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A MEMOIR

OF

MARY CAPPER,

LATE OF BIRMINGHAM,

A MINISTER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

“The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more
unto the perfect day.” Prov. iv. 18.

LONDON:

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1847.



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PREFACE.

THE journals and other papers of Mary Capper were entrusted by herself to the care and revision of the editor, with the understanding that any use might be made of them which, after her decease, should appear to be right. The present compilation is, in consequence, now offered to the public, with the hope that the cause of truth and righteousness—that cause which was so dear to the subject of this memoir through a long life, may be served thereby.

The character of Mary Capper is pretty fully developed in the subsequent pages; yet it may be allowed to the editor, who had the privilege of near intimacy with her for almost half a century, to remark, that in preparing this work for the press, and consequently dwelling much on the life and conversation of this devotedly pious individual, she has been particularly impressed with the cheerful contentment of spirit, manifested under the varying circumstances of her life. This is the more striking when the feebleness of her bodily powers, the enlarged liberality of her mind, and her deep feeling for human sorrows, are taken into account, together with her limited pecuniary resources and small personal accommodations. It is true, she was often entrusted with the means of relieving those in distress, which was to her a source of

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genuine delight; but she steadfastly refused repeated offers of increased comforts for herself; preferring to dwell in comparative obscurity, and in the close vicinity of those dear friends whose society and kindness had largely contributed, for a long course of years, to her enjoyment. Another object which she had in view was, to be so situated as to occasion, to such friends as might be passing through the town, little inconvenience in paying her a visit; for such was her modest estimate of her own attainments, that she could not suppose her friends would incline, or could suitably be expected, to come far to make her a call.

Many, however, as will be seen in the following pages, could bear their testimony to the solid satisfaction which such visits afforded them; and this undoubtedly proceeded from the conviction, that the chief pursuit of Mary Capper's life had been to honour her Lord and Master; by this she gave the strongest proof of her gratitude for the love of God, extended to her in Jesus Christ her Saviour; whose peace was richly shed abroad in her heart, and more especially so as she approached his heavenly kingdom, where all is peace and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and that for ever!

KATHARINE BACKHOUSE.

Darlington, 1847.

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MEMOIR OF MARY CAPPER.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE, EDUCATION, &c.

MARY CAPPER was born on the 11th of the 4th month, 1755. She was the daughter of William and Rebecca Capper, of Rugeley, in Staffordshire. They had a very numerous family, consisting of ten sons and four daughters; some of whom lived to advanced age.

John, their first-born, was a merchant in London, where he died in 1835, after completing his 88th year; James also died the same year in that city, at the age of eighty-one; having been, during fifty years, Rector of Wilmington, Sussex.

The whole family were brought up by their parents as members of the Episcopal Church, to which they themselves were conscientiously attached.

Mary, the subject of the following Memoir, possessed a mind of no ordinary description; energetic and contemplative, she seemed peculiarly prepared, as Divine Grace was allowed to operate upon her gifted mind, to throw aside the prejudices of education, and to stem the torrent of opposing opinion.

Her susceptible heart was, however, keenly alive to the sorrows of others, and deep were her sufferings, when, for a time, her religious views broke the harmony of the domestic circle; but having taken up the cross of Christ, she was mercifully enabled to follow her Lord in simple obedience, and in