

**A MINISTER OF GOD:  
SELECTIONS FROM THE  
OCCASIONAL SERMONS AND  
ADDRESSES OF JOHN HAMILTON  
THOM**

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A Minister of God: Selections from the Occasional Sermons and Addresses of John Hamilton  
Thom by V. D. Davis

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**V. D. DAVIS**

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JOHN HAMILTON THOM**



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A MINISTER OF GOD

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

**Occasional Sermons and Addresses**

OF

**JOHN HAMILTON THOM**

*Author of 'Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ.'*

EDITED

WITH A MEMOIR

BY

V. D. DAVIS, B.A.

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### PREFACE.

THIS is a book not for Ministers of Religion only, though very specially for them. Whoever has been touched by the wonderful power of the sermons in the two volumes of 'Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ,' must desire to know more of the author; and for the memoir included in this volume it may at least be said, that it contains some passages of great autobiographical interest, while in the occasional sermons from which selections have been made, the author also strikingly reveals himself.

But the first thought out of which this little book arose was of the great value, both for ministers and congregations, of the many passages in those occasional sermons, which speak with such directness and awakening power of the ideal of the Preacher and the Church, and of the duties of minister and layman alike. These, it was felt, ought to be preserved, for the use especially of those preparing for the ministry of religion, or already active in the field, and the book is issued with the earnest hope that it may prove a manual of abiding worth, and find a welcome in all the churches where the 'Laws of Life' are already so highly prized. Orthodox and heterodox alike may surely find here words of guidance and of inspiration, for of Thom it may be truly said, as he himself said of Channing, that he was 'not the founder

of a school, but the destroyer of all schools, except the school of the spirit.'

The three Sermons which are printed entire, and with the Address of Welcome follow the Selections, are added as each presenting an aspect of the author's ministry, on which he laid the greatest stress. His ideal of Church life he cherished with an ardent faith, in the interest of true Catholicity. The Ministry to the Poor, as is more fully stated in the Memoir, was one of the deepest interests of his life. The sermon for the Liverpool Dispensaries may serve not only as a fine example of the preacher's method in dealing with such practical subjects, but as an interesting land-mark by which to judge of the progress that has since been made in sanitary reform.

In the preparation of the Memoir it will be seen how much I have been indebted to Dr. Martineau's Memorial Preface in the volume of sermons 'A Spiritual Faith,' and to other sources. It should be added that free use has been made of the memorial article which I wrote for the *Liverpool Unitarian Annual* of 1895.

In accordance with the wish of Mr. William Rathbone, Mr. Thom's executor, I have gladly accepted the whole responsibility for this book, as regards both its publication and the choice of Selections and the Memoir; but I cannot allow it to go out without a word of grateful acknowledgment to him, for sanctioning the publication, and for the confidence and generous kindness to which I owe, not for the first time, the privilege of undertaking such a task.

V. D. D.

November, 1901.



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## MEMOIR.

**J**OHN HAMILTON THOM was a native of the North of Ireland, but Liverpool was the city of his adoption. A young man of twenty-one, he came straight from college to settle there as minister of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, removing after two years to the more central Renshaw-street Chapel. Before he was sixty he was compelled by a failure of voice to retire from active service, but Liverpool remained his home to the end.

For more than twenty years he had, as closest friend and brother in common work, James Martineau, the minister of Paradise-street Chapel, and afterwards of the new Hope-street Church ; and with them as an elder friend, minister at that time in Manchester, was John James Tayler. These three are always to be remembered together as kindred spirits, among the first in this country to be quickened by the influence of Channing to a deeper and more vivid religious life, and themselves the leaders of a new movement among English Uni-