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ART. I.—*The Life of Isaac Milner, D. D., F. R. S., Dean of Carlisle, President of Queen's College, and Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, &c.* By his niece, Mary Milner, author of the "Christian Mother." Second Edition abridged. London. 1844.

DR. JOHNSON once observed, in conversation, 'that no man is so important to society, that his death makes a chasm which cannot be filled up.' This sentiment is so far true, that affairs of the world never cease to go forward in some way, however many important persons are taken away; but it is not true that the space occupied by some men can immediately be filled by others. Dr. Johnson, himself, left no man behind him who entirely filled his place. The same may be said of our Washington and also of our Franklin. The same is true of Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, and others. Dr. Milner, we think, is another example of a man who left a great chasm in the literary and religious society, with which he was connected, which has not been filled to this day.

The writer of the life of this eminent man, makes an apology for the length of time which had elapsed after the death of her uncle, before this biography appeared; but she makes this sensible remark, "That the value which may be reasonably supposed to belong to a faithful Memoir of the Life and Character, of the late ISAAC MILNER, is by

no means of an ephemeral nature. The history of a man, whose mental endowments raised him from poverty and obscurity to wealth and fame, must always command attention, and possess an enduring worth, and if it were the object of the following pages to exhibit an eminent instance of the success, which almost invariably, in a greater or less degree, rewards the vigorous exercise of superior talents, such an object would amply justify their publication. That life must surely be worthy of being recorded, of which the whole course affords a striking illustration of the animating truth, that in this free country, ability and industry are the passports to honourable distinction. In the case of Dean Milner, however, another and a more powerful source of interest is superadded. If he were distinguished by his intellectual superiority, he was yet more distinguished by his Christian piety. Confessedly in the first rank of mathematicians and philosophers of his day, he was content, 'to receive the kingdom of God as a little child.' Gifted with extraordinary mental powers, and beyond the generality of his fellow men, a master of reason in its own province, he learned to submit his gigantic understanding to the humbling doctrines of Revelation."

Isaac Milner was born, Jan. 11, 1750. His father was originally a member of the Society of Friends. He had been unsuccessful in business, and was in reduced circumstances. He was a man of strong sense, and extraordinary industry and self-denial. Having in his own case experienced the want of a good education, he resolved, at whatever inconvenience to himself, his children should enjoy this advantage; and this resolution he kept as long as he lived; but his sudden death, when Isaac was only ten years of age, seemed to threaten that his kind purpose would fail of being accomplished.

His older brother Joseph, having been sent to a grammar school, Isaac, then only six years of age, accompanied him; and at ten years of age, could construe Ovid and Sallust into tolerable English. His mother being altogether unable to continue him at school, he was placed in one of the woollen manufactories in Leeds. His brother Joseph, however, having made some progress in his classical studies, by the kindness of a friend, who had remarked his abilities, was sent to the university of Cambridge, where he distinguished himself, and when he had finished his studies at the university, he was appointed head master of the Gram-

mar School at Iull, in which town he was afterwards elected afternoon lecturer, in the principal church. Having now a salary of more than £200, he began to think of making provision for his brother Isaac. Mr. Atkinson, who was requested to visit him in the factory, and ascertain whether he was competent to be an usher in his brother's school, found him at the loom with a Tacitus and some Greek author lying by his side; and upon further examination it appeared, that his knowledge and love of learning had not been diminished by his long absence from school. Being satisfied that his brother would not be disappointed in the assistance which he expected from him, Mr. Atkinson arranged all matters with his master, and obtained his release from his indentures; upon which, his master coming into the room where he was at work said, "Isaac, lad, thou art off." The delight manifested by the boy, Mr. Atkinson says, is quite indescribable.

Isaac Milner now entered upon his new course of life, and proved himself a competent teacher of the lower classes in Latin and Greek; and while he rendered important aid to his brother, under his tuition he made rapid improvement in his own studies. He not only became a good classical scholar, but mastered the elementary branches of the mathematics; so that when any difficulty occurred in Algebra, Joseph Milner, to save time, was accustomed to call on Isaac to solve it.

In the year 1770, Isaac Milner was sent by his brother, to Queen's College, Cambridge. His obligations to the kindness of his brother were not only acknowledged, but felt in the tenderest, strongest manner, to the day of his death. The affection which bound these two brothers together was perhaps, as strong as ever subsisted in that relation of life. "It began in childhood; was cemented in youth, by more than ordinary fraternal kindness on the one part, and by cordial gratitude on the other; and far from suffering interruption or abatement in after life, it increased in fervour, till the death of the elder brother separated these tenderly attached relatives."

Isaac Milner entered Queen's College as a sizar, in which situation it devolved upon him to perform various menial offices, in days of yore. One day, as report says, carrying a tureen of soup into the dining hall, he let it fall, when he exclaimed, 'when I get into power, I will abolish this nuisance.' This saying created much merriment among the

fellows, as none of them suspected that under the rough appearance of the sizar, was the future president of their college; and that this prediction would be literally verified.

He took his degree of A. B. in 1774, and though he was very diffident of his own abilities, and dreaded the trial which he was now to undergo, he came off superior to all competitors, and obtained the honour of senior wrangler of his year, with the title, "*incomparabilis*." He also contended for Smith's Prize, in which he was also successful. These are the two highest honours which the university of Cambridge has to bestow. His health, however, was greatly impaired by his too intense application of mind; so that he was led to consult Dr. Fothergill, who wrote him a very characteristic letter. But about this time he became acquainted with William Hey, Esq., of Leeds, who perceiving his superior talents and attainments, invited him to his house, and put him on an entirely new course. An intimate friendship was formed between them, which was never interrupted until the death of Mr. Hey.

On the 17th day of December, 1775, Isaac Milner entered into holy orders, at a general ordination held in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, by the bishop of Peterborough.

On the 10th of January, 1776, he was elected a fellow of Queen's College; and, the next year, took his degree of A. M., and received the appointment of tutor in his college, in which capacity he acquired great reputation. During this year, he communicated his first paper to the Royal Society, on "Algebraic Equations." On the 22d of March, in this same year, Isaac Milner was ordained priest, by the same bishop who had ordained him deacon.

In the year 1778, he communicated his second paper to the Royal Society, on the "Communication of motion by impact or gravity;" and the next year, 1779, another paper, on the "Precession of the Equinoxes." But though intent on mathematical science, he found time to pay attention also to chemistry; and it was about this time, by inhaling some deleterious gas, he laid the foundation of a pulmonary complaint, from which he never entirely recovered.

In the year 1780, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society; so that his reputation as a scholar seems to have risen very rapidly.

Although Mr. Milner had not much opportunity of ex-

ercising his ministry publicly, yet he devoted much attention to the study of the holy scriptures, and the writings of the fathers of the Christian church. About this time, commenced an intimate friendship and frequent correspondence, between him and William Wilberforce, Esq., which continued through life.

In the year 1782, Mr. Milner was elected professor of Natural Philosophy in his college; and from this time he delivered lectures alternately on Chemistry and Natural Philosophy; sciences for which he entertained a love throughout the whole of his subsequent life. His vacations he invariably spent at Hull, in the society of his beloved brother.

Mr. Wilberforce, contemplating a tour on the continent of Europe, had applied to a certain gentleman to be his companion, but on being disappointed in him he invited his friend Isaac Milner, to make one of a travelling party, through France, Italy, &c. This invitation he accepted, and set off with Mr. Wilberforce, his mother and sister, and two or three other ladies. Their journey was commenced on the 20th of October, 1784.

The only thing very memorable in this tour, was the happy change produced in Mr. Wilberforce's religious sentiments, principally by means of Mr. Milner's conversation. When Mr. Wilberforce first discovered his evangelical views, as he informs us in his journal, he repented that he had invited him to accompany him. He had picked up "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and inquired of Milner, what sort of a book it was, who answered, "one of the best ever written." On which they agreed to read it in company.

Mr. Wilberforce having been called home to attend to his duties in parliament, Dr. Milner returned with him; and again, on the 7th of July, they set out together for the continent; as the ladies who were of the company had been left in Italy. On this second journey, the subject of religion became again the topic of these two friends, and instead of any human composition, they now read together the Greek Testament; which gave Dr. Milner the opportunity of repeatedly explaining and inculcating his views of the doctrines taught in the sacred volume; and, by degrees, Mr. Wilberforce imbibed the same sentiments. It seems, therefore, that the extensive influence which Mr. Wilberforce's evangelical views have had in Great Britain, and

which they still continue to have, is to be attributed to the instrumentality of Dr. Milner.

In the year 1786, Mr. Milner took his degree of bachelor in divinity, on which occasion, he had an opportunity of distinguishing himself in a public disputation, termed "a divinity act," in which he had as his opponent, Dr. Coult-hurst, one of the ripest scholars and ablest disputants in the university. The subject was "Faith and Works."

In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Milner gives the following account of his college labours: "In college, I lecture from eight to ten in the morning—from that time till four in the afternoon, I am absolutely so engaged, that I can scarce steal half an hour from preparing my lectures, to dine. At half past five, I get my coffee to go to chapel, and then lie down for an hour. I then rise, and take my milk—look out various articles, and make notes of natural history, &c., for the succeeding day. This coming every day, keeps me on such a stretch, that I am often very much done up with fatigue; and if Mr. Metcalf, of Christ's College, did not assist me, I should not be able to get through."

His health, at this time, was much impaired, so that his physicians, Drs. Baillie and Pitcairne, were seriously apprehensive that his life would be of short duration. Under these circumstances, he again had recourse to his friend, Mr. Hey, of Leeds, to whose judicious advice the prolongation of his life, may, perhaps, under Providence, be attributed.

Mr. Milner was appointed a member of the "Board of Longitude," whose meetings he punctually attended. This Board consisted of some of the most scientific men in the country; and had for its object all discoveries favourable to navigation; but has recently been dissolved.

Mr. Milner's religious character evidently improved, every year, as appears by his private correspondence. His theoretical views were correct from his youth, but, for some years, he was too much under the influence of literary ambition; but he at length was brought to see and feel that the highest wisdom was, "To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

By the death of the Rev. Dr. Plumtre, in the year 1788, the office of President of Queen's College became vacant, and to this honourable station, Mr. Milner was elected. For half a century, this college had greatly declined in

reputation ; but from the time of Mr. Milner's election, it began to rise ; for he was no sooner in office, than he commenced a reformation of abuses, which had long existed. He also introduced from other colleges men of real learning as tutors, to whom he uniformly showed kindness. Like other reformers, however, he met with his full share of obloquy and abuse, but he possessed sufficient fortitude to brave opposition, and to continue in the course which he believed to be the path of duty.

During the years 1790 and 1791, Mr. Milner suffered much from ill health ; so that he was unable to deliver all the lectures officially required, and was indulged with a substitute, in relation to the Jacksonian Professorship. For the sake of personal improvement in piety, he was accustomed, at this time, to keep a diary ; from which the following pious reflections are extracted ; “ How much reason have I to be thankful, that it hath pleased God to lay this affliction of bodily sickness upon me ! Assuredly, I was going in the broad way of destruction. For though there was nothing openly gross or scandalous in my conduct, yet a very little reflection convinces me, that my life had nothing to do with that of a Christian—God was not in my thoughts. I consulted *self* only. I transacted my ordinary business with diligence and credit to myself ; but the reasons of my conduct were pride, love of reputation, hopes of advancement, and such like ; to which, however, I may add, the pleasure I took in the study and improvement in natural philosophy and mathematics. But all this began and ended in self-gratification. And as I had no better motives myself, it was impossible that I should teach others to regulate their principles by superior motives than the love of fame, of consequence, and of advancement, and the prospect of much mental pleasure in study. But how self-condemned do I appear, when I recollect, that, all the while I knew better things ! There is some excuse for numbers around me, *they* have never been in the way of instruction ; whereas, I have been acquainted with evangelical truth for many years ; and yet, in defiance of conviction, I have gone for years, breaking God's commandments, and encouraging others to do so by my example. O Lord, forgive me ! O let my mouth be stopped, and let me never say, that thou dealest hardly with me, in continuing the pains of my body.”

In the year 1791, Mr. Milner was appointed to the dig-

nified station of dean of Carlisle ; which was brought about chiefly by the influence of Dr. Pretyman,\* bishop of Lincoln, with Mr. Pitt, whose tutor he had been. But notwithstanding the brilliant prospects which opened before him, as dean of Carlisle, and president of Queen's College ; yet he was deeply afflicted on account of the sickness of his brother, whom he loved most tenderly. In a letter to his friend, Mr. Hey, he says, "My heart is almost broken ; I neither eat nor sleep, and unless it please God to enable me to submit more calmly, I shall, assuredly, be overset. My dear friend, you are a *futher*, and know how to feel tenderly. Oh ! my dear, and only brother ! who has comforted me so often in my sufferings!! . . . The last time I saw him, I told him plainly that I had not learned to submit to God's dispensations. He said, 'The thing is, Isaac, you don't make God your *summum bonum*.'" "

On the same occasion, in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, he says, "You know the terms my brother and I have lived on from infancy. You must also be aware of the great comfort he has been to me, as an affectionate friend and faithful adviser, during my long illness. Judge, my dear friend, what I must have felt on the prospect of seeing him snatched away. . . . O my dear friend, the views of religion concerning which, you and I have so often conversed, are the only ones that can help in time of need. May God, of his infinite mercy, grant, that you and I may become practically acquainted with them ! How necessary is the rod of correction ! It leads to self-examination. I remember you always, affectionately."

In 1792, Mr. Milner took his degree of Doctor in Divinity ; and toward the close of the year, was elected to the office of vice chancellor of the university. At first, he greatly hesitated, whether, on account of the state of his health, he ought to accept the office. And on this occasion, he writes to his friend, Mr. Hey of Leeds, and gives him an account of the nature of his complaints, which may be gratifying to other invalids. "This complaint," says he, "is not of that class which is properly called nervous, or hypochondriacal, and in which business and plenty of exercise in the open air, is recommended. Yet I do not wonder that such an idea is gone forth respecting me ; because I now look well, and am always in good spirits, when I *do* appear in public. This idea cannot be done away with by anything I can say, and is only to be opposed by profes-

\* Afterwards Dr. Tomline.

sional opinions. The other fact to be insisted on, and clearly set forth, is my incapacity for bearing the open air, or the air of rooms not constantly warmed by fires. My present state is certainly a complication, viz ; the relics of a severe ague, combined with a constitutional affection of twenty years standing. This affection you have seen a great deal of in my case ; and you know nobody was more active than I was, or used more exercise in the open air, of various kinds. I rode on horseback as long as I could, and every morning before breakfast, and in all weathers. The other part of my complaint, my aguish affection, you have not seen so much of ; yet you have heard of me from others. You are to put these things together and to judge for yourself, whether you can certify what you believe to be my case ; and in such a way as to enforce the truth, and thereby undo any conception of this sort, viz : that I only want resolution to go out, and that any office that obliged me to go out, would do me good." Notwithstanding his reluctance, he was induced to accept the office of vice-chancellor ; especially, in consideration of assistance proffered to him by the other heads of colleges. The very next year after he accepted this important office, his wisdom and fortitude were put to the test in the case of Mr. Frennd, who had written a pamphlet entitled, "*Peace and Union Recommended to the Associated Bodies of Republicans and Anti-Republicans.*" He was charged with attempting to prejudice the clergy in the eyes of the laity, and to degrade the rites and doctrines of the established church. He was tried in the vice-chancellor's court, convicted, and expelled the university.

One of Dr. Milner's dearest friends, and frequent correspondent, was the Rev. James Stillingfleet ; an extract of a letter to whom, will show his feelings and furnish some account of the state of religion, at Cambridge.

" I preached yesterday to a serious congregation at Simeon's church, in the morning, and heard him preach a faithful sermon, in the evening. I regret that I shall lose his company so soon ; he is going to Portsmouth. My brother joins me in best respects to you. He is as well as one can expect, after so much fatigue. You have heard, I suppose, that Frennd is foiled repeatedly ; first, by the vice-chancellor's court, and then by the unanimous voice of the court of delegates. It will do some good here ; even his arrogant and unchristian conduct will not be without its

fruits. This place has obtained more evangelical means, since I was here last. There is now Simeon; and it is to be regretted that his congregation is not so large as it were to be wished. Of those, however, who do attend, there are a number of solid Christians; and whether God may please again to make this place a nursery for the gospel, as doubtless it was, in a very high degree, at the time of the Reformation, we know not. But times are different. Then, persons of rank and eminence, some of them at least, attended to the gospel; now, in general, the lower orders only regard such things, and the great and the high have, all over Europe, forgotten that they have souls. It the more becomes us, my dear friend, to watch and pray: it is an hour of temptation. "Set a watch over my mouth, that I offend not with my tongue; let me not eat of their dainties." I feel need to pray continually, lest I be carried away, even by the civilities of the world. We began, as despised preachers of Jesus; in meekness and simplicity may we continue so to the end, and nourish our souls with the doctrine which we preach to others."

It was in the year 1793, that Dr. Milner took formal possession of his deanery of Carlisle. A person who was present on the occasion, but then a child, writes: "I was then nine years old, and was wonderfully struck with his majestic appearance, and his manner of reading the lesson for the day. Dr. Paley stood on the south side of the communion table, without taking part in the service. Standing near the dean, he appeared like a little boy: the bishop preached. Thus commenced Dr. Milner's connexion with the city of Carlisle—a connexion, which was doubtless by the blessing of God, rendered instrumental to the salvation of many souls."

Besides the three months which the dean was required to reside at Carlisle, all the rest of the year was spent at the university, in the vigorous discharge of the important duties of his station. He not only introduced a reform in regard to the sizars, but corrected many abuses, and exercised constantly, a conscientious superintendence over the conduct of all the young men belonging to his college, and actively interested himself in the welfare of such as gave any promise of future eminence.

As his brother Joseph had undertaken to write a history of the Christian church, the object of which was to show, that from our Saviour's time to the present, there ever have

been persons, whose dispositions and lives have been formed by the rules of the New Testament. Dr. Milner laid himself out, when they were together, which was every vacation, to render him all the assistance he was able.

Dr. Milner felt deeply on the critical situation of the British nation, at this time, and agreed in all important points with the policy of Mr. Pitt; and was grieved when, for a short season, his friend Wilberforce withdrew from his connexion with this great statesman; but we shall omit all further notice of his political sentiments, in this condensed narrative.

It will be a matter of curiosity to know Dr. Paley's opinion of the preaching of Dr. Milner, as he was often his hearer; and we have from Dr. Smyth, professor of History in Cambridge, the following remarks: "I told the bishop of Carlisle," says Dr. Paley, "that about the evangelical doctrines themselves, I must leave him to judge; but if he chose to hear them urged with great ability and placed in the most striking point of view, he must go to hear our dean." And Dr. Paley, in perfect accordance with this, in a letter to a friend, says, "When the dean of Carlisle preaches, you may walk on the heads of the people. All the meetings attend to hear him. He is indeed a powerful preacher." This crowding to hear the dean, might be confirmed by many living witnesses. In a letter addressed to his biographer, it is said, "When it was known that the dean was to preach in the cathedral, I have seen the aisles and every part of it so thronged, that a person might have walked on the heads of the crowd. It was pleasing to see how religious persons of different denominations flocked around the pulpit. I well remember, at times, while preaching, his being so absorbed in the subject, that the expression of his countenance had in it something more than earthly. After one of his powerful discourses, a young gentleman from Liverpool, who had heard him, called upon him, and with tears in his eyes, thanked him for his discourse." The text was, 'Wherefore halt ye between two opinions.' The same sermon was the means of awakening several other persons.

In a letter to his friend Mr. Wilberforce, dated Feb. 23, 1797, written under an attack of one of those terrible headaches, with which he was frequently afflicted, at this period of his life, he says, "God knows whether I am to have any more intervals of tolerable health; but you will judge of

my state, when I tell you, that, last Monday, I had most seriously, as nearly as possible determined to leave all here, and go and wait God's will near my friends at Hull.

“ I wish I could keep my trust in Him without wavering! Oh, a great deal passes my mind ! but you will excuse my writing more at present. Surely, I should be glad to see you ; but at present I am too ill to enjoy your company. Yours with the best and most affectionate wishes.” It will encourage many a poor invalid, who has been accustomed to think his sufferings peculiar, to find that the great Dr. Milner laboured under similar complaints, and was subject to similar feelings of depression. In October, 1797, he addressed another letter to the same friend, much in the same style, as it was written under similar circumstances. “ Your letter finds me this morning (as you have seen me not unfrequently,) laid at length upon the sofa, in considerable pain of the head. . . I am reviving a little. There is really nothing of which I can speak positively with more certainty, than of the utility which is connected with these repeated chastenings. It is a sad thing that they should be so necessary ; but I bless God that they do not harden, as I should have supposed, that in time they would, but on the contrary, soften my heart, and make it more submissive to His will, who knows what is best for us. Your dear mother is, I doubt not, under the teachings of the Spirit of God, and will improve by her afflictions ; and it is very evident to me, that in her case also, afflictions are necessary. When she is better for a few days together, I see a strong tendency to relapse and lose ground in spiritual matters ; and, so far as that goes, it is a bad sign in her and myself. It is a bad sign when religious frames depend on the pulse ; yet it is a good sign, when the effect of sufferings is to give us a clearer insight into our own character, and the character of God : for it is in that way only that we can come to understand our real situation, that is, the relation in which we stand to an offended God. An inch gained in this way is inestimable, because it is certainly in the right road.”

Dr. Milner was greatly affected with the increasing indisposition of his brother Joseph. On this subject, he writes to Mr. Wilberforce as follows, “ My dear friend, I know you profess to be never much moved by any event ; still I believe, if you had been with me for the last fortnight, your compassionate heart would have been deeply affected. I

must be very short; I am not able to write. A considerable fever, with an increase of asthma has come upon my poor brother, and brought him to the very gates of death. He still remains in a most critical situation—I very much doubt whether he will ever recover. This is not fear, but reality. My constant persevering prayer has been for resignation and support—but, alas! alas! I can just say from experience, ‘The Lord knows how to be gracious, if we could trust him’—and no more. Oh! my dear friend, there is something on this occasion, crowds upon my mind, so thick and so close, that I should have been overwhelmed but for God’s especial mercy. A deal of this is bodily. I am weak, nervous, and worn out. ‘Multis vulneribus oppressus, huic uni me imparem sensi.’ Then, from a very child I have lived with this only brother; he has been kind to me beyond description, and a faithful adviser in illness on a thousand occasions. Lastly, no man’s affections were, perhaps, ever so little divided by a variety of friendships as mine. For years past, I have said, ten thousand times, that I would exhort a youth whom I wished to be happy in this world, to know *more* people and love them *less*, yet God does not absolutely give me up to griefs. My brother’s mind is so happy, that it can hardly be in a more desirable state. ‘The promises are sure.’ Yesterday, I was told that he had your book in his hands for several days, and that he likes it better and better. When I talked to him last, I could get nothing from him, but, ‘Let not your heart be troubled.’” When it became evident that his brother was approaching his end, his feelings would not allow him to see him; but he wrote a note to him, requesting him to leave him some counsels, that might tend to produce resignation to the divine will. On which, his dying brother wrote the following excellent letter, which deserves a place here. It is the testimony of an excellent man, on his death-bed.

“DEAR BROTHER,—Resignation to the divine will, is one of the last and highest attainments of the Christian life; it is what is ultimately to be aimed at, as essential to comfort here, and happiness hereafter. But it seems not to be by any means the first object of one who is desirous of becoming a Christian, nor even attainable, except some other necessary things are previously acquired. For me to have my will in unison with the will of God, I must in the first place, trust him thoroughly, and love him supremely; for

it is impossible for me freely to give up my will to another entirely, while we are on bad terms; that is, as long as I cannot trust him, and so long as I hate him; or what, in this case, comes to the same thing, love any person or thing better than him. The conclusion is, that all attempts at resignation will be in vain, without conversion and reconciliation with God.

“When we are convinced of the sinfulness and misery of our natural state, it is a high point of wisdom to seek, by prayer and diligent searching the scriptures, that only right and effectual method of relief which God has provided. ‘Repent and believe the gospel,’ is the first thing. We should not stir from this direction, till we have some good ground of evidence, that we do repent and believe. Alas! our guilt and wickedness are much deeper and larger than we are apt to suspect; and our pride fights, with inexpressible obstinacy, against all just conviction. But let us not be discouraged; things impossible with men, are possible with God. Let us pray, not now and then only, but constantly. Life is short, we have no other business that ought to interfere with this. It should be the perpetual, as it is the most important employment of the soul. The scriptures daily meditated on, will supply us with instruction; and if we pursue our business in religion it will doubtless be made our chief pleasure, in time. A thorough insight into human emptiness and worldly vanity, a complete conviction of the evil of sin, even in our own particular case, and a desire to forsake it altogether, a solid discernment of the complete sufficiency of Christ, to save us in all respects—these things, in daily seeking unto God, are to be attained. We are not so ready to pray as God is to hear. He delights to magnify his Son Jesus, and to show what he can, and will do for us through Him. He calls us to do nothing in our own strength; and as we cannot have, so we need not think of having any worthiness of our own. We may come and take freely, what He freely bestows—and, my dear brother, when once in this way, you can steadfastly rely on the divine promises, through Christ, so sure as ‘faith worketh by love,’ you will find yourself enabled to love God; and it is in Christ that His love will be seen. A union and fellowship with Christ will take place; and it is the sweetest and pleasantest sensation which the human mind can know. Though the effervescence of it be short and momentary, and by very transient glances, yet its

steady energy is real and powerful. For to encourage us, we should remember the interest we have in Him by the ties of a common nature. The second and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, represent this point strongly. You may think that I deviate from the subject of resignation, but I know no other way of coming to it. Once brought to love Christ above all, we shall love other persons in the best manner, in subordination. Even to part with dearest friends will be practicable. Because (1 Thes. iv. 14,) 'If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him.' When we can feel any genuine love to God in Christ, we shall be led to such an acquiescence in his wisdom and goodness, that we shall choose his will to take place, rather than ours; and the thought, how soon all things shall be set right in a future life; and that He makes all things to work together for good, will reconcile the mind to any thing that God pleases. And though the dissolution of soul and body be always a serious thing, and against the feelings of nature, yet a mind whose hope and desire are with Jesus, and which has a constant thirst for spiritual enjoyments as true felicity, and which is loosened from all worldly attainments, must, ON THE WHOLE, wish for death rather than life, as we all wish most for that which has most of our hearts; but the love of God will teach such a one to resign himself, as to the time, to his heavenly Father's will. You will not mistake me, I hope, as though I believed that all real Christians have learned this completely; far from it. But these things are learnt by them, in a measure; but not without much conflict, opposition from sinful nature all along, and much imperfection. And though it is not easy to confine by rule, the Spirit's operations; yet this seems the general order of Christian virtues, viz. repentance, faith, love, resignation. In Christ himself, resignation was perfect. 'Not my will but thine be done.' And as far as we trust in him for grace, so far we may receive grace out of his fulness. Among mere men, St. Paul seems to be the completest pattern of resignation. What a tremendous view of his sufferings is that in 2 Cor. xi. But how practicable did the love of God make many things to him. In Phil. iv. 11-13, he tells us, that he had learned to be content in any state, and that he could do all things through Christ which strengthened him, and the original word for 'had learned' *μεμνημαι*, alluding to the Pagan mysteries, shows that this learning was of a mysterious nature.

“Dear brother, I write in the fulness of affection, wishing you to make it your main business to acquire these things. I am far from thinking, that your long course of afflictions, has been against your acquiring them. Oh! let me beg for patience to lie, as clay in the hands of his infinite wisdom, who knows how to humble our pride, and to break our wills, and to form us to a conformity to Himself. And may you be helped to a steady course of praying and seeking God, with a willingness to give up all for Christ!

“I have been looking at Dr. Johnson’s life. The man was unfaithful to his convictions, for the most part of his life at least. Had he been humbled before God, he would have been despised by the world, but would have been comfortable in his own soul. May Christ Jesus visit you, and lead you, dear brother, to true rest. Yours,

“Nov., 1797.

J. M.”

The writer of this letter lived only a few days after it was penned. He died on the 15th of November, 1797.

The feelings of Dr. Milner, on this occasion, can hardly be conceived, much less described. We have, however, a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, dated on the very day of his brother’s decease, which serves to show something of his feelings. “O my dearest friend, my beloved brother’s last words, or nearly so, were, that, ‘Jesus was now doubly, doubly precious to him’—Christ called him to himself, this morning about seven. I keep to myself as much as possible and pray—but, indeed, my dear friend, I fear, this may be the last letter you will ever receive from me. If the event—which, however, is not worse than the suspense, should prove too much for my weak frame, and already half-broken heart, remember there was a corner in that heart, preserved to the last for you and your half.

“Oh! that I had followed his steps! or had now strength as I have some heart, in the days of life, to follow them, in warning a thoughtless world! I wish tears would come—I should be easier.”

“It is very generally known,” says his niece, “that Dr. Milner was in the habit of using opium as a medicine. To the use, and value of that medicine, in his case, those who knew him intimately can bear testimony. Upon this subject, some misapprehension has existed; it may be sufficient to say, that by Dr. Milner, this drug was never, at any period of his life, used otherwise than strictly as a medicine, and by the concurring advice of the first physi-

cians of the day. How effectual it was in enabling him to dedicate to the noblest uses, what he truly called, the 'shattered remains' of his health, is known only to the very few persons, whose privilege it was to witness his daily habits, and enjoy his domestic society."

The strength of his affection for his brother, as also the depth and sincerity of his piety, will appear by the following letter, addressed to the Rev. William Richardson, one of the most intimate friends of his brother. "My dear Sir, I cannot give any satisfactory reason for it, but so it is, I dread either to see or write to any of my brother's dear or particular friends. Therefore, I have written nothing to any of them, except where there was an absolute necessity for so doing. While I remained at Hull, I dreaded the approach of good Stillingfleet; and, at last, when I understood he was coming to see me, I summoned courage to tell him, by letter, that I could not venture to admit him; yet, he had written to me the most kind and affectionate letter, that ever was penned. I say again, I cannot explain the violent agitation which I foresee would take place on an interview with you or him; but I feel that it would be so certainly, and I know not whether I should survive it. This apprehension is not fancy. . . . Indeed, it is of God's special mercy, that I am alive. But you will say, does not every man lose near friends and relations? Not many, in such circumstances. He was the only near relation I had in the world; and I was brought up with him from a child. I remember him as far back as I remember anything, and we went to school together, for many years. Still, I own there are cases quite as afflictive as this; and probably several without the same mitigating considerations—MITIGATING, do I call it? to be able to say, 'I have no doubt, whatever, that he is in heaven. This is, indeed, a glorious reflection, and it should heal my broken heart. It would, no doubt, if reason had much to do in such a matter, but reason is pushed aside by affection, self love, and unsubdued passion. There is, however, in religion a reality. I thank God, I can say so, on the best foundation, viz.; that in that way I obtain some relief, and in no other. I grasp, therefore, the help, as firmly as I can, but still, dear sir, my heart is broken! Don't tell me how much you have felt—I know, I am sure, you have."

The remainder of this long letter relates to his brother's writings, and the estimation in which they were held.

The duel between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney, took place about this time. Dr. Milner's abhorrence of the practice was uncompromising. The popular arguments in its defence or mitigation, he held to be fallacious. "Murder," he was wont to say, "is not the less murder, because the murderer exposes his own life." And, in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, he says, "I hope you will do something effectual against duelling. You will never have another so fine an opportunity. It has hurt Pitt's character more than any thing he ever did. Perhaps not so in London.

In the month of December, 1798, Dr. Milner was elected to the mathematical chair at Cambridge, once filled by Sir ISAAC NEWTON. That chair had been resigned by that greatest of philosophers, in 1669; and from the time of that resignation, until the election of Dr. Milner, four professors only had occupied it, viz. Whiston, Saunderson, Colson, and Waring. Dr. Milner remained in this station, until his death.

His mind appears to have been much oppressed with melancholy feelings about this time, of which he complains in his letters to his intimate friends. To Mr. Wilberforce, he says, "Though I have endeavoured to discharge my duty here, as well as I could, and though I have been enabled, through a gracious Providence, to get through four preachings, yet sadness and melancholy of heart stick close by me, and increase upon me. Who would believe this? I tell nobody, but I am very much sunk, indeed, and I wish I could have the relief of weeping, as I often used to have."

About this time, Dr. Milner was much occupied in studying the works of Jonathan Edwards, and more particularly his treatise on "The Religious Affections." The following letter to the Rev. Mr. Richardson, will show the state of his mind better than any description. After an introduction, he says, "My views have of late been exceedingly dark and distressing; in a word, Almighty God seems to hide his face. I entrust the secret, hardly, to any earthly being. I endeavour to pour out my heart before God; but really I receive so little that I can fairly call answers in any shape, that my heart fails, and I know not what will become of me. I feel assured, that for a good while, my earnest desire has been to serve God according to my station, and to give myself wholly to Him; but I find it to be no easy matter to look death and judgment in

the face : and the thing which most dispirits me is, that my case takes up so much of my attention, that, in a measure, my usefulness is destroyed, or at least lessened.

“ I see my fault to be, that I am impatient in prayer, and do not hope and wait quietly ; but how to get the better of this I am utterly at a loss. I don't know whether I make you understand me perfectly. In one word, my prospects here grow darker and darker, as to bodily decay. I would have the evidences of a good hope brighten—else what is to support me ? There is doubtless, a good deal of bodily affection mingled with this ; but it is not all so, and the devil is very busy. I bless God, however, that I never lose sight of the cross, as the great thing to cling to ; and though I should die without seeing any personal interest in the Redeemer's merits, I think, I hope, I should be found at his feet. If I am to be saved at all, it is, assuredly, in this way. This conviction has not yet been shaken in my mind ; but it is a blind sort of faith ; and nearer allied to despair than to confidence. I see plainly, indeed, that there is no other way, but still I do not see but that I may perish. I will thank you for a word at your leisure. My door is bolted at the time of my writing this, for I am full of tears.”

In another letter to the same friend, he manifests the lively interest which he felt for promising young men ; but then falls into the same strain of complaint respecting himself, as in the preceding letter.

“ B. is really a very amiable, mild, taking young man. I am greatly pleased with him. His public dispute, called his *act*, is lately put off till the next term, on account of the death of a Master of Arts, of St. John's. When such an event takes place in term-time, it causes three days non-term, and no business is done ; so poor B. who was ready charged and primed, must keep in that state until he has opportunity of firing. He was very little discomposed about it, though he said he could not well set about other business till he had got that off his mind. I have known some people, in his circumstances, very much ruffled by such an event. He seems, indeed, excellently disposed, and I wish his modesty would let him call on me oftener than he does ; for it would really be a pleasure to me to do a service to such a lad ; and those subjects have been so familiar to me for a long time, that it gives me no trouble to assist one in his situation. I gave him some advice about spending his summer, but I mean to send for him and examine him particularly.

“ May Almighty God bless you always, and return seven times into your bosom your kindness shown to me, lately, both in what you said, and in the despatch you used in answering my letter. I cannot but think there is something sadly wrong, about my views or my way of going on, in some respect or other, or I should not be in this great darkness and dismay. I assure you, I sometimes think, my mind will lose all its tone. I aim as much as possible at two things, 1. To keep up a steady, praying, waiting spirit. 2. To surrender my own will to his will, entirely, and, therefore, to allow no known sin. This must surely be right, but I suppose, I do not do, what I say. There is something wrong I am satisfied, or I should not be so miserable, and have so little confidence towards God, at the times when I most want it. There is nothing that I see clearer, than that my continued afflictions are useful and even necessary to me. In intervals of health, I can pray very sincerely for the return of illness, if expedient. I really tremble when I grow better, so prone am I to wander into the old way of worldly-mindedness, and of pleasing self; but when the fits of illness come, I do not, I believe properly kiss the rod. Yet, I really cannot charge myself with much murmuring; I thank God, I have got over that a good deal; but a sort of melancholy sulkiness comes on, and a want of cheerful submission. No earthly being can tell what I suffer in mind and body. I should be very grateful to you to write to me again, at your leisure.”

Dr. Milner spent much time in revising and preparing for the press, that part of his brother's “ Church History,” which had been written, but not printed; and afterwards, he determined to continue the history himself, which he brought down to the year 1530. On this work he bestowed immense pains and labour; for he was most scrupulous about stating facts, except on the very best evidence; and where any thing was doubtful, he would not rest, until he had caused the authentic documents to be searched, in different European cities. He found his brother's manuscript to be in a very imperfect state; so that for several years, all his leisure was occupied in this work.

About this time also, he formed the design of publishing his brother's “ Life.” In executing this work, he was assisted by Messrs Stillingfleet and Richardson, the most intimate friends of his brother.

In a letter to him, Mr. Wilberforce had spoken in strong

terms of his domestic happiness, to which Dr. Milner replies, "Perhaps, these wonderful smiles are for some future trial—continue to watch." And this very reply found Mr. Wilberforce, who was at Bognor with his family, in the deepest distress on account of the dangerous illness of his wife. On hearing of the affliction which had thus befallen his friend, Dr. Milner hastened to Bognor, and remained with him till the danger was past. He was a friend of the right stamp, who hesitated not to throw aside every thing, to fly to the assistance and comfort of a friend. Such friends, are, indeed, invaluable. No earthly possessions are to be compared with genuine friendship. Happy, truly happy, may he be said to be who has such friends. We should be pleased to give much more of Dr. Milner's religious correspondence, it is exceedingly to our liking; but we have already occupied as much room in this way, as can be spared to us.

When the British and Foreign Bible Society was established, the enterprize commended itself strongly to Dr. Milner's good sense and evangelical piety; and he, therefore, gave his warm encouragement, and personal co-operation to the formation of a Branch Society in the university of Cambridge, on which occasion, he delivered an excellent speech in favour of the national society. At this time he did not dream of any serious opposition to so good and glorious a cause; or any interference that there could be between it and any other society. But the Rev. Dr. Marsh, then a professor in the university, and one of its brightest ornaments, soon began to manifest a decided opposition to the "British and Foreign Bible Society;" and soon came out with his "Inquiry, &c." At the first anniversary of the Auxiliary Branch of the university, Dr. Milner came forward again, in an able speech, in vindication of the national society, and in speaking of the agency which he had in forming the auxiliary whose anniversary was then celebrated, he says, "My lord, after more than forty years residence in this university, and of course, after attending a variety of public meetings, I can honestly declare, that there is no one on which I can reflect with so much sincere and solid satisfaction, as on that meeting which took place in this room, last December, and which is the object of our commemoration this day." . . . "It is an institution which calls forth the love and admiration of all persons, who have duly weighed its natural tendencies, the means which it

employs, and the blessed effects which it is calculated to produce.”

Dr. Milner felt it to be his duty to descend into the arena of public controversy, in opposition to the pamphlet of Dr. Marsh. In such a cause, a disputant of such ability, could not but come off triumphantly. Perhaps, nothing written in this controversy, was more able and effectual, than Dr. Milner's defence.

Dr. Kipling and the Bishop of Lincoln, both came out against Calvinism, about this time. Dr. Milner had studied this subject far more accurately and profoundly, than either of them, and pointed out the errors and fallacies, on which their most plausible arguments rest. Indeed, he had it in his thoughts to write a “*Life of John Calvin,*” and was urged by some of his friends to undertake it; and as he had collected many materials, it is to be regretted, that a vindication of the character of the great Reformer of Geneva, had not come from the pen of a man in many respects resembling him. The state of his mind as to vital religion, may be inferred from his favourite authors, which were Luther on the Galatians, which he admired exceedingly—Edwards on the Affections—Beveridge's *Private Thoughts*—Pascal's *Thoughts*—Owen on the *Mortification of Sin*, and Witherspoon's *Sermons*.

If Dr. Milner had lived in our times he would have been found among the most strenuous opposers of Puseyism; for he was much troubled about “*Baptismal Regeneration,*” which had been lately made a subject of controversy, between ministers of the Church of England. On this subject, we have his thoughts expressed in several distinct propositions, from which we extract a few sentences.

“There is no doubt that our Lord appointed baptism to be a rite of initiation into his church.

“Further, it is clear, that faith was an indispensable qualification in the candidates for baptism.

“It appears, therefore, that regeneration, of which faith is the fruit, must precede baptism, and that baptism is the sign and seal of regeneration.” Then he attempts to reconcile the language of the ARTICLES of the Church of England, with these views.

Much that is highly interesting in the scientific career of Dr. Milner, has been necessarily omitted in this brief sketch. He always appeared to great advantage at public examinations, in which he often departed from the techni-

cal explanations of the books, and entertained the audience by a resort to the most familiar illustrations.

But passing by many interesting incidents in the life of this great, but afflicted man, we must hasten to give some account of the closing scene of his earthly pilgrimage.

For some time before his death, Dr. Milner was principally occupied with religious contemplations; but no particular apprehensions were entertained by himself, or his friends, that his end was so near, as the event proved it to be. He was seized rather suddenly with a difficulty of breathing, which prevented him from saying much. His last words were addressed to his friend Mr. Wilberforce, who was standing by his bed, "O my dear friend, I am leaving you—I am dying;" and catching a few breaths, he expired.

"Dr. Milner's personal appearance was exceedingly distinguished. He was above the usual height, admirably proportioned, and of a commanding presence. His features were regular and handsome, and his fine countenance was as remarkable for benevolence, as for the high talent which it expressed. Of animal spirits, throughout his life, he possessed an abundant flow, and his constitution was, doubtless, originally, unusually robust. In short, no man was ever more profusely gifted with the best and most valuable of moral endowments. By his friends he was regarded with a degree of admiration and reverent affection which falls to the lot of few. One who knew him well, and than whom few persons are better qualified to form a correct estimate of the powers of a truly great mind, in a letter to his biographer, says, "Your uncle was, beyond compare, the greatest and ablest man with whom, in the course of a somewhat chequered life, it has been my fortune to hold personal converse."

In closing this review of the *Life of Dr. Milner*, we would remark:

1. That nothing more is necessary to evince the power of his genius, than the fact, that he, a poor sizar, wholly unpatronised, should have risen, first to the possession of a fellowship in his own college, next to be the head of that college, and finally to be the vice-chancellor of the university, and also Professor of Mathematics, in the chair which had been filled by Sir Isaac Newton.

2. One trait in his character, to which he doubtless owed much of his success, was the habit of concentrating the whole powers of his mind on whatever engaged his atten-

tion at any time. And when thus occupied, he permitted nothing to interrupt the prosecution of the object which he had in view. In illustration of this trait, a friend related the following anecdote: "I called on the Doctor, to introduce the late Rev. Mr. Church, then going out as a chaplain to Madras, desirous that a young minister going on so important an errand should have the advice, instructions, and encouragement of so able a counsellor, I took Mr. Church to the deanery. The Doctor was occupied in an attempt to ascertain the meaning of an abbreviation which he found in Ainsworth's Dictionary, *Auct. Phil.* Mr. Church was introduced and politely received, but the Dean could not turn off his attention from the philological pursuit, in which he was engaged, and instead of giving his counsels to this young man, or saying any thing about his important mission, he continued his search after the meaning of this abbreviation, asking every person near him, and turning over volume after volume, until at length he found it stood for *Auctor Philomolæ*. He then began to pay attention to Mr. Church, and occupied the remainder of the visit in giving him judicious advice."

3. It required great firmness of mind, and strength of religious principle, to stand forth, for so many years, the unflinching advocate of the evangelical doctrines of the Bible. The influence of such an example, in so high a station, must have encouraged and confirmed the minds of many pious ministers, in the Church of England.

4. His life furnishes satisfactory evidence, not only of the reality of his piety; but that it was an active, growing principle. His deep sense of his own sinfulness, and his anxious doubts and fears respecting his own spiritual condition are truly remarkable in a man of talents so exalted, and placed in a station so high and honourable.

5. In the Christian character of Dr. Milner, there was a happy symmetry. He was not merely devout in his habitual feelings towards God, but very kindly affectioned towards his fellow men. While he was humble and penitent, pleading for mercy to himself as the chief of sinners, he had a heart overflowing with benevolence to men. His fraternal affection was, perhaps, excessive; but he was under great obligations to an only brother, who had acted the part of a father to him. His friendship was of the purest kind, and his affection for his friend more than commonly strong. His kind encouragement to pious and promising young men,

was a very amiable trait in his character; and so was his condescending readiness to communicate religious instruction to those into whose company he happened to fall. And as he was affectionate and benevolent, so he was strictly conscientious; feeling that he was accountable for the right use and improvement of all the talents committed to him.

6. We will close our review with the reflection, "How great a blessing to the church and to society is the life and labours of such a man as Dr. Milner! Though he was of a different denomination from ourselves, and entertained different views from ours, of the polity and government of the Christian Church, yet we can admire his talents, love his pious character, and rejoice in his usefulness in promoting the cause of truth and holiness, as truly, as if he had been a Presbyterian. Our difference with Dr. Milner and other Episcopalians, of like sentiments and spirit, is merely external, and in comparison with the great points on which we agree, are of little consequence. We sincerely wish that there were hundreds of such men in the church of England, at this time, and there would be no danger that she would be corrupted or divided by doctrines and usages, which are more suited to the dark ages, than to the nineteenth century.

The signs of the times are ominous all over the world. When the inquiry is made, "Watchman what of the night?" the answer is, "The morning cometh and also the night."

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ART. II.—*A Treatise on the Church of Christ; designed chiefly for the use of Students in Theology.* By the Rev. William Palmer, M. A., of Worcester College, Oxford. With a preface and notes, by the Rt. Rev. W. R. Whittingham, D. D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland. From the second London edition. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1841. Svo. 2 vols. pp. 529, 557.

LOGICIANS bid us have an eye to the *πρωτον ψευδος* in every piece of bad argument, because, by uprooting that, we subvert all that grows out of it. For a different reason it is often well to look after what, in corresponding language, one might call the *εσχατον ψευδος*—that error for whose sake