

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST MAGAZINE,
REPOSITORY,
AND
MISSIONARY OBSERVER.

VOL. 2.—NEW SERIES.
1855.



LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND Co.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.
LEICESTER: WINKS AND SON.

and promise that no ability I may possess shall be unemployed to secure that the proceedings shall be both orderly and harmonious. With ardent prayer to the Giver of all grace, that this may be a united, happy, and

useful Association, and that our denomination may greatly flourish and glorify God yet more and more, I commend you to the proceedings of the session.

MEMOIR OF REV. WILLIAM GOODLIFFE.

THE record of a few of the leading incidents in the life of departed friends, affords instruction and satisfaction to survivors. Earnest and pious minds leave behind them something deserving of note, and fraught with benefit.

These observations are suggested by the death of one who, for about thirty years, devoted much of his time to gathering and sowing the seeds of divine truth. Mr. William Goodliffe, late of Rothley, a few of the incidents of whose life we propose to sketch, was the fourth son of the late Mr. Thomas Goodliffe, of Lambly Lodge, in the county of Rutland. He was born June 19th, 1801. His early youth was marked by no striking features; being naturally shy and timid, he entered with less ardour into youthful pursuits than many do in the period of boyhood. He was blessed with a pious, intelligent, and affectionate mother, who sought early to impress his mind with saving truth. "The *schoolmaster* was not abroad" in that quiet little county, so that he, as well as other members of the family, had to travel many miles to obtain the rudiments of education. He was early apprenticed to a grocer, at Uppingham, where he faithfully and diligently discharged his duties. He attended the ministry of Mr. Green, (Independent) and remarks in his journal that he was often deeply impressed with what he heard. After some few changes as assistant he entered upon a situation at Nottingham, with the widow of Mr. Major, a member of

U

Vol. 2,—N. S.

Stoney Street church, to whom he was afterward married. He attended the faithful ministry of the late Rev. W. Pickering, and shortly after offered himself for baptism and fellowship. He was baptized October, 1823. In common with all who feel the constraining influence of the love and example of Christ, he began to work in the vineyard of the Lord. The Sabbath school offered to him, as it has done to many, the means of usefulness, self-improvement, and hallowed enjoyment. Our brother's first address in the Sabbath school, was delivered with diffidence and hesitation; but a worthy, aged friend, still living, encouraged him to persevere. He did so, and in a year or two afterward, he was invited to preach in the village stations of that extended church. His labours became increasingly acceptable. He applied himself diligently to supply the loss of early advantages, which he often lamented. Business not succeeding to his wishes, he removed to Beeston, in the year 1830, where he formed many pleasant friendships, where he preached during the period the church was destitute of a minister, and many were blessed by the word proclaimed. He resided at Beeston about six years, and was employed preaching either there or at the surrounding places almost every Sabbath. About the close of 1836, he was invited by the church at Kirton Lindsey, and after much thought and prayer for divine direction, decided to accept it. He entered upon his new engagement, Janu-

ary. 13th, 1837; and afterwards he observed: "the prospect was far from encouraging in any sense of the word, except a conviction that God is as near at Kirton, and a throne of grace as accessible as elsewhere. The country looked dreary, being covered with a deeper snow than had fallen for several years, and many persons were affected with influenza. The congregations were exceedingly small, and appearances were disheartening; but God can make the most cheerless outward circumstances supportable and profitable. Ere long brighter prospects opened, congregations improved, and some few additions took place." Again at a later period, he writes, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all his benefits. I am gladdened as a christian, my work appears increasingly important and promising. O, that my Heavenly Father, who knows my state altogether, may deign to supply me with all-sufficient grace and wisdom to direct. Oh how wonderfully God is answering my prayers, and the prayers of dear christian friends, by reviving his work of grace. O my God, since thou dost bless an instrument so feeble; the glory shall be all thine own, through Jesus Christ my Lord." But it appears, that neither has the christian minister cause long to rejoice over uninterrupted prosperity, for shortly after he entered this remark: "Oh how true, offences will come. Oh what need of faith and patience, Lord teach me by thy spirit to blend in my labours and efforts for thee, faithfulness and wisdom, gentleness and honesty. Oh teach me to watch for souls as one that must give an account." The congregations increasing, the chapel being small, it was decided to erect galleries, and otherwise improve and enlarge it. This being done the improved chapel was opened, early in 1841. He records with heartfelt gratitude the

accomplishment of that object. "And now that we have returned to our accustomed place; Oh that God may indeed return with us, and give bright manifestations of his love, presence and blessing; so that thy work may appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children." He further observes: "this week (July 17th), has been one of solemn import to me. I have been four-and-a-half years minister here, and have received an invitation to become their pastor, and have this week been solemnly set apart to that office; may I not only renew my covenant engagement, but earnestly seek thy grace, to help in every time of need. And now, Lord, let thine eye be upon me for good; be thou my light in darkness; dispel my ignorance and destroy the natural pride of my heart." In the spring and summer of 1842 he held short services in the open air, which were blessed to the good of some who had previously neglected public worship. He appears to have a deeper sense of the importance of his work, and records, that for several weeks he had risen at five o'clock in the morning to spend an extra hour in reading God's Word, and pray for divine light to enable him more fully to understand and feel its worth. Alternate seasons of hope and discouragement seemed to have gladdened or depressed him. The low state of religious principle and its development, in the outward deportment of many of the members of the church affected him, and he earnestly wrestled for more of the power of religion to be manifested. He had directed his efforts to the young, and besides keeping a day school, interested himself in the important work of the Sabbath school. In the latter end of 1843, a small school room was erected, for which, he thankfully acknowledges the goodness of his Heavenly Father. In the early part of 1844 he appears to have been

cheered by a revival, and the union of several persons with the church; but the hopes excited were transient; so that he mourns over some who sought pleasure in the paths of sin, and shun the people and worship of God. He appears to have been a good deal depressed at the change, and it seemed to have brought him to resign his ministry at Kirton-in-Linsey, which he did early in 1845. He removed to Chesterfield, where a few General Baptist friends had met for worship, and for some time laboured with encouraging hopes of success; but owing to the want of a suitable place of worship and other things he entertained but little hope of the establishment of the cause; and receiving an invitation to become the pastor of the church at Rothley and Sileby, he removed there, Midsummer, 1846. Concerning this removal he writes, "what a changing state is this! All our removals are bringing us nearer our final and eternal home, which we trust will be the realms of eternal day. Oh, that this change may be seen to result in mutual good, to ourselves, and thy church, and the furtherance of the gospel of my blessed Lord and Saviour."

For some time his labours were attended with pleasing success, and he records the goodness of God with thankfulness, and with humility, acknowledging his many defects, and imperfections. He preached generally thrice on the Sabbath, holding prayer and enquirers' meetings, at which he frequently enjoyed much of the divine presence and blessing. They were times of refreshing to many souls. Owing to a want of more enlarged and liberal views, causes of trial and misunderstanding arose, and hindered the good work. They were of a kind which came more in opposition to the peculiar temperament and character of our respected brother's mind, so that it is probable he was unduly affected

by them, to the detriment of his personal comfort and usefulness. His connection with the church at Rothley ceased in 1850. A few friends at Ansty, Thurcaston, and Cropston, had opened a place for public worship and a Sunday school at Cropston, and in consequence of Mr. Goodliffe's labours ceasing at Rothley he was invited by them to preach once a fortnight which he agreed to with pleasure.

On Nov. 9, 1851, by their own wish, and recommended by the Midland Conference, the friends at Cropston were formed into a separate church. Brother Wigg of Leicester assisted on the occasion. Mr. Goodliffe had been invited to become their pastor, which he accepted, and preached when his health would permit to the time of his death.

The friends at Cropston, with feelings of affection, remember his efforts to do good. They found him ever ready, according to his ability, to advise, assist, encourage, and promote, amongst them, the good cause that he had at heart.

His preaching was plain, serious, and impressive. Christ and him crucified formed the great theme of his discourses, and though marked by little of what may be denominated talent, they were useful and edifying to plain, earnest christians. His pastoral visits to the sick were constant. He took great pleasure in that department of labour, and in many cases his visits were blessed. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to know that his flock were living near to God, and making advances in the divine life, and that sinners were brought to the fold of Christ.

For some time his sight had been failing, and he found in the spring of 1854 that he had entirely lost the sight of one eye, and an eminent medical gentleman whom he consulted told him he feared the other would

be lost also. His general health was not good. On Lord's day, Sep. 1854, he walked from Rothley to Sibley, to be present at the Sunday School anniversary. The heat was very oppressive. When at Sibley he complained of acute pains in his head, and was unable to attend the chapel. He and his wife returned home, and he wished immediately to go to bed. He had an apoplectic fit, which render-

ed medical aid unavailing; he lingered till about five o'clock on the following day, when he fell asleep in Jesus, about the same time as the respected Mr. Pike, who many years before delivered his ordination charge. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

THE PLURALITY OF WORLDS.

(Continued from page 314).

MAN has always been fond of peopling space with inhabitants. Ages ago he delighted to surround himself, on every hand, with the fair creations of fancy. He felt that it was not good to be alone, and to him all nature was full of the loveliest and the divinest life. Beneath the rolling deep—over which old Neptune rode in his royal chariot, drawn by brazen-hoofed and golden-maned steeds,—beneath the rolling deep, floated the fair daughters of the ocean, with their soft and sea-blue eyes, and long golden streaming hair. In the dark woods and shady groves dwelt the graceful Dryads; and there danced together Satyrs and Nymphs, beating the ground with alternate feet. In the clear crystal fountains Nymphs and Naiads unveiled their beauty, and with them the rapt bard and the wild-eyed seer often had inspiring communion. On the mountains and in the glens the footsteps and the pipe of Pan were heard; and his strange voice, sounding through the forest, or echoing along the dell, often startled the lonely traveller. The heavens, too, shone with deified humanity. The sorrowing, the beautiful, the unfortunate, the good and the great, transformed into bright constellations, looked down from the

midnight sky, watching over the lives of men, shaping their course, influencing their destiny. Hence we read of the rainy Hyades, cloudy Orion, the sea-calming Gemini, the bright-clustering Pleiades, and Arcturus fearing to dip in the watery main. But these poetic creations, the beautiful imaginings of the soul as it lay in its dim twilight reveries, have passed away. The day-dawn of Science has broken the slumbers of the mind, and dispelled the fantastic shapes with which it peopled the universe. Sea, wood, fount, and dell we know to contain other creatures than the graceful forms of the Poet's fancy. But as if to take vengeance on Science, for depriving grove, hill, fount, and sea of their fair inhabitants we make her turn dreamer and poet. We clothe her in the singing robes of the bard. We furnish her with wings to veil her eagle gaze. We administer to her an opiate of religious enthusiasm that her dreams may be gorgeous as the dreams of the olden bard, and shapes of ethereal beauty may ever float around her. For so does Science soar, and dream, and sing when she crowds universal space with planetary worlds, and peoples them with intelligent inhabitants.

We have seen that in the Solar