

**THE STAR OF THE WEST: BEING MEMOIRS
OF THE LIFE OF RISDON DARRACOTT,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AT
WELLINGTON, SOMERSET, WITH
EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE**

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The Star of the west: being memoirs of the life of Risdon Darracott, minister of the gospel, at Wellington, Somerset, with extracts from his correspondence by James Bennett

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JAMES BENNETT

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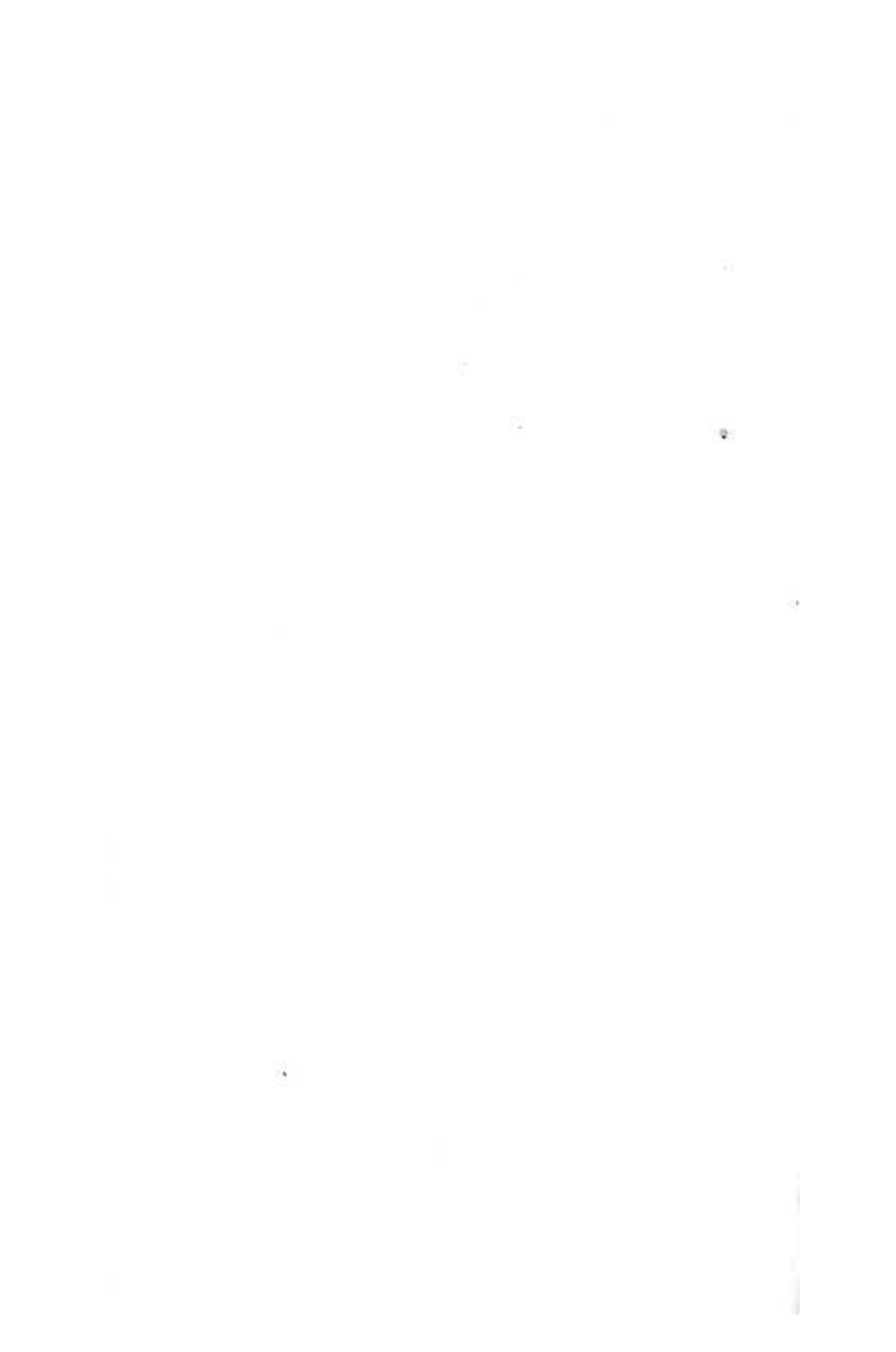
WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY JAMES BENNETT.

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1829.



PREFACE.

It was not without considerable hesitation, that the Author ventured to present these Memoirs to the public eye. He had, indeed, often perused the documents with the most desirable emotions, and wished them introduced to more general notice; but he always anticipated the question, why obtrude upon the public, the Memoirs of a man who has slumbered among the dead more than half a century?

Those who have recently entered into their rest, still live in the remembrance of many surviving fellow-labourers; and it is in the breasts of those, who already know something of a man, that we expect to find a curiosity to know more. But, the contemporaries of Risdon Darracott, who would have caught eagerly at his Memoirs, and promoted their circulation among friends, have long since gone to join him,

where the pages of biography are neither read nor needed. And now that another generation has risen up who knew him not, what hope can be indulged of attracting any considerable attention to the memory of one, so long gone by in the procession of ages, as to have left scarcely any that can recal his image ?

For, it is not pretended that the subject of these Memoirs was a Luther or Calvin in the church, confined to no clime, and claimed by every age. The distinguished men, who have created a new æra in religion, may be recalled to notice at any time, and can always justify the interest which they never fail to excite. But the history of those who filled a narrower circle during life, must be recorded immediately after death, or the world will refuse to listen to the instruction which they may be able to afford.

Sometimes, indeed, the powers of the biographer may supply the deficiencies of his theme, and attract attention to the picture, whose original would be despised. As in the life of Savage, we value only the pen of Johnson. But though the biographer of Darracott, pretends to no such powers, while he questions the propriety of extorting attentions to which the subject has no just claims, he has been induced by

the force of various considerations, to print the following Memoirs.

The papers from which the volume is compiled, have long been preserved in the family of the deceased, as precious relics. Frequently presented to the eye of friendship, they have furnished the employment of many interesting hours, and proved the source of the most sacred pleasures. It was owned by all, that they furnish such a picture of a heart devoted to the divine glory, a life consumed in most successful evangelical labours, and a death pre-eminently distinguished by holy triumphs, that it was scarcely less than a duty to draw them from obscurity, and prevent their passing unimproved into oblivion.

Since Christians feel, to their cost, how much they are affected by the spirit and conduct of the living world around them; should we not endeavour to furnish an antidote to the poison, by calling up even those who have been long dead, that we may live in the circle of those who instruct by their superior wisdom, inspire esteem for their character, and stimulate to imitation of their conduct? Whenever the God of all grace indulges the world with distinguished specimens of religion, we should study to perpetuate their usefulness beyond the narrow limits of their mortal race. And though it is to be regretted, that Risdon Darracott

had not found a biographer among his contemporaries, who would have enjoyed superior opportunities of extending and prolonging his influence; it may be hoped, as truth and holiness are immutable, that excellencies such as are here exhibited, will still find their sympathies in the hearts of Christians, and even now rouse to sacred emulation. For it is presumed, that few pious persons will rise from the perusal of these Memoirs, without feeling their humility increased by the consciousness of inferiority, or their zeal inflamed by the sight of superior ardour.

If the work was to be attempted, the connexion of the Author with the family of the deceased, seemed to impose on him the duty; as, by marrying the granddaughter of Mr. Darracott, he has come into possession of the documents from which the volume is compiled. That he has yielded to the force of the considerations which induced the attempt, he is forbidden to regret; whatever reception these Memoirs may obtain from the public. For it has proved a privilege to hold converse with the pious dead.

Should the perusal of this volume afford to each reader but a moiety of the edification and delight they have afforded to the compiler, they will prove one of the most valuable opportunities of usefulness with