

Timothy East

Pastoral Recollections and Sketches



Pastoral Recollections and
Sketches By The Author of The
“Evangelical Rambler”

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Pastoral Recollections and Sketches

By The Author of The “Evangelical Rambler”

With a Preface by The Rev. John MacFarlane, LL.D., Clapham.

By Timothy East

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Please have patience with us when you come across typos. Over time we are revising the books to make them better and better. If you would like to send the errors you come across to us, we'll make sure they are corrected.

Preface

THESE PAPERS were originally published in the “United Presbyterian Magazine;” and the author now reissues them from the press, because he has been requested to do so. He has done nothing more to them, than make a few verbal corrections; and the only prefatory remark he deems it necessary to add, is a mere repetition of his original statement:

“The writer assures his readers, that truth and fact are the staple of his articles; imagination merely arranges their parts, and supplies the descriptive illustrations; and his main object is to present the truth of the sacred testimony in a form adapted to interest their attention, that he may, under the divine blessing, convey it with greater facility to their conscience and heart.”

Nov, 10, 1862.

Introductory Notice

THESE "PASTORAL RECOLLECTIONS" appeared some years ago in the pages of the "United Presbyterian Magazine;" and it will gratify not a few, that the author has decided to reissue them in the present form. Amid other employments in this the evening of his long and useful life, Mr. East has, we think, been wisely guided to revise and publish these remarkable pastoral experiences. They include some exceedingly interesting cases of conversion and spiritual revival. Without taking the precise form of Pike's "Cases" of conscience, they belong to that class of experimental theology, and are therefore worthy of a place in every Christian library. We warmly recommend the book to the godly and the ungodly: to the godly, that they may be preserved in humility and excited to prayer and watchfulness; and to the ungodly, that they may be led to serious consideration upon the subject of their soul's eternal interests. At the same time, Christian ministers cannot fail to derive from its perusal much useful information as to the zeal for souls which becomes their office, and the skilful and adroit manner wherewith they should handle divine truth, when in contact with anxious and inquiring minds. We know few men better qualified to guide them in this respect than Mr. East. His own conversion in early life was very remarkable; and its influence has never been lost upon him, but continues still, accumulating strength as he nears the end. To save sinners has been with him a passion from first to last. The consequence has been, that God has given to him, in many parts of the country, not a few souls for his hire. One of these conversions must ever stand forth to the view of the Christian Church, as perhaps the most illustrious of the present century.

Mr. Prout, in his memoirs of John Williams, the martyr of Erromanga, tells us that it was when listening to a sermon of Mr. East from the words, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief," that this great missionary was brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. We have never ceased to love and esteem the man whom God so highly honored, as to make him

the instrument of converting one whose future zeal and labors in Polynesia brought so many hundred savages to the faith of the cross of Jesus, and the influence of whose missionary enterprise must continue to tell powerfully upon the best interests of generations yet to come.

We have no doubt whatever that this distinguished honor, by God's blessing, decided Mr. East to prosecute that clear, evangelical, and impressive method of preaching the Gospel for which he has ever been noted. And now, in the eventide of his long and checkered life, it is pleasing to find the "old man eloquent" employing himself in calling up to his own recollection the deeds of his activity, that he may thereby perpetuate his usefulness long after he has been in the grave. As the author of the "Evangelical Rambler," he is already well known in England. As the author of that admirable argument, "The True and Proper Deity of the Son of God," the late Dr. Chalmers, by recommending it to his class in the University of Edinburgh, as one of the best treatises he had read on the subject, has made him favorably known to the theologians of the north: and we humbly think, that by these "Pastoral Recollections" he is likely to become, even now in old age, "when others fade," very agreeably known to a rising generation, to whom, it may be, his name is strange. This aged servant of Jesus, and these latest works of his hands, constitute a beautiful life-setting. We see a fine radiance of light falling around his hoary head; we see his labors, not preceding him into heaven, but preparing to follow him thither, after they have, for a season, done good work for Christ and souls here; and while we thus gaze upon him, we are much moved to pray that his own sun may set without a cloud, and that he may in due time be welcomed at the gates of paradise by that Lord he has so zealously served, and by those children of whom he has been made the honored spiritual father, even now awaiting his coming, and eager to hail him with, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

We recommend this little book more especially to young Christian ministers, "Cases of conscience" are not among the subjects of classical or academical learning; indeed, it is to be regretted that they do not find their appropriate place even in the prelections of our theological seminaries. This may partly be accounted for, from the extreme delicacy of such subjects, as well as from the inconceivable varieties which they assume, alike in their emotional and doctrinal character. However this may be, it is certain that no part of pastoral duty comes so unexpectedly upon the youthful minister as this. Unless, indeed, he be a very decided Christian, and has spiritual life in

him beyond his years, he is almost sure to find himself unprepared to meet the demand which duty imperatively makes, and thus to complicate the case to his own mind, so as to perplex instead of satisfying the mind of his patient.

To meet the requirements of this situation, one of the best things he can do, is to make himself acquainted with the experiences of older brethren, and be guided by a wisdom too mature for his years, but not for his duty. The book we recommend is well adapted for such a purpose, and cannot fail, as a manual, to be very useful. The following are among the excellences which justify the opinion we have now given. The method adopted by Mr. East in dealing with conscience is evangelical, prudent, direct, discriminating, patient, prayerful, hopeful, persevering.

It Is Evangelical

This, of course, is a *sine qua non* in the matter. The principles applied to the cases are thoroughly orthodox. This is something to say for any such work in these times of rebuke, blasphemy, and gainsaying.

The student will not find any modern prescriptions either of the rational or mystic school. All is brought to the test of Scripture — all is made to repeat the good old doctrines of the good old Book — and that, too, without either cavil or compromise. The “sweet story of old” is the golden thread which runs throughout the entire fabric of its thoughts, its arguments, and its appeals. In its professed gospel there is nothing new. Now, better foundation than this could no man lay. The cardinal truths of Christianity, though they may not strictly be called the promises of Scripture, underlie all the consolation or direction which these promises afford to the distracted or distressed. This is the great charm and the substantial worth of Dr. Alexander’s (America) delightful volume on “Consolation.” No waters can refresh or revive the soul that do not spring from the well of living truths. Hence one of the very first and best qualifications for becoming a “son of consolation” is to be thoroughly grounded in, and imbued with, the essential doctrines of redemptive truth. This becomes specially pressing when the “case” happens to be one of doctrinal or speculative error, together with the frightful distractions into which the bewildered mind has been thrown. Mr. East’s book gives forth very “certain sounds” in this direction, and must be highly suggestive to conscientious and earnest minds.

It Is Prudent

Without prudence, the “case” is often made worse. We have seen “a mind diseased” giving every promise of being cured — indeed, upon the very point of yielding up its whims or alarms — cast down again, and into still darker depths, by the rashness of dogmatism or the cruelty of pedantry. Here, however, we see the delicate handling of difficulties linked to the firmness of unfaltering attachment to truth. In this respect we reckon some portions of these “recollections” of great value and importance, and deserving of the study of our rising ministry.

It is direct.

While proceeding cautiously, there is no need to make detours into extrinsic subjects. In the cases referred to, there is generally a demand for speedy practice; at a rare time we do find that a little preliminary fencing is required to set us right with the dark in soul, the dead in hearty the distressed in mind. This, however, is the exception. The sooner we come to the point the better. Having ascertained where the evil lies, we must confidently, but in kindness, promptly but gently, apply the remedy, leaving no doubt as to our faith in its curative or comforting power. Delays are dangerous, especially in spiritual troubles, and are the less to be justified, that the means employed are of divine sanction. Here especially is the aphorism true. *Bis dat qui cito dat.* [He gives twice who gives quickly —Ed]

It Is Discriminating

The same distemper exhibits sometimes great variety, both of symptom and degree. It is possible that there may be but one and the same remedy; but it does not follow that this remedy is in every case to be administered in equal quantities, or unaccompanied by other components. It is so in cases of conscience or severe affliction. For example, we may be confronted with the most distressing of all cases, when doubts as to the divine authority of Scripture have rushed in, or when the patient is in despondency or in despair as to his own salvation. Now, it would never do all at once to quote to such the Scripture, “He that believeth not, shall be damned;” we must discriminate between those that are morbidly sensitive on the points referred to, and sincerely anxious for deliverance, and those cold, sneering, heartless

infidels, who glory in their shame. Let us battle with these most dogmatically, and tell them God's truth without any misgiving; but with the former let us deal gently, and try to win them by calm and judicious expostulation, — an expostulation deriving its influence as much from the display of heart as of head.

It Is Patient

No wise physician is in a haste to effect cures; he knows that all safe remedies require time to become effectual. It is the distinction of the quack to promise instantaneous recoveries. And surely the same thing must hold true in our spiritual practice. God Himself exercises patience in dealing with sinners. He waits long, and He waits "in slowness to wrath." But for the divine patience, we should all perish. In this Christian ministers should be followers of God. We have great need to guard against peevishness. Jonah is our example here. How little he becomes, in his haste to have Nineveh destroyed! We are all liable to the same weakness, and, for anything we can tell, fail in cases where a little more patient waiting upon our ministry might have been followed with success. Our divine Master showed matchless patience in dealing with the weaknesses of His disciples, and in this He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. It is prayerful. Mr. East, in this work, commends and uses prayer as indispensable to success. Indeed, Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase. If we do not precede and accompany all our efforts with sincere and fervent prayer, our patients may address us in the language of Job, "Miserable comforters are ye all."

It Is Hopeful

Our best services in and to the Church of Christ, are those wherein we abound in hope. Hopefulness makes us lively in action, pleasant in manner, and clear in perception. The pastor who goes forth always weeping, is not likely to be always a successful comforter. Sympathetic tears are often the cause of wiping oft tears; but smiles, too, are in their own place useful. A cheerful religion is often the antidote to melancholy and depression. Grimace and whining serve only to aggravate the evil. Perhaps, in the work we commend, Mr. East succeeds in nothing so admirably as in stripping reli-

gion of all such swaddling bands, and presenting her to the weary heart in the beauteous drapery of pleasantness and peace.

Perseverance

In fine, the method here pursued is marked by perseverance. "Never despair," is the motto of the author, and "Be ye steadfast and unmovable" is the advice by which he walks. The instances in which this perseverance is successful, form its best justification. In what, indeed, can we, ought we, doggedly to hold on, if not in efforts to "comfort all that mourn," to "undo the heavy burdens", and to "let the oppressed go free." In general, success is sure to attend us. Mr. East failed sometimes, and so does every Christian minister. Still, if anywhere, here on the field of winning souls to Christ, and of building them up in their most holy faith, success may be safely expected, and often gloriously won. The comment on many of the cases narrated in this volume is, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

A work, then, having such excellences as these, we can recommend to all; and, as has been said, especially to young ministers. In it they have not only an example of most affectionate zeal for winning souls, but of some of the wisest and most potent ways of compassing and accomplishing this most desirable end. To the God of all consolation we most sincerely commend at once the venerable author, his touching and useful volume, and his readers, who, we hope, shall be numerous, and each and every one of them the wiser, the happier, and the better, from perusing "Pastoral Recollections."

JOHN MACFARLANE.

VICTORIA ROAD, CLAPHAM,
London, 10th November 1862.

1. A Remarkable Old Woman

WHEN I COMMENCED my ministerial labors, the chapel I preached in was the smallest in the town. The gallery on the right hand side of the pulpit was called the blind gallery, as it was without windows; and, on the Sabbath morning, it contained only one person, nearly eighty years of age; and often, when the people were singing the hymn before the sermon, have I looked and sighed, alas! the blind gallery will soon become, the deserted gallery; it may be taken away as a useless appendage to an almost vacated place. The congregation in the morning was often below seventy souls, and there were only thirty-nine members in the church; and nearly one-half of this number left me, on the settlement of a popular minister over a Baptist church, to join in fellowship with him. We were verging towards extinction; and often did I seriously meditate striking my tent, and going to pitch it elsewhere. However, a trivial circumstance, which augured no good, roused me; and I resolved, in the strength of the Lord God, to give full proof of my ministry by laboring in season and out of season. I had my reward, for within the space of four years we built a new chapel, had a congregation as large as the largest in the town, a church rapidly increasing in the number of its members, and a popular and flourishing Sabbath-school.

The Lord was pleased to confer great honor on my ministry in the conversion of sinners; and what is rather uncommon, there was a large proportion of aged and some very aged people, turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. I have selected for this paper the case of one who was near seventy years of age when she entered the chapel for first time.

There lived in a little cottage in the suburbs of — — — , a somewhat remarkable old woman, and she was remarkable for two things, — the exquisite neatness and cleanliness of her person and her dress, and her regular and punctual attendance at her parish church; and she was totally blind. She was supported by a liberal allowance from the parish, and a few extra subscriptions from her church-going admirers. Before she lost her sight, she

read a great deal, for a person in her rank in life; and had accumulated a large store of varied knowledge, which enabled her to sustain conversation with ease, and often intense interest, — especially to the young, who were amused and instructed by some of her tales and sage reflections. As she was a public character — one known to all who had a taste for the remarkable — I went to see her; but when she found that I was a Dissenting minister, she evidently recoiled, as she held the Tractarian doctrine, that no one who was not episcopally ordained, and in the regular line of apostolical succession, was qualified to officiate as a priest of the temple. On taking leave of her, she expressed no wish for a repetition of my visit; and I withdrew, musing, as I walked away, on the absurd notion, that no man, however accurate and extensive his biblical knowledge, is competent to reply to the question, should it be proposed to him, “What must I do to be saved?” unless some episcopal bishop has previously placed his hand on his head, and breathed into him, or assumed the power of doing so, the Holy Ghost.

This old woman had a little favorite granddaughter — a smart, clever child — who used to go to read to her, and carry to her some of the news of the town. This little girl was in my Sabbath-school; and she was a very great favorite. I always spoke kindly to her, and frequently gave her little books; and though her grandmother attempted to persuade her to go to the Church Sabbath-school, yet she could not succeed. When arranging the mental materials to compose a sermon on 2 Kings 5:1-3, and meditating on the benefit which Naaman derived from having in his house the captive Hebrew maid, it struck me that I might get at the soul of this poor old Pharisaical blind woman through the medium of her grand-daughter; and my plan of procedure was soon settled. I gave her a little book of anecdotes and descriptive stories, knowing that the taste of the old woman lay in that direction, hoping she would of her own accord take it, and read it to her. I soon found that my experiment had succeeded; for, on the following Sabbath, she came to me after the morning service, and said, “Grandmother was so much pleased, sir, with that story-book.”

“You read it to her?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Good girl, if you come to me in the vestry tomorrow evening, I will give you another.” I did so; and it was of the same character as the preceding one; and with such sort of books I contrived to keep up a connection with her mind through the medium of this little girl, — meditating, as the

reader may imagine, a more grave and a more spiritual style of reading, when the appropriate tune should come. After the lapse of several months, having received back many little books which I had lent, and which, on inquiry, I found had been read, I rewarded her, for her attentive kindness to her grandmother, by giving her the sketch of Newton's conversion, requesting her to take great care of it and preserve it.

She was delighted; and, as I afterwards found, she went earlier than usual the next evening to the cottage, and said, "Mr—— has given me a nice good book, because I come so often to read to you." This softened down a few of the old woman's prejudices; and though she still thought I could not be a good priest, yet she thought I might be a kind man. She sent a message to me, by the child, to thank me for my kind attentions to her.

"Yes," said I to myself, as I received this invaluable present of her thanks, "I shall get at her in process of time; and who can tell what God my Saviour may graciously condescend to do?" I now paused for some weeks, lent no more books, and made no inquiries, though the child often intersected the pathway of my movements; when one day I saw her approaching my door, as I was in the act of leaving home.

"Grandmother has sent me, sir, to ask if you can lend me some other good book to read to her."

"Did you read Newton's *Life* to her?"

"Yes, sir; and my grandmother was so pleased with it, that she made me read it to her three times."

I am not ashamed to confess that this communication, simple as it was, moistened my eye; and with feelings which no language can clearly embody, my heart said, "The Lord be praised for this sign of coming grace to her soul."

I now sent her two: one on a general historical subject; and the other, a tract on regeneration.

For some time I took no further notice of the case; and though I often threw myself in the child's way, yet she took no notice; she neither asked for another book, nor did she tell me that she had been reading what I had sent to her grandmother. After waiting nearly three weeks with some degree of anxiety about the poor old woman, her grand-daughter called on me, and said, "Grandmother was at chapel on Sabbath evening, sir. I took her there, and took her back home. She was so delighted, sir, she says she shall come again. May I take her, sir, into the old woman's pew?"

“Yes.”

"She wishes you would be so good as to send her another good book to read, like this, sir!" returning the tract on regeneration.

"O, I will give her that, which she may keep; and you will take this and read to her." — Bunyan's "*Come, and Welcome, to Jesus Christ.*"

On the following Sabbath she was again at the chapel, and soon became a regular attendant, and appeared to listen with fixed attention. At length she sent to say she should be glad to see me. I went; and she received me with evident emotions of delight. "Ah! sir," she said, "when you called upon me, some months ago, I behaved rudely. My superstitious opinions then held dominion over my mind; but now, sir, I see the New Testament is a better guide than the Church of England; and your preaching comes closer home to the heart of my soul than that which I have heard in the parish church for near fifty years."

"You now understand and feel what you hear?"

"Yes, sir, because I now feel that I am a guilty and worthless sinner; and that fits me to understand the Gospel of salvation which you preach."

After a lengthened conversation, I went to prayer with her, and left her, promising to repeat my visit.

When it was noised abroad that the old blind woman had left the church, there was a commotion amongst the lady pharisees of the Establishment, which was more amusing than ominous; and a few called on her, to reason the case with her. She heard all they chose to say, and with one short sentence in reply she broke up the counsel of remonstrance: "I have, ladies, attended my parish church for near fifty years, without getting any real spiritual benefit to my soul; but at the chapel, where I have been only a few Sabbaths, I have heard and felt the truth as it is in Jesus. There I shall continue to go, as long as my feeble limbs will carry me; for there I find Christ to be precious, and His Gospel the power of God to my salvation."

The Pharisaical ladies withdrew in dudgeon, hinting that, as she had left the church, she could not expect to receive any more favors from them. This roused the old woman's spirit, and she said with great firmness, "I thank you, kind ladies, for all your acts of liberality and kindness to me; but if you suppose that I am to barter my freedom, and run the risk of losing my soul, for the sake of the silver of earth, you are mistaken. I must live free, though in poverty; and my salvation, now, is the one thing I value above all price."

Some time after this, she was received into fellowship with the church; and her cottage became a favorite place of resort to some of her fellow-members. She continued for several years regular and punctual in her attendance, with very few variations in the history of her life; till, at length, the infirmities of old age came upon her, which ultimately prevented her from coming to the chapel. She then broke up her little establishment, and went to reside with one of her married daughters, a kind-hearted, but not a pious woman. Years rolled on — the grand-daughter had left the school, the cottage of her former residence was now occupied by others; she gradually faded away from my recollection, under the ceaseless excitement of varied public engagements; and in process of time I forgot her.

In the summer of the year 1817, my garden needing the handy workmanship of the weeder, I went to find a woman who was famed for her skill in such labor. I knocked at her door, but received no answer; and just as I opened it, and was in the act of entering, a neighbor stepped out of the adjoining house, and said, “If, sir, you want Mrs. ———, and will leave your orders with me. I’ll give them to her tonight, when she comes home from work. It’s no use, sir, to say nothing to that old woman there; she is blind, and so deaf that she can’t hear a word which nobody says to her.”

I gave her my message, thanked her for her politeness; and as it was very hot, and I felt rather fatigued, I thought I would walk in and rest myself awhile, and sit and contemplate the dignity of human nature in ruins. There sat the old woman in an armchair; wrapped up in flannel, with her head slightly inclining forward; her face nearly concealed by her cap and bonnet, and as motionless as a statue. I sat nearly opposite to her, musing on the pristine scene of Eden, — of the great fall, — the change, the misery and degradation of man, — his decay, death, and final destiny. Ah! thought I, here is one who may have seen some of the bright pictures of life, and who may have tasted of some of its sweets, and also some of its bitters. Her history may be a curious one — full of adventure, or a dull monotony of existence. She has survived the wreck of her senses, and may now be living in the inner chamber of imagery in full vigorous thinking and feeling; or she may be in a spiritual dormitory, dreaming away her life. But her soul, — that is a precious thing; that will outlive the wreck of life, and live for ever. She is now before me, inaccessible, as all her senses are locked up — gone from her use; and are of no use to me. Where may she be tomorrow I her body may be here — cold and motionless. It is so now; but tomorrow it

may be colder, and then it will be stiff. But where will she be then! Her senses are not her, she has outlived them; her body is not her, she will outlive its life. Where will she be then? I wonder if I can make her hear. The divine Spirit can, I know, make the arrow of truth pass to the soul, through a very narrow and even dark passage. I'll try. I did so; and placing my lips as near her ear as possible, without touching, I said, audibly and distinctly, "You are very old." No reply.

"How old are you?"

"What is your name?"

"Do you want anything?"

"Are you in any pain?" These and other questions, variously constructed, I continued to repeat; but they fell off from her as they would have fallen from a statue. Poor thing! It's no use to try. She is living now out of my reach. The door is locked, and the key is lost. I resumed my seat. My anxiety to gain access to her mind increased in its intensity, in proportion to the apprehended impossibility of succeeding. I'll make another effort. But what question shall I now put? It must be short. "Do you ever think about dying?"

There was a slight convulsive movement of the hand. Did she hear me, or did she hear only a sound? Was that movement of the hand voluntary, designed, or a mere unconscious convulsive movement? I now repeated the same question slower, and with more emphasis. The same slight movement followed. Yes, she did move her hand, though the motion was slight, almost undiscoverable. It is a sign, though, that the inner spirit is at home, and awake, and possibly may now be watching near the mysterious avenue, listening to catch some intelligible sound. I'll try again, and I will put a different question; one which shall include the sweetest name ever uttered, or ever heard: its charm may be felt. Who can tell?

I paused, and prayed; and then said, "Do you know anything about Jesus Christ?"

Never shall I forget the effect of this question. Had I been suddenly transported to the center of Eden, existing in all its primitive beauty and melodious harmony, I might have been more delighted, — stronger raptures might have convulsed my spirit, — but I could not have been more astonished. Her hands were suddenly raised, and her arms were extended, and her countenance glowed with more than human radiance; and in a loud, exciting tone, she said,

“What! is that Mr. ——, my beloved pastor? It was under your ministry, my beloved pastor, I was brought to know Christ, and feel the preciousness of His love.”

After this utterance, her spirit drew back into the inner chamber of conscious but inaccessible existence; and to all my questions about who she was, the person with whom she was living (for I now recognized, by the sound of her voice, my poor old blind woman), her wants, etc., etc., she was as insensible as though death had taken her from the land of the living. This, I said, is a remarkable case. I wonder if another question, embodying the name of Christ, will get at her. Perhaps it may. She may now be living in that most mysterious state of insensible consciousness, when it is rather Christ living in the soul, than the soul perpetuating the positive vitality of its own conscious existence. I'll try.

“Is Christ precious to you?”

“He is precious to my soul, — my transport, and my trust.”

The reply had an electrical effect on my spirit. Marvelous! I never witnessed such a glorious scene as this, — it is the sun setting, tinged with his retiring glory the ruins of the great temple. The proud ones of the earth would have laughed had they been present; I wept, but they were tears of joy. I varied my questions again. No sign of hearing, no perceptible motion, though I took her hand. It was as though some guardian angel kept watch to prevent any thought bearing a direct relation to earth or time obtruding itself on her attention, now she was in waiting on the verge of the celestial world for her translation.

“Do you long to see Christ?”

“My soul is in haste to be gone.”

She resumed her motionless attitude, as though unwilling to prolong fellowship with frail humanity; her countenance settled down into its calm insensibility of expression; and I left her, resolving that I would take an endeared friend with me on the morrow, who would feel an ecstasy of delight on witnessing such a remarkable scene. But the morrow proved to the poor blind old woman a day which has no coming night. Her daughter informed me, that being awake, and thinking she heard her mother utter some sound, she went with a light to her bed-side, when, after a slight convulsive struggle, she said, “Dear Saviour, I come to Thee,” and expired.

It appears that the disturbance of the preceding day, and its consequent powerful excitement, awoke her out of the profound spiritual reverie in

which she had been living for many months; and by bringing her again into contact with earth and with time, caused her redeemed spirit, now loathing such alliances, to bound away and spring into life. What a splendid transition! the cottage exchanged for a mansion; the imprisoned spirit set free to behold the glory of Christ, and to live and move amidst the sublime grandeur of immortality.

And yet we are told that the faith of Christ, which unveils such grand prospects of a future state of existence, is a mere delusion! If we admit this, yet we must admit that it is a very remarkable delusion, as it usually comes in its most vivid forms, and with its most active agencies, just at that period in the history of human existence, when all the realities of earth and of time are vanishing away from our possession and our sight. At that awful crisis, when the pomp of distinction, the fascination of sensible objects and social intimacies, and the grandeur of wealth, are all dying off under the withering influence of the night-shade of death — and nothing is left to man but the shroud, the coffin, and the grave — then comes the Christian faith, and opens up a scene of distinction, of fascination, and of grandeur, which no known words of conventional usage can adequately describe; and yet the dying man, who feels his departing spirit embracing these revelations as sublime realities, is told by the cold-hearted skeptic that all is delusion. But as the delusion is so innocent and so exciting, so grateful to taste, and so elevating, why try to undeceive him, when, if all be a delusion? and you succeed in convincing him of it, you perform, O skeptic, the cruel act of dragging the spirit of your departing friend from an Elysium of bliss, to perish on the platform of destructive death, like the stalled ox or the fatted calf?

2. The Power of the Cross — Moorfields “Tabernacle”

The cross once seen is death to every vice. — Cowper.

THE CELEBRATED GEORGE WHITFIELD built several large places of worship in England: one in Bristol; one at Kingswood, in the center of an extensive colliery district; and two in London, — Tottenham Court Chapel at the west end, and the Tabernacle situated in Moorfields, which, in his time, was a very profane and depraved neighborhood. At his decease, the management of these places devolved on some pious gentlemen, nominated by himself; and they appointed their successors. The two in London, which were under the control of the same managers, had two resident pastors, — one for each congregation, — dividing half of the public religious services between them; the other half devolved on an assistant-minister from the country, who usually tarried at the manse for six Sabbaths, and was designated by the cognomen of the “Tabernacle Supply.” At the time when the somewhat extraordinary occurrence took place to which I am now going to call the attention of the reader, the Rev. Matthew Wilks and the Rev. John Hyatt were the pastors; and their memory is still held in grateful remembrance by many an old disciple. Mr. Wilks received his ministerial education at Trevecca College, in Wales, which was imder the patronage of the justly celebrated Lady Huntingdon; and for upwards of half a century he was one of the most distinguished ministers of the age. Mr. Hyatt was a self-educated man, a preacher of extraordinary power, surpassing in his popular manner, and his very effective ministrations, most of his contemporaries: a star in the firmament of the Church of great magnitude.

In the year 1815, I was spending my annual six weeks’ visit at the Tabernacle. On the Sabbath morning, December 17, I preached at Tottenham Court Road Chapel, from Prov. 22:6; and, in the evening, at the Tabernacle, from Gal. 6:14, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” The topic which I raised and illustrated was the following: “The cross displaying the glory of its power and its grace, in the subjects of its unanticipated triumphs.” “Who that had seen Saul of Tarsus passing through the gates of Jerusalem, on his way to Damascus, could have supposed that by mid-day he would be seen bowing his knees in the presence of the crucified Nazarene —”the rejected of Israel; and that soon after that strange event, he would be heard giving utterance to the words of my text? Yes; the triumphs of the cross are often as unanticipated as they are glorious.” The congregation was unusually large; and there was one present whom I knew not. And as his history before he heard the sermon, and subsequently, wears an aspect of the romantic.

I will give a brief sketch of it. I think it proper to premise that his name is assumed, and that some of the descriptive drapery is artificial; but the facts of the history are genuine, and it is a sketch of a real, not a fictitious, person.

Henry Cozens was born in London in 1801. His parents were respectable and pious; and he received a very good religious and secular education. At the age of fourteen he went as apprentice to ————, and was a smart, active, and shrewd lad, somewhat facetious, and of great resolution of purpose; but more remarkable than most youths for a grave, reflective turn of mind. He passed through the first half of the term of his apprenticeship with great ed&t, getting ahead of all the other apprentices in the establishment in the scientific neatness with which he executed his work, and his extraordinary dispatch; having the art of working what is technically called double time, within the same given number of hours. But his skill and his proficiency became a snare; as, by working task-work, according to the law of the establishment he received a weekly income which very far exceeded his necessary expenditure. He was advised by his parents and others to set apart at least a portion of it for accumulation; but his sympathy for the poor, his desire to appear, when he put off his undress, as of equal rank with his superiors; and the generous abhorrence he cherished against a penurious habit which he had seen developed in some collateral branches of his own family, combined to neutralize the practical effect of such good advice. He was generous to others; but on himself he was extravagant, yet confining his profuse expenditure for upwards of a year simply to his external appearance. At length he began to gratify his taste for reading, for music, and

recreative and sensual indulgences. Almost as soon as he tasted the forbidden fruit of evil, his entire moral nature seemed to undergo a sudden and extraordinary change. The sweet simplicity of his smile; his healthful bloom; his frank and open-hearted style of address; the regularity and order of his hours and his movements, were strangely revolutionized. The change was as conspicuous as it was unanticipated; a lovely virtuous character withering under some pestilential contagion. Alas; he had been lured by the prevailing spirits of evil from the theater to the billiard table; there he played, night after night, with varying degrees of success, till he got so involved in debt, that he felt compelled to commit a crime to retrieve his honor. He broke into his master's counting-house, and stole fifty pounds. As the numbers of the notes were not known, they could not be traced, and therefore he had nothing to fear; yet he suffered intense remorse of conscience, which was not yet hardened into callous insensibility by the deceitfulness of sin. But having once crossed the line which keeps good and evil apart, he felt less reluctance to re-tread the fatal pathway to ruin; and being again involved in pecuniary difficulties, he committed a second robbery. A trivial circumstance awakened suspicion in one mind; he was watched — suspicion was soon confirmed; and on opening his writing-desk, during his absence, the only note his master could identify was discovered. His father was sent for, and a friend who was known to feel a deep interest in the family; and they were in waiting, without knowing for what purpose, when, rather earlier than usual, Henry Cozens returned home, and was requested to step into the drawing-room. He had not been seated many minutes, before his writing-desk was placed on the table, which his master had previously brought into the room. On seeing it, he arose, embarrassed, and yet collected, and said, "I at once, and with shame, acknowledge my guilt, and will submit to any arrangement which your generosity, sir, may dictate; from your justice I can claim nothing." It was arranged that he should at once leave the establishment, his father engaging to repay to the full extent of his embezzlements.

This was a severe blow to his family, but it fell with comparatively little effect upon Henry, as he was too deeply plunged in habitual vice, and too closely allied with evil associates, to recover himself and pursue a virtuous course. He refused to return to his father's, who now rarely saw him, and was kept entirely ignorant of the life he was living.

After leaving his situation, he obtained employment in another establishment, which brought him into contact with some who were further advanced in the progress of vice and crime than his earlier companions. They concealed from him their real character till they had initiated him into some of their less hazardous enterprises; then he was easily induced to go with them to any extent of wickedness, and within the space of a few months he took rank as a professed thief. The gang of which he was now a member, soon after he joined them, concocted a burglary which was to be committed in the neighborhood of Finsbury Square, when the family was at public worship; and they appointed the open space in the front of the Tabernacle as the place of rendezvous on the following Sabbath evening. As the success of their plot depended on exact time, Henry Cozens, when they were all assembled together, was sent into the Tabernacle to ascertain the hour. To do this he had to worm himself through the dense mass standing under the front gallery; and while doing it — which, to avoid exciting any suspicion, required great caution — his eye was necessarily directed towards the pulpit. He had nearly reached the point of vision, where he could see the face of the clock, when, as though struck by some invisible spirit, he could go no farther; he stood fixed to the spot, petrified with horror, yet listening with intense and absorbing interest to the appeal of the minister, who was preaching the glad tidings of salvation through the redemption of Christ, and urging his hearers to escape from the wrath to come. “He felt,” as he afterwards said to a friend, “as though suspended in mid-air over some awful abyss, without hope of rescue.”

He had now been absent so long, that his companions began to feel not only impatient, but somewhat alarmed; and one of them was sent to seek him, and to bring him out as soon as possible. This was a difficult matter, as Henry Cozens was rather diminutive in stature; but at length he saw him, and touching him on the shoulder, said in an under tone, “Come, or we shall be too late.” His reply was laconic, but given in a firm tone, which precluded any parley, “No, the *Cross now and forever.*”

What this man said on rejoining his companions I never heard, but it might have been something like the following: “This Tabernacle is enchanted. It has spoiled many a brave spirit. Here John Williams was converted, and turned a missionary; and now Henry Cozens has cut us, and says he’ll cling to the cross for ever. Come, let us be off; the very air is infectious. I’ll never meet here again.”

Henry Cozens himself remained to the close of the service; and then he walked away, and walked alone, under a novel and extraordinary excitement, and with emotions unlike any that had ever before agitated his soul; much of the same order as those which agitated the breast of the dying thief, after he found that the illustrious Sufferer who had promised him an entrance into the celestial paradise was now dead, leaving him to his own agonies and fearful apprehensions; a conflicting agitation like that which prevails between wave and wave, after the storm has ceased, the natural subsidence into quiet stillness being prevented by the mighty upheavings from the tumultuous swellings of the lower parts of the great deep.

“How strange! I went into the Tabernacle to note the time for crime, and there felt the power of the cross. At six o’clock I expected that, by this hour, I should have been sharing with others the spoils of plunder; now our companionship is broken up, and from this hour I will be a disciple of Christ.” Oh! to grace how great a debtor." Yes! I know this is a real change of soul. It is not produced by man, though man is the agent of it. It is Thy work, O Lord. It is real. No mockery; no illusion." He thus went musing till he came to the end of Goswell Street, and there he stopped some minutes; the right leading to his father’s house, the left to his own lodgings. “Yes; if I go to my lodgings, some of my old companions may be in waiting for me. I think I could easily resist all their efforts to entice me back to evil; but resistance would bring on a contest, which would ruffle my spirits, and might drive out some of the grand thoughts of the sermon, and efface some of the impressions. No; I will keep out of their way. I will never again see my lodgings. I will never again go into any of the haunts of wickedness I have so often visited. I won’t even tread along the loathsome pathway I have so often trodden, and at all hours of the night. Yes; I will imitate the example of the prodigal, and go home. There I shall be received, as he was, with gladness of heart; there I shall be safe. Ah! I need a hiding place from the eye of justice.”

The house of Mr. Cozens had long been the house of mourning. He hung down his head with shame when any reference was made to his son, and Mrs. Cozens’ heart was sick with grief; and they often wept together, because their much-loved first-born was walking in the ways of sinners, and fitting himself for destruction. They had been in the habit some years of attending the Tabernacle, when its present Supply preached there; but Mrs. Cozens, feeling an unusual depression of spirit, said, “I will stay at

home tonight; you can take Eliza with you.” “Yes, father, I will go with you; I should like to hear Mr. ——.” The servants also went.

All was now still. Not the voice or the foot tread of any of the living was to be heard. The depressed mother seated herself on her armchair — took her Bible, that sweet soother of grief; and after awhile she began reading the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. She sighed as she read, for her soul was in great trouble; and more than once the tear of sorrow fell from her eye. She read the parable of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth verses: “How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep’ and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety-and-nine and goeth into the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety-and-nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. The words held her for some time spellbound in an agony of fear; yet after a while its intensity was mitigated by hope: —”Yes, the Son of man, who came to save that which is lost, knows where my child is; He knows what he is doing; and He can easily find him and restore him to the fold.” She read on, but paused when she came to the nineteenth verse: “Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.”

“This is a grand promise; but then it is given to united prayer. But I am now alone. There is no one who can come to an agreement with me, and no one who can pray with me, or we would kneel together and pray together for the conversion of my child.” She put down her spectacles — reclined backwards in her chair — and gave herself up to the wild and agonizing thinkings of her soul. In a moment a new spirit came into her. She saw no shape. She heard no voice. But the word of the Bible, the precious Bible, came with great and soul-inspiring power, and sweeter to her taste than music to the ear of harmony, when pining in melancholy sadness. Ps. 1:15: “And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” She knelt alone, but she felt that she was not alone; the Son of man, who came to save that which was lost, was with her; she prayed alone, but she prayed as Jacob prayed, and felt that her prayer was prevailing. “That night,” she remarked to me when alluding to it, some years afterwards, “was a memorable night. It was Tabor by moonlight.”

“I am sorry,” said Mr. Cozens, on his return home, “that you were not with us tonight. We have had one of the best sermons I ever heard Mr. ———— preach. It was a grand subject:” “The cross subduing and triumphing over its enemies.” The congregation was, if possible, larger and more attentive than usual; and at times, as still as death. His Master was with him. I shall never forget his descriptive sketch of the conversion of the dying thief, to prove that the cross, in the hour of apparent weakness, was the mighty power of God. One expression had a thrilling effect on the entire mass. “See, brethren, with what natural ease the thief, whose hands were stained with human blood, passes into a renovated being, fitted to take rank with celestial spirits, when touched by the more than magic power of the cross.” Then he repeated the lines of Cowper which we have so often admired. “Yes, the cross!”

“There, and there only, is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair;
No mockery meets you, no deception there;
The spells and charms that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.”

“And I hope,” said Mrs. C., “that the Lord has been with me. I never felt more enlargement, or more fervor, in prayer for the conversion of our dear Henry than I felt tonight. I begin to hope that the good Shepherd will seek him, and restore him to us.”

“That will be,” said the father, “the consummation of my domestic happiness.”

Just as they were preparing for family prayer, the bell of the front door rang. The mother started in her seat, and said, “That’s my Henry’s ring. Hark! he always rings twice.” The bell rang again. “Yes, it is his ring. The good Shepherd has been abroad tonight; and He is bringing home to us the lost sheep. I seem to hear the footsteps of His power.” Henry entered the parlor. “I am glad to see you, my child,” said his father, who embraced him. His sister sprang upon him, and threw her arms round his neck, exclaiming, “We are so glad to see you, dear Henry.” His mother moved not — she spake not; but she wept. Henry, as soon as he could disengage himself from his sister, approached his mother, wiped away her tears, kissed her, and seated himself by her side. In a few moments his head was in her bosom, for he always loved his mother; but there was no speaking. No; as yet the

thoughts and feelings of every heart were too big to make their escape through the ordinary channels and instruments of conveyance. The mother was the first to break silence.

“And where, my Henry, have you been spending your evening?”

“At the Tabernacle.”

“At the Tabernacle! and is it true? at the Tabernacle, my child?”

“Yes, my mother. I had no intention of going there five minutes before I entered.”

“And so it was,” she said, “with that dear man of God, John Williams; but when he was there, the good Shepherd sought him and found him, and brought him into His fold. My child, has the good Shepherd taken you into His fold tonight?”

“I felt, when listening to Mr. ———, the subduing power of the cross.”

“What’s that, Henry?” said his mother, whose excess of excitement had impaired in a slight degree the delicacy of her hearing. “Oh! mother,” said his sister, “he says that when listening to Mr. ———, he felt the subduing power of the cross.”

“Then the good Shepherd has been abroad tonight. I saw light in the heavens when the Lord bade me call upon Him. Bless the Lord, O my soul. What a night of mercies! It is the calm after the storm — like life from the dead.” And she said, “My soul doth magnify the Lord” and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, For He that is mighty hath done to we great things, and holy is His name.”

“And I hope,” said Henry, He hath reclaimed me, and brought me home to tell you what great things He has done for me, and has had compassion on me.

“Who could believe such lips could praise,
Or think my dark and winding ways
Should ever lead to Him!”

The old servant who had been in the family many years, saw Henry Cozens in the Tabernacle; and while he was listening to the sermon, she was praying to the Lord Jesus to open his heart, that he might feel what he heard. On entering the parlor, when the bell rang for family prayer, she said, “After seeing you at the Tabernacle, I am not surprLsed, Mr. Henry, by seeing you

at home. It was a grand melting sermon; a power of tears was shed tonight. The Lord be praised!”

“This,” said Mr. Cozens, “is an eventful night; and it is meet that we should mingle gratitude with our rejoicing. My son, who was dead, is alive again; he was lost, but now we find him again with us. Bless the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” After singing the following hymn, the fifteenth chapter of Luke was read; and at times, both in the singing and the reading, the appeal was overpowering.

O, my Lord, I've often mused
On Thy wond'rous love to me;
How I have the same abused,
Slighted, disregarded Thee!

To Thy church and Thee a stranger,
Pleased with what displeased Thee;
Lost, yet could perceive no danger, —
Wounded, yet no wound could see.

Bat unwearied Thou pursu'dst me,
Still Thy calls repeated came;
Till on Calvary's mount I viewed Thee,
Bearing my reproach and blame.

Then, o'erwhelm'd with shame and sorrow,
Whilst I view each pierced limb,
Tears bedew the scourge's furrow.
Mingling with the purple stream.

I no more at Mary wonder,
Dropping tears upon the grave;
Earnest asking all around her.
Where is He who died to save?

Dying love her heart attracted,
Soon she felt its rising power;
He who Mary thus affected,
Bids His mourners weep no more.

In a letter, addressed to an intelligent friend, Henry says, in referring to this extraordinary event in his spiritual history, "When pressing through the

dense mass of people within the Tabernacle, which required the utmost caution, as I was apprehensive that every one who looked at me suspected the design of my movements, my eye, more than once, caught sight of the preacher; but it was not till I came near the spot where I could see the face of the clock, that he excited any particular attention. But just as I was going to turn round to notice the exact hour, he gave utterance to an expression which startled me; and in a moment I had brought most vividly to my remembrance a stanza of a hymn which I had learnt when a boy, and which, without my being able to assign any reason for it, always acted on my imagination as a charm:

“Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

Immediately long dormant associations awoke, emitting a softened radiance over my mind; and I felt as though entering a mysticism of thought and strange emotion — the transition-state when passing from death to life. The design of my entrance into the Tabernacle — my companions — our anticipated burglary — passed away from my recollection as rapidly, and as completely, as a slight May snow-storm disappears when the sun comes out of his secret chambers. The minister, his look, his attitude, his voice, rising from the tender in remonstrance and entreaty, to the bold and impassioned in solemn and awful warning, arrested and absorbed my attention, and kept me passive under his impressive and subduing power. He ruled my spirit; and I became spellbound to his lips, standing motionless, under the pressure of an influence I had no power or inclination to resist. I felt my guilt; and the first pang of remorse was tremendously acute. I saw my danger, and it was an awful scene — hell moving beneath me; and I trembled through fear of what was coming. I shall never forget the rapid and varied emotions of my soul, immediately consequent on my giving heed to the appeal and warnings of the pulpit; and if the God of all grace had permitted me to leave the Tabernacle under this terrible pressure of guilt, and keen apprehension of coming vengeance, I might have been tempted to prefer a premature death to the endurance of such intense agony. But when just ready to sink into despair, the Saviour passed by, and spake peace to my soul, and there was instantaneously a calm. What a change! No words can describe it. Tears of sorrow, mingling with tears of joy and gratitude, fell copiously; and I let

them fall, being too deeply interested in what I heard and felt to heed the presence or notice of others. When touched, I turned to see who touched me; and I saw one of my companions in crime. His unexpected appearance, and his request to go with him, revived all that I had for a few minutes forgotten; the scene of guilt and of danger through which I had just passed into the light and calm of hope, re-opened in more fearful forms of threatening vengeance; and I felt sick at heart. But when he left me, and I again turned my eye to the pulpit, the subject of the discourse, so singularly adapted to the agonized condition of my soul, revived the impressions and emotions which his touch and voice had for a little while suspended; and I again mingled tears of gratitude and love with those of contrition and sorrow. Mr. ——— ended his sermon as he often does, abruptly, without any other notice of its being ended than a long pause, before he announced the hymn for singing; and during that pause, when no sound was heard, I said to myself, “Have I seen a vision, or is all I have seen, and heard, and felt, a reality?” The singing of the hymn, which was one I had often heard sung, calmed down in some degree my strongly excited feelings: and in walking away from the Tabernacle, at the close of the sermon, I became convinced on reflection that it was no vision, but a reality; and that I had passed from death to life.

“I recollect feeling, as I passed along with the crowd, — and it was a delightful sensation, — that I was no longer an alien from God, a wandering orphan on earth, living without Him in scenes of danger and misery, but one of His children; renewed and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, brought unexpectedly into contact with the powers of the world to come; an heir of immortality with some faint shadows flitting before my imagination of the glory to be revealed when mortality is swallowed up of life. I have, since the hour I first believed, enjoyed some sweet manifestations of divine love; but I do not expect, while in the body, to feel such intense emotions as I felt then. Then I felt as the mariner feels when just recovered from the wreck — no less astonished than delighted by an unanticipated interposition of rescuing grace and mercy; but I look forward to the hour when, on seeing my adorable Saviour, the emotions of my heart will be more in unison with the immensity of my obligations than they have ever been. When I see Him as He is, I shall love Him as I ought.”

The personal safety of Henry Cozens rendered it necessary to conceal from others for some considerable time the fact of his conversion; but, after

remaining in comparative retirement for nearly twelve months, no former deeds of evil coming to light, and most of his old companions having been shipped off to penal settlements, or compelled to leave the city, and go elsewhere to work the works of darkness, he was received into fellowship with his Christian brethren, without anyone but his own family, the Rev. Mr. Wilks, and myself, ever knowing all the peculiarities of this strange passage in his spiritual history. I never saw him; but I know from the testimony of others, that he lived to adorn his Christian profession, and became an ornament and a useful member to the social community against which he once waged a daring and an annoying hostility.

When the “set time” comes for the accomplishment of a purpose of grace, we often see a harmony in the movements of its subordinate agents; they work together, though not always in concert; the Lord working with them and by them. Henry Cozens enters the Tabernacle, as John Williams entered it, to gratify an evil passion; he listens to a sermon; the old servant of the family sees him listening; and while his mother is tarrying at home, wrestling in prayer for his conversion, she also prays that his heart may be opened; and before he closed his eyes in sleep that night, it was said of him, by One who knew the secrets of his heart, “Behold!” What a stimulus and encouragement to prayer is this case of Henry Cozens! — to the prayer of faith, which offers up its supplications with strong crying and tears, and which wrestles with the Lord through the long night of desponding grief, till the day breaks, bringing the promised blessing, when the spirit of heaviness is exchanged for the garment of praise!

In this instance of conversion, we are reminded of Bunyan’s Pilgrim, when living through a period of his history no less eventful. Bunyan was a profound moral philosopher, with a heart as tender as the most exquisite sentimentalist. He knew what sorrow was, — he had felt it, — the sorrow of a wounded spirit. He knew its sources — “its aggravations — its accompaniments, shame, remorse —” the agitating apprehension of coming wrath; and he knew also what would give relief, and where to direct the mourner to find it. Hence he leads his pilgrim steadily along, oppressed by his heavy burden, till he ascends a slight eminence, when he sees the mystic emblem of redemption; and, without an effort, he loses his burden: it rolls off, and he is free.

On the 30th of January in the preceding year, the late John Williams, who fell the martyred missionary when attempting to introduce the Gospel

into the Island of Erromanga, engaged to spend the evening with a party of gay companions at a place of public resort on the City Road, and they were to meet on the same spot, in front of Whitfield's Tabernacle, where Henry Cozens and his companions met, and go from thence together, to enjoy their nightly dissipations. He kept the hour; they did not. He felt piqued; and to avenge himself on them for not being punctual, he consented to accompany a friend into the Tabernacle. When sitting there, he saw the same preacher, in the same pulpit, in which Henry Cozens saw him when he was standing in the area; and though he heard a different sermon, yet it was the instrument of the same power and of the same grace — producing the same order of impression and emotion; and both, from the hour they first believed, and both knowing the exact date of that eventful hour, yielded themselves unto God, and became His servants, having their fruit unto holiness, and their end now is everlasting life. And their spiritual father hopes he may, without presumption, look forward with triumphant emotions of delight to that solemn and grand presentation day, when the faithful ministers of the cross will be permitted to appear in the presence of their divine Lord and Master, with their ever-living and never-fading crowns of rejoicing I There, with Williams, whose death made many eyes weep, and whose name has been uttered in many different languages' and by many thousand tongues; and there, with Cozens, of less distinction and renown, and with others unknown on earth, but well known to the angels of God, he hopes to bow before the throne, and offer adoration and praise to Him, to whom all will be equally indebted for their elevation and their bliss.

What an honored place is Whitfield's Tabernacle! How many thousands, now mingling their praises before the throne of God and the Lamb, will retain for ever on their imagination, its locality, and its entire appearance. The low, massive pulpit; the railed off compartment near by for the richer and more genteel attendants — the aristocrats of the order; the wide extended area for the undistinguished masses, with its backless seats; the standing room, under the side, and deep front gallery; the four antique chandeliers hanging from the ceiling, and studded with candles; the crowded galleries at the back, and in front, and on each side; the managers' pew, as in the shade of the great congregation; the little inner, and the larger vestry; the minister in the pulpit, with the clerk on his left-hand side, slightly in advance of him, leading the psalmody; — the tout ensemble surpassing in antique simplicity all other places ever consecrated to the great and grand purpose of saving

souls from death. And when the fire of the coming conflagration, having burnt up the palaces, the council-chambers, and the other splendid public buildings of the great metropolis, is seen moving towards this spot, so long the holy place of the Divine residence, it may possibly linger, and enfold itself in its own curling and devouring flames, as though unwilling to reduce to ashes the spiritual birth-place of so many of the redeemed and glorified spirits of the celestial world. And when the great fire is gone out, having finished the purifying process of this part of the material universe, and its ashes are become cold, some, in whom the imagination will ever be the predominant faculty, may be seen gathering up a portion of them as a sacred relic, to be shown when " the Lord shall count as He writeth up the people, that this man was born there.

I cannot finish this sketch, without saying that, in every very large place, such as Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham (there is one in Bristol), Edinburgh, and Glasgow, it would be an inestimable blessing to the great mass of the population, if there was pitched amongst them such a Tabernacle as this, with one-half or two-thirds of its seats free, and for the use of the first who come in to occupy them; its pulpit filled in succession by some ministers of the Gospel, irrespective of denominational distinction, who have been most successful in winning souls to Christ, with its resident minister to preach alternately with the Supply, and look after the spiritual interests of the people. The erection of such a Tabernacle would be a new epoch in the history of Christian zeal and benevolence; — the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in a dark place, in whose light many would rejoice, and rejoice for ever; — a platform raised on an elevation higher than the ordinary level, from whence the watchman of the night and of the morning might catch the first mystic sign of the glorious coming of the Son of God, at whose feet every knee is to bow, and to whom every tongue is to confess to the glory of God the Father.

3. The Moral Wreck, And The Soul Lost

O for a shelter from the wrath to come!
Crush me, ye rocks: ye falling mountains, hide
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide. — Cowper.

WE WERE STARTLED ONE NIGHT, just as we were preparing to retire to rest, by a carriage stopping in front of the house, followed by loud ringing and knocking; and, on the door being opened, I heard a person say,

“Is the Rev. Mr. —— at home?”

“Yes.”

“I must see him immediately.” The young gentleman was introduced. “My brother, sir, is very dangerously ill; and my mamma will feel greatly obliged if you will come and see him. We fear he won't live till the morning. I have a carriage, sir, in waiting, and will take you and bring you back, if you will have the politeness to accompany me.”

I knew not the gentleman who was supposed to be dying, nor did I know any of his family; but I ascertained from his brother, as we were going along, that gay and dissipated habits had brought on the tremendous crisis, which was expected to take place during the night; and it was a fearfully dark and stormy night.

On entering his bedroom, which was very large, the feeble taper light merely served to render the darkness visible; and his mother, a lady of the highest polish of manners and address, offered an apology by saying, “Our son, sir, cannot bear a strong light. Walk this way — he is lying here, sir,” — drawing aside the bed-curtain. The gloom, and the death-like stillness of the room, depressed my spirits; no one stirred; all seemed terror-struck, as though some tragical catastrophe was about to happen; when we were suddenly startled into fearful commotion of feeling, by one of the most piercing groans I ever heard uttered by a human being.

“Are you in great pain, sir?”

This question, coming from the lips of a stranger, whose entrance into the room he had not heard, startled him. He changed his position, and, looking towards me, an extra light being supplied for the occasion of the interview, he said abruptly, “I am going to take a leap in the dark;” which was followed by another groan, expressive of the convulsive agonies and the tumultuous agitations of his soul, now on the brink of the tremendous precipice of eternal destruction.

“I hope not, sir.”

“No power can save me.”

“Christ Jesus is able, and is willing, to save the chief of sinners, even in the uttermost extremity of their guilt and their danger.”

“Yes, sir, but outraged justice sometimes demands a victim, to vindicate its own honor. I am doomed to death and damnation. I am as sure of going to hell, as there is a hell to go to.”

“My dear Charles,” said his agonized mother, who gave a wild shriek, and, in an hysteric fit of loud and terrific laughter, was carried out of the room. My spirit trembled. I had never before witnessed such a horrifying scene. His brother, who had accompanied me, and his younger sisters, withdrew; but one remained, stood close by my side, calm, yet evidently in great mental anguish. She feared her brother was speaking the truth, and this gave to her spirit the power to listen and the power to endure the terror of what she heard; yet hoping some voice of mercy would control and allay the storm, which seemed to threaten the fatal wreck of his soul. “Shall I pray with you, sir?”

“You may, sir; but I am beyond the reach of mercy.”

After prayer he became more composed, and listened with fixed attention while I spoke of Christ and the great salvation, and urged him to call on Him to save him. I left him tranquil; but whether his tranquility proceeded from the effect of truth on his soul, or was the physical consequence of the near approach of death, was a question I could not decide.

“Have you,” said his mother, who was pacing the parlor below, wringing her hands in the severest anguish of grief, her hair hanging in loose disorder over her shoulders; “have you, sir, been able to say anything to my dear Charles, which has given him a ray of hope?”

“He is tranquil, madam; but he has not told me the cause of his tranquility.”

“Will he die tonight, sir; this wild, stormy night, sir? And if he die tonight, sir, will he leap in the dark into” — I could not endure the wild scene which I now witnessed. Mother and daughters raised one shouting scream of woe; and in that state I left them to the care of the servants.

In the morning I received the following note: —

“REV. AND DEAR SIR, —”I am happy to inform you that our dear brother lay quite tranquil for upwards of an hour after you left him. He then asked for a glass of water. “I will now,” he said, “try to sleep.” Towards late in the morning we think he did sleep a little. The doctor has just been here. He reports rather more favorably. When you can make it convenient to renew your visit, we shall be most happy to see you. Mamma, sisters, and brother, unite in respectful remembrance. — “Yours sincerely,” Sarah.”

I went to see him in the early part of the following evening, when I found him more composed; his fever had abated considerably; and hopes began to be entertained by all, except himself, that he would recover. “They are sanguine, sir, but I am not. I think the sentence of death is recorded against me; and, sir, if it were not for that more tremendous sentence, which is called the second death, — that is, the eternal banishment of the soul from all fellowship with God, the fountain of life and happiness, — I should not tremble in prospect of the issue. It is that, sir, that fills my soul with horror.”

“But I hope, sir, you are not in such a state of deep despair as you were last evening.”

“There is, sir, a lull in the storm; but the horizon of my vision is yet surcharged with the elements of His coming wrath. I have less positive agony of soul; but I have no hope. I feel it would be an act of presumption to indulge hope.”

“But the Bible tells us that the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.”

“Yes, sir, where reverential fear of His Majesty is blended with humble hope in His mercy, the penitent may repose in security in His compassion and His love. But I am not a penitent. I am a rebel struck prostrate before Him. I dread His vengeance; but I cannot hope in His mercy.”

I again called his attention to the character of Christ, uniting the divine and human nature in His person — to His wondrous condescension in assuming the form of man — His death — the design of it, and its efficacy — to the character He still sustains, as a Saviour able and willing to save the chief of sinners; and argued, in support of the following propositions, that it

was an insult to His benevolence to mistrust it, and an aggravation of guilt to cherish despair rather than confide in the fidelity of His promises. This seemed to take effect. He remained silent some minutes, evidently absorbed in thought. At length he said, "If, sir, you will pray with me, I shall feel obliged; and then I wish to be left quite alone —"not disturbed till I ring — as I should like to follow out that train of thought to which you have now given me the clue."

I did so, and left him, with some faint hope that the Divine Spirit would preside over his thinking faculty at this eventful crisis in his history, and invest his thoughts with an unction and a power that might bring peace to his soul.

The threatening symptoms soon began to pass away; his strength rallied; and within the space of a few weeks he was able to leave his sick chamber, and appear with the family in the parlor, and in occasional drives into the country. His recovery was hailed by his mother, and spoken of by himself, as partaking somewhat of the marvelous nature of a resurrection.

He again went out into active life; and now I began to fear the result. I was very attentive to him during the progress of his recovery, watching with great anxiety his mental tendencies and their development; and while I saw much to sustain hope, yet a certain inexplicable mannerism, associated with casual outbreaks of a spirit yet unhumbled to a level with his real moral condition, made me, when disposed to rejoice, to do it with trembling. The family, either as a compliment to my polite attention to the son, or as the effect of my conversation and prayers when with them, took a large pew in the chapel, and attended my ministry for some months very regularly, and with apparent seriousness. Mr. Charles usually headed the family in walking up the aisle; and, after admitting all into the pew, he took his seat next to the door; and seemed by his looks and his attention as though he really loved the habitation of the Lord's house.

But, alas I their habits of external piety had not resumed the regularity of established order more than six months before I observed an occasional break. Sometimes his younger sisters were absent; then his mother; then his brother; and then himself: his elder sister was uniformly regular and punctual. When I called to see them, the hearty welcome was exchanged for the cold formality of artificial politeness; frivolous excuses were assigned for irregularity of attendance on public worship; and the reappearance of the

former signs of fashionable gaiety and nightly revels soon told the melancholy tale, that the promising glory was departed.

As I sat one day in my study, musing over this touching and depressing event in the history of my ministerial life, with the scene of the first night's visit passing in review before my imagination, and going onwards in my anticipations to the awful decisions of the last day, trembling under the burden of my own thoughts and fears, my servant informed me that there was a gentleman below who wished to see me. On entering the parlor, I was surprised, yet gratified, on seeing Mr. Charles, who most cordially offered me his hand; and then, at my request, he resumed his seat. He is come at last, I thought, to unburden his mind, and to record now, more decidedly than ever, his vow of perpetual fidelity to God his Saviour. Delusive expectation! it soon vanished away, as the beautiful dream of a midnight hour vanishes when the eye opens on the dawn of the morning light. A scene of moral baseness, and consummate folly and impiety, now sprang up before me, which has never had a parallel in the whole course of my varied and extended experience.

"I have called, sir," he said, "to tender you my sincere thanks for your polite attention to me during my illness; and am desired by my mother to say, that our family does not wish to retain the pew at your chapel, though it is very possible you may occasionally see my eldest sister. As it relates to myself, sir, I have to inform you that I feel no trifling degree of mortification when recalling what, in the season of intense physical suffering, and when the mind was somewhat wandering on the other side of sober reason, I said to you; and what I have been induced to allow you to say to me since my recovery. This communication, I have no doubt, will startle you; and with your sentiments and opinions, it will vex, and may depress you; but a regard for my personal honor compels me to make it. One request, sir, and then I have done. Look no longer on me as a disciple of your faith; repeat to no one what in the sanctuary of private friendship you saw and heard; hold all that as sacred as the secrets of the grave. From this moment I shall sail down the stream of time, enjoying the pleasures of life while it lasts, and leave the future till the future comes."

I was literally thunderstruck. The elegant politeness of his manners; the cool effrontery with which he delivered these horrifying determinations; his very respectful looks and tones towards myself, tended in some measure to keep down my spirit — to soften it — to melt it — and to bring it to play on

some latent feelings which I thought might possibly still linger in his soul. The attempt failed; for on opening on him in a calm and affectionate tone and style, he abruptly said, "Pardon me, sir, I merely came, out of respect to your character and your politeness, to announce a changeless determination; not to submit to a remonstrance, nor to argue a question of divinity."

"Really, my dear sir, you do surprise me. However, as you will submit to no remonstrance, nor descend to any argumentation, you will allow me to say, in vindication of my own honor, that I did not obtrude myself on you or your family. I was sent for, and on a night, and at an hour of the night, when but few ministers would leave their home to wait on an entire stranger, as you then were to me. I employed no torturing process to work on your soul. I saw you writhing in mental agonies, when you knew not that I stood by your side. It was no remark of mine which wrung from your burning lips the heart-rending exclamation, "I am going to take a leap in the dark," which sent your own mother out of the room, wild in delirious frenzy." He moved. "Stop, sir, I must finish; you are bound in honor to listen. You say, you will now sail down the stream of time, and enjoy life, leaving the future till it comes. Take warning; or if not, listen to an announcement. You may enjoy life; but remorse, and remorse keener than a scorpion's sting, is the penalty which you may have to pay. The future is coming; it may be here sooner than you expect, and then the threatened wreck of the soul may become a real one: the leap in the dark must be taken, and then you perish for ever."

He bowed, and abruptly left the room. I did not follow him. I did not like to let my eye look intentionally on him for the last time; nor touch his hand knowingly for the last time. It was to me the most awful interview I ever held with a human being. Such a combination of evil principles, coming out in a set speech, and so coolly — such base ingratitude to the God of his mercies — such defiance of His authority — such scornful contempt of the great salvation — "such bold daring of a readiness to meet what might be involved in the future! Alas! I had no power to bear up under such an accumulated treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath. My spirits sank within me; and I sought a momentary diversion, amidst the hilarity and playfulness of my much loved children.

Well, that day soon passed away, though not its remembrance; his eldest sister still attended the chapel, though she cautiously avoided all intercourse with myself or any of the people. At length the family removed to a distant neighborhood, when she also disappeared, and all knowledge and trace of

them was lost. Years rolled on; the terrors of that awful night, and the more appalling utterances of that eventful day, were now far back in the distant history of my life: my recollections of them were less frequent, as I had other scenes to witness, and other utterances to engage my attention; and when they did rise up before my imagination, their once vivid impressions lost much of their depressing and agonizing power, except when out in a very dark and stormy night. Then the past scene of horror, and the ominous exclamation, "I am going to take a leap in the dark," produced a convulsive agitation on my spirits.

After preaching on a Sabbath evening, from the word "Depart," one of my hearers, an intimate friend, followed me into the vestry, and said, "I wish, sir, you would accompany me some evening in the early part of the week to see a person who is dangerously ill; if you will fix the day and the hour, I will call on you, and take you in my chaise." We fixed Tuesday evening. He came, and we left together. He made no allusion to the dying person, except the probability of his not surviving many weeks, if days; nor did I ask any question, except to ascertain if the dying man was pious or not.

On our arrival at a beautiful villa in the suburbs, I was ushered into a drawing-room, where, to my astonishment, I saw the eldest sister of Mr. Charles. She attempted to speak, but could not; and in a few minutes she withdrew, and I was left alone. My friend was not with me; he went to make a call on another family. A servant at length appeared, and requested me to follow her, which I did, in mournful silence. I entered a bedroom, which was deserted by all, except the dying man and his nurse. This is strange. Is he an orphan in this world of sorrow? Has he no friend, except one hired for the occasion, a mere underwaiter in the ceremony of death? I had my fears, and they were gloomy; for I felt as though I was treading near a fatal volcanic spot, marked off as sacred to some awful manifestations of Divine justice. I looked on the dying man, whose pale and distended countenance told me that death was near at hand. I thought I knew him, yet was not quite certain. "He has been lying in this state," said the nurse, "nearly half an hour; but he will wake up soon." I took a chair, and watched by his side. He moved, opened his eyes, looked on me with a fixed look, yet remained silent. It is, I said to myself, Mr. Charles; but how changed!

Ah! the voyage of life is nearly ended; and now he will have, I fear, to shoot the gulf; and there he will perish. He must now very soon take the

dreaded leap. He still looked — we were both silent; the power of speech was gone from us. He raised himself a little on his pillow, still keeping his eye fixed on me, as though he dreaded me; and at length he spoke:

“You, sir, saved me once, when the stream was drifting me on the fatal rocks, and then I escaped the wreck. But what return have I made to Him, who sent you with the message of grace; to Him who gave me space to repent, and motives and promises to do it; to Him who waited to be gracious, and was willing to forgive? I rebelled against Him again. I sinned yet more daringly and desperately. He has again overtaken me; His heavy wrath has again fallen upon me; the pains of hell have got hold of me. I see the storm coming, and this time I shall go down. I must take the fatal leap now. and perish for ever.”

I knew not what reply to make; and, when making an effort to speak, he interrupted me by saying,

“Your visit, sir, has taken me by surprise. I knew not that you were sent for; I should have prevented it if I had known it. One confession I will make; a sense of honor, not the hope of mercy, compels me to make it. Ever since the fatal day when I saw you last, and said what I did say, I have been abandoned by God, except when He has drifted a storm of vengeance over my mental pathway; and, perhaps He has ordained that you, who heard, and have doubtless recorded, my impiously profane determination to enjoy life while sailing down the stream of time, shall be present to witness the struggles of my doomed soul when in the act of perishing for ever.”

A fit of delirium now came on, and in that state I left him. He was more calm on the following morning, and continued tranquil during the day, and several succeeding days; and hopes were entertained by his medical friend and others, that he would again rally, and yet live to taste once more the sweet cup of life. But they were all doomed to disappointment. His fever returned with still greater violence; he became faint, and felt dying. And just before the death-stroke was given, he said to his eldest sister, who stood weeping by his side, “It’s all over. I perish, let no one else. Yes, I perish — I know it — I feel it. Let no one else. Bid the rest, in the name of one who speaks from the wreck of his own ruin, haste to the refuge!”

His voice now failed him. He struggled hard and long; and at last, with one loud groan, he expired, and then took the fatal and dreaded leap; but has never come back to tell us what it is for a soul to perish.

Yes, man may hear the truth, and despise it; he may receive the truth, and live to reject it; he may lift up his voice in defiance of the justice, and in scornful contempt of the mercy of God; but he cannot go where the vengeance of God cannot follow him. He may sin in company, and alone; he may, while sinning, indulge himself in great hilarity of spirits; he may sin, in defiance of his own conscience, till he gets near the end of life; but there he is stopped, as now he can go no further. The last day comes at last; and what a day of self-rebuke and terror! The last hour comes at last; and what an hour of darkness and of woe! The last breath of life is drawn, and it comes back; life refuses its aid to live longer: the soul passes into the dark valley of the shadow of death, and feels, when there, conscious of being there alone; moves forward, conscious that there will soon be an opening to illumine this place of cheerless and hopeless darkness; hell moves to meet the coming spirit, which perishes for ever in the great deep gulf of despair. O man! O thoughtless man! O man, born to live for ever! Why, oh, why fit thyself for destruction? Escape ere the last hour is come; fly to the refuge now; the gates of mercy are still open: call on the name of the Lord Jesus to save thee, and call now; and with energy and earnestness, as the sinking mariner calls to the pilot who guides the lifeboat in the storm. Listen; the voice of mercy still is speaking; listen and obey — it is not too late.

“Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” — Isa. 45:22.

4. The Dying One. Part 1.

This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
The twilight of our day, the vestibule. — Young.

IN THE YEAR 183-, I spent a few weeks at Blackpool for the recovery of my health; and when there, a succession of incidents occurred, which issued in an important result. When walking on the beach one evening, I picked up the fragment of a letter, which was without a direction or signature. The following is a copy of it: —

"YOU KNOW, MY DEAR ELIZA, that I was not sanguine in my expectations of deriving any permanent benefit from my sojourn at this lovely watering-place. After recovering from the fatigue of the journey, I found my spirits a little revived, and my strength a little improved by the sea breezes and our rides into the country. But I am again relapsing into that enfeebled state in which you saw me on the day of our departure from home.

I am now convinced that no skill can arrest the progress of this fatal disease. I must die. Oh, Eliza, death is an awful subject of contemplation at any time; but as it approaches, it assumes a degree of terror which keeps me in perpetual alarm. I sleep but little; and when I do, my dreams agonize my wakeful hours. I want something to tranquillize and fortify my mind; but I know not what it is, nor to whom to make application for counsel or for comfort.

The resident clergyman here called the other day, and we had a long conversation; but he left me as he found me: my heart instinctively revolted against the advice he offered; he wished me to take the sacrament, and receive absolution.

Oh, Eliza, it is painful to part with life at such an early age, and under such prospects of happiness as mine; but to be driven to the altar of sacrifice in such an agonized state of feeling, is an allotment of woe which' —

On the following week, a servant in livery called at my lodgings with a note: —

"REV. SIR, — Our daughter is unwell, and wishes to have some spiritual conversation with you. We shall esteem it a favor if you will call any time tomorrow, or Thursday, after ten o'clock, which may be most convenient to you.

"Your obedient and humble servant, J. M."

Perhaps, I thought, the fragment of the letter was written by this young lady. If so, Divine Providence has supplied me with a clue of guidance in my interview with her. Yes; like the mariner, when standing on the wreck enveloped in midnight darkness, she is suffering intense mental agony from an apprehension of some terrific danger, and knows not where to find a deliverer or a comforter. The name of Jesus will be as the voice of peace in the storm. She is in a fine moral condition to bow, and pray, "Lord, save me or I perish!" Yes, I'll go tomorrow. I may prove the messenger of grace to her soul. I feel as though stepping into a lifeboat; spying on a rafter of the wreck a solitary human being, and going off to rescue him. What an honor, what a luxury, to be employed in saving souls from death!

The morrow came; and, after going where the spirit is attuned and fitted for its most hallowed labor of love, I hastened off to see the unknown child of affliction and sorrow. I was introduced to her parents, who received me with such an air of stern politeness, that I felt somewhat embarrassed; but, on alluding to the illness of their daughter, they relaxed a little, and said, "Be seated, sir."

"Our daughter, sir," said Mrs. ———, "is now reposing herself on the sofa, after the fatigue of her ride. She wished us, sir, to request the favor of a visit from you, though we cannot say why she has done it, as you are a stranger to all of us. Of course we could not object to do this, because we know not how to refuse her any request, she is so good a child."

"My daughter, sir," said Mr. M———, "is virtue embodied. She is superior to most in intelligence. I never knew her equal for amiability and moral loveliness. She is now laboring under a disease which depresses her spirits. This makes her restless; but I tell her she has nothing to fear. Her virtue is a sure passport to heaven, if the Almighty should take her from us. I believe, sir, you are a Dissenting clergyman?"

"I am a Dissenter, sir."

"Perhaps, sir, I ought to apologize for the request I am going to make; but on one point we are very tenacious. We wish our child, if the Almighty

should take her to Himself, to die in the faith in which she has been baptized."

"Yes, sir, we are very particular indeed on that point," said Mrs. M———. " We belong to the Church of England. In that faith our dear child was baptized; and we hope, if the Almighty should take her to Himself, that she will die in that faith."

"There is another suggestion I have to make," said Mr. M———. " She is very sensitive; easily excited; rather apt to sink into a morbid melancholy, especially of late. She has been reading the New Testament a good deal lately; and she has received an impression that the Almighty will not take her to heaven. Now, sir, if you will try to divert her from this course of reading, and get her to read, as she used to do, some of our light literature, I think you would accomplish a very praiseworthy object. The clergyman who did us the honor of a visit urged this upon her; but he could not succeed. Perhaps, sir, you may, as she wishes to see you."

"We did not know," said Mrs. M———, "that she had a New Testament till the other day. I went rather abruptly into her room, and found it open before her; and she was in tears. We can't account for this sudden change in her taste and her habits. It's a great trial to us. Our medical attendant wishes her to give up such reading. He assures her it is counteracting all his efforts to recover her. This is the only instance of her disobedience to our will we have ever known. It makes us very unhappy."

I assured them that I would not say a single word to induce her to become a Dissenter; but in reference to the other subject, I could give no pledge, "It is possible," I remarked, "that if she were interdicted reading the New Testament, it might increase her mental restlessness and depression to a most painful degree. Perhaps you had better be with me when I see her, and then you will hear all that I may say to her."

"We should prefer it, sir; but, to our astonishment, she has requested that no one may be present with you."

Miss. M——— was a fine figure, elegant and graceful in her form and manners; the hectic flush added to the beauty of her countenance; her eye beamed intelligence and benignity; but she was strongly marked by the lines of gloomy sadness. She received me with evident emotions of delight. "I believe, sir, you are the author of the"Evangelical Rambler."¹

"I am, madam."

“I have never seen the entire work, though I should like to get it; but a very pious young friend, who left us yesterday, gave me three numbers of it, which I have read with intense interest; and she informed me you were in Blackpool. This will explain the mystery of my papa’s application to you.”

“What are the numbers of the work which your friend gave you?”

“Nos. 15, 17, and 19. They give a strongly-marked sketch of the spiritual history of Miss. Boscoe, who appears to be a young lady of great taste and mental vigor, heroically renouncing the gay pursuits of life, and becoming decidedly pious. I envy her. What a luxury it would be to have her for a companion in this dark stage of my history! Do you think, or, I shall ever gain a degree of composedness equal to what she obtained?”

“Yes, if you go to the same well-spring of consolation.”

“I will, sir, go anywhere, and make any sacrifice, to obtain relief from that condition of anxious uncertainty into which I am plunged. My mind is in a labyrinth of confusion.”

“Be calm: you will hear as she did the voice of peace when you are fitted to listen to the joyful sound.”

“I should tell you, sir, that, prior to my illness, and before I read the numbers to which I have referred, I was very gay and frivolous; quite a devotee to all fashionable amusements and pursuits. The ballroom and the theater were the most attractive places of resort; music, dancing, and cards, my most exciting employment. I read a good deal, to preserve me from ennui, in the dull hours of solitude; but it was principally the polite literature of the day. Scott and Wordsworth were my favorite authors. But they lost their magic charm, almost as soon as I was seized with my fatal complaint; and then I had no resources of mental gratification within my reach. As my illness made progress, I was at times reluctantly compelled to think of death; and I thought it very hard to be compelled to die at such an early age. My proud spirit rose in haughty rebellion against God, for allowing this fatal disease to come upon me; to send me out of life, when I had such splendid scenes of affluence opening before me. The remembrance of this, sir, — and it is not many days since I felt the full force of this rebellious spirit in its angry violence, — not only depresses, but agonizes me.”

She paused, and wept. She had much yet to say, before her mind was unburdened of all the causes of her disquietude; but she had not strength to finish the melancholy tale.

“I see you are exhausted. I will pray with you, and repeat my visit on the morrow, when, after this first interview, you will be less excited.”

“Can’t you come, sir, this evening? My heart is full of sorrow. When asleep, shapeless forms of terror are moving around me; and in the morning my mind is suffering under their vivid impressions. In the evening I am more calm.”

“Yes; I’ll be with you by six o’clock.”

I then prayed with her; and on leaving, said, “I picked up this fragment of a letter one evening last week, when walking on the beach. Is it yours?”

“O yes; thank you, sir, for restoring it to me, though now it is of no consequence.”

In the evening she was more vigorous, and rather more tranquil; but a pensive melancholy sat brooding over her countenance, which glowed more intensely than in the morning with the hectic flush. Her dark blue eye sparkled with radiant intelligence.

"By your permission, sir, I will resume and finish my sad tale of woe. During the first fortnight of our visit here, I felt such a change, that I began to entertain a hope that I should recover, and again enjoy life; but that hope left me about three weeks since, when I felt, for the first time, that I must die. The tumult of emotion which the certainty of this fearful event raised in my heart, is beyond the power of words to describe. I had heard of another world, of heaven and of hell; but I had never felt that it was a real world. It had flitted before my imagination as a poetic conception, rather than a positive reality. Where shall I go when I die? was the startling question ever present to my agonized spirit. I had never read the New Testament since the time I occasionally read it as an exercise at school; and though I generally went to church once on Sundays, it was as a mere matter of course, without any idea of going to worship God, or receiving any instructions from the pulpit. Indeed, my taste revolted against any religious exercises; and I thought them quite unnecessary. I divulged to my parents the agonized state of my heart; but they could not give relief. They told me that my virtue would be a safe passport to heaven; but this was offering me something intangible, when I wanted something real: it increased the anguish of my spirit, as it left an impression that mine was a unique case of mental alarm and torture, for which there was no redress. The clergyman of this place visited me, by the request of my papa: he was very polite and kind; but he did not understand me, nor did I understand him. Either I was incoherent, or I

spoke of moral facts of which he has no knowledge, or he has no sweet balm in his possession that can heal such wounds as mine. He wished me to take the sacrament, and my parents offered to join with me in receiving it; but I objected, because I did not perceive its relevancy to the strange mental condition in which I was involved. He also offered me absolution, and was polite enough to let me read it as it stands in the prayer book; but I had no faith in his power to forgive me my sins, and therefore respectfully declined his offer. I was thus drifted about by various winds, and tossed as on the threatening elements, expecting to be lost; but my knowledge was too superficial to attach any definite meaning to the vague, yet horrifying conceptions of my own wild imagination.

“As I was sitting one day last week on yonder seat, wrapt in a reverie of awful thinking and strange emotion, a young friend with whom I spent two pleasant years of my life at school was in the act of passing me, when our eyes suddenly met each other, and there was an instantaneous recognition. She came and spent the evening with me, and I told her all the hidden secrets of my heart. She understood me, and spoke to me about Jesus Christ; and the next day she brought me the numbers of the”Rambler" which you have seen, and gave me this copy of the New Testament. She left Blackpool the same day; and as we were walking together towards the inn, you passed us, and she said, “There is the author of the work, Mr. ——; send for him, — he will tell you where to cast your anchor in this fearful storm of your spirits,”

“What effect did the reading of the”Rambler" produce?”

"Oh, sir, an instantaneous effect. It convinced me that mine is not a unique case of mental anguish; that at least one has felt what I feel, and obtained relief; and as she did, so possibly may I. I was particularly struck by the following passage:

“I was too fond of the gaities of fashionable life, to derive any enjoyment from the study of the Evangelists or the Epistles of Paul; too much addicted to consume my time in decorating my body, to give any proper trouble or attention to the spiritual culture of my mind; and the charms of this vain and transitory world had acquired such a powerful ascendancy over my taste and feelings, that the glories of the invisible world were utterly disregarded. But it hath pleased God, who made the light to shine out of darkness, to cause the light of truth to shine into my darkened soul; and I now feel as in a new world of being. I look back with astonishment and with ab-

horrence on my former course of life, amazed at the forbearance of God — overpowered by His condescension; but no words can express the emotions of my heart, when contemplating the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards me, through Jesus Christ my Lord. That sacred Book, which I always venerated for its antiquity, but never understood, now discloses beauties as much superior to the most romantic scenes of nature, as the workmanship of the Divine hand exceeds the production of human skill. The Saviour whom I once despised, though I bore His name, and rejected, even while I bent the knee of homage, I now love and adore.”

“Your mamma has informed me that you have been reading the New Testament; but I should like to know what conception you had formed of Jesus Christ, before you began to read about Him.”

“My conceptions of Him were vague and indefinite. I do not know that I once thought of Him as a real, living being; certainly I had no conception that He stands in any relation to us, either to bless or to curse.”

“But you often heard Him alluded to in your church service, and His name invoked in prayer?”

“I have no doubt, sir, but I did; yet it made no impression. I went to church because my parents went, and because an occasional attendance at church is a prevalent custom amongst the polite and genteel; and when there I moved, as others moved, when the name of Jesus Christ was repeated; and when the service was ended I withdrew, having, as I thought, done my duty, which was more from respect to my own status in society, than from any other motive. Indeed, I do not recollect that I ever thought of any other motive.”

“I presume that, since you began to read the New Testament, you have formed a much higher opinion of Jesus Christ than you previously entertained?”

“I have read, sir, His history with intense interest. It has delighted me. I could read it day and night. It discloses such marvelous facts, surpassing anything I ever read in romance. I was particularly struck with the exercise of His miraculous power in opening the eyes of the blind, and in raising the dead; but more particularly by His healing the paralytic, and forgiving him his sins. He is a wonderful Being. What a fine blending of majesty and meekness in His character! But benevolence appears to have been His ruling passion. O that He were now on earth! I would hasten to see Him; and I

would implore Him to do for me what He did for the paralytic, —”forgive my sins, and heal my disease.”

“Have you read any other part of the New Testament except the evangelic history of Jesus Christ?”

“I began reading the Epistle to the Ephesians; but it is too profound for me. I must advance in knowledge by a miraculous progression, to understand it within the short space of time the Almighty has allotted for me. I have read only the Gospel by Matthew and the Gospel by John. I find there is much, very much, in the history of Jesus Christ which I cannot comprehend. The design of His coming is veiled in a mystery which I cannot unravel.”

“You say, if Jesus Christ were on earth, you would hasten to see Him, and would implore Him to do for you what He did for the paralytic. Are you aware that He need not come back to earth to do this? — that though He is in heaven He sees you, and hears you, and can forgive you, with as much ease as though He were with you in the human form?”

Her countenance underwent a sudden change, as I gave utterance to these assertions. The gloom of sadness was thrown off by a bright radiance of joy; and she wept.

“And can He, sir?”

“Yes!”

“At times, sir, especially when reading the Gospel of John, I had an impression, more than once, that He still lives, and takes an interest in sinful men; but I cannot see how He can act in their behalf, now He is removed so far away from the abode of mortality.”

“He is our Saviour.”

“Yes, sir, I know He is called our Saviour; but I am at a great loss to conceive how He can now become the Saviour of sinners. You say He can see me, and hear me, and can forgive me. This perplexes and confounds me, I want to have this simplified and explained, as the performance of such acts of benevolence and grace requires the possession of powers equal to what we attribute to the Almighty.”

“Jesus Christ, when on earth, was a divine being, in the human form; and after giving His life a ransom for our redemption, He ascended, in His human form, into heaven, where He ever liveth to save all who trust in Him for salvation.”

“If divine as well as human, the mystery is explained. You have now, sir, thrown a light over the parts of His history which were covered in darkness. I now see how He can save, even though He be not visible or audible. But will He save me, after the life of gaiety and folly which I have been living?”

“Yes; He came to seek and to save them that are lost. He died that He might be able to save sinners, — suffering, the just for the unjust; and He now liveth to save every one who will trust in Him for salvation.”

“This is to me, sir, the most joyful tidings I ever heard; and I feel it is true. Blessed Saviour! I come to thee.”

Her excess of feeling now became so oppressive, that I abruptly closed the conversation; and, after praying with her, I bade her adieu, promising to spend the ensuing evening with her.

1. Scheduled to be republished by LutheranLibrary.org in 2021.↩

5. The Dying One. Part 2.

Each moment has its sickle, emulous
Of Time's enormous scythe, whose mighty sweep
Strikes empires from the root; each moment plays
His little weapon in the narrower sphere
Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss. — Young

AS I WAS STROLLING along the sands one evenings gazing on the magnificent scenery above and around me, the heavens growing darker and darker, and the waves rolling in tumultuous violence, I met Mr. M——, who was unusually polite; informing me that he had decided on returning home the next day, adding, “You must, sir, spend the evening with us. We feel greatly indebted to you for your kind attention to our daughter, who has certainly derived great spiritual comfort from your conversation and prayers. There is one question, sir, which I should like to have solved, as the fact to which it relates greatly perplexes me. I see, in the case of my daughter, — and I have heard of similar cases, — that Dissenting ministers are more successful in tranquillizing a mind which is greatly agitated in prospect of death, than our clergy. What method do you adopt?”

“Your clergy, sir, except the evangelical, like the popish priests, go and offer absolution and the sacrament; we go and direct the mental sufferer to a living Saviour.”

“I see the distinction, sir, and it is an important one; but, like Sir James Mackintosh, whose Memoirs I have been reading, while I admire the noble and the beneficent character of Jesus Christ, there is much connected with Him which I cannot understand. I cannot make out how it is He becomes the Saviour of men.”

Our conversation was interrupted. I spent a pleasant evening with the family; and, in taking leave of Miss. M——, I promised to correspond with her; and as her home was not far from the place of my own residence, I

said I would visit her, if she wished me to do it. In the following week, I received a letter from her: —

“MY DEAR SPIRITUAL FATHER, —”for such you are; and I shall have to bless the Lord through eternity, as I do now, that I ever knew you; — you will be pleased to hear that I bore the fatigue of the journey much better than was anticipated, and arrived at home the day after we left Blackpool. Home is sweet, — its associations are touching; but the dark shadows of coming death are falling on its once enchanting scenery, and I must soon lie low in the grave. I have marked out the spot for my burial place, in a nook overhung by a venerable oak, which has lived through the storms and the sunshine of many hundred winters and summers. What a mercy — what an inestimable blessing — that the light of life now irradiates the dark valley of the shadow of death! My soul cleaves to Jesus — my adorable and compassionate Saviour, — as I saw a little child run and throw himself into the arms of his father, when startled and affrighted by the voice of the thunder rolling in terrific grandeur of sound through the heavens. In Him I trusty and in Him alone. Through what a wondrous change have I passed within the space of a few days! — like falling asleep in the terrors of a winter’s storm, and awaking in the calm and the splendor of a spring morning. Where is the darkness which enveloped my mind a few weeks since? It is gone, and the true light shineth. Where are the terrors which howled around my affrighted spirit I They have gone to rest, and all is tranquil. Where is the anguish which tortured? It has exhausted its violence, and now I have

“The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy.”

"At times I feel, for a moment, that I am in a dream or a trance; but this is only a momentary impression: the evidences of reality are too obvious and too numerous not to be seen and felt. Oh, how sweet is the name of Jesus! I have a soul for music. I have often sat in an evening in a favorite grotto, listening to the sounds of the Eolian harp — nature playing on her own sweet instrument; and I have preferred its wild and exquisite strains to those of the piano or the organ. What those soul-inspiring sounds were once to my taste, that, in an infinitely higher degree, is the name of Jesus to me now. And shall I see Him soon? and will He come to meet me when I pass the line of mortality? and shall I behold His glory, and live with Him for ever? How

wondrous! All other wonders dwindle into commonplace incidents in comparison with this. This, the mystery of mysteries, is now made as plain to me as the elementary principles of my own mother tongue.

"My papa appears much impressed by some remark you made when you met him on the sands the evening before we left. Do you remember it? My parents present their respectful compliments. I shall wait with great eagerness to hear from you. — Yours most affectionately, MARY —————.

"Our rector has just sent to make inquiries, and to say he will call on me officially in a few days. I suppose he will come with his absolution and the sacrament. My prayer is, 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.' They mean well; but we know that they are self-deluded men, who, alas I too often succeed in deluding others."

"My Dear Sir, — Since my last, I have been passing under a cloud, which has intercepted those vivid manifestations of the Saviour's love and compassion which I had enjoyed. This change has come upon me rather suddenly; and it greatly perplexes and distresses me. I have not withdrawn my dependence from Christ, to place it on any other foundation; for I still feel that He only is the rock of my safety. But I have some strange doubts and misgivings. I do not doubt His ability or His willingness to save me; but I fear lest I have not come to Him aright, and with the proper dispositions and feelings. This change in the state of my mind is most powerfully felt in prayer. I cannot pray with the same degree of fervor; I do not now feel so abstracted from the world; I feel at times cleaving to life; and the invisible realities of eternity exert a less sensible influence over my imagination and my heart. This astonishes and depresses me. I thought when I first believed, that, as I drew nearer and nearer the celestial world of spirits, I should feel an increasing eagerness to mingle with them, and that my soul would become more rapturously entranced by its still nearer approximation to the end of its faith. Is this an unusual state of mental excitement, or does it form a necessary part of that spiritual economy of training, under which I am still living, to suffer and to enjoy? It is infinitely less painful to endure than my former condition of unmitigated anguish, as I feel no rebellion of heart against the Divine proceedings. I am passive in His hands; I have at times the light of hope glimmering in the gloomy shade; but I long for the coming back of the exquisite joy which, if not departed; is greatly reduced in its ecstatic power. Will you reply to this question, which, with me just now, ab-

sorbs all others — Shall I die as safely, if I die in this twilight state of mental vision and enjoyment, as I should, if I die with the light of hope beaming clearly and strongly upon me?

"My disease is still making progress, yet rather slowly. I suffer less pain, and have not such an oppressive sense of weariness after a little exertion. I generally ride out in the middle part of the day, and occasionally take a walk in my garden. But the spots once dear to my heart, from the charm of their associations, are less exciting now than the lonely nook of earth shaded by the venerable oak. That's my favorite grotto now; and when reposing there, I shall hear softer, and sweeter, and more melodious sounds, than the harp ever emitted, even when the breeze of nature moved in its most congenial variations of power.

"I have not yet seen our rector. The young friend who lent me the numbers of the 'Evangelical Rambler,' has just sent me a copy of Doddridge's 'Exposition.' What a treasure! How insipid now the reading which used to keep the midnight lamp burnings when compared with Paul's Epistles! for though I do not understand all; I understand enough to keep me steadfast in Christ; praying that I may 'be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' — Yours most affectionately,
MARY.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND, — When Noah entered the ark, and the Lord had shut him in, he was as safe in the dark and stormy night, as in the bright and tranquil day. So, if you are in Christ, trusting in Him, and in Him alone, abiding in His love, cleaving to Him as a living and compassionate Saviour, you will die as safely, if you die praying, "Lord, save me, or I perish," as you would, if you died in the highest transport of soul; the ascent to heaven being as safe and as rapid from Gethsemane as from the top of Tabor. It is on the merit of His obedience and death that your safety depends, not on the ecstasy of your feelings. The variation in the degrees of your newly originated emotions is no cause of alarm, as it is what all are subjected to who are in training for another and a purer condition of existence in the celestial world. The great design to be accomplished by these changes in the susceptibilities of the heart, is to divert your attention from any dependence on what you feel, as the basis of your hope, that you may be compelled to maintain your absolute and exclusive dependence on Christ, and on Him

alone. He will not forsake you. He will come again, and you will again enjoy the manifestations of His love; sorrow may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning. You are now moving slowly along the pathway of life; towards the end of your journey the progress will be more rapid; your salvation is nearer than when you first believed; and ere long you will awake up amidst the grand and splendid realities of immortality, and be presented faultless before the glorious presence of the Divine Majesty. What a destiny awaits you! You will soon be where no rough winds blow, where no storms desolate, where no eye weeps, where no intervening clouds intercept the brilliant displays of the Redeemer's glory, and where all His disciples mingle together in a state of perfect purity, and harmony, and love. When there, in seasons of retirement for meditation and secret adoration, you will in recollection come back to earth; and what took place at Blackpool will stand out in bold relief as the commencement of a new epoch in your moral history, never to pass away from your remembrance.

"I intend to leave in a few days; and when you are holding fellowship with the pure and great spirits of immortality, I shall often revisit Blackpool in imagination; recalling to my remembrance my first and my later interviews with you; and shall pass from such reminiscences to the anticipations of hope, when you will be to me a crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. — Yours truly and affectionately, —————.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, — I thank you for your sweet letter. It has greatly allayed some most distressing fears; yes, I see and I feel that I must keep on the rock. I am safe there.

"The rector has been with me, and left me rather abruptly. He opened upon me in a truly professional style; saying, without any notes of preparation, 'I have called, Miss. M———— to administer to you the last ceremonial rites which our church has appointed to be administered to all her children, preparatory to their death.'

"I feel obliged, reverend sir, for your professional politeness; but I need, in prospect of death, something more definite and substantial than ceremonial rites. In the first place, I have no faith in your absolution, preferring to rely for forgiveness and salvation on Jesus Christ, the friend of sinners; and though I should like to commemorate His death, as an expression of my faith in Him, and love to Him, yet I decline taking the sacrament now as I

am unwilling to give any sanction to the popular belief that it will act as a spiritual charm to fit me for death.”

“He looked aghast; saying, in a rather rude tone, ‘I suppose you have got your religion from the schismatics.’

“My religion, reverend sir, I have taken from the Word of God; and I have not found there a single passage which sanctions that course of priestly policy which you adopt. It is, as far as I can judge, a nearer conformity to the priests of the papal church, than to the apostles of Jesus Christ.’

“He arose, bowed, and retired. When do you leave Blackpool? Don’t forget your promise to come and see me. I long for another interview. —”Yours affectionately, MARY ———.

Soon after my return home, I received a note from Mr. M——, saying that his daughter was taken much worse, and not expected to live many days; and that the family would feel truly grateful if I could make it convenient to come immediately.

This intelligence depressed, but did not surprise me. I felt unwilling to part with her. I knew, when I saw her springing into newness of life, that she would not tarry long on earth; but now that the time of her translation drew near, my spirit sunk, in anticipation of going to witness the grand but agonizing event.

“Oh, sir,” she said to me, on clasping my hand as I stood by her bedside, “I have been wading in deep waters since I saw you last. My mental sufferings have been intensely acute and severe. Not a passing cloud obscuring the light of life; but a total eclipse, and my soul had almost dwelt in silence.”

“What was the immediate cause of your sufferings?”

“Oh, sir, my sins. It is true I have no open and flagrant crimes for self-reproach, but many secret sins. I have been living through life, without fearing, or loving, or honoring God; and without any emotions of gratitude to Him for His mercies. I have been living a vain life; seeking gratification from the most trivial and fantastic sources, rather than in the enjoyment of His favor. I have lived a practical atheist, without God in the world. When I went to church, it was not to worship Him, but to be seen by others. I never bowed down to worship Him in secret. My guilt appeared to me awfully heinous, and my remorse has been intense.”

“But did you not think of the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin?”

“Yes, sir; but this added fresh agony to my agonized soul. I thought I had been guilty of presumption; first, by venturing to rely on His death, and then for thinking that He had given me peace of mind. In addition to all these causes of mental suffering, such horrid thoughts of God, such mistrustful thoughts of Christ, rushed into my mind and held dominion there, that I seemed borne away from all my recent desires and longings by a force which I could not withstand. I almost gave myself up for lost; and there was no one to whom I could unburden the sorrows of my soul, and ask for counsel.”

“And how long did you labor under this acute suffering?”

“For several days and nights, I was left without one blissful emotion; and at times almost without one ray of hope.”

“You are not, I trust, in such a state of suffering now?”

“O no, sir; the dreary night is past, and the Lord is again with me. I now see that the enemy was permitted to come and sift me, as he did Peter; but the Lord prayed for me, as He did for him; and though my faith was sharply tried, it never quite failed me. I clung to the plank, as the storm raged, when I could not get into the lifeboat.”

“It often happens that the last contest with the great invisible adversary of our souls is the most severe; and just before we leave earth, the bitterest cup of woe is given us to drink. It was so in the experience of our dear Redeemer. He had to endure the anguish of Gethsemane and the agonies of the cross, both physical and mental, just prior to His ascension to glory. You have had a taste of that cup of sorrow which your brethren in the faith who are detained longer in life, have often put into their hands, — a momentary conflict, which they have to sustain during a long life.”

“I hope I shall not have to pass through such another ordeal of suffering, if it be the will of my heavenly Father; though the returning manifestation of His love and grace is a rich recompense of reward. How sweet the dawn of light, after the dark hour of night! How serene the calm, when the storm has just ceased to rage?”

“And how do you feel now?”

“Serene, and in waiting; but no transport. My spirit at times recoils, in anticipation of passing alone across the line, and entering alone the dark and

cheerless valley of the shadow of death. It is as yet an unknown pathway — to eternal rest.”

“But your Lord will meet you there, and the lustre of His countenance will illumine the valley.”

“Oh, yes! I recollect His sweet words, — they are harmony and peace to my soul. Will you, sir, read the chapter which contains that promise, and pray with me?”

She rang the bell.

“Nurse, will you request my papa and mamma to come in, as Mr. —— is going to conduct a devotional service; and you will return, and remain in the room.”

I read the fourteenth chapter of John, and made a few appropriate observations on several of its verses; and then we all knelt by her bedside, while by prayer and supplication I committed her soul to the care of the Lord Jesus. Her parents abruptly left the room as soon as the prayer was ended — the nurse was bathed in tears; but Miss. M—— sat erect, supported by pillows, quite herself. A placid smile was playing on her lips, — a bride could not have looked more joyful and lovely.

“This, sir, has been a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, — blessed be His holy name. He is strengthening me to endure the last struggle. I feel that every tie which bound me to earth is now loosened, and I shall not remain very long with you. I now wish to be left alone, — I will ring when I need help.”

“Shall I stay with you?” said her nurse. “I will sit quite still —” I wont speak.”

“You are a kind nurse. I thank you; but I wish to be left quite alone.”

I took a lonely walk, and came unexpectedly within sight of the graveyard, and soon discovered the spot which my dear dying friend had chosen as the place of her burial; and with emotions which no descriptive language can embody in a perceptible form, I sat myself down under the venerable oak, musing on death, immortality, and the glorious resurrection. Yes; beneath the turf on which I am now reposing, the beautiful exterior part of my much-loved child in the faith will soon be deposited, to remain in undisturbed quietude till the voice of the Son of God is heard calling up the dead to life. What a scene of sublime grandeur will then be visible! The sun gilding with his brightest rays the tops of the mountains, and illumining the deepest depths of the glens and caverns of the earth, on the morning when

all who have died in the Lord will spring into life, their bodies changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body, to die no more! What a sequel to the conflicts, the sufferings, and the sorrows of time!

On my return, I found she had rung the bell; and, on seating myself by her bedside, I said, "In my ramble, I very unexpectedly caught sight of the churchyard, and visited the spot you have selected for your grave."

"Is it not a sequestered spot?" her eyes sparkling with radiant lustre as she spoke. "I think," she added, "you will admire my taste. It is the most lovely spot in that dreary dwelling-place of death. But it is the radiance of a brighter sun than that which illumines our earth, which throws over it a brilliancy which is the dawning light of immortality. I once regretted my premature death, and often rose in rebellion of spirit against the Almighty for cutting me off in the prime of life; but I do not regret it now. I can part with life now, with as much complacency as a prisoner parts with his chains; and can leave the world with as much delight, as he walks out of his cell to breathe the air of freedom. Indeed, it would be a great disappointment to me not to die."

"Do you think the time of your departure is near at hand?"

"I have not yet, my dear father in Christ, received the premonitions of my departure, which I think I shall receive before the event takes place. My kind nurse, you will remain with me; but the family, and you, sir, will retire to rest."

I saw her several times during the next day, and observed a gradual change in her appearance; but no change in the state of her mind. She was serene, and in waiting, but had no transport. About eight o'clock in the evenings she said to her nurse, "I am now going; call my father and mother, and Mr. ———."

Never shall I forget this scene. She sat erect, and as calm as though watching, in perfect health, the moon stealing softly along her pathway in the heavens, when all is hushed in the silence of the night.

"My beloved father, I am now going to leave you; and, my beloved mother, I am now going to leave you; but, before I go, I must again urge you to take refuge in Christ, and then you will escape the wrath to come. Kiss me, my much-loved parents. This is the last. My spiritual father, farewell. We shall meet again; and we all may, and I hope we shall. I have now done with earth. Come, Lord Jesus — come quickly!"

The nurse readjusted the pillow for the last time; she laid her head upon it, — a peculiar softened radiance beaming on her countenance as she drew the covering over it; and in about a quarter of an hour we heard one deep sigh. The nurse advanced, and looked, and said, weeping as she spoke, “All is over. Her happy spirit is now entering into the joy of her Lord.” I involuntarily repeated the following lines, before anyone moved from the post of observation: —

“Happy soul, thy days are ended,
All thy mourning days below;
Go, by angel guards attended,
To the sight of Jesus, go.
Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo! the Saviour stands above.”

The next morning I left for my own home; but to this hallowed spot I often, in imagination, return; and when standing there, with the scene still indelibly impressed on my imagination, I feel an evidence in confirmation of the divine origin of the faith of Christ, which yields to my heart the highest degree of satisfaction — like listening to a voice speaking from the celestial glory, saying, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord!”

Through what great and decisive changes did the dear departed pass within a short space of time! When she first trode on the sands at Blackpool, her proud spirit rose in haughty rebellion against God for permitting the fatal disease to fall upon her; and yet, after the lapse of a few months, she said, in a calm hour, that it would be a great disappointment to her not to die. And what a death was hers, — more like a translation than a death. Go, reader, and stand beside the deathbed of the dying infidel,¹ and you will start back with horror, as you see him taking his leap into the eternal world, enveloped in darkness. Pass from this horrifying sight to the peaceful chamber of Miss. M——; mark her dignified calmness, when in anticipation of an immediate entrance into the great world of spirits. What a contrast! Are you not constrained to say. Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like hers?

1. See Chapter 3.↩

6. Remarkable Coincidences

Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. — Paul

THE EVENTS OF PROVIDENCE, if not more singular than the most marvelous conceptions of romance, are often equally exciting, and sometimes produce on the heart very powerful and salutary moral and spiritual effects. They constrain the man of reflection to recognize a divine arrangement in their occurrence, conjunction, and practical results. Hence, very few, after reading the sketch which the inspired writer has given us of the life of Joseph, — following him through the various windings and doublings of his history, and marking the strange combination of events which led to his deliverance and exaltation, and the effect of this on the destinies of Egypt and the chosen people of God' — can hesitate to admit the truth of his own statement subsequently made to his brethren: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive! Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

And this active Providence, whose footsteps we can often trace while reviewing the past, both in relation to ourselves and others, is still active; often making what we call casualties and trivial incidents, no less than more conspicuous and imposing events, subservient to the accomplishment of great and grand purposes. We see the movements of the great wheel, though the inner wheels, which guide its evolutions and regulate its speed, may lie concealed; but the workmanship, when examined, discovers exquisite skill and beneficent design. We see the intention of God in His actions, and feel and admire the results, while the process is hidden from us; and can add our testimony in confirmation of the Apostle's statement, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

In the year 1812, I was on a visit at Bath, having engaged to preach two Sabbaths for my esteemed and revered friend, the Rev. Mr. Jay, who stands

in the relation of a spiritual father to the dear departed minister who was the means of recovering me from the dark and cheerless region of skepticism, and bringing me into the fellowship and into the service of Christ. When there, the following remarkable coincidence happened in the eventful history of two brothers. They grew up together till they reached about the fifteenth year of their life, and were excessively attached to each other. Their mother died within a year after the birth of the youngest, and at length their father died also. At his death, they were placed under the care of an uncle; and the eldest was sent to India. The uncle died, and the youngest was left without a friend. He went to London, where he obtained a subordinate situation in a merchant's warehouse — rapidly passed through the various gradations of servitude — became a partner — gained a large fortune, and then withdrew from the establishment. As he had heard no tidings of his brother for many years, he resolved to go to India to ascertain whether he was dead or still living. He went; and there he was informed that a gentleman, bearing his name, and who had resided in India some years, left for England about six months before his arrival. They were now traveling in quest of each other, —

“The world was all before them,
And Providence their guide;”

and as thirty years had elapsed since their last interview, they doubted the possibility of recognizing each other's personal identity, even if they should perchance meet.

At the time of my visit at Bath, there were staying at an inn, which was very near my temporary domicile, two gentlemen, attended by their livery servants. They had often seen each other, and dined at the same public table; and once they sat close together, and in chitchat. Their two servants had lived some years with their masters; and being now in the same inn, they became very intimate; told each other what few family secrets they had to divulge; when one, awaking as from a dream, said, “Our masters are brothers, as sure as a hurricane raises a storm; and we had a terrible one in our out-passage. Why, I went last year with my master to India to look after his brother.”

“And my master,” said the other, “is come to England to see if he can find his brother; and they are both of the same name, and as much alike as

two peas.”

The servants communicated their suspicions to their masters; the two strangers met, and were soon locked in each other's arms as brothers. I saw them several times walking arm in arm together; their countenances betraying the hidden feelings of their soul. “Ah!” thought I, “if the withering influence of a haughty skepticism has fallen upon your spirit, or if you are devotees of a popular superstition, you will think and speak of this sudden and unanticipated meeting as a lucky event, a singular chance, turning up in the history of your life; a tale worth telling, but one which will be unproductive of any fine moral effect on your heart or character. But if you are men of God, you will trace with intense interest His guiding hand in bringing you so unexpectedly together; and with new-kindled emotions of gratitude and love, you will renew your consecration to Him and His service!”

About the same year, two gentlemen from Yorkshire arrived in Bristol to attend its great leather-fair. They were well known to each other, having often attended the fair; and they always stopped at the same inn. They were both gay, though not dissipated — thorough men of the world, yet untainted by some of its social vices — fond of the theater and other scenes of fashionable life; and had a great liking for cards, which often afforded them amusement, after they had finished the commercial labors of the day. In the year 1812 or 1813, they met as in former years; took a late dinner together on their arrival; and as each had a little private business to do in the city, they walked together as far as Bridge Street, and then they separated; each one jocosely alluding to the game of cards which was to be, as heretofore, the finis of the day. They soon dispatched their little private business, and then roved about; and both entered the Tabernacle, though neither of them had such an intention when they left the inn; nor did they know of each other's presence there. The sermon which was delivered that evening bore some reference to the commercial spirit of the people, which, under the magic influence of the great fair, recovered from its collapsed state, and became for a season their master-passion. The words of the text were, “AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL.”

The service closed, and the congregation retired; and these two men of commerce had now to wend their way back to the inn; but each one took a circuitous route; and it was later than usual before they again met. Neither of them seemed inclined to talk much; though they interchanged a few com-

monplace remarks; and then retired to rest, without making any reference to cards, which somewhat astonished both of them. They breakfasted on the following morning in the same room, but one took his breakfast before the other came downstairs; offering as an apology, when leaving, that he wished to go somewhere before he went to business. They saw each other occasionally during the hurry and the bustle of the day, but did not meet till very late at night, when the commercial room was nearly deserted of its evening crowd; and they soon after withdrew to rest. The next day came and went, with only this circumstance of variation. As there was such a large influx of men of business, the landlord said he was under the disagreeable necessity of requesting that they would put up with the inconvenience of sleeping in a double-bedded room, though in separate beds. One of them soon retired; and the other, after waiting awhile, followed, — entering the room very cautiously, to avoid disturbing his friend, who, he presumed, would be asleep. He placed his candle on the table, concealed, as he thought, from all observation — took his chair — sat down, and began reading his New Testament, which he had purchased in the course of the day. After this he knelt by his bedside, and continued in that position some time, but uttering no audible sound; his prayer was the prayer of the inner man of his heart. He knew the eye of God saw him; but he knew not that he was seen by the eye of another. He was mistaken. His friend had watched the whole of his doings; and when he arose from his knees, he was startled and astonished by a new utterance from lips which had for many years given expression to very different sounds.

“My dear sir,” offering his hand, “I congratulate you. You have now been doing what the power and the grace of God have compelled me to do.”

“What! and are you, my old friend, a man of prayer at last?”

“Yes; thanks to the God of all grace.”

“But how is this, that we, who met on Monday as men of the world, should now meet as disciples of Christ?”

“Oh! on Monday evening, I went to the Tabernacle, and heard a wonderful sermon on the loss of the soul.”

“And I was there, and heard it.”

“Indeed! Did you intend to go when we parted?”

“Such an idea never entered my mind as to go to the Tabernacle. I was drawn in by hearing the singing; and I did not know that it was a place of worship till I was in!”

“I can say the same; but how marvelously singular that we should both go, and without intending it; and that when there, the same wondrous effects should be produced in us! Why, it is almost a miraculous coincidence.”

They sat together some hours, talking about the great things the Lord had done for them, having had compassion on them; and then they prayed together, and together offered their thanksgivings for such an undeserved and unanticipated manifestation of Divine grace and love. The next morning they went together to the Tabernacle manse, and had an interview with their spiritual father, who congratulated them, prayed with them, and exhorted them, “that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”

On the 1st of September, in the year 1811, I preached a sermon in my own pulpit, from 2 Cor. 2:14, 15, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish!

I went in the following week on a visit to my old friend Captain Q—— at Weymouth; and, on the Sabbath evening, I delivered the same discourse in the chapel of which the late Dr. Cracknell was resident minister. I noticed more than once, during my visit, the marked attention which the young ladies paid me, especially when I was in conversation; and I had, more than once, to parry their urgent entreaty to give them a copy of the sermon. This entreaty was enforced by the solicitations of their mother. At length I very reluctantly consented, but fixed no time. About six months after this, when in another pulpit, and in another place, I saw Mrs. Q——, and after service went to the pew in which she was seated, to inquire after her welfare, and that of her interesting family.

“You have not, sir, sent the sermon we so much desired.”

“No, madam.”

“You cannot imagine what an amount of disappointment you have occasioned. For weeks we expected it every time the coach arrived; and often have my daughters gone to the office, hoping to receive the parcel.” I expressed regret. I felt some surprise that there should be such an eager desire for a sermon, which I deemed not worth transcribing.

“Perhaps, sir,” Mrs. Q—— added, “when I tell you the effect of that sermon on two of my daughters, you will not be astonished by what I have

stated. My eldest daughter heard the sermon when you delivered it in your own pulpit; and it proved the means of her conversion to God. My younger daughter heard it at Weymouth; and the same result took place in her experience. We now have the unspeakable happiness of looking on our beloved daughters as fellow-heirs of the grace of life; and they, with the captain and myself, are very anxious to possess the instrument which God has employed to produce such grand results. We should prize it, sir, as much as an Israelite would prize the rod of Moses.”

“Say no more, madam. Forgive me. The sermon shall be copied and sent within a week.” It was sent with a letter of congratulation and advice.

What a singular Coincidence! The Sermon, delivered from two pulpits, situated nearly fifty miles apart; is heard first by one sister, and on the following Sabbath is heard by the other, and is employed by the Divine Spirit as the instrument by which both are renewed, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and brought into contact and fellowship with the powers of the world to come; neither of them knowing of the effect which it produced on the other, till they disclose to their honored parents the reason why they so anxiously wished to have a copy of it. Many of the scenes and the impressions of time imperceptibly slip away from the memory, as we move on through life, and a much greater number will vanish in passing into a purer and more dignified economy of existence; but our conversion to God, with its adjuncts of place, agent, and instrument, will perpetually recur to our recollection, and, like the fadeless bloom of a changeless springtime of verdant beauty, will retain for ever its power of vivid and strong excitement; and will be regarded through the evolutions of endless ages, as the only event of time worthy of everlasting remembrance — the commencement, not merely of a new epoch in our history, but of a new life and a new order of existence.

When residing at F———, where I commenced my ministerial labors, I had in my congregation a newly-married couple of very intelligent and interesting young people. The gentleman was a lineal descendant of a long line of pious ancestors; but the lady could not claim the honor of such a descent. Her ancestors held rank amongst the yeomanry of the county — an honorable, but rarely a religious, class of men. But though Mr. W——— had pious ancestors, he himself was not pious, having, when a resident in London, eagerly followed in the wake of the votaries of fashion; while

Mrs. W——— had received no other religious training than what was supplied by the Church Catechism, and the anti-evangelical ministry of her parish church. Yet they were both adorned with many personal virtues; and, with all their spiritual deficiencies, which lay concealed from the eye of casual observers, they were a beautiful specimen of what our social nature would have been, if it had sustained no injury from the Fall. Mrs. W——— had just given birth to her first-born; and I very willingly accepted an invitation to pay them a visit, and have a look at the little stranger on his entrance into life.

About three weeks before this visit, a very intelligent and sober-thinking minister dined with me; and our conversation turned on the relation which events, and often important events, bore to preexisting impressions of the certainty of their occurrence. It took its rise from an observation of my own, that, on several occasions in my ministerial life, I had a vivid impression that my ministry would, at a certain service, or during a certain Sabbath, prove successful; and that my mind was at that time, and had been during the whole of the week, under such a vivid impression in reference to the labors of the following Sabbath.

The Sabbath dawned, and the impression came with it; and under its powerful influence I entered the pulpit, and preached in the morning from Genesis 3:9, "And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" My eye was very active during that Sabbath, but I saw no one in the congregation particularly affected; yet I had no doubt of a successful result, as I had never been disappointed when brought into such a delightful state of mental feeling and expectancy.

On going to Mr. W———'s, I resolved, as the birth of a child gave me a fine opportunity, to press upon both of them the importance of personal piety; and, after tea, I proposed reading and family prayer. I saw it gave pleasure.

When I had finished reading the Psalm, I said: "My dear sir, you are now a father. Your child is born to live for ever. Think of this. It will devolve on you to train up this child in the fear of the Lord; but unless you yourself are brought into fellowship with him, the duty will be but imperfectly discharged. Allow me, then, to ask you one question," "Do you ever feelingly and earnestly pray for the salvation of your own soul?"

My friend was deeply affected; his eye was fixed on me, but he was silent; and in a moment, by a sudden spring, of which I was unconscious till

I saw the movement, his beloved wife, exclaiming, "My dear John," threw her arms round his neck, and there was an audible weeping. I was literally taken by surprise; nor could I refrain from sympathizing with my friends, who were for some few minutes too powerfully overcome by excess of feeling to give any explanation of the cause of it.

"I never, sir," he replied, when he was sufficiently composed to speak, "had one feeling thought about the salvation of my soul, till last Sabbath three weeks, when you preached from Genesis 3:9."

"Was it in the morning?" asked his wife.

"Yes, madam," I replied.

"And about what time, sir, did you commence the sermon?"

"About half-past eleven."

She was silent for some time, evidently striving against a strong tide of feeling which was flowing in her breast.

It was exactly at that hour, and on that morning, when solemn thoughts, which have often sprung up in my mind within the last twelve months, came upon me with great force. They were too painful and oppressive to be borne; but I knew not from what source to obtain relief. My hymn book was lying on my dressing table. I opened it, and began reading a hymn, and I thought I never read one so beautiful; but when I came to the following verses, I fell on my knees at the throne of grace; and, for the first time in my life, committed my soul to the compassion and love of my dear Saviour' —

"Oh, would the Lord appear,
My malady to heal!
He knows how long I've languished here,
And what distress I feel.

"Here, then, from day to day
I'll wait, and hope, and try;
Can Jesus hear a sinner pray,
Yet suffer him to die?"

"No; He is full of grace;
He never will permit
A soul that fain would see His face,
To perish at His feet."

It was indeed a touching sight to behold the husband and his wife, emerging together out of the mere forms of religion; and, under a keen sense of guilt and unworthiness, coming to Jesus Christ to be saved. From the first impressions of divine truth on their hearts, till the hour when my interrogations led to the grand discovery that they had both left the dark prison house of spiritual ignorance and alienation from God, they had been praying for each other's conversion, — dreading lest one should be taken, and the other left to perish; but now, under very strongly excited feelings, they exchanged mutual congratulations, on account of what the Lord had so unexpectedly done for them.

“It is,” said Mrs. W——, “like a pleasant dream — the dream of an Elysian romance. But, thanks be unto God, it is no dream. It is a glorious reality — what I never anticipated.”

“And what,” Mr. W—— replied, “I could have formed no conception of. But I am astonished that we could have lived so long in such a state of profound ignorance and alienation from God, and yet in the habit of reading the Bible, and hearing the Gospel faithfully preached.”

We knelt together at the throne of grace, and offered up our united thanksgiving for this marvelous manifestation of the loving-kindness of God our Saviour; and, as their minister, I solemnly dedicated them to His service, with their firstborn, the living pledge of their mutual love. I then withdrew, musing, as the reader may naturally suppose, on the singular coincidence as to time, when the same spiritual effects were produced in both, in different places, and by a very different order of means. Within the space of a few months, I had the gratification of receiving them into fellowship with my pastoral charge. In process of time, Mr. W—— became an office-bearer of the church; and both lived to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour. The last time I saw them, which is about ten years since, they were still holding on their way, ‘looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.’

7. The Blacksmith and the Tractarian Priest

Hear the first law — the judgment of the skies:
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies;
And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusions, strong as hell, shall bind him fast.
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewildered once, must he bewail his loss
For ever and for ever? No. — Cowper

HARRY ROGERS was a native of ———, in Shropshire. His father was a shrewd man, skilful in his profession as a blacksmith, and very indulgent to his children; but as he was decidedly irreligious, he left them to educate themselves, which they did, by learning to practice the vices with which that dreary moral waste abounds. Harry was his eldest son, his mother's darling boy; and at the age of fourteen he went into the smithy to assist his father; where, being a clever lad, he very soon excelled in making a shoe, and in shoeing a horse. As he was a good singer, and witty withal, he was a great favorite both with the younger and the elder people of the village, who were often charmed by his song, and the facetious drollery of his sayings and his stories. At length, contrary to the practice of his father, and in opposition to the urgent entreaties of his mother, he became a regular attendant at the public house, where his ruin was soon completed. After sitting up for him one morning till past two o'clock, his mother sallied forth to seek for him; but she found every public house closed, and returned home with a heavy heart, saying to her husband, whom she awoke, "I have great trouble of soul about Harry. He's not come home, and I can't find him. I'm afraid these soldiers have taken him off."

"He's no such a fool; come, come, get to sleep."

The morning dawned, and with it came the news that Harry had enlisted, and was gone off with the recruiting party.

An incident now occurred, illustrative of an old adage, "It's an ill wind that blows no one any good." As the colonel of the regiment was riding past old Rogers' smithy, his horse cast a shoe, and stumbled, and the colonel fell with great violence against the curb-stone. Mrs. Rogers had him carried into her parlor, placed him in an armchair, wrapped a wet towel round his head, which she kept erect, and sent for the doctor; but he soon revived, and said, "I am not hurt, merely stunned. I thank you, madam, for your prompt sagacity in placing this wet bandage on my head. Give me a glass of cold water." On the arrival of the doctor, the colonel, with a good-humored smile, said, "You are too late, sir; yet I consider you entitled to your fee."

Old Rogers was too busy in his smithy to pay much attention to what was going on indoors; but he stole away for a few minutes to see the colonel, though he knew not who he was, as he was in a plain dress; and after congratulating him on his escape, he said, "I'm a hand short just now, sir, and have a good deal to do; but I'll shoe your horse next." This allusion to the hand short, brought tears in the eyes of his wife, and made her sigh heavily; and to give vent to her trouble, she said, "I wish these soldiers had been at Jericho, and then they would not have got at my dear Harry." The colonel listened very attentively to her sad tale; and on taking leave of her, after thanking her for her attention, he said, as he was mounting his horse, "I am sorry, Mr. Rogers, that I have no change to pay you. I'll send and discharge your bill to your satisfaction tomorrow; and the discharge shall be satisfactory to the old lady."

The accident, the politeness of the stranger, the sympathy he expressed in behalf of Mrs. Rogers, with the guessings who he could be, and what he meant by the discharge being satisfactory to Mrs. Rogers, supplied materials for conversation till long after the usual hour of going to rest. Early the following mornings and before the due preparations were made for breakfast, Harry opened the door and walked in; yet seemed ashamed to look on his mother.

"Why, Harry, how could you serve your father so, to leave him to do all the work himself? And how could you leave me so? I shall never know another happy day or night."

Harry, not knowing as yet what good news he had to report, said, "The colonel has sent me with this letter to father, and says I must let him have it

directly. Where is he?" The following is a copy of the letter: —

"SIR, — I enclose a sovereign in discharge of your claim; and I herewith give your son Harry his discharge, as an expression of my gratitude to his mother for her kindness to me. I hope his narrow escape from the trials and dangers of a soldier's life will keep him from the public house, which is the road to ruin. —"Yours," etc.

This letter, which took them all by surprise, had an electrical effect.

"What's that?" said his mother. " Harry discharged? Here, let me have the letter."

"I'll never part with it."

"Am I discharged? Why, our colonel said nothing to me about it. He sent for me, and told me to bring the letter; and as I was going out of the room, he said,"Take the colors out of your hat, and leave them with the Sergeant, as it may break your mother's heart to see them."

"Well now, Harry," said his father, "I hope you will take the colonel's advice, and keep out of public houses."

"I'll never enter another."

After this, he became very steady, and kept to his work. On coming of age, as his brother was able to take his place in his father's smithy, it was arranged for him to go to ————, where he got a good situation. He had not been here long, before he married a very respectable young woman, who had received a religious education in a Sabbath-school; and for a few years they lived an industrious and sober life, uniformly attending church on Sabbath morning; and in the evening, as they had no family, they often took a ramble into the country, or had some friend to see them. Having become a great favorite with some gentlemen whose horses he shod with scientific skill, they urged him to go into business on his own account, which he did; and they patronized him. He was now flush with money, which made him comparatively inattentive to his business; and then his early habits came upon him with more than their former violence and virulence, and he became a hard drinker. His church was forsaken; his home lost its charms; and frequently he did not leave the public house till he was so intoxicated as to need some one to take care of him. He continued in this course of dissipation for many years, till at length the strength of his powerful athletic constitution gave way; and he was now confined to his own

room, with no prospect of again seeing the world. His ever-attentive wife watched over him day and night; and it was a most painful post of observation for her to occupy, as, in addition to physical pain, her husband endured the most torturing agonies of conscience' His self-reproachful terms were uttered with fierce and thundering tones of condemnation.

"Shall I," she said, when there was a lull in these storms of self-reproach, "send for our clergyman? He may speak some words of consolation to your soul."

"Yes, yes, do."

A friend happened to call to see him; and, hearing from his own lips the agonized state of his mind, obtained his consent to allow me to see him; and, having received from this friend a sketch of his history and his character, I went on the following day, and was introduced to him; and the following is an outline of what passed between us: —

"I am sorry, sir, to see you so ill."

"Yes; I am as bad as bad can be. Mine, sir, has been a rough passage, but not a lonely one."

"You have a good wife, who has always, I believe, endeavored to take great care of you."

"I don't mean that, sir. I have had one with me day and night, that I have tried to get rid of, but never could."

"Who is that?"

"Why, my conscience. My conscience has been my tormentor day and night. Ay, no one knows what a wicked man suffers but himself."

"And what did you do to get rid of your conscience?"

"Why, I drank deeper, which was making bad still worse. Ay, many a night after my first nap, I have counted all the hours of the clock."

"And what did your conscience make you dread?"

"God: His eye was always open upon me. He made me at times feel His wrath. I was often afraid to go to sleep, lest I should awake in hell. And when I was asleep, I often dreamed that I was going off to hell, to be tortured there. I tell you what, sir, it's no very easy or pleasant work to keep up a regular course of wickedness."

"But how is it, that what you suffered did not hold you in, and keep you from deeds of wickedness?"

"Why, sir, I had no more power over myself to rein myself in, than a jockey has over a vicious runaway horse, when he gets the bit between his

teeth.”

“Your passage through time has been both short and awful. You have been fitting yourself for destruction.”

“Fitting myself for destruction! Do you mean by that, that I have been preparing myself for hell?”

“Yes.”

He was silent, and remained silent some time. A convulsive shiver came over his great muscular frame. His eyes rolled, as though moved by some internal tempest of woe. At length he fixed a settled and an intense look on me, and replied somewhat coolly, “What fools we are to do that — to fit ourselves for hell!”

“Well, you have got nearly through the first passageway of your existence; and soon you will cross the line, and get into the other, which will be longer.”

“Yes; I suppose I shall. The doctor told me this morning, he did not think I should live the week out.”

“Well, then, in a few days you will be in another world, and in a new condition of existence. How do you feel in prospect of passing from time to eternity?”

“As quiet as a lamb.”

This reply startled me, as I expected some terrible outbursts of anguish and agony of spirit. Yes, I thought, the internal torture is too great to be endured, — it has impaired his intellect; and yet there was no external appearance of it, either in his looks or in his tones.

“Did you say as quiet as a lamb?”

“Yes, sir; and I feel so, thank God.”

“But how is this? Why, your friend told me that you were suffering great anguish of soul, — that you were trembling in prospect of death, under a firm conviction that you were doomed to hell.”

“Ay, I was ’tother day; but I am not now, thank God. Do you know, sir, I sent three times before he would come. That was a bit too bad, because I might have died and gone to hell before he got here; and if I had, I should have cursed him in hell.”

I was still apprehensive, from these strange remarks, that his excess of mental anguish had impaired his mind; and therefore, to soothe him, and divert his attention for a moment from the process of torture going on in the

inner chamber of his spirit, I said, "Be composed; the light of mercy may dispel the midnight darkness."

"But, sir, was it not too bad to keep me waiting, and in suspense, when I was so near hell; and he didn't know but I should fall in before he got here. Three times I sent for him before I had him here. However, thank God, he came at last."

"Who do you refer to?"

"Why, the parson, to be sure."

"Who?"

"Why, Parson Spry."

"Well, and what did he say and do to you?"

"Why, he asked me a few questions in a very hurried manner, and which I thought of no great use; and then he absolved me and gave me the sacrament. He wanted my wife to take the sacrament with me; but, poor soul, she was too brokenhearted to do it, as she knows that is the last thing to be done before death; and, therefore, we got a neighbor to come in and make up the right number."

I will now present to the reader this form of absolution, which I copy from the prayer book of the Church of England, and which gives to the Protestant Episcopal priest even greater power than Rome gives to her priests: the Catholic priests can forgive only some sins; the Protestant can "forgive all sins" — so says the Prayer book:¹ —

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offenses; and by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

"Well, then, am I to understand that the reading of this form of absolution, together with taking the sacrament, quieted your conscience, and makes you feel as quiet as a lamb in prospect of dying, and passing into the eternal world?"

"Yes, to be sure. When a man's absolved by a regular Oxford or Cambridge parson, he has nothing to fear. Why, he told me that I am now fit to die; and I suppose he is a good judge of such matters, as it is his profession — at any rate he ought to be."

"And do you now expect to go to heaven when you die?"

“To be sure I do. No lamb ever died quieter than I shall die. I have made my peace with God.”

“Well, then, as he has done for you all you want done, there is nothing for me to do; and therefore I shall go.”

“I thank you, sir, for coming, but I have now got all I want; I have made my peace with God.”

I now turned round, as though I intended leaving him; and seeing a book, which I had previously seen, on the sill of the window, where his wife was standing in mournful silence, I said to her, “Pray, ma’am, what book is that?”

“It is a Bible, sir;” and she presented it to me, with very marked expressions of satisfaction. I then walked to his bedside with the Bible open, and said, “Now, suppose Jesus Christ and Parson Spry were both in this room, and one said one thing, and one said another, — which would you believe?”

“Why, Jesus Christ, to be sure.”

“Well, then, I will now tell you what Jesus Christ says is necessary to fit a man for heaven.” Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:2). I saw from his look that he suspected the integrity of my reading, and I therefore added, “Now mind, I am reading from your own Bible; and if you think I am not reading correctly, examine the verse yourself,” — giving him the Bible.

He read it, and kept his eye on it a considerable time, and then said, “You read right, sir. Born again? What’s the meaning of these strange words?”

“Your very question is a proof that you are not born again; for if you were, you would know what it is.”

“I suppose I should. Then, according to what Jesus Christ says, I am not likely, after all this absolution and sacrament trouble, to get to heaven?”

“Why, the awful fact is, the parson has been deceiving you; and, if you die under your present delusion, you will indeed have cause to curse him in hell.”

“But do you know what it is to be born again?”

“Yes.”

“Will you, sir, tell me?”

“Why, you said just now, that you had made your peace with God, and have peace of soul, and did not want me to do anything for you.”

“Why, yes; but these strange words have fallen upon my soul like a blow from a sledge hammer, and shivered my peace and my hope to pieces. Yes, the parson has been deceiving me — Jesus Christ can’t mistake. But, sir, to come to the point, — Will you tell me the meaning of these strange words, as you say you can?”

“Why should I, after being told you don’t want me to do anything for you?”

“Why, just as you should save a man from being drowned, if you stood at the side of the canal. Come, sir, I haven’t long to live. No time should be lost. Make haste, or I may be in hell before your explanation can get into my soul.”

I still paused.

His wife now approached me, bathed in tears, and said, “O do, my dear sir, tell my poor dear husband what he wants to know; and what he must know, and feel too, to fit him for heaven. I have told him that the absolution and the sacrament is all a piece of deception; but he was angry with me for saying so. Do, sir, tell him what it is, and take off the veil of delusion from his precious soul; and if the Lord should be pleased to give him grace to understand and feel what you say to him, I shall mix tears of gladness with my tears of sorrow, when I go to weep at his grave; for he has been a good and kind husband to me.”

I still paused, as though I felt more disposed to keep back what I knew, than to tell him; as I wished to excite him to the highest possible degree of anxious solicitude.

“Don’t pause longer, sir. Why, I may get cold in death before you strike, and then all will be over. Strike while my soul is hot with desire to know what these strange words mean.”

His wife made another appeal, and was going on her knees, which I prevented. “Do, sir; do, sir, tell him — he has not long to live.”

He then cast on me a terrible look of indignation, and said, “Why, sir, you are as bad, or worse, than Parson Spry. He came and deceived me, but perhaps he didn’t know any better. You come, and find me deceived; and yet you won’t undeceive me, though you say you can. And will you let me die, and let me go to hell, under a fatal delusion? Then if you won’t tell me what it is to be born again, will you tell my wife where to go and get some one who will come and tell me? I must know, or I shall die in despair.”

“Yes, sir; said his wife, with prompt eagerness,”if you won’t tell my dear husband what he must know to die happy and safe, tell me where I can find some good minister of Jesus Christ, who will come and tell him. I’ll go directly, as death is coming, and will soon be here.”

“You suppose I am unwilling to explain to you the meaning of this strange expression — Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; but you are mistaken. I am willing to do it.”

“Then, sir, why don’t you begin? I have a new and a great lesson to learn, and but little time left to learn it.”

I was still standing with my stick in my hand, when his wife brought me a chair, and in a tone and with a look that almost overpowered my feelings, said, “Will you, sir, sit down, and tell my poor dear husband what it is to be born again; and who can tell what may be the issue? Perhaps the Saviour, who fitted in a few hours the dying thief for paradise, may do such an act of grace and of power for my dear husband. And if he should—” — A flood of tears prevented her finishing the sentence.

I could stand out no longer. I sat myself down, took the Bible, paused for a few seconds to compose my strongly excited feelings, and silently to implore the presence of the Divine Spirit; and, just as I was going to begin, he interrupted me by saying —

“Now, sir, you must be very plain in your speech, because I know nothing. You must talk to me, as to a very ignorant, as well as a very wicked man.”

“I will; and if I say anything which you don’t quite understand, stop me, and ask for an explanation.”

“I will, sir; because I don’t want to hear you talk: I want to understand what you say.”

“And feel it too, I hope, my dear husband,” She was still weeping.

“Ay, ay. Very good. It’s no use to know, unless it is felt. That’s a good stroke, my dear wife. Yes, to feel it. I hope Jesus Christ will make me understand and feel what it is to be born again before I die. Then I shall die as quiet as a lamb, and no mistake.”

“I hope you will, and then, like the angels of God, I shall have ‘great joy of soul,’” said his fond and attentive wife.

1. See the “Order for the Visitation of the Sick.”↩

8. The Blacksmith and the Christian Minister

I need a cleansing change within,
My life must once begin again.
New hope I need; and hope renew'd,
And more than human fortitude;
New faith, new love, and strength to cast
Away the fetters of the past. — Coleridge

THE BLACKSMITH, as related at the close of the preceding sketch, was waiting with eager look till I should proceed.

“Now, my dear sir, you will pay special attention to what I am going to say to you.”

“Ay, that I will.”

“But before I begin, we will pray to Jesus Christ to enable you to understand and feel what I may say.”

“I hope, sir, your good prayers will be answered.”

I began by reading the first verse of John 3, ‘There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.’ Nicodemus was a man of distinction amongst the Jews, and held in repute as a religious man. He had heard of the miracles which Jesus Christ performed, and he now sought an interview with Him, and thus addressed Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.’ Jesus Christ is attentive to this respectful address, and replies, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ But His reply startles Nicodemus, who does not understand the meaning of what He says: ‘Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?’ You see Nicodemus does not call in question the correctness of Jesus Christ’s statement, that a man must be born again before he can see the kingdom of God; but merely

intimates the difficulty he feels to conceive how such an event can take place.’

“Ah, sir, that’s the case with me. I can’t understand it.”

“Well, but stop; don’t get flurried. What appears difficult at first, may by explanation be simplified; we gain all our knowledge by degrees.”

“Very true, sir; a lad must learn to make a nail, before he can shoe a horse.”

“In the seventh verse Jesus Christ says, ‘Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.’ ‘This new birth is necessary to fit you for the kingdom of heaven; and, therefore, as I am a divine teacher, you should not marvel at my enforcing what is necessary to prepare you for a state of future happiness.’ And as Nicodemus could not go to heaven till he had experienced this great change in his soul, neither can you, or myself, or anyone else.”

He now rose up in his bed, his countenance undergoing frequent and rapid changes of expression; and with his fists clenched, and his long arms extended, he thundered out the following sentence, which, by its suddenness and its vehemence, startled me: —

“What a rascal that parson is, to say nothing to me about the necessity of this new birth! Why, he came to lead me blindfold into hell.”

“Now, my dear sir, be composed. This excitement will unfit your mind to receive the instructions I am going to give you.”

“No, no, it won’t, sir; I am only giving vent to my feelings, which, if kept pent up in my soul, would make me burst with rage. It was an act of cruelty to stay so long after he was sent for before he came; but to say nothing about the necessity of this new birth when he did come, was a greater act of cruelty. Well, sir, I’ll be composed. Explain it to me, and tell me all about it.”

“You are a sinner, guilty and depraved. You have committed many sins, and are now under a sentence of condemnation. The word of God says, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’ (Gal. 3:10). You have felt through life a propensity to sin, and you have taken delight in sinning. This proceeds from the depraved state of your heart. Your heart is wicked. You have not loved God, nor feared Him; nor have you sought, by intense prayer, the manifestation of His pardoning mercy and grace. You have taken more pleasure in sinning, than in repenting; more pleasure in swearing, than in praying; more

pleasure in profaning the Sabbath, than in keeping the day holy; more pleasure in drinking deeply, than in working out your salvation with fear and trembling; and have felt more disposed to forget God, than to think of Him with delight.”

“Ah, sir, you have hit off my character to the life in these few words. But what am I to do now — what is to become of my poor soul? Why, this absolution and sacrament of the parson is, after all, a regular piece of humbug — a bit of priestly trickery — a mere farce, to end in a terrible tragedy.”

“Well, this wicked heart of yours must undergo a change of principle, of propensity, of taste; and then you will have a moral capacity and an inclination to hate sin, which you once relished, and to fear God and love Jesus Christ, whom you once contemned and despised.”

“Did you ever know a man, sir, who got born again?”

“Yes. I trust I have undergone this great change.”

“And how, sir, did you do it? Tell me, that I may set about it at once, as I have not long to live. Will it take much time, sir?”

“My dear sir, it is a great and glorious change; but it is one which you cannot produce yourself.”

“Indeed, who can do it for me? Can you, sir? If you can, I hope you will. I will let you do anything to me; because I see if I don’t get this job done, I shall never get into heaven. I shall then get out of a state of delusion, and get into a state of despair. One state will be as fatal as t’other; but despair will be the most horrible while it lasts.”

“This great change cannot be produced by man. It requires the exercise of the gracious power of God to effect it.”

“Then, sir, what must I do? Must I lie here till God is pleased to change my heart, and make me fit for the kingdom of heaven?”

“I will now read to you another part of the word of God, which will tell you what you are to do: ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your fleshy and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.’ (Ezek. 36:26, 27). You see that it is God that changes the heart, and puts a new spirit into the soul of man. This is His work. He alone can do it. And it is of great importance that you should understand and believe this.”

“I see, sir; that’s plain enough, and no mistake.”

“Now, attend to what follows this statement of His own work: ‘Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.’ The heart must be changed — God alone can change it; and yet He requires you to pray to Him to do it for you. He thus brings a test to try your submission to His authority, to try your recognition of His power and grace, and also to try your earnestness in prayer.”

“I see, sir, this is all plain and easy to be understood; but then how must I pray? and if I pray, will He hear me?”

“Yes, He will hear you. I will now read to you another part of His holy word: ‘Thus saith the Lord: The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool;’ ‘But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word!’ (Isa. 66:1,2). What I have now read from the word of God will teach you in what manner you ought to pray. You may cast these verses into the form of prayer, and with very great ease and propriety. ‘O Lord, be pleased to give me a new heart, and put a new spirit into me, that I may be a new man, in principle, in propensity, and in taste. Take away, O Lord, this stony heart; this hard heart; this heart that feels no awe of Thy justice and Thy purity; this heart that feels no love or gratitude to Thee; this heart that feels no hatred of sin — no sorrow for sin; this heart that takes no delight in walking in Thy statutes, and in keeping Thy commandments.’”

“Now, till you have this new spirit, this feeling heart, you would not be happy even if you were to go to heaven, because you would be without a disposition to love God; and because you could not join with the holy and happy spirits in their songs and ascriptions of praise to Jesus Christ for redeeming and saving them. They would shun all fellowship with you, as they would shun the fellowship of an evil spirit of hell, if one could get there. And you should pray with great earnestness of soul, as a man would pray to be healed of a dreadful disease, if he knew a person who could cure him.”

“I see, sir, what you say is quite plain, and it strikes home upon my heart, which begins to feel a bit; but I’m afraid when you are gone I shan’t mind it.”

“You must pray to have it kept in your mind. But there is another view of your character and condition which I have yet to place before you. You are not only depraved, — you are guilty, under a sentence of condemnation, and are liable to be sent to hell. To save you from this tremendous condition

He tells us, that ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ (John 3:16). Here you see you are liable to perish — that is, to go to hell when you die; and your death is very near. How awful to go out of this world into hell, and live there for ever in a state of hopeless misery!”

“Oh, sir, the thought of it makes me sick at heart. But can’t I be saved, as I am yet out of hell?”

“Yes, you can; and may, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, to save such as you; and He is able and willing to save you, if you believe in Him — that is, if you rely on Him to do it, as you would rely on the veracity of a friend who promised to do a thing for you which you could not do yourself — a thing essential to your safety and happiness.”

“But will He save such a great sinner as I am, and now I cannot sin any longer? It does not seem very likely.”

“Yes, He delights to save the chief of sinners. When on the cross. He forgave and saved the thief who was crucified with Him; and in the evening of that very day, He admitted him into paradise, amongst the glorified spirits of heaven! Only think, in the morning he was in prison, at noon on the cross, at night in heaven! You thus see that Jesus Christ can, when He pleases, do a great work in a little time.”

“I wish He would do such a grand work for me. Why, I would sing His praises for ever; and louder than any of the rest. But what must I do, to get Him to do it for me?”

“Why, be willing to let Him.”

“Oh, sir, I am willing; yes, I am. And may I hope He will save me?”

“Yes, you may.”

I now prayed with him, and left him; but I was with him in imagination during the whole day. His looks, his attitudes, his thundering voice when giving vent to his indignant feelings at the gross imposition which had been practiced on him by the priest, with his absolution and the sacrament, made such a strong impression on me, that I could not disengage myself from him during the whole of the day. In the evening I felt restless, as I thought it possible he might die in the night, as the fatal relief from great physical suffering had continued for nearly two days. I therefore resolved to go; and finding no one below, I stole softly up into his room, and saw a sight which gratified me. His wife was sitting by his bedside, with the Bible on her lap, which she had been reading to him, and repeating to him, as well as she

could, the comments I had given on the verses, to which I had especially called his attention. When he saw me, the tear moistened his eye; and holding out his hand, he said, "I thank you, sir, for your kindness in coming again. I did not expect you before the morning." But after a pause he added, with great solemnity, "In the morning I may be beyond your reach."

"I hope you have been thinking over what I said to you in the morning."

"I can't think on anything else; and I don't want to think on anything else. Ah, sir, I should have thought about these holy and good things when I was in health; and if I had, and had felt them, I had not been now on a dying bed. I have sinned away my health; I have sinned away my life; I feel it is going from me; and unless Jesus Christ prevents it, as I hope He will, I shall have to say, I have sinned my soul into hell."

"Did you understand what I said to you in the morning?"

"I understood two things just as well as I ever understood anything in the course of my life. I understood, first, that I must have a new heart to fit me for the kingdom of heaven; and that I must depend on Jesus Christ to take me there. And besides this, I recollect you told me I must pray to the Lord with all my soul, to give me a new heart, and to give me grace to believe in the blessed Saviour."

"And have you prayed with all your soul?"

"Yes, that I have. I can't pray so long as you can, sir, nor can I pray in such words as you can. My prayers are short, but they come up from the bottom of my heart."

"And do you feel any change in your heart?"

"I feel a change in my thoughts and feelings, but I can't say that this is the great change which is to fit my soul for the kingdom of heaven."

"If you feel any change, you ought to be thankful to God for producing it."

"I tell you what, sir, I would not be again the same stupid sinner I was yesterday for a thousand worlds. But still I am not quite sure that I am born again. At times I think it impossible that such a wicked man as I am, can within a few hours, be made fit for the kingdom of heaven."

"In general, to fit a man for the kingdom of heaven is a lengthened process; but God, when He chooses, can do it in a few hours."

"Ah, I now recollect," — "his countenance lighted up with a ray of intelligence, tinged with a complacent joy, —"when I was a boy, hearing a Methodist minister preach in the open air at our village, from these words,

‘With God all things are possible!’ Why, sir, if it should please Him to change this vile heart of mine, at this awful hour of my existence, and save me from perishing, it will be a grand proof indeed that all things are possible with Him. There is one question which I wish you would be so kind as to reply to; If God should be pleased of His great mercy to give me a new heart, how shall I know that He has done it?”

“You will feel yourself to be, as the Apostle Paul expresses it, a new creature in Christ Jesus. You will have new thoughts of God, of Christ, of sin, of heaven, and of hell — new feelings, new desires, new emotions of sorrow for your sins, and new hopes and fears. And your soul will cleave to Jesus Christ, to whom you will look for salvation.”

“I feel, sir, very different to what I did before you came to see me. After the parson absolved me, and gave me the sacrament, my terrible agony of soul left me; but with the exception of this agony of soul, I was the same man I had been all my life long. No thoughts of God or of Christ, or of preparation for heaven, came into my heart. I did not once lift up my heart in prayer for mercy or salvation. The Lord be praised for sending you, my dear sir, to rescue me from the awful delusion the Oxford parson came and practiced upon me; which, if you had not come, and talked with me and prayed with me, would have proved fatal. I should have died, and gone to hell, when expecting to go to heaven.”

I again prayed with him, and left him. Early on the following morning I repeated my visit, but the darkened windows of the house told me that its former inhabitant was gone. His widow received me in silence, interrupted only by her sighs and tears.

“He has left you, madam?”

“Yes, sir; his spirit took its departure — to a better world, I fully believe — about four o’clock this morning. Just before the event occurred, he took my hand between his, and said with great calmness of soul, ‘Give my love to Mr. ———, and tell him the Lord spared me just long enough to get a good hope that I am born again of the Spirit; and I die a guilty and worthless sinner, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to save me from perishing, and to give me everlasting life.’ He closed his eyes the moment he had finished uttering these words; and with only one deep sigh he left me, never to return.” She then taking my hand, said, “I cannot, sir, by words, give full expression to the feelings of my heart. You, with God’s blessing, broke the spell of delusion which the priest, with his absolution and sacrament, threw

over my dear husband; and he died, I believe, in the Lord, and is now with Him in heaven. Oh! had you not come, where had his soul been now? I shudder to think.”

“And, madam, if the Lord had not come with me, I had come in vain. To Him we will ascribe the glory of this triumph of free and sovereign grace.”

We cannot advert to the fatal activity of the priests of superstition, but with mixed feelings of pity and indignation. With the delusive absolution, and the sacramental apparatus in their pockets, they prowl about, — the incarnation of the lying spirit, — seeking whom they can deceive. From the respectability of their status and their character, they have easy access to the rich and the poor, and are equally welcome to the intelligent as to the unlearned; and in the chamber of sickness they perform their mystic incantations, which lull into a state of insensible delusion the soul of man, when trembling on the verge of an eternal world of woe. The case of the blacksmith is no solitary one. I have known some, and I have heard of many others, both in the higher and humbler circles of life, who have been terror-struck when reviewing, in prospect of death, the history of their past life; but when the lulling influence of this absolution and sacramental incantation has been thrown over their guilty and affrighted spirits, they have sunk into a perfectly apathetic state, lying as calmly in their beds as though they had never sinned; having, as the current phrase expresses it, made their peace with God.

With what surprise must these deluded spirits enter the eternal world! “Not every one that saith unto me. Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day. Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

9. Light at Noontide

Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hope, still poring o'er Thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair. — Watts

MISS. EMILY was the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J——, who were members of the church under my pastoral charge. I baptized her, watched over her with much solicitude as she advanced through the stages of childhood and of youth; beheld with great satisfaction the gradual development of her character, which was adorned with many excellences; and on her attaining the age of eighteen, I had the gratification of receiving from her an application for admission to the Lord's table. She could not give me any specific account of the time of her conversion and self-surrender to God, nor of any particular means which were employed to effect it; saying, "The great change has been so gradual, that I cannot trace it to the period of its commencement — resembling the break of day, after a beautiful moonlight night, rather than an instantaneous translation from the kingdom of darkness unto the kingdom of God's dear Son."

For the space of rather more than two years after her public profession of religion, she maintained the consistency of her Christian character; keeping herself unspotted in the world; breathing a pure, and even an ardent spirit of active zeal in the cause of Christ; and distinguished herself as a Sabbath-school teacher, and a most energetic and successful collector in behalf of the auxiliary missionary society, which was in connection with the church and congregation of which she was a member. She had never left home till about this time, when she accepted an invitation from her aunt to spend a few weeks with her; and though it was known that her aunt and her daughters were all gay, moving in fashionable circles, yet no one expected that Miss. Emily would sustain any moral injury from a short intermingling with them, her religious principles having become so consolidated and habitual to her. On her return home, one of her cousins came with her, and remained

for several weeks. I soon saw a change in her spirit, her style of dress, and in her whole appearance and manners. She uniformly absented herself from the week-evening services of devotion; accepted invitations to gay parties, first as a compliment to her cousin, and then to gratify her own taste; till at length she crossed the boundary line which separates the church from the world, and was often to be seen at the concert and in the ballroom, among the gayest of the gay. She kept up her attendance at public worship on the Sabbath, with her usual regularity; but there was a listlessness and an indifference so obviously apparent, that it gave great pain to her parents and myself.

“Oh, sir,” said Mrs. J——, “we did wrong by letting her go to her aunt’s; but I hope, when her cousin is gone, she will regain what I fear is either lost or materially injured.” Her cousin left, but the influence of her spirit and example did not go with her; it remained as a prolonged blight, withering the bloom, and eventually destroying the fine tone and complexion, of Miss. Emily’s religious spirit and character.

A few weeks after the departure of her cousin, she accompanied a small picnic party to a most romantic part of the country, about ten miles from home; and all being deceived by the serene brilliancy of the heavens, they prolonged their rambles till a late hour. The weather suddenly changed; a thunder-storm rushed upon them so unexpectedly, that, before they could reach any place of shelter, they were thoroughly drenched with the heavy rain which followed it. In this state she returned home, and immediately retired to rest; but within the space of an hour, she had a succession of shivering fits, occasioning some alarm. Her pulse beat with great rapidity, she complained of pain and thirst; and her pains became so violent, that it was deemed expedient to send for the family surgeon. “There is nothing to fear,” he said, after seeing her; “she will be better in the morning, and will very soon be quite herself again.” She was better in the morning, and in a few days she was able to take an airing in the country; but, in appearance, she was not herself again, — the healthy bloom of her countenance was exchanged for the faint hectic flush. She lived through the summer, subjected to varying changes; but towards the autumn it was considered advisable to send her to the coast of Devonshire. Here she breathed a salubrious air, and was soon almost herself again; but happening to renew her cold by an imprudent exposure to a damp night air, all the alarming symptoms of the fatal disease came back with still greater violence, and she hastened home to die.

I went to see her on the evening after her return; but she had sunk into such a state of sullen reserve, that I could not get at the state of her mind. One morning her mother, on entering her room, saw the New Testament lying open on her table, but made no allusion to it.

“Yes, ma’, we must soon part; and then we part for ever.”

“Not so, dear Emily; if we part, it will be, I hope, only for a season. We shall meet in heaven.”

“Never, my dear ma’; that holy book says it is impossible.” Taking the New Testament and giving it to her mother, with a leaf turned against a passage, she added, “You will take it out of the room; the sight of it agonizes me, as the appearance of an executioner would agonize the prisoner doomed to die by his hand.”

“My dear Emily!”

“Ma’, read that passage: ‘For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.’ (Heb. 6:4-6).”

I saw her the next day, and found her calm, and disposed to converse with me; but it was a fearful, because an ominous, calm, — the quietude which steals over the spirit when sinking into despair.

“I was, sir, once enlightened. I have tasted of the heavenly gift, and was made a partaker of the Holy Ghost. I have tasted the good word of God, and have felt the power of the world to come. And, sir, as you know, I have fallen away; and the words of that holy book have pronounced my doom. Indeed, sir, I am more calm in despair, than I should be, if I struggled to indulge hope.”

“But, my dear Emily, think of Peter. He denied his Lord with an oath, and yet he was restored to His favor.”

“Yes, sir, but he went out the moment he sinned, and wept bitterly; but I have been living in a practical denial of Him for many months, and should have been living in the practical denial of Him still, if this fatal disease had not intervened to prevent it; and I have no tears to shed. No, nay eyes refuse such an offering to repentance.”

“But, my dear Emily, if you read the entire passage, you will see that those who cannot be renewed to repentance, after they have fallen away, are

those who become such daring and hardened apostates, that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame, — that is, they approve of the conduct of the Jews, who actually crucified the Son of God; and in their impenitent state, they revile Him as a blasphemer or impostor. Now, you cannot do that?”

“Revile the Son of God! No, sir; I tremble under a keen sense of His judicial authority. Approve of the treatment He received when on the cross? No, sir; I would rather be able to say, Come, Lord Jesus, than cry. Away with Him! crucify Him, crucify Him!”

“Then, my dear Emily, you are not one of the fatal number whose recovery is impossible.”

“My fixed belief is, that my recovery is impossible; and I am waiting the awful issue in dread suspense.”

“But you will admit that, with God, all things are possible; and if so, He can renew you again to repentance.”

“But, sir, there are occasions when the exercise of His power is held under subjection to the claims of His justice. He has power to redeem and renew the lost; but His justice prevents it. My case bears some analogy to theirs. He can renew me again to repentance, as He can renew them; but I dare not expect that He will exercise His uncontrollable power to nullify His own equitable decree, which has decided that the willful apostate shall perish.”

“But, my dear Emily, a person may fall away under the influence of an ensnaring and subtle temptation, who does not do it as the result of a resolute determination. He may be overtaken and overpowered, and borne away by temptation, as David was; but such fall as this, materially differs from a premeditated design to renounce the faith of Christ, as a fabulous invention of man, that the sinful propensities of the heart may be indulged, without any dread of penal consequences.”

“Oh, that fatal visit! oh, that I had never gone! That verse, sir, which says it is impossible to renew the apostate again to repentance, is the first, and indeed the only one, which struck my eye when I opened the Bible, to see if I could find any promise of mercy to afford relief to my troubled soul; and it has struck its barbed point into the very core of my heart. I know my doom.”

This text was to her as a trunk of living misery, around which the tendrils of her agonized spirit wound themselves, bearing her up to endure the

raging tempest of fury which was beating upon her. And, what is very common in such a state of dread excitement, she evinced more calmness in the storm, than when an effort was made to direct her attention to Him who alone could control it and bid it cease.

On finding her one evening rather more tranquil than usual, I said to her, “Death will soon put an end to some of your sufferings; but if you die in despair, your sufferings will never end. Think, dear Emily, of Him whom you once loved — in whom you once put your trust for salvation — who once began the good work of grace in your heart — and of whom it is said, that He will carry it on to perfection.”

“Yes, sir, but I arrested the progress of His work.”

“Yes, as a hurricane sometimes beats down a part of a building; but the builder sets to and repairs it.”

“But, sir, do you think it is possible that He will set His hand the second time to the work?”

“Can you not perceive some indications that He is now at it? If He intended finally to abandon you, and leave you to perish. He would have left you in a state of absolute insensibility and indifference. But, instead of this. He has caused the whirlwind of His anger to bear down upon you, to rouse you to a perception of your great danger, that you may feel compelled to lay hold of His strength, and thus be rescued from it.”

“I do not doubt His ability to rescue me and save me.”

“And He is as willing to do it, as He is able. Did He ever refuse to save even the most abandoned and worthless, who applied to Him for salvation? And has He not said, that He will cast out none who come to Him? Think of His conduct towards the sinners of Jerusalem, who, after witnessing His splendid miracles, the living witnesses of His divine mission, imbrued their hands in the blood of His life; and yet He commissioned His apostles, just before His ascension, to go and preach repentance and remission of sin to them, before they visited any city of Samaria, or any other country, with the tidings of mercy and grace. ‘And that repentance and remission of sins should he preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”

She was silent; and, for the first time since her return home, she consented to my praying with her. For several weeks I repeated my visits almost daily — read the Scriptures — and prayed with her; and she became more composed, and listened with fixed attention to my conversation; and

we thought that she began to indulge hope of returning mercy. But she would at times, after a season of mental calmness, when we were believing that the words of consolation were taking effect, suddenly, as though impelled by some indwelling spirit of evil, call up before her imagination, as so many specters of terror, all possible objections¹ against her salvation; and then her looks, her tones, and her utterances, were truly appalling. To speak to her then, was like whispering to a hurricane; she was driven, as in a whirlpool of anguish, with so much fearful rapidity that she had no power to listen, and appeared as though forced to plunge herself into the very cauldron of despair.

“I deserve, sir, all I suffer, and more than the Lord has yet inflicted upon me. And my suffering, instead of being any argument against the truth of the Bible, is an awful confirmation of the truthfulness of His righteous judgments, denounced against apostates.”

“But, my dear Emily, why not admit that the promises of mercy are equally true, with the threatenings of vengeance?”

“I do, sir; but my guilt, which makes me feel the equity of the threatening, makes me afraid to plead the promise of mercy.”

“But, Emily, the promise of mercy presupposes the existence of guilt; or it would be unnecessary and useless.”

“True, sir.”

“You know that Jesus Christ sustains the relative character of a Saviour towards fallen humanity; and this supposes that those He is able and willing to save, are in a self-perishing condition, and unable to save themselves.”

“But then they must believe in Him; and I feel I cannot do that.”

“You would do it if you could?”

“Yes, that I would, and this moment.”

“Then you can pray as a father interceding for his afflicted child once prayed, —”Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.”

On seeing her the next morning, she said, “A ray of hope darted through the settled gloom of my soul, when you, sir, repeated to me yesterday the prayer of the afflicted father. And that prayer I was enabled to offer up in the night-watches, when reviewing the history of my past life, and meditating on the glorious character of Jesus Christ. I loved Him once. His name was once precious to me. I once enjoyed His love. These were happy seasons, — springtime seasons of bliss and of hope. Had I continued in His love, I had still been happy and safe. But I forsook Him, and He has now

forsaken me. What a change! It is stem winter NOW; no signs of life — no sweet influences from above now — storms and tempests: all is dark and wild, NOW.”

“But you mourn your departure from Him?”

“I regret it, sir, but I am not conscious of any feeling which is at all like contrition. My heart is as hard as a rock. This is the most fatal symptom. I can muse on the terrible sequel without feeling terror-struck, as I felt when the pains of hell first got hold upon me: then I found trouble and sorrow.”

“The Lord has passed by in the earthquake and in the thunder, that your spirit may gain composure, to fit you to listen to the small, still voice of mercy.”

“No, sir; no, sir; it’s a mere lull in the storm, which I dread more than tempests bursting o’er my head. Oh, that fatal visit! I ought to have been a blessing to my aunt and cousins; and if I had acted a faithful part to them, I might have been; and now, as a punishment for my unfaithfulness, they have been a curse to me. My settled belief is, that I shall perish.”

“You need not perish, when the great Deliverer is so willing to save you.”

“O that I could believe in His willingness!”

“Why not, when He says, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?’”

“Oh, I cannot come to Him. I am held back — spellbound by ray convictions that I shall perish, as an awful warning to others. Yes; my fall, the agony I suffer, and the final issue, will be a warning beacon to guard others against the fatal spot of danger and of death.”

An event now occurred which had a very powerful effect on her mind, and one as novel as it was unexpected. She had become exhausted by the excess of mental excitement, and, contrary to her expectations, when she retired to rest, she went off to sleep almost immediately, and slept soundly the greater part of the night; her beloved mother watching by her side. She awoke in the morning, and exclaimed, “And am I still here — still suffering here?” And for the first time she wept, and remained some time bathed in tears. “Oh, ma! I have had a most wonderful and consolatory dream. I dreamt that I was walking alone through a romantic scenery, alternately gazing on the heavens, which no cloud obscured; and on the hills, and woods, and green fields of earth, which seemed enveloped in a mantle of living beauty. At the end of my pleasant path, I entered a thick coppice; and

there, to my surprise, I saw a small Gothic chapel. I approached it, and listened, and heard the sweetest music I ever heard, and soon caught the words which they were singing —

“He is able, He is willing,
Doubt no more.”

I entered. A man of God rose up in the pulpit, and preached a very eloquent and impressive sermon from Hosea 14:4: ‘I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely; for Mine anger is turned away from him.’ And I dreamt that, while listening, the anguish of my soul gradually abated, and ere he had finished, I felt assured that the Lord Jesus would heal my backsliding; that His anger was turned away from me; and I had a persuasion of His love for me, like what I enjoyed when I first knew Him and loved Him.”

After narrating to me her dream, she added, — “I know the Holy One does sometimes employ the visions of the night as harbingers of mercy; and I cannot help thinking He has done so on this occasion, that He may have all the glory of recovering me from the deep depths of misery into which my sins had plunged me.”

“Then this dream inspires you with hope?”

“It does. The dream itself presents to my imagination the great facts of the Bible, which you, sir, have again and again endeavored to impress on my heart; and I cannot help indulging a hope that it is a prefiguration of a reality, a shadow of good things to come.”

“And what effect has it produced?”

“It has led me to trust in Christ, and my dread of perishing is gone off. Yes; and my heart throbs with emotion, when I think of His compassion and His love. If I now perish, I will perish in the act of praying, ‘Lord, save me!’”

“And does not this give you comfort?”

“I have no comfort, nothing directly positive — no actual enjoyment — not even any sensible enjoyment, arising from hope. But I am not NOW in despair.”

Owing to an engagement from home, I did not see her for several days; and on my return I found her as I left her, — without consolation, but not in despair.

“I hope, my dear sir, you will not leave me; for I have a presentiment that I shall not live through the night. Oh, where shall I be when the morning dawns on earth!”

“Will it be morning then with me?
Awak’d to hail His glorious light,
Or must my doleful destiny
Be endless night.”

After a short pause, her countenance indicating the strange emotions of her soul, she raised her hand, and exclaimed in a tone of terror, surpassing any utterance I had ever heard from her lips, —

“Where, where for shelter shall the guilty fly?”

“Where? dear Emily! To Christ; He is a refuge from the storm. He will cast out none who come to Him. The volume of inspiration closes with an invitation, as comprehensive as it is appropriate: ‘And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, And let him that heareth say, Come, And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’”

She wept. They were tears of contrition, mingled with tears of gratitude and love. We wept with her. At length a prolonged silence was broken, by a solemn self-surrender of her soul to the compassion of her adorable Saviour.

“Yes, blessed Jesus, I will come to Thee! I DO come to Thee! Yes, I can come to Thee NOW. Accept and save me.”

In a moment, the darkness, which had so long sat brooding over the chaotic state of her soul, passed off, and with ecstasy she exclaimed —

“Yes, the light of life now illumines the dark valley of the shadow of death! I will now fear no evil. I find that I am safe now! Yes, He gives me hope NOW! More than hope; He is giving me NOW peace and joy in believing. Oh how sweet the light of the morning, after the prolonged darkness of the night! How sweet the calm after the threatening storm! Now, ma’,” embracing her as she spoke, “though we part, it will not be for ever. No; we shall meet again; and then we shall meet in heaven, where there will be no sighing or sorrowing, because no sinning.”

She now revived, and was able to remove into the sitting room. The vivacity and the energy of her spirits and her feelings returned in full-tide manifestation of power and expression; the lurid gloom of her countenance was succeeded by a peculiar and marked serenity and loveliness; and at times, so great was the change, that we fondly indulged a hope that she would yet live to enjoy life. Fallacious hope!

It came to enliven and to cheer; it went away to disappoint and depress. The crisis came.

She was reclining on the sofa, her head resting on the bosom of her fond mother; her father was sitting in his armchair by the side of the fire; and one of her sisters was standing near her, refreshing her with the scent of aether. In a moment of stillness, sacred to the crisis which no one was anticipating, she lifted up her eyes, looking with fixed steadfastness, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and without a sigh or a struggle, she expired. The suddenness of her departure took us all by surprise. But what was our surprise in comparison with hers?

While we were looking on her lovely form, now belonging to the tomb, she was beholding the Person of her Redeemer, and the opening scenes of the celestial world; and while we were shedding tears, sacred to her memory, she was passing through the august ceremony of presentation before the glorious presence of the Holy One with exceeding joy; and long ere she was attired in the shroud of death, she was arrayed with the white robes of immortality; and had taken possession of her quiet and enduring chamber in her heavenly Father's house.

Yes, Emily, though dead, yet speaketh; and her warning voice demands attention. Watch and pray, O youthful disciple, against temptation! Be on your guard, especially when the gay scenes of the world present themselves to your passions and your taste. Emily fell, yet was recovered; but no descriptive terms of conventional usage can sketch that terrible ordeal of suffering through which she had to pass: she was "SAVED, YET SO AS BY FIRE." Shun, youthful disciple, even the appearance of a conformity to the world; as it is more easy to arrest the progress of the good work of grace in the soul, than to repair it, after it has been damaged and endangered. Cleave, then, to the Lord with full purpose of heart; for though you may be recovered so as by fire, if you fall by the power of great temptations, yet should you "SIN WILLFULLY" after that you have received the knowledge of the truth,

there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation" which shall devour the adversaries."

1. The writer does not know a better book to put into the hands of a person who has, by a conformity to the customs of the world, sustained spiritual injury to his religious principles and feelings and habits, than "The Night Lamp," by the Rev. Dr. Macfarlane of Clapham, — a book which ought to be read by every professor of religion, and one which may be read with interest even by infidels. This book should have a dwelling-place in every house, especially where there are youthful disciples.↩

10. The Sisters of Charity

She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears, on strictest search,
But then she fasts, and, item, goes to church. — Cowper

THE PHARISEES, as a distinct sect, are become extinct; but the spirit and the principles of the order are found incorporated amongst Pagans, Romanists, and all the various denominations of Protestants, with the exception of the small sectional part who rely for acceptance with God, and the hope of eternal life, on the meritorious obedience and vicarious death of Jesus Christ. The modern Pharisees conclude, that if they adhere to their own traditional faith, whatever that faith may be; if they observe its prescribed ritual, whatever ceremonies it may enjoin; and if, in addition to this, they cultivate their own conventional virtues, of whatever cast or character these may be, they have discharged all the obligations which the Almighty imposes on them, and stand a very fair chance of attaining the ultimate reward of future blessedness, as a recompense for their pious labors and sacrifices. Their scornful contempt of the way of salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ, is most inveterate; and now, as when our Lord was on earth, there is more hope of the conversion of publicans and harlots than of them. And yet, occasionally, we see a Pharisee becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus; cherishing a meek and lowly spirit, and zealous in the defense and extension of the faith once delivered to the saints.

The two ladies whose history and character I am now going to sketch, were both maiden ladies, who had passed the meridian of life; yet they were vigorous and active. Miss. Rowley was the daughter of an eminent physician; and the father of Miss. Evans was a prebend of Salisbury Cathedral, — both men of distinction in their day. Miss. Rowley had met with a disappointment in early life, which somewhat soured her temper, and made her rather splenetic; Miss. Evans had declined several very eligible offers, facetiously remarking, in defense of her decision, that she preferred freedom to

bondage, even though the yoke might be made of silk, and decorated with garlands. Miss. Rowley was the eldest, and the finest figure; but Miss. Evans was the most interesting and bewitching in her appearance. The former was the quickest in her power of perception; the latter was the most resolute in her spirit. They bore a resemblance to each other in the sedateness of their manners; but Miss. Evans was more easy of access. Miss. Rowley, if once offended, was implacable; but Miss. Evans rarely took offense, as she had acquired the habit of putting the best construction on the sayings and doings of others. Miss. Rowley was most admired; Miss. Evans most beloved. The one ruled her establishment with a Napoleonic dignity and authority; the other was served by an obedience more prompt and cheerful, because enforced by no appearance of rigor. They both possessed large fortunes, and moved at every period of life in the first circles of gaiety and fashion. Having settled, by mere accident, in the vicinity of a provincial town, they were looked up to by all classes with a degree of respect which is usually shown to persons of rank and opulence. They were regular devotees of the Church of England; much attached to her forms and ceremonies, and her incomparable liturgy; and their voice was distinctly heard within the Gothic walls on the Sunday, whether there were few or many, kneeling and responding with them. But Miss. Rowley surpassed her more amiable friend in the publicity of her secret devotions, and the artificial parade attending them; for while Miss. Evans preferred the privacy of her own bedroom, Miss. Rowley had an oratory with the figure of the Saviour hanging before her; her quarto prayer book was elegantly bound in morocco, and her kneeling cushion was covered with velvet, decorated with some emblematical devices. Into this oratory she entered every morning immediately after breakfast; always previously ordering her servants to keep silence, as she was going to prayers. Occasionally the door was left partially open, that she might be heard by others, — judging, possibly, that it was her duty to teach by example, it being beneath her dignity to instruct by precept.

Their reading was select, including the Prayer Book and the Homilies, the “Week’s Preparation,” “The Whole Duty of Man,” with a few choice pieces published by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. But, in addition to these. Miss. Evans had some books of a superior class, which had belonged to her father.

As they were nearly of the same age, and resided not far from each other, and having no intimacies which they were anxious to perpetuate or dis-

solve, and calculating that it would not be very many years before the Almighty would take them to Himself, they devoted a portion of their time and their wealth to the praiseworthy deeds of charity. They made arrangements with a dressmaker and a salesman to make clothes at greatly reduced prices for the poor, who should present a ticket of recommendation from them. By adopting this plan of affording relief to extreme indigence, they acquired a high degree of popularity amongst some of the poor, but not amongst all, as it was a fixed law in their economy of benevolence to limit their charity to those who attended the parish church; — the poor schismatics were the objects of their loathing. In addition to these acts of charity, they went about doing good, always accompanied by an old servant of Miss. Evans, who, unknown to her mistress, had imbibed evangelical views of truth, — often stealing away from the church, to hear the Gospel in a Dissenting chapel. They visited the most obscure and the most impoverished parts of the town, allowing nothing to check their ardor or stay the outpouring of their liberality, but a certain knowledge that the mourning widow, the bed-ridden sufferer, or the family of absolute destitution, preferred the simple worship of the chapel to the pompous forms of the antique, apostolical church. And yet, though they exercised extreme caution to keep all from participating in their charity who bowed not at their bidding, where they chose to repeat the responses of the Prayer Book, they had on their list some of the Lord's "hidden ones," who could "speak of the glorious honor of His majesty and of His wondrous works." Of this number I shall mention only two: Old Thomas, who was nearly eighty years of age, and who knew Miss. Evans' father; and Jane Case, nearly of the same age, who knew her mother. Miss. Evans often referred to these two, when conversing with Miss. Rowley on the little matters of their charity; and doing so, on one occasion, when her temper was out of tune, the latter said —

"I prefer visiting some of the more stupid ones, who can't repeat either the Belief or the Lord's Prayer."

"I wonder at that. Have you ever talked with old Thomas? He is a very superior man. He has great gifts. Only think, he remembers my father, and has heard him preach. I could sit for hours to hear him talk; he talks so sensibly and so piously."

"He began talking to me one day, but he was too familiar in his speech; and I reproved him. We must keep untrodden the space between these poor

creatures of our charity and ourselves. The old proverb says. Familiarity breeds contempt.”

“Have you ever had any conversation with old Jane Case, who knew my mother?”

“No; I never talk to any of them, except when with you. And I must confess that those whom you admire most, I like less than the stupid ones. I don’t like to hear the poor talk in such high strains about their assurance of going to heaven. For how can anyone know, for certainty, that he shall go to heaven, till he gets there?”

“I don’t know,” replied Miss. Evans, “but old Thomas and Jane Case say they have no doubt about it; and this certainly makes them contented and happy. I never saw two such happy beings.”

“O yes; they think they shall have the advantage over us when they get into another world; and this feeds their vanity. They think the Almighty loves them. Strange infatuation! What can He see in them to induce Him to love them?”

“Oh, they are so pious. I sometimes wish I had their piety.”

“Miss. Evans! you shock me. They are not only infatuated, but rude. Why, one of them, when you left the room yesterday, said to me,”She hoped I was looking to another foundation," or something like it, “for my salvation, instead of looking to any merit in my good works.” That was downright rudeness, Miss. Evans — approaching to insolence.”

“Oh, they mean well. They don’t intend offense. I am sure they are too grateful for your kindness, and too simple-hearted, for that.”

“But what arrogance, Miss. Evans, to make any allusion to the possibility of my making any mistake on what is necessary to merit the favor of the Almighty. I rather think they are Methodists; and if so, I shall withhold my charities from them.”

“But, dear Miss. Rowley, suppose they are Methodists,¹ yet they are our fellow-creatures, and in destitution; and surely it can’t be displeasing to the Almighty if we supply a few of their wants, though we may not like their religion. He feeds us bountifully, and surely we can’t refuse to give them the crumbs that fall from our table.”

“You know, Miss. Evans, that I detest their religion. It is wild fanaticism; it is low-bred enthusiasm; they are the enemies of our pure apostolic church, that holy church of which your father was such a distinguished ornament; and therefore I shall in no case deviate from the law we laid down

when we commenced our course of charity, — namely, confine our charities to the poor members of our own church.” And, turning to the old servant who followed them, she said —

“Do you know old Thomas?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“And old Jane Case?” Yes, ma’am.”

“Are they Methodists?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Do they come to church?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Do they go anywhere to worship the Almighty?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Where?”

“To the Dissenting chapel, ma’am.”

“Then they are Methodists;” and turning away in anger, she said, “They shall never more eat or drink at my expense. No, my charity shall never support the enemies of my religion.”

It has often been remarked, that little incidents are sometimes the germ of great events; and an ominous hour occasionally heralds the beginning of a new epoch in the history of man. It proved so now. The rector was taken severely, though not dangerously, ill on a Sunday morning; and the curate was gone to do duty for a clergyman who had a horse entered for the Derby; and as property has its privileges as well as its obligations, he went to be in attendance at the betting-room, and on the race-course. The churchwarden was sent for.

“What is to be done, Mr. Warden? I’m too ill to do duty, and my curate is away.”

“Why, sir, there is a clergyman at the George. He had a slight accident in coming into town yesterday afternoon, which has detained him; but he is better now, I know, as I passed him in coming here, and he looked pretty well.”

“Do you know him, Mr. Warden?”

“No, sir; but he is quite a gentleman.”

“Do you think he would do duty for me today, Mr. Warden?”

“Why, sir, I should think, under these unlucky circumstances, he would not object.”

“Then go, Mr. Warden, with my compliments, and tell him how things are; and ask him if he will have the politeness to do duty for me.”

All was soon arranged. The bell began to toll; the devotees bent their steps to the venerable church of their forefathers; the stranger entered the desk, read the prayers with emphatic solemnity; and having exchanged the white surplice for the robes of black, with a full sash hanging gracefully over his shoulders, he walked up into the pulpit; and when the melody of the organ and the choir had died away into silence, and he had offered a short prayer, he read, in a loud and impressive tone, his text, John 3:14, 15: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish’ but have everlasting life.” The design of the sermon was to prove that Jesus Christ now stands in the same relation to humanity, as the brazen serpent in the Hebrew camp stood to the diseased and dying Israelites; and that no clergyman acted a faithful part to the people of his charge, who did not, in his public ministrations, exhibit Him as the only Saviour, mighty to save, — and no less willing; and in whom they must believe, or they will perish for ever.

A few of the higher class, after listening for about a quarter of an hour, the usual length of the rector’s sermons, took their hats and walked out, evincing unmistakable signs of their disgust. Many who remained were restless, particularly Miss. Rowley, who amused herself, as much as her temper would let her, by reading Sternhold and Hopkin’s Psalms. But a few seemed awestruck by what they heard. It was novel and powerful. No one was more deeply impressed than Miss. Evans.

“What a misfortune,” said Miss. Rowley, as soon as the benediction was pronounced, “that the rector should have asked this clergyman to do duty for him! He can’t know him. Impossible?”

“My dear Miss. Rowley, I thought I never heard such a sermon.”

“Nor anyone else. Why, he must be some escaped lunatic. I’ll never hear him again. She had no opportunity, for the warden sent him a note to say, there would be no duty performed in the afternoon.

This was an evangelical clergyman, an entire stranger, who preached in the old church — a mere mausoleum of spiritual death — the first Gospel sermon that had ever been heard within the memory of man. Its startling sound amongst the people, was something like firing a double-barreled rifle into a rookery, raising a loud outcry; but it had a subduing effect on a few,

who felt it to be the power of God to their salvation. Yes, the Lord was present on that singular occasion, to convey His healing grace to the souls of some of the spiritually diseased and perishing. Miss. Evans went home with a heavy heart, deeply absorbed in thought, feeling a strange sensation pervading her whole mental frame; and, for the first time in her long life, she began to fear that she might possibly perish for ever. Her hope of going to heaven' which had risen out of her varied acts of charity, and which had hitherto rested, so she imagined, on a stable foundation, vanished away, leaving her unrapped in cheerless gloom, looking in fixed amazement at the scene of moral desolation around her; as we may suppose the traveler, when recovering from the thunder-stroke, gazes on the devastation of the great tempest which has hurled the trees of the forest and the habitations of man into one vast pile of ruins. What to do, in this bewildered state, she knew not, nor of whom to ask counsel. Her former prayers she could not now repeat, for they were as unsuited to her condition, as the words of common conversation would be to a man who has lost himself on the moors during a snowstorm; and though she had a servant who could have spoken words of instruction and consolation to her at this critical juncture in her spiritual history, yet she had no conception of her ability to do it. "Woe is me! Woe is me!" was her agonizing soliloquy, when pacing to and fro in the drawing-room, where she had often heard the glees and songs of mirth. "The Israelite, when bitten, had only to go and look at the serpent raised by Moses, and his fever left him; but I know not what it is to believe in Christ Jesus. All to me is as a dark, wild storm of threatening vengeance." She set off alone, even though there was the appearance of foul weather, and took refuge in the humble cottage of old Thomas, with whom old Jane Case was taking tea.

"I'm glad to see you, madam, though I didn't think I should have had this pleasure today."

"Oh, Thomas! I am in great trouble, and don't well know what is the matter with me, nor where to look for relief in this hour of my perplexity."

"The Lord grant," said old Jane Case, "that it may be some soul matter; some trouble, madam, about your precious soul. I have long feared that you two kind ladies look more to your good works for salvation, than you do to the Lord Jesus Christ. I said this to Madam Rowley t'other day; but she was offended with me. The Lord knows I spoke in love to her soul, and not to give offense."

“And so I told her, Mrs. Case, but I could not remove the impression.”

As old Thomas had heard of the sermon which had been preached at the church in the morning, he guessed, from Miss. Evans’ looks and remarks, that it had reached her heart, and stripped off the robe of self-righteousness which she had made for herself, leaving her now in a destitute and forlorn condition.

“It is well, madam,” said old Thomas, “to have trouble sometimes. No one can ever have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has not soul trouble first. We must feel our disease, or we shall never apply to the great Physician to heal us.”

“That’s certain truth, Thomas,” said old Jane Case; “and I hope this trouble of our kind lady is trouble about her soul, and that she is made to see and to feel her need of a Saviour, as you and I do. I have prayed a power of times, that this may be the case with both you kind ladies; for there is something very terrible in the thought of living on earth a few years, in wealth and ease, and beloved by others, and enjoying the blessedness of doing good to the poor and needy, and then at last perishing for ever under the wrath of God.”

“Oh, Jane, you make me tremble.”

“Come, then, ma’am, at once to Jesus Christ to save you; and He will make you rejoice in His love. The Lord be praised. I see this is your spiritual birthday. You are now moving into newness of life, and don’t know it. Yes; the Lord is breathing into your soul — which has been living in a state of spiritual death — the breath of spiritual life; and soon you will feel it, and know it too.”

“I don’t doubt, madam,” said old Thomas, “but the Lord is now working in your soul the great change which is necessary to fit you for heaven; and to fit you also for holy fellowship with Him while you live on earth.”

“But, Thomas, my mind is in a state of fearful anxiety.”

“The tumult, madam, will subside, and ere long you will have peace. Look to the Lord Jesus, and pray, — Lord, save, or I perish.”

There was much in the conversation of these two old disciples which Miss. Evans did not understand, yet occasionally some great spiritual truth darted forth, like the sun escaping from a dark, portentous cloud, and threw a gleam of light over her agitated spirit; and she felt its momentary impression to be in unison with the strange pulsations of her newly awakened faculties; as a man, when dreading the coming storm, catches the wild stray

notes of melody as they pass from the warbling bird, not yet quite dumb with terror, and feels their power on his spirits urging him onwards to his home.

“There’s nothing like prayer, madam,” said old Thomas, “to bring peace to the soul in trouble. It gives vent to the feelings; and brings the great Helper out of the hiding place of His power. I’ll read a chapter of God’s blessed Book, if you like, madam, and then we will pray together. We are within our Lord’s promised presence.”

“Ah,” said Miss. Evans, as she walked away from this humble cottage, which was the local dwelling-place of an heir of glory, “what a truly good man! He is fit to be my spiritual counselor! What a prayer! How unlike my own! How appropriate! How simple, and yet how earnest! And old Jane Case! What a devout Christian! How cheerful and happy! How deeply read in the word of God! Yes; they both have what I want, — what no gold can purchase, — what no robber can steal away, — peace OF MIND.”

The pious servant, who knew nothing as yet of the new process of thought and feeling which was passing through the soul of her mistress, in whose behalf she had often wrestled with the Lord, as Jacob wrestled at Peniel, was greatly surprised, and somewhat perplexed, by a remark she made on retiring to her couch for the night.

“This, Martha, has been to me the strangest day of my life. Good night. If you ever pray, pray for me. Good night.”

“Good night, ma’am. Yes; I will pray, and I hope the great Intercessor will pray for us both.”

Why, what has happened today? Surely the sermon of the morning has not taken effect on the soul of my mistress. And yet it is possible. The Lord has power over the heart of a Pharisee, as He had over the heart of Zaccheus, and the dying thief. O that it may be so! My kind mistress, if renewed by the Lord the Spirit, will make a fine Christian lady. What a change this will be! What a stir it will make amongst her gay associates! I long for the morning, when I hope to hear something about what she means by this being the strangest day of her life. If her spiritual birthday, it’s a day whose remembrance will endure for ever.

1. The epithet which is attached to the pious of every denomination by the high church party.↩

11. The Death of the Sisters of Charity

Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clust'ring ornaments to clog the pile;
From ostentation, as from weakness, free,
It stands, like the caerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give.
Stand the soul-quick'ning words — BELIEVE AND LIVE!
Too many, shocked at what should charm them most,
Despise the plain direction, and are lost.
Heaven on such terms! (they cry, with proud disdain);
Incredible, impossible, and vain; —
Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey:
And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way." — Cowper

THE RECTOR APOLOGIZED to his audience on the following Sunday for the sermon which had given so much offense; and said that he never would, at any future time, admit a stranger into his pulpit. He then read, with emphatic earnestness, a severe and caustic invective against the evangelical clergy, and all classes of Dissenters, and their ministers; and concluded by assuring his hearers, that, if they continued faithful to the church of their forefathers — the pure apostolic Church of England — that rich and beautiful oasis of the moral desert — and if they regularly observed her sacraments, and paid due honor to her clergy, as the only authorized priests of God on earthy they would, without doubt, feel when dying that they had made their peace with God, and would then most assuredly go to heaven.

The intensity of antagonistic emotion was felt and evinced in equal degrees, by the two ladies of this narrative. The eye of Miss. Rowley sparkled with bright animation; her breast heaved with the inflation of joyous satis-

faction; and she rose up, displaying her tall figure, and gazing around with an air of assumed dignity, as though she was the presiding spirit of the entire assembly; while Miss. Evans looked downcast — became restless — a sigh, too expressive of sorrow to make its escape without exciting attention, came from the depth of her heart, as though some home-tidings of calamitous grief had suddenly burst upon her ear.

“This,” said Miss. Rowley, as soon as she got off consecrated ground, “is something like a sermon — as much superior to the sermon we heard last Sunday, as the notes of our fine organ surpass the sound of a bagpipe.”

“Not a word,” said Miss. Evans, “about Jesus Christ, or redemption through His blood. Not a word about the necessity of being born again; or about repentance or faith. Not a word about our obligations to love Jesus Christ supremely, or to take up our cross and follow Him.”

“You really alarm me; quite shock me. Miss. Evans! as though the Almighty required anything of this sort from us. Indeed, I begin to fear that the report I heard last week is true.”

“What report do you refer to?”

“Why, that the sermon of last Sunday has so wrought upon your mind, and has produced such a strange effect, that you have actually let yourself down so low as to go and visit old Thomas, and kneel down on the bare floor with him and old Jenny Case, that wild enthusiast; and allow him to pray over you.”

“I certainly did visit old Thomas, and Mrs. Case was with him; and he certainly did read a chapter of the New Testament, and then we knelt in prayer before the Lord, our Maker and our Redeemer. Nor am I ashamed to own that I never felt purer emotions of delight in any religious exercise, than I felt then.”

“I regret. Miss. Evans, that any circumstance should occur to interrupt our long established friendship; but you know, madam, we all owe some respect to our own respectability.”

“It is not my wish, I assure you, that our friendship, the growth of so many years, should be interrupted; we may yet be of service to each other.”

“I understand you. Miss. Evans; but if you indulge any hope of bringing me over to adopt any of the crudities of the evangelical faith, I will at once crush it, by forbidding even any allusion to it. I have made my peace with God for many years past, — indeed, even before I knew you; and I will not have that peace disturbed by any one. Good morning, madam.”

The rector, hearing of the commotion which the unlucky sermon had occasioned amongst some of his parishioners, and dreading lest Miss. Evans should leave the church, with others who had given him notice that such was their intention, he sent her a copy of “Mant’s Treatise on Baptismal Regeneration,” requesting her to read it forthwith; and saying in his note, that he would do himself the honor of calling in a few days. He did call; and after a few commonplace remarks, he said, — “I suppose, madam, the very excellent treatise which I did myself the honor of sending to you, has drained off the sediment of error, which I heard the unknown clergyman had most unluckily deposited in your mind?”

“I read, sir, that treatise some years ago, and once admired it; but on re-perusing it, which, at your request, I have done very carefully, I am really astonished that I could ever have believed the doctrine therein propounded.”

“What, madam! do you doubt the grand fact of our regeneration taking place at our baptism?”

“I now, sir, disbelieve it; and I will tell you why I disbelieve it. If I had been regenerated, when I was baptized, I should not have lived all my life in such a state of alienation from God — so forgetful of Him — so ungrateful to Him — so ignorant of Jesus Christ, and of the way of salvation through faith in Him — and so much devoted to the gay pursuits of the world. It is, sir, in my belief, a fallacious delusion which is practiced on the people who take their opinions of religion from the Prayer Book, which is a human composition’ instead of taking them from the Word of God, which is our only infallible guide and authority.”

“I see, madam, it will be useless to prolong our conversation; you are too much excited. Perhaps when the feverish excitement produced by that unlucky sermon, preached by some unknown strolling clergyman, has subsided, and you regain your accustomed coolness, you may again think and speak as you used to do.”

“I hope, sir, such a fatal occurrence as that will never happen to me. I know, as yet, but little of the wondrous mysteries of om’ redemption; they appear, as yet, veiled in obscurity; but I would not part with the little light I gained from that admirable sermon, and go back into that profound ignorance and spiritual torpor in which I have been living all my long life, to save my riches from sinking into the deep waters. No, sir, I would rather have the poverty of poor Jenny Case, with her piety, than ten times my wealth without it.”

“I regret, madam, to hear you say what you now say. Indeed, I am painfully apprehensive that you will become a self-deluded enthusiast.”

“I hope, sir, the Lord will preserve me from self-delusion; but I shall have no objection to exchange my enthusiastic attachment to the gay pursuits of life, for a supreme attachment to Jesus Christ, my adorable Saviour. Can we, sir, love Him too much, who, though rich, for our sakes became poor; and who gave His life a ransom for our redemption?”

The knot which had tied her and her old friend, Miss. Rowley, in such close friendship for so many years, was now cut asunder; and when they met, which was but seldom, it was merely to exchange the formal expression of polite recognition, — the one remaining a Pharisee, who trusted in herself that she was righteous, and despised others; while the other, having imbibed the humble and self-condemnatory spirit of the publican, breathed his prayer with reverence and in faith, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

A Pharisee, when converted to the faith of Christ, cannot give such palpable proofs of the great change as a person can give, who has been previously living an immoral, or a practically irreligious life; but its genuineness will be attested by two decisive evidences. First, there will be an absolute renunciation of all personal attainments, as the basis of dependence for pardon and eternal life, combined, in imitation of Paul, with a ceaseless desire to be found in Christ, not attired in their own righteousness, which is of the law, but “that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” And, secondly, along with the cultivation of meekness and humbleness of mind, there will be blended great simplicity in devotional exercises, and uniform consistency of moral and religious deportment, bearing a nearer resemblance to the evening star, whose lustre is pure and brilliant, though not dazzling, than to the sun suddenly emerging from a dark portentous cloud, irradiating the heavens and the earth with his glory.

Miss. Evans was devoutly attached to the church in which she had been trained, and in whose service her father lived and died; but as she could not hear, from the pulpit of her own parish church, the Gospel of reconciliation and peace preached in its simplicity and purity, she at once decided on taking a pew in the Dissenting chapel, — deeming this no less her duty, as an example for others to imitate, than a privilege essential to her own spiritual prosperity. Her decision excited no astonishment, because of the well-known firmness of her character, though it gave great mortification to the

high church party; while it was hailed by the Dissenters as a triumph of divine truth over the mere forms and ceremonies of a deluding superstition.

She had always been more partial to old Thomas and to Jenny Case than to any other of her pensioners, because they knew her parents, and often amused her with some interesting tale about them. But now she had other reasons for her strong attachment to them. They were the first persons to whom she communicated the depressed state of her mind on that eventful Sabbath, which old Jenny always called her spiritual birthday. And as they were both very intelligent Christians — deeply read in the word of God, and imbued with the Spirit of Christ — she often visited them, and sometimes invited them to visit her, — finding their conversation, notwithstanding its quaintness and their homely figures of speech, both interesting and instructive. They knew, from experience, the mind of the Spirit, and were well qualified to solve the doubts which occasionally depressed her; and to explain the cause and the design of the difficult parts in her experience, which often distracted and perplexed her.

“You must now, madam, said old Thomas, feel a wonderful difference in your soul, when compared with what you used to feel.”

“Yes, Thomas, all the difference between death and life. I lived, before that eventful Sabbath when I came to your cottage, in a state of spiritual death, yet I did not know it. I then did not understand the design of the Gospel. I saw no glory in the character of Christ, nor any beauty, and scarcely any meaning, in the word of God.”

“Ah, my kind lady,” said old Jenny Case, “when the Lord opens our eyes, we see some of the wondrous things which are contained in His law; that is, in our blessed Bible. Oh, it is a grand Book! No book speaks with such power to the soul. It makes us feel what we read, and enjoy it too. The Lord be praised.”

“Yes, Mrs. Case, I can attest the truth of what you say. Before that eventful Sabbath, I was as insensible to feeling, when engaged in religious duties, as a corpse would be, if placed near the most melodious music. And when thinking of heaven, which was not often, I had no emotions of delight — no eager anticipations.”

“But I suppose, madam,” said old Thomas, “you felt some emotions when you thought of death, and of going into the unknown world?”

“Ah, Thomas, death was to me a most gloomy subject of reflection. The thought of dying would at times obtrude itself upon me; but it was an un-

welcome thought, and I banished it from my mind as soon as I could. Indeed, if left to my choice, I would rather have lived on earth for ever, than die, and go into another world, because I was never quite sure I should go to heaven. I had many fearful misgivings.”

“I suppose, madam, the thought of dying is a welcome thought to you now?”

“I now think of dying more frequently than I used to do, and with less dread; but it always awakens great solemnity of feeling. I do not know what it is to die; nor do I know what it is to walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death.”

“That’s a beautiful expression,” said old Jenny, — ‘the shadow of death.’ The Lord comes into the valley to meet His people; and they see only the shadow of death, as they pass on to be with Him. The Lord be praised. We need fear no evil there, or then.”

“I suppose, madam,” said old Thomas, “you often feel surprised when you look back, and review that part of the history of your life which preceded the great change through which you have lately past.”

“Yes, Thomas, and at times I feel as though I had just awakened out of a long and fearful dream. I have lived, not to glorify God, but to gratify myself with vanities. But the dreary night is ended; and now, blessed be His holy name, the light of life dawns upon my once darkened soul.”

“Why,” said old Jenny Case, “you must now feel a new creature, living and moving amongst new sights of great beauty and great glory. You can now, kind lady, tell what Paul means, when he speaks of seeing Him who is invisible; and what Peter means, when he speaks of loving the unseen; and what John means, when he speaks of seeing the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.”

“I know but little as yet, Mrs. Case; and I am often astonished that I should have lived so long in such profound ignorance of my real character and condition, and under the power of such strong delusions, when I had free access to the Bible, and often read it. The Bible now seems to me a new book; and I can now underhand many parts of it, which were once as difficult of comprehension, as though I had been reading it in an unknown language. There is now no book I read with so much delight and satisfaction. It brings me into immediate fellowship with God and the eternal world.”

“What, madam, has been done in your soul,” said old Thomas, “has been done, not by the power of man, but by the power of the Lord the Spirit. The heart, before He comes to work upon it, is a piece of fallow ground; and, for man to try to break it up, is like plowing against a rock; but when the Lord the Spirit lets fall the dew of His grace, it soon gets fit to receive the incorruptible seed of truth, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

“The Lord be praised,” said old Jenny, “His work is going on. He is forming a people for Himself, to show forth His praise for ever. There will be glorious gatherings in heaven. All love there — all purity — all harmony; because all will be holy and contented there. We shan’t have then to die, as we have now. One endless state of holy and happy existence. We shall then behold the glory of Christ. What a grand sight! Brighter than the brightest sun that ever smiled on earth.”

“And there,” said old Thomas, “all the redeemed gathered from all ages, and countries, and people, will join in singing the same jubilee anthem of praise, — ‘Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.’”

Rather late one Saturday evening, Miss. Evans was seen wending her way towards the cottage of old Jenny Case; and, on opening the door, the old woman rose to receive her.

“I owe you an apology, Mrs. Case; I hope you will forgive me.”

“Forgive you, my kind lady. I didn’t know that you had offended me.”

“Why, I forgot either to bring or to send the small weekly present, which you ought to have received on Monday morning. I hope you have suffered no inconvenience from my remissness of attention to you.”

“Oh no, my kind lady, for I always find, that when I have no food, the Lord takes away my appetite. Blessed be His holy name: and then I am just as well without food as I am with it.”

“Have you been without food any day this week?”

“I have not had any breakfast yet; but I have been living all day on the promises, and they are always precious, and always fulfilled in the Lord’s time and way. Our duty is to wait, not to dictate or murmur. Our dear Lord was forty days without food, and in the wilderness all the while; but I have a home, and have felt no hunger, as He did.”

“There, Jane, is a double portion; and I will never forget you again.”

“The Lord be praised. He never wounds, but He heals; and always gives us more than is expected, when faith lays hold on His strength and wrestles with Him. That’s a beautiful and true saying: ‘weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.’”

“If, Mrs. Case, you ever feel a desire for any extra comfort, I wish you would let me know. I shall esteem it a privilege to send it, or bring it to you.”

“I thank you, kind lady; but I have food and raiment, and therewith I am content. The Lord recompense you for your kindness to me. I hope He will meet with you tomorrow from off His mercy seat, when you are eating and drinking at His table in remembrance of His suffering and death for us, and our salvation.”

“What a fine example of cheerful contentment!” thought Miss. Evans. “What a saint! Her dwelling-place must be the tabernacle of the Most High! She must repose herself in the pavilion of His presence! Her visions of glory must be very clear and distinct; they come near to her at times, and cast the shadow of their radiance over her venerable countenance. If I envy any one, it is this extraordinary woman.”

Miss. Evans maintained for many years the integrity and honor of her religious profession; decided in her attachment to the faith once delivered to the saints, and its institutions; but cautiously avoided all ostentatious display, — breathing a catholic spirit; and always ready to cooperate with others in advancing the spiritual empire of the Prince of Peace. At length the infirmities of age crept gradually upon her; and we began to fear that the time of her departure from us was drawing nigh; yet she was mercifully exempted from the lengthened afflictions and sufferings which often precede death. I missed her from public worship only one Sabbath, though I found she had been confined for several weeks during my absence from home. I called on the following day to see her. She was seated in her armchair, with her Bible, and Cowper, her favorite poet, lying open on her reading table, by her side.

“This, sir,” she said, laying her hand on her Bible, “is the book of books. What a loss the world would sustain if it were withdrawn from circulation! — a greater loss than the disappearance of the sun from the heavens.”

“I see, madam, you still associate Cowper with the Bible. He is my favorite poet. There is a rich vein of pure evangelic truth running through his fascinating verse.”

“Sometimes, sir, he is rather caustic and severe; he bites hard; but this I have always attributed to the ardor of his attachment to pure evangelical truth, rather than to any native bitterness of his spirit. But I have now taken my final farewell of him, having just finished reading the last piece of poetry I intend to read; and it is a correct description of my sentiments and feelings. I have often repeated it when I have been lying on my pillow at night, and it has had a fine soothing effect; it has often inspirited me, and then lulled me to sleep,”

"Since the dear hour that brought me to Thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but Thine,
Nor hop'd; but in Thy righteousness divine:
My prayers, and alms, imperfect and defil'd,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;
Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart:
Cleans'd by thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good;
I cast them at Thy feet — my only plea
Is what it was — dependence upon Thee;
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.

“But I hope we shall again see you amongst us, and that you will yet live to bless others. The poor will indeed feel poverty-struck should you leave them.”

“Ah, poor creatures, I feel for them; but the Lord can raise up other friends for them when I am gone. No, sir, you will never see me again in the chapel. I have a presentiment that I am going to die; and, now the hour is come, I would rather die than live.”

The Lord has dealt very mercifully with you, by preserving you so many years in the enjoyment of such vigorous health.”

“Yes, sir, He has been very gracious to me. He is a kind father. He was kind to me before I knew Him, but He has been much kinder since. He often comes and comforts my heart with the sweet manifestations of His fatherly presence.”

“Then, madam, you really wish to die?”

“Now, sir, the time of my departure is drawing near, I really have an ardent longing of soul to get on the other side of the veil, that I may see my

adorable Saviour; and take a look at the beauty, and grandeur, and blissful harmony of my Father's dwelling-place."

"And how do you feel in prospect of dying? Have you no fear as to the final issue?"

"Fear, sir? not the shadow of fear flits across my soul. I could now, if the Lord bade me, take my staff, and go and lay down on my sofa and die, with as much confident composure as I should retire to my bed for a night's repose."

Old Thomas was unable to go and see his kind benefactress during her short confinement; but he sent her the following letter by Jenny Case, who was admitted to an interview: —

"DEAR MADAM, — I feel devoutly obliged to you for the great kindness you have showed to me these many years. You have often spread my table in the wilderness; and, of late years, you have often refreshed and comforted my heart. I am sorry that I can't come to thank you with the living voice. I shall be sorry to lose you; but He who died to redeem you, has a stronger claim on your personal attendance on Him, than we have. Go, much-revered and much-loved sister in Christ, and go in peace. The Lord Jesus is in waiting, just on the other side the dark cloud that divides the heavenly land from ours, and He will receive you to Himself. It won't be long before I shall follow you, when we shall meet again; and then we shall meet in the likeness of the Son of God. — Your obedient servant"

"Thomas."

"Methinks, kind lady, it won't be long before you go home. And oh, what a home! Your Father is waiting to welcome you there! And there you will see our adorable Saviour."

"Yes, Jane, I think I shall leave you soon."

"I used to think I should go first; but the Lord has got you in readiness for heaven, before He has made me meet to go. Alas I there is much to be done, in this depraved heart of mine, before I am fit to mingle with the holy ones of heaven. But I shall, as old Thomas says, soon follow you, and we shall meet again; and then we shall be perfect in holiness. That's the grand end of our hope."

"Yes, Mrs. Case, this will be, I think, our last interview on earth; you will take that (presenting her with a five pound note, and giving her a simi-

lar note to present to old Thomas), and you will both receive, as long as you live, the same amount every quarter from my executors. The next time we meet I shall have nothing to give, and you will need nothing; we shall then be on an equality in wealth and dignity. Thank the Lord, not me. I am a mere stewardess.”

“The Lord be praised for calling you, kind lady, out of darkness into His marvelous light, and for giving you such a good hope, through grace, in your dying hours. And may the Lord lift upon you the light of His countenance when you enter the dark valley; and then, you will find it illumined by the visible presence of the Lord Jesus. Thank you, kind lady, for all your acts of kindness. Farewell, till I see you a glorified spirit.”

On the following day, after this short interview with old Jenny Case, to whom she was much attached, she revived, was unusually cheerful, and sat for hours looking out of her drawing-room window, admiring the beauties of her Father’s creation; and, after dinner, which she appeared to relish, she took, according to her custom, her nap on the sofa. She slept unusually long, but her kind and attentive servant did not like to disturb her. At length she again opened the door, and again listened; but hearing no sound of breathing, she cautiously drew nearer and nearer, and gently uncovered her face, on which a sweet smile was strongly imprinted; but her redeemed and happy spirit was gone to mingle with the saints in light.

I never heard any particulars of the death of Miss. Rowley, except the following statement, which the rector made when he preached her funeral sermon: — “She was born within the pale of our pure apostolic church, and she cherished, instead of renouncing, the grace of baptism. No one of the faithful sons of the church was more punctual and regular at public prayers, or observed, with more order or scrupulosity, all the fasts and feasts of the church, or paid more due honor and homage to her clergy; and only a few days before her death, she took the sacrament with great solemnity and reverence. The rhapsody of the deluded and self-deceived fanatic moved not her calm spirit; as death was coming, she lay still and quiet; offering no resistance, and evincing no impatience. She would have lived, if the Almighty had pleased to suffer her; for she never lost the love of life, like the ranting enthusiast; and when the hour came for her to pay the debt we all owe to nature, she paid it without a groan or a struggle. What a fine character for our imitation! and what an enviable death!”

Now, let the intelligent reader pass from this descriptive sketching of the death of the Pharisee, into the chamber where Miss. Evans tarried for a short space of time before she entered into the joy of the Lord, Let him listen to the pious breathings of her redeemed spirit, when speaking of God and His paternal kindness; and of Jesus Christ, His sympathy and love, and His power to save; and then let him mark its ethereal movements when in anticipation of the grand sequel to the sufferings and trials of life. And when he has done this, then let him say which of the two died most in harmony with the practical influence and ulterior design of the Christian faith, and whose death is the most enviable.

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The most important thing to grasp is that no one is made right with God by the good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith resting on what Jesus Christ did. It is by believing and trusting in His one-time *substitutionary* death for your sins.

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Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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“Human reason and inclination are always in their natural state averse to the doctrine of Justification by faith. Hence it is no wonder that earth and hell combine in persistent efforts to banish it from the Church and from the world.”

- [*The Confessional Principle* by Theodore Schmauk](#)

Theodore Schmauk's exploration and defense of the Christian faith consists of five parts: Historical Introduction; Part 1: Are Confessions Necessary?; Part 2: Confessions in the Church; Part 3: Lutheran Confessions; and Part 4: The Church in America.

- [*Summary of the Christian Faith* by Henry Eyster Jacobs](#)

A Summary of the Christian Faith has been appreciated by Christians since its original publication for its easy to use question and answer format, its clear organization, and its coverage of all the essentials of the Christian faith. Two essays on election and predestination are included, including Luther's "Speculations Concerning Predestination".

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- [*Sermons on the Gospels* by Matthias Loy](#). and [*Sermons on the Epistles* by Matthias Loy](#)

"When you feel your burden of sin weighing heavily upon you, only go to Him... Only those who will not acknowledge their sin and feel no need of a Savior — only these are rejected. And these are not rejected because the Lord has no pity on them and no desire to deliver them from their wretchedness, but only because they will not come to Him that they might have life. They reject Him, and therefore stand rejected. But those who come to Him, poor and needy and helpless, but trusting in His mercy, He will receive, to comfort and to save."

- [*The Great Gospel* by Simon Peter Long](#) and [*The Eternal Epistle* by Simon Peter Long](#)

“I want you to understand that I have never preached opinions from this pulpit; it is not a question of opinion; I have absolutely no right to stand here and give you my opinion, for it is not worth any more than yours; we do not come to church to get opinions; I claim that I can back up every sermon I have preached, with the Word of God, and it is not my opinion nor yours, it is the eternal Word of God, and you will find it so on the Judgment day. I have nothing to take back, and I never will; God does not want me to.”

- *True Christianity* by John Arndt
- *The Sermons of Theophilus Stork: A Devotional Treasure*

“There are many of us who believe; we are convinced; but our souls do not take fire at contact with the truth. Happy he who not only believes, but believes with fire... This energy of belief, this ardor of conviction, made the commonplaces of the Gospel, the old, old story, seem in his [Stork’s] utterance something fresh and irresistibly attractive. Men listened to old truths from his lips as though they were a new revelation. They were new, for they came out of a heart that new coined them and stamped its own impress of vitality upon them as they passed through its experience...” – From the Introduction

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