away his life. He told them that "Let them use him as they would, he was determined to stay with them till God should fit them by his ministry to profit by one better, who might succeed him; and solemnly declared, that when they became so prepared, he would leave the place."

In a few years his labours had surprising success, so that the people became greatly reformed. However, he kept his word, and left them; lest any seeming inconsistency of his might prove a stumbling-block to his young converts; for though he had £400 per annum there, it was no temptation to him to induce him to break the promise he had made.

A very signal providence, it is said, directed him to a settlement in London, in 1652, by the unanimous choice of the inhabitants of St. John the Apostle. Soon after, he was made Lecturer of St. Paul's; and in 1658, became Vicar of St.

\* The family of Annesley, or Annesly, as it is in *Domesday Book Anselci*, is of great antiquity; deriving its name from the wapentake of Owardsboc or Braxton, in the county of Nottingham, of which the family was possessed before the Conquest; and Richard de Anselci was proprietor of it in 1086, when the *Domesday Survey* was taken by command of the Conqueror.

The connection of the present Wesley family with the Annesleys stands thus:—John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, was son to Samuel and Susanna Wesley. Dr. Annesley was son to — Annesley, who was brother to Arthur, first Earl of Anglesey.

Giles's, Cripplegate: two of the largest congregations in the city.

On the Restoration, he was confirmed in the above vicarage by the King, who presented the living to him Aug. 23, 1660.

But this did not screen him from the oppressive operation of the Act of Uniformity, by which he was ejected from this vicarage in 1662. After this he met with many troubles for conscience sake, and many signal deliverances. God was not pleased with his persecutors; one magistrate, while signing a warrant to apprehend him, dropped down dead! Might not the hand of God have been seen in this? and yet the living laid it not to heart.

Among the Nonconformists, Dr. Annesley was particularly and deservedly eminent. He had in effect the care of all those churches; and was the chief, often the sole, instrument in the education and subsistence of several ministers, of whose useful labours the church had otherwise been deprived.

Of all gifts, salaries, and income, he always laid aside the tenths for charity, before any part was spent. By this means he had always a fund at hand for charitable uses, besides what he was furnished with by others, for the same purposes.

He was the main support of the Morning Lecture, for which so many have cause to be thankful to God. And after the death of old Mr. Case, of St. Mary Magdalene, Milk-street, who was the first that set up the Morning Exercises, Dr. Annesley took the care of this institution upon himself. This Morning Lecture, or Exercise, originated in the following way:—

Most of the citizens in London having some friend or relation in the army of the Earl of Essex, so many bills were sent up to the pulpit every Lord's-day for their preservation, that the Ministers had not time to notice them in prayer, or even to read them. It was, therefore, agreed to set apart an hour every morning at seven o'clock; half of it to be spent in prayer for the welfare of the public, as well as particular cases; and the other half to be spent in exhortations to the people. Mr. Case began it in his church in Milk-street; from which it was removed to other remote churches in rotation, a month at each church. A number of the most eminent ministers conducted this service in turn; and it was attended by great crowds of people. After the heat of the war was over, it became what was called a *Casual Lecture*, and continued till the Restoration. The sermons delivered at these lectures were collected and published in six vols. 4to.

It is worthy of remark that the Sermon on the question, "Wherein lies that exact righteousness which is required between man and man?" Matt. vii. 12. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you," &c. was preached by Mr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who then ranked with the Nonconformists! See Neal's *History of the Puritans*, vol. 1, p. 797, 4to., and *Nonconf. Memorial*, vol. 1, p. 125, &c.

In speaking of Dr. Annesley's character, Dr. Calamy says, "He was an Israelite indeed; one that might be said to be sanctified from the womb, for he was early under serious impressions; so that himself said, he knew not the time when he was unconverted."

He was a most sincere, godly, and humble man; had a large soul, flaming zeal, and was remarkably successful in his ministry.

He had great courage, as may be seen at his first settlement at Cliff, in Kent. He never feared the utmost malice of any of his enemies; and nothing that he met with ever abated his cheerfulness. He had uninterrupted peace in his soul, and assurance of God's favour for thirty years before his death; though for some time before that he had passed through severe mental exercises.

In his last illness he was full of comfort, and could say, "Blessed be God! I have been faithful in the work of the ministry, for more than fifty-five years." Some of his last words were the following. Just before his departure, he often said: "Come, my dearest Jesus! the nearer the more precious, the more welcome." Another time his joy was so great, that in an ecstasy he cried out, "I cannot contain it! What manner of love is this to a poor worm! I cannot express the thousandth part of what praise is due to Thee! It is but little I can give Thee: but, Lord, help me to give Thee my all! I will die praising Thee, and rejoice that others can praise Thee bet-

ter. I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness. Satisfied! Satisfied! O my dearest Jesus! I come!"

See the funeral sermon preached for him by Dr. Williams.

During seventeen weeks' pain, though he had before enjoyed an uninterrupted course of health, he never discovered the least degree of impatience; and quietly resigned his soul to God, Dec. 31, 1696, aged 77.

Dr. Annesley's figure was fine; his countenance dignified, highly expressive, and amiable. His constitution, naturally strong and robust, was capable of any kind of fatigue. He was seldom indisposed; and could endure the coldest weather without hat, gloves, or fire. For many years he scarcely ever drank any thing but water; and even to his last sickness his sight continued so strong that he could read the smallest print without spectacles. His piety, diligence, and zeal, caused him to be highly esteemed, not only by the Dissenters, but by all who knew him.

A curious anecdote is entered by his grandson, Mr. J. Wesley, in his Journal:—

"Monday, Feb. 6, 1769, I spent an hour with a venerable woman, nearly ninety years of age, who retains her health, her senses, her understanding, and even her memory to a good degree. In the last century she belonged to my grandfather Annesley's congregation, at whose house her father and she used to dine every Thursday; and whom she remembers to have seen frequently, in his study at the top of the house, with his window open, and without any fire winter or summer. He lived seventy-seven years; and would probably have lived longer, had he not begun water-drinking at seventy."

His last will and testament is too singular to be omitted:—

"In the name of God! Amen.

"I, Doctor Samuel Annesley, of the Liberty of Norton Folgate, in the county of Middlesex, an unworthy Minister of Jesus Christ, being, through mercy, in health of body and mind, do make this my last Will and Testament, concerning my earthly pittance.

"For my soul, I dare humbly say, it is, through grace, devoted unto God, (otherwise than by legacy,) when it may live here no longer. I do believe that my body, after its sleeping awhile in Jesus, shall be reunited to my soul, that they may both be for ever with the Lord.

"Of what I shall leave behind me, I make this short disposal,—

"My just debts being paid, I give to each of my children one *shilling*; and all the rest to be equally divided between my son Benjamin Annesley, my daughter Judith Annesley, and my daughter Ann Annesley, whom I make my Executors of this my last Will and Testament; revoking all former, and confirming this with my hand and seal this 29 of March, 1693.

"SAMUEL ANNESLEY."

Dr. Annesley was a lively and emphatic writer, and must have been a very useful preacher. The following extracts, taken at random from his sermon "On a Good Memory in Spiritual Things," will prove this:—

"Violent passions spoil the memory; such as anger, grief, love, fear. Passions we must have; but constitution and education allay them in some; reason moderates them in others; and grace regulates them in all. Where these bridges are wanting, they shake all the faculties as an earthquake doth a country. For example, anger, when it rages, manifestly inflames the blood, and consequently the spirits, and melts off the impression in the brain just as the fire melts the wax and the impressions that were fixed upon it.

"A multitude of undigested notions hurt the memory. If a man have a stock of methodical and digested knowledge, it is admirable how much the memory will contain; as you know how many images may be discerned at once in a glass. But when these notions are heaped incoherently in the memory, without order or dependence, they confound and overthrow the memory. Thus many hear or read much, too much perhaps for their capacities: they have not stowage for it; and so they are ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, look that you understand and digest things by meditation; run not on too fast: he that rides post can never draw maps of the country.