

**MEMOIRS OF THE REV. DAVID
STONER: CONTAINING COPIOUS
EXTRACTS FROM HIS DIARY AND
EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE**

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Memoirs of the Rev. David Stoner: containing copious extracts from his diary and epistolary correspondence by Various

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VARIOUS

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David Storer.

MEMOIRS
OF
THE REV. DAVID STONER :
CONTAINING
COPIOUS EXTRACTS FROM HIS DIARY
AND
EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

No man is really happy, rational, virtuous, amiable, but the true Christian. How free from pride is his consciousness of union with the Deity! How free from meanness, the humility which levels him with the worms of the earth!

CHATELAIN'S PASCAL.

TENTH EDITION.

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PREFACE.

SHORTLY after the lamented death of Mr. Stoner, several of his friends, who sincerely valued his excellencies, and cherished a pleasing though mournful recollection of his labours, expressed a desire that a record of his life, in a separate and distinct form, should be prepared for publication with all convenient speed. Such a record, they imagined, would be highly gratifying to the large circle of his acquaintance, and not wholly unacceptable to others who had heard of him only by report. The compilers of these sheets, whose local situation appeared advantageous for the collection of materials, were requested to arrange the work thus suggested, and present it to the public.

To their minds one difficulty occurred. They feared that such a publication would be thought to interfere with the claims of the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine,—the vehicle in which, according to the equitable usages of the Connexion, biographical accounts of its departed Ministers are generally conveyed. This difficulty, however, was speedily removed by the promptitude and kindness of the Rev. Dr. M'Allum, who engaged to furnish a memoir of his esteemed friend for the valuable periodical above mentioned, of as large a size as its pages, occupied as they are with other important matter, could conveniently admit. Dr. M'Allum's very elegant and interesting sketch appeared in the Maga-

zine for May, 1827. By his permission, granted with his usual frankness and urbanity, the compilers have gratefully availed themselves of its contents, particularly in narrating Mr. Stoner's proceedings while at York, and in describing the virtues which adorned his exemplary character. To offer their public thanks to the Doctor is now, alas! too late. He also has finished his earthly course in the prime of his days, leaving in the hearts of all who knew him a deep and tender regret, that one so amiable, gifted, and promising, should be withdrawn so soon from the circle of his social intercourse and ministerial exertions.

From Mr. Stoner's manuscripts the compilers proceeded to make such a selection as they deemed most suitable to their purpose, and also applied to many of his friends in different parts of the country for facts, letters, or other communications. They soon found themselves placed under very agreeable obligations; for their applications were immediately met with a cheerfulness and confidence, which they beg most affectionately to acknowledge. The names of their esteemed correspondents—with one or two exceptions, where secrecy was desired—will appear in connexion with their contributions; and if this work be at all calculated to accomplish the important objects for which it is prepared, it will undoubtedly prove a source of much satisfaction to those who have thus promoted its compilation, that to their kind attention and assistance no small part of its worth is justly attributable.

Ample materials were quickly obtained;—but it seemed at first rather difficult to fix upon such a plan as would bring them into the most profitable use. They were not sufficient to form a regular piece of biography, unaccompanied by observations; and they were too valuable to be merged in a continued narration, without any distinct reference or lengthened citation. To the compilers it

appeared most advisable to divide the whole work into chapters, corresponding to the leading periods of Mr. Stoner's life, with the reserve of one chapter, in conclusion, for a delineation of his character,—to arrange the different facts and extracts with as much attention to chronological accuracy as was practicable, or necessary,—and to enrich each chapter with as many extracts as their collections afforded, without descending to tedious minuteness, or indulging in needless repetitions. They have used much diligence to secure correctness even in matters seemingly trivial, for they think that the very circumstances of sacred truth demand attention; and they have interspersed such reflections as were suggested by the successive events which they record. These may in themselves be sufficiently obvious and common; but it is hoped that they will derive some interest and force from the bright example with which they are associated.

Not a few of Mr. Stoner's connexions and general acquaintance have urged the propriety of appending specimens of his sermons to the Memoirs. This the compilers once intended:—but they were restrained chiefly by two considerations: first, that the addition of such specimens would greatly increase the size of the volume, extended perhaps already beyond its just limits; and, secondly, that some purpose is entertained, if circumstances encourage it, of publishing a selection of the sermons in a separate form. From a cursory examination of Mr. Stoner's discourses, the compilers do not hesitate to pronounce that, notwithstanding the multitude of pulpit compositions which are continually issuing from the press, such a volume, if edited with judgment and care, would prove a valuable accession to the religious productions of the day. In the ninth chapter of this work is inserted a sketch of Mr. Stoner's last sermon, with a few extracts from its more

striking passages. The compilers once purposed to introduce other sketches in different parts of the Memoirs on the same plan; but were apprehensive that these would too far interrupt the progress of the narration, and in some degree change the biographical character of the work. Enough, it is presumed, will be found scattered through the successive chapters, and contained in the outline mentioned above, to convey a correct idea of Mr. Stoner's talent and style of preaching. More than this did not seem to fall properly within the province of his biographers. *

It is an encouraging circumstance to the compilers that so much solicitude has been expressed for the speedy publication of these Memoirs; but they fear that they have incurred censure by seeming delay. They beg to allege, in their own excuse, that they have done what they could to expedite the work. Nine months have not yet elapsed since the death of Mr. Stoner,—a period which they trust will not be deemed immoderately long, when it is considered that they have enjoyed no peculiar facilities for despatch. They wish to state farther that, as they had to draw their materials from a large and mingled mass of private correspondence, and from the manuscripts of Mr. Stoner, all of which are written in a very small character, and continually interspersed with short-hand, it was necessary that every line should be carefully transcribed for the press. They may also be allowed to mention, that their task has been pursued amid the constant pressure of other engagements,—the frequent languors of personal indisposition,—and repeated visitations of domestic suffering and bereavement. Oftener than once has he, on whom, from his situation, the more laborious part of this compilation necessarily devolved, attempted to prosecute his work with a trembling hand and aching heart, while a beloved child lay in the adjoining room wrapped in the pale vestments