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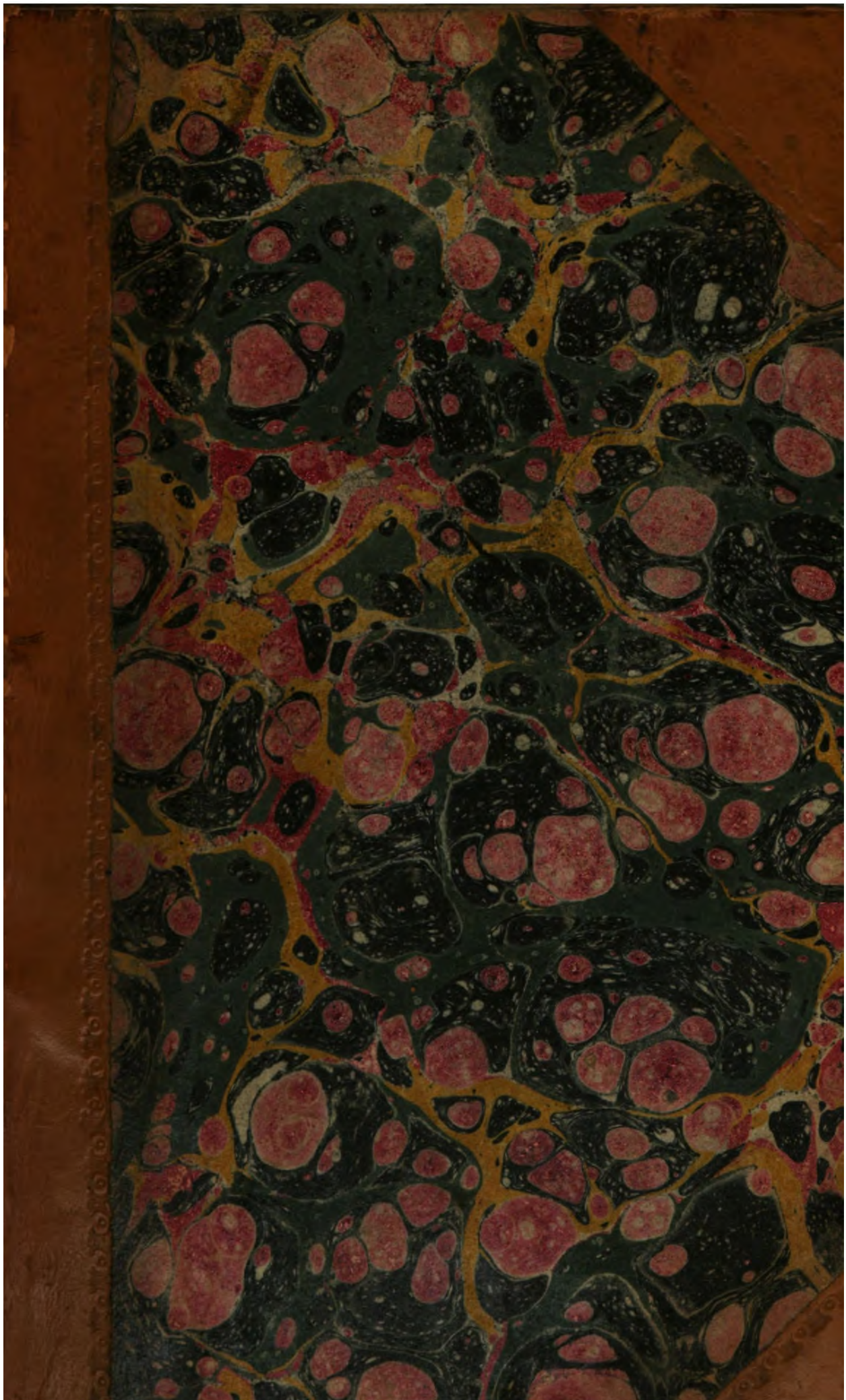
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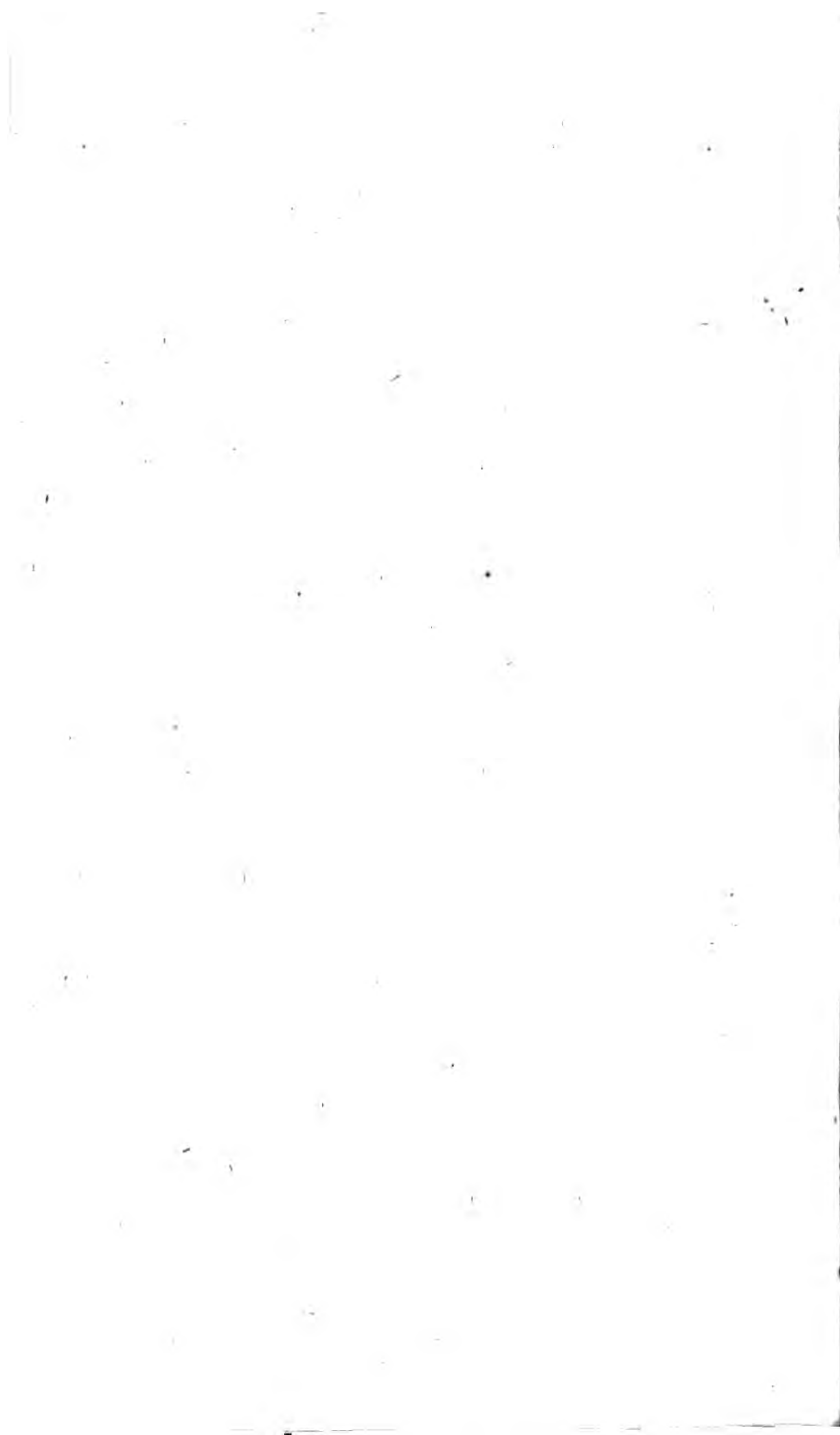


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M E M O I R

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN ESCREET, M.A.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS

LETTERS, DIARY, &c.

BY THOMAS WEBSTER, M. A.

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AND LATE FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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CONTENTS.

MEMOIRS.

Introduction	5
Early Life	1
Residence at Cambridge	10
Ministerial Labours	47
Last Illness and Death.....	75

SERMONS.

I. John xiv. 2.—“ <i>In my Father's house are many mansions.</i> ”	107
II. Psalm xxxi. 15.—“ <i>My times are in thy hand.</i> ”	121



INTRODUCTION.

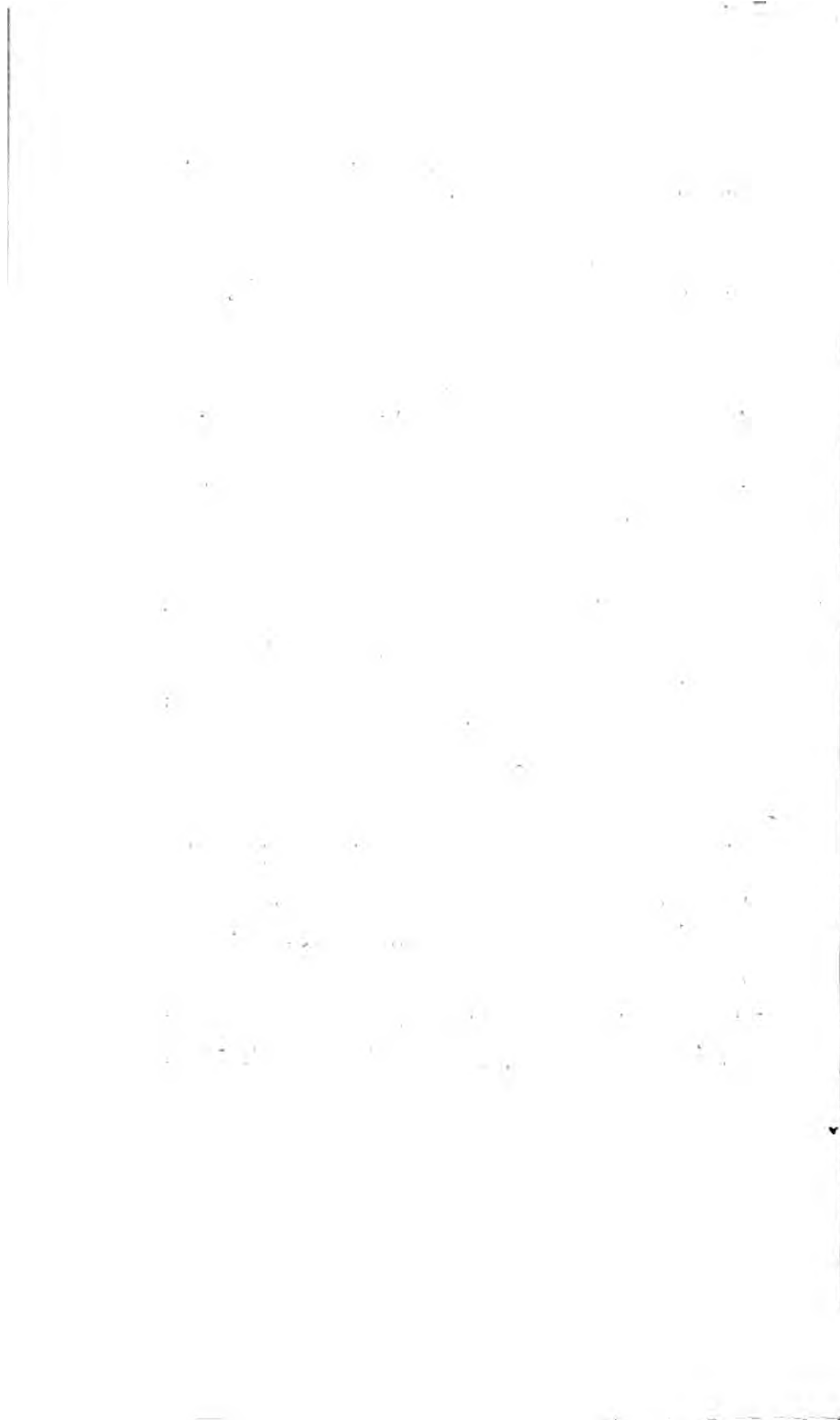
“**THY way,**” says the Psalmist, “**is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.**” But amidst the various dispensations of Almighty God, few appear more mysterious than the removal of so many of his faithful ministers, at the very moment when they appear most prepared for extensive usefulness, and when, according to the usual course of nature, it might reasonably be expected that they should long continue to instruct and edify the church. Such removals are accompanied, indeed, with the most salutary lessons; they teach us the vanity and the uncertainty of life; they warn all, however eminent their talents, and important their station, to cultivate habitual preparation for the coming of

their Lord; and they often impress more strongly upon the minds of a bereaved and afflicted family and people, those instructions which had previously been regarded with comparative indifference. But the full explication of these dispensations must be left to that world, where we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but shall know even as we are known.

Meanwhile it becomes us, as much as possible, to improve these afflicting events; to illustrate the characters and the conduct of those, who, according to our own apprehensions, are prematurely removed; and to endeavour at least, to excite others, to be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. With such views the following brief memoir was originally drawn up, and inserted in the *Christian Guardian*, and it is now re-printed in a detached and enlarged form, with the addition of extracts from the letters of the deceased, and the testimonies of his friends; and with two of his sermons, the one of which was almost

the last he preached, and the other was prepared for the benefit of his people, after the first attack of his fatal complaint; and evinces the warmth of his affection for them, and the christian temper which he exercised in such trying circumstances.

For the publication of these sermons, and for any defects which may be discovered in them, the writer of this memoir deems himself responsible. The discourses were certainly not intended by their author for the public eye. They were written for the instruction of a plain congregation; and it is due in justice to the character of the deceased, to remark, that he studiously endeavoured to adopt that mode of expression, and those ideas, which might be clearly intelligible to the people amongst whom he was placed; and that for this purpose he was prepared to sacrifice the character and reputation, to which he was so justly entitled, by his distinguished literary attainments.



CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

JOHN ESCREET was the fifth son of Thomas and Sarah Escreet, and was born at Kingston upon Hull, Aug. 1, 1796. When only three years old, he was deprived of his mother; but that loss was eventually supplied by the kind and tender attention of his mother-in-law, who, with his affectionate father, still survives to lament his death. Though naturally intelligent and docile, young Escreet was early observed to be somewhat hasty in his temper, but, when about seven years of age, this irritability of disposition was gradually removed, and during the whole succeeding period of his life he was distinguished for mildness and gentleness: for a calm and equable temper which scarcely any thing could ruffle or disturb. When eight years old he was placed under the care of the Rev. John Scott, at that time master of the grammar school in Hull, with whom he continued till prepared for Cambridge. "He was my pupil," says Mr.

Scott, “ from his first going to school, until his
“ removal to college ; first at the grammar school,
“ and afterwards as a private pupil ; and I must
“ pronounce him the most blameless youth that
“ ever came under my observation. I never saw
“ another like him ; he always seemed to do what
“ he ought, and I am almost ready to say, no-
“ thing else. He was always diligent : always
“ mild ; always dutiful. He lost his own mother
“ at an early age, but she who succeeded in her
“ place confirms my testimony of him, that such
“ as I saw him at school, such he was constantly
“ at home.”

Young Escreet was early intended for the mi-
nistry, and though the subject was rarely men-
tioned to him, he seemed not to have the least
interest for any other pursuit. He prosecuted
his studies with diligence and alacrity, though
frequently interrupted by the delicate state of his
health, which rendered occasional visits to some
friends in the country indispensable. Here,
however, his conduct was still the same. Kind,
equable, consistent, he every where conciliated
respect and esteem, and secured at once the ad-
miration and affection of his superiors and of all
with whom he was connected.

The source of this admirable conduct was no

doubt fervent piety. Of this Mr. Scott remarks, "I apprehend it is not easy to say how soon it originated. It seemed gradually to grow up from his early days. We may safely say he feared the Lord from his youth."

From the age of seven he appears to have been conscientious and regular in private prayer. But when eleven years old, the attention of his affectionate relative was attracted to his regular and uninterrupted retirement for devotional purposes. He was observed to resort to a room which he considered out of the hearing of the family, and to employ in general, nearly two hours in an evening, in fervent prayer, reading the scriptures, and meditation. "There," says his sister, "have I heard him, and my own heart has been much affected. O how sweetly he communed with his God! how fervently he breathed out his soul! how earnestly he prayed for each by name!" It is impossible to pass over this circumstance without observing, how strikingly the promise was fulfilled in his case, "they that seek me early shall find me." His early devotion was accompanied with eminent meekness and piety; was the means, under God, of preserving him from dangers and temptations in succeeding years; was followed by an early

ripeness in christian graces and heavenly dispositions; and terminated by an early removal to heaven; which, however, we may lament as our loss, is his exceeding gain.

Statements indeed of this nature are received in various quarters with a considerable degree of incredulity, but such incredulity chiefly arises from ignorance and inattention. Numerous instances of early piety have been communicated to the public on the most unquestionable authority; in many cases the young christian, after exhibiting a premature growth in knowledge and experience, has been favoured with a triumphant removal to the paradise of God;—but well authenticated instances are not wanting of those who have been as it were sanctified from the womb, and who having cheered a pious parent's heart by their early attention to sacred things, have continued for many years as honoured instruments of good to the church and the world. Were family religion more seriously attended to, and were children more early taught to consider the public discourses of their minister as intended for themselves as well as those of riper years, we might reasonably conclude that such instances would be still more frequent.

The great adversary of souls indeed sedulously

endeavours to lead men to an opposite conclusion; and he so far succeeds, that many well-meaning persons are induced to say,—‘ Do not
‘ put the bible too soon into your childrens’
‘ hands. Do not take them so early to public
‘ worship. Do not insist so strenuously upon
‘ their learning catechisms, hymns, and prayers.
‘ Do not make such a point of their attending fa-
‘ mily devotion. If you begin so soon, and press
‘ the matter so strongly, you will disgust your
‘ children with religion and they will turn out the
‘ worse.’ To all this it might be sufficient to
answer,—Duty is ours, success is God’s. Our
duty is to train up our children in the faith and
fear of God; that duty commences with their
birth, and those apprehensions of evil conse-
quences which would lead us to neglect the
divine command, ought to be instantaneously
rejected as temptations of our great enemy. But
it may farther be answered that these well-mean-
ing persons are as much mistaken in fact, as in
theory. In every instance where young persons
have been distinguished for early piety, it will be
found that they have been early introduced to
public and family worship, and most carefully
secluded from worldly principles and examples.
Young persons are much more frequently dis-

gusted with religion by the inconsistencies of those who profess it, than by any other cause whatever; and there cannot be a grosser inconsistency, than for a man to acknowledge religion, as a concern of supreme importance, and yet to allow his children and his family to remain in comparative ignorance of its doctrines, in neglect of its plain and positive precepts. The indulgence of sloth and indolence on the one hand, or of unsanctified tempers and tyrannical dispositions on the other, will be found the grand cause why the children of many ministers and other professors of religion, decline from the good ways of God. The dangers from negligence, indecision, and careless walking, are inconceivably greater than those which can result from strictness, and even unjustifiable severity.

The conduct of the friends of young Escreet was widely different from that which is here censured. He was early placed under the faithful and affectionate ministry of the Rev. T. Dikes and the Rev. J. Scott, and habituated to give an account of the sermons he heard. So diligent was his attention, and retentive his memory, that he could usually repeat the divisions and subdivisions even when they were numerous, though not in the habit of taking notes at the time. This was pecu-

liarly remarked on one occasion, when having heard a dissenting preacher, he recounted on his return, twelve distinct heads. After having retired for prayer, he frequently wrote what he recollected of the sermons ; a practice strongly recommended by his affectionate tutor.

This diligent attention to private devotion and public instruction, was followed, as might reasonably have been anticipated, by a corresponding growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This was especially evinced by his affectionate conduct to his parents and other relatives. When Mrs. Escreet was attacked by fever, he became a constant and unwearied visitor to her sick chamber, and manifested the most tender sympathy and regard. In conversing with him on one of these occasions, and referring to that hasty disposition which was observed in his earlier years, Mrs. E. remarked, " I never see any of that temper now John ;" to which he replied, " no, but you do not know " how much it costs me to subdue it."

In this regular course young E. persevered during his earlier years. He experienced indeed various interruptions from an ill state of health, and on one occasion, narrowly es-

caped being drowned in the river Hull, from which he was mercifully rescued. When he arrived at a suitable age, he was called upon to attend the ordinance of confirmation, and prepared for this solemn occasion with all that devotion and seriousness, which might reasonably have been anticipated from his previous character. He rose on the appointed day at five o'clock in the morning, that he might without interruption pour out his soul before God, and the whole of his subsequent conduct, shewed how deeply he was impressed with the vows of God which were upon him.

The views which he entertained of the nature and importance of this ordinance, will more suitably come before us on a future occasion; but it may not be improper here to remark, that so far from regarding it as a mere ceremony, he contemplated it as a mean to an important end, and conscientiously improved it as preparatory to an attendance on the sacrament of the Lord's supper; at which, from this period he became a regular and devout communicant. 'I remember,' says one of his surviving companions, 'that on my first coming I was much struck with him: before I was in the habit of

‘attending the sacrament, his regular attendance
‘on that ordinance used to make me ashamed of
‘myself.’—It is indeed more than probable, that
his upright and holy conduct and conversation,
was, through the divine blessing, instrumental
in leading many seriously to consider their ways,
and eventually to return unto the Lord.

CHAPTER II.

RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE.

IN the autumn of 1813, when seventeen years of age, Mr. Escreet commenced his residence at Trinity college, Cambridge. An appearance at either university forms an important epoch in life, and must always be contemplated by pious and prudent friends with considerable anxiety. Not that the dangers of our universities are greater than those of various other situations: not that young men are there exposed to more formidable and unavoidable temptations than elsewhere, for much more formidable temptations to vicious and immoral practices, are met with in the metropolis, and in most of our large provincial towns; but because the commencement of a residence at the university is the entrance upon a new situation in life; is necessarily accompanied with the removal of many of the restraints under which a young man has previously been placed; deprives him of the watchful eye and prudent caution of a beloved parent or an affectionate tutor; leaves

a large part of his time absolutely at his disposal ; and brings him into contact with a number of idle, dissipated, or expensive young men, with whom he may either have been slightly acquainted at school, or to whom he may be introduced by attending at the same lecture room, or sitting at the same table.

That all is done which might be effected to guard young men against these dangers, is what few persons will be prepared to maintain. The regulations with respect to lodging houses at Cambridge, have certainly done much to diminish the evils to which that system must necessarily be exposed ; but the system itself cannot be finally terminated, until more apartments are provided within the walls of the colleges, without precluding many young men from enjoying that privilege of an university education, to which their situation and prospects justly entitle them ; or which is indispensably requisite to their future success in various professions. And however we may be disposed to censure any particular college for not erecting adequate buildings, we must at the same time recollect, that such erections not only imply the incurring of a considerable expence, to which the funds of the society may not always be adequate, but is also impeded

by a variety of other obstacles, and attended with consequences which imperiously demand mature consideration.

Thus much seems necessary to premise in justice to those venerable institutions, to which this country is so deeply indebted. Nothing is easier than to censure existing defects; but in attempting to remedy what is wrong, it is incumbent upon us to guard against the introduction of equal, or even greater evils. And notwithstanding all the complaints we hear, it is scarcely possible that on any general system, greater encouragement can be held out to literary excellence, whether classical or mathematical, than is at present offered in the university of Cambridge.

Mr. Escreet's arrival at college was indeed a change of scene, but accompanied by no change of conduct. He pursued the same regular, studious, quiet, religious course, which had distinguished his earlier years; a course it is true which leaves little for the biographer to record, but which afforded an important and salutary example to those who had the opportunity of observing it, and well deserves the imitation of others. The manner in which his time was spent, is thus stated in one of his letters, which

may also furnish some idea of college life to those who are not acquainted with it.

After some playful remarks, for though grave, he was never gloomy, he proceeds :—‘ It will not
‘ be amiss to give you an account how I spend
‘ the day. In the morning we go to chapel at
‘ seven, which must surely have been ordained
‘ in ancient days, when men rose much earlier
‘ than they now do ; however, we are only ob-
‘ liged to go four mornings in the week, including
‘ sunday morning. The service is over by half-
‘ past seven, when there intervenes a little more
‘ than an hour for reading before breakfast. At
‘ nine, we go to the lecture on Euclid, which
‘ lasts until ten, we then go to a classical lecture
‘ until eleven. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and
‘ Fridays, there is a lecture on divinity from
‘ twelve to one, and as we are obliged to attend
‘ twenty-five of these previous to ordination, I
‘ was advised to attend them as soon as possible,
‘ that I might have that leisure time when there
‘ would be more occasion for it. From one, to
‘ a quarter-past two, is spent in walking, &c.,
‘ after which we go into the hall to dinner. We
‘ sit down where we please, save that there are
‘ tables for the fellows, fellow-commoners, &c.,
‘ which are not to be approached by us. Our

‘ commons are chiefly beef and mutton, potatoes
‘ in plenty, and greens ; the saints days are ob-
‘ served at other colleges by having no lectures,
‘ we however, keep them in a different manner,
‘ we retain the lectures but make the distinction
‘ at dinner. You then see not only plain beef,
‘ mutton, &c., but also geese, ducks, roast pig,
‘ fowls, and sometimes a turkey. We have no
‘ ceremonies; it is not *Mr. such a one, what part*
‘ *would you take*, but each one helps himself to
‘ what part he likes best, and then another takes
‘ the joint, and the meat is in general terribly
‘ mangled. The afternoon is therefore the longest
‘ part of the day, most of which will be devoted
‘ to reading. Chapel in the evening at half-past
‘ five to six, after which tea; at eight I lay by
‘ and leave my room at half-past nine, when they
‘ make up a fire, which I light in the morning,
‘ though I have not been up very early yet,
‘ about six, I think, sometimes later: thus you
‘ see the order of the day!

To a regular studious man, such as Mr. Es-
creech was, the history of one day may be regarded
as the history of the year. And accordingly, the
whole of his correspondence indicates, that his
time was employed much in the same way, from
the beginning to the end of his career. The

same habit of early rising, of regular study, appears to have been preserved, with little interruption, except what was necessarily occasioned by ill health, by an inflammatory complaint in his eyes, or by travelling at stated intervals between Cambridge and Hull.

Such strict and invariable regularity, will doubtless, be regarded by some as unnecessary, and by others it will be censured as dull, monotonous and stupifying. It is however, of the utmost importance—it is the only sure way to success; it is for want of this, that many young men of great natural powers, and favoured with every conceivable advantage, either fail in their academical career, or purchase success by sacrifices which the utmost honours and emoluments can never compensate;—by ruined health and an enfeebled constitution.

The importance of this subject may perhaps excuse a little digression from the main thread of the memoir. Those who are conversant with our universities, are well aware that frequent instances occur where the health is seriously injured; that many men after great exertions, are compelled to relinquish their pursuits, and that others derive from such examples, an argument, or a pretext for desisting from the studies of the

place, and confining themselves to the acquisition of just so much knowledge as may secure a degree, lest by over exertion their health also should be ruined.

The question therefore may fairly be asked, does that degree of application which is necessary to ensure the attainment of university honours and advantages, expose the student to very imminent danger of injuring his health? And in connection with this question it might also be asked, do illness or mortality prevail most among reading or non-reading men?

The complete determination of these questions would require a degree of medical knowledge, to which the writer can obviously lay no claim; but judging from his own experience, from the observations he has been able to make on those cases, which occurred during his passage through the university, and a twelve years residence in its immediate vicinity, he is firmly convinced that a very small proportion of the sickness or the mortality which occurs in the university of Cambridge, can with any degree of fairness be regarded as the necessary effects of study; and that in a very large proportion of cases where studious men fall a sacrifice, the melancholy event is more to be attributed

to the neglect of some plain and simple rules, which the experience of those who have passed over the ground with success would obviously suggest, than to any natural consequence of diligent exertion.

It will indeed generally be found that where young men fall a sacrifice, the real blame attaches not to a studious life, but to the vain attempt of effecting a given object by disproportionate means. Many students are sent to college very slenderly and insufficiently prepared, and from various motives—motives often of the most laudable nature, are induced to emulate those who have enjoyed greater advantages. Others who have been well prepared, discovering on their first arrival with what facility they can outstrip their companions, are induced to give way to indolence and repose, until roused to exertion by the approach of some arduous and important examination; and others having fixed their hearts on the very highest academical honours, will not for one moment listen to those who suggest the importance of regular exercise, of early rest, and occasional relaxation. In each of these classes, instances occur of impaired health, ruined constitutions, and early death: but such lamentable results cannot with any degree of justice be re-

garded as the natural or necessary effects of a studious life, but must chiefly be imputed to the neglect of common prudence, or the disregard of the dictates of experience.

If these views are correct, it cannot be too strongly urged upon parents and tutors, to retain young men from the university, until they are effectually prepared for the studies of the place, and to impress upon those who are commencing their residence, the importance of regular study, diligence, and perseverance, from their first entrance, until the completion of their academical course.

Mr. Escreet's case strongly confirms these ideas. Notwithstanding a naturally delicate constitution, liable to frequent attacks of indisposition, and subject to the most distressing inflammatory complaint in his eyes, which entirely disabled him for ten weeks in his first year, he yet appeared in the second class at his first examination, and succeeded to the first class in the second; and though compelled to absent himself entirely from college the ensuing year, and spend a considerable part of it at Leeds, under the surgical care of the late distinguished and excellent William Hey, Esq., he was on his return, elected scholar, attained a respectable

degree, and after a long and laborious preparation as candidate for a fellowship, finally quitted Cambridge in a state of health which encouraged him to undertake a greater degree of ministerial labour, than can, generally speaking, be deemed expedient.

His whole course was marked by diligence and regularity. His society was very limited. Those indeed, who seriously apply themselves to study in our universities, have no time for idle calls, and a numerous acquaintance; and nothing is more dangerous to the young student than the claims of former school-fellows and companions. Reading men have seldom much time to bestow upon a new comer; non-reading men are a disgrace to themselves and a pest to others.

His friends however, though limited in number, were highly valuable, and all with one voice unite in testifying the deep sense they entertained of the excellence of his character, and the benefit resulting from his acquaintance. 'His conduct at Cambridge,' says one, 'was that even, steady, straight forward course, which was peculiar to himself. Nothing seemed to turn him at all out of the way, What was the temptation of some religious young men, getting together in parties, and dissipating their time, was no

‘temptation to him: his companions might be
‘higher in life, or lower than he was, but while
‘he was very friendly with both, he was not at
‘all prevailed upon to ascend or descend, but
‘kept his own course. His conversation was
‘generally sensible, his frame of mind habitually
‘serious. His religion was of that practical kind
‘which influenced every thing he did and said,
‘and was seen to pervade the whole man!’

‘I met with him,’ says the Rev. E. White of
‘Gosfield, ‘accidentally, at Mr. C’s room at
‘breakfast, and was much struck with the piety
‘I perceived in him, connected with so much
‘amiableness, solidity, and judgment.’ A friend-
ship then commenced which continued until
death; and in a funeral sermon, preached at
Stisted, March 23, 1823, Mr. White remarks,
‘All the nine years I have known him I never
‘heard him speak an idle word. In college he
‘was my counsellor, my friend. His prayers
‘often animated me. My loss is almost irrepa-
‘rable.’

‘We were,’ says another of his surviving
friends, in a letter to Mr. T. Escreet, ‘of the
‘same year, and of the same college, and there-
‘fore knew one another by sight; but till about a
‘a year before our taking our degrees, I was al-

‘ together involved in such a different line of ac-
‘ quaintance, that we had no personal intercourse.
‘ About that period however, I remember that
‘ while I was slowly struggling out of a very
‘ awful abyss, the meek and amiable conduct of
‘ your brother was one circumstance which dis-
‘ posed me to think favourably of that part of
‘ my fellow students who were stigmatized by the
‘ rest as religious, and with whom I had then no
‘ acquaintance or connexion. I was at that time,
‘ certainly a very impartial witness, and the con-
‘ duct which could avail to conciliate the mind
‘ of such a person as I then was, must have had
‘ some traces of a peculiar holiness and beauty.
‘ As my own views became clear, and my con-
‘ duct decided, mutual friends brought us into
‘ closer contact, and for about three months pre-
‘ vious to my being ordained deacon, your bro-
‘ ther and myself, used to meet for about an hour
‘ and a half, every Saturday evening, to prepare
‘ for the Sunday, by reading a chapter and con-
‘ versing over it, always beginning and ending
‘ with a few words of prayer. Our number was
‘ never increased by any addition, even occasional,
‘ that I remember; and I believe such parties are
‘ best, when the number does not exceed three
‘ or four. We had no temptation to display,

‘ and communicated our ideas without reserve.
 ‘ What I chiefly remember of your brother is, the
 ‘ simplicity with which he adhered to the scrip-
 ‘ tures in all his views, both upon doctrinal and
 ‘ practical points; his acquaintance with the
 ‘ bible, and his meek and unassuming manner.
 ‘ He was far my superior in acquaintance with
 ‘ the subjects on which we spoke; but he seemed
 ‘ always more willing to hear, than to speak, to
 ‘ be the learner, rather than the teacher. His
 ‘ modesty indeed was so great, that it required
 ‘ long acquaintance, or very great penetration, to
 ‘ discern his excellence. And it consisted more
 ‘ in the calm and even tenor of his life, and the
 ‘ constant maintenance of a meek and humble
 ‘ spirit, than in any singular or striking passages
 ‘ which could be put into the shape of anecdote.
 ‘ Though suffering much from ill health, he ap-
 ‘ peared always resigned and even cheerful; and
 ‘ I cannot charge my memory, that during the
 ‘ whole course of our acquaintance, which was
 ‘ very intimate for some time before I left the
 ‘ university, I ever knew him do any thing, or
 ‘ speak a word, that was unchristian.’

A similar, unreserved testimony is given by
 another of his intimate and valuable friends;
 who dwells particularly on the advantages de-

rived from his religious conversation, and the benefits resulting from a few young friends meeting together on the Sunday afternoon, to read the scriptures and converse upon them.

The writer of this memoir is well aware with what jealousy meetings of this nature are regarded in various quarters, and he must have had very little experience, who has not discovered, that there is danger lest they should be abused. But it surely argues a very morbid and unchristian state of mind, when the meeting of a few young men, for the purpose of reading the scriptures and of prayer, are considered more dangerous and alarming, than their meeting for conviviality or amusement. If men, professing religion, allow themselves to neglect the proper studies of the place, under the pretext that they are devoting their time to religious pursuits, the writer has no hesitation in saying, that they grossly neglect the duty of that station of life to which God has called them; but if a portion of the unappropriated leisure of the Lord's day, and an hour or two on one or two evenings of the week, are employed by serious young men in mutually communicating their ideas upon religious and scriptural subjects; the writer conceives that such individuals, are not only strictly in the path of

duty, but are deserving of every encouragement which can consistently be given them.

It is, however, of the utmost importance, that the prudent conduct of Mr. Escreet and his companions should be strictly observed. There should be no display,—the numbers who meet together should be small and limited,—the time should not interfere with any prescribed duty,—the whole should be calculated for private instruction and edification, and every approximation to publicity should be carefully avoided. So strictly was this the case with Mr. E. and his friends, that probably very few persons but the parties actually engaged, were at all aware that six young men met for such a purpose in Trinity college on the Sunday afternoons, and three on the Saturday evenings.

That these young men were not negligent of the proper studies of the place, is clearly manifest from the situations which they have since occupied. Of the other individuals, the writer does not feel himself authorized to speak, but of Mr. Escreet, it may be proper to remark, that notwithstanding all the impediments resulting from his delicate state of health, and the complaint in his eyes, he distinguished himself as we have already seen in the college examinations, was

elected scholar in 1817, and was found in the list of wranglers, at the time of taking his degree in January 1818.

After commencing B. A. Mr. E. remained at college to prepare for examination, as candidate for a fellowship, and continued to pursue his studies with the same diligence and regularity as formerly. The state of his health, and the weakness of his eyes, very much impeded his progress, and prevented his ever indulging any sanguine hopes of success. But he was actuated by a higher principle than mere temporal advantage, and therefore he felt it his duty to persevere. He considered that the honour of religion was deeply concerned in the literary acquirements of its professors, and that it was therefore incumbent upon him, under every discouragement, to do what he could; the result of this conduct was that though he eventually failed in obtaining a fellowship, he secured a degree of esteem and respect from the members of his college, which was of far more intrinsic value than the mere acquisition of the object at which he aimed.

During this period, Mr. E. occasionally recorded the feelings of his mind for his own private edification. A few fragments of this nature were found among his papers, which were

evidently not intended for any eye but his own. The following extracts will doubtless be read with interest, and, we trust, with edification also.

“ Jan. 13, 1819.—WEAKNESS OF MY NATURE.—I feel my own weakness more and more. I can do nothing without God’s help. If he leave me to myself, I must certainly perish. I would, however, lie a suppliant at his feet and implore his grace.

“ Jan. 17.—1 Sam. ii. 30. ‘Those who honour God he will honour.’ My sabbath has been not near so profitable as the last. I feel a strange distance from God. Why? On the preceding Saturday night, instead of reading, I devoted more time to devotion, which I neglected to do last night. In the former case, I was richly repaid; for the latter I suffer loss.

“ I have just parted from White and Bull. God bless them in the matter of the senate-house, and direct all their goings.

“ Nov. 4.—SINGLENESS OF EYE DESIRED.—We have this day formed a small committee for collecting subscriptions among the members of the University for the Bible Society, of which I am Secretary. May the Lord prosper us in our work, and give me a single eye to his glory!

How difficult is this attainment! Self cleaves to every thing.

“Nov. 6.—OUR WEAKNESS, GOD’S STRENGTH.—When we feel an indisposition to prayer, arising from a sense of our own weakness, we should be the more encouraged to go, trusting in God; agreeably to what the Apostle says, ‘When I am weak, then am I strong.’

“Nov. 7.—RESOLUTION.—I have this day attended the sacrament, and resolved again to devote myself to God; to resist my besetting sins; to be on my watch against neglecting private devotion, and to make it a main object to live to God. May the Lord help me!

“Jan. 5, 1820.—I feel my dependence on God for every thing. If left to myself, I must fall; I can only cry, ‘Lord, hold thou me up, so shall I be safe.’

“Feb. 18.—I little thought I should have seen so much of my own heart. Lord, give me a new heart!

“March 7.—DAY OF JUDGMENT.—What crowds to see the chairing of the new member to-day, and what a small company at church to-night! There is only one day in which men will assemble in a larger multitude for religion than for the world; and that is, the day of judgment.

“ March 8.—PRESUMPTION.—Adam probably expected that Eve would have died immediately on taking the forbidden fruit, and was thus perhaps emboldened to commit the same sin.

“ April 30.—HOLINESS.—I was much struck in chapel this morning with that part of the Te Deum, ‘ To Thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.’ Is this the burden of their song? Amidst all the other attributes of the Almighty, his power, wisdom, goodness, mercy, &c. &c. is holiness alone selected? How, then, should we labour to be holy as he is holy! As their song is continual, so should our pantings after holiness be. How seasonable will it be to remember this in times of temptation! ‘ Holiness becometh my house for ever.’

“ May 8.—NEED OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT.—What need have we of the influences of the Spirit to give us even a taste for the Scriptures, as well as an insight into their truths. ‘ O Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from me.’

“ May 14.—HELP IN NEED.—The Apostles prayed for boldness to speak his word. When they had prayed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit to speak the word with all boldness. How true it is, ‘ As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.’

“ May 15.—**END OF SCRIPTURES.**—An angel (Acts, v.) is sent from heaven to liberate the Apostles, and what is his message? ‘ Go, speak unto the people all the words of this life.’ Do, then, the words of Jesus and his disciples lead to life? O how careful should I be ever so to esteem them when reading, and so to be influenced in practising them!

“ June 4.—**NECESSITY OF FIRMNESS.**—I seem to see somewhat more of the necessity of counting the cost. Sloth and evil desires are my besetting sins; and with these I must part. It is necessary to set my face like a flint against these. Like a man with his back to a tree, determined not to yield to his foes, so sometimes do I feel, praying at the same time mightily for help.

“ I learnt this day, that by neglect of private prayer our foes are strengthened. When Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, &c. Lord, keep me always fervent in prayer.

“ July 13.—**NEED OF SPIRITUALITY.**—Without maintaining the spirit of religion continually in the mind, I find it impossible to resist sin and Satan. We must be armed with the Christian panoply, or else we shall inevitably be wounded in the conflict.

“ Sept. 3.—**CONFLICT.**—I am determined, by

God's grace, to give myself up to him. I cast myself on his mercy and help. I say, 'Save, Lord, or I perish.' I cannot deliver myself from the dominion of sin. But the Saviour is mighty. Lord, increase my faith, and keep me from falling.

"Sept. 4.—ENCOURAGEMENT.—I feel encouragement in this, that I want nothing but what God is willing to bestow. The Apostle St. Peter says, that we should live the rest of our time to the will of God, and this is what I want above all things.

"DIFFICULTY OF FAITH.—How difficult is faith—a constant and habitual confiding—trusting in nothing but in the grace of God! For we naturally had rather trust to any thing for deliverance than to the power of God!

"Sept. 7.—WE STAND BY FAITH.—I can only be kept upright by the power of God, by applying continually to Christ; pleading what he has done, and laying hold of his strength. 'We are kept by the power of God *through faith.*'

"Sept. 10.—WATCHFULNESS.—How powerful is our great adversary! Every moment are we exposed to his attacks. If foiled in one attempt, he tries another; if one sin allures not, another apparently less heinous is made use of to

draw us from God; so that we need be watchful in all things."

The next extract shews, that while Mr. E. was diligently attending to the concerns of his own soul, he was not inattentive to the spiritual wants of others. The individual to whom it refers, appears to have been one of the college servants, and it will be generally allowed, that persons of this class, are exposed to peculiar difficulties and temptations. Happy are they who not only meet with kind and liberal masters as to temporal concerns, but are favoured with those who will occasionally call their attention to that better world, where all earthly distinctions shall cease and vanish away.

"This day W—— died, after a long illness. H. and myself had visited him repeatedly. Hearing that he was very near his end yesterday, I called immediately after breakfast. His face presented a death-like appearance; but he was very happy in his mind. They told me that he was now assured of his interest in Christ. The Bible being put into my hands, I asked him what part he would wish me to read; he replied, About the resurrection. I turned to the 15th of 1st Corinthians; but as he at times appeared likely to breathe his last, I only read a part,

making now and then a remark suitable to the occasion. Great was his animation when I came to this, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' He clapped his hands while I was reading this, and on his countenance was marked the greatest joy and triumph. He had before said two or three times, 'How came you to know all this? I did not tell you' (for his memory seemed to have failed him). He had, indeed, told them of it before; but it was sufficiently marked in his countenance and behaviour, so as to be visible by all. When I was reading the above passage, he said, 'I am ready! I am ready!'—(and I think also,)—'Come, Lord Jesus.' He requested me, if I did not think it too much, to go to prayer. I did so. He joined with energy and loudness in part of the Lord's Prayer; having before told his wife to be still, and not interrupt him with her lamentations. After prayer, I wished him good bye; and he said, he hoped we should meet shortly, or at least—(meaning not to wish my life short)—but that at least we should meet again in heaven. He survived the day; and I was nearly on the point of going to enquire after him, when H. came up, and informed me that he had left this world about nine this morning.

“ When I first called on him, about two months ago, from an expression which he made use of, ‘ that he did as well as he could,’ I was somewhat afraid lest he might be trusting to himself, or to any thing he could do for salvation, and therefore guarded him against it; and endeavoured in my feeble way to point out the Saviour. During the time I have seen him, I have great reason to be assured that his trust was in Christ alone for salvation. He loved to read the word of God; and marked particular passages, and seemed always most unhappy when, through the force of his disorder, he had not been able to attend to divine things. He would say, with evident feelings of regret, ‘ I have not been able to think much to-day.’ And though, when he got very little sleep in the night, he was very subject to dozing in the day, yet he used to strive against it, because it disqualified him for reading and meditation. Sometimes he would say, he was more comfortable than before: from which it was evident, that he had felt his ruined state by nature, and was seeking deliverance. He seemed to have a full persuasion, that he should see things more clearly before he died. He was exhorted to seek earnestly for it; and I believe verily that

he obtained it—that he was fully assured before his death of his interest in Christ.

“To the Lord be all the praise! May he enable me to be more active in his service!”

And here perhaps it may not be inexpedient to introduce an extract from one of Mr. E.'s Letters, containing an account of the removal of a fellow student, as illustrating the christian sympathy and lively feelings which so invariably marked his character.

‘ I should have written before but have been
‘ a good deal occupied; you would see in the
‘ newspapers the death of —— B. A. of the
‘ same year with myself. I had not been very
‘ intimately acquainted with him beforehand, but
‘ was requested by H. to sit up with him part of
‘ the night;—on the Monday preceding he had
‘ been playing at Tennis, a very violent exercise,
‘ by which he was thrown into an excessive per-
‘ spiration, and imprudently put on a cold, not
‘ to say a damp shirt; this brought on an infla-
‘ mation in the lungs.—I sat up with him along
‘ with C. till three in the Morning. He conti-
‘ nued much the same all Sunday, and about
‘ twelve at night his friends arrived. On Mon-
‘ day evening the Physician thinking there was
‘ no hope, consented that he should speak to his

‘ friends, bid them farewell, in short do just
‘ what he pleased. I must here premise that
‘ ——— was of a most amiable disposition and
‘ much respected. When he came up to Cam-
‘ bridge he was, I believe, serious; but sadly de-
‘ clined. On the Sunday Evening he became
‘ fully aware of his departure; and exhibited,
‘ during the remainder of his short life, all the
‘ signs of true repentance. In bidding his ac-
‘ quaintance farewell, he warned them of their
‘ danger, and dictated to one a solemn letter.
‘ We received the sacrament with him on Mon-
‘ day night, between twelve and one; it was as
‘ you may imagine a solemn scene: a fellow
‘ mortal just about to leave this world, implor-
‘ ing the mercy of an injured Saviour; never
‘ did the body and blood of Christ appear so
‘ precious as then, when we had a view of death
‘ and eternity. . . On Wednesday night he became
‘ a little worse, and died about eleven. No-
‘ thing now remains but for us to pray that his
‘ sudden removal may not be lost upon us, but
‘ that we may be taught so to number our days
‘ as to apply our hearts unto wisdom. O that
‘ his gay friends may take warning by his dying
‘ entreaties, and indeed turn to God.’

Amidst, however, Mr. E.’s zealous exertions

for the benefit of others, and his diligent attention to the duties of his station, he was not exempt from spiritual trials and temptations which compelled him to resort to the great captain of salvation, for that deliverance and support which he alone can give.

Under date of September 17, he thus writes.—

“ CONFLICT, AND HOW TO GET THE VICTORY. — My song shall be of the mercies of the Lord, and I will now recount his loving kindness. About two months ago, I became sensible that I was deceiving myself. I had given way to my besetting sin, but I now saw that it must be conquered. I resolved not to indulge sinful thoughts any longer, but still Satan kept me as his captive. I tried the most likely means to overcome my sins, but all failed: Satan still kept me as his captive. I found all human means in vain; I committed the matter to the Lord. At first I was foiled, and I began to despair of ever gaining the victory. But I made my supplication to God, and find, that ‘when I am weak, then am I strong.’ (See Sept. 3, 4, 7.) I believe, that through his grace I shall be victorious. But it was a hard matter simply to exercise faith in Christ, much harder than to undergo any self-denial or even torture.

“ I see how God has helped me, and therefore humbly trust, that he will still continue so to do. Lord, help my unbelief !”

In the early part of 1820, Mr. E. visited his friends at Hull ; of this journey little is recorded, and it would therefore have been passed over in silence, had he not on that occasion, borne a public testimony at a meeting of the Sunday schools in Hull, to the value and importance of early religious education.

‘ I hope,’ said he, ‘ I shall be pardoned for
‘ rising to say a few words, on a subject with
‘ which many in this room are better acquainted
‘ than myself. The situation in which for the
‘ last six years I have been placed, has entirely
‘ prevented me from taking part in the honour-
‘ able office of teacher in a Sunday school. I
‘ can only therefore, say a few words on the ad-
‘ vantages of religious instruction in youth, and
‘ this more especially, in the season of sickness
‘ and death. Children as well as others must
‘ die ;—they too must appear before God. If
‘ then, they have never before heard the truths of
‘ religion,—if they have not been shewn their de-
‘ pravity by nature, their need of a redeemer,
‘ and of the influences of the Spirit of God, there
‘ is nothing, if I may so say, to lay hold of ; the

‘ whole work of religious instruction is to begin ;
‘ and that too when the body is enfeebled by
‘ disease, the mind not capable of attention, and
‘ there is but a step between them and death.
‘ But if the seed has been early sown ;—if there
‘ has been line upon line, and precept upon pre-
‘ cept, then the minister, or whoever he may be
‘ who visits them, has only to call to remem-
‘ brance what they have already learned. He
‘ can point them to the Saviour of whom they
‘ have often heard, enlarge upon his wondrous
‘ love, tell them all he has done for their souls,
‘ and lead them to him who hath said, “ Suffer
“ the little children to come unto me and forbid
“ them not.” ’

He then illustrated and enforced these remarks by several anecdotes of children, instructed in one of those Sunday schools, whose ages did not exceed nine or ten.

On Mr. E.’s return to Cambridge, and while he was preparing for his final examination, various important and valuable situations were proposed for his acceptance. He was offered an appointment as tutor in a nobleman’s family ; or to undertake the care of a church in Switzerland ; or to be nominated as principal of a college in Nova Scotia ; or to go out as chaplain to

India. He was rather inclined to accept of the latter proposal ; but a deference to the wishes of his father, who had watched his progress at the university with satisfaction and delight, induced him to decline the proposal. The propriety of this decision was confirmed, by the opinion of his medical advisers, who considered it highly improbable that he should long survive, if exposed to an East Indian climate.

The following extracts from his letters, illustrate the views and feelings of his mind on this important subject.

‘ I have heard nothing further about India. I
 ‘ would leave it in the hands of God. I would
 ‘ live more to God than I have done : but the
 ‘ more I desire, the more difficulty I feel. There
 ‘ is a daily cross which each man must take up
 ‘ if he would follow his divine master. Much
 ‘ self-denial, yea, continual self-denial, is neces-
 ‘ sary in order to maintain the life of religion in
 ‘ the soul ; so that if salvation depended on our-
 ‘ selves, none would be partakers of it ; the news
 ‘ of deliverance would be in vain. But our
 ‘ wants are amply provided for : help is laid on
 ‘ one that is mighty : so that we may be strength-
 ‘ ened with might by his spirit in the inner man.’

‘ July 8, 1820.—The subject of which you

‘ write is of such vast importance, that I shall
‘ enter immediately on that topic.

‘ I feel entirely incompetent to offer you any
‘ advice, “ Physician heal thyself,” might then
‘ justly be applied. For I am in a great strait
‘ myself, from which I hope the Lord in his good
‘ time will deliver me. I will just tell you my
‘ circumstances, and how I feel with regard to this
‘ matter. About a fortnight ago, I heard that
‘ ——— wished particularly to see me; having
‘ some intimation of the subject, I considered it
‘ well, and made it a matter of much prayer. I
‘ told ———, that if he could meet with others
‘ better qualified, taking every thing into account,
‘ (eyes, &c.) I should decidedly say to them “ Go
‘ and the Lord be with you;” if such were not to
‘ be found, then I should think it my duty to go.
‘ Seeing him afterwards I mentioned more par-
‘ ticularly the state of my eyes, which have been
‘ much worse. He said, “ that was the only
‘ objection, and that I had better consult an ocu-
‘ list.” I was fully intending to do so in order
‘ to get the matter settled at once, when I re-
‘ ceived yesterday morning an answer to a letter
‘ written ten days ago. In this my father says,
‘ it gave him great uneasiness that I had not
‘ given up the idea; that he cannot bring his

‘ mind to consent to it ; after he is gone I may
‘ then do as I please. I thought of calling on
‘ ——, but I find he is gone to London. So am
‘ I circumstanced : my eyes would I am afraid
‘ prevent me from being at all useful in the
‘ work, and I should be only a cumberer if I
‘ went, and my friends you see, oppose. My
‘ only desire is, that in this matter, the will of
‘ the Lord may be done. A few short years have
‘ their course to run, and then it will little signify
‘ where we have been employed in our master’s
‘ vineyard, or what self-denial we have endured
‘ for him in passing through the wilderness of
‘ this world. I seem to wish to set myself on the
‘ borders of the grave, and from the brink of
‘ eternity, to decide so important, so momentous
‘ a question. Yet at present I see not my way
‘ quite clear. I pray most earnestly for the divine
‘ direction, that the lines may fall to me where
‘ he judges best, and where I may be most useful.
‘ With regard to yourself, you have so good a
‘ counsellor, that I need say nothing. It is of
‘ vast importance that good chaplains should be
‘ sent to India, and with cheerfulness would I
‘ go, if I saw my way clear before me. Yesterday
‘ and to-day, I was a good deal oppressed with
‘ considering the subject, and more especially

‘ when I heard that —— would not be at home
 ‘ till the end of the week. But I now feel as
 ‘ though I could commit it entirely into the hands
 ‘ of God, and in so doing feel much happiness.
 ‘ I wish to have nothing to reproach myself for
 ‘ afterwards, but to be ready to act as my duty
 ‘ shall appear, with hearty prayers that the steps
 ‘ of both of us may be ordered by him, who doeth
 ‘ all things well, and over-ruleth all for the good
 ‘ of his church—believe me, &c.’

‘ I duly received yours on Friday last, and shall
 ‘ certainly comply with your desire so strongly
 ‘ expressed. When I take all things into consi-
 ‘ deration, (my eyes, &c.) it does not seem the will
 ‘ of God that I should go to India, at least, at pre-
 ‘ sent; as this seems pretty clear I am content. I
 ‘ had no desire to leave my native land. The riches
 ‘ and the honours of India, had, I think, I may
 ‘ say, no weight with me in the consideration of
 ‘ this matter. My only desire was to do what
 ‘ appeared to be the will of God, whether accord-
 ‘ ing to my inclinations, or contrary to them. In
 ‘ short, I wished to view the matter as on the
 ‘ borders of eternity—to look upon it as I should
 ‘ one day do at the brink of the grave. I knew
 ‘ full well that dangers and difficulties, perhaps
 ‘ too, the loss of life itself might attend my going,

‘ yet these things I knew from the scriptures,
‘ ought not to move me from following the path
‘ of duty. I feel thankful, therefore, that my
‘ mind was brought to such a state, as to be ready
‘ implicitly to obey the leadings of providence,
‘ or rather of the God of providence. I have
‘ consulted no one scarcely on the subject, but
‘ left it, as it is best to leave such matters, in the
‘ hand of God. For the present, therefore, I
‘ give up all thoughts of going to India. I dare
‘ not say I will never go, lest I should thereby
‘ frustrate and set myself against any designs of
‘ God, which may happen to be unfolded in
‘ future life. With this I hope you will be per-
‘ fectly satisfied.

Mr. E. was now approaching that examination which was either to issue in his election as Fellow of Trinity, or terminate all his college prospects. At this trying time he had recourse to his principles for support. He had intimated to a friend, in the July preceding, “ I have little hopes of succeeding in September on account of my eyes, which prevent my reading hard.” And in another letter, written during the examination, he writes,

‘ I say continually, “ Thy will be done.” Agur’s
‘ petition was a good one “ Give me neither pov-

‘erty nor riches, feed me with food convenient
 ‘ for me.” Prov. xxx. 8. Poor short-sighted crea-
 ‘ tures as we are, we know not what on the whole
 ‘ may be best for us; we should often choose
 ‘ what would be most injurious in this world and
 ‘ the next. Lot seems an awful instance of this;
 ‘ what a bitter choice his proved! When, in ad-
 ‘ dition to this, I consider the uncertainty of all
 ‘ things here below, I rejoice to commit all my
 ‘ ways into the hands of an almighty Friend. My
 ‘ days on the earth may not be long. I am re-
 ‘ minded of this continually, and especially by
 ‘ the loss of several men in one year. B———,
 ‘ you know, died last year; S——— has since
 ‘ followed. There are only four of us candidates;
 ‘ “we are left a few of many.” The number of
 ‘ Fellowships vacant is eight, number of candi-
 ‘ dates twenty-three.’

The following paragraph appears also in the book before referred to:

“TRUST IN GOD.—During this week we shall sit for Fellowships. I believe it will be all ordered for the best. I sometimes find a great load; but the question of my Lord comes to my mind; ‘What do ye more than others?’ ‘of what avail is your trust in God, if it fail you in such a season as this?’ ”

When the examination closed, and he was, as he clearly anticipated, disappointed of success, he writes,

“ I have now sat for a fellowship and failed. I am satisfied, as it is the Lord's will ; having nothing wherewith to reproach myself on this head. My path, it seems, must lie through the valley of humiliation ; no doubt it will be better for me.”

And under date Oct. 1, 1820, in a letter to a friend,
‘ It hath pleased the Author and Giver of
‘ all good to keep back from me the object of my
‘ pursuit. I feel submissive, and can truly say,
‘ “ Thy will be done.” ’

When we consider the value of a Fellowship at Trinity college ; the honourable distinction which it confers ; the quietness and the retirement, and the literary advantages which it affords ; and recollect also the delicate state of Mr. E.'s health, the strong probability that he might not be able to endure ministerial fatigue ; the little prospect which he had of preferment, or even of any considerable provision, we may well admire the christian composure and resignation with which he viewed his disappointment :—a disappointment which may be regarded as either alleviated or aggravated according to the light in which this circumstance is contemplated,

that while only eight could be elected, he was one of ten out of twenty-three candidates, who were considered by the electors as worthy of nomination.

But in all his papers and all his letters, not one trace of dissatisfaction appears. He seemed perfectly resigned to the will of God. The consideration that he had done what he could, supported and cheered him; and instead of giving way to unavailing regret, he immediately devoted himself to that work of the ministry which had ever occupied the first place in his heart and affections.

And such should be the case with all who are intended for this high and holy work. Academical honours and distinctions may well be desired, not merely on account of temporal advantages, but as opening the door and affording the means of increased usefulness. But the highest academical honours and the most valuable situations in our universities are unworthy of notice or regard in comparison of that good work in which the faithful minister is engaged, and that glorious reward which shall then be communicated, when "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

CHAPTER III.

MINISTERIAL LABOURS.

IN the midst of Mr. E.'s examination for a fellowship, he received information of the curacy of Stisted, near Braintree, being vacant. At such a time most persons would have felt exceedingly indisposed to attend to such intelligence, and there were various reasons why Mr. E. should entirely disregard it. He evidently needed relaxation after this long and arduous contest;—he had planned and arranged a visit to his friends in Hull; and he had good reason to conclude that even should he fail of a fellowship, the numerous friends whom his uniform course of conduct had secured, would soon procure for him some very eligible situation; but none of these considerations produced any effect on his mind. His object was the ministry, and he therefore took the earliest opportunity of engaging in its sacred work.

In order to this, at the suggestion of his valued friend the Rev. Mr. White, he waited on

the Rector, the Rev. Dr. Seale. It was of great importance to Dr. S. that his curacy should be immediately supplied; that the person whom he nominated should be one who would most probably continue some time in the situation; and that, if possible, the curate should be a gentleman already in orders. On all these points there were difficulties. Mr. E. was not yet in orders; he must wait some weeks; and it was at that time very probable that he might succeed to a small living in Yorkshire, in the gift of Trinity college, and to which his attention was called by one of the examiners for the fellowship, the Rev. Professor Monk, now Dean of Peterborough. The penetration of Dr. S. enabled him to discover, that Mr. E. was in all respects, the person suited for his curacy; in consequence he waived every objection, gave him a title, treated him with the utmost kindness and attention, and mourned over his illness and removal with the affection of a father. Through the kind intervention of the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, Master of Trinity college, letters dimissory were obtained from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr. E. was ordained Deacon, by the Bishop of Norwich, on Sunday Oct. 15, 1820, having travelled four hundred miles in the course of a

few days, that he might enter somewhat earlier on his delightful work.

The following brief note on this occasion appears among his papers :—

“ Oct. 15.—I was this day ordained deacon by the Bishop of Norwich, on letters dimissory from Canterbury. Fifteen deacons and fifteen priests ordained at the same time. May they all be useful in the church of Christ! Lord, help me to be faithful—to feel the importance of the office more and more, and to approve myself to God as his ambassador, not regarding the opinions of men.”

On his arrival at Stisted, Mr. E. immediately engaged with the utmost assiduity in the labours of his ministerial office. His slender form, and youthful appearance, when contrasted with some of his predecessors, induced the people to enquire, “ What can this young man say ? ” But they were soon constrained to acknowledge that his word was with power. He brought to his work a mind at once deeply impressed with fervent piety, and richly furnished with literary acquirements. Possessing a solid and clear judgment, with great penetration, and much knowledge of the human heart, his discourses were highly interesting. He was fervent, ani-

mated, solemn and pathetic. He especially aimed at persuading his hearers by the love of Christ, to attend to those offers of salvation which were proposed through him. "I am always," said he, "afraid of driving them away from the Saviour; I would rather err on the side of drawing them."

This feeling of tender concern for the welfare of the people amongst whom he was called to labour, appeared in every part of his conduct. The casual hearer was often impressed by the contrast, which his zealous and pathetic addresses, exhibited to that cold and perfunctory manner in which many recite their discourses;—as though they were mere matters of course, in which neither themselves nor their people had any interest whatever. But it was not merely in his public services, that Mr. E. exhibited the character of a faithful and affectionate pastor, this was still more strikingly exemplified by his diligence in study, his prompt and regular attention to the sick, the infirm, the young and the ignorant, and by his voluntary relinquishment of considerable opportunities of pecuniary advantage.

Mr. E. still retained the early habits to which he had been accustomed, and in consequence,

his sermons were frequently written before breakfast. He composed them with great facility; they were of course all original, and he availed himself very little of the valuable assistance which may be derived from the writings of others. The habit indeed, which Mr. E. had for so many years cultivated, of writing notes of the sermons he had heard, both at Hull and at Cambridge, had supplied him with a valuable store of theological knowledge and expression, which is scarcely attainable in any other way. This obvious advantage is lost by the negligence of many parents in placing their children in situations, where public religious instruction is seldom attainable, or of a kind scarcely worth attending to; and it is often thrown away by the want of attention on the part of those who are favoured with such opportunities. This is the more to be regretted because these opportunities can never be recalled. The young man, who either by his negligence or his misfortune, has not been seriously attentive to the sermons of others, during his scholastic and academical course, will seldom have it in his power afterwards to enjoy this advantage. He will usually be himself engaged at those very hours, when he might wish to hear others, and very possibly it will not be until he has been

some years a minister—not till his own habits as a preacher, are permanently fixed, that he will have the opportunity of learning this most important part of his profession.

In the winter season, the customary service at Stisted, as at various other places, is prayers on one part of the day, and sermon and prayers on the other. In addition to the prayers, Mr. E. adopted the excellent practice of catechising the children and young persons of his congregation. On the Sunday evening, he usually visited the workhouse, in order to instruct the poor and infirm inmates, as well as any other of his parishioners who found it convenient to attend. Here he read some of the church prayers, together with the lessons for the day, and examined the young persons who were present, as to the sermon or sermons he had preached, the heads and leading divisions, and the texts he had quoted or referred to. He then repeated and explained any parts which seemed to be imperfectly understood, or not clearly remembered, and after uniting in prayer and singing the praises of God, returned to his own habitation.

Mr. E. was also instrumental in forming an adult school, which he usually attended twice in the week, and at which many poor and igno-

rant persons learned to read the word of God. The following extract of a letter to his brother, Mr. Henry Escreet, contains his own account of these labours.

‘ The time passes very pleasantly; I attend to
‘ my youths the first thing, so as to finish by
‘ eleven or half-past. Having then had enough
‘ of reading, I go out visiting among the cottages,
‘ &c. or take a gentle walk until dinner, as there
‘ is not much opportunity of walking after; read-
‘ ing, sermonizing, schools, fill up the rest of the
‘ time.

‘ As several in the parish are able to read, I
‘ have procured a number of tracts, and Sarah
‘ (Miss Escreet) has covered them, in order to
‘ lend among other useful publications, and form
‘ a little parish library. I shall most probably
‘ increase my stock in London.

‘ The catechizing still goes on in the church ;
‘ the serious part who value instruction, stay and
‘ hear the catechism explained. I have been
‘ lately on the fourth commandment. I gene-
‘ rally go over it on Thursday, so that on Sunday
‘ I ask the girls where they find any particular
‘ passages; they then turn to them, and I read
‘ them to the congregation. I have already
‘ found the advantage of this practice.’

In another letter to a friend, he writes, ‘There is a Sunday school in the place, but I have not yet taken any part in the day, but in the evening I keep school in the workhouse, where we have about eighty scholars assemble, and about the same number of other hearers. I go over the sermons, that is, give an epitome of them. The serious part of the congregation attend; and it sometimes calls the drunkard from his cups. I am myself, much interested in it, and if ever I have found the presence of God in my ministerial labours, it has been at the workhouse. On Wednesday evening I have a few adults come to read, and on Thursday, school is again kept. I used to have it in the evening, but in consequence of several children coming from the “uplands,” I now give up the afternoon to it instead. It is indeed a happy employment, to be occupied as a true minister of Jesus Christ. I feel my own unprofitableness more and more, and would desire to spend and be spent in my master’s cause. I feel I do not half enough in his service!’

Much as we must admire the zeal and devotedness, which Mr. E. manifested in these labours of love, it is a duty owing to others who are just entering into the work of the ministry, to suggest,

that his example should in these respects not be followed, without some caution and consideration. The world indeed, is continually ready to say, " spare thyself," and the exceeding caution of some, approximates so nearly to cowardice, as justly to deserve severe censure. But at the same time it is perfectly clear, that very few persons possess sufficient strength of constitution to sustain, at their first setting out in the ministry, the exertions in which Mr. E. engaged. How far these exertions contributed to shorten his days, may indeed admit of some doubt. His residence at Stisted, appears to have been the healthiest period of his life, but the degree of languor which he felt during the last summer, as well as the lassitude experienced on each returning Monday, might well have justified his relaxing in some degree, from his zealous and arduous services.

The quantity of labour which each individual can sustain in the ministry, or in any other department of life, is so various, that no general rule can be laid down. Every one must judge for himself what he is able to bear, and by not exceeding, either in length of sermon, or in loudness of voice, those limits which his own feelings intimate to be expedient, he will gradually ac-

quire increasing powers. Few persons are aware of the increase of labour occasioned by raising the voice above its natural pitch, and it is not perhaps, too much to assert, that the last quarter of an hour of a discourse, is often more fatiguing than the whole of the preceding service.

Hints of this general nature, are well deserving of serious consideration; but let it ever be remembered, that it is better to wear out, than to rust out; and he is not fit for a minister, who can look on a congregation of ignorant, and dying, and perhaps vicious men, without feeling at times his spirit stirred within him, and his sympathy and concern for their perishing condition, exciting him occasionally to pass the narrow limits to which cool calculation, and mere worldly prudence, would otherwise confine him.

Mr. E. diligently visited his people from house to house, especially those who were ill, never waiting to be sent for. He regularly attended two who resided a mile and a half from him, twice a week, and sometimes oftener, for the space of twelve months. He was once called up at two in the morning, to attend the dying pillow of a poor man, to whose conversion he had been instrumental; and though he found him insensible, he continued offering up fervent

prayers on his behalf, which the Lord graciously heard and answered. The violence of the pain was mercifully removed, and the individual spared, and permitted, in company with Miss Escreet and a pious neighbour, to partake of the Lord's supper. Some short time after, Mr. E. was again sent for; and while kneeling at the bedside praying, the poor man gently expired. One striking effect of the tendency of true religion was seen in this individual. Twelve months before he was ignorant of his letters, but previous to his removal he could quote any part of the New Testament.

In visiting the sick, Mr. E. generally made use of the prayers appointed on such occasions in the Liturgy. While offering up his petitions for the child of the individual just mentioned, the poor parent, at that time a thoughtless and wicked character, was so deeply impressed, that on the following Wednesday he appeared at the adult school, and continued a regular attendant both there, and at the house of God, which he had previously neglected, until disabled by his last illness.

In many other instances, Mr. E.'s parochial visits, both to those who were afflicted, and those in health, were accompanied with the divine

blessing. He was occasionally requested to attend persons at a distance, who had no particular claim on his kindness, and with these applications he deemed it his duty to comply, though such compliance was accompanied with inconvenience, and liable to misrepresentation.

The faithful minister is not unfrequently placed in embarrassing circumstances, by applications of this nature. The friends and connections of his own parishioners, witnessing his fidelity, zeal and affection, in visiting, instructing, and consoling the afflicted, will often desire to enjoy the benefit of his assistance in times of trouble, and will therefore, earnestly and urgently request the favour of his visits. To refuse compliance with such invitations, is often to neglect a fair opportunity of doing good—to comply with such requests, exposes the individual to complaints of interfering in other men's concerns, and has in some instances, actually drawn down the reproof of superiors. Yet, certainly it was never in the contemplation of the legislature, when dividing the country into districts, and appointing a spiritual person to communicate religious instruction in each particular district, so to intrench upon the liberty of the subject, as to preclude sick or dying persons from enjoying the

benefit of the counsel, or the prayers, of any other minister to whom they might have access, or who might be disposed to perform that greatest possible act of charity, the preparing a dying sinner to meet his God. Such an idea places the ministers of the establishment in a worse situation than any other class of persons. Any layman may, at his discretion, visit a sick or dying person: any methodist or dissenting teacher, may voluntarily step forwards to administer to their spiritual wants; but no sooner does a regularly ordained minister comply with the urgent request of a person who may live in his neighbourhood, or with whom he may have been personally acquainted, and step over the bounds of his parish, to offer up prayers and supplications on his behalf, than he may very possibly be requested to confine himself in future to his own parish, which he may be told, is amply sufficient to occupy all his zeal; with perhaps a hint, that if such intention is not complied with, a complaint will be preferred to his superiors; and what adds to the evil is, that the more unworthy the person may be to whose care the parish is entrusted; or the less confidence the parishioners can place in either his piety, wisdom, or integrity, the more probably will such complaints be made.

Happily indeed, in many cases, the prudence, and piety, and moderation of our episcopal rulers, induce them to attribute such complaints to their true cause; but instances will occasionally occur in the administration of a large diocese, where the artful and designing misrepresentation of an unworthy individual, may educe a censure upon one, who is conscientiously attending to the duties of his own place, who studies to be quiet, and mind his own business, and who has no desire to move beyond the narrow bounds of that parish which is committed to his care. In such instances, the unjustly censured, should in patience possess their souls, and leave the matter in his hands who will assuredly in due season, appear on their behalf.

So far was Mr. E. from indulging this narrow and exclusive spirit, that in referring to the labours of another, he says:—

‘ With respect to P—’s visiting in the parish,
‘ he is heartily welcome to wander from one end
‘ to the other, and do as much good as he possibly can; and in what good he does I can rejoice as much as if it were done to myself. It
‘ is the glory of Christ we must seek for and not
‘ our own. In works of faith and love, there
‘ should be no unholy rivalry, and really the conversion of sinners is so vast a work, requiring

‘ such mighty power, that every one who is so
‘ blessed as to be the instrument of turning any
‘ to righteousness, will say, “ Not unto me, not
‘ unto me, but unto thy name be the praise,” and
‘ the more we can obtain of this spirit, the
‘ more acceptable will our labours be to God.
‘ May he then go on and prosper, and the Lord
‘ be with him.’

Mr. E. was indeed himself in no real danger. The mild and christian virtues of that distinguished prelate, in whose diocese most of the surrounding country is situated, would never allow him to censure any without previous enquiry; and the worthy Rector of Stisted, was too well aware of the modest and retiring disposition of his Curate, not to be fully convinced that whenever he visited beyond the bounds of his parish, it was an act of christian compliance with the wishes of others, rather than the effect of unrestrained and improper zeal.

The poor people at Stisted established a small fund for the relief of sick persons, which afforded Mr. Escreet great satisfaction. Alluding to this in one of his letters, he says, “ Is not this one of the fruits of the Spirit;” and when we recollect how deeply selfish principles are implanted in the heart, and how often they appear in that very

class of which this society was composed, we may form some idea of the joy which a faithful Pastor would experience, at seeing his children thus walk in the truth, and evince the reality of their love to God, by self-denying exertions, to benefit their fellow creatures. To this benevolent institution Mr. E. cheerfully contributed, and had the satisfaction of witnessing its utility in various instances.

In March 1822, Mr. E. was ordained priest, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Bangor; he proceeded M. A. at the usual time in that year, having some time previously been a member of the Cambridge Philosophical Society. In the month of June, an opportunity offered itself, of visiting his relations in Hull, whom he had not seen for two years, a valued and respected friend having kindly offered to supply his curacy at Stisted, for a few weeks. Mr. E. however, declined embracing this opportunity. The Archbishop of Canterbury had appointed to hold a confirmation, and Mr. E.'s sense of duty to his young parishioners, would not allow him to neglect them on such an occasion for any personal gratification. 'I had some thoughts,' says he, 'of coming into Yorkshire this summer, but the confirmation taking place July 13, in the midst

‘ of my vacation, I cannot do it with a good conscience, as perhaps I may not be at Stisted on another such occasion. It is a little disappointment, more especially, as —— kindly offered to serve my church for a few Sundays, I have no doubt, however, that all is ordered for the best.’

The same feelings which induced Mr. E. to decline the gratification of visiting his friends, excited him also to labour as much as possible to prepare his young parishioners for the ordinance to which they were invited. He employed much time and labour in explaining the institution, expounding suitable passages of scripture, and impressing upon their minds, the spirit, and temper, and disposition, which they should cultivate. He addressed to them a series of discourses upon the subject, pointing out from, Sam. iii. 27, the blessedness of an early devotion to God;—from Josh. xxiv. 15, the duty of choosing God’s service;—from 1 Pet. v. 8, the importance of resisting our great adversary; and from Heb. vi. 2, the grounds and utility of the institution, and the requisite preparation: he especially illustrated the utility of the institution, by the effect produced on the minds of the confirmed, and on the minds of others. This institution at

each returning period, excites the ministers and pastors of the flock, to pay an especial regard to the young ; to instruct them in true religion ; to impress upon them the importance of not only making a profession of religion, but of living up to the truths which they profess. It enables him to examine the progress which his young people have made, to discover where they are mistaken ; to correct what is wrong ; impress more forcibly what is right, and urge them on to a greater degree of proficiency. It excites also in those who know the importance of true religion, a spirit of prayer, on behalf of the rising generation. Recollecting how soon they shall go hence, and be no more seen ; how certainly others must ere long supply their places, they will earnestly pray that these young persons may indeed be a generation to serve the Lord, when they themselves are removed ; that the Spirit of God may be poured upon their seed, and his blessing on their offspring ; that they may spring up as the grass, and as willows by the water courses, that one may say I am the Lord's, and another call himself by the name of Jacob, and another subscribe with his hand, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

In impressing on his young people a suitable

preparation, Mr. E. earnestly called upon them seriously to consider the nature of the ordinance, and carefully to examine themselves;—to sit down and count the cost;—to remember their obligations to Almighty God;—that they must either serve him, their rightful Lord and Master, or join themselves to his enemies; and that therefore it was their true interest, as well as bounden duty, to devote themselves entirely to God's service, and to pour out their souls in fervent prayer, that He would accept the sacrifice, and receive and keep them for his own.

After the confirmation had taken place, he proceeded from Ps. lxxvi. 11, to comment in a plain and impressive manner, upon the solemn engagements into which they had entered, the enemies and dangers to which they were exposed, the Almighty Captain under whose protecting care they were to go forth, and the blessed victory which every faithful follower of the Lamb, should eventually participate; and he then earnestly urged upon them the duty of solemnly commemorating their Saviour's love, by attending at the Lord's table; an exhortation with which some have since complied.

After delivering this discourse, he said to his affectionate sister, "Now I will leave them;"

implying that he should let the subject rest for a season, adding, " I feel very glad that I did not go home; perhaps I may not be with them another confirmation." Little did he or any of his friends at that time anticipate how soon the connection should terminate.

And here it may not be improper, to advert to the amazing effect which is usually produced, when confirmation is duly prepared for, and suitably improved. Once in three or four years, a solemn appeal is made by the faithful minister, to the youth of his parish, reminding them of their baptismal engagements, and calling upon them, now that they are approaching to years of discretion, calmly and deliberately to consider and ratify the promise and vow which was made on their behalf. They are thus called upon publicly, and by authority, to declare whose servants they are. They are excited seriously to consider the nature, obligations, and privileges, of that gospel, in which they have been so long instructed; and are required, not formally, or hypocritically, but in sincerity and truth, to devote themselves unto God. While the young are thus excited, their parents and friends are also reminded of the vows of God which are upon them;—are called to look upon their own cove-

nant engagements with the Almighty; to renew those engagements with true repentance and fervent prayer, and to intercede earnestly at a throne of grace, on behalf of their children or friends, who are now especially called upon to devote themselves to God. Meanwhile, the ministers of religion are themselves excited to a more diligent examination of their people;—to feed the lambs of the flock with suitable food;—to adopt and arrange courses of sermons for their especial benefit; to converse with them in a free, confidential and affectionate manner; and thus to form that intimate pastoral relation, which often proves of incalculable benefit and advantage, in succeeding years. That this institution should be misrepresented or abused, is no way surprising, for what will not ignorance and folly profane or pervert?—but that it should be treated with levity or contempt by any who make a profession of religion, because of the different views which themselves entertain, or the lamentable instances of abuse which are sometimes witnessed, may well excite regret and reprehension.

Mr. Escreet received under his care two regular pupils during the year, and admitted two more from Cambridge, during the long vacation. On no account however, would he exceed this num-

ber, though he had many applications, saying,
“ If I comply I must neglect my parish, and this
“ I will not do.”

The following extract, from a letter, written subsequently to Mr. E.'s decease, may illustrate his conduct in this and various other respects, and must be regarded as highly honourable both to the writer and his friend.

‘ The first time I ever had the pleasure of see-
‘ ing Mr. E., was at ——’s rooms. I had been
‘ invited to breakfast, and was told that a Master
‘ of Arts was to be of the party. I can assure
‘ you, I went with no pleasing expectations. I
‘ fancied that the conversation would be engros-
‘ sed by one individual, and that the breakfast
‘ would pass away remarkable only for the at-
‘ tempt to impress upon our minds, what an
‘ honour had been done us. Soon after my ar-
‘ rival, Mr. E. entered. On beholding him, my
‘ ideas were somewhat changed: there appeared
‘ no assumed consequence, on the contrary, hu-
‘ mility;—still his manners were reserved. We
‘ sat down to breakfast; the conversation soon
‘ became general, the apparent reserve of
‘ our companion passed away, and kindness,
‘ mingled with good humour, became the
‘ predominant feature of his countenance; he

‘ seemed to study our pleasure; he related
‘ college anecdotes, he brought in review be-
‘ fore us, the habits and manners of men who
‘ had once been eminent in our university, and
‘ gave the characters as it were a local habitation
‘ and a name. Having learnt that I was a fresh-
‘ man, he gave me some account of his own feel-
‘ ings when he was in similar circumstances,
‘ and also some useful advice with respect to my
‘ reading. When the party broke up, I felt ex-
‘ tremely sorry, and would gladly have delayed
‘ his departure.

‘ The consequence of this interview was a re-
‘ quest on my part, that he would receive me as
‘ a pupil, during the ensuing summer vacation,
‘ to which he at length consented, though he
‘ long hesitated, on account of his parochial
‘ duties.

‘ The first sermon I heard from him, struck me
‘ much. No flowery metaphors, no high sound-
‘ ing words, but good sense and fervent piety
‘ were there clothed in the most plain and affec-
‘ tionate language. He had considered his con-
‘ gregation, and having found it to consist, for
‘ the most part, of hearers, who had spent their
‘ lives entirely in the labours of husbandry, many
‘ of them unable either to read or write, he deter-

‘ mined, as an ambassador of Christ, to make the
‘ purport of his message plain to all, and by dint
‘ of labour, he accommodated both his thoughts
‘ and his language, to the capacity of the hum-
‘ blest of his hearers.’

After some further remarks, the writer proceeds—‘ If ever any man yielded up the powers
‘ both of body and soul, to the pursuit of any
‘ object, it was Mr. E. in the discharge of his
‘ ministerial duties. He seemed to think every
‘ moment wasted that was not, in some way or
‘ other, connected with them ; and I have some-
‘ times thought, that he even considered the
‘ hours which he every day devoted to his pupils,
‘ as a fraud upon his parish ; and I am confirmed
‘ in this, from the fact, that previously to his
‘ going down into Yorkshire, while in health, he
‘ had determined to limit the number of his
‘ pupils to two, and had in consequence refused
‘ several applications. Though his parish con-
‘ tained eight or nine hundred souls, he was
‘ intimately acquainted with the situation and
‘ circumstances of every individual. There was
‘ no need for the sick parishioner to request the
‘ minister to visit him. The minister was at the
‘ bedside perhaps long before the application was
‘ even thought of. In cases of illness, he re-

'gulated the frequency of his visits, by the ap-
 'parent danger. If the person was dangerously
 'ill, Mr. E. attended once a day at the least, and
 'this in a scattered country parish was no slight
 'exertion. But here he did not stop. He did
 'not think his commission was only to the sick,
 'but also to those who were in health; and once
 'in every quarter at least, he made a practice of
 'visiting every house in his parish, of reminding
 'the healthy of the mercies which the Almighty
 'was vouchsafing to them, of stirring them up to
 'thankfulness, and of warning them, against
 'putting off till a later day the salvation of their
 'souls.

'In these labours of love, have I seen him em-
 'ployed early in the morning, and late in the
 'evening, and he had his reward, even in this
 'world. If ever there was a clergyman beloved
 'by his people, that clergyman was Mr. E. Often
 'have I had the pleasure of beholding, what the
 'poet calls, the "test of affection," a tear start
 'into the eyes of many, when descanting on his
 'kindness and attention. I have even known
 'the days that he has visited them, noted down.
 'I have heard it said, "the very sight of him
 'gives me pleasure, even if he does not enter my
 'cottage."

‘ There is one thing which I have often re-
‘ marked, probably from being particularly in-
‘ terested in it, namely, the good management of
‘ the Sunday school. In some parishes, this in-
‘ stitution does not produce that benefit which
‘ we might expect. Here there were no tickets
‘ for good lessons, no children censured, or
‘ thinking themselves unfairly treated, because
‘ they had not got tickets; on the contrary, to
‘ the deserving child, the greatest reward was,
‘ the teachers approving look, and to those who
‘ had not done their allotted task, there was a
‘ kind admonition which seldom failed of success,
‘ and which was not attended by any of that
‘ unpleasant feeling I have just mentioned.

‘ There is one anecdote I have learned of him,
‘ which I think very characteristic. When —
‘ first went to college, he professed serious reli-
‘ gion, became acquainted with Mr. Escreet, and
‘ they grew intimate; — however, formed
‘ some rather worldly connections, and became
‘ attached to them, and neglected Mr. E. But
‘ when — was seized with the inflammation,
‘ which so rapidly caused his death, Mr. E. for-
‘ got all past neglect, and while —’s worldly
‘ companions never came near him, or only just
‘ called and went away again, he sat up with him

‘ two or three nights while living, and watched
‘ by him even when dead.

‘ I have often heard the people praise Mr. E.’s
‘ repetition of his sermon on Sunday evening, be-
‘ cause they knew partly what he was about to say,
‘ and therefore understood the whole better;
‘ and it produced a more lasting impression.
‘ You will remember the school-feast, how he
‘ pondered what he might devise to amuse, as
‘ well as to instruct. During the tea, he con-
‘ versed in an amusing way upon dances and
‘ fairs, shewing their folly and danger? and you
‘ will also remember his visiting the hop fields,
‘ to prevent indecorum and produce a proper
‘ feeling. He never walked for a mere walk, he
‘ had always some person to see. He was re-
‘ gular in every thing, in his meals, in the hour
‘ at which he attended his pupils, and I can add,
‘ the pains which he took with them, and the
‘ attention he paid them, as well as the clear
‘ knowledge he had of his subject, and the
‘ good method he had of explaining it. His
‘ wisdom was equally conspicuous; he was not
‘ hasty in giving an opinion, but when he had,
‘ it was one which few could cavil at. His
‘ courage led him firmly to stand by what he

‘ thought his duty. His unruffled temper, which
‘ I never saw disturbed, and his general cheer-
‘ fulness, were peculiarly worthy of notice
‘ and imitation.’

CHAPTER IV.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

MR. E. continued during the summer of 1822, actively engaged in the same course of ministerial exertion, which we have already noticed. At the approach of autumn, when his pupils left him for Cambridge, he gladly availed himself of the opportunity afforded, by the kind assistance of the Rev. Mr. Dunn, in taking charge of his church, to visit his friends at Hull.

“ In October 1822,” says Miss E. “ we went
“ to town on our way to Yorkshire. The night
“ before, we had the school as usual ; the people
“ took a most affectionate leave, saying, they
“ should never see us more. The young people,
“ as if with one consent, burst into tears. My
“ dear brother alone was firm, ‘ Come,’ said he
“ to the children, ‘ go home, and do as you have
“ heard ; that will be better than staying and
“ crying here.’” This was the more remarkable,
as Mr. E. had not at that time experienced any
indisposition ; and, except a slight degree of

languor, had enjoyed uninterrupted health during his residence at Stisted.

On his arrival at Hull, Mr. E. was received with the utmost kindness and affection by his numerous friends. It was his first appearance as a minister in the place of his nativity, and many eagerly availed themselves of the opportunity of listening to his discourses, little anticipating how short his time would be. He preached on Sunday Oct. 19, in the morning at St. John's, for his esteemed friend the Rev. T. Dikes, from Numb. x. 29, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good;" and in the evening of the same day at St. Mary's, the church of his affectionate tutor, the Rev. J. Scott, from John xiv. 2, "In my fathers house are many mansions." On the following Sunday, he preached at the same churches, terminating his public ministry at St. Mary's, with a sermon from Ps. xxiii. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." These sermons were heard with great satisfaction, and many from this specimen, indulged the hope of his extensive usefulness, but God seeth not as man seeth, and amidst all these pleasing anticipations, Mr. E. received his summons to depart.

Two days after, his fatal disease first appeared, which is thus noticed in his diary,—

“ Tuesday, Nov. 5, 1822.—On rising from dinner, was seized with an expectoration of blood—put to bed, and bled. The next morning again expectorated, and again bled. Through the whole was preserved calm and composed, and enabled to resign all into the Lord’s hands. ‘It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.’ I had prayed, that I might not be lifted up by my public ministrations; but still, I am afraid, felt some pride in wishing to do as well as possible, and did not wish to be checked in that way. The Lord answered me, perhaps, by this illness. Lord, henceforth give me humility! Give me it in thine own way.”

On the Thursday following, writing to an affectionate friend, with reference to the supply of his curacy, he says:—

‘ At first this dispensation seemed mysterious
 ‘ and painful. I felt for my parish, but was en-
 ‘ abled to commit all into the hands of God. I
 ‘ feel now in excellent spirits, have every com-
 ‘ fort, receive the greatest attention from friends,
 ‘ and hope that he who has wounded will also
 heal, and restore me, if not to very active ex-
 ‘ ertions, at least to some degree of usefulness in
 ‘ his service. I prayed for humility and perhaps
 ‘ God has answered me in this way, to shew me
 ‘ my entire dependance upon him.’

In this tranquil and improving state Mr. E. continued for about a fortnight; indulging, together with his friends, the hope that his days might be lengthened, and his opportunities of usefulness restored; but at the end of that period, these hopes were found to be delusory, and both himself and friends were compelled to anticipate that his work was approaching to its close.

“ Nov. 21.—Was threatened with a relapse and bled again. I then felt more than ever the uncertainty of life, and the probable nearness of death; and instead of praying, as before, ‘ Lord, restore me to my parish!’ my prayer was, ‘ O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and am no more seen!’

“ Nov. 22. Morning.—I derived comfort from considering, that if admitted into heaven, I could prostrate myself as low as any before the throne, feeling my condition as a guilty sinner, and my debt to the Saviour; and that I thought I could take pleasure in the employment of heaven. These were my evidences which afforded comfort in such a season.

“ Monday, Nov. 25, E.—Was enabled to plead the promises of the Saviour in prayer, particularly his invitations to come unto him weary and heavy laden. O how precious are these promises!

“ Friday, Nov. 29.—In prayer, the blessedness

of the man who is under the protection of God, (Ps. xc.) occurred to me. Thought I, What mercies does God give to his people who trust in him here and hereafter! Such good things, as no eye hath seen, no tongue can tell, no heart conceive. I trust, I was enabled to be thankful. How is the word of God food to the soul when it is in a proper state! O my soul, wait on the Lord! It is a mercy to have been afflicted, to find the sweetness of the word. O may I find it more!

“ Dec. 9.—I am improving daily in health. O Lord, let my spiritual health also grow! Grant that I may feed and be nourished by the holy word, so that it might be said, ‘Mayest thou prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth!’ O take not thine holy Spirit from me.

“ Dec. 12.—Yesterday evening, in bed, these words came to my mind, ‘Be careful for nothing,’ &c., and I found them refreshing. Perhaps, thought I, when I leave this place, I may be taken ill on the road, and thus exchange all the comforts of home for the inconveniences of an inn; nevertheless, ‘be careful for nothing,’—‘Lo,’ he hath said, ‘I will never leave thee; I will never, no, never forsake thee!’ Perhaps, on my return, I may be unable to do duty, and then be

obliged to leave my people—‘Be careful for nothing;’ ‘the Lord will provide.’ Or perhaps my complaint may then return through exertion, gather additional strength, and in a few months consign me to the grave—‘Be careful for nothing.’ The Lord is all-sufficient. O my soul, commit thy way unto the Lord, he shall direct thy paths. With such promises, what needest thou to fear? Lord, help me to pray more earnestly!

“ I lately heard of the death of —, and this morning of that of —. If they were not of the number of thy people, O Lord, lay not their blood to my charge! Pardon the numerous sins of thy servant, and make me in future more faithful in private as well as public.

“ I this day heard that Mr. Dunn could supply my cure until I was able to take it myself. How merciful is the Lord to me!”

The following extracts of letters written at this period, appear worthy of insertion. To a very intimate friend he says:—

‘ Dec. 1822.—It may seem somewhat like ingratitude in me, to neglect writing to you [for so long a time. To tell you the truth, I have beside me a letter intended to have been sent, but the threatening of a relapse on Nov. 22,

' caused a complete alteration in my plans, and
 ' frustrated my previous hopes. I was then
 ' brought very low, almost within sight, in my
 ' own apprehension, of the borders of the grave.
 ' I was enabled however, to put my trust in the
 ' Saviour, and to feel the comfort of his precious
 ' promises. After a few days I wrote to Dr.
 ' Seale, informing him of my state, telling him
 ' what my medical attendant said respecting me,
 ' and leaving the curacy in his hands; at the
 ' same time stating my desire to return. He re-
 ' plied in a very kind and friendly letter.....
 ' offering every accommodation..... In answer
 ' I informed him, there were reasonable hopes
 ' that I should be able to return and do duty by
 ' the end of this month. These hopes I am happy
 ' to say, seem likely to be realized. I am re-
 ' covering my strength and power of speech
 ' rapidly. I must however, be very cautious.
 ' I am to undertake no more than the regular
 ' duty. Indeed with respect to this, I have
 ' written to Mr. Dunn, requesting his help for
 ' some Sundays after my return, till I see what I
 ' am able to bear.

' We hope therefore to reach Stisted by the
 ' end of the month, or before the first Sunday in

‘ January. How mysterious are the Almighty’s
 ‘ ways ! how little did I think when I set out
 ‘ that I should be absent so long. His ways are
 ‘ not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts !
 ‘ yet are they wise and just and righteous.’

To a near and aged relative he thus writes :—

‘ Dec. 1822.—I fully intended paying you a
 ‘ visit before my departure, but was taken so
 ‘ suddenly ill, as to be entirely incapable of it.
 ‘ During nearly a month I have been kept a close
 ‘ prisoner in the house, having only been out
 ‘ once. I am however, through the mercy of
 ‘ God recovering fast, and hope soon to be able
 ‘ to return to my parish. It has indeed many
 ‘ attractions which make me wish to be there
 ‘ again. The situation is very healthy, and the
 ‘ country pleasant. The village is on the side
 ‘ of a hill ; the church at the extremity of it to-
 ‘ wards the valley : for two years I have laboured
 ‘ amongst them, endeavouring to preach the
 ‘ word of God faithfully, remembering the ac-
 ‘ count which I must one day give before the
 ‘ judgment seat of Christ. My sister and I have
 ‘ also taken some pains with the children, so that
 ‘ the Sunday school, consisting of upwards of
 ‘ one hundred, is now in a flourishing condition ;

‘ and on a Sunday night, it would much surprize
‘ any stranger to hear the number of texts recol-
‘ lected by some of the children. I believe I am
‘ respected by all the people, and beloved by
‘ many, so that my removal would be looked upon
‘ as a calamity by them.

‘ The Lord has been pleased to separate me
‘ from them for a time, and to bring me near to
‘ the borders of the grave. Then I found in a
‘ more especial manner the comforts of religion.
‘ What hope there is beyond the grave, is a
‘ question which naturally comes at such a time.
‘ Are we prepared to meet our God? I felt
‘ that I was in some measure prepared, because
‘ I perceived my condition as a guilty sinner,
‘ whose iniquities are more in number than the
‘ hairs of my head, and was enabled to look to
‘ Christ for pardon, even to him whose blood
‘ cleanseth from all sin; and also because I
‘ thought I could take pleasure in the happiness
‘ of those above, in praising and serving God.
‘ But we cannot be too much in earnest while in
‘ health and strength, to make God our friend.
‘ How does he invite us in Isa. lv. “ Seek ye the
‘ Lord while he may be found, and call ye upon
‘ him while he is near;” we know not what
‘ a day, or an hour may bring forth, and a happy

‘ thing it is to be found ready when death shall
‘ come ; and how shall we be ready, but by re-
‘ penting heartily of sin, looking to Christ for
‘ pardon, and being sanctified by the Spirit of
‘ God. And for these things we ought to pray
‘ earnestly and frequently !’

In the hope of being able shortly to resume his ministerial labours, Mr. E. employed a portion of his time in preparing suitable discourses. One of these on Psalm xxxi. 15. “ My times are in thy hand,” will appear entire at the close of this memoir ; but it may not be amiss, here to insert an extract from a sermon on Psalm cxix. 71, which still remains unfinished ; but which gives a lively view of the benefit resulting in Mr. E.’s estimation, from sanctified affliction.

“ It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”

PSALM cxix. 71.

WHEN God created man, he created him in his own image, “ in the likeness of God created he him.” He then could enjoy his maker’s presence, free from care and sorrow, he had all that eye could wish or heart desire. But when he transgressed the command of his creator and ate of the forbidden fruit, then he became liable to sorrow and to affliction, and entailed these evils on all his posterity. So that whenever we witness the afflictions of others, or are called ourselves to suffer, let us remember that sin is the cause of all—it is the fountain from whence all the bitter waters of affliction flow. But while we remember this, let us at the same time bear in mind the grace of our great Redeemer, the second Adam, who has repaired the ruins of the fall, and in whom we have gained more than we lost at first. True indeed, he permits his people to endure trials and afflictions, but he has turned the curse into a blessing—he makes affliction to work together for good to them that love God—he assures us by his apostle

St. Paul, that God afflicts “for our profit that we may be partakers of his holiness;” that though “for the present it be not joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it brings forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.” Moreover he gives to us exceeding great and precious promises, he gives his Holy Spirit to comfort us, so that the true christian may say, and will say, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”

I shall endeavour to shew—

I. The truth of the Psalmist’s assertion.

I. The truth of the Psalmist’s assertion. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” Some perhaps may wonder at it—wonder what good there can be in affliction. Now I will agree with them that sometimes affliction is not a blessing but a curse. When a man is laid for many weeks upon the bed of sickness, exposed to much pain and to many inconveniences: if when he recovers there be no change of heart, and no change of conduct, if he go on still in his wickedness, neglecting God and neglecting his own soul, perhaps even more hardened than before, it is plain that his affliction is not a blessing to him, he has got no benefit from it, but will have to answer for it at the bar of God. Nevertheless

this proves nothing against the general benefit of affliction; seeing even the word of God itself is said to be a savour of life unto life to some, and of death unto death to others. Affliction, sanctified affliction, is productive of great, of essential good; and this will appear when you consider that—

1. It disposes the mind to serious reflection.
2. It tends to draw us near to God.
3. It shews us the value of his word; and
4. Has a salutary effect upon our future life.

1. It disposes the mind to serious reflection. And who can tell the benefit of this? Want of reflection is the ruin of numbers! It is the great art by which the enemy of our souls draws many to destruction; and therefore we find in holy scripture such importance attached to it, “Thus, saith the Lord of Hosts, ‘Consider your ways,’ ‘Israel did not know, my people did not consider,’ ‘O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.’ And with this the Psalmist agrees, Ps. cxix. 59. “I thought on my ways, says he, “and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.” See the blessed effect which followed thinking on his ways—he turned his feet unto God’s testimonies. Affliction then is good, inasmuch as it disposes us to serious reflection. It leads us to reflect

on what is past. On the goodness of God to us—the numerous instances of his favour, and mercy bestowed upon us. While we are in health and strength, free from care and free from trouble, then too often the mercies of God are lost upon us, they are indeed “new every morning,” and with the Psalmist, every day should “we bless him and praise his name for ever and ever,” yet alas! too often do we take but little notice of them, too often forget to praise him for them. But in the time of affliction, many a mercy occurs to our mind of which we little thought before, and especially the blessings and privileges which we once enjoyed, and of which we are then deprived, rise high in our estimation. Is the royal Psalmist for instance, deprived of the privilege of attending the house of God, hear how he expresses his sense of the value of the privilege. “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”

But affliction not only disposes us to reflect on God’s goodness to us, but also on our ingratitude to him. As we see many mercies which before lay hid, so do we see many sins committed, many duties neglected, which before had escaped our observation. We may perhaps have gone on in

a round of duties, satisfied with ourselves, and conscious that all was right, but when the hand of God is laid upon us, we see many failings, many omissions, and have need to cry, 'cleanse thou me from my secret faults.'

Thus does affliction dispose us to meditate on what is past—it does so also with respect to what is to come. We consider our present condition; tenants at pleasure of a little tenement of clay, which will soon crumble into the dust; we see that our life is but as a vapour, which appeareth for a little moment and then vanisheth away; in short that we are not sure of our existence one moment, but depend absolutely and entirely on the Almighty. We see that all our present strength, and all we have, is derived from him; that if he give the word, our youth is renewed like the eagles, but if he call in our breath, we die, and are turned to our dust. And oh! it is profitable thus to look upon ourselves as dependent creatures, that so we may be always ready for our departure hence.

It also disposes us to meditate on our future condition. We cannot but see that our stay here may be but short, that we are hastening to another world, and that it is uncertain how soon we may exchange time for eternity. We are com-

pelled to consider the importance of being prepared to meet our God. I am going into a world unknown, how soon I cannot tell. I shall there have to give an account of all the deeds done in the body, and if my name is not written in the book of life, I shall be lost for ever, undone, miserable to all eternity. Better were it for me never to have been born than to be banished from God and heaven, and happiness, and all that is great, excellent, and glorious, for ever. How then am I prepared for this awful change! Have I truly and earnestly repented of all my sins past? Have I fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before me, and committed my soul unto him to be kept against that day? Is there evidence of a change of heart in me? Do I take pleasure in his service here? And is there a reasonable hope that I should delight in the employment of heaven, in serving God day and night? Now these are questions which the afflicted person would naturally put to himself, and when affliction thus disposes to reflection, I leave you to judge whether the Psalmist's words are not true, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." It is so,

2. Because it tends to draw us near to God. When we are afflicted we see in some measure the

vanity of this world, with what a slender thread we are connected with it, and how soon all our connection may cease. It tends to strip created comforts of their charms, to shew us them in their true colours, and to make us see that they satisfy not our immortal soul. Take for instance, the most pure and exalted source of pleasure, the society and intercourse, the assiduous care and attention of friends, this, however agreeable to the mind in seasons of health, yet, when care occupies the mind, when the person is in prospect of death, and all anxious as to the great concern, then indeed he feels that if the Lord help him not, how can these help him. To the Lord therefore does he betake himself, and "gets him to his God right humbly." He sees the folly of having "forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns that can hold no water." I have no doubt, my brethren, some of you have often found that trouble has driven you to God. You felt uneasy, you could find no comfort elsewhere, and though Satan strove to keep you from the mercy seat, still you were enabled to come, and found it good to draw near to God. See how often the Psalmist in distress implores the aid of the Almighty. His indeed, was a checkered life, full of trial and affliction.

But in all his troubles he drew near to God, and while others said, who will shew us any good, he said, Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. He knew that in his favour was life, that if the Lord were on his side, he need not fear what man could do unto him; that if the Lord was his shepherd, he should not want. He laid his case before the Lord, poured out his soul before him, implored his mercy and his favour, and committed his ways to him. O happy David, in the midst of all thy trials who hadst freedom of access to such a friend, who couldst unbosom all thy sorrows to such an Almighty deliverer. I see thee go heavy and dejected to the throne of grace; ere thy prayers be offered, I hear the voice of praise; the sense of God's presence and of his favour has turned thy mourning into joy, and strong in faith thou givest glory to God for those mercies which he is yet to bestow. And truly, my brethren, the people of God have often found it so. Often through the prevalence of prosperity, and the snares which usually attend it, their graces have begun to wither, their love to languish, their zeal to decline—prayer perhaps, was regarded more as a duty than a privilege, and communion with God had lost its sweetness; the Lord has laid his

hand upon them to draw them to him, and they have humbly gone to the throne of grace, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, the Lord has revealed himself to them, he has waited to be gracious, they have pleaded his promises, and found them to be all yea, and amen, in Christ Jesus. Affliction is good as it tends to draw us near to God.

3. It shews us the value of his word. Whatever we may have thought of the word of God before, then it appears to us in a different light. Perhaps we had neglected it, or read it carelessly, or at least unprofitably, but then it seems to us of vast importance, inasmuch as it contains the words of eternal life. Observe how the Psalmist says in my text, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." And then he adds, "the law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver," and v. 92, "unless thy law had been my delights, I should have perished in my trouble," and v. 143, "trouble and anguish have taken hold upon me, yet thy commandments are my delight." "Remember," says he, "the word unto my servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope"—"this is my comfort in my affliction for thy word hath quickened me." O my

brethren, depend upon it you will find no comfort in affliction, but in God and in his word. How sweet the words of the Saviour to the weary soul, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," how sweet are they when he can plead them in prayer, and has an assurance that the Lord will hear him.

* * * * *

As soon as Mr. E. was sufficiently recovered to bear the fatigue of the journey, he determined upon leaving Hull, and returning to Stisted. He felt especially grateful that this dangerous attack occurred when at home, in the society of his dear father, and family; and in his native place, where he was surrounded by numerous and sympathizing friends, and was almost daily favoured with the visits of pious and excellent ministers, some of whom he had known from his childhood, and who were deeply interested in his behalf;—but still his heart was amongst his people. 'I do hope,' says he in December, 'by the end of this month, to return to Stisted, if I am to return. I have cause for great thankfulness to the Father of mercies, for his goodness to me: hope again

‘ enters my heart, of preaching to my beloved
‘ people the words of everlasting life; I pray for
‘ them and for myself, that all may be ordered
‘ for the best. I long to be there;—my people
‘ live in my heart.’

On Tuesday, Jan. 14, Mr. E. left Hull, in company with his sister, and staying two nights at Cambridge, arrived at Stisted on the following Friday. ‘ Contrary almost,’ says he, ‘ to the advice of all my friends, but with the consent of my medical attendant, I left Hull, to undertake a journey of 160 miles. Through the mercy of God, I was wonderfully supported during the journey, and did not take much cold from it. For some months I expect to be unfit for duty. I have however, no uneasiness on that head, as Mr. Dunn has kindly engaged to serve my church as long as he is needed.’

Mr. E.’s parishioners were deeply affected by his altered appearance. His cough re-appeared at Cambridge, accompanied with slight expectoration. This rendered exceeding caution necessary, lest any imprudent exertion should produce still more unfavourable symptoms, but during the whole of his short stay at Stisted, he continually kept in view the object for which he came, and endeavoured to improve every opportunity

for the welfare of his people. He expressed great satisfaction at being with them. 'I am glad,' said he, 'I am among my own people. I think we shall do some good by coming, at least, I hope these books will,' pointing to the prizes he had purchased for the school. Conversing with one of the school girls he said, 'well, Naomi, you and I are brought very low: it is a happy thing to be ready either for life or death.' To another who mentioned the pain experienced from false accusation, he remarked, 'Ah! these are part of the storms and trials here below in our way to heaven, but afterwards there shall be salvation and glory.' He thus endeavoured to counsel, direct and comfort all to whom he had access, speaking a word in season to the weary, he contributed to their bodily as well as their spiritual wants; remarking on one occasion, 'You see I can do nothing for your souls; I must do what I can for your bodies.'

The symptoms of his complaint continually increased, but as his outward man decayed, his inward man was renewed day by day! He was most obviously ripening for heaven. 'Dear John,' says his sister, 'seems to get within the vail. He really appears in such close communion with his God, as makes me feel he is not

‘ long to be an inhabitant of earth.’ While able to pray in the family, there was such fervency, solemnity, thankfulness and humility in all his petitions, that those present were deeply affected, and when his strength no longer permitted his leading the devotion himself, he seemed to join with his whole soul in the confession, thanksgiving, and other prayers, selected by his sister from the Liturgy.

It was at length determined that Mr. E. should remove to town for farther advice. At first his views of immediate danger were somewhat shaken by the deceitful language which a very eminent physician thought proper to adopt. He soon however, discovered, that there was no prospect of recovery, and calmly and patiently waited his approaching change.

“ March 4.—After the medical attendant was gone, he said, ‘ I think, Sarah, they give us but poor hopes.’ I replied in tears, ‘ No;’ when he gently raised his hand, and said, ‘ The Lord’s will be done; if I am spared, I shall have much to tell: if taken, I shall escape many storms and trials through this life.’ I said, it is hard to part: when, turning and looking sweetly, with somewhat of ecstatic joy, he replied, ‘ O! I shall be ready to welcome you on the shores of heaven.’”

The next day he directed letters to be written, enquiring for a suitable person to succeed him in the curacy, having previously made arrangements with respect to his pupils. When first the relinquishing of his curacy was suggested, Mr. E. spoke of it as a most important step, intimated his purpose of waiting for a short time, and in the interval committing it to God in fervent prayer. This indeed appears to have been his constant practice with reference to every important undertaking, a practice it may be remarked, invariably attended with the divine blessing.

On Thursday March 6, I received a note from Miss Escreet, mentioning their arrival in town, stating Mr. E.'s extreme danger, and his wish that I should call upon him. I had long had the pleasure of his acquaintance, being early introduced to him at Cambridge, as the pupil and friend of my highly esteemed relative Mr. Scott, and had been occasionally favoured with his company while residing at Oakington. I had also heard from our common friend the Rev. Mr. Dunn, of Kelvedon, of his illness, but was not aware of his extreme danger, until I received Miss E.'s note. I should have visited him immediately, but it being my lecture night at Tavistock chapel, I was compelled to postpone my

call until the following morning. After a previous conversation with Miss E., which satisfied my mind that there was no prospect of a recovery, or even of a long continuance, I was introduced into his room. I found him lying on a sofa, exceedingly reduced, and evidently approaching to the grave. After some little conversation, I intimated, that not having seen him since he was in full health and vigour, the change in his appearance might be more striking to me than to others; but at the same time, I apprehended his own observation of sick persons must have convinced him of the danger of his situation, though of course no one could say how long the Lord might spare him, or what his purposes concerning him were. He replied, that he was perfectly happy; he trusted he was ready for life or death. He mentioned having been exceedingly low and uncomfortable the preceding night, but that about three o'clock he was enabled to leave himself entirely in the Lord's hands, and found a sweet composure which left him nothing to wish for. After conversing some time, we engaged in prayer; and, though I designedly made use of expressions clearly evincing my anticipation of a speedy removal, I found him, on rising from my knees, not only calm and composed, but with an

expression in his countenance of satisfaction and delight in the prospect which lay before him. He requested, and I cheerfully promised an early repetition of my call. But it pleased God to appoint otherwise. He was removed early the next day.

I was particularly struck with the regard and affection he manifested, both for the worthy Rector and the parishioners of Stisted. He was deeply impressed with gratitude for Dr. Seale's kindness and attention. Aware of the difficulty of meeting with a curate, who might in all respects be suitable for the situation, he seemed to lose sight of all other concerns in his anxiety for this. His life indeed, was not spared to witness the fulfilment of his earnest wishes, but I trust his prayers have been heard and answered, and will be accompanied with lasting benefits to all connected with the parish.

The apothecary who attended Mr. E. and who is one of the Society of Friends, called in the evening, and having been previously desired by one of his affectionate relatives to communicate to Mr. E. his real state, said to him, in the kindest manner, "I think it my duty to tell thee, that thy tabernacle is fast giving way;" and on intimating that a great change had taken place in

the last twenty-four hours, added, "It must be an anxious time for thee." Mr. E. replied, "O no, I am ready either for life or death." After this gentleman had left, and Miss E. was sitting by him in tears; he put his arm round her neck and said, "O my sister, O my sister, weep not for me! Rejoice!" and pausing a moment, said, "Rejoice with me if I stay! Rejoice with me if I go." To a gentleman who called soon after, and inquired, "Sir, do you think you are near your end?" he replied, "I don't know; I am as a traveller, and know not how near I am to my home." After this person had left him, he said, "I have been examining my evidences for heaven, and am satisfied: I know I must come as a penitent sinner to the foot of the cross; there I can lie as low as any one, and not fear acceptance."

In this calm, composed, resigned frame of mind Mr. E. continued during the night. He had been meditating the preceding evening on that delightful declaration, Isa. xxxiii. 24, "The inhabitant shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity;" and was now rapidly approaching to that blessed state. His affectionate sister, who tenderly watched by his bed-side night and day,

anticipating every want, and never leaving him, perceived his end was near, and desired his parting blessing. He immediately stretched out his hand and said, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee! the Lord be merciful unto thee and cause the light of his countenance to shine upon thee, and give thee peace." In the course of the morning he enquired, "Is not to-day Saturday?" Miss E. answered in the affirmative, adding, "I think you will be in heaven on Sunday." "Do you," replied he, affectionately, and then fervently prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit! Lord be merciful unto me!" These appear to have been his last words; and shortly after about ten o'clock in the morning, of March 8, 1823, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, he calmly fell asleep.

One gentle sigh their fetters breaks,
We scarce can say, they're gone,
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne.

His mortal remains were interred among his beloved people at Stisted. They were accompanied to the grave by the Rev. Dr. Seale, Messrs. Marsh, C. Musgrave, Ware, White and Dunn. The funeral service was read by the worthy Rector Dr. Seale, who, though deeply affected by his

loss, was yet able to officiate on the melancholy occasion. While the Rev. W. Marsh, tenderly consoled the bereaved and mourning relatives. The event was improved the following Sunday, by a funeral sermon from his affectionate friend, the Rev. E. White, of Gosfield, on Acts, xx. 31, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." In this discourse Mr. White insisted on the humility, the tender affection, and the persevering fidelity with which the great apostle St. Paul exercised his ministry among the Ephesians. He then proceeded to illustrate these striking features in the character and conduct of his departed friend, demonstrating his humility, both from his general conduct, and his private papers; illustrating his tender affection by the readiness with which he came amongst them, and the exertions he made on their behalf; and his persevering fidelity by the steadfastness with which he ever inculcated upon them, the great and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Mr. W. then enforced in striking terms upon his hearers, the duty of watching against forgetfulness of the things they had heard; against de-

clining in their love to God; against remissness in duty; against unbelief and impenitence: and closed his discourse by earnestly calling upon all to copy the bright example of their deceased minister; to whose excellence he bore testimony, in the striking terms which have already been quoted in this memoir.

From this sermon, I should gladly have selected some very excellent and impressive passages, but the modesty of the author will not allow me thus to adorn my pages. God grant, that his earnest exhortations, may long be remembered by the numerous congregation to whom they were addressed; and that the instructions of their departed curate, and his affectionate friend, may so sink deep into their hearts, and produce such blessed effects in their lives, that they may meet together with joy on the last day.

Funeral sermons were also preached at Hull on account of Mr. Escreet's death, by the Rev. T. Dikes, and the Rev J. Scott. The latter of whom has kindly communicated to me the notes of his discourse, from which I have extracted various remarks. In the conclusion of his sermon especially, Mr. S. took occasion to recommend religion to the young, pointing out its

necessity, from the early death of Mr. E.—its blessedness from his exemplary life, and his happy death. He illustrated the nature of true religion, its extent and consistency, as visible in Mr. E.'s invariable conscientiousness; his unaffected humility and dependance on Christ; and he further pointed out those high and valuable attainments, which were so conspicuous in his character; love, peace, joy, holy composure, and a calmness in the prospect of dissolution, most truly admirable in so young a man.

And such lessons it becomes us all to learn from the case before us. We may well indeed regret the stroke by which an affectionate people have been deprived of a faithful minister, and a mourning family most deeply afflicted; but mere sorrow for our, or for their loss, can be of no avail; the part of true wisdom is to copy his bright example; to follow him, as he followed Christ; to consider our own latter end; its certain approach, the uncertainty of the hour when the Son of man shall come; the importance of habitual preparation; the duty of continual self-examination; unfeigned repentance, lively faith in the great sacrifice, habitual dependance on the teaching and strengthening influences of the Holy Spirit, and unreserved devotion to the ser-

vice of Almighty God. If such lessons as these are learnt by the early removal of our departed friend, and if we are indeed excited to work the works of him that hath sent us while it is day, remembering that the night cometh when no man can work; then his early, and in some respects, premature removal, will be indeed a blessing to our souls; and however painful the bereavement may be at present to us, or to any, it will call forth thanksgivings of grateful praise to the God of our mercies, in that day when the redeemed of the Lord shall be raised from the grave, and admitted with triumphant songs, to the mansions provided for them, in their heavenly Father's house.

SERMON I.

PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S, HULL, OCT. 1822.

“In my Father's house are many mansions.”

JOHN xiv. 2.

It needs but little observation and little reflection, to be convinced that this is not our rest;—that we are but strangers and pilgrims here, passengers to another world. This most solemn and important truth, is obvious alike to rich and poor, to learned and ignorant; nay, even the young themselves, who are so apt to be wholly employed with the objects around them, and who generally put off the thoughts of death and judgment, to a far distant period; even these must perceive that the young die as well as others; and that there *may* be but a step between them and death. In short, my brethren, we have only, if I may use the expression, to make a right use of our eyes and our ears, and we shall see, that we must soon leave this lower world. For what do we see around us but dying creatures? What do we hear of, but the serious dispensations of God's

providence? Scarcely a week passes over our heads in which we do not hear of some one who is called to meet his God. Death invades the social circle, and no family is exempt from his approach. Sometimes the king of terrors makes his breach even where it is least expected, and where it is most deprecated; the husband and the wife, the mother and the child, are sometimes cut down, as it were, at one stroke; the son, the only son of his mother, is parted from her fond embrace, no more to meet in this vale of tears. Few who are here present but in some measure have experienced his power, and we are reminded continually, that our dearest connection must dissolve on earth, that our friends must either part from us or we from them.

Is it then true that we must lose our friends? Is it true that we also must lie on a dying bed—pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death; and what then have we to comfort us in these anticipations? Is there no hope, beyond the grave? Is all there dark and uncertain? And have we no knowledge of that world to which we are hastening, and in which we shall dwell for ever? O yes, there is a brighter prospect! Our adorable Redeemer has overcome death, and opened the gates of heaven to all believers! He

has given us a sight of the glories of the heavenly regions ; the veil which separates this world and the next is drawn aside, and we are permitted to take a view of our future residence. Do *ye* therefore who are weighed down with sorrow, do *ye* therefore meditate on the bliss of heaven, and filled with holy joy at the contemplation of such unspeakable felicity, take down your harps from the willows, and now sing the songs of Zion, even though it be in a strange land.

The subject before us, will I trust be profitable to all ; the words are indeed addressed to the true disciples of Christ, and for those only are those mansions prepared ; still however it may be useful to set before the ungodly and the sinner, the blessedness which they are despising ; that so they may see that they are feeding upon husks, yea even upon the east wind, and neglecting the true and the enduring riches.

Let us proceed to consider

I. The future residence of the saints.

II. The encouraging assurance given with respect to it.

I. The future residence of God's people. " In my father's house." Their residence, their abode will be in God's house. We know indeed that the Almighty is everywhere present, and is not

confined to particular places. We know also that all the things which he hath made declare his glory, still however, in some places he is pleased to unveil himself, and discovers more of his glory than in others; and whenever he is pleased to unveil himself, that is called his house. He has a habitation on earth, in which he is pleased to reveal himself to his waiting people; where he often refreshes their spirits, comforts their hearts, and strengthens their faith; so that they are ready to say, "Lord, it is good to be here." And in these houses of God, each one of them desires a mansion, so long as he remains on earth. Just as David envies the sparrows and the swallows which built their nests in the house of God, so do they long "rather to be door-keepers in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of sin and wickedness." But the house which is spoken of in my text, is a better house than are the earthly courts of the Lord: the one are earthly, the other is heavenly; the one are liable to decay, the other is incorruptible, and imperishable; and when thousands of years have run their course, still it shall stand, in all its glory and in all its strength. And as the house, so also are the inhabitants: we meet in these terrestrial temples, on one sabbath; perhaps ere ano-

ther arrives, some one of our little congregation is called away ; in the space of a year we perceive the loss of many ; and in half a century almost the whole of this congregation will be removed from time into eternity, and their place succeeded by others. Not so however in that house of which the Saviour speaks, the inhabitants thereof shall never be diminished, nor their places supplied by others ; those who are once admitted, “ shall go no more out,” but shall dwell there for ever.

But let us survey a little more attentively, the future residence of God’s people ; it is in “ Christ’s Father’s house,” it is in *their* Father’s house, according as Jesus says, “ I ascend up to my Father and your Father, to my God, and to your God.” They shall dwell then in the presence of God—where he unveils himself and manifests his glory ; Moses, you know, said, Lord, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory : but he could not see the face of Jehovah. But in heaven they see him as he is ; there indeed he makes his face to shine, and no cloud intervenes between them and their God. In this vale of tears his people often experience the hiding of their father’s face, which makes them go heavily before God ; but there such will not be the case—he will con-

stantly be with them, there will be no interruption, no intermissions to this their joy, but he will dwell with them for ever and ever. They shall see his power; his goodness; his wisdom; his mercy; his justice and righteousness; they shall dwell with the fountain of light, of life, of joy and love. And they shall dwell also with their Saviour: for where the Father is, there dwells the Son also: and so will be fulfilled the prayer of the dying Redeemer, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." Now indeed, they love *him*, though they see him not; but then they shall see him whom their souls love, even that Saviour who died for their sins, and who rose again for their justification. Are we not delighted to see a friend, in whose conversation and company we used to take great pleasure? and if that friend has done us some great service, what feelings of satisfaction have we on seeing him again? And who is such a friend to us, as the Lord Jesus? Who hath shewed such love to us as he who laid down his life for us? True it is, that now the children of God cannot love him as they would; but then, when they see the benefits of his redemption—

when they view them in a proper light—when they see from what misery he has saved them, to what a height of glory he has raised them, how will their love be kindled! how will they rejoice to meet him! rejoice to be with him! If the disciples were glad to meet their Lord on earth, how glad will they be to meet him in heaven; where they shall meet to part no more? Moreover they shall ever dwell with that Holy Spirit, who has taken up his abode with them on earth, who has constituted them the sons of God, who has comforted them in all their trials, and who has prepared them for that state of blessedness, which they shall then enjoy. “The comforter shall abide with them for ever.”

Thus shall these who are the true disciples of Christ, dwell in the presence of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and behold the glory of the great Trinity in Unity.

And now turn your eyes to the company which shall fill those courts:—angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets; all the saints of God, from the beginning of the world even to this time; our friends who have died in the Lord, who sleep in Jesus; them shall we see again, and enjoy their company for ever. And then too we

shall all be of one heart and one mind, nothing shall interrupt our friendship, but it will be pure, and heavenly, unmixed with selfishness, and undisturbed by discord. There is provision made for all their wants and necessities in this heavenly house—no care ever enters—no spiritual trouble shall ever disturb them—they shall never be burdened more by a sense of God's displeasure—no more doubts and fears shall distract their minds—the fiery darts of Satan and all his devices will be at an end as it regards them—a wicked world shall no longer persecute them, or entice them—they shall no longer be wearied with the corruptions of their own hearts—for then they shall be “presented without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but shall be holy and without blemish.” O what joy will they feel when arrived in safety at their father's house—when they know by the enjoyment that they have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

Their trials indeed shall all be over—there shall be no want to those who fear him—there will be no crosses in enjoyments—no sickness of body, no care of mind—no troubles of heart—no turbulent and unruly passions—no death—and consequently no fear of death. All these will be left behind,

they enter not into heaven, but are left to the inhabitants of this world. Need I tell you, how the understandings of the inhabitants will be enlarged—how they shall be enabled to comprehend things, at present, beyond their knowledge—how they shall have a clear view of the nature, the character, the perfections of God—how they shall be able to explain the mysteries of his providence! What a clear view they will have of the wonders of redemption. Need I tell you how they shall be clothed in white robes, and have palms of victory in their hands! how crowns of glory shall adorn their heads, even crowns incorruptible and undefiled and that fade not away. Need I tell you how they shall sit upon the Saviour's throne—how heavenly banquets shall delight their taste—how the most pleasing objects shall satisfy their eyes, and heavenly melody shall please their ears. And what shall I say more!—listen ye who are troubled in heart, listen to the words of St. John. Rev. vii. 14. “ These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall

hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Having thus contemplated a little the future residence of God's people, we must now very briefly proceed to consider,

II. The encouraging assurance with respect to it.

"In my fathers house are many mansions." There is room and place of reception and entertainment. God's house is large enough to accommodate all his children; there is room not only for one, but for many. Christ is gone not only to take his own place, he is gone to secure it for all his followers; and however numerous they may be there is room enough for them. Here indeed they may be like their master, and have no certain dwelling place; but there it will not be so. "After this, I beheld, says St. John, and lo a great number, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb." Many of all ages, of all conditions, of all countries, shall be accommodated there; so that the true christian need not fear that he

should be overlooked, amidst the number of God's people, and that there should be no place in heaven for him; no, there are *many* mansions, there is room for all.

Moreover in the expression "there are many mansions," it is implied that the future dwelling places of the saints are lasting and of long continuance; they are indeed everlasting habitations, eternal houses. Take the best and most desirable houses and habitations in this world, and after all that can be said concerning them, their glory, their stateliness, their rich furniture, their pleasant situation, yet are they fading and perishing, decaying and mouldering away. "The inward thought of men indeed may be, that their houses shall endure for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; but this their way is their folly;" "though their posterity praise their saying." But these mansions endure for ever, these dwelling places to all generations, no violence can be done to them, no mischief can happen to them.

This then is the encouragement, that there are many habitations, and that these shall endure for ever; they are the words of him who is too wise to err, too good to deceive.

And now my brethren, having meditated a

little while upon the future residence of God's people; having left for a short time this lower world, in order to survey the everlasting habitations. We are naturally led to think, what a happy thing it would be, if there were mansions of bliss, for all here present! if we could reasonably hope that all here were the disciples of Christ, and looking forward to brighter prospects beyond the grave. But is this the case? We are obliged to say it is not. Judge yourselves that ye be not judged of the Lord. Do not many walk who shew themselves not to be the servants of Christ, but the servants of sin and Satan; are there not many here who love the world and do not earnestly seek an interest in this blessedness? Are there not many who are careful and troubled about many things, and yet never troubled about their souls? Nay are there not many who feel no disposition for the employments of heaven? Who would be glad of the robe, the palm, the crown, the rest of heaven, but who know nothing about the joy of God's presence, and would be miserable in serving him? O my brethren, in what a case are you? all this honour, all this joy, to be possessed by others, and you to have no share in it. If you do not consider this now, remember there is a

day when you will be obliged to think of it; when you shall see the children of the kingdom, at a distance, and you yourselves cast out. What anguish will fill your mind, to consider that all these blessings were freely offered to you, that you were besought in the name of Christ to be reconciled unto God. You will not then be able to stifle conscience, to betake yourselves to any other source of enjoyment, to say, well one day I will attend to these things; for the day will be past, and your doom fixed for ever. Where, let me ask, are you seeking eternal habitations? You must live somewhere for ever. Are you then hastening to the abodes of darkness? Do you choose to be companions of the devil and his angels? When endless joy is offered you, do you choose everlasting torment? Had you rather take up your abode with Satan, than with your God and Saviour! O ye simple ones, how long will ye love simplicity. Your ways will end in death: Why spend ye your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not. Labour to secure one of these mansions; the time is short and uncertain. O then give diligence; repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted

out; and that you may receive an inheritance with all them that are sanctified.

Some, however are, I trust, true disciples of Christ; they have fled to him for refuge, they have a lively faith in his mercy, they are endeavouring to fulfil all his commands. To you my brethren, what encouragement is here, soon your trials will be over, soon this earthly tabernacle will be taken down; but ye have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Soon your journey will be over, and soon you will arrive at your Father's house. Be looking forward to this day—ever be meditating upon it—regard it as the end of your course. Let it cheer your hearts and enable you to bear patiently whatever you meet with here, dwell not upon your troubles, however great they may be, but consider what things Christ has prepared for you. Seek then the things above, and not those on the earth; set your affections on things above, so when Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

SERMON II.

WRITTEN DURING MR. E.'S LAST ILLNESS,
AND NEVER PREACHED.

“My times are in thy hands.”

PSALM xxxi. 15.

THE Psalmist when he wrote this Psalm, appears to have been in a state of great trial and affliction. He draws near unto his God as one who feels the necessity of so doing; the language of his heart seems to be, “other refuge have I none,” Lord be thou my helper, be thou my Saviour, or I perish. Not like many, who when they pray do it with such carelessness and indevotion, that you would really suppose they needed no mercy, no grace at the hands of God. No, he seems to wrestle with the Almighty, and like his great ancestor Jacob, to say, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. After having prayed earnestly for deliverance from his enemies, he describes his situation in the most affecting terms. “Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble ;

mine eye is consumed with grief, yea my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of my enemies, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear among mine acquaintance, they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind, I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many, fear was on every side, while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life." Pitiably indeed, was the situation of David, but who does not see how applicable the words are to the son of David, who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; who "was despised and rejected of men," who was forsaken by all his disciples, betrayed by one, and denied by another; view the beloved Redeemer extended on the cross, surrounded by his bitterest enemies, gaping upon him with their mouths, and ready to take away his life. But where was the confidence of David or of his greater son? What hope had he in this his time of need? "I trusted in thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand." He looked off from the creature, he put his trust in the Lord; and con-

sidering his times in God's hand, it made him resigned to the dispensations of the Almighty, encouraged him to feel that he was safe, and led him to desire that favour which is better than life.

Now we, my brethren, perhaps are not in such a state of affliction as David was; nevertheless, the subject will, I trust, be profitable to all who are here present, whatever be their station, and whatever be their circumstances. All should say with the Psalmist, "My times are in thy hand." And I would that all could do it in his spirit; that all felt their dependance upon God as much as he did. We shall consider—

I. The truth contained in the text.

II. The lessons we may learn from it.

I. The truth contained in the text.

"Our times are in God's hand." Our times of—

1. Prosperity and Adversity.

2. Health or Sickness.

3. Usefulness, or the contrary.

4. Life or Death.

1. Prosperity and Adversity.

Our times of prosperity are in the hands of God. We have no power over them ourselves. We may indeed bask in the sunshine of prosperity, we may seem gay and flourishing in the eyes

of others, and to ourselves there may appear no danger of a reverse, but we are prosperous no longer than the Almighty pleases. View the mighty monarch of Babylon, "whose greatness reached unto heaven, and his dominion to the end of the earth." He was walking in the palace of his kingdom, the king spake and said, "is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty." But while the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven saying, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee." And that very day was he deprived of his reason, driven from men, had his dwelling among the beasts of the field, and did eat grass as oxen. He thought his times of prosperity were in his own hands, but it proved that they were in the Lord's. So it was with Herod; arrayed in royal apparel, he made a speech to the people, and the people gave a shout saying, "It is a voice of a God and not of a man." And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory. How sudden the change—how soon was all his prosperity finished; he that was envied by others, soon became more miserable than the worst.

The Psalmist once said in his prosperity, that he should never be moved; the Lord had of his goodness made his hill so strong; thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled. And so it is with all of us. Our prosperity is not to be depended on; it is in the Lord's hands to give and to take away. And so also is it with our times of adversity. We are apt to think when we come into trouble, that our trials are so great, that they must overwhelm us, or of such long duration that we can never escape from them. Not so, however, does the Almighty deal with us, our times of adversity are in his hand, he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust, he will lay upon us no more than we are able to bear, he might easily consume us in his wrath, but for his name's sake he defers his anger, and does not suffer his whole displeasure to arise. He can still the raging of the sea, he fixes its bounds which it cannot pass; and though the waves of adversity may roar and toss themselves, he saith to them, "So far shall ye go and no farther." He also limits the time of their duration; they shall last no longer than he pleases; from whatever source they appear to come, by whomsoever and in what way soever effected, he will controul their duration. The times of adversity are in his hand.

2. In his hands are our times of health and sickness.

We are very little apt to consider this; we walk day by day as though our life, and breath, and all our ways were in our own hands; we rise morning by morning, lie down evening by evening, forgetting too often to acknowledge him as the God of our health: or if we do it with our lips, how little do we feel the truth of it, how little do we live according to it. But need I prove that this is the case? The experience of every day testifies it. We see the strong and the robust, the young and the healthful, arrested suddenly by disease, and laid upon the bed of languishing. In the morning perhaps they rose active as before, ere the shades of the evening come upon them, their strength is decayed, and their beauty withered. The physician may indeed assign it to causes which seem satisfactory to him, but after all we must say, "our times of health are in the Lord's hand."

Our times of sickness are equally so. He that has power to wound, has power also to heal; with him are the issues of life, as well as of death. He can give a sudden check to our disease, and restore us again in a few days, to strength, if so it pleases him; and if not, if he make us to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights be

appointed us, yet is it a consolation to know that we are in his hands, that he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; that though he does chastise us, yet it is for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. Oh! it is sweet in such a time, to be able to consider our afflictions as coming from him, and to look to him entirely for the removal of them. O put not your trust in man, nor in any son of man, for there is no help in them.

3. Our times of usefulness, or the contrary.

Are we actively employed in the service of God, endeavouring to promote his glory, and the good of our fellow-creatures? Is it the desire of our hearts to spend and to be spent in his service? Having tasted that the Lord is gracious, do we long and are we making it our endeavour to tell to others of his love, and excite them to seek the Lord while he may be found? Let us remember that these times of activity and exertion, are in the Lord's hands; and he may see fit to deprive us of them, even when we least expect it. How often do we see useful christians doing good to all around them, suddenly cut off in the midst of their days, while many that fear not God nor regard man, seem to flourish and prosper in their wickedness. Yet we must say,

and yet we will say, Righteous art thou O Lord, in all thy ways, and holy in thy works.

Are we cut off from usefulness, let us remember it is the Lord's doing; let us keep our souls like a weaned child—let us labour to attain the spirit of David when he said, if he say thus of me, I have no pleasure in him, then be it unto me, O Lord, according to thy word—let us remember that our judgment is with the Lord—he knows and will accept the desires of our hearts—and “our work is with our God”—he will either raise us up to it again, or else raise up others to supply our places—the work of the Lord shall prosper, and it signifies not by what instrument. Therefore, let us commit this into the hands of God praying with the Psalmist, “Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands, yea the work of our hands, establish thou it.”

4. Our times of life and death.

Need I remind you that is the case? Who has power over his life a single moment? Alas! how do men walk securely, as though they were not only sure of the morrow, but had before them many months and years of prosperity. But what

said the Almighty to one that thought so, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." What saith the scripture to us, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, seeing thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." How does every days experience convince us of this; how many we see in the prime of life, almost without a warning, in the midst of bustle and of business, called into eternity! The weeping relatives in vain deprecate the stroke, the man himself may pray for a little longer respite, and in vain: all which shew us that our lives are in the hands of God.

And so also are our deaths. And if we be the people of God, what encouragement is there. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The times thereof are in his hands; and in whose hands can they be better. How often do we see the mercy of the Lord, manifested in the deaths of his people. They are perhaps, beforehand overwhelmed with doubts and fears, they walk in darkness and have no light, and they say "O spare me a little that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen;" the Lord in mercy hears their prayers, removes their doubts, strengthens their faith, and enables them to meet the king of ter-

rors as a messenger of peace; and to say when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me. O death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory.

Thus are our times of prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, usefulness and the contrary, life and death, in the Lord's hands. Thus you see the truth contained in the text. Now let us consider—

II. The lessons we may learn from it.

1. Of Gratitude.

2. Humility.

3. Dependance.

4. Preparation.

1. Of Gratitude. We ought to be thankful that our times are in the Lord's hands. For let us suppose they were placed in the hands of others, or in our own. In the former case, should we not be subject to prejudice, caprice, erroneous opinions of others. Who would not rather have his times committed to God than to any of the children of men; however well affected they may be to us. But perhaps some would wish that their times were in their own hands; but they who do so, are ignorant of their own hearts; they would wish, no doubt, to walk all their lives

in the sunshine of prosperity; they would then keep far away all trials and afflictions: for this is the nature of the human heart—we start back from those things which are best for us—we would not choose chastening, because for the present it is grievous, notwithstanding afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby; and thus we should soon lose sight of that better world, to which we profess to be going, and on which our hearts ought to be set. Our times then are best in God's hands; in his who has all power in heaven and in earth; who changeth not, and therefore we are not consumed! who is possessed of infinite wisdom, and knows what is best for us; who is a God merciful and gracious, who is not ready to deal with us after our sins nor reward us after our iniquities; but who is ready to hear and to answer prayer, who hath said, "call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me." Have we not then cause for thankfulness, do we not learn a lesson of gratitude?

2. Humility.

We may well be humbled when we consider our past ingratitude to God on this as well as on other accounts. We have cause to be hum-

bled because we have been so little sensible of this truth. O how many days have we passed regardless of the power of the Almighty and of our absolute dependance upon him. Have we not lived as though our lives were in our own hands, as though we had power over the morrow, forgetting that we dwell in houses of clay and are crushed before the moth. And have not we cause to be humbled on this account: that we, such frail, dependent creatures, should thus walk as though all were in our own power. Have we not often murmured or been ready to murmur at the dispensations of the Almighty; have we not sometimes thought his dealings towards us to be hard, and wondered why he so dealt with us. But who are we that we should complain! Complain too of such a God, who is tender and compassionate towards us, who knows what is best for us, who when he afflicts, afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men, but chastens in mercy that we may be partakers of his holiness. O then let us learn the lesson of humility; let us confess our sins in this respect, lie low at the footstool of divine mercy, and labour to walk humbly with our God.

3. We learn a lesson of dependance.

Seeing all our times are in God's hands; seeing

we have not any thing but comes from God; seeing we have not any thing which can be called our own; ought we not to feel, ought we not to live sensible of our entire dependance upon God. A dutiful child will feel its dependance upon its parents, will acknowledge all as coming from them, will look to them for the supply of all its wants, and not give the glory of them to another. So should we acknowledge all as coming from God; daily should our praises ascend to the Father of mercies and to the God of all grace. Do we receive comforts from the creature, let us look through them to God, who is the source of all, and give him the glory of them. Let us look to him continually for the supply of all our necessities, and ever trust in his fatherly goodness. In short let us cultivate a child-like spirit of dependance upon God; and amidst all the changing scenes of life, may we ever consider ourselves in his hands. In prosperity, let us acknowledge his hand, and trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. In adversity let us not murmur at his dispensation, but quietly wait his pleasure. In health, let us praise him as the author of it, and use it to his glory. In sickness, let us submit to his rod and trust

to his mercy. In usefulness, let us give him the glory; in the contrary, let us rejoice that his work shall prosper, and pray that it may be established. In life, let us live as those who know not how soon they may die. In death, let us rejoice in the consolation of the gospel, follow the steps of our Redeemer, and seek to glorify him by our deaths as well as our lives.

4. Preparation.

And Oh, how needful is this, when we consider the numerous changes and chances to which, in this mortal life, we are subject! Who can tell what a day or an hour may bring forth? The present moment is passing hastily away, and what futurity may bring with it is uncertain. How wise is the man who is prepared for all that may befall him! Is, however, such a preparation to be obtained? Undoubtedly it is. The man who has felt his condition as a sinner, and has committed his soul to Christ, to be kept by him against that day; the man who has been renewed in the spirit of his mind, and walks soberly, righteously, and godly in the world;—that man is prepared, whatever may betide. He is prepared for prosperity or adversity; health or sickness; for life or death; for time or for eternity. He has the word and the spirit of God for

his guide to lead him ; he has his precious promise to support him ; he has glorious hopes held out before him, and even in passing through the valley of the shadow of death, he may fear no evil, for God's rod and staff they comfort him. How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, and thy tabernacles O Israel. Who is like unto thee O people favoured by the Lord.

Do you then, my brethren, who hitherto have thought nothing of your sins and never seen the value of a Saviour, betake yourselves to him in prayer ; seek a contrite heart, a broken spirit ; plead his gracious promises, and pray with the Psalmist, " Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." I beseech you be earnest, for the day is far spent ; you may be now standing on the brink of eternity, and your days cut short in a moment ; sleep then no longer in sin ; turn from your evil ways ; turn to the Lord, so will he have mercy upon you.

Ye who trust that ye have obtained mercy, that ye have received grace to amend your ways, walk here sensible of your entire dependance upon God, sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of life ; live close to God in prayer ; make the Lord your portion ; desire none other than he ; walk holily and unblameably before men in

love. In short, live in the omission of no known duty, live in the cultivation of every christian grace; endeavour to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards men; that so when death comes ye may be prepared for it, and experience the blessedness of those servants who are found watching.

And what the Lord saith to you he saith to all "Watch." "Watch therefore for ye know not at what hour your Lord may come."

THE END.

