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LIFE OF
THE REV. JOHN SARGENT.

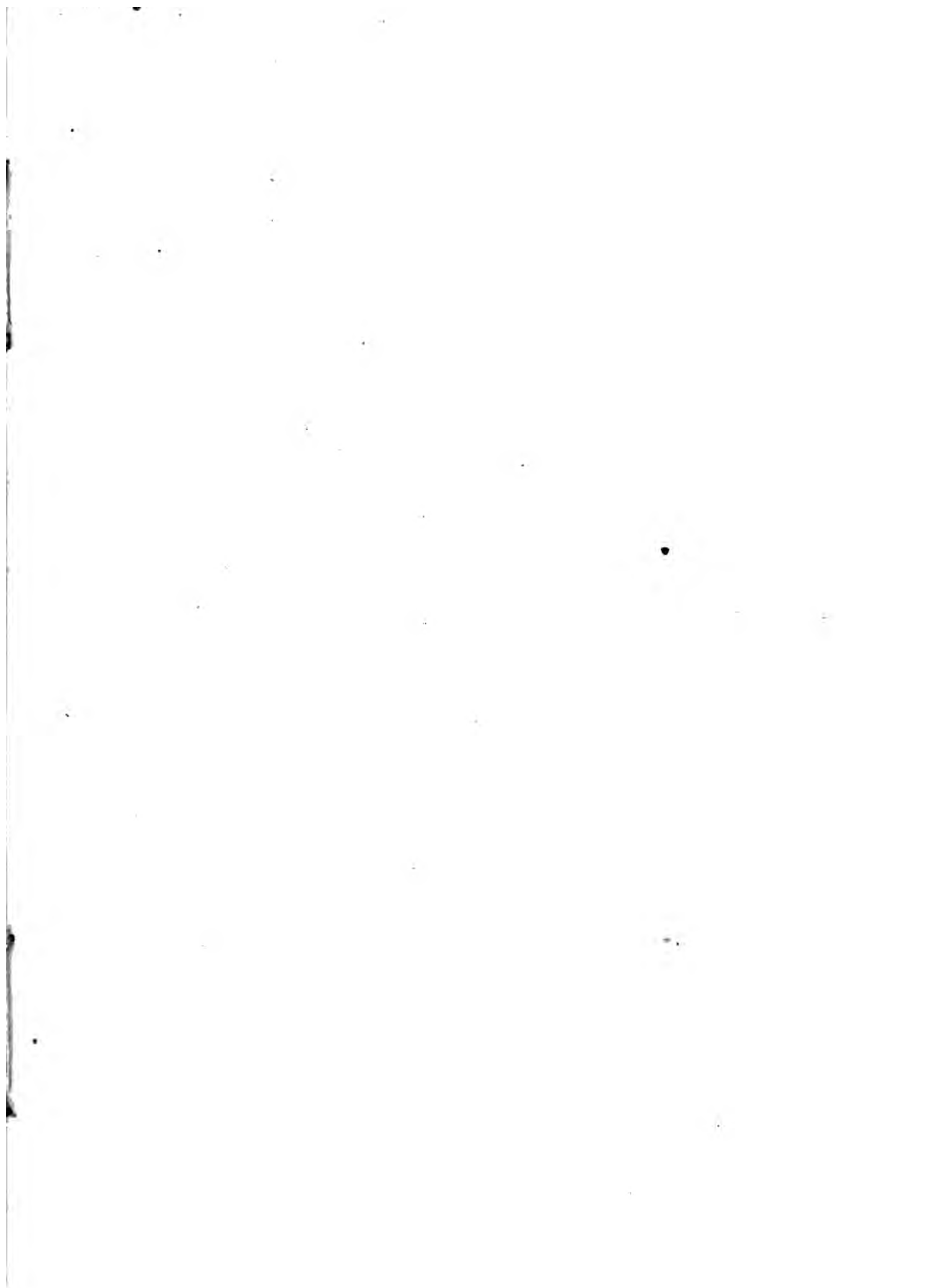


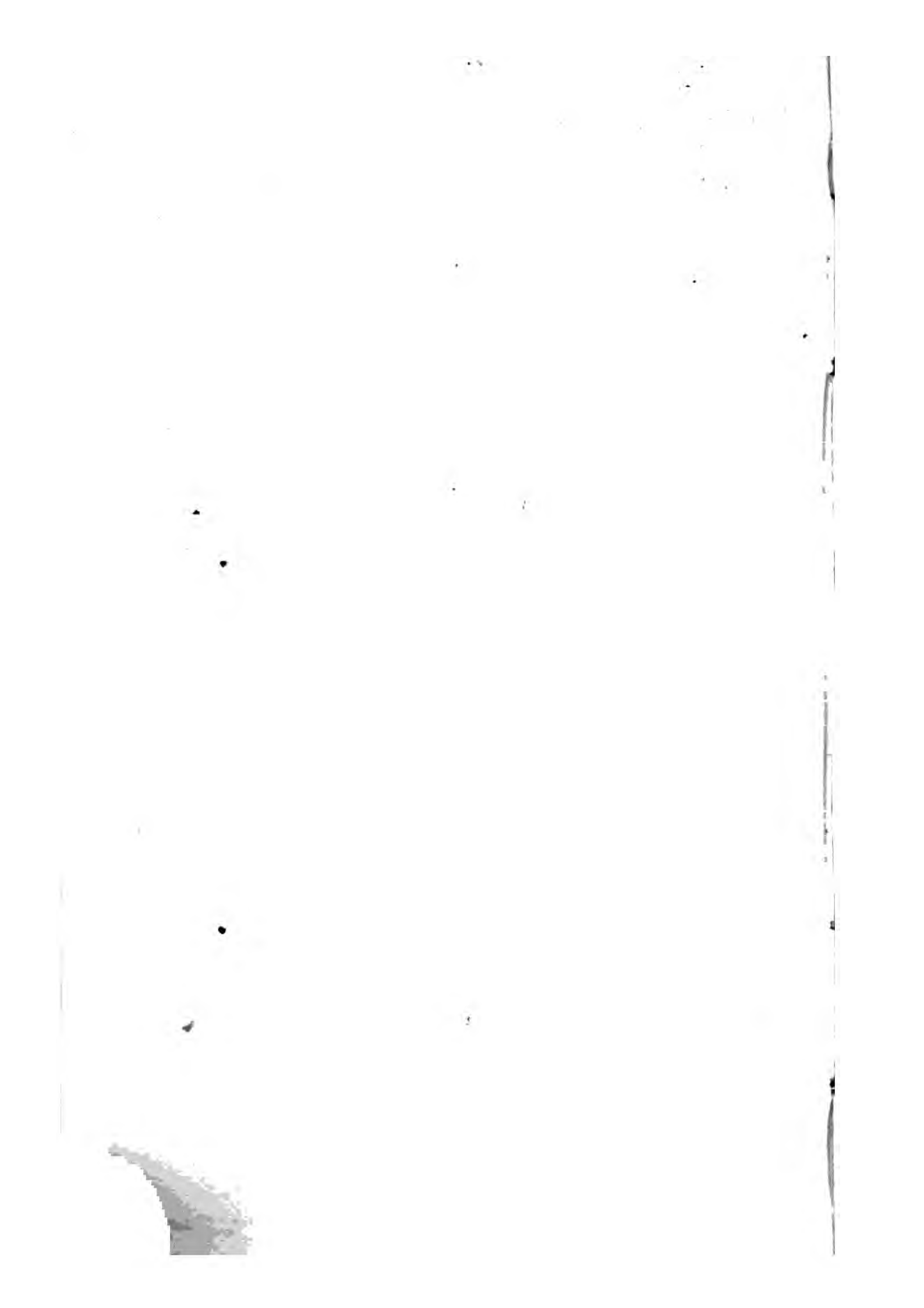
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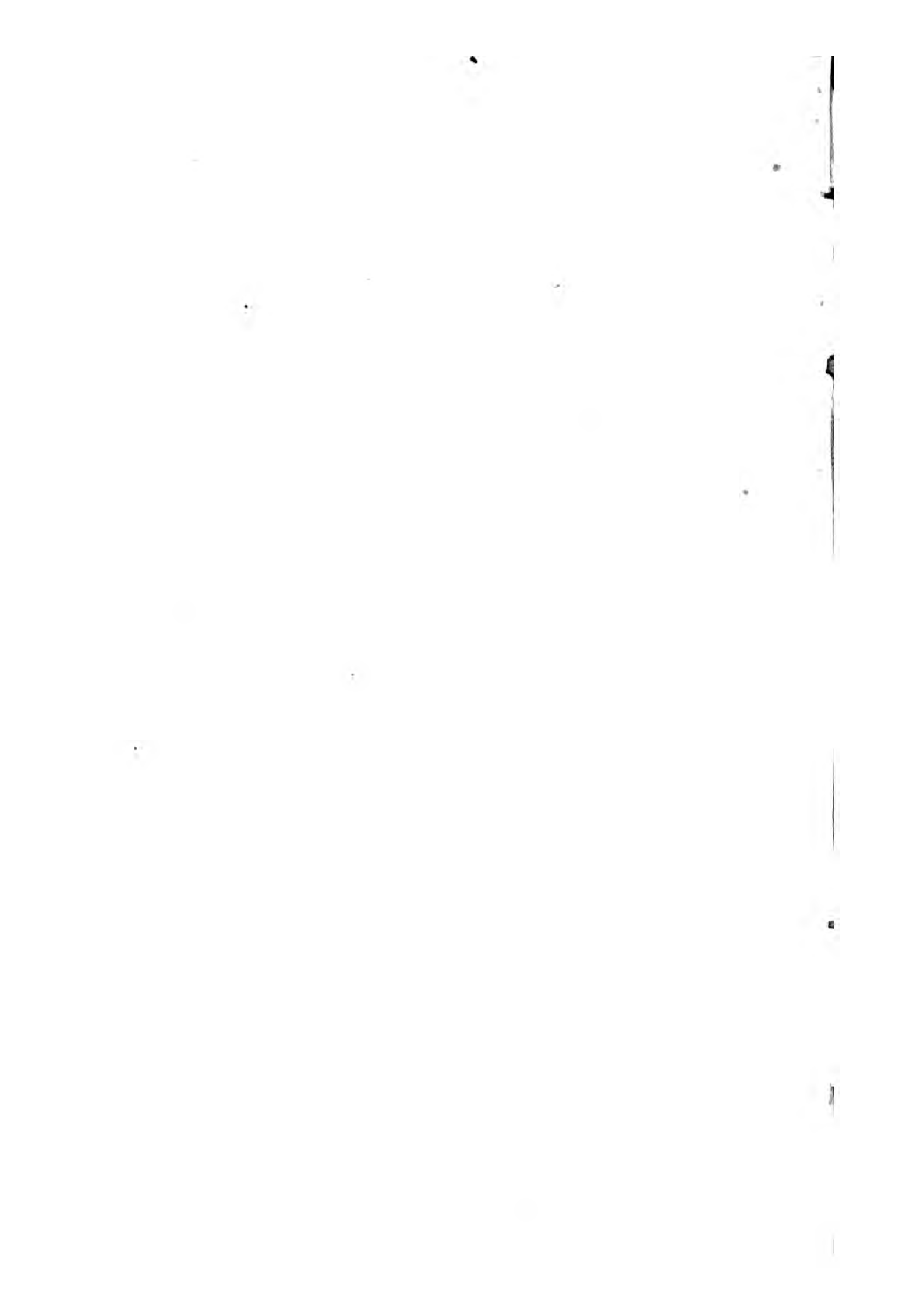






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SKETCH

OF

THE LIFE

OF

THE REV. JOHN SARGENT

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY BURNS & SIEG.

C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS.

1861.



ADVERTISEMENT.

WHOEVER has read the Life of Henry Martyn, will be glad to know something of his biographer, the Rev. John Sargent. The following sketch is from the pen of the Rev. Samuel Wilberforce, then Rector of Brightstone, now Bishop of Oxford. Of the papers of Martyn, some, for reasons of a temporary and delicate nature, were not used by Sargent. These, after his (Sargent's) death, and the death of the lady to whom Martyn had been engaged, along with some other of his unpublished manuscripts, it was determined to give to the world. They were accordingly pub-

lished, under the editorship of the present Bishop of Oxford, the intimate friend of Sargent, and under the title of "Journals and Letters of the Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D." The work is fitly introduced by the following beautiful sketch of Sargent's life and character, from the pen of its accomplished editor. But as the "Journals and Letters" have not been republished in this country, the Life of Sargent is much less known among us than it deserves to be. The sketch here presented exhibits the picture of an eminently devout and holy man, humble, patient, and "zealous of good works." Born to high rank, and with talents and accomplishments fitting him for any station, he might not unreasonably have looked for a conspicuous and influential position. But his whole ministerial life was passed—contentedly passed—in an obscure parish, and amongst a rude and illiterate people. Earnest and courageous in maintaining

his own views of truth, he was singularly considerate and forbearing towards those who differed from him. Free from any blind and superstitious devotion to mere names and precedents and forms, he was yet truly reverent and loyal to the wisdom of the past, and to things long and lawfully established. With affections unusually sympathetic and warm, and with manners that drew everybody to him, it was still the religious element in his character, which gave it its greatest elevation and its highest charm. Admirably balanced, with nothing in excess, and nothing defective, Sargent's was indeed a character that belonged to better times; but which, for that very reason, may be fitly commended as a model for our own. If we gaze upon it as upon some rare and beautiful *antique*, in despair of ever coming up to it ourselves, we may yet bless God for bestowing such gifts upon men.

The sketch itself, was first brought to my

notice, by a very near relation, since gone to her rest. Her piety delighted in the contemplation of a character so remarkable for saintly loveliness as Sargent's; whilst her taste was charmed by the grace and beauty with which it is here delineated. It was suggested and arranged between us, that we should republish the sketch by itself, for wider and gratuitous distribution. But this was not to be. Before our little scheme could be accomplished, God took her, with whom it originated, to Himself, where she needs no longer the encouragement of saintly examples; for she sees and mingles with "the spirits of the just made perfect."

" 'Tis sweet, as year by year we lose
 Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
 How grows in Paradise our store."

KEBLE.

In addition, therefore, to the hope that good may be done by this republication, I have now

a melancholy pleasure in carrying out a little plan of usefulness, which beguiled some weary hours, and was among the latest thoughts of one, whose removal has made her own home desolate, and many hearts sad. Her high appreciation of such a character as Sargent's, is the best evidence and illustration of her own. And now, I doubt not, she "beholds the King in His glory," and with Martyn, and Sargent, and other kindred spirits, rests in "those heavenly habitations, where the souls of those who sleep in Jesus, enjoy perpetual rest and felicity." *Sit anima mea cum illis.*

S. B.

LANCASTER, March, 1861.



L I F E
OF
THE REV. JOHN SARGENT.

THERE are some feelings which are wrought into the very texture of the mind, with too much vividness to bear expression. That the intimate friend of Henry Martyn should become his biographer; that one whose mind was distinguished by the same refined delicacy, and whose soul was equally penetrated with the same divine grace, should delineate his portraiture, was eminently fit; and the execution of the work attests this appropriateness. For it is impossible to separate in the reader's

mind, the name of Martyn from that of his biographer; the author from his subject; the character he draws from that which he evinces. In showing another he displays himself; and hence it were almost an unlawful action to attempt to dissever these names, united together in the reverent affection of Christian men's remembrance.

The Church has ever gathered up with duteous care, the ashes of those, who having "fought a good fight, and kept the faith," have finished joyfully their earthly course. She stores up for her children the memory of their example; and it were not meet that this saint of God should be taken from us, and no record of his faith and love remain.

The circumstances of life in which his lot was cast, the sphere of those duties from which he never wandered, were not of a character to supply events or incidents for a continuous

narrative. He walked in the low valley where the pastures of God's presence are often the greenest, where the dews of his Spirit fall in richest and most fertilizing abundance, and where, if anywhere upon earth, the notes of purer beings might still be heard to float upon the air, and blend with the praises of the children of men. But in such a course, there is little to catch the world's eye, or excite its interest. Although the work in which he is engaged is really the greatest and most enduring in its consequences of any for which this world is the appointed theatre, yet the name of the Christian minister is not associated with events of earthly magnitude. Still the mere sketch of such a character will be deeply interesting to many; and that sacredness which belongs to the closing scene of a Christian's life, when, upon the brink of eternity, he sees what is concealed from us, and

when (as he stands upon the heights which overlook the future), the light of the heavenly world is fast rising on his eyes, may call for a short account of the last stage of his journey heavenward.

John Sargent, the eldest son of John Sargent, Esq., of Lavington, in Sussex, and Charlotte, his wife, was born on the 8th day of October, 1780. He was educated at Eton, and was remarkable there amongst his contemporaries, for uniting a decided superiority in the manly sports of the play-ground, with high classical attainments. From Eton he removed to King's College, Cambridge, where, through God's blessing, the Rev. C. Simeon was made the instrument of first leading him to serious views of religion. Under his guidance and that of the late Rev. Thomas Lloyd, he was gradually nurtured and strengthened in the ways of God. For both

of them, he preserved through life a reverent affection; maintaining with the one an unbroken friendship, and cherishing a grateful veneration for the memory of the other. He quitted Cambridge in the year 1802, and entering at the Temple, set out in that path which appeared to be marked out for him by the providence of God.

As the heir to the family estate, and its future representative in his native county, it was the desire of those to whose wishes he deemed it a duty to yield, that he should follow the profession of the law. His own heart longed for a more entire dedication of his powers to the Redeemer's work than was possible in a course of life mainly conversant with earthly things. Yet having judged, upon mature reflection, that such was at the time his duty, in the true spirit of Christian submission, he set himself resolutely to its per-

formance. It was not, indeed, without many painful struggles that he arrived at this conclusion.

The bent of his soul towards the sacred profession was peculiarly strong. How far was he bound to listen in it for a "call from God?" How far to submit these holy desires to the wishes of parental authority? He weighed the apparently conflicting claims of duty, and acted without hesitation upon his matured conviction. In a letter written at this time to an intimate friend, he thus describes what had been passing in his mind. "I do not wonder at your wishing that I had chosen decidedly to enter the Church. But what could I do? Could I, indeed, have been *assured* that it was God's will that I should serve him as a minister, were it to preach to the wild Indians, *nothing* should stand in the way. But I thought Mr. Si-

meon's observation just. 'You are *certain* that you are acting according to your duty in obeying the wishes of your father;' whereas, I could not say so in the other case. What painful fluctuations of mind I have suffered upon this occasion is not to be described. Under pain of body or loss of friends we clearly see that resignation is our duty; but here I was tossed about for a long time without being able to satisfy myself, upon a point of such importance, what was my duty. Yet under this disquietude, I committed my way unto the Lord, and I have not a doubt but that He will be with me, and somehow or other, make me in some little degree instrumental in promoting His glory. Indeed, you have no idea of what I have felt. No one who has not been in a similar situation can form any notion of it.

“My decision will, I trust, be approved of by my heavenly Father. My one desire has

been, if my heart has not deceived me, to do His will, and to devote myself entirely to His honor and glory. I shall be happy wherever I am, if I can assure myself that I am serving Him in the way which He ordained me to walk in. Do not forget, I beseech you, to pray for me, that the love of Jesus may attend me, and His right hand lead me through the perils of the profession I am entering. When I look at the corruption and weakness of my own heart, I tremble; when I behold the power and willingness to save all to the uttermost who come to Him, which is in Jesus, I rejoice."

Worldly business, undertaken in this spirit and conducted on these principles, was not likely to endanger the spirituality of his soul. The ungenial atmosphere which hangs over the seats of legal strife, and the bustling scenes of earthly business could inflict little

injury on him who had such a talisman within. The state of mind evinced by his letters at this time justifies a record of this date in the journal of Henry Martyn: "Sargent seems to be outstripping us all."

At no very distant period, however, it pleased God, who had thus tried the submissive faith of his servant, by calling him to give up those desires which were the strongest in his soul, to open to him the path which he longed to tread. The objections of those to whose wishes he thought it a duty to yield were removed by altered circumstances. He quitted that profession upon which, in obedience to their desires, he had entered, and prepared himself for undertaking that holy office to which his own inclinations had always been so strongly directed. In the years 1805 and 1806 he was successively ordained deacon and priest. He entered upon

his ministry with the cure of Graffham, in Sussex, which, with the small contiguous parish of Lavington, formed to the end the scene of his ministerial labors. Here, with patient perseverance, he continued for years “to do the work of an Evangelist,” amongst those whom God had committed to him. His whole heart was given up to that ministry wherewith he had been intrusted. To be made an instrument of usefulness in God’s hands, to be “a fellow-worker with God,” in promoting the eternal happiness of the souls committed to him, was, through the whole of his life, his single object. And it was this active principle, under the regulation of a well-instructed conscience, which animated him to unwearied exertions in an obscure, and in many respects, unkindly portion of his Lord’s vineyard. There was in his charge nothing which ministered to the gratification

of earthly motives. His lot was cast among the ignorant and unpolished—amongst those who could not appreciate his classical elegance of mind, or enter into the exquisite sensibility of his affection. They were the “few sheep in the wilderness.” But in them he recognized those for whom Christ shed his blood, and for them, therefore, he was content to labor, “to spend and to be spent,” and yet neither be faint nor slothful. The spirit which breathes in a letter descriptive of his first entering upon his ministry amongst them, was never abated by weariness or disappointment. “I have already, as I told you, entered upon my ministerial labors. My parishes are small, but I find that a small parish will produce ample occupation for a minister, if he is inclined to seek for it. The generality of my parishioners, from what I have seen and from what I hear from the

present curate, are very ignorant of the true foundation on which to build," &c.

Nor were there wanting peculiar ministerial trials in this secluded situation. There was a false spirit of religion prevalent amongst his people, which was through the whole of his ministry a source of continual rebuke and suffering to his godly soul. Antinomian on principle and in practice, they withstood continually the word of life, perverted unstable souls, and, with all the insolence of spiritual pride, continually wounded his naturally sensitive heart.

In the letter which has been already quoted as describing his entrance upon the ministry, he gives the following account of this section of his flock: "Some few are fanatical disciples of Huntington. They came to hear me the first time I preached; whether they will continue, I cannot say. The preacher amongst

them, who makes my shoes, upon being asked his opinion of me, said, 'that he thought I should be enabled to declare the truth;' that is, he thinks me a *promising* young man. One of them the other day, speaking of Mr. —, the curate, said, 'he had no particular fault to find with the man,' but he did not think him quite 'free in the liberty.' Upon my desiring an explanation of that expression, he simplified the assertion by affirming that he was rather 'in bondage,' rather 'under the yoke.' They have a jargon and cant of their own, to be ignorant of which, in their estimation, is to be carnally minded and unregenerate. God alone can enable me to be useful either to these deluded people or the other part of my flock. I am sensible that the grace of our Saviour can alone give that singleness of heart and spirituality of mind which characterizes his people at all times. I

should wish to be more sensible of my weakness in myself, and of my strength in Jesus.”

Such was the character of the flock to which the Great Head of the Church confined those labors for which human wisdom would have selected a very different sphere. And such, in its general features, it continued through a period of twenty-five years which he spent amongst them. He was indeed cheered by witnessing amongst his people many individual instances of altered conduct and renewed affections. He committed the bodies of many to the grave “in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life,” and with good grounds for trusting that they would be “his crown and rejoicing at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.” But his discouragements were never intermitted. The careless sinfulness of some, and the delusive profession of others, were always a

burden to his soul; still they were the object of his unwearied solicitude. The health of different members of his family took him often from home for a season, and led to the exercise of his ministry in more populous and instructed places. In these he was always courted and admired; and (which to him was a far severer trial than that applause which is the common food of vanity) he found in them kindred minds able to return his warm affection, and “esteem him very highly in love for his work’s sake.” In them, above all, he was not seldom permitted to see the palpable effect of his “work and labor and love.” And yet from these more inviting occupations, he returned always readily and cheerfully to his own appointed task; neither envying the charge of others, nor slumbering in his own. To know that such a man continued with such effects the unintermitted labors of a holy life,

may give encouragement to many who are pressed down with the apparent fruitlessness of their ministerial work. It displays most strikingly the submissive activity which is the true frame for Christian usefulness, as far apart from slothfulness as from that bustling love of action which will scarcely suffer good to be effected by another's efforts.

The same sound and sober habit of mind was evinced in the whole complexion of his ministerial character. Deep and reverent was his affection for that branch of Christ's Church from which in infancy he had received the sacred mystery of baptism, and with whose holy orders he was now invested. There was a marked difference on this point between his judgment and feelings and those of some, whose ardent piety he most highly esteemed, and with whom he was constantly connected in active efforts for the spread of God's word

and kingdom. Never in this age of various and unbounded religious excitement was he led astray from the path of Christian sobriety. The dazzling light of novelty had no charms for him. In the province of religion, the suggestions of the imagination were at once and unhesitatingly submitted to the scrutiny of a sober and searching judgment. He was strong in the irresistible strength of an humble simplicity.

Some extracts from two of his letters upon points which have of late been often agitated amongst Christians, will well illustrate this sober and established judgment. The first was in answer to a friend who consulted him under some scruples of mind as to the propriety of subscribing, before entering at college, his assent to the Athanasian creed. The second relates to the partial separation proposed in the Bible Society.

To the first, he writes thus: "I confess that I have never felt all the difficulties that present themselves to the minds of some good and able men. I read in the New Testament that 'he that believeth not shall be damned.' Must I not say Amen to this declaration of my Saviour? There can be no doubt upon that point. But, then, what is that belief, the rejection of which is damnation? Some will say, 'A belief in the existence and unity of God.' Others will add, 'A belief in the existence and mission of Jesus Christ.' Others will proceed further and say, 'A belief in that God in whose name those who believe are to be baptized; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' Now may I say Amen to the *first* assertion, and be deemed charitable? And may I say Amen to the *second* assertion, and still be deemed charitable? But when I affix my Amen to the *third* assertion, am I

who believe the one God to be distinguished by a threefold personality, expressly revealed and commanded to be acknowledged—to be exclaimed against as uncharitable and unscriptural? If any man object to the *terms* used in the Athanasian creed, let him find better if he can. But if he objects to any terms except such as are to be found expressly in the word of God, let him state how it is possible to devise a form of words, which, as a symbol, shall be sufficiently clear to detect the subtleties of heretics. How could the evasion of those who some time ago seceded from our Church be exposed by more appropriate, or, if you will, less objectionable expressions? There is a good remark made by one of the Fathers, whom Milner quotes (his name and precise words I do not at this moment remember). He says, ‘The blasphemies of heretics have, reduced us in our own

defence to use expressions which otherwise had not need to be adopted, concerning the mysterious article of the Holy Trinity.'

“When it is said, ‘He, therefore, that will be saved, must *thus* think of the Trinity,’ I interpret the word ‘*thus*,’ so as not substantially to differ from these articles. A person might *thus* think of the Trinity who objected to the *word* ‘proceeding,’ and adopted some other to express that relation which the Holy Spirit bears to the Father and the Son. So also I understand the clause, ‘This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.’ A man may believe faithfully the Catholic faith respecting the Trinity, whilst perhaps he scruples about the use of some particular *term*.

“Lastly, when I affirm my belief that those who reject the Triune Jehovah will perish, of course I mean those who do this deliberately

and notwithstanding opportunities. I leave to God Almighty the application of general threatenings to every particular case.”

How wisely does he hold the balance between uncharitable censure of particular errors and latitudinarian indifference to the cause of truth!

On the second subject above-mentioned, he writes as follows, August 22d, 1831.

. “I say to the reformers, either do nothing or do much more than you propose. Either leave us as a piece of mechanism, a mighty engine to send Bibles to the four quarters of the earth, or, if you will, constitute us a devotional body, expel not merely Canaanites and Perizzites, but Hivites, Jebusites, and all the other *ites* from amongst us.”

And this sobriety of judgment was seen in his whole system of practical divinity. Whilst

on the one hand the eminent spirituality of his soul kept him at the greatest distance from a formal regard to the externals of religion, he was equally free from a slight and irreverent estimation of any of those outward observances which have been appointed or sanctioned as the means of good to Christ's Church. Remembering continually that the communion of his own soul with his God is the especial privilege of the believer in Jesus, he never suffered the individualities of the Christian character so to engross his attention as to lose sight of his inestimable privileges as a member of the Church. He did not seek to remove the sheep of Christ from that fold into which he had gathered them, that they might enjoy singly a separate communion with their God. The foundation of this habit of mind was laid in that deep humility which formed so striking a feature in

his ministerial character. There was nothing great which he thought unjustly withheld from him; there was nothing common which he esteemed beneath his care. The ministrations of those who, in the judgment of others, could not be compared with him, were, in his eyes, far more valuable than his own. He praised them with that hearty self-depreciating commendation which springs from a soul to which the pantings of vanity, or the strugglings of envy, are altogether unknown. From true Christian charity, "in honor he preferred others." Closely allied with this was his patience as a minister of Christ. Day after day would he visit the sick-bed of his poorest cottager, and continue, in spite of dulness of intellect and coldness of heart, to watch for any opening by which he might win souls to Christ. Year after year, with undiminished energy, did he patiently preach

to his little flock the glad tidings of salvation, and without ceasing were his prayers poured out to God for them.

Great, too, was his ministerial tenderness. His holy condemnation of sin was never mingled with any of the harshness of invective. When compelled to wield the sword of the Spirit for the conviction of sinners, it was "even weeping" that he taught them what it was "to be the enemies of the Cross of Christ." He could scarcely speak of the concerns of immortal souls without tears. Often have I heard the voice which was telling of the return of some repentant prodigal falter with suppressed emotion, and seen the eye, which by faith contemplated the realities of eternity, fill with the tear of grateful joy. None ever came to heal the wounds of souls who possessed a softer touch, a more exquisite sensibility of spirit. He was the chosen com-

forter of sorrow, the "son of consolation" to wounded hearts. Though he always spoke out in condemning sin, though he dared not hide the holiness of God under a meretricious representation of his mercy, yet it was his especial delight to be in his Master's hands the means of gently kindling to a flame the smoking flax, or raising tenderly the bruised reed. Indeed it might have been said that this was the peculiar feature of his ministerial character, if there had not been another in which all the rest seemed to be merged. The grace of God had wrought in an unusual degree within his soul that which was the distinguishing character of Herbert's pastor. "Holiness to the Lord" was imprinted upon all his conduct. He could not bear sin; he viewed it with holy indignation. Its struggles in himself, and its frequent prevalence in his people, were the causes of his deepest

sorrow. All attempts to make light of its defilement, to lower down the standard of God to the debased conceptions of fallen man, excited within him a vehement indignation and a holy zeal for God, which might have been deemed by those who witnessed them alone as almost incompatible with that deep and abiding tenderness which had been breathed over his soul. It was indeed the union of these two qualities which distinguished his ministerial character, which reached the conscience of the careless, which detected the disguises of the false professor, which comforted the broken-hearted and encouraged the believer in new and increasing endeavors after conformity with God. The influence of his character extended beyond the limits of his own parish. Many were the brother presbyters whose hands he strengthened, whose hearts he animated, whose knowledge he increased. It

was a sad, though a soothing sight, to witness on the day when the earth closed over his beloved remains, the mournful train of neighboring pastors who, with entire submission to the Master of the shepherds, wept over their own loss, saying from the heart, "Alas, my father!" "Alas, my brother!"

But let it not be supposed by any to whom he was unknown, that the habitual holiness of his soul was shown in gloom or moroseness. If it were possible to convey to these pages a true representation of what he was in social or domestic life, it would be alone abundantly sufficient to refute forever such mistaken views of the character of true religion. If it were possible to transfer to the canvas the varied play of intellectual elegance, the kindly glow of every generous feeling, the healthy and vigorous actings of the affections, which were ever present in his domestic circle, the

picture of rational enjoyment would be complete, and though much cannot be said here upon this subject, yet for the honor of religion, it must not be left wholly unnoticed.

There was then in him a heartiness of affection which ministered to the purest happiness. There was the gaiety of a mind, too much refined to be ever boisterous, too manly to be ever frivolous, too entirely given up to God to be ever unseasonably mirthful, a perpetual spring of holy guileless gaiety, gladdening and purifying the hearts of all those to whom God in His mercy had given him as a companion in this world of sorrows. The character of his intellect, as well as the dispositions of his mind, tended to produce the same result. He combined a sound and discriminating judgment, with great warmth of imagination and fervency of spirit. His mental constitution seemed to be incapable of re-

ceiving the taint of superstition, whilst to every word of revelation, he was docile as a child. His powers had been wisely cultivated, and the refining power of sterling piety had been exerted upon a mind, which was deeply and lastingly imbued with the pervading spirit of classical elegance. This was, indeed, a feature of his mind which deserves especial notice. He belonged to a school of Attic elegance, which is declining amongst us; a school of men who studied the classics, not as a means by which to obtain distinction, nor merely to acquire, in the knowledge of another language, a key to fresh mental attainments, but for their own sweetness. These were men whose whole spirit breathed of classical refinement. The bustle of our busy age, its hard and unpoetical features, seeking in everything immediate utility, exalting science above literature, and the lower

and more productive provinces of science, above that which is more abstruse and intellectual, are altogether unfavorable to the production of such characters. That so few of them remain is one of the worst signs of our literary state. In him this true spirit of a scholar was conspicuous. Such natural powers, so cultivated and so controlled, could not fail to render him a bright ornament of social life. There was, too, one remarkable effect of the unusual height of holiness, to which, through God's grace, he had attained. It was the mode in which his mind passed from ordinary to sacred subjects. It might be from mingling in the sports and merriment of childhood; it might be from the excitement of intellectual conversation, that he was called upon to turn his attention at once to holy things. The transition was effected in a moment. It was natural, reverent, free from

anything of sternness, and impressing upon every one the evident truth, that his religion was no gloomy system of prohibitions and restraints. God had been honored in his joy, and if he turned to graver objects, it was but to honor God still in a different method. It was the same wave when it raised its sunlit crest towards the sky, or sunk again into the calm. The change could not be noted, but in the seriousness which overspread his mind, and in the increased satisfaction with which he turned from the innocent mirth of childhood to the severer joys of an immortal being. Like most others of quick feelings, his temper was naturally hasty. Every succeeding year brought it under more entire control. By God's grace, it was kept entirely free from asperity, while it possessed in a large measure, the frank and sparkling quality which was its appropriate

charm. The largest liberality was the natural overflow of his generous soul. He had *nothing* for himself. He seemed scarcely able to comprehend the pleasure of owning anything unless he could give it to another. This was a frame of mind which insured the happiness of its possessor.

It must not, however, be supposed, that this child of God passed through life, without receiving at his Father's hands those "loving corrections," of which all are partakers. The same temper which ministered in ordinary seasons to unusual happiness, rendered him also peculiarly alive to the bitterness of the cup of affliction. He knew, indeed, too well, the hand which smote him, to yield to hopeless or repining sorrow. But while he justified God for all his dealings, the iron entered oftentimes into his soul. "A pilgrim," he says in a letter to a friend in 1805, "will

always long most for his journey's end, when the inns and road are bad and uncomfortable. Besides, even temporal good is much endeared to us, by a short suspension of it, so that God by his providence makes us enjoy it more, and at the same time be less riveted to it. Such a paradox is the Christian life! Affliction comes not from the dust, but from His hand, who would not send it were it not necessary, but chastens us in mercy." In this spirit did he always receive the chastening of the Lord. He came out of the furnace evidently refined by its fires. Affliction lent wings to the strong desires of his soul, with which they soared to greater heights of communing with God. Some extracts from a letter to a friend, written in November, 1829, a time of the deepest sorrow, will suffice to illustrate the workings of his holy soul at such a season. It pleased God to take

from him his eldest son,—a son endeared to his heart by every peculiarity of character and every circumstance of education. He had never exchanged a father's care for the instruction of any other teacher, and between such a pupil and such a preceptor, the task had grown insensibly into a delight. His health, which had been for years the object of watchful solicitude, appeared to be established. He had entered upon life at the University of Cambridge, withstood the strong temptations of opening manhood, and the ensnaring seductions of early independence, and had given intimation of no inconsiderable intellectual acquirements, when from watching with delight this course of promise, his parents were called upon by a sudden attack of pulmonary disease, to see the object of their hope and affection waste upon a bed of sickness, and at last, to yield him up again into the hands of

the God who had given him to them for a while. That bed of unseasonable decay was cheered by the calm and holy light of Christian hope; it was surrounded by hearts deeply wounded, but entirely submissive to the will of God, and supported therefore by His presence. The spirit which breathes so evidently in the following letter, was the expression of his father's habitual feelings.

“ CHECKENDON, November 4th, 1829.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND :

“ Your love is sent to one on whom the grave closed last Sunday week. At two o'clock in the morning of the preceding Tuesday, having been carried on Monday evening by his mother and myself from his bed to his couch and his couch to his bed, he was carried by better hands to a better rest than this poor world affords. You may

conceive what our grief is ; but we are looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, not doubting but that He who enabled our beloved child, in the tenderness of youth and feebleness of mortal nature, to hurl the stone into the head of that giant, Death, who stalked out before him daily for so many weeks, will enable us to deal as faithfully by murmuring discontent. We trust we can say it is well, it is all right and good, and merciful and faithful. Blessed be the Lord, He has not permitted the enemy of my soul to assail it for one moment, that I am aware of, with the thought, 'This is a hard and severe dispensation.' In one sense, of course, it is unutterably so, and I am conscious of needing it ; but experience tells me what this life is, and faith tells me what the other is ; and I know the name of the Lord of heaven and earth, that it is love, and I know that He

doeth what He pleaseth in all parts of His dominions, and doth nothing but what is perfect. To alter it for the better is impossible, nay, the very notion is an abomination. ‘The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away;’ taken away ‘from the miseries of this sinful world;’ taken away to Himself, to ‘enormous bliss,’* my dearest child. Shall I not then in the midst of my sorrow, add, ‘Blessed be the name of the Lord.’ Since we were at Torquay, I have had increasing evidence that my beloved son’s heart was right with God. Penitent, dependent on Jesus wholly, devoted to his love. Most plainly did I discover this in the Isle of Wight,—plainer still when he was at college, a period of so much temptation, a season when his health was so good that he seemed as likely to live as ourselves. And

* Milton.

throughout his illness till his last breath, I can truly affirm that he taught me more than I ever taught him ; he taught me how to suffer and die. The Lord held him by the right hand, and made the yoke easy and the burden light. He had naturally a great fear of death, but his head was raised above the waves. I said to him, 'You could not have supposed that such strength would be imparted to you.' 'Then praise Him for it,' was the reply. I do praise Him for it, and trust that you and yours will help us to praise Him, who out of weakness maketh strong. But forget not to pray that we may all have a more holy heart, and live a more holy life, the only substantial proof of real religion."

These were not words of assumed submission. Such was the tone of his prayers, such was the acted language of his life. And to estimate aright the powerful workings of God's

grace in bringing him to that state of dependent quietness, let it be remembered that his natural affections were pre-eminently warm. I can safely affirm, after a long and most intimate acquaintance with him, that I never knew any one in whom they were so strong. There was a depth of tenderness in his soul “passing the love of woman,” sublimed into the most elevated tone of manly vigor.* Yet

* I may be allowed to introduce here some verses, in which, after some years, he recorded his feelings upon this subject. He had been walking with us upon the shore, within sight of St. Catharine’s Head, near which he had spent a winter for his son’s health. We noticed his unwonted silence, and when he returned home he committed to paper, and put into my hands, the following verses, the fruit of his silent meditations on the beach :

IN CATHERINAM MONTEM.

Grata rubent aliis cum culmina montes inaurat
 Oceano subiens sol—oriensve mari.
 Cum stipant læti comites risumque jocumque,
 Cretato attulerint gaudia festa die.

such he always was whenever, as was often the case in the later stages of his journey, the

Saxa mihi surgant vix visa adopertaque nimbis !
 Et vespertini littoris unda gemat !
 Et spatiar solus mecum vagabundus arena !
 Et natum orbato sit lacrymare patri !
 Huic illic quondam licuit sperare salutem :
 Sed nimis heu ! fallax spes et inanis erat.
 Conquerar abreptum ? questus procul absit ! at ipse
 Qui fleret Jesus, non mihi flere vetat.
 Quin te lustratum, carissime, sanguine Christi
 Tam cito cœlestes lætor inisse domos.
 Non macies lethumve incumbunt sedibus istis
 Felicique nefas exulat omne loco.
 Conditus o tecum jaceam ! tecumque resurgens
 Sœcula, non iterum te doliturus, agam !

[The following beautiful Translation of the touching lines above given, will be recognized as the production of one of the most graceful pens amongst us.—ED.]

SEASIDE MUSINGS.

WRITTEN AFTER A WALK ON THE BEACH, AND IN VIEW OF
 ST. CATHERINE'S HEAD.

How glow yon heights,—as seaward sinks the sun,
 Or gilded by the morn—to eyes not mine !

hand of the Lord was heavy upon him. Thus when, in 1831, he lost his aged father, he wrote in the same strain to one who had addressed him in the language of Christian consolation.

“MY DEAR FRIEND :

“Many thanks would I offer you for your feeling and Christian note.

Or when the mirthful throng may thither run,
 O'erjoyed to see some festive morning shine ;
 But hung with clouds for me, and half descried
 Those cliffs arise ; and moans along the shore
 The wave benighted, while I there abide
 And roam the sands, my darling to deplore.
 There, once to him, awhile, sweet hope was given
 Of health restored—false hope alas ! and vain !
 Him shall I weep ? Yes, JESUS wept, and Heaven
 Forbids not *Tears* : but let me not complain.
 Nay, dearest boy, in Christ's own blood made pure,
 I joy that Thou so soon hast found thy home ;
 Those Heavenly seats, from dull decay secure,
 That happy world, where nought of ill can come.
 With thee I'd rest ; with thee I'd rise, and then
 Never again to mourn thee)—live again.

Translated. A. C. C. 1861.

“This is a moment when the sympathy and supplications of Christian brethren are indeed valuable. I have suffered and do suffer acutely. My love to my father was never small, and of late years it has been called out amazingly. Constant intercourse has done this; but, above all, the sight of Christian graces in him, especially that of humility, has increased the warmth of my love.

“I could not, therefore, behold him, on the bed of languishing and death, without having my heart rent. But I look backwards at the mercies shown me in and with him, and I look upwards to the throne of grace, before which he bows with the redeemed, and thence I do find supplies of strength to submit meekly to the Lord; and thence I trust to find that showers of grace and blessing will descend to abase and purify one ‘whose soul cleaveth to the dust,’ for heaven and its endless blessedness.

“I feel now like the soldier who has had one on each side of him laid low. Oh, may this lay my pride low, and all my sins.

“May I live as a dying man, unto and upon the Lord, then death will prove to be life.”

Very shortly before his own most unexpected summons into the presence of his Master, he was again called upon to indorse extreme affliction. His remaining son, who had inherited besides his own peculiar share the love which had been his brother's portion, was seized with dangerous sickness. His father's anguish was intense. But in his bitterest struggles not a thought but of the holiness and love of his God ever entered into his mind. The dispensation was dark to all who witnessed it; so entirely was the heart which was stricken in accordance with the will of God, that it was a sore trial of faith to believe

that it was needed. It was remarked by one who knew him intimately, by one whose deep piety and matured judgment added unusual weight to such an expression (my late father), "I can hardly conceive how the mind of an angel in glory can be more perfectly in accordance with the will of God than his." For days together, did I witness at this time an entire submission to God's severest appointments, which would amply justify such a declaration. Little did we then foresee the purpose of these last purifying fires through which he entered into glory ; but so deep was the impression which the sight made upon me, that I committed to paper at the time a few of the expressions of his resignation during the affliction, and of his thankfulness when it was removed.

March 30th, 1833. A day of entire hopelessness of his son's recovery ; in the midst of

the deepest sorrow—after speaking much of the support which he received, he added: “What should I be now without the Gospel? I am sure that my heavenly Father would not send me this agony, if he did not see it to be needful for me; and I believe that I can truly say, I would not thus lift up my finger to remove it, if it be not His will.”

And again. When the pressure of his alarm was through God’s mercy removed, and his soul was melted in gratitude, “What an expression,” he said one day, “is that, ‘Praise waiteth for thee, O God!’ It is easy to pray to God in trouble, but to praise him; that is the real difficulty. I am sure I desire to praise him.”

Such was the habit of his soul, when as he said, “I have not the shadow of a doubt that within six weeks we shall have laid that dear boy in yonder churchyard.” Within six

weeks the ground was broken up, and the earth received her dead into her keeping until the great day ; but it was the father who was taken, and the child who wept over his grave : For “ His ways are past finding out.” On the 26th of April, he had engaged to visit the Isle of Wight. He did not arrive, but we heard that he was detained at home by a slight indisposition. Saturday, the 27th, his illness increased. Medical assistance was called in. It was supposed to be a relapse of the influenza, and no sort of danger was apprehended. Such was the course of each succeeding day. There were some distressing symptoms, but none which spoke of immediate alarm. On Thursday, May 2d, an eminent surgeon, well acquainted with his constitution, was summoned from London, and pronounced him free from any symptom of immediate danger, yet that very night was the work of death begun ;

and on the next morning, peacefully and without a struggle, he resigned his spirit into the hands of the God who gave it. During the course of his illness it was necessary to administer opiates; in the feverish slumber which resulted from them, his mind wandered until recalled by the voice of another, and his lips spoke without the exact rein of reason.

Yet even then his expressions were of the same holy nature as those which he uttered in more collected moments. From his full soul there poured forth unceasingly the pure streams of a renewed spirit. "I have the greatest fear," he said, "of saying something in delirium which may dishonor my God; I have heard of some good people who have been permitted to do so, and I have a horror of it." This was his fear, but so far from its accomplishment, when his reason wandered his mouth was filled with praises: he was reason-

ing with sinners, or speaking with unusual clearness and beauty of the deep things of God. When he was first laid upon that bed from which he never rose, he said to one near him: "Now from this bed to glory, or else to live more than I have ever lived, to the glory of my God." His humility of soul was strikingly exhibited in the course of this last struggle. "Look at me," he said to those around him, "look at me, the vilest of sinners, but saved by grace! Amazing that I can be saved." And this was heard to be his continual language; exalting the grace of God which was able to save even him. He thought too at this time of the welfare of those around him. He desired that an especial message might be delivered from him to all his people. "I would have you," he said, "seek out every drunkard, swearer, and sinner in this place, and warn them of God's wrath against their

sins. Tell them that all I have said to them is true. That on a bed of death I more than ever felt its truth; that a death-bed is no place for repentance." "Tell," said he, "the children of this place, from me, to hate sin, to strive against it, and above all things to beware of putting off the time of beginning to serve God." Throughout the whole of this time his soul appeared to be eminently "athirst for God."

"Wrestle for me," said he, in broken accents, but with deep earnestness, to a Christian friend who stood by his bed, "wrestle for me, that I may go hence to glory, or else live more like the saints in glory;" and at another time, when speaking of his earnest affection to his family and his great happiness in them, he added with emphasis, "But to be *holy*, to be perfectly *holy*, how gladly would I leave all of you, to be holy." Nor were

there wanting in his case some of those unusual supports with which the Lord at times upholds the goings of his servants when they enter upon the dark valley of the shadow of death. His exceeding self-suspicion, and his habitual sobriety of feeling, might not unnaturally have prevented the expression of any lively emotions of assured joy at the apprehension of the near approach of eternity. He had moreover a nervous shrinking from the act of dying, yet it pleased God to pour at this season a flood of heavenly light upon his soul. He passed the streams well-nigh dry shod. "I am safe," was his rejoicing testimony, "though a miserable sinner; saved by grace, I have not a doubt;" and calling to him one eminently beloved, he said: "You know that I have always had a horror of superstition. I believe that I inherited it, but I wish to tell you of the extraordinary revelation of him-

self, which it has pleased God to make to my soul ;” and then, “ Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean by any vision, but by unusual spiritual communion with Himself.” The words, “ Glory, glory !” were heard breaking from his lips as his countenance kindled into holy fervor, and his lips spoke of “ that bright light,” which, when asked “ What light ?” he explained to be “ the bright light of the Sun of righteousness.”

No less than four times during the last night which he spent upon earth was he heard repeating to himself, in solemn ascriptions of praise to God, “ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Amen.” And when, just before the last struggle, one said to him, “ The everlasting arms are under you,” he answered with eager joy, “ I know they are—I feel them—that is enough.”

It was “ enough” for him. He had been

found faithful. His Lord on whom he relied was able to deliver him. He forsook not His servant who trusted in Him, but even as he passed through the waters which separate this world from the next, He put a new song into his mouth, and filled his tongue with the praises of his Lord. And now he rests with Him. That pure soul has attained the sinless state for which he panted. He is with that Saviour whom he loved ; he has tried the promise of the Lord and found His word true : “ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”



