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"ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN."

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MEMOIR

OF THE LATE WALTER VENNING,

ESQ.

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"I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in
prison, and ye came unto me."

MATT. XXV. 36.

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It was the unspeakable privilege of Mr. Walter Venning to have been blessed with a religious education under the care of eminently pious parents in Devonshire, who had used every effort to lead him to the knowledge and service of God. Commercial engagements obliged him in early life to visit St. Petersburg. He carried out with him that general sense of religion, and particularly that regard to the sanctity of the Sabbath, which he had imbibed from the habits of his youth; and greatly was he shocked at the profanation of the holy day which prevailed even among the British inhabitants of that city. The feeling, however, which was then excited was of no long continuance. His inexperienced mind even manifested its depraved tendencies by gradual compliance with the customs of the place, to which he was urged by the ridicule to which he found himself exposed, when he attempted to plead for observances which were associated with his earliest recollections. With the neglect

of the Sabbath were connected the slight performance and the frequent omission of secret prayer. Hence arose a growing carelessness about spiritual and eternal concerns, which, by his own confession, prevailed to a lamentable degree, but never so thoroughly as to leave him in quiet possession of the worldly habits which he had assumed.

About the year 1807, an event took place which called back his wandering heart, and appears to have been the principal means of fixing his convictions and determinations on the side of religion. That event was the death of his aged and pious father. Under the deep feelings of regret which the loss of a parent occasioned, he retraced his past life, found that he had been pursuing vanity and vexation of spirit. Many tender scenes of parental instruction and admonition, which had been nearly obliterated from his recollection, were now renewed. The calm composure with which this reverend and beloved parent "waited for the salvation of God," until he "finished his course with joy," became the means of fixing the convictions of the affectionate and dutiful son; and, to adopt his own words, "Led him again to bless and praise that Almighty Power which enabled his parent on his dying pillow to comfort those who came to comfort him."

These impressions, it appears, never afterwards forsook him. Some remarkable providential preservations experienced in the frequent voyages