

# Timothy East

## The Sheepfold and The Common

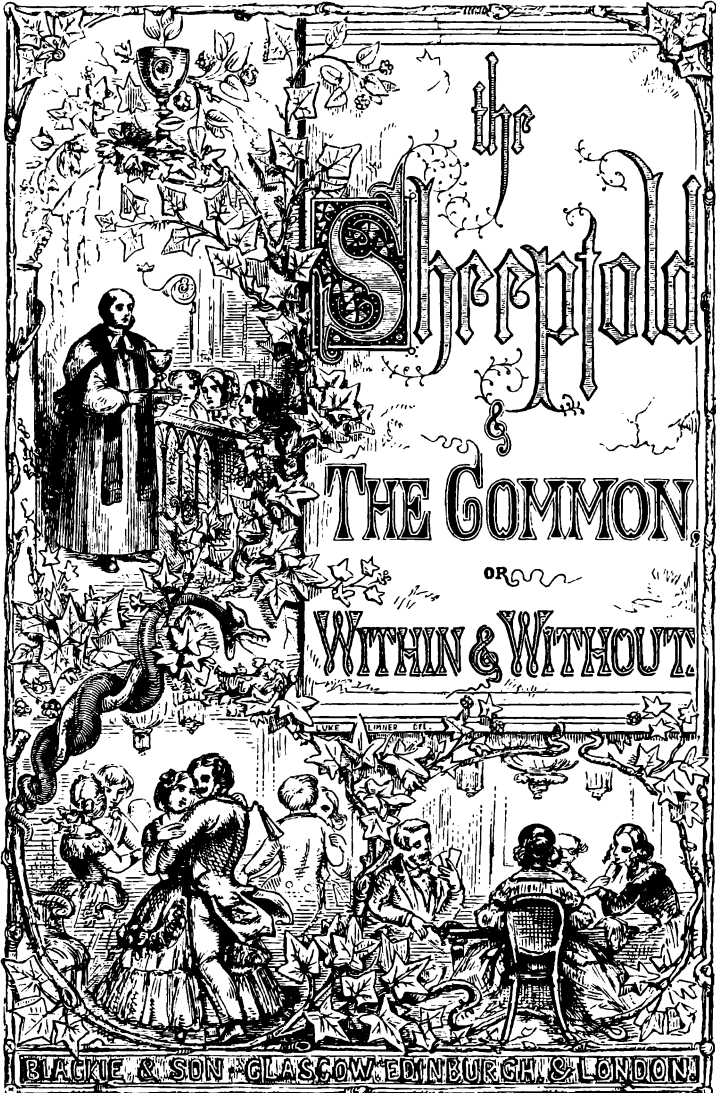


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"The history of the Church confirms and illustrates the teachings of the Bible, that yielding little by little leads to yielding more and more, until all is in danger; and the tempter is never satisfied until all is lost. – Matthias Loy, *The Story of My Life*

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The  
**Sheepfold**

**THE COMMON**

OR

**WITHIN & WITHOUT**

**BLACKIE & SON GLASGOW EDINBURGH & LONDON**



DRAWN BY W. F. THOMAS

### THE OLD SHEPHERD.

Vol. 4, page 2.

ENGRAVED BY W. F. THOMAS

The Sheepfold  
and  
The Common  
— or —  
Within & Without



Blackie & Son Glasgow Edinburgh and London.

THE  
SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON:

OR,  
WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

VOL. I.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”—JOHN x. 27.

“Them that are without God judgeth.”—1 COR. v. 13.



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## PREFACE.

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THIS Work was originally published, above thirty years ago, under the title of the *Evangelical Rambler*. It has long been out of print; and its republication at the present time has been recommended, as calculated to assist in arresting the progress of some popular errors and dangerous institutions, and in aiding the advancement of truth and social happiness. This opinion was strengthened by a knowledge of the fact, that, according to the most accurate calculations, from sixty thousand to a hundred thousand copies of the Work, under its original title, were issued from the English press, whilst in America it obtained an equally extended circulation; and from the still more important fact of the Author having received, from a large number of persons, assurances, both by letter and personal interviews, of their having derived their first religious impressions and convictions from perusing its pages. A new and thoroughly-revised Edition is, therefore, now issued, under the title of "THE SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON," as being more descriptive of the aim and intention of the Work than its former name.

The object of the Work is to afford instruction and amusement, conveyed by a simple narration of the events of everyday life. In constructing his story, the Author has availed



himself occasionally of the conceptions of his fancy, and at other times he has crowded into a narrow compass facts and incidents culled from an extended period of his history; but reality forms the basis of every narrative and of every scene he has described. He has departed from the common-place habit of presenting the grand truths of the Christian faith in didactic and dogmatic statements, preferring the dramatic form, as more likely to arrest the attention and interest the feelings, especially of the youthful and imaginative portion of the community. In adopting this style of composition, he has thus endeavoured to follow the footsteps of the great Prophet of Israel, who often spake in parables, veiling truth in a beauteous external vehicle, to captivate and teach his hearers, while their prejudices were lying dormant. In no book of human authorship can we find specimens of imaginative composition that will compare with the following examples from the New Testament, which the Author quotes, in illustration and defence of the principle on which his Work is based.

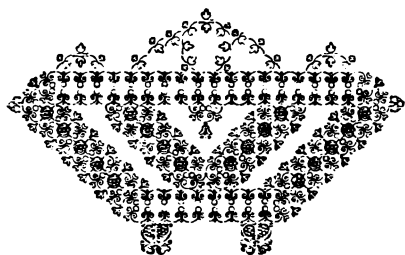
On no occasion during the ministry of Jesus Christ are we so thoroughly convinced of the fatal danger of trusting in our own attainments and doings for our salvation, and of the absolute safety of reposing exclusive confidence in Him for this inestimable blessing, as when he places us in imagination on the shore, after the desolating storm has completed its work of destruction, leaving us to gaze on the ruins of the one house erected on the sand; while we see the other remaining secure on the unmoved and unshaken rock, in stern and tranquil defiance of all tempests and hurricanes. *See* Matt. vii. 24-28.

We have more definite and more vivid impressions of the invisible world—of the calm repose and fraternal fellowship of the saved, and of the privations and anguish of the lost, when

reading our Lord's description of the condition of Lazarus and the rich man, than is produced on our minds by his announcement of the issue of the day of judgment, when the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. Luke xvi. 19-26.

The Work, under its new title, "THE SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON," has undergone a very careful revision; many portions of the original have been re-written, and others omitted to make room for new matter of more interest and importance at the present time. While carrying out the main object of the Work, as already adverted to—namely, to present the grand doctrines of the Christian faith in a pleasing and attractive manner—the Author has also endeavoured to elucidate various topics important to the church at large and to the well-being of society in general; and though he has not plunged into the mazes of controversy, with the obscure and often unintelligible advocates of the theological heresies of the age, yet many of the more prominent of these have been subjected to a severe and, he trusts, an impartial examination.

If the re-issue of this Work should prove as successful in conveying spiritual life to the spiritually dead—in relieving the anxious inquirer from his misgivings and perplexities—and in administering the consolations of faith and hope to the devout believer, while passing through the varied seasons of his eventful history, as it proved in its less perfect and less attractive form—then, whether living or dying, the Author will indulge the hope of meeting many, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be to him a crown of rejoicing for ever.



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## SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON.

## THE LONELY WIDOW.



IN the summer of the year 18--, I took an excursion through part of the West of England; and after travelling on horseback several days, I resolved to tarry at the beautiful village of Stanmoor. Passing along, a sign I saw hanging before a small but respectable-looking inn, involuntarily reminded me of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and I made up my mind to rest for a season beneath its humble roof. Having taken my horse to the stable, and given the hostler instructions to take good care of him, I was shown into a neat small back room, which commanded a very beautiful view. As I stood gazing and musing while the homely-looking landlady was preparing my coffee, the lines of Milton's Morning Hymn recurred to my recollection; but never, till that moment, had they produced such an exciting effect:—

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good :  
 Almighty! Thine this universal frame :  
 Thus wondrous fair! Thyself how wondrous then !  
 Unspeakable : who sitt'st above these heav'ns,  
 To us invisible, or dimly seen  
 In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare  
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.”

My cogitations were interrupted by the landlady, who, as a mark

of respect, herself brought in my coffee, &c., put a small bell on the table, and assured me, with a great deal of good-natured ease, that she would endeavour to make me comfortable as long as I chose to honour her house with my company. Having partaken of the provision of the table, I resolved on taking a walk, and was told, that if I turned short round to the right when past the clump of fir-trees, I should soon come to a pleasant valley. This direction I followed; and in about a quarter of an hour I entered one of the most romantic vales I have ever visited. The sun was still gilding the tops of the distant hills; the blue sky was enlivened by the song of the thrush, and the responding notes of the yellow-hammer. As I walked on, my attention was attracted by the bleating of a flock of sheep, which I saw at a distance ascending a steep path, leading to a neighbouring fold. I quickened my pace, that I might have some conversation with the shepherd, who, with his dog, was bringing up the rear. He was an old man of a swarthy complexion, and strongly marked features; his gray hairs hung in locks over his shoulders, and his manners seemed to indicate the presence of a superior mind. He made a courteous bow; I saluted him, and remarked—"You are taking your flock home to rest, which I hope sometimes reminds you of the approach of that hour when you must rest from all your labours."

"Yes, it does; and, blessed be God, there is a rest provided for his people."

This pious expression sprang a mine of exquisite feeling in my breast; and I instantaneously felt a profound veneration and respect for the old man, whom I now looked upon as a son of God in the disguise of lowly and lonely humanity.

"I presume you know something about Jesus Christ, who is the way to that place of rest."

"Yes, he is now my Saviour, though for many years I lived without knowing anything about him. I often feel sorry when I think of the many precious hours I have wasted by reading ballads and foolish books, which I ought to have spent in reading my Bible."



“Do you ever attend a place of worship?”

“No, I never leave my flock.”

“How, then, did you come to know anything about Jesus Christ?”

He put his hand into his pocket, and pulled out a tract, and said, as the big tear dropped upon his cheek, “This is the blessed book that made known to me a blessed Saviour; and I would not part with it for all the world.”

Feeling anxious to hold in my hand the instrument which had been employed by the “Eternal Spirit” in turning this aged man from darkness to light, I asked him to let me see the tract. It bore the following title, which had become nearly obliterated by frequent use:—“The Good Old Way; or the Religion of our Forefathers, as explained in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies of the Church of England.” I said to him, “How did you get this tract?”

“A lady gave it me one day, about three years ago; I don’t know her; but I hope she will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

“How do you spend your leisure time now?”

“In reading my Bible, which tells me so much about that dear Saviour, in whom, through grace, I have believed, and who is able to keep that which I have committed to him against the great day.”

“I suppose you are much more happy now than you were before you knew him?”

This question brought over his countenance one of the finest expressions of delight I ever beheld; and, after a short pause, he said, “More happy, Sir! I never was happy till I obtained mercy; but now I am happy, and expect before long to join that blessed company we read of in the Revelation, who serve God day and night in his temple.”

Having made a few unimportant inquiries about his family, the state of agriculture, and the population of the district, I wished him a good night, and left him. As I passed along, I said to myself, I should like to watch the countenance, and listen to the remarks of this converted shepherd, while some philosophic sceptic, in flippan

style, or in graver tone and sarcastic sneer, says to him, "Why, shepherd, you have been long living amidst visible and splendid realities; but now, in your old age, you are living under the spell of legendary delusions. The Deity whom you now adore is nothing but the idol of your own creation. The reported facts and doctrines of the Bible, which have had such an effect on your imagination, are either fabulous tales or superstitious dogmas; and, notwithstanding your airy flights into another world, you, like your sheep, will cease to be, when death comes to release you from your labours, for there is no other world."

With what indignant astonishment, blended with pity, would the old shepherd look on such a man; doubting, for a few moments, whether he was not some infernal spirit in the human form. I can easily imagine he would reply: "It is odd, Sir, that such a poor ignorant old man as I be, that has lived for more than sixty years without thinking about God at all, should all at once, and without intending to do it, create by the force of my fancy such a pure, benevolent, and glorious Being, as I now believe God to be; who stoops from his high and lofty throne to listen to my poor prayers, and to answer them too. And it is mainly odd, Sir, methinks, that these tales of the Bible, if they be fabulous, and these doctrines of the Bible, if they be nothing but superstitious dogmas, as you call them, should all at once, and without my thinking of such a thing being done, work such a great and blessed change in my hard and wicked heart, and should make me so happy as I now be. It is, methinks, a main pity that they have not worked on your heart as they have on mine, and then you would be about as unable and as unwilling to doubt their truth as I be. You say, Sir, there is no other world; I should like to know how you happen to know this? have you been to the sun, and the moon, and all the stars, and every where else to see? If you have not, according to my plain way of thinking, I think it is a main act of presumption for you to say so. You tell me that I shall cease to be at death, just as these sheep will cease to be. I should like to know how you happen to know this.

Has our Maker spoken to you out of heaven, and told you so: or is it mere guess-work with you? No, no, Sir; I am not going to take your random guess-work sayings as true gospel; I like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John too well for that; and now, to let you know my mind, I tell you plainly, you come too late to make a poor man disbelieve his Bible, if you don't come before he has felt the enlightening and renewing and refreshing power of its blessed truths on his soul; he has then the Witness within, and that's a witness that can't lie. I won't give up the truthful testimony of this living Witness for your random guess-work sayings, which you yourself can't know to be true. I don't want, Sir, to offend you; but I look upon you as a false prophet, who may deceive the wicked, but can't deceive a man who fears God and loves Jesus Christ as I do, and shall do for ever."

Perfect stillness prevailed around; no sounds were heard but my own footsteps, and the occasional notes of the nightingale, until I came to a brake, when I heard some verses of a favourite hymn sung in sweet melody of intonation:—

"The calm retreat, the silent shade  
With prayer and praise agree;  
And seem by thy sweet bounty made  
For those who follow thee.

"There, if thy Spirit touch the soul,  
And grace her mean abode,  
Oh! with what peace, and joy, and love,  
She communes with her God!

"There, like the nightingale, she pours  
Her solitary lays;  
Nor asks a witness of her song,  
Nor thirsts for human praise.

"Author and guardian of my life,  
Sweet source of light divine,  
And—all harmonious names in one—  
My Saviour! thou art mine.

“What thanks I owe thee, and what love!  
 A boundless, endless store,  
 Shall echo through the realms above  
 When time shall be no more.”

I lingered here some time after the music had died away, luxuriating in my own hallowed reflections; and then, after gazing awhile on a tall and graceful figure standing on the summit of a rock, whose melodious voice had breathed such an air of enchantment over the scene below him, I returned to the inn, had my supper, and after engaging in prayer with the family, retired to rest. In the morning I rose early and revisited the vale, humming over, as I sauntered along, the following suggestive and consolatory lines of a modern poet:—

“God is here; how sweet the sound!  
 All I feel and all I see,  
 Nature teems, above, around,  
 With universal Deity.

“Is there danger? Void of fear,  
 Though the death-wing'd arrow fly,  
 I can answer, God is here,  
 And I move beneath his eye.

“When I pray, he hears my pray'r;  
 When I weep, he sees my grief:  
 Do I wander? He is here,  
 Ready to afford relief.”

I reached the end of the walk before aware of it; when I saw a cottage, towards which I bent my steps. It was small, yet tastefully adorned with jessamine, honey-suckles, and rose-trees, with a neat flower-garden in front, inclosed by a hawthorn hedge; and while admiring its varied beauties, an elderly female made her appearance, whose physiognomy and whose manners were very prepossessing. After a little desultory conversation, as I stood resting my arm on the top of her little wicket-gate, she invited me to come in and rest myself. I accepted her invitation, and soon found that I was in the society of one of the Lord's “hidden ones.” My hostess was a

widow, whose husband had been dead about seven years. She informed me that her father, a man of piety and of wealth, had given her an education becoming his station; that at the age of seventeen she yielded herself to God, as one alive from the dead, and before she reached her twentieth year, she was married to one of the most amiable and one of the most attentive men that ever became a husband. A kind Providence smiled upon them during the first twelve years of their wedded life, when a series of disasters befell them, which turned their paradise of bliss into a valley of weeping. Her father having made some large speculations in the wool-trade, lost the whole of his property, and not having been inured to affliction in his earlier days, his vigorous constitution gave way, and he died, exclaiming, "Though I have lost all my worldly substance, yet the pearl of great price is still mine." The insolvency of her father shook public confidence in the commercial respectability of her husband, who was soon obliged to call together his creditors; and though there was more than sufficient property to meet their demands, yet, by making him a bankrupt, they did not receive quite half their amount. When his affairs were wound up, and he had obtained his certificate, his friends raised a subscription for him, and he recommenced business; but the hand of the Lord was against him, and he could not succeed.

An interesting daughter, who, from the age of seven years, had been seeking the Lord, was so overwhelmed by the afflictions of her parents, that she fell into a rapid decline; and though there were occasionally some bright prospects of her recovery, yet at last the night of death came and sealed up the vision of life. The father, who was a man of a very delicate frame, gradually sank beneath his accumulated trials, and left his widow with a son, without any resources for their future maintenance.

Her son was sent to a boarding-school, where he was educated at the expense of his uncle; and as the place of her nativity had lost all its attractions, she chose to retire to the lonely cottage in which I found her, where He who multiplied the widow's oil has never suffered her to want any good thing.

An occasional tear fell from her eye while she was relating this tale of woe, yet there was a dignified composure in her countenance, and that led me to remark—"I presume, Madam, that though you have met with such severe losses, you have not lost your confidence in God, nor the peace of mind it yields."

"No, Sir; I have enjoyed in this cottage more of the Divine presence than I ever felt in the days of prosperity, and would not willingly return to the world, and hazard the loss of my spiritual consolations, could I obtain its highest prizes. I know that my afflictions have been sent by my heavenly Father, who is too wise to err, and too good to act unkindly. He has designs to accomplish, by his dispensations, which may appear to us mysterious, because to us they are unknown; but though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. I now find the wells of salvation yield sweeter waters than when resorted to in former times, and my prospect of future glory is brighter and more animating than in the days of my greatest prosperity."

On expressing my surprise that she could willingly reside where the means of grace could not be fully enjoyed, she informed me that she was not deprived of these privileges. "If you look in that direction, you will see a spire rising among the trees on yonder hill. In that church the gospel is preached in its purity and in its power, and the Rector, who is an amiable man, usually preaches on Sabbath morning, when I attend. In the afternoon I stay at home and meditate on what I have heard; and in the evening I go to hear an excellent minister of Christ, who preaches in a small Dissenting chapel at the other end of our hamlet."

"Then you are no bigot?"

"No, I love all who love Christ; and to me it is immaterial where I go, if I can obtain an interview with Him, whom unseen I love."

"As the gospel is preached in your village, I hope you have met with some with whom you can enjoy Christian fellowship."

“Yes, the Lord has a few in this modern Sardis who have escaped the general pollution, and are walking worthy their high vocation. We meet once in the week for prayer and conversation, and are often favoured with times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.”

“Have you ever had any conversation with a pious shepherd, who feeds his flock in your beautiful vale?”

“O yes, he is often our chaplain. The word of Christ dwells in him richly. He has an excellent gift in prayer, and is an Israelite indeed; a beautiful specimen of the new-creating power of the Almighty.”

“But do you never wish to reside in a town, where you could enjoy an extensive intercourse with the religious world?”

“O no; I have lived long enough to know that a few select friends, whose minds are uncontaminated by the censorious spirit of the age, are a richer treasure than a promiscuous throng, enslaved and governed by sectarian prejudices.”

The room in which we were conversing was neatly furnished; a few pictures decorated one of the side walls, and a small library was placed in the centre of the opposite. I found among the books a copy of Robinson's *Village Sermons*, and on taking it from the shelf, I observed, “Robinson was an extraordinary man, but the eventide of his life was comparative darkness.”

“Yes, it was; but the productions of his pen have often yielded me pure mental enjoyment; and, if you will permit me, I will show you a passage in one of his sermons, which I never read without bearing a personal testimony to its accuracy:—‘Is it a benefit to understand the spirit and see the beauty of the Holy Scriptures? Afflictions teach Christians the worth of their Bibles, and so wrap up their hearts in the oracles of God. The Bible is but an insipid book to us before afflictions bring us to feel the want of it, and then how many comfortable passages do we find which lay neglected and unknown before! I recollect an instance in a history of some who fled from persecution in this country to that then wild desert, Ame-

rica. Among many other hardships, they were sometimes in such straits for bread, that the very crusts of their former tables in England would have been a dainty to them. Necessity drove the women and children to the sea-side to look for a ship expected to bring them provisions; but no ship for many weeks appeared; however, they saw in the sands vast quantities of shell-fish, since called clams, a sort of mussels. Hunger impelled them to taste, and at length they fed almost wholly on them, and to their own astonishment were as cheerful, fat, and lusty as they had been in England with their fill of the best provisions. A worthy man one day, after they had all dined on clams without bread, returned God thanks for causing them to *suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand*—a passage in the 33d chapter of Deuteronomy, a part of the blessing with which Moses blessed the tribe of Zebulun before his death; a passage till then unobserved by the company, but which ever after endeared the writings of Moses to them.”

Just as she finished reading, a farmer-looking man came to the door with a letter, which Mrs. Lewellin took and opened with eagerness. She wept as she read, and involuntarily exclaimed—“O George! my son, my son!” Unwilling to withhold consolation from one who had passed through such fiery trials, I asked her if she had received any intelligence of a very painful nature.

“Ycs,” she said, while endeavouring to suppress the rising grief of her heart, “I have a letter from my dear boy, who has resided in London for the last two years. He is very ill. O Sir! if ——.” A long silence ensued, which was interrupted only by the expressions of strong maternal grief. “If he had felt the power of divine grace changing his heart ——.” She wept again. “But I fear he has been drawn away from religion by evil companions. Oh! if he were to die, where could I ever find rest? This is a trial which pierces my heart.”

“I am not surprised to witness such excessive grief; but may not this affliction be sent to elicit the meaning of some obscure passage



of the Sacred Volume? Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; that is, deliverance comes when most needed, but as often when least expected. The set time for your son's conversion may be nigh at hand; and He who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will may now be making the necessary preparations for this great event; so that your mourning may very soon be turned into rejoicing."

"If the Lord should be pleased to renew the soul of my dear boy, I shall, like the father, when he saw his prodigal son retracing his steps to his long-deserted home, feel an ecstasy of joy. The crisis in his moral history may be coming. I will betake myself to special prayer, and in faith and hope wait the issue. Nothing is impossible with God."

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## THE WIDOW'S SON.



GEORGE LEWELLIN, the son of the lonely widow, at the decease of his father was twelve years of age. He finished his education under the direction of his uncle; and, having attained his seventeenth year, he was placed in a merchant's counting-house in London. In person he was tall and slender, prepossessing in appearance and manners, unreserved in disposition, of an amiable temper, and disposed, from the ingenuous sincerity of his heart, to regard every one as his friend who courted his society. Soon after his entrance on his new course of life, he received an affectionate letter from his mother, cautioning him against the many temptations of the metropolis:—

"As, my dear George, you are removed from under the immediate inspection of your friends, and will be exposed to a variety of tempta-

tions, permit me to urge upon you the importance of reading the Scriptures daily, of regularly attending some place of worship on the Sabbath-day, and of avoiding the company of the gay and dissipated. If companions entice you to the play-house, to card parties, or to places of public amusement, do not allow them to prevail upon you; for, if you once give way to their entreaties, you will soon be overcome. I have had many trials. I have lost my property; I have buried your lovely sister; I have wept over the tomb of your pious father; and to see you turning your back on religion, would bring my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. But I hope better things of you, though I thus write. Let me hear from you soon, and often; and give me a faithful account of how you spend your time; and believe me to be yours, most affectionately," &c.

His reply will give the reader some insight into the state of his mind and situation:—

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—I thank you for your kind letter. Yes; you have had many trials, but I hope you have, at least, one living comfort left. To promote your happiness will be, I trust, the constant effort of my life; and as I know something of the value of prayer, I hope you will always have me in remembrance when at a throne of grace. I have a good room at a Mr. Jordan's, in the City Road. Mr. Jordan is a plain, pious man, and his wife appears very amiable. They have no children, and they treat me as their son. I very much like the situation which my uncle has procured for me. There are, in the office, three clerks besides myself, but they are all my seniors. The oldest is married, and has a family. The next is the son of a Friend, but he has thrown off the plain garb, and often ridicules the simple mode of speech for which that scrupulous people are distinguished. The other is the only son of a country esquire of large fortune. They treat me with the greatest kindness; and so does the gentleman in whose service I have the honour of being employed. My time is fully occupied; and though business is new to me, yet I begin to find the difficulties attending it giving way. I will try to please, and I hope shall be successful. As I know you

feel more anxious about my spiritual than my temporal prosperity, I shall give you an account of the manner in which I spend my Sabbaths. I regularly attend church twice a-day, and have already heard some of the most celebrated preachers in London, but have not yet determined to what congregation I shall attach myself. Variety is charming, but I rather think that a stated ministry is the most profitable. I often think of you and your lovely retreat, and wish I could pop in upon you to receive the maternal blessing."

A material change soon took place in the principles and habits of young Lewellin, and it may be proper to give a brief account of those to whose influence it may be ascribed. The senior clerk in the office was an amiable man, but his mind was deeply tinctured by the deistical sentiments of the age. He would occasionally throw out some insinuations against *professors*; but as he perceived it gave Lewellin pain, he was rather sparing in his remarks. Mr. Gordon, the semi-Quaker, was less guarded; and, being a young man of a ready wit and polished manners, he became a dangerous companion. Having been educated under a severe discipline, which taught him to regard the cut of the coat and the construction of a sentence as important if not essential branches of religion, he had imbibed deep-rooted prejudices against it; and, though still in regular attendance at meeting *on first-day morning*, yet he usually spent the other parts of the Sabbath at some place of public resort. His respectability introduced him into the best society, and his principles fitted him for the worst. He narrowly watched Lewellin; and resolved to emancipate him, if possible, from under the control of his religious opinions and habits; and he proceeded with great caution in this work of moral destruction, being aware that, if his principles were stormed before they were undermined, he should excite a powerful resistance. Having laid his plan of seduction, he soon began to carry it into execution. On leaving the office one evening, he politely asked Lewellin to spend an hour with him. Lewellin frankly accepted his invitation, and they had a long conversation together, during which Gordon displayed so much good-nature, such a fund of

anecdote, and such a rich vein of wit, that he gained an entire ascendancy over his friend, who expressed a desire that the intimacy now formed might be perpetuated. The clock struck eleven, when Lewellin suddenly started from his chair, and took his hat and cane; but was detained two hours longer by the powerful attractions of his companion. At length he bade him good-night. As he passed down Fleet Street, his conscience began to smite him. "What would my dear mother *feel* if she knew where I am at this hour!" But, having resolved that he would never again be guilty of such an act of imprudence, his faithful monitor was hushed to silence:—"He is a charming man!—What an extensive knowledge of the world!—What a fund of anecdote; and how well he narrates and describes! A new scene is opening before me." Thus he talked to himself, till he reached his lodgings, where he found the family very much alarmed.

"Dear Sir," said Mrs. Jordan, as soon as the passage door was opened, "we are very glad to see you. We were fearful that you had lost yourself, or that some greater evil had befallen you."

"I am sorry," replied Lewellin, "that I have kept you up so late; but Mr. Gordon pressed me to spend the evening with him, and the time slipped by before I was aware of it."

"I am glad to see you home," said Mr. Jordan; "and, as we have been expecting you every minute for the last three hours, we have not yet had family prayer." The good man knelt down, and prayed most affectionately for his young friend, who stood exposed to so many temptations.

Next day Lewellin went to the office as usual, but nothing particular occurred till the evening, when Gordon asked him to accept the loan of a book, which he had no doubt would amuse him. He took it, and hastened home to peruse it. Immediately after tea he retired to his own room. He opened the volume, read the title-page, threw the book on the table, and exclaimed, "No; I'll not read it. I gave my word of honour to my mother that I would never read a novel; and I will not sacrifice my honour to please any friend." He paced the room backwards and forwards for some time,

reflecting on the past evening, till the thoughts of his heart troubled him, when he seated himself in the arm-chair which was standing near the table. As the book was elegantly bound, he took it up, and examined the workmanship; read the whole of the title-page, and then the preface; and, finding nothing very objectionable, he read on, till startled by a knock at the door. "Who is there?" "Will you come down to supper, Sir?" He took out his watch, and found that he had been reading two hours, and as it was the first novel he ever read, it had so deeply fixed his attention, that he had nearly finished it before he felt conscious of what he was doing. "Yes, yes, I'll come presently; but don't wait." "Let me see, there are thirty more pages; I'll finish it." He read on, but the charm was broken by a recollection of his vow; and he again threw the book from him, exclaiming, "Fascinating wretch, thou hast beguiled me of my honour!" He hastened out of the room, that he might avoid the reflections of his own mind; and when he entered the parlour, he found an interesting young man, of whom he had often heard Mr. Jordan speak. This young man was intelligent and pious, highly accomplished in his manners, and just on the eve of being married. After supper he engaged in family prayer; and when offering up his devout thanksgivings to the God of all grace, for preserving him from the paths of the destroyer, and guiding his feet in the way of peace, he made a natural transition to the situation of Lewellin, and most fervently prayed that he might be enabled to escape the pollution of the world, and consecrate himself to the service of the God of his fathers. Lewellin endeavoured to conceal his emotions, but the recollection of his having that night sacrificed his honour, threw such a melancholy air over his countenance, that Mrs. Jordan, who felt deeply interested in his welfare, abruptly asked him if he was unwell. The question perplexed him; but assuming his ordinary cheerfulness, he replied, "No, Madam." Having sat a little longer, he took leave of the company, and retired to rest. On casting his eye on the book, as he stood musing, he said, "Well, I don't know that I have received any moral injury from reading it; and perhaps

my mother did wrong to press me to pledge my word that I would not read a novel."

Next Sabbath Mr. Gordon called on him in the afternoon, and asked him to accompany him to the Lock, to hear a celebrated preacher. As they were passing through St. James's Park, they met Mr. Phillips (the other clerk in the office), with three ladies. The meeting appeared accidental; and as Mr. Phillips pressed his friends to do him and the ladies the honour of their company, politeness induced a compliance, and the whole party took an excursion on the river. They did not return till late; and it was past twelve before Lewellin reached his lodgings. On entering the parlour he made an apology for not being home earlier, and to avoid being embarrassed by any questions, took his candle, and retired to his own room. He sat himself down; but the sight of the Bible, which lay on the table, agonized his feelings, and he began to reproach himself in the bitterest terms. "Yes, a new scene is opening before me; but what a scene! No; I will break the charm before I am completely enslaved! My mother does not know it.—But the eye of God—I cannot conceal myself from him. Woe is me! I am lost! I am undone! No; I will repent. I will ask for mercy." He threw himself on his bed, and after hours of mental torture and bitter lamentation he fell asleep; but he was scared by the visions of the night, and when the light of the morning dawned, it brought no tidings of peace. At length he arose, and went to the office, where he met his companions in guilt, but his mind was too much depressed to allow him to be cheerful; and the references which were made to the excursion of the preceding evening aggravated his misery. When the business of the day was closed, he walked away in silent sadness; but he had not gone far before Gordon overtook him, and invited him to take some refreshment in a coffee-house. He strongly objected—and then consented.

"I perceive," said Gordon, "that you are unhappy, and I guess the cause. You suffer your noble mind to be tortured by the tales of the nursery. Treat them with contempt."

"No, I am not tortured by the tales of the nursery, but by the reflections of a guilty conscience."

"Conscience," said Gordon, smiling; "I had such a thing once, but as it stood in the way of my love of pleasure, I got rid of it, and now I am happy, because I am free. And I assure you that you will never be fitted to enjoy life till you form juster notions of the Deity than religion inspires; and till you open your heart to the sublime gratifications which the society and amusements of this far-famed city afford. Come, give way to the impulse of your generous nature, and accompany me this evening."

"Where?"

"Where you shall have a mental feast."

Lewellin, expecting that Gordon was going to a Philosophical Society, of which he was a member, gave his consent; nor was he undeceived, till he found himself seated in a box at Drury Lane Theatre. His conscience smote him; but as he had been decoyed there, the faithful reprover was soon silenced; the curtain was drawn, and the stage exhibited a scene which was not only new but captivating. When the play was over, Gordon said, "I have watched your countenance during the whole of the tragedy, and I perceive that you have an instinctive taste for the drama. Yes, Lewellin, this is the school to exalt the genius and amend the heart. Here our manners are polished, our taste is refined, and those moral sentiments are inculcated which make the man *the gentleman*."

On leaving the theatre they adjourned to an hotel, where they ordered supper, and as they sat conversing together till a very late hour, they decided on sleeping there. The Rubicon was now passed, and Lewellin, having tasted of the forbidden fruit, resolved to rid himself of his Puritanical notions (as he began to term his religious sentiments), that he might enjoy life. The first step he took was to write a letter to his kind friend, Mr. Jordan, to say that circumstances rendered it inconvenient for him to reside so far from the office, and therefore he was under the painful necessity of taking another set of rooms; he added, "I will call and settle with you ;

and I will thank you to send my dressing-case, &c., by the bearer." He then told his friend Gordon what he had done, who congratulated him on his *courage*, and assured him that he was welcome to accommodation in his apartments until he could suit himself better.

The seducer having now got his victim in his own power, hurried him through the various stages of vice with almost breathless impetuosity. The theatre, the billiard-room, the hotel of intemperance, were alternately visited; and he who a few months before was horror-struck at the sight of a novel, could now occupy the seat of a scorner. But he was not suffered to remain there undisturbed. Conscience would sometimes inflict the most poignant wounds. The thought of home, of his pious father and sister, of the day of judgment, and of his loving mother, drove him at times almost frantic; when, after pronouncing a secret curse on his companion, he would plunge himself deeper in iniquity, that he might gain a momentary relief. To follow him through the course of impiety which he ran for the space of two years, during which time he involved himself in debt and in hopeless misery, would afford the reader no gratification. Disease, which had been for some time destroying his health, and impairing the vigour of his constitution, now incapacitated him for business, and he was obliged to keep to his apartments, which were near those of Mr. Gordon. For several days after his confinement he received no attention from his friend, and that left his mind more at liberty to take the black review.

He reproached himself—he reproached the destroyer of his peace—he wept, but he could not pray. He wrote a letter to his pious mother, but he burned it—he wrote another, and burned it. He wrote to his friend, Mr. Jordan, whom he had not seen since he left his house, and, just as he was directing it, the servant announced Mr. Gordon.

"Well, George, how are you?"

"Ill, very ill, and you are the cause of it!"

"I the cause of it!"

"Yes, you enticed me from the paths of virtue into the paths of



vice, and though I reproach myself for my folly in giving way to your entreaties, yet, Sir, you are the seducer."

"Ah! Lewellin, you are got back to the tales of the nursery. Come, come, pluck up your spirits. You will soon get better. What does the doctor say? I was at Drury last night, and never had a finer treat."

"The doctor gives me but little hope, and your present conversation gives me less pleasure. If I die, I must appear before my Judge, and am I (wringing his hands) prepared? No!"

"Well, then, I will be off, but don't play the fool; die like a man. Phillips says he'll call to see you to-morrow, but I suppose a visit from some of the godly will be more acceptable."

"I want a visit from some one who can minister to a mind diseased."

"Well, good-bye. But die like a man, if you are doomed to death."

He was now left alone, irresolute—alarmed. He rings. "Put that letter in the post immediately." Is more composed. Mr. Jordan called on him next morning, and when he saw him could not refrain from weeping. Lewellin cautiously concealed from him the cause of his illness, but informed him that the doctor gave but little hope of his life.

"Does your dear mother know how you are?"

"No, I do not like to alarm her; but if I do not get better in a few days, I think I shall endeavour to go down and see her, and if I must die, I hope to die in her arms."

"I have called several times at your office since you left my house, but you were either engaged, or not within, and we have often wondered why you never came to see us. We have always had you in remembrance at a throne of grace."

"Ah! had I never left your house, I should not have been reduced to that state of wretchedness and woe in which you now see me. I was seduced by a worthless companion, and now—(he made a long pause)—I have cut short my life; I have ruined my soul; I shall break my mother's heart. O eternity! how I dread thee."

The tender feelings of Mr. Jordan were so strongly excited by the

looks and the expressions of Lewellin, that he could make no reply for several minutes. At length he said, "But the chief of sinners may obtain mercy."

"Yes, I know that the chief of sinners may obtain mercy, if they repent and believe; but I cannot do either. I have fitted myself for destruction, and now I must prepare to go where the worm dieth not, and where the fire will never be quenched."

"Do not despair of mercy."

"Yes, I must. Despair gives me more relief than hope."

"Shall I pray with you?"

"It is too late."

"Consent."

"Then pray for my dear mother; pray that her mind may be prepared for the distressing news which will soon reach her ears. I have deceived her."

Mr. Jordan knelt down and prayed; but his importunity merely served to invest the pang of despair with an additional degree of terror.

"All is useless—

'The help of men and angels join'd  
Can never reach my case.'"

"That's true, my dear young friend, but" ——

"Pardon me for interrupting you, but I dare not ask for mercy. Justice demands a victim, and I must die."

"But mercy pleads."

"Yes, but she will never plead for me."

"Do try to pray."

"No, I am not disposed to offer a fresh insult to God. He has rejected me. I know my doom. It is irrevocably fixed. I deserve all I suffer, and all I have to suffer."

Mr. Jordan now left him, but called again the next evening, when he found him rather better and more composed, and was gratified to hear that he had written a letter to his mother, informing her of his indisposition, and that she might expect to see him in the space of a few days, as he had been recommended to try the effect of a change of air.

## THE WIDOW'S SON RECLAIMED.

**T**HE influence of Divine truth on the youthful mind is often very salutary ; it keeps the conscience tender, even when it does not keep it pure ; it inspires an awe of God, and a secret dread of evil, even when it does not root out of the heart a predilection for it ; and secures an external consistency of moral deportment, even while the mind remains unchanged. But such is the extreme degeneracy of our nature, that its sinful appetites and propensities will often burst through the most powerful restraints, and the fascinating temptations of an evening, or even a single hour, will often render apparently useless all the efforts of a long and painstaking course of domestic instruction and discipline. Hence the youth who has been trained up in the "fear of the Lord," on finding himself removed from under the watchful eye of parental solicitude, may, after a momentary hesitation, yield to the ensnaring seductions of the world, and launch forth into scenes of impurity and vice, braving the consequences ; and though occasionally disturbed by some compunctious visitations, yet he passes on, contemning his early religious impressions, and treating with profane levity those momentous truths which once overawed and animated his soul. But can he proceed without meeting with some formidable resistances ? Can he forget that the piercing eye of God follows him through all the windings and doublings of his course ? Can he shake off the dread of futurity, and bid his dark forebodings cease ? No ; conscience stands in his way, and disputes his passage, by turning against him the sword of truth, which often inflicts a wound too deep even for intemperance to heal or soothe. He sighs for peace, but peace comes not ; for there is no peace to the wicked.

To indulge the hope of reclaiming such a youth by the mere force

of terror or persuasion, would be a visionary prospect ; yet, have we never seen the prodigal return ? Have we never heard the parent exclaim, " For this my son was dead, but is alive again ; he was lost, but is found ? "

George Lewellin left London a few days after he had communicated the state of his health to his mother, and reached her home the following morning ; when she saw him, as he was opening the wicket gate in front of the house, she sprang up, ran, fell on his neck, and kissed him. The interview was affecting ; and it was some moments before either of them could speak. On raising her eyes to survey the once lovely form of her only son, now emaciated by disease, she could not refrain from exclaiming, as she pressed him still closer to her agonized bosom, " O, George, what's the matter ? How long have you been ill ? Why did you conceal your illness from me ? "

" Be composed, mother ; I am better, and have no doubt but relaxation from business, and the fresh air of the country, will be the means of bringing me about again. The porter is waiting with my trunk ; I will thank you to satisfy him for his trouble, as I have no change."

During the first week after his arrival he began to mend ; and all indulged a hope of his speedy recovery ; but disease had taken too deep root in his constitution to be suddenly eradicated ; and within a fortnight the fever returned with increasing violence, setting at defiance the skill of the physican, who confessed that his life was in the most imminent danger. He now took to his bed, and said to a young friend who called to see him : " I shall never leave this room till I am carried out by the ministers of death." On the following Sabbath, his mother ventured to ask him how he felt in prospect of death. This question agitated him. He became restless, a sullen gloom was thrown over his countenance, and he remained silent. This silence inflicted a deeper wound in her tender bosom than the most piercing cries of mental anguish ; and though she endeavoured to conceal her grief, yet she was unable to do so. " O, George, do tell me. When I lost your father, I had the consolation of knowing that he was gone



ENGRAVED BY W. L. THOMAS.

RETURN OF THE WIDOW'S SON.

DRAWN BY G. H. THOMAS.

to heaven ; and your dear departed sister said, just before she left me, 'Weep not for me, for I shall soon see the King in his beauty ;' and will *you die* without allowing me to indulge the hope of meeting you in heaven ?"

"My dear mother, I have deceived you once, but deception is now at an end ; I have 'trampled under foot the blood of the covenant,' and that blood is now crying for vengeance against me. I know my doom ; and, however painful it may be to your feelings to see your own child lingering out the few remaining days of his life, without one cheering hope, yet I *do* request that you will not embitter my last hours by making any allusions to heaven."

"O, George, my child!"

"O, my mother, I am undone !"

As his mind was in such a perturbed state, Mrs. Lewellin thought it prudent to turn the current of conversation ; and, after listening to a detailed account of his course of life when in London, she retired to try the efficacy of prayer. In the evening a pious young friend called to see him, to whom he said, "I will thank you to remove that Bible out of my sight, for its very presence agonizes me. Such a book ought not to lie near such a wretch as I am. It is like compelling the criminal to ride on his own coffin to the place of execution."

"But, my dear Sir, that holy book contains a revelation of mercy and grace to sinners, and offers salvation to the chief."

"I know all that, and therefore I wish it removed ; for I have made sport with the revelation of mercy."

"But the Lord waits to be gracious."

"No ; he is now laughing at my calamity ; and soon the curtain of life will drop, and then his injured justice will be glorified in my condemnation. Give me a draught of water."

He drank the whole in haste ; and, on giving back the cup, said, "It would afford me some relief if I could hope to find a spring of water in hell. But, no ; not one drop there to cool my parched tongue !"

“O, George, do not put from you the words of peace.”

“The words of peace, to my soul, are like the dragon's sting or the viper's bite ; and the voice of mercy sounds more awful in my ears than the footsteps of vengeance. I know my doom ; and if you wish me to have a moment's calm while the respite lasts, talk of earth, of its joys, or of its sorrows ; but bring me not near the spot where Mercy died for man.”

The fever, which had remained stationary for several days, now raged with uncontrolled violence, without impairing the vigour or acuteness of his intellect, and all expected that a few hours would terminate his mortal career. His mother hung over him, breathing the purest and most ardent affection ; but she was not permitted to instil the consolations of religion, and that at length so overpowered her feelings that she was obliged to retire, leaving her only son the victim of despair. His eye followed her as she left the room ; and when the door closed, he burst into a flood of tears, exclaiming, “The doom that awaits me would be less terrible, if I could have concealed it from my mother. I have destroyed myself, and plunged the fatal dagger into her breast. O, thou holy, thou righteous God, thou art clear when thou judgest, and just when thou condemnest ! Have pity on my dear mother, and support her soul under this awful visitation of thy vengeance !”

He now became more composed ; but on hearing the clock strike eleven, he started up in bed, asked for a large draught of cold water, and expressed an ardent wish to see his mother once more, as he was apprehensive that life was just on the eve of departing. A female attendant went to call her, but she was asleep ; and on returning, she asked if she should awake her. After a long pause, he said, “No ; let her sleep on, and take her rest, and I will die alone, and spare her the agony of hearing the last tremendous groan, which is to announce my entrance into hell.” He then requested that another pillow might be placed under his head ; and turning himself on his left side, he laid himself down to expire. In about a quarter of an hour the nurse, who was standing by his side, gently whispered,

“I think he is gone;” but on feeling his pulse, she soon ascertained that he was in a profound sleep. He slept for several hours, during which time the fever very much abated, and when he awoke he said, with a firm tone, “I now think I shall recover.”

“Yes, my child,” replied Mrs. Lewellin, “the Lord has heard my prayers, and answered them, by sparing your life; and I have no doubt but he will answer them further by making this affliction the means of bringing you to repentance, and the enjoyment of fellowship with him.”

This appropriate remark made a deep impression; he looked at his mother, but said nothing. His recovery was as rapid as his relapse had been dangerous; and though his strength was greatly impaired, yet he was able to leave his room in the early part of the ensuing week. Being now rescued from the brink of death, and animated with the hope of returning health, as he sat alone musing over the awful scene through which he had so recently passed, he laid his hand on a hymn-book, which was placed on the table, and read the following hymn with intense interest:—

“When with my mind devoutly press’d,  
Dear Saviour, my revolving breast  
Would past offences trace;  
Trembling I make the black review,  
Yet pleased behold, admiring too,  
The pow’r of changing grace.

“This tongue with blasphemies defil’d,  
These feet in erring paths beguil’d,  
In heavenly league agree.  
Who could believe such lips could praise,  
Or think my dark and winding ways  
Should ever lead to thee?

“These eyes, that once abused their sight,  
Now lift to thee their wat’ry light,  
And weep a silent flood;  
These hands ascend in ceaseless pray’r;  
O wash away the stains they wear,  
In pure redeeming blood.



“These ears that, pleased, could entertain  
 The midnight oath, the lustful strain,  
 When round the festal board ;  
 Now, deaf to all th’ enchanting noise,  
 Avoid the throng, detest the joys,  
 And press to hear thy word.

“Thus art thou serv’d in ev’ry part ;  
 O would’st thou more transform my heart,  
 This drossy thing refine ;  
 That grace might nature’s strength control,  
 And a new creature, body, soul,  
 Be, Lord, for ever thine.”

While reading these verses, the determination he had formed to live and die without hope, was shaken; but after a momentary pause, he involuntarily exclaimed, in an under tone of utterance, “It would be an act of presumption for me to indulge a hope of ever feeling the power of ‘changing grace.’ No, it cannot be; my heart is too hard. I am too impure, too depraved, too guilty.” This novel train of thought was broken off by the entrance of his mother into the parlour, who was surprised and delighted by seeing him with the hymn-book, which he still held in his hand. Without appearing to notice it, after a casual reference to the good prospect of his speedy restoration to health, she said, “I hope, my dear George, as you are now able to visit your friends, that you will accompany me in the evening to chapel, where you will hear a most excellent minister.”

“I will go to oblige you, but I can anticipate no other pleasure.”

“But you may derive some profit, for there the Lord condescends to make the truth effectual to the salvation of them that believe.”

“But I cannot believe, no, I cannot; I would, but I cannot!”

“But faith, my dear child, comes by hearing; and who can tell but this night you may feel the power of changing grace.”

After tea, Mrs. Lewellin and her son walked to the chapel; and though there were no splendid decorations to allure the devotee of superstition, nor any sculptured forms to attract the attention of the

sentimental worshipper, yet it was invested with unrivalled charms in her estimation, as the place where

“ — The Father sits supreme,  
As King Eternal, to receive  
Petitions that his servants bring,  
The homage which his subjects give.”

The reading, the singing, and the prayer accorded with the general tone of feeling which a select congregation usually enjoy; and though young Lewellin conducted himself with the greatest degree of decorum, yet it was not till after the text was announced that he appeared interested in the service. The preacher was a young man, of a correct taste, strong intellectual powers, and bold and animated address; but the subject which he had chosen for discussion was more adapted to establish the Christian in his faith, than reclaim the sinner from the error of his ways. The text was taken from 1st Corinthians, vi. 17: *He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.* There were no flights of lofty imagination in the composition of the discourse; no powerful appeals to the conscience; no master-strokes of argument, levelled against either the root or branches of infidelity; no terrific enunciations of the Divine displeasure; but a calm and spiritual explanation and defence of the doctrine of our union with Jesus Christ. The service was concluded without having produced any visible effects on Lewellin, who walked away with his mother, and the only remark he made was, “I never heard such a sermon before.” She knew not how to interpret the meaning of this ambiguous expression, and made no reply, lest, by coming in contact with his deistical opinions, she should be incapable of persuading him to accompany her at a future time. On entering the parlour, he took a candle and retired to his own room, which gave his mother a private opportunity of imploring the blessing of Heaven on the service of the evening. After waiting a considerable time, she began to feel uneasy, and went to the bottom of the stairs to listen; but on hearing his footsteps as he paced his chamber, she resumed her seat. An hour had now elapsed since she had seen him; the ambulating

motion was no longer heard, her fears were strongly excited, and being unable to suppress them, she stole up softly to his door, and listening a while with breathless anxiety, she heard, or thought she heard, an indistinct sound; she then looked through the keyhole of the door, and lo! he was on his knees in prayer. Had she seen visions of God, she might have been more awed, but she could not have been more delighted. She wept as she descended the stairs, but they were such tears as sorrow never sheds. Her heart was full, and she gave vent to her enraptured feeling at the footstool of His throne who had caused grace to abound where sin had been reigning nigh unto death.

At supper her son appeared very sedate, absorbed in deep thought; yet there was a serenity in his countenance, and an ease in his manner, which bespoke the composure of his mind. "I think," said his mother, "that the discourse we heard this evening placed the happiness and security of the Christian on such a firm basis, that we might have concluded the service by singing the beautiful lines of Toplady:—

‘Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given,  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven.’”

“You might have sung these words, because you are a Christian, but how could I have responded to them?”

“I hope, my dear George, you liked the sermon.”

“I never heard such a sermon; at least I never heard a sermon which produced such an effect on my mind. I could have listened till midnight. I felt what I never felt before.”

Yes! that night he felt the power of “changing grace,” and the change produced in his opinions, taste, and habits, soon became conspicuous; and while it excited the ridicule of some, the gratitude of others, and the astonishment of all, it was as a witness raised from the dead to give a fresh testimony to the divine origin of the truth which had been the means of effecting it. He who had

been a bold blasphemer, now became a man of prayer; the intoxicating cup was exchanged for the wine of the kingdom; the Sabbath was hallowed as a day of rest; and the amusements and dissipations of the world were forsaken for the more refined enjoyments of devotion.

As soon as his health was re-established, he began to prepare for his return to his situation in London; and though he recoiled from the prospect of being compelled to associate with his former companions, yet he indulged the hope of being able to reclaim them from the destructive paths of sin. He wrote to his friend, Mr. Jordan, with whom he lodged when he first went to London, to inform him of the change which had taken place, and to request permission to become once more an inmate in his pious family. To this letter he received a very encouraging reply; and the following week was fixed on for his departure.

But he could not consent to leave the place where he had passed from death to life—from the miseries of one world to the sublime anticipations of another—till he had borne a public testimony of his gratitude to the Redeemer, by receiving the memorials of his death. He waited on the faithful minister who had been employed as the angel of mercy to his soul, to express his desire; and on the following Sabbath, with his honoured parent, he sat down at the Lord's table, thus making a public profession of the faith which he once scornfully rejected.

The morning after his return to London he went to the office, and on entering every one arose to offer his congratulations; but Mr. Gordon exceeded all in the ardour of his expressions. "This," said he, "is one of the happiest days of my life, and I adore the fate which has decreed that death shall lose a victim to restore me my friend."

"I adore the mercy," replied Lewellin, "that has spared my life; and I trust, my dear Sir, that my friendship will now be a purer flame than ever burnt on the altar of my heart."

This reply created a little embarrassment to Mr. Gordon; but

he soon got over it, and resumed his accustomed vivacity of disposition and ease of manners. In the evening they walked away together, when Lewellin informed him that a material change had taken place in his sentiments and in his taste; and that if he wished for a renewal of their former intimacy, it must be on the express condition of paying a most devout regard to the truths and institutions of revelation.

“What,” said Gordon, “are you again enslaved in the trammels of superstition; and do you expect that I shall bow my neck to such an ignominious yoke!”

“What you deem the yoke of ignominy, I esteem the badge of honour; and what you deem a cunningly devised fable, I esteem Divine truth. You won me over to your sentiments, and what did they do for me? They impaired my health. They tore up the foundation of a good constitution, and they plunged me into despair. I lived a sceptic, but I found that I could not die one. I am now restored to health, to truth, to happiness; and it is my determination to consecrate myself to the service of God my Saviour.”

“Ah, I pity you.”

“Pity me! Pity is for objects of misery; and had you seen me when the terrors of death fell on me, you might have pitied me: but now I want no pity, for I am perfectly happy; happy, because redeemed and regenerated; and have the prospect of enjoying a state of endless happiness in the world to come.

“Then, I suppose, in future our office is to become the hot-bed of fanaticism, where the rank weeds of an ancient superstition are to overshadow the lovely plants of reason’s golden age?”

“As I shall not obtrude my religious sentiments on the attention of others, you may calculate on passing through your professional duties without being annoyed, unless you first attack them; and in that case, I shall certainly stand up in their defence.”

“Well, well, that is all very fair. Then, if I do not commence the assault, you will not open your battery.”

“It will be my aim to make myself agreeable, and to recommend

my religion more by my example than by my arguments ; because I know how you will evade the one, but it is not quite certain that even *you* can withstand the other.

“ Ah, I see you resolve to play off upon me in the same way in which I triumphed over you, and I have no objection for the experiment to be tried ; but it will not succeed.”

The bold and decided manner in which Mr. Lewellin met the sarcasms of infidelity, and avowed his supreme regard to the truth of revelation, cut off from his former companions all hopes of getting him again to join their ranks ; and they, as by mutual consent, abstained from either pressing or enticing him to do so. He now pursued his course without much obstruction, displaying an amiability of temper, and a dignified integrity of principle, which gained him general respect ; and though some regretted the change, yet all acknowledged that it was beneficial. His mind was too powerfully imbued with the love of the *grand and essential truths of revelation*, to admit of his cherishing any undue predilection for the distinctive peculiarities of sectarian opinions ; and hence he very easily guarded religion against the obnoxious charges to which it is too often exposed, by the dogmatism and intolerance of its injudicious advocates. He was now introduced by his friend, Mr. Jordan, to the Rev. W. C——, of whose church he became a member ; and such was the vital energy which he threw into all his engagements, and such the unaffected humility which adorned his character, that he soon rose very high in the esteem of all his religious associates. As a Sunday-school teacher, as a visitor of the sick, and as an agent of the Tract Society, he was equalled by few, and surpassed by none ; and he never appeared more delighted than when engaged, either alone or with others, in devising plans for the promotion of the spiritual and eternal welfare of his fellow-men ; and in carrying them into execution he spared neither time, labour, nor expense.

## FAIRMOUNT.



At a time when I was recovering from a long and severe illness, which had interrupted the regular discharge of my ministerial labours, and threatened the extinction of life, I received an invitation from my friend, Mr. Stevens, who lived near the romantic village of Watville, and resolved to pay him a visit. I travelled by easy stages; and in three days after I left home, I became an inmate in his hospitable villa.

The villa of Fairmount is situated on the summit of a hill, commanding an extensive view of a richly-wooded and picturesque country. On the evening of my arrival the scene was one of extreme beauty. At the base of the hill flowed a meandering river, stretching away into the far distance, sometimes lost amidst the luxuriant foliage, and again suddenly reappearing; here reposing in cool shadow, there gleaming with the rays of the setting sun. On the right, a small parish church, with its pointed arch and tapering spire, peeped through an inclosure of aged elms and sycamores; on the left, near the public road, a few white cottages, with trim gardens, where children were sporting gleefully. More distant, films of smoke marked the positions of various hamlets; and, stretching far as the eye could reach, the hills of another county rose in purple masses against the evening sky. In the meadow, the cow and the ox were feeding together, and from the sheepfold the bleating of the flock fell softly on the ear. A host of early associations rushed upon me, and filled me with pleasant recollections of days long past, and I felt relieved from the pressure and perplexities of my ordinary avocations.

Mr. Stevens, with whom I was now domiciled, was a very intelligent and pious man. In early life, like many others, he had imbibed the sceptical opinions of the age, but as they were invested with no power to

“Heal the sorrows of the heart, or allay its fears,”



DRAWN BY S. BRAD

A PROSPECT OF FAIRMOUNT.

ENGRAVED BY W. E. THOMAS.

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he renounced them when the terrors of death fell upon him, and sought consolation at the cross of Christ. From that hour he became a decided Christian, choosing rather to suffer the reproach which is too often cast on *genuine piety*, than endure the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. Soon after *his translation from darkness to light*, he was introduced to the amiable and pious Miss Bathurst, with whom he formed that sacred union, which has been through life a source of mutual felicity. The first few years after their marriage they were extremely anxious for an heir, but as Providence denied them this gratification, they were disposed to acquiesce in his decision, and to reduce to a practical operation the prayer which they had long been accustomed to repeat: "Thy will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven." Being exempted from the charge and the expense of a family, they were more at liberty to promote the welfare of others; and rarely a day elapsed which did not bear testimony to their benevolent exertions.

The morning after my arrival, Mrs. Stevens asked me if I would accompany her to see a poor pious young woman who was very ill; and, lest the distance should be an objection, she told me she had given orders for the carriage to be ready exactly at half-past ten. "And as, Sir," she remarked, "you take greater pleasure in tracing the operations of Divine grace in the renovation of the human soul than in exploring the wonders of the material universe, and feel a purer delight on seeing a repenting sinner than in gazing on the enchanting scenery to which you have made such frequent allusions, I think I can gratify you."

As we were passing along the road, she gave me the following narration:—"In the cottage to which we are going reside a poor man and his wife, who have had a large family, but all have died in infancy except one beautiful daughter. She, when only sixteen, entered the family of a respectable farmer in the adjoining parish, where she continued four years, and would, in all human probability, have continued there till now, had it not been for a dashing London servant, who, when on a visit to her own father, got acquainted with her;

and by telling her of the high wages, and the little work *which town servants have*, made her dissatisfied with her place; and, in opposition to the advice of all her friends, she gave notice to leave, and actually went to London to try her fortune. When she arrived there she called on her friend, who had promised to procure her a situation; but was informed that no good one had yet turned up. She was recommended to take a lodging, for which she would have to pay only two shillings a-week, and no doubt, if she made proper inquiry, she would hear of something that would be for her advantage. Thus thrown on the world, without a home, and without a friend, she would have fallen a victim to her folly, had not Providence interposed to protect her. As she was passing along the Strand, with her bundle under her arm, a lady, who had once seen her at my house, recognized her, and asked her where she was going. The poor girl related her mournful tale, and implored pity. This lady took her to her own home, but as she was not in want of a servant, she could not retain her; yet she procured for her the best situation in her power. But, instead of high wages, she had not so much as when in the country; and her work was much more laborious. Thus disappointed, and having too high a spirit to return home, she gave herself up to grief; and taking a severe cold, which she neglected, her strength soon wasted away, and she was obliged to throw up her situation, and go into lodgings for the recovery of her health. But disease had made too great progress to be arrested; and after parting with nearly all her clothes to defray the expenses she had incurred, she was reduced to the alternative of dying for want or returning home. She wrote to her father, telling him she was very ill, and did not expect to live, and desiring as a favour that he would permit her to come home, and die in the room where she was born. As soon as the old man received her letter he hastened to our house; never did I witness such a burst of feeling. ‘O Madam! my dear Harriet is very ill; she has sent us this ——, and wants to come home, she says, to die.’ He wept, like the old patriarch, when he saw the bloody coat instead of his darling son. I endea-

voured to console him as well as I could, and immediately made an arrangement for her return. In the course of the next week, the grief-worn parents had the melancholy gratification of embracing their child. She was obliged to take to her bed on the very day of her arrival. I saw her the day after, and received from her a faithful narrative of her life. The wreck of beauty was still visible amidst the ruins of her constitution; and the hectic flush gave, at intervals, a superhuman expression to her countenance. I felt conscious that she was hastening to the grave; and this circumstance deeply depressed the feelings of her pious parents, who were fearfully apprehensive that she was not prepared for death and the final judgment. I requested them to leave us alone together, when I began to converse with her on the value of her soul, and on the only way of salvation. She wept, and said that she was fully aware of her danger and desert; but added, 'I hope that the Friend of sinners will have mercy on me. My conscience has often smote me; the anguish of my mind I cannot describe; but I lay myself at His feet, and cry, God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I have," added Mrs. Stevens, "regularly renewed my visits almost every day; and I hope that my feeble efforts have been made the means of leading her to the Saviour."

We now alighted from the carriage, and entered the cottage. Its cleanliness and order bespoke the presence of taste and religious feeling. As soon as the poor girl heard that there was a minister of the gospel in the house, she expressed an ardent desire to see me. When I approached her bedside, she exclaimed, "'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.' My pious parents impressed this fact on my memory in the days of my childhood, yet it never reached my heart till since I have been confined in this chamber. I have spent the prime of my days in vanity and sin, neglecting the means of grace, and disregarding the remonstrances of my own conscience; and, had not an invisible hand arrested me in my progress, I should have gone on till I had lost my soul. But here I

am, a monument of mercy; a sinner saved through the blood of the Lamb. That kind lady is the best earthly friend I ever had. She has been the means of making known to me the way of life; and now I can say, 'I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'

I expressed the pleasure I felt at hearing these joyful tidings, mingled my tears of gratitude with those of her relatives and friends, and after commending her soul to the care of the Lord Jesus, I bade her adieu, till we meet in that world where no disease will invade the constitution, where death will never burst asunder the bonds of social union, and where

"Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown."

As we rode back to Fairmount, I congratulated Miss Stevens on the honour which God had conferred on her, in employing her as the instrument of saving this dying girl from the pangs of the second death.

"It is an honour which I prize more than gold and silver, and which imparts a purer joy to my mind than ever heaved the bosom of a mere earthly philanthropist; it invests the eternal world with a fresh charm, as I expect to embrace my Harriet, as my own child in the faith.

"I have often thought, that if the infidel could perceive the sources of pleasure which Christianity opens to the pious mind, he would be less disposed to reproach her as hostile to human happiness."

"Yes, but such is the degree of his mental aversion to pure Christianity, that her more sublime doctrines are turned into themes of ridicule; the spirit which she inspires in her friends is regarded as the wild-fire of fanaticism, and our efforts to save a soul from death are stigmatized as a paltry manœuvre to gain a proselyte to our party; and though we may attempt to justify our conduct on the admitted principles of social benevolence, yet we can but rarely succeed."

Our conversation was unexpectedly interrupted by a gentleman, who stepped out of his garden, and informed Mrs. Stevens that the poor widow was worse, and was not expected to live through the day. This communication very deeply affected her. She paused, and then said, "Do you think that I may be permitted to see her?"

"Why, Madam," replied Mr. Roscoe, "the medical attendant has given express orders that no one be allowed to see her except the nurse. I hear that she *has made her peace with God*, and is not afraid to die. It will be a happy release for her."

"I hope Mrs. and Miss Roscoe are well; you will make my compliments to them, and say that we hope to see them at Fairmount very soon."

"Mr. Roscoe," said Mrs. Stevens, "is our nearest neighbour, but I fear that he has no just perception of the *nature* of true religion; though he is, *in his own estimation, a very religious man*. He is so amiable in temper, so kind in disposition, and so benevolent in spirit, that every one esteems him who knows him; but I fear that he substitutes this exterior amiability in the place of the atonement of Jesus Christ; and thinks that nothing more is necessary for salvation except an attendance at his parish church. But I feel for the dying widow. I saw her at the commencement of her illness; but when I told her *that she was a sinner, and that she could not be saved but through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ*, she told me that *she had never done any harm in her life, and that she did not doubt of the mercy of God*. I have called several times since; but, as I attempted *to disturb her peace in her dying moments*, I have not been permitted to see her again; and I understand some very severe remarks have been made on what is called my *cruel conduct*."

"Yes, Madam," I replied, "the spirit of the world will often forbid the herald of mercy entering the chamber of affliction, and will wrap up the departing soul in the winding-sheet of self-security before it enters the valley of the shadow of death. The language of Jesus Christ in reference to such a state of mind is *very, very awful*: '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 I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.’”

“I grant,” said Mrs. Stevens, “that prudence often renders it necessary to exclude even intimate friends from the sick chamber, lest the patient should have too much excitement; but to exclude friends merely *because they are religious*, and who may be disposed to say something in relation to that tremendous scene which eternity opens on the disembodied spirit, is a crime of no ordinary magnitude; and if the spirit were permitted to step back, after that scene has been beheld, in what indignant language would she condemn such an act of fatal cruelty.”

“It is a most momentous event in the history of a human being, when he passes from one world to another; when he steps out of time into eternity; but how perilously awful to make the passage when unprepared to go. I recollect going to see one of my hearers who was dangerously ill; but on recognizing my well-known foot-tread as I entered his chamber, he concealed himself under the bed-clothes, and we spoke not for several minutes; no sounds were heard, but his heavy sighs and piercing groans. He put out his hand, which I took, and gently pressed; we still remained silent, both being too highly surcharged with mental emotion to give utterance to what we felt. At length he threw off the bed-clothes, looked on me with intense earnestness, and exclaimed, ‘O Sir, I am lost; I shall be in hell before the morning.’”

“What a terrific vision! were you able to speak any words of peace to his soul?”

“I did speak words of peace, but they gave him neither peace nor comfort.”

“Did he die, Sir?”

“Yes, he died the very next day; and his last words were, ‘I AM LOST; LOST FOR EVER!’”

“How very awful!”

“In such a case the tremendous catastrophe is expected; but now,

let us think for a moment of a person passing out of one world to another (as many alas! do) under a delusive expectation of going to heaven; but on stepping out of time into eternity, he finds himself in hell. What must be his surprise; his terror-struck anguish; his fearful, his terrific exclamations of agonized woe; his condition, bearing some analogy, though infinitely more tremendous and appalling, to that of a culprit tried and cast for death, when in a trance, knowing nothing of the process or the issue, till he feels the minister of death adjusting the rope on the fatal platform; awakening up to a state of consciousness just before the drop falls. While in a trance, he might be moving amidst the congratulations of his family and his friends, to take possession of a newly bequeathed inheritance; with what terrific consternation would he, on recovering the use of his reason, find himself under the gallows of infamy, tied to its cross beam, the executioner by his side, stepping back to draw the bolt which is to give him to death struggles and to death."

"Your illustration is terrific; but it is not equal to the tremendous reality—a soul lost, when, under a fatal delusion, expecting to be saved."

We now came in sight of Fairmount, and that turned the current of our conversation to a more interesting theme. I remarked, "that I thought the country more favourable to devotional feeling than the city. The gaiety and the bustle of the one distract the mind; whereas the quietude of the other composes it."

"True, Sir, but the spirit of devotion would soon languish beside the murmuring stream, or beneath the silent shade, unless invigorated by the unction which cometh from above. If we, who live in the country, have fewer temptations than those who live in cities, yet in general we have fewer religious advantages; and though not altogether deprived of the society of Christian friends, yet it is but seldom that we are surrounded by a sufficient number to admit of making a selection."

On entering the parlour, Mr. Stevens soon joined us, and seemed much interested by the report of our morning's excursion. Having

partaken of a plain dinner, he and I adjourned to a sequestered arbour, at the extreme point of his shrubbery, where we sat conversing the greater part of the afternoon. "Mr. Roscoe," he observed, "to whom you were introduced this morning, is a most interesting companion. He is a man of very extensive reading, of deep and close reflection, of a fine taste, very benevolent in disposition, of strict integrity, and very religious in his own way. He is rather too fond of disputation, and there is no subject which he likes to discuss more than the subject of religion, though I think he does not understand it so well as he does many others."

"Is he fond of introducing religious subjects in conversation?"

"Very."

"Does he introduce them merely for discussion, or in relation to their practical tendency?"

"Why, his uniform design, if I may be permitted to judge of his motive, is to excite a general feeling of disgust against what he calls the Methodistical or Calvinistic delusions of the age, which he regards as more injurious to our national character, and more destructive to our happiness, than even the spirit of infidelity itself."

"Then I presume that you are not very intimate."

"O yes, we are. We often protract the debate till our wives interfere, and request us to remember the hour."

"But are not some of his prejudices against the demoralizing tendency of the Methodistical delusion (to use his own phraseology) shaken by your conduct?"

"O no; he has, like many others, an ingenious expedient, by which the force of individual example against his sweeping charge is repelled. He says that our superior good sense, and our superior virtue, prevent these delusions from operating on us as they operate on others. So you see that his complaisance nullifies the argument which he cannot refute; and the mine which Christian consistency springs beneath an erroneous opinion, is countermined by the artifice which friendship employs."



“Is he very dogmatical in conversation?”

“Rather so; but he never loses his temper. Indeed, he is a most valuable man; and if it should please God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, to shine into his heart, to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, he would, I have no doubt, carry the attainments of the Christian character to the highest point of excellence.”

“Is Mrs. Roscoe of the same way of thinking with her husband?”

“Why, Sir, I do not think that *she ever thinks* on the subject of religion. She goes to church, reads the *Week's Preparation*, takes the sacrament, feeds and clothes the poor, and says that, in her opinion, nothing more is required of her. She sometimes listens, it is true, to our discussions, but it is more, I apprehend, from the respect which she feels for the laws of politeness, than from any interest which she takes in the subject. Miss Roscoe, who is a most amiable creature, ventures occasionally to make a few observations, and sometimes to ask a few questions, but she is very guarded. Mrs. Stevens presented her with a copy of Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* the last time she gave us a call; and from the spirit in which she received the present, and the assurance she gave that she would read the book, we entertain some hope that the light of truth will lead her to the well-spring of true happiness.”

“From a remark which Mrs. Stevens made to Mr. Roscoe, when we parted with him, I hope that I shall have the pleasure of spending an hour or two in his company before I leave Fairmount.”

“Yes, he and his family dine with us next week; but you must contrive to hide the colour of your cloth if you wish to draw him out in conversation, especially religious conversation, for you Dissenting ministers do not stand very high in his esteem. He thinks that you have obtruded yourselves on an office which, for want of learning and episcopal ordination, you are not qualified to fill. He can relish none but Oxford or Cambridge men.”

Mrs. Stevens, accompanied by a little niece, who was a weekly boarder at a ladies' school on the other side of the hill, came to invite us to tea in the alcove. We took a circuitous route through the shrubbery, till we entered on the lawn, at the bottom of which nature and art had combined their skill in the beautifying of this rural retreat. While sitting there, receiving the refreshment which the hand of an indulgent Providence had provided, and listening to the sweet harmony of the feathered tribe, the servant, who had just returned from the neighbouring town, delivered to his master a newspaper and a packet of letters. Mr. Stevens, having apologized for his rudeness (as he called it), proceeded to open the letters, and, to neutralize my displeasure, he placed the paper in my hands. "My dear," addressing himself to Mrs. Stevens, "I have some good news to tell you. Mr. Lewellin has accepted our invitation, and will be here, if Providence permit, next Thursday."

"One mercy, like one affliction," replied Mrs. Stevens, "seldom comes alone." Addressing herself to me, "I hope to have the pleasure of introducing to you a nephew, who has recently felt the power of the truth, which he once affected to despise."

"The society of Christian friends is always animating, but particularly the society of those who have recently passed from death to life, who have just been redeemed from the dominion of Satan, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. There is usually such an expressive animation in their look and in their utterances; they have the freshness of their new life glowing upon them; and when speaking of what they know, and testifying of what they have seen and felt, they do it with a simplicity and earnestness which has a fine and powerful influence over our spirits. We glorify God in them."

"My nephew is the only son of a pious mother, and she is a widow. He was permitted to run to great lengths in the paths of evil, but the Lord has had mercy on him, and his conversion is, in my opinion, as great a proof of the divinity of this Christian faith as the conversion of St. Paul."

"Pray, is he the son of Mrs. Lewellin, who lives in the village of Stenmoor, that you refer to?"

"Yes; do you know him?"

"I have the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Lewellin, but not her son, only by character. To meet with him will be no small addition to the gratification I feel from my visit to your lovely villa."

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## A MORNING'S RAMBLE.



WHEN the devotions of the morning were discharged, I strolled out alone, intending to amuse myself for a few hours in collecting some fossils, out of the quarry near the Rectory. As I was passing through a thick coppice, I met a little boy, very neatly dressed, who politely made me a country bow

"Well, my little fellow, what is your name?" "Jemmy Allen." "And where do you live?" "In the cottage just at the end of this wood." "And how many brothers and sisters have you?" "None, Sir." "And what is your father?" "A ploughman." "And where are you going?" "Up to Squire Stevens', to get a little gruel for mother, who is very poorly." "Can you read?" "Yes, Sir, I can read the Testament, which Squire Stevens gave me." "Can you tell me who made you?" "God." "Who came into the world to save sinners?" "Jesus Christ." "What must you do to be saved?" "I must be sorry for my sins; I must pray to God to forgive me what is past, and serve him better for the time to come."

I proceeded in questioning him, and was pleased to find that he could repeat the whole of Watt's Catechism, and also a great part of

that composed by the Assembly of Divines. His knowledge of the Scriptures was extensive, considering his years; and he repeated to me the whole of the commandments, with our Lord's summary of them, as recorded in the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel by Matthew. Having given him a trifle, as a reward for his past diligence, and as a stimulus for the future, I moved on, and soon came within sight of his mother's cottage, which presented to my imagination more powerful attractions than the quarry I had intended to visit. On entering, which I did without ceremony, I beheld an interesting-looking female, apparently very ill, seated in an arm-chair. I apologized for my intrusion, which occasioned her a little embarrassment. After thanking me, as a minister of Jesus Christ, for the honour I had done her, she asked me to take a seat. Her cottage stood alone, almost entirely surrounded by tall elm trees, and seemed, by its sacred furniture, consisting of a Bible, hymn-books, tracts, &c. (the symbols of the Divine presence), set apart as a local habitation for an heir of glory. A few lines, once addressed to a secluded saint, involuntarily occurred to my recollection: "Our Lord has many jewels. Among the number, there are some of such peculiar properties that he does not choose to expose them to public observation. He separates them from the general assemblage, secluding them for his own complacent contemplation, and sets them as a seal upon his heart."

"You have a lovely retreat from the world, but I suppose, like others, you are sometimes disturbed by its cares."

"*I have been*, but now I have cast all my cares on him who has promised to sustain me."

"Then you have reached one of the highest points of experimental religion, and may look down on this tumultuous scene with an eye of comparative indifference."

"Why, Sir, I would not exchange my situation or my prospects for any other that could be offered me. I have not much of this world's goods, nor yet many wants; but I have an unclouded prospect of future happiness, which reconciles me to my lot."

“ But have you been always so highly favoured !”

“ O no, Sir. For many years I was kept in a state of spiritual bondage, sighing for liberty which I could not obtain, and praying for peace, but had great bitterness. At length it pleased God to shine in upon my mind ‘with beams of heavenly grace;’ and the plan of salvation, of which I could previously form no just ideas, was exhibited with such clearness, that the burden of guilt fell off my conscience; and from that blessed hour to the present, I have not had a doubt of my interest in the merits of my Redeemer. The long affliction with which I have been visited has brought me into more intimate communion with Him; my soul is as a weaned child; and I am waiting the summons to depart.”

“ But what a chasm will your departure make in the happiness of your little family !”

“ Yes, my dear husband will feel the stroke; and so will my dear little boy. Nature still yearns over them, but I am enabled to leave them, as a dying legacy, to the Lord of life. My husband, I believe, is on the way to the kingdom of heaven; and my boy, I hope, though very young, fears the Lord God of his parents; so that I die under a firm persuasion that our intercourse will not be destroyed, but only suspended for a season.”

“ Then you can die in peace ?”

“ In peace, Sir !” pausing as though her redeemed spirit laboured for some more than common form of expression as the vehicle of her utterance, “ that word is not descriptive of my state of mind; I feel a joy which is full of glory, and such an intense longing of soul to be introduced into the presence of my Lord, that at times I fear I am too impatient for the descent of the celestial chariot in which I am to enter through the gates into the city.”

“ I suppose that, though you live secluded from the world, you are sometimes visited by pious friends ?”

“ The Rev. Mr. Ingleby, the venerable rector of Broadhurst, from whom I received the word of truth, often comes and spends an hour with me. He considers me as the first-fruits of his ministry;

and I rejoice, *as only the first-fruits*, for since it pleased the Lord to call me by his grace, there have been many to whom he has been the instrument of conveying the grace of life. Our hamlet was the land of darkness before that bright light rose upon us; but now it is as the land of Goshen. What a glorious change has been made in Squire Stevens and his lady, who live at Fairmount villa! When they came to live there, they took the lead in all the fashions and amusements of the gay and ungodly; very seldom attended church on a Sunday, and often uttered many hard speeches against Mr. Ingleby; but their prejudices vanished as soon as they heard him, and now they are become the most spiritual and zealous family in our parts. There was a fine stir when they left their own parish church to attend the ministry of Mr. Ingleby, who preaches about a mile and a half off; but they have displayed so much of the superior excellence of the Christian character, and conducted themselves with so much godly consistency, that even the enemies of the cross are loud in their praise. They sometimes call to see me, and when they do not call they often send; and the other day, when I was expressing my gratitude to Mrs. Stevens for the numerous favours I had received, she replied, with an emphasis which I shall never forget, '*The steward should wait in the hall after he has delivered the present; and then return and deliver the note of thanks to his lord who sent it.*' I hope, as you are a stranger among us, you will call at Fairmount, where, I am sure, you will meet with a very kind reception."

I made no reply, but proposed reading a chapter and going to prayer. I read the 23d Psalm, on which I made a few appropriate remarks, and then bowed before the footstool of the Divine throne. It is true I had no soft cushion to kneel on, but I felt that the ground was rendered sacred by the presence of the Holy One; I had no prescribed form to aid my devotion, but I felt under the peculiar dictations of the Spirit, who maketh intercession within the saints; and arose, not to lose a recollection of the interview amidst the din of business, or the dissipations of life, but to cherish



FIRST INTERVIEW WITH FARMER PICKFORD.

it as a latent proof of the connection which subsists between the spiritual and material world, and as supplying me with a fresh evidence of the immense value of that scheme of redemption which admits sinners into fellowship with their sovereign Lord.

Soon after I left this lonely cottage, on crossing over a neighbouring field, I saw a farm-house at a distance, and finding from my watch that I had two hours more at my disposal, I resolved to visit it. On entering the yard I met the farmer, Mr. Pickford, a respectable-looking man, who invited me, in the true spirit of rural hospitality, to walk in and take a mug of ale. I had not been seated many minutes before the crusty brown loaf, the delicate cream cheese, and the can of fresh ale made their appearance, and as my appetite was rather keen, I relished my lunch. But as my principal design was the survey of human character, I easily contrived to induce my host to exhibit himself, which he did in pure native style.

"I have been admiring, farmer, the neatness of your hedges, and the cleanliness of your fields, which, added to the richness of the foliage and the luxuriance of the crops, gives a fine effect to the scenery around."

"Ay, ay, Sir, a country life for me. I shouldn't like to be pent up in the smoke of a city all my days, though my foolish girls are always saying that there are more pastimes in a town than in a village."

"Why, yes, we have many sources of amusement in a city which you cannot have in the country; but we are exposed to more danger, from the temptations to which we are liable."

"That makes good what I have often said, that town-folks are worse than country-folks."

"But if a man be inclined to be wicked, he will be wicked anywhere. I suppose you have some about you *who are not quite so good as they ought to be.*"

"Yes, there are a few of that sort, the worse luck; but then we have some who are *better than they need be*, and so the quantum of goodness is made up to the full Winchester measure."



"Indeed! I never saw a man better than he ought to be."

"Why, Sir, perhaps I made a mistake. I should have said, we have some who *pretend to be better than they need be*; but you know that a man may pretend to what he a'n't got."

"True; but what sort of persons do you now refer to?"

"To these Methodists;\* before they came we were as peaceable as a flock of sheep in a fold; but now we are always wrangling; and, in spite of us, they have put down all the little merry-makings which we used to have among us."

"But how have they put down your merry-makings?"

"Why, Sir, we used to have as good a pit of cocks as any in the country; but now the very men who used to breed the best sort are turned Methodists; and when I asked one the other day if he had any young ones hatched yet, he told me that he had seen his wickedness, and hoped never to be permitted to fall into the sin again; as though God Almighty would be offended at the innocent pastimes of a village."

"But do you not suppose that the cocks which fight inflict pain on each other; and can a humane person derive any amusement from the agonies of a dumb animal?"

"True, Sir; some, I know, are against such sports, but I must confess that I have a bit of a liking for them."

"I believe, from what little I know of rural life, that the *innocent pastimes* of the village usually terminate in scenes of drunkenness, rioting, and lewdness; and pray, farmer, have you never seen the bad effects of them on your friends, and on your servants?"

"Ay, ay, Sir, you now strike home, but what are people to do; they must have a little 'laxation from hard work sometimes."

"But you say 'these things are put down by the Methodists, in spite of you;' what do the people do now?"

"O, nearly all of them are turned Methodists, and Squire Stevens, who lives up at Fairmount yonder, is at the head of them."

\* The epithet Methodist is taken in its popular acceptation, as employed by the anti-evangelical part of society.

"What sort of a gentleman is he?"

"He is very well in his way, only he has too much religion."

"What do you mean by too much religion?"

"Why, he is always talking about it, and giving away little books, and visiting the poor, and praying with them in their houses, and preaching to them in his chapel which he built for them. And some people say he can preach a better sarmunt than parson Cole, who is a regular Oxford man. His wife is a cleverish sort of a woman; she looked in here one day, and talked away at a fine rate about Jesus Christ and salvation by grace; and I have had main hard work ever since to keep my wife from running after this new sort of religion."

"Pray, farmer, have you ever seriously reflected on the worth of your soul?"

"Why, Sir, I have something else to reflect on."

"But have you any subject to reflect on of equal importance? Do you not know that your soul, when it leaves the body, will exist for ever in a state of happiness or misery?"

"So the parsons tell us, but they may be out in their judgment as well as other people. I don't believe all they say. I strike off one-half, and then there's plenty left."

"Do you ever think on the subject of death?"

"No, I don't like to think on such a gloomy subject."

"But why not, when you know you must die soon, and may die to-night?"

"I hope not, for I a'n't fit to die."

"And are you conscious that you are not fit to die, and yet neglect to think about it? Is it possible?"

"Why, Sir, methinks it's time enough to think about it when it comes."

"But it may come suddenly, like a thief in the night, and bear off your soul to the great world of spirits."

"If it should, then the Lord have mercy on my soul. I suppose he will, as he likes to save sinners, so the parsons say."

I then described to him the frame of mind in which I had left Mrs. Allen—his wife being present the whole of the time. He could not refrain from weeping, though he endeavoured to conceal his tears; and when I had finished, he said that he knew her very well, but as she was a Methodist, he had been prejudiced against her, but added, "If this be a sample of their religion, it is of a better sort than I imagined." And turning to his wife, he said, "Do as you like, I will never oppose thee again."

"That's the best news I have heard to-day. I'll go to chapel on Sunday."

"I hope, Sir, that you will stay and take a pot-luck dinner with us; it will be plainish fare, but a hearty welcome."

"Yes, Sir, do," said his modest-looking wife; "we have just killed a pig, and I have a nice pork pie, and some apple sauce and cream."

I thanked them both for their kindness, but declined accepting the invitation, having engaged to dine with a friend in the neighbourhood.

"Pray, Sir, if a body may be so bold, do I know your friend?"

"You do know him; and perhaps if I mention his name, you will feel a momentary embarrassment."

"I fear no man; and I don't think I have got an enemy in all these parts."

"I am going to dine with Mr. Stevens."

"Hollo! I sometimes talk a bit too fast; the worse luck; however, don't say what I have said. He is a gentleman; I would not offend him for the world. We live on very good terms; and a better man does not exist, and I am sure his wife is the best woman in all the parish."

I told him that he might make himself very easy, as it was not my habit to sow discord among neighbours. I promised to call again before I left, which appeared to give him pleasure.

As I was walking up the hill which leads towards the villa, I met a venerable-looking gentleman, in the costume of a clergyman.

We bowed ; and, with an air of peculiar kindness, he said, " I presume I am addressing the Rev. Mr. S——s?"

' My name, Sir, is S——s."

" I am happy to see you in these parts ; but I shall be more happy by seeing you at the rectory. We are both, I trust, ministers of the gospel ; and though we labour in different communions, yet, as we expect to dwell together in heaven, I see no reason why we should shun each other's society on earth."

" Our Lord has broken down the middle wall of partition, but bigotry has been endeavouring almost ever since to rebuild it ; and though she has succeeded in raising it up immensely high in some parts of her empire, yet, as she cannot always secure a good foundation, we occasionally find an opening through which we can pass to enjoy the fellowship of the saints."

" Ay, Sir, I often pray, ' Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof.'"

" And to such a prayer I can most cheerfully respond, Amen."

" But do you not think," added Mr. Ingleby, " that the spirit of liberality is gaining ground among us?"

" I hope it is ; but there is very much land yet unoccupied."

" True, but there have been some large inclosures made within the last half-century. Your London Missionary Society, which breathes such a catholic spirit, has brought together many of the children of God who were scattered abroad ; and the British and Foreign Bible Society has bound them together as with a threefold cord, which the demon of bigotry will never be able to burst asunder."

" I think your remarks are correct ; but I want to see more of the spirit of liberality of sentiment and feeling which is often expressed, and often applauded at our public meetings, brought into expression and practical operation in social life. I want to see Christians of every denomination mingling together, not in the costume and with the spirit of their distinctive order, but in their more dignified and exalted character, as disciples of the Lord Jesus. I want to see

them disposed to merge the trifling distinctions in the more important consideration of their relative union to each other; and if the spirit of contention is to prevail among us, let it be the spirit which Paul inculcates, when he exhorted the Hebrews to provoke one another to love and good works."

"Your sentiments," replied the pious rector, "exactly accord with my own; and though I do not expect that the spirit of bigotry will die and be buried before I am called to rest with my fathers, yet I hope, when standing on the top of the celestial hills, to witness her interment, and then, in ecstasy, I will respond to the joyous shout which earth will raise, when she exclaims, 'Bigotry is fallen—is fallen!'"

"I have just had the pleasure of an interview with Mrs. Allen."

"Ay, she is an eminent saint. How is she, Sir?—I am now going to see her."

"She appears to be drawing near her latter end, but I do not think there is any prospect of an immediate change; she is in a most heavenly frame of mind."

"When I first knew her, which is now near twenty-five years ago, she came to live with me; but her temper was so violent, and her enmity to the gospel so inveterate, that I was obliged to part with her. After she left me, she went to live with a dissolute gentleman in the neighbourhood, when the seed of the kingdom which had been unconsciously deposited in her heart, sprang up; and after remaining in her situation for a few months, she returned to my service, and never have I seen a more manifest proof of the efficacy of Divine grace."

"Religion will sometimes reform a vicious life, and check the evil propensities of the heart, while the *temper* is left unsubdued. What influence have her religious principles over her temper?"

"I am happy to say that the lion became a lamb, and in meekness and gentleness of spirit she surpasses most. But I perceive, looking at his watch, "that I cannot prolong our conversation, as I have an appointment; and therefore I beg you will do me the

honour of a visit before you leave. Come early in the morning, or consent to stay the whole of the night."

I reached Fairmount about half-an-hour before dinner, which gave me an opportunity of recording in my diary the incidents of the morning. As I sat musing on the raptures of the dying Christian, the ignorance of the worthy farmer, and the liberality of the venerable clergyman, the servant tapped at my door, and informed me that the family were waiting. I immediately made my appearance in the parlour, when Mrs. Stevens said, "I have the pleasure, of introducing to you my nephew, Mr. Lewellin." I took his hand with mingled emotions of surprise and joy, offered him my congratulations on the great change which had taken place in his moral and spiritual character, inquired after his pious mother, and then sat down to refresh myself with the provisions of hospitality.

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## THE HORNINGSHAM SAILOR.



INNER being ended, we adjourned to the back parlour, whose folding doors opened on the lawn, and exhibited a sweet scene of tranquil beauty.

"The heart that is insensible to the charms of nature," said Mr. Lewellin, "must be devoid of taste and feeling."

"True," replied Mr. Stevens, "but how many feel these charms who never hold communion with Him who has invested them with their magic power. They profess to rise up through nature, 'to nature's God;' but their conceptions of His character are essentially defective; they admire His grandeur and His greatness, but there is no recognition of His purity; they extol His benevolence, but are

not awed by His justice. I recollect being in company with a gentleman, who was an impassioned admirer of nature, and after an eloquent descant on its magnificent scenery, he concluded by saying, 'The Deity, who has given existence to such physical wonders, would act a very undignified part to stoop so low as to notice the little frailties of humanity; but to suppose he would punish them, would be to offer Him an insult.' Hence they very naturally, from their assumed premises, scornfully reject the remedial scheme of salvation that is revealed to us in the Scriptures."

"Our reception or rejection of the Scripture scheme of salvation," said Mr. Lewellin, "depends on the opinion we form of the character of God; for if his purity and equity be not recognized, the law which commands obedience will be denounced; the distinction between virtue and vice, which the Scriptures mark with such precision, will be confounded; and the whole scheme of Divine mercy will be regarded as a cunningly devised fable. I remember the time when I lived without any habitual reverence for the Supreme Being. I admired the wisdom and the benevolence which I could trace in the construction of the universe; but it neither excited gratitude, nor led to any dependence on God for preservation from evil, or for happiness. It is true when the elements were disturbed, when the tempest raged, when the lightning flashed, and when the thunder roared, I trembled; but no sooner had these commotions ceased, than all was tranquil within; yet it was not peace of mind, it was a moral torpor, a judicial insensibility, the ease which precedes the moral pangs of the second death."

This reference to his former state induced me to ask him to give us an account of his conversion. He complied with my request; but as the more prominent incidents have been already narrated, I need not detail the whole of his statement.

"My mind," he observed, "was in a peculiarly serene frame when I consented to accompany my mother to chapel. I had been that morning on a visit to a friend, in whose society I had passed many hours of pleasant intercourse; and our conversation unexpect-

tedly took a religious turn. 'I have recently,' said my friend, 'had my mind very much occupied and perplexed about the truth or falsehood of Christianity. If Christianity be a cunningly devised fable, we are safe; but if it be a true revelation from heaven, we are undone.' 'It is no fable,' I replied; 'it is too true.' 'Then how can we justify that indifference which we pay to it?' 'To justify it is impossible; but such is the native insensibility of our hearts to unseen and eternal realities, that nothing but an extraordinary dispensation of Heaven can rouse us to a state of proper feeling.' 'Pray, Sir,' said my friend, 'what was the state of your mind in the immediate prospect of death?' 'I was,' I replied, 'in great agony, and its intensity increased as the symptoms of coming death became more decisive. I drew back with horror from the scene which was before me; but yet at times I longed to plunge into the dark abyss, that I might know the utmost of my misery.' 'But could you derive no hope from the consolations which Christianity holds out to man?' 'None; mine appeared a hopeless case. An allusion to mercy had a more terrific effect than the utterance of the tremendous word, Depart!' 'I think,' he replied, 'that religious people are generally more happy than those who are irreligious; and it is certain, if the testimony of the most respectable witnesses can be received, that they are infinitely more happy in the prospect of death.' 'Yes, Sir, they are, and very naturally so. They expect by the loss of life to gain the prize of a glorious immortality. We have no such a prospect!' 'That's true. To us a hereafter is a dead blank, or torments for ever. What a difference!' As I was returning to my mother's cottage, I felt an unusual elevation of soul, for which I could assign no real cause. 'Is this,' I involuntarily exclaimed, 'the first beaming of mercy? Impossible! But why?' The train of thought which now passed through my mind necessarily partook of the singular character of my feelings; and though I could not fix my attention on religious subjects, yet I felt no inclination to dismiss them. After I reached home, as I sat musing over the recent occurrences of my life, I opened a hymn-



book which was lying near me, and felt deeply impressed by a hymn to which I chanced to turn, and which was very appropriate to the state of my mind. The same afternoon my mother asked me to accompany her to chapel, which gave me more pleasure than I wished to discover. I was delighted with the fervour of the singing, and the chaste simplicity of the prayer, and a few petitions which were uttered struck me with great force."

"Do you recollect these petitions?" said Mrs. Stevens.

"I shall never forget them—'Enlighten, we beseech you, O Lord, our dark understandings!—renovate our depraved nature!—deepen the impressions which thy truth has already made on our hearts!—and admit us, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, into communion with thee, the only source of pure and substantial bliss!' Never did words, uttered by human voice, produce a more powerful effect; but it was not till the minister began to enlarge on the condescension and death of the Lord Jesus, that I felt my guilt and perceived my danger. I retired from the chapel with a class of feeling which had never been previously excited within my breast; yet I cannot say whether joy or sorrow most preponderated. I wept as my sins came to my remembrance, but my most sacred tears were shed in gratitude to the Redeemer for the thrilling manifestation of his pity and his love. I felt the change, on passing from a state of spiritual death to newness of life, as consciously as I now feel the action of life in my vital system; nor could any species of sophistry induce me to doubt it—a change which produced an entire revolution in my sentiments and principles; in my habits and in the objects of my pursuit; and though it has called down upon me the sarcasms of the sceptic, yet I am not ashamed to own that it is 'by the grace of God I am what I am.' My mother, when I told her of it, fell on my neck and kissed me; she wept tears of joy, and then knelt down and returned thanks to God for his abundant mercy towards me. Never, till that eventful evening, had I tasted of such pure, such unmingled felicity."

Every one present was deeply affected by this narration. Mr.

Stevens was about to continue the conversation, when our attention was attracted by an English sailor, who approached and asked an alms. Mr. Stevens, who was fond of seeing all the varieties of human character, invited him to take a seat, and after inquiring where he had come from, and how long he had been at sea, said, "I dare say you have endured many hardships in your dangerous profession; it would be interesting to us if you would give us some account of your life."

"My life, please your honour," replied the weather-beaten tar, "has been a chequered life. I was born at Horningsham, a small village in Wiltshire. My father had three children. He was very religious, and so was my mother. They taught us to read the Bible and to pray, and took us to chapel every Sunday. But I was always a wildish lad, and so was brother George, who was a year younger than I. One night, when we were about seventeen years old, we set off, unknown to father or mother, to go to sea. We walked all night, and all the next day, till we got to Botley, between Southampton and Tichfield, where we stopped for some refreshment, and to rest ourselves. The next day we were joined by three soldiers, who said they would take us across the fields to Gosport; but when they got us into a lonely place, they robbed us of our watches and all our money. This was the beginning of our sorrows, and we began to repent of our folly; but we did not like to go back home. As we were walking up and down a street in Portsmouth, a gentleman came and asked us if we should like to go to sea. I replied I would like nothing better. He gave us five shillings each, provided a lodging for us, and the next morning we went on board ship. We often wished ourselves at home, but it was no use; so, after sending a letter to father, to let him know what was become of us, we set sail. After cruizing about the channel for some months, we fell in with the Dutch off Camperdown. This was the first battle I ever fought; and it was a desperate one. Many a stream of English blood flowed that day; and, just as we were hailing victory, a spent shot struck my poor brother George (his voice

faltering as he spoke), who was standing by my side; he fell; he carried him down to the cockpit, when he took me by the hand, and said, 'Farewell, brother! I am dying. Give my love to mother, and father, and sister, and tell them that I die in the arms of victory.' He scarcely finished the words before he heaved a dismal groan, and died. The shouts of victory gave me no pleasure; for I had lost my brother. Poor fellow, he was thrown overboard the same day; and many a tear was shed, Sir, as we let him down, for he was much liked by the crew."

"What ship," said Mr. Stevens, "were you on board of?"

"The *Venerable*, please your honour; Admiral Duncan's ship."

"Did you know Covey, who was wounded in that engagement?"

"Yes, please your honour; I was on deck when he fell. He was as brave a fellow as ever fought; and he was as generous as he was brave."

"But was he not very wicked?"

"He was a good sailor, please your honour, and he was generous to a proverb; but he had no sense of religion, though at times, I believe, he suffered much in his conscience."

"Do you know what became of him?"

"I have heard that he was sent to Haslar hospital after he left the *Venerable*, and I suppose he died there; and there, I suppose, he was buried. God rest his soul!"

Mr. Stevens rose and left the room, but soon returned with the tract which gives such an interesting account of Covey. He read some passages from it, and while he was reading, I watched the countenance of the sailor, which betrayed alternately symptoms of astonishment, of joy, and of the deepest solemnity.

"I am right glad," said the honest tar, "to hear that my old shipmate is got safe into such a port. He had a roughish voyage; but the storm is over; and from that account,\* he is now safe landed."

\* Covey was one of the bravest of the brave, and as wicked as he was brave. Mr. Pratt, in the second volume of his *Gleanings*, gives us the following account of him:—

"There is no refuge from the storm but in Jesus Christ," said Mr. Stevens.

"Ah, there is no getting into the port of heaven but through Christ; this I have known for many years; but it han't done me much good; but I hope it will."

"Have you now left the navy?"

"Yes, and please your honour. I was wounded at the battle of Trafalgar, when our Nelson died; and I was sent home, along with many others, to the hospital. After I left the hospital, I went back to sea, but I got my discharge a little more than two months ago. Here it is, and please your honour."

"Where have you been since you got your discharge?"

"I went home to Horningsham as fast as I could travel, to see my father, and mother, and sister; for I had not seen them for many years. I got there about five o'clock in the evening, and when I opened the door, I saw a stranger sitting in the chimney-corner,

As the two fleets were coming into action, the noble admiral, to save the lives of his men, ordered them to lie flat on the deck, till, being nearer the enemy, their firing might do the more execution. The Dutch ships at this time were pouring their broadsides into the *Venerable* as she passed down part of the Dutch fleet, in order to break their line. This stout-hearted and wicked Covey, heaped in rapid succession the most dreadful imprecations on the eyes, and limbs, and souls of what he called his cowardly shipmates, for lying down to avoid the balls of the Dutch. He refused to obey the order, till, fearing the authority of an officer not far from him, he in part complied, by leaning over a cask which stood near, till the word of command was given to fire. At the moment of rising, a bar-shot carried away one of his legs, and the greater part of the other; but so instantaneous was the stroke, though he was sensible of something like a jar in his limbs, he knew not that he had lost a leg till his stump came to the deck, and he fell. He was sent home to Haslar hospital, with many others; and soon after he left it, he went on a Sabbath evening to Orange Street Chapel, Portsea, where he heard the Rev. Mr. Griffin preach from Mark v. 15. "He listened," says his biographer, "with attention and surprise, wondering how the minister should know him among so many hundred people; or who could have told him his character and state of mind. This astonishment was still more increased when he found him describe, as he thought, the whole of his life, and even his secret sins. Some weeks after this," says Mr. Griffin, "he called and related to me the whole of his history and experience. He was surprised to find that I had never received any information about him at the time the sermon was preached which so exactly met his case. Something more than twelve months after this time he was received a member of our church, having given satisfactory evidences of being a genuine and consistent Christian. A few

who turned out to be my brother-in-law ; but poor sister Susan was dead. I was afraid to ask about father, for I began to think that death had been on board, and capsized all of them. I saw his stick hanging over the mantle-piece ; and after a while (tears falling as he spoke), I asked if he were alive. 'No, William,' said my brother-in-law, 'your father has been dead five years.' 'Is mother alive?' 'She is alive, but I fear she won't live till the morning.' 'Then I'll put on shore, and see her before she goes down.' So I went up stairs, and as soon as mother saw me, she knew me, and she wept for joy to see me back ; and as soon as she had given me a salute, she asked if brother George were living ; and when I told her of his death, she wept again, but they were not tears of joy. She died in about three hours after I got home ; and I staid there a few weeks after she was buried, but the place being deserted by those I loved, I made up my mind to slip my cable and sheer off. I couldn't lay at anchor in such a deserted port."

"Was you with your mother when she died?"

weeks since, hearing he was ill, I went to visit him. When I entered his room, he said, 'Come in, thou man of God! I have been longing to see you, and to tell you the happy state of my mind. I believe I shall soon die; but death now has no terrors in it. The sting of death is sin; but, thanks be to God, he has given me the victory through Jesus Christ. I am going to heaven! O! what has Jesus done for me, one of the vilest sinners of the human race.' A little before he died, when he thought himself within a few hours of dissolution, he said, 'I have often thought it was a hard thing to die, but now I find it a very easy thing to die. The presence of Christ makes it easy. The joy I feel from a sense of the love of God to sinners, from the thought of being with the Saviour, of being free from a sinful heart, and of enjoying the presence of God for ever, is more than I can express! O! how different my thoughts of God, and of myself, and of another world, from what they were when I lost my precious limbs on board the *Venerable!* It was a precious loss to me! If I had not lost my legs, I should perhaps have lost my soul.' With elevated and clasped hands, and with eyes glistening with earnestness, through the tears which flowed down his face, he said, 'O, my dear minister! I pray you, when I am dead, to preach a funeral sermon for a poor sailor; and tell others, especially sailors, who are as ignorant and wicked as I was, that poor blaspheming Covey found mercy with God, through faith in the blood of Christ! Tell them, that since I have found mercy, none that seek it need to despair. You know better than I do what to say to them. But, O! be in earnest with them; and may the Lord grant that my wicked neighbours and fellow-sailors may find mercy as well as Covey!' He said much more; but the last words he uttered were, 'Hallelujah! hallelujah!'"

"Yes, and please your honour; I hove to as soon as I saw her, and I did not leave her until she went down."

"How did she die?"

"Just in the same way as I hope to die, when it pleases God to call me. She said, 'William, I am now going to heaven, and I hope you will follow me.'"

"Well," said Mr. Stevens, "I hope you will; but what do you intend to do for a livelihood?"

"Why, please your honour, I don't know what to do."

"Can you work in a garden?"

"I think I can, and I'm willing to try. I used, when a lad, to work in the Marquis of Bath's garden, along with my father, and I have not quite forgot what he learned me."

Mr. Stevens, being in want of an under-gardener, took the sailor into his service, and he long remained with him, a very faithful and industrious servant; an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.

After the sailor left the parlour, Mr. Lewellin remarked, that the adaptation of the gospel to man, of every order of intellect, of every shade and complexion of character, of every age and of every country, was to him a most decisive evidence of its Divine origin. Had it been a human invention it would have been incumbered with some local or national customs, and hence it would have discovered some radical defect; but instead of this, the closer it is examined the more its adaptation to the moral condition of humanity is perceived; its rites are such as all may practise; its precepts are as suited to an Asiatic or an African as to an European; and its leading fact, "*that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,*" is "*worthy of all acceptance.*"

"As you have so recently left the ranks of infidelity," said Mr. Stevens, "let me ask you—Are infidels in general sincere in the opposition which they make to Christianity?"

"They are as sincere as a criminal would be in his efforts to prevent the judge entering the court; but, in general, they have a strong impression that their opposition will be useless."

“ I see that I have not given my question precisely that form of meaning which I intended. Do you think that they really disbelieve the truth of Christianity ? ”

“ We have many in this country, as there are many in all other countries, who are as ignorant of the nature and design of the Christian faith as they are of the science of astronomy or of medicine, and they disbelieve it, if it be proper to say a thing can be disbelieved which is not known ; but I do not think that any really disbelieve it who have received a proper religious training. They will, when together, cheer up each others’ spirits, and affect contempt for the religion of the Bible ; but I have seen a whole company disconcerted by a clap of thunder, and retire, not to enjoy the pleasures of reflection, but, if I may judge from what I have felt, to writhe beneath the agonies of anticipation.”

“ Do you know if your conversion to the Christian faith produced any good effect on any of your former associates ? ”

“ I recollect on one occasion, when several of us were spending a Sabbath evening in an hotel, after I had delivered a speech at some length in favour of Deism, and against Christianity, I was so much applauded, that they clapped me, and said, ‘ Well, Lewellin, *if you ever turn, there must be something in it.*’ After I did turn, or rather *after I was turned*, the majority reproached me as a hypocritical fanatic ; but one came and congratulated me on having escaped the destructive snare in which he was entangled ; but added, ‘ My doom is irrevocably fixed, and it would be only an aggravation of my misery to indulge a hope of salvation.’ Poor fellow ! he was hurried on, even against the strong convictions of his judgment, and the reproaches of his conscience, through almost every scene of dissipation, till at length the strong arm of death stopped his progress. As soon as I heard of his illness, I went to see him. I never shall forget the interview. It brought to my recollection my own state of misery, when the terrors of the eternal world, like the vivid lightning, were playing around my distracted spirit. On entering his room, he endeavoured to avoid seeing me, by concealing his face

under the bed-clothes. I approached his bedside, and spoke, but he was dumb with silence. I endeavoured to rouse him by the kindest expressions of friendship, and at length he uncovered his horror-struck countenance, and said (as nearly as I can remember), 'I don't doubt your kindness; it is indelibly impressed on my callous heart. But why come to torment me? The *damned* cannot be *saved*!' 'But,' I added, 'the *chief of sinners* may.' 'Not after their doom is fixed. I have passed the line which divides the saved from the lost; and I cannot retrace my steps.' 'But, ——' 'But, Sir,' interrupting me, 'excuse my abruptness; I feel as though I were now riding on the elements of woe; the voice of peace I cannot hear. My soul is in a whirlwind of despair! The storm will ne'er subside! The clouds of the Divine displeasure are highly charged; they are gathering blackness! and soon—yes, I feel death now creeping up to strike my heart!—soon, very soon I shall be cast into outer darkness!' 'But, ——' 'But spare me!' 'But, do listen—I *may* be the means of distilling consolation; for I have suffered all you now suffer, and yet have obtained mercy.' 'Yes, *you* have, and I am glad of it for your sake; but that feeling aggravates my agony. Distil consolation! Yes, you may; but every avenue of my soul is filled up with anguish; it cannot enter. Tell me not of a Saviour, for I have slighted him! Tell me not of his compassion, for I have made it a subject of ridicule! Tell me not of heaven, for I shall soon see it, but at an immeasurable distance! Death is come, my heart-strings are breaking! I lie down in misery, to rise ——' He could add no more. I left him in the agonies of despair, and soon after he died."

"How awful!" exclaimed Mrs. Stevens; "was it not too much for your feelings?"

"Too much!" replied Lewellin, deeply affected, "I scarcely knew how to remain, or how to move; and, had it not been for the nurse, who entered the room just at this crisis, I think that I should have sunk. It has left a horrifying impression on my mind, which reflection increases; for he was the only son of a pious father, who was




ignorant of his character till he came up from the country to attend his funeral. The good man waited on me before the rites of sepulture were performed; and though I suppressed the strong descriptive language of his son, yet it was not in my power to alleviate his fears. He wept aloud. He paced backwards and forwards in my room, like a man bereft of his senses. *'Had I lost my property, I had merely lost what will melt in the general burning; but I have lost my child, who will never see ——. Woe is me!'* I went to see the good man a few months ago, but his countenance has never since worn a smile—his food is the wormwood, and his drink the gall."

"What anguish," said Mr. Stevens, "does an irreligious child often inflict in a parent's breast! I have often grieved because I have not had a family, but I am sure that I shall never grieve again."

I now observed: God often employs the religious education of children as the means of their conversion; but when they leave their father's house, if they are not placed in a pious family, they often turn out the most depraved. Hence we derive an argument for our encouragement, to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and also a beacon to warn us of the danger to which we expose them, when we introduce them into situations where they are under no religious control. This good man demands our pity; but, perhaps, if we knew the whole history of his conduct to his child, we should be disposed to blame him. And what a warning is this fact to the youth who has received a religious training. He may indulge himself in a course of sin, but conscience will rebuke him; he may suppose that his father is ignorant of his conduct, but he cannot conceal himself from the eye of God; and he may presume on a future day for repentance, but that day may be a day of darkness, of lamentation, and of woe.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

## THE RECTOR OF BROADHURST.

“ Y dear,” said Mr. Stevens, “here is an invitation from the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, requesting us and our visitors to take tea at the rectory to-morrow evening, when he will introduce us to the Rev. Mr. Guion; and as we have no engagement, I presume I may send an answer in the affirmative.”

“Most certainly,” said Mrs. Stevens; “to meet Mr. Ingleby and Mr. Guion together will be a great treat; they are both men of superior intelligence and piety, and of great conversational powers.”

“I do not know Mr. Guion,” I remarked, “but I have a very high opinion of Mr. Ingleby; he breathes a fine catholic spirit, and preaches the gospel with great simplicity, purity, and power.”

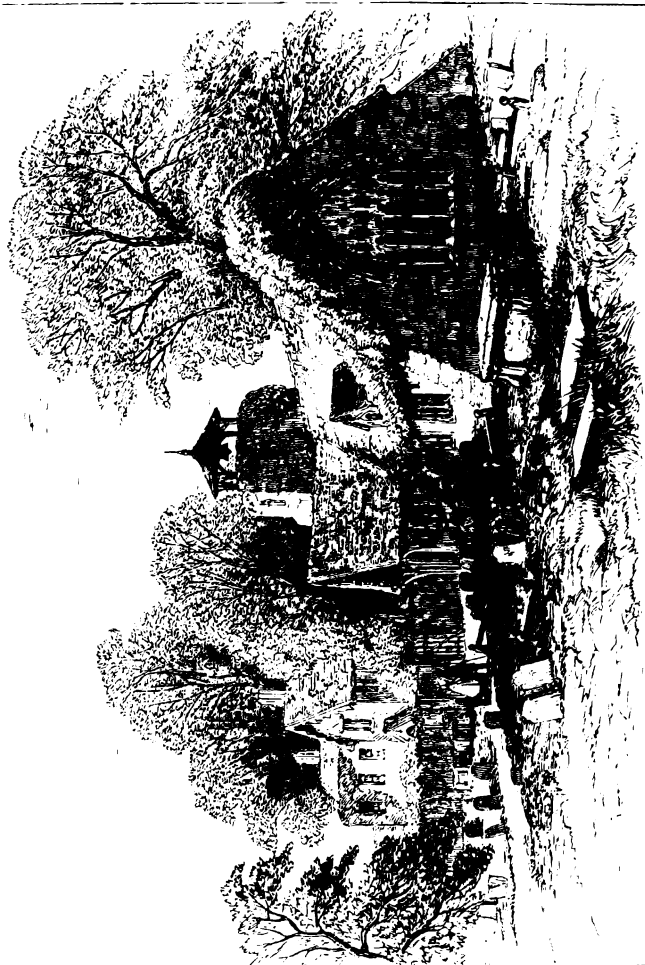
“I think,” said Mr. Stevens, “I know a few who excel our venerable friend in some separate ministerial qualifications and attainments; but in that rare union of excellencies which meet in him, he stands, in my opinion, unrivalled. He has a voice which is clear and powerful, his action is natural, he commands attention, and he always rewards it; for, by an extraordinary aptness of manner, he compels his hearers to believe that he is addressing them individually. And I have often been astonished by the extraordinary fertility of his mind; for while he is perpetually exhibiting the *same truths*, the modes of their exhibition are perpetually varying; his arguments, if they are not always new, yet they are always put in a new form; and his figures of illustration, which are beautifully chaste, have, if I may use such an expression, the freshness and fragrance of novelty upon them.”

“But, after all,” said Mrs. Stevens, “much as I admire him when he is in the pulpit, it is in the parlour and in the walks of private life that he unconsciously unfolds the *entire* of his real character. He appears more amiable and lovely in the undress of social in-

timacy, than when attired in the costume of his order. In my opinion, he approaches nearer the perfect and upright man of the Bible than any clergyman I know."

I had heard much of Mr. Ingleby since I had been a visitor at Fairmount, and I now looked forward with great pleasure to the prospect of being more fully acquainted with him. I shall here introduce some particulars of his history, much of which I afterwards learned.

On his leaving college, where he was greatly beloved by those who were admitted into his intimacy, Mr. Ingleby went into Yorkshire, and took the curacy of a country parish; and there he exhibited in faint miniature the fine character which, in after-life, he more clearly and broadly developed. To this spiritual cure he was much attached; and it is probable that he would have continued in it, but he married a niece of the gentleman who had the living of Broadhurst in his gift, and who presented it to him on the day of his marriage. To this living he was inducted in the year 1796; and though he subsequently had several offers of preferment, yet he declined them, preferring contentment and the affectionate regards of the attached and devoted people amongst whom he laboured, to the greater honours and emoluments which were held out to him. When he commenced his ministerial labours, he found the church in a most dilapidated condition; its steeple had fallen; its walls were rent in several parts, and overgrown with rank vegetation; the rain oozed through its roof; the grass had grown high on every walk which led to its antique doors; and though the face of the clock was partly visible, the clock itself had long ceased to tell the hours. Almost the whole parish was living in a state of absolute ignorance and moral barbarism. His heart sunk within him as he surveyed the moral waste which he was appointed to cultivate; but recollecting that he was not appointed to labour in his own strength, he resolved to consecrate his life to its improvement. Having formed this resolution, no offer, however flattering, could for a moment shake it. The first thing he attempted was, not to raise the tithes, which he knew



DRAWN BY S. HEAD.

THE CHURCH OF THE NEGLECTED PARISH.

ENGRAVED BY W. L. THOMAS.

would inflame the prejudices of the people against him, but to get the church repaired. He called a meeting of the parishioners, stated his wish, and urged them, in such a mild and persuasive manner, to comply with it, that the utmost degree of unanimity prevailed; and they retired congratulating each other on the residence of a clergyman amongst them who seemed to manifest a concern for their spiritual welfare. Though the parsonage house was, if possible, in a more dilapidated state than the church, yet he prudently declined alluding to it, which gave a few of the leading men such a high idea of his disinterestedness, that they called another meeting, and resolved that the house and the church should be repaired at the same time. When the church, thoroughly repaired, was reopened for divine worship, there was such a concourse of attendants that it was not large enough to contain them. The clerk, who had grown old in the service, having repeated the *Amen* within its walls for nearly half a century, said to his rector, while he was assisting him in putting on his sacred vestments, "There is a main lot of people come, Sir, to see our beautiful church; one should almost think that the dead had got leave to come out of their graves to see it."

It was with some difficulty that Mr. Ingleby could get to the desk; and when he commenced the service, instead of reading the prayers, like his predecessors, in a hurried and irreverent manner, there was so much gravity in his appearance, so much solemnity in his deportment, and such a clearness and impressiveness in his enunciation, that the whole congregation were astonished and delighted. But it was in the pulpit, where he had to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, that he commanded most attention, and excited the deepest interest. He selected for the occasion the memorable words of St. Paul, "*For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*" (1 Cor. ii. 2). After dwelling some time on the death of Christ, and its grand design, he said, "My brethren, I am appointed to labour amongst you; and I have now informed you what will be the principal subject of my ministrations. I shall preach Christ; and can I preach on any subject so important?"

As you are sinners, involved in a state of degeneracy, guilt, and condemnation, you need a Saviour who is able to absolve you from your guilt, and bring you into a state of reconciliation with God, and save you from the wrath to come. Such a Saviour I now proclaim to you; a Saviour who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. On the merit of his obedience and death you must rely for pardon and eternal life; and I beseech you to renounce at once every other object of dependence, and come to him, by faith, with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and he will save you."

This sermon produced a powerful impression, particularly the following very simple illustrative argument:—"If a man, whose tongue is cleaving to the roof of his mouth, were to put this question to me—Will a draught of pure water quench my thirst? I should very naturally say—*Try it*. Or if a man, when standing on a wreck, should ask me—Will your life-boat take me in safety through this fearful storm? instead of philosophizing on the causes of storms, or on the art of boat-building, I should say—*Jump in, Sir, and try it*. And I have the same reply to make to you, who may feel disposed to ask me if coming to Jesus Christ to save you will make you happy—*Try it*. Thousands and millions have made the trial, and found it a successful one; and now I say to each one of you—*Try it*."

This style of bold, yet simple address, was as novel amongst the people as it was impressive; it commanded and secured attention; and it was evident to all that the preacher was in earnest, for he spake as one having authority. Some were delighted with the sermon, and said that they had never seen the truth in such a clear light before, and that they had never before felt it operate so powerfully on their minds; and after the service was over, they lingered about the church, as though they were unwilling to leave the place in which they had been listening, with so much pleasure, to the glad tidings of salvation. But there were a few of the *more respectable part of the people* who were offended, and who did not hesitate to say, that if morality was to be excluded from the pulpit, to admit of

the introduction of this evangelical style of preaching, they should decline attending the church. In the course of the week Mr. Ingleby received a letter from Mr. Porteous, a county magistrate, of which I afterwards obtained a copy, and also of his reply. I here introduce them as curiosities:—

“REVEREND SIR,—I was not a little delighted and astonished on Sunday last; I was delighted with your very eloquent manner of reading our incomparable Liturgy; but I was astonished by the *very unguarded expressions which you made use of in your sermon*. You said, if my memory serves me, ‘good works have nothing to do with our salvation—that if we are saved, it must be by faith in Christ crucified.’ Now, *if our good works have nothing to do with our salvation, shall we not abstain from performing them?* I need not, I am sure, to a gentleman of your learning, point out the dangerous consequences which must result to the interests of morality from such sentiments; but considering that you have been so much engaged in attending to the repairs of the church, &c., I can very easily believe, from your habit of preaching extempore, that you let fall many expressions which, on mature consideration, you will condemn as unequivocally as I do. You will excuse the liberty which I have taken in offering these remarks, *but as the morals of the people are somewhat under my supervision, I could not remain silent when I apprehended danger*. Assuring you, Reverend Sir, that I have a great esteem for the clergy, and, as you are appointed our rector, I shall be happy to see you at my mansion, and wishing you health and happiness among us—I am, Reverend Sir, your obedient servant,

“J. P.”

Mr. Ingleby’s reply:—

“DEAR SIR,—I received yours of the 10th, and I presume that a reply is expected. I did say, in the course of my sermon, that good works would never merit the forgiveness of our sins, nor procure for us a state of final happiness. And I did say that we must be saved, if we are ever saved, by faith in Jesus Christ. I did state, most expressly, that the obedience and death of Jesus Christ constitute the

only meritorious cause of our eternal salvation. And if you read the following passages of Scripture, you will perceive that I am correct:— ‘But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and 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’ (Phil. iii. 7-9). ‘For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them’ (Ephesians ii. 8-10).

“And, further, if you consult the Eleventh Article of our church you will find that I advanced no new doctrine:—‘We are counted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not by our own works or deservings: wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the *Homily of Justification*.’

“When these doctrines are preached with simplicity and earnestness among a people who have not been accustomed to hear them, it is no unusual thing for some to imagine that they will be followed by the most dangerous results; but if you will only wait to see their practical influence, you will be convinced that they will *incline*, as well as teach men, to ‘deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.’ Assuring you that I am not offended by your free communication, and that I shall be happy to avail myself of your very friendly invitation—I am, yours truly,  
“J. I.”

The church, which in former times had been almost “as drear as the mansions of the dead,” was now crowded to excess; the people flocked to it from all the adjacent parishes, and many, who came to



scoff, returned to pray. A visible change soon took place in their habits ; the drunkard became sober, the Sabbath-breaker visited the house of prayer, the village games were exchanged for the hallowed exercises of devotion, and the moral desert displayed the beauties of holiness. When it was found that these effects were the result of his ministry, though the spirit of scepticism, which often lurks under a profession of religion, could not be conciliated, yet its open hostility ceased, and the amiable and zealous rector was allowed to pursue the even tenor of his way, beloved by the pious, and respected by the profane.

But he was not more attentive to the duties of his office than to the virtues of his private character. What he enforced on others, he himself practised ; what he inculcated from the pulpit, he exemplified in his family. There religion unfolded her sweetest charms, and sent forth an influence which operated with resistless force on every inmate in his house ; and as his wife was endowed with an unusual share of prudence, she became indeed an help meet for him. She involved him in no pecuniary embarrassments by the extravagance of her habits ; occasioned no discord by the officiousness or bitterness of her temper ; but by managing his temporal affairs with discretion, left him more at liberty to devote himself to the duties of his sacred avocation.

The rector of Broadhurst was instant in season and out of season, serving the Lord, and his labours were blessed in the conversion of not a few of his parishioners. His earnestness in the work of the ministry, his evangelical preaching, and his popularity with the common people, stirred up the jealousy and opposition of the neighbouring clergy, who were preachers of morality, but not of the gospel. Some of them even went so far as to denounce him from the pulpit as a fanatical devotee, who was disturbing the peace of society, and ought to be expelled from the church.

None were more severe in their remarks, or more determined in their opposition, than the Rev. Mr. Guion, the rector of Norton. This clergyman had passed through the University of Oxford with

great *eclat*, was a most accomplished scholar, possessed of a very superior understanding, an admirer of polite literature in all its branches, and inherited a large fortune which his father bequeathed him ; but when he entered on the discharge of his sacred functions he was an entire stranger to the power of vital religion. His zeal for the church burnt with an ardent, if not a pure flame, which led him to look with supercilious contempt on all whom he deemed innovators ; his reverence for the consistency of the clerical character preserved him from the vices and follies in which too many indulge ; and the independent tone of his mind induced him to compose his own discourses, rather than read those which were composed by others. By the rich he was admired for the elegance of his manners, by the intelligent for the extent and variety of his knowledge, and by the poor for his profuse benevolence. On his settlement at Norton he called on Mr. Ingleby, but finding that he was (what the world calls) a Methodist, he declined an intimacy, and they rarely met, except on public occasions.

Mr. Ingleby having been appointed to preach a visitation sermon, Mr. Guion and several other clergymen amused themselves with the prospect of hearing an enthusiastic and unintelligible discourse. He chose his text from Isaiah lii. 11 : "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." After a few introductory remarks, he said that the ministers of religion ought to be men of piety towards God, and of purity in the sight of men ; and as they are intrusted with the truths of revelation, they ought to proclaim them with impassioned ardour. Having been favoured with a sight of this manuscript sermon, I have taken a few extracts from it :—

"As, my brethren, the ulterior design of our public ministry is to recover sinners from their apostasy from God, into a state of fellowship with him, ought we not ourselves to live in an habitual contemplation of his excellencies, and in the exercise of spiritual communion with him ? Ought we not to rise above the mere forms and ceremonies of devotion, into that immediate intercourse with the Holy One which the Scriptures describe by the appropriate phrase of

‘walking with God?’ May we not fairly presume that such an hal-  
lowed exercise will have a most material influence in inducing within  
us that pure and ardent spirit of devotion, without which the duties  
of our sacred profession will be discharged in a cold, formal, and  
unimpressive manner? And can we expect to shed the lustre of  
piety around us unless we are imbued with its spirit, by a constant  
association with Him who alone can infuse it into the mind, and  
keep it from a state of relaxation and decay?

“It has been remarked that the copy which the rest of mankind  
write after should be remarkably correct. Hence the exhortation  
which St. Paul addressed to Timothy is strictly applicable to each  
of us: ‘Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversa-  
tion, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity’ (1 Tim. iv. 12). The  
apology which has sometimes been offered for ministerial irregularity  
cannot be admitted—‘Do as we say, but not as we do,’ for is not ex-  
ample more powerful than precept? If the priest be profane, will  
not the people abhor the sacrifice? If we addict ourselves to the  
vices of the age, can we warn the people against them with any hope  
of success? If we follow the amusements and diversions of this  
world, will they believe that we are in earnest when we exhort them  
to abstain *from the appearance of evil*? If we secularize our habits,  
enter with spirit into the intrigues of the politician, and discover a  
restless ambition to reach the summit of human fame, will they give  
us credit for being sincere, if we exhort them, as we ought to do, *to  
set their affections on things above, and not on things on the earth*?

“In the discharge of your public functions, I would recommend  
you to press upon the attention of your hearers those truths which  
belong to the great scheme of redemption, the lost and helpless state  
of man, salvation by the free grace of God, justification and accept-  
ance through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the necessity of the  
new birth, and of the enlightening and purifying operations of the  
Holy Ghost. These doctrines, which are expressed with so much  
clearness in the Articles of our church, are the essence and glory of  
that gospel which we are commissioned to preach; and though they

are rejected by many as the corruptions of Christianity; yet I presume that you will contend for them as the faith which you are to deliver for the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints. If these truths are rejected because they are evangelical, and the more fashionable doctrine of a sincere though imperfect obedience, combined with a submission to a prescribed formula of religion, which leaves the heart unrenewed, be substituted in their room, we may gain the applause of those who trust in themselves that they are righteous, but we shall be guilty of an awful departure from the spirit and the design of our commission, and justly incur the displeasure of Jesus Christ.

“To conclude: the hour is rapidly approaching when we, who are appointed as the stewards of the mysteries of the kingdom, shall be summoned into the presence of our invisible Lord, to give an account of our stewardship, when the motives which induced us to take upon ourselves the priest’s office and which induced us to retain it, the manner in which we have spent our time, employed our influence and our wealth, and conducted the public solemnities of religion, will undergo a close and a severe investigation; and if we, the ministers of the sanctuary, should, when weighed in the balance, be found wanting, how awful will be our doom! Ezek. xxiii. 7, 8.

“Happy, thrice happy that minister who, amidst all his infirmities, will be able to give up his account with joy; but woe, woe, woe to us if we be found unfaithful!”

This sermon produced a very considerable effect on the audience, but no one was more deeply affected by it than Mr. Guion. He listened with profound attention, and though he mustered all his prejudices against the preacher, and endeavoured to avoid the force of his solemn appeals, yet he was *not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake*. After the service was concluded he retired to meditate on what he had heard, but his mind was too deeply wounded to admit of calm meditation. His personal guilt, his danger, his ministerial infidelity, his dishonoured Lord, the future judgment passed in review before his mind, greatly agitating his

feelings; and being unconscious of the immediate cause and design of this extraordinary mental excitement, he knew not where to obtain relief. As the Sabbath approached he attempted, as usual, to compose a sermon, but after poring over the text on which he had fixed, he abandoned it, because he could not understand it. He then selected another, then another, then another, till, in despair, he resolved that he would not make a fresh effort till his mind was more composed. "I'll preach," said he, "an old sermon," but he could not find one that he could preach. At length he took a volume of sermons from off one of the shelves of his library, and seeing one on these words, "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee" (Zech. ix. 12), he transcribed it. The following paragraph, when he read it from the pulpit, darted a ray of light across his mind, but he was not then able to discover the truth which it so beautifully exhibits: "You who are lying in the prison of an unconverted state, come hither to this sanctuary, whose gates stand open to receive you. 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' He hath shed that blood which 'cleanseth from all sin,' and hath sealed that gracious and well-ordered covenant which offers pardon and eternal life to every penitent believing sinner. And now all things are ready for your reception; the Father is ready to embrace you, Christ is ready to wash you in his blood, the Spirit is ready to heal your diseased natures, angels are ready to rejoice at your return, and we, as the servants of this King of Zion, are ready to welcome you into this family of God, and do now exhort you, and pray you, in Christ's stead, 'to flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before you.'"

On the next Tuesday he rode over to Broadhurst, and heard Mr. Ingleby preach his evening lecture, but contrived to return without being seen. He now felt conscious that Mr. Ingleby was qualified to become his religious instructor, and therefore resolved to open a correspondence with him, which he did by writing to him as follows:—

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,—The sermon which I had the honour of hearing you deliver at your visitation, has made such a deep impression on my mind, that I have been uneasy ever since. It has stripped me of all my imaginary excellence, destroyed the foundation on which I was building my hope of future happiness, convinced me of my personal guilt and degeneracy, rendered me unfit to discharge the functions of my sacred office, and thrown my feelings into such a perturbed state, that I know not how to calm them, nor how to bear up under them. As you have been the means of inflicting the wound, probably you can administer some consolation; and, if you will permit me, I will ride over and avail myself of the honour and felicity of an interview. A reply by the bearer will greatly oblige, yours truly,

“OLIVER GUION.”

The interview took place as proposed, and from that hour to the present, these two laborious ministers of Jesus Christ have lived in the uninterrupted enjoyment of Christian fellowship, animating each other in their sacred work, and, by uniting their influence, have succeeded in diffusing the leaven of truth through the greater part of their extensive parishes.

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## A VISIT TO THE RECTORY.



WE reached the rectory early in the afternoon, and found the venerable rector waiting our arrival. There was, in the manner and style of our reception, a fine blending of dignity with kind and benevolent feeling. In his person he was tall and slender, about sixty years of age; his silver locks fell in curls on his shoulders; in his countenance there was a marked expression of benignity; and his whole appearance

was in keeping with his sacred profession. Mrs. Ingleby was equally free and easy in her manners, but she was rather reserved; yet it was the reserve of constitutional timidity—*hauteur* was alien to her nature. After tarrying awhile, examining his cabinet of natural curiosities, selected and arranged with taste and judgment, we adjourned to the moss-house at the bottom of the garden, which he had, with his own hand, constructed and adorned. It stood on an eminence, which commanded a varied and extensive view, while the trees and shrubs which grew around screened us from the observation of others. The sun, which had been pouring down his scorching beams during the greater part of the day, was now gradually descending the western horizon, gilding the heavens and the earth with his rays. The birds were warbling their evening songs of praise to the Author of their being; the bees were pressing into their hives with the collected stores of the day; the plaintive voice of the turtle-dove fell softly on our ear, which, intermingling with the occasional cawing of the rooks, returning to their young with the fruits of their toil, gave to the evening a charm which the crowded haunts of fashionable life never possessed.

As we sat, enjoying the interchange of sacred thought and feeling, almost forgetting that we were inhabitants of a world which had fallen from an original state of purity and bliss, I observed an interesting-looking stranger advancing towards us; and was informed that it was the Rev. Mr. Guion, of whom I had previously heard.

Mr. Guion apologized for not being punctual, and informed us that the fall of his horse was the cause of it. He was welcomed by the whole party, and congratulated on his having sustained no injury. Mrs. Ingleby, of course, presided at the tea-table; she was elegantly polite, yet so affable that we felt at perfect ease; and every one appeared to enjoy the desultory chit-chat, which was kept up with great spirit. At length, when the tea-drinking ceremony was over, *conversation* commenced, according to our uniform custom, and, to the astonishment of all, Mrs. Ingleby led off; yet I think it was more by accident than design.

“Strange events happen in the history of life; but I have been thinking, while attending to the ceremonies of the table, that if an old prophet of Israel had been with us when we took our first cup of tea in this moss-house, and if he had predicted that we should live to see the present company with us, I should have doubted it.”

“Our presence, Madam,” said Mr. Stevens, “may be attributed to the moral power of the Christian ministry; that ministry being the instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God, by which he effects moral wonders.”

“I had no idea,” said Mr. Guion, “when I was going to hear the visitation sermon at Salisbury, that I should come into contact with any other power than the rhapsodies of evangelical enthusiasm. Several of us were highly amused in anticipation of witnessing some strange outbursts of fanatical sentiment and feeling, uttered in some grotesque terms of enunciation. But my venerable friend had not proceeded far in his discourse before I felt compelled to listen with profound attention; what he said was new to me, it went to my heart; I was not able, nor yet inclined, to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”

“And pray, Sir,” said Mr. Lewellin, “what was the direct effect which the sermon produced?”

“The effect, at the time, was an undefinable effect. I recollect, when I left the church, and I contrived to leave it without intermixing with any of my brother clergymen, I retired to meditate on what I had heard, but my mind was too deeply agitated to admit of calm meditation. My personal guilt, my spiritual danger, my ministerial unfaithfulness to my dishonoured Lord, and the future judgment, alternately convulsed my feelings; and being unconscious at the time of the immediate cause or ultimate design of this extraordinary mental excitement, I knew not what to do to regain my accustomed composure. I could neither read nor pray. I wandered hour after hour to and fro, in a lonely glen; I was in a fearful tumult of anxiety and agony of spirit.

“The gospel,” said Mr. Ingleby, “is designated the power of God



to salvation, and when it comes to the soul dead in trespasses and sins, in the demonstrative power of the Spirit, its great power is felt; felt to be subduing, at times agonizing, and always renovating. The issue is certain and glorious, its operations are the necessary preparations for eternal salvation."

"I believe," said Mr. Lewellin, "you have not many evangelical clergymen in these parts."

"Not many, Sir; the generality of our clergy are very excellent men, who mean well, but they are not spiritually enlightened men; and, unhappily for themselves and others, this is their great fault, they put a Papal construction on the import and design of our sacraments, and virtually repudiate the articles to which they have given a solemn assent and consent. My nearest brother clergyman is Mr. Cole, the rector of Aston; he is decidedly and avowedly anti-evangelical; he denounces us as a living curse to our church, and a disgrace to our order; but he is a gay man of the world, will shuffle the cards, dance at a ball, and visit a theatre, without any sense of impropriety; he rather glories in his shame."

"Their dependence for success in their official labours," said Mr. Lewellin, "is on the efficacy of the sacraments, and they may be regarded as magicians of a new order, operating on their deluded devotees by a sort of spiritual legerdemain; contrasts to the faithful in Christ Jesus, who execute the ministry which they receive of the Lord Jesus under the sanction and power of the Holy Ghost; and contrasts as great as between demons and angels of God.

"The Christian ministry," said Mr. Ingleby, "is a life-giving ministry, and a ministry of great moral power, when it is faithfully executed. It is an institution peculiar to Christianity, and admirably adapted to advance the improvement and happiness of society. Paganism wraps up the mysteries of her pretended revelations in the folds of an hieroglyphical device, Mahometanism discourages the people from prying into her origin, and Popery confines the light of revelation within the archives of her temple: but Christianity presents the Sacred Volume to the poor as well as to the rich; to the

ignorant as well as to the learned; and by appointing men to explain and enforce the truth, secures the attention of the multitude, who find that it still pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."

"Yes, Sir," replied Mr. Guion, "but if the ministry throw into the shade the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, it ought not to be called a *Christian ministry*. I preached for the space of four years, and thought I preached well. I took great pains with the composition of my sermons, but I did not preach the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. The few who attended my ministry were pleased, but none were converted; and I never heard any of them make the subject of my sermon the topic of conversation, except when I indulged myself in a satirical attack on the fanatics in the church and the fanatics out of it."

"I presume," said Mr. Stevens, "that you had no conception, when you were satirizing the fanatics, as you termed them, that you were satirizing those who contend earnestly for the faith."

"O no, Sir! I was ignorant of their sentiments, and my prejudices kept me ignorant. I would not read any of their productions. I often said that they ought to be driven out of the Establishment, because I thought they were secretly undermining its foundation, and, if allowed to grow into a formidable body, might endanger its existence."

"Did you wish to crush them?" said Mr. Lewellin.

"O no; I would have tolerated them as we tolerate the Dissenters, but I would not allow them to disturb the harmony of the church."

"Did you ever think, Sir, of the awful responsibility in which your profession involved you?"

"Yes, Sir; but as I lived a virtuous life, when I did occasionally advert to the day of final decision, I thought I should have a crown of glory awarded me. O! how I was deluded; but the delusion has passed away; and though I now see defects where I could not discern them before, and feel that I am not worthy to unloose the latchet

of my Master's shoes, yet I hope, through his free and sovereign grace, that I shall be saved."

"Did your clerical brethren," Mr. Stevens inquired, "express any astonishment or displeasure at the change which took place in your religious opinions?"

"Yes, Sir, one, a very amiable and learned man, with whom I had been carrying on a literary correspondence, wrote me a long and rather severe letter. He said that he was astonished that a person of my distinguished reputation should condescend to take up the crude and unphilosophical notions of the modern fanatics. Pause, Sir, said he, and think of the fatal step you are taking—a step which, if actually taken, will tarnish the lustre of your character, blast for ever all hope of your preferment, and doom you to associate through life with those whom to shun is a virtue, and esteem a vice. I replied to his letter, stated the doctrines which I believed, and the reasons why I believed them, and assured him that he was labouring under a powerful misconception, from which I was happily delivered; and concluded by saying, that if it were vile in the estimation of my friends to revere and love such men as Newton, Cecil, Venn, and Ingleby, I was resolved to become viler still. This closed our correspondence."

Mr. Guion, who was naturally very facetious, amused us with a drollish story about two ladies, on whom he had called in the course of his pastoral visits. These were two maiden sisters, who had resided together for rather more than half a century, and possessing an independent fortune, were persons of considerable consequence in the parish. They were now too far advanced in life to take *the lead* in fashion, but they did not *lag far behind*; and though their opinions on some subjects were regarded as rather antiquated by their juvenile friends, yet they were usually treated with very great respect. They were considered as very religious, *particularly so*; and were very devout, when *seen at their devotions*. The preparation week was to them a week of very great importance, and very toilsome mental labour; and it is rather remarkable, that neither of them had been

detained from the sacrament for the space of thirty years, *except when they had company*. At the time of Mr. Guion's visit, the eldest, Miss Susan, was sitting in the breakfast parlour, reading.

*Mr. Guion.*—"Good morning, Madam, I hope you are well."

*Miss Susan.*—"Indeed, Sir, I am not. I have not been well since you began to preach the new doctrines of the new birth and faith, and salvation by grace, which Mr. Ingleby taught you. I wish he had been on a visit to Jericho, instead of being appointed to preach that visitation sermon. Indeed, Sir, I don't like your preaching against cards; for, Sir, I never play for money; and *beside, all the money I ever win I give to the poor*. You have driven me and my sister from the church, Sir, and if we are lost, you will have to answer for it. And *beside, Sir, I never will believe that God will damn any body*. We were all living, Sir, as peaceably as a nestling of birds, till you began your present style of preaching, but now every body has something to say about religion. I am sorry to say that religion is getting quite into disrepute, now the common people are becoming religious." Miss Susan had not finished the last sentence, before Miss Dorothy entered. She was more polite, but there lurked under her politeness a malignancy of disposition which her sister did not discover, amidst all her flippant invectives.

*Miss Dorothy.*—"Well, Sir, I did not expect that you would have done us the honour of a call."

"*Mr. Guion.*—"I wish, Madam, to pay respect to all my parishioners."

*Miss Dorothy.*—"Out of the pulpit, I presume."

*Mr. Guion.*—"Yes, Madam, and in it."

*Miss Dorothy.*—"Surely, Reverend Sir, you are now indulging us with a joke, and I wonder that such a *religious clergyman* as you are can use such a profane weapon."

*Mr. Guion.*—"I am not aware, Madam, that I ever behaved disrespectfully towards any of my parishioners, when discharging the public duties of my office. If I have, I sincerely regret it, and you would oblige me if you would let me know in what."



MR. GUION'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH THE MISSES BROWNJOHN.

*Miss Dorothy.*—"Did you not tell us, Sir, on Trinity Sunday, that publicans and harlots were more likely to enter the kingdom of heaven than your more righteous hearers? And did you not tell us that we must implore mercy, in terms *equally humiliating*? What was this, Sir, but proclaiming the jubilee of vice and the armistice of virtue?"

*Mr. Guion.*—"I merely quoted the language of Jesus Christ, which he addressed to the chief priests and elders of Jerusalem, and as we are all sinners, I am at a loss to conceive how any can implore mercy but in the same phraseology of speech. The language of our church, you know, Madam, is very, very appropriate to us all, '*Lord have mercy on us, miserable sinners.*'"

*Miss Dorothy.*—"No, Sir. I am not a miserable sinner. That language is only intended for the depraved part of your audience."

*Miss Susan.*—"Miserable sinners! Ah! miserable enough. Why, Sir, there is more misery in the parish *now*, than there has been *for the past forty years, put it all together*. I went into the kitchen the other night, and I saw our cook with the Bible on the table, weeping as though she had lost her father. And this, Sir, is all your doings; and when I told her she should not go to church any more to be made miserable, she began crying again, and had the impudence to tell me the next morning, that unless she could have the liberty of going to church on a Sunday, that I must provide myself with another servant. So you see, Sir, what misery you are propagating among us."

*Mr. Guion.*—"All pure religion commences in repentance towards God, and can there be repentance without sorrow? And if tears, the signs of sorrow, should be shed, ought this to excite astonishment? And you will permit me to say, that prohibiting your servant from attending church on the Sabbath is neither kind nor equitable. The Scriptures tell us of some who will not enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in."

*Miss Dorothy.*—"I see your reference, but feel not its force. And as we differ so materially in our religious opinions, I think we had

better decline any farther intercourse. You may go, Reverend Sir, and comfort the miserable, who are crying for mercy, *because they need it*, but you will allow us and our friends to enjoy that mental complacency which arises from a full conviction that we discharge our duties to our God and to our neighbour, and this we take as a bright omen of our future destiny. We have no desire to be initiated into the mysteries of your faith, but we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God."

*Mr. Guion.*—"If we cannot agree on the speculative points of religion, probably we may on its relative duties. And now, ladies, you will allow me to state the ulterior design of my visit. John Brown, a very worthy man, who is in the employ of Mr. Rider, fell two months since from the top of a barley-mow, and broke a leg. He is still confined to his bed. He has five children, and his wife is on the eve of being again confined. This severe affliction has reduced the whole family to a state of extreme distress, and I am anxious to procure a little assistance for them."

*Miss Dorothy.*—"They should apply to the parish. We pay our rates, and that, you know, Sir, is giving to the poor."

*Mr. Guion.*—"A gift is a voluntary donation, but paying the parish rate *is no gift*, it is a legal compulsion. And besides, this poor man has always avoided an application to the parish, and I think it is not only our duty, but our interest, to encourage the poor to depend on their own resources, and the occasional assistance of their richer neighbours, rather than force them, by neglect, to have resource to the parish rate. There is a high spirit of independence in the mind of a poor, honest, industrious man, which keeps him from making any application to the overseers; but when that spirit of independence is broken down by the iron hand of want, and he is compelled to solicit parish relief to save himself from starvation, the repugnance is no longer felt, and then, by withholding a little temporary assistance in time of need, we injure the tone of his moral feelings, and create a family of paupers, who may hang on the parish rate all their life."

*Miss Dorothy.*—"If, Sir, you always *reasoned in the pulpit* with as much correctness as you now *reason out of it*, your more respectable parishioners would not turn their backs on you. I will think of the case of this poor man, and if, after having made due inquiry, we think it a meritorious case, perhaps we may send something."

*Mr. Guion.*—"On the accuracy of my reasoning when in the pulpit it would be improper in me to express an opinion, but you will allow me to say that it is only *a very small portion* of the respectable part of my parishioners who have turned their back on me. The generality attend the church more regularly, if not more devoutly, than before I commenced my present style of preaching. And who are those who have recently deserted the church? Not those who are separated from the spirit and the customs of this world, but those who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, who feel a higher gratification in reading plays and novels than in reading the Sacred Scriptures, in whose families no altar of devotion is erected, and who are more disposed to ridicule pure religion when it is infused into a living character, than to admire its excellence or imitate its example. If I preach contrary to the Scriptures, or to the Articles of our church, it will be an easy thing to detect me; but if my preaching accord with them, to condemn it will be an aggravation of guilt, and to desert it will be judging ourselves unworthy of eternal life."

*Miss Susan.*—"Every tub must stand on its own bottom. You go to heaven your way, and we will go ours."

*Miss Dorothy.*—"Yes. We are commanded not to be righteous over-much. The Deity is pleased when he sees his rational creatures happy, and he does not require us to forego the innocent diversions which improved society has instituted for its own gratification. However, it is not my wish to prolong a debate which is mutually unpleasant."

"Do these ladies," inquired Mrs. Stevens, "ever come now to hear you preach?"

"No, Madam, Miss Dorothy bears what she calls her expulsiou



from church in a genuine pharisaical *hauteur* of spirit; and is sullenly silent about the cause of it. But Miss Susan is bitterly vituperative. She often says I shall have to account to the Almighty for driving her from the church where she was christened, and confirmed, and taken the sacrament ever since, and where she hoped to be buried with her ancestors; but she declares I shall never bury her."

"Do you ever see them now, Sir?"

"We occasionally meet, when we go through the formal ceremonial of a polite recognition. They do not object to a bow from their rector, though they object to his sermons."

"Have they any pernicious influence over others to keep them from church?"

"Yes, Madam, over a few of the frivolous and the gay, who now attend Mr. Cole's church, when they go anywhere. And there these two ladies go on sacrament Sunday—wind and weather permitting."

"We often," said Mr. Ingleby, "see the depraved and dissolute repenting, and seeking salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, but we rarely know a genuine Pharisee converted: they are too good in their own estimation to need a Saviour. They will bow at the mention of his name, but they will not look to him to save them; and primarily, because they are under no apprehension of ever being lost."

We were startled, while gravely listening to this tale of the two spinster ladies, by the sudden tolling of the church bell. Mr. Ingleby left the room to ascertain the cause, and on his return informed us that, owing to some mistake, he had to conduct the service at a funeral, which he expected would not take place till the following day.

"Pray, Sir," said Mrs. Stevens, "who is to be interred?" "One of the choicest lambs of my flock. She fell a victim to the inconstancy of a worthless man; but towards the close of her imbittered life she enjoyed unruffled peace of soul, and died in full and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life." He now left us to prepare for the service, and we resolved to follow him to the graveyard.



A LAMB OF THE FLOCK BORNE TO HER REST.

Seated by myself upon a tombstone, I sat musing on death and immortality; on the raptures and the woes of the invisible world; on the dying and on the dead; till I saw the procession moving slowly up a lane which led to the place of sepulture. The pall was supported by six females dressed in white; and one walked before the corpse, carrying a chaplet of flowers. The parents and their surviving children followed; and a large proportion of the village hung on, as deeply interested spectators. On entering the church, the bier was placed in the aisle; the pall-bearers standing by its sides during the whole of the service. The procession at length moved to the grave, which was under the shade of a yew tree. Every eye appeared suffused with tears; but when the noise of the earth falling on the coffin was heard, there was such a simultaneous emotion of grief excited, that nearly all wept, except the parents. They stood motionless; the power of feeling seemed suspended; a fixed melancholy was impressed on their countenance; and they walked away, the victims of despair, moving from one dreary spot to another not less dreary.

As their grief appeared too singular to use any of the common methods which that passion generally adopts to gain relief from its own inflictions, I felt anxious to ascertain the specific cause of its excitement; and, on returning to the rectory, I asked Mr. Ingleby to give us the history of the deceased.

“She was,” he said, “the eldest daughter of an opulent farmer, who resides about half-a-mile off; an extremely handsome and accomplished girl; and, from the elegance of her manners, and her intellectual attainments, she was fitted to move in the most polite circles. But though she stood without a rival in the whole hamlet, she was either unconscious of her superiority, or had too much good sense to display it. She would visit the sick, instruct the children of the poor, or perform any other work of mercy. In her the passion of selfishness was annihilated, and she lived to bless others. But she wanted the grace of pure religion to give the finishing polish to her attractive charms: and had she possessed this at an earlier period of

her life, she might still have been, what she once was, the glory of her father's house.

“About four years ago, a young gentleman of rank and fortune, but of dissipated habits, obtained an introduction to her; an intimacy was formed, which soon ripened, in her unsuspecting breast, into an ardent attachment. Her parents, who ought to have guarded her against the cruel monster, did all in their power to encourage his visits; and on one occasion, when I ventured to suggest that I suspected the purity of his intentions, they were offended. But the veil of deception, which he had thrown over his professions, was very unexpectedly rent asunder; and with a levity and insolence of manner, which rarely occur in the annals of human treachery, he tore himself away from her, leaving her the dupe of her own credulity, and the victim of her own grief. Abandoned by one she loved, and thrown as an orphan on the world, even while her parents were still living, she withdrew from society, and, like the stricken deer, sought a tranquil death in a gloomy shade. Her health gradually declined, and it was thought proper to try if change of air and change of scene would not become the means of restoring it. She went, with a younger sister, to Teignmouth, to spend the winter; but on her return we all perceived that she was hastening to the tomb.

“I called to see her a few days after her return, and was both astonished and delighted to find that, during her residence at Teignmouth, she had given almost undivided attention to the momentous claims of religion. ‘Though, Sir,’ she said, ‘I have had the privilege of attending your ministry from my early childhood, and have had my mind, at various times, most powerfully impressed by the truth, which I have heard you preach, yet I never understood the plan of salvation till recently. I used to admit the importance of religion, but *now I feel it*; and though I cannot say that I have attained to any high degree of eminence in knowledge or enjoyment, yet light has broken in upon my understanding, and I am permitted to indulge a good hope through grace. How astonishing! I was sent to Teign-

mouth for the recovery of my health, which I have not obtained; *but there I found the pearl of great price* (Rom. xi. 33).

“I asked her if anything of a particular nature occurred while she was at Teignmouth, to force on her attention the great question relating to her personal salvation? when she gave me the following statement:—

“When out for a walk one evening, I ran into a roadside cottage, for shelter against a very heavy shower of rain. I there saw a young person, about my own age, dying of a decline; and in a short time her physician came, who is a very godly man, and I overheard part of their conversation. I heard her say, I am not now afraid of dying or of death. I know by the loss of this frail life I shall gain immortal life in heaven—a life of happiness, where there will be no sin, or sorrow, or pain, or poverty, or death.’

“‘I called,’ she added, ‘the next day, with a few jellies and oranges, but I found the cottage in a state of great confusion and sorrow, for she died just before I entered it. On the following Sabbath her funeral sermon was preached at the Dissenting chapel, and I heard it. The text made a deep impression on my heart, as I thought it applicable to myself—“*Her sun went down while it was yet day.*” From that hour I gave an undiverted attention to the apostolic injunction—“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;” and I trust, Sir, I can now say I do believe in the Son of God, and hope He will save me. I may live to outlive my affliction, and the poignant sufferings which have been the cause of it; but it is very doubtful. What a mercy that I am now prepared for death and its issue.’

“She grew better as the spring advanced; the influence of religious principle moderated the violence of her mental anguish; her spirits regained their natural vivacity; she resumed her customary habits of going about doing good, and again mingled amongst the living; but now her preference was to the excellent of the earth, who love and fear God. So great was the change in her appearance, that we all flattered ourselves that the fatal disease had received a check,

and that she would yet live to bless us with her presence and her example. But the disorder, which we thought subdued, was silently spreading itself through her whole frame; and having taken a fresh cold, it attacked her with greater violence, and within the space of three weeks she was taken from us. At my last interview with her, which was only a few hours before her decease, she said, 'I am not *now* afraid to die. The subject has long been familiar to me. It is divested of all its terrors. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." I enjoy His presence this side the Jordan, and doubt not but the waters will divide when He calls me to pass through.'

"On seeing her mother weep, and her father retiring in sorrow from the 'post of observation,' she said with great composure, 'My dear parents, weep not for me. I shall soon, very soon be released from all my pain, and see Him, "whom having not seen, I love; in whom, though I see Him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." I leave you in this vale of sorrow, to ascend the mount of bliss; and I hope you will follow me. And O! that he who has been the guilty cause of my early death, may obtain mercy in that day when we must stand together before the judgment-seat.' She spoke but little after this, and at seven o'clock the same evening she said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' smiled, and expired.

"Since her death her parents, who are virtuous, but not pious, have been inconsolable; they reproach themselves in the bitterest terms for the inducements which they threw in the way of the murderer of their daughter and the destroyer of their happiness; and though they have no doubt of her present felicity, yet, being ignorant of the nature of that felicity, and having no animating prospect of attaining it themselves, they sorrow as others who have no hope. I have visited them several times since the dear deceased left us; but grief has taken such an entire possession of their mind, that the words of consolation seem to aggravate its violence, and I fear, unless mercy interpose to prevent it, that the grave will soon be opened to receive them."

“Nothing,” said Mr. Stevens, “gives such buoyancy to the mind, in the season of affliction, as communion with God. This holy exercise induces resignation, as well as submission to His will ; raises up the soul above the conflicting elements of sorrow, into the tranquil regions of peace ; and, by associating it with the unseen, yet not unfelt realities of the eternal world, makes it unwilling to look for permanent and substantial happiness amidst the fleeting possessions of earth.”

“I was present,” said Mrs. Stevens, “when my dear sister, Mrs. Lewellin, lost her Eliza. She wept as she followed her remains to the tomb ; but she did not repine. She said to me, after the rites of sepulture were performed, as we sat together in the room in which the dear girl expired, ‘If it had been the will of the Lord to have spared my child, I would have received her back with grateful joy ; but as He has taken her to Himself, I can bow and say,

‘I welcome all thy sov’reign will,  
For all that will is love ;  
And when I know not what thou dost,  
I’ll wait the light above.’”

“Religion,” said Mr. Ingleby, “has a fine effect on the soul in the day of prosperity ; but its excellency is most visible in the season of adversity ; then it shines with peculiar radiance, demonstrating its superhuman origin, by the omnipotence of its power in moderating the intensity of grief, and inspiring the soul with a hope full of immortality.”

## SATURDAY EVENING AT FAIRMOUNT.



T was on a fine summer evening, when taking a solitary ramble, that I seated myself on the stump of an old elm tree, gazing on the splendour of the heavens and the beauties of the earth; thinking of the mysterious period when there was no sun, or moon, or stars; when there was no material universe or created beings; that I unconsciously fell into the following train of reflection. Here I am; but how came I here? Am I the child of chance, or the offspring of a wise and beneficent Creator? When I see a machine, I feel conscious that it was constructed by an artist; and can I suppose that the more curious mechanism of my body was formed by chance? Was it chance that placed my eye in the only proper position in the body to guide the motion of my hands and my feet; that stationed around it so many guards to keep it from injury; that has given it a mysterious power to travel over a wide and extended surface without fatigue; and to receive the exact form and colour of external objects on the dark canvas spread out behind the lens, without intermixture or confusion? Was it chance that constructed my ear for the nice discrimination of sounds; that let fall the ray of intelligence on my understanding; and gave to my fancy its capabilities to adorn the conceptions of my mind with the drapery of a beauteous imagery? And was it chance that gave to my tongue the sense of taste and the gift of speech? Impossible! I trace contrivance in all these astonishing arrangements and endowments, which demonstrates the existence of a God who made me. Was it chance that placed the sun in the centre of the planetary system; that impressed laws on those unconscious bodies which revolve around it, which keep them from deviating from their mysterious course; that set bounds to the sea, which it cannot pass; that gave to the air I breathe a salubrious



and elastic quality; and enriched the earth with a prolific power? Impossible! In all these mighty works I trace the operations of intelligence and design. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." All nature is full of God. He shines in the brightness of the sun,

—————"Refreshes in the breeze,  
Clows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees."

And does not the visible creation display the goodness of God? Pain is not the object of contrivance, which would have been the case had the Creator been a malevolent being. The eye is formed for the purpose of vision, not to be injured by the atom floating in the air; the ear for hearing, not for aching; the hand and the foot to be active and useful, not to be lacerated by instruments of torture.

The sun was now creeping gently down the western horizon; the sky was clear and bright, as on the eve of the first day of the creation; no sounds broke in upon my calm serenity, except the loving of the cattle and the bleating of the sheep penned in a neighbouring fold; and, just as I was rising to a more glorious theme of contemplation, my attention was arrested by the appearance of a gentleman, who was walking along the bank of a river, gliding through the vale beneath me. His manner was singular. Now he advanced with hurried steps the distance of fifty yards, then suddenly stopped, looked round him, advanced again, again stopped, stood motionless, then approached the brink of the river, receded, walked up to the edge again, paused, appeared wrapped in deep and solemn thought, retraced his steps, abruptly stopped, fixed his cane in the ground, threw down his gloves, took off his hat, advanced, and fell. During the whole of these apparently mysterious movements, my sympathies were excited, and I was making every necessary preparation to save a soul from death. My feelings were too violently agitated to allow of cool reflection; but I could not refrain from paying the tributary sigh to that unknown cause of woe which appeared to be hurrying an intelligent and accountable being out of a world on which I had been gazing with so much delight, and

sending him, stained with the blood of his own life, into another and a changeless economy of existence.

As soon as I saw him fall, I rushed forward; and, as the river was not more than a few hundred yards distant from me, I felt conscious that I should be able to reach him in time to save his life; but just as I was going to leap over the stile that stood midway between us, I saw him raising himself on his knees. I drew back, and looking through the hedge, I perceived that he had not fallen into the river, but among the high rushes that grew on its brink, and that he was not meditating the destruction of his own life, but the rescue of a little lamb, that had accidentally slipped into the stream. The transition of my mind from one of the most awful subjects of contemplation, to a touching incident of human benevolence, was not less gratifying to my feelings than the sudden hushing of the midnight tempest is to the mariner, who, having lost his compass, can steer his vessel only by the light of the polar star.

Curiosity impelled me to watch the movements of this stranger, and I beheld him cautiously removing the weeds which were entwined around the exhausted lamb, and then carrying it to its dam, which, I imagined from her bleating, instinctively knew the danger from which her offspring had been delivered. This sight brought to my recollection the language of the prophet, who represents the Redeemer as gathering the lambs with his arms, and carrying them in his bosom.

On perceiving the stranger advancing towards the stile which I intended to cross, I again seated myself on my former post of observation, and soon had the gratification of seeing him saunter up the lane. He was a young man, on whom the God of nature had bestowed a fine exterior form; and who by an action, which he was not conscious I had witnessed, had strongly prepossessed me in his favour. I arose on his coming near me; we exchanged the customary bow of polite recognition; and, after passing a few cursory remarks on the varied scenery around us, we moved onwards together, and were soon engaged in a very interesting and important discussion.

"I have, Sir," he said, "left the bustling city, in which I have spent the greater part of my life, to survey for myself those rural beauties and employments which I have been accustomed to view through the medium of the press."

"No fancy," I observed, "can paint the beauties of nature, in all their varied forms, and hues, and rich combinations. The landscape pleases when on the canvas; but there is no life, no motion, no sound, all which are necessary to make the representation really correct."

"True, Sir, but we are much indebted to the pencil for introducing rural scenes and scenery into our crowded cities, by which we are told, through the medium of the eye, that there are living beauties in nature which *we may see*. This is my first visit to the country. I have been wandering about for several weeks, travelling from village to village, and penetrating into woods and forests; trying to make myself familiar with the manners and habits, the sentiments and feelings, of the various orders of rustic life. I have conversed with the opulent and indigent farmer; with the man who holds the plough, and the man who drives the team; with the shepherd and the woodman; I have looked into their houses and their huts, and have investigated their plans of domestic economy; and I think I shall now return home with a more correct opinion of the actual state of things that I once entertained. The beauties of nature are more beautiful than I anticipated; but I have searched in vain for that rural simplicity, and innocence, and joy, which ancient and modern poets have described in such glowing colours. For simplicity, I have found rudeness; for innocence, low cunning; for contentment, murmuring dissatisfaction; for sportive playfulness, almost universal lamentation. To quote the language of a poet who first introduced scepticism into my unsuspecting breast:—

' I grant, in leed, that fields and flocks have charms  
For him that grazes, or for him that farms:  
But, when amid such pleasing scenes, I trace  
The poor, laborious natives of the place,  
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,  
On their bare heads and dewy temples play;

While some, with feeble hands, and fainter hearts,  
 Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts—  
 Then, shall I dare these real ills to hide,  
 In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?"

"I have often been charmed with the pastoral life of the poets, but I have never found a counterpart to their descriptions. *Their* shepherdesses are clothed with the verdant beauty of paradisaical innocence, and their shepherds are men of genius; the sky beneath which their ewes lamb and their dogs sleep, knows nothing of the war of elements; but when I visit the actual spots from whence they collect their enchanting imagery, I see the ponderous cloud overhanging the defenceless fold; and am soon convinced that

'No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,  
 Their country's beauty or their nymphs rehearse.'

"The poets have long been practising an illusion on our credulity; and though, after the deception is discovered, we may continue to admire their highly-wrought descriptions, yet, the charm of reality having vanished, we feel dissatisfied."

"It is to be lamented," I replied, "that poets are not the only writers who try to impose on the credulity of their readers. The reading world, as it is called, revolves in a fictitious region; and hence, when its inhabitants come forth amidst the scenes of real life, they are apt to think, and feel, and talk, and act, like beings descended from an aerial planet."

"Your observation, Sir, is perfectly correct; but, in my opinion, no writers are so deserving of severe censure as religious writers. They represent as fact, what we know is fable; as real, what our intuitive sense teaches us is imaginary; and, by a dexterity which belongs exclusively to their order they try to beguile us of our innocent recreations, which they denounce as impure and pernicious, and enforce on us exercises at which our generous nature recoils; and have the effrontery to tell us, that if we wish for happiness we must seek for it in religion."

"That there has been deception practised by *some* religious writers

no one can deny; but I cannot subscribe to every part of your sweeping charge. For if your remarks are to be admitted in their fullest extent of application, they would go to the entire banishment of all religion from society, which would be a fearful calamity—the experience of all ages and countries proves that no social fabric can be held in order and in harmony, unless its various parts are compressed together by the force of religious opinions and sanctions.”

“Not, Sir, to the banishment of the religion of nature, which is simple and pure, but to the banishment of the religion of revelation, which is mystical and corrupt.”

“And pray, my dear Sir, what is this religion of nature, which you say is so simple and pure? It is something of which I have heard, but I never saw its form or heard its voice.”

“Why, Sir, it is that view of the perfections of the Deity which we discover in His visible works, and the consequent impressions which they make on our minds. How vast the power which has sprung yon azure arch over our revolving globe! What wisdom is displayed in the adaptation of every part of the creation to accomplish some obvious design! And it is evident, from the subservience of all things to the comfort and happiness of living beings, that goodness is an essential attribute of the Deity. It is in this vast temple, where he unveils his glory, that I offer up my orisons and my incense; and not on altars built by human hands, or within temples consecrated by priestly incantations.”

“I agree with you, that power, and wisdom, and goodness, are displayed in the works of God, and that we may worship him either in the glen or on the mountain top, beside the running stream or within the recesses of pathless woods; but, as we are sinners, can we indulge any hope of mercy, unless he condescend to promise us forgiveness? And tell me from what part of the *visible creation* has the sound of mercy ever proceeded?”

“Why, Sir, we may presume that He who has made provision for all our temporal wants, has made provision also for our moral ones.”

“We know, Sir, that the supreme magistrate feeds and clothes the state prisoner, but are we to presume, from this circumstance, that he will also remit his sentence of condemnation?”

This question produced a momentary embarrassment; but, after a short pause, he said, “I grant that a promise of mercy would be a more substantial basis for hope than a mere presumption resting on analogical reasoning.”

“I thank you for this frank admission; and I think if you will investigate the subject, free from prejudice, you will find that the promise has been given.”

“I know that the writers of your Scriptures have incorporated the promise of forgiveness in their scheme of religion; but I can never bring my mind to believe that they were authorized to do so by the Deity. I never can believe in the truth of Christianity. It is impossible.”

“But, Sir, you will admit that it may be true, though you do not believe it?”

“Why, yes; my scepticism does not prove it false, any more than your faith proves it true.”

“Now, let me suppose for a moment that it is true—in what an awful dilemma are you placed! Be candid. Are you convinced, by an unbiassed and dispassionate investigation of the evidences of Christianity, that the system is false?”

“Why, no; I have never examined them; and for this reason, I have never thought it worth while; because I cannot reconcile your doctrine of the atonement with the dictates of reason.”

“But, suppose the *fact* of the atonement be established by proper, *valid evidence*, will your inability to reconcile it with the dictates of reason be any logical argument against it?”

“Most certainly it will, unless you require me to believe what I can neither understand nor comprehend; and, allow me to ask, what practical effect can be produced by the admission of any doctrine or supposed fact which is incomprehensible?”

“You believe in the existence of God; and that belief induces you

to pay him homage ; but can you comprehend the nature of his essence, or the *modus* of his existence ?”

He was silent ; I continued, “ We have positive proof that the tides of the ocean are acted on by the moon. This is a fact, which nautical science compels us to believe ; and the belief does operate on human conduct ; but can you understand how its influence does act ? But, waiving the introduction of other facts, which may be made to tell with crushing force against your proposition, that what is incomprehensible cannot put forth any practical power, may I be permitted to ask, what other specific objections you have to advance against the doctrine of the atonement, which is so distinctly and repeatedly brought forward by the writers of the Scriptures ?”

“ I have several ; first, I cannot admit that the death of an innocent person can be accepted as an atonement for the sins of the guilty, without a gross violation of the laws of immutable justice. If I take for granted, what your Scriptures assert to be the case, that man is a sinner, and consequently under a sentence of condemnation, does not immutable justice require that he should stand responsible for his actions ; how, then, can he transfer this responsibility to another, without disturbing the established law of moral order ?”

“ He *does not make the transfer*, he *merely accepts it* ; the transfer is made in his behalf, by the authority of the supreme legislator ; and Jesus Christ, to whom the transfer is made, willingly takes upon himself the moral responsibility of human crime and guilt.”

“ This certainly obviates one part of my objection, but still immutable justice seems to require, to quote from your own standard of authority, that *the soul that sinneth shall die*, that is, I suppose, shall endure the penalty of his own crimes.”

“ Yes, unless some intervening act of grace be performed, which acquits the culprit, without setting aside the authority of the law by which he is condemned. You recollect what is reported of Zaleucus, a king of Greece, at a crisis when the paternal affections beat in harmony with the claims of justice.”

“It has escaped my memory.”

“The case was this—he passed a law which doomed an adulterer to the loss of his eyes, as the penalty of his crime. His own son was accused and condemned; and the question arose amongst the people, Will the king’s son suffer, or will the law be repealed? The king very soon settled the question—his son suffers the loss of one eye, and then, to save him from total blindness, he consents to lose one of his own eyes; thus bowing to the majesty of his own law for the suppression of this popular crime. Here we see how, by an expedient devised by paternal benevolence, the authority of the law was preserved, while the guilty culprit was rescued from the *extreme severity* of its infliction. And now permit me to ask, whether the development of the paternal affections, in conjunction with the mitigated severity of judicial infliction, had not a necessary tendency to excite amongst the people a more profound reverence for the law, while it increased their attachment to their sovereign, and their confidence in the equity of his administration? What adulterer could expect to elude the penalty of his crime after witnessing such a spectacle of justice and of benevolence?”

“Permit me to say, I cannot perceive the bearing of this touching fact, which you have imported from Greece, on my objection to your doctrine of the atonement.”

“Indeed, I am surprised at that. The Bible tells us that God stands in the relation of a paternal sovereign, who commands our subjection to his laws, while he allows us to address him as our Father. These laws we violate, and the penalty is incurred, and immutable justice requires its infliction; he provides a substitute in the person of his only begotten Son, who willingly consents to accept the appointment, and actually suffers, the just for the unjust; dying to rescue the guilty from the horrors of the second death. Here we see the conjunction of justice and mercy, the blending of the awful majesty of the Sovereign with the tenderness of paternal benevolence; the law is honoured, while the culprit is pardoned; and the practical effect of this comprehensive scheme of



grace is to increase our reverence for the authority of God, while it increases also our gratitude and love to him."

"If I admit, what you take for granted, that the Deity has given us a code of laws in your Scriptures, and that the violation of any of them does actually involve man in guilt and condemnation, then, in that case, your explanation is a fair rescue of the atonement from the grasp of my objection. But I have now to call your attention to another objection, which, I think, will give you a little more trouble. But, before I bring it forward, allow me to ask one question. According to your theory, unless I misapprehend you, the atonement is a simple vindication of the Deity's moral government, enabling him to exercise mercy in conjunction with justice; and thus uphold the authority of his laws, while he passes a sentence of acquittal on the culprit who transgresses or disobeys them?"

"Yes, my theory embraces that aspect of the atonement."

"Has it any other bearing?"

"Yes, it has an important bearing on man, in relieving him from the galling pressure of conscious guilt, and giving him peace of soul, combined with a hope of final salvation."

"It is this aspect of the atonement," said the stranger, "which constitutes the germ of my objection. The atonement, if a reality, is a fact of ancient date; and, like all other historical facts, it comes transmitted to us on the evidence of testimony; and it must, I suppose, be believed before it can exert any influence or power on the mind of man."

"Most certainly."

"This is the problem I want solved; is this supposed moral power emitted *directly* from the atonement on the human spirit, when it is in a quiescent state? if so, there can be no necessity for the exercise of belief; or does the human spirit extract it by the mysterious action of its own faith? if so, as the virtue itself is both intangible and imperceptible, and consequently inconceivable, how can faith, whose object of belief must be something definite, perform the supposed action?"

“Your question is a very subtle one, but it is not a very perplexing one, because it relates to a fact of a peculiar order, all of which are self-evident, while the nature of their influence or power, and the *modus* of its operation—*i.e.*, the operation of the influence of the facts of the peculiar order—are shrouded in a veil of impenetrable mystery.”

“Excuse me; but I don’t take the drift of your meaning.”

“You object to the atonement, because you cannot conceive how it can exert any effective influence over the soul of a man oppressed by a sense of conscious guilt.”

“Exactly so.”

“Well, I am now going to prove that there is no logical force in your objection, and I will do this by one analogical fact, which will explain, and, I think, confirm the correctness of my meaning. Take, then, human friendship. Is the moral power of human friendship a fiction or a reality? Take the *look* of friendship; is there no moral power in the movement and soft beaming of the eye, especially in the falling tear? Take the *countenance* of friendship; is there no moral power in the bland and bewitching smile? Take the *bosom* of friendship; is there no moral power in the suppressed groan or noiseless sigh? Take the *hand* of friendship; is there no moral power in the hearty shake or gentle squeeze? Take the *tongue* of friendship; is there no moral power in its expressions of sympathy, or its promises of fidelity? But, Sir, what is this mystic power, which is known to act with such efficacy on the troubled and down-cast spirit in the season of its perplexities and sorrows? Can you tell me *what it is, or how it acts?* It is a *mighty something*, which, like an invisible spirit of superhuman benignity, moves without a shape, speaks without a voice, passes through all resistances of doubt and misgivings without an effort, laying the throbbing heart of the anxious mourner at rest on its own impalpable bosom, where it enjoys the solace and the calm of sweet repose. Thus we have, in the common occurrences of every-day life, a philosophical defence of the moral efficacy of the power which the Scriptures ascribe to the

atonement, even though we cannot define its exact nature, or explain the *modus* of its actual operation. It is then, like the power of human friendship, a fact which evidence attests and which uniform experience confirms."

"I am delighted that my scepticism has supplied to you such a tempting background for the beautiful sketching of the mystic power of friendship true to life, with which you have now favoured me. But you have overlooked one important fact, namely, that the human spirit is dependent on her physical senses for the transmission and reception of the power of friendship."

"True, but only as the *medium* of transmission and reception; and this fact supplies fresh evidence to prove, that while you are compelled to admit, on the evidence of consciousness and testimony, the power of friendship, you can neither explain nor conceive the nature of its influence, or the *modus* of its operation. And it is to the same evidence I appeal in confirmation of the moral power of the atonement on the human spirit, and maintain that you have no moral, or even logical right to deny it, on the ground of my inability to give you all the explanations you may ask me for, when you yourself feel a similar inability to explain how it is that a self-evident friendship works so powerfully on the heart of sorrow and of perplexity."

"Well, then, I will admit, and most readily, that you have fairly silenced my objection against the atonement, on the ground of your inability to explain, or my inability to conceive the *modus* of its moral operation on the human spirit; but still I hesitate to admit its reality, because I do not feel its absolute necessity, either as a basis of hope or a source of mental ease and satisfaction."

"I once, Sir, rejected the atonement as you now do, but when I saw the malignant quality of sin, I could reject it no longer; and you will allow me to say, that if it be a reality, and you finally reject it, you will inevitably perish. Permit me, therefore, to advise you to read the Scriptures attentively, examine the evidences which they adduce of their divine origin, and implore the Father of our spirits to aid the perceptions of your judgment and the tendencies of your

will on this important subject of inquiry. If, after this intellectual and moral process has been adopted, you are compelled to disbelieve the Scripture doctrine of the atonement, you will have the show of argument in your favour; but if you reject it without investigation, your folly will be no less apparent, even if it be false, than your guilt will be overwhelming, if it should be true."

"We must now," said the stranger, "leave this subject of discussion, and bid adieu to each other; but I will give you my pledge of honour that I will take your advice, and if you will exchange cards with me you shall know the result, though I cannot allow you to imagine that it will afford you any satisfaction."

"It may, and I hope it will."

The stranger (whose name I perceived, on looking at his card, was Gordon), on taking leave of me, said, "I have been watching yonder cloud some time, and am apprehensive a storm is rising; but I hope we shall be able to escape it." I now hastened towards Fairmount; but, as I had wandered the distance of some miles, I soon found that it would be impossible to reach it without having to encounter the threatening tempest. As I passed through a thick coppice, the birds sat in silence on the branches, or flew with rapidity from one tree to another; the wind blew with a deep and hollow sound; and then for a few seconds ceased its howlings, as if to recover strength to send forth a more dismal groan. On descending the slope which led into the vale, a streak of lightning struck across my path, and the loud roaring thunder, echoing through the valley, produced a universal consternation in its flocks and herds. A sudden darkness came over the whole horizon; the rain came down in torrents; and, having missed my path, I knew not which way to proceed.

After walking on a considerable distance, I saw a cottage, towards which I ran for shelter, and was welcomed in. The honest woodman immediately ordered his eldest boy to fetch a large bundle of sticks to throw on the fire; and I was requested to draw near and dry myself. Up in the chimney-corner sat a fine-looking girl, about nine years of age, whose eyes were bedewed with tears; an-



THE WOODMAN'S FAMILY IN TROUBLE.

other, about three years older, sat in the window seat wrapped in pensive sadness; an athletic youth, still older, was reclining himself against the table; and the father soon drew, from the deep recesses of a wounded breast, one of the most piercing groans that ever vibrated across the sensibilities of my heart. These symptoms of grief soon convinced me that I had retreated from the disorders of the physical world, to witness the convulsive throes of the social; and my spirits, which usually ebb and flow with the tide of feeling on which they are borne, began to sink within me. "I fear," addressing myself to the father, "you are in trouble?" "O yes, Sir! our hearts are all bursting; for death is coming to bear off our little Jemima. She is up stairs, where she has now been these eight days, and her mother has never left her, night or day. She is one of the best girls a father ever loved." "But death does not come by chance." "O, no; 'the Lord gave, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord;' but it is hard work to part. Do walk up and see her before she dies; but she is so changed!"

I entered her room, and soon perceived that death had cast his fatal shadow on her countenance, which still retained its beautiful form and expression. Addressing myself to the child, I said, "Do you think you shall die?" "Yes, Sir." "And if you die, where do you expect to go?" "To heaven." "What makes you think you shall go to heaven?" "Jesus Christ has said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" "What do you understand by coming to Jesus Christ?" "Believing in him, and loving him." "Did you always believe in him, and love him?" "No, not till he inclined me; for if we love him, it is because he first loved us." "Then you can leave father, and mother, and all your brothers and sisters, to go to heaven?" "Yes, Sir; I have no wish to live on earth, when I have the prospect of living a happier life in heaven."

The surgeon, who had been anxiously expected for several hours, now arrived. "Do you think," said the grief-worn mother, "our child is dying?" This question, though familiar to the humane man, was

not heard without an evident emotion of sorrow. "While there is life there is hope; but I would not advise you to be too sanguine in your expectations; she is very ill." There was no burst of anguish at this reply. They all knew Jemima was dying, though they were unwilling to believe it; and though their pulse beat a little quicker on hearing this reply, and their faces turned paler, yet they stood pressing round the bed, as if to keep off the king of terrors, whose advanced guards had taken the forlorn hope.

We now went down stairs; and, as the storm was over, the surgeon left, but I could not leave. "Will you," said the father, "go to prayer with us? If it were not for prayer, and the hope which the gospel gives, my heart would break." With this request I complied; and while praying to the God of all grace that the little child might be favoured with the light of his countenance in her passage through the valley of the shadow of death, I heard the mother's shriek, which convinced me that she was gone. The children started up, weeping aloud, wringing their hands, and calling, "Jemima! Jemima! don't leave us." And the mother, with a softened melancholy of countenance, appeared among us, saying, with a faltering tongue, "*She exclaimed, as I was raising her up on the pillow, 'I am going to heaven!' and fell back in my arms, and died.*"

I remained with them about a quarter of an hour, administering to them the consolations of religion, and then left them, in company with the eldest boy, who conducted me to Fairmount, which I reached about ten o'clock. I related to my friends the adventures of my ramble, which compensated for the anxiety which my long absence and the state of the weather had occasioned. When reflecting on this fact, and contrasting the bright prospect which the gospel of Christ unveils to the juvenile as well as to the aged Christian, with the dark and cheerless gloom of infidelity, I feel its immense superiority; and with emotions which no language can describe, I pay my adorations and praises to Him who brought life and immortality to light.

## A SABBATH MORNING AT FAIRMOUNT.



HAVING spent a few hours in meditating on the great facts of the Christian faith, an exercise in which I have for many years been in the habit of engaging on a Saturday evening, I retired to rest, and soon fell asleep; and in my sleep I had a dream. I dreamt that, under a serene sky, I was passing through a beautiful vale, belted on each side by a plantation of gigantic trees; and, on reaching the end of it, I saw a broad gravel walk, running along the margin of a rapid river; then turning off rather abruptly under the shade of a high mountain, winding itself gradually into a grove of large and beauteous shrubs, whose foliage surpassed, in diversified forms and variegated colours, anything of the kind I had ever seen. The soft breezes were laden with the most delicious odours of flowers; and the air vibrated with the music of its feathered tribes. I often paused; and while listening to the soft sounds of melody, and while inhaling the sweet fragrance, I felt an unusual elevation of spirit, a calm ecstasy of emotion. In about half an hour I came to a spot which commanded a bold view of an extensive landscape; but the most attractive object in this scene of beauty and of grandeur was a church, imbedded in an inclosure of evergreens. I now quickened my pace. As I advanced near it I heard the harmony of sacred song; but it soon died away into profound silence. The devotional part of the service was over before I entered the church, and the minister had named his text; but, from the tenor of his discourse, I judged it was "A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR." The following is the only paragraph which was distinct and fresh upon my memory when I awoke, and it was delivered with an impressiveness of manner and intonation which kept the entire congregation in breathless silence:—

"He walked through the province of human misery and crime, a



mysterious being, doing what He pleased, without ostentation and with perfect ease. He gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf; disease, in its multifarious forms of infliction, withdrew when He issued the command; the dead arose to do Him homage; the raging elements, when His disciples were in danger, hushed to a calm at His bidding; and the dumb became vocal in His praise. These were the triumphs of benevolence over the miseries of man, requiring, on His part, no privations or suffering to effect them. Shift the scene of His history, and what a sight do we behold! He is poor, homeless, and unpitied; often weary in His great exertions of beneficence; and sometimes having to endure the extreme of hunger and of thirst. His enemies revile Him as a fanatic; denounce Him as an impostor and maniac; and accuse Him of treason and blasphemy; and secretly conspire to put Him to death. The quietude of Gethsemane, where He was pleading with heaven in behalf of the people, is broken by the foot-treads of His betrayer, stepping in advance of an armed force; in the council-chamber of Caiaphas he is maligned and insulted; and when arraigned at Pilate's tribunal, He is scourged and condemned; and at Calvary they crucify Him between two malefactors. There this illustrious Prince bleeds, and there He dies; for what? and for whom?" The pathetic tones in which this sentence was uttered—there He bleeds, and there He dies; for what? and for whom?—bathed the whole audience in tears; there was a sudden pause, and its stillness awoke me.

"This," I said, as I came back to wakeful consciousness, "is a dream, which has called up day thoughts in the visions of the night; painting on the fancy, in vivid colours, the meditations of the heart. A dream! strange phenomenon! the mysterious action of the mysterious spirit, ever active, with or without the auxiliary aid of the senses; but the facts of this dream are the realities of absolute truth—the most wonderful and important realities within the compass of universal knowledge. I can reply to the questions of the dream in my wakeful hour. He bleeds; for what? The iniquities of the

people. He dies; for whom? He gave His life a ransom for the redemption and salvation of man. Wondrous event!"

On looking out of my bedroom window, I saw the sun rising in his splendour; the winds were at rest, no clouds veiled the heavens in gloom. "It is," I involuntarily exclaimed, "a delightful Sabbath morning." Seeing Hervey's *Meditations* on my dressing-table, I took it, and read his "Descant upon Creation," closing with the following soul-inspiring paragraph:—

"Most of all, ye ministers of the sanctuary, heralds commissioned from above, lift every one his voice like a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the Redeemer. Get ye up, ye ambassadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains, and spread far and wide the honours of the Lamb that was slain, but is alive for evermore. Teach every sacred roof to resound with His fame, and every human heart to glow with His love. Declare, as far as the force of words will go, declare the inexhaustible fulness of that great atonement, whose merits are commensurate with the glories of the Divinity. Tell the sinful wretch what pity yearns at Immanuel's breast; what blood He has spilt, what agonies He has endured, what wonders He has wrought for the salvation of His enemies. Invite the indigent to become rich; entreat the guilty to accept of pardon; because with the crucified Jesus is plenteous redemption and all-sufficiency to save. While you, placed in conspicuous stations, proclaim the joyful sound, may I, as I steal through the vale of humble life, catch the pleasing accents! For me the Author of all blessings became a curse; for me His bones were dislocated, and His flesh was torn. He hung with streaming veins and an agonizing soul on the cross for me. O! may I, in my little sphere, and amidst the scanty circle of my acquaintance, at least whisper these glad transporting tidings!—whisper them from my own heart, that they may surely reach and sweetly penetrate theirs.

"But when men and angels raise the grand hymn; when all worlds and all beings add their collective acclamations—this full, fervent, and universal chorus, will be so inferior to the riches of the Re-

deemer's grace, so disproportionate to the magnificence of His glory, that it will seem but to debase the unutterable subject it attempts to exalt. The loud hallelujah will *die* away in the solemn mental eloquence of prostrate, rapturous, silent admiration.

'O goodness infinite! goodness immense!  
And love that passeth knowledge! Words are vain;  
Language is lost in wonder so divine;  
Come, then, expressive *silence*, muse his praise.'

On my way to the church, passing a cottage which stood a short distance from a foot-path I was crossing, I saw a man and his two sons at work in his garden; they made me a bow, which I acknowledged.

"Your cottage," I remarked, "is pleasantly situated; and you seem to have a productive garden, and keep it in good order."

"Why, yes, Sir; but it costs us a deal of hard labour."

"Have you a large family?"

"Yes, Sir, we have six children; and, thank God, they are as healthy as a spring morning."

"Who do you work for?"

"I and these two lads work for Farmer Goddard, who lives just over the hill, as good a master as ever hired a servant."

"What time do you generally devote to your garden?"

"Why, Sir, we give it a few odd hours in the week; but as that is not enough, we work at it on a Sunday morning till dinner-time."

"And what do you generally do after dinner on a Sunday?"

"The lads go on the green for a bit of a frolic, and I go up to the Plough, and spend a few hours along with some of my neighbours."

"Can you read?"

"A little, Sir; but my wife can read as well as any of my master's daughters."

"Have you a Bible?"

"Yes; but I don't read it much, because I can't understand it."

"Don't you think you could understand the following passage:—  
'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou



"WE WORK ON SUNDAY TILL DINNER-TIME."

labour, and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God ; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son."

"Why, yes, Sir; that's plain enough to be understood; but such poor folks as us can't afford to rest from labour on a Sunday."

"Do you think that God would command poor people to rest from their labour on the Sabbath, unless He knew that it would be for their good? And, besides, do you think that poverty will be admitted as an excuse for a neglect of duty? Suppose your master was to tell you to fetch up the cows from yon meadow, would your poverty be an excuse for not doing it?"

"No; to be sure not. I ought to do what master bids me."

"If, then, you ought to do what master bids you, *ought you not to do what God commands you?*"

"Why, yes, Sir; I must say that you are right."

"But you tell me that after dinner you go up to the Plough, where I suppose you spend some of your money. Now, your poverty ought to be an excuse to keep you from a public-house; but it ought not to be an excuse to keep you away from church."

"Why, Sir, I must say there is reason in what you say, but I don't spend much; and I like to have a little talk with my neighbours."

"But do you never think of another world?"

"Not so much as I should, Sir, I must say."

"Don't you know that you are born to live for ever? During the first period of your existence you have to live in this world, and this period is very short; during the next period of your existence you will have to live in the invisible world, and that will never end. And while here you are making preparation for your future and changeless condition of existence—for heaven, and its happiness and dignity, or for hell, and its misery and degradation."

"Why, Sir, to speak the truth, I never heard anything about this till lately; but last Lady-day master hired a fellow-servant, who has often talked to us on this subject; but I never give heed to what he says, because he is a *fantic*, so Miss says, who has just come home from boarding-school."

“A fanatic you mean; but that is a nick-name which people who have no religion give to those who have. Now, I suppose your fellow-servant understands more about the Bible and about religion than you do?”

“More than I do! ay, more than all the rest on the farm put together. He has got the Bible at his fingers’ ends, and will tell the meaning, too, off hand; and master has taken a great liking to him, and is going off to his way of thinking, which, I hear, is a mortal sorrow to mistress and the young ladies.”

“Does his religion make him wretched?”

“Why, Sir, it is commonly thought in many of these parts, and by many of the gentlefolks, that religion makes people unhappy; but I am sure that our Sam is one of the happiest men on earth. I have often said to my wife that there must be something in Sam’s religion which we don’t know anything about; because, let whoever will be dull and sorrowful, he is always happy.”

“Yes, my honest fellow, there is more in religion than you, who do not understand it, can form any notion of. Religion is something more than resting from labour on a Sunday, and going to church.”

“More than that, Sir! then I wish you would tell me what it is; for I always thought that going to church was all that God required us to do; and I heard mistress say so to master t’other day, and she was in earnest when she said it, for she spoke loud enough to be heard all over the kitchen.”

“Yes, I will tell you with great pleasure. As we are depraved and unholy, more disposed to love sin than to hate it, the Bible tells us that the dispositions and propensities of our mind must be changed by a supernatural power; and when this change takes place, we become new creatures—old things pass away, and all things become new. And as we are guilty sinners, we must repent of our sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.”

“Ay, I see, all this belongs to the mind, and is something different from merely going to church. Now I have often been to church,

but I always came out just as I went in. I never heard anything that ever touched my heart."

Pleased with this reply, which seemed to indicate an apprehension of the subject, I replied, "Yes; you may go to a church, and return from it without possessing religion, for that has a peculiar and direct reference to the heart, which is by nature deceitful and impure. But yet religion is conveyed to the heart through the medium of reading or of hearing. Hence it is our duty to read the Bible and other good books, and to go and hear the gospel preached, because it pleases God, by means of preaching, to save them that believe."

"Then I suppose, Sir, you are now going to church; but as you are a stranger in these parts, perhaps you don't know that our parish church stands yonder."

"Yes, I know it does; but I am not going to that church, because the clergyman does not preach the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. He is a blind guide."

"No, Sir; on that point you are mistaken; his eye is as sharp-sighted as a hawk's; he is the best shot in the parish."

"I don't mean that he is literally blind, but spiritually; that is, he does not understand the religion of the Bible, and therefore he does not teach it."

"That's what our Sam says, and I heard mistress let fly at him rather sharply t'other day for saying so. But master now says the same thing, which, I am told by the dairy-maid, gives mortal offence to mistress and the young ladies. But I never knew master wrong in his judgment of men and things. Where, Sir, are you going, if one may be so bold to ask?"

"I am going to hear Mr. Ingleby, whose preaching has been such a great blessing to many of his parishioners and others."

"That's the parson our Sam goes to hear; and master has taken to go to hear him lately. He wants, so I have heard, mistress to go with him, and the young ladies; but they won't; they say he is a Methodist and *fantic*."

"Have you ever heard him preach?"

“No, Sir. I am told that his preaching drives people out of their senses, and I should not like to part with what little I have.”

“Did you ever know any one driven out of his senses by him?”

“Why, no, Sir; and I must say that I don't much believe it; and for this reason, I always find people who like his preaching more inclined to do poor people good, than those who talk against it. Why, Sir, when my wife was last confined, we all thought that she would die; and it is wonderful how kind some of Mr. Ingleby's followers were to her. They gave her what she wanted for this world, and talked to her so kindly about another world, that she has taken a liking to them, and would have been off to their religion, but I would not let her. We have had more words on this subject than any other since we have been married, which is now eighteen years come Christmas.”

“And do you think that you have done right by opposing your wife? Now, suppose you were to make up your mind to go and hear Mr. Ingleby preach, how would you like for your master to say to you, *No, you shall not go?*”

“I should not like it at all, because I think I have a right to go where I please on a Sunday, if I do my work in the week.”

“Then, has not your wife a right to go where she likes to worship God, and get religious instruction, if she does her duties at home.”

“Why, yes, Sir, and I sometimes think that I have done wrong by stopping her.”

“Now, take my advice, let her go, and go you too, and hear and judge for yourself; and, take my word for it, you will never regret it.”

I now left him, and hastened to church; and just as I entered, the venerable man read from the desk, “I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.” He conducted the devotional part of the service with great solemnity, and the congregation appeared to feel that they were under the immediate notice of the Holy One of Israel. After his entrance into the pulpit, he presented a short



extemporary prayer with great simplicity and fervour, and then announced his text: Genesis xxviii. 16, 17.

I. It is the presence of God which constitutes the glory of the visible temple.

II. He is sometimes present when the worshippers are unconscious of the fact; and,

III. A belief of his presence is calculated to excite awe and delight.

As a few notes of this sermon may not be unacceptable to the reader, I will give them:

“That God actually dwells in the place where a pure worship is performed, we have the most decisive proofs. ‘In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee’ (Exodus xx. 24).

“His presence is extended through all space, and operates with an undiminished force in every part of his universal dominion; but there is a more special manifestation of it where people assemble to praise and pray. And though scepticism may ridicule such a notion as giving locality to the Supreme Being, yet to deny it, is virtually to exclude him from the government of the world. But what attracts his notice? Not the rising spire, nor the tolling bell; not the Gothic arch, nor the Corinthian column; not the flowing vestment of the preacher, nor the purple robe of the hearer. These are the embellishments and attractions of human device, which may captivate and amuse the sentimental or the superstitious, but from such vain shows the Holy One turns away, to look with complacency on an object which a proud and sceptical world scorns to pity or to notice. ‘To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word’ (Isaiah lxvi. 2).

“He is here, though you see him not, and though the sound of his awful and paternal voice is never heard; and when you come into his invisible presence, always remember that ‘God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth’ (John iv. 24). You must bow before him in faith, believing that his eye is upon you, and that he knows all the thoughts and desires of your heart; you

must confess and deplore your sins, and pray for mercy, and for your eternal salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, giving thanks for every good and perfect gift which he has bestowed upon you. If you do this, then you may expect some special manifestations of his grace and love; but if you feel no emotions of reverence, of self-humiliation, or of gratitude, nor any intense desires for his favour and loving-kindness, then you stand chargeable—even though you may suppose you have done your duty—with the sin of hypocrisy or insincerity, and of you the Lord may say, ‘This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men’ (Isa. xxix. 13.)

“And, in addition to these exercises of mental devotion, you are to listen to what God the Lord will say to you in the ministrations of truth and grace, which His ministers are employed to conduct. We preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; but we warn and teach in vain, unless you believe, and receive the truth in love and gratitude, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and if our warnings and teachings do not take effect, you will die in your sins and perish for ever. For how *‘will you escape if you neglect so great salvation.’*”

When going through the crowd, after the service of the church was over, I noticed the man with whom I had been conversing in the morning, a little way before me, with his wife and two of his children. When he saw me, he came up, and, thanking me for my advice, said, “I hope, Sir, I shall never forget this day; and I am sure that I shall often think of you when I don’t see you.”

As I was sauntering along, meditating on the realities of the visible and the invisible world, and offering my silent adorations and thanksgivings to Him who gave himself a ransom for my redemption, I heard the sound of footsteps behind me, and, turning round, I was rather abruptly addressed by a stranger, who said, “I thank you, Sir, for persuading my servant, Robert, to come to church this morning. He is a good servant, and a better informed man than

most labourers ; but he wants *the one thing needful*. Godly servants are a master's treasure."

"Am I addressing Mr. Goddard?"

"Yes, Sir ; and if I mistake not, you are the gentleman who has called to see my friend, Mr. Pickford."

"Yes, I have visited him."

"I wish, Sir, you would come and see me. Your talk and prayer might do my family good, as it has done his."

"I am glad to hear that you are turning your attention to the salvation of your soul."

"Ah, Sir, I lived for many years, like most of the farmers in these parts, a sad heathenish life ; and I should have lived on in this state till the hour of death, had it not pleased God to send me a godly servant. His plain and honest talk set me thinking, and reading my Bible, and then I went and heard the Rev. Mr. Ingleby preach, and the gospel came with great power to my soul. It opened before me a new scene of spiritual wonders, and a new source of spiritual comfort. But I am sorry to say that all my family are sadly opposed to spiritual things ; they make light of them."

"You may live to see a change."

"I hope I may. But it is very painful, after being made alive from the dead, to see my wife and children living under the sentence of death. It makes my heart ache. What ought I to do?"

"Persuade them, when they go to public worship, to go where the gospel is preached."

"They object, Sir, and I cannot force them."

"Try the efficacy of prayer—the prayer of faith and of importunity—and calmly wait the issue."

We now parted, and when going by the church in which the Rev. Mr. Cole does duty, I picked up an elegantly bound prayer-book, and observing a fashionable couple at a distance, I quickened my pace, that I might restore what I presumed they deemed valuable, if their property. When I overtook them, I presented the book, and asked if they knew to whom it belonged.

“O dear,” said one of the ladies, “it is mine, but I had not missed it. I thank you, Sir; we have heard a very excellent discourse this morning from the Rev. Mr. Cole. O dear,” said the lady, “I think he is one of the most heavenly preachers I ever heard.”

“Is his audience very large?” I asked.

“O no, Sir; only a few genteel people attend, and a few poor old people, who receive the sacrament money, and some gifts at Christmas.”

“Then, I presume, there can be but little religion in the parish, for the population is very large.”

“O dear, Sir, I assure you there is a great deal too much religion in our parish, and it is on this subject that Mr. Cole has been preaching so eloquently this morning.”

“Why, Madam, you both puzzle and surprise me. Too much religion in a parish where the generality of the people forsake the church, and a minister preaching eloquently against religion, which he lives to inculcate and recommend!”

“I see you are a stranger among us,” said the lady, “or you would perceive the force of my remarks. The people all flock to a church just over yonder hill, where a Mr. Ingleby preaches, and really, Sir, if you associate with them, you would soon become quite dull and melancholy, particularly so. Do you know, Sir, that they are so far gone from all the elegant accomplishments of society, as to say that it is a sin to play at cards, or attend a ball, or go to a theatre, or anything of the kind? O dear, if I should ever, by any misfortune, turn over to their religion, which I daily pray I may be kept from, I should be, as the apostle says, of all, ‘one of the most miserable.’”

“Well, Madam, with your antipathies to their religion, one should suppose you are in no danger.”

“O dear, there are strange things that happen, Sir, in the course of one’s life. Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, who live at Fairmount villa, which we shall see presently, were, a few years since, as gay as any. Mrs. Stevens was never herself more completely than at a ball. She is a most accomplished dancer; her action is so graceful; and even

now, Sir, she moves as if she were stepping on springs, which makes me think she has some secret longings to appear amongst us again—an event we should be so glad to see, she is such a choice spirit; but now, as the apostle says, ‘they are carried away with this dissimulation.’ They are now so religious that they read the Bible, and sing a psalm, and say prayers every morning and evening in the family; and I am told, but I should hope there is no truth in the report, that when Mr. Stevens is from home, Mrs. Stevens so far forgets herself as to say prayers to her servants.”

“You should not believe everything that report says, Madam.”

“O dear, I don’t believe one-half, for I heard the other day that Mrs. Stevens really goes to see a poor woman of the name of Allen, who lives in this cottage which we are now passing, and that she descends so low as to say prayers to her.”

“Why, Madam, report is very busy in your neighbourhood; I am afraid you are not living in peace.”

“In peace, Sir; why, I assure you, it is the very worst neighbourhood I ever was in in all my life. I never hear one person speak well of another.”

“How do you account for it, Madam?”

“O, Sir, it is religion which has done it. Not the religion of our forefathers, but the religion which is imported from t’other side of that hill. Do you know, Sir, that Farmer Goddard, who was one of the pleasantest men I ever knew, has lately got infected by it; and Miss Goddard, who has just finished her education at Mrs. Roper’s, told us, as we walked together to church this morning, they can do nothing to please him. That when she wanted to go to Bath with Mr. Johnson, to see the *Fall of Tarquin*, he would not let her go, but had the rudeness to say she was going into the way of temptation.”

“And do you think, Madam, it is right for a daughter to talk against her own father?”

“Why, to be sure, Sir, you now put a question which never struck me before.”

“And do you think that a person of affluence and respectability sustains any loss of reputation by visiting the poor and afflicted?”

“O, no, I have often thought of doing it myself; but really, Sir, I don't know what I could say to them. I suppose it would be necessary to descend.”

“Yes, Madam; the Lord of life and glory descended, when he assumed a human form to accomplish our redemption; but I rather fear, from the general strain of your remarks, that you have no accurate conception of the design of his mission, or of his death.”

“O dear, Sir, I wonder at your remark. He came to teach us to be religious.”

“And, Madam, the first lesson he has taught us is to this effect: ‘Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

“Do you know, Sir, I never could understand the meaning of that language; and I have asked several of my friends, but they can't tell me; and one evening when I met the Rev. Mr. Cole at a card party, I proposed the question to him, but he was so much engaged that he could not attend to it.”

“But you perceive, that unless we are born again, *‘we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.’* I can tell you who can explain it to you.”

“Who, Sir?”

“The Rev. Mr. Ingleby.”

“O dear, you alarm me. Do you think I could ever go and ask him?”

“Would you then rather live and die ignorant of the meaning of the subject, than go and ask him to explain it to you?”

“Why, Sir, if I were to be seen speaking to him, my friends would cut me, and I should never be able to appear at any of our social parties.”

“But, Madam, it is a serious thing to die without possessing that which Jesus Christ says is absolutely necessary to fit us for heaven.”

“But, Sir, I am not going to die yet.”

“I hope not, Madam, but you must die, and must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and then do you think that a recollection of your card parties will afford you any pleasure?”

“But I hope to prepare for death.”

“Can you, Madam, prepare too soon, when you do not know but you may die suddenly?”

“O dear, Sir, the subject begins to depress me, and I must decline pursuing it any farther, if you please.”

“Read, Madam, before you retire to rest this evening, the third chapter of the gospel of John; ponder over what you read, it may do you some spiritual good.”

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## SABBATH EVENING AT FAIRMOUNT.



IN the estimation of Mr. Stevens, who was educated within the pale of the Church of England, and who had imbibed from his parents an intolerant spirit, the Dissenters were unworthy of the toleration which had been granted to them; as he believed they were decidedly inimical not only to the religious, but the political constitution of the state. Hence he often blamed the government for granting them so much religious liberty. And even after he had felt the spiritual change, which forms the great line of distinction in the human character, he retained, for a long time, too many of his old prejudices against them. But, becoming an active agent of the Bible Society, he was unexpectedly brought into contact with some whom he found to be men of sense, of piety, of zeal, and of candour; more disposed to disseminate the pure faith of Christianity, than propagate their own peculiar tenets. He now rose superior to his long indulged antipathies; and though he still gave a decided preference to

the church of which he was a member, yet he felt convinced that there were many wise and good men belonging to other religious communities. As he was by nature of an open and generous disposition, the spirit of liberality found in his heart a congenial soil for its growth and expansion. He would often repeat, with peculiar warmth of expression, the following verses:—

“ Be that bigotry far from our breast,  
 Which would Christian from Christian divide;  
 Which by blind party zeal is caress'd,  
 The offspring of folly and pride.

“ Names, parties, and sects disappear,  
 With their separate int'rests and laws,  
 No name, but of Christ, would we bear,  
 No int'rest but that of his cause.”

Happily for him, and for the neighbourhood in which he lived, his pastor, the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, was a man of a most catholic spirit, who viewed the circumstantial differences which prevail among Christians as of little consequence, in comparison with the more important truths on which they are agreed. *He felt a stronger attachment to the Redeemer* than to the formula of the church of which he was a minister; and though he was a man of order, and conscientious in the observance of all ecclesiastical laws, yet he thought that the Word of God ought not to be bound by human restrictions.

As the population of the parish was large, and the gospel was not preached within the distance of two miles from Mr. Stevens' villa, he, at the suggestion of his amiable lady, conceived the design of building a small chapel in its immediate vicinity, for a religious service on Sabbath evenings. He was aware that he should subject himself to the sarcasms, if not to the contempt, of the more fashionable and bigoted; but he esteemed the reproach of Christ a greater honour than the applause of men; and seeing the people around him perishing for lack of the knowledge of the way of salvation, he thought it his duty to do all in his power to make it known to them. But he



did not venture on the execution of his plan till he had first consulted his pastor, who, instead of censuring him for his zeal, or presuming to silence him *for not possessing the mysterious charm of office, grace,* encouraged him to proceed. "If," said the holy man, "you can get the people to love the gospel in the evening, they will soon come to church to hear it in the morning; and if they should be converted through the instrumentality of lay preaching, they will love the Saviour as much, and be at last as happy in heaven, as though the great change were produced through the instrumentality of clerical preaching.

The chapel was built on an elevated spot of ground near the roadside, so that it was visible from the most populous parts of the hamlet; and though the building of it gave great offence to a few, yet it pleased the majority. At first, Mr. Stevens read a sermon to the congregation; but after a while he composed discourses, which he delivered extempore; and being a man of reading, and of a ready utterance, his labours gave very general satisfaction. Some of the thoughtless had become serious, and some of the dissipated had become religious, which he considered a satisfactory proof of the Divine blessing; and though he was much importuned by some of his friends to abandon what they called *his wild project*, and resume his more orderly habits of a regular churchman, yet he steadily refused to do so. His reply to the gainsayer was, "The love of Christ constraineth *me*."

" Yes, and he reaps the fruit of all his toil,  
He sows the seed, and God has bless'd the soil:  
He sees the wicked man forsake his ways;  
The scoffing tongue has learned to perfect praise;  
The drunken quits his revelry and strife,  
And meekly listens to the word of life;  
The noisy village, wanton and profane,  
Grows neat and decent, peace and order reign;  
At length wide districts hail the gospel rays,  
And the once savage *mincr* kneels and prays;  
Through his dark caverns shines the heavenly light,  
And prejudice grows silent at the sight."

On the Sabbath evening we were at Fairmount, the Rev. Mr. Morris was expected to preach a charity sermon for the school which was established and superintended by Mrs. Stevens. He came early in the afternoon, and after tea, while he withdrew to prepare for the pulpit, I retired for meditation; and in passing through the hall, my attention was arrested by a female, who was waiting with her little girl to see Mrs. Stevens. She informed me that her parents had never given her any religious instruction; that no one ever taught her to read the Scriptures, or keep holy the Sabbath day; and that, till recently, she had no expectation of living in another world after death. When about eighteen years of age, having lost her father and mother, she married a soldier, who belonged to a foot regiment, and she was permitted to go with him to the continent. While sojourning among strangers, she was exposed to the most extreme hardships; but her greatest trial was the death of her husband, who was killed just before the birth of her child. After his decease she returned to England, and settled in her native village; where, like the majority around her, she lived without God, without Christ, and without hope, till after the erection of the chapel. Having often felt the disadvantages of her inability to read or write, she resolved, if possible, to give her child an education; and as soon as she heard of the establishment of this school, she applied for her admission, and her request was granted. The children were taught in the afternoon of the Sabbath, and they usually attended the public service in the evening, with their parents.

On one occasion Mr. Stevens addressed his rustic audience from the following words: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John iv. 29). As he proceeded to unveil the hidden mysteries of the heart, the conscience of this widow began to smite her; she could not imagine from what source he had derived such an accurate knowledge of her character and history; she felt self-condemned; and had it not been for the invitation which was given to the weary and heavy laden, to come to Jesus Christ, she must, to quote her own language, "have gone

home in despair." But the wound was no sooner inflicted than it was healed; and though her views of the scheme of salvation were circumscribed, yet they were clear, and operated with so much force on her moral character, that she was become a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Thus, while the sons of science pour contempt on the gospel as beneath their notice, and the patrons of ecclesiastical order condemn all departures from the restrictions and limitations of human authority, yet its history demonstrates that the God of all grace will employ it as the means of converting sinners, even when it is preached by men who have not studied theology within the walls of a college, and also when it is preached in places which have not been invested with the charm of human consecration.

From the garden in which I was walking I had an extensive view of the surrounding country, and watched with peculiar delight the people advancing in every direction towards the house of prayer. It indeed was a lovely sight! The old and the young, the healthy and the infirm, the poor, and a few of the rich, were pressing onward, with eagerness and decorum, apparently conscious that they were going to worship the Lord of hosts.

The children commenced the service by singing a hymn, composed for the occasion; and such was the effect which it produced on the crowded congregation, that many wept—not tears of grief, but of joy. The Rev. Mr. Morris preached a very judicious sermon, from the words of Solomon: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6). When enforcing on parents the importance of training up their children in the way in which they should go, he said, "You may be denied the gratification of seeing any immediate advantage resulting from your labours; but you ought not, therefore, to conclude that they will prove useless. The religious principles which you instil into their minds may lie concealed for a long time without being destroyed, as the seed which the husbandman casts in the ground remains inactive till called forth into expansion and growth under a mild and genial influence. They

may be striking root, and shooting up into active life, at the time when you are despairing of ever reaping the reward of your labour." He illustrated and confirmed these remarks by a quotation taken from Cecil's *Remains*. "Where," says Cecil, "parental influence does not convert, it hampers. It hangs on the wheels of evil. I had a pious mother, who dropped things in my way. I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed infidel; but then I liked to be an infidel in company, rather than when alone. I was wretched when by myself. These principles and maxims spoiled my pleasure. With my companions I would sometimes stifle them; like embers, we kept one another warm. Besides, I was here a sort of a hero. I had beguiled several of my associates into my own opinions, and I had to maintain a character before them. But *I could not divest myself* of my better principles. I went with one of my companions to see the *Minor*; he could laugh heartily, but I could not. The ridicule on regeneration was high sport to him—to me it was none; it could not move my features. *He* knew no difference between regeneration and transubstantiation. *I* did. I knew there was such a thing. I was afraid and ashamed to laugh at it. Parental influence thus cleaves to a man; it harasses him; it throws itself continually in his way."

On walking from the chapel, after the close of the service, I overtook a gentleman, who confessed that he had been hostile to the benevolent designs of Mr. Stevens, but that, in future, he would co-operate with him.

"And why, Sir," I asked, "were you hostile to them?"

"Because I did not understand them; and it is to this cause, I have no doubt, that we may attribute much of the opposition he has met with."

"The world," I replied, "is governed by prejudice, and not by reason; and hence, what is excellent and beneficial is often condemned and often opposed, because prejudice has been excited against it by misrepresentation or misconception. Prejudice led Nathaniel to exclaim, when the advent of the Saviour was announced

to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' And prejudice often induces many, in modern times, to say, 'Can any good result from teaching children to read, or from preaching the truth in any other place than in a church?'

"Yes, Sir," was the reply; "and it is very difficult to dislodge prejudice after it has taken possession of the mind; for though there are seasons when its absurdity is admitted, yet the dread of abandoning old opinions, which have received the sanction of ages, and of adopting new ones, which are held in general contempt, operates with such force, that but few are courageous enough to overcome it. The following lines of a modern poet may be thought severe, but they are correct:—

'Though man a thinking being is defin'd,  
Few use the grand prerogative of mind:  
How few think justly of the thinking few!  
How many never think, who think they do!  
Opinion, therefore—such our mental dearth—  
Depends on mere locality or birth.'

"True, Sir; but the few who burst the bonds of prejudice, and claim the privilege of thinking, and judging, and acting for themselves, though contemned and reproached by the multitude, are the pioneers of an adventurous and ever active benevolence, the ornaments and benefactors of the age and the country in which they live. Suppose Mr. Stevens had been held in subjection by the bigoted opinions of others, the children who are now taught to fear God and honour man, would be left to rise up in life without any accurate perceptions of their duties; and the village, which now enjoys the light of life, would still be sitting in the shadow of death. He may be ridiculed for his zeal, and reprobated for his irregularities as a member of the Established Church; but can any one who believes the truth of the Scripture, suppose that his conduct is displeasing to *Him* who requires all his disciples to do what they can to hasten the coming of His kingdom?"

"I knew Mr. Stevens," said the stranger, "when he was a man of

gaiety and of pleasure, and I have known him since he has been a religious man; and although unable to account for the amazing change which has been produced in him, yet I always gave him credit for meaning well. Some religious people are ashamed of their principles, but he has professed them openly; some contend for them in a rude, dogmatic, and antichristian manner, but he has displayed as much amiability of temper as he has decision of conduct: and while many whom I know have conformed as much as possible to the customs and habits of the world to avoid its censures, he has uniformly paid as much respect to the preceptive parts of Christianity, as he has discovered zeal in the propagation of its doctrinal tenets. And it is this uniform consistency of conduct on his part, that induced me to attend the Union Chapel this evening, and I do not hesitate to say that I have been gratified and instructed."

When I reached Fairmount I had the pleasure of being introduced to Miss Roscoe, who had ventured, for the first time, to attend the chapel. This young lady united in her person the fascinations of beauty with superior mental accomplishments; and though she would occasionally intermingle with the gay and the fashionable, and participate in their pleasures, yet she was more attached to reading and retirement. This disposition was cherished by her father, who was a man of close study, and passionately fond of disputation. He would sometimes relax from the ardour of intellectual pursuits, and enter into the amusements of the theatre, the ball-room, and the card party, with energy and vivacity; but soon he would grow weary of such pastimes, and return to his more rational employments. He was well read in history—a good botanist—had acquired an extensive knowledge of the science of geology—had studied Blackstone and Burn with attention; but the largest portion of his time was devoted to the investigation of the Scriptures. After Miss Roscoe had finished her education at a boarding-school, she pursued her studies under the superintendance of her father, who was eminently qualified to enrich her mind with the treasures of know-

ledge and of wisdom. Thus months and years rolled on in regular succession, with but few incidents of a painful nature, till He

“ Who waits his own well chosen hour,  
Th’ intended mercy to display,”

inflicted a wound in her heart, which was attended with an unusual depression of spirit. She felt the stroke, but knew not from whence it came, nor could her father tell her who could heal it. He was advised to try what effect a change of air and society would have on her spirits; and hence he removed his family to Dawlish in Devonshire, where they spent the whole of the summer; but still her morbid melancholy increased, and the physician recommended a visit to Bath for the winter, as the only expedient which was likely to prevent the entire loss of health, if not of her reason. Here she was hurried, by the ardour of parental solicitude, into scenes of gaiety and amusement, which now had lost their charm; and though she often refused to go, saying that they could afford her no pleasure, yet, her reluctance being regarded as an inveterate symptom of her complaint, she was compelled to yield, till she frankly said, “ If you wish me to regain my long-lost tranquillity, cease to force me where the gaiety of others increases my mental depression, and let me return home, that, in the retirement of solitude, I may find rest from the aggravating amusements of human gaiety and folly.”

Mrs. Stevens, who was intimate with the family, and had held some religious conversation with Miss Roscoe before she left home, made a morning call on her return, when she found her alone. Referring to Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, which she had presented to her on a former occasion, she received a reply which gave her great pleasure; and, from some incidental expressions, she was convinced that the cause of her depression lay in the deep recesses of her heart. She therefore suggested to her, as the only effectual means of its removal, a perusal of the Scriptures. “ I once felt,” she said, “ what you now feel, and though my mental anguish was not so acute as yours, nor so overwhelming in its influ-

ence, yet I should have sunk under it, had it not been for the consolations of mercy which I found in the Bible."

This communication, which was not less unexpected than the appearance of the angel of God to Hagar, as she sat in the solitude of maternal grief, mourning over her child in the agonies of death, raised the spirit of Miss Roscoe from beneath that load of depression which was sinking her into despair, and she inquired, with singular emphasis of expression:—

"And do you indeed think that the Bible will afford me any relief? I have not been permitted to see it since the commencement of my illness; but if you recommend it, I will peruse it."

"Yes, my dear; that book, which a thoughtless world despises, is Heaven's best gift to man.

‘ I know and feel it is a blessed book ;  
And I remember how it stopp'd my tears  
In days of former sorrow ; like some herb  
Of sov'reign virtue to a wound applied.’ "

"But," said Miss Roscoe, whose independent mind had not lost its intellectual vigour during the gloomy night of mental sadness, "what does the Bible reveal, which is so peculiarly appropriate to me?"

"It reveals a Saviour, who came into the world to save sinners."

"That truth I know, and I cannot banish it from my recollection; but I cannot perceive how the belief of it is calculated to bring back my long-lost happiness."

"But, my dear, *if you did believe it*, in the scriptural acceptation of the term, it would not only remove the depression of your spirits, but raise you into a higher and a purer state of felicity than that from whence you are fallen."

"I do believe it, and what more is required?"

"What more, my dear Miss Roscoe? You should reduce your belief to a practical operation, and, in the most simple and humble form of speech, plead the merits of the Saviour's death for the remission of your sins, for peace of conscience, and for eternal life. 'For



through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' You are unhappy, but know not the cause; and that morbid melancholy which has destroyed your health, and laid waste the vivacity of your spirits, has hitherto set at defiance every expedient which you have employed for its removal; but such is the mysterious efficacy of the death of Jesus Christ, *when the design of his death is perceived*, that it makes the wounded spirit whole, and it calms the troubled breast. The state of your mind is neither hopeless nor singular; and though at present you may not be able to perceive how your mental anguish can issue in mental peace, yet, if you try the efficacy of prayer, you will see 'the darkened cloud withdraw;' and then you will adore the grace which humbles to exalt, which impoverishes to enrich, and which renders our sources of earthly pleasure incapable of affording delight, that we may be compelled to derive our supreme felicity from fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ."

This intercourse led to an intimacy, which soon ripened into a strong attachment; and that morbid melancholy, which had withstood the rural charms of Dawlish, and the captivating amusements of Bath, began to give way under the religious communications of a friend, who had often been ridiculed for her zeal, and sometimes reproached for attempting to disturb the peace of those whose happiness she lived to promote.

Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe saw, with no ordinary emotions of delight, the dawning of serenity on the countenance of their beloved child, but knew not the cause till they accidentally saw her reading the Bible, which they had been recommended to keep from her. In the evening, as they were sitting together, Mr. Roscoe said, "I think, my dear Sophia, that you are regaining your former vivacity."

"I am more happy than I was, but not so happy as I wish to be."

"The light of bliss, I hope, my dear, is shining on you, but I fear lest it should again depart. You must be cautious what you read; and if you will permit me to offer you my advice, I would recommend you *light reading*, which, I think, would just now have a good effect."

“I thank you, my dear father, for your advice, but such reading would bring back the gloom which the light of revealed truth is scattering from around my mind. There is no book which I read with so much pleasure as the Bible.”

“The Bible contains much important history; it abounds with interesting narratives; it makes us familiar with the customs of ancient times, and supplies us with some inimitable specimens of good composition; but I would advise you not to read the Epistles of the New Testament, lest they should perplex and bewilder you, and lead you off into a state of mental distraction, which no human skill would be able to control or subdue.”

“You know, my dear father, that no human skill has been able to control or remove that fixed melancholy under which I have been labouring for nine months; but I feel now greatly relieved from it; and I assure you that it is the perusal of that portion of the Scripture which you wish me to avoid, to which I attribute, under the blessing of God, the delightful change which has taken place in the state and frame of my mind.”

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## THE BIBLE DISDAINED.



AS it was a very fine evening, I resolved on taking my usual walk, and sallied forth, sauntering along, undecided where to go, till I came within sight of the towering hill overlooking the woodman's cottage. “Yes, I will go and see the surviving mourners. They are doubtless still in trouble; but the heavy swell of grief may have subsided a little, now that all that remained of their lovely Jemima\* is in the grave.” The

\* See p. 106.

rich scenery through which I was passing supplied me with ample and varied materials for thinking; but my thinking faculty felt more inclined to muse on death and immortality than on trees or flowers, on bleating sheep, or on lowing cattle.

Yes, man dies; but he still lives. He passes from one locality and condition of existence to another. He will never die again. No, his next life is endless. If saved, what varied and splendid forms of beauty and of grandeur will open on his vision the moment he passes the dark frontier that divides the visible from the unseen world! What sounds of harmony, coming from the pure and happy spirits of the celestial state, will vibrate on his ear! What ecstasy will he feel when presented faultless before the glorious presence of the Divine Majesty! If lost!—Woe, woe, woe! My heart recoils from a contemplation of his fearful and changeless destiny.

On entering the cottage I saw a stranger, in the costume of a gentleman, polite and accomplished; but there was an air of mannerism about him uncongenial to my taste. The woodman and his wife were glad to see me, and after making a few faint allusions to the mournful event which had recently occurred, they relapsed into expressive silence, which induced me to suppose that my abrupt appearance had interrupted some conversation or discussion. At length, after a little desultory and somewhat forced chit-chat, the woodman, who appeared rather singularly excited, addressing himself to the stranger, said, "There is, Sir, one evidence that the Bible comes from God, which gives to me and my wife entire satisfaction, and against which no objection can be brought that can stagger or weaken our faith."

"These good people," said the stranger, turning towards me, "appear not to have perplexities enough in the casualties and contingencies of life, and therefore they are perplexing themselves by the mysteries of the Bible."

"Yes, Sir," said the wife, "just as we should perplex ourselves if an old and endeared friend looked in to see us, bringing with him some good news. We certainly might feel a little perplexed about

the accommodation we could give him, but none on account of his coming to see us, or the good news he brings; that would be a matter of rejoicing."

"I admire the happy art you possess to give a good turn to an objectionable observation. Well, Mr. Woodman, let me hear what this evidence is, which gives to you both so much satisfaction, and which you think no objection can set aside. I see," taking out his watch as he spoke, "I must soon go."

"Why, Sir, it is just this: when reading my Bible, I cannot help thinking of myself—my condition as a sinful and an immortal being—of my last end—of God, his goodness in providence, but his still greater goodness in making such grand provision, through the redemption of Christ, for my present and future happiness. These thinkings awaken in my soul gratitude, and love, and filial trust in Him, and constrain me to surrender my soul to Him, through Christ, to be redeemed, sanctified, and saved. Now, Sir, as the road which leads to your mansion must lead *from* it, so I think that the Bible, which *leads us to God*, as our father and our best friend, *must come from Him.*"

"Well, my good fellow," rising, and taking him by the hand, "perhaps it would do you no good if I were to attempt to disturb you while reposing with so much satisfaction in your innocent delusions."

"You have, Sir, been trying to do it for the last hour and a half," said the wife, with a marked emphasis of severe rebuke, "and without directing us to any other source of comfort under our troubles. We have just lost one of our dear children; but the Bible reconciles me to that loss, by telling me that my child is now happy in heaven; but you have been trying to make us believe that this is a delusion. Why, Sir, you would, if in your power, do us a greater act of cruelty than Captain Dunlop, who lives in yon big house, attempted to do to us last autumn."

"I would scorn to commit an act of cruelty against any one, especially against you, who have behaved with so much civility to me.

But what act of cruelty did the Captain meditate committing against you?"

"You see, Sir, that little running brook which feeds the water-cess you have just relished so much. Well, the Captain, last autumn, cut a deep channel for it to run through the glen, in an opposite direction, but Squire Stevens interfered, and prevented him. Now, Sir, if he had done what he was going to do, he would have taken from us our stream of water. But, even then, by raising a little subscription amongst our neighbours, we might perhaps have sunk a well, and though the water might not be so good or so plentiful, yet it might have answered our purpose. But, Sir, if you take away our Bible, or, what is the same thing, if you were to destroy our belief in its inspiration and authority, you would take from us the rich flow of comfort it supplies to us in our troubles, and you would cut us off from the hope of future happiness. Now, if you had succeeded in your endeavours, your visit would be to us as great a curse as the visit of the devil was to our first parents in Eden."

"You are, indeed, eloquently ingenious. Well, the next time I come I won't say anything against your Bible."

"I hope not, Sir," said the honest woodman, who appeared much pleased with the smart reproof his wife had administered to this stranger; "for if you do, we shall then say at once, what I now say after long endurance, we would rather have your room than your company. I think, Sir, such gentlemen as you should keep within the compass of your own sceptical fraternity, and then you may say what you please, and perhaps not do much harm. But when you enter the cottage of the poor, and find them happy in God, and thankful to Him for their Bible, you ought to feel it a *point of honour* not to try to steal away their happiness; as I suppose you have too much honour to pocket any spoons when you go away from a rich man's house."

I listened with amazement and delight to the artless defence and severe rebuke of the woodman and his wife, and addressing them, said, "I am happy to hear you administer such a severe and just

rebuke to this gentleman; and which, Sir," turning towards him, "I hope you will feel at the core of your heart, and that it will prevent your repeating elsewhere the act of meanness of which you have been guilty here—stealing a poor man's Bible, while eating his bread and cheese."

"Do you, Sir, mean to insult me? I allow no one to do that with impunity."

"Indeed, Sir! If speaking the truth, in a tone and style in which it ought to be spoken to a man in the attire and with the appearance of a gentleman, who enters a poor man's cottage, and, while feasting at his table, is mean enough to try to destroy his faith in his Bible, which is the well-spring of his happiness, be regarded by you as an insult, why, then, there is no alternative but to feel yourself insulted."

He looked, but said no more, and tossing, rather unceremoniously, a half-crown piece on the table for the refreshment he had received, he left in high dudgeon, muttering to himself as he moved away.

"These infidels, Sir," said the woodman, "in one thing are like the Pharisees of the New Testament; they won't go into the kingdom of heaven themselves, and they want to prevent others going there if they can. He began his infidel remarks before my children, but I sent them away, and told him that I would not let a child, if I knew it, get near an infected person."

"I suppose you don't often meet with infidels."

"More often, Sir, than I wish; for I generally find they are bad men—some bad in their habits, and all bad in their principles. The high-priest of their order lives up in yonder mansion, and he has many visitors. He used to come to our cottage sometimes, but he does not come now, as I offended him one day, by telling him that it was an act of meanness, as well as injustice, to try to cut off the stream of water from the poor families that live near it, for some miles in its course, and doing it to enrich his own meadows."

"Well," said his wife, "we should pity them, and pray for them,

and bless the Lord for making us to differ. It often pains my heart to think of a person living a few years in wealth and honour, and then passing into the eternal world to perish for ever. We have many troubles, yet some comforts. There, Sir," pointing to her Bible, "is our grand comforter; its precious promises speak peace to the soul, and take our hopes onwards to a better world, where the weary will enjoy rest for ever."

I read the fourth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians, making a few comments on its last verse, adapted to the excited state of feeling occasioned by the death and burial of their little Jemima; and, after praying with them, I withdrew, yet promising to repeat my visit before my departure from Fairmount.

On getting over the stile which crossed my pathway about half-a-mile from the cottage, I saw the infidel standing where I had seen Mr. Gordon standing on a preceding Saturday evening; and though at first I thought he was waiting for me, yet I soon perceived that he was admiring the grand panoramic view which was visible from that spot. I passed within a few yards of him, and in the act of passing we exchanged a bow of recognition.

"It appears, Sir," he said, "that we are going in the same direction, and, if agreeable, I will walk with you."

I at once consented, thinking that I might have an opportunity of making an assault on his scepticism, which possibly might issue in some practical good.

"You were rather too severe upon me in the cottage."

"If I thought so, Sir, I would offer you an apology; but my few remarks, though severe, were, I think, just."

"Well, well, perhaps I did wrong. But the fact is, I found both the woodman and his wife so shrewd and intelligent, that, on hearing them make some impassioned allusions to the Bible, I thought they would appreciate some remarks tending, at least in my opinion, to counteract the terrible impression of fear and dread which a belief in the inspiration and authority of the Bible necessarily calls up and fixes in the heart."

“But you see it inspires no fear in them; it is not to them the haunting ghost of terror, but a domestic comforter.

“Well, I can't account for it; I wonder how any one who believes in the Bible, which speaks of hell and endless misery, can sleep calmly on his pillow. I suppose they must believe one part, and disbelieve the other.”

“No, Sir, it is because their belief in one part inspires confidence in the love and faithfulness of God their Saviour, they can believe the other part without dread or fear.”

“I presume you are a firm believer in the Bible.”

“I am, Sir.”

“May I be permitted to ask you what is the predominant impression it makes on your mind—terror or tranquil peace?”

“If I were to say that it never awakened an emotion of terror, I should not speak strictly correct. When I have reflected on sin, its essentially evil nature and tendency; on my own sins, their number and peculiar aggravations; on the Divine purity and justice; and on the tremendous visitations of punishment which have been, and still are inflicted on man, both in this world and in the world to come, I have felt a tumult of terror agitating my soul, of a fearful aspect. But, Sir, my faith sees one in the midst of the storm, whose eye is pity, and whose arm is power; and my prayer is, *Lord save or I perish*. He hears and he answers this prayer.”

“But how do you know that he hears and answers your prayers?”

“Because my dark forebodings cease, and there is a calm within, as there was a great calm on the Lake of Galilee when our Lord rebuked the winds and the sea.”

“Were you trained, Sir, to a belief in the Bible?”

“I once rejected the Bible as a book of fables or falsehoods.

“You, then, were once what I am now—an unbeliever; and I was once what you are now—a believer. How the human character changes as time moves slowly on, to bring out the great teacher, death, who will finally settle everything.”

“Yes, Sir, and for ever.”



“What awful sublimity in that short sentence—*yes, and for ever*. The subject of our conversation interests me, as I have heard that prisoners committed for capital offences sometimes evince a peculiar intensity of emotion when listening to the mock process of a trial; the rehearsal of the coming tragedy pleases them. But to return to our subject, may I be permitted to ask you whether you now live habitually free from terror?”

“I do, Sir.”

“Never calculate on being damned for ever?”

“Never.”

“And you can sleep as calmly on your pillow, with the Bible by your side, as you could if you believed the dark world of hell had vanished into air—gone out of existence for ever!”

“Yes, Sir, I can.”

“This, Sir, is to me inexplicably marvellous. I wonder how any one, who believes in the Divine authority of the Bible, can ever look at it without feeling terrified, as children feel when going into a dark room, after listening to a series of fearful ghost stories.”

“Why, Sir, the very design of the Christian revelation, given to us in the Bible, is not only to deliver us from the wrath to come, *but from the dread of it*. And this it does, when we believe in its Divine origin, and yield to its authority.”

“I was a believer once, and fond of theological studies; but the predominant influence of my faith was most oppressive, at times agonizing. I could never rise above terror; the dread of being lost for ever haunted me almost day and night.”

“If you watched the mental process which was going on during the time you were a believer in the Bible, and can now distinctly recollect it, perhaps you will perceive there was one great act you failed to perform, which is the testing and the decisive act of a genuine believer—the passing of the Rubicon.”

“To what act do you refer?”

“To the act of coming to Jesus Christ, in compliance with his own invitation and promise—‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. xi. 28). '*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*'" (John vi. 37).

"Yes, Sir, I recollect having my eye often fixed on the two verses you have quoted, and others which speak of coming to him for life, and to be saved; but a veil of mystery hung over them which I could not lift up. I had the loftiest conceptions of his superhuman greatness and goodness; the fine blending of majesty and meekness, of dignity and condescension in his character, awakened my admiration; his pity, his love, his spotless purity, awed and delighted me; and I often felt indignant—a real loathing of spirit—when reflecting on the brutal treatment he met with from his countrymen; but I never could make out, from anything I read in the New Testament, how he could stand in the relation of a Saviour to me, or how I could perform that act of coming to him, on which he places the issue of salvation. And this is the origin of my unbelief. I had no wish to become an unbeliever; I became one against my inclination, and in opposition to early, and long-cherished, and endeared associations; but necessity compelled me; because, after long and intense thinking, I found that the proffered blessing of salvation was placed on an impracticable and an impossible contingency. Nor have I, as yet, had cause to regret it. I now can live without dread of the future; and I have no doubt, if there be another state of existence for man, as I feel inclined to believe there is, it will be one of happiness, to compensate for the sorrows and miseries which are endured in this."

"But suppose others have been enabled to perform this act of coming to Jesus Christ; and suppose, by performing it, they have entered into the actual possession of peace and joy in believing, then I think you must admit that the contingency on which the proffered blessing of salvation is suspended, comes within the capabilities of the human mind, and what others have done *you might have done, and yet may live to do*. By your permission I will give you a paragraph, as it bears so closely on the subject of our conversation, which one of the most distinguished men of the present age addressed to a philosophical friend. The writer had been for years a believer

in the Divine origin of the Christian faith, but up to this period in his moral history, it was to him a system of abstract truths, which made no approaches to his heart, to engage his affections, or to influence his will. But by a succession of impulses and impressions, and new discoveries of his inner spirit, he began to feel restless—some degree of alarm, in fact, that he stood in need of a Saviour; and by reading the Bible with close attention, he found that Jesus Christ, who up to this time had moved in dim vision before his imagination, as an ideal or a mere historical being, was a living being, and just such a living being as he needed—one who could save him from his fears, and who alone could save him. The crisis in his moral history now arrived, and he says: *‘I sicken at my own imperfect preparations. I take one decisive and immediate step, and resign my all to the sufficiency of my Saviour. I plead his own promise, that him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. I come to him with my heart, such as it is, and I pray that the operation of his Spirit, and the power of his sanctifying faith, would make it such as it should be.’* This is the experience and testimony of Dr. Chalmers, who tells us that after he thus believed and trusted in Christ, he had ‘joyful moments;’ he walked with God, living in the habitual expectation of eternal life.”

“If, Sir, I now entertained the same belief in the truthfulness of the Bible which I once entertained, and which, without doubt, Dr. Chalmers entertained when he wrote to his friend the paragraph which you have just given to me, I should feel strongly inclined to attribute the predominancy of fear and dread over hope and peace, under which I ceaselessly suffered, to some defective view of revealed truth, or to some shortcoming in the mysterious act of mental obedience to a Divine requisition; but, to be candid, I cannot now look on the Bible with that degree of reverence I once did, and for many grave reasons. I have detected in it so many palpable errors, and so many irreconcilable discrepancies, that I cannot now receive it as a genuine and authentic revelation of the Deity.”

“But neither errors nor discrepancies have ever been considered, by fair and impartial critics, as decisive evidence against the genu-

iness or authenticity of an ancient book; as errors, by careful collation, may be corrected, and discrepancies adjusted, as our knowledge becomes more accurate and extended. And this has been done in reference to the Bible, by many whose learning and integrity stamp a sterling worth on the result of their labours."

"I know, Sir, many men of learning, of taste, and of dogged honesty, who are staunch believers in the Bible, and candour compels me to admit that they have, to their own satisfaction, corrected the errors and harmonized the discrepancies which stagger my faith; and, perhaps, if I were to adopt the same process of labour, I might be equally successful; but I do not now see the necessity of it. I have arrived at a point of discovery which yields me as much satisfaction as you can feel in the discoveries which the Bible makes to you. I can feel, without such auxiliary aid, a calm repose in the sympathy of God with individual man, and a delight in meditating on his grandeur and his goodness, which, I think, cannot be surpassed by any emotion which the strongest faith in the promises of the Bible can inspire."

"But, Sir, how can you know that he feels sympathy for individual man, unless he tells you so?"

"I believe he does."

"But on what evidence do you base your belief? Because, to believe without evidence, would be as absurd as to withhold belief from preponderating evidence would be reprehensible."

"I infer it, from the very obvious marks of *benevolent design* which are apparent through the whole range of creation."

"I will not dispute this point; but permit me to ask you whether, in your belief, his sympathy is a species of refined sentimental emotion for his own gratification, or a practical manifestation of sustaining and consoling influence; and whether he sympathizes with *every individual man* who needs his sympathy, or *only a select portion* of the great family of suffering humanity?"

"Before I reply to your questions, may I ask if you have any doubt on the question of his sympathy for individual man?"

“I have no doubt on the question of his sympathy and loving-kindness in behalf of those who confide in him, and who love him, because my Bible tells me so; but there is an ambiguity in your form of expression, which, in my judgment, involves a self-evident contradiction, and this is why I have asked for a clear explanation—ambiguity in reasoning being something like a sudden eclipse, which wraps everything in total darkness.”

“In my theory, Sir, there is no selection—nothing like that undercurrent of partiality which runs through the Bible; all are treated alike, standing on the same level; and hence my expression, he sympathizes with individual man, means *every man*.”

“And you believe this, without his telling you that he does cherish a *practical* sympathy for every man.”

“I infer it, Sir, and from what I consider an infallible data—the obvious marks of benevolent design, which I can trace through the whole range of the visible creation.”

“I admit your data, but object to your inference, because uniform experience decides the fact that all men do not stand on the same level, nor are they treated alike; for we cannot look in any direction without seeing inequality. I am not going, Sir, to inquire into the causes of this inequality of rank, of personal and of social condition, which is so obviously apparent, as that would raise many questions which we should not have time to discuss, but simply to notice the fact of inequality, which your proposition virtually denies. Look, for example, at yon princely mansion, and then think of the cottage where we first met. Compare the athletic frame of its wealthy occupier and his hale appearance, with an emaciated human being, whose life is pining away under a prolonged disease. Are all treated alike, and do all stand on the same level, under his administrative providence? No, Sir, there are towering mountains, rich in golden ore, and desert wastes, where the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom. And if, Sir, he sympathizes with every man, in the sense which we attach to the term, it must be sentimental; facts prove that it is not practical—the mere

sympathy of the humane judge for prisoners, when leaving the dock under the sentence of death, or that of the tender-hearted physician in a ward of incurables. Go into an hospital, a prison, a poor-house, or a cottage, where its inmate is dying under prolonged and acute disease; visit the habitation of a broken-down tradesman, whose children are crying for food, while he has none to give them; pass on to the field of battle, after the work of slaughter is over, and mingle amongst the wounded; or go on board the slave ship, and look into her hold, as she moves through the middle passage, between the land of freedom and the land of perpetual bondage; and what *practical* proof will you find, in any of these retreats of suffering humanity, that GOD SYMPATHIZES WITH EVERY MAN? You talk of the discrepancies of the Bible, and argue that they are a proof that it comes not from God. But what a terribly perplexing and appalling discrepancy do you open up between his character as a benevolent being, and his administrative providence? Follow out your course of reasoning, and then, to act consistently, you must become an atheist, and compelled to admit into your creed not only improbabilities, but absolute impossibilities."

"Well, I will admit that when we come into real, practical life, we are compelled to modify, if not to give up as indefensible, some of our speculative opinions. In fact, the issue of every inquiry, when fearlessly pursued, is uncertainty—painful, distracting uncertainty—and man becomes the sport, if not the victim, of his own speculations and investigations."

"Yes, Sir, when he will not condescend to be taught of God. If we admit the inspiration, and consequent authority of the Bible, we have an infallible teacher on all questions relating to our responsibilities and our final destiny, and the mind settles down into a state of quietude, and feels secure; but if we reject its inspiration and authority as a sham, or a dogma of superstition, we go adrift on the wide expanse of absolute uncertainty, and are left to perish, when, and where, and how we know not, till after the terrible catastrophe has occurred."

There was now a pause in our discussion; and within the space of a few minutes, a little dark cloud, like that which was seen by the prophet's servants from the heights of Carmel, overspread the heavens, and we were compelled to look for a place of refuge from the storm which was coming.

"I am going to see a poor woman, who lives in yon cottage; perhaps you will not object to accompany me; we shall find shelter there."

"Most willingly, and if she be a deserving object, I shall feel most happy to contribute a mite for her relief; *for your sake, Sir.*"

"I thank you, Sir, for the personal compliment; and I doubt not but she will be thankful for your charitable donation, for she is very poor."

"To be candid, Sir, I like practical sympathy better than sentimental; the one is a reality, the other a sham or a mawkish emotion, little less than a self-compliment to a refined but useless sensibility—something which excites the sentimentalism of a drawing-room, when we are looking on the print of an hospital or the wreck of a vessel hanging on the wall, but which gives no relief to a rescued sailor, or a discharged incurable."

The poor inmate (Mrs. Allen) was seated in her chair, wrapped in flannel, and supported by pillows, her appearance plainly indicating that she was near death. She smiled on seeing me, but on seeing the stranger she became a little disconcerted, yet, with polite ease, she moved her hands towards two chairs, and said, "Gentlemen, be seated."

"You appear," said Mr. Tennent, "very ill."

"Yes, Sir, but I believe my life of suffering will soon end, and then all will be well—*and for ever.*"

"I suppose you hope to go to heaven when you die?"

"I have no doubt of it, Sir."

"But as your Bible speaks of hell and eternal misery, don't you sometimes fear going there when you die?"

"I did once, Sir."

“And why not now?”

“Because my dear Saviour says, ‘Come unto me, and I will give you rest.’ I have come to him, and do come to him daily and hourly, and he has fulfilled his promise, and given me rest of soul, as an earnest of everlasting rest, and peace, and joy.”

“Then you have no fear in prospect of going into the great invisible world.”

“No, Sir; and I long for the hour to come when I shall depart and be with Christ. I saw him in the visions of the night, when deep sleep had fallen upon me, and he appeared in glory, as when he was transfigured on Tabor.”

“Do you place much dependence on dreams?”

“I place dependence on nothing, Sir, but the exceeding great and precious promises of my Bible; but it is delightful to have, in the visions of the night, the re-appearance of day-thoughts and meditations; it is often then, from some cause which I cannot explain, they are clothed in a more visible and substantial form.”

“Now, Mrs. Allen, one more question, and I have done. Do you think it possible for any argument to convince you that Jesus Christ is not a real being, only an imaginary one?”

“Do you, Sir, think it possible for any argument to convince you that you are not a real being, or that we are not all real beings, only imaginary ones. The one thing is just about as likely to be done as the other, and just about as easy.”

I read part of the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, making a few remarks on what I read, and then went to pray with her, Mr. Tennent, from a sense of politeness, if not from a superior reason, kneeling with me before the throne of mercy. As the storm was now abated, and the evening far spent, we left her; but, on shaking hands with her, Mr. Tennent gave her a sovereign.

We walked away in silence, but at length he said, “Well, Sir, if your religion be, what unbelievers say it is, an invention, it is a very soothing and inspiring one. On such an occasion as this we cannot help wishing it to be real, even if we can’t believe it to be so.”



“You see, Sir, it answers all the purposes of a reality at the great crisis in the history of human life.”

When we came to the cross-road where we were to leave each other, he said, “Do you, Sir, remain at Fairmount much longer?”

“Yes, Sir, for some weeks.”

“I should like another interview, if I may be permitted to solicit such a favour.”

We engaged to meet on the following Saturday evening, but we were prevented. Towards the latter end of the ensuing week, I received the subjoined note from him, which was brought by Captain Dunlop’s gardener, who informed us that his master was just dead:—

“DEAR SIR,—Before you receive this, I shall have left. What a contrast have I witnessed between the cottage and the mansion! What I have *seen* and *heard* during this visit will never pass from my memory. If I could believe in the efficacy of prayer, I should say, *pray for me*. We may never meet again, but should the Bible ever be in later life as precious to me as it was before infidelity corrupted my heart, you shall hear from me.—Yours faithfully,

“GEORGE TENNENT.”

We had heard of the Captain’s illness, at whose mansion Mr. Tennent had been on a visit; but the announcement of his death startled and depressed us.

“Why, gardener, your master’s death has been very sudden.”

“Yes, Sir, he wasn’t ill more than five days.”

“What was the nature of his disease?”

“Inflammation of the bowels, so I heard my wife say.”

“Did any clergyman visit him during his illness?”

“No, Sir, no one was with him but my wife, he was mainly fond of her, and she nursed him, and gave him his physic, and didn’t leave him, night or day, till he left us all for t’other world.”

“I believe, gardener, he was an infidel, and did not believe in the existence of another world.”

“It happened to him, Sir, as it has happened to others before him; when death got near him his infidelity forsook him, and then his belief of another world was as strong as the apostle Paul’s, so I heard my wife say.”

“Do you know how he felt in the prospect of dying?”

“I heard my wife say it was a dismal scene. She trembled at night when she was left by herself with him.”

“Do you know if Mr. Tennent saw him during his illness?”

“I heard my wife say that he saw him once, and they had high words.”

“You don’t mean they quarrelled.”

“Why, no, Sir, not exactly that, but I heard my wife say that when Mr. Tennent went into his room one morning, just after breakfast, master said to him, *you see, Tennent, what you and your infidelity has done for me. I shall go down in this storm, and be lost.* Mr. Tennent said something in reply, so I heard my wife say, but I can’t mind what, for I have been in a power of trouble since master’s death, for he was a good master to me. He never went into the room after that morning, so I heard my wife say.”

“Do you know if he had any hope of salvation before he died?”

“No, Sir, I don’t think he had. I heard my wife say that master said next to nothing all along through his sickness, but that one awful saying, *I shall go down in this storm, and be lost.* He said that, Sir, so I heard my wife say, just as he was a-dying. My wife is in sore trouble about master’s soul, for he was a good master to her. I tell you what, Sir, this infidelity is a bad thing. It makes people bold in wickedness and contempt of God when they are in health, but their courage leaves them when death comes. They are desperate cowards then.”

“Well, gardener, I hope it will be a warning to you.”

“I hope, Sir, you don’t think that I be an infidel. No, Sir, I love my Bible, and so does my wife. An infidel! no, Sir; and I often told master he would repent of it some day. I can’t, Sir, get the terrible words out of my ears—I shall go down in this storm, and

be lost. In that storm master did go down. Good night, Sir; it's too awful to think about."

The funeral was conducted with great pomp; and when passing the gardener's cottage some days afterwards, I stepped in and saw his wife, who was in mourning for her late master. After a few leading inquiries, I got her to tell me what passed when Mr. Tennent went to see his dying friend.

"I don't mind all, Sir, but master said to him, you see Tennent, what you and your infidelity has done for me. He then said something about praying to Jesus Christ to save him, when master said to him, why, how can I do that, when you have taught me to reject Him as an impostor? I loved my Bible till I knew you; you made me ridicule it. Mr. Tennent then went out of the room in anger, and never came back. I felt for my poor master. It was very sad to see him go out of one world into another, and hear him say, just as he was going, I shall go down in this storm, and be lost. I have had no sound sleep since. I can't get the frightful words out of my ears. I am always dreaming about a boat turned over in a fearful storm, and master sinking in the great lake."

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## THE BIBLE PRECIOUS.



SOME few years after my interview with Mr. Tennent, and when its vivid impressions had nearly faded from my recollection, I received the following letter, which I read with intense delight:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is possible that you may have forgotten me long since; but a slight reference to the remarkable incidents con-

nected with our interview, will probably bring me to your remembrance. We met on a Saturday evening, in a woodman's cottage, at Broadhurst; we afterwards knelt together in the cottage of a poor woman, who, doubtless, has passed into a happier world long ere now. We parted under an arrangement to meet again; but the sudden illness and death of my old friend, Captain Dunlop, with whom I was then staying, compelled me to leave his house rather abruptly. In a note which I sent to you I remember saying, that if the Bible should ever be again as precious to me as it once was, you should hear from me. And now I redeem my pledge, which you will be kind enough to accept as my apology for obtruding this letter upon you.

“When we met in the woodman's cottage I was a proud sceptic, looking with haughty disdain and contempt on every one, illiterate or intelligent, who professed a belief in the authority of the Bible. But what I heard and saw that never-to-be-forgotten Saturday evening, and subsequently in the death chamber of my old friend, was like the shock of an earthquake; it shook my sceptical opinions from their foundation, and so scattered them, that I never afterwards could gather them up, nor did I ever make an effort or feel an inclination so to do. The sweet calm of the poor woman's cottage, when placed in contrast with the terrific storm of the mansion—the assurance of the poor woman that she was going to heaven, and the equally strong assurance of my old friend, Captain Dunlop, that he was going to hell—were so strongly imprinted on my imagination, that they followed me day and night. I grew sick of life, and more than once was strongly tempted to hasten on a doom which I thought inevitable, and which at times I longed to have decided and settled for ever. I dared not enter a church; the sight of a Bible had the same effect on my nervous sensibility which we may suppose the re-appearance of a murdered man would have on the living monster who took away his life; and when in company, if religion became the subject of discussion, I felt interdicted from taking any part, either for or against it. This painful state of mind



MR. TENNENT AND THE TRACT SELLER.

continued for more than two years; there was at times a lull in the storm of anguish; but after a while it came back with still greater fury, and, like my departed friend, I often said, 'Yes! I shall be a wreck, and lost.'

"But God, who is rich in mercy, whose eye is pity, and whose arm is power (to quote your own expression, which I admired for its beauty when you uttered it), in an unlooked for moment, and in a strange place, brought about a wonderful change, by renewing me, I trust, in the spirit of my mind, and bringing me again to say, 'Precious Bible, what a treasure!'

"The means which he employed to effect this wondrous revolution in my opinions and in my heart were very simple, but they were effectual: he chose to let me see and feel that the work was his own work. Such was the restlessness of my mind, that I was compelled to keep perpetually moving about, that by seeing various sights, and going into fresh society, I might be diverted from the gloomy terror of my own thoughts, and the dread of what was to come. I spent two years on the continent, but returned to England last spring the same man as when I left it—with this difference, that I seemed nearer the verge of absolute despair. After spending a few weeks in London, and visiting many places in South Wales, I went to Bristol, and then to Bath, and from Bath to Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, where I took lodgings, making up my mind to stay there during the summer. When returning one evening from Newport, I met a lad with a small basket, who asked me to buy a little book, telling me, as an inducement, that he had been walking about all day long, and had not got enough money to buy a supper for his poor old mother. His doleful tale touched my heart, and I gave him some relief, but said, 'Keep your books, lad, they may be money to you.' We both passed on, but when at some distance from each other, I thought, perhaps he has in his basket something that would amuse me. I turned and hailed him, and he ran back. On examining his basket I found a largish lot of religious tracts; I took two, paid him for them, put them into my pocket, and

went home. I was so knocked up by my long walk that I was soon in bed and asleep, and the tracts were not thought of. The next evening, when sitting on a large stone on the beach, looking at the ships sailing and at anchor, at the varied movements of the sea-gulls, and the gentle ebbing of the tide, I felt a momentary elation of spirit, such as I had not felt for years; it was something like the sudden return of an old friend after years of absence. I will not, Sir, trouble you by recounting the thoughts that passed through my mind in this elysian reverie, but one thought came and went so often, that it became the master thought of this delightful mood of thinking. 'Yes,' thought I, 'man has a capacity for happiness, why, then, is he not happy? Why am *I* not happy? and why do I not enjoy life when I possess so amply the means of enjoying it? What can be the reason why I am so cast down and wretched?' On putting my hand into my pocket to get my knife, I felt the tracts I had put there when I bought them, and I took them out. Their titles, *Covey*\* and *Poor Joseph*, had caught my eye when I saw them in the lad's basket, and I was induced to select them, imagining they narrated some interesting tale.

"I read the account of Covey, but his daring courage when going into battle, which forced him to risk disobedience to orders rather than skulk from the advancing foe, made a stronger impression on my imagination than his after conversion did on my heart. It carried me back also to the scenes which my old friend, Captain Dunlop, had often pictured to me, of his hairbreadth escapes from danger; and then his last words recurred to my memory with terrible force—'Mr. Tennent, I am a wreck, and lost.' I put the tracts again into my pocket, as I thought, and sat in terrible and depressing cogitations for a long time; but providentially I had put back only one of them; the other had fallen on the ground, and a slight breeze blew it just under the notice of my eye. I took it, and read the title—*Poor Joseph; an Authentic Narrative.*†

\* See note, p. 58.

† A poor, half-witted man, named Joseph, whose employment was to go on errands

“On any other occasion I should have doubted the truthfulness of the narrative, and should have ridiculed it as a tale got up for dramatic effect. But I did not do so now. The sentiments of the tale came with such force, that a flood of tears bore testimony to its wondrous effect on my proud spirit, and I was now deeply humbled and abased before Him whose eye is pity and whose arm is power.

“Returning to my lodgings I bought a Bible, now no longer an object of scornful contempt, but of veneration and love, and sat down to read it with as much eagerness of soul as a disconsolate child in a distant country would open an unexpected letter from his father. I am not ashamed to confess to you that I shed many tears that night, as the Bible lay on the table before me; tears of contrition, when recalling to my remembrance some of my reproachful sayings against it; and tears of gratitude to Jesus Christ,

and carry parcels, passing through London streets one day, heard psalm-singing in the house of God; he went into it; it was Dr. Calamy's church, St. Mary's, Aldermaubury. The preacher read his text from 1 Tim. i. 15—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” From this he preached, in the clearest manner, the ancient and apostolic gospel, and Joseph, in rags, gazing with astonishment, never took his eyes from the preacher, but drank in with eagerness all he said, and trudging homeward, he was heard thus muttering to himself, “Joseph never heard this before! Christ Jesus, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners like Joseph; and this is true, and it is a ‘faithful saying!’” Not long after this Joseph was seized with a fever, and was dangerously ill. As he tossed upon his bed, his constant language was, “Joseph is the chief of sinners, but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and Joseph loves him for this.” His neighbours who came to see him wondered on hearing him always dwell on this, and only this.

One man, finding out where he heard this sermon, went and asked Dr. Calamy to come and visit him. He came, but Joseph was now very weak, and had not spoken for some time, and though told of the doctor's arrival, he took no notice of him; but when the doctor began to speak to him, as soon as he heard the sound of his voice he instantly sprang upon his elbows, and seizing him by his hands, exclaimed, as loud as he could with his now feeble and trembling voice, “O Sir! you are the friend of the Lord Jesus, whom I heard speak so well of him. Joseph is the chief of sinners, but it is a faithful saying, that Jesus Christ, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, and why not Joseph? O, pray to that Jesus for me; pray that he may save me; tell him that Joseph thinks that he loves him for coming into the world to save such sinners as Joseph.” The doctor prayed; when he concluded, Joseph thanked him most kindly; but his exertions in talking had been too much for him, so that he shortly afterwards expired.



the friend of sinners, for causing me once more to revere and love my Bible. For some time I was fearfully anxious lest the newly-ekindled emotions of my heart should die out, and that I should again be left to go back into my old practices of evil, and possibly re-occupy the seat of the scorner. I therefore resolved to let time test the genuineness of the great change before I said anything to any one about it. Time has done this; and you, Sir, are the only person to whom I have made the disclosure; and I have no doubt but you will rejoice to hear from me a simple statement of what the Lord has done for me, and how he has had compassion on me. We may meet again; and if we should, we shall meet as fellow-believers in the precious Bible, and in the Saviour it reveals to us. Last week I sent a family Bible to the woodman, and a small Bible to each of his children, simply telling him that it was a present from one who once attempted to sap his faith in the divine authority of the Bible, but who now venerates and loves it as God's best gift to man.—I remain, yours respectfully, "GEORGE TENNENT."

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## THE FAMILY OF THE ROSCOES.



R. ROSCOE was the son of an eminent London citizen, who, by his successful speculations in trade, had risen from indigence to the possession of great wealth. He had two brothers and one sister. His eldest brother took to his father's business, his youngest entered the church, and his sister married a country gentleman of fortune and respectability. He was originally designed for the law; but, after spending a few years with an eminent solicitor, he abandoned the profession, and devoted himself to a life of pleasure. After years of wandering from one place to another, he settled in the neighbourhood of the village

of Aston, where he built a spacious mansion, as elegant within as its external appearance was imposing. Soon after its completion he married an amiable and intelligent lady, of a small fortune, but of great prudence. For some time they lived in the enjoyment of domestic peace; and while Mr. Roscoe gained reputation as a man of intelligence and of taste, Mrs. Roscoe was universally esteemed for her affability and benevolence. Years passed along—they had several children, but all died in infancy. These successive bereavements had such a depressing effect on Mrs. Roscoe, that solitude became oppressive, and society aggravated her grief, and the shades of melancholy were gathering thick around her; yet she was comforted under her sufferings by the sympathy and affection of a fond and endeared husband.

Time, which had covered the grave of her children with verdure, began to close up the wounds of her heart; but, when permitted to enjoy the anticipations of becoming once more a mother, she was doomed to witness the growing indifference of her husband towards herself. Her other trials depressed her, but this overwhelmed her. Her affection still glowed pure and ardent; and though she long resisted every unfavourable impression, and redoubled her efforts to please, and to render his home attractive, yet she saw her happiness a wreck, and found herself bereft of all the endearments of life.

This change in Mr. Roscoe was produced by his intimacy with Sir Henry Wilmot, of Cleveland Hall. Sir Henry was the only son of an eminently pious mother, who died when he was seven years of age; he was thus left entirely to the care of his father, a man of superior mental attainments, but of gay and dissipated habits, and a free thinker on theological questions. When young he resisted the contagion of evil by which he was surrounded; but having finished his education, which was not favourable to the growth of religious sentiments, he paid a visit to the continent, and there he became thoroughly corrupted. On the decease of his father, he returned to take possession of the family inheritance; and brought with him all the loose opinions and dangerous principles of those with whom he

had associated. Being a man of elegant manners, of sociable disposition, generous and warm in his professions of friendship, who had seen the various aspects of society, and was qualified either to debate in argument or amuse at play, he soon acquired a powerful ascendancy over Mr. Roscoe, whom he often induced to prolong his visits at the Hall to a late hour. The influence of evil, like the influence of good principles, is at first imperceptible; but it is usually found that the one corrupts more rapidly than the other reforms. The erection of the building requires a skilful combination of talents and materials; but it may be demolished by the rude hand of a barbarian, who knows not how to draw an elevation, or execute a design.

Cleveland Hall, which had been in former days the house of mercy and of prayer, was now become the rendezvous of the vices—the seat of licentiousness and of moral pollution;

“There *many* fell, to rise no more;”

and there Mr. Roscoe lost the fine bloom that once glowed on his character; and if a sense of decency operated as a partial restraint, yet his home and his wife were comparatively forsaken.

Mrs. Roscoe, who watched this progressive change with deep anxiety, would occasionally solicit the company of her husband during the tedious evenings of the winter, but rarely succeeded; for, such was the infatuation which had seized him, that he could not be happy away from Sir Harry. At length the hour arrived which teems with eventful consequences to a family, and Mrs. Roscoe became the mother of a lovely female child. At first her life appeared in imminent danger; and when this was announced to her husband, he was deeply affected, and sat mute in silence; but it was not the dignified silence of the soul bowing down in submission to the will of God, but the silence of horror-struck guilt, which dares not speak. After waiting a considerable time, the victim of his own reflections, he resolved at last to see his wife; but when he entered her room he found that she had fallen into a profound sleep. As he was retiring, the nurse threw off the covering that concealed the face of his

daughter, and the sight operated as a spell upon his passions. As he kissed the babe, the tide of conjugal affection flowed back into his soul, and he resolved from that hour to become once more a domestic man. The next morning he sent a short polite note to Sir Harry, saying that he should in future decline all intimacy.

Had he merely resolved to drop the intimacy by degrees, leaving the Hall earlier in the evening, and going less frequently—offering reasonable excuses for these variations, and then trivial ones—it is more than probable that Sir Harry would have employed an extra amount of fascinating influence to prevent a dissolution of the connection. But by coming to a decision at once, and acting on it—by the transmission of the note—he broke the spell of enchantment under which he had long been held, and effected his emancipation with comparative ease. Herein he displayed consummate wisdom, and should be regarded as a model of imitation by any one who feels himself entangled in a similar snare. Hesitation, combined with a resort to cautious expedients, is far more likely to give perpetuity to a beguiling temptation than to dissolve its charm; whereas, a resolute determination to break away from it, followed by some bold and decisive step, is almost sure to prove successful; the self-conquest is then made without much difficulty, the character is redeemed from infamy, and domestic happiness is re-established on a solid foundation.

Mrs. Roscoe soon recovered—the life of the child was spared—her husband became kind and attentive—and the sun of her domestic happiness, which had gone down, returned to lighten her long cheerless habitation. She was always a religious woman; but her religion was restricted to opinions, and forms, and ceremonies, which had no moral power on her mind. She had her seasons of devotion, but she regarded her devotional exercises as a duty, not a privilege; and read her Bible occasionally, but her reading was generally confined to its histories, or narratives, or parables. She regularly attended her church, and repeated the reponses of its Liturgy with great solemnity, but she never conceived that the essence of religion

consists in the renovation of the soul. She was amiable and benevolent, discharged the relative duties of life with strict honour and punctuality, and threw over the path of her visible history a lustre which all admired; and feeling satisfied with her personal goodness, she very naturally concluded that God required nothing more. To her the scheme of salvation, which requires repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, was not less offensive than to the avowed unbeliever; and though she had more liberality than her husband, yet she was equally severe in her remarks on those whose piety led them to oppose the customs of the world, and devote themselves to the Redeemer. Her formalism was both rigid and acrimonious; and though it yielded no mental enjoyment, yet it excited much self-complacency, inducing her to think she was fit for heaven, without creating any intense longings to go there.

Years passed away in the enjoyment of health, unannoyed by cares or sorrows, till Miss Roscoe was seized with that depressing melancholy which has been already described,\* and which threw a sombrous gloom over all their prospects. From this affliction she was now recovering, and though her parents beheld with joy the gradual return of her cheerfulness, yet her cheerfulness was of such a serious cast that they rejoiced with trembling. As they were sitting together one evening, when their daughter had displayed unusual liveliness, Mr. Roscoe said, "My dear Sophia, it gives us great pleasure to witness your pleasantries, and we hope that in a short time you will be able to partake of the amusements in which you once took so much delight. We have resolved to celebrate your convalescence by giving a ball, and we hope you will lead off in style."

This communication, which was intended to raise her spirits, had a contrary effect; and she replied, "I am conscious that you always keep my happiness in view, but I assure you that such a mode of celebrating my deliverance from the gloomy night of mental sadness would ill accord with the sentiments and feelings of my mind; the song of mirth I would exchange for the hymn of praise, and would

\* See p. 129.

prefer the retirement of devout meditation to the noisy bustle and fantastic exhibition of human vanity and folly."

"But such amusements," replied Mr. Roscoe, "used to afford you gratification, and I do think, my Sophia, that they will contribute very materially towards restoring that high-toned vivacity which your spirits usually preserved."

"Yes, father, I once took great delight in such amusements, and almost contemned the person who despised them, but my taste is changed; and if you wish to retard the restoration of my mental energy and vivacity, you have only to urge a compliance, which will wound my conscience."

"This reply, my Sophia, confirms the fearful apprehensions which I have recently entertained concerning you."

"What, my father, are these fearful apprehensions?"

"You are escaping from the gloom of a physical depression, to be involved in a religious gloom, which will prove still more injurious. You know that I have always inculcated religious principles, and set you a virtuous example, and can you suppose that I would now recommend amusements which *ought* to wound your conscience?"

"But *it would wound my conscience* were I to mingle again in the gay parties, and partake of the amusements, in which I once delighted; and I am sure, after such an avowal, you will not press it."

"I would not press anything on you which would give you pain, but I fear lest the religious turn which you are now taking should lead you either to despondency or enthusiasm."

"O my father, it is a belief that Jesus Christ died for sinners, even the chief, that has given peace and hope to my deeply-depressed mind. This is the theme on which I love to dwell. In comparison with this, the charms of poetry or the discoveries of science are insignificant and worthless."

"But, my dear, I hope you do not rank yourself among the chief of sinners. You have always been a dutiful child, kind and attached to those around you; the ornament of your family; your character is free from a stain, and your moral principles are as pure as the light

of heaven ; and would it not be an insult to your Maker if you were, as is too much the fashion among our modern saints, to class yourself with those who are too worthless to merit his regard ?”

“But, my father, we may be very excellent in the sight of man, and yet offensive in the sight of God. The Pharisees of the New Testament are compared to ‘whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.’ I feel the comparison in relation to myself to be just. I have discharged the relative duties of life with some degree of propriety, and know that my character is free from reproach ; I have devoted myself to the improvement of my mind, and held in veneration the religion on whose external ordinances I have attended, but I have not sought for happiness in the enjoyment of the divine favour, nor have I, till recently, either understood or felt the power of religious principles on my heart. However, though I may be blameless towards man, I am a sinner against God, but a sinner hoping to be saved by grace through faith, and that faith is not of my own originating, it is the gift of God.”

“My Sophia, I never heard you talk in a strain like this before ; you appear to have taken a most gloomy view of human nature, and, according to my judgment, you are gone off among the mysteries of modern Calvinism, and, unless you retrace your steps, you will be plunged into a state of depression more perplexing, because more hopeless, than that from which you are now emerging.”

“I know I never talked in this strain before, because the veil of ignorance concealed from me the truths which I now discern with so much clearness in the Scriptures. The apostle says, ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ And I can attest, from my own experience, the accuracy of this statement. But the eyes of my understanding are now enlightened, and I can discern a beauty and grandeur in the scheme of salvation which I never saw before. The Scriptures are now the pure fountain from whence I draw the water of life. My

taste is now formed by the influence of the truth which they reveal, and such is the altered state of my mind towards God, and the Redeemer, and another world, that I feel as though introduced into a new condition of being. You may imagine that this mental process will issue in gloom and dejection, but no; I feel myself rising above the conflicting elements of grief on which my mind has been tossed, into the enjoyment of that 'peace which passeth all understanding.'"

"But, my Sophia, I fear that you are carried away by the flights of your fancy, and are *now* labouring under a delusion which will leave you more wretched than it found you."

"But, my dear father, *suppose it be a delusion, is it not a pleasing one?* It has delivered me from a species of melancholy, which no other expedient could remove. But it is no delusion, because the effect is produced by truth operating on my mind through the medium of my judgment; and if you examine the Scriptures you will perceive that they represent such a moral change as indispensably necessary. Jesus Christ says that unless we are born again we cannot see the kingdom of heaven. This new birth I once thought was baptism by water, but I now perceive the absurdity of such an opinion, for those who are born again are fitted for heaven; but can we believe that all who are baptized are fitted for heaven? There is baptism by water, which is the external sign of that moral purification which is denominated the baptism of the Spirit. And St. Paul says, 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.' And though some would say that this refers expressly to the reformation which must take place in the more abandoned and impure, yet the comprehensive phrase which he employs (*if any man be in Christ*) demonstrates the necessity of this change in each individual, irrespective of the peculiar modification of his character."

"I admit that there must be a change, my Sophia, but as that must be produced by our own reflections, it does not require these flights of the fancy which you are now taking."



“But, my dear father, can a change so important as that which the Scriptures describe, take place in the human soul without affecting all its faculties and passions? The change may be sudden or gradual, according to the sovereign will of the great agent by whom it is produced, but when it does take place, a person cannot be unconscious of it. It is not merely a change of opinion, but of principle; it not only gives a distaste for the follies and vanities of the world, but raises the affections to the unseen realities of eternity, and transforms the whole character into a resemblance to Jesus Christ’s. Dr. Paley says, ‘It is too momentous an event ever to be forgotten. A man might as easily forget his escape from shipwreck.’”

“I know that this change is necessary in relation to some, *but I cannot see that it is necessary in relation to you*; and I fear that you are perplexing your mind with a subject which, if not above your reach, is altogether inapplicable to you.”

“But, my dear father, *I feel* the necessity of this change in relation to myself, and it is evident that my opinion accords with the current language of the Scriptures. Hence we read of being born again, of passing from death unto life, of being created anew in Christ Jesus, of being made new creatures, and *I feel that I have undergone this change*. It is no airy notion which flutters over my fancy; it is no superstitious impression sporting with the credulity of my mind; it is no mysticism of opinion which dreads the light of investigation; but a substantial fact, which I cannot doubt, and to which I attribute, and *exclusively attribute*, my present mental composure and felicity. Yes, I now can say I am happy.”

“It gives me pleasure to hear that you are happy; and though I fear your happiness arises from a source which will ere long dry up, yet I will not disturb it while it lasts. Your heart, I know, is good, and the errors into which you have now fallen will be corrected, I have no doubt, by the mature reflections of your judgment. It is natural for persons who have laboured under a physical depression of spirits to be delighted by almost any object of pursuit which first strikes their attention. Some are charmed with the gaities of this

world, and some with imaginary conceptions of the felicities of the next, and hence are carried away with the visions of their own fancy; but time cools their ardour, and they ultimately live to think and act like other people; and this, I trust, will be the case with you."

"My errors I hope to detect, and when detected I will renounce them, but my religious principles, I hope I shall never live either to renounce, or compromise, or dishonour."

"I know, my dear, that you are too virtuous to dishonour, and too independent to compromise any good principles, but I hope you will renounce those gloomy and mystical views which you have recently imbibed, and return to the adoption of those in which you have been educated. A mind that is given to change becomes the sport of every wind of doctrine, and liable to be imposed on by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

"But, my dear father, you will permit to say that I am not deceived. I have carefully examined the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, and I am as thoroughly convinced that I have been living in a state of total ignorance of the nature and design of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as I am opposed to the absurd rites of Papal superstition."

"Well, my Sophia, I perceive that you are too much enamoured with your opinions to enter on a logical investigation of them at present; but when the freshness of novelty is worn off, and your mind reverts to its accustomed accuracy of perception and sobriety of feeling, we may then do so with mutual satisfaction."

"I hope, my dear father, we shall; for I assure you that, as my happiness is inseparably connected with yours, it is my daily prayer that we may be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

She now withdrew to her own room.

"Sophia quite alarms me," said Mrs. Roscoe. "I fear her disorder is taking a more fatal turn. It certainly has impaired her reason."

“She perplexes and puzzles me,” said Mr. Roscoe; “no, her reason is not impaired; it is acute and vigorous, and she is moving in a new pathway of religious inquiry, but I cannot follow her. Some new chapter is opening in her mental history. She talks both rationally and incoherently. We must wait the issue, and hope for the best.”

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## THE SOCIAL PARTY.



THE day at length arrived when the Roscoes came to dine at the villa. I had previously seen Mr. Roscoe, and had become somewhat acquainted with his character; but there was such a peculiarity in his manner, that I could not approach him with ease. He was affable, yet reserved; high, yet condescending; polite, yet spoke and acted as though conscious that he was about to engage in a disputatious combat. The cloth was no sooner removed, than Mr. Lewellin, who had recently attended the anniversary of the Shaftesbury Bible Society, informed us that a medical gentleman moved one of the resolutions, who confessed that he had been for many years an avowed infidel; but, on application, he became a subscriber to the Bible Society: and then he thought it proper to read the Bible, to see if it was a proper book for circulation. After alluding to the instruction and pleasure he had derived from its histories and its parables; from its unique doctrines, and its pure morality; from its development of the character of Christ, and its delineation of the human heart and character, he concluded his speech by saying, “I am satisfied, from what I have read, that the Bible contains a revelation of grace and mercy from heaven. I deeply regret that I ever despised it, or spoke against it; and I think it a duty which I owe to the Redeemer, and to this society, thus publicly to say, that I renounce my infidelity

as the bane of human felicity, and take my Bible as my guide to everlasting life!"

"Infidels," said Mr. Stevens, "very rarely read the Scriptures, except to ridicule them. They take for granted that they are the compilation of men, who have successfully palmed an absurd system of superstition on the world, which but few have courage enough to expose and condemn. But as the age is rapidly advancing in knowledge, they are sanguine in their expectations. Hence, David Hume prophesied that, at the conclusion of the last, or the beginning of the present century, Christianity would be exterminated from the earth. But this prediction has failed, for Christianity is now diffusing itself with almost unprecedented rapidity through every part of the world. Paine boasted that he had cut down every tree in the spiritual Eden. 'Priests,' says he, 'may stick them in the ground again, but they will never take root.' Foolish man! did he not know that there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease, 'yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.'"

"I think," said Mr. Lewellin, "that the Bible Society is the glory of the age and country in which we live, and if Britain, who now stands on the highest pinnacle of fame, should ever fall from her eminence, and become, like modern Greece, the land of moral and political darkness and desolation, I have no doubt but the adventurous of a distant posterity will visit her national ruins, giving to her the tributary tear of gratitude, as the birthplace of an institution whose benevolent design includes the whole family of man."

"But I do not think," said Mr. Roscoe, "that the Bible should be indiscriminately circulated. A person of education, like the medical gentleman of whom you have been speaking, may read it, but I do not think that it should be distributed among the ignorant and the poor, because it is impossible for them to understand it; and if so, it is nothing less, in my opinion, than an act of folly, or mistaken kindness, to give it to them."

“They may not,” replied Mr. Lewellin, “be able to understand every part of the Scriptures, but I think they will be able to understand those parts which are of great importance to be known. For example, suppose a Sabbath-breaker was to read Ex. xx. 8, ‘Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy,’ would he not understand it? Suppose a thief was to read Ex. xx. 15, ‘Thou shalt not steal,’ would he not understand it? Suppose a calumniator were to read Ex. xx. 16, ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,’ would he not understand it?”

“They would understand these preceptive parts of the Scriptures, but I think that they would not understand the speculative parts, and hence they would be in danger of forming wrong opinions on religious subjects.”

“But if you withhold the Scriptures from them, you give them no chance to form right opinions.”

“They should take their opinions from the clergyman of the parish in which they live, as he is the only authorized person to teach them.”

“But, if so, to what a dilemma would you reduce them. You will, on your maxim, compel them to vary their belief according to the ever-varying belief of the clergy. For example, you require the people of this parish to believe implicitly what the Rev. Mr. Cole preaches.”

“Certainly I do.”

“And you will require the people in the adjoining parish to believe what the Rev. Mr. Ingleby preaches?”

“Decidedly.”

“But do not these two clergymen preach different doctrines? Can they both be right?”

“They do preach different doctrines, and I think Mr. Ingleby assuredly wrong.”

“Then there must be something wrong in your maxim, which requires the people of a whole parish to believe error. Or let me suppose that the Rev. Mr. Cole, the clergyman of this parish, should

die, and that he should be succeeded by a clergyman who preaches the same doctrine as Mr. Ingleby, will you not, according to your own maxim, be compelled, along with the rest of the parishioners, to believe those very doctrines which you now regard as erroneous? Indeed, if your maxim be a correct one, what security have you for the permanent continuance of your belief?"

"I have often told Mr. Roscoe," said Mr. Stevens, "that he will ultimately believe the same doctrines with myself, and now I perceive there is a chance of it; for in the event of the decease or the preferment of the Rev. Mr. Cole, the living will be presented to an evangelical clergyman."

"Well, if that should be the case, I will break up my establishment, and reside elsewhere."

"But this," observed Mr. Lewellin, "would be running away from your maxim, that the people should believe, without examination, the doctrines which their clergy preach. Indeed, your maxim is as much opposed to a *fixed local residence* as it is to a *steadfast belief*, because you do not know but as soon as you have purchased your house, laid out your pleasure-grounds, and brought your garden to a high state of cultivation, an evangelical clergyman may be inducted into the living, and thus become the innocent occasion of making you literally a pilgrim, if not a stranger on earth."

"Would you, then, leave every individual in society to interpret the Scriptures according to his own judgment?"

"Certainly; Jesus Christ says, 'Search the Scriptures.' Now, if one person has a right to search the Scriptures, and to form his religious opinions from them, so has another; and if two, so have ten; and if ten, so have all."

"Then we shall have as many different religious opinions afloat in society as there are members; and I think it would be infinitely better to lock up the Bible in the cloister of the Romish monks than to circulate it."

"I grant that we shall have different religious opinions prevailing among us, but this circumstance will be more favourable to the reli-

gious improvement of the people than a dull uniformity. There is no nation in Europe where there are *more* religious sects than in England, and there is no nation where there are *fewer* than in Spain; but which of the two nations is the most intelligent, which the most powerful, and which the most free and the most religious? National uniformity is the stagnant water where the life of religious principle dies; but national freedom, which gives to every man the right to think and judge for himself, is the angel of mercy, preserving the truth in its purity amidst the conflicting elements of diverse opinions, causing it to have a free course and to be glorified."

"But would it not be better if we could all see alike on religious subjects? Then there would be no disputation, and Christianity would present to an unbeliever much stronger evidence of her divine origin."

Mr. Lewellin replied, "If we could all see the truth with the same clearness as the apostles saw it, and if we all felt its purifying influence on the heart as they felt it, we should then arrive at the highest pitch of human attainment; but this is a consummation rather to be desired than expected. It is evident that we have not attained this pitch of excellence; and, till we have, I think that common justice requires that we should concede to others the right which we claim for ourselves."

"Well, Sir, if I concede this, still I think that the different sects should keep distinct from each other. There should be no union, no combination; they should act apart and alone, move under their own standard, and sleep in their own tents."

"Mr. Roscoe is now," observed Mr. Stevens, "getting to his old objection against the Bible Society. He dislikes the union of the different denominations of Christians in that society. He thinks that the church has degraded herself by associating with the Dissenters in the circulation of the Scriptures."

"So it is," said Mr. Lewellin; "what one man considers an excellence another deems a defect. This very union is to me a most delightful subject of contemplation; it reminds me so much of the

heavenly world, where all the redeemed mingle together in sweetest harmony, after the jarring discords of earth have ceased to annoy and disturb."

"But if we are distinct, let us keep distinct."

"But, Sir, we may differ on some points, and yet agree in others; and the same reason which would keep us distinct on points of difference, should bring us together on points of agreement. For example, you may be most attached to the monarchical branch of our constitution, Mr. Stevens to the aristocratical, and I to the republican. Here we should differ, but yet we may agree to defend it against a common foe. Now, shall our difference on these points prevent our uniting in its defence?"

"Certainly no; he who would not unite with his countrymen in the defence and support of the constitution, ought not to partake of the benefits which it confers."

"I thank you, Sir, for this concession; you have fairly awarded to me my point. Difference on some subjects ought not to prevent a union on others. We differ on some religious subjects, but we all profess to love the Bible, and to revere it as the standard of truth; why, then, should we object to co-operate with each other in circulating it through the world? The Bible Society I contemplate as the temple of peace. When we enter we lay aside the weapons of hostility, and mingle together as the professed disciples of Jesus Christ; and after thus fraternizing for a common object, we retire without having surrendered the smallest atom of the respective opinions and practices by which we are distinguished; and I am conscious that the intercourse will have a good moral influence over us, by diminishing the force of our mutual jealousies, and promoting a kind and affectionate spirit among us."

"I have often thought," said Mr. Stevens, "when I have had the pleasure of being present at a Bible society anniversary, of the beautiful lines which Milton represents Adam as addressing to Eve, after they had wearied themselves with mutual accusations:—



‘But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame  
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive,  
In offices of love, how we may lighten  
Each other’s burden in our share of woe.’”

“I think,” said Miss Roscoe, “that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of universal benevolence, and I see no reason why it should exclude any from its communion who profess to have embraced it. If the disciples of Jesus Christ will meet at last in heaven, and lose their sectarian designations in the more grand appellation of the redeemed, why should they object to associate together on earth? Surely it is no dereliction of Christian principle to take the example of the spirits of just men made perfect as a model for our own conduct, while we are in this imperfect state.”

“I see,” said Mr. Roscoe, “if the question of the Bible Society is to be carried by numbers, that I shall be out-voted; but still, though it may do some good, and display a kind and benevolent spirit, yet I fear it is productive of many evils. For example, a Dissenter gives away a Bible to a poor family, accompanied by his own reflections; will he not, at the time he make the donation, say something that may have a tendency to proselyte that family to his own peculiar tenets?”

“He may, Sir; but has not the Churchman the same liberty? Hence, on a supposition that they both aim at proselyting, their chance of success is reciprocal; and if they both succeed, the relative numbers of each denomination stand unaltered. But I do not think that such a spirit actuates the great body of the members of the Bible Society. They circulate the Scriptures without note or comment, and leave them under the blessing of Him, who employs the truth they reveal, as the means of enlightening the ignorant and sanctifying the impure. To them the question of conformity or dissent is a question of minor importance; and I can attest, as far as my knowledge extends, that their paramount anxiety is to promote the spiritual and eternal benefit of those to whom the donation is given, not to augment their relative numbers.”

“But I think that every Churchman ought to support the church of which he is a member.”

“And do you imagine,” replied Mr. Stevens, “that the circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment will endanger the safety of the church? What is this but virtually acknowledging that our church is not established on the foundation of the apostles and prophets?”

“I do not intend to insinuate that it is not supported by the authority of the Scriptures, but still I think that if the Book of Common Prayer be circulated with the Bible, the attachment of the people for the church is more likely to be preserved.”

“But,” said Mr. Lewellin, “this will involve a concession which probably you will not like to place on record; it is conceding that the Bible alone will not support your church, but that it must stand indebted to the Book of Common Prayer; a concession from which, I am sure, my friend Mr. Stevens will dissent.”

“Oh! Mr. Stevens,” said Mr. Roscoe, with a smile of good-nature, “is more than half a Dissenter already; and I often tell him that he will soon become as zealous as the strictest of the sect. There is a substantial proof of my assertion” (pointing to the chapel, which was visible from the room in which we were sitting).

“Ah! friend Roscoe, I know you do not like my chapel, but I hope that I shall see you there the next time I have a charity sermon for Mrs. Stevens’ Sunday-school. Your friend, Mr. Green, was there the other Sunday evening, and he has called on me since to say that he shall be happy to co-operate with me in promoting the moral welfare of the poor people in this neighbourhood; and who knows but your prejudices may ere long give way, and that we may all act in concert!”

“Yes, I heard of his having been at your chapel, and I must confess that I was astonished. Why, no man has talked more against your irregularities than he has; but now, such is the inconstancy of man, he is become an advocate of your opinions. But I am too old to change, and too much attached to consistency to deviate from the

course I have followed for so many years. Even the eloquence of Mrs. Stevens, and that eloquence I know is powerful, would fail in producing any effect on my mind. I have many objections against educating the children of the poor, and more against worshipping in any other place than the Established Church, and I think that no force of argument would be sufficiently strong to overpower them."

"There are," said Mr. Lewellin, "the objections of prejudice, and there are the objections of reason; and though it is not always in our power to draw the line of distinction between them, yet we should attempt it. I lay it down as an axiom, which is founded in the very constitution of the human mind, that a child cannot discharge his duty till he knows what that duty is; he cannot know it till he is taught it; and the earlier the information is communicated, the sooner shall we secure his obedience, and the more uniform it is likely to become. Hence the necessity and utility of Sunday-schools."

I had hitherto sat silent, but now I related the conversation I had had with the little boy\* whom I accidentally met in one of my morning rambles.

"The shrewd intelligence of this boy may be a solitary instance," said Mr. Roscoe; "but I fear that the plan will be found productive of fatal consequences. Our poor population will grow genteel in their habits; proud and discontented, and unwilling to discharge the duties of their station; and by being taught to read, will become either religious disputants or avowed infidels."

"No, this is not a solitary instance of the utility of Sunday-schools. I can give many others." I then described the scene which I witnessed in the woodman's cottage, narrating, at the same time, the conversation which passed between myself and his dying child.† As I was telling this tale, a tear dropped from the eye of Miss Roscoe, and her countenance beamed with delight.

"Ah! how I should like to have witnessed such a scene—a little girl languishing into life."

\* See page 43.

† See page 105.

“Indeed, my Sophia,” said Mr. Roscoe, with a tone somewhat harsh, “I should not like for you to have been present. This artificial excitement of the passions—this effervescence of feeling in the bosom of a child in the near approach of death, is no recommendation of the plan by which the effect is produced.”

“Indeed, papa, I should like to have been present; it must have been a noble sight to witness a child rising to the contemplation of a state of future happiness; to have beheld the involuntary movements of her soul towards the source of all blessedness; and to have heard her speak in terms so delightful of the love of Christ, as the first moving cause of her love to him. I have seen many sights, but this surpasses all, possessing a radiance of glory which casts a dim shade on every other.”

These remarks, which were made with a singular emphasis of tone, produced a powerful effect on the whole party; and though Mr. Roscoe was evidently displeased with the sentiments which they conveyed, yet he was delighted with the graceful vivacity of spirit with which they were expressed.

Mrs. Roscoe, who had taken no part in the conversation, now observed that she had no doubt but there were good and bad of all sorts, and that she thought every person ought to be left to choose his own religion; *only they should take care not to choose that religion which made them miserable.* Addressing herself to Mrs. Stevens, “I think a little religion a very good thing; and as our Maker has given us one day out of the seven to be religious in, I think that is quite enough; I should not like to be obliged to think and talk about religion all the week, and I often wonder how it is that you, who have so much of it at Fairmount, are not become weary of it altogether!”

“Why, the reason is, we love it; and, you know, people do not grow weary of that on which their affections are placed.”

“But we are commanded ‘not to be righteous over-much!’”

“We are so commanded; but we should be cautious lest we give a wrong meaning to that expression. Do you think it possible that

we can love God too much; that we can love the Redeemer too much; that we can be too much attached to the great principles of justice, benevolence, or moral purity?"

"O no, certainly not; but then I think it possible for us to think and talk so much about religion as to render ourselves uncomfortable. Now I have heard some religious people speak with rapture about the happiness which they expect to enjoy in heaven, but as I know we cannot enter heaven till we leave earth, and that we must die first, I never make that the subject of conversation, or even reflection; for I always find that it casts a gloom over my mind, and makes me low-spirited."

"But ought we not, Madam, to prepare for death before it comes?"

"O yes, we ought to make our peace with God, certainly; and, as he is so merciful, he will be sure to give us time for it."

"What time did he give to Miss Walcote, who expired just as she had left the card-table?"

"To be sure that was a frightful event; but you know she was a most accomplished young lady, and had a good heart."

"Yes, Madam, she was amiable and accomplished; but how awful was it to pass from such scenes of human folly to the judgment-seat of Christ!—one moment shuffling the cards, the next listening to the final sentence, 'Come, ye blessed,' or 'Depart, ye cursed.'"

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## MISS ROSCOE.



HERE are periods in the history of life which give birth to events of such a peculiar order, that they not only contribute materially to our future happiness, but exert a powerful influence in the formation and in the complexion of our character. We are accidentally thrown into

the company of a stranger; the stranger becomes a companion, the companion a friend; the friend is powerfully imbued with the spirit of Christ, capable of instructing and consoling us in seasons of perplexity and depression; and though we may not notice the original moving cause of the interview, yet the consequences resulting from it may be felt through life, and in another and better world.

It was the privilege of Miss Roscoe, when labouring under her mental depression, to find in Mrs. Stevens a friend eminently qualified not only to impart the sympathies of friendship, but to administer the consolations of religion. As she had passed through the same tumultuous and darkened scene, she knew how to guide the footsteps of another; and having "tasted that the Lord is gracious," and felt the moral efficacy of his death, she could speak on these sacred themes with a peculiar force of impression. Her skill in introducing religious subjects in conversation was great, and her views were clear and comprehensive. She minutely studied the peculiarities of the human character; observed the times, and seasons, and forms of its development; and while she rarely left an individual or a company without dropping some appropriate remark, she never obtruded her sentiments so as to make them unwelcome.

As Mrs. Stevens was walking one evening to her favourite retreat for meditation, she saw Miss Roscoe approaching, and after exchanging the customary salutations, the conversation turned on the subject of religion and a future state.

"My mind," said Mrs. Stevens, "has been dwelling with more than ordinary delight on the immortality of the soul. Immortality is the grand prerogative of man. He lives amidst the decay of his nature, survives his own dissolution, and lives for ever."

"How few," replied Miss Roscoe, "are impressed by this grand subject. Here and there I meet with an individual who is alive to the powers of the world to come; but the vast majority move onwards to the tomb, as though that receptacle of death was to terminate their existence. To me immortality is alternately a pleasing, and an awful theme of meditation. There are seasons when it is

invested with a radiant brightness, which almost entrances my soul, and I am eager to join the general assembly of the redeemed; but at other seasons my mind recoils from the thought of dying, and I ask, in terror—

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

“That the subject of immortality, preceded by dying, should present the varying aspect of delight and of terror, is not surprising. Some are in bondage all their life through fear of death, and others are *occasionally* in a state of great alarm: but this proceeds either from the incorrectness of their views of the economy of revealed truth, or the weakness of their faith. They look for some degree of moral perfection in themselves, to which they never attain, rather than to Jesus Christ, in whom they are accepted as complete; or they hesitate to place an implicit dependence on his power and willingness to save them, lest they should be guilty of an act of presumption. But as the gospel is a revelation of grace to sinners, and as we are invited in the most encouraging language to receive it, we ought not to hesitate, or deem it presumptuous to do so. I remember hearing our venerable minister once conclude a sermon with this striking remark: ‘Are you willing to be saved?’ After a short pause, he added, ‘Then Jesus Christ is willing to save you. You and the Saviour are both of one mind, and who can separate you?’”

“But I fear,” said Miss Roscoe, “that I have not yet felt that deep contrition for sin which is essential to genuine repentance, and which must precede the exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I recently read a sermon, in which the author says, that ‘the sorrow which is connected with true repentance is not only sincere, but deep and pungent. It not only enters into the heart, but it penetrates into its inmost recesses, and there lives and reigns. It not only causes the tear to flow, and the breast to heave with the bitter emotions of anguish, but it is compared to the most acute sorrow which can pierce the human bosom; to the sorrow which chills the

heart of a parent as he mourns the loss of a son, of an only son, of a first-born! I know I have felt abased and humbled when reviewing my past life; and silently adore the long-suffering of God in bearing with me; but I am yet a stranger to that acute and overwhelming agony of soul which, in the estimation of this writer, is essential to genuine repentance."

"If, my dear, you have felt sorrow for sin, you need not be distressed because you have not felt it in its most intense and agonizing degrees. True repentance does not always burst forth in bitter lamentations and weeping, leaving the victim of its infliction an exile from all the comforts of life and all the promises of mercy—doomed, in his own apprehension, to a more awful banishment at the day of final decision; but it is often the silent tear, and the noiseless sigh—the self-loathing of the soul over its defects—which become daily more and more apparent, accompanied by an humble and implicit dependence on the death and mediation of Jesus Christ for pardon and endless life. The author from whose beautiful sermon you have quoted a passage, remarks towards the latter end of it, that 'heart-felt sorrow for sin is not opposed to happiness. The tears of penitence are not tears of unmingled bitterness. There is a joy connected with them which is as satisfying and exalting as it is purifying and humbling. God himself has pronounced the sorrow of the poor in spirit, blessed; and he has not blessed it in vain. His people taste its sweetness. Their happiest hours are those which are spent in the exercise of penitence and faith; and while these graces are in lively exercise, they may look on the inhabitants of heaven without envy, even though they may long to participate of their still more elevated enjoyments.'"

"Such a repentance I am conscious I have felt. I would not return to my former course of life, even if it were compatible with a religious profession; for I have lived a life of vanity, minding earthly things; my intellectual studies were pursued to gratify pride, which coveted the honour which comes from man; the claims of God, on the homage and supreme affections of the heart, I have neglected;



the Redeemer I have neither loved nor honoured; I have spurned from my presence those religious principles which require a separation from the world, and have uniformly acted as though the realities of an unseen world were a mere fanciful creation; but now the delusion has vanished away, and I see with an unveiled face the supreme importance of those truths and sources of enjoyment which in the days of my ignorance were concealed from me; and if I have any regret, it is not because I have discovered the illusion so soon, but because I did not discover it sooner."

"It is recorded of one of the Roman emperors," said Mrs. Stevens, that he wept when he saw the statue of Alexander the Great, because Alexander had conquered the world at a period of life when he had gained no victory. And if you, my dear, have been later than some others in making your spiritual discoveries, and in gaining your spiritual conquests, I hope you will now distinguish yourself by a decision more firm, and a zeal more ardent, and redeem, for the honour of the Saviour, the time you have withheld from his service; and by carrying the principles of your faith to the highest possible attainments, you will compel others to see the effects which the grace of God produces in the human character."

On passing within sight of a cottage standing on a slight elevation, Miss Roscoe said, "That, I believe, is Mrs. Labron's, and I greatly admire it, it is such a beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture, my favourite style of building, and its shrubbery and gardens are laid out and planted with so much taste."

"Yes, my dear, there is great external beauty, but within there is a sad spectacle of domestic sorrow and moral disfigurement. Her eldest daughter is rapidly fading away from life, under the withering influence of that disease which proves fatal to thousands; and I am informed that, to divert her attention from dying, she spends the greater part of her time either in reading novels or playing at cards; and though a minister of Jesus Christ, who has a slight intimacy with the family, expostulated with her on the impropriety of devoting herself to such amusements at such an eventful crisis, yet it

made no impression on her; and her mother said, with an air of apathetic indifference, that as she was passionately fond of novels and cards, she thought it would be an act of cruelty to withhold them from her; adding that she had taken the sacrament, and made her peace with God! and that the physician particularly requested that no one be permitted to speak to her on religious subjects."

"This is appalling, truly awful; and yet how many modern Christians would give it the sanction of their decided approval. The physician requesting that no one may be permitted to speak to her on religious subjects! Oh, how cruel! What is this but interdicting the visit of mercy, and dooming a sinner to pass into the eternal world unprepared to die? I remember, at an early stage of my late affliction, the medical attendant urged upon my parents the necessity of keeping the Bible out of my reach, and they complied with his request; and that holy book, which reveals life and immortality, was kept out of my sight. Can you account for this most astonishing part of their conduct?"

"I can tell you the reason which they assign for it. They, I have no doubt, will say that the mind of a dying patient ought to be kept in a state of great composure; and concluding that religion will agitate and alarm, they forbid all reference to it."

"Poor creatures, how ignorant must they be of the nature and tendency of pure religious truth! If a person be renewed in the spirit of his mind, and if he feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart, there is no subject which will have such a delightful effect as the immediate prospect of entering heaven. I lately sat beside the bed of a dying Christian, who, not long before her departure, after praying in the language of Stephen, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' repeated the following lines with an emphasis and melody of voice which still sounds in my ear:—

'Dissolve Thou the bond that detains  
My soul from her portion in Thee:  
O strike off these adamant chains,  
And set me eternally free.

When that happy moment begins,  
Array'd in thy beauties I'll shine;  
Nor pierce any more with my sins  
The bosom on which I recline.'

And if a person be ignorant of the scheme of salvation which is revealed in the Scripture, there is no subject which ought to be pressed more upon his attention. If he have but a short time to live, no portion of that time ought to be lost. To-day he is here—to-morrow in eternity. For the physician to interpose, to keep him in a state of ignorance, is an act of cruelty which no language can adequately describe; and, notwithstanding the frivolous reasons which he may assign for his conduct, it is an act for which he will stand responsible at the last day."

As I was returning from a solitary walk, I accidentally met the ladies, and on reaching the end of the grove through which we were passing, we seated ourselves on a garden chair, which stood under a very fine beech tree, from whence we had a distinct view of the rectory and its church, and also of Mr. Stevens' unobtrusive chapel.

"These Dissenting chapels," I remarked, "are what may be called ecclesiastic retreats; spiritual places of refuge for the gospel when it is driven out of the church."

"They are spiritual Bethels," Miss Roscoe replied, "where God unexpectedly visits his chosen ones with the manifestation of His unseen but not unfelt presence; often astonishing and delighting them; constraining them to exclaim, in the language of the venerable patriarch, '*Surely the Lord is in this place.*'"

"Yes," said Mrs. Stevens, "and sometimes in these chapels He conveys the grace of life to the spiritually dead. This reminds me of what I should have told you before, but it escaped my memory. You know that we have seen Mrs. Pickford at our chapel several times lately, and last Sabbath evening, when she was passing my pew after the close of the service, I spoke to her, expressing the pleasure I felt on seeing her there; and inquired after the welfare

of Mr. Pickford and the family. She then very modestly, for she appears to be an amiable woman, referred to the benefit which had resulted from your visit, and asked me to remind you of your promise to visit them again."

"I intend to see Mrs. Pickford in the course of the week. I know, Madam, that you are partial to yon modest-looking chapel, but still, though its *internal glory* may be greater than that of the church, yet it does not form such an imposing object in a piece of scenery."

"I admit that; but it often calls up, in a pious mind, an order of richer and more hallowed associations, and awakens a more sublime and elevating class of feeling. There is a church, with its Liturgy and its white-robed priest, yet from it the gospel is cast out; but it has taken refuge in what you call our modest-looking chapel, where it proves to be the power of God to salvation."

"I have been accustomed," said Miss Roscoe, "to attend that church from my childhood; the gentleman who does duty in it is a learned, polite, and amiable man; we have often spent many pleasant evenings together; he excels in music, and has a fine poetic taste; but I regret to add, he has a strong aversion to evangelical truth. He came to see me just as I was recovering from my late affliction, and when I made some reference to the influence which reading the Bible had over my mind, he said, 'I hope you will be on your guard, for you are now in great danger of becoming too religious. The mania has affected many amongst us, but I hope you have virtue enough to resist it.' He is rather lofty in his spirit, though very familiar when among the poor. His ideas of the dignity and excellence of human nature are diametrically opposed to the scriptural representation; and he asserted in the last discourse I heard him deliver, that the charge of a universal corruption having taken place among the members of the human family, was a gross libel on our virtue. 'There are a few imperfect,' he said, 'yet they have virtue enough left to atone for their defects; but the great bulk of mankind are as perfect as their Creator ever intended they should be.' He

then adverted to the evangelical doctrines of faith, and salvation by grace through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, which he denounced as corruptions of Christianity, and warned the people against them, as being more pernicious to the peace and good order of society than the principles of open infidelity. On being asked by my father how I liked the discourse, I replied, 'Not at all, as Mr. Cole not only opposed the Scriptures, but the Articles of his own church;' and I then quoted the eleventh Article, which put an end to our conversation. I have not heard him since; for I think it wrong to sanction by my presence a style of preaching which is subversive of the entire scheme of salvation."

"It must be painful," I observed, "to be driven from the church by the introduction of erroneous doctrines; but it must *be more painful to a conscientious mind to sit and hear them*. Where do you now attend?"

"Alas! Sir, like the captives of Babylon, I am denied the privilege of worshipping in the temple, and, like them, I sit and weep over the desolation of Zion. But He who was a little sanctuary to them in the season of their captivity, visits me within the retirement of the closet, by the special manifestations of his holy presence. I asked permission the other Sabbath to go and hear the venerable Mr. Ingleby, but I was refused. Oh! this pierced me to the heart."

"But why did your father deny a request so reasonable?"

"He would not have done it if he had not been influenced by others; for such is the strength of his attachment for me, and such his devotedness to my happiness, that he has heretofore deemed no sacrifice too great, nor any indulgence too expensive to promote my comfort. But the Rev. Mr. Cole and some lay gentlemen have urged him to interpose his authority, to save me from what they call the delirium of religion. They tell him that his honour, his peace, and his influence, are all in jeopardy; and that if I am permitted to go on in my present course, nothing but inevitable ruin awaits me. By such stratagems they have induced him to act a

part which I know is repugnant to the generous feelings of his nature; because he told me, at an early stage of my hallowed impressions, that if I found peace in religion, he would not presume to interfere."

"This trial," said Mrs. Stevens, "is not joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Though it comes through a medium which invests it with a peculiar poignancy, and may throw a gloomy shade over all your hopes of future comfort, yet the Redeemer says, 'My grace shall be sufficient for thee, my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness.' You have only to act wisely, and with decision; keep your conscience void of offence towards God and man; demonstrate, by the meekness of your disposition, and your efforts to please, that your religion is not the religion of fancy or of passion, but of principle; and then you will rise above the visible agents who are employed in conducting the machinery of Providence, to meditate on Him who sits behind the cloud that conceals Him from our sight, working all things after the counsel of His own will."

"I have known," I remarked, "some young Christians commence their religious profession under auspicious influences. They have been hailed by pious parents and pious friends with acclamations of joy; the spring-time of their spiritual existence has been free from the rude blasts of persecution; and they have advanced from stage to stage, with unobstructed and undiverted steps. I have known others rocked in the whirlwind, and cradled in the storm. They have had to contend with the principalities and powers of evil in their high places. They have been despised and rejected; and the reproaches of men have fallen upon them. But I generally find that opposition at the commencement of a religious profession has a beneficial rather than an injurious tendency. It forces its principles deeper into the mind. It consolidates them. It gives to them an energy which ultimately rises superior to resistance; a healthful vigour, which they rarely attain to when nourished by the fostering hand of parental solicitude; and it brings them forth into such

visible and powerful manifestations, that even the enemies of our common faith are compelled to feel

‘How awful goodness is!’”

“Yes, Sir,” observed Mrs. Stevens, “and we should remember that those who oppose religion, when it takes possession of an individual mind, and exerts its influence over the visible actions of the life, often do it ignorantly. If they knew that they were attempting to resist the work of God in the new creation of the human soul, they would cease their opposition. But they do not. They have no conception of such a thing. They ridicule it as visionary; and if a person offer to prove, by sober arguments taken from the Scriptures, or from the Articles of our church, that such a new creation of the soul is a reality, and that it will develop itself precisely in that exterior form which they see exhibited in the conduct of those whom they oppose, yet they will refuse to hear. Their unfairness to meet the arguments in support of *the reality of the thing*, I grant, is very censurable; but it must be attributed to that judicial moral blindness which is one of the consequences of our apostasy from God, and which calls for the exercise of our forbearance and our tenderest pity. Hence, when we are reviled for our religion, we should not revile again; when we suffer, we should forbear to reproach; and commit our cause to Him who judgeth righteously.”

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In the course of the week I availed myself of the opportunity, during the absence of my esteemed friends from the villa, to go and take tea at Farmer Pickford’s; and I was very much gratified by my visit. During the evening he made several references to his wife’s attendance at the chapel; and at length he spoke out, by saying, “Mr. Stevens, I think, is about one of the best of us: he is very charitable to the poor, and so is his wife; and he is always willing to do any body a good turn when he can; and my wife says he is a capital preacher, but I can’t think so.”

“Have you ever heard him preach?”

“No, Sir, I must have an Oxford or Cambridge man. To speak my mind, Mr. Ingleby is the preacher for me. I never went into his church before you took lunch with us, but what you said then inclined me to go. Why, I would rather hear one of his *sarvants*, than I would a score of Parson Cole’s. He sends what he says *home here*,” laying his hand on his heart; “but I can get a comfortable nap when Parson Cole is holding forth. We all go to church now on a Sunday morning, and I seem to like it; and the youngsters like it, and so do the sarvants. It helps to keep us in a bit better order. And wife often tells me she was never so happy in all her life as she is now; and that makes me feel a bit more comfortable. as I like to see smiling faces in my homestead.”

I listened with some emotions of surprise and delight while he was running on in his tale of reformation, and, after a little hesitation, I ventured to propose reading a chapter of the Bible, and going to prayer.

“Ay, that’s right, Sir. That puts me in mind of what I heard my uncle say, the last time he slept here, and he was as staunch a Churchman as ever sung a psalm tune: ‘Prayer and provender are two good things; one is good for man, and t’other for beast:’ though, I must say, we ant had much prayer here; worse luck.”

I read the second chapter of Ephesians, making a few comments on it, and then we knelt before the throne of grace; and when this domestic service was over, I received the hearty hand-shake, and set out to retrace my steps to Fairmount, which I reached just in time to lead the devotions of the family; when, having committed ourselves to the protecting care of our heavenly Father, we retired to rest.



## A VILLAGE FUNERAL.



DEATH is a solemn subject of meditation; and it is one which presents stronger claims on our attention than any other, because we all *must die*. If to die were a mere cessation of being; if, when the mind ceases to think, and the passions cease to glow; if, when the active and the passive virtues cease to display their moral beauty and vigour, and when the mantle of mortality falls from off us, we live only in the recollection of surviving friends, we should forbear passing a heavy censure on the general indifference which is manifested towards death and dying. But we live, when dying; we outlive death, and live for ever. Yes, life and immortality are brought to light by the volume of inspiration. There we read that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

Death spares neither age nor rank, talent nor piety. The king of terrors sways the sceptre of absolute authority over all the living; none can elude his grasp, nor resist his power. What a scene is presented where he has achieved a conquest! The sparkling eye become dim, the instructive lips sealed in perpetual silence; the ear deaf alike to the voice of friendship and the song of mirth; and the tabernacle of bliss changed into the house of mourning. The preparations necessary for the interment keep the mind in a state of constant agitation; but when these are all adjusted, and the ministers of death enter to bear away the dear departed to the distant tomb, then the sobs, and tears, and groans of agonized survivors, proclaim the greatness of the irreparable desolation.

It was on a still summer evening, as we sat conversing together on the immortality of the soul, and on the blessedness of the righteous in the heavenly world, that we received intelligence of the approach-



THE HOUSE OF MOURNING.

ing dissolution of Mrs. Allen. Mrs. Stevens expressed a desire to see her once more before her decease; and having accepted my offer to accompany her, we hastened to her lonely dwelling.

I have often observed, in my intercourse with society, that the benevolent affections are not cherished exclusively by any class of its members, but glow in the breasts of all; yet they are usually most delicate when refined by the hallowed fire of devotional feeling. On some occasions we see in humble life the tributary tear paid to departed worth, even where religion has not instilled her sweetest influences; yet, in general, a degree of insensibility is manifested which may well excite astonishment. But we felt, on entering this cottage, that we were indeed in the house of mourning. The husband, just returned from his hard day's labour, sat in the window-seat, his mug of ale, and bread and cheese, untouched on the table beside him; his hand spanned his forehead, concealing his eyes, and his little boy stood near him, pensive and sad. No voice spoke, no noise was heard, nor did our entrance disturb the mourner in his musings. We felt a momentary tremor, under an apprehension that death had already borne off his captive.

At length Mrs. Stevens said, "Well, Robert, is your wife still in the body, or in glory?"

He started up, and, as the tear fell on his sun-burnt face, replied, "She is still with us; but she will soon be gone. She has been discoursing about you, Ma'am, all day; and she will be very glad to see you again before she enters into the joy of her Lord."

We went up stairs, and it was evident, from the expression of Mrs. Allen's countenance, that our visit gave her great delight. She sat up in bed, supported by pillows; her face glowed with a hectic flush, her eyes shone with radiant brightness, her voice was clear, though not strong, and her mind discovered its usual cheerfulness and vigour.

"Here I am, hourly expecting a change. Disease has nearly consumed my body; but as my outward man perisheth, blessed be God my inward man is renewed day by day. I have passed through deep waters since I saw you, but they have not been permitted to

overflow me; for when the enemy came in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him. The contest is nearly over, the prize of my high calling is in view, and Jesus, my beloved Saviour, will soon, very soon, present me faultless before the presence of the Divine glory with exceeding joy."

"I am happy," said Mrs. Stevens, "to find you in such a calm ecstasy in anticipation of the coming crisis. You have borne a living testimony to the truth of religion, and now you can bear a dying testimony to its excellence."

"My living testimony has been but feeble; it has not been so decided as it ought to have been; I dare not think of it but with regret and self-loathing. I have been an unprofitable servant, but I look for redemption and for acceptance to Jesus the Mediator, whose blood cleanseth from all sin."

"But it must give you some degree of satisfaction to look back and see the fruits of your religion, though the fruit may not have been so rich nor so fine as you could wish."

"It gives me pleasure to know that I have been kept from falling, and that I shall soon be permitted to bow down in the presence of my Lord, and offer to Him some expression of my ardent gratitude for his great goodness to me; but I can derive no satisfaction from a review of my own conduct. I am a sinner saved by grace."

"You are now," I observed, "near the end of your course, and I suppose you would not willingly recommence your pilgrimage on earth."

"I would, Sir, cheerfully, if my Lord were to command me, but not otherwise. I long to be with him. To give up my dear husband and child occasioned a hard struggle, but I have been enabled to do it; and now I am going home, and my Father is waiting to receive me."

We committed her departing spirit to the Lord Jesus, and prayed for her husband and her child; then returned to Fairmount, where the news of her decease reached us within the space of an

hour. After we left she had spoken but seldom, lying with her eyes closed, but, from the occasional motion of her lips, it was evident that she was much engaged in prayer. At length she said, "I feel a change which I cannot describe—is this death?—how easy it is! The king of terrors is transformed into an angel of deliverance. I shall soon see the King, the Lord of hosts in his beauty. I am entering the valley, but there is no darkness. I see the shadow of death, but feel no sting." After a short pause, during which her spirit seemed to be gathering up its strength for the final departure, she embraced her husband and her child for the last time; and, having solemnly commended them to God, she reclined her head on the pillow, and expired. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, and their decease is often precious in the sight of men. Yes, their composure when bidding farewell to their endeared relatives, and their joyful anticipations when in the act of passing into the unseen world, often produce such a powerful effect on the spectators of their exit, that many who contemn their religious principles, have retired from the solemn scene, saying, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his."

Mrs. Allen's long affliction had so impoverished her husband, that he was not able to meet the expenses of her funeral; but such was the esteem in which her character was held, that a subscription for the purpose was immediately raised. I had often seen the city funeral, where the simplicity of nature is sacrificed to pompous show. The mourning coaches, the hearse decorated with plumes, and drawn by horses clothed in black, the hireling mourners, who make a mockery of grief—these may, by their sombrous appearance, throw a momentary gloom over the spirits, but rarely, if ever, produce a deep moral impression on the heart. I had now to witness, in a village funeral, a very different scene.

The ancient custom of burying the dead in the evening, which still lingers in some parts of the country, prevailed in this village. I left Fairmount, in company with Mr. Stevens and Mr. Lewellin, about five o'clock, the eighth day after her decease; and we were

both astonished and pleased by seeing Farmer Pickford on the road before us. When we came up with him I saluted him.

“What, Farmer, are you going to the funeral?”

“Yes, Sir; my mistress wished it, as she mainly liked Mrs. Allen; and I felt a bit inclined to pay a little respect to her memory, because I once made sport of her religion; but I am now satisfied that it is of the right sort.”

“It is so. It gives comfort on a bed of sickness and pain, and it fits a person to die well—to die with a full expectation of going to heaven; that is, of going home.”

“It’s a main good thing, and no mistake, when we are turned out of one home, to have another to go to.”

“And that *other* home *heaven*, which I hope, Farmer, will be your home at last and for ever.”

“The Lord grant that it may be so. I often pray a bit about it; but my prayers are but poor prayers, worse luck. I can’t pray like you.”

“You can pray, like the publican, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’”

“Ay, that’s the prayer for me. I can pray that prayer, and feel it too.”

Almost immediately after we had reached the cottage, a neat oak coffin, bearing the name and age of the deceased, was brought out, and placed on two stools in the centre walk of the garden. A band of singers from the church choir took the lead in the procession, then the bearers of the coffin, two and two, a lad walking on each side with a stool, to afford an occasional resting; then the chief mourners—the widowed husband and his little boy; some relatives, and a few poor friends, walked behind; and many of the villagers attended as spectators. As the bier entered the vale that divides the two parishes, the singers sang the following hymn:—

“Hear what the voice from heaven proclaims  
For all the pious dead;  
Sweet is the savour of their names,  
And soft their sleeping bed.

“They die in Jesus, and are bless’d;  
How still their slumbers are!  
From suff’rings and from sins releas’d,  
And freed from ev’ry snare.

“Far from this world of toil and strife,  
They’re present with the Lord;  
The labours of their mortal life  
End in a large reward.”

The effect was solemn and impressive. As soon as the hymn was sung, the bier stood still, and the bearers rested; when the thrush and the yellow hammer, roused by the music, poured forth their melodious notes, as though anxious to prolong the song. The number of spectators increased as we advanced; all were serious, some wept; and when we turned into the lane which led up to the church, another hymn was sung, in accents more bold, but equally melodious with the former:—

“O for an overcoming faith,  
To cheer my dying hours,  
To triumph o’er the monster Death,  
And all his frightful pow’rs!

“Joyful, with all the strength I have,  
My quiv’ring lips shall sing,  
‘Where is thy boasted vict’ry, Grave?  
And where the monster’s sting?’

“If sin be pardon’d, I’m secure;  
Death hath no sting beside;  
The law gives sin its damning pow’r;  
But Christ, my ransom, died.

“Now to the God of victory  
Immortal thanks be paid,  
Who makes us conqu’rors while we die,  
Through Christ, our living Head.”

The venerable rector met the procession on its entering the burial-ground, and walked before it up the pathway leading to the church, reading, as he walked, the thrilling words of inspiration: “I am the resurrection and the life.” The corpse was taken into the middle aisle of the church, and placed on a raised platform; the concourse of

people attending seated themselves in the different pews, and listened with devout seriousness to the appointed lessons and portions of the Scripture, which Mr. Ingleby read in very impressive tones. When he had finished, the corpse was carried forth to the place of sepulture; where, after the rest of the burial-service was performed, it was deposited till the morning of the resurrection. When Robert and his little boy looked down into the grave which had just received the remains of her they loved, they wept, and returned to their house of mourning, cast down, yet animated by a hope of a reunion in the celestial world.

I stole away from the crowd, which was pressing round the grave to take the last look of the coffin, that I might indulge my reflections in solitude. Death was the theme of my meditation. Humiliating theme! How calculated to bring down the lofty spirit of pride, to extinguish the flame of ambition, to hush the contentions of discord!

A thrilling horror came over my spirit as I anticipated my own decease. I felt attached to life, and my nature recoiled in prospect of losing it. The lengthened sickness; the parting tear; the final farewell; the unknown pains of dying; the solemn anticipations of an immediate entrance into another world; the interment of my body in the cold, damp earth; the sighs of my bereaved widow and fatherless children; all rushed in upon my fancy. Never did the communication which the Redeemer once made to the mourner of Bethany appear so beautiful as at this moment: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." It was the light of life and the vision of immortality bursting in upon the empire of death; elevating my soul above the desolation around me, to look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself"

I did not leave the church-yard till the shadows of evening



reminded me of the lateness of the hour, and of my having left my friends, who were waiting for me at the rectory. When I entered the study, the venerable rector said, "I am happy, Sir, to see you once more on this side the grave; I shall be more happy to see you on the other side; but before that blessed interview can take place, two graves must be opened, and we both must pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death. My grave-yard is much richer than it was when I commenced my labours in this parish; and in walking round it, my eye catches sight of monuments which bring to my recollection some with whom I have taken sweet counsel. and who will be, I have no doubt, my crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. They are now resting from their labours, and I shall soon rest from mine; and then we shall appear before the throne of God together, and serve him day and night in his temple, and for ever."

"You uniformly speak," said Mr. Stevens, "with confidence of your final salvation, but every disciple of Christ cannot do so; for I have noticed, within the limited circle of my Christian fellowship, great variation of mental feeling as the hour of departure has been drawing near. Some I have seen in solemn rapture when anticipating death; a sweet calmness of spirit in others; while in many I have known hope and fear alternately prevail. And though we may possibly trace up this varying state of feeling as death approaches, to physical causes, yet should we not contemplate the sovereignty of God at this crisis, who gives what portion of consolation he pleases?"

"I think the sovereignty of God is as conspicuous in the dying chamber as in the temple of grace; yet the Scriptures lead us to believe that there is an ordained, if not a natural connection between an eminently holy life and an eminently peaceful death. Hence the apostle, after enforcing on his readers the cultivation of the graces of the Christian character, concludes by saying, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an

entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' I have a funeral sermon, published by the Rev. Mr. Jay, which I have read with much satisfaction, particularly the following passage: 'The confidence of the people of God generally increases as death approaches. Hence Isaiah compares their peace to a river; for as a river rolls deeper and wider as it hastens to the sea, so their peace commonly becomes more solid and more extensive as they draw near eternity. In this view the change which Dr. Goodwin experienced was remarkable. "Is this dying?" exclaimed he, a little before he expired. "Is this what, for so many years, I have been dreading? Oh! how precious does the righteousness of the Saviour now appear! —He cannot love me better than he does; and I think I cannot love him better than I do." This is not a solitary instance. How many have we ourselves seen who wept upon the mountains of Zion, but rejoiced in the valley of the shadow of death; whose harps, long before hung upon the willows, were taken down, and delightfully used in singing the Lord's song in the most strange part of all the strange land! We cannot always account for things as effects, which yet we are compelled by observation and testimony to admit as facts. But the case before us sufficiently explains itself. The love of life having, from the will of God, no longer now any purposes to answer, is suffered to die away. By drawing near the better country, we feel something of its influence, as the perfumes of Arabia the Happy are blown into the neighbouring provinces. Above all, there is now more of the simplicity of faith. During life some degree of legality attaches to all our performances. Doing continually intermingles with believing; and often, insensibly to ourselves, we are anxious to make ourselves better, to *entitle* us to the divine favour, or to find something in ourselves wherein to *hope*, if not whereof to glory before God. But all this is now over. What can the believer do when dying? What qualifications can he then acquire? What attainments can he then propose? "Let him look back upon a well-spent life." This is impossible. Every review which he takes of

himself is humbling. The very sins of his holy duties would drive him to despair. One resource remains—one, only one, which is always equal to our relief—one whose consolation is only hindered from flowing in to us by the want of simplicity of mind; it is looking by faith to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world; it is to commit implicitly the soul to him. He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.’”

“I am fond of visiting the sick and the dying,” said Mr. Lewellin. “When with them, I feel the truth of religion. The terror which seizes on the spirit of an infidel in his last moments, and the rapture which glows in the breast of the expiring Christian, are equally impressive and instructive. I have seen the unbeliever tremble as the footsteps of death have been heard; his face has turned pale through fear, or it has been beclouded by despair. I have heard him utter the most piercing cries; send forth heavy sighs and groans—the speechless messengers of woe; I have heard him reproach himself in the strongest language for his folly and his guilt, in having passed through life an enemy to the faith of Christ; and I have seen him expire in unutterable anguish. I have also seen the believer, calm and enraptured. I have heard the music of his soul becoming more soft and enchanting as the vital spirit has languished in his frame. I have listened while he has given utterance to his holy aspirations and blissful anticipations; but I have never heard one express any regret for his attachment to the doctrines of the gospel. I have never known one willing to renounce his faith, or give up his hope, in prospect of death.”

“Nor I,” said Mr. Ingleby; “and this circumstance is a strong evidence in favour of the adaptation of the gospel to our moral condition. Infidelity may contemn the faith of Christ, and hold up its friends to scorn, but she is faithless; for when her disciples want her comfort in their last hours, she generally leaves them as victims whom she has fitted for destruction, that she may mingle among the

gay and the dissipated, to prepare *them* also for the pangs of the second death."

It was late before we left the rectory, and in passing the now desolated cottage, we saw light in the room, and on knocking at the door, we gained admittance. "Well, Robert," said Mr. Stevens, "you are not yet gone to bed."

"No, Sir; if I go to bed, I don't think that I shall sleep. I thought when my wife lay so ill, and suffered so much, that I should be willing to give her up to the Lord, if he would take her; but now she is gone, I feel my loss. No man can tell what death is till it comes. I love to think of her, for she was a good wife, and a good mother; and I should like to talk to her; but now if I go into the room, I find that I am alone; and this chills my heart. My boy tries to comfort me, but, poor fellow, he wants a comforter as well as I; for he loved his mother."

"But God can support you under your trial; for he has said, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.'"

"Oh, yes; he does support me, and he has given me a spirit of resignation to his holy will; but, Sir, nature can't help feeling."

"But I do not suppose you would recall her from heaven, even if you were permitted."

"Why, Sir, it gives me pleasure to think that while I am mourning here below, she is happy and at rest in heaven; but if I were permitted to recall her, I am sure I should be tempted to do it; for she always tried to make me happy. She is gone, never more to return. In looking into her drawer, since we came back home, I found these papers, which I have just been reading."

Finding they were in Mrs. Allen's writing, I afterwards borrowed them, and having transcribed a copy of one, I here insert it. It was dated three months before her decease:—

"I have just been favoured with a singular manifestation of the loving-kindness of my Saviour. He has taken away the guilt of all my sins. He has removed all my doubts. He has given me peace,

and has enabled me to resign my husband and child to his care. He will soon take me to himself. As I have felt at times great depression, and may in my last moments be unable to speak of his doings, I now record in writing what will not be seen till after I have seen him. I die a guilty and worthless sinner, depending on his death for salvation; and can say that I die in full and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life.

“SARAH ALLEN.

“DEAR WIDOWED HUSBAND,—Before you see this, I shall have passed through the valley, and joined the redeemed above. While you are weeping I shall be rejoicing; yet, if the spirits of the glorified are suffered to visit their earthly friends, I will often come and hover over you and the dear motherless child. Follow me as far as I followed Christ. Farewell, till we meet in glory.—Yours, for ever.”

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## MISS ROSCOE WITHDRAWS FROM GAY LIFE.

**A**S Miss Roscoe was sitting one evening with her parents, the conversation turned in the following manner:—

“I have just received,” said Mr. Roscoe, “an invitation from Mr. Denham to attend a private ball at his house; and he hopes that you, my dear Sophia, will accompany me and your mamma. I fear, from some incidental remarks which you have made at different times, that such amusements have lost their charm; but I hope that your good sense has overcome your scruples, and that you will not hesitate to comply with my request. I ask it as a personal favour.”

“Yes, my dear,” said Mrs. Roscoe, “I hope you will; your father and I have had much conversation together on the subject, and we

both think you can do it and be very religious too. You know that religion is not to deprive us of any enjoyments. Indeed, I think when such religious people as we have always been indulge ourselves in these fashionable amusements, we do more to recommend religion than such austere professors as our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Stevens."

To which Miss Roscoe replied: "I certainly think that religious people ought to recommend religion by their cheerfulness and their pleasantry, as well as by their strict moral deportment; but I do not see how that religion, which requires us to avoid a conformity to the vain customs of the world, can be recommended by a compliance with them. If we do as others do, we shall be thought like them; and I am sure, from my personal knowledge, that those who find pleasure in balls and theatrical amusements are as averse to the religion of the Bible as those who openly and avowedly reject it."

"My dear," said Mrs. Roscoe, "I hope you do not intend to say that all who avail themselves of such recreations are destitute of religion. I do not like such sweeping charges. You would condemn some of the most amiable and virtuous persons living!"

"A person may be amiable without being religious, and virtuous, even while he rejects as fabulous that scheme of salvation which we admit to be true. If, then, we admit it to be true, does it not become us, if we wish to preserve consistency, to conform ourselves to its *preceptive* parts? And does it not require us to become a peculiar people? And in what can that peculiarity be manifested but by an entire avoidance of the habits and customs which the world sanctions? You know, mamma, that I often acted a most prominent part in these scenes of fashionable gaiety, and that I intermingled with the indiscriminate throng, participating in the glow of feeling enkindled in their breast, and am, therefore, intimately familiar with the moral qualities and the religious sentiments of those who derive their highest gratification from such sources; and while I would proceed with great caution in invading the province of the heart, yet it is my decided opinion that no person who has

ever felt the transforming influence of divine truth can sanction them."

Mr. Roscoe remarked: "I grant, my Sophia, that a superior mind will look with indifference on such frivolous amusements, and that many who resort to them are impelled more by custom than inclination; yet I do not perceive that they can injure the religious tone of the mind. I have been as firm a believer in the divine origin of the Bible, and the mission and death of our Saviour, after my return from a ball, as before I went, though I confess my time could have been more profitably occupied."

"And I am sure," said Mrs. Roscoe, "that I have felt as religious at the opera as ever I felt at church; my heart has been elated with gratitude to the Almighty for permitting us to enjoy such recreations."

"I do not suppose, my dear father, that going to a ball or the opera would shake your belief in the divine mission of Jesus Christ; but I presume that you do not imagine that He would attend them if He were on earth! and ought a disciple to go where his Lord would not go? I grant that *that* religion which consists only in a speculative belief may not be injured by such amusements; but I am conscious that they produce and nourish sentiments and feelings which are not only unconsonant, but directly opposed to the spirit of vital Christianity. I could not pass from the gaities of a ball-room to anticipate the happiness of heaven, nor retire, after the fatigues of a lengthened dance, to hold spiritual communion with the Holy One."

"But where," said Mrs. Roscoe, "is the necessity of being always religious? Is the world to be turned into a convent, and are we all to become either nuns or monks—forbidden to taste of any of the pleasures of life, and doomed to perpetual fastings and prayers? What! religion every day, and all day long! Why, my Sophia, your remarks alarm me."

"I am sorry, my dear mamma, that I should cause you any alarm, but I assure you that there is no occasion for it; the religion which has given me a distaste for pleasures so ephemeral and unsatisfactory,

has opened to me sources of enjoyment of a much higher order. I do not stoop to earth or any of its gay scenes for mental bliss, but arise to intercourse with the Great Invisible. I no longer seek for religious impressions amidst the forms and ceremonies of an external devotion, but in the exercise of that faith which brings remote objects near, and which invests those which are unseen with a more attractive power than those which are visible. I no longer hover in a state of uncertainty respecting my final destiny, for I enjoy the bright beamings of that hope which is full of immortality; and can attest that now my mental happiness is more pure, elevated, and stable, than it was when I was a devotee to fashionable amusements."

"I am glad," said Mr. Roscoe, "to hear that you are happy; but I must confess that it is a sort of happiness of which I can form no idea. The Almighty is very good; he wishes to make all his creatures happy—some in one way and some in another; we should follow where inclination leads. Inclination is the first law of nature, which all must obey if they wish to be happy; and I think that we ought not to interfere with each other's propensities."

"But as by nature we are inclined to evil, ought not *such* a propensity to be restrained? What are the various laws of civil society but so many proofs of the evil propensity of our nature, and so many restraints on its indulgence?"

"I admit that the majority are wicked, and that they require the strong arm of the law to keep them in subjection; but I cannot admit that *all* are corrupted by the evil principle. What models of perfection may we select from the circle of our acquaintance!—men of honour, of integrity, of benevolence—men in whose character all the virtues are concentrated, and who live amidst the contagion of the world without being injured by it—men who would scorn an act of meanness or duplicity; who would sacrifice their ease and their wealth to promote the general good; *who are religious without ostentation*; and who know how to enjoy the felicity of social life without being entangled by its snares. Are we to suppose that *such* men are



corrupted by evil principles, and that they are under some fatally evil inclination?"

"You will admit, my dear father, that a community of rebels may cultivate the social virtues among themselves, even while they live in a state of revolt against their sovereign, and in hostility against all who retain their loyalty?"

"Yes, my dear, certainly they may.

"Do we not read in the Scripture, that *all* have sinned against God—that *all* are gone astray from their subjection to his authority—that *all* are become corrupt? And do we not know that the sentence of death has passed upon *all men, because all have sinned*? Now if, as you suppose, some have escaped the general contagion, and are absolutely pure and virtuous, how is it that they are involved in the same sentence of condemnation with the openly depraved and wicked? Where is the equity of such a decision? And are we not accustomed to say, when kneeling before the Lord our Judge, 'We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts; we have offended against thy holy laws; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us; but thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders?'"

"Yes, my dear Sophia; but you must remember that our excellent Liturgy was composed to suit the moral condition of the great majority of the people; and therefore it became necessary that such strong language should be employed; but you cannot suppose that it is strictly applicable to the virtuous part of the community."

"Then why do they adopt it? Why do they acknowledge, on their knees before God, what they deny to man? Is not this a resistless proof of the evil propensity of human nature?"

"I think not. I think it is a proof of the generous amiability of human nature, as the virtuous part of society consent to employ language which is not strictly applicable to themselves, out of com-

passion to the more degenerated and worthless, who ought to make such concessions, and pray in such strong terms of humiliation."

"How, then, ought the virtuous to pray, if they ought not to pray in the strongest terms of humiliation? Shall we revive the spirit of the ancient Pharisee, which our Lord condemned; and shall we approach the footstool of the divine throne with his language: 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess?' In this prayer there is the language of self-gratulation and the spirit of censoriousness, but no humble confession for sin, nor any petition for mercy."

"Being a virtuous man, he had no sins to confess, and therefore did not need to implore mercy, but he did not forget to offer thanks to God for his virtuous endowments.

"He did not *feel* the guilt of his sins, nor did he *feel* the need of mercy; but his insensibility was no proof of his innocence. The publican was in the temple at the same time, but how different the spirit which he discovered, and the language which he uttered: 'And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner!' And in the following verse we read the judgment which Jesus Christ pronounced on the state of these two men: 'I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'"

"I am sorry, my dear," said Mrs. Roscoe, "that you have taken such gloomy views of human nature; I do not think that they will contribute to your happiness, and I very much regret that you should ever have imbibed them. We were once happy and united, but now we are a divided family; the introduction of this evangelical religion, as it called, among us, has broken up our peace, and we are censured by many of our friends for permitting you to follow your present bias. We did hope, when the fervour subsided, you would return to your former habits of life, but I begin to despair of this.

“The views of human nature which I have taken, dear mamma, are scriptural, and in strict accordance with the language of the prayers and articles of our church. If I am mistaken, I am willing to be convinced of my error; but, on a question of such magnitude, I can receive only the most substantial proof. You charge me with breaking up the peace of the family; this charge possesses a keen point, and it has deeply grieved me. My peace was broken, and I wandered almost a forlorn object of grief, because I had no prospect of happiness till I was led to embrace my present religious opinions; these have acted on my wounded spirit as the rebuke of the Saviour did on the agitated waters of Gennesaret, and now I enjoy an internal calm; and must the restoration of peace to my mind be regarded as the destroyer of domestic happiness?”

“Why, you know, my dear, that your views on religious subjects differ from ours; indeed, I think them very eccentric, and we cannot approve of them, and our friends make many remarks which are not pleasant. Some say that you are a Methodist, some that you are a Calvinist, and many say that you are become quite a fanatic. These things are unpleasant, they mortify us. We think it quite a disgrace to our family that you should have such things said about you. I therefore hope you will consent to go with us to Mr. Denham’s ball; it is held, I assure you, principally on your account; there is to be a large party, and all will be delighted to see you. You then will wipe off the odium which your eccentric views have brought on yourself and us. Your father has made a very handsome purchase for the occasion, which he intends to present to you. You know it will not prevent your being very religious.”

“I would sacrifice much to please and gratify you, my dear mamma; but do not press me to a compliance which I cannot yield to without making a sacrifice of principle.”

“But what principle would you sacrifice by complying with such a request?”

“If I were to go I should feel no interest in the scene, and my sadness would throw a gloom over the cheerfulness of others; and I

should render myself the object of satirical remark, rendered keener than any which has yet been directed against me, as my inconsistency would justify it; for those who are so anxious to get me among them, well know that I must first sacrifice my religious principles before I can consent."

"O no, my dear, they will receive you with more delight than they would an angel; and when you get among your old friends, you will disengage your mind from your religious meditations, which you will find a great relief; I have no doubt you will be quite yourself again, and that will make us all as happy as we used to be. I feel in ecstasy in prospect of it. Do yield to our request."

"Yes, I must disengage my mind from all religious recollections or anticipations to be happy on such an occasion; but such a disengagement would be the entire destruction of my happiness in this world, and the prospect of it hereafter.

"Then, must we go without you?"

"I cannot consent to go unless you insist on it; and even then I should go with reluctance, and I fear my presence would disturb the harmony of the evening."

"I assure you," said Mr. Roscoe, "it is with the deepest regret that I witness the pernicious infatuation under which you are labouring. Fitted to move in any rank of life, and to command the respect and esteem of a large circle, who would feel proud to enjoy your friendship and society, you seem determined to descend even to the lowest, and gather up the fragments of a fanatical felicity among the evangelical professors who abound among us. My peace is gone, because yours is wrecked; and my hopes of your future respectability are all vanished. I certainly did expect that you would comply with my request to accompany us to Mr. Denham's, when I solicited it as a personal favour; but I now perceive that your religion has taught you how to refuse a parent's request; and if the first-fruits are disobedience, what will be the issue? After all the pains that I have bestowed on the cultivation of your mind, and the bleeding anxiety of my heart during your protracted illness, to see you now come forth to

contemn the elegant accomplishments of social life, and the society of those with whom you have been accustomed to mingle with so much delight and *eclat*, is a calamity which will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave?"

Miss Roscoe was too much affected by this severe and unexpected address, to make any reply; and though she endeavoured to suppress her feelings, yet she was obliged to retire to her own room, where a flood of tears gave her some relief. When somewhat composed, she opened her Bible, and the following passage struck her eye: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. x. 32-36). The remarks of her favourite commentator, Scott, strengthened her views of the passage, and she felt more and more that it was her duty to act consistently with her religious principles, though she might incur the displeasure of her parents.

Soon after this conversation took place, a select party came to spend the evening at the Roscoes'; and, after tea, the cards were introduced as usual.

"I shall be happy," said the Rev. Mr. Cole (addressing himself to Miss Roscoe), "to have you for a partner at whist."

"I am sorry, Sir, to deny you any request, but I cannot comply with the one which you have just made.

"Indeed! why, we have often spent the evening in this amusing manner, and I hope we shall spend many more."

"Yes, Sir, we have; but it is not my intention to consume any future portion of my time in such an amusement."

"But do you think that there is any moral evil in it?"

“It has, in my opinion, *the appearance of evil*, from which *we are commanded to abstain.*”

“But of two evils is it not the wisest maxim to choose the least? and is it not a smaller evil *to amuse ourselves at cards, than, as is often the case at evening parties, to play at scandal and defame the reputation of others?*”

“Unquestionably; but I presume that a wise and good man would avoid both these evils.”

“But I am not aware that any evil can arise from this amusing exercise.”

“Does it not consume that time which ought to be devoted to a more profitable purpose? Does it not frequently give excitement to those passions of our nature which ought to be repressed? Does it not encourage a passion for gaming, which, we know, has involved many in entire ruin?”

“But that is the abuse of the thing.”

“Nay, Sir, I think it is the natural tendency of it.”

“But are we to have no amusements because some indulge in them to excess? Is life to pass away in a dull, monotonous routine of duty? Are we always to live in a state of exile from the charms and fascinations of social intercourse? Is the mind never to relax itself amidst the diversions of polished society? Must we ever keep up our attention to the sombrous claims of religion, and always think, and speak, and act, as though we were treading on the verge of an awful eternity? Indeed, I give it as my decided opinion, that *that species of religion which interdicts these amusements, cannot claim a divine origin, because it is opposed to human happiness.*”

“That species of religion, as you are pleased to call it, *does claim a divine origin, and, perhaps, if you examine its claims, you will find them attested by the spirit of the New Testament.* Permit me to ask you one question, and I am willing that your answer shall decide the question at issue between us—Do you believe that if Jesus Christ or any of his apostles were now present, they would consent to pass

away the hours of this evening in such an exercise as playing a game of cards?"

"Perhaps not, but they were extraordinary persons, and their virtue kept them from many sources of amusement from which we, who are more frail, may very innocently draw a portion of our pleasure."

"Then you admit that it is *our frailty* that leads us to such amusements, and that if *we possessed more exalted virtue* we should avoid them?"

"You reason excellently well, Madam, against the amusement; but *such is the frailty* of our nature, that I fear the passion cannot be subdued with such a weapon."

"Perhaps not, Sir.

"Pray, Madam, what amusements would you sanction?"

"Those which would afford me pleasure on reflection, and in which I could be engaged in my last moments."

"The apparent delight with which evangelical professors anticipate their *last* moments, is a tacit acknowledgment that the present are dull and insipid."

"We anticipate our last moments, Sir, with awe, mingled with delight, and though you may imagine that our present moments are dull and insipid, yet, I assure you, you are mistaken. We have our sources of happiness, but card-playing is not included in the number."

"I cannot but think that evangelical religion has an antisocial tendency, and would, if generally prevalent, deprive us of all our innocent recreations."

"Evangelical religion, like the religion of the New Testament, requires us not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed in the renewing of our mind, and it produces a distaste for those frivolous and pernicious amusements in which the votaries of this world delight; but I am not aware that it has an antisocial tendency, unless you mean by that expression, that its tendency is to mark out the essential difference between a real Christian and one who bears only the name."

"Why, we are all Christians, and good Christians, too; but our Christianity does not teach us to wait the arrival of death before we can be happy."

"Yes, Sir, there are the pleasures of sin, which we are commanded to forsake for the recompense of reward.

"And, Madam, there are the pleasures of innocence, which are as sweet and as sacred as the joys of angels."

"But I cannot suppose that you include card-playing among the pleasures of innocence."

"Most certainly I do!"

"Then, do you imagine that our old friend, Mr Lock, is of the same opinion, who in an evening was reduced from a state of affluence to a state of poverty?"

"Why, that was an unlucky night for him, certainly; but you know *we* do not play for more than we can afford to lose."

"I think, Sir, with all due deference to your judgment, that every one who plays at this game of innocence stakes more than he can afford to lose."

"You are, indeed, an ingenious casuist, and I wish to know how you can prove the correctness of your assertion."

"Can you afford to lose your temper?"

"If I do lose it I can easily recover it again."

"You may, Sir, but can others?"

"If they cannot, they are to blame."

"Then, Sir, *this game of innocence is found on experiment. first, to destroy the placidity of the temper, and then to involve its abettors in censure.* But there is often more staked in this game than the loss of temper."

"What is there, Madam?"

"The loss of friendship. You know that the families of the Orrs and the Humes have never met in any party since the quarrel which took place two years since at Brushwood House."

"Why, that was a very serious affair, certainly, but you know that such quarrels rarely happen."



“Nay, Sir, they often happen, only friends interpose and effect a reconciliation. But with such facts imprinted on our memory, can we say that such a game is the game of innocence?”

“I think, Madam, you are rather too severe, for you must allow that it often beguiles away many a languid hour.”

“Which hours, Sir, ought to be spent in preparation for immortality.”

“You veer, Madam, towards death, from whatever point of the compass you set out.”

“And, Sir, death is veering towards us, in whatever employments we are engaged; but would you like to feel his fatal infliction when seated at a card-table, or returning from a theatre?”

“Too grave; much too grave, Madam, to be pleasant.”

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## FRESH PERPLEXITIES.



MS. DENHAM was not one of the select party that met at Mr. Roscoe's, as she had accompanied her husband to Bath, where he was detained longer than he expected, having some important family matters to adjust with the executors of a deceased uncle. On the day after her return home, when sitting quietly by herself in her little back parlour, working away hard and fast with her knitting needles, Miss Denham came in, took a seat by her side, and thus began:—

“Do you know, mamma, that Miss Roscoe is become so religious, that she actually refused the Rev. Mr. Cole as a partner at cards, at Mr. Roscoe's party, and said so many hard things against card-playing, and brought forward so many arguments from some old Puritanical book, that he was at times quite disconcerted?”

“Yes, my dear, and it is enough to disconcert any good Christian to have religious subjects introduced at our convivial parties.”

“O yes, mamma, exactly so. I think if we are religious on a Sunday, it is as much as ought to be expected. Our Maker can't expect more. Do you think he can, ma'?”

“Certainly not, my dear; if he did, we should have had two Sundays in the week, instead of one.”

Well, ma', I really wonder how it is that Miss Roscoe has become so religious all at once. What a pity. I suppose she must be very unhappy.”

“Yes, my dear, that you may depend on. Her parents are nearly broken-hearted. Dear Mrs. Roscoe says that all their peace is gone; and they really dread the consequences. She has positively refused to attend our ball on Friday week.”

“Is it possible? I wish I had known it, I would have reasoned the point with her. I will go and see her. I think I can persuade her, because I recollect putting aside an engagement one night last winter to go with her to see the *Beggar's Opera*.”

“Ah! my dear, when this evangelical religion, as it is called, takes possession of a person's mind, it is no use to attempt to reason or try persuasion—reason has nothing to do with it.”

“Then, mamma, it must be a very unreasonable thing.”

“Exactly so, my dear, and I hope you will avoid its snares.”

“Dear mamma, I really wonder that you should consider it necessary to give such a hint; I assure you I have no prepossessions in its favour. Indeed, it is not my intention to trouble myself at all about religion yet; of course, I shall go to church along with you and papa, and take the sacrament once or twice a-year. That will do, won't it, ma'?”

“Yes, my dear, our Maker won't desire more from such a young person as yourself. But still it will be necessary to avoid all intercourse with those religious people who are known to be evangelical; for the Rev. Mr. Cole says he thinks that there is something of a bewitching nature in it, as it is known sometimes to overcome those who have the greatest antipathies against it.”

“Why, mamma, you quite alarm me. Then no one is safe. Is it

possible for me ever to take to this evangelical religion? O, I would rather enter a nunnery at once, and take the veil for life."

"Yes, my dear, and I would rather you should; but still I deem it prudent to give you a hint to be on your guard; for I heard you, a short time since, drop some expressions, when speaking of Mrs. Stevens, which quite alarmed me."

"Indeed, mamma! I don't recollect it. I certainly think Mrs. Stevens a most amiable lady; and though she may have rather too much religion, yet she is very accomplished, and a most interesting companion."

"She is amiable and accomplished, but I think her *a most dangerous companion*."

"What! the amiable Mrs. Stevens a dangerous companion? Why, mamma, she is a truly virtuous and lovely woman."

"She is so, my dear, and that makes her so dangerous. She is always aiming at proselyting others to her religion, and such is the bewitching charm of her eloquence, and such the fascination of her manners, that she scarcely ever fails. Why, do you know, though I am ashamed to confess it, she nearly got me over to her religion when I was with her by myself one evening last winter."

"Dear ma', you quite surprise me. *You* nearly made an *Evangelical!* Did you ever tell pa' about it, and what did he say?"

"O, no, my dear, I never mentioned it before to any one; and I should not like to have it repeated."

"I may just mention it to Mr. Ryder, as a curiosity in the economy of life."

"No, no, I beg you won't; it will make me so much talked about, and it will induce her to make another effort. But, as I was saying, you really must be on your guard. You have not my fortitude and self-possession. She is a most beguiling woman, and has so much tact. She easily accommodates herself to the taste of her visitors, she bribes the poor by her benevolence, fascinates the young by her pleasantry, and entangles the thoughtless by her arguments. No one is safe who associates with her."

"But, mamma, I do not think she would proselyte me, for I have no predilection for religion. It is too gloomy a subject to suit my taste. Indeed, I do not understand it; though every now and then I am tempted to wish I did; I have at times such strange thoughts and feelings."

"Of course, you know, my dear, it is a duty you owe the Almighty to resist an evil temptation."

"Exactly so; but is it not odd that I should ever be tempted to a thing for which I have no predilection, and which I don't understand? But, ma', I am under an engagement to take tea with Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe next week—what shall I do?"

"Decline, of course, my dear."

"But the time is fixed."

"You can send a note, *and plead indisposition as an apology for absence.*"

"But would that be honourable, if I should not be indisposed?"

"You know it is fashionable."

"Yes, mamma, but I have long felt a great dislike against the fashionable habit of sacrificing truth to expedience. I cannot do it. I have no strong desire to become religious, but I wish to be virtuous; and I think an inviolable regard to truth the very foundation of virtue."

"Very true, my dear; I am pleased with your remark, it discovers a virtuous mind; but you must not be too scrupulous. You will find it impossible always to avoid the customs of fashionable life; for though some of them are open to the censures of the strict moralist, yet they have been too long established to be changed."

"But, mamma, I should think it wrong to comply with any custom which pure morality condemns. When I was at Mr. Travers's, the housemaid, who had been in the family seven years, and who was greatly respected, was called up into the parlour and discharged at a moment's warning. She wished to know the cause. Mrs. Travers said to her, 'I have detected you in so many falsehoods, that I cannot believe a word you say.' She took up her wages, and

said, 'Who taught me to speak untruth? When I came into your service, I came uncorrupted; I abhorred a lie, but did you not compel me to the habit? Was I not forced to say, when you were unwilling to see company, that you were ill, or from home; and if mistresses teach servants to lie, ought they to be discharged when detected?'

"How insolent! Did not Mr. Travers force her out of the house?"

"Yes, mamma, he resented the insult; but after she was gone, he said, 'I hope the truth will always be spoken in future; for if we compel our servants to falsify for our convenience, we ought not to be astonished if they do so for their own.'"

"Well, my dear, with your high notions of virtue, I do not see how you can excuse yourself from Mrs. Stevens's; but let me entreat you to be on your guard, for we live, as the apostle says, in perilous times. I would rather follow you to the grave than see you infected with a religious contagion; and I am sure your papa would disown you."

"Dear mamma, I wonder that you should harbour any suspicions. It is not my intention to become religious yet. Indeed, if I were, my religion must tolerate all the fashionable gaieties. You know I am fond of cards and concerts, of balls and plays; and as for the Bible, I assure you that I have not read it since I left school. It is too grave to suit my taste, and so mystical that I cannot understand it. Indeed, I have my doubts about it; particularly since our acquaintance with the Ryders. Mr. John is quite a sceptic; he is very clever, and his arguments are so powerful!"

"I have no wish that you should become a sceptic, my dear; it would make you so much talked about."

"Exactly so, mamma; I know it is not fashionable for ladies to become sceptics, but Miss Sims affects to be one, and really boasts of it, which sadly mortifies her sister Amelia. However, I have made up my mind to keep to the good old religion of our church; though Mr. John Ryder said the other evening, in a large party, he expected to make a convert of me."

"I admire your firmness. Yes, keep to the church, and you will be sure to go to heaven when your Maker takes you out of this world!"

"You think I shall, ma'."

"To be sure, my dear. Our Maker could not object to take such a dear lovely girl as you are to heaven, to live amongst the happy innocents there."

"That's a beautiful thought. Sceptics don't expect to go to heaven, do they, mamma?"

"No, my dear."

"Where will they go?"

"I don't know, and I don't think they know themselves. I once heard your papa say, they expect death will snuff them out of existence as we snuff out the flame of a candle."

"Do they really believe this? What a sad pity—snuffed out of existence. I shall never forget the expression. I'll repeat it to Mr. John Ryder the next time he calls; I wonder what he will say?"

"He will only laugh at it."

"Laugh at being snuffed out of existence! No, mamma, I will never become a sceptic, to be snuffed out of existence. I would rather turn an evangelical, for they, when death comes, are in ecstasy, in anticipation of eternal life and happiness in another and better world."

"What a loud ring, I wonder, ma', who it can be; but it does not matter, we are dressed to receive company." The servant entered with the cards of Miss Dorothy Brownjohn, and her sister Susan, who, of course, had been ushered into the drawing-room.

"I am so glad to see you; do be seated, ladies. Well, this is a pleasure I did not expect when I rose this morning, though I said last night, when looking at the coal leaf waving on the bar of our parlour grate, that we should have company to-day. We should have made a call on you, as we missed you at the sacrament last Sunday week, only I have been to Bath with Mr. Denham. We were all prodigiously affected, as we thought you were ill."

“Oh no,” said Miss Susan, “we haven’t been exactly ill, but it was all hurry and bustle with us that week, and I could not get through my preparation reading and prayers, to fit me for the sacrament.”

“I think my sister,” said Miss Dorothy, “is too scrupulous, and I tell her, that if she can’t get done all the preparation reading and prayers, the Almighty will overlook it, and so would Mr. Cole.”

“Oh dear, yes, to be sure he would. Why, I had not time that week to read a single extra prayer; we had company in the house every day and night.”

“The principal purpose of our calling on you this morning, dear Mrs. Denham, is to ask you if you know any one who would suit us in the capacity of a cook.”

“What, are you going to part with the old cook who has been with you so many years?”

“Oh dear, yes,” said Miss Susan, “and I wish we had got rid of her at the beginning. Since she has got infected with the rector’s new religion, she has not been the same woman she once was.”

“Yes, there is an obvious difference,” said Miss Dorothy, “in her spirit, and appearance, and manners, which I cannot account for.”

“Does she neglect her duties?”

“Oh no,” said Miss Susan, “she does not neglect her work; if she did I should soon be after her. She used to sing a good song, and be as merry as a cricket; but no singing now, except some odd psalm; and she never appears happy but when going to church, or reading her Bible; and she is trying to get over the rest of the servants to her religion.”

“Have you given her notice to leave?”

“Oh no, not exactly. I’ll tell you, dear Mrs. Denham, how it was. I heard a whisper amongst the rest of the servants that the cook got up before them in the morning, and sat up after them at night; and I was determined to find it out, and the reason of it, for it did not look well; now, did it? So one night, when all the rest were gone to bed, I went down stairs very softly, and looked through the key-

hole, and saw her reading her Bible; and I made up an excuse for going in; and I said to her, 'I think, cook, sleep would do you more good at this hour than that book, sitting up wasting fire and candle;' and she gave me such an insolent reply, that she ruffled my temper very much. She said, 'If I thought so, Ma'am, I should be in bed, but I like a little reading out of God's book before I go to rest; and if I do my work to your satisfaction, as I hope I do, I think you have no cause for complaint.' And the next morning she actually gave notice to leave."

"And I am sorry to say," added Miss Dorothy, "that just before we left home, the housemaid gave *me* notice."

"Why, sister, you did not tell me that. This is all our rector's doings. We were living as peaceably as a nestling of birds, till he began to preach the new doctrines of the new birth, and faith, and salvation by grace. I am sometimes tempted to wish myself in heaven, out of the way of these domestic miseries."

"Mr. Cole, in his sermon on Sunday morning, said that this evangelical religion is a spiritual epidemic; it spreads by the power of sympathy, and affects all alike. It is a prodigious evil."

"That's true; we will have no more of it in *our* family," said Miss Dorothy, "for our next servants shall engage not to go and hear our rector, and I will substitute the prayer-book for the Bible, for the servants to read."

"Very proper," said Mrs. Denham, "that venerable book will do them no harm."

"They may read that," said Miss Susan, "and welcome. It will never make them miserable, nor keep them up late at night."

"Then, ladies, you are in want of two servants?"

"Yes," said Miss Susan, "and two who like to read the prayer-book better than the Bible, and won't go to hear any of the evangelicals."

"Shall we see you at church next Sunday; Mr. Cole is going to preach a charity sermon for our Sunday-school."

"What, have you a Sunday-school?"



“Yes, Mr. Cole felt compelled to set up one in self-defence, for he found the children all going off to a school kept by some of the evangelicals, and their parents followed them. We haven’t many.”

“For a Sunday-school,” said Miss Dorothy, “in self-defence, there is some excuse, otherwise I would not give it my sanction; I hope you are very careful what you teach the children, otherwise you will lift them up with pride, and they will not work as servants ought to do.”

“Mr. Cole won’t have anything taught in the school but the Church catechism.”

“They may learn that,” said Miss Susan, “and welcome; it won’t do them any harm. Yes, you may expect us on Sunday, and perhaps then, Mrs. Denham, you may be able to tell us if you can help us to any servant who will comply with our terms—read the prayer-book, and not go near any of the evangelicals.”

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## THE RELIGIOUS PARTY.



HERE was at Mr. Stevens’s a select but not a large party. The conversation was of a desultory nature till after tea, when Miss Roscoe was requested to favour the company with a little music. She seated herself at the piano, and sung the following hymn with considerable effect :

“O my Lord, I’ve often mused  
On thy wondrous love to me;  
How I have the same abused,  
Slighted, disregarded Thee!

“To thy church and Thee a stranger;  
Pleas’d with what displeas’d Thee;  
Lost, yet could perceive no danger;  
Wounded, yet no wound could see.

“But, unwearied, Thou pursu’dst me ;  
 Still thy calls repeated came,  
 Till on Calvary’s mount I view’d Thee,  
 Bearing my reproach and blame.

“Then o’erwhelmed 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 pow’r ;  
 He who Mary thus affected,  
 Bids his mourners weep no more.”

“I scarcely know which to admire most,” said Mrs. Stevens, “the air or the hymn itself; there is plaintive melancholy in the music which accords with my feelings, and an exquisite delicacy in some of the expressions of the hymn, which I greatly like. How touching the allusion to our former state of indifference and insensibility! How correct the beautiful reference to the moral efficacy of the Saviour’s death in exciting sorrow for sin’ But the last stanza, in my opinion, is the most soothing and consolatory—

‘He who Mary thus affected,  
 Bids his mourners weep no more.’”

“It is a favourite hymn of mine,” observed Mr. Lewellin; “and the last stanza, to which you refer, brings to my recollection the lines of Cowper:—

‘But with a soul that ever felt the sting  
 Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing.’

But, no sorrow is so deep and pungent as that which the mind usually feels when pierced by the convictions of guilt; and yet there is a sacredness in the passion which distinguishes it from unmingled anguish or grief. When first excited, it often occasions deep mental

depression ; but when relief is obtained, by a clear perception of the way of salvation through faith in the death of Jesus Christ, it is turned into a spring of grateful joy."

"But the generality of professing Christians," said Miss Roscoe, "scornfully reject those religious sentiments which commence their moral operations by inflicting pain in the mind. They are religious, but their religious opinions are not permitted to excite either the passion of sorrow or of joy ; and as soon as a person begins to *feel* what he believes, he is denounced a fanatic."

"Yes," replied Mr. Lewellin, "when a person begins to feel the moral efficacy of the truth, he is regarded by many as falling into a state of idiotcy, or rising to a pitch of frenzy. We may feel the charm of music, but not the charm of devotional sentiment ; we may be depressed when we give offence to an endeared friend, but a recollection of our transgressions against our Father who is in heaven must occasion no regret ; the imagination may be delighted by captivating scenery, but not with the sublime visions of future bliss. No ! An excitement which takes its rise in such causes is considered by the semi-Christians of the present age as a certain indication of a disordered intellect or degenerated taste."

"The veil of ignorance," observed the Rev. Mr. Guion, "which is thrown over the mind of the unregenerate, renders them incapable of forming any clear perceptions of the nature or design of the gospel. They reduce the whole of religion to a human arrangement, which merely requires an external homage to an established formula ; and conclude that after they have uttered the solemn responses of the Liturgy, listened to the sermon which the clergyman delivers, and taken the sacrament, they have discharged the whole of their duty towards God ; and as they have no clear perceptions of revealed truth, they cannot have any powerful religious impressions. Their heart is as cold during the service as the marble slab which bears down to succeeding generations the names of the deceased of past ages ; and as they never feel deep sorrow for sin, nor ardent love for an unseen Redeemer, we ought not to be asto-

nished if they treat with contempt the excitement of such emotions in the breast of others."

"Certainly not," replied Miss Roscoe; "I very well recollect being much surprised when I accidentally heard a little girl singing the following verse of a hymn, which I now much admire:—

'Tis religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live;  
'Tis religion must supply  
Solid comforts when we die.'

I was quite incapable of conceiving how religion could give *pleasure*. I compared a religious service with a concert; and while the recollection of the one produced a pleasant feeling, the other appeared dull and insipid. I compared a Sabbath-day with another day, and regretted that custom had set it apart for observances which were repugnant to my taste. If I went to church, I felt no interest in the service; and if I stayed away, I was unconscious of having sustained any loss of mental improvement or enjoyment."

"But I presume," said Mr. Lewellin, "that *now* you can trace the connection between religion and pleasure."

"Yes, Sir; there is an inseparable connection between the influence of religious truth on the heart, and the highest degree of mental enjoyment; it brings the soul into a new world of being, where objects, unseen by the natural eye, disclose their beauties; and truths, unfelt by the unrenewed mind, excite a joy which is unspeakable. Now I can understand the Scriptures; the Saviour is invested with overpowering charms, and the futurity which stretches beyond the grave, presents a clear and spacious scene of bliss to my imagination."

"How naturally," observed Mr. Guion, "the mind of an enlightened Christian associates the hope of future happiness with the name of the Redeemer. How cheering and animating to believe that after the sorrows and turmoils of this life have ceased, we shall enter into rest. What a scene of sublime grandeur will open on us then, enkindling emotions of astonishment and joyous delight infinitely beyond any ever previously felt!"

“I admit,” said Mr. Lewellin, “that the external beauties of the heavenly world will impart a high degree of delight, but the society of the place will constitute the chief source of felicity. We shall behold the Son of God seated on his throne of majesty and grace. He is the perfection of beauty, and his form is as glorious as his nature is pure. What an impression will be produced *when we see him face to face!*”

“I love,” said Mrs. Stevens, “to think of heaven as the dwelling-place of my Redeemer. The very anticipation of the first interview with him whom unseen I love and adore, excites a feeling in my soul, rich in all that is sacred and delightful. I have, it is true, many ties which bind me to earth, yet there are seasons when I can sing the ardent language of the poet without a faltering accent—

‘Where Jesus dwells my soul would be,  
And fains my glorious Lord to see;  
Earth, twine no more about my heart,  
For ’tis far better to depart.’”

I had as yet taken no part in the conversation, but this reference to Jesus Christ now living in the celestial world, led me to remark that the sufferings he endured when on earth were a decisive proof that he came to accomplish some wonderful ulterior design. We know, from the testimony of the Word of God, that there are beings in heaven of divers rank and order; but from what has taken place, and what is still taking place in the economy of the Divine procedure, we find that a new order of beings is to be called into existence, and one which is to take precedence of all others—to stand out conspicuously for the admiration of all worlds, as the most marvellous specimens of the creating power of God. But instead of putting forth his creative power, as when the angelic orders were called into existence, the Lord Jesus himself, in human form, comes into the dark and wicked world, and, out of the most impure elements, moulds a people for himself, whom he will acknowledge as his brethren, and to whom the angels of God are to act for ever as ministering spirits.

Mr. Lewellin replied: “We are accustomed to say that the facts

of real life are often more startling and surprising than the wildest conceptions of romance, but the fact to which you have just given such a prominence is one which must have taken all beings, of all worlds, by surprise; the lowest and the meanest in the scale of intelligence, if not the most polluted and the most vile, are advanced, through the condescending grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to stand at the head of the intelligent creation of God."

"Then," said Miss Roscoe, "to be a redeemed sinner, when the ulterior purpose of Jesus Christ is actually accomplished in us, will be regarded as a nobler mark of distinction than to be an archangel."

"Yes, the angels of God are the *servants* of the celestial establishment, but redeemed sinners are the sons of God, fashioned like unto the glorious form of Jesus Christ himself, each one being the express image of Jehovah's person."

An allusion having been made to the impression which must have been made on the minds of the apostles when gazing on the ascension of Jesus Christ, I mentioned that I had recently heard an intimate friend give a graphic description of the scene, in a discourse delivered in his own chapel, and, at my request, he was kind enough to give me a copy of it. As it bore an emphatic relation to the subject of our conversation, I then read it to the party:—

"When going with his apostles from Jerusalem to Bethany, he stops, and stops somewhat abruptly, as though under the impulse of some new thought—they also stop; and when he lifts up his hands, they gather around him; he speaks—they listen with fixed eagerness of attention; he blesses them, though in what form of expression we are not told; they feel the power of his blessing diffusing through their soul an indescribable sensation of calm and ecstatic joy; still looking on him with intense earnestness, at once expressive of their confidence and their love, they suddenly see a movement, and are startled, but not affrighted; he moves, he rises above them, and enters a trackless pathway, on which no one but himself could tread; he is parted from them, gradually ascending higher and higher, till at length a bright cloud receives him, and

he disappears out of their sight. They are petrified to the spot, not by terror, but amazement; no one speaks—all instinctively feel that the spot is too hallowed for sounds of human utterance. Two messengers from the celestial world break the silence of ecstatic wonder, saying, ‘Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.’ The apostles bow in reverential awe, and on the spot on which he stood before he was parted from them, they kneel down and worship him, and then return to Jerusalem with great joy.

“With what raptures did the celestial spirits hail his return, and with what joyful awe did they witness his re-investure with the glory he had with the Father before the world was. A new and never-to-be-forgotten era in the annals of immortality is now begun; the new dispensation of mediatorial grace and love, for which the events of four thousand years had been a preparation, is now established; inaugurated into his office as a king and a priest on his throne, he presents to the joyous spectators the first redeemed sinner brought from earth to grace his triumphs. And who is selected for this novel manifestation of his power and his love? A man of genius? a man of rank? a man of Platonic virtue or of Socratic fame? No: a man of crime! who but a few days before was hanging on a cross of infamy and torture, reviling him who is now presenting him faultless before the presence of the Most High, amidst the praises of myriads of celestial spirits. What a wondrous scene!”

“Yes,” said Mr. Guion, “that is a scene I should like to have beheld, but the resurrection will surpass it in awful grandeur; and this we shall all see.”

This animating conversation excited a degree of feeling which I am not able to describe. Every countenance beamed with delight, and even Miss Denham, who had been a mere listener, manifested an interest in it which I was rather surprised to witness. At length Mr. Stevens rang the bell, when the servants entered the parlour,

and Mr. Guion, after reading a portion of the Scriptures, engaged in prayer. He was solemn and devout, and though no visions of glory were seen, nor any supernatural voices heard, yet the Divine presence was eminently enjoyed, and we rose from our knees and sang—

“The world knows nothing of the joys  
That Christian fellowship supplies;  
Enamour'd of their glitt'ring toys,  
Our hopes seem nothing in their eyes.

“But we can witness what we know,  
And speak aloud, nor care who hears;  
Our joys from heavenly sources flow,  
And would be ill exchanged for theirs.

“We envy not the great and wise;  
We count ourselves more blest than they:  
We're taught their honours to despise,  
And from their joys to turn away.

“'Twill soon appear who serve the Lord,  
And who are they who serve him not:  
Then let us hold his faithful word,  
And ours will be a glorious lot.”

On resuming our seats, Mrs. Stevens said: “I think that *all* the pleasures of religion are not reserved for another world. There are some which we may partake of in this, and one of the most gratifying is the pleasure of doing good to others.”

She then read to us a letter she had received from an aged Dissenting minister, who had a large family and a very limited income, imploring her generous assistance to enable him to extricate himself from some pecuniary embarrassments.

“I am a clergyman,” said Mr. Guion, “and feel no disposition to leave the church, but I know how to respect a Dissenting minister, and to sympathize with him in his afflictions. But this good man wants something more than sympathy, and I feel thankful that it is in my power to offer it.”

“I have already collected a few pounds,” said Mrs. Stevens, “which, with the addition of your liberal donation, will be a very acceptable present.”



“The charity of bigotry,” said Mr. Lewellin, “is restricted in its sympathies, and, like the Levite, will pass by the sufferer if he belong to another denomination, without extending relief; but the benevolence of the gospel, like the good Samaritan, asks no invidious questions, weeps with them that weep, and rejoices with them that rejoice, and rising to an elevation which renders the landmarks of religious distinctions invisible, pours down its charities upon all who are in trouble.”

“I assure you, Sir,” replied Mr. Guion, “that as I advance in life and become more imbued with the love of the truth, I feel an increasing attachment to real Christians of every denomination, particularly the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ. When I first took orders I was a first-rate bigot; I resolved to have nothing to do with Dissenters. I despised them. I contemned our venerable friend Mr. Ingleby for his liberality, and refused to associate with him because he associated with some pious Dissenters. I thought that as they left the church they should be banished from all intercourse with our society; and such was the degree of my hostility towards them, that it would have given me pleasure to have seen them sent to some distant colony, where they could live by themselves. But since it hath pleased God to call me out of the darkness of ignorance in which I was involved, into his marvellous light, and shed abroad his love in my soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, I have cherished the pure benevolence of the gospel, and now recognize all as fellow-heirs of the grace of life who bear the image and breathe the spirit of Jesus Christ.”

“I think,” said Mr. Stevens, “that the spirit of bigotry is decidedly antichristian, as it separates those from each other who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and it has a natural tendency to excite strong aversion in the minds of unbelievers against religion; hence we ought to watch and pray, lest we should be imperceptibly injured by it.”

“But do you think,” said Miss Roscoe, “that it is possible for a real Christian to possess an atom of bigotry?”

"An atom!" exclaimed Mr. Lewellin, "I know some who are enslaved by it."

"What! and Christians?" said Miss Roscoe.

"Yes."

"Indeed! I should have thought it impossible. But you would not adduce their bigotry as an evidence of their personal religion?"

"O no, it is an evidence of their personal weakness."

"From such a spirit, Sir, I hope we shall ever be preserved. I would shun it as much for its meanness as I do for its malignity; and look on it as a demon who destroys the harmony which ought to prevail among all who rest their hope in Christ."

## MISS ROSCOE.



T was near the end of the following week ere Miss Roscoe and Mrs. Stevens again met. After some remarks from Mrs. Stevens upon the evident depression of her friend's spirits, Miss Roscoe observed:

"Since I had the pleasure of seeing you last week, I have felt the extremes of anguish and of joy. My life is indeed a chequered one, and I often wonder how the scene will end."

"Yes, my dear, the life of *every Christian* is a chequered life. He is liable to a continued change of feeling, and the scene of Providence is ever shifting; the current of his history may run on for a season in a smooth and even course, but it is constantly exposed to obstructions. Joy and grief are very delicate passions; and as they have such a powerful influence over us, it is wisely ordained that we shall not be kept in a state of perpetual excitement. They come in as with a flood of feeling; but, instead of laying waste the mind, they often become the means of enriching it with the most nutritious consolations."

“But how difficult it is to control grief, when it springs out of a domestic calamity.”

“I hope, my dear, you have no new domestic trial.”

“I am not aware that I have a new one, but I have one that has inflicted a most poignant wound, and I know not what steps to take. My dear parents manifest the most decided hostility to my religious opinions and habits. When they confined their hostility within the bounds of argument and persuasion, I found it comparatively easy to maintain the contest; but now they begin to reproach me, and I fear their attachment is on the decline. To survive the loss of their affection, I think, will be to live too long for my own peace. Where shall I find another home? Where shall I find another father? Where shall I find happiness when my parents cease to love me and regard me as their daughter?”

“Though your parents are hostile to your religious opinions and habits, their hostility will not continue always. They are disappointed by your not appearing in that circle of society in which they expected you to move; and are mortified by the satirical remarks which your religious profession has provoked; but time will soften down these asperities of feeling, and they will eventually tolerate what they may never be disposed to sanction.”

“But what ought I to do? Am I to sacrifice my religious principles to parental solicitation? I have been advised to do so, as obedience to parents is a cardinal virtue of Christianity. It is a virtue which ought to live in the heart of every child; yet I feel I cannot give it that form of expression which they wish. It is this that aggravates my sorrow. I love them, I revere them, I would sacrifice my health and my life to please them; but I cannot, I dare not sacrifice my conscience.”

“Your situation is very delicate and painful; yet you must remember that you are under the peculiar protection of the Redeemer. He has all power in heaven and on earth, and works all things after the counsel of his own will. He can cause light to spring out of darkness, and often comes forth to deliver his people when they

despair of help. I would advise you to be firm, yet temperate; to blend the utmost degree of kindness with inflexible decision; to avoid every appearance of eccentricity; not to introduce religious questions in conversation at an improper time, and when you *do introduce them*, cautiously abstain from minor and subordinate topics; bear reproach without murmuring; never discover an eagerness to expose erroneous views of truth, unless you have reason to conclude that it can be done without giving offence; and, as a general maxim, prove the truth and the excellence of your religious sentiments and opinions, more by your life than by your tongue."

"I sometimes think that I shall sink beneath my afflictions, but at other times I rise above them. I know that it is through much tribulation that the righteous are to enter the kingdom, and I know, also, that amidst all their tribulations they enjoy peace. The candidate for immortality ought not to object to the cross; but when the cross is prepared by those we love, it becomes peculiarly oppressive. After much deliberation and many prayers, I resolved on writing to my parents, and have placed in the hands of my father, as I left home, a letter, a copy of which I will read to you:—

"MY BELOVED PARENTS,—It is with many varied and conflicting emotions that I now address you; you may think it strange that I have chosen the more formal style of writing, rather than conversing with you, but I trust you will agree with me that, considering the importance of the subject which is now engaging so much of our mutual thoughts and feelings, and the different opinions we entertain, it is of great consequence that we should fully understand each others' sentiments. Upon your kind sympathy I throw myself; judge me not harshly; though compelled to differ from you on many points, still let me have your usual kindness and consideration.

"I am fully aware of the deep and poignant sorrow which my late course of conduct has brought upon you; you have ever been to me kind and indulgent, have brought me up in the enjoyment of every comfort and elegance which your station in life has enabled you to command; no expense has been spared to fit me for the position in

society you wish me to occupy; and now, by my own act and decision, I deprive you of the pleasure and reward which you so naturally expect. You wish to see me moving in elegant society, joining with youthful vigour in those scenes of amusement and worldly gaiety in which you think I ought to find delight, and attribute my objections to such amusements to a morbid antipathy to the elegancies of life, and an assumption of ascetic rigour ill suited to the character of one who has enjoyed my advantages. Both from love and duty, you require me again to frequent these scenes of amusement in which I now feel no interest, again to conform to the usages of fashionable life, and again to be, what I once was, "a giddy worldling." My dear parents, were it an earthly attachment you asked me to surrender, however great the sacrifice, however my heart, its woman's hopes and happiness might be wrecked, so great is the affection I bear you, so high a regard have I for parental authority, that I would yield. But what is it that you ask of me? Not such a sacrifice as this—that time, your love, and other ties might heal—but the sacrifice of all I hold most dear, most valuable—the sacrifice of *myself*, my precious and immortal soul. Start not, my father, but ponder well and deeply what I say. Judge me not by this world's judgment, but by the Scripture authority, which I know you revere, and will never gainsay. I believe in no strange doctrine; no new or fanciful form of religious truth has taken possession of my heart and feelings. Taking the testimony of Scripture for my guidance, seeking to be led alone by its revealed truth, and to learn and to obey its commands, how can I conform to the world, and yet remain a disciple of Christ Jesus? The two are impossible! "Be ye not conformed to the world" is a solemn command, to which I must yield obedience. It has pleased God in his providence so to influence my heart and conscience, that I now see things with a different eye than before; I must therefore regulate my conduct by these convictions. Love of the world, and worldly pleasures, cannot find a place in the heart of one who has given herself to Christ. You may plead that God requires not sacrifices such as these from his

people, especially in opposition to parental authority; and that I have no right to blast your happiness, and bring disgrace upon your family by my eccentric notions. I cannot admit that by my decision I am justly incurring your displeasure, or disgracing myself and you. I cannot, conscientiously with my sense of duty to Christ, any longer mix with the gay and thoughtless, make myself a partner in their follies, or join in their amusements; but I am not required to shun literary pursuits, the improvement of my mind, and those intellectual enjoyments in which I have ever delighted; but believing, as I do, the utter inconsistency of all worldly dissipation and gaiety with the pursuits of a Christian life, I must for ever renounce them. I am prepared for all that misrepresentation and contempt from others may do to wound and annoy, but cannot give up my religious principles, and what I consider my Christian duty. I trust, with the blessing of God, and help from him, sustained by the love and sympathy of my dear Redeemer, I could willingly become *a martyr*, but never either an inconsistent professor or an apostate.

“My beloved parents, ponder well ere you deprive me of your confidence and affection; listen not to the satire and bitterness of others, who cannot judge me as I ought to be judged. Believe me—supreme love to the Saviour will not make me love you less; my religious feelings will not make me indifferent to the claims of parental regard, authority, and affection. I shall not be less your child because I call God my father. I implore you, let not domestic strife and sorrow enter our once happy home! For the sake of *peace*, must I conform to the world, return to the habits and customs of fashionable life, be again—what I once was—one of the gay and thoughtless, or no longer the child of your fondest affections, or perhaps even an inmate of your home? Bear with me while I tell you, my choice is made; I am prepared to sacrifice everything but my religious freedom, my love for my Saviour, and obedience to his authority. ‘He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’

“It will not be long, at the longest space of time, before this world, with all its gaieties and follies, will pass away from us; we know not

how much of sorrow or joy lies before us; what will sustain us should sorrow as a flood flow over us, desolation, and bitter woe? Will the jocund laugh, the merry dance, the enlivening strain of earth's sweetest music, soothe the heart overburdened with deepest sorrow? If we have no other foundation to rest upon than these—no other friendship than that of the world, which is as evanescent as its happiness—where shall we go if sorrow withers our joys and enters our home? But we may escape these, and, like a peaceful stream, our years may glide from us, our sky still be bright and serene, and a cloudless sunset cheer our departing day; but night follows day—and there is a night, dark and stormy if unenlightened from above, coming upon us all, for which we each one must prepare—the night of death! What will it avail us then whether riches or poverty, rank or *meanness*, has been our portion here? These will not save us; all that human love and friendship can effect will be unavailing then, if our hope is not on high—if an Almighty friend is not with us to divide for us the waters of dissolution—to become our intercessor and Saviour. Oh! my beloved parents, dearer to me than life itself, think of these things; think of the last earthly scene; let me prepare for it, and forget not that the same preparation is needful for you.

“I can no longer trifle with the things of time; an eternity of bliss or woe is before me. I am prepared for the sacrifice of all earthly honour and happiness, that I may be safe in Christ, and prepared to meet him at his coming. That you, my dear parents, may finally meet me in the heavenly world, where no sorrow can enter, and where the voice of discord is never heard, is the sincere prayer of your affectionate and dutiful child,

“‘SOPHIA.’”

“I have no doubt,” said Mrs. Stevens, “but this letter will operate greatly in your favour. Your parents are labouring under a misapprehension, which your open and frank statement will remove; and while they must admire the independence which claims its rights, they will respect those religious principles which no human authority can, or ought even to attempt to subdue.”

“Oh! they are the best of parents, and if they had not been influenced by the evil spirit of others, they never would have disturbed my peace. I blame not them, but the officious few who, like the ancient Pharisees, will not go into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in. But I forgive them. They demand my pity—they have it—and my prayers also, for they know not what they do. I will now, as a diversion from this painful subject, read to you an interesting letter which I have just received from a young friend with whom I formed an acquaintance when at Dawlish, and I have no doubt it will give you great pleasure, as it has given me. She was, when I first knew her, devoted to the pleasures of this world; but now, I trust, she is seeking those of a better:—

“MY DEAR SOPHIA,—I received your last letter; on looking at the date of it, I must apologize to you for leaving it so long unanswered. It came to me while my mind was in an agitated state, and I had almost abandoned the hope of future happiness. Not that I have been called to pass through any scene of earthly trial and disappointment, but my volatile and thoughtless heart has been deeply impressed by the conviction of my sinfulness in the sight of God. and my consequent danger. Although I have received a religious education, and ever felt a reverence for what is sacred and sublime, yet love for real religion had never found a place in my heart. Far from my thoughts and feelings was all regard for what is most essential to our eternal interests. Fond of the society of the worldly and gay, my chief pleasure and pursuits have been in the world—gayest among the gay, the festive dance, the evening assembly—all the pleasures which may be derived from the associations and charms which this vain and transitory scene can give, had acquired a complete ascendancy over my heart. The thought of death and futurity I banished from me, living on in a state of careless, thoughtless indifference.

“At this time a friend presented to me a little treatise, and I could not from politeness refuse to read it. From its perusal I have re-



ceived those deep and powerful impressions, which, I trust, may never be effaced from my heart. I now see wherein I have acted so foolishly. God, in his great mercy, has poured into my soul the light of Divine truth. Oh! how greatly are all things changed to me! I can no longer find pleasure in worldly dissipation and gaiety; I have entirely forsaken those scenes of folly and sin; and am I not happy? The peace and true joy which only a Christian can know, has taken possession of my heart; love to my Saviour, who lived and died for me, and a sense of his forgiving mercy, is my chief delight. In the study of the Holy Scriptures I find intense enjoyment; the time I formerly spent in thoughtless gaiety I now devote to the improvement of my mind, and the sacred delights of private devotion. If you, my dear Sophia, have felt the renewing influence of Divine truth, you will be able to rejoice with me, and fully comprehend the gratitude I feel to Him who has arrested my steps, and is now, I trust, leading me in the paths of purer happiness and peace.

“Hoping soon to receive another letter from you, and with kind remembrances from my dear parents, believe me, ever your sincere friend,  
“LOUISA.”

“It is pleasing,” said Mrs. Stevens, “to see the progress which the truth is making. It is true we cannot boast of numbers, when we compare the righteous with the irreligious, yet our number is on the increase. The poor in general hear and receive the gospel; and the God of all grace is calling some in the higher ranks of society to be the living witnesses to its truth and excellence.”

“But how few the number! We may quote the language of the apostle as descriptive of the present state of the higher orders: ‘Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called.’ Alas! no. The wise disdain to receive instruction from the fishermen of Galilee; the mighty are too proud to yield subjection to the authority of the son of the carpenter; and the noble contemn the ignominy and reproach of the cross. They support the dignity of the church, while they debase the character of its Founder; venerate its minis-

ters, while they despise and reject the authority of their Master; observe its sacraments and its ceremonies, while they repudiate the design for which they were instituted; and move onward towards the unknown world of spirits, without ever agitating the great question, *What must I do to be saved?* Alas! they are self-doomed to endless woe. We should pity and pray for them."

"Their talents, their rank, and their wealth, often excite our envy; but if we knew all the moral disadvantages which are attendant on their great possessions, such a passion would never glow in our breast. They are exempted from many of the evils which press on the lower and middle classes of society, but they are not exempted from the pangs of sorrow, nor the visitations of death. A late senator,\* whose knowledge of human life and manners was as comprehensive as his eloquence was brilliant and fascinating, has somewhere said, 'that to the great the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They, too, are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In these they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality.'"

"From the intercourse which I have held with the higher circles, I am of opinion that there is a much smaller proportion of real happiness among them than is generally imagined; and when I reflect on the temptations and dangers to which they are necessarily exposed, I feel no disposition to envy them. But what rank of life is free from danger? Who, of all the human family, would ever seek redemption through the blood of Christ, unless impelled by an invisible force? What heart would ever glow with love to God, unless that passion be enkindled as with a live coal from off his own hallowed altar? And where this passion does glow, what force can extinguish it? And if we have been made to differ from others, ought we not to distinguish ourselves both by the purity of our life, and the ardour of our zeal for the honour of the Lord Jesus?"

"Where much is given, much is required. Our responsibility

\* Burke.

rises in proportion to the elevation of our rank and the extent of our influence. When I see a professing Christian, possessed of wealth and of leisure, freed from the incumbrances of the world, yet living a supine and comparatively inactive life—while he makes no effort to form plans for the moral welfare of society, or to lend his aid to those already established—I feel the force of the apostolic question, How dwelleth the love of God in him?”

“There is, in my opinion, a grand peculiarity in the religion of Jesus Christ, which cannot be expressed in more emphatic language than that of Paul:—‘For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.’”

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## THE FAMILY OF THE LAWSONS.



ONE evening I received an invitation to dinner from Mr. Lawson, a retired tradesman in easy circumstances, who within the last three years had settled in his native village. Mr. Lawson was a man of no education, but possessed of an active mind; his manners were unpolished yet agreeable; and though he had been busily engaged in the trading world for more than twenty years, he had quite acquired the habits of a country gentleman. His garden was his favourite amusement; there he toiled early and late, displaying great taste in its cultivation, and often availing himself of the gratification of sending a portion of its fruits to some of his old city friends.

He married early in life, and made what was thought a prudent choice; he had no fortune with his wife, but soon found he had a fortune *in* her; for what he gained by industry, she preserved by

rigid economy. He used often to repeat with satisfaction one of her choice maxims—*those tradesmen who begin life as geniefolks, often end life as paupers*. Mrs. Lawson's early habits of economy in process of time degenerated into extreme parsimony; and though she would often talk of charity, yet she usually excused herself from the practice of this virtue by quoting the common adage—*we must be just before we are generous*. Though a rigid economy was the order of the house, Mrs. Lawson was more anxious for the education of her children than her husband. He often used to say, "Where is the necessity of spending so much money in education, when we got on well enough without it?" To which she would aptly reply, "The times are changed, and if we wish our children to move with respectability in that rank of life to which their fortunes will elevate them, we must train them up for it."

Mrs. Lawson was considered very religious by some of her most intimate friends, but she was more attached to the doctrines of the gospel than to its precepts, and usually expressed a more ardent desire to enjoy the consolations of faith, than to grow in knowledge and in grace. She was more solicitous to guard the little territory of opinion which her judgment occupied, than to extend the empire of righteousness and peace; and though she would sometimes speak of the love of God to sinners, yet such qualified terms were invariably employed, that it bore, at least in her estimation, an exclusive reference to a few of her own order. On their settlement at Broadhurst they attended the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, but his style of preaching did not exactly suit Mrs. Lawson; sometimes he preached well, but at other times he was too legal—he dwelt too much on the preceptive part of the Scriptures, and too little on the doctrinal. He enjoined obedience to the law of God, instead of leaving the principle of grace to produce it, without any reference to obligation. He did not go sufficiently deep into Christian experience, nor employ that singular phraseology of speech which she had been accustomed to admire. Mr. Lawson and his daughters were more delighted with this new style of preaching (as it was termed) than with the old; but

rather than disturb the harmony of the family, they consented to go with Mrs. Lawson on the Sabbaths a distance of six miles, to hear one of her more favourite ministers. This circumstance at first wounded the feelings of the rector, and excited no small degree of astonishment among the pious, who had anticipated that this family would have been an acquisition to their little circle; but when the spirit of Mrs. Lawson was more fully displayed, and her sentiments more generally known, it gave entire satisfaction, as they were unwilling to have their numbers augmented at the expense of their mutual felicity.

The day on which I was to dine with Mr. Lawson at length arrived. After dinner our conversation turned on religious subjects, and Mrs. Lawson distinguished herself, not less by her loquacity than by the occasional bitterness of her spirit.

"I think, Sir," she said, "that we live in very awful times; but few know the truth, and very few preach it. I do not know six ministers in the kingdom whom I could hear with any pleasure."

"Indeed, Madam, and what is the cause?"

"I hope, Sir, *you* know."

"But, my dear," said Mr. Lawson, "how should this gentleman, who is a stranger among us, know the cause unless you tell him?"

"If, then," said Mrs. Lawson, "I must speak, though it is with great reluctance that I bring forward such a heavy charge, *they do not preach the gospel*. They are in general mere moral lecturers, and their sermons are mere essays on some one branch of relative duty; but those who are called 'evangelical,' I consider most censurable; because, though they profess to know the truth, yet they are afraid to preach it."

"I presume you except Mr. Ingleby from this sweeping charge?"

"He may be a good man, but his knowledge of the gospel is very superficial. I have occasionally heard him preach a sermon which has given me a little pleasure, but his light merely serves to make his darkness the more visible. He preaches what I call a legalized gospel; instead of preaching a free salvation, he is always exhorting

his hearers to be doing something; and tells them that they must look into their own heart, or to their own life, for the evidences of a work of grace."

"And pray, Madam, where is a person to look for a genuine proof of his personal religion, unless he does look into his own mind? Are we not told that a tree is to be known by its fruit? And is not this figure employed by Jesus Christ to teach us that if our moral principles are good, we shall exhibit the visible signs of their goodness in our life and conversation?"

"I hear a great deal about moral goodness in the present day, but I very seldom see any; human nature is awfully depraved; some preach about its being made better by the grace of God, but I believe it never can be improved. The heart after conversion is as deceitful and as desperately wicked as before, and if we are saved it must be by free and sovereign grace."

"I admit, with you, Madam, that those who are saved 'are saved by grace through faith;' but does not that faith purify the heart and overcome the temptations of the world? Where the principle of grace is implanted, is it not represented as reigning through righteousness unto eternal life?"

"Yes, Sir, and our evangelical moralists tell us that the principle of grace will gradually extend its influence over the whole mind, till every disposition is subdued, and we are fitted for the kingdom of heaven."

"And do we not read that he that hath the hope of future blessedness 'purifieth himself, even as God is pure?'"

"But how can we purify ourselves? Does not such an idea supersede the work of the Spirit?"

"By no means, Madam. If we are made alive from the dead by the infusion of the principle of spiritual life, we possess a certain degree of moral power; but this power does not render us self-sufficient; we become new but not independent creatures. We have duties to discharge, but we are not left to discharge them in our own strength. Mark the reasoning of the apostle: 'For if ye live

after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye, *through the Spirit*, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' Here we see human agency, in concurrence with the assistance of the Spirit, employed in mortifying the deeds of the body."

"It is but seldom," observed Mr. Lawson, "that I interfere with any religious discussion, but I must confess that I like those principles which have the best influence over our temper and our actions. My wife contends for faith, and some high points in divinity which I cannot reach; and though I readily agree with her, that faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ is essential to salvation, yet I like to see some good works following it."

"What do we more than others?" I replied, "is a question which is proposed to us by high authority. Many who reject Christianity carry the principles of morality to very high perfection, and are distinguished for their integrity and benevolence, but we are required to surpass them. The same mind which dwelt in Christ Jesus is to dwell in us. We are not only to admire his humility and condescension, his meekness and his devotional fervour, but to imitate it. We are not only to love him as a Saviour, and obey him as a sovereign, but to follow him as an example. If we contend for the faith, we are to 'contend earnestly,' but always with the 'meekness of wisdom.' We should never indulge ourselves in indiscriminate censure, nor vainly presume on our own infallibility, but endeavour to hold the unity of the faith without bursting the bond of peace."

The young ladies, who appeared altogether indifferent to the conversation, now withdrew. They were genteel in their manners, and seemingly amiable in their dispositions; but their style of dress gave me no high opinion of their moral taste. They were much too gay in their appearance for the daughters of religious parents, and I could not avoid receiving the impression that they spent a larger portion of their time in adjusting the plaiting of their hair, and the disposal of their ornaments, than in the cultivation of their minds. I love to see an elegant neatness in female attire, but when the passion for dress reigns in the heart, it destroys dignity of character.

engenders vanity, consumes time, is always instituting comparisons which either mortify pride or inflame it; and it becomes such a perpetual drain on the resources of the pocket, that the claims of charity are rejected, because they cannot be relieved.

“My daughters,” said Mrs. Lawson, “have received a very superior education, but have never seen much of fashionable life; they were never at a ball or a play; and though I *once* permitted them to attend a concert, yet only once. I think their taste would lead them to such scenes of amusement; but, as they know my objections, they do not press for my consent.”

“As religious parents,” I observed, “*ought* to support the sacredness of their character by the moral consistency of their conduct, *so ought their children*. They have the same evil dispositions and propensities as the children of the irreligious, but they are placed under more powerful obligations to repress and subdue them. It is true that parents cannot force their children to be religious, but they have a right to expect them to pay some attention to the injunctions of religion, if not for their own sake, yet from respect to the feelings and reputation of their parents. This respect for parental feeling and reputation is often the safeguard of juvenile worth; but when it is once destroyed, the barrier of restraint is broken down, and ruin becomes almost inevitable. I once said to a youth, who was pleading in favour of a fashionable amusement, ‘Remember, your parents are pious; and if you persist, you will not only wound their feelings, but dishonour their reputation; and will you deliberately commit two such evils for a momentary gratification?’ After a short pause, he replied, ‘No, Sir; I will not purchase personal indulgence at such a price. I will never deliberately wound feelings which I ought to hold sacred, nor injure a reputation which I would allow no person to attack with impunity.’”

“That was a noble decision,” said Mr. Lawson, “and the youth who formed it, I have no doubt, is an ornament to his father’s house.”

I now ventured to remark, that the present era afforded the



Christian parent great facilities in the discharge of his religious duties towards his children, as the variety of engaging works which issue from the press are calculated not only to interest but to instruct, and the numerous societies which are formed for the education of the poor, and for evangelizing the heathen, have a tendency to keep up a high sense of the importance of religion in the youthful mind, while they call his powers into active operation."

"Yes, Sir," said Mrs. Lawson, "the press sends forth its monthly publications, but I permit very few to enter this house. I do not approve of teaching young people religion; for who can teach but the Holy Spirit? And He does not require any human performance to aid him in his work. Sunday-schools may do a little good, by keeping the children out of mischief; but I am no friend of missions to the heathen: when their time comes they will be called; and, till that 'set time' comes, it is no use for us to send them the gospel."

"Then, Madam," I asked, with some degree of surprise, "are your daughters connected with no religious institution?"

"No, Sir; and if they were to wish it, I would not give my consent. A person ought to possess religion before he engages in any religious exercises."

"I know a young lady," I observed, "who entered a Sunday-school, and she soon became an excellent teacher; but, when reflecting on the nature and design of her employment, her heart smote her, as she felt convinced that she had never experienced the power of religion on her own soul. It pleased God to bless these reflections to her conversion, and she is now an eminently devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus."

"Such a case *is possible*," said Mrs. Lawson, "because, 'with God all things are possible;' but I should think it an insult to Him to send my daughters to teach in a Sunday-school, or to collect for a missionary society, as an inducement for him to convert them."

"I wish," said Mr. Lawson, with great earnestness, "our daughters were converted; I should have a larger portion of happiness than I

now have, and should look forward to the grave with much more composure. But, alas! all their attention is devoted to the follies of the world—dress, music, painting, and visiting, consume the greater part of their time. I see the children of other religious families decidedly pious, but I see no signs of piety in mine; I begin to think that we have neglected the means, and therefore God withholds his grace.”

This remark excited a smile on the countenance of Mrs. Lawson, who satirically observed, that her husband was fond of the legal dispensation. “What,” she added, with great warmth of expression, “shall the Divine decree be subject to the control of our freewill? Have not the Lord’s people, in every age, had wicked children? Yes; Abraham had an Ishmael, and David an Absalom, ‘but the foundation of God standeth sure; the Lord knoweth them that are his.’”

“True, Madam; but are we not commanded to ‘train up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!’ I know that we cannot give them the grace of life, but we can give them instruction; we cannot force their obedience, but we may convince them of its reasonableness; we cannot keep them from evil, but we may succeed in placing many formidable obstructions in their path to ruin.”

“Very true, Sir; but human expedients will never renew their souls. This is a work which Divine grace alone can do; and I think that we ought not to labour to accomplish what we know we cannot effect.”

“But do we not know that the Spirit often breathes on the dry bones while the prophet is calling on them to live? We know that we cannot command a future harvest, but does that conviction prevent our sowing the seed?”

“But, Sir, it is no use to sow the seed unless God gives the increase.”

“Very true, Madam; and have we any reason to expect the increase unless we do sow the seed? Are we not commanded, ‘In the

morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good?"

"I know, Sir, that your opinions and mine are very different on most religious subjects; and I think, if we continue the debate, we shall not come to an agreement. I daily pray for the conversion of my children, and take them with me to hear the pure gospel of Jesus Christ; and I leave them in the hands of God, to do with them as seemeth good in his sight. I cannot merit grace for them, neither can they merit it for themselves. If it be given, it will be given freely; and if it be withheld, it will be withheld righteously."

The cool indifference with which she uttered these sentiments paralyzed my whole frame, and I felt that I ought to make no reply. Indeed, what reply could I make that would have made any good impressions on a mind so devoid of the common feelings of humanity, as to give utterance to expressions of such a fearful import? I involuntarily sighed over victims which a perverted faith was preparing against the day of slaughter, unless a miracle of grace should be wrought to prevent it, and speedily retired from the room, in which I had suffered more mental anguish than I had felt during my whole visit to Fairmout.

There is a strange diversity of character in the professing world, but amidst all the varieties which it contains, no one presents so many repelling qualities as the high antinomian professor. He embraces a few leading truths of the Bible, while he rejects others not less essential and important. His spirit is bitter, and his censures indiscriminate; and while he pleads for the divinity of a system which inculcates humility and meekness as cardinal virtues, he usually displays much pride, and great want of charity. He arrogates to himself the collected wisdom of the age, stamps his own opinions with the seal of infallibility, and has the vanity to suppose, and the hardihood to assert, that he, and he only, understands the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The compassion which sighs over the moral miseries of the world, never glows in his breast; the pity

that weeps in prospect of the desolation which is coming on the ungodly, never moistens his eye; the eloquence which would warn them of their danger, and point them to the refuge of safe retreat, never quivers on his lips; and if we could penetrate the deep recesses of his soul, and render ourselves familiar with every passion which claims a local habitation there, we should find ourselves associated with the master vices of the moral world; whose breath pollutes, and whose touch defiles; whose existence, in connection with the religion of the Saviour, is a mystery which a future day will unravel, but which the present has reason bitterly to deplore.

The antinomian heresy, which, happily, is not now so prevalent in this country as it was in the early part of the present century, is qualified for mischief by the very properties which might seem to render it merely an object of contempt—its vulgarity of conception, its paucity of ideas, and its determined hostility to taste, science, and letters. It includes, within a compass which every head can contain, and every tongue can utter, a system which cancels every moral tie, consigns the whole human race to the extremes of presumption or despair, erects religion on the ruins of morality, and imparts to the dregs of stupidity all the powers of the most active poison.

To find the children of such professors of religion devoted to the follies and vices of the world, ought to excite less surprise than regret; because it is wisely and judicially ordained, that the adoption of error and the neglect of duty shall meet with a just rebuke, and a severe chastisement, in the consequences which inseparably attend them. But ought not the irreligion of such children to become a beacon to warn parents of the danger of such perverted notions and such criminal remissness? Shall we presume to insult the Holy One by offering up our prayers for their conversion, if we withhold from them instruction, and cease to exercise a constant and active vigilance over the formation of their character and their habits?

Can such professors be said to *adorn* the doctrine of God our

Saviour in all things? Do they "add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity?" Are they conformed to the image of the Son of God? If we compare their vanity with his humility—their bitterness of spirit with his gentleness—their bigotry with his liberality—their love of discord and contention with his love of peace—their insensibility to the moral disorders of the world with the tears he shed when anticipating the desolations which were coming on the inhabitants of Jerusalem—and the rancorous eagerness which they discover to restrict the blessings of redemption to a select few, with the unbounded comprehension of his invitations addressed to all, of every age and every clime—we must feel at a loss to conceive how they can present any fair claim to fellowship with him. If the Saviour were to reappear on earth, he would calumniate no minister who preaches salvation by grace—he would break up the peace of no church which holds the unity of the faith—he would show his regard for the law of God by obeying its precepts, and unveil the glory of the gospel by proclaiming it among all people. But the modern antinomian preaches only to the *elect*—sets aside the authority of the law by pleading the indemnities of grace—disturbs the harmony of the brethren by the contentions of discord—and pours insufferable contempt on those holy men who endeavour to win souls to Christ, because they execute every part of their commission. We may speak of them in the language which Jacob employed in reference to two of his sons, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."

Sometimes these high antinomian sentiments are embraced by persons whose genuine piety operates as a check to their natural tendency; but they ought always to be avoided as a moral contagion, which, though kept under restraint for a season, will eventually break out, and produce essential injury in any Christian community. Who can look abroad without seeing occasion to deplore their pernicious effects? The religious instruction of children is discounte-

nanced—the claims of the heathen are rejected—the love of the brethren no longer remains the test of discipleship—the great majority of the world are placed under the ban of reprobation—the attractive graces of the Spirit are repudiated as obnoxious to the faith—and the lovely, the merciful, the compassionate Redeemer is appealed to, to sanction these monstrosities of modern professors.

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### CALM DISCUSSION.



THE letter which Miss Roscoe addressed to her parents proved a means of softening down their prejudices, and convincing them of the impropriety of attempting to force her to comply with customs which were offensive to her feelings. Though they could not feel the attractions in religion of which she spake, they resolved never more to annoy or reproach her. Thus the cloud which had been gathering for months, threatening the destruction of all her domestic peace, passed away, and she was now left to pursue her onward course undismayed by difficulties, because she had no longer to contend with the spirit of persecution.

I have sometimes known the ardour of devotional feeling cool as soon as the fire of persecution has been extinguished; and the heroic fortitude, which the storm has been unable to subdue, has gradually relaxed under the soft influence of prosperous ease. The mind, almost instinctively, accommodates itself to its circumstances; and though it rises in stern defiance against the lawless threats of injustice and oppression, it too often sinks into a state of comparative apathy when opposition ceases. It is at such a period that religious principles are in danger. Courtesy will often prompt to a sacrifice which compulsion could never obtain; a smile will sometimes con-

quer where a frown would fortify to resistance; and the faith which has stood immovable amidst the virulence of reproach and sarcasm, has sometimes wavered under the entreaties of parental kindness, and the tender solicitations of endeared friends.

But such was the ascendancy which Divine truth had acquired over the mind of Miss Roscoe, and such the decision of her character, that no external change impaired the strength, or shook the firmness of her religious principles. She was not less spiritually minded under the sunbeams of prosperity than when adversity lowered; her affection for her parents did not diminish her superior regard to her Redeemer; and though she now felt still stronger obligations to please them, yet she regulated the whole of her conduct by the sacred maxim — “Them that honour me, I will honour, saith the Lord.”

It was after her return from the cottage of a poor neighbour, where she had been administering the consolations of religion to a young woman about her own age, who was then in the last stage of consumption, that she sat herself down on a sofa, in perfect abstraction, unconscious of the presence of her father, who had just entered the parlour. For some time he felt unwilling to disturb her, but at length he broke in upon her musings, by asking if she felt indisposed?

“Oh, no, papa, I am not indisposed; I never enjoyed a finer state of health, or greater elevation of feeling than I do at this moment. I have been spending an hour with Jane Thomason, whose happy spirit is on the eve of departing from this vale of tears. It is beside the bed of the dying that I feel the degradation and the grandeur of my nature. There I see what sin has done to disfigure and destroy the body; and there I see what the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ does to adorn and dignify the soul.”

“Yes, my dear, death is a debt which we must all pay; and I hope we shall be able to pay it with submission when nature demands it. But I wish you not to suffer yourself to be too much absorbed by this subject, as it will depress your spirits. I have long known

Jane; she was always a virtuous girl, and I doubt not but she has made her peace with her Maker.”

“Depress me, father!—No; such a theme of meditation possesses no depressing tendency. It is true, a momentary tremor will come over my spirit when I think of the parting scene and the unknown pang of dying, but it is only a momentary tremor—a passing tribute to the value of that life which I would spontaneously resign for a more perfect state of existence, if my heavenly Father required me to do it.”

“But if you incessantly dwell on a future state of existence, I fear you will neither improve nor enjoy the present. The present has its duties, which we ought to discharge, and its pleasures, which we ought to enjoy; and, while we may derive some consolation from the prospect of a future life, I think we ought not to undervalue the present.”

“To undervalue the present life, my father, would be an insult to Him who gave it; and to neglect its duties, would be to incur his righteous displeasure; but when we feel the renovating influence of Divine grace infusing the principle of spiritual life into the soul, it will be impossible for us to wish for its endless duration. I have just been reading a discourse, which says, ‘The soul no sooner receives this new life, than it begins to be filled with hopes and fears, desires and dispositions, to which, in its fallen state, it is an entire stranger. It becomes concerned about its own safety, and conscious of its own dignity. The things of eternity arrest its attention, and call all its powers into exercise. It thinks, and feels, and acts, as though it regarded itself born for an immortal existence—as though it looked on heaven as its home, and never could be satisfied or happy till it should be engaged in its services and sharing in its joys.’”

“Well, my dear, I hope, when our earthly pilgrimage is ended, that we shall meet in heaven; but I must confess that I do not feel that glow of animation in the prospect of it which you feel. In looking over the letter I received from you the other day, I was surprised to find that we differ so little in our religious belief; and yet,



when we converse together, a stranger would imagine that we are at the distance of the antipodes from each other. We admit the same truths in theory, but you appear to discover an importance and an excellence in them which I cannot feel or perceive. They are invested with a charm in your mind to which I am altogether insensible. Indeed, there is a mysteriousness connected with their operation on you which I cannot comprehend. Can you explain it?"

"Our Lord," said Miss Roscoe, "when conversing with his disciples, who had proposed to him this question, 'Why speakest thou unto them in parables?' answered, 'It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' It is evident, from this passage, that the truth which is revealed, requires some supernatural illumination to enable us to understand it; and if you search the Scriptures attentively, you will perceive that this fact is asserted in the most positive and direct terms. 'The natural man' saith the apostle, 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, *because they are spiritually discerned.*'"

"But are we to expect that this supernatural illumination, of which you speak, will convey to us any truth which is not already revealed? If so, the revelation is imperfect, and if not, it strikes me that a supernatural illumination is unnecessary."

"There will be no fresh truth communicated; but without this Divine illumination we shall not discern the importance and excellence of that which is revealed. Hence we read of having the eyes of our understanding enlightened. The psalmist prays thus: 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law!' And the historian who records the conversion of Lydia, when assigning the cause of it, says, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.'"

"But as we are endowed with an understanding which is capable of discriminating between truth and error, I cannot perceive the necessity of any supernatural assistance. I believe that we are

sinner, and I believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners. I do not want any supernatural illumination to confirm my belief of these facts."

"But you want supernatural assistance to invest your belief with power to impress them on your heart. You may believe that you are a sinner, and yet you may not see the malignancy of sin, nor yet feel that deep, poignant sorrow which the Scriptures call repentance. You may believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and yet may not perceive how his death accomplishes this great design."

"But I fear, my dear Sophia, you are now soaring into the region of mysticism, and are in danger of paying more attention to the visions of your fancy than to the convictions of your understanding."

"No; a mystical theology is not only inexplicable, but it cannot be defended by sober and rational argument. Am I offering an insult to my reason when I beseech the Father of light to illumine my understanding, and thus enable me to perceive, *not only the meaning, but the beauty and excellence of the truth which he has revealed?* And considering the volatility of the mind, how much it is under the control and dominion of the passions, how rarely it can abstract itself from sensible objects and pursuits, and what uniform indifference it manifests to the great questions of personal piety, shall I be considered as acting irrationally, if I pray that I may be deeply and permanently affected by the truth which I believe? O, my father! I can attest from experience that this supernatural illumination of the mind is the great secret in personal religion. Without it we are in darkness, while encompassed by the light of revelation; may admit the inspiration of the Bible, while the veil of mystery hangs over its sacred pages; may condemn, as Puritanical or Methodistical, the very principles we theoretically acknowledge to be divine; and, amidst all our professions of reverence for the character of God, and love to the person of the Redeemer, may be destitute of that mental peace which arises from a *scriptural* belief of the truth."

The conversation now turned on the right which every person possesses to form his own opinion on religious truth.

"I have been an enemy to free inquiry," said Mr. Roscoe, "but on maturer reflection I must give up my opposition. Where this liberty is enjoyed there will be great diversity of opinion, but probably that will prove less injurious to the practical influence of religion than a perfect uniformity, which admits of no discussion. When you and I thought alike on religious questions, my mind was in a stagnant state; I very rarely thought much or deeply on the subject; but since you have imbibed your present views my feelings have been agitated; I have been obliged to re-examine the evidences of my belief also; and though I cannot agree with you on all points, yet I begin to see that my knowledge is defective."

"Persecution," Miss Roscoe remarked, "on account of religious opinions is a cruel crime, and though the apologist has often attempted to palliate it, and sometimes to justify it, yet it is nothing less than an outrage on the inalienable rights of man. Who can compel me to believe any system of opinions? The effort, if made, would be fruitless, because physical force cannot subdue the understanding; and if I do believe any system of opinions, who can compel me to disbelieve? Have I not the same right to exercise my judgment in the adoption of my belief as another person, and ought I to be disturbed, especially in this land of freedom, if I claim and exercise this right?"

"I think not, though our prejudices are so very much in favour of old established doctrines and customs, that we almost necessarily feel impelled to interfere and prevent a person, if possible, abandoning them. A parent, who is a member of the Establishment, does not like to see his child deserting it, and though a severe critic may attribute this to the force of prejudice, yet I am not surprised that it should assume a powerful influence over the feelings. The religious belief in which we have been educated, whose rites, and forms, and ceremonies are associated with our earliest recollections, at whose hallowed altars we have formed the most sacred of all human

alliances, and in whose consecrated earth the remains of our ancestors are deposited, may be supposed to enkindle, even in the breast of age, the fire of a youthful attachment; and it must occasion deep regret to see it forsaken as the child of superstition or the parent of error."

"I assure you I have no inclination to leave the Establishment, though, I presume, you will admit that I have a right to do it if I should think proper."

"Your right is admitted, for I am convinced that we ought not to attempt to control the judgment of another; but I sincerely hope that you will never think proper to exercise your right."

"It is not likely that I shall. I am under no temptation to do so. I admire the liturgy of our church, I approve of her articles; and though there are imperfections, which a scrutinizing eye may discover, in her constitution and in some of her ceremonies, yet I believe that she is as pure as any church of modern times."

"I am happy that your evangelical views of truth have not destroyed your veneration and esteem for the Establishment, as it would be a source of great mortification to us if you were to become a Dissenter."

"I am not acquainted with any Dissenter, except Mr. Lewellin, whom I have occasionally met at Mr. Stevens's, but our attention has been so fully engaged by the great and important truths of revelation, that I have never heard the question of dissent discussed. As Christians of every denomination will meet together in heaven, and unite in one common anthem of praise, I think they ought to cherish the kindest affection for each other; and, instead of suffering the minor questions of difference, which give a distinctive shade to their religious character, to keep them in a state of reciprocal alienation, they ought to 'dwell together as brethren.'"

"But, my dear, I am no advocate for an indiscriminate association of religious people. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' Your attachment for the church may be weakened if you hold intercourse with those who dissent from it. There are, I have no doubt,

some wise and good men among the Dissenters; but, as there is *a larger number of that description among us*, I think you will have no occasion to wander out of the pale of the church for society."

"It is not, I assure you, my intention to form a large circle of acquaintance; but I must confess that my mind is too deeply imbued with the catholic spirit of the gospel, to keep up the separation which divides those who are united together by ties more sacred and durable than those of nature or common friendship. The ardour of my feelings may impel me to become zealous in the cause of vital godliness, but I feel such an aversion to bigotry, that I do not think that I shall ever become a bigot. To me the questions of conformity and non-conformity, of church and dissent, are so insignificant and worthless, when put into comparison with the vital Christianity of the Bible, that I dismiss them from my mind. No, my dear father, I value, more than I value life, the truth which bears the stamp of Divine authority, and care but little for the opinions which are alternately admitted and rejected by human authority."

Mrs. Roscoe now entered the parlour; and, after taking her seat, she expressed the pleasure which she had felt on reading her daughter's letter; and said she hoped, though they differed on religious subjects, that in future they should live together in peace. She assured Miss Roscoe that the trifling opposition they had raised against her was not intended to wound her feelings; and, as they were now satisfied of the goodness of her motives, though they still felt a little regret at the eccentricity of her habits, they should leave her to pursue the course which her own good sense was competent to mark out. "We hope you will not object to accompany us when we visit our friends?"

"Certainly not, mamma, unless it be to a ball or card party. My religious principles have not alienated me from the pleasures of social life, though they have given me a distaste for fashionable amusements.

"Your secession from the fashionable circle," said Mrs. Roscoe,

“has excited both astonishment and regret; and many of your best friends very much pity you.”

“Their astonishment, mamma, does not surprise me; and though I accept of the expressions of their regret as a proof of their friendship, yet if they knew the cause and the reasons, they would be more disposed to offer me their congratulations. I have exchanged one source of gratification for another; and can attest, from experience, as I have tried both, that my present is more pure and more satisfactory than the former.”

“Really, my dear, I often wonder what you can see in religion to be so captivated by it?”

“If, mamma, my mind had not been illuminated by a heavenly light, I should have seen no attractions in it. I once saw none; and if I had been told a few years since that I should live to renounce the gaieties of the world, and embrace the calumniated doctrines of evangelical piety, I should have trembled in prospect of the issue.”

“And I assure you that I even now tremble for the issue. I fear that you will have your mind so bewildered with your religious notions, that its energy will be destroyed, and its peace entirely broken up.”

“You need not, my dear mamma, give yourself any uneasiness on that subject. I am happy, more happy than at any former period of my life; and I have a prospect of future happiness before me. What more can I desire? I have gained the prize for which all are contending; and though it has been found within the sacred inclosures of religion, where I never expected to find it, yet ought I to cast it from me?”

“Well, my dear Sophia, if you are happy, I will not attempt to disturb your happiness.”

“No,” said Mr. Roscoe; “nor shall others. If it has pleased God to give you a portion of heavenly light, which he has withheld from us, we will not try to extinguish it. I deeply regret that I ever reproached you for your religion, or opposed you, for I am now con-

vinced that the spirit which originates such measures must be evil. A remark which I met with in a discourse recently published by a clergyman, has made a deep impression on my mind. He says, when illustrating the following sentence—‘Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried’—‘It might often serve to stay the hand of persecution in religion, to consider who, in fact, sharpens the axe of the executioner, lights the fires of cruelty, or kindles the still fiercer flames of bigotry and theological hatred in the soul. It is *his* work who is ‘the father of lies;’ and therefore the natural enemy of the truth is the author of every plot for its destruction. Consider, therefore, if you discover even a spark of intolerance and harshness in your own heart, in what flame that spark is kindled, and make haste to extinguish it in the waters of love.’ When opposing you, my dear Sophia, I thought I was merely opposing a modern fanaticism; but it is possible that I have, through ignorance, been opposing the progress of genuine piety. Ignorance may palliate, but cannot excuse crime; and I now resolve to let you enjoy unmolested the liberty of thinking and deciding for yourself on the great question of religion; and my daily prayer is, that God will be as merciful and gracious to us, as he has been to you.”

Miss Roscoe replied, after she had recovered herself from that overflow of feeling which such noble sentiments had excited, “I thank you, I thank you, my dear father, for your kindness. You have given me many proofs of your attachment, but this last I receive as the strongest, because I value it as the most sacred. It is to the influence of others that I always attributed the opposition which I have met with; and, as I felt conscious that it would die away upon cool reflection, I endured it as a temporary evil, which would become productive of a permanent good. Had I met with no opposition, I should not have enjoyed so much my present liberty; and I trust that the veil of oblivion will now fall on the past, while a brighter vision rises on our fancy as we look forward to future days.”

How many have pined away in the dungeon, or expired at the

stake, under the relentless demon of persecution! and though the shield of the civil law now protects Britons from the tortures which the pious of former ages had to endure, yet the evil spirit still exists, and often displays, even in this land of freedom, its unsubdued enmity against the pure religion of Jesus Christ. It cannot imprison, but it can reproach; it cannot consume by an instantaneous death, but it can break down and destroy the vivacity of the mind by the lingering process of daily sarcasm and misrepresentation; yet, let not the sufferer compromise his principles, but remain faithful, even unto death. The angel of the Apocalypse, when assigning the reason why some of the brethren of Smyrna should be cast into prison, left on record the design which God has in view by permitting *you to be afflicted*. "He (*i.e.*, the devil) shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried."—"Here, then," to quote the language of an elegant writer, "if you are the children of God, is the real end and object of your trials. They are permitted, not in anger, but in love; not to destroy, but to sanctify; to prove your sincerity, to try your patience, to ascertain your deficiencies, quicken your zeal, and stimulate you to confidence, and trust, and prayer, and love to Him who is 'able to save to the uttermost all that come to him.' It is thus that our heavenly Father frustrates the devices of the devil. The very fires lighted by the enemy of saints, serve only to cherish the graces of the true Christian, to melt down the irregularities of temper, to *burn in* and fix all those qualities which were, perhaps, hitherto sketched but in light and fading colours on the character. The spirit of persecution may rage against you, but its duration is fixed. 'Ye shall have tribulation *ten days*:' and as He, 'whose you are, and whom you serve,' has limited its duration, so he can abate its violence; and, when his gracious designs are accomplished, he will deliver you from its power. The religion of Jesus Christ has often been despised and rejected, even by those who are her ministers; and sometimes she has been bound in chains by the kings of the earth, as though she were the destroyer of human happiness; but she has, in this country, broken asunder the bands



of her captivity, and is enjoying unrestricted liberty. 'May her sceptre sway the enlightened world around.' 'Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us, God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.'

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## SELF-DELUSION.

**A**CCORDING to our custom, after the engagements of the day we retired to the drawing-room, to enjoy the pleasures of social intercourse. Mr. Stevens having spent the morning in visiting among scenes of sorrow and distress, our conversation naturally turned on the subject of human happiness and sorrow. After much varied discourse, Mr. Roscoe (who formed one of our party) observed, "There is much misery in the world; and every individual of the human family is called, at some period of his life, to drink its bitter draughts; yet, in my opinion, there is a larger portion of happiness distributed among us than is usually admitted."

"These observations," said Mr. Stevens, "are quite correct; yet how few wish to live their life over again. Some, who have no hope of a blissful immortality, would not object to a second birth and to a second childhood; but in general they would prefer some other course of life than that which they have run, under a supposition that they should be able to avoid the evils by which they have been oppressed, and gain the prize of mental happiness, which they have never obtained."

"But the reluctance which we may feel to go back to infancy, and live through our past life is, in my opinion, no substantial argument against a preponderance of happiness in the world. If we prefer another course to that which we have run, it is because we calculate

on a fewer number of evils, and a greater portion of enjoyment; but who would not willingly endure all the miseries which he has suffered, with the comforts with which he has been favoured, rather than die and enter the invisible world, where he knows not what destiny awaits him?"

"If we know not what destiny awaits us in the eternal world, we ought to prefer the endless continuance of life, even when associated with the severest afflictions, rather than wish for its termination; because *here* the most violent pulsations of anguish admit of some intermitting seasons of ease; but *there*, if we miss the prize, *we shall be cast out into outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, and for ever.*"

"This subject," said Mr. Roscoe, "at times almost overwhelms me; and like Job, when in his anguish, I am inclined to say, 'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man-child conceived.' But this is useless. I am in being, and can't go out of existence. I may pass from one world to another, and sometimes wish to pass the line which separates the unseen from the visible world, that I may know the final issue; but this is not a permanent desire. No! the final issue of life is invested with such solemn and awful grandeur, so much personal and relative happiness or misery is dependent on it, that I feel either instinctively or morally afraid to anticipate it. Indeed, I should be a more happy man if I could disbelieve the immortality of the soul. Yes, I should. I could enjoy life; and though I might feel some occasional regret in prospect of ceasing to exist, yet then I should escape the awful sense of horror which sometimes fills my mind in the fearful apprehensions of future degradation and misery."

"I have thought," said Mr. Stevens, "from our former conversations, that you had no doubt of a state of future happiness."

"Very true, I once had no doubt, but then I never thought deeply on the subject. I felt confident that I should enter heaven, and participate in the joys of the blessed, immediately after my decease; but then I was under the power of that self-delusion which you so

often entreated me to guard against. I sometimes felt a momentary elation in anticipation of seeing the beauty and grandeur of the heavenly world; but when I began to examine the foundation of my confidence, I found it giving way. I thought that the Supreme Being could not, consistently with his benevolence, inflict punishment in another world for the sins committed in this; and that the conscientious discharge of our relative duties towards each other, constituted the whole extent of our obligations to him. Hence I necessarily expected a state of future happiness; but, by a closer examination of the Scriptures, I am convinced that he has appointed a day in which the administration of justice will be conducted impartially; when the motives of human action, as well as the actions of human life, will undergo a strict investigation, and we shall be rewarded or punished according as we have done good or evil."

"This is a very important discovery, and may be regarded as the beginning of a great change in your religious opinions—a change which may lead to the most happy results."

"But can such a discovery, which has plunged me into an abyss of terrific horror, ever lead to any favourable issue?"

"Yes, Sir, it can. It is the discovery of our guilt and our danger that predisposes and impels us to receive the Christian faith as exactly adapted to our moral condition. Until this discovery is made, the scheme of salvation which is revealed in the Bible may be contemplated as true, without being *felt as necessary*; and the mind, perplexed and bewildered by the speculative doctrines of its own belief, may admit them in theory, and yet reject their practical application. But when we feel our guilt, and perceive the moral danger to which it inevitably exposes us, we necessarily ask the question which the jailer of Philippi once put to the apostle, 'What must I do to be saved?' Will a person ever put such a question till he *feels* that he is in danger of being lost?"

"Certainly not; but when he *does feel* that danger, the question becomes not only proper, but one of paramount importance. And what *MUST* we do?"

“As you have admitted the importance of the question, I at once reply to it, and do so by quoting the language which the apostle used when it was proposed to him—‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ This reply corresponds with the language of Jesus Christ himself, who says, ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Hence you perceive that *our salvation is made to depend on our belief in Christ*; but it must be obvious to you that it must be such a belief as will produce a practical effect. Not a vague and inoperative assent, which leaves the mind in a state of moral apathy, neither alarmed by a perception of danger, nor delighted by the promise of deliverance; but that strong faith in the efficacy of the Saviour’s death, and his willingness to save, which will impel us to make a direct and a constant appeal to him.”

“I am aware that a change is taking place in my religious opinions, or rather, that my religious opinions are beginning to produce a deeper impression in my heart; but my happiness is not increased by it. Indeed, I cannot account for the singular restlessness and depression of my mind. I once could pray with ease and pleasure; but now, if I make the effort, I cannot do it. I once had great delight in reading the Scriptures, but now I cannot understand them. The more I read and reflect, the deeper I am involved in mental perplexity; and such is the perturbed state of my feelings, that unless it please God to interpose, and give me some relief, I shall be lost.”

As he gave utterance to these expressions, we were no less astonished than delighted; and the rapid interchange of looks, seemed to indicate a positive mistrust of our senses. A perfect silence prevailed among us for some minutes, while each one felt grateful to *Him* who was in the act of redeeming a noble spirit from the bondage of ignorance and self-delusion, by pouring into the recesses of his soul the light of truth. At length Mr. Stevens said, with an emphasis which I shall never forget,

“Permit me, my dear Sir, to offer you my congratulations. Your present depression is to me a source of unutterable joy. Your spirit is wounded by an unseen hand; but there is balm in Gilead—there is a Physician there. You are involved in a state of mental perplexity, which increases in proportion as you labour to extricate yourself; but the day-star will ere long arise in your heart, and then, under the light of a clear manifestation of the truth, you will not only see its beauties, but feel its moral power. You may be tempted to conclude that your case is singular, and that you shall never be able to derive any consolation from the promises of the Bible; but you must guard against receiving such an impression; and remember that *He* who, when on earth, opened the eyes of the blind, and made the dumb to sing, and *He alone*, can give you that spiritual discernment which constitutes the essential difference between a real and a nominal Christian.”

Mr. Roscoe felt somewhat embarrassed by this powerful appeal; but recovering himself, and assuming his natural dignity of manner, he said, in a subdued tone, “I have much to unlearn, and much to learn, before I can become a real Christian. The following passage, in one of St. Paul’s epistles, has often puzzled me, but now I begin to understand its meaning: *‘Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.’* I once thought that I could acquire a knowledge of the theory of revealed truth by the mere effort of intellectual research and investigation, as we acquire a knowledge of any human science; and perhaps few men have devoted more time to the study of it than myself; but I have hitherto neglected to implore wisdom from above, because I did not think it necessary. And the result of all my mental application is a painful discovery of my own ignorance, and even this was not made till I saw my danger. My dear Sophia has often told me that a Divine illumination of the mind is the great secret in personal religion; but I could form no conception of her meaning. Such a sentiment appeared to me not only *unnecessary*, but absurd; and I often feared, when she has been

speaking on this subject, that her understanding was bewildered amidst the unintelligible reveries of a mystical theology. Sometimes, it is true, her arguments would be attended with so much force and skill that she has compelled me to change the subject of debate; but on a recent occasion, when she quoted the passage, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,' it made so deep an impression upon my heart, that from that hour to the present I have undergone a perpetual conflict between my prejudices and convictions."

Mr. Roscoe had engaged to return home early in the evening, and now withdrew, but not without expressing the great pleasure which the conversation had afforded him, and making us promise that we would spend an evening at his house in the following week.

Mr. Stevens and I walked with him the greater part of the way home. It was a lovely evening. The moon was just rising above the top of a distant hill; and, as we were entering the grove, we lingered to listen to the songs of the nightingales responding to each other.

"Here is melody," said Mr. Roscoe. "Here is the song of innocence. Here is sweet contentment. And why is the bird of night more happy than man? Ah! why?"

"Because," said Mr. Stevens, "man is fallen from that state of purity and honour in which he was created, and it is wisely ordained that misery shall be the consequence of sin." We now bade him adieu.

On our return, Mrs. Stevens said, "I should like to send a note to Miss Roscoe, to tell her the nature of our conversation with her father. Dear creature, it will make her so glad."

"I think you had better defer doing so till to-morrow; and even then I would advise you to avoid precipitancy. Her mind has recently been under very strong excitement, and as such news will necessarily produce a powerful effect, great prudence is needful on your part in making this communication. As she has to pass from



"IT WAS A LOVELY EVENING. THE MOON WAS JUST RISING AS WE  
ENTERED THE GROVE."

the deepest anxiety to the most elevated joy, she ought not to be startled by a hasty communication; it should be made cautiously, that the transition of feeling may be gradual, instead of rushing in upon her with overpowering force."

"Perhaps, when he sees her, he will make some allusion to the subject of our conversation, which may lead to an entire disclosure of the state of his feelings. What a change! How surprising! I seem as if I were suddenly roused from an enchanting dream."

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Stevens, "it is surprising that the Lord of glory should condescend to subdue the enmity of the human heart, and thus make the child of disobedience an heir of glory; but it ought not to surprise us. If we look back, we shall remember the time when to us the theatre possessed more attractions than the house of God, and the follies of gay life gave us more delight than the exercises of devotion; 'but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are we saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'"

"If," said Mrs. Stevens, "Mr. Roscoe should come forth a *decided character*, it will make a powerful impression on his irreligious friends. Surely they will not be able to withstand the force of such a striking evidence in favour of the divine origin of the Christian faith—why, it is a self-evident demonstration. I begin to anticipate the happiest results."

"But, my dear, you must not be too sanguine; Mr. Roscoe may not come forth *so soon, nor so decidedly*, as you anticipate. Though I trust the great moral change has taken place which distinguishes the real from the nominal Christian, yet, as his mind is of a very singular order, we may conclude it will still retain its individuality, and develop its new qualities with that precision and precaution which are its distinctive characteristics. We may calculate on decision, but not rash or hasty decision; on energy, but not much ardent zeal; and on unbending integrity and unremitting con-



stancy; but his progression is likely to be that of a man moving onwards with the dignity of principle, rather than under the impulse of strong passion."

"But do you not suppose that he will go to Broadhurst, and hear our dear Mr. Ingleby next Sabbath?"

"Certainly not; you are not to conclude, from the conversation of this evening, that he yet sees the truth with perfect clearness. No, he rather resembles the man of whom we read in the gospel, who, when the mystic power commenced its mighty operation, saw men so indistinctly that they appeared 'like trees walking.' The film is but partially removed from the eye of his understanding; and though he has the power of spiritual discernment, yet not perfectly. And such is the degree of influence which prejudice, and family, and social connections may still have over his mind, that probably he will not very soon break through his long-established habits, and mingle among us as one of our own people. Indeed, I hardly wish it; because it will be so extraordinary, that it would be considered as a religious mania, taken as by some kind of mysterious infection, rather than the positive result of deep thought, and cool and deliberate judgment. Oh, no; minds, when under the dominion of grace, are usually governed according to the settled laws of their own constitution; and hence the difference of conduct, in relation to an open profession of religion, which is so apparent among the heirs of salvation."

"I am sure Mr. Ingleby will be delighted to hear of it. I have often heard him say, that the conversion of a moral man to the faith of Christ is a more decisive proof of the efficacy of Divine truth, than the conversion of an immoral man, and a much more rare occurrence."

"Yes, my dear, it is more rare, and more difficult, because it is not so easy to convince of mental sin as of an overt act of impiety; but I do not wish that there should be even the most distant allusion made on the subject to any one but Miss Roscoe."

"My dear, you surprise me."

“Perhaps I may, but I think you will be satisfied with my reasons for wishing silence to be observed. If we hastily proclaim to our friends that Mr. Roscoe has undergone a great change in his religious opinions and principles, we may raise expectations which his cautious habit of mind may disappoint, at least for a season, and thus bring on ourselves the censures of some, for stating as a fact what we merely wish to be true. And not only so, but we shall deprive his decision of that power of impression which I think it will ultimately possess. For if we are more forward to speak of such a mental change than he is to profess it, we may be considered as the originators of it; and in that case his example will not have such a powerful influence over his irreligious friends, as it will have if it appear to be the result, as I expect it will, of calm deliberation. He will move with great caution, and we should speak with equal caution.”

“What effect do you think his conversion will have on Mrs. Roscoe?”

“Why, unless it should please God to interpose, and bring her to the knowledge of the truth, I have no doubt but it will be regarded by her as some astounding and destructive visitation, sent by an unknown hand to destroy her happiness for life. She is but partially reconciled to the piety of her daughter; and, even now, expresses not only her surprise, but her deep regret; and if her husband become pious (as I have no doubt but he will), though she may endeavour to conform herself to his religious habits, yet it will be with extreme reluctance. But perhaps by his conversation, and the dignified consistency of his conduct, he may succeed in process of time, in answer to his own fervent prayers and the wrestling prayers of dear Sophia, in winning her to Christ.”

“It is possible, nay, very probable, as prayer will be made for her continually; and the prayer of faith brings to pass moral wonders. We may live to hail them both as fellow-heirs of the grace of life.”

“What a blissful consummation!”

## A NIGHT CALAMITY.



NEAR Fairmount Villa stood a tasteful cottage, which Mr. Stevens had erected as a means of giving additional security to his premises. It was occupied by a worthy man, named Josiah Hargrave, who gained his livelihood as a common carrier. He had commenced life as a labourer; and, by honest industry and perseverance, had risen to a state of comparative independence. His cottage was well furnished; he had two cows, a good horse and cart, a doukey, a large stock of poultry, some pigs, and hay and straw enough to last him through winter. He had been married about seven years; and had three children, two sons and a daughter. Here they lived in peace and contentment, neither envying their richer, nor despising their poorer neighbours.

I called on them one day; and, when congratulating them on their prosperity, I was struck with the very sensible remarks which Mrs. Hargrave made on the uncertain duration of all earthly blessing.

“Our heavenly Father,” she observed, “has blessed us indeed; He has given us more than we deserve, and more than we expected; and He, who has given us all, can, if He please, take all away.”

“Yes, He can; and suppose He should deprive you of your little possessions, do you think you could bow in submission, and say, *Thy will be done?*”

“Yes, Sir, if He give the disposition; but if not, we should repine.”

“Ah! Sir,” Josiah remarked, “we are poor sinful creatures. In prosperity we are ungrateful, and in adversity rebellious, unless it please the Lord to sanctify to us His dispensations.”

“Which state,” I asked, “should you prefer, if it were left to your choice—prosperity or adversity?”

“Why,” said Josiah, “I would rather let my heavenly Father

choose for me, than venture to choose for myself, because He cannot err; but I may. Prosperity, without His blessing, would be a snare; adversity, with it, would be a comfort."

We were interrupted in our conversation by the sudden entrance of the eldest boy, a lad about five years of age, who exclaimed, "I have said my hymn! and,"—— before he saw me.

"Come," said the mother, "go and speak to the gentleman."

"Yes," added the father, "and say your hymn to him."

The boy approached with a modest blush, and immediately repeated the following verses, with ease and propriety:—

"I thank the goodness and the grace,  
Which on my birth have smil'd,  
And made me, in these Christian days,  
A happy English child.

"I was not born, as thousands are,  
Where God was never known,  
And taught to pray a useless pray'r  
To blocks of wood and stone.

"I was not born a little slave,  
To labour in the sun,  
And wish I were but in the grave,  
And all my labour done.

"I was not born without a home,  
Or in some broken shed,  
A gipsy baby, taught to roam  
And steal my daily bread.

"My God, I thank thee, who hast plann'd  
A better lot for me;  
And placed me in this happy land,  
Where I may hear of thee."

He repeated also the third chapter of the Gospel according to John, without making any mistake.

"And where does your boy go to school?"

"He goes," said Josiah, "to Mrs. Stevens's Sabbath-school; and, for the last six months, he has been twice in the week up to Squire Roscoe's; and Miss Roscoe has been so kind as to teach him."

“There was a time,” I remarked, “when the rich were either too proud, or too much devoted to the pleasures of the world, to attend to the improvement of the lower classes; but now they discover a disposition to favour almost every institution which pure benevolence establishes.”

“Yes, Sir,” said Josiah, “some do; but not all. We have a few in the parish who are very angry with Mrs. Stevens for setting up her Sabbath-school; and they have tried to put it down; but, thank God, they have not been able to do it. We have but little light; and why should they try to put it out? I went the other day up to Cleveland Hall, and Sir Harry Wilmot, who was a great enemy to Mrs. Stevens’s Sabbath-school, was pleased to say that my Charles was a very sharp and well-behaved lad, and did us credit. ‘Yes, Sir,’ I replied, ‘and we may thank Mrs. Stevens for that; for if she had not opened her Sunday-school, our boy would be as rude and as ignorant as other boys.’ ‘What!’ said Sir Harry, ‘does your boy go to her school?’ ‘Yes, Sir.’ He was silent some time, and walked backwards and forwards his room, and then went to his bureau, and took out a pound, and said, ‘Make my compliments to Mrs. Stevens, and give her this towards the support of her school; and tell her that as long as I see such fruits of her labour, I will encourage them.’”

“It is pleasing,” I remarked, “to see the prejudices which some of the more opulent and powerful have cherished against the benevolent institutions of society, giving way; and I have no doubt but they will ultimately become the generous supporters of them.”

\* \* \* \* \*

We had protracted our conversation at Fairmount to an unusually late hour, and were preparing to retire to rest, when we heard the cry of “Fire!” We immediately rushed out, and, on passing through the back yard, we saw the flames issuing from Hargrave’s cottage. We hastened to afford assistance; but as the wind blew hard, and we had no engine, it was impossible to save more than a few articles of furniture. It was a dismal scene; I shall never

forget that awful night. The mother, with one child in her arms, and another by her side, with difficulty made their escape; and Josiah, in trying to remove his poor dumb ass from the shed, which stood close behind the cottage, was severely scorched; and, though he returned again and again, he was obliged to abandon her.

At length the fury of the wind abated, the rain came down in torrents, and the neighbours, flocking to our assistance, we were able, within the space of about two hours, to extinguish the fire. We now turned our attention to the poor sufferers, who had taken refuge in the villa. On entering the kitchen, I beheld Mrs. Hargrave with her infant in her arms, Charles standing close by her chair, and her husband reclining against the wall, as the surgeon was examining his wounds. When they were dressed, and the terror had somewhat subsided, Josiah said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, but, blessed be his name, he hath not taken away my wife nor my children."

"There are," said Mr. Stevens, "some circumstances connected with every affliction which take off their keen edge, and give a stronger excitement to our gratitude, than to a murmuring disposition."

"But," said Josiah, as he stood gazing on the living wreck of his possession, "where is Henry? I don't see him."

"Where did you carry him?" said the mother. "You took him up and ran out with him, when I came out with Charles and Ann."

"I have not seen him," said Josiah.

The mother, on hearing this reply, darted from her seat, exclaiming, with a look and in a tone of frantic agony, "My Henry is burnt! my Henry is burnt! O, my Henry! my poor dear Henry! I shall never see him again!" This subdued the firmness of Josiah; but he could not weep. He looked like a man bereft of his reason. He fell back in a chair, and said, "Alas! my poor dear Henry!" This scene of parental anguish was too much for Mrs. Stevens; and, though she bore up for a time, and endeavoured, by efforts of

kindness, to allay their sorrow, yet she was obliged at length to retire.

As the mother was again exclaiming, "O, my poor Henry! I shall never see him again!" the gardener entered the kitchen with Henry, and said, "Here he is, safe and sound!" The father sprang up as with the rapidity of thought; the mother rushed across the room, and they both seized the child, as though each was afraid to let the other touch him. But after the first maternal kiss had been given to little Henry, who knew nothing of what had been passing, she suffered her husband to take him, as she still held her infant in her arms, and they both sat down, with their Charles between them, while the inmates of the villa pressed round to participate in their joy.

"And is it you, my Henry?" said the mother. "Kiss me, my boy."

"Kiss me, Henry," said Charles.

We now shed tears of gratitude, and after recovering ourselves from this agitating excitement, I asked the gardener where he found the child.

"I found him, Sir, asleep between two trusses of hay in Master Hargrave's stable."

"O, I now recollect!" said Josiah. "I carried him and put him in the stable when the fire broke out, as I knew he would be safe there, but I had forgotten it."

Early in the morning I hastened to the ruins, where I found Josiah and his wife examining the extent of their loss.

"This has been to you a night which will never be forgotten."

"Very true, Sir," said Mrs. Hargrave, "we never had so many mercies crowded within such a short space of time. What a mercy that we were not consumed, that none of our children were burnt, and that the horse and cart are not injured, so that Josiah can go on in his business; we can sing of mercy as well as of judgment."

"Ah! Sir," said Josiah, "what a mercy that, though we have lost some of our little property, yet we have not lost any property but what was our own. The Lord gave it to us, and now He has been



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pleased to take it away, but He has not taken all. He has spared more than I expected, and much more than we deserved."

"It will be a long time before you will be able to repair this loss."

"Yes, it will; but you know, Sir, that it is 'the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich.' This trial is sent to moderate our desires after the things that perish, to teach us to walk by faith, and to derive our happiness from communion with Him who is invisible."

As we were conversing together, Mr. Stevens came up, and taking Josiah by the hand, said, "Don't be cast down, I will have the cottage repaired immediately, and till it is finished, you shall have my other cottage at the grove, which happens to be vacant."

Thank you, Sir, for your kindness; I hope Mrs. Stevens is well this morning?"

"She is not well; she has had a bad night."

Several of the more respectable inhabitants of the village now joined us in their expressions of sympathy; and it was unanimously resolved that a subscription should be made for the benefit of the Hargraves. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Roscoe, "I shall be happy to see you at my house in the evening. In the meantime we shall be able to ascertain the extent of this good man's loss, and then we can adopt some effectual measures to repair it."

There is a kind provision made for the children of sorrow in that sympathy which is implanted in almost every breast. Who can avoid its excitement when an object of distress is seen, or a tale of woe narrated? Yet there are some who will weep over misery, but will make no personal sacrifice to relieve it. They will talk, but they will not give. They will recommend to others the benevolence which they never practise; and profess to admire the virtue which they are not anxious should adorn their own character. "But," says the apostle, "whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

The loss which Josiah Hargrave sustained by the fire, amounted to about thirty pounds; and Mr. Roscoe consented, at the urgent

request of the gentlemen who met at his house, to accompany Mr. Stevens in soliciting the benevolence of the neighbours towards repairing it. They commenced their work of mercy on the following morning, and finished it in the course of the day. The first person they called on was the Rev. Mr. Cole, the rector of the parish, and he refused to contribute, because Hargrave chose to attend the ministry of Mr. Ingleby in preference to his own.

"This refusal," said Mr. Roscoe to his friend, "does not surprise me, but it grieves me. Mr. Cole is an amiable man, but he is, what I once was, a religious bigot; and though he is very charitable to the poor, yet his charity is confined to those who come to his church."

"We may," said Mr. Stevens, "call his charity the charity of bigotry, not the charity of the gospel."

"I was once taking tea with him, when a poor woman, near the time of her confinement, applied to him for relief; but when he found that she attended your chapel, he first reproved her, and then dismissed her without giving her any assistance."

"But perhaps he thought she was an impostor?"

"No, Sir, she brought with her a note of recommendation from your friend, Mr. Stone."

"And is it possible that a man, who professes to be a minister of Jesus Christ, could refuse to assist a poor woman in such a time of need, because she does not attend his church? Then, I suppose, if he had been passing by Josiah Hargrave's house when the fire broke out, his first inquiry would have been, Do you attend my church?—and on finding that he hears Mr. Ingleby, he would have gone on, and left him to perish."

"No, no; I think he would have knocked you up, and sent you to assist him, because his argument is, 'Let those who imbibe the same faith, assist each other.'"

"A similar argument was employed by the priest and Levite, when they passed by on the opposite side of the road, disdaining to do more than merely look on the wounded traveller; but the good Samaritan, whose breast glowed with pure benevolence, 'when he

saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.' And are we not commanded to display the same comprehensive benevolence, without standing to consider the character of the sufferer, or presuming to inquire into the orthodoxy of his faith?"

"I was much pleased with a little anecdote which I heard the other day, of your friend Stone. A person applied to him on behalf of a poor man in great distress. He was in a hurry, and had no money with him. 'I cannot,' he said, 'examine the case now, as I have a gentleman waiting to see me; but, if the poor man belong to the household of faith, I will thank you to advance ten shillings for me; if not, advance five. My maxim is, according to the law of the Scripture, to do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.'"

The subscription which was raised by Mr. Stevens and Mr. Roscoe, with the remittances received from the Rev. Messrs. Ingleby and Guion, amounted to nearly fifty pounds, and this was given by Mr. Stevens to Josiah, who was so overcome by this unanticipated expression of sympathy, that at first he could scarcely speak. He modestly requested Mr. Stevens to express his grateful thanks, and those of his wife, to his benevolent friends, assuring them that they would endeavour, by future conduct, to prove how deeply they felt this unexpected kindness.

Within the space of three months Hargrave returned to his cottage, with his family, a richer if not a happier man than before the fire drove him out; and there he lived for many years, respected and beloved by all who knew him.

If we say that afflictions spring up by chance, or are brought about merely by secondary causes, which are not under the guidance and control of God, we not only reject the authority of the Bible, but deprive ourselves of the consolation which follows from a firm belief that the design for which they are sent is merciful and gracious. If the sufferer should suppose that his afflictions are of

such a peculiar nature that they cannot possibly answer any good purpose, I would say, Do not impeach the wisdom of God, nor yet presume to fix limitations to the operations of his power. If you have never yet repented of your sins, nor sought the salvation of your soul through the mediation of Jesus Christ, your trials may be sent to prepare your heart for the reception of the truth, by which you are to be sanctified and saved. As the gentle rain, descending from the clouds of heaven, fits the soil for the seed which it is to nourish for a future harvest, so it pleases God, in the dispensations of his providence, to allow those painful events to transpire, which, imperceptibly, predispose the mind, first, to bow in submission to his authority, and then to seek after the enjoyment of his favour. There is a native independence in some minds, which, in relation to man, is a high and noble virtue, but in relation to God, is a daring sin. When one is made rich, and the glory of his house is increased, he is sometimes apt to think, if not to say, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" What is this but absolute rebellion against Divine authority, which must be subdued; and, if it please Him to employ severe and varied afflictions to subdue it, then "why should a living man complain—a man for the punishment of his sins?" "Should we not," says an admired writer, "principally value that which is morally good for us; that which influences and secures our eternal welfare; that by which the safety of the soul is least endangered, and the sanctification of the soul is most promoted!" Upon this principle many have had reason to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." "Disease," says one, "commissioned from above, sought me out, found me in a crowd, detached me from a multitude, led me into a chamber of solitude, stretched me upon a bed of languishing, and brought before me the awful realities of an eternal world." "I never prayed before," says another; "my life was bound up in a beloved relative; I saw my gourd smitten and beginning to wither; I trembled; I watched the progress of a disease which doomed all my happiness to

the grave. In that moment of bereavement, the world, which had won my affections, was suddenly deprived of all its attractions. I broke from the arms of sympathizing friends, saying, 'Where is God, my Maker, that giveth songs in the night?' I entered my closet, and said, 'Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee.'

Misery seems to possess one of the attributes of the Supreme Being, and is everywhere present, inflicting its anguish in every human breast. No situation in life, however elevated, is above its reach; none, however obscure, is beneath its notice. It goes up to the throne, and disturbs the peace of the monarch; it creeps into the lonely hut, wringing the heart of poverty; nor can the tears of penury, nor the moans of distress, move its pity. It fastens on the babe in the days of infancy; follows him through the various stages of childhood and of youth; becomes a more intimate associate as he advances in life, but often reserves its most poignant inflictions and its bitterest draughts till old age, when the mind is bereft of its vivacity and strength. It lurks beneath the most fascinating objects of delight, and springs out at a season when no danger is expected; sometimes it throws around itself the garb of complacency, and, under the appearance of the truest friendship and the purest affection, disarms suspicion, that it may more effectually entangle its victim.

Where can we find an antidote for human misery? Not in the speculations of philosophy. Philosophy tells us that we must endure our sufferings, because we cannot avoid them; and that it would be visionary to expect an entire exemption from them in a world in which they everywhere abound. Miserable comforter! I need some substantial relief, some prop on which I can lean in the days of adversity. Where shall I find it?—in human friendship? Alas! that is too often a phantom of the imagination, which plays before the fancy while prosperity shines on my pathway, but disappears as the storm arises, and the darkness of the night falls upon me. I need a more stable source of consolation. Where shall I find it? "In sweet submission to thy will, O my God!" Here is bliss.

Here I find joy in grief. Here I have the bitter waters of life made sweet, the heavy burden of care lightened, and my strength becomes equal to my day.

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## A SURPRISE.



HE indisposition of Mrs. Stevens increased, and became more and more alarming; she was soon confined to her room, then to her bed; and her life was considered in imminent danger. The fever rose so high that she became somewhat delirious, but even then, while her fancy wandered amidst the wild scenes of her own imaginative creation, she spoke with rapture of her approaching dissolution. On one occasion, as I entered her room, she raised herself up, and sang, with a strong yet softened melody of voice :

“Lord, what are all my suff’rings here,  
If thou but make me meet,  
With that enraptur’d host t’ appear,  
And worship at thy feet !”

At length, while we were silently watching the progress of a disorder which was threatening to take from us one of the most interesting and amiable of women, it pleased the Father of mercies to throw her into a deep sleep, which lasted many hours. In the morning she awoke both revived and composed; and, after asking for Mr. Stevens, she requested some refreshment. Thus the cloud which had been hanging over us with such a lowering aspect, now gradually dispersed; and, in a few days, she was pronounced out of danger. “I thought at one time,” she said, addressing herself to her husband, “I should have left you. I felt the parting pang; and it was such a pang as my heart never felt before. I

looked into the valley of death; and though the light of life illumined it, yet nature recoiled at the prospect of entering. I had no doubt of the issue of dying, but I dreaded the act of dying. But now I am coming back to life. Oh! that my life may be more devoted to Him who lived and died for me!"

Miss Roscoe had left home the morning after the fire at Hargrave's cottage, to spend a few days with her friend, Miss Holmes, but as soon as she heard of Mrs. Stevens's illness, she returned. "I am happy to see you once more," said Mrs. Stevens. "This is a pleasure which I did not anticipate. How uncertain is life!"

"Life is uncertain," replied Miss Roscoe, "but they who believe in Christ shall never die. They may, in the progress of their being, drop their mantle of mortality, as the insect leaves his shell, when he expands into a more beautiful form of existence; but the soul, redeemed by the blood, and purified by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, 'liveth and abideth for ever.' I hope your mind has been kept in perfect peace during your severe affliction."

"It has been kept in peace, but not in perfect peace. On the second day, when my disorder assumed a threatening aspect, a horror of great darkness fell upon me. I was compelled to admit the possibility of having deceived myself—of having claimed privileges to which I had no title—of having mistaken the excitement of feeling for the fervour of spiritual devotion—of having indulged prospects which I should never realize. But, just as I was beginning to sink into despair, the light of mercy broke in upon me, and revived my hope. Never, oh! never had I seen such beauty as I then perceived in the verses—

'Jesu! lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the billows near me roll,  
While the tempest still is high:

'Hide me, O my Saviour! hide—  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
O receive my soul at last.'

“It is consoling to meet with others who are exercised in a similar way with ourselves. I thought your faith was too strong ever to stagger, and your prospect of eternal life too clear ever to be shaded by dubious uncertainty; but now, I perceive, you can doubt, which encourages me to hope that my faith may be genuine, though it is sometimes involved in perplexity, and sinks into depression.”

“Have you,” Mrs. Stevens asked, “had any recent conversation with your papa on religious subjects?”

“Not very recently, because he has manifested a more than ordinary degree of reserve when there has been any allusion to them, and therefore I have judged it proper to observe great caution while his prejudices are in such a state.”

“But may not this reserve on his part be the solemn musings of a mind deeply impressed by the truth, which, has hitherto been either misunderstood or rejected?”

“I should be happy if I could put such a favourable construction on his manner; but I fear not.”

“Our favourite poet says:—

‘Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread,  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.’

Allow me, my dear friend, to offer you my congratulations. Your prayers, I hope, are answered; and you may go home, and embrace your father as a ‘fellow-heir of the grace of life.’”

“If I could, the sun of my bliss would never go down; but, alas! I fear that you congratulate me on what we wish to be true, rather than on what actually is the case.”

“My dear, I speak what I believe.”

“Impossible! Has he made any particular communication to you, which enables you to speak in such a decisive tone?—if so, tell me, my dear friend, what you know. I am impatient to hear it.”

“The evening before Josiah’s cottage was consumed, your father spent some hours with us, and seemed not only willing, but anxious



to converse on religious subjects. At one time, he was affected almost to tears, when he said, 'My dear Sophia has often told me that a Divine illumination of mind is the great secret in personal religion; and on one occasion, when she quoted the words of the apostle, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," she made an impression on my mind which has never left me.' Thus God has not only subdued the prejudices of your father's heart against the truth, and opened the eyes of his understanding to see its excellence and importance, but has employed you as the agent in the accomplishment of this great work."

After recovering herself from the surprise which this communication produced, she said, "I feel as if enjoying a most pleasant dream—my fancy beguiled and deluded by its own visionary conceptions—not less surprised than delighted to find myself awake—with you—listening to the most joyful news that could be conveyed to my soul." She wept. "And is it possible?—Is it true?—What, my father!—Excuse me; I must go, that I may hear these glad tidings from his own lips."

On the following Sabbath Mrs. Stevens was so far recovered as to be able to go to church, where she expected to see the Roscoes; but she was disappointed. "I fear," she remarked to her husband, as they were returning home, "that Mr. Roscoe will not become a decided character; but I hope he will not neutralize our dear Sophia."

"He will proceed, I have no doubt, very cautiously; examine and re-examine every step he takes; but when the Rubicon is passed, there will be no fruitless attempts to unite religion and the world, but an unreserved devotion of soul to God."

In the evening Miss Roscoe was at the chapel, and after service called at Fairmount to see her friends.

"It is true," she said; "my dear father is at length brought to know that he is a sinner, and to feel the importance of redemption through the blood of Christ. I went with him in the morning to

hear the Rev. Mr. Cole, with whose sermon he was not so well pleased as on some former occasions; and he would have accompanied me this evening, had it not been for mamma, who most earnestly requested him not to go."

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The evening came when we were to pay our promised visit to the Roscoes, and just as we were about to set out, the Rev. Mr. Guion arrived. When he found where we were going, he proposed returning home; but Mrs. Stevens said, "No, no; you must accompany us. You may be the means of doing some good; and I think your Master has sent you for that purpose."

Mr. Roscoe gave us a cordial welcome; but when the name of Guion was announced, Mrs. Roscoe drew back with a very polite movement, and became unusually reserved. Conversation flagged, till Mr. Roscoe mentioned that he had been reading Buchanan's *Christian Researches in Asia*, and called our attention to some passages, which had much interested him:—

"I have returned home," says the writer, "from witnessing a scene which I shall never forget. At twelve o'clock of this day, being the great day of the feast, the Moloch of Hindoostan was brought out of his temple, amidst the acclamations of hundreds of thousands of his worshippers. When the idol was placed on his throne, a shout was raised by the multitude, such as I had never before heard. It continued equable for a few minutes, and then gradually died away. After a short interval of silence, a murmur was heard at a distance; all eyes were turned towards the place, and behold, a *grove* advancing! A body of men, having green branches in their hands, approached with great celerity. The people opened a way for them; and when they had come up to the throne, they fell down before him that sat thereon, and worshipped. And the multitude again sent forth a voice like the sound of a great thunder. But the voices I now heard were not those of melody; for there is no harmony in the praise of Moloch's worshippers.

“The throne of the idol was placed on a car, about sixty feet in height, resting on wheels which indented the ground deeply, as they turned slowly under the ponderous machine. Attached to it were six cables, by which the people drew it along. Upon the car were the priests and satellites of the idol, surrounding his throne. I went on in the procession, close by the tower of Moloch, which, as it was drawn with difficulty, grated on its many wheels harsh thunder. After a few minutes it stopped; and now the worship of the god began. A high priest mounted the car in front of the idol, and pronounced his obscene stanzas in the ears of the people, who responded at intervals in the same strain. ‘These songs,’ said he, ‘are the delight of the god.’ After the car had moved some way, a pilgrim announced that he was ready to offer himself in sacrifice to the idol. He laid himself down in the road before the car, as it was moving along, lying on his face, with his arms stretched forward. The multitude passed round him, leaving the space clear, and he was crushed to death by the wheels of the car.

“A horrid tragedy was acted on the 12th of September, 1807, at a place about three miles from Calcutta. A Brahmin died at the advanced age of ninety-two. He had twelve wives, and three of them were burned alive with his dead body. Of these three, one was a venerable lady, having white locks, who had been long known in the neighbourhood. Not being able to walk, she was carried in a palanquin to the place of burning, and was then placed by the priests on the funeral pile. The two other ladies were younger; one of them of a very pleasing and interesting countenance. The old lady was placed on one side of the dead husband, and the two other wives laid themselves down on the other side; and then an old Brahmin, the eldest son of the deceased, applied the torch to the pile, with un-averted face. The pile suddenly blazed, for it was covered with combustibles; and this human sacrifice was completed amidst the din of drums and cymbals, and the shouts of the Brahmins.”

“What horrid rites!” exclaimed Mr. Roscoe. “I fear they have been too long practised to be easily destroyed. I think Chris-

tianity ought to be established in India, for the moral benefit of our countrymen. Many of them go out when young—when their passions are strong—and when they have but very faint conceptions of the nature or the importance of religion; and as there are no Sabbaths—no religious ordinances or instruction—they must be in great spiritual danger, from the contagion of evil by which they are surrounded.”

“I was intimately acquainted,” said Mr. Guion, “with a very amiable young man, the son of a pious solicitor, who went to India, where he remained ten years, and then returned. He called on me some time ago, and I derived much information from him; but I was grieved to find, by his own confession, that he had become a deist. I asked him if his deism was the result of any fair and earnest investigation; and he very honestly said, ‘No, I found my belief in the Divine origin of Christianity becoming weaker and weaker when I was separated from its ministry and institutions, till at length it became extinct; and though I have sometimes made an effort to recover it, yet I have not been able to do so.’”

“But,” said Mr. Roscoe, “though the establishment of Christianity in India might preserve our countrymen from infidelity, yet I do not think we can calculate on bringing over the natives to embrace it.”

“Why not? Is the conversion of a modern pagan to the faith of Christ more difficult than the conversion of an ancient one? If Greece and Rome were subdued by the preaching of the gospel, who can despair of India?”

“If we had the same miraculous powers as those with which the apostles were endowed, we might anticipate similar results; but we have not; and I confess that, though I approve of the motive which originates and supports missionary institutions, yet I do not think they will ever prove successful.”

“By what means, then, did Paul convert the heathen? Was it by the exhibition of miracles? Certainly not. A miracle may make some impressions on the judgment, by demonstrating the power of

a present Deity, and of his direct agency in its production, but it cannot renew the heart, and inspire the soul with the love of God, with a hatred of sin, and a hope of glory. The miracles of the first ages were merely the credentials of the teachers, and were given as a solemn confirmation, once for all, of the divinity of the new dispensation, which they were commissioned to establish; but they were not the ordained means of conversion. The apostle Paul performed miracles but seldom; and when he did perform them, they had not always a salutary effect on those that beheld them. When he wrought a miracle in Lyconia, the people first worshipped him, and afterwards would have put him to death. What, then, were the ordained means of conversion? The same that are ordained now—the preaching of the cross; as the Scripture hath declared, ‘Faith cometh by hearing.’”

“If we admit,” said Mr. Roscoe, “the concurrence of a supernatural power with the agency of man in teaching and in preaching, we ought not to doubt the possibility of converting the whole population of India to the belief of Christianity.”

“Certainly not; and is not this supernatural concurrence promised by Jesus Christ, to his ministers of every age? ‘Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’”

“My heart often aches,” said Miss Roscoe, “when I reflect on the degradation and wretchedness of women in India—where, if they escape an untimely grave in the days of childhood, they are doomed to a state of perpetual ignorance, excluded from all the accomplishments of society, treated as the refuse of the human family, and are often burned along with the body of their deceased husbands. I think every woman ought to make some effort to raise her own sex from this most appalling condition; and as nothing will prove successful but the principles of Christianity, we ought all to become the advocates and supporters of missionary and Bible societies.”\*

\* “Will it be asked what females are expected to do? We leave the decision of their conduct to the impulses of their hearts, and the dictates of their judgment. Let but their affections be consecrated to the cause, and their understanding will be suffi-

“I have no doubt,” said Mrs. Roscoe, who was not at home on these subjects, “but the natives of India are as happy with their religion as we are with ours; and if the females do not meet with that respect which we meet with, you know, Madam,” addressing herself to Mrs. Stevens, “that they do not expect it. Therefore, as it hath pleased the Almighty to give them their religion, I think we ought not to try to take it from them. We should not like to have ours taken from us. However, I think there is too much attention paid to religion in our days; it was not the case in the good old times of our fathers.”

“But, mamma, would you not save a little child from being  
 ciently fruitful in expedients to promote it. Their husbands will be gently prevailed upon to lay apart some of their substance to serve religion. Their children will be nurtured in a missionary spirit, and learn to associate with all their pleasures the records of missionary privations and triumphs. They will solicit the repetition of the oft-told tale, and glow with a martyr’s zeal for the salvation of the souls of men. Listen to the eloquent appeal of a masterly preacher on this subject:—‘Christian matrons! from whose endeared and endearing lips we first heard of the wondrous Babe of Bethlehem, and were taught to bend our knee to Jesus—ye who first taught these eagles how to soar, will ye now check their flight in the midst of heaven? “I am weary,” said the ambitious Cornelia, “of being called Scipio’s daughter; do something, my sons, to style me the mother of the Gracchi.” And what more laudable ambition can inspire you, than a desire to be the mothers of the missionaries, confessors, and martyrs of Jesus? Generations unborn shall call you blessed. The churches of Asia and Africa, when they make grateful mention of their founders, will say, “Blessed be the wombs which bare them, and the breasts which they have sucked!” Ye wives also of the clergy, let it not be said that while ye love the mild virtues of the man, ye are incapable of alliance with the grandeur of the minister. The wives of Christian soldiers should learn to rejoice at the sound of the battle. Rouse, then, the slumbering courage of your soldiers to the field; and think no place so safe, so honoured, as the camp of Jesus. Tell the missionary story to your little ones, until their young hearts burn, and in the spirit of those innocents who shouted hosannah to their lowly King, they cry, “Shall not we also be the missionaries of Jesus Christ?”’ Such an appeal to Christian females cannot be made in vain. They are not the triflers who balance a feather against a soul. They will learn to retrench superfluities, in order to exercise the grace of Christian charity. They will emulate those Jewish women who ‘worked with their hands for the hangings of the tabernacle,’ and brought ‘bracelets, and ear-rings, and jewels of gold,’ for the service of the sanctuary. They will consecrate their ornaments to the perishing heathen; and render personal and domestic economy a fountain of spiritual blessings to unenlightened nations, and to distant ages. They will resign the gems of the East to save a soul from death, and bind round their brow a coronet of stars, which shall shine for ever and ever!”

drowned, or a widow from being burned, if it were in your power?"

"Certainly, my dear."

"Now, mamma, as this cannot be done by force, we propose convincing the people, by a process of fair reasoning, that such practices are sinful and impolitic; and thus induce them, if possible, to abolish them."

"Oh! that may be very proper, but I think that *we* have nothing to do with it, and therefore, why should we trouble ourselves about it? Why not let things remain as they always have been?"

"I must confess," said Mr. Roscoe, "that I begin to differ from you, and I shall be very glad to see an auxiliary missionary society established amongst us. If we have a purer faith than the Hindoos, and one better calculated to promote individual and relative happiness and improvement, we ought to impart it. To monopolize it would be an act of selfishness and injustice; and though I have hitherto, like too many around me, been guilty of this act, I will go and sin no more."

"But, surely," said Mrs. Roscoe, "you do not intend to become a missionary, and transplant us to some province of India?"

"No, no, my dear; I will not go myself, but I will give some portion of my property to send others."

Had some shapeless figure, of hideous look, suddenly entered the room, and denounced a heavy woe on each inmate of the dwelling, Mrs. Roscoe might have been more alarmed, but she could not have appeared more surprised than when she heard this last sentence.

"What!" she said, in a more lofty tone than I had ever known her assume, "and have you so far forgotten your own dignity as to connect yourself with missionary societies, which go abroad on purpose to disturb other people in their religion, as we have been disturbed in the enjoyment of ours?"

"My dear, you seem strangely excited, as though I was going to do some barbarous or immoral act; when all I propose doing, is to give a little of that wealth which God has given to us, to convey to

the deluded and degraded Hindoos the good news and glad tidings of great joy which the holy angels announced to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and which the ministers of Christ proclaim to us. Surely you cannot object to this."

"I do not suppose you would like the Hindoos to send their religion over to us, for our adoption."

"They may if they please; but they would not manage to persuade our widows to burn on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands, or induce fathers and mothers to destroy their lovely children."

"Well, at any rate, I think you ought to stay till they apply to us for our religion as a substitute for their own."

It was now late, and the company upon the eve of retiring, when Miss Roscoe arose, took from the book-case one of the volumes of Doddridge's *Exposition on the New Testament*, placed it on the table, and said to Mr. Guion, "I know, Sir, that it is your custom to conclude your social visits by reading the Scripture and prayer; and if you will consent to do so this evening, you will greatly oblige us."

"I have no objection, if it be perfectly agreeable."

"Certainly, Sir," said Mr. Roscoe, "we ought not to object to prayer."


The bell was now rung, and the servants were requested to come to family prayer. We waited several minutes, during which time Mrs. Roscoe was very restless. At length they entered, at irregular intervals of time, seating themselves on the corner of the chairs which stood nearest the door, expressing, by their looks, the utmost degree of surprise at this novel service, and occasionally, by the satirical smile which played over their countenance, indicating either their contempt or their disposition to merriment. I needed no one to tell me that this was the first time the *family* had ever knelt together at the throne of grace; but, knowing that a great moral change had taken place in Mr. Roscoe, I felt conscious that it would not be the last; and could not refrain offering my inaudible expres-



sions of praise to the God of all grace, for permitting me to see *that* fire enkindled on this newly-erected domestic altar, which has ever since burnt with unceasing brightness.

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## THE CONSULTATION.

“AMMA,” exclaimed Miss Denham, as she entered the drawing-room one morning, after rather a lengthened walk, “I have heard something that will surprise and distress you; I can scarcely believe the report, but I have been assured of its truth from the best authority.”

“What is it, my dear? you seem agitated, has anything alarmed you?”

“Nothing more, mamma, than this dreadful report; really none of us seem safe; dear Mr. Cole never spoke a greater truth than when he said there was something of a *bewitching* nature in this new religion! I am alarmed for myself, and almost wish that we were away from this place altogether. But I must tell you the story. Mr. Roscoe has taken to his daughter’s religion, and is now as fanatical as herself!”

“I cannot credit this, my dear,” replied Mrs. Denham; “you know how often I have said this is the worst place I know for scandal; you should be careful how you receive these reports; no, no, my dear, I cannot believe such a story as this about Mr. Roscoe; he is too good, amiable, and virtuous a man to be led so far wrong, and too much of the gentleman to stoop to anything so mean and vulgar.”

“I hope, mamma, it may be so, but I am afraid it is true; and every one is so distressed and affected by the intelligence, I assure you it has produced quite a sensation.”

“My dear, it is impossible; I saw him at church on Sunday, and

heard him myself repeat the responses louder than he ever did before; and if you recollect, we talked about it when we got home."

"No, mamma; if you recollect, we dined last Sunday with a large party at Mr. Gladstone's, and did not go to church."

"Then it was Sunday week."

"It has happened since then. It happened one night last week; and as I have been at some pains to get at an entire knowledge of this disaster, I will tell you about it."

"Oh! dear," said Mrs. Denham, as she composed herself to listen to the tragical story, "what a world we live in! Really nothing but religion seems to be thought of. Our very servants are becoming religious, and who can wonder at it, when the rich set them the example! And if this should be true about Mr. Roscoe, which I devoutly pray heaven may forbid, there is no saying where the evil will stop."

"Well, mamma, you know that on Tuesday week Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, and the gentleman that is on a visit there, and the Rev. Mr. Guion, all went to spend the evening at Mr. Roscoe's."

"I have always said," interrupting her daughter, "that there is no good doing when such people get together. If I had seen them go, I would have given Mr. Roscoe a hint to be on his guard. He was taken by surprise, I have no doubt. Well, my dear, go on."

"Well, ma', as I was saying, they all went; and when there, Mr. Roscoe said that he would change his religion, and have that which flourished so luxuriantly at Fairmount; and he got Mr. Guion to read a chapter out of the Bible, and to say prayers, and had all the servants in to hear him, and they all knelt down, though I heard that the cook stole out slyly, when they were all upon their knees. She didn't like it."

"I always thought well of that cook; she has a taste above her class in life, I should like to have her: do you think she will leave?"

"I don't know, ma', but I should think she will; I will ask her if you wish it."

"No, my dear, it won't do for you to appear in the matter; I'll

“speak to John to speak to her. But now about Mr. Roscoe, what is to be done?”

“But, ma', I have something more dismal to tell you.”

“I hope not. Why, this is enough to shock the feelings of an angel. Reading the Bible, and prayers, and kneeling down on the floor with servants! I hope Mrs. Roscoe is not gone off.”

“No, all this was much against her will, and she is very unhappy about it, and says she shall never be happy again.”

“Dear creature, it is impossible; but what else have you to tell?”

“Why, Mr. Roscoe proposed to set up a missionary society, to raise money to send this new religion abroad.”

“Well, my dear, this last part of your story relieves my mind. This is a proof of mental derangement. The Chancellor would not want a stronger. It is often the case, when people go wrong in their mind, they profess strong attachment to the things they hate most when they are in their right senses. I now must insist upon it that you never make another call at Fairmount. Really, if you should ever take up with this evangelical religion, I should be tempted to wish myself in heaven, to escape the mortification.”

“Indeed, ma', you need give yourself no uneasiness on that subject. I have no predisposition in favour of religion. Indeed, I have my doubts, and if it were fashionable, I think I should profess myself a sceptic, but that would not be lady-like.”

Mrs. and Miss Denham, after much long and serious debate, resolved on making a call on Mrs. Roscoe. They found her at home, alone, depressed, and reserved, and though she made an effort to rise to her usual vivacity, yet she could not succeed. Mrs. Denham was very particular in her inquiries after the health of Mr. Roscoe, and was surprised to hear that he was well; and on being informed that he was gone with Miss Sophia to spend an hour at Fairmount, in company with the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, she became greatly agitated.

“Then I fear, my dear Mrs. Roscoe, that it is too true? Oh! I have had no rest since I heard it. What a trial! Really, no one

is safe. That such a sensible, and amiable, and virtuous man as Mr. Roscoe used to be, should so far forget himself and all his friends as to change his religion, is very astonishing and affecting. We called on the Rev. Mr. Cole as we came by, to ask if he had heard of the report, and here he is, dear man, coming to condole with you."

"I am glad to see you," said Mrs. Denham to Mr. Cole, as he entered the parlour; "we have been offering our sympathy to dear Mrs. Roscoe—but can't something be done, Sir?"

"Then I suppose there is some foundation for the report. I always thought Mr. Roscoe a very judicious and sensible man, and I still hope, that though he has diverged into this eccentric course, his good sense will, on cool reflection, induce him to return."

"Yes, Sir," replied Mrs. Roscoe, "I hope so too, but it is possible that the influence and example of our daughter may protract, if it do not perpetuate, the delusion under which he unhappily labours; and if so, I shall never see another happy day."

"O yes, you will," said Mr. Cole, "his sun is only passing under a cloud, and when his mind clears up, it will shine with its accustomed brightness. His good sense will preserve him from that fatal vortex into which too many have fallen."

"If, Sir, this were a sudden change, I should be induced to believe that he might be recovered, but it has been coming on for a long time. You know that he does not make up his mind on any subject very suddenly, but when he has done it, you know how firm he is."

"Very true," said Mr. Cole, "but his spirits have been unusually depressed for some months. I remember the last time we spent an evening at Mr. Denham's, that I rallied him on his dulness when we were at play. We must raise his spirits, and then we shall drive away his evangelical notions."

"I have not noticed any particular depression. He has been rather more grave, yet he has been cheerful; and has talked rather more frequently on religious subjects, but they have not affected his spirits."

“Well,” said Mr. Cole, “I will come and have a rubber with him, and I will engage to rub these notions out of him.”

“Indeed, Sir, he has formally declined playing any more, and has requested me never again to introduce cards.”

“Really,” said Mrs. Denham, “this is very affecting. Not play again! Not suffer cards to be introduced? Then I suppose he intends to break off connection with all his old friends, and take up with the evangelicals; but I hope you have too much firmness to yield to him.”

“It has been my maxim through life to sacrifice everything for the sake of domestic peace. I cannot oppose Mr. Roscoe, and I must confess that he has manifested the utmost degree of affection and kindness.”

“The apostle St. Paul has predicted,” said the Rev. Mr. Cole, “that in the last days perilous times should come, and indeed they are come. The church once enjoyed quietude, but now she is rent into divisions; not so much by the Dissenters who have seceded from us, as by the evangelical clergy who are admitted within her pale. Their eccentric notions, and their extempore and familiar style of preaching, operate as a charm on the minds of their hearers; and wherever they go, some stir is always occasioned about religion. In general, the poor and the illiterate become their admirers; but sometimes we see men of sense and learning beguiled by their artful sophisms. I can account for their success among the lower orders, but when I see an intelligent man brought over to their belief, I confess I am puzzled. But still I won’t give up Mr. Roscoe. I will, in the course of a few Sundays, preach a sermon which I will procure for the occasion.”

“You will greatly oblige me if you will, Sir, but you must do it soon, for I dread the idea of Mr. Roscoe going to hear Mr. Ingleby while he is in his present state of mind.”

“But you have no idea of his leaving my church?”

“Why, you know very well,” Miss Denham remarked, “that none of the evangelicals think you preach the gospel. I have heard Miss

Sophia say so many times, and you may be sure that she will try to make her papa believe it, and if he is become an evangelical, he is sure to believe it; for I have noticed that what one believes, they all believe. Really, Sir, there is so much ado made now about the word gospel and evangelical preachers, that the subjects are become quite offensive."

"Yes, to persons of intelligence and taste."

"Exactly so, Sir; you will excuse what I am going to say, but I often think that you are rather severe, too much so I know for some of your hearers; but I have no idea how any people of sense can go and hear such preaching as Mr. Ingleby's. I heard him once, *on the loss of the soul*. I could not sleep after it—and even now, at times I think of it. But, Sir, you know we have nothing to do with such subjects till we die, or till after death."

"Such preaching," said Mr. Cole, "is as offensive to pure taste, as it is revolting to our feelings."

"Exactly so; you know we are to be allured to a brighter world—not frightened there. Pray, Sir, shall we have the pleasure of meeting you and Mrs. Cole at Mr. Ryder's on Tuesday? By the by, I wonder you do not cure Mr. John of his scepticism. There is to be a large party, and rather a gay one."

"I don't think," replied Mr. Cole, "that Mr. John Ryder has any more scepticism than does him good—it keeps off the gloom which a belief in the Bible almost necessarily brings over the youthful mind. No, I shall not be with you. I have an engagement with a few friends who are going to Bath, to see *Romeo and Juliet*."

"How dull and insipid is a religious service when compared with a play. What a pity that our Maker requires us to be religious. I have not seen a play for some months, and when I was hearing Mr. Ingleby, I really thought that I should never have courage to see another. Oh, how he did denounce the theatre! He really said that it was the pathway to hell."

"Yes," said Mr. Cole, with high disdain, "that man would inter-

dict us from every social enjoyment; would batter down the temple of the muses, or change it into a house of prayer; and bring before our imagination the awful realities of the eternal world, with so much force, as should compel us to think, with perpetual awe, on death and the future judgment."

"Oh! dear, they are awful realities indeed. When I heard him, he alluded to dear Miss Patterson, who took cold on returning from the play, and died, you know, Sir, a few weeks afterwards? Oh! she was a lovely creature. She was too good to live on earth. Had she been religious, she would have been a saint. But she often used to say that her grandpapa left his religion to her aunts, and his fortune to his grandchildren. Mr. Ingleby, after condemning plays, &c., as impure and sinful, made a long pause, and then proposed his questions with so much solemnity, that my pulse began to beat with feverish rapidity.—'Should you like,' he said, and he looked while he said it so stern and solemn, 'to pass from the theatre to the judgment-seat of Christ? Should you like to leave the gaieties of this world, to associate with the awful realities of another?' There was so much stillness in the church as he went on in this strain of awful eloquence, and so many people were overcome by what he said, and such a serene smile on his countenance when he began to speak about our Saviour, that I do really think, if I had not been very firm and decided, I should have become as religious as any of them. It was, I assure you, very difficult to withstand his fervour."

"I hope," said Mr. Cole, "you will never go again, for evil communications corrupt the best of hearts."

"Go again!" exclaimed Mrs. Denham, "not if she have any respect for her own happiness, or ours. Why, to hear this about the sermon is enough to frighten any good Christian; what must it have been to have heard the sermon itself! One thing puzzles me when I think about it—why do our bishops consecrate such men?"

"Oh, unluckily we have some evangelical bishops."

"A bishop evangelical! don't you consider that a great wonder, Sir?"

“I consider it a great calamity to our church.”

“Exactly so; then I suppose we shall always be annoyed with these evangelical clergy if the bishops sanction them. I hope you won't turn evangelical.”

“Not while I retain my reason. When that is gone, I may go off too.”

My readers who are but superficially acquainted with the religious habits and style of conversation which prevail in the higher walks of life, may be induced to imagine that I have given a strong colouring to some parts of my narrative, but I assure them that I have not. Indeed, had I quoted the epithets and the phrases which, I know, are sometimes employed, when a certain class of fashionable Christians, with their anti-evangelical pastors, venture to discuss religious subjects, and animadvert on religious people, my pages would be too disfigured to pass through the hands of the pious reader.

It is to be lamented that many intelligent and amiable persons, who occupy very prominent positions amongst us, and who are admired and esteemed by all who know them, are as ignorant of the nature and the design of Christianity as the ancient Scythian or the modern barbarian. They imagine that they are Christians, because they are born in a Christian country; that they are very good Christians, because they sometimes go to church; and that they are safe for another world, because their conscience does not condemn them for the practices in which they now indulge themselves. And if any one, in the most guarded way and the kindest tones of speech, venture to suggest the possibility of self-deception, they are offended, or take refuge in the belief that their hearts are too good to be guilty of such a mean vice. They keep to the religion in which they were born and educated; and this to them is the ark of safety.

Yes, you are a Christian in Britain, as you would be a Mahometan if you had been born in Turkey; but search the Scriptures, and examine if the design of Christianity has ever been accomplished in you. Have you been born again? No. That subject you



ridicule, because you do not understand it. Have you had repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? No; and if these subjects were pressed upon your conscience with the affection of apostolic compassion, and ardour of apostolic zeal, you would retire displeased, if not disgusted, with the minister who dares to enforce them as essential to your safety and happiness. Are you crucified to the world by the moral influence of the death of Jesus Christ? Crucified to the world! The very phrase, though scriptural, grates offensively on your ear! Crucified to the world! O no. You are devoted to its pleasures, its follies, its amusements. Shut up the theatre, abolish cards, interdict the assembly and the ball, and how would a large portion of our modern Christians be able to support life?

You may imagine that you are a *good Christian*, because you sometimes go to church; but an occasional visit to a material temple will not produce that moral transformation of the soul which is essential to fit you for the holy exercises and enjoyments of another world. You may reject these questions which I now propose to you; but before you reject them, permit me to urge you to search the Scriptures, and then you will see that they have a paramount claim on your attention. Can you be a Christian unless you possess the spirit, and are in some degree conformed to the image of Jesus Christ?

But it ought not to excite our astonishment, though it may our tenderest sympathy, to see the great majority of those who move in fashionable life passing away their time amidst the gaities and follies of the world, when they are sanctioned, if not encouraged by the clergy, who ought to teach them better, both by precept and example.

We have ministers of religion who do not hesitate to hold up to ridicule and contempt the essential doctrines and self-denying precepts of their own faith; and attempt, as far as the influence of their example can extend, to banish all serious and devout piety from the social circle. They see no harm in customs which the spirit and even the letter of the Scriptures condemn; and sanction by their

presence those scenes of human folly and gaiety which have captivated and ruined thousands, who were once the ornaments of their fathers' house.

Such ministers not only sanction the customs of the world, but they discountenance all serious piety, and declaim against their evangelical brethren as disturbers of the peace of the church. If Christianity be a cunningly devised fable—if the life of faith and of practical devotedness of the soul to God be mere fancies—if heaven and hell be the conceptions of romance, brought into the pulpit to terrify the credulous and please the sanguine—I should not hesitate to pronounce a heavy censure on those ministers who bring forward these subjects so often, and who enforce attention to them with so much ardent and impassioned eloquence.

But if Christianity be true—if the final happiness or misery of the human soul depend on faith in Christ—if the glories of heaven and the terrors of hell are realities which exceed the power of man to describe—then even the most sceptical must admit that the ministers of religion ought, with great boldness and impassioned earnestness, to rouse their hearers to a serious and immediate attention to these great, these awful subjects; and ought they not to teach by example, as well as by precept? and by the purity of their morals—by their religious habits and style of conversation—give strong and unequivocal proofs that they preach what they believe, and believe what they preach?

But let no Christian, whatever rank he may hold in social life, or whatever degree of reputation he may have attained for intelligence, or good sense, or for amiability of temper, presume to hope that he will ever be able to make a scriptural profession of religion (after he has felt the power of it) without exciting the displeasure, if not the opposition, of his irreligious relatives and friends. They will not object to the religion of forms and ceremonies; to the religion which is confined to the temple, or to the bed of sickness; to the religion which allows of a conformity to the gaieties and the follies of the world, and which frowns from its presence all references to death, to

judgment, to heaven, and to hell; but the religion which consists in the moral renovation of the soul, which identifies man with a living Saviour, and which raises his anticipations to the glories of the invisible world, they despise, and cast it from them as a strange thing, and then ridicule it as contemptible.

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## THE DARK VALE ILLUMINED.



JUST as we were going out to take an evening walk, the postman delivered a letter addressed to Mrs. Stevens; she read it, and in silence handed it to her husband. I apprehended, from the expression of her countenance and her excited manner, that it conveyed some painful intelligence; and this was immediately confirmed by Mr Stevens, who said, "This is a letter from our nephew, Mr Lewellin, informing us of the sudden and dangerous illness of his mother, and he requests that we hasten to see her."

"The intelligence," said Mrs. Stevens, "is most painful, but it does not greatly surprise me; I had something like a presentiment of it in the mental visions of the past night; I saw her leaning on the top of her staff, standing near the brink of a river, whose waters divided of themselves, as a radiant brightness gilded the whole horizon; and while listening for some moments to the sounds of sweetest harmony, I awoke, and found it was a dream. Thus my senses were locked up in the chambers of slumber, that my spirit might go and commune with my dear sister before she leaves us."

A carriage was immediately sent for, and we set off from Fairmount about eight o'clock. It was a cloudy moonlight night. We rolled on in silence, being too much absorbed in painful thought and expectation to break the quiet which grief requires for the

solace of her own feelings. At length Mr. Stevens, alluding to Mrs. Lewellin's illness, said, "With what different emotions do the inhabitants of the visible and invisible world contemplate the same event! While we are anticipating her departure with deep sorrow, the glorified spirits of her deceased husband, and child, and father, are attuning their harps of joy, to celebrate her entrance among them."

"Very true," Mrs. Stevens replied; "our loss is their gain; but it is as natural for us to deplore our loss, as it is natural for them to exult in their gain."

"I admit, my dear, that we cannot, while encompassed by human infirmities, avoid feeling the pang of sorrow on such an occasion as this, though we may moderate its intensity by reflecting on our own dissolution, which will introduce us into the society of those who obtain the prize of immortality before us."

We had no difficulty in procuring a change of horses at each succeeding stage; nothing worthy of remark occurred during the journey, and on the following morning we arrived at Mrs. Lewellin's cottage.\* The same jessamine, and honey-suckles, and rose trees adorned its tasteful front; the same hawthorn hedge inclosed its well-cultivated garden; the little wicket-gate still swung on its hinges, as when I paid my first visit six years before; but they had lost their attractions, or I had lost my power of enjoyment.

On seeing Mr. Lewellin, Mrs. Stevens said, "Is your mother still living, my dear George, or has she left us?"

"O no, aunt, she has not left us; she has made many inquiries about you, and longs to see you. She says that when she has seen you she shall depart in peace."

"When was she first taken ill, and what is the nature of her disorder?"

"She has not been well for some weeks, but her indisposition created no alarm. On Sabbath morning she felt better, and went to chapel, where she commemorated the death of the Redeemer,

\* See page 6.

with her Christian brethren. As she was returning home she was exposed to a heavy shower, and though she took every precaution to prevent any evil consequences, yet, early in the evening, an inflammation of the bowels came on, which has raged with unabating violence; and her medical attendant says that he does not expect that she can live through the day. Her pains have been excruciating, but she has borne them with the fortitude and resignation of a Christian, and now she seems to be enjoying that fatal ease which is the immediate forerunner of dissolution."

On entering her room she received us with composure, and calmly said to her sister, "Weep not for me, the days of my widowed mourning are drawing to a close. I have long lived secluded from the world, and I can leave it without a sigh."

"Then," I said, "you have no fear?"

"Fear! why should I fear? I know I am in the valley, but it is illumined with the light of life. I have often dreaded this hour, yet it is the happiest hour I have ever known."

"To us, my dear sister, it is a most painful hour."

On seeing her sister and her son in tears, she said, "I hope you will compose yourselves, that we may enjoy each other's society on this side Jordan, which I am soon to pass. . . . My dear George, receive once more, and for the last time, the congratulations of your mother on the honour which the God of all grace has conferred on you, in adopting you as his son. I now solemnly charge you, before Him and the pious friends now with you, always to act worthy of your high vocation. Maintain the dignity of your Christian character by the integrity of your principles, your decision, and your zeal for the honour of the Lord of life and glory. As much of your future happiness and respectability will depend on the choice which you may make when you settle in life, let me beseech you *to marry only in the Lord—prefer piety to beauty, good sense to a large fortune, and remember that a meek and quiet spirit is the most beautiful ornament in the home of a righteous man.*"

She then turned towards Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, and said, "I

thank you for all your kindness to me and mine in the days of our adversity. The Lord reward you a thousand fold. I have only one legacy to leave, and I leave it to you. I bequeath to you my dear boy; take care of him for my sake."

The pious rector of the parish made an early call. Mrs. Lewellin received him with a sweet smile, and motioned him to be seated. After inquiring for her welfare, he thus accosted her: "What would you now do without a Saviour?"

"I should perish! But I have a Saviour whose blood cleanseth from all sin."

"His blood," he said, "is of more value than a thousand worlds."

She replied, "*It is inestimable! It is inestimable!*"

We all knelt down, and this man of God devoutly prayed that she might have "an entrance ministered unto her abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

As the cottage was not large enough for our accommodation, the pious rector invited us to his hospitable home, but Mrs. Stevens resolved not to leave her sister. There was grief over the whole village as the rumour spread that she was dying. Her benevolence had added lustre to her piety, and such was the veneration and attachment in which her character was held, that many a hand knocked softly at the door of her cottage, and many a low voice inquired how God was dealing with her. About noon she fell into a sweet sleep, and slept for several hours; she awoke refreshed, animated; a heavenly serenity beamed on her countenance, as she exclaimed, "Oh! the bliss of dying!"

"You are happy, mother, in the prospect of death."

"Happy, my child, yes, my joy is unspeakable."

Her voice suddenly faltered, yet she gently whispered "Farewell" as her son caught her in his arms, and with her eyes fixed on him, after one strong convulsive struggle, she expired.

Mrs. Lewellin had generally attended the village church in the morning of the Sabbath, and in the evening she usually heard an excellent minister of Christ who preached in a Dissenting chapel,



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and when reproached for her liberality by the more bigoted, she used to say, "*I have no objection to go where I can hold communion with the Saviour.*" Adjoining the chapel there was a burying-ground, to which she had long been accustomed to resort, as favourable to meditation, and on returning from an evening walk with the pious rector, we passed near it, and were induced to visit the spot which she had selected as the place of her burial; it was overshadowed by a large oak tree, and partially inclosed with some evergreens, which she had transplanted from her own garden.

"You see," he said, "how instinctively we love immortality, and as we cannot live here always, we wish life to flourish over the tomb in which our body is decaying. This is simple and beautiful. She was a woman of great taste, and a Christian of high principle. Her knowledge of the gospel was clear, comprehensive, and profound; and she displayed, during her residence with us, a spirit as free from the ordinary imperfections of the human character as I have ever beheld."

I told him that I had been requested to ask if he would attend her funeral.

He replied, "Certainly, if the family wish it. I respected her—I loved her. I often retired from the labour and perplexity of study to pass an hour with her, and always found her conversation of such a spiritual, catholic, and heavenly cast, that I never failed to derive great benefit from it. Her conversation was remarkably suggestive; she has helped me to many texts, and some of my most useful sermons owe their origin to her observations and reflections. I was always delighted when I saw her in church, because I knew she was praying in spirit for the success of my ministry."

Upon the day appointed for her burial almost every inhabitant of the village attended, to pay the tribute of respect to her memory. The corpse was taken into the chapel, and after the minister had read the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and delivered a very simple impressive address, and offered up a solemn prayer to "the God of the spirits of all flesh," it was interred amidst the sighs and tears of a large concourse of spectators. Some were attired in full mourn-



ing, many were in half mourning, but the majority had merely put on their Sabbath dress, being too poor to purchase clothes for the occasion. There was one female of the group, about the age of thirty, with an infant in her arms, whose appearance and manners indicated the most poignant grief. During the time the minister was conducting the service, the tear fell silently on her cheek, but when the body was lowered into the grave she wept no more, but appeared convulsed, and then advanced to the brink of the grave, and after looking with intense eagerness for some seconds, she exclaimed, "Lover and friend hast thou taken from me," and fell senseless on the ground. On inquiry, I found that she was the widow of a poor woodman, who was killed by the falling of a tree, and who was left with three children, and had another born three months after his father's decease. She lived about a quarter of a mile from the cottage, and as Mrs. Lewellin used to pass by her residence when taking her morning walks, she often called to see her. On one occasion (the poor woman told me the next day), after giving her weekly donation, she gave her a tract, and requested her to read it. "I did read it," said the weeping widow, "but I could not understand it. When she called the next time she asked me if I had read it, and when I told her I could not understand it, she said, 'Read it again, but before you read it the second time, pray to God for wisdom to enable you to understand it. He can give it, and he will give it if you ask him.' I did so. The Lord has answered my prayer, and made me, I trust, wise unto salvation. But he has taken from me my guide, my counsellor, and my friend. The death of my husband, which threw me on the charity of the parish, and deprived my dear babes of a father, was a great trial, but it did not pierce my heart like this. I sometimes think my heart will break, then I go and pray to the Lord for submission to his holy will, and I find myself better; but it will be a long time indeed before I shall be able to get over it."

I mentioned this incident at the rectory, and then learned that the poor widow was a regular attendant at the church, and was

considered decidedly pious. Mrs. Stevens, having ascertained the amount of her departed sister's weekly donation, engaged the rector to become her almoner, and the usual payment was continued. Mr. Lewellin was so affected by this testimony to the memory of his mother, that he increased the sum; and before he left Stanmoor he called to see the bereaved sufferer, and gave her several articles of furniture, which once adorned the lonely cottage of her whose remains we had committed to the tomb.

The evening before our departure, I retraced the steps I had trodden on my former visit to this village; and fixing on the same hour for my ramble into the vale, I anticipated another interview with the pious shepherd. As I walked on I heard the bleating of the sheep, and saw them at a distance ascending the steep path which led up to their fold in a neighbouring field. I heard also the barking of the dog; and soon afterwards the shepherd made his appearance, but I knew him not.

"Is the old man dead," I asked, "who kept his flock here about six years ago?"

"Yes, Sir; he died about Christmas."

"Did you know him?"

"He was my father; and a better father never lived."

"He was a religious man; was he not?"

"Yes, Sir; and he died in the faith of Christ."

"I hope you are following in his steps."

"It is, Sir, my wish and my prayer to be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

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On the Sabbath morning after our return to Fairmount, the Rev. Mr. Ingleby preached from Acts xxi. 16, "An old disciple." We were much pleased with his sermon, particularly with the following passage: "When we see an old disciple moving amidst the activities and amenities of life, we see a *living* monument of the faithfulness and loving-kindness of God; and when we follow him to his grave,

though we may sorrow over his departure from amongst us, yet our sorrow is not to be without hope; he still lives, and lives in a new form, amidst new scenes of beauty and of grandeur, and with new associates; he is with Christ, assimilated to his likeness, beholding his glory, and enjoying sweetest intercourse with him. His gain by his death, should reconcile us to our loss."

"The loss of my dear sister," said Mrs. Stevens, "is the most afflictive trial I have ever been called to endure. Memory carries me back to the days of childhood, to the riper years of age, and to the associations with which my dear departed sister is inseparably entwined. But the pleasing charm soon vanishes, for she is gone."

"But, my dear," replied Mr. Stevens, "though this affliction be grievous, yet you might have been visited by one much more severe."

"Yes, I know it. I might have lost you. That would have been a more overwhelming one. I wish to be resigned—it is my constant prayer—and I hope that I do not cherish any murmuring disposition, but I cannot help feeling; yet I fear lest I should indulge my mourning to an excess."

"Excess of grief, my dear, is to be guarded against, as it unhinges the mind, induces a melancholy cast of temper, and dispossesses comforts which are still preserved, of their power to interest and delight. Mourn you may, but you must not mourn as one 'who has no hope.' For hope, even the sweetest hope that can lodge in the human heart, is yours. Death has merely separated you for a season, he has not destroyed your union. You now live apart, but no impassable gulf lies between you—only a narrow grave. Let your mourning, therefore, be moderate and submissive."

"Yes," Mrs. Stevens replied, as her countenance began to assume its former cheerfulness, which had vanished from the moment the first intelligence of her sister's illness was received, "my sister lives—she lives a purer and a happier life than I ever expect to live, till I cease to breathe this vital air—she now sees the King in his

beauty—she now unites with all the redeemed in singing, ‘Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.’ She is, and ever will be with the Lord. These words comfort me.”

“Then let *me* hear the words which comfort you,” said Mr. Lewellin, who caught this latter sentence as he entered the parlour, “as they may serve to comfort me. My heart never throbbled as it has done since I lost my mother—a loss I have been anticipating for years, but I now find that it is more desolating than I ever anticipated.”

“It is an event,” said Mr. Stevens, “which has brought along with it many alleviating circumstances. She died in peace. No dubious uncertainty distracted her, no dread forebodings appalled her, no torturing anxieties for those she loved agitated her breast. Hers was an enviable death.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Lewellin, “her sun did not go down till the evening; and even then it was light. She told me that for several days before her last illness she suffered great mental perplexity and horror, that she not only doubted her personal piety, but the truth of revelation. She was driven almost to a state of despair; and on the Sabbath morning, when she left her cottage for the house of prayer, she resolved not to receive the memorials of the Saviour’s death. The text from which the Rev. Mr. Bates preached, was taken from Judges viii. 4, ‘Faint, yet pursuing.’ There was one paragraph in the sermon which gave her sweet relief. It was to this effect: ‘The most favoured servants of the Lord are liable to momentary seasons of suspicion and depression; and some have been left for days, and some for months, not only without consolation, but even without hope. But shall we say that as soon as they lose their enjoyments they make a shipwreck of their faith? Shall we say that the design of God—the practical efficacy of the atonement—the continual indwelling of the Holy Spirit—depend on the ever fluctuating and ever varying temperament and feelings of the mind, which is sometimes so perplexed and distracted by unknown causes, as to be incapable of *believing* its own faith, or deriving felicity from its own sources of

blessedness? Oh! no. There are periods in the mysterious life of an heir of salvation when he is left without comfort, if not without hope, and then comes on the hour and the power of darkness; but this singular dispensation does not disinherit him, or leave him an orphan, in a state of privation and abandonment; neither does it destroy the vitality of his religious principles, but it is intended to let him feel a portion of that misery which he deserves, but from which he is delivered through the blood of the Lamb.’”

“Had my sister left us under this mental gloom, I should have had no doubt,” said Mrs. Stevens, “of her present happiness; but it would have been an additional cause of grief.”

“Sometimes,” I observed, “it pleases God to leave his most eminent servants without any strong consolation in their last hours; and sometimes he elevates them to a participation of the felicity of heaven, before he permits them to enter. Hence there is no undeviating uniformity in his procedure; but yet he keeps our practical good in view by all the dispensations of his will. When I see a holy man overwhelmed with sorrow on the eve of his departure, I am convinced there is no absolute, no meritorious connection between an exemplary life and a triumphant death. This conviction, coming through such a medium, destroys all self-complacency, and impels me to place all my dependence for salvation on Jesus Christ. But when I see a sinner of like passions and infirmities with myself—one who has wept over defects and transgressions similar to my own—rising above fear, eagerly and yet submissively anticipating his own dissolution, giving utterance to thoughts and feelings more nearly allied to the glory and purity of the heavenly state than to the dark obscurity of the present, I feel a degree of gratitude to the Saviour for making manifest life and immortality, which, for its full expression, I must wait till I see him as he is, and am made like unto him.”

“The death of our friends,” said Mr. Stevens, “is always an afflictive event, but it is sometimes a salutary one. It reminds us of our mortality, and brings before our imagination the unseen realities of

an eternal world. It teaches us what shadows we are, and what shadows we are pursuing:—

'Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,  
To damp our brainless ardours; and abate  
That glare of life, which often blinds the wise.  
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth  
Our rugged pass to death; to break those bars  
Of terror and abhorrence nature throws  
'Cross our obstructed way; and thus to make  
*Welcome, as safe, our port from ev'ry storm.*'"

"To repine," I observed, "under any of the dispensations of Providence, would be to display a temper which no Christian should cherish; but to repine at the grave of a pious friend, discovers not only a spirit of hostility to the Divine will, but an unsubdued selfishness, which would deprive another of happiness, merely to augment our own."

"Resignation is our duty, and this brings with it its own reward; yet it is a disposition which does not spring up spontaneously in the heart. It is one of those good gifts which cometh from above; but, like every other disposition which claims the same origin, it must be exercised before it can become *perfect*; and when perfected, or when approaching near perfection, it can rejoice in tribulations also."

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## INTEMPERATE ZEAL.



THE Rev. Mr. Roscoe and his lady, who had not been at the mansion for several years, now intimated their intention to pay a visit to their brother. He was the youngest son of the family, and at an early age had decided for the church, as a profession more easy, if not so lucrative as some others. Having finished his career at Oxford, where he was

more distinguished for his love of pleasure than regard for academical honours, he obtained ordination, and settled in a parish in Somersetshire. For nearly fifteen years he remained unmarried, devoting himself to a life of pleasure, and paying but little attention to the claims of his parishioners. The dignity of the priest was lowered by the imperfections of the man, and the church was forsaken for the village chapel. At length he was, by the remonstrances of his friends, induced to pursue a course more becoming the sanctity of his office; he withdrew from his former companions, abandoned the sports of the field and of the gaming table, and turned the torrent of his displeasure against those who had separated themselves from the church, on account of his former irregularities. He had reached the age of forty when he married the eldest daughter of a neighbouring magistrate, a lady distinguished by superior intelligence, and a most catholic spirit. They had two children, who both died in infancy. So deeply wounded was the heart of the mother by these bereavements, that she long abandoned herself to the agonies of grief; and though time had now removed its poignancy, yet she often alluded to her babes and their early death, in a tone and manner which proved that they still lived in her fond remembrance.

Their arrival at their brother's mansion had been expected for several days, and every preparation was made to render their visit pleasant and profitable. At length they came; and though the Rev. Mr. Roscoe was a reformed man, yet he discovered no signs of being a spiritual one. He was become more moral in his habits, but less tolerant in spirit; and soon convinced his brother and his niece that "the things which are seen and temporal" had a more powerful ascendancy over him than those "which are unseen and eternal." He declined the invitation of the Rev. Mr. Cole, to preach on the following Sabbath, as he was too much fatigued by his journey to do duty; but consented to accompany the family to church. It was a beautiful morning, still and serene; no sound was heard but the melody of the birds, and the "church-going bell." Mr. Cole read the Liturgy in his usual heavy, monotonous tone, which was no less offensive to the

ear, than a certain air of carelessness which hung over his manner was repulsive of devotional feeling. He announced his text in an elevated pitch of voice, which immediately arrested the attention of his congregation. "The subject," he remarked, "which I shall submit to you this morning, is taken from the tenth chapter of St. Paul the apostle's Epistle to the Romans, and the second verse:—'For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.'"

He began by declaiming against the spirit and the conduct of the ancient Pharisees, who were, he asserted, the troublers of the church in a former age; and then expressed his deep regret that the sect was not yet become extinct, but was even at this moment augmenting its numbers, and threatening, by its untempered zeal, and its invincible ignorance, to tarnish the lustre and destroy the foundation of the church which is fostering them in her bosom. "If," said he, "we run a comparison between the modern Calvinists, who unhappily stand connected with our venerable Establishment—the admiration and envy of the world—and the ancient Pharisees, we shall find that they bear a close resemblance to each other; and though a good man will pause before he gathers on his lips the denunciations of inspired writ, yet a high sense of duty compels me to say that the woes which our Saviour uttered against the latter, stand directly pointed against the former. The ancient Pharisees set aside the weightier matters of the law to attend to the ceremonials of religion; they prescribed no bounds to their proselyting spirit, for they would encompass sea and land to gain *even one* proselyte; and when they had gained him, our Saviour says that they made him twofold more a child of hell than themselves, though they made bolder and higher pretensions to religion than any other sect. And who, when looking at this picture of the ancient Pharisees, does not recognize the portrait of our modern Calvinists?—'For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' But the modern Calvinists conduct themselves with less reverence for the authority of our church, than the Pharisees discovered for the



authority of theirs; for they will dare to reject some of our established doctrines, and explain away the import of some of our long-settled rites and sacraments."

He then went on to prove, by quotations from the fathers and the Book of Common Prayer, that baptismal regeneration is the only regeneration which is necessary or possible; and positively asserted that the conversion of persons who are already members of the apostolic Church of England, is a mere fiction of modern fanaticism.

"These Calvinistic clergy," he added, "declaim against good works, and exalt a dogmatic belief in certain crude opinions, as the only necessary condition on which sinners can obtain the forgiveness of Almighty God." Then he attempted to prove that the people must necessarily become corrupt, among whom salvation is proclaimed, without requiring, on their part, good works as the essential condition of its bestowment.

"Look, my hearers," he exclaimed, "on the destructive tendency of their style of preaching. As soon as the officiating priest opens his lips and gives utterance to his sentiments, there is an instantaneous commotion in his congregation. Those who lived in peace are split into divisions, and the family or the village which held the unity of the faith, as propounded by our pure apostolic church, suddenly becomes the arena of religious disputations and wrangling, and the temple of peace and unity becomes a Babel of confusion and discord.

"Indeed, in *some instances*, children will rise up in rebellion against the authority of their parents, till the parents, wearied by their obstinacy, or subdued by their importunity, imbibe the same fatal opinions, that they may regain their domestic peace.

"These priests are zealous, and they pretend that they have a zeal of God; but it is the fire and the smoke, whose effect is to darken and to desolate, rather than that clear and radiant light which warms while it illumines, and gives a verdant bloom to every springing blade and opening bud, while it directs the passenger onwards on his journey. In a word, the labours of these men, wherever they are

successful (and such is the fatality attending them that they are always successful), tend to give a retrograde movement to our social habits and enjoyments, and to carry us back to the gloomy times of the Commonwealth, when the Puritanical devotee was seen weeping between the porch and the altar, but never indulging himself in the innocent recreations of life.

“In fine, I feel myself compelled once more to warn you against their doctrines, as contrary to the doctrines of our incomparable prayer-book; to warn you against associating with them, or hearing them preach, as you may be entangled by their sophistry before you are aware, and while you will deplore, in common with myself and others, their existence within the pale of our pure apostolic church, you will endeavour, by your influence and your example, to check the progress of the moral contagion which they have introduced among us. That the common people, who know not the Scriptures, and who despise the authority of their authorized teachers, should embrace the Calvinistic doctrines, is not surprising, because they give them a complete indemnity against every species of crime, but that any of the well-educated and intelligent members of society—any who have not sacrificed their virtue nor lost their taste—should feel a predilection for them, is one of those moral mysteries which can be accounted for only from one of two causes—a partial derangement of intellect, or the magic charm of enthusiasm.

“To conclude: Are they zealous in propagating their doctrines? be you zealous in opposing them; are they zealous in gaining proselytes? be you zealous in reclaiming them; are they zealous in putting an end to all the innocent enjoyments of social life? do you display a superior degree of zeal in preventing such a fatal evil, that we may enjoy life as we have been accustomed to enjoy it in our social circles, and thus prove to a sceptical and a fanatical age, that we can be religious without being melancholy or morose, and fit ourselves for the happiness of a future world without sacrificing the pleasures of the present.”

When the service was concluded, the Roscoes walked home toge-

ther, but no one made any reference to the sermon, as all felt convinced that it was directed against Mr. Roscoe, who appeared, during the whole of the afternoon, unusually reserved. This reserve was regarded by some of the family as a decisive evidence that the sermon had produced its intended effect; and the polite and friendly manner in which he received the Rev. Mr. Cole, who called in the evening, seemed to confirm this opinion. Next morning, as they sat at breakfast, the Rev. Mr. Roscoe said that he had anticipated great pleasure from his visit, but, he added, "I certainly did not anticipate the feast of delight which I enjoyed yesterday. Mr. Cole surpassed himself. I think he gave us a correct portraiture of modern Calvinism. O, it is a gloomy system of religion! just suited for fanatics or enthusiasts. Don't you think Mr. Cole a very clever and a very intelligent man?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Roscoe, "I think him clever and intelligent, and a man of rather extensive reading. We have often passed many pleasant evenings together in discussing literary and scientific questions, and I have uniformly admired his dexterity in reasoning, and the aptness of his illustrations; but, in my opinion, something more than learning and intelligence is necessary to enable a person to understand the scheme of salvation which is contained in the Scriptures."

"But I presume you do not intend, like our modern fanatics, to depreciate learning and intelligence?"

"No; I think a Christian minister cannot be too learned nor too intelligent, but learned men do not always understand the things of the Spirit of God, and some of the most intelligent have been known to imbibe the most erroneous opinions. This, I suppose, you will not deny; does it not then necessarily follow that something more than learning and intelligence is requisite to enable a person to understand the Scriptures?"

"O! I see you have imbibed one of the notions of our modern fanatics. And is it possible that you can give up your understanding to the dominion of fanaticism, which avows sentiments not less

derogatory to the dignity of man, than its unintelligible jargon is offensive to pure taste? They say that no one can understand the gospel unless he is taught by the Spirit of God. They think we must be inspired to enable us to understand the Scriptures, which were given by Divine inspiration, and which are able of themselves to make us wise unto salvation."

"You have made several allusions to modern fanatics, and, from your mode of expression, I conclude that you hold them in contempt."

"In sovereign contempt. They are the troublers of the church, and I wish it were in my power to expel them."

"But if you were to expel all from the church who believe in the necessity of a Divine illumination to enable us to understand the Scriptures, you would retain none but those who disbelieve her doctrines. In the homily on reading the Holy Scriptures you will find the following passage: 'And in reading of God's Word he not always most profiteth that is most ready in the turning of the book, or in saying of it without the book, but he that is most turned into it, that is, the most inspired with the Holy Ghost.' And is there not, through the whole of the public service of our church, a constant reference to the Holy Spirit as the agent by whom the ignorant are instructed, the impure cleansed, and the morally wretched consoled and made happy? Read the collect for Whitsunday: 'God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit, grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour.' And if you turn to the service which was read when you entered into priest's orders, you will find the following verse, which breathes a language no less fervent than scriptural:—

'Come, Holy Ghost! our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire;  
Thy blessed unction from above  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love;  
Enable with perpetual light  
The dulness of our blinded sight.'

Can language more clearly or more forcibly express the necessity of a Divine influence to aid us to understand the meaning of the Word of God? And ought those to be stigmatized as fanatics, and expelled from the church, who *actually* believe their own recorded faith? That would be an act of injustice no less flagrant than if a ruler were to banish the faithful and loyal subject, while the convicted traitor is permitted to enjoy the protection of the law and the emoluments of office."

"But you will admit that there are fanatics in the church, who hold some strange opinions, which do essential injury to society?"

"I admit that there are men who are called fanatics by those who do not understand the doctrines of their own church. I once regarded every zealous, and spiritual, and useful clergyman as a fanatic; but, like others, I affixed no definite meaning to the epithet which I employed. I found the word already coined, and I used it; but I have since discovered its spurious qualities, and, as far as my influence extends, I will prevent its circulation. We ought not to stigmatize those who differ from us. If we think them wrong, we ought to try to reclaim them, but in doing so we should make no sacrifice of the spirit of the Christian, or the courtesy of the gentleman."

"Then I presume you did not approve of the sermon which you heard yesterday?"

"I did not approve of the *temper* which Mr. Cole displayed. The pulpit is a sacred place, and he who occupies it should always bear a near resemblance *in spirit*, if he cannot in manner, to the Prince of Peace. The weapons of the Christian minister never do any execution except they are spiritual, and then they become mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of error, and destroying the barriers which prejudice has raised against the reception of the truth, and then the mind willingly submits to its authority."

"I must confess that he was rather severe, perhaps too much so for

the sanctity of the pulpit; but the severity of his spirit did not weaken the force of his arguments."

"But a bad spirit will often induce a wavering hearer to suspect that the arguments are defective. An affecticnate manner insinuates itself into the heart, renders it soft and pliable, and disposes it to imbibe the sentiments and follow the impulse of the speaker. Whoever has attended to the effect of addresses from the pulpit, must have perceived how much of their impression depends upon this quality. But, instead of being cool and dispassionate in his reasoning, and leading on the congregation from one stage of conviction to another, by a regular process of proof, treating his erring opponent as a fond parent treats a disobedient child, with affection, even while a paramount regard for his welfare urges to correction, Mr. Cole advanced with impetuosity into the heat of the debate, dogmatized when he ought to have argued, instituted invidious comparisons when he ought to have made an effort to conciliate prejudices, denounced when he ought to have entreated, and certainly left an impression on my mind that the display I witnessed yesterday had little of the loving temper of pure Christianity."

"But," said Mrs. Roscoe, "I really thought, from the friendly manner in which you received Mr. Cole last evening, that his discourse in the morning had given you as much pleasure as it gave us. Indeed, I do not think that his spirit was bad; he spoke certainly with more warmth than usual, but then he was anxious to convince you, I have no doubt, of the errors which you have recently imbibed, and to warn you of their dangerous tendency."

"If Mr. Cole displayed an antichristian temper in the pulpit, that is no reason why I should behave unlike a gentleman in the parlour. I shall always be glad to see him, and will treat him with the respect which is due to his character and his office. If he thinks I have imbibed any erroneous opinions, I shall have no objection to give him an opportunity of correcting them; but if he calculated on disturbing my belief in the doctrines of the Scriptures and of our church, which I have recently embraced, he, by his mode of attack yester-

day, supplied a fresh proof of the adage, *that intolerance defeats its own purpose*, as I am, if possible, more deeply convinced of their truth and importance than I was before I heard his sermon."

"I had heard," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "a great deal about Mr. Cole before I left home, of his learning, and of his eloquence, and I went to church yesterday with very high expectations; but I was sadly disappointed. I listened to his sermon with great attention, but I did not like either the sentiments, or the spirit, or the design of the sermon. He was, when in the pulpit, more like a gladiator aiming a deadly thrust at some living opponent, than a minister of Jesus Christ preaching the truth in love. It certainly, but no thanks to him, has put some new thoughts into my heart, which I feel to be weighty and important, but which at present exist there in a very wild and incoherent state."

"I am happy to hear you say so, dear aunt," said Miss Roscoe, "as the incipient thoughts of a spirit, on entering and passing through the great renovating process of Divine grace, are usually wild and incoherent; but, in a short time, they are always reduced to obvious and intelligible order."

"I don't quite understand you, my dear."

"But you will soon, dear aunt. The roll of Divine truth opens gradually, and what at first is obscure and indistinct, becomes, in the progressive unfolding, clear, intelligible, and perceptibly harmonious; and then the comprehension of the wondrous scheme of human redemption and salvation, against which we had yesterday morning such a tirade of misrepresentation and abuse, is an easy, and, I may add, a necessary action of the mind. The prophet Hosea, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says to the now thinking inquirer, 'Then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord.'"

## BAPTISMAL REGENERATION A FICTION.

**T**HE right of private judgment on every question which stands connected with the present or future happiness of man, is an unalienable privilege. The exercise of this right has been, and still is, proscribed by the genius of superstition; but the spirit of Christianity not only sanctions but establishes it; and we are commanded to bring every opinion which may be submitted to us to the test of a close and severe examination. We are not to be controlled or governed by the authority of men of learning, nor are we to receive a doctrine as true, because it bears the marks of antiquity.

The priests of the Romish Church lay claim to infallibility; but this extraordinary endowment is withheld from the laity, who are commanded to receive, most implicitly, everything which they advance, however repugnant to reason, or contrary to the Scriptures. But this prostration of the understanding before the majesty of the priesthood, and this tame submission to all the doctrines and precepts which they may enforce, is an act which no intelligent Protestant can perform.

If, then, we refuse to surrender the government of our reason to the absolute authority of the ministers of one church, which arrogates to itself the attribute of infallibility, shall we do it to those of another, which makes no such lofty pretensions? We ought unquestionably to hold in high estimation those who administer to us the word of life; but as they are men encompassed with infirmities, often differing from each other on the most essential articles of the Christian faith, and liable to err in common with ourselves, it is no less our duty than our privilege to compare what they advance from the pulpit or from the press with the testimony of the Bible. Did not Jesus Christ urge his hearers to search the Scriptures; and when the apostle Paul wrote to the church at



Corinth, he employed these words:—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

There is too much reason to fear, that while we boast of our freedom from the spiritual dominion under which our forefathers groaned before the Reformation, we are getting back into a state of bondage, by voluntarily and pertinaciously adhering to ancient opinions on religious subjects without investigating them; and hence, so few among us are capable of distinguishing truth from error. Indeed, so unpopular is the calm investigation of religious truth become among a certain class of Christians, that it is deprecated as one of the early symptoms of fanaticism. They will go to church, utter their solemn responses, and listen to the sermon; but to compare the sentiments of the sermon with the language of the Scripture, to see if there be a strict accordance between what they hear and what they read, or ought to read, is a practice which many would condemn, and which comparatively few will adopt. Is it then surprising that we meet with so many who are as ignorant of the Scriptures and of the articles of their own church as they are of the Koran of Mahomet or the Shasters of the Hindoos? Nor is this charge directed exclusively against the lower orders of society, for it is equally applicable to those who occupy high places in the intellectual, social, and literary world`

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In the evening, as the ladies of the family were attending to their needle-work, the Rev. Mr. Roscoe made an allusion to the sermon which Mr. Cole delivered on the preceding Sabbath, and said, that though the spirit which he displayed might be objected to, and some of his arguments might be deemed inconclusive, yet he decidedly agreed with him on the subject of baptismal regeneration. He went on to say—"I know that the evangelical clergy maintain that every person, even the most moral and virtuous, must undergo an internal change before they can be fitted for the kingdom of heaven; but, as Mr. Cole very judiciously observed, this is one of

the wild notions which spring out of the luxuriance of an enthusiastic imagination, rather than out of the soil of a matured judgment."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But do you not believe in the necessity of regeneration?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, but I believe that no other than baptismal regeneration is either necessary, or even possible in this world. We are born\* anew in baptism, and in baptism exclusively. As you are fond of appealing to the authority of our church on the disputable points of religion, you will allow me the same privilege. When the child is baptized, the priest is taught to say, 'Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks to Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.' Then follows this solemn form of thanksgiving and prayer, which the priest is required to offer to Almighty God: 'We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church; and humbly we beseech Thee to grant that he, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that as he is made *partaker* of the death of thy Son, he may also be *partaker* of his resurrection: so that finally, with the residue of the holy church, he may be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom, through Christ Jesus our Lord.' And does not the catechism of our church teach the child to say, in answer to the question, '*Who gave you this name?*' 'My godfathers and god-

\* Some of the Tractarians speak in more guarded, yet in more ambiguous terms, on the regenerating power of baptism; but the majority of them entertain the belief which is expressed by the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, in the following quotation from one of the last sermons he preached at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, see page 193:— "Here is a great mystery; that by water in holy baptism is given a regenerating and life-creating grace—that by water we go down into the font foul and leprous; by grace we rise pure, spotless, and sound—that by water we go down into the font dead in trespasses and sins; by grace we rise up from the font alive in Christ."

mothers in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? What language can more plainly or unequivocally prove that baptism is regeneration; and that the child who is thus regenerated by baptism is made a partaker of the death of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? And as regeneration can take place *only once, and does take place in baptism*, those who imbibe the modern notions on this subject are convicted of error by the authority of the church to whose decision they so often appeal."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I grant that the popular construction of the passages which you have quoted supports your opinion, and if a similar phraseology of speech were employed by the writers of the New Testament, I should not hesitate to agree with you; but I do not find such language in any part of the New Testament. I think that the Liturgy and Articles are to be brought to the test of the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures to that of the Liturgy. The latter, though the first of human compositions, is nevertheless of human authority; the former is given by the inspiration of God."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I admit that the Liturgy and the Articles of our church are human compositions, and that they possess no weight of authority unless they are in strict accordance with holy writ: but do not the sacred writers in the most positive terms assert that baptism is regeneration? Is not the following passage conclusive: 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life' (Titus iii. 4-7).

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"This passage most certainly associates baptism and regeneration together; but it does not say that we are *regenerated by baptism*. The washing of regeneration, or baptism, is the mere external sign of that moral purity which is the effect of the renewing

of the Holy Ghost. And that this is the meaning of the passage, I appeal to your good sense; for, if we are regenerated by baptism, where is the necessity of the renewing of the Holy Ghost?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I do not mean that baptism itself regenerates us, but that the Holy Spirit regenerates us when we are receiving the sacrament."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Simon Magus was one of the first converts to Christianity; he was baptized by Philip, but he was not regenerated by the Holy Spirit. He had been baptized, but he still remained unholy, and 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.' This simple fact proves that baptism is not regeneration, unless you are prepared to admit that a regenerate person may be 'in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity;' and if so, what spiritual advantage does he derive from his regeneration? If by baptism Simon Magus was made a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, it is evident that he required some moral change after this, as we are expressly informed that his heart was not right in the sight of God, and that he had no part nor lot in any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I candidly confess that this case of Simon Magus seems to militate against the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; or, at any rate, it clogs it with difficulties which are not easily overcome."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"So I think, and so I should imagine every person of common sense would think. In my opinion, it settles the question."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But there are other difficulties which press upon the doctrine, which seem to me insuperable. If baptismal regeneration be the only regeneration possible in this world, and no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven except he be regenerated by water, what will become of those children who die unbaptized? Shall we consign all the offspring of the Friends and of the Baptists to a state of future misery, and nearly all the children of Scotland, and of those of our own church, who die before the ceremony can be

performed; shall we plunge them, in fact, into hell, with the devil and his angels, when we know they have committed no actual sin? What is this but representing the mothers of earth bringing forth children to people the infernal regions. Most horrible! Indeed, rather than embrace a doctrine that entails after it such fearful consequences, I could consent to close my Bible, as a revelation of wrath rather than of mercy."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But I do not see that this consequence necessarily follows; because Almighty God may of his goodness take these children to heaven, though they may not have been baptized."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"What! if baptism be regeneration. Are not children conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity? Do they not partake of our impurity, and can we suppose that they will carry a depraved nature with them into heaven? If so, evil abounds there no less than here; and all the anticipations which we indulge of attaining a state of unsullied purity and bliss after the close of life, must be regarded as the illusions of the fancy:—No, their moral nature must be changed; and if they are not baptized, it must be changed by the renewing of the Holy Spirit, without the external ceremony, which proves that regeneration is essentially different and distinct from baptism. I will give you a quotation from the pen of an elegant writer, which will, I think, decide the question:—'But that baptism is not regeneration, is placed beyond all reasonable debate by the following declarations of St. Paul: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Cor. i. 14, 17). Nothing is more certain than that, if baptism insures or proves regeneration, Paul, who so ardently desired the salvation of mankind, and wished to become, as extensively as possible, the instrument of their salvation, could not thank God that he baptized none of the Corinthians but Gaius, Crispus, and the household of Stephanus. To him it would comparatively have been a matter of indifference whether they accused him of baptizing in his own name or not. Of what consequence could

the clamour, the disputes, or the divisions be, which might arise about this subject, compared, on the one hand, with the salvation, and on the other with the perdition of the Corinthians? Instead of thanking God in this manner, he would have baptized every Corinthian who would have permitted him; and, like a Romish missionary, have compelled crowds and hosts to the streams and to the rivers in the neighbourhood, that they might receive the ordinance at his hands. With still less propriety could he say, if baptism were the means of regeneration, especially if it insured or proved it, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Christ, as He himself hath told us, sent St. Paul to the Gentiles and to the Corinthians, as well as other Gentiles, *to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* In other words, Christ sent St. Paul to the Gentiles to accomplish their regeneration. But if baptism be the means of regeneration, or be accompanied by it, then Christ actually sent him to baptize, in direct contradiction to the passage just now quoted. From both these passages it is evident that baptism neither insures nor proves regeneration, unless we believe that the gratitude of the most zealous apostle rose in intensity in proportion as he failed in accomplishing the design of his mission.’”

*Mrs. John Roscoe* (addressing her husband).—“I think you must now give up the point; for who can fairly stand against such plain and powerful arguments?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“But the doctrine is no less dangerous than anti-scriptural; and when we reflect on the tendency which the human mind discovers to derive consolation from any source of relief, however vague or imaginary, we cannot evince too much ardour in exploding the fatal delusion. In this country there are multitudes of baptized persons who discover, at no period of their life, any other proofs that they have been regenerated than what the parish register supplies. If these persons, who have grown up in a state of ignorance of Christianity, corrupt in morals and in manners, are told by their clergyman that when they were

baptized they were made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, will they not easily lull the disquietude of their consciences to sleep, and flatter themselves with the hope of final salvation, even while they continue the servants, if not the slaves of sin? Will they, if warned to flee from the wrath come, apprehend any danger, seeing they are taught to believe that they are already the children of God? O fatal delusion! a delusion no less dangerous to the morals than it is to the final happiness of man, because it leads him to ascribe the origin of his religious character to a ceremonial act performed on him at a period when he knew it not, rather than to his repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and teaches him that he may become a glorified spirit in another world, even though he lives and dies a sceptic or a blasphemer. Thus a little cold water taken from a font, and falling from the holy hands of a regularly ordained priest, imparts such a mysterious sanctity to the subject whom it touches, as to render any moral or spiritual meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light quite unnecessary. *How wonderful!*"

It was amusing to watch the movements of Mrs. John Roscoe during these discussions, and gratifying to hear her occasional observations. She would sit sometimes as patient as a judge when listening to the evidence on some grave charge against a prisoner at the bar, and at other times she was as restless and fidgety as a jurymen anxious to deliver the verdict, that he might get home to his dinner as quickly as possible. In general, she held a very tight rein over her excursive spirit, out of respect to the two principal disputants; but occasionally it would drop from her grasp, and then she was off at a tangent.

"I think," said she, "a man's bump of credulity must be larger than his head who would tell me, with decorous gravity, that he really has faith to believe such an ecclesiastical dogma."

This remark somewhat disconcerted, though it did not displease her husband, who rather liked to see her display her cleverness, but he soon recovered himself, and addressing his brother, he said:—

“But these are the consequences which *you* deduce from the doctrine, rather than consequences which necessarily follow from its admission. When the child is baptized we pray that he may *lead the rest of his life according to this beginning*; which presupposes the possibility that he may not. If he do not, he forfeits his baptismal rights, and relapses into a state of condemnation and guilt.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“Then I presume that, by his relapse into a state of condemnation and guilt, he places himself in a moral condition similar to the condition in which he would have stood if he had never been baptized?”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“Exactly so.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“As a state of guilt and condemnation implies, on the part of man, depravity and alienation from God, must he not undergo some *moral change* in his disposition, his principles, and his taste, before he can loathe himself on account of his impurities, or be fitted to dwell in the immediate presence of a holy God; as we read that ‘without holiness no man shall see the Lord?’”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“Certainly; he must be made good and virtuous before he can be admitted into heaven.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“But if he were regenerated when he was baptized, and there is no *other regeneration possible in this world*, you see the dilemma in which you place a man who by transgression forfeits his baptismal rights.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“What dilemma?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“Why, in despair. You say he needs a moral change to fit him for heaven; but as that change cannot be produced without baptism—and *he has undergone the ceremony, which cannot be repeated*—you place him under the ban of reprobation, unless you adopt the only alternative which remains for you, that of admitting him to heaven in his depraved state. Mr. Cole, in his sermon, was very severe on the evangelical clergy for two things; he asserted that, by their awful strain of preaching, they generally destroy the peace of society; and by holding out the hope of salvation to the most guilty, they destroy its virtue. These were certainly heavy charges; but do you



not perceive that they are charges which may be brought with strict logical accuracy against the advocates of baptismal regeneration? For, if they follow out their doctrine to its legitimate consequences, they are compelled either to admit a man into heaven in an unregenerated state, who by a relapse into sin forfeits his baptismal rights, or, after his forfeiture, to tell him that he cannot be regenerated, by which he is systematically and inevitably consigned over to despair."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Well, I confess that the doctrine appears involved in more oppressive difficulties than I ever conceived; and yet, from the quotations which Mr. Cole gave us on Sunday from the Fathers, it appears to have been a doctrine which was received into the church very early and very generally."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, to quote the language of an eloquent writer, 'it is well known that, from a very early period, the most extravagant notions prevailed in the church with respect to the efficacy of baptism, and its absolute necessity in order to attain salvation. The descent of the human mind from the spirit to the letter—from what is vital and intellectual to what is ritual and external in religion—is the true source of idolatry and superstition in all the multifarious forms they have assumed; and as it began early to corrupt the patriarchal religion, so it soon obscured the lustre and destroyed the simplicity of the Christian institute. In proportion as genuine devotion declined, the love of pomp and ceremony increased; the few and simple rites of Christianity were extolled beyond all reasonable bounds; new ones were invented, to which mysterious meanings were attached, till the religion of the New Testament became, in process of time, as insupportable a yoke as the Mosaic law. The first effects of this spirit are discernible in the ideas entertained of the ordinance of baptism. From an erroneous interpretation of the figurative language of a few passages in Scripture, in which the sign is identified with the thing signified, it was universally supposed that baptism was invariably accompanied with a supernatural effect, which totally changed the state and character of the candidate, and constituted him a child of

God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven. Hence it was almost constantly denoted by the terms *illumination*, *regeneration*, and others expressive of the highest operations of the Spirit; and as it was believed to obtain the *plenary* remission of all past sins, it was often, in order to insure that benefit, purposely deferred to the latest period of life. Thus Eusebius informs us that the Emperor Constantine, finding his end fast approaching, judged it a fit season for purifying himself from his offences, and cleansing his soul from that guilt which, in common with other mortals, he had contracted, which he believed was to be effected by the power of mysterious words and the saving laver. "This," said he, addressing the surrounding bishops, "*is the period I have so long hoped and prayed for, the period of obtaining the salvation of God.*" And no sooner was the rite of baptism administered, than he arrayed himself in white garments, and laid aside the imperial purple, in token of his bidding adieu to all secular concerns.' We have here a fair specimen of the sentiments which were generally adopted upon this subject in early times; but if the Articles and Liturgy of our own church are to be submitted to the test of the Scriptures, must not the opinions of the ancients pass through the same ordeal? I would therefore say of all the authorities quoted by Mr. Cole, 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' But you will permit me to add, that if there be such mysterious efficacy accompanying the rite of baptism, and such danger incurred by a relapse into sin after the candidate has submitted to it, I think the ancients discovered more wisdom in having it deferred till the period of their approaching dissolution, than we do in submitting to it while surrounded by all the fascinations of sense and the temptations to evil."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"I was never a zealous advocate for baptismal regeneration, but now I repudiate it as an ecclesiastical fiction. But then comes a very grave question, *What is regeneration?*"

*Miss Roscoe.*—"Yes, aunt, one of the gravest and one of the most important questions that can engage our attention."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"And I must have the question satisfactorily solved. Indeed, I begin to apprehend personal danger, for, though baptized, I may not be regenerated."

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## THE RETIRED CHRISTIAN.



HE beauty of the morning tempted me to seek the recreation of a solitary rural walk, and that I might not spend a useless day, I made a selection of tracts for distribution. After sauntering through many a pleasant lane and meadow, the freshness of the grass, the beauty of the wild flowers, and the warbling of the birds enlivening the scene, I came near to a mansion belonging to the Marquis of B—, and, availing myself of the privilege which he generously affords the public, I resolved to visit it. Walking leisurely up the long shady avenue, I now and then caught a glimpse of the venerable structure, and at length it came full in view. It was an irregular building, of the Elizabethan period, of considerable extent, and in excellent preservation. As I passed from room to room, examining the articles of taste and of luxury with which they were adorned, I thought within myself, how little can all this splendour do to confer true happiness! The collection of ancient armour interested me, and the portraits of the great ones of former times carried my mind back to events too intimately interwoven with our national history ever to be forgotten. Before I left the library, I deposited between the leaves of some of the books lying on the table a few tracts, which I hoped might arrest the attention of some of the members of the noble family, and having commended these silent messengers of truth to the Divine blessing, I retired, delighted with what I had seen

I walked on some little distance, when, on making a sudden turn, I descended a winding slope, which led to the front of a neat cottage, partially concealed by the evergreens which surrounded it. An air of finished neatness and scrupulous order was everywhere visible, and its quiet simplicity formed a pleasing contrast to the magnificent mansion I had just left. The barking of a little dog, and the crowing of a cock, satisfied me that it was inhabited, though I saw neither man nor child. Discovering a tasteful seat, formed by the bended branches of an ash and hazel that grew in fellowship, I sat me down to rest myself. I did not long remain in suspense as to the character of the inhabitants, for, while indulging my fancies, I observed, at some distance, a venerable-looking man advancing towards the cottage. As he drew near, I rose and saluted him: he returned the compliment with graceful ease; and his manner at once convinced me that, though in a rustic garb, he had been accustomed to mingle in polite society. His frank and kindly manners at once relieved me from the embarrassment into which his unexpected appearance had thrown me, and it was with feelings of interest and pleasure that I accepted his invitation to step into his cottage and rest myself. The interior of this retreat was as neat as the outer decorations were beautiful; the furniture was simple and inexpensive; the only thing which particularly attracted my attention was a large painting, which, he informed me, was a favourite family-piece. While I was admiring the picture, and carefully examining the group there represented, his wife entered the room, and, after a little general conversation, she pressed me to remain and dine with them. We soon became somewhat familiar; and, throwing off reserve, conversed freely, as two old friends are wont to talk when met together after a long absence. In course of conversation, my venerable host gave me some account of his history. His life had been a chequered one, on which had fallen the lights and shadows of prosperity and adversity. I ascertained that his name was Armstrong, that he had three children—his daughter, who was married to an attorney in Bristol, and his two sons, who resided in London. He had acquired a handsome fortune by industry

and frugality, and having disposed of his business, had retired to the country to spend the evening of his days in retirement. But soon the charm and novelty of the country wore away; he was not happy completely isolated from commercial life and intercourse with general society; and resolved again to return to more active pursuits. A favourable opportunity soon occurred, when he disposed of his country residence, and entered into partnership with a banking firm of reputed respectability. But, ere long, he found that he had been deceived; the concern became bankrupt, and in his old age he lost at one sweep the accumulated property of former years. The shock to himself and his wife was at first overpowering, but, when awakening from the stupor into which it had thrown them, they rejoiced that their children were in a very prosperous condition, and they had no doubt but they would prove to them comforters in the hour of their distress. In this they were not mistaken: an arrangement was soon made for the removal of their parents from the scene of their sorrow and misfortunes; the cottage which they now occupied was purchased for them, and to secure them from all anxiety respecting their future support, an annuity was settled upon them for life.

When Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong removed to the cottage, they brought with them an old domestic, who had been in their service for more than thirty years, and she, with a man-servant, made up the whole of their family. As they were strangers in the neighbourhood, and in a manner cut off from intercourse with the world, they lived quite retired, finding, in the gratification of promoting each other's happiness, more satisfaction than they had ever enjoyed in the days of their prosperity.

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"Adversity," I remarked, "though dreaded when at a distance, is often met on its near approach with calmness, and not unfrequently it becomes a source of greater happiness than prosperity has ever been able to impart."

"Prosperity," said Mr. Armstrong, "possesses greater attractions

than adversity, but it has a more pernicious influence on the mind. The prayer of Agur I admire for its simplicity and suitableness, seeing that wealth and extreme poverty often place our principles in danger:—"Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die; remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

"There is no exercise," I observed, "which has such a salutary influence over the human heart, and over the formation of the character, as prayer; for, by associating us with the Author of all excellence, we imperceptibly imbibe a portion of his goodness; it is the hand which lays hold of his strength; and then we enjoy peace, because we feel secure amidst all apparent dangers and positive privations."

"But, Sir," said my host, "how few pray!—how few understand the nature of prayer!—how few engage in this holy exercise from choice, or derive from it that satisfaction and delight which it is calculated to impart!" Looking at me with calm earnestness, he added, "Such is the magic influence which the fleeting events of life have over us, that we remain comparatively indifferent to the realities of an eternal world, till some disaster arises to break the charm. The afflictive dispensation which deprived me of all my property, and left me dependent on my children, though severe, has proved the most beneficial occurrence of my history. It has taught me the vanity as well as the instability of all earthly possessions; it has led me to seek pure and substantial happiness in fellowship with the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ."

He then informed me that, from his childhood, he had been a regular attendant at his parish church, and endeavoured to practise the relative virtues which he so frequently had heard inculcated. But, during the whole of this time, he had no just conception of the evil of sin, or of the degeneracy of his nature, or of the necessity of that faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ which

purifies the heart. He was religious from habit, not from conviction; and he paid respect to the ceremonies of public worship because others did so, rather than from any benefit which he expected to derive from them. The cottage he now occupied was at a considerable distance from the parish church, and on his removal to it he felt quite free from the control of the opinion of others, and usually spent his Sabbaths at home. One day, however, his curiosity was excited by some rumours which reached him respecting the rector, and he resolved to go to hear him. "We all walked together," said he, "and on entering the church we were struck with the size of the congregation, and the unusual seriousness of the clergyman, who was officiating in the desk. But it was when in the pulpit that he displayed the fervid and impassioned eloquence of a holy man of God. There he exhibited the word of life with such clearness, and with such power, that we were delighted; and though he advanced some things that were new to us, and which did not exactly agree with our own opinions, yet we could not refrain from going again on the following Sabbath. Since that day we have never absented ourselves, except when illness has compelled us; and now I can adore the wisdom and the love of HIM who broke up my former establishment, in which I lived a useless life, and fixed my residence in this humble retreat, where I have been brought to hear the pure gospel, which has been the means of infusing spiritual life into every member of my household."

"The ways of heaven," I remarked, "are sometimes dark and mysterious; but when their ulterior design is accomplished, the obscurity vanishes, and we are enabled to perceive marks of infinite wisdom and benevolence in the events which, at an early stage, appeared as the precursors of judgment and of woe."

"Yes, Sir, the dispensation by which I lost my property was, indeed, dark and mysterious; it involved me in the depths of trouble, and I had no resources of consolation opened to me, but the sympathy I received from my children. It did not occur to me that a gracious Providence was intending to promote my happiness by

smiting the prosperity which I was enjoying. I reproached the agents of fraud, who had deceived me, and I reproached myself for being deceived. I was stung to the quick by the disgrace into which I was plunged; and when I retired to this cottage, I felt more disposed to murmur against the providence of God, than to offer the tribute of a grateful heart."

"It is the influence of religion which induces within us a disposition of mind in accordance with the sovereign will of our heavenly Father, and which teaches and inclines us to derive our purest enjoyments from the manifestations of His favour. Hence, he who possesses the religious principle in full energy, is fitted to meet any trial, however severe, and to reside in any place, however humble, because he believes that all things are working together for his good, and that there is no spot in the universe from whence the God of providence and of grace is excluded."

"In my former country residence, to which I had retired with a large fortune, I soon began to feel out of my element. The decoration of my house, and the laying out of my gardens and pleasure-grounds, kept me employed for a time, but when these were completed, I found that the inactivity of a retired country gentleman was ill suited to my active habits. I became unhappy, and was glad to leave the country to enter again into commercial pursuits. When I came here I dreaded a renewal of the experiment; and though I believed that adversity would assume and retain a powerful influence in reconciling me to my fate, I soon found that adversity alone could not induce submission to the will of heaven, nor produce contentment. The mind cannot derive support from the cause of its depression. This must come from some other source. I have found it, or rather it was given me, when and where I looked not for it. I now can say, what I never could say when in the height of my prosperity, that I am really happy and contented. I have no wish to return again to the busy world."

"Solitude," I remarked, "is most favourable to the spirit of devotion; yet there are many of the virtues of the Christian character



which cannot be displayed but before the public eye—such as candour, and benevolence, and zeal; and as we are not to live to ourselves, do you not think, Sir, it is our duty to go forth and let our light shine before others?”

“Most certainly, Sir; and though we are apparently shut out from the world, and have but few of its temptations to allure, and none of its cares to distract us, yet we live quite near enough to its evils to afford us an opportunity of displaying those graces of the Christian character to which you have alluded. Our nearest neighbour is a man of wealth, and of extensive influence in the parish; but he looks down on us with contempt, because we have embraced what he calls *this new religion*, and he does everything in his power to irritate and mortify us. Just over yonder hill there are several cottages, which are inhabited by coal-miners, who are as ignorant and as depraved as any description of persons I have ever known; and where ignorance and vice abound there is sure to be wretchedness. Hence, though we do not occupy any prominent station in the eye of the public, we are not exempted from the privilege of attempting to do good to others, nor from the honour of suffering persecution for righteousness’ sake.”

“As you are now in the possession of a larger portion of happiness than you ever previously enjoyed, do you not feel a stronger attachment to life than you ever felt?”

“Yes, Sir, I do; because I now perceive that our life is given for a nobler purpose than I ever conceived before. I used to think that it was given us for the acquisition of wealth and honour, and for the gratification of the taste and feeling; but now I believe that the original design of its bestowment is that we may honour and love God, and, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, be prepared to enjoy His presence in the eternal world. But though I am more attached to life than ever, I have no objection to resign it, when it may please God to call me to do so. At my advanced age, though my health is good, and my constitution unbroken, I cannot expect to live many years; yet I feel the strong pulsation of a life over

which neither the first nor the second death have any power. I should like to live on earth, if it were the will of God, till I see my dear children embrace the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; but if I should be removed before that event takes place, I have no doubt but I shall unite with the ministering angels and the spirits of the redeemed in celebrating it in His presence."

"I am happy to hear you speak with so much confidence on such an important subject, as I have long thought that the fears which Christian parents so often and so long cherish respecting the salvation of their children, are no less dishonourable to God than destructive of their own peace. He has commanded us to use the means for the conveyance of truth to their minds; and he has given us many promises of sure success; and ought we, after all this, to despair? He may withhold the renovating power, to make us more importunate in prayer, and to convince us that human means alone will not prove effectual; but still it is our duty and our privilege to expect that his word shall not return unto him void, but that it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it."

I was much interested by the conversation of my host, and my gratification was increased by hearing that he attended the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Guion, of whom he spoke with all the warmth of filial attachment; that he was personally acquainted with my esteemed friend, the Rev. Mr. Ingleby; and had often heard of Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, though he knew them not. I now bade this aged couple farewell, and set out to retrace my steps to Fairmount, highly pleased with the adventures of the day, which I found as conducive to my mental and spiritual improvement, as they had been beneficial to my health.

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## SPIRITUAL REGENERATION A REALITY.

**A**N occurrence took place in the course of the day which revived the question of the preceding evening. Two funerals passed along the road in front of Mr. Roscoe's mansion. The first was that of a man, who died in the prime of life; and the second was that of an infant, who expired soon after its birth. The man had been a poacher, and, like most who devote themselves to illicit practices, he had lived a dissolute life. He rarely if ever attended church; usually spent his Sabbaths in idleness, or in the indulgence of his vicious propensities; was notorious for the vulgarity and impurity of his manners; and such was his aversion to religion, that when the Rev. Mr. Cole called to see him, only a few days before his death, he bluntly told him, that as he had lived without religion, he had made up his mind to die without it.

The infant was the first-born of an interesting couple, who had been married little more than twelve months. They lived in a genteel residence at the farther end of the village, and were celebrated amongst their neighbours no less for their affection for each other, than the sufferings which they endured before their union was consummated. The cupidity of their parents kept them apart for a period nearly as long as Jacob served for his beloved Rachel, when death came, and by leaving them orphans, broke down the barrier which had obstructed their union. But they were both too deeply affected by their loss to evince any symptoms of pleasure; and such was the respect in which they held the memory of their parents, that they permitted one year to pass over their heads before they were married. On the nuptial morning, a large number of the villagers greeted them with their simple benedictions as they left the church; and when they alighted from the carriage to enter their own dwelling, they were surrounded by a group of

females dressed in white, who presented them with a garland of flowers—expressing, at the same time, a wish that their joy might prove of a less fading nature.

“It is,” said Mr. Roscoe, “by bringing the incidents and facts of real life to bear on the doctrines of our belief, that we are able to test them. The man who has just gone to his grave was the son of the parish clerk, and I well remember when he was baptized. If regeneration takes place when the ceremony of baptism is performed, he was then made a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. But what moral good resulted from this supposed change in his state and character? None. He grew up a wild lad—he lived without religion—and without it he died. But the child whose funeral we have just seen pass—this babe, the first-fruits of conjugal bliss, which just made its appearance in this valley of weeping, a branch too tender to thrive in such an uncongenial soil, after languishing for a few seconds, experienced a premature decay. It was a branch from the wild olive, and required the same spiritual grafting to fit it to luxuriate in the garden of the Lord as a more hardy plant. But if this spiritual operation cannot be performed except when the sacrament of baptism is administered, as some assert, then is this tender scion a brier or a thorn, whose end is to be burned, for it withered and died before the waters of healing could be procured. The impure and impious ruffian, who dies in the act of scornfully rejecting the Christian faith, passes at once into the kingdom of heaven, and takes rank with prophets, and apostles, and martyrs; while the little lovely babe, when waking up into a state of consciousness, instead of feeling the tender embraces of a mother, is startled into terror and anguish, by the sight and sound of infernal and lost spirits! Really this baptismal regeneration of the Tractarian churchman is such a monstrous doctrine, that I am at a loss to conceive how any man of common sense and humane feeling can appear as its advocate; it is a libel on the Christian faith, a daring outrage on parental feeling, and altogether a fatal delusion.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I have been reviewing my opinion on the question of baptismal regeneration since our last discussion, and I find the difficulties in which it is involved too numerous and too formidable to be fairly overcome. I find I must abandon it; but in doing this I am plunged into deep perplexity; for I am utterly incapable of conceiving *what regeneration can be*, unless I imbibe the notions of the evangelical clergy, which I never can do."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"To object to truth, attested by conclusive evidence, merely because it is admitted by a class of men against whom strong antipathies are improperly excited, is a mark, not of wisdom, but of folly; and if you push such a determination to the full extent of its application, you will be reduced to the necessity of giving up your belief in the existence of a God—the Divine mission of Jesus Christ—the doctrine of providence—the resurrection and the final judgment—as they believe these doctrines in common with you."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Very true; but you know that prejudice is more difficult to subdue than reason; and hence it may be termed the forlorn hope of truth, which but few can take. But as the question is one of paramount importance, and we have leisure to discuss it, I wish it to be pursued, and I shall be glad if you will give me your definition of regeneration."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"The word regeneration rarely occurs in the New Testament; but there are many other terms employed, which convey the same leading idea; such as, being born again—born of the Spirit—born of God—being made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Hence, when the apostle had exhorted the Ephesians to put off, with respect to their former conversation, 'the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts,' he adds, 'and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God,' or in conformity to His image, 'is created in righteousness and true holiness;' and in his address to the Romans he says, 'and be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.' These passages decidedly prove, at least in my opinion, the

necessity of some *moral change* in the principles, and dispositions, and tempers of our mind; and I am not aware that I can give you a better definition of it than you will find in the preface to a volume of discourses which I have in my library:—‘*By regeneration is meant, a prevailing disposition of the mind to universal holiness, produced and cherished by the influence of the Divine Spirit operating in a manner suitable to the constitution of our nature, as rational and accountable creatures.*’”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“The passages which you have quoted unquestionably imply the necessity of some moral change; and I can conceive a propriety in their application to the Jews, or to pagan Gentiles of ancient times; but they cannot, with any show of reason, be applied to us, who are born Christians, and educated in the belief of Christianity.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“No, we are not born Christians. We are born in a country where Christianity is professed, and of parents who bear the Christian name, and we have been educated in a belief of Christianity; yet no one is a Christian until he is renewed in the spirit of his mind, and is in some measure conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, who was holy and undefiled. To prove the correctness of this statement, I will refer you to our old friend, Mr. Trotter. His father, you know, was a good man; but he himself, with all his excellencies, was an avowed sceptic; and his brother was no less dissolute in his habits than he was corrupt in his principles. You will admit, I presume, that some moral change is necessary in relation to such men.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“Certainly; if a man be a sceptic, his opinions must be changed before he can become a believer; and if his habits are depraved, they must be changed before he can become a Christian. But the majority are virtuous, and to these I suppose you do not intend to apply the doctrine.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“You may know many whose characters are adorned with the various traits of excellence, but have you ever known a perfect man?—a man in whose temper there is no flaw—in whose

disposition there is no perversity—in whose principles there is no obliquity—one who uniformly, and on all occasions, displays the most entire and irreproachable goodness?”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“No, I must confess that I do not know such a one. I quite admit that the most perfect and the most amiable men I have ever known, have, on close acquaintance, disclosed some imperfections of character, more or less.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“And may not a person acquire a high degree of virtue even while he is destitute of every *religious* principle? Our friend, Mr. Frowd, as you may well remember, was a most excellent and virtuous man, and even a zealous Churchman; but you know that he rejected the Divine origin of Christianity, and supported the church as a mere human establishment, which served to give stability to the government, by operating on the prejudices and passions of the masses of the people through the medium of her clergy. Hence we must not confound morality and religion, as though they were essentially the same thing, seeing that the most moral may be as sceptical in their opinions as the most impure, and are often even more unwilling than they, to receive the humiliating doctrines and self-denying precepts of the gospel.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“I admit the correctness of your statement, and I assure you that this view of the matter has often excited my astonishment. I have in my parish a gentleman, who is very humane and benevolent—a faithful friend—beloved by all who know him; but he has not been to church for nearly twenty years, except when he came to receive the sacrament, on his being elected sheriff of the county. I have sometimes spoken to him on the subject of religion, but he shrewdly gets away from my arguments by saying, ‘Sir, you are to be commended for doing your duty.’”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“And will not these facts convince you that the moral disorder of our nature lies in the heart, which may be deceitful and desperately wicked in the sight of God, even while some of the virtues adorn the character. Have you yet to learn, my brother, that pride, which disdains vulgar vice—that a love of fame and that self-interest

may generate many social and domestic virtues, even while the inner man is enmity against God, neither recognizing the authority of his law, nor embracing the truths of the gospel? On this subject I can speak with strong personal feeling; and if I may refer to a passage in my own history, it is not to gratify vanity, but to illustrate the distinction which the Scriptures preserve between morality and personal religion. I lived for many years a virtuous life, attached to the church, and devoting much of my time to the study of the Scriptures, reverencing God as a great and good being, and believing in the Divine mission of Jesus Christ; but during the whole of this time I was ignorant of the alienation of my affections from God—of the actual depravity of my heart—of the essential evil of sin; nor could I understand how we are to be saved by grace, through faith, until it pleased God to enlighten my understanding; then all obscurity vanished, and now, I trust, I know the mysteries of truth more perfectly.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“You who embrace what are termed evangelical sentiments, always employ a mystical phraseology of speech, which no one can understand but the initiated; and this is one principal cause of the prejudice which prevails against them amongst the more intelligent and less enthusiastic part of society.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“But our mystical phraseology of speech, as you are pleased to term it, is the very language of Scripture; and the inspired writers who have employed it, would doubtless use it now, if they were speaking to us. You, then, ought to transfer your objections from us to them; but in doing so, you would be encountering an authority which you profess to venerate. But, after all, the objection is less against the phraseology of Scripture, than against the truth of which it is the appointed vehicle of communication. Pride, under some peculiar modification, is the epidemic disease of our nature; but none are more under its dominion than men of intelligence, of taste, and of virtue; and it is against this passion that the gospel of Jesus Christ directs the thunder of its power. How mortifying to a man of intellectual fame, whose superior genius feels equal to



the comprehension of whole systems of truth, by a single exertion of its power, to be told that '*whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein!*' How mortifying to a man, whose amiable temper, whose social habits, whose fascinating manners, whose constitutional virtues have combined to raise him far above his fellows, to be told that he must come down from his vantage-ground, to kneel at the same throne of grace with publicans and harlots, and implore forgiveness in language equally humiliating with that which they employ!"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I have always thought that the cultivation of the virtues predisposed the mind to receive the truths of Christianity; but if your statement be correct, a virtuous man may be no more fit for the kingdom of heaven than a profane one."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Nor can he be, *unless he is born again.* He may, like the Pharisee in the gospel, trust in the merit of his virtues for salvation, instead of trusting in the redemption made by Jesus Christ; but having no just perceptions of the degeneracy of his nature, he repudiates with disdain the doctrine of regeneration, which Jesus Christ asserts to be universally necessary."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Then you believe that *all* men are depraved, though not *equally corrupt*; and that all, notwithstanding their various shades of excellence, stand in equal need of the moral change which you think regeneration denotes?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"We should remember that Christianity is essentially a restorative dispensation; it bears a continual respect to a state from which man is fallen, and is a provision for repairing that ruin which the introduction of moral evil has brought upon him. Exposed to the displeasure of God, and the curse of his law, he stands in need of a Redeemer; disordered in his powers, and criminally averse to his duty, he equally needs a Sanctifier. And it is to men of every age and of every clime, as guilty and depraved sinners, without paying any respect to the lighter degrees of their depravity and guilt, that the gospel of Jesus Christ brings the glad tidings of complete redemption; but if any reject it, through a false conception

that they do not require its renovating power or its cleansing virtue, they are, in the language of the Scriptures, emphatically denominated unbelievers, on whom the wrath of God abideth continually."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the ladies, who informed us that they had made a call at Fairmount, where they had been highly gratified.—"Indeed," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "I must confess that I was most agreeably disappointed. Mrs. Stevens is no less accomplished than intelligent; and I was delighted with her frank and cheerful disposition, and the elegant case of her manners. Instead of a demure lady, disgusted with the world, and absorbed in the anticipations of a future state, she talked pleasantly of men and things, as a contented and a happy resident amongst them. I could perceive that religion was her favourite theme; yet there was no gloom with it, nor overweening self-conceit. She appeared almost like an angel pleading the cause of heaven, and that in such language and with such feeling as I never before heard or witnessed. She disengaged the religious principle from all its connections and associations with human forms and ceremonials, and presented it in its own native simplicity and purity; I could see that it was to her no less a source of felicity than a subject of contemplation and discussion. She must be, indeed, a happy woman."

"It is generally supposed," said Miss Roscoe, "that the religious principle, when it takes possession of the mind, pervading all its powers, and regulating all its movements, necessarily becomes the source of perpetual dejection and sorrow; but a more false notion never obtained currency. True religion is not a source of misery, but a perennial spring of contentment; the day-star of hope, the rising and setting sun of human happiness."

"But you know, my dear," said Mrs. Roscoe, "that your religion prohibits you from participating in many sources of amusement in which you once took great delight; and as they are so innocent and so agreeable, I cannot but think that in this respect it must be painful to you to make the sacrifices which your religion requires you to make."

“If, mamma, I looked back on my former sources of gratification with a lingering eye, and still longed to participate in them, I certainly should feel the restraining power to be painful; but *the grace of God*, by renewing my mind, has entirely changed my taste; and now the theatre, the ball, or the card-party, would be to me as much a source of actual pain as they once were of ephemeral joy. While sojourning in this vale of life, the enjoyment of fellowship with my heavenly Father is more than a recompense for the loss of those pleasures which I have abandoned.”

On which Mr. Roscoe remarked: “If the revelation of mercy was intended to promote our happiness, it certainly would fail in accomplishing its design if it proved a source of misery.”

“But,” said Mrs. John Roscoe, “I have never yet conceived of religion as being a source of *mental bliss*. I have felt it a duty to be religious, but never a pleasure. I have read over my prayers, but they never came from my heart. I have practised some of the self-denying virtues of religion, but it has been more from a sense of duty than from actual preference. I have sometimes thought of going to heaven, but I have never derived any gratification from anticipating it.”

“O no,” said Mrs. Roscoe, interrupting her, “neither have I.”

“But,” replied Mrs. John Roscoe, “one thing is certain, there is some essential difference in the origin and the character of that religion which is a source of real pleasure, and that which is embraced from a mere sense of duty.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Roscoe, “the religion which is embraced from a mere sense of duty, is the religion of forms and ceremonies; while the religion which is the source of mental bliss, is the religion of principle and of feeling. The one may be assumed or laid aside as fancy or as convenience may dictate; but the other, taking up its abode in the heart, liveth and abideth for ever. All false religions take man as he is; they accommodate themselves to his errors and his passions; they leave him essentially the same as they found him; *they* follow the man, they are formed after *his* likeness: whereas in

genuine religion the *man* changes—he is modelled after the image of Jesus Christ. The gospel, instead of flattering, tells him that in his present state he is incapable of performing its duties or of relishing its joys; that he *must* be transformed, or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and what it requires it produces; hence all is order and harmony. For everything in the dispensation of the gospel and the constitution of the Christian church is *new*; we have ‘a *new* covenant;’ we ‘approach God by a *new* and living way;’ we ‘sing a *new* song;’ we are called by a *new* name; according to his promise we look for ‘*new* heavens and a *new* earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.’ ‘He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold I create *all things new*.’ Can we wonder then that we are required to ‘put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the *new* man;’ ‘to walk in *newness* of life;’ ‘to serve him in the *newness* of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter?’ that we are assured ‘that neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a *new* creature;’ ‘*that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new?*’”

“I feel,” said Mrs. John Roscoe, “under the impulse of strong excitement. Some strange emotions—conflicting emotions—which I know not how to embody in distinct and appropriate forms of expression. I have been religious—scrupulously religious—and yet my religious ideas have been vague and indefinite; my religion has never engaged my affections. I felt charmed while listening to the chaste eloquence of Mrs. Stevens, when speaking of the practical influence of the love and grace of Christ on her soul; and your correct distinctions between the religion of mere form and the religion of principle, confound and subdue me; but I want two things, which you, Sir, and Mrs. Stevens seem to possess—I want a spirit to discern the distinction, and a heart to feel it. Yes, there must be a mental change in me before I can see as you see, and feel as you feel.”

Her husband, interrupting her, exclaimed, “My dear, you must put a curb on your imagination, or before you leave for the sober quietude of home, you will become an evangelical enthusiast.”

“To be candid ; I am awe-struck by the new discoveries I am making, or rather by the new visions of religious truth which are rising before me. Indeed, I must have the religion of principle ; that of mere form has no life, no power ; it throws out no attractions ; it touches not the heart to excite its affections ; it does not bring me into contact with a living Saviour ; nor does it inspire me with a hope full of immortality.”

“My dear,” said her husband, “you surprise me.”

“You cannot feel more surprised than I feel myself. I feel on the eve of some great crisis in my moral history, and yet I see nothing distinctly, except the utter worthlessness of a religion of mere form without a living principle.”

We were all too much astonished by this sudden outburst of impassioned feeling, to make any observations ; at length Miss Roscoe broke through the silence, which was felt to be painfully oppressive, by saying, “I hope, my dear aunt, the Divine Spirit is gently leading you into the way of peace and the paths of righteousness, for his name’s sake. What is now obscure will soon become clear ; wait patiently on the Lord until the day of explanation dawn, and then the day-star of hope will arise in your heart.”

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## THE EVIDENCES OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.



ON returning from a walk in the garden, the Rev. Mr. Roscoe said to his brother, “I have just been having a talk with your gardener, and I think you have got one of the most industrious and intelligent workmen I have ever met with ; he both understands how to cultivate his garden and how to cultivate his mind.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, Robert is a very good and a very clever servant; he respects the apostolic injunction, and renders obedience, not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but as a servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. He is conscientious and intelligent; and I believe that he would neither waste my time by indolence, nor my property by negligence or extravagance."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"A good servant is very valuable; but, like most other valuable things, he is very rare. Your gardener seems much attached to you, and says he hopes to die in your service. From the style of his conversation, and the extent of his general information, I should suppose he has had a superior education, and that he must have seen better days."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"No; he never occupied a higher rank in life than he does at present. His father, who is still living in one of my cottages in the village, is a very worthy man, who has brought up a large family, and he often boasts of having done it without receiving any assistance from the parish. He is a fine specimen of the true English character in its primitive state. About three years since he was very ill; and as we knew that his resources were scanty, we voted him twenty shillings at a vestry meeting, which the overseer was requested to give to him. But when the money was presented he said, 'I am much obliged to you, Sir, and to the other gentlemen, for your kindness, but I will never eat bread that's bought with parish money; no, Sir, I won't disgrace my family in my old age.'"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"That is a noble spirit! If such a spirit were generally diffused among our labouring population, there would be more virtue and more happiness in the country. I am not surprised that you have such a servant, now I find that he has such a father. Is the old man evangelical in his principles?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, and in his practice; but he was not able to infuse his principles into his son, who for many years evinced strong antipathies against his father's piety. He inherited his honesty, and industry, and high independent spirit; but he was very profane, which was a source of great distress to the good old man."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But I should hope that he is not so now, for I was led to infer, from some expressions which he used, that he was a very virtuous man."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, he is virtuous, and more than virtuous—he is now decidedly pious. He is a living witness of the doctrine of regeneration; and if you go and ask him what it is, he will tell you that *it is an internal change in the dispositions and propensities of the mind, produced, not by the application of water in baptism, but by the renewing power of the Divine Spirit.*"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I did not think that talking of the old man and his son would lead us to the subject of our late discussion; but as it has come up again, let me ask you one question—If regeneration do not take place at the time of our baptism, when does it take place, and how will it be possible for us to decide whether we have been regenerated or not?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"If it invariably take place at the time of baptism, according to the popular construction of our prayer-book, and the current belief of the Tractarian members of our church, nothing more would be necessary to convince us that we are the children of God than an attested copy of our baptismal register, which I presume, on reflection, you will deem too preposterous and too hazardous to be admitted."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But admitting, for the sake of the argument, that baptism is regeneration, where would be the hazard of letting our assurance of it depend on an attested copy of our parish register?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Why, suppose such an attested copy could not be obtained, then we could have no substantial proof of our regeneration. We may be the children of God, and we may be inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; but if the officiating minister neglect to record the fact of our baptism, or if the register-book should be lost or burnt, it will be impossible for us to prove it, even though the Spirit itself bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. To what a dilemma, then, may a son of God be reduced! He may be in the possession of every moral evidence of his filial relation

to his heavenly Father— he may love him, fear him, and glorify him; he may have put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and may have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness: but not being able to establish the fact of his baptism by the production of a genuine copy of its insertion in the parish register, he is not able to prove the fact of his regeneration. ‘A situation this of doubt, suspense, and anxiety, with regard to our eternal welfare, to which it is reasonable to believe that, with such a revelation of his will as Christianity professes to be, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort would not expose his humble creatures.’”\*

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“I am satisfied that it does not invariably nor necessarily take place at baptism; but then, when does it take place?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“It does not uniformly take place at any particular age, but precisely at that period in the life of man which the Spirit of God determines. Some, I have no doubt, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit in the days of infancy, and grow up into life under the influence of the holy principles which were implanted in their soul when they had no consciousness of it. I have a book at hand, from which I will read you a passage that is quite to the point:—‘God has wisely given to the female sex a peculiar tenderness of address, and an easy and insinuating manner, which is admirably adapted to the great end for which he intended it, that of conveying knowledge to children, and making tender impressions on their minds; and there is hardly any view in which the importance of the sex more evidently appears.’

“It seems to me that children may early come to have some apprehensions of what is most important in religion. They may have a reverence for God, and a love for him, as that great Father who made them, and that kind friend who gives them everything that they have; and they may have a fear of doing anything that would displease him. And though it is not so easy for them to

\* Dr. Mant.



understand the doctrines peculiar to a Redeemer, yet when they hear of Christ as the *Son of God, who came down from heaven* to teach men and children the way thither, and who died to deliver them from death and hell, their little hearts may well be impressed with such thoughts as these, and they may find a growing desire to be instructed in *what Christ is* and *what he taught and did*, and also to do what shall appear to be his will. And wherever this is the prevailing disposition, it seems to me that the seeds of holiness are sown in that soul, though but small proficiency may be made in knowledge, and though the capacities for service may be very low. But the tendency to that which is evil and the aversion to that which is good, which children generally discover, is a decisive proof that very few are renewed at this early period. They often outgrow their religious impressions, yield to the force of temptations, and allow themselves to be drawn aside from the path of duty by the attractive charms which a deceitful world holds out to allure and destroy. But, while glowing with health and devoting themselves to the pleasures and amusements of this life, it often pleases God to arrest them in their career of folly as they are entering on the age of manhood, or during the first few years of it, and then they yield themselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.

“‘Some,’ to quote from the same author, ‘are wrought upon by Divine grace in the *advance and even in the decline of life*. There are but few who arrive at what may be called old age, and of them but very few who, at that period, feel the great change; nor shall we be much surprised at this if we consider the inveterate nature of bad habits, which renders it almost as hard for them that are accustomed to do evil to learn to do good, as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots.’”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“But one should imagine that the more our reason is improved, and the nearer we get to another world, the more solemnly and deeply the heart would be affected by the great and awful truths of religion. You never thought so much nor so deeply on religious subjects when you were young as you do now;

and, therefore, I wonder you agree with your author in supposing this to be a very unfavourable period to be regenerated."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Very true; but I cannot see one of my own age in the whole circle of my acquaintance, who has been impressed in a similar manner to myself. 'It is in vain to reason against facts,' says a judicious writer, 'and experience proves that it is an *uncommon thing* for persons to be awakened and reformed in old age; *especially if they* have been educated in the principles of religion. Nevertheless, to prove the infinite energy and sovereignty of Divine grace, God is sometimes pleased to renew even such: He touches the rock which has stood for ages unmoved, and the waters flow forth; He says to the dry bones—live, and they are animated with life; and then, with the vigour of a renewed youth, they devote themselves to God.'"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Then you think that this great change in the human heart may take place at any period of life, though you think that the season of youth or early manhood is the most favourable."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I do."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Will you now tell me by what sort of evidence a person who is actually regenerated acquires a satisfactory knowledge of the fact?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"The apostle says, 'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' When an immoral man undergoes this internal renovation, there will be such a change in his habits and in his conversation that it will be conspicuous to all who know him. The swearer will fear an oath—the drunkard will put from him the intoxicating cup—the Sabbath-breaker will keep holy the day of rest—the impure, who have been as a walking pestilence in the social world, will become chaste—and those who have displayed the more malignant and ferocious passions, will distinguish themselves by their meekness, gentleness, and humility."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But may not this reformation take place in

the character of the more dissolute, without any change being effected in the dispositions and propensities of their hearts?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes; the influence of persuasion, of example, of self-interest, and of mortified pride—the decay of the vigour of the animal passions, and a fearful apprehension of future judgment, will sometimes operate a most surprising reformation in some of the more licentious; but when it proceeds from any of these causes, if they do not relapse into their former course of evil, they become satisfied with a mere scantling of exterior morality—evincing, at the same time, the utmost degree of aversion to the things of the Spirit of God. But when this reformation in the character proceeds from the renovation of the heart, it resembles the shining light, which shines clearer and brighter until the perfect day; those who undergo it become decidedly pious, and usually engage in the holy exercises of religion with a high degree of animation and delight. They will speak in the most exalted terms of the Redeemer—of the greatness of his love, and of the sovereignty of his grace; they will discover the most intense concern for the spiritual welfare of others in whom sin is reigning unto death; and while they will often look back with astonishment on the scenes of danger from which they have been delivered, they will boldly and cheerfully devote themselves to the service of Christ, notwithstanding the opposition or the persecution they may have to encounter. I remember, when my gardener, Robert, felt the great change, he became all at once so anxious to go and hear Mr. Ingleby preach, so much attached to his Bible, so zealous for the conversion of his fellow-servants, and so fond of conversing on the essential doctrines of the gospel, that I thought at the time he would lose his senses; but *now* I can easily account for it all; and though some lighter shades of imperfection still rest on his character, yet he holds fast his integrity, and is a living witness of the efficacy of the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"If I mistake not, you have asserted that this renovation of the heart is as necessary for a moral person, whose

character is adorned with many social virtues, as for one who is openly profane. Now, if we admit this to be correct, what perceptible change can take place in his conduct when he is renewed, and by what evidences can *he* be convinced of it?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"There will not be that visible transition, in his case, from a state of depravity to a state of purity; but the moral man, when regenerated, will become a *pious man*. He will discover the same anxiety on the question of his personal salvation—the same attachment to the Bible—the same zeal for the conversion of others—the same disposition to converse on the essential doctrines of the gospel, as the regenerated immoral man; and he will ascribe this change to the same supernatural cause; and, by the avowal of his sentiments and by his decision, he will provoke the same expression of scorn and contempt from the men of the world. There will be a striking similarity between his character and his religious habits after his regeneration, and the character and religious habits of one who was previously an immoral man, but who has *been renewed in the spirit of his mind*; and they will both be in possession of more satisfactory evidences of their regeneration than any exterior change which their character and their life may supply."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"What are those *other* evidences of regeneration to which you now refer?"

Mrs. John Roscoe now became much excited. "Yes," she said, "that's the important question I want explained. I have been living many years under a most fatal delusion, for though baptized, I am not regenerated; nor do I as yet know what regeneration is. Be very simple and plain in your explanation." She now sat looking and listening with a fixed intensity of anxious earnestness, reminding me of the appearance of a defendant whom I once watched in a crowded court, during the prolonged consultation of the jury, whose verdict was to secure to him the possession of his rich inheritance, or reduce him to comparative pauperism.

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"A person who is regenerated will be introduced as into a new world; the transition from his former to his new moral

condition, whether it takes place suddenly, or by a gradual process, will be so clear to his mind that he cannot doubt it; he will form new and more accurate perceptions of the character of God—of his own character—of the visible and invisible world—and of the official character of Jesus Christ; he will feel the force of obligations pressing upon him, of which he had previously formed no conception, and he will discover sources of enjoyment of a new and a more refined order.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“I fear you are now taking me into an imaginary region, where we shall be both lost amidst the obscurities of a fanatical and enthusiastic belief.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“I am as great an enemy to fanaticism as yourself; out you will permit me to say that this term is often affixed as a stigma on personal piety. I am now merely stating facts, which are attested by the evidence of experience. Do we not read in the Bible that the renewed man has the eye of his understanding enlightened? Does not this expression imply that before his renovation his understanding was darkened, through the ignorance that was within him? And can we suppose that he discovers no fresh objects of contemplation and delight when this new power of spiritual vision is imparted? He has new apprehensions of the spirituality and omnipresence of God—of his majesty and purity—of his power and patience—of his goodness—and especially of his condescension in hearing and answering prayer. And when he turns his eye in upon himself, he discovers his guilt, his depravity, and his unworthiness; and exclaims, Woe is me, for I am unclean! He is no less astonished at the Divine forbearance towards him than he is at his own insensibility and ingratitude; and while he offers up the tribute of praise to the God of his mercies, he abhors himself, and repents in dust and in ashes. But his chief attention is fixed on the person of the Redeemer—on the efficacy of his death—on the prevalence of his intercession—on his amazing and boundless love for sinners—even the chief. On these grand and important themes he dwells with the most enraptured delight. They now appear before him invested

with a charm all their own; and he is no less astonished when he remembers his former indifference to them, than he is at that death-like insensibility which the great majority around him discover. The pleasures and the pursuits of the world, which once engrossed so large a portion of his attention, and so powerfully interested his passions, now sink into insignificance when compared with the realities of the invisible state; and though he feels no disposition to neglect his present duties, yet he often anticipates, with intense emotions of delight, the glory which is to be revealed on entering the kingdom of heaven. Having been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and sanctified in part by the eternal Spirit, he now feels the powerful obligations of gratitude and love constraining him to yield himself to God, to serve and glorify him. He can now without regret leave his sinful pleasure, and from meditation, prayer, and listening to the gospel's joyous sound, he can derive real and substantial happiness.

“But one of the most satisfactory evidences of regeneration is an aversion to sin, and an ardent desire for an entire conformity to the purity of the Divine nature, which every renewed man feels—an aversion which is not directed exclusively against open immoralities, but which extends to the principles of evil which lie concealed in the recesses of the heart. Hence, his prayer will be—Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant from presumptuous sin; let no iniquity have dominion over me; lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from all evil. But the renewed man is not more anxious to be preserved from the dominion of sinful passions and principles, than he is to become holy, even as God is holy. And as he knows that this assimilation can be produced only by immediate intercourse with God, he walks in a state of habitual communion with him; and though he is not always conscious of his presence, nor always favoured with the sensible manifestations of it, yet he cleaves to him in the purposes of his heart. Now, I appeal to you, if such a change in the character, in the views, and in the tastes of a man, is not a powerful evidence of his having undergone that internal renovation or regeneration which the Scriptures repre-

sent to be indispensably necessary to fit us for the kingdom of heaven."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Why, I must confess that such a change is a more rational evidence of regeneration than the simple fact that the baptismal ceremony has been performed; but how few of those who have been baptized possess any such evidence of their being the children of God, and the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"This is too true; and, alas! what an appalling truth!"

Mrs. John Roscoe, who listened with profound attention to the whole of this discussion, on rising with her niece to take a stroll in the garden, said, "What a burlesque on the sanctity of our pure and sublime faith, to see an immoral man, when reprov'd for his vices, and warn'd to flee from the wrath, deliberately appeal to the fact of his having been baptized, to prove that he is a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven! Can we conceive of anything more puerile, or more calculated to encourage persons to riot in sin, fearless of the fearful consequences? It is quite time this fatal heresy was driven out of our church, and torn out of our prayer-book."

"I think so too, aunt; but what commotion would be excited amongst our church-going people if any legal attempt were made to substitute the simple and significant baptism of the New Testament for this delusive papal ceremony of baptismal regeneration. Why, many would rather have their Bibles mutilated than their prayer-book. The Bishop of Oxford calls it a Churchman's blessed inheritance, which ought to be preserved entire; no change in a book which is so perfect."

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## ON CONVERSION.



RETURNING with Mr. Roscoe and his brother from a survey of some ancient ruins, which reminded us of the departed heroes of olden times, and of the legendary tales of their strange and adventurous life, which are still rife amongst the people who reside in this vicinity, we overtook Mr. Stevens, who consented to spend the evening with us, and we walked on together to Mr. Roscoe's mansion.

After tea our conversation turned on the rise, progress, and character of Methodism, when the Rev. Mr. Roscoe gave it as his unqualified opinion, that its introduction into this kingdom was no less fatal to the honour and harmony of the church, than the irruptions of the Goths and Vandals from the trackless deserts of the North, were to the literature and sovereignty of the Roman empire. "It came," he observed, "at a period when no danger was apprehended; and from the meanness of its appearance, and its entire want of the attractions of intelligence or of taste, no one could calculate on its exciting that commotion, or acquiring that degree of influence over the popular mind, which its history records, and which we all ought deeply to deplore. To extirpate this fatal heresy, or to arrest it in its destructive course, I fear is now impossible; but we ought certainly to be on our guard, lest we should accelerate its march, either by that supineness which neglects to defend the passes, or that neutrality which looks with indifference on the conquests of an enemy, if he leaves us in the undisturbed possession of our own little territory. Though you cannot agree with the Rev. Mr. Cole in his opinions on baptismal regeneration, I think you must agree with him in his remarks on the preposterous conversions which are the boast of our modern fanatics. Indeed, what man of learning or of taste can read the periodical journals of enthusiasm without feeling disgusted, and if he were not thoroughly established in his belief



of the Divine origin of our holy religion, he must, I think, become a sceptic."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Men of learning and of taste, with some few honourable exceptions, very rarely discover any strong attachment for the humiliating doctrines or the self-denying precepts of that holy religion, whose Divine origin they professedly admit. The religion which they admire is not the religion of the Scriptures, but one modified and adapted to their taste and propensities. Would the poets or prose writers of modern times, who praise, in harmonious numbers or well-turned periods, the religion of their country, welcome that religion if she were to disengage herself from the attractions of the mitre, and the associations of sacred altars and antique buildings, and rise up before them in the simplicity of her attire, and, with an authoritative voice, as when she first despoiled Greece and Rome of their elegant mythology, demanding from them repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? If she were to speak to them of sin, of their sins, she would excite the smile of ridicule; if she were to urge on them the necessity of repentance, lest they perish, she would provoke their contempt; and if she were to require from them that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which by its own reaction purifies and ennobles the human soul, she would be despised and rejected, no less than the enthusiasm of Methodism. But though the Rev. Mr. Cole reprobated, in very strong terms, the preposterous conversions of the fanatics of modern times, he did not, I believe, deny the necessity of conversion, nor say that it was impossible."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"O no, he gave us the following quotation from the excellent and judicious tract \* which the justly celebrated Dr. Mant has published on the question: 'Conversion, according to our notions, may not improperly be said to consist of a rational conviction of sin, and sense of its wickedness and danger; of a sincere penitence and sorrow of heart at having incurred the displea-

\* The reader is referred to two tracts on Regeneration and Conversion, published by Dr. Mant, and circulated by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.

sure of a holy God; of steadfast purposes of amendment with the blessing of the Divine grace; of a regular and diligent employment of all the appointed means of grace; and of a real change of heart and life, of affections and conduct, and a resolute perseverance in well-doing.' And I may quote the next paragraph from this judicious tract, which says, 'The triumph of such conversion as this is not attended by alternations of extreme joy and despondency, of the most ecstatic rapture and the most gloomy despair; sometimes by heavenly exultation, and sometimes by the agonies of hell. It has little of what is brilliant and dazzling to decorate, little of what is magnificent and imposing to dignify and exalt it.'

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"When I first read that tract, I very much admired it, and I have circulated many hundreds, thinking that it would check the progress of evangelical sentiments; but, on a recent perusal of it, I felt much astonished when I recollected the satisfaction and the pleasure which it once afforded me; and I fear that, by giving it circulation, I have assisted in perpetuating the delusion under which such a large proportion of all ranks in society are advancing to the eternal world. I certainly do not object to his definition of conversion; but the highly-wrought reflections which you have just quoted, are, in my opinion, an impeachment of the accuracy of his reasoning and of the fervour of his piety. If they have any meaning, they are intended to prove that the *gentle* excitement of the passions constitutes a legitimate evidence of conversion; but if the passions should be *strongly* excited—if they should *overflow*, and dare to wet the couch of a penitent with the fast-dropping tear—if they should touch on the borders of the joy which is unspeakable and full of glory—or if they ever should sink into despondency, or rise to a hope full of immortality, then they change their character, and become, not the evidences of conversion, but of fanaticism. I object to such a statement as unphilosophical, and calculated to produce the very evil it is intended to prevent. Two men, whose mental temperament varies from cool apathy to the highest degree of a nervous sensibility, may sincerely repent of having, by

their sins, incurred the displeasure of God; but to suppose, with Dr. Mant, that they will both feel in the same exact proportion, and that proportion the lowest possible degree of excitement, would be to betray consummate ignorance of the constitution of the human mind. These two men, who feel a degree of sorrow for sin, and of joy for the promise of forgiveness, that accords with the exact susceptibility of their nature, are placed by the *judicious* Dr. Mant in very opposite columns—the one amongst the sincere penitents, the other amongst the deluded fanatics. But this is not the only absurdity which such a classification involves; for it necessarily tends to plunge the man of strong passions into despair, because he feels too acutely, while it keeps the man of more moderate passions in a state of uncertainty, lest he should not have felt quite enough.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“But will you not admit that the annals of Methodism record many instances of extravagant feeling, which neither a reference to the varying temperament of the mind, nor the sober language of Holy Writ, will account for or justify; such as extremes of weeping and of laughter, sobs, and shrieks, and groans, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth—the voice now stifled by agony, and now bursting forth in tones of despair; tremors, and faintings, and droppings to the ground, as if struck by lightning; paleness and torpor, convulsions and contortions; things terrible to behold, too terrible to be borne, and which words cannot describe. Can you suppose that such scenes are the effect of Divine truth producing a rational conviction of sin, and a keen sense of its wickedness and danger? are they not rather the consequences of fanaticism?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“The symptoms which you have enumerated are sometimes apparent, I have no doubt, even when the *heart* is untouched by the subduing power of the grace of God, and may be referred to the strong excitement of the animal passions, when stirred up from their dormant state by the impassioned eloquence of the preacher; but at other times we may regard them as the visible and audible signs of a genuine conversion to God, the utter-

ances of a soul at the period of its new birth, when in the act of passing from death to life. And though I should prefer the truth being felt and received into the heart in the calm of composed and silent listening, yet I would rather see an entire congregation bathed in tears, sobbing, and even groaning aloud, while their minister is addressing them on the sublime and awful realities of the eternal world, than witness that apathetic indifference which is so generally apparent—a listlessness which is something like a judicial insensibility.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“I admit that there is too much apparent indifference in our congregations to the sermons of the clergy; but there may be a strong undercurrent of emotion, even when there are no floods. But to revert to what I call the extravagant symptoms of feeling in connection with Methodism, the line of distinction which you have drawn between the causes to which we may refer them may be substantially correct; but I presume you do not intend to maintain that they are ever, even in the most sober and modified degree, the necessary accompaniments of conversion?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“No, certainly not; but if there be sorrow in the heart for having incurred the displeasure of a holy God, ought we to be surprised if the eye be suffused with tears? and if there be a rational conviction of the danger to which the commission of sin exposes us, ought we to be surprised if the breast heave with tumultuous swellings of alarm and dread? Shall an apprehension of deserved wrath awaken no terror? or a hope of redeeming love inspire no joy? Why, a man must be metamorphosed into some other being, not to have his passions stirred, from the very depth of his soul, when such awful and transporting scenes are passing before his mental vision.”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“I am astonished that any clergyman should condemn the strong and visible excitement of the passions at the period of conversion, when there are so many passages in the Scriptures which attest it. The writer of the book of Proverbs says, ‘The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can

*bear?*' And if a deep wound be inflicted on the soul of man, which he is incapable of healing or of enduring, shall we turn round upon him and aggravate the intensity of his anguish, by employing the strong symptoms of his grief as evidences either of insanity or fanaticism? The impiety of such an act would be no less censurable than its cruelty. And does not the prophet tell us that when the Spirit of grace is poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that 'they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' This prediction was fulfilled when the three thousand *were pricked in their heart*, and cried out at the close of Peter's address, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* And shall the charge of fanatical extravagance and delusion be brought against these primitive converts, because they cried out, and asked aloud, in the hearing of all the people, what they should do to escape from the wrath they had deserved?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Mr. Cole admitted that the penitents in former times were sometimes extravagantly affected, because their conversion was miraculous, but he maintained, and I think very satisfactorily, that there are no *instantaneous conversions in modern times—the thing is impossible*. If you recollect, he proved that the instantaneous conversions recorded in the Scriptures were effected by the force of miracles, but as these have ceased, men must be wrought on now by the more slow process of argument and persuasion; and he supported his opinion by the following quotation from Dr. Mant: 'When the conversion was sudden or instantaneous, it was the consequence of miraculous evidence to the truth. When the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost added to the church three thousand souls, they were men who had been amazed and confounded by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the supernatural gift of tongues.'"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, they were confounded and amazed when they heard the apostles speaking in different languages, but this miracle,

so far from effecting their conversion, merely excited the ridicule of many, who, mocking, said, 'These men are full of new wine.' But after they had listened to Peter's discourse, they were 'pricked in their heart, and then said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?' Miracles attested the Divine mission of the apostles, *but it was the truth* which the apostles preached that became the means of the conversion of the people. And though the miraculous evidences of the apostolic commission have ceased, because they are no longer necessary, yet the truth, which is the instrument of conversion, is preserved pure and entire; and when it is faithfully and energetically preached, it is still the power of God to salvation. Shall we say that he, who has all power in heaven and earth, cannot, if he please, effect the conversion of sinners as suddenly in the present day as in the times of the apostles."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"If you recollect, he quoted Dr. Mant to prove the possibility of such sudden conversions. 'Not that I would be understood to assert that Providence may not, *perhaps*, even in the present day, be sometimes pleased to interpose in a manner more awful and impressive than is agreeable to the ordinary course of his proceedings, and to arrest the sinner in his career of infidelity or wickedness, and to turn him from darkness to light.' What he maintained was, that these sudden conversions are not to be expected by the clergy who preach to Christian congregations, which are composed of those who have been trained up in the belief of Christianity."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I have no doubt that many who have been trained up in the belief of Christianity have, in the process of their training, felt its moral influence in producing repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, though they may not know the time when they first felt its power in enlightening and renewing them, or when they passed from death unto life. The whole process of their conversion has been conducted so silently and so gradually—they have been led on by such imperceptible steps from

one degree of knowledge and of grace to another, and it has been with so much hesitating precaution that they have embraced the consolatory promises of mercy—that they have erected no monumental pillars to commemorate any great moral revolution in their character, nor placed any sacred landmarks by which their progress in the life of faith can be traced. But are your congregations composed exclusively of this description of hearers? No; you may sometimes see all the varieties of the human character sitting around you when you are in the pulpit; the Sabbath-breaker, the swearer, the debauchee, the seducer, the scoffer, and the mere formalist in religion. Must not these persons be converted before they can enter the kingdom of heaven? And how is their conversion to be effected? You employ your arguments to convince them of the Divine origin of Christianity, and they *are* convinced of it, but still go on in a course of sin. You employ the force of moral suasion to induce them to turn from iniquity to righteousness, but such is the fatal obduracy of their hearts, that it makes no impression. What can you do now to insure success?”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“Why, if people will not be converted by argument or persuasion, they must take the consequences upon themselves. I don’t know anything more that can be done. We must leave them to take their own course, and if they perish, we can’t help it. They doom themselves to perdition.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“But if you read the New Testament with close attention, you will perceive that there is a power associated with a faithful and enlightened ministry, which makes it not the letter of instruction merely, but the spirit which giveth life. Did not the Saviour, when he gave the apostles their commission, say, ‘Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world?’ Is it not to his immediate presence with the first preachers of the gospel, that the sacred historian everywhere ascribes the signal success which crowned their labours, and not to the force of miracles? If a great multitude at Antioch turned to the Lord, it was because the hand of the Lord was with them; if Lydia believed in consequence of giving attention

to the things which were spoken, it was because the Lord opened her heart; if Paul planted, and Apollos watered with success, it was the Lord who gave the increase; and highly as they were endowed, they did not presume to rely on the efficacy of their own addresses, or the force of the miraculous attestations of their own mission, but confessed that it was through God that they became mighty and triumphant in all their ministerial labours. If, then, his presence is associated with a faithful ministry, and the apostles invariably ascribed their success to the concurring testimony of his power, and if he promise to be with his ministers through every succeeding age, ought you to overlook it? Will you boast of your uninterrupted succession in the ministerial office from the times of the apostles, while you undervalue the importance of the presence of the Lord to give success to your official labours? or do you suppose that now Christianity is grown venerable by her age, she can turn men from darkness to light—from the power of Satan to God—without the concurring testimony of that Almighty power on which she relied in the days of her youthful vigour?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"These quotations and references undoubtedly prove that our Saviour must give the success to our ministry; but I think it would be very injudicious to state such a fact to our congregations."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Why so?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Because it would lower the clergy in their estimation if we were to say that we are not invested with a plentitude of power to accomplish the design of our appointment, and might lead the people to wait for a miraculous conversion, instead of trying for it in the regularly appointed way."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Then you must admit that the writers of the Scriptures, who wrote under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, acted a very injudicious part, and have set us a very improper example, as they have placed the fact of their personal insufficiency, and their entire dependence on their invisible Lord, in a prominent point of view. Indeed, the consequences of such an admission would



be alarming, as in that case we should be compelled to pass a censure on the wisdom of the Divine Spirit for allowing such facts to be placed on record, if they are calculated to produce a pernicious effect on the popular mind. It is evident to me, from your last remarks, that you, in common with all the clergy of the anti-evangelical school, have imbibed some very fatal errors, which must render your ministrations worse than useless; must, in fact, render them pernicious, because deceptive, both to yourselves and to your people."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"And do you really think so? This certainly is a very grave imputation on our order, and one which ought not to be advanced unless you can maintain its correctness, with an array of very clear evidence. Why, you now insinuate that we are self-deceived, and are deceiving others. What proof can you bring of this?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Your first error, and it is a capital one, is the self-sufficiency of the clergy to accomplish the design of their appointment. This may be true, if we view them merely as appointed by human authority to conduct a prescribed service and administer the sacraments. This you can do. But the more spiritual functions of the ministry you cannot perform by virtue of a self-sufficient power."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"To what spiritual functions do you refer?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Why, to the conversion and spiritual renovation of sinners, and the administration of effective consolation to a wounded spirit. If any order of ministers, under the Christian dispensation, ever possessed the power of doing this, we must admit that the apostles of our Lord possessed it in a pre-eminent degree. But they disclaimed the possession of such a self-sufficient power, and acknowledged their absolute dependence on the concurring grace of God, and the fervent and effectual prayers of their pious lay brethren. The apostle Paul, when trying to allay the ferment which the spirit of contention had raised in the church of Corinth, and to detach the people from the popular idols of their admiration and confidence, speaks out boldly and explicitly on the question of ministerial insuf-

fiency and dependence: 'For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; *but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase*' (1 Cor. iii. 4-7). We know that opinion has a powerful influence in the formation and development of character, and in no order of men does it operate with more direct and constant force than on the clergy; hence, if a clergyman thinks he is invested with a plenitude of power to accomplish the design of his appointment, he will live in a state of comparative, if not absolute independence of God: he will not be a man of prayer; I mean, he will not wrestle in prayer with God, to render his public ministry successful in the conversion of sinners; *such a thing will not come into his mind*. He thinks of himself more as a priest in the church, than as a minister of Christ, labouring for the spiritual good of the people. His self-sufficiency, which keeps him independent of God, tends to inflate him with spiritual pride; he becomes arrogant, and expects that the people will place themselves in submissive subjection to his authority—believe what he dictates, and celebrate what he prescribes. But when, like Paul and the rest of the apostles, a clergyman has a piercing conviction of his insufficiency to execute the trust committed to his charge, he will never enter a pulpit to preach till he has been in his closet with God—praying for assistance from him, and for the putting forth of his Divine power, through the medium of his otherwise ineffective agency. His opinion of himself, his feelings, and his retired devout exercises, all harmonize with the following quotation, which I will now read to you: 'Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life' (2 Cor.

iii. 3, 6). And while such a clergyman will depend on God for the success of his labours, rather than on any conceived self-sufficiency, he will also, in imitation of the apostles, place a subordinate degree of dependence on the fervent prayers of his believing brethren. 'Finally, brethren,' says Paul, who could work miracles to attest the Divine origin of the message he delivered to the people, 'pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you' (2 Thess. iii. 1)."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"And what is the second error which you think we hold?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Why, you teach the people to depend on you for spiritual blessings, instead of directing them to look to God, from whom cometh every good gift, and every perfect gift; hence, they come to church, go through the order of the service, and withdraw when it is over, more like self-moving machines, whose movements are regulated by laws imposed on them by human skill and authority, than like intelligent beings, who feel their responsibility to God, and their dependence on him. And this is the great practical evil which is inflicted on the people, by the clergy assuming to themselves a sufficiency of power to accomplish all the purposes of their ministry—their hearers are not a praying people. Now, to me nothing is more obvious, if I take the meaning of the uniform language of the Bible, than this great important fact, that prayer on the part of a minister and his hearers, is made essential to their spiritual prosperity and happiness. Hence, after the promise of a new spirit and a new heart was given, to excite the eager expectation of the people of Israel: 'Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them' (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). Hence the importance and necessity of prayer. Can we expect forgiveness unless we pray for it? and is not the moral renovation of our nature of equal importance? and if, in the economy of salvation, we are to be sanctified by the Spirit of God as well as justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, are we to be reprobated as deluded when we invoke his purifying agency? Let us look around us, and

what shall we see? What!—a scene not less affecting than that which struck the eye of the prophet when he received his commission from above to enter the mystic valley of death. It was full of bones: ‘And, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.’ He was asked, ‘Can these dry bones live?’ and he answered, ‘O Lord God, thou knowest.’ What did he do? He prophesied as he was *commanded*; and when thus engaged, the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they lived. If, then, the ministers of grace wish to accomplish the great moral design of their appointment, and acquire the deathless honour of rescuing sinners from that state of guilt, degeneracy, and misery in which they are involved, let them preach the gospel in a clear and in a faithful manner, teaching them that every good thought, every holy desire, every sacred principle, must proceed directly from the Father of mercies, and God of all grace; and that, while they are employed as his servants, in administering the revelation of his will, if any good results from their labours, it must be in *answer to the humble and fervent prayers of those who proclaim and those who hear the truth.*”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“The clergy have fallen very low in your estimation.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“The Tractarian clergy have. They sink themselves by their arrogance, and lofty assumptions of official dignity and power; they are haughty and overbearing, and have no resemblance in their spirit, or in their style of speech, to the prophets of the Old Testament or the apostles of the New; and if not an importation from Rome, they are in training to serve at her altars, and advocate her assumed infallibility.”

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THE TENDENCY OF EVANGELICAL  
PREACHING.

IN his brother the Rev. Mr. Roscoe met with a more formidable antagonist than he expected; and though foiled in some previous encounters, yet he again resumed the debate.

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I wonder how you can object to the strictures which the Rev. Mr. Cole made in his sermon last Sunday, on the censurable conduct of those clergymen who declaim against good works, and exalt a dogmatic belief in certain crude opinions as the only necessary condition on which sinners can obtain the forgiveness of Almighty God."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"As I have not been in the habit of hearing many of the evangelical clergy preach, I certainly cannot say from my own personal knowledge how far the charge which you allege against them is just or unfounded. If they do declaim against good works, they are guilty of a serious dereliction of duty, and should not receive the sanction of any wise or good man. I agree with you, that this is not the age in which virtue, in any of her forms or requirements, should be made light of, especially by those who are professedly her ministers. For if they, who ought to stop up the passes to evil, turn their weapons of war against the bulwarks of practical righteousness, the common enemy will meet with an ally where he ought to find a foe, and the capital and its dependencies will soon be taken. But though I have not heard many of them preach, I have been in the habit of reading their published discourses, and it is my opinion that from the press they push the claims of practical righteousness to such an extreme, that I have often heard them censured for their excessive strictness; and it is fair to presume that they are not less urgent and severe when they are in the pulpit. But admitting, for the sake of the argument, that they do declaim against good works,

we know that they practise them; and their hearers, with some few exceptions, will bear a comparison with the most virtuous members of society."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Then you admit that some of their hearers are not men of virtue—hence, does it not necessarily follow that their ministers preach a doctrine which leads to licentiousness?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But this argument which you employ against the moral tendency of evangelical preaching is liable to two very formidable objections—it is fallacious, and it proves too much. It supposes that the conduct of a *minority* is the test by which the orthodoxy of the preacher is to be decided. But why fix on the *minority* as the test, when their relative number is a tacit proof that they are the exception to the general class of his hearers? If a few in a district are turbulent and factious, and disposed to rebellion, while the larger proportion of the people are peaceable and submissive, revering the authority of the laws, and cultivating the virtues of social life, would you recommend the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, as though the entire mass were in a state of revolt? Where would be the equity or the expediency of such a measure? Why impugn the character of all because a few are criminal, and why involve the innocent and the guilty in one indiscriminate visitation of punishment? And would not your argument apply with equal, if not with stronger force, to the anti-evangelical clergy? Have they no immoral hearers? Have they none who set at open defiance the laws of God and man? Have they no scoffers who visit their temples?—no infidels who commune at their altars? Can they say of all in their congregations, 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God?'"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But, you know, *we enforce virtue*, and tell our hearers that their final salvation depends on their becoming virtuous. This, you will admit, is a more powerful motive than that which an evangelical preacher employs, who says that we may be saved without it."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"No, he does not say that we can be saved without becoming virtuous. This is an accusation which cannot be substantiated; and to bring it forward is to bear false witness against another. He does not require virtue on our part as a prerequisite to recommend us to the favour of God; but he enforces it as expressive of our reverence for his authority, and of our gratitude to his sovereign goodness in redeeming us from the curse of a violated law. He does not substitute our very defective righteousness for the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which would be an entire abandonment of one of the most essential doctrines of the gospel; but he tells us that *the grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* Indeed, the evangelical minister requires, on the part of his adherents, a higher degree of virtue than his opponent, and he employs more powerful motives to enforce it. He requires the entire renovation of the soul, and such a conversion from all the evil habits and impure propensities of our nature, as shall constitute us *new creatures in Christ Jesus.* Do you enforce virtue from an appeal to the authority of God? so does your evangelical brother. Do you enforce it by a reference to its own loveliness, and its tendency to promote personal and relative happiness? so does he. But he goes a step further—he presses into the service of the pulpit the motives which arise from the redemption of the soul by the death of Christ; and if we look around us, we shall perceive that these exert a more powerful influence on the principles and conduct of men, than any other which ever has been or ever can be employed. Men who will resist authority may be subdued by clemency, and many whom a dread of punishment could not reclaim from evil, have been turned from the error of their ways after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward them hath appeared. And then, like the eunuch of the Scriptures, they have gone on their way rejoicing, ever ready to give to others a reason of the hope within them; saying, under the impulse of devout gratitude, rather than vainglorious ostentation, 'Come and hear,

all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.'”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“We very well know that those who admire evangelical preaching are, generally speaking, more loquacious on the subject of religion, and more religiously disposed in their habits, than others; but this is one of the objections which we have against it. If *we* feel *too* little, *they* feel *too* much; and if *we* are not quite so religious in our habits as we ought to be, *they* go to the opposite extreme, and become enthusiasts. *We* keep within the boundary which reason and decorum mark out, but *they* cross it; and while *we* restrain our passions, and rarely discuss the awful subjects of religion in our social interviews, *they* yield to impulses and excitements, which they rashly ascribe to a mental intercourse with an invisible world, and thus they approach to the very verge of fanaticism.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“But surely you do not object to a person who has felt the renewing power of the grace of God, ascribing the great change to its real cause, expressing at the same time his joyful gratitude to God for effecting it.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“What I dislike and condemn is the strong effervescence of feeling which so often makes its appearance amongst the admirers of evangelical preaching, and which leads them to use terms of expression which are more nearly allied to rhapsody than sober truth and reality.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“You know that, on all subjects, men speak as they feel; and therefore, when their passions are strongly excited by religious truth, they ought not to be condemned or censured if they do give utterance to some expressions which may appear rather extravagant to an apathetic mind; they speak naturally, that is, in character. Let me give you an example. Can a man of a refined taste, and who is very excitable, avoid being deeply interested by the sublime or beautiful in the natural, or by the pathetic or tragical in the moral world? No. It is impossible. He is affected before he is conscious of feeling, and often when he is incapable of assigning the



cause of it. To argue that this liability to strong excitement is a proof of the imbecility of our mind, or of our tendency to fanatical illusions, is nothing less than a begging of the question—a species of artifice which cannot be tolerated. Our nature is liable to excitement, and we cannot avoid it. It is, upon the whole, considered a favourable symptom of a fine taste or a good disposition. We prefer it to stoicism, to apathy, and to a mental dulness, which neither harmonious sounds nor enchanting scenes can move. If, then, our passions are necessarily stirred within us, and sometimes powerfully stirred by external objects, by what law is it rendered improper for a man to be deeply affected by the momentous truths of revelation? Does the law of our nature forbid it? No. You yourself have confessed that the admirers of evangelical preaching are in general strongly, too strongly affected by what they believe. To strip your charges of the measured language in which they are brought, do you mean to say that they are too deeply affected by the awful descriptions which the sacred writers have given us of the miseries of the damned; or too strongly animated by the sublime anticipations of a blissful immortality; or too grateful to the Lord of glory for bearing their sins in his own body on the tree; and too intense in their desires after a more perfect conformity to the purity of the Divine nature? But is this possible?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"We certainly cannot love Almighty God too much, nor can we be too grateful to him for his mercies, temporal and spiritual; but when we are speaking to each other about our religious feelings, I think, as the apostle says, we should let our moderation be known."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But, to speak naturally, we should speak as we feel. I remember a poor woman of the name of Allen, who often used to perplex me when we conversed together on religious topics; she always left a vague impression on my mind that there was a something in religion which I had never discovered."

"I am fully convinced," said Mrs. John Roscoe, apologizing for obtruding her remarks, "that those who embrace evangelical senti-

ments are more religious in their conversation and habits than those who do not. But it is at the awful hour of death that the difference becomes the more apparent and striking. We had a servant, a member of a Dissenting chapel, who lived with us some years, but when she was taken ill she left us to go to her father, a poor pious man, with whom she resided for several months before she died. I often went to see her, and was standing by her side when she breathed her last. She was composed and even cheerful in prospect of death, but it was the cheerfulness of a spirit made happy by the consolations of religion, and which expected to be still happier in the celestial world.\* I recollect asking her what made her so happy when death was so near, and her reply, though I did not then, and do not yet comprehend its full import, made such a strong impression, that I have never forgotten it—“His sweet promise, *Come unto me, and I will give you rest.* I do come to him; he has given me rest of soul; and he has provided a rest for me in heaven. And you, dear Madam, must come to him to be saved and made happy.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“It is now about twelve months since I was travelling with an eminent physician. Our conversation happened to

\* The author once knew a lady who was celebrated, in the town in which she lived, no less for her benevolence, than she was for her utter dislike to those persons who had embraced evangelical sentiments. She generally used to term them, by way of reproach, Methodists, enthusiasts, or fanatics. For many years she was in the habit of visiting the poor and the infirm, sympathizing with them when in trouble, giving them money to purchase the necessaries and comforts of life; and she originated several public institutions, which still remain as the memorial of her practical goodness. Often has she sat beside the lingering sufferer, wiping away the cold sweats of death, and administering, with her own hands, the last portion of food or of medicine which nature consented to receive. This lady, when conversing with a friend, whose prejudices against the fanatics of the day (as the disciples of the Redeemer are styled) ran as high as her own, said, “*I don't know how to account for it, but I find these people know more about religion than we do, and appear more happy in their dying moments than any others I ever meet with.*” Happy would it have been for her if some friend had been present to explain the cause of it; but no—living under the sombrous gloom of a pharisaical faith, which admits not of the clear light of the truth, she lived in ignorance of the nature of faith in Christ, and in ignorance she died.

turn on the state of religion in the country, and on the evangelical and anti-evangelical clergy and laity of our own church; when he stated that, in the discharge of his professional duties, he was often called to witness the termination of human life—the retiring of the actors from the busy stage—the departure of intelligent beings from one world to another—and that he had uniformly found, that those who imbibe evangelical sentiments die much more like the Christians of the Bible than those who do not. He gave it as the result of long experience, that evangelical religion, though much despised, is greatly conducive to the happiness of man, especially in his last moments. This fact produced a deep impression on my mind, as he said it had done on his.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“Yes; the imagination, when acted upon by evangelical opinions and impulses, very often holds a pretended intercourse with Heaven, and sees sights and hears sounds which are supernatural; but are we so far gone from the sober restraints of reason as to become the advocates of enthusiastic raptures?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“I am not surprised at what you say, as I once used to talk in a similar strain, but now, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the delusion has vanished, and I am convinced that what I then called, and what you still call the raptures of a disordered imagination, are the triumphs of faith over the terrors of death; and that the glowing expressions which often fall from the lips of the dying believer are entirely in accordance with the genius of the gospel.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“I have no doubt but such strongly excitable persons will be saved, if they are sincere.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“And why should you doubt their sincerity? If you see a man devoting his mind to the pursuits of commerce, or of literature, or of pleasure, you do not feel at liberty to impugn his motives; then why should you do so when you see him devoting his mind to religion? Is religion the only subject which we are forbidden to approach? or if we do approach it with reverence for its authority, with ardent gratitude for its sacred communications,

with strong interest in its sublime enunciations of a future state of existence, are we to be reproached for insincerity and hypocrisy? You accuse us of ostentation, because we make a more decided profession of religion than some of our neighbours; but allow me to ask you if the spirit in which this charge originates has not exuded its venom against pure and undefiled religion in every age of the Christian church, when it has been embodied in a living character?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Why, you know that some who have made the greatest pretensions to religion, have been guilty of the most dishonourable conduct!"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, I know it; and I confess that the inconsistent conduct of some professors of religion induced me, for many years, to cherish very unfavourable opinions against all who embraced evangelical sentiments; but I am now satisfied that I acted neither wisely nor equitably. Because one member of a family, or ten members of a religious community, act inconsistently with their professions to each other, am I at liberty to condemn the whole?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But you will admit that it is calculated to excite suspicion."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"It may excite suspicion where an evil passion or where prejudice has gained the ascendancy, but not otherwise. I maintain that the law of equity forbids our suspecting the sincerity and uprightness of any man until he gives us a cause for doing so. Am I to suspect the honour, the integrity, and the friendship of Mr. Stevens, because some one who goes to the same church, and professes the same religious opinions, has been guilty of fraud, or sacrificed his honour by attempting to wound the reputation of his friend?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But when people make a greater profession than their neighbours, it is natural for us to expect more exemplary conduct."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Certainly; and if they are not exemplary in their conduct you may impeach their sincerity; but you ought to confine

the act of impeachment to the offender—to extend it to others would be unjust. If a professor of religion run to the same excess of riot as others—if he press to your theatres—if he visit your card parties or your balls—you may very justly reproach him; *but if he do not*, such is the fastidious and antichristian spirit of the age, you think it strange, and begin to speak evil of him. If he act in direct opposition to his religious principles, you charge him with hypocrisy; if he act in conformity with them, he is subjected to the same imputation, with this essential difference in his favour—that the first accusation would be just, while the latter would be groundless.”

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—“I very much dislike indiscriminate and wholesale accusations. We ought not to censure one person on account of the imperfections of another; nor insinuate a charge against any one, unless we have strong evidence to sustain it.”

*Miss Roscoe.*—“Very just, aunt, but such is the practice of this strange world; and though we protest against it, yet we can obtain no redress. When one who has been gay becomes pious, the *magicians* prophesy that he will go off into a state of derangement; if he retains his reason, as is usually the case, they express a *devout* wish that the motives of his conduct may prove to be sincere; if he act in accordance with his religious principles, and refuse to conform to their customs and habits, he is stigmatized as unsocial, precise, and hypocritical; and such is the degree of virulence which goes forth against him, that if no imperfections can be discovered in his character, some will be imputed; and if no rumours come from the north to blast or tarnish his reputation, they are easily raised at home by the magic wand of calumny.”

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—“I am quite weary of this censorious spirit, its bitterness and its sarcasms. I would willingly contribute towards raising five hundred pounds, as a prize for the best essay on the antichristian character of this evil spirit, and the most effectual means by which it can be exorcised from amongst us.”

*Miss Roscoe.*—“And so would I, dear aunt; I am sure we could

raise the money, if we could get a first-rate pious writer to give us the book."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Courtesy requires that I yield the point to the ladies, who, to their honour, generally take the part of the accused; but (addressing his brother) I still believe that the offer of an unconditional salvation to men of every description of character is very hazardous to the interests of public and private virtue."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But the evangelical clergy do not, if I judge from their written discourses, make that unconditional offer which you suppose. They require repentance towards God, before they inculcate faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They require that we should forsake our sins, before they encourage us to hope for mercy. And then the faith which they inculcate is not a mere philosophical assent to the truth of Christianity, which may leave the evil passions and propensities of the mind unsubdued, but such a faith as shall, by its own reaction, purify the imagination, overcome the allurements and fascinations of the world, and work that conformity of soul to the purity of the Divine nature, which forms the great line of distinction between a real and a nominal Christian; between one who is born of the flesh, and one who is born of the Spirit; between the natural man, in whose estimation the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness, and the spiritual man, who discerns them in all their simplicity and relationships. You talk of a conditional salvation; but if you intend by that phrase that we are required to do something by which we are to merit the favour of God and a seat in his celestial kingdom, you hold an opinion which is opposed to the Scriptures and destructive to human happiness; for who can tell when he has acquired that exact degree of virtue which will justify his claim? Indeed, my brother, we ought always to remember that we are sinners—that in the most improved state of our character we are yet imperfect—that after all the acts of obedience which we may perform, we are unprofitable servants—and that if we are ever saved, as I hope we shall be, it will not be *for our own works or deservings*, as the articles of our church declare, but

by grace, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God' (Eph. ii. 8). Considering the indifference which is so generally manifested by persons of all ranks, and of every character, to the momentous truth on which the final and eternal destiny of the soul depends, and the fearful inroads which the worst of principles are making amongst the morals of social life; considering the rapidity with which the fashion of this world is passing away, and how soon we shall all be called to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; instead of repressing any ardent passion for religion, we ought to cherish it; and should contemplate the secession of one sinner, who withdraws from the deluded and infatuated multitude to repent and to pray, with a kindred feeling to that of the spirits of the invisible world, of whom our Lord says, that 'likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.'

The conversation was here interrupted by some of the party moving to the parlour window; when Mr. Roscoe said to his brother, "There is, I see, a gentleman coming up the carriage drive, one of your own order, who is a living witness that regeneration is something essentially different from water baptism, and quite independent of it; and also that a person of the purest virtue requires a Mediator and a Saviour, no less than the most profane and worthless."

"Who is the gentleman?"

"The Rev. Mr. Guion, the rector of Norton."\*

"I have heard of him, and I am told that he is a man of great attainments."

"His learning is great. He is a most eloquent preacher; and he is evangelical."

Mr. Guion was now ushered into the parlour, accompanied by Mrs. Stevens; the ceremony of introduction was soon over, and the parties very soon began to be acquainted. After some desultory conversation, the Rev. Mr. Roscoe (addressing himself to Mr. Guion)

\* See page 78.

said, "I had the honour of making the acquaintance of two ladies, who are, I believe, members of your cure, the Misses Brownjohn. I met them at Buxton last autumn; I hope they are quite well."

"They are, I believe, very well; but just now they are involved in a vexatious perplexity."

"Nothing very painful, I hope."

Why, the case is this; they had a nephew who left England for the East Indies when they were little girls. No tidings were heard of him for many years; but about twelve months ago, intelligence of his death arrived, and he died, it appears, without a will, and very wealthy. There have been a few claimants to his property, but the two ladies in question are judged by many to be the next of kin, and they have commenced proceedings; but there is a mortifying hitch in the progress of their suit, for, on searching the parish register, there is no record either of their birth or their baptism."

"These old records used to be kept in a most shameful way. I don't wonder to hear of their vexatious perplexity."

"It is a little amusing to see how differently the two ladies are affected by this unlucky discovery. Miss Dorothy is in high dudgeon, because the non-production of the document arrests her progress towards the possession of a large fortune. But Miss Susan is most affected, by its cutting her off from the prospect of going to heaven, believing, as she does, that no other than baptismal regeneration is necessary or even possible; but now, for want of a fair copy of her registration, she has no legitimate proof that she is born again, even though she has a faint recollection of her godfather and god-mother."

"What course of procedure do they intend to adopt to obviate the evils resulting from the non-registration of these two events—birth and baptism?"

"Miss Dorothy has employed a very clever solicitor, who is drawing up her case to lay before counsel, caring but little about her baptism if she can succeed in getting at the money; while Miss Susan cares nought about the money in comparison with her spiri-



tual birth. She thinks that her confirmation, which she distinctly remembers, and the trouble she has often been put to by the week's preparation for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, will all prove of no avail, for want of this fair copy of her registration. She has called into requisition the official aid of the bishop's secretary, to lay her case before his lordship; and with her the point of vexatious perplexity is, who shall now regenerate her, to fit her for heaven, if she can't prove that the thing has been done. She won't let me do it, because I am an evangelical; and she fears the bishop won't give his sanction to its being done by a clergyman with whom she sustains no ecclesiastical relationship. However, she has made up her mind on this point, so I hear, that if the bishop thinks it is necessary she should be baptized, and if he won't give his sanction for her to go into another parish to be born again, she will break up her establishment, and become a parishioner at Aston, and then the Rev. Mr. Cole will do the thing properly."

"This case of Miss Susan Brownjohn," said Mrs. John Roscoe, addressing her husband, "upsets, according to my thinking, your doctrine of baptismal regeneration; for it is monstrous to imagine that the Almighty will make a person's fitness for heaven depend on the fidelity of a parish registrar, who is often a stupid fellow, and sometimes more partial to his cups than to doing his duties."

With this half-grave and half-comic remark the colloquy ended, and the party separated, some going one way and some another, but all in a very good humour.

"Your aunt," said Mr. Guion, as he was bidding adieu to Miss Roscoe, "has a rich vein of satire imbedded in her mental stratum."

"True, Sir, but I believe there is a new formation progressing, of more sterling worth; a discovery made very recently."

"Indeed! This is joyful intelligence. Such discoveries are made by angelic spirits, who care nought about any other formations of our earth; and when made, they kindle into celestial rapture."

"And we can participate in their joy."

"Your papa," said Mrs. John Roscoe to her niece, as they were

promenading in the garden, "is a powerful reasoner; his arguments seem to me quite irresistible."

"He is," my dear aunt, "a spiritually enlightened man; and he not only understands what he believes, but he feels its power."

"Alas!" my dear Sophia, "I feel dark and bewildered; and I know not what to do to gain mental peace. O how I long for some rays of that celestial light which has illumined his mind and yours. The incipient thoughts of my heart, which have long been nestling there, are becoming powerful convictions; and force me to believe that there is a reality in our common faith, which you and your father have discovered, but which we have not."

"The Lord, I trust," dear aunt, "is beginning in *your* soul the great good work, which will issue in your eternal salvation."

"What makes you think so?"

"I think so because your spirit, which has long remained dormant, and comparatively insensible under the repressing and benumbing influence of Tractarian delusions, is now stirring within you; struggling into newness of life; acquiring the moral sense of spiritual perception and feeling; craving after spiritual nourishment and consolation; willing to yield itself to God, to be renovated, redeemed, and sanctified; and to walk with him. These are unmistakeable signs."

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## ON ATTENDING AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY.



R. ROSCOE had devoted a large portion of his life to biblical studies, and the various branches of literature which are connected with them, and was thus qualified to discuss theological questions with great facility. His passion for disputation having subsided into an ardent love of

the truth, he no longer argued for the honour of gaining the victory, but either to vindicate his opinions when assailed, or to acquire more correct information on subjects which, till recently, he but imperfectly understood. His loftiness of spirit had now left him; and though he still displayed the insignia of a high mental order, yet there was so much amiability in his manner, and so much docility in his temper, that while he commanded respect, he did not fail to win esteem. During his first serious impressions, the light of truth shone with too feeble a ray to produce that perfect and plenary conviction which permits the mind no longer to vacillate; but when it came, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, he received it with mingled emotions of astonishment and joy; and while he still retained his constitutional independence and ardour, these qualities were so softened and imbued by the love of Christ, that they gave a charm to his character and conversation, of which every one was conscious but himself.

His more public profession of religion was free from ostentation, and without reserve. It was not made to gratify caprice, or cast a reflection on the indecision of others, but in obedience to the authority of the Saviour; and as he had, before his conversion, acquired extensive information on theological subjects, when that great event took place he was enabled to advocate the cause of truth with considerable ability, without requiring the preparatory course of instruction which is in general necessary. He still held in veneration the Established Church, and respected the private character of his parish minister, the Rev. Mr. Cole, though he could not agree with his sentiments; but as he was not edified by his ministrations, he felt it to be his duty to separate himself from his congregation, and join himself to that of the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, whose evangelical preaching was quite in accordance with his own views of revealed truth. This step had been anticipated by his friends, and while some of them commended him, others were much displeased.

On the evening preceding the Sabbath, Mr. Roscoe mentioned the resolution he had formed, when his brother remarked, "I am not

surprised at your determination, because I know that it is a very general thing for those who embrace evangelical principles to prefer an evangelical ministry; but will not such a step grieve your old friend, the Rev. Mr. Cole."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Perhaps it may; but ought I, by my presence, to sanction opinions which I believe to be erroneous?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Though Mr. Cole differs from you on some points of theology, there are many on which you agree; and I think you may, like some others who have embraced evangelical principles, still attend a ministry which does not belong to this specific denomination, as you retain the right of rejecting what you disapprove."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"If the points on which we differ did not involve any essential doctrine of the Christian faith, I should deem it my duty still to attend his ministry; but when I consider that he denies those truths which are, in my opinion, the vital parts of Christianity, and preaches what an apostle would call another gospel, I ought not to give him the sanction of my presence. If I sustained no personal injury under such a ministry, I could not derive any real advantage from it. And, besides, am I not responsible to God and to society for the influence of my example, as well as for my opinions and principles? If so, I am under a sacred obligation to be as cautious what I indirectly sanction, as what I recommend. Can I, without sacrificing the dictates of my conscience, recommend a person to believe that he requires no other regeneration than that which he experienced when he was baptized, and that his good deeds will atone for his evil actions; that he requires no other qualification for heaven than a faithful discharge of his relative duties on earth? Impossible. If, then, I cannot recommend the adoption of these opinions, ought I to sanction them by my presence, when they are enforced by others? I believe that men, before they are renewed in the spirit of their minds, live in a state of alienation from God—under the condemning sentence of his holy law—and are justly exposed to future and endless misery. I believe this on the testimony of the sacred writers, whose testimony is corroborated by the articles

of our church; and do not the same authorities teach us to believe that the truth, when preached in a pure and faithful manner, is the ordained means of the conversion and salvation of men? But if the pure truth of the gospel becomes corrupted, are we not taught to believe that the people perish? He who corrupts it, either wilfully or through ignorance, will stand responsible at the last day for the awful consequences of his conduct; but if I give my sanction to a ministry which I believe to be a corruption of the gospel, and the people should perish under it, shall I not be regarded as accessory to their ruin?"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But supposing I admit that an anti-evangelical ministry is a corruption of the gospel, and that it does not prove the means of the conversion and salvation of those who hear it, yet you must allow that they hear the truth in its purity from the desk, where the Bible, as well as the prayers are read, which answers the same purpose. Hence I have known some who have imbibed evangelical sentiments, recommend a continuance at their parish church on this account, though the ministry may not exactly accord with their views and taste."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes; we have the pure gospel in the desk, even when we have another gospel in the pulpit; but I have never known it produce those moral effects on the people which result from an evangelical ministry. The prayers of our Liturgy may aid the devotional feelings of a renewed Christian, but it is the *preaching of the truth* that God employs as the means of infusing the devotional spirit; and though some may recommend us to attend where the gospel is confined to the reading-desk, yet can we suppose that Paul would do so if he were on earth? Would he, who pronounced that man or angel accursed who dared to preach any other gospel than that which he and his fellow-apostles preached, urge his friends or his hearers, if he were taking leave of them, to attend a ministry which he believed to be in opposition to the truth? Impossible! Can we suppose that our Lord, who commanded his disciples *to take heed what they heard*, would, if he were again to appear on earth, recom-

mend us to attend on a ministry which he believed was subversive of the truth, and the means of misleading the people? Impossible! If we cannot believe that *they would recommend us to do it, ought we to recommend that others should do so?* Would it be wise to act in opposition to such authority? would it be safe? would it be in accordance with the will of the Lord Jesus? and could we calculate on receiving his benediction—*Well done, good and faithful servant?*

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But surely you do not mean that every one who embraces evangelical sentiments ought to leave his parish church if those sentiments are not preached there?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Most certainly I do."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Indeed! Suppose one member of a family should embrace evangelical sentiments, while all the rest retain their former belief, would you recommend that one individual to disturb the peace of his family, by straying to some other church to hear his favourite doctrines?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I recommend no one to disturb the peace of a family, and I rather think it will be found, when peace is disturbed, it is in consequence of the resistance which is raised by the opposite party. Here is, for example, a single individual in the midst of a large circle of gay acquaintances, who feels the renewing influence of truth, and makes an open profession of her faith in Christ. She now retires from the follies and vanities of the world, adopts habits which are decidedly religious, and, without infringing on the rights of others, she claims the privilege of attending that place of worship where she can derive the most spiritual improvement. What law, either human or divine, is violated by such a decision? None. But as the profession of faith in Christ, in the midst of a circle of the gay and the fashionable, is a novelty repugnant to their tastes, and considered by many of them so inelegant, and such a near approximation to the habits of the lower orders, she who makes it becomes an object of satire and reproach, and then is accused as being the cause of all the domestic misery which *they* originate."

*Mrs. Roscoe.*—"But you know, my dear, that our domestic peace

was destroyed as soon as Sophia imbibed her evangelical sentiments ; and you know that religion has been the subject of contentious debate between us ever since."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But would it ever have been destroyed if *we* had not done it? A letter\* which she addressed to us convinced me, at the time, of the injustice of our accusation ; but now I look back on that dark period of our life with more pain than any former one. That letter satisfied me that I ought not to oppose her ; and though I then regretted that she had embraced views of truth which were so different from my own, yet I admired the firmness and constancy which she uniformly displayed when they were assailed ; and now I do not hesitate to say, that he who opposes or persecutes another on account of his religious principles and habits, *is treasuring up to himself wrath against the day of wrath.*"

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"I disapprove of persecution as much as you do: it is both impolitic and cruel ; and seems to be one of the crimes which is left for the more savage and waspish part of our nature to commit. But, still, if we do not oppose force against a person who has embraced evangelical principles, we may *reason* ; and as I consider the desertion of a parish church a serious evil, you must permit me to remind you that if you leave yours and go to hear Mr. Ingleby, the stability of your character will be shaken. You have been considered as one of the pillars of the congregation—one of its ornaments—your decision has been admired no less than your benevolence, and all regret that you should fall from your steadfastness, and exchange the religion of your forefathers, which is grown venerable for its antiquity, for a new religion, which has but recently sprung up amongst us."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"This was one of the very arguments which the Church of Rome employed against the Reformers, and if they had yielded to its influence, we should still have been in her communion. I recollect having met, some time since, in the course of my reading, with the following judicious reply to a satirical question which a

\* See page 228.

Catholic bishop proposed to a Protestant:—‘*Where was your religion before the days of Luther?*’ ‘In the Bible, Sir, where yours is not, and never was.’ The Bible, as Bishop Stillingfleet very justly observes, is the religion of Protestants. You say that I have exchanged an old for a new religion, but this I deny. I still admire the Liturgy, and I still believe the Articles of the church; I still retain that religion which you say is venerable for its antiquity; but, then, I believe it is not to remain a religion of mere forms and ceremonies, but that it is to operate on my heart, and produce within me the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The new religion, as you and others are pleased to term it, is not a corruption of the old; but it is the old religion of our venerable Reformers, and the good old bishops and pastors of our church, revived in its primitive simplicity, and life, and power. It is the religion of the Bible, which enlightens and renovates the inner man—which brings us into fellowship with the Holy One—which preserves the broad line of distinction between the real and the nominal Christian—and which, by its progressive influence, makes us meet to become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“But I do not think that you can, consistently with your profession as a Churchman, leave your parish church to attend one in another parish; the rector is the shepherd, whose spiritual jurisdiction extends over the whole parish, and the people are, ecclesiastically considered, his flock. Is it right for one sheep to stray into another fold for pasture?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“Your figure of comparison is more fanciful than just. As we live in a land of freedom, where every man is permitted to exercise his own judgment on every religious question, we may believe what doctrines, practise what ceremonies, and hear what minister we please, without offending against any law, or subjecting ourselves to the interference of others.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“But you are not sure that you will approve of all the doctrines that Mr. Ingleby preaches, and may, after a while, be under the necessity of going elsewhere.”



*Mr. Roscoe.*—"If I should be under the necessity of going elsewhere, I ought to be thankful that I have the right, and also the opportunity of doing so. But as this is an hypothetical case, I feel under no obligation to reply to it, further than to say, that as religion is now become essential to my happiness, and an enlightened ministry\* essential to my spiritual improvement, I shall go where I can derive most advantage. Places and forms, times and seasons, are the accidental associations of religion, not the integral parts of it. That powerful ascendancy which they once retained over my imagination and prejudices is now destroyed, and I am free to hear the truth wherever it is proclaimed, and to offer up my sacrifice of prayer and of praise to God, in any place which he will condescend to visit with his presence."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"But I presume you do not intend to leave the church for any of the Dissenting chapels which are springing up amongst us."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"You know that I am attached to the constitution and the prescribed formula of the church, but I have a stronger attachment for the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God to salvation; and if I could not hear it preached within the walls of the Establishment, I should consider it my duty to go where I could

\* "They that have any just sense of the importance of religion," says a judicious writer, "find that they need all the helps that God has appointed. Suppose the Sabbath were abolished for a few weeks—in what state, think you, would some of you find your minds? Why, you would feel as if you had scarcely any knowledge or power of religion at all." But there is no charm in the sanctity of the day to keep up the power of vital religion in the heart of a Christian, nor in the holy place where he may spend "the consecrated hours"—this honour having been put on a faithful ministry, which exhibits the truth in its purity and force. What a loss does a Christian habitually sustain who deprives himself of such a ministry, and worships where angels never stoop to celebrate the conversion of one sinner to God! Instead of hearing that *glorious gospel* which enlivens and strengthens the mind, which purifies and ennobles it, and which brings the remote and unseen realities of eternity to moderate the impetuosity and cool the ardour with which the fleeting shadows of time are pursued, the heart is often disquieted, if not with "harsh and dissonant sounds," yet with antichristian and dissonant sentiments, and the day of rest becomes one of perplexity and mortification—Providence having determined, that they *who observe lying vanities shall feel that they have forsaken their own mercies* (Jonah ii. 8).

hear it. Now, I will put one simple question, and I am perfectly willing to be guided by your reply. Suppose the pure gospel was preached in a Dissenting chapel, and another gospel was preached in the church, to which place would the apostle Paul go to worship, if he were a resident amongst us?"

The Rev. Mr. Roscoe made no reply to this somewhat hampering question; but his wife, who was rather more ingenuous in her disposition, and less anxious about the consequences of any fair concession or admission, said, "I have no doubt but he would go to the Dissenting chapel, and take others with him."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"My dear! do you really think so? you must be more guarded."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"Yes, I do most certainly think so; and I'll tell you why. He has pronounced a woe against any one who shall dare to preach another gospel than that which he preached; and therefore it is not likely that he would sanction an official service, against which he has recorded his solemn and awful denunciations. It would be exposing himself to the consequences of his own anathema if he were to do so."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe, smiling.*—"I bow to the Spirit, that will rule in spite of apostolic prohibition."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"Yes, when it rules in righteousness, as in this case, rebellion would be treason, no less to logic than to apostolic authority."

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On the following Sabbath morning we were delighted to see Mr. Roscoe and his family enter the church, Mrs. John Roscoe accompanying them. As this was the first time they had come to hear Mr. Ingleby, we were very naturally somewhat excited on the occasion. He read the prayers with great solemnity and pathetic earnestness; and it was evident, from the expressive responses of the congregation, that they felt engaged in a devotional exercise, blend-

ing, in the name of the glorious Mediator, supplication with thanksgiving. His subject was taken from Revelation iii. 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." After a few prefatory remarks, the venerable rector said, "I shall endeavour to prove from these words that the Christian is animated in his course by the hope of attaining the honours which wait him at the end of it." He had, in this sublimely interesting subject, ample scope for the exhibition of some of the most attractive and impressive parts of revealed truth; and such was the ease, energy, and animation with which he spoke, that the audience listened with fixed attention; and though he knew not that Mr. Roscoe's family was present, yet, from the tenor of his remarks, some thought that the sermon was intended solely for them.

After service, when strolling leisurely through the church-yard, Farmer Pickford pressed through the crowd, and rather abruptly gave me his hearty hand-shake, and we walked away together, his modest wife by his side.

"We have had an excellent sermon this morning.

"That's true, Sir, and no mistake. Mr. Ingleby speaks as though he believed and felt what he says. He is wonderfully clever. He knows the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; and methinks he could repeat it without looking at it. And what a smart voice he has—not too loud for them that sit near him, and loud enough to make people hear outside the church if a window happens to be open."

"He is indeed an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; that is, he has extensive and profound knowledge of them."

"He has more verses of the Bible in one sarmunt than Parson Cole puts in threescore; and I take notice that they are all different, while Parson Cole is always repeating two, which I have learnt by heart. One is, 'Be not righteous over much;' and t'other, 'In the last days perilous times shall come.' He has given me a bit of a liking for the Bible. I read one chapter every night to the youngsters before they go to bed, and two on a Sunday."

“I hope you understand and feel what you read, and what you hear from the pulpit?”

“Why, Sir, as for that I can't say much; but I can say this, I like what I hear, and I can make out Mr. Ingleby's meaning a bit better now than I could at first. What he says often *comes home* here,” placing his hand over his heart, “and then I can't help feeling, and at times I feel desperately; but then, worse luck, it all goes off on a Monday.”

“I suppose, though, you sometimes think during the week on what you hear at church on the Sabbath?”

“I can't help doing that; but, worse luck, I can't make out his meaning by my own thinkings so cleverly as he does in his sarmunts.”

“That's very likely; but I suppose you now reflect at times on the worth of your soul, and the possibility of its being lost?”

“Ay, that I do; more now in one hour than I ever did all my life long before. Parson Cole never made me feel or think, but when he was lashing away at the *schesmeatics*, as he calls the Methodists, and then I used to feel mightily pleased. I often think we were two fools together—one for lashing the Methodists, who never offended him, and t'other for being pleased with it. I never come from church now without thinking about myself and my sins, and about Jesus Christ who died on the cross, and about heaven and hell. These are now to me great realities. Nothing else, as you said to me when you first talked to me, is of equal importance. But I am very stupid in such matters, worse luck. Wife knows a power more about such things than I do, and she often helps me a bit to mind and understand Mr. Ingleby's sarmunts. We often sit up an hour or so after the youngsters and the sarvunts are gone to bed, to talk over these matters. I like her talk, as I understand it a bit.”

“I suppose you understand Mr. Ingleby much better than you used to understand Mr. Cole; and I daresay you would not very willingly go back to your parish church?”

“I have been there, Sir, for *the last time*, and no mistake. When

there, I could sit thinking about my crops and my cattle, but I can't do that at church now. No; Mr. Ingleby takes my heart along with him; and at times he gives such terrible back strokes that he makes me tremble—ay, and cry too; and I a'n't ashamed to confess it to you."

"I am thankful to hear you say what you do say, and I have no doubt but you will, by and by, know spiritual things much better than you do now."

"And so I tell him, Sir; I tell him he is now like the man of whom we read in the Gospel of Mark, who, when the Lord began to open his eyes, saw so confusedly, that men appeared like trees walking; but after a while he saw things as clearly and as distinctly as other people."

"The Lord grant it may be so; then I shall be a power happier than I be now. I sha'n't mind death then."

"I suppose, Mrs. Pickford, things are now more comfortable at home than they used to be?"

"Yes, Sir; I see a blessed change in my husband, and a change in my family. Sunday is now kept as it ought to be, and we all go to church, servants and all, which makes me very thankful to God for working this change in our homestead, and to you, Sir, for the part you have taken in it."

"I have a good wife, Sir, who looked after me when I neglected to look after myself, and who looked after the youngsters when I was for letting them run wild. I used to feel a power of anger against her for her Methodist ways and talk, and at times I refused to let her go to chapel on a Sunday; but I did this in the days of my ignorance. I know a bit better now, thank the Lord. She says she sees a change in all of us, but I hope she will see greater changes yet. I now know that my heart must be changed, and I pray to God to change it. I hope, Sir, you will come again to see us before you leave Fairmount, and give us a bit more prayer. That prayer you gave us at your last visit has never been off my heart since I heard it, and I don't think it will ever go off."

"Yes, Sir, do come again," said Mrs. Pickford, "I will try to make you comfortable, and you may do us some good."

"Why, Sir, I got more good to my soul by your talk when you looked in and tasted our brown loaf and cream cheese, than I got from all the parsons that ever visited us, and we have had a power of them in the shooting season. They would talk about game and dogs, but not a word about the soul and its salvation. I'll tell you what my belief is—one half of them would make better gamekeepers than parsons; and I'll tell you why I think so—a man, to be a right sort of a fellow for his work, should have a liking for it; and he should stick to it, and not gad about, minding other things."

"Very true; the ministers of religion should try to save the souls of their people."

"That, Sir, is my thinking; but no parson ever said anything to me, or to any of us, about my soul and its salvation, though they all knew I was a badish sort of a man, apt to swear a bit, and sometimes get drunk, worse luck."

"Well, Farmer, I hope now you will work out your salvation with fear and trembling, and then you will never again commit such sins."

"I will, Sir, the Lord helping me; and I hope we all shall; we shall then be a power happier, and no mistake."

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On their return from church, Mrs. John Roscoe said, "We have heard a very judicious and impressive sermon this morning. I was much pleased with the vigour and occasional elegance of Mr. Ingleby's style; but this was a source of gratification far inferior to the elevating sentiments which he delivered. I could have sat another hour with great pleasure, but not without coveting the feelings of a man who spake of the joys of heaven as one who had passed through all the necessary preparatory trials, and was living in the sweet anticipation of his final happiness."

"I was much struck," said Mrs. Roscoe, "at the size and listening attitude of the congregation. How audibly and impressively they

uttered the responses. It was the sound of many voices, yet all in harmony; I saw no one gazing about, as though he were a stranger in a strange place, but every eye seemed fixed on Mr. Ingleby. I have been more pleased than I expected; and if this be a fair specimen of evangelical preaching, I shall feel no reluctance to go again.'

This remark overpowered the feelings of Miss Roscoe, whose mind had been filled with anxiety respecting the issue of this first visit of her parents to the church in which she had so often listened with delight to the truths of revelation, and she could not refrain from shedding the tear of joy.

"Yes," said Mr. Roscoe, "the service was indeed interesting and impressive. The preacher displayed a spirit and a manner which became the place he occupied, and the responsibility of the sacred duties devolving on him. His mind was absorbed in his subject; and his principal aim was, by showing us our danger, and the resources of our safety, and by exhibiting before us the honours and felicities of the unseen world, so to awe and animate us, as to secure our devout and permanent attention to the momentous truths which he brought forward. I felt that the revelation of mercy was to him not a mere system of philosophical speculation, which, by exercising the reasoning faculties, improves the intellect without refining the moral sense; but that it was, what it professes to be, a restorative scheme of salvation, which, by renovating the heart, restores man to his long lost purity and bliss—deriving all its efficacy from the grace of Him by whom it was first announced."

"I never retired from a service," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "with such feelings as those that influenced my heart this morning; so dissatisfied with myself, and yet I know not why; I feel that I need something to solace my heart, and yet what that something can be I know not. I am, indeed, dear Sophia, in a state of almost overwhelming perplexity."

"Your observations, dear aunt, remind me of a passage in the history of the apostle Paul, who at one period of his life was in the same state of mental perplexity, which led him to say, 'When the

commandment came, sin revived;’ that is, when he felt the condemnatory application of the law of God to his conscience, he was in a tumult. Before this application was made, he thought that his heart was very good, but afterwards he felt himself a great sinner, and that he had within him many evil principles, which had been lying in such a dormant state, that he had no suspicion of their existence. The new discoveries which you are now making, and which occasion such painful perplexity, are preparing the way for other discoveries, which will soothe, and yield the sweetest consolation; and you will be led gradually onwards to a clear and comprehensive view of the grand theory of revealed truth; and then, like Paul, you ‘will abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.’”

“I hope, my dear, it will be so; for I feel when associated, as I too long have been, with our Tractarian fallacies and delusions, such a craving of soul for some yet unknown spiritual helps and consolations, that I am painfully disquieted, and at times alarmed, lest I should be seized by death in my present state of unpreparedness for that solemn event. I hope, my dear, you and your papa will pray for me, for I now feel the need of the prayers of others. I know not how to pray myself. Forms are now useless to me, especially those I once used and admired, but never felt; I cannot use them now; and yet I know not how to pray to the Almighty without a written form.”

“You will soon know, dear aunt.”

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## THE UNHAPPY ONE.



MS. DENHAM was quite disconcerted by not seeing the Roscoes at church on Sunday; and therefore, accompanied by her daughter, she made a call the next day, to ascertain the cause.

“We were much surprised yesterday,” said Mrs. Denham, “by



not seeing any of you in your pew. We thought some of you must be very ill. We had a most charming sermon. Mr. Cole took his favourite text—'Be not righteous over much.' He read most excellently. Mr. Denham very much admired the sermon, and so did Sir Henry Wilmot; I heard him say that Mr. Cole surpassed himself. He showed us the folly and the danger of being too religious. We should have called in the evening, only we know that Mr. Roscoe has some scruples now about Sunday visitors.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Roscoe, "you will be surprised when I tell you that we all went to hear Mr. Ingleby."

"Indeed!"

"And did you really?" said Miss Denham. "I heard him once. Is he not a most solemn preacher? I think if I were to hear him often I should be brought over to his religion, he enforces it with such awful power."

"You know, my dear, our objections to his religion; and I hope you will never think of leaving your own for it."

"Why, mamma, if I speak the candid truth, I must confess that I have no religion to leave."

"Dear Matilda, you shock me. Why, can't you say the Catechism, and the Belief, and the Lord's Prayer; and were you not confirmed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells; and have you not taken the sacrament three times, and thus made yourself a very good Christian?"

"No, ma', only twice. If you recollect, we had a large party last sacrament Sunday."

"Yes, I now recollect it. I suppose (looking at Mrs. Roscoe) you found the church prodigiously full?"

"There was a very large and a very attentive congregation."

"I have heard that before, and I wonder at it. I wonder what charm people can feel in such a gloomy religion, to be so fond of it. They should have the sermon preached to them which Mr. Cole read on Sunday morning. It would soberize them. I am told Mr. Ingleby preaches such awful sermons, and with so much vehemence, that he makes people take up with his religion whether they

will or no. Pray, how did Mr. Roscoe like his preaching? He is a sensible man, and one on whose judgment we may place some dependence, notwithstanding his religious eccentricities."

"Mr. Roscoe was very much pleased. He thinks Mr. Ingleby a very intelligent and a very eloquent preacher. Indeed, we were all so much gratified, that it is our intention to hear him again."

"There, mamma," said Miss Denham, "I told you it would be so. Is he not, ma'am, a most beguiling preacher? I have often wished to hear him again; and yet I wonder at it, for he made me feel so awfully. What was the subject of his discourse?" (Mrs. John Roscoe now entered the parlour with Miss Roscoe.)

"He preached about the difficulties which a Christian has to overcome before he can enter heaven."

"I wish," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "you had been with us. I think all your objections against evangelical preaching would have been removed. I never enjoyed a sermon so much. We certainly act a very unwise part in cherishing antipathies against a style of preaching which is so well calculated to direct our attention towards that eternal world to which we are all hastening."

"It is very proper that we should all think about going to heaven; but if we think too much on that subject it will make us low-spirited. Mr. Cole very justly remarked yesterday, in his sermon, that our Saviour never prayed that we should be taken out of the world; and I think it would be wrong if we were to desire it."

"But you know that we *must leave* it; and as we know not how soon, is it not of importance that we should be prepared?"

"O, certainly; and I doubt not but, when our Maker is pleased to take us unto himself, we shall be quite resigned to our fate; but for my own part (rising as she spoke), I would much rather live than die. We know what this world is, and here we are very well off, but we know nothing about the next."

"I hope," said Mrs. Roscoe, "you and Miss Denham will accompany us on Sunday to hear Mr. Ingleby, as I have no doubt you will be much pleased. No one could have stronger prejudices

against that good man than myself; and though he advanced some things which I did not very well understand, yet he preached with so much ease and animation, that I felt more of the importance of religion last Sunday than I ever felt before."

"I have no doubt but Mr. Ingleby is a very good man and a most excellent preacher; but you know that Mr. Denham is so attached to his religion, that he would not like for us to change ours. When, Madam (addressing Mrs. John Roscoe), do you leave?"

"We think of going the early part of next week."

"No, no," said Mrs. Roscoe, "we cannot part with you so soon. You must prolong your visit."

"Yes, dear aunt," said Miss Roscoe; "indeed you must."

"I hope, Madam, you and the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Roscoe, will do us the honour of joining a select dinner-party at Brushwood House this day week. Mr. Denham charged me to take no refusal, he is so anxious for the honour of seeing you all at his table."

"I feel obliged by your polite invitation; but I believe my husband has to attend a clerical meeting, which will render it absolutely necessary that we should be at home on Tuesday next. If he can stay, you may expect to see us; and I will let you know immediately after I have seen him."

"You see, my dear," said Mrs. Denham, on her way home, "the propriety of the suggestion which I gave you some time since, to avoid associating with Mrs. Stevens, as it is to her influence we may attribute the entire secession of the Roscoes from our social parties. They are all gone, as you may perceive from our interview with them this morning; and their example will influence others. It is prodigiously affecting to see the progress this evangelical religion is making, and no one can say where it will end."

"But, mamma, one thing is certain—if we judge from observation, they are happier with their religion than we are with ours."

"Yes, my dear, they say they are happy; but what pleasure can there be in religion?"

“ I don't know, mamma ; but I am sure that Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe have a larger share of happiness than I have. I often feel a gloom come over my mind, which I can neither remove nor account for ; and sometimes I feel such a singular depression of spirit, that I am inclined to read my Bible ; but I don't know that it would do me any good.”

“ Why, you know, my dear, you have been confined at home rather more than usual, which has relaxed your nerves too much ; but our parties will soon meet, and then the gloom of which you speak will go off. But I must request you to avoid associating with your new friends, especially now you are somewhat depressed in spirits, or they may bring you over to take to their religion, which would be, as I have often told you, a most prodigious affliction to your father and myself.”

“ I cannot, mamma, efface from my memory the sermon which I once heard Mr. Ingleby preach. It sometimes recurs to my recollection with a force that quite overpowers me ; and I have such fearful dreams. I dreamt last night that, just as I was coming out of the theatre, the heavens all at once blazed with fire, and I thought the day of judgment was come. I awoke in such a fright, and just then I heard Hector howl most awfully.”

“ But, my dear, this was only a dream.”

“ But is not my dream a presentiment ?”

“ O, no, my dear ! it's only superstitious people who ever have such a thing as a presentiment.”

“ But, ma', I am unhappy, indeed I am. I can't forget the sermon I heard Mr. Ingleby preach.”

“ I wish you had never gone to his church. I wished you not to go. You should always follow my advice ; I have more knowledge of men and things than you have.”

“ True, ma' ; but I often wish to hear him again. Is he not a good man ?”

“ My dear Matilda, you alarm me. You wish to hear him again, when his first sermon made you so unhappy ! You must not

cherish such an idea. Indeed, you must make some effort to raise your spirits, and drive all these gloomy thoughts out of your head, or there is no knowing what may happen."

"But, ma', if I could drive them out of my head, I could not drive them out of my heart. They have penetrated too deeply."

"My dear Matilda, you *must* rouse yourself. It won't do to give way to your melancholy ideas. Why, if you don't take care, you will become as religious as any of them; and then, as I have told you before, we should never have another happy day."

My dear ma', I am unhappy, and cannot help it. With everything to make me happy—perfect health, affectionate parents, kind friends, the prospect of a union with the man I love—and yet I am not happy. That fearful question, which impressed me so much when I heard it, is perpetually sounding in my ears."

"What question do you refer to?"

"It is this, which I have repeated to you before—*Should* you like to pass from the theatre to the judgment-seat of Christ?"

"But that, my dear, was in his sermon, and he could not help reading it. He did not mean you, and I wonder why you should recollect it so. You should forget it."

"But I can't forget it. It is always returning. I hear it now. I hear it in company. I hear it in solitude. And in the dead of the night, when I awake, as I often do, I hear it then."

"Your papa has spoken to me several times lately about you. He says he is sure, from your melancholy looks and absence of mind, that there is something the matter with you. He thought, till I satisfied him to the contrary, that there was likely to be some rupture between you and Mr. Ryder. He is urging me to grant you every indulgence in our power."

"I am strongly tempted to become religious, to see if that would make me happy."

"I am glad, my dear, it is only a temptation. You know our Saviour has taught us to pray, Lead us not into temptation. This

accounts for something I saw the other day, which rather distressed me."

"What was that, ma'?"

"I saw a Bible on your toilet."

"O yes, I recollect. I heard a poor woman say that her Bible made her happy, and I thought for the moment it might make me happy. But I could not make out which part I ought to read first, so as to understand it; and, therefore, I didn't read much. I read the history of Joseph, which pleased me a little; and I read some of the gospel stories; but the other parts I cannot understand. It is to me altogether a book of mystery."

"Nor can I understand it. It is a book of mystery to me as well as to you. But, dear, one thing is certain—the Almighty does not require you, now you are so young, the very life and soul of all our parties, to give your mind to such awful subjects as the Bible speaks about."

"Perhaps not, but still I am restless and uneasy. Indeed, I sometimes think of going to consult Mr. Ingleby; he may be able to give me some advice which may do me good."

"Dear Matilda, by no means do such a thing. If he could once get you into the Rectory, he would be sure to convert you to his religion. Keep up your spirits. We will go to Brighton soon; then to the altar. Then the tour, and then the return and the visiting. You will soon be as happy as the day is long."

"I hope God will bless me, and make me happy."

"There's no doubt about that."

"Then, ma', if he will bless me, why does he let me live so unhappy? I have tried to pray to him to make me happy; but it's of no use. What can I do?"

"You must go into company more."

"It is useless. I can't now enjoy what I used to enjoy so much; and I don't know the cause. I feel doomed by fate to unhappiness, and yet I have everything to make me happy."

"I'll speak to Dr. Bailey; he is very likely to give a prescription that may relieve you."

"No physician's prescription will ever soothe the pangs of a wounded spirit."

"My dear Matilda, your case greatly distresses me, and your papa too. Tell us what we can do to comfort you, and we will do it."

I cannot tell. What a contrast between Miss Roscoe and myself! How cheerful she is! what a sweet smile is always playing on her countenance! how lively and energetic she is, while I am wretched and depressed, weary of life, yet living in the dread of death; more wretched, while in the possession of abundance, than the poor in their poverty."

Some few weeks after this conversation, Miss Denham, on her return from making some morning calls, said to her mamma, "You recollect our meeting Mr. Cole, the last time we were at Mr. Roscoe's?"

"Yes, dear."

"And do you recollect the remark you made on his leaving us?"

"No."

"You said, 'I wonder what is the matter. Mr. Cole looks so much annoyed to-day.'"

"I now recollect it, and I thought of it several times during the week, but I don't cherish such gloomy things as you do."

"Then I can tell you what affected him. I have just heard it. It will astonish you. No one expected such a thing; it is so strange and unlikely."

"What is it?"

"You know Miss Amelia Stubbs has been very ill many weeks and is likely to die."

"Yes, I heard it from Dr. Bailey."

"Her papa, when she was given over by Dr. Bailey and another physician, sent for Mr. Cole, and he talked to her, and gave her the sacrament and absolution, and then assured her that all was done that was necessary to be done to fit her for heaven; and he told her that now she might be resigned to her fate without any fear, as her peace with God was made on the sanctity of the sacrament."

“Very proper, dear. It is not, I believe, quite safe to die without taking the sacrament. I should do that the first thing if I were a-dying.”

“Exactly so, ma’. After Amelia had taken it, and when all thought she had made her peace with God, and was quite resigned to die, she sent for Mr. Cole again, and told him that what he had done was of no use, and that she dreaded dying just as much after taking the sacrament and absolution, as she did before she took it. It was this that so much affected him. He had just left her when we met him.”

“But why should he care about it, if he did what the church prescribes to be done? He did his duty, and that ought to have satisfied him.”

“But, he says, it is such an indirect impeachment of his competency to perform his clerical functions.”

“I have no doubt, if the real state of the case were known, that Mrs. Stevens has been with her, and undone what Mr. Cole did. She is always prowling about amongst the sick and the dying, disquieting their minds after the clergy have helped them to make their peace with God.”

“No, ma’, she had not seen Mrs. Stevens. Her disquietude of soul came of itself.”

“How do you know that?”

“I have just seen her, and she told me so. She said, and she spoke emphatically when she said it, ‘To give the sacrament and absolution to fit a person for dying, as a sort of a passport to heaven, is a great delusion.’”

“Depend on it, dear, that her fever has affected her brain. She must be in a state of delirium.”

“No, ma’, she is quite herself—as calm and as collected as when in perfect health. And she talks now so sweetly about Jesus Christ, and about his love for sinners, and about coming to him to be saved, that she really made me weep, though I could not comprehend her meaning. You would not know her if you were to hear her speak



now, so different to her former talk. She talks now like a saint just going into heaven. It is quite wonderful. I can't make it out."

"Then I suppose Mr. Ingleby has been with her."

"Yes; her papa, at her request, sent for him; and he talked to her, so she told me, so sweetly about Jesus Christ, about his compassion and his love, and about his being able and willing to save her, and prayed with her so sweetly, that now she says she is quite happy at the thought of dying—that she would rather die than live."

"All this is quite marvellous."

"Exactly so. It has taken the whole circle of her intimacy by surprise. Everybody is talking about it, and nobody can make it out. Only think, a young lady with her bright prospects saying she would rather die than live!"

"Did Mr. Ingleby give her the sacrament and absolution?"

"No, ma', he did nothing but explain the Bible to her, and pray with her."

"Is she dying?"

"She is just now a little revived; but she told me again, she would rather die than live; and there was such a sweet smile on her countenance when she said it."

"Marvellous! But are you quite sure she is not in a state of delirium? This is how delirious people talk, so I have heard."

"She is no more delirious than I am. She told me, that if she should get well again, which she did not expect, she would have nothing more to do with balls, theatres, and card-parties; and she said so many solemn things to me about my soul, and its salvation and another world, and urged me so earnestly and affectionately to prepare for death while time was given me for such preparation, that I am become as low-spirited as ever, and don't know what to do. It is marvellous to hear with what ease, and fluency, and earnestness, she now talks on these awful subjects."

"One strange thing now comes so soon after another, that I get quite bewildered, but I suppose after a while things will settle down, and we shall be as quiet as ever. It is this evangelical religion that

is doing all the mischief. What a pity that our Maker does not, somehow or another, put a stop to it."

"But, ma', people can't die in peace without it, though they can live without it. How will you account for this?"

"I don't know, as I never studied the subject; and I wish you would banish it from your mind, and talk about something else."

"I may talk about something else, ma', but to banish it from my mind is more than I am able to do."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the Rev. Mr. Cole.

"We were just talking about this strange case of Miss Amelia Stubbs. How unpolite in her to tell you that the administration of the sacrament and absolution was a great delusion, when it is the very thing our church prescribes to fit a dying person for heaven!"

"Ay, she is to be pitied. Her mind is affected."

"So I believe, and so I have said. Is she likely to get any better before death?"

"No, Madam; there is no chance of that now, as Mr. Ingleby has her under his care."

"I think," said Miss Denham, "she is scarcely to be pitied. She is as calm and as collected as when in perfect health, and appears so happy when speaking of the bliss she expects to enjoy after death. She says she would rather die than live."

"This, I know, is what the evangelicals say, but I won't believe it."

"I believe it, Sir, for I have seen her, and heard her say so. I wish I was half as happy with the prospect of living as she is with the prospect of dying. Can you account for this wonderful change from a dread of death to a desire to die?"

"It's all effervescent excitement."

"A most pleasant one, just such an excitement as I should like if I were dying."

"My dear, you are overstepping the bounds of reverential propriety, by offering such free remarks to Mr. Cole."

"I hope not, ma'; it is not my intention to do so; but I can't

help saying that, while standing beside her death-bed, I envied her her happiness. She told me that the sacrament did not take from her the dread of dying, but the sweet promise of Jesus Christ did."

"What promise of Jesus Christ did she refer to? To one, I suppose, that she heard in a fit of delirium. Delirious people always see imaginary sights, and hear imaginary sounds, and yet they think them real."

"O no, Sir, there's no delirium in her case. It was a promise which Mr. Ingleby read to her out of the Bible, and it was something like this, '*Come to me, and I will give you rest.*'"

"I shall have no rest as long as Mr. Ingleby is suffered to invade my ecclesiastical territory, and pervert my parishioners from the sacraments of our church to his evangelical notions. I mean to complain of him to the bishop of our diocese, and have him cited before him."

"I don't like," said Miss Denham, after Mr. Cole left, "this citation reference. I wonder what he will say to the bishop, and I wonder what the bishop will say to him. Will he tell him that he visited a young lady of his parish when she was dying, and gave her the sacrament and absolution, according to the prescribed forms of the church, but they failed in her case in the efficacy of their power, as she dreaded death as much after she had taken the sacrament as she did before it was given to her? Will he then go on to say, that Mr. Ingleby was then invited to see her, and that he, by repeating and explaining to her some promise of Jesus' Christ, which he read to her out of the Bible, succeeded in taking from her heart all dread of death, and in inspiring her with a joyful hope of immortality? Do you think he will do this, and then pray his lordship to issue a censure, and an interdiction to prevent his doing such a kind thing to any other person?"

"O no, dear, he won't do anything so highly indecorous. It was a hasty expression."

"I hope so, because the *morale* of such an application would be

this: he would rather his parishioners should die in despair, than they should derive hope and spiritual consolation from the promises of Jesus Christ, repeated to them and explained to them by a brother clergyman of another parish."

"But, dear Matilda, in this case the brother clergyman is an evangelical."

"Admitted; but then he does what Mr. Cole could not do; he gives consolation and hope to a person when dying. This case is causing much excitement; it is bringing the efficacy of the sacraments into dispute. I shall never, ma', forget my interview with Amelia; her serene look, her composure, the soft yet full intonations of her voice when bidding adieu to what she called this vain world, and hailing the dawn of a blissful immortality. And, ma', she wept many tears when she was urging me to flee from the wrath to come."

"Why, dear, it was very uncharitable in her even to suppose that such a dear innocent as you are is exposed to the wrath to come, but to allude to it was an act of great rudeness. I wonder you did not resent it."

"Really, ma', I felt when she was speaking as though what she said was very applicable and proper. But perhaps we were both labouring under a wrong impression. However, the conclusion which I have come to is this, though I have not mentioned it to any one before, that there is a power in evangelical religion of which we can form no idea. There's a mystery about it I cannot fathom."

"I am glad that dear Amelia is happy in prospect of death; she was always a virtuous girl, with a good heart; and now we will dismiss the subject, to talk about something else. Come, let us go into the drawing-room, and we will have a little music. You dwell on melancholy ideas too much; dismiss them, dear."

"Dismiss them! Why, ma', my thoughts come and go without my control. Some are strange thoughts, such as I never had before, and some are the same as usual. My mind is quite jaded by its own activity; and if I go to rest, and go to sleep, it is just the

same then, as it is now. I often wonder what the issue of all this mental turmoil will be."

"Here is Mr. Ryder and his sister coming; they will cheer you up."

"Don't tell them that I am unhappy; it may excite suspicion or jealousy."

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### THE SCENE CHANGES.

**A**N arrangement having been made by a few of the gay young people of Aston to go to a public ball, Miss Denham yielded to the solicitations of Mr. Ryder, her betrothed husband, and promised to go with them, though not without a slight degree of reluctance. After she had given her consent, on casually seeing the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, as she was returning from a morning walk, his sermon on the loss of the soul was brought so forcibly to her recollection, and it revived so powerfully the disquieting emotions which it produced at the time she was listening to it, that she said to her mamma, "I think I ought not to go; the thought of going makes me feel quite unhappy." However, the entreaties and persuasions of her mamma and Mr. Ryder prevailed, and she accompanied the party. It was a fine evening when they set off, and they were all in great glee; but on their return, the night had become so dark and stormy that it was with difficulty they reached home. The next morning Miss Denham complained of a slight cold, and it was thought proper that she should keep her room during the whole of the day. On the following day she felt somewhat unwell, but not ill; and as there were a few select friends engaged to tea and cards, she dressed, and appeared amongst them. She was gay and sprightly, but the dew of health was gone from her countenance; her eyes did not sparkle

with their usual lustre; and all received an impression, from her general appearance, that some fatal disease had seized her, though no one had courage enough to mention it.

After the party broke up she became somewhat worse; but as there never had been much illness in the family, her parents did not send for medical assistance, supposing that she had merely taken a cold, from which she would soon recover. Her mamma sat by her bedside till midnight, when she left her in a sweet sleep, having commissioned her favourite servant to watch her through the night. About three in the morning she became restless, awoke, and asked for some water, which she drank with avidity, and then slumbered on for the space of another half-hour. She awoke again, and asked for more water; complained of its being bitter, and uttered some incoherent sentences, which induced the servant to call up her parents. She became composed again; slept rather more soundly; but about five she again awoke, and seeing her mother, she said, "I have had a very strange night—I have seen strange sights, and heard strange sounds—I am very ill—I ought not to have gone to the ball—I knew better—I *should not like to pass from the theatre to the judgment-seat of Christ!*"

"O, my dear, do not suffer your mind to be so distressed. It was a very unfavourable night; but I hope it will please the Almighty to restore you to health very soon. Your papa has sent William for Dr. Bailey, and we expect him here every minute."

At length, after two hours' long suspense, the trampling of the horses announced the approach of the doctor, who was soon introduced to her by her tender-hearted father. He made a few inquiries—examined her pulse—looked grave—and then abruptly retired below, followed by both her parents, who felt anxious to know his opinion, yet dreaded to ask him for it.

"Miss Matilda," he said, "is very ill—she must be kept very composed. I will send her some medicine, which she must take immediately, and I will see her again about noon."

"Is there any danger, Sir?"

“There is, Madam, always some danger attendant on such a violent seizure; but I see no great reason to apprehend a fatal issue.”

The doctor's directions were strictly adhered to; but the fever continued to rage with even greater violence, and she became delirious. Occasionally she gave utterance to half-formed sentences, which indicated that she sometimes thought herself listening to a sermon *on the loss of the soul*, and at other times enjoying the gaieties of fashionable life. Often did her father, with hurried steps, walk up and down the lane, between the hours of twelve and two, to look for the doctor; and just as he was sending William to hasten his return, he saw him coming. After the second interview with his patient, her mother ventured to say, “Do you think, Sir, the dear creature is dying?”

“Why, no, Madam; she is still very ill, but not worse than when I saw her in the morning. She may recover, and I hope she will; but everything depends on her being kept composed.”

“But, Sir, she is at times very delirious, and utters sayings frightful to hear.”

“That must not astonish you; it proceeds from the nature of the complaint; it is a painful but not a dangerous symptom. I want to subdue her fever, and if I can do that, we have nothing to fear. I will see her again in the evening.”

She continued during the afternoon much the same, but towards evening was more composed; she recognized her mother, and conversed a little with her; complained less of pain and of thirst, and was so much revived that the doctor said, on leaving her, that he had very little doubt that she would recover. During the four following days there was no perceptible change, but on the turn of the seventh day the fever left her. As the doctor had been very particular in recommending her parents to keep up her spirits, to prevent her ruminating on the subject of religion, her mamma occasionally read to her some passages from the most amusing books she could procure, and generally passed away the dull and tedious hours of the evening at cards. But though she had regained her

vivacity, and talked with her accustomed ease on the past scenes of her life, and the prospects which futurity opened up to her ardent fancy, yet she gradually became weaker and weaker, which convinced her physician that some incipient disease was undermining the vigour of her constitution; yet he did not despair of her final recovery.

But though for a while some flattering symptoms gave promise of returning health and vigour, yet at length it became evident that death was lurking in ambush, and that the gay and accomplished Matilda must die. One physician was called in after another, and every expedient which human skill could devise was resorted to; but no power could arrest the progress of the flattering yet fatal disorder which was gradually wasting away her life. As soon as she was informed that there was no hope of her recovery, she requested to be left alone till she rang the bell. On this request all went below, and sat for some time weeping together. "She is now," said her father, "making her peace with God; let no noise be heard; this work requires stillness; may heaven bless her in the act." The bell rang; her anxious mother, on approaching her bedside, perceived she was in a state of extreme agitation, and her voice faltered as she said, "I fear, ma', I am not fit to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. I wish to see some clergyman who will bring words of peace to my soul."

"That's very proper, dear. I'll send for Mr. Cole, who will, I am sure, and with great satisfaction, give you the sacrament, and then you will make your peace with God."

"Yes, mamma; he gave it to Amelia Stubbs when she was dying, and she told me that she dreaded death after she had taken the sacrament as much as she did before it was given to her; she told me that giving the sacrament and absolution to fit a person for dying is a great delusion. I now feel, ma', that I have been living under the spell of a fatal delusion; but I cannot consent to die under it. Will you send for Mr. Ingleby?"

"Mr. Ingleby!" said the astonished mother.



“Yes, ma’; he spoke words of comfort to Amelia Stubbs when she was dying, and he may bring some words of comfort to my troubled soul. Send for him immediately. I have not long to live, and I wish now to turn the current of my thoughts towards the other world.”

“I hope,” said the weeping father, on Mrs. Denham’s entrance into the parlour, “our dear Matilda feels her soul happy.”

“O no! she is not happy. Her soul is in trouble. She says that she is not fit to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.”

“What makes her think this?”

“It is the remembrance of some question she once heard Mr. Ingleby put when he was reading his sermon.”

“Did she ever tell it you?”

“Yes; many times of late.”

“Do you recollect it?”

“Yes; it was this—‘Should you like to go from the theatre to the judgment-seat of Christ?’”

“And who would? Perhaps that question was the Almighty’s warning voice speaking to her soul.”

“She wishes to see the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, and requests that he may be sent for immediately.”

“Yes, I’ll send for him at once, since she desires to see him. He is a good man, and has made many happy in their last hours, and I hope he will bring words of peace to the troubled spirit of our dear dying child.”

As the news of Miss Denham’s approaching dissolution spread through the parish, many wept, and many sent to inquire after her; but none were more deeply affected than the Stevenses and the Roscoes. Though they had often sent, and often called, yet they had not been permitted to see her more than once, and then she was flushed with the high expectation of a speedy recovery.

Mr. Denham at once sent a note to the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, informing him of the dangerous illness of his daughter, and of her desire to see him at his earliest convenience.

Mr. Ingleby was very soon with her; he found her seated in an arm-chair beside the fire, with a Bible open on the table before her; but she was too much excited to do more than extend her hand, sitting for some time nearly motionless, in pensive silence. There was a melancholy cast on her countenance, which formed a strong contrast to the brilliancy of her eye, and the beautiful though fatal hectic which flushed her cheeks. Her parents, after making some delicate allusions to her illness, and the depression of her spirits, withdrew, as she had requested to be left alone with Mr. Ingleby; and after they had left the room, she very frankly told him that she had sent for him to give her the benefit of his instructions and his prayers. "I have lived, Sir, a gay and a thoughtless life, but not a happy one. I have often felt dissatisfied with the sources of my gratification, and envious of the happiness of our friends at Fairmount; but never had resolution enough to abandon the objects of my pursuit, nor to seek theirs. It has now pleased the Almighty to put a stop to my career of folly and gaiety, and I know that in a few weeks, if not days, I shall die, and go into the eternal world; and I am not prepared for such an awful event."

"But what convinces you that you are not prepared to go into the eternal world; and how long have you entertained such a belief?"

"Ever since I heard you preach a sermon on the loss of the soul. Since then I have been unhappy, and often in terror."

"Do you remember any particular passage in the sermon which impressed and affected you?"

"O yes, Sir; one, which is fixed on my memory. It was this: '*Should you like to go from the theatre to the judgment-seat of Christ?*'"

"To pass abruptly from such a scene of gay amusement into the eternal world would indeed be awful, but God in mercy has interposed to prevent it; and your present anxiety on the subject may be regarded as a favourable sign that he is dealing graciously with you. But as many are alarmed in the immediate prospect of death,

and pray for mercy when they cannot continue longer in a course of folly and of sin, you will permit me to warn you against grasping at a premature hope, which may prove more fatal, because more deceptive, than the keenest feelings of anguish."

"O, Sir, I have no hope. My soul is deeply depressed; I cannot look back on the scenes of my past life without being amazed at my folly. Had I taken the warning which Amelia Stubbs gave me when she was dying, I had not gone to the theatre or the ball-room again; and then I had not been dying now."

"You knew her?"

"Yes, Sir; and I saw her when she was dying; and she told me she would rather die than live. And she besought me with tears, and in the sweetest tones of solicitude, to flee from the wrath to come. But I was infatuated, and I saw not my danger, nor did I understand the full import of her warning as I do now. I continued to follow the multitude, because custom led the way, and now I must die alone. But I am not fit to die."

"Why do you suppose that you are not fit to die?"

"Because I am a sinner; I always thought I was, when I ever thought on the subject, but now I *feel* that I am."

"And how long have you felt yourself a sinner?"

"O, Sir," and she wept as she spoke, "not till after I was informed of my danger; and this aggravates my misery, because I fear that it is a dread of punishment which disquiets my soul, rather than a true sorrow for my sins?"

"Had you ever any convictions during your gay career that you were acting an unwise and a dangerous part?"

"O yes, often, Sir, very often; conviction would sometimes flash over my mind, with the vividness of lightning; but then it would soon go off again; and though I could not forget the impressions which it produced, yet I soon ceased to feel them."

"You informed me just now that while you were sometimes dissatisfied at your own pursuits, you often envied the superior happiness of our pious friends at Fairmount; but why did you envy them

their happiness, when you could form no just conception of the nature of it?"

"It is true, Sir, I could form no conception of the nature of their happiness, but I knew they were happy—more happy without our fantastic sources of amusement than we were with them. I never retired from their society without being convinced that there was a Divine reality in true religion; and yet I could not imagine what it could be. The only idea I could form of it was going frequently to church, reading the Bible, praying, and living a virtuous life."

"Yes, my dear, there is a Divine reality in true religion, which, I hope, you will live to feel?"

"I cannot live, Sir, and I am not fit to die. My case is hopeless."

"No, my dear, it is not hopeless. I can repeat to you words which have comforted thousands, and I hope they will comfort you—'*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*'"

"But, Sir, after living such a vain life, may I venture to rely on his death for salvation, with a hope of obtaining it?"

"Yes, most certainly. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—those who *feel* they are sinners—and as soon as we *feel* our *guilt* and our *degeneracy*, we are not only fitted to come unto him for peace, and acceptance, and eternal life, but *invited* in the most tender and endearing terms. Hence he says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

"O, Sir," she suddenly exclaimed, and her eye sparkled with delight, "these are the very words which gave comfort to dear Amelia Stubbs when she was dying, so she told me."

"And I hope they will give comfort to your soul. They are the words which Jesus Christ uttered when he was on earth, and addressed to sinners like you."

"But he does not speak them to me; if he did, then I should have comfort, because then I should have hope."

"He has had them inserted in the New Testament, and there you may read them; and as they are placed there for the comfort of

sinners of all future times, you are authorized, when reading them, or hearing them repeated, to believe that he is *speaking* to you, and as really as though you could hear him giving utterance to them."

"Then I will hope in his mercy and in his power; and yet I am almost afraid to hope. Had I felt some years, or even some months since what I now feel, I should have been preserved from the ensnaring influence of those fascinations which have opened for me a premature grave, and might, in the society of my esteemed friends, Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe, have enjoyed a large share of happiness on earth."

"But you ought to be thankful to the God of all consolation that you have felt, in the eleventh hour, that degree of guilt, and that clear apprehension of danger, which has induced you to run for refuge to Jesus Christ to save you."

"Very true, Sir; and I do feel the emotion of gratitude to him springing up in my heart. It is a new emotion, and it is a very sweet one."

"You have often heard, when attending the services of the church, that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save sinners from perishing; did it never make any impression on your heart?"

"Yes, Sir, I heard it, but it did not impress my thoughtless mind. But now I see it and feel it. O, how wonderful, that the Son of God should bleed and die for such a guilty and worthless sinner as I now feel myself to be! And may I hope, dear Sir, without being guilty of presumption, that *he will save me* from perishing, and admit me into heaven?"

"You may; indeed, not to do so would be a sin, as it would be an impeachment of his integrity."

"Then I will hope, and will bless and praise his name with all my soul. I have been living under a fatal delusion, but I feel that I am under no delusion now."

"No, my dear, you are now brought into connection with realities, —sublime realities—realities which connect the two worlds, and

which explain the mysteries of time, and open a free and a safe passage for the guilty and the worthless into eternity."

"May I now urge my last request, which is this—that ere you leave this house, you will try to impress on the mind of my dear parents the important truths which you have with such clearness made known to me."

The venerable man having given her his pledge that he would attempt to do so, then knelt down and prayed with her, and bade her farewell, yet intending to see her again. Immediately after Mr. Ingleby's departure she retired to rest, and slept the greater part of the night. In the morning, when her father drew near her bedside, and asked her if her soul was happy, she replied, "I am composed, but not perfectly happy. I have a hope that I shall not perish, and that I shall be saved; and this is as much as I can expect, and far more than I deserve. I shall now soon leave you, dear father; but before I go I have two requests to make, which I hope you will comply with. The one is this, that you and my dear mother will go and hear that holy man of God preach, who has brought words of comfort to my troubled soul. He understands what religion is, and will explain it to you more clearly and more perfectly than Mr. Cole can do. I once, in common with others, ridiculed his evangelical views of Divine truth, and turned the edge of satire against those who seek happiness in the consolations of the gospel; but now I am driven for peace and for hope to that very source. My other request is, that you will send my affectionate regards to Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe, and say that I wish to see them as soon as they can conveniently come."

Mr. John Ryder, who had been unremitting in his attentions during her illness, and who was nearly frantic with grief in the prospect of parting with her, was waiting below; and when she was asked if he might see her once more, she replied, "I think not, it may disturb me; I am too near an eternal world to suffer my feelings to intermingle again with those objects on which they have been too strongly placed." But after a long pause she added, "Yes,

let him come up. The parting scene, though painful, may be profitable." He entered the room, pale and dejected; and though his spirit could brave death in the high places of danger, yet now he was appalled—seeing her preparing for the tomb, instead of the altar. On approaching her bedside she extended her hand, and with a mild look and softened tone, she said, "We now part, but I hope not for ever. Death, which is now removing me, may soon call for you, and then I hope you will find that consolation in the death of a despised Saviour, which it has pleased God, very unexpectedly and undeservedly, to give to me." And then, after a mutual embrace, she drew back her hand, and concealed her face, as though her eyes were for ever closed on things visible and temporal.

The interview with her endeared friends, Mrs. Stevens and Miss Roscoe, gave a fresh excitement to her feelings; but it was one of pure and unmingled satisfaction. They conversed together with intense interest on the love of Christ, and the freeness of his salvation; but when any reference was made to the joys of the heavenly state, she merely expressed a hope that she might be permitted to join the innumerable throng, though doomed to remain unnoticed amongst them. As Mrs. Denham and the nurse were exhausted by excessive fatigue, having had no rest for several nights, Mrs. Stevens's and Miss Roscoe's kind offer to stay with her was accepted. It was evident to all that she could not continue long; for though there had been some favourable symptoms of recruited strength, yet for the last few days the disease had made very rapid progress, and when the physician took his leave, he said, "Be not surprised if a sudden change should take place." She slept through the first part of the night very composedly, but about three in the morning she became restless, and on being raised up in the arms of Miss Roscoe, she swooned for a few seconds, when she gradually revived, and expressed a wish to see her parents once more. She first kissed her mother, and bade her adieu, and then her father, and then her two female friends, and, last of all, her old nurse; and after a long pause she said, "I am dying, but not without hope of obtaining eternal

life, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." She then gently reclined her head on the bosom of Mrs. Stevens, and breathed her last.

Thus died the once gay and thoughtless Miss Denham, bearing a testimony against the vanities of the world, which had ensnared her, and to the importance and excellence of the faith in Christ, which she had often made the theme of her ridicule. Had she felt the transforming power of the truth which on one occasion she heard fall from the lips of Mr. Ingleby, or had she given heed to the warnings which Amelia Stubbs, when dying, addressed to her, she might have lived, a comfort to her parents in their old age, and an ornament to society; and, at a distant period, she might have descended to the grave laden with the fruits of righteousness, and rich in the anticipations of hope. But as she chose to disregard them, and devote herself to the follies and amusements of gay life, she was called to taste the bitterness of death in the spring-time of her years; yet mercy spared her till she sought the redemption of her soul, through faith in the death of the Redeemer, while many are left in their last hours on earth to seek for enjoyment amidst scenes of folly, and then, when death comes, they pass into the eternal world, for which they have made no preparation. What consternation and horror will then seize them! A ceaseless storm of agony, which never abates, and from which there is no escape. O, reader,

"Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer."

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## THE TRACTARIAN AT FAULT.



SOON after the Rev. Mr. Roscoe and his lady returned home, Miss Roscoe received the following letter from her aunt:—

"MY DEAR SOPHIA,—We are again at home, and in good health; but before I say anything about home, I will give you



a short account of the adventures of our journey. We had, for nearly half the distance, two gentlemen for our fellow-travellers—one a Roman Catholic, the other a Protestant—whom I shall call Mr. O'Brian and Mr. Robertson. Mr. O'Brian was a very demure-looking man, with a large head, overhanging brows, and strongly marked with a severe yet self-complacent expression. On taking his seat, he at once opened a newspaper and commenced reading. At length, having wearied himself by the intensity of his reading, or having exhausted the subject matter of his paper, he folded it up, put it on his knee, took off his spectacles, and then placing them cautiously in an elegant silver case, he slightly changed his position, and appeared equally intent in looking at the varied beauties of nature.

“Mr. Robertson requested that he would favour him with the use of the paper. The favour was granted in silence, and with a somewhat haughty bow.

“Mr. Robertson, who sat opposite me, was an interesting and intelligent-looking man, with a bold, yet rather facetious-looking countenance; while reading, I was much struck with his appearance, his features underwent such frequent and rapid changes of expression. It seemed to me that he had met with something which alternately amused his fancy and roused his ire. The paper, I should tell you, was from the Roman Catholic press, and contained some marvellous tales, the description of some gorgeous ecclesiastical ceremonies, and a Jesuitical defence of the Catholic clergy, on whom the editor lavished many praises, for their active benevolence and their earnestness in the grand work of saving the people.

“On returning the paper, Mr. Robertson said, ‘I greatly dislike these marvellous tales, because I think them legendary inventions; and I greatly dislike these pompous ceremonies, because they do not harmonize with the beautiful simplicity of the religion of the New Testament; and though I have no doubt but some of your priests are men of active benevolence, yet I do not think they have any more power to save the people than any other men.’



DISCUSSION IN THE STAGE COACH.

“‘Perhaps, Sir,’ said Mr. O’Brian, ‘you are what in common parlance we call an unbeliever.’

“‘No, Sir, I am not; I believe in the plenary inspiration and absolute authority of the Bible; but I have no faith in the infallibility or divinely delegated power of any order of priesthood; pure sham pretensions, Sir.’

“‘But, Sir, our priests are the regular successors of the apostles.’

“‘They may be, but what then? Do you mean to imply, in this category of their descent, that they are endowed with the same power and authority as the apostles?’

“‘Most certainly I do.’

“‘Indeed! that is claiming a good deal of what is superhuman. The apostles had power to work miracles; but do these priests of yours ever do such a thing as open the eyes of a blind man, or raise a dead man to life.’

“‘No, Sir, they do not pretend to do such things. The power and authority which is delegated to them is spiritual; to act not on matter but on mind; to remit or retain its sins.’

“‘The apostles never possessed this spiritual power, or if they did, they never exercised it.’

“‘I beg your pardon, Sir, but you are mistaken.’

“‘To the law and the testimony; specify one case in which any one of the apostles ever ventured on forgiving any man his sins.’

“‘I have not my New Testament with me, or I could prove the truth of what I say.’

“‘I know all the facts of the New Testament, and if you will only refer to any one case, I will give it to you with all its details.’

“No reply.

“‘No, Sir; the apostles always directed the attention of the guilty, for the remission of their sins, to God, seated on a throne of grace; or directly to Jesus Christ, as a Saviour mighty to save. I certainly will give your priests the credit of acting a very cunning part in one particular, relating to the possession of apostolic powers.’

“‘A very cunning part, Sir! in what particular?’

“Why, the apostles proved that they had power to work visible miracles; but this power your priests lay no claim to, because, if they did, they would be challenged to the proof; but they claim an authority to forgive sins (after certain cash payments are made), which authority the apostles never exercised; and when they are asked for a proof that they possess it, they have none to offer except their own fallible testimony. However, their deluded devotees very meekly hand over the cash, which the priest very gravely pockets, reminding me of the Ephesian jugglers, who said, in justification of their zeal for the great goddess Diana, “*Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our living.*” This, Sir, is worse than mere sham; it is a daring usurpation of the Divine prerogative, which is no less than an act of blasphemy; *for who can forgive sins but God only?*”

“No reply.

“When Mr. O'Brian left us, his place was filled up by an elderly man, the most profane person I ever travelled with. I watched the changing countenance of Mr. Robertson, the rapid contraction and distention of his brow, his intent and eager look of indignation. Availing himself of a short pause, he said, with a very stern look, and in an authoritative tone, ‘If, Sir, you have no reverence for God, I hope you will pay some respect to a lady, and leave off such profane, disgusting utterances.’

“‘I suppose, Sir, you are a believer in the Bible?’

“‘I am, Sir.’

“‘I am not. I don't believe that God takes any notice of what we say or do.’

“‘It is very possible, Sir, you may feel the full force of your belief at some future period of your history.’

“‘You speak ambiguously; will you explain your meaning?’

“‘Why, Sir, it is possible you may feel, when dying, what the generality of your profane fraternity feel—intense remorse and some awful forebodings—and may, as they have often done, cry aloud for mercy; and then you may be made to feel that God takes no notice of what you say or do.’

“‘I don’t believe in a futurity; I no more expect to live after death comes, than I expect my dead dog to live again, or that a rotten cabbage-stalk will spring up into vegetable life again.’

“‘Well, Sir, if you choose to die like a dog, or rot like a cabbage stump, you will permit me to say that I don’t admire your taste.’

“‘I defy you to prove that I shall live after I am dead.’

“‘You need not defy me to do that, for I assure you I have no wish to do so; and really the sooner such profane beings go out of existence the better; if not for their own sakes, yet certainly for the sake of others.’

“This last stroke of caustic severity struck the evil spirit dumb, and he left us very soon after.

“Your uncle took no notice of any occurrence during the whole of the journey; he entered into no conversation, but appeared deeply absorbed in his own thoughts, and since his return he very rarely leaves his study, except for his meals, and these he often takes in almost total silence. An incident occurred on Saturday week, which, when viewed in connection with the strange alteration of his habits and manners, induces me to hope that his religious opinions, like my own, are undergoing a decided change. He said to me, ‘I shall read the service to-morrow, and my curate shall preach;’ assigning as the reason for such an unusual arrangement, that he could not select a sermon to his mind; adding, ‘I must get a new set.’ What spiritual influence that visit is now exerting over him, time alone will show; but as it relates to myself, I assure you, my dear Sophia, I shall never forget it; and I hope the vivid impressions of the superlative importance of personal piety which I received, will never become obliterated. The idea which most forcibly struck me was one which came out incidentally at our interview with the excellent Mrs. Stevens—*that genuine religion was a source of mental bliss; it takes its rise in the heart, and brings us into contact with a living Saviour.* As soon as this grand idea took possession of my mind, I saw the absurdity, and I may say the impiety of deifying the ceremonies of religion, by ascribing a regenerating power to baptism,

an absolving power to confirmation, and a saving power to the priesthood of any church. O! how often have I uttered, in conjunction with others, when in church, the following prayer: '*O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.*' But I never *felt* myself a miserable sinner till *now*. I never *felt* the need of mercy till *now*. I uttered the prayer quite mechanically, not from the heart; but *now* I feel its appropriateness and its urgent necessity; and I begin to hope he will have mercy on me and on my dear husband.

"You are aware that my sister, who is an eminently devout woman, is also a Dissenter; and hitherto, when she has visited us, we have felt some objection to her staying over the Sunday, because, having no sympathy with your uncle's style of preaching, she could not go with us to church; and we both felt a reluctance to tolerate an inmate of the rectory going to a Dissenting chapel. But the other evening, when alluding to her expected visit, he said to me, 'I hope she will remain with us some weeks; and I see no good reason why we should object to her attending the Dissenting chapel, as we know she prefers it. The apostle commands us to be *courteous*; and hence we must not suffer any of our ecclesiastical antipathies or predilections to set aside the law of Christian politeness.' This first budding of liberality was hailed by me with more delight than we feel when gathering the first snow-drop of spring; in itself a proof that our visit has thawed away the ice-bound antipathies of a frigid ecclesiastical formalism. Remember me most affectionately to your papa and mamma, and believe me to be, my dear Sophia, your most affectionate aunt,

"A. R."

Soon after receiving this letter, Miss Roscoe wrote to her aunt, in the following terms:—

"MY DEAR AUNT,—Yours of the 14th more than delighted us; it excited our gratitude to the Author of all good desires and all holy counsels; and both mamma and papa have consented that I should come to you as soon as I can conveniently get ready. I often prayed,

while you were with us, that your visit might prove a spiritual blessing to us all; and I now indulge the hope that the Lord is answering my prayers. To see you and my dear uncle moving out of dull, monotonous formality, into newness of life, and to hail you as fellow-heirs of the grace of life, will be indeed the consummation of bliss. With united affection to you and yours, "SOPHIA."

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The Rev. Mr. Roscoe had not preached for many Sundays, leaving this part of his clerical duties to be performed by his curate; and one evening, when in conversation with his family, he made a communication that startled them. Alluding to the discussions which had taken place at his brother's mansion, he said, "They have altogether unfitted me for my ministerial functions. I cannot preach *now*, for I do not know what to preach. I am compelled to renounce my former belief, and I see no alternative but to adopt the evangelical faith; and yet I do not clearly understand it. It is at present enveloped in a thick mist, which may possibly clear off as I pursue my inquiries; and yet I scarcely know how to pursue them. However, I have decided on one important step, which I have no doubt will startle many, and may bring upon me some opprobrium, and that is, I have engaged an evangelical preacher to succeed my present curate, who leaves next Sunday, having obtained preferment. My new curate may prove to me a counsellor and a guide." The effect of this unexpected announcement was electrical, and some tears were shed, as an homage of gratitude to the God of all grace.

"I hope, Sir," said Mrs. Burder, "the Divine Spirit is gently leading you out of the darkness of theological error, into the marvellous light of pure, evangelical truth; and though for a while a thick mist of obscurity may envelope some parts of its harmonious theory, yet if you follow on to know the Lord, the pathway of your inquiry will become clearer and brighter, till in the progress of time you will comprehend, by practical experience of its power, what the apostle designates the height and the depth, the breadth and the

length of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; and then you will have both joy and peace in believing."

"It will, indeed," said Mrs. Roscoe, "be a delight to my soul to hear pure evangelical truth proclaimed in our church, in which a cold and frigid Tractarianism, which I never very well liked, has long been in the ascendant."

"And to hear it proclaimed by my dear uncle," said Miss Roscoe, "will be as joyous to my heart as the coming up of John the Baptist out of the wilderness, proclaiming the speedy appearance of the Messiah, was to the devout Jews, who were waiting for the consolation of Israel."

"Your father, my dear Sophia, has been the means of effecting a thorough revolution in my theological opinions and belief; but had there not been another power presiding over our discussions, more powerful than his cogent arguments, my haughty spirit would never have yielded to him the palm of victory. Yes, and I am not ashamed to avow it, '*by the grace of God I am what I am.*' I have always loved my brother as my brother, but now, henceforth, I shall love and revere him, as my spiritual father in Christ."

"Do you recollect, uncle, what part of the discussion made the first and the deepest impression against your Tractarianism, and in favour of evangelical truth?"

"Yes; I felt staggered by the case of Simon Magus,\* as a self-evident proof that baptism is not regeneration. The argument rising out of the possible loss† of a parish register I felt to be very powerful. I was also, more than once during our debates, very solemnly impressed by your father's serious and intense earnestness; but one expression he uttered, when replying to some observations of your aunt, went to the core of my heart, and I could not extract it."

"Do you recollect the expression?" said Miss Roscoe.

"Yes, and its accompaniments, and the long train of reflections it gave rise to. It was this:—'All false religions take man as he is, and leave him essentially the same; but in genuine religion the

\* See page 321.

† See page 349.



*man changes*,\* and I saw an illustration and confirmation of this in your papa. I recollected the time when he was as decided a Tractarian as myself, equally averse to evangelical truth, and more intolerant in his spirit against others. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus did not excite more astonishment amongst the Jews and the disciples of Christ, than I felt at the change which had taken place in my brother. In him I saw a living proof that the *man changes*,\* and I saw also that the change brought him into a nearer spiritual conformity to the primitive disciples of Jesus Christ. Then the emphatic exclamation of your aunt helped on this new process of thinking and feeling, and my spirit instinctively responded to the truthfulness of her utterance, 'I must have the religion of principle—that of mere form has no life; it does not bring me into contact with a living Saviour.'

"I often felt," said Mrs. John Roscoe, addressing her niece, "when associating with your friends, that I was with persons of a new order, very diverse in spirit and in style of speech to our Tractarian neighbours,—advocates for the same ecclesiastical ceremonies, but regarding them merely as the external medium for the conveyance of Divine truth and grace to the mind; not magnifying them, as endowed with any mysterious, self-contained power to operate by their own immediate agency. But the point of difference which struck me most forcibly, was their constant reference to the absolute necessity of a supernatural renovation of the soul, and the infusion of a new and spiritual life."

"And, my dear aunt, was this the only point of difference which you discerned between us and your Tractarian friends?"

"O no. Perhaps if I refer to a passage in a sermon which I heard the venerable Mr. Ingleby preach, it will give you an idea of the other point of difference I perceived. It was contained in a sermon from John iii. 14, 15, and was to this effect: Jesus Christ stands in the same relation to us which the elevated brazen serpent did to the bitten Israelites—every one who looked to it was healed.

\* See page 344.

We, as sinners, are thus addressed: 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else' (Isa. xlv. 22). 'You are not,' he said, with intense earnestness, 'to look to your virtues for salvation, nor are you to look to your religious ceremonies for salvation; but you are to look to Jesus Christ, symbolized by the brazen serpent of the Hebrew camp, a living Saviour, and one mighty to save.' This was a beautiful passage, beautiful from its simplicity and its adaptation to our condition. I have been baptized, confirmed, have taken the sacrament many times, and have passed through the entire process of ecclesiastical training, but I now find I am not spiritually regenerated, and that I need a Saviour just as much as any unbaptized heathen."

"Tractarians," said Miss Roscoe, "neither deny nor repudiate Jesus Christ; they maintain his original dignity, and often depict, in strongly exciting language, his humiliation and his sufferings. They also extol him as the perfection of moral dignity, combined with personal excellencies of the purest order; but they do not give to him that prominence as a Saviour mighty to save, which the inspired writers and which the evangelical clergy give to him. His substitutional work they virtually reject, as we do the legend of baptismal regeneration. He is, in their ecclesiastical domain, more as the spectre of the Christian faith, moving silently in dim twilight amongst its established forms and lifeless ceremonies, than as the ever-living Son of God, giving life to the spiritually dead, healing the moral disorders of fallen humanity, and saving the chief of sinners from everlasting woe."

On Sunday afternoon they all went to church, and heard the curate deliver his farewell sermon, which, like most sermons of the same school, was a pompous eulogium on the church, its apostolic orders, and its sacraments. Jesus Christ was visible in the remote distance, but not drawing the people to himself by the virtue of his death; the efficacy of the attractive power was deposited in the laver of baptism, and the absolution of the priesthood.

"I am devoutly thankful," said Mrs. Roscoe, as they were return-

ing from church, "that this is the last sermon of the Tractarian school we shall have from this pulpit."

"I think," said Miss Roscoe, as they were chatting together after tea, "we shall be guilty of no offence against any law of our statute-book if we go together to the Dissenting chapel this evening, as we have no service at church."

"I shall not object," said Mr. Roscoe, "to your going; but if I go, now that I have appointed an evangelical curate to do duty at church, a report may be raised that I am going to turn Dissenter. This would most likely operate to my prejudice. However, I intend to hear the sermon, which I can do very easily by walking in the garden alongside the chapel, where I have of late heard many of Mr. Davis's sermons, and have more than admired them; I have felt them."

"My uncle! you progress in liberality rather rapidly. I hope this is not a sign that you will soon be taken from us; choice fruit sometimes gets prematurely ripe."

"O no. I am not meet for heaven as yet. But now that I begin to know and feel the real power of the truth on my *heart*, I shall throw off the mantle of bigotry; it never sits gracefully on a true believer in Christ. One faith ought to produce one spirit—the spirit of love and Christian fellowship. We shall all be one in heaven, and why not all one on earth?"

The text for the evening sermon was part of the 29th verse of the 34th chapter of the prophecies of Ezekiel—"A PLANT OF RENOWN." After a concise exposition of the prophecy, Mr. Davis remarked, "It is not my intention to give you a lecture on the future restoration of the Jews to the land of their fathers, but rather to fix your attention on that glorious *One* who is announced in my text under the beautifully appropriate image of a plant of renown. That it refers exclusively to Jesus Christ I shall take for granted, and the following is the leading question I mean to discuss—What is the primary cause to which his pre-eminent distinction and celebrity may be attributed? That there are some subordinate causes which have con-

tributed to it, I readily admit, such as his miracles, his teaching, and the moral grandeur and social loveliness of his character; but these, though brilliant and imposing, are not enough to account for the unparalleled celebrity which he still maintains in universal estimation. For suppose, after performing the miracles which he did perform, and after conveying the knowledge of spiritual truths which he did convey, and after developing the character which he did develop, he had suddenly disappeared, like Enoch or Elijah, doing nothing more in behalf of man, what an impenetrable cloud of mystery would hang over the design of his appearing on earth? We should, in that case, be reduced to the necessity of believing that the greatest, the wisest, and the most benevolent being that ever appeared in the human form, came and went away without accomplishing any purpose commensurate with the moral grandeur of his character, or the vastness of his resources for practical utility. He would flit before our imagination as a wonderful being, but a being of no essential importance to us. His history might live in our recollection without exciting an emotion of gratitude or of love, or it might pass from our recollection without our sustaining any perceptible loss, proving a vast brilliant mirage in the dreary desert of humanity; or, like some splendid night-dream, leaving at the dawn of morning its romantic incidents feebly and uselessly imprinted on the fancy. If, then, his splendid miracles, his sublime revelation of spiritual truth, and his unique character, blending in equal proportions the perfections of divinity with the excellencies of unfallen humanity, are insufficient to account for his unfading and ever-increasing celebrity, and for the absolute dominion he holds over the thoughts, the admiration, and the supreme affection of his disciples, of every tribe and every grade of the intellectual and social world, to what other cause are we to attribute it? To what other cause! to his death, and the relation in which he stands, by virtue of his death, to the great family of man. He came to give his life a ransom for many; his life he gave, laying it down of himself; he suffered, the just for the unjust; he died for us.

“Death severs all relative connections; but the living survivors can derive no benefit from the departed, because all intercourse is broken off, and the medium of communication destroyed. But here is an exception to the universal rule; by giving his life as a ransom for sinners, he became the Saviour of all who believe in him, and his death is the mystic power which brings them into a close and indissoluble union and fellowship with him. John Bunyan, when incarcerated in Bedford jail, was building up his fame as one of the most sagacious moral philosophers of his age; his genius, having gauged the depth of human sorrow, discovered and made known the source of its alleviation and relief—by an allegorical form of representation, which charms the imagination while it touches the heart. His Pilgrim leaves the City of Destruction with a heavy burden on his back, and he groans beneath its weight through every stage of his progress, till, on ascending a little eminence, he suddenly and unexpectedly descries the cross, when in a moment the straps of his burden snap asunder; it rolls off and disappears. This was to him a joyful discovery; and he exclaims, ‘He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death.’ Yes, brethren—

————— ‘The cross!

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

Hence, when a sinner feels the pressure of guilt on his conscience, and stands terror-struck lest the wrath of God should fall upon him, he looks by faith to Jesus Christ giving his life a ransom, and then a power is emitted which soothes his sorrows and allays his fears, and gives him joy and peace in believing. And when he arrives at the great crisis of his destiny, conscious that he is going from this world into the great world of spirits, what is it that braces up the nerves of his soul, now on the eve of becoming disembodied? what is it that gives buoyancy to his hope, and calmness if not ecstasy to

his feelings? what is it that acts with such great power at such an eventful crisis?—it is a simple trust in the efficacy of the death of Jesus Christ. Hence you may often hear the departing believer saying, as his last audible utterance, *Who loved me*, and GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME; and his conscious assurance of this great fact disarms death of his sting, and he passes onward into the eternal world with a hope full of immortality.”

After proving that he will maintain his celebrity through all future periods of time, and onwards for ever, both in the estimation of the saved and the lost—the saved will never forget him, or cease to feel the manifestations of his love; nor will the lost ever forget him, or cease to feel the terror of his righteous displeasure—he concluded his sermon as follows:—“Will those doomed spirits, who were his contemporaries during his earthly sojourn, and who distinguished themselves by their daring and unprovoked hostility, ever forget his appearance when they held him under their subjection, or his appearance now he has them under his own? Will Judas ever forget taking the sop, and then going deliberately away to receive the reward of treachery? Will he ever forget re-entering the garden, passing along its lonely pathway, followed by an armed force, and stepping forward in advance to give the appointed signal, by saluting him? Will he ever forget the tortuous question, which still vibrates on his ear—‘*Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*’ Will Caiaphas, the high-priest, ever forget rending his clothes, and accusing him of blasphemy, because he admitted he was the Son of God? Or will any of his associates in the council ever forget that they once spat in his face, and buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands? Will Herod and his men of war, now seeing him on his throne of majesty, ever forget setting him at nought, and mocking him, arraying him in a gorgeous robe, and dismissing him in derisive scorn and contempt? Will Pilate ever forget when the Lord of glory stood as a criminal at his tribunal? or when, after pronouncing his innocence, he ordered him to be stripped, and

scourged, and then sent him forth to the death of torture and infamy? Will the man who placed the crown of thorns on his head, or the man who put the reed of mockery in his hand, or the men who nailed him to the cross, or the debased malefactor, whose last breath was spent in reviling him—or will any of the Scribes and the Pharisees, whose malignant spirit gave an impulse and a tone to the infuriated rabble, ever forget what they did and what they said against *Him* who now sits on the throne of majesty and of power, and the day of whose vengeance is come? Ah! no. He will be held in everlasting remembrance by celestial and infernal spirits, and by the saved and the lost, who once sojourned in this vale of tears."

"There is," said Mr. Roscoe, "I must confess, a power and an impressiveness in this style of preaching, as much superior to our cold and formal Tractarianism, as the beauty and the fertility of summer surpasses the icy chills and sterility of winter."

"The one," said Miss Roscoe, "is the empire of death; the other, of life."

"I long," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "for next Sunday, when I hope we shall hear, for the first time in our church, the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

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The Sabbath dawned, and it was a lovely day. Public curiosity had been awakened by the suddenness and novelty of the change; the church was crowded, for the fame of the preacher had preceded him. The service was read by the Rev. Mr. Roscoe. His new curate entered the pulpit with graceful ease, his countenance betokening a deep sense of his responsibility to God and to the people, to act a faithful part in the ministration of Divine truth. His text was a very appropriate one, and it was announced with impressive distinctness, yet in a mild and rather pathetic tone: "*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*" (Eph. iii. 8). After a very brief introduction, he said, "Here are two things

to which I will now call your attention, first, the estimate which the apostle forms of himself; and, second, the commission he was engaged to execute." A few extracts from the *second* division of his discourse, may not be unacceptable to the intelligent reader. He first gave a graphic sketch of the impure and degrading mythology of the Gentile world, and the safeguards which were placed around it, by the sagacity of its priests, in conjunction with imperial authority, to protect it against any movements which might be made to subvert it, or bring it under the ban of popular outrage or odium. He then represented Paul taking a survey of it, meditating on its antiquity, its imposing and beguiling fascinations, its undisputed ascendancy over the passions and prejudices of the people, exclaiming, in anticipation of its overthrow, But *who is sufficient* to do it? "His faith, brethren," said the preacher, "was as strong as his zeal was ardent; and while conscious that he was in himself less than the least of all saints, yet he knew he had received a commission to go forth and destroy this stronghold of Satanic impurity and crime, and he was to do this by preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"1. The subject of his preaching was *defined*. He was to preach about Jesus Christ. He doubtless told the people that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, who had appeared on earth in the likeness of men; and then, after giving a sketch of his character, detailing some of his miracles, and repeating some of his sayings, he announced his ignominious and agonizing death. Had Paul been an impostor or a fanatic, and had Jesus Christ been, what our German infidels say he was, a mythical being, the apostle would have cast the myth of his death into the shade, under a full conviction that it was far more likely to elicit the expression of scornful contempt, than to awaken any poignant or sublime emotions in the souls of the people. But no; his death is the chief subject of the apostle's preaching—the magnetic power of a mysterious attraction, awakening morbid sensibilities, and stirring death itself into vigorous life; it is *the* fact of his extraordinary history on which he dwells with impassioned earnestness:



‘For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified’ (1 Cor. ii. 2). He does not dwell on his tragical death to excite popular odium against his murderers, nor to excite popular sympathy or admiration by a description of the calm self-possession and the moral dignity he displayed in his sufferings; but he dwells on it as a marvellous manifestation of Divine benevolence: ‘For 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 iii. 16; Rom. v).

“2. The subject of his preaching was *exclusive*. He had, as modern preachers have, a great variety of subjects which he could have introduced in his public ministrations; and we know that on some occasions he did avail himself of them, as when at Athens he exposed the absurdity of the superstitions of the people; and as when, addressing Felix, he reasoned on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, making that licentious man tremble, in the presence of his courtiers, under the terror of his appeals; but in general, the pity and the love of Christ for perishing sinners, and his power and willingness to save them, constituted the leading theme of his simple and subduing eloquence. Yes, brethren, and this is the only theme which can render the ministrations of the pulpit attractive and impressive; because it is the power of God unto salvation. Jesus Christ, when on the earth, said, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me’ (John xiv. 6). Paul believed this, and he preached it; and so ought we. Yes, we should enter our solemn protest against, and fearlessly denounce, all the false and delusive expedients which superstition and infidelity devise and adopt to conciliate the Divine favour; and boldly maintain that there is only one way of access to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins and for eternal life (Acts iv. 12).

“3. The subject of his preaching required no *adventitious circumstances to make it attractive, or to render it successful*. See 1 Cor. i. 21, 25. We have been gravely told by some of our Christian philo-

sophers, who admit the Divine origin of Christianity, that she must be *preceded by civilization*, with its arts and sciences, or she will never gain any splendid triumphs amongst a rude and an uncultivated people. Then, forsooth, the agriculturist must know how to drain his marshes, and how to cast up his furrows; how to plant and prune his hedges, and how to construct his dikes; before his heart can receive the incorruptible seed of the truth, which liveth and abideth for ever. Then, forsooth, the sculptor must know how to convert, and by the most scientific process, the rough and shapeless block of marble into the human form, before his soul can undergo a new creation in Christ Jesus. Then, forsooth, the painter must know how to impress on the canvas the face of the blue heavens, its rising and its setting sun; the sombrous splendour of a starlight night, and the dark and fearful thunderstorm, before he can feel the moral attraction of the powers of the world to come. Then, forsooth, the rude barbarians of the island and the desert must be located in towns or cities, must abandon their wigwams, their caves, and their mud huts, for well-ventilated and ceiled houses; must give over the chase, and cease to pluck subsistence from the unpruned plants of the wilderness, and participate in the luxuries of high living; must have their museums and literary societies, their courts of judicature, and their halls of legislation, and their printing-presses, before they can be formed into Christian churches, to enjoy the communion of saintly brotherhood. This is what I call the poetry of scepticism; something to excite or soothe the sentimental, and to act as a barrier to arrest the progress of the faithful herald of salvation, who, like Paul, goes forth to preach amongst the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

“We have another set of philosophers, who have not moral courage enough to reject Christianity as a sham or delusion, but who gravely tell us *that she must submit to the operation of the law of progress*, or she will never gain any conquests amongst our deep and profound thinkers, or our men of refinement and of taste. She must now, at the opening of this new epoch in her history—so say these

semi-sceptical philosophers—come out of her antiquated forms and requisitions, and be moulded into a shape, and trained to a mode of argument and address, adapted to the intellectual attainments and delicate sensibilities of the age. A chaste and classical language must supersede the uncouth technicalities of the olden times; reason must now be admitted as the only standard of appeal and of judgment on all questions of belief; arbitrary dogmas must give place to new discoveries in the science of morals and of theology; and while a subdued respect and reverence is still cherished in the popular mind for the Bible, and the institutions which are upheld by its authority, yet there must be no limits prescribed to the spirit of free inquiry, nor must any coercive power or ceremonial arrangement trespass on the sanctity of human freedom, or on any of our civil or social habitudes. If we choose to dance at a ball; if we choose to bet at the race-stand or frequent the theatre; if we choose to shuffle the cards, or toss the dice, or strike at a billiard-table; if we choose to take recreative pleasures on a Sunday, rather than render obedience to the Puritanical law of its observance, and choose to offer our adorations and our orisons to the Deity beside murmuring streams or gurgling fountains, or on the tops of lofty mountains, in preference to a church consecrated to his worship; and if we should have a greater liking for the poetry of Byron or of Wordsworth than for that of David or Isaiah, and should cherish a stronger predilection for the novels of Scott or of Bulwer than for the dull prose of prophets or of apostles, we feel that Christianity has no moral right to interdict us. The day of absolutism in her history is past and gone. She may now ask to be received amongst us as a guest—she must not come as a despot or as a sovereign; she may advise, but she must not command; she may breathe the words of a soothing sympathy in the house of mourning, or in the chamber of death, but she must not presume to utter any denunciations, if we should say to her, what Felix once said to her heroic champion, ‘Go thy way this time, when I have a more convenient season, I will send for thee.’

“And now, forsooth, we have a new set of philosophers\* coming up within our own borders, men of learning and of taste, and of Oxford or of Cambridge training, who have recently discovered that Christianity is not, as hitherto believed by our great theological authorities, a remedial scheme of grace and truth, to recover man from the ruins of the fall, *but a mere educational scheme, to develop his inner spiritual life, and train it to a state of perfection.* Hence, they tell us that we are to regard Jesus Christ as a prophet and an example, rather than as a priest and a sacrifice; and that the basis of our hope of salvation is not his meritorious righteousness, imputed to us and received by faith, but his personal excellencies, which he displayed through the whole tenor of his life; these excellencies becoming inwrought in our souls by an assimilative process, conducted by our own unaided meditative musings. So then, according to the doctrine of this new school of Christian philosophers, if I meditate, under the mysterious charm of an approving sympathy, on the gentleness, the meekness, and the patience of Jesus Christ—on his benevolence, his heroic fortitude, and his calm endurance of suffering—on the graceful urbanity of his manners—on the amiability of his temper and spirit—and on the moral dignity of his character—I shall so inwork his personal righteousness in my inner spirit as to make it my own; and on this my hope must rest of being justified against all the charges of a violated law, and through this source I must look for peace with God and for final salvation.

“I will meet all these new discoveries and semi-profane speculations by one simple remark:—If the apostle had lived through all succeeding ages up to the present time, he would continue to write and to preach as he wrote and preached to the citizens of Ephesus and Corinth. He would have indulged in no vain speculations, nor would he have made any new discoveries. If he stood in this pulpit now, and if any of the departed spirits of Ephesus or of Corinth

\* Reference is here made to Archdeacon Hare, the Rev. Fred. Maurice, chaplain of Lincoln's Inn, the Rev. Mr. Trench, professor of divinity in King's College, London, and the Rev. Mr. Kingsley, rector of Eversley.

were raised from the dead to form part of his audience, they would see the same man and hear the same voice, and hear that voice giving utterance to the same truths, and in the same style and tone of proclamation. He would again tell them, as he told them when preaching to them, that by nature they are the children of wrath, even as others, and are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of themselves, it being the gift of God, 'not of works, lest any man should boast' (Eph. ii. 9). He would preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"Hence we perceive that the theme of preaching is to be the same throughout all ages, though the heralds of its proclamation may be different men, dying off in the progress of time, to be succeeded by others; but woe be to that herald who dares to substitute a vain philosophy, or any new discoveries, for the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Hear what Paul says: 'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed' (Gal. i. 8). He has, I know, been censured for using such awful words of denunciation, and held up to popular reprobation, as breathing a malignant as well as a dogmatic spirit. But, brethren, allow me to ask you one question. Do you think it possible for human language to embody that amount of indignant feeling which you would virtuously cherish against the monster who, on a dangerous coast, and for no personal advantage, would falsify the colours of the lighthouse, or who would shift the buoys on a rocky shore? No. If you could inhale the breath of the most scorching vengeance, you would breathe it forth against such an infernal being, who is willing to become a wholesale murderer, beguiling to danger and to death by the very signals which are appointed for life and safety. Hence heavy denunciations of woe on some special occasions are the utterances of pure benevolence. And this is strictly correct in reference to Paul. He knew that the gospel he preached was a true and faithful saying, the power of God to salvation; and consequently any gospel in opposition to it would be false and fatal; and hence he sends forth his

warning voice, as you would send forth yours if you saw a man in the very act of changing the signals of safety for those of destruction and of death.

“In conclusion, brethren, ever remember that preaching is only the proclamation of mercy and of grace. It is an instrument of power ; but it is nothing more. To you the word of salvation is now brought, and to you it has been delivered this night ; will you receive it, or will you reject it ? If you receive it in faith and in love, it will prove a savour of life unto life ; but if you reject or neglect it, it will prove a savour of death unto death. On its reception or rejection your eternal destiny is dependent, and shall that destiny be endless happiness or endless woe ? Decide ; now is the accepted time.”

The congregation listened with close attention, and appeared powerfully excited ; a deep solemnity was the predominant expression of almost every countenance, quite unlike the apathetic indifference of former times. On passing away from the church, with Mrs. Roscoe and his niece, who were in an ecstasy of delight, one of Mr. Roscoe's most intelligent hearers said to him, “ You have now, Sir, a curate who is an honour to your pulpit ; he knows his work, and has given us a proof that he knows how to do it ; he will very soon fill the church, for we need, and have long felt the want of a pure evangelical gospel. Under such a ministry we shall soon see some signs of spiritual life amongst us.”

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## THE POPULAR DELUSION.



RUMOUR having reached us that the venerable Mr. Ingleby had met with an accident on his return from a visitation, we made a call at the rectory, and had the gratification to find that it was a false report. Mr. and Miss Roscoe and Mr. Lewellin came while we were there; he detained us to tea, and then gave us an account of his journey, which, though unattended by any remarkable incidents, was both interesting and instructive.

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I was much pleased with our bishop; he is a commanding figure in the pulpit, with a clear sonorous voice, and very graceful action. I never heard a more natural speaker. But he has other, and still greater excellencies; he is a truly godly man—a spiritually-minded man; and he equals, if he does not surpass, both in purity of doctrine and impressiveness of manner, the most distinguished of our prelates."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"It is to be regretted that our bishops don't preach as Paul and the other apostles preached—in season and out of season—anywhere and at any time; proving, by the multiplicity of their labours, that they are in earnest in their efforts to save souls from perishing."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"There is some difference between our modern Episcopal bishops and the bishops of the New Testament, though they profess to be their lineal descendants."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, the bishops of the New Testament were fishermen or tent-makers; men of a meek and lowly spirit, who coveted no man's gold or silver; they thirsted for no secular honour; in their own estimation they were less than the least of all saints; and the highest point of their ambition was to preach amongst Jews and Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, regardless of the priva-

tions and sufferings to which this exposed them. But a mitre now adorns the brow of our Episcopal bishops; there is a graceful magnificence in their appearance, and they are in general men of a lofty bearing; their superb palaces are decorated with the skilful devices of sculptors and painters; they roll in carriages, and fare sumptuously every day; they may be seen occupying their seats in the legislative council of the nation, and on days of public audience Cæsar admits them into his august presence, and his princes and nobles do not hesitate to bow down and do them homage. What a striking contrast between the primitive and our modern bishops!"

*Mr. Stevens.*—"And you may add, Sir, between the primitive church of the apostles, and our modern Episcopal Church. The latter is distinguished by its wealth and splendour, the former by its extreme simplicity and purity. The Apostolic Church was founded for the edification and safety of its members, who were an incorporation of independent freemen, to whom the right of private judgment was conceded; the Episcopal Church is an ecclesiastical institution, established for the support of an hierarchical priesthood, who, like despots, admit of no interference from the people over whom their jurisdiction extends."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I must confess that I should like to see our church brought into a nearer resemblance to the Apostolic Church of the New Testament; but still I think we may look upon it, with all its faults, as a national blessing; and if we could get the Tractarians expelled, it would stand as a mighty breakwater against the drifting currents of Popery and infidelity."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But most of our bishops have a strong bias towards Tractarianism, because it is so favourable to their spiritual despotism; it increases and consolidates their power, and under its sway the lay members of the church are reduced to a state of abject submissiveness to the priesthood, similar to the condition of the members of the Church of Rome. The inferior order of priests rule the people, and the bishops govern the priests; the laity have no voice in the appointment of any of them; and if, as is sometimes the case,



they object to their teachings as having a tendency to establish Roman Catholicism on the ruins of the Protestant faith, they can obtain no redress against such a fatal result."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"But, happily, there are exceptions to this general rule, and our bishop is a very decided one. He is a good and faithful minister of Jesus Christ, imbued with a *Pauline* spirit; and the sermon which he delivered to his clergy was both appropriate and impressive. I was quite delighted with it, and so were some of my brethren, especially our pious and intelligent lay brethren. The text was taken from Rom. xiv. 17: 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' The bearing of the discourse was to prove that the essence of religion consists in supreme love to God our Saviour, and uniform and cheerful obedience to his revealed will; and not in a mere conformity to ecclesiastical regulations, and the observance of ceremonial rites. And when addressing the clergy at the conclusion, he said, 'My beloved brethren, to whom is intrusted the ministry of reconciliation, you will not neglect to observe the rules which the church has laid down for the government of her clergy, nor omit to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, but ever keep in mind the sacred and imperative command of your Divine Lord and Master—"GO AND PREACH THE GOSPEL"—for it is the *gospel* which is the power of God to the salvation of the people. Preach it fully, clearly, and faithfully—in season and out of season—and with all the energy of your soul. Before you enter your pulpits to preach, retire to your closets to get your heart imbued with the unction of the Spirit; and when you return from your labours, withdraw to your closets to invoke the Divine Spirit to impress your message of grace and mercy on the hearts of the people. Ever remember you are in some degree responsible for their salvation.'"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Why, Sir, this was like an apostolic sermon. Did the clergy listen to it; and did they appear to like it?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir, they listened, and some of them were delighted with it; but I fear the majority thought it savoured too

strongly of the spirit of the evangelical school; they appeared rather restless."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I recently spent a few days with an old friend, when I was introduced to several Puseyite clergymen, with whom he keeps up a close intimacy. They are, in general, accomplished and intelligent, but bitter in spirit against Dissenters, and, if possible, I think more bitter against their evangelical brethren. They say the Dissenters are honest foes to the church, because they avow their hostility; but the evangelical clergy, they say, are sly, artful, and dishonest, who conform to betray—take the loaves and the fishes of the church, while they are labouring to destroy it."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"Of what practical use, Sir, is your act of uniformity? The Dissenters have no such an act in their ecclesiastical statute-book, and yet, with the exception of a few Socinians, we agree on all the essential truths of the Christian faith, and our ministers preach in each other's pulpits without making any compromise, or giving any offence; but it is not so amongst the clergy of your church, even though they are under a legal obligation to believe alike. Why, Sir, it is Jew and Samaritan dwelling together in the land of promise, still refusing to have any dealings with each other, though they avow allegiance to the same prince."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, Sir, our clergy are two distinct orders of men, subscribing to the same creed; yet the faith for which some contend, as the original faith once delivered to the saints, is disdainfully rejected by others as false doctrine."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"The evil which you, Sir, and other stanch Churchmen see and deplore, without being able to correct it, takes its rise in this plain palpable fact—the reformation from Popery in England was not a thorough reformation; it was no plucking up by the root, as in Scotland; it was mere topping and lopping work. It was more like a transfer of the Papacy, a little changed and a little modified, from the Pope to the English monarch, to answer his ambitious purpose, than a transformation of the Papal superstition into the Protestant faith of the New Testament. Why, Sir, there is very little difference

between a Tractarian clergyman and a Roman Catholic priest; they both claim the same high prerogatives, and arrogate to themselves the same submissiveness on the part of the people, restrict salvation within the pale of their own church, and assume a delegated power to discharge all the functions of their office, without any acknowledgment of their dependence on a supernatural agency. They are dogmatic, imperious, and intolerant—spiritual Ishmaelites, whose hands are against every man belonging to another order; they are, in temper and in spirit, a perfect contrast to the apostles of the New Testament, from whom they profess to derive their descent.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“Your description is strong, but, alas! it is too true. I recollect one day, when there was a large number of Tractarian clergy at my friend’s, being rather provoked by the Papal-like style of speech which prevailed amongst them, and availing myself of a favourable opportunity, I said, ‘Gentlemen, I can hardly bring my mind to believe that you are the genuine successors of the apostles, as you assume to yourselves a self-sufficient power for the performance of your duties. The apostles spoke as men who were appointed to act ministerially, always acknowledging that their success depended on the concurrence of a Divine power; and when they were successful in their great work, they offered up their thanksgiving to God, to whom they ascribed the honour of their success, viewing themselves as mere inefficient instruments.’”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“Did your remarks, Sir, elicit any reply?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“O no, Sir; I saw by their looks and their significant movements that they regarded them as beneath their notice, because they were the remarks of a layman. Infallibles will not stoop to discussion; they merely dictate like an oracle, or command like a despot.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“Yes, Sir; our clergy who advocate high church principles talk like Papal priests, and breathe the same spirit; and, unless they can be checked, they will assimilate the Church of England to the Church of Rome. Regeneration and abolition, which the sacred writers ascribe to the grace of God, they

pretend to effect by their own delegated authority and power; and, as a necessary consequence, they require the people to look to them as holding the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And some few of the order are gone so far on their way to Rome, that they require their penitents to enter the confessional and make a full confession of all their sins, before they perform the delusive act of absolution."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"One should suppose that the Papal-like extravagance of the Tractarian clergy would be so repugnant to the evangelical clergy as to keep them at an infinite distance from all adhesion to high church principles, and yet it has not this effect. They seem, with rare exceptions, as much attached to these principles as the priests are, whom they denounce as Papists in disguise. Hence they will allow no church to be a true church of Christ but the Episcopal Church of England, and no minister to be a true minister of Christ unless he has been episcopally ordained."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, I regret to say these opinions are becoming very popular, and the clergy of both orders are endeavouring to impress them on the laity, and, I fear, with some degree of success. Indeed, high church principles, which used to be confined to the studies of the clergy, or merely lurked about amongst a few grave thinkers of the monkish order, are now becoming popular; they are finding their way into the light reading of the day, in hymns, in tales, and in memoirs; the female sex is captivated by them, and they are employing their powerful influence in propagating them amongst the poor, in Sabbath-schools, in workhouses, and wherever they can track the foot-treads of a human being. The advocates of these principles are displaying an ardent and an untiring zeal, a zeal worthy of a better cause. They employ the same argument amongst all classes, and with an equal amount of success; the intelligent and the sentimental, the uneducated and the uncouth, are alike ensnared by it. Ours, they say, is the true church, which Jesus Christ has purchased by his blood; enter and keep in, and you will have nothing to fear at death or the day of judgment."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"And this belief is rising in popularity, and is be-

coming a national delusion. It is an instrument of great power in the hands of our Tractarians, as well as in the hands of the priests of Rome, and it is to the members of both churches a refuge of lies. The infatuated Tractarians reason precisely on the same data as the Papists, and arrive at the same deceptive conclusion—We are members of the true church because we are members of the Church of England, and therefore we are safe—as safe, they think, as the family of Noah in the ark when the door was shut; and no argument, however scriptural or powerful, can shake their confidence in the belief of their safety.”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“Yes; and so inveterate is this belief amongst a vast majority of the members of the Church of England, that they will resent, as a personal insult, any reference to the possibility of their labouring under a delusion. An intimate friend related to me the following anecdote, which is illustrative of the facility of self-deception when under the power of high church principles.—He had been, in the early period of his life, a gay man of fashion, but he was now become a new man in Christ Jesus; and he had been a Churchman, but he was now a Dissenter. An old friend, with whom he had lived on terms of very close intimacy when they were both gay men of the world, came to reside in his neighbourhood, and he went to see him. On his second visit he took an opportunity of referring to the progress they were both making towards old age, and to the importance of being prepared for an entrance into the eternal world. His old friend abruptly terminated the subject of reference, by saying, ‘I am not disposed, Sir, to do as you have done—change my religion. I am a member of the Church of England, as my father was before me; and I mean to live and die in her communion. I offer no opinion about what will become of schismatics; but we know that the members of the true church will be saved; and such is the Church of England.’ Yet this man very seldom went to church. He was gay in his old age—passionately fond of gay company and high living.”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“This is the common cant apology which Church-

men offer in defence of their utter neglect of the great salvation. I had formed, some short time ago, a slight commercial intimacy with a gentleman; and on one occasion I ventured to call his attention to the solemn interrogation of Jesus Christ—‘For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ (Mark viii. 36, 37). He replied, with an off-hand pleasantry, ‘I am not disposed, Sir, to change my religion.’ He knew I was a Dissenter. ‘Why, Sir,’ I remarked, ‘I did not know that you had any religion to change, for I heard you say, not long since, that you had not been inside a church for several years.’ ‘True, Sir, but I am a member of the Church of England, as my forefathers were as far back as we can trace; and I shall live and die in her communion. You know, Sir (so the apostle says), our Saviour has purchased the church, and He will not let go any part of it; and therefore I am safe. Our rector, who is a very learned man, preached a sermon on that subject the very last time I heard him; and he satisfied me that I have nothing else to do, to propitiate the Deity, than to keep within the pale of the church.’”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“Last winter I went to visit a very old woman, whose grandson is my groom; she has attended (so she told me), all her life long, the parish church in which the Rev. Mr. Cole does duty. When I asked her if she thought she was prepared for death, she replied *instantly*, ‘Yes, I be, Sir. I keeps to my church. There I was married, there I was confirmed, there I was christened, and there I had the holy sacrament many times. There my husband is buried, and my father and mother, and all the rest of them that lived before them; and there I shall be buried when I dies. I ant changed my religion, Sir. It has been in our family for upwards of a hundred years. We have all kept to our church. The Lord rest our souls.’”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“I suppose, Sir, you could not lead her into another way of thinking?”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“O no. Her unvarying note was, ‘I keeps to my

church—my blessed church.' I offered to read a chapter of the Bible, and pray with her; but she said she had taken the sacrament and made her peace with God, and did not want to be troubled with any fresh thing."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"These are most melancholy tales. Why, it appears that one great comprehensive scheme of delusion is extending its fatal influence both over the clergy and the laity of our church. One should suppose they look upon it as the very ark of God, transferred from the Levitical to the Christian dispensation. They make the church their saviour. I have recently had a most painful confirmation of this. I opened an epistolary correspondence, a few months since, with a young lady\* with whom I formed an intimacy when I was moving amidst the gay scenes of fashionable life. She is both intelligent and accomplished, and of a most amiable disposition. Having adverted to the attention I was giving to the paramount claims of religion, I very delicately urged her to consider them, as life is so uncertain; alluding, at the same time, to give force to my remarks, to the death of Miss Denham, with whom I knew she sometimes exchanged letters. The following is her reply:—"I am delighted to hear that you are becoming religious. Our Maker has enjoined it upon us. I resolved, when I had finished my education, and before I made my *debut* in fashionable life, to become decided, and settle everything connected with religion, as I knew that when I had done so I should be more at liberty to give attention to other claims, and to derive gratification from other pursuits. Indeed, I may say I acted on the old maxim, "Finish one thing before you commence another." Therefore, having perfected myself in the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, and the Catechism, I passed through our curate's examination without any difficulty; and, in the following week, I was confirmed by the Bishop of London, along with several of my school-fellows. The next Sunday I took the sacrament; and I have taken it three times since. So you see, my dear friend, I am now a member of our pure apostolic church; and I am resolved

\* Miss Rawlins, of London.

to live and die in her communion. I do not think the Almighty can require anything more than this; and I think, if we keep steady and faithful to our church, we are sure to go to heaven when we die. I advise all my young friends to follow my example; but, I am sorry to say, some are too frivolous and gay to do so. It is too grave a subject for them."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"It is appalling to listen to such tales as these; and yet we are all familiar with them. What myriads of Churchmen live, and die, and perish under this fatal delusion! What agony of surprise, what intense anguish of soul, must they feel on entering the world of spirits—on discovering the deception which has been practised on them, and which they so fondly cherished. The Papal and the Tractarian priests are the most successful agents which the devil employs to ruin souls. What terrible mental encounters will take place between them and their deluded victims when they meet each other in hell—and meet they will!"

*Miss Roscoe.*—"And how much is it to be deplored that the living victims of this popular delusion are so deeply entrenched in their superstitious belief, that the ordinary methods of conviction and recovery cannot get at them? O these priests, who are preparing their devotees for destruction! Pray, Sir," turning to the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, "what judgment do these Tractarians entertain of the Church of Scotland, which made such a noble stand for the faith against the encroachments of the Papal power?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"O, they unchurch it."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"And, of course, they are as unceremonious in their treatment of the Dissenters?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, they treat all alike, except the Papal Church, and that they admit to be a true church of Jesus Christ."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"This does not surprise me. They revere and love their parentage; this is a filial virtue. For this they are to be commended. But do they consign all to a state of future misery who do not belong to the Episcopal Church?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Why, my dear, there is a diversity of opinion



amongst them on this question. Some will take their belief to the full stretch of the tether of consistency, and, without hesitation, doom all to destruction who are not within the pale of their communion. Others are a little more charitable; they admit the bare possibility of their salvation, by assigning them over to the *uncovenanted* mercies of God."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"And pray, Sir, what do they mean by the uncovenanted mercies of God?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"They mean that God *can* save them, as he *can save an infernal spirit*; but he gives them no promise of mercy on which they can place any hope of salvation."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"What opinion, Sir, do the evangelical clergy who hold high church principles entertain on this question?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Why, all of them would rather see the people within the pale of the church than on the outside, deeming it of the two, the safest spiritual locality; yet I never knew an evangelical clergyman express a doubt about the salvation of any one who believes and trusts in Jesus Christ."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Are high church principles held by any very considerable number of the evangelical clergy?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I regret to say that, in the best and the most liberal, there is a strong leaning towards them; but the majority, I believe, are not only their decided but their zealous advocates. They know that the gospel they preach is preached with equal purity, and sometimes with greater power, in the pulpits of Dissenting churches and chapels; and hence, from motives of policy, I apprehend, they endeavour to enlist the sympathies of the lay members of the Establishment in favour of these principles, to prevent the possibility of their withdrawing from it. To what extent they succeed in imparting their spirit of exclusiveness and bigoted attachment to Episcopacy, amongst the enlightened and the pious laity, I have no means of judging; but I believe, from some few indications I have seen, that in liberality of opinion, and generous expressions of Christian feeling, these lay members of the Establish-

ment are at least half a century in advance of their clergy. They were, a few years since, equally exclusive and bigoted, but, from the concurrence of various causes, they have improved most rapidly in the cultivation of charity and brotherly kindness—the prominent graces of the Christian faith. They are acting now as pioneers in the work of church reform, though that, I fear, is a forlorn hope.”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“Then, Sir, we cannot calculate on any great accessions from the clergy of the Church of England to the cause of Christian union and fraternal fellowship, during the prevalence of these high church principles.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“A few, who are ripening more rapidly than the average of their brethren for a removal to a purer world, gladly hail and accelerate the progress and the triumph of fraternal union of all denominations amongst the people of God; but they subject themselves to much obloquy and reproach, by overstepping the broad line of ecclesiastical demarcation which is drawn by these high church principles, to prevent any intermixing of the different denominations, even in ordinary social intimacy. They are marked men; deemed by their brethren ecclesiastical renegades, who sacrifice clerical consistency to gratify their vanity.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“These high church principles, in their development and practical working, militate very strongly against the Church of England, and do more than any other cause to shake the confidence of the laity in her Divine origin; they make her more like the gaudy, intolerant, and exclusive Church of Rome, than the simple, meek, and loving church of the New Testament. She has now officiating at her altars a numerous tribe of Tractarian priests, who are subdivided into two orders—one prepared to fraternize with Papal priests, the other directly opposed to them—but both orders unite in denouncing their evangelical brethren, and with as much severity as they denounce Dissenters. The various tribes of infidelity watch the virulence and the progress of this internal contest with intense gratification, and its tendency is to increase their contempt for the Bible and Christianity. We know that the church

has in her service a comparatively small number of clergymen who preach the pure gospel of Jesus Christ; but, unhappily, with few exceptions, even these are as much opposed to Dissenters as the Tractarian clergy, and consequently it would be utopian to expect any rapid progress in the cause of Christian unity and fraternal fellowship while these high church principles continue in the ascendant. What reaction may take place on the evangelical party from the tremendous efforts of the Tractarians to assimilate the Church of England to the Church of Rome, must be left to pure conjecture, but we may hope that, in process of time, they will be brought to see and to feel that the more nearly they are conformed in spirit, in temper, and in disposition to *the* LORD OF ALL, the more brilliant will be their moral lustre, and the more powerful their ministry."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby*—"I should like to see the dove with the olive branch make its appearance, betokening the abatement of the elements of strife and contention; but I fear the day of its alighting on our altars is far distant. However, let it be our aim and our daily prayer to aid the progress of Christian union and fraternal fellowship, and then we shall have this testimony, that we please God our Saviour, and serve our generation according to his revealed will."

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## THE CHURCHMAN'S LAMENT.



HE Rev. Mr. Ingleby, when opening an evening discussion on a very important question, gave it as his opinion that the judgment which Robert Hall formed on the present aspect of the Papal movements, is perfectly correct. He says—"It is certain that the members of the Romish community are at this moment on the tiptoe of expectation, indulging the most sanguine hopes, suggested by the temper of

the times, of soon recovering all that they have lost, and of seeing the pretended rights of their church restored in their full splendour. If anything can realize such an expectation, it is undoubtedly the torpor and indifference of Protestants, combined with the incredible zeal and activity of Papists; and universal observation shows what these are capable of effecting—for often they compensate the disadvantages arising from paucity of number, as well as almost every kind of inequality.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“ If, Sir, we were merely torpid and indifferent, there would be less danger to apprehend; but the fact is, the high church principles, which are now struggling amongst us for the ascendancy, are imperceptibly and very extensively reconciling the clergy and many of the laity to the fatal errors of the Church of Rome. It is, I believe, the opinion of most who have paid much attention to the records of prophecy, that Popery, before her final overthrow and extinction, will revive from her long torpid state, will shake herself from the dust which has been accumulating around her during her slumber of inaction, and come forth with new and more vigorous life. I fear that a large number of our Episcopal clergy are preparing the way, some few openly, but the greater proportion of them secretly and slyly, for the triumphs of the Papacy in the United Kingdom, especially amongst the Churchmen of England.”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“ That the Papacy does look with a longing eye on Britain, the emporium of wealth and of the arts and the sciences, and is with Jesuitical artifice concocting schemes for its recovery to her own dominion, is now too palpable for any one to doubt; and I believe, when she does come forth in some new forms of seductive attraction, she will gain over many to her ranks, both of the clergy and the laity of your church; but her efforts to beguile and subdue Dissenters will be but the serpent biting at the file; our absolute and exclusive authority in support and defence of our belief is the Bible, and our watchword is, ‘To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them’” (Isa. viii. 20).

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"And our appeal, if we acted a consistent part as sound Protestants, would be to the same authority; but many of our clergy are not satisfied with this authority, but are for calling in the fathers, and appealing to the decisions of councils, and listening to the vague and often contradictory testimony of unauthenticated tradition. They are unsettling Protestantism by the attempts they are making in its defence."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"A high Churchman may say, and say truly, there is but a step between me and Popery. And consistency has already forced some of them to take this step; but I apprehend that many, with the Pope in their hearts, will feel more disposed to sacrifice consistency on the altar of self-interest, than publicly profess allegiance to his authority. The entreaties and the tears of a loving wife, especially when she pleads under the shade of a palace, the mitre gracing the brow of her frail lord, or when standing on the luxuriant soil of a rich benefice, will decide many a bishop, and many a prebend, and many a rector, to prefer hypocrisy to apostasy; they will content themselves by attempting to assimilate the Church of England, as nearly as possible, to the corrupt original from which she withdrew at the Reformation."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But some are so thoroughly honest, that they prefer apostasy to hypocrisy. Some, even of the evangelical clergy, are gone off to Rome, and many others, I fear, will follow them."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I have long apprehended and dreaded this, and I have made many efforts to convince my clerical brethren of the fatal tendency of their high church principles, but I have not been very successful. No mathematical demonstration appears to me clearer than this, that if the clergy will magnify the church, instead of magnifying the Saviour; if they will confine salvation within the pale of her communion, instead of proclaiming that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved; if they will maintain that no minister of the Christian faith is a true minister of Jesus Christ, unless he has received episcopal ordination from a bishop in the regular line of succession from

the apostles, they will be led, in the process of the inquiry, to see the palpable inconsistency of having a secular power as the head of the church, and then there is no alternative but to bow down and do homage to the Pope, as the spiritual head of a church founded and upheld by his spiritual authority. But so strong is the attachment they cherish to their high church principles, that some say they cannot give them up, even though such an issue should take place; and others are even sanguine in their expectations of being able to effect a junction with Rome, by inducing her to abandon some of her dogmas, and relax in some of her absolute, and what they consider unimportant regulations."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"I see dark omens in the heavens. A severe testing time is coming. I believe we have amongst us many noble spirits, who are valiant for the Protestant faith; but we have also a powerful and subtle enemy in the field, and, I fear, many treacherous men in our camp. A party of the clergy of our Protestant Church hailing with delight a union with Papal Rome! How startling and humiliating!"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Many great and good laymen amongst us see the tendency of these high church principles, and deeply deplore it, yet but few of the clergy apprehend any real, or rather any very alarming danger. Indeed, the leading men amongst them believe that these principles are the only safe barrier of defence which can be thrown around the Church of England, thus virtually admitting that she is not established by Christ's authority, nor guarded by his strong arm. I have often said to many of them, You act not only impolitically, but dangerously. You are professedly protecting your church against Dissenters, from whom you have little or nothing to fear; while by your manœuvres you are moving nearer and nearer the Romanists, who will ultimately seduce you to their fellowship, if they do not gain actual possession of your church."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, I fear that evil times are coming. Many of the best part of our clergy are tainted with the popular opinions of the worst. They do not preach like our pious forefathers, urging

the people to repent and believe in Christ. They magnify the Church of England at the perfection of ecclesiastical order and beauty, and direct their vituperations against their fellow-Protestants who differ from them on the comparatively unimportant questions of Episcopacy and Episcopal ordination. The only points of importance on which the evangelical clergy differ from their Tractarian brethren, relate to the efficacy of the sacraments."

*Mr. Stevens.*—These high church principles have always prevailed amongst some of our clergy; but they never gained such notoriety as they have recently done. They were merely an undercurrent, but now they are like the Jordan overflowing its banks. Daubeny's *Guide to the Church* made a little stir on its appearance, but it produced no ferment in the popular mind. Mant's tracts on baptismal regeneration made a more powerful impression; but it very soon subsided, and things remained as they were. But the Oxford tracts have roused the attention of Europe. They are shrewd, subtle, elegantly written papers, which, by laying hold of the imagination, easily beguile the heart; they are doing great execution amongst our sentimental half-Popish Churchmen, and especially amongst silly women: written professedly in defence of the Church of England, yet, as I once heard a Catholic priest\* say, nothing that ever issued from the press has done so much to aid the triumphs of Popery."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I have read most of these tracts, and I am fully convinced, by the arguments and reasonings of the writers, that the high church principles, which are becoming so popular amongst our clergy and some of the laity, cannot be deduced from the Bible, which contains the religion of Protestants."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"From the Bible, Sir! no; they emanate from the Prayer-book, that keepsake which Rome gave to Protestantism at the time of the Reformation, with this inscription written in hieroglyphics:—'Occupy till I come.' That book, Sir, is the cause of all

\* Rev. Mr. Logan, a priest at Oscott College, near Birmingham.

the Popery with which our church abounds. It is the destroying angel of a pure Protestant faith."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"Ay, I have often told you that you were too much attached to your Prayer-book. It is to many Churchmen not only a domestic idol, but the idol of their temple: and now you are suffering for your idolatrous attachment to a book which the Jesuitical spirit of Rome induced your Reformers to take into their worship, and indorse it as the guide of the faithful in all future ages. To that book, which you admit to be an authority, the Puseyites now appeal in support and defence of their Papal opinions and customs, preferring its authority to the authority of the Word of the Lord. They tell you, as the Papal priests tell their devotees, that the Bible is an ambiguous book; that it ought not to be put into circulation, except with notes and comments written by some of their own order; that prophets, and apostles, and Jesus Christ himself ought not to be trusted amongst the people, unless some Tractarian professor or priest go with them to give the proper interpretation to their equivocal teachings; but the PRAYER-BOOK, in their estimation, is the living oracle, the Urim and Thummim of a new theocracy, which utters the truth of inspiration in un mistakeable language."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"I went and heard the Rev. Mr. Farish, who left his curacy a few months ago, preach his farewell sermon. He knew that the clergyman who was appointed to succeed him, was one of the most rabid Puseyites that Oxford ever sent forth. At the conclusion of his discourse he said, as nearly as I can recollect, 'I have preached to you Christ and him crucified; and I have told you again and again that there is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved. I have proved from Holy Writ that salvation is of grace—free unmerited grace through faith—and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9). My successor is a clergyman of a different school, and he will, I fear, dwell more on the ceremonies of our faith than on its doctrines, and most likely he will give to the sacraments a prominence to which you have not been accustomed. But if the



gospel should be excluded from the pulpit, as I fear it will be, sorrow not, even as others who have no hope; you will hear it from the desk. The great truths of the Bible may be perverted and suppressed, but no sacrilegious hand will dare to mutilate or withhold our Prayer-book. This ever liveth, and is unchangeable amidst all the mutations of a mysterious Providence. You then, brethren, will not forget that you are Churchmen, and you will still cleave to the altar and the walls of your church; and wait till the vision returns, which for a season is about to vanish away."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I have always protested against advising people to attend their church when the gospel is banished from the pulpit, and for this reason: it is the gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation, and not the Prayer-book. And experience proves, that if there be no more gospel in a church than what the Prayer-book announces, the people show no signs of spiritual life."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"This is diverting the attention of the people from the Word of God, to the compositions of man—a most dangerous experiment, fraught with great evil."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I think so. When we go to the Bible, and take its lessons, believing what it teaches us, we are safe; but if we admit any other book to become our authoritative teacher, then we are in great danger. In that case we follow a fallible instead of an infallible guide. Hence originate the discordant opinions which are now disturbing the peace of our church."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, Sir, this is the root of the evil that exists and is spreading amongst us. I certainly admire much of our Liturgy, and think that the men who drew up some of the prayers, though not inspired, in the sense in which apostles and prophets were inspired, yet they must have been greatly assisted by the Spirit of the Lord when composing them. But many parts of the Prayer-book are very exceptionable, of which I was not conscious till lately. The fantastical exhibition of the white-robed priest in the pulpit, and wax candles burning on the altar at mid-day, or in

readiness to be lighted, have led me to examine the Prayer-book more attentively and minutely, and I must confess that the closer I study it, the lower it sinks in my esteem and confidence."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I have been attached to the church from my youth, and I am still attached to it. But my attachment is to its excellencies, not to its defects. I prefer Episcopacy to Presbyterianism, or Independency; but the exterior form of government is a matter of little moment, when compared with the essential principles of the Christian faith. Forms may change, as they have changed before, but Christianity itself undergoes no change; the new and living way of access to a reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, for all ages and all countries."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"If we could have Episcopacy thoroughly relieved from the excrescences which disfigure and defile it, and our Prayer-book thoroughly purged from all its Papal sacraments and ceremonies, we then should have, in my opinion, the faith embodied in an external form of government and ritual, as near the perfection of the New Testament as human wisdom could make it. I then should look on the Church of England as one of the purest churches of the Reformation: it then would be the temple of peace and order."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir, I should like to see this done; but alas! it is what, I fear, the present temper of the times would not tolerate—something to be desired, rather than expected—a utopian calculation—the forlorn hope of ecclesiastical reformation."

*Mr. Levellin.*—"Reform the Prayer-book! Why, Sir, to touch that antique book, grown gray in the service of the temple, and around which there is such a clustering of tender and imaginative associations—to obliterate a single sentence, or change a single custom, or new-shape a single ceremony—would be, in the estimation of the great majority of Churchmen, a crime as heinous as that of Uzzah, who laid hold of the ark of God with unclean hands; and would merit a similar doom. The proposal to do such a foul deed would disturb the peace of every parish within

the domain of Episcopacy; would raise such lamentations as have never yet been heard by the ear of living humanity; and compel many a grave old man, and many a still graver old matron, to go and mourn apart from the general community of grief. Reform the Prayer-book! that pure relic of antiquity! What wild project next? If you take my Bible, O, spare me my Prayer-book! would be the exclamation of many of the church-going people of England."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I think, with you, Sir, that the current of national prejudice in favour of the integrity of the Prayer-book is at present too strong to be resisted; and all attempts to effect any essential change in it will end in failure."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"It must be revised and reformed if we are to retain our Protestantism."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"As Protestantism and the Prayer-book have lived together in love for so many centuries, why not permit them to live on to the end? especially as this close alliance has had both the sanction and the support of the most distinguished of the evangelical clergy."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Because the Prayer-book is now putting forth that inherent Papal power which long lay dormant and unsuspected; and is doing this, not to aid the spiritual triumphs of the glorious gospel of Christ, but to sap the foundation of our Protestant faith; and thus prepare the people to hail the return of the Papacy amongst us. It is, if I may be allowed the use of such a figure, the decoy duck of Popery, which we have been carefully preserving in the ark of our faith, mistaking it for the gentle dove. Dr. Pusey, in his letter to the Bishop of London, says: 'It is more than idle to talk, as some have done, of putting down Tractarianism in order to check secession to Rome. Such might drive hundreds from the church for tens; but while that precious jewel, the Prayer-book, remains, they cannot destroy or weaken Tractarianism. Tractarianism was entirely the birth of the English Church. Its life must be consistent with the formularies with which it is embodied.'"

*Mr. Stevens.*—"But there is certainly a change coming over the

public mind respecting the Prayer-book. Some very stanch Churchmen are for driving it out of our church, as the buyers and sellers were driven out of the temple; but most are for purging it from its Papal defilements and sacraments."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"I am aware that there is a slight movement amongst a certain order of Churchmen in favour of a revision of your Prayer-book, that it may be brought into a more perfect agreement with the purity of the Christian faith; but how is it that so few of the evangelical clergy take part in the present struggle? They seem, so I judge from their inaction, as willing to let this stronghold of Popery remain unscaled, as their Tractarian opponents."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Two reasons, I think, may be assigned for their inaction, though, in my opinion, they are not very logical or powerful. They love peace and quietness, and this restrains them from taking any active part in the contest; and, in addition to this, they are somewhat apprehensive that if the secular powers interfere, they may decree a rejection of the old Prayer-book, and the construction of a new one."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I would not give my sanction to such a decree. No, Sir, we will retain our Prayer-book, but have it submitted to a very severe purifying process. There must not be, as at the Reformation, an attempt made to please both Papists and Protestants; it must be made thoroughly Protestant, as it is designed for us; and hence there must be a thorough purging out of the old leaven of Popery, and nothing retained but what is in exact harmony with the New Testament records. No rite, no ceremony, no institution, no ecclesiastical law or regulation which does not originate in Divine appointment."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"If this could be accomplished, and we could have a Prayer-book whose articles and ceremonial rites and institutes would exactly harmonize, as they ought to do, with the integrity and the purity of the New Testament, then the Church of England would become a great moral and spiritual power amongst us, justly entitled to the admiration and the homage of the British people,

whose sympathies and affections would rally so closely around her, that she need not stand in awe of the aristocracy of Popery, nor be jealous of the democracy of Dissent, nor cherish the slightest misgivings, when assailed by any class of infidels."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"I should very much like to see such a prayer-book substituted for the half-Papal and half-Protestant one which you now have; and if, Sir," addressing Mr. Roscoe, "you were nominated on a commission appointed to revise it, what suppressions and alterations would you propose?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I would begin with the Catechism."

#### THE CATECHISM.

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"A catechism should be a digest of the entire theory of Divine truth, arranged in logical and systematic order, every part should be stated in such definite and plain terms as to be easily understood, especially by the young."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But our Catechism does not answer this description. It contains no correct digest of biblical truth, nor is there any order; it is defective on some points, and on others it is erroneous—more in harmony with Papal than with Protestant belief. It begins by advancing, in a categorical form, a delusive and a most fatal error, which, as a necessary sequence, is made to run through all the prominent ceremonies of our church, placing the Tractarians on the vantage ground, who claim the honour of being more faithful expositors of our national creed than their evangelical opponents. In reply to the question about who gave the catechumen his name, he is taught to say, 'My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.'"

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"These ecclesiastical officials can put in no claim to a Divine origin or sanction; there is no allusion to godfathers or godmothers in the Bible; they are an importation from Rome; and I think it will be more to your honour to send them back, than retain them in your service."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"What follows is equally, if not more objectionable:—  
 'Question.—What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you? Answer.—They did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life.' Thus the Church of England initiates the rising generation into the belief of positive and dangerous error;\* substitutes absolute falsehood for Scripture truth, as no such moral wonders† are performed when the rite of baptism is administered."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"How any intelligent Protestant, with the fear of God before his eyes, can conscientiously take upon himself such a vow, that a child, who is born in sin and shapen in iniquity, shall renounce all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and walk in God's commandments all the days of his life, is to me inexplicable, unless he looks upon the ceremony of baptism as a mere farce, and his vow an idle, unmeaning utterance. However, one thing is certain; they find it more easy to make the vow than to keep it; as the children of the church turn out as gay, and dissipated, and sceptical, as those who never had such a vow made in their behalf."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I can offer no arguments in defence of the appointment of godfathers and godmothers; they certainly have no New Testament origin or sanction. And if I were left to my own choice, I would rather forego administering the rite of baptism to infants, than I would tolerate such vows, when those who make

\* See page 320.

† The writer of this article, in the year 1843, met a physician in Bath, and in the same year he met a solicitor in Banbury, who for many years ranked as members of the Church of England; but on examining the baptismal service in conjunction with this part of the Catechism, they felt such a strong repugnance against having their children baptized according to the prescribed formula, that they both preferred becoming Dissenters, rather than give their sanction to what they conscientiously believed to be a sinful, because antisciptural ceremony, more fit for a Papal than a Protestant church.

them, and those who hear them made, very well know that they have no power to redeem them."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"As no human being can persuade or coerce another to do these deeds of renunciation and submission, we must look upon the whole ceremony as a purely Papal invention, admitted most censurably within the pale of our church, and incorporated with her system of ceremonial discipline and order. Hence I presume, Sir, you would very willingly have these parts of our Catechism expunged?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Indeed, Sir, I should, and so would my evangelical brethren. It is a sad evil which we groan under."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"The Tractarian clergy, in common with the Papal priests, are resolute in their adherence to this baptismal ceremony and its catechetical adjuncts; and they denounce their evangelical opponents as unfit to officiate in the church, because they impeach her authority to originate ecclesiastical ceremonies which have no sanction from the New Testament. From these data I draw the following conclusion:—the evangelical clergy are the most consistent scripturalists, but the Tractarian are the most consistent Churchmen; and while the former do homage to Divine authority, the latter prefer rendering allegiance to human."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Your conclusion, Sir, is just; but it is a most mortifying one, and I think we should do all in our power to get a Catechism more in harmony with the New Testament and the Protestant faith."

#### THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE.

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"It is maintained by many, that the rite of confirmation which is administered by our bishops is a continuation of apostolic practice, recorded in the Acts; but I prefer the judgment which our own distinguished commentator, the Rev. T. Scott, has given on this subject:—'The rite of confirmation, as practised by many Christian churches, has often been, and still is, spoken of as a continuation of the apostolical imposition of hands for the confirmation of new converts, by the Holy Spirit

thus given to them. But it is far from evident that this was done universally by the apostles, or by those who immediately succeeded them. As, however, *miraculous powers*, rather than *sanctifying grace*, were thus conferred, unless miraculous powers were now connected with that rite, the parallel must wholly fail.\* How far something of this kind, properly regulated and conducted, may be rendered subservient to the edification of young persons descended from pious parents, and baptized when infants, is another question; but to advance this observance into a *sacrament*, and even above a sacrament (as it certainly is advanced when the *Holy Spirit is supposed to be conferred by imposition of hands*, and by using words in prayer like those of Peter and of John), puts the subject in a very different light. Doubtless it was at first thus magnified in order to *exalt the Episcopal order*, to whom the administration of it was confined, as if they were intrusted with apostolic authority; but as *miracles* are out of the question, so to follow the apostles in faith,

\* "After the intelligent reader has carefully examined the following references—Acts viii. 5-15; xix. 1-6—then let him look at a Puseyite confirmation, and I think the contrast cannot fail to strike his attention.

"We have seen what took place in the days of the apostles, let us next see what takes place at a Puseyite confirmation. The unconscious infants of a nation are baptized; by such baptism they are professedly regenerated; they are made children of God, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. At this ordinance there are godfathers and godmothers undertaking solemn responsibilities; these parties are required to be present to witness the confirmation, and are taught to regard it as a loosening of them from their sacred bonds.

"Now, we ask the Episcopal expositors to tell us where we are to look for godfathers or godmothers at the baptisms mentioned in the Acts? Where is the doctrine of the *regeneration* of baptized infants in the Acts? Where is the doctrine of a Divine life begun in baptism and perfected in confirmation? What are the proofs of such regeneration as a qualification for confirmation? The only qualification prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer for confirmation by the bishop, is ability to repeat the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Catechism. Of repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ there is not a word. Here, then, we have a generation of young persons on whom Episcopal hands are laid, and who are taught to believe that, in consequence of this act, they have received an influx of spiritual grace, implanting new, and invigorating old spiritual principles, and raising them at once to the stature of Christian manhood. Was there ever such delusion! How long will men of sense in the Established Church endure it!"—*Dr. Campbell.*



humility, diligence in preaching in season and out of season, in piety, and self-denial, is the only scriptural mode of magnifying either the Episcopal or the clerical office. Assuredly as this matter (namely, the confirmation service) is very often conducted, it must be allowed to be *an evil; and it ought either to be attended to in another manner, or not at all.* Change it, or abolish it."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"I met the other day, in my casual reading, with an honest confession from a leading Tractarian: 'It is true, the actual word confirmation does not occur in the Bible *in that sense in which we are now using it,*' which is a plain admission that the rite, as administered by our bishops, differs from that act of confirmation which the apostles performed. They confirmed believers who were members of the church; that is, strengthened their faith, by renewed evidences of its Divine origin, urging them at the same time to continue in it, notwithstanding the persecutions they might be exposed to, and on some occasions they conferred the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; but our modern bishops administer the ceremony to young people who make no decided profession of personal piety, and the observance of this ceremony, and not their piety, is the ecclesiastical qualification for membership with the church over which their jurisdiction extends."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"It appears to me, after a close investigation of the subject, that confirmation, as administered by our bishops, is based on the fatal error of baptismal regeneration, and is a necessary sequence to it. Two objects are accomplished by it. In the first place, it is a release to godfathers and godmothers from the heavy responsibilities they took upon themselves, when they gave the vow at the baptismal font that their godchild should renounce all the sinful lusts of the flesh, &c.; and, in the second place, the confirmed person becomes legally entitled to all the privileges and immunities which the Church of England guarantees to her members; and, at the same time, 'confirms and perfects,' as Dr. Hook says, 'that which the grace of God's most Holy Spirit has already begun in baptism.' Hence the prayer which the bishop offers up before he administers

the rite, is in exact agreement with this statement:—‘ Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them the forgiveness of all their sins, strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen.’ After this prayer, then, follows the effective act of confirmation; the bishop lays his hand on the head of every one kneeling before him, repeating a short prayer; and it is by this imposition of hands and prayer that the grace is conveyed which nourishes and strengthens the inner spiritual life, which was infused at the baptismal font; or, to quote what Dr. Hook says, ‘ it is to perfect that which the grace of God’s most Holy Spirit has already begun in baptism.’ ”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“ This certainly is a very ingenious arrangement, to show out to public notice the importance of a duly authorized priesthood, on whose official actions the spiritual life and safety of Churchmen and their children are made to depend; but it is ingenuity at the expense of truth and common sense. In the prayer which precedes the ceremony of confirmation, the bishop asserts what is not true—children are not regenerated at the font of baptism; and yet it is asserted that they are. He does not pray that God would be pleased to forgive them their sins; he merely tells God that he has done it; and thus they are confirmed in the belief of a most fatal delusion—a positive falsehood.”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“ Unquestionably; every person who is confirmed, if he have any faith in the integrity of the bishop, when engaged in this act of public devotion, must believe two things; indeed, he is compelled to believe them, unless he impeaches the piety of the bishop: he must believe that he is regenerated, and consequently needs no spiritual change of heart and mind; and he must believe that all his past sins are forgiven, which renders it unnecessary for

him to pray for mercy on account of any bygone acts of delinquency or impiety. What a delusion!—a fatal delusion!”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“That no such moral effects result from this act of confirmation, is very painfully demonstrated by the scenes which often follow its performance. I went some time since, at the request of a friend who, like myself, still cleaves to the church, while he loathes many of her Papal ceremonies, to witness a confirmation, and what immediately followed. Some on leaving the church appeared to be seriously impressed; but the majority were as mirthful as if returning from a fair; many resorted to the public-houses, and in the evening they were seen reeling home in a state of intoxication; and I afterwards heard of some who fell into grosser crimes.”\*

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“There is no denying the fact, that what often follows a confirmation service is most revolting to Christian feeling; tending to bring its administration into popular disrepute. Hence, I can subscribe to the truth of a statement, and an accompanying opinion, given by a clergyman of high distinction, in his reply to some official interrogations. ‘I do not pretend to know,’ he says, ‘what may have been the effect of confirmation in former times, but I have witnessed enough in our day to make me wish to see it abolished. In some persons it creates a superstitious trust in the efficacy of the mere ceremony; to others it is a grand festival, a time to see and be seen; and too frequently ending in folly, drunkenness, and every kind of vice. I have heard more than one reclaimed drunkard, in giving an account of himself, date his first act of intemperance, or first intoxication, to the day of his confirmation; and on these accounts it is, to many, a subject of ridicule and contempt, bringing discredit upon our holy religion. . . . For more than ten years my own desire has been, that in any measure of church reform that may be adopted, the *ceremony* of confirmation may be entirely left out.’”

\* The writer of this paper once heard a young man say, when reeling out of a public-house, “Well, as I have the old score wiped away to-day by the bishop himself, I can afford to run up another short one.”

## THE ORDINATION SERVICE.

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I was not aware, till very recently, that the ordination service is so very objectionable in many of its parts, especially to any one who is jealous of the Divine honour. When a person presents himself to be admitted to the order of priesthood in our church (and it matters not whether he be a gay man of fashion or a devout servant of God), after replying to certain questions proposed to him, and giving certain assurances, he is then required to kneel in the presence of the bishop, who thus speaks in a tone of authority, as though he had all power in heaven and on earth:—"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and his holy sacraments, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Does it not savour of blasphemy to concede to any man an authority to forgive sins?"

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"I think it does, Sir, and very strongly. And are you aware that the priests of the Church of England are invested with a much higher degree of authority in this matter than any of the priesthood of the Papal Church of Rome?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Not with a higher degree of authority! That I think is impossible."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"Indeed, Sir, they are. Their delegated power is made absolute, and it is unlimited; but the power of the Papal priesthood is placed under very stringent restrictions. Thus, when the Papal priest puts into requisition the exercise of his ghostly power, in the remission of the sins of the dying Catholic, the bye-laws of his church make a distinction, *and for very lucrative reasons*, between venial and mortal sins; he is authorized to remit venial sins, but he is powerless to remit mortal sin; and hence his form of absolution runs as follows: '*And by virtue of authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and*

*the Holy Ghost.*' The Episcopal Protestants' form of absolution runs thus: 'And by His authority, committed unto me, I absolve thee from ALL thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' The Papal priest remits *some sins*; the Protestant priest absolves from *all sins*; the Roman Catholic, after his priest has absolved him, has to go and live for a season amidst purgatorial fires; but as Protestantism has no purgatory, her devotee passes at once, according to this Episcopal legend, into the kingdom of heaven, after her priest has exercised his absolving power. The priest, then, according to this absolution ceremony, saves from hell, and gives a passport to heaven, by virtue of the delegated authority he received from the bishop who ordained him."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"This, certainly, is a too glaring usurpation of the Divine prerogative of mercy on the part of the priesthood, to be tolerated, especially by us Protestants. Away with it from our Prayer-book, and send it back to Papal Rome, from whence it came. It is both a sin and a disgrace to a Protestant community to tolerate amongst them such a close conformity to the blasphemous usurpations of the Papal Church."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I thought but little about it when I was ordained, but I have thought much since, and I must admit that it is most objectionable, so much so that I have made up my mind never to attend another ordination service. The bishop assumes and professes to convey a power which does not belong to man, and with which man ought never to be intrusted."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"To invest a man with such power has a most dangerous and servile tendency. If a priest really believes, as many of them do, both Papal and Protestant, that he is actually endowed with the authority which the bishop professes to delegate to him at his ordination, must he not look upon himself as a great being, entitled to great homage, having a disposing power over the final destiny of the human spirit? will he not move about amongst his parishioners as a demi-god in the human form?—whom he wills, he pardons and saves, and whom he wills, he allows to perish. And if

he makes the people believe this, as the clergy are now attempting to do, will they not stand more in awe of him, whom they see and hear, than they do of God, who is invisible?"

#### THE BURIAL SERVICE.

*Mr. Stevens.*—"I think some parts of this service require revision, though, as a whole, I rather like it."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"As a service to be read at the interment of a devout man, a believer in Jesus Christ, it is very appropriate; but it must be a very painful infliction on a truly pious and conscientious clergyman, to read the service at the interment of a very wicked person."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir, it is indeed; and I make it a rule to vary the forms of expression when I have such an office to perform on such an occasion."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, Sir, I am aware you do; and though it is, I believe, a trespass on the sanctity of canon law, yet I think no conscientious person will blame you."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"On one occasion, some years since, when I made this variation, a complaint was lodged against me by the relatives of the deceased for so doing. The bishop sent for me; and when I told him that the deceased was a very impure man, an avowed sceptic, and one who died in the act of sinning against God, his lordship said, 'I do not wonder at your scruples. I cannot blame you.' The service is often most painfully trying to a conscientious clergyman, not only on his own account, but on account of the wrong impressions it often makes on those who attend at the funeral. We know that *last* impressions, like first impressions, are often very powerful; they linger long on the heart and on the imagination; and hence, when the survivors of a wicked man hear a clergyman thanking God for taking the soul of the departed one to himself, they very naturally withdraw from the scene of death, under a firm belief that, however profligate he may have been in his life, and however agonizing his dying mental pangs, he is just as well off in the eternal world as he would be if he had lived a religious or virtuous life."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"It appears, from the tone and style of your Prayer-book, that the persons, when receiving the mysterious efficacy of your sacraments, are just as passive, in one sense, as a piece of marble is under the chisel of the sculptor. They stand still, as the block of marble stands still, doing nothing; they may be dozing. The clergy, like the sculptor, do all that is to be done, and the sacraments they administer are to take effect on these passive beings by virtue of their inherent power, when properly administered by a bishop, or a priest who has received Episcopal ordination from a bishop, who is in the regular line of succession from the apostles. Now this Tractarian theory is in direct contradiction to the Word of God, which makes it obligatory on every sinner to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling; to believe and to trust in Christ that he may be saved; to receive the truth in the love of it, which is to effect his spiritual freedom; to yield himself to God as made alive from the dead; to purify himself, and to walk in newness of life; and even the first great action of Divine grace, in his renewal and renovation, is *making him willing to do* what is essential for his present happiness and safety, and his final salvation. Thus, according to the Scripture theory, the sacraments have no self-acting power, nor have the agents who administer them any self-sufficient power; the regenerating and sanctifying power is in the Lord alone, and to him, and him alone, is a sinner indebted for his salvation, which is an act of sovereign and unmerited grace." See Ephes. ii. 8, 9, 10.

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I deeply regret that we have in our Prayer-book so many objectionable services and ceremonies, and more especially as they bring us into so close a conformity with the Papal Church of Rome. Any impartial person, who looks at the two churches through the medium of these prominent services and ceremonies, would pronounce us twin sisters, or ours a daughter bearing a very strong resemblance to her mother; and it is only by turning to our articles that we can point out any essential difference between them. Our articles are Protestant and scriptural; our ceremonies are derived from the Papacy, and are antisciptural.

Hence we account for the existence of the two orders of clergy who officiate at our altars—the evangelical and the Tractarian. We are a kingdom divided against itself, and what the final issue of the contest will be no human foresight can decide. You are for reforming the Prayer-book by expunging that which savours so strongly of the Papacy; and if this could be done, then Tractarianism would disappear from amongst us, and we should hold the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace. But who will undertake this herculean labour? Will our clergy? They have no power, even if they had an inclination. Will our bishops? No. They have gained the prize, and are contented; they live in affluence and in ease, and care but little about the strife and contentions which prevail amongst their subordinates, with whom they hold but a very formal and distant intercourse. The laity, at least the more enlightened, and the pious, I know, are restless for a change; but I see not how any change can be effected unless there be a breaking up of the Establishment, for it to undergo a remodelling; and if such a great crisis as this should come, there is no conjecturing, from the present aspect of the times, whether the Prayer-book would receive a more scriptural or a more Papal cast and complexion. We ought not to forget that it is the civil power which appoints our bishops, sits in judgment on the conflicting opinions which divide the clergy, and rules the destiny of our church; and we know, from very painful experience, that the civil power, whether embodied in a Whig or a Tory administration, has uniformly evinced a stronger liking for ceremonial pomp and display, than for the beautiful simplicity of the church of the New Testament. Hence, I believe that reformation is hopeless, as Cæsar disdains to admit the supremacy of Jesus of Nazareth.”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“That, Sir, is my decided opinion.”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“I am not sanguine in my hopes. The buyers and sellers are again in the temple, but the Son of God is not now in the form of the Son of man, or they would soon be driven out.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“Then, Sir, Tractarianism will spread more widely



and rapidly amongst us, and if an open and a positive junction be not formed between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, there will be a tacit one; and the reign of ecclesiastical delusion and despotism will be established in Britain; and the English, like the Irish and the Italians, will be, at least to a certain extent, a priest-ridden people."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"You should all do as I have done, and then you may breathe freely and without fear, and laugh to scorn all attempts, open or insidious, to beguile you to Rome. Our principles render us invulnerable; yours, constitute your danger."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"Mr. Lewellin means we should all turn Dissenters, and acknowledge no legislative dictation or authority in matters of religion but that of the New Testament."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"You have often rallied me on my Dissenting principles, but the time is fast coming when the problem will be solved, that dissent from human authority in matters of the Christian faith is the only invincible barrier against the encroachments of the Papal power."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I have no desire to forsake the church of my fathers—the church of my early and long-cherished veneration and attachment—but I will not remain in her communion if she form an alliance with Papal Rome, or become semi-Papal herself. No! I am a Protestant Christian, which is another designation for a Bible Christian; the Bible is my infallible rule, which forbids absolute yielding and subserviency to any human authority; and if Protestantism be driven from the Church of England, or if she gives that submission to priestly dictation which should be given exclusively to the Word of the Lord, I will immediately leave her, as I would leave my own mansion if I felt its foundation giving way, preferring the woodside cottage as more safe, though less elegant and imposing."

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## RIGHT AT LAST.

“**I** HOPE, Sir,” said the venerable Mr. Ingleby to Mr. Roscoe, “you were gratified by your late visit to your brother, now, I trust, your son in the faith?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“I was more than gratified; I was both astonished and delighted. There is a marvellous change in him, in his spirit and habits, as well as in his theological opinions and style of preaching. He stands in the centre of a large circle of his clerical brethren, a living monument to the honour of the enlightening and renewing grace of God.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“All such changes are both marvellous and natural. The unrenewed part of the community, both the clergy and the laity, look at them with some degree of amazement, regarding them as strange and mystical phenomena; but we know that they are the moral workmanship of the Spirit of God. They are also living evidences of the Divine origin of Christianity, bearing the same relation to it now, as the miracles of healing did on its first promulgation. Their production requires a power which is extrahuman; but, notwithstanding this self-evident fact, different persons will attribute them to very different causes, as they did the undisputed miracles wrought by Jesus Christ. Some of the Pharisees asserted that he performed them by a power derived from the devil; others said, can a devil open the eyes of the blind? thus implying the absolute impossibility of his doing such a benevolent action. The same difference of opinion prevails amongst men, when they try to account for these moral miracles. Some refer them to an undefined fanaticism, or to a love of singularity, or to the power of persuasion, or to the imbecility or partial derangement of the intellectual faculty; and others ascribe them to the direct agency of the Spirit of God, which, certainly, is assigning an adequate cause, and the ONLY *adequate cause* for their existence.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Surely no one who knew my brother before his conversion, will accuse him of fanaticism, for a more doggedly stern advocate in behalf of Tractarianism never undertook its defence and support; and no one, I think, will venture to say that his intellect has passed under an eclipse since his conversion. No, Sir; such references would entail discredit on any one who would make them. All must admit that he himself is competent to give evidence on the fact and the cause of it; and he uniformly says, *By the grace of God I am what I am.*"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"As you refer to his style of preaching, I presume he has resumed his pulpit labours?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, Sir, he has; and if my eyes had been closed, and I had not known that he was in the pulpit, I should have thought that I was listening to a preacher I had never heard before. Formerly he was rather heavy, and there was a harsh monotonous tone in his delivery—but now he speaks with great ease and fluency, and with a pathetic earnestness which at times is thrilling. I have seen some of his hearers affected to tears, who used to sit as unmoved as stones. I was present when he delivered his first sermon, after several months' absence from the pulpit; and as he had given notice that he should assign the reasons which induced him to renounce the Tractarian heresy and adopt the Evangelical faith, there was an overflowing congregation. His text was a very appropriate one; it was taken from 2 Tim. iii. 5: '*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.*' From these words of Paul he raised the following proposition, which he argued with great accuracy and telling force:—'We should hold no Christian fellowship with any order of ministers who unduly magnify the form and ceremonies of Christianity, and who, either actually or virtually, depreciate its doctrines and its precepts.'

"He concluded his discourse as follows:—'My dearly beloved brethren, I have been labouring amongst you many years, but I now publicly confess, with shame and confusion of face, that I have been misleading you on the great question of your personal

salvation, simply because I have been living under the power of self-delusion—advocating the form of godliness, while denying its power. Like the priests of Rome, and like too many, alas! of our own church, I have been teaching you to look for peace of mind and for the hope of salvation to the efficacy of your baptism, to the eucharist, and to priestly absolution; but, thanks to the Divine Spirit, I now perceive that these are refuges of lies—the inventions of a crafty and self-deluded priesthood—the fatal quicksand of superstition, on which the people are perishing in their sins, and are lost for ever. I now renounce these Christ-dishonouring heresies, as opposed to the spirit and the letter of the Bible, and embrace the truth which is embodied in the simple and concise reply which the apostle Peter made to the members of the Jewish council: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 12). In future, both by myself and my excellent curate, the regenerating power of the Spirit of God will be substituted for the regenerating power of water-baptism, and your faith will be directed to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, rather than to the officiating priest when exercising his absolving power.

“I fear that many of my parishioners have passed into the eternal world under the influence of self-delusion, during the long period in which I have been self-deceived; and this is to me a source of bitter and agonizing sorrow. But, brethren, I have now resolved, in the strength of the Lord, that none of the living shall perish from the same cause, as, from this time forth, it is my intention to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ—proclaiming him, in all my ministrations, as an ever-living Saviour, able and willing to save even the chief of sinners.

“Christianity has been designated an experimental science, that is, a science which may be submitted to the test of experience; and to the truthfulness of this designation I can now bear my testimony. The change which has taken place in my belief has been preceded by a change of heart. While living under the fatal delusions of

Tractarianism, the Bible was to me a book of mysteries, but now it is intelligible—it is the book of the heart. I now know what it is to be born of the Spirit, to believe and trust in Christ, to love and adore him, and also what it is to have joy and peace in believing; and it is my earnest prayer that you, my beloved brethren, may be made partakers of like precious faith, that we may live and rejoice together in hope of the glory to be revealed in us when our spiritual warfare is accomplished, and we are for ever at rest. In conclusion, I would make the same request of you, which the apostle made of the church of the Thessalonians: “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you” (2 Thess. iii. 1).”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“How do the people appear to like this new style of preaching?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“Some are violently opposed to it, others express no decided opinion, but I think the majority are pleased with it. The Curate informed me that he has conversed with a few who have recently felt the gospel to be the power of God to their salvation; and, to aid their spiritual progress, a weekly prayer-meeting is established, where I heard two laymen pray with great simplicity and earnestness; and after the devotional part of the service was concluded, the Curate delivered a short and an appropriate address, which appeared to make a deep impression on this select audience. He and my brother are very active, labouring in season and out of season; they go from house to house, distributing tracts amongst the people, conversing and praying with them; and, in addition to this, they are training a lay agency to pay domiciliary visits to the farm-houses and cottages that are scattered over the hamlet.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“That’s one of the most useful plans which a clergyman can adopt to extend his usefulness amongst the more ignorant and debased of his parishioners, who will not come to church unless some influence be employed to induce them. I recollect a decent woman, the wife of a very rude and profane forester, was persuaded, by one of my pious members, to come to church, soon

after I was inducted to the living; and it pleased God to convert her, which so greatly enraged her husband, that he threatened to kill her if she did not leave off coming; but she braved all his menaces, and has been ever since one of my most constant hearers. Happening one day to be near his cottage, I ventured to make a call; he was eating his dinner; and as I passed him to take a seat in the chimney-corner, he cast a sullen look at me, but spoke not a word. After a few common-place observations, I referred in terms of commendation to a fine plantation of fir and beech trees which I had been admiring, and to the neatness of the quickset hedge which encircled it, which so much gratified him that his dogged sternness of look and manner relaxed into free and easy good humour, and he became quite chatty, and asked me if I would take a glass of ale. I thanked him for his hospitality, but said I preferred water to any other beverage. He rose, took a jug from the dresser, and stepped out as nimbly as he would step to wait on his master; his wife expressing her astonishment at what she heard and saw. 'There, and please your reverence, is a glass of pure spring water, as clear as crystal, and about as cold as ice.' I sat some time longer, and having accomplished my object by talking him into a good humour, I arose to depart, shook hands with him, and left him, and I had the pleasure of seeing him at church on the following Sabbath morning; he is now one of the most pious, and, I may add, one of the most polite members of my spiritual cure. We should imitate the example of Jesus Christ, who came to *seek*, as well as to save them that are lost."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"I know him quite well. When riding by his cottage last autumn, my horse plunged, and threw me, but providentially there was no accident beyond the bursting of the girths of my saddle, which he repaired with the dexterity of a proficient. Had I been a duchess, and had he been a young nobleman, I am sure more promptness and delicate kindness could not have been shown me; and his wife was equally attentive and obliging. This occurrence has led to a little intimacy, and I have since spent some happy

moments in his cottage; and I have seen the big tear fall on his sun-burned face when we have been talking of the love of Christ. He is more like the gentle lamb than the savage bear. He is fond of reading; and, in addition to some historical works, and books on horticulture, he has a copy of Henry's *Commentary on the Bible*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, Scott's *Force of Truth*, Andrew Fuller's *Gospel its own Witness*, and John Newton's Works. I don't think any infidel would venture an attack on his faith."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I suppose, Sir, you heard the Curate preach?"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yes, several times. He has a sonorous and clear voice, and his action when in the pulpit is good, because natural; he excels most ministers I have heard in the ease and facility of his style of address; he narrates an anecdote with great skill and force of impression; his appeals to the conscience are very close and searching; he dwells much on the love and compassion of Jesus Christ for sinners ready to perish, and on his ability and willingness to save them; but it is when he is warning them to flee from the wrath to come—and sketching the dying of an impenitent sinner, and his passing alone into the eternal world, to endure the anguish and self-reproach which are consequent on being lost and *doomed for ever*—that he evinces the most feeling, and discovers the extent of his mental resources to supply him with novel imagery of illustration, and terms of alarm and vivid description. Then it is that the eyes of all the people are fastened on him; and at times they seem to be awe-struck."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"The introduction of the gospel of the grace of God into a parish, which has been long sitting in spiritual darkness, is an event of immense importance; it is the beginning of a new epoch in its history; it is the depositing of the mystic leaven amongst the people, which effects wonderful changes and transformations in their souls and social habits. I can supply out of my own parish examples illustrative and confirmatory of what John Foster says in his *Treatise on Popular Ignorance*. 'We cannot,' he remarks, 'close this subject without adverting to a phenomenon as admirable as, unhappily, it is rare, and for which the observers may, if they

choose, go round the whole circle of their philosophy, and begin again, to find any adequate cause other than the most immediate agency of the Almighty Spirit. Here and there an instance occurs, to the delight of the Christian philanthropist, of a person brought up in utter ignorance and barbarian rudeness, and so continuing till late—sometimes very late in life—and then at last, after such a length of time and habit has completed its petrifying effect, suddenly seized upon by a mysterious power, and taken with an irresistible force out of the dark hold in which the spirit has lain imprisoned and torpid, into the sphere of thought and feeling.

“We have known instances in which the change, the intellectual change, has been so conspicuous within a brief space of time, that an infidel observer must have forfeited all claim to be esteemed even a man of sense, if he would not acknowledge—This that you call Divine grace, whatever it may really be, is the strongest awakener of the faculties after all. And, to a devout man, it is a spectacle of most enchanting beauty, thus to see the immortal plant, which has been under a malignant blast while sixty or seventy years have passed over it, coming out at length in the bloom of life.”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“Yes, and we are all living witnesses of the amazing efficacy of Divine grace in effecting our spiritual transformation, which, like that of the apostle Paul, has been produced in us without any efforts of our own, or any anticipation of such an unlikely thing being done. That it is a reality we cannot doubt, because, in addition to the evidence arising from our consciousness, we have the evidence of our senses. Now, suppose by an action of our imagination we step back a few years in our moral history, and re-assume our original characters, what a contrast should we, in that case, exhibit to our present selves! You, Sir, and your brother would move amongst us as two haughty Tractarians, magnifying the form and ceremonies of Christianity, and depreciating its doctrines and precepts. Mrs. Roscoe would be a stereotyped formalist, sitting in her easy-chair, with her week’s preparation before her on her card-table, looking forward with some undefined emotions of superstitious rever-



ence to the sacrament Sunday. Miss Roscoe would be moving, the principal figure in a ball-room, exciting the envy or the jealousy of her gay associates. My uncle and aunt would be living at Fairmount, the chief priest and priestess in the temple of fashion; routs, and dances, and gala nights—coursing-matches, and the prosecution of poachers, and the gains and the losses of the turf, supplying the poor rustics with topics for their table-talk. And, as for myself, I should be prowling about the streets and resorts of London, with some profane sceptics or accomplished gamblers, humming, in an under-tone of grave or jocular levity—*‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.’* This is a sketch of what we should have been at this moment if Divine grace had not come to impress on us another likeness, and infuse within us another spirit. These moral changes in us are not shams and delusions, but positive realities.”

*Mrs. Roscoe.*—“I should not like to become my former self again, without religious thought, and without any religious emotions. I lived without reflection or anticipation; and when any particular circumstances compelled me to advert to the certainty of my death, I felt an awful recoiling of spirit against it.”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“If our conversation were overheard by some of our fashionable Christians, how strange would it appear to them! They would imagine, if they did not know us, that we were a set of incurables; and if they actually knew us, they would speak of us as a group of fanatics.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“This reminds me of an admirable discourse I heard my brother’s Curate preach on the words of the apostle John: ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is’ (1 John iii. 2). ‘You are now living,’ he said, when addressing the pious part of his audience, ‘in a world of sin and sorrow; and you are living in disguise, and are not known to the persons amongst whom you live, and with whom you are engaged in the commerce of life. They may know your person, your name, your residence, your relative

connections, and your distinctive religious denomination, but they have no knowledge, or even conception, of your elevated rank in relation to the wondrous beings of the great unknown world. This should neither astonish nor mortify you; for when Jesus Christ sojourned on earth, even though he was the brightness of his Father's glory—even though stormy winds and raging waves, disease, and death, and infernal spirits acknowledged the absolute supremacy of his dominion over them—yet the men of the world knew him not. They knew him as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of the carpenter; they knew him as a madman, an impostor, and a blasphemer; but they knew him not as the Son of God in the human form, come to seek and to save them that are lost. If, then, they knew HIM not who presented such luminous signs of his celestial dignity and glory, how can you expect the world ever to look on you as the sons of God, living through the period of your minority in disguise, soon to have your relative dignity chronicled in the records of immortality?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"That passage proves that our identity is preserved amidst all the changes we have undergone, or may yet undergo—identically the same persons after our conversion as we were before our conversion, though vastly different; and, in a glorified state, we shall be identically the same persons we are now, but then we shall be made exactly like the Son of God. Our Lord, when administering consolation to Martha of Bethany, said: 'And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?' (John xi. 26). There is nothing in this passage which requires its restriction to the singular occasion of its utterance; it announces an absolute fact, universally applicable to our Lord's disciples. There may be a momentary suspension of life, attended by a sudden yet momentary collapse of the self-conscious faculty, when the great spirit is in the act of removing from her material tabernacle, to enter the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: but it is only the suspension, it is not the extinction of life; and the self-conscious faculty will soon awake, and bear an undisputed testimony

to the personal identity of the soul. Yes, and there is to me a sublime and thrilling interest in the belief, that I shall be myself again when I awake in the Divine likeness, with my own intellect, with my own imagination, with my own heart, and with my own memory laden with its varied accumulations—identically the same person, yet transformed into a pure and spotless being—and that, after the lapse of millions of ages, I shall be identically the same being I am now; the same being I was in the days of childhood and of youth, of early and of later manhood; the same as I was when living amidst the attractions of home and the charms of more extended social intimacies; the same as when I was enduring the privations and sorrows of earth, encountering its conflicts and its trials; and the same as when I stood trembling on the narrow isthmus of time, fearing to slip the cable of life, and launch into eternity.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“But while identity is preserved, we shall exist in some new form, as we shall then be disembodied; shall *see* ourselves and each other; and be endowed also with some new faculties to fit us for our high destiny, its felicities and employments.”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“We shall, undoubtedly, be as fitted to engage in all the exercises of the celestial world, and to intermingle, with graceful ease, in all its varied associations and enjoyments, as we should be if we had sprung up into being there, like the angels of God. But yet I do not think it necessarily follows that we shall have any new mental faculties communicated to us; the faculties which we shall then require may even now be lying dormant in the soul, waiting merely for the act of disembodiment to come forth in full development and activity.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“That’s an idea I have long entertained, for experience proves that the spirit of man, even now, when it makes its escape from the control of the senses, as in dreaming, does occasionally give palpable indications of the possession of faculties far more active and vigorous than is ordinarily displayed when under their dominion; doing, in fact, when asleep, what cannot be done

when awake. I know an intelligent man, on whose testimony I can place absolute dependence, who has told me more than once, that though unable, when awake, to construct a stanza, yet, after reading Milton, or Thomson, or Pope, he has when asleep composed poetical pieces with great ease and rapidity. And I am quite sure that many of the sermons I have preached when asleep have far surpassed anything I could produce when awake. These facts, and I could increase their number, are to me satisfactory indications that there are latent faculties in embryo, lying dormant in the wondrous spirit of man, which, when fully developed and brought into action (as they will be when the spirit is disembodied), will be found admirably adapted to the exercises of our future economy of existence. Without requiring any new mental creation, we shall feel as much at ease and at home in heaven as though we had never lived elsewhere."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Does the apostle, by this expression, '*When he shall appear,*' refer to the appearance of Jesus Christ on the morning of the general resurrection, preparatory to the final judgment?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Some think he does, but I doubt it. When he makes his grand appearance, preparatory to the final judgment, he will be seen coming in the clouds, and all the holy angels with him; and at the blast of the archangel's trumpet, the pious dead will spring up into life, and, together with the pious who may be living at this great crisis, will undergo a change in their physical formation and appearance; the natural body will become a spiritual body, bearing the image of the heavenly, as distinctly as they bore, when living on earth, the image of the earthy. But *this* wonderful process of coming up into newness of life, issuing in a physical transformation from a natural to a spiritual body, is effected by the action of *power*. 'For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself' (Phil. iii. 20, 21). What a sublimely grand spectacle! every one of the august family of God will be arrayed in a body

resembling the glorified body of Jesus Christ! But the assimilation to which the words of John refer, is produced by vision. We shall be *like* him when we *see* him; and the assimilation will take place immediately on seeing him, and in consequence of seeing him; and we shall see him the moment we die, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."

*Mrs. Stevens.*—"There is something so strange and appalling in death and in dying, and in having to pass, and pass alone, into the great world of spirits, that I am not surprised by the shuddering dread which some feel when anticipating it; and nothing can allay this fearful commotion, but a firm belief in the watchful eye and ever-active presence of our kind and compassionate Saviour. 'I will come again and receive you to myself,' is the sweet promise which reduces agitation to calmness, and inspires confidence and joy in the moment of the final departure from earth."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"We cannot tell on what living being here on earth any of us will cast the last look of recognition and affection; but the first Being we shall see on entering the great unknown world will be Jesus Christ, waiting to receive us to himself as his own, that we may be glorified together. This we believe, and this we know; and therefore we may rejoice with joy unspeakable."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"Then it would be more in harmony with the spirit of our faith, to cherish a desire to depart to see our Lord, than to wish to live here always away from him."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I was very much pleased with the following paragraph of the discourse which I heard the Curate deliver, from the text on which you have just been speaking:—'You are following, my brethren, no cunningly-devised fable, as infidelity asserts, when you enter the mystic inclosure of Divine revelation, and look with the piercing eye of faith on the glory to be revealed in you, because the objects of your belief are not inventions, but realities within the range of your actual knowledge. You know in whom you believe; and you know that he has effected in you the preparatory spiritual change which is to issue in the grand result of your

eternal salvation. You know he has convinced you, by his Holy Spirit, of the evil of sin; that he has produced in you the feeling of deep self-humiliation and contrition; that he has drawn you to himself, to believe and trust in him; and that he has at times manifested himself to you as he does not unto the world, giving you peace and joy in believing. These emotions of contrition and self-humiliation, of peace and of joy, you know are genuine emotions; not self-originated, nor yet produced by the action of any mere human agency; and you know that they are the first spiritual operations in the new formation of your soul, which is to terminate in a perfect likeness to Jesus Christ, when you see him as he is."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I have in my congregation a very simple-hearted, godly man, who is in the service of an avowed sceptic; and one day, when he was at work, his master said to him, 'John, you don't know that what you believe about another world is true.'—'And you, master, don't know that it is untrue.'—'I believe, John, that the visions of future glory which now flit so vividly before your imagination, will turn out at last to be deceptions—mere fancy pictures; for when you are dead you will go out of existence.'—'I have heard you say that before, master; and if it should be so, I shall never know it; but there is *one thing* which I think I know.'—'And what's that, John?'—'Why, master, it is just this. If you were dying—and die you must—you would rather have the bright visions of immortality and eternal life fitting before your imagination, than die as infidels generally do, in dread uncertainty, or in the agony of self-reproach for neglecting the great salvation. I am safe against both these terrible evils, but you stand exposed to them; and it will very soon be decided which is right and which is wrong—you or I. We are both near our journey's end; I am seventy-two, and I believe, master, you are a few years older. We shall soon know what our end is to be. I have no fear, except for you, master.'"

*Mr. Stevens.*—"These plain godly people very often, by their homespun arguments and their shrewd remarks, stagger and confound even the most subtle and scornful infidels."

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*Mr. Lewellin.*—"They often silence them."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I don't think we have many avowed infidels in Broadhurst, though, alas! we have too many who are theoretical believers, but practical unbelievers."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"There are a great many in my brother's parish, and yet they generally attend church once on the Sabbath. They are very free in their remarks on his conversion, which, they say, is passing from one theological absurdity to another; the Curate, in their estimation, is a very amiable and zealous fanatic. At the conclusion of the sermon from which I have given you one extract, he made this striking appeal to them, and he was kind enough to give me a copy of it:—

"I will now admit, for the sake of the question I have to propose, that what we believe is fictitious; that there is, in fact, no future state of existence for man; no such visions of glory for us to behold when we pass out of life; and no such scenes of bliss for us to enjoy as I have now been endeavouring to portray. But suppose we really believe that there are, I appeal to you whether our faith does not tend to sustain our spirits when suffering under the ills of life; and whether we have not something in prospect, which is an adequate compensation for the anticipated loss of life and all its possessions. Is it nothing to a *noble mind*, rich in the stores of knowledge, and still richer in the anticipations of hope—endowed with faculties too valuable to be annihilated without a pang of regret keener than ever pierced the heart of sorrow—to believe that he is superior in the duration of his being to the beasts of the field and the creeping things of the earth; that he is superior to the trees of the wood, the shrubs of the lawn, and the flowers of the garden; ordained to live after they have outlived their life, and to live on for ever in dignity and in happiness? Take the case of a *poor believer*, who has to sustain the hardships and privations of life, often not knowing how to get the next meal for himself and family, or where to get the means of protecting his scanty household property against the distrains of his landlord. Is it nothing

to him to be able to look forward to the coming of a period when he shall be in the possession of an inheritance uncorrupted, undefiled, and that will never fade away? Take the case of one who has had to weather all through life the storms of adversity; to stand exposed to the blasts of calumny, reproach, and wrongful testimony; who has had to suffer, like the apostle of the Gentiles, the peril of the deep, the peril of the wilderness, and the more galling peril of false brethren. Is it nothing for such a man of accumulative trials, to be able to believe that, after a few more storms have agitated the waters of life, and after a few more reproaches have assailed his reputation, he shall enter into the port of eternal safety, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest? Or take the case of one who has been a *living martyr* to physical afflictions and sufferings; who has scarcely ever breathed the breath of uncontaminated health, though she has wandered from one salubrious place to another, to catch its invigorating inhaling; whose food has been tasteless, and to whom restless nights and days of weariness and pain have been appointed; and whose ethereal spirit has been held in a state of langour and depression by the mysterious action of disease on her nervous sensibilities. Is it nothing to such a sufferer to believe that, after a few more months or years of agonizing and torturous endurance, the dark night of her mourning will pass away in the dawn of the bright and serene morning of immortality, whose sun will rise without a cloud, never to go down or pass under a momentary eclipse?

“Why, then, I ask the infidel, will you attempt to destroy or disturb the faith of such believers? Why not let each one go daily, in the quietness of his spirit, to draw the waters of healing, of refreshment, and invigoration from this perennial well, which he has found in the wilderness? Why attempt to throw a dark and impenetrable veil over the enchanting scenes which the opening heavens partially disclose, and on which he gazes in joyous hope and in ecstasy of longing? Why not let him remain, under what you call the spell of his delusion, when it entails on you no loss or suffering, but which



imparts to him such holy and sublime enjoyments? Suppose it be—what you tell him it is—all a delusion; yet if he die under its power he will never know it; why not, then, let him die in peace? surely his peaceful death can occasion you no bitter regret. Why try to rouse him out of his elysian reverie, simply to let him know that death is coming to deprive him of all his sublime anticipations, and slip him out of existence? What gratification can success in such a species of destructive labour afford you? You are not the daring highway robber, who plunders another to enrich himself; you are the wanton or the malignant incendiary, who devastates that you may revel in the irreparable losses which you inflict on others, with no prospect of personal advantage. But suppose that what you reject as fanciful and fabulous, *should turn out at last to be a reality*, then your doom is certain and truly awful; you will pass into the eternal world alone, a lost spirit, to perish, yet retaining your consciousness for ever. And you cannot know that it is not a reality, unless you can acquire all knowledge, and this you cannot do while you live. You must die to know that there is no hereafter; and if you survive your own death, and live on in some intermediate state, you must visit every nook and corner of the vast universe before you can know that there is no heaven and no hell. Why, then, proudly arrogate to yourself the possession of knowledge which you know that it is impossible for you to acquire? and why, while unable to decide against the reality of what we believe, are you not in terror lest you should be labouring under a criminal self-deception? If there be another world, which you cannot disprove, with what horror will your spirit, when disembodied, enter it, to meet her fearful and merited doom, to dwell for ever amongst the devil and his angels?

“The efforts which you are now making to induce others to reject the Christian faith as an imposition on human credulity, will receive **AT LAST** a recompense; and what will that be?—their bitterest curses, which will be an aggravation to your misery, far beyond the capability of human conception. There, in the eternal world, you will be a lost spirit, assailed by other lost spirits, reproaching

you as the prime agent in effecting their ruin for ever; and with emotions of deadly hatred, and in terms of malignant accusation, corresponding with the awful intensity of their mental suffering. Regret then, on their account or on your own, will be useless; for could you shed as many tears of sorrow, as there have been dew-drops since the birth of creation; could you heave as many sighs and groans, as there have been pulsations of pain since the first child of sorrow felt the bitterness of grief; and could you offer as many petitions for mercy, as there have been lamentations of woe since Esau endured the anguish of unavailing repentance, it would be of no use. Once lost, by dying in your sins, there is no possibility of recovery or escape. When, then, the final issue is so tremendously awful, the preparatory anxiety and caution to avoid it cannot be too scrupulous or guarded; but to advert to it with a spirit of levity, or to deem it too insignificant and unimportant to demand the most solemn attention, is to give decisive evidence that you have prematurely fitted yourselves for destruction, and are ripe for hell, before the reaper is in readiness to put in the sickle of death to cut you down.’”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“This, Sir, must have been a most impressive sermon. What effect did it appear to produce?”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“The congregation listened to it with profound attention; and some were subdued; they quailed under it.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“If, Sir, a few years since, you had seen and heard in some night vision, what you have now seen and heard under the broad daylight of positive reality, you would have thought, when awakening out of your sleep, that you had witnessed something of what God could do, but you could not have anticipated its actual occurrence.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“That’s very true, Sir; I wish you would go, and see and judge for yourself.”

*Miss Roscoe.*—“Yes, do, Sir; and, if you will permit me, I will accompany you. It is the Lord’s doing, and it is a very choice specimen of the Divine workmanship.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I should like to go, but my age and infirmities forbid it. I must be contented to look at the descriptive sketching of this sublime manifestation of the power and the grace of God; it is the triumph of evangelical truth over the lifeless formalism of Tractarian arrogance and delusion."

"Our prayers," said Miss Roscoe, "are answered; my dear uncle and aunt are right at last."

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## THE QUAKERESS.



ON returning from my protracted visit to Fairmount, and resuming my pastoral labours, I was gratified by the eager welcome I received from the people of my charge. During my absence the pulpit had been regularly supplied by a succession of ministers of various religious denominations—men who had never subscribed to an act of uniformity imposed by human legislation, but yet, in all their public ministrations, they closely adhered to *the unity of the faith*, because they received the Bible as the rule of their religious belief and practice. On looking around my congregation, I missed a venerable elder and several others, who had gone the way of all flesh; also, a few individuals and families, who had removed to other localities. Yet I was pleased to find that there was no perceptible decrease in numbers, and to learn that the harmony of my flock had not been in any way disturbed by strife and contention.

Amongst the various causes which lead to the peace and prosperity of a Christian church, the example and influence of females deserves a prominent place; it operates silently, yet powerfully, both to repress what is evil and to stimulate to what is good. Woman was first in the transgression, but in every age she has laboured to repair the evil which that direful calamity has entailed on the human race; and, though less conspicuous in her sphere of action than man, she

has often equalled him in earnest devotedness, and has sometimes surpassed him in self-denying sacrifices and heroic sufferings. The apostle makes honourable mention of those women who laboured with him in the gospel; and it was my privilege and happiness to have some as co-workers, of great, if not of equal importance and worth. One of the most useful of these was Miss Chester, a diffident and unobtrusive woman, yet ever active in labours of love—doing everything with so much prudence and amiability that she neither provoked censure nor awakened jealousy or envy. She had acquired great aptitude in gaining the confidence of the females in the congregation, whose hearts the Lord appeared to be opening to receive the truth; she could go where the habits of social life forbade me to enter, and could gain information on the delicate question of personal piety, which would have been withheld even from my solicitations. In this way she acted as a pioneer, and often brought me information regarding individuals of whose religious awakening I might otherwise never have heard. The first time she called on me after my return, she had a great deal to tell me of what had taken place among my people during my absence; but the most gratifying intelligence of all was, that she thought her esteemed friend, Miss Osbourne, had become decidedly pious, though she had not yet openly avowed herself. Miss Osbourne was not one of my own people, but had been brought up in the Society of Friends, and had, to all human appearance, been a consistent adherent of that community. On making some inquiries as to this unexpected transformation of character and habit, I learned that it took its rise from a sermon she heard from Matt. vi. 5—“*that they may be seen of men.*” While listening to the preacher, and when reflecting on what he said, she was convinced that it was contrary to the spirit of the New Testament for a disciple of Jesus Christ to assume any distinctive denominational sign, either in dress or style of speech—as it is holding out a secular mark to attract human attention; or if this be not the motive, she perceived that such was the result. From that time forth she exchanged the dress and speech of Quaker-

ism for that which is in current usage in genteel life, believing that the best evidence of a living faith is to add to "faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Pet. i. 5-7). On leaving me Miss Chester said—"The history of her religious experience will, I have no doubt, interest and gratify you. I have promised to spend an evening with her soon, and I hope you will accompany me; I am quite sure she will be very glad to see you."

Miss Chester having made an appointment with Miss Osbourne, the evening soon came round that we were to pay her a visit at her quiet residence, and Miss Chester having called on me for the purpose, we set out on our mission together. Just prior to this my first interview with Miss Osbourne, I had lent my chapel to the Friends to hold a public meeting, when I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Joseph Gurney and another address a large and an attentive audience. To this meeting Miss Osbourne very naturally referred, thanking me at the same time, for this mark of respect for the body; adding, "I am no advocate of the *esprit du corps*. We may cherish our preferences, yet I like to see all true believers living together in friendly intercourse."

"It is, Madam, by coming into close contact we rub off the angular parts of our denominational character, and then, as a necessary consequence, we can develop the more sterling attributes of our renewed nature, as one in Christ."

"I think Friends have isolated themselves too much. They live in a little Goshen of their own, and cherish rather too fondly the idea that they, and they only, have a purely spiritual faith. They look on others as devotees of carnal ordinances."

"We receive the ordinances which are delivered to us in the New Testament, and observe them as tests of our subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ; but, in our judgment, they do not possess any inherent power to work in us the fruits of righteousness. We look through them to the great truths they symbolize. Baptism

symbolizes the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; and the Lord's Supper symbolizes the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. And this Friends might have known long since if they had consulted our best writers; but this they neglect doing, and hence they do not know us *perfectly*. Indeed, they cherish many wrong notions and impressions about us."

"Yes; they move in a circle of their own, which is rather a confined and peculiar one. They do not like to cross the line which keeps them distinct from others. This I have long considered an evil, and I may say I have felt it to be one. Thus, when the controversy sprang up in America about the divinity of Jesus Christ, and which led to the secession of so many from the Society of Friends, I was in a most bewildered state; I had no previous information to help me to form a correct judgment on the questions in dispute and discussion."

"The tenacity with which the Friends adhere to the '*inward light*,' which they imagine is given to every one, very naturally renders any laborious effort on their part to understand the facts and the truths of the Bible a mere work of supererogation. They hand down, from one generation to another, a few distinctive opinions, which, combined with other causes, keep them a compact body and peculiar people; but I apprehend there is among them too great a lack of a diligent searching of the Scriptures, to ascertain how far these opinions are supported by Divine authority."

"I myself *was* very fond of this '*inward light*' theory. It was to me, what the all-sufficiency of reason is to the rationalist. I was my own guide and my own authority. I could not stoop to receive instruction from prophets or apostles. But my faith in its infallible guidance has long since been shaken—I may now say, quite destroyed. I find it is not powerful enough to keep the Society of Friends from a gradual decay. They are dying off towards extinction, while other denominations are increasing in their numbers."

"I know some of the rising generation who have withdrawn from the Society of Friends and gone over to the Established Church.

There was, I believe, a large secession at Manchester some few years ago?"

"Yes; but nothing shook the body so violently as the American controversy on the divinity of Jesus Christ. The shock was felt here, and Friends were not prepared for it. It led many to imbibe the Socinian heresy, and some became avowed sceptics."

"In relation to all controversies knowledge is power, but ignorance is weakness. If we are trained by a regular course of proper teaching to understand the distinct yet united truths of the Bible—the evidences by which they are supported, and the arguments by which objections to them are refuted—we are then prepared to withstand the shocks of heresy without being startled into scepticism by the imposing dogmatism or subtle plausibilities of its advocates."

"Very true; but Friends have not the advantage of such training; and therefore, when a controversial spirit does spring up amongst them, it becomes as a wolf in the sheepfold."

"But though controversy may do some evil, yet it may do some good; for in the spiritual world, no less than in the physical, stagnation is often more perilous and fatal than the most violent tempest."

"Very true. I know that the American controversy has done some good in England. It has awakened the dormant mind of Friends to a calm and close investigation of the subjects of discussion; and the result is, that the belief of many now rests on logical evidence, rather than traditionary testimony. Till it took place, and excited the attention of Friends, I always looked on Jesus Christ merely as an amiable and intelligent philanthropist—a model for us to copy after."

"But as there is an immense disparity between humanity and divinity—between a perfect man, and God manifest in the flesh—what effect did the first announcement of the divinity of Jesus Christ produce on your mind? Did it not startle you?"

"I felt an instinctive revolting against it. I felt more disposed to treat it as a legend, than look upon it as a fact."

"But why?"

"Because I thought it was not likely that God would manifest

himself in the flesh, when he could so easily accomplish any beneficent purpose without stooping to such an act of humiliation and meanness. Indeed, for a very long time the more I thought of it the more I revolted against it. I loathed it, it was offensive to my taste; and I did not like to hear the question argued."

"But did it never strike you, when reading the gospels, that Jesus Christ attempted to make the Jews believe that he was a Divine incarnation? I suppose you must have read the following passage—'The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God' (John x. 33)?"

"Why, yes; but I thought their accusation against him on this point, was a wilful perversion of his meaning—an excess on their part of malignant feeling."

"But did you never receive an impression, from the facility with which he performed many stupendous works, and his entire avoidance of all pomp and display, that he was a wonderful Being, something more than man?"

"Why, no. The truth is, I never felt sufficient interest in the question to pursue the investigation of it with attention. I revolted from it."

"But when you were forced to attend to it, in some measure, by the frequency of its discussion amongst Friends, did any other reason present itself to your mind as a constraint, or an inducement to reject it as a mere legend?"

"Yes; the absolute impossibility that two such dissimilar natures, as the Divine and human, could be united in one person."

"But did you never advert to the conjunction of the immaterial and material—two very dissimilar natures—in your own person?"

"I recollect hearing one Friend, who was arguing the question with another, advance that fact in confirmation of the proposition that natures very dissimilar to each other can be conjoined in one identity; but at the time I thought it more fanciful than correct. Indeed, I revolted against any evidence that was brought forward



by any one in support of what I considered a legend, rather than a reality."

"But did it never strike you that his relative character, as the Saviour of sinners, involves in it the necessity of his being something more than a mere man, it being an absurdity to suppose that one man can save others?"

"I never adverted to his relative character at this period; I had no definite conception of it, nor did I wish to have. I did not feel that I needed a Saviour; I thought his being called one was a mere conventionalism—a mark of respect."

"At the time when the divinity of Jesus Christ became a popular subject of discussion amongst Friends, the question of his atonement was also agitated; what were your sentiments respecting it?"

"I repudiated it, as derogatory to the Deity."

"In what respect did you consider it derogatory to the character of God?"

"I thought it an impeachment of his benevolence to suppose that he would not exercise his clemency unless he was induced to do so by the shedding of blood. And I also thought it was an impeachment of his equity to require innocence to suffer and die in behalf of the guilty. All my feelings were opposed to it."

"But Friends in general have professed their belief in the reality and necessity of the atonement; and Joseph Gurney, who is an authority amongst them, has written in defence and support of it. Did you ever read his treatise?"

"It was put into my hands by one of our elders, who knew that I entertained some doubts on the subject. I looked into it, but as soon as I found that he attempted to support his views of the atonement by citations from the Bible, I felt that I could much easier reject the Bible as a revelation from heaven, than I could admit a dogma so utterly opposed to my reason. Indeed, I had become a confirmed sceptic, though I did not like to avow it, as I knew it would give pain to many for whom I had great esteem; and, besides, I did not like the idea of making myself the subject of public notice and remark."

“Did you, at this period, feel at ease—quite satisfied with yourself and your condition?”

“No; not quite. I sometimes felt an impression, and it was a very painful one, that I was not acting honourably nor honestly by standing identified with a body of Christians, after I had virtually renounced my belief in the articles of their faith. This greatly perplexed me. I knew not what to do.”

“I suppose if you had openly avowed, what you had virtually done, they would have excluded you from their fellowship?”

“It is probable that a sentence of disownment would have been passed against me. This I should not have liked. It would have given so much pain to my parents.”

“There is now, I believe, a change in your views of Divine truth?”

“Yes; and a great change, not only in my views of Divine truth, but in my appreciation of its importance.”

“Will you tell me what was the means of leading you to receive the faith you once repudiated?”

“In the first instance, the reading of Dr. Chalmers’ *Astronomical Discourses* weakened, in some measure, one very strong objection which I had long cherished against the truth of Christianity, and which I then considered invincible.”

“I presume you refer to the objection which some philosophic sceptics have advanced against the Divine origin of Christianity, that it is monstrous to suppose the Deity would lavish on so insignificant a world as ours such peculiar and distinguishing attention as are ascribed to him in the Bible?”

“Yes. To suppose that he would make such costly sacrifices as the Bible says he did make, to recover such a puny race of beings from their degradation and misery, when, if they were swept out of existence, they would hardly be missed from the great field of the creation—was an objection which struck me with great force; and I long cherished it. It appeared quite insurmountable. But though the eloquent doctor, by weakening the force of a long-cherished opinion, cowed in some degree my sceptical spirit, it was not subdued—I felt

more disturbed than gratified. Indeed, I felt so much annoyed, that I resolved I would read no more speculations relative to Christianity. I was determined to banish religion from my thoughts."

"Did you remain for any length of time in this state of mental isolation from all contact with the facts and truths of the Bible?"

"No; I really found it impossible to isolate my mind from them. The more I tried to do so, the closer did they cleave to me. I felt painfully annoyed by the ceaseless action of my thoughts and reflections. They disturbed me in my sleep, my dreams were often painfully exciting, and I often awoke in a tumult of mental emotion."

"Did this severe mental conflict subdue you to the obedience of the Christian faith?"

"No, no: quite the reverse. I felt, if possible, a more haughty indignation against the truths by which I was so painfully annoyed—they followed me as my own shadow. At length, I went so far as to resolve that I would rather avow my scepticism, than keep my rank as a believer."

"Then what led you to embrace the faith which you repudiated with such indignant feelings?"

"A most humiliating sacrifice of my integrity. It came about in this way. Joseph Gurney and a few other Friends met at my father's house to spend the evening; and as I expected there would be a religious service, I feigned indisposition as an excuse for not being present. I withdrew to my own room, and resumed reading Macaulay's Essay on Milton, but could not proceed with it. I took up another book, but soon closed it. I felt painfully restless—vexed that I was by myself, and mortified at what I had done. That night was a restless night to me. I had never before deviated from absolute truth. I was now sunk in my own esteem, and I felt that if my friends knew what I had done, and why I did it, I should sink in their esteem also. I retired to rest; but sleep was gone from me. When musing on what I had done, and what I must do in the morning, to carry on this work of deception, the idea rushed into my mind with terrific force—but God knows *what I have done*, and

what I am now meditating to do to conceal my shame! Then I felt the pang of remorse. I had never felt it before. It was a strange sensation. I felt that I had fallen from my steadfastness."

Miss Chester had hitherto taken no part in the conversation, but on seeing her friend painfully excited, she remarked, "that the first convictions and impressions of conscious guilt have often a very singular effect on the mind. Some degree of perplexity is felt to account for them; but the most perplexing question is, How can relief be obtained?"

"Mine that night," said Miss Osbourne, "were very acute and depressing—almost overwhelming. However, I indulged a vague hope that I should sleep away my disquietudes, and be myself again in the morning, and feel as in former times. I resolved I would never again violate the sanctity of absolute truth."

"And did the morning bring relief?"

"No, Sir. It brought a rapid succession of strange and very painful emotions. I could neither banish nor repress them. I knew not what to do. I remained in my own room, for I was too excited to mix with the family. I spent a lonely and very unhappy day."

"Did you not attempt to pray for mercy to pardon the act of deception you had committed?"

"The idea occurred to me more than once. I had heard a Friend, some weeks before at a public meeting, discourse about the publican in the temple. His simple prayer came very vividly to my recollection; but my spirit was too haughty to adopt it. My convictions of conscious guilt had merely disturbed my quietude. They had not gone deep enough to awaken any alarm for my soul's safety. They inflicted torture, but excited no genuine penitence and contrition. I felt bewildered and unhappy. I knew not what to do."

"Did you long remain in this bewildered and unhappy state?"

"For several months, I was a living martyr to mental disquietude and restlessness."

"Did you search the Scriptures to see if you could find anything in them to minister relief to your disconsolate heart?"

“Such an idea never struck me. If it had been suggested to me, I think I should have scorned it as a fanatical idea. I had always looked upon the Bible as a compilation of strange writings, without unity, order, or authority. I had no more notion of deriving relief from them, than from reading any other book of history or ecclesiastic ceremonies.”

“A melancholy proof, Madam, of the great defect in your religious training!”

“That I now feel and deplore. The Bible I now revere as the inaudible voice of the Lord speaking to the conscience and the heart.”

“And how did you come to change your views as to the Bible?”

“One evening, while I was sitting alone, bemoaning my hapless condition, and mourning over the fruitless efforts I had made to regain mental tranquillity, the sense of conscious guilt became very, very acute, and very oppressive. It weighed down my spirit. It was *at this time* attended with some degree of alarm and dread. I began to think it possible that God would bring me before him in judgment. This was a new idea. I trembled when thinking of the probable issue—lost, lost for ever! At this eventful moment, when the dread of such a terrible issue was wringing and torturing my spirit, a sudden impulse, accompanied by a ray of celestial light—though then I knew not that it was celestial light—produced a deep conviction of the *necessity* of an atonement to expiate human guilt; and then I at once admitted *the reality* of the atonement made by Jesus Christ.”

“Did these new discoveries of truth minister to your relief?”

“Not immediately; I was still bewildered and unhappy. I was trying to make myself good—trying to work out my own righteousness. But I could make no satisfactory progress. I thought at times that my heart was getting worse instead of better. I was treading on the verge of overwhelming despondency. I felt an outcast. In this state of extreme perplexity and mental torture, I betook myself to the Bible; but I did so more to divert my mind

from its miseries than with an expectation of gaining relief. The Divine Spirit directed my attention to the passage—‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world’ (1 John ii. 1, 2). Had the Lord spoken to me from heaven, I might have been more startled; but there was such a sweet consolatory power accompanying the reading of the passage, that I felt it came from him. I was in a moment, in a calm of ecstatic emotion. I shall never forget the sensation. It was a sudden transition from torture to ease. I then felt, and for the first time, an intense glow of love to Jesus Christ.”

“Did not the reading of that passage,” said Miss Chester, “with its hallowed accompaniments, bring you on your knees before the Lord with weeping and supplication?”

“It did; but for a while, and rather a long while, surprise was the most predominant emotion of my heart. I was surprised that I had never previously felt myself to be a guilty and helpless sinner needing an Almighty Saviour. I was surprised that I should ever have felt a loathing and hostility to a scheme of salvation which is such a sweet and rich manifestation of the loving-kindness of God. And I was surprised that I could have lived so long without feeling a supreme love for Jesus Christ.”

“Your experience, my dear Miss Osbourne,” said Miss Chester, “is a fresh confirmation of a remark I heard a good minister of Jesus Christ make not long since:—*A sense of NEED* must precede all intense concern for our salvation, and all right apprehensions of the relation in which Jesus Christ stands to us. When this is felt, the veil of mysticism is taken off the truth which is deposited in the Bible; and it becomes intelligible and powerful. As our Lord says: ‘They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick’ (Matt. ix. 12).”

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Several months elapsed before I had another interview with Miss Osbourne; but I noticed that her attendance at the chapel was

regular and punctual. She listened with marked attention to the pulpit ministrations; but there was a pensiveness in her look, which still indicated mental disquietude. At the request of Miss Chester, I again visited Miss Osbourne, along with her. On expressing a hope that she was making progress in the path of life, she said, "I am still in a state of painful bewilderment, and still unhappy. I no sooner get over one spiritual difficulty than I feel perplexed and entangled by another. I find that the pursuit after truth lies through a thorny maze."

"I trust you are now thoroughly established in your belief of the supreme divinity of the Son of God, and of the reality and efficacy of his atonement?"

"O yes, I am. His divinity is written as with sunbeams; and I now wonder how any one can doubt it, who admits the authenticity of the Bible. And his atonement is equally conspicuous."

"What, then, is the fresh spiritual difficulty that now disquiets you?"

"I don't know whether I rightly understand the import of the expression which Jesus Christ uses—'COME TO ME, and I will give you rest.' It is evident he makes the present and future happiness of sinners to depend on a personal application to himself. Hence he says, 'All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' As this style of speech was never employed by any other prophet or messenger, it appears to constitute a peculiarity of great importance in relation to his supreme dignity. *He* cannot be a mere man who places such an inconceivable blessing on such an issue. But though I am convinced, after long and patient investigation, that our salvation is made to depend on a personal application to Jesus Christ, I often have this question pressed on my attention—How may I know if *I* have actually applied to Him in the exact way which the Scriptures require? To some, who are rooted and grounded in the faith, this question may present no difficulty; but to me it is one of great importance and of painful perplexity."

“One difficulty which attends the solution of this question arises from the very *nature* of the application which it supposes. If coming to Christ were a bodily act, and if the dependence to be reposed in him fell under the cognizance of the senses, we should be able to decide with perfect ease whether we have come to him or not. But it is simply a mental act, which may be performed even while the believer remains in a state of doubt. To believe or to trust in Christ, is the first act of the mind; but to come to a satisfactory conclusion that this act of dependence agrees with the requirements of the Scripture, supposes that a process of examination and comparison has taken place. I am to judge of my faith from its effects; as the worth of a tree is to be decided by the quality of its fruit. And here two questions demand my attention: first, What moral effects does faith produce? Secondly, Have these effects been produced in me? Faith purifies the heart from the love of sin; brings the distant and unseen objects of the eternal world to act with impressive force on the judgment, and affections, and imagination; induces its possessor to walk as seeing him who is invisible; to love the Redeemer with a supreme affection; and constrains him to attempt to advance the glory of God in the world by a life of practical devotedness to his will. These are some of the effects or moral evidences of faith; *and if they always existed in their highest degree*, we should have some certain landmarks of decision, when attempting to ascertain the genuine nature of our dependence on Christ, which neither sophistry nor unbelief would be able to remove. But as an excellent writer observes:—‘The mind of every Christian experiences many *alternations* of holiness and sin. Temptations often and unexpectedly intrude. The objects which engross the whole heart of the sinner, unhappily engage at times in greater or less degrees that of the Christian. Nor is their influence always transient. David, Solomon, and other saints mentioned in the Scriptures, for a length of time sinned. Not a small number of sins are committed in thought, word, and action, in the brighter and better seasons; nay, in the brightest and best. ‘I sin,’ says Bishop Beve-



ridge; 'I repent of my sins, and sin in my repentance. I pray for forgiveness, and sin in my prayers. I resolve against my future sin, and sin in forming my resolutions. So that I may say, My whole life is almost a continued course of sin.' This is the language of one of the best men that ever lived. A still better man has said, 'For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do' (Rom. vii. 19). If, then, the most eminent saints, in the most improved state of their character, and the most sacred seasons of their devotion, have the evidence of their faith weakened by the force of contrary evidence, ought it to excite our surprise if in us it is often obscured, and sometimes overbalanced?"

"Then I judge from the tenor of your remarks, that, for consolation and hope, we must turn from ourselves, and constantly depend on Christ as a Saviour; whatever may be the varying tone and tendencies of the heart."

"Yes; trust in him at all times—in sorrow, and in joy; when assailed by temptation, and in seasons of triumph; whether in transport on the mount, or abased in the valley—one undeviating act of the mind from the beginning to the end of the conflict."

Our conversation now turned on the honour which the God of all grace confers on an individual whom he condescends to admit into a state of fellowship with himself; and on the consequent obligation which this places him under to make an open and unequivocal profession of religion.

"Yes," said Miss Chester, "the noblest distinction we can attain to, is to be endowed with the faith of God's elect; but it is a distinction which often exposes us to the ridicule and the scorn of the world."

"The semi-Christians of modern times," I remarked, "are as ignorant of the relative dignity of the sons of God, as the ancient Jews were of the personal dignity of Jesus Christ. Nor ought this to excite our surprise, seeing that, as the apostle says, 'the world knows us not, because it knew him not.' But though the world be ignorant of our relative dignity, we ourselves are not; and yet there are some

who appear ashamed of it. They desire to gain the crown of glory; but refuse to identify themselves with the disciples of Jesus Christ, that they may escape the odium to which they are exposed."

"There is in this," said Miss Osbourne, "a species of meanness, of which, I think, an honourable mind could not be guilty. But though some who have felt the power of truth to a certain extent, may hesitate to identify themselves with the disciples of Jesus Christ, yet they may be influenced by the purest motives. I have a friend, who has recently been convinced of the truth of the gospel; and yet, when conversing with an eminently pious stranger on some of its sacred topics, very ingenuously said, '*But, madam, I do not wish you to suppose that I am a Christian. I admire the doctrines and the precepts of Christianity; and I admire the character of those who display its moral virtues; but I dare not rank myself among their number. O no; I am not good enough!*' Now, this friend has mental firmness enough to withstand the rudest shocks of reproach; but as she has not, in her own estimation, felt the transforming power of the truth, she cannot conscientiously identify herself with those who have."

"This," I remarked, "is neither a singular nor a hopeless case. The reluctance which your friend feels to make a profession of religion, till she is satisfied that she possesses the principle, is a decided proof of her integrity; and though she may remain in this state of dubious perplexity for a still longer time, yet she will never enjoy perfect peace, till she becomes decided."

"But ought a person to make a decided profession of religion before he has attained a full assurance of his personal interest in the redemption and love of Jesus Christ?"

"In my opinion, the very moment a sinner trusts in Christ Jesus for the salvation of his soul, he places himself under an obligation to render obedience to his laws. The first petition is, '*Lord, save, or I perish;*' the next in order, and which should immediately follow, is, '*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*' He distinctly states what he would have us do:—'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before

men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven' (Matt. x. 32)."

"But is it not a wise *discretion* to tarry awhile, to test the strength of the religious principle, before the garb of a public profession is put on? Should we not avoid precipitation in a matter of such importance?"

"But would you, during this probationary period, depend on your own moral strength to sustain the vital energy of your religious principles?"

"Certainly not."

"Then you would depend on the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to preserve the vitality of your principles, while you are passing through this probationary period; the length of it to be decided by your own discretion?"

"I would depend on him to keep me steadfast in his ways."

"And could you not depend on him with as much implicitness and constancy to keep you steadfast after you have put on the yoke of obedience, as you can when preparing to do it?"

"Most certainly."

"There is a little incident recorded in Matthew xvi. 21, which embodies one of the laws of the mediatorial government of Jesus Christ. '*From that time forth,*' that is, after his apostles had made a public avowal of their belief in him as the Son of God, he began to show unto them the coming events of his wonderful history. Yes, my friend, the path of duty is the path of safety, and obedience brings its own reward, as clearer manifestations of the love of Christ usually follow an open profession of devotedness to him."

"I remained a spectator the last time the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered at your chapel; I thought it a very solemn service, and I was a good deal impressed by it."

"I hope you have outlived the scrupulous objections of your educational training, and now admit that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are of perpetual obligation?"

"I must confess that they have engaged some portion of my

thoughts, particularly the Lord's Supper. I recently read Joseph Gurney's remarks on it, but they did not satisfy me. I thought them more ingenious than solid; and they seemed to me very much a piece of special pleading. From his book I turned to 1 Cor. xi., and I recollect saying when I had finished, the apostle Paul and Joseph Gurney don't think and write alike on this subject. As they can't both be right, one must be wrong; which shall I follow?"

"I suppose," said Miss Chester, "you don't find that a difficult question to decide?"

"Why, my dear, it is not a very easy matter to get over long cherished scruples—to obliterate early impressions, and adopt new religious habits and customs. But still, I must confess, that an inspired apostle is a safer guide, than an uninspired partizan writer. However, there is a previous question, which, if I may be permitted to mention it, I should like to have answered. What, in your judgment, are the spiritual advantages which are connected with the regular observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper?"

"In the first place," I replied, "it tends, and I think very forcibly, to give fixedness and solidity to our faith in the historic truthfulness of our Lord's sufferings and death. He himself instituted the ordinance, even before his death was accomplished; and he assigns his reason for so doing: 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt. xxvi. 26-28). Immediately after his death, we find, by consulting the Acts, that his disciples partook of it in obedience to his authority, and for the purpose which he specified. The apostle Paul tells us that he had a special revelation from heaven in relation to it (1 Cor. xi. 23, 26). And this ordinance, instituted by Jesus Christ, and observed by all the primitive disciples, is handed down to us as a standing memorial of the wonderful fact that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."

“Yes, I see. Then this ordinance stands like a monument erected at the time when the event occurred, to commemorate it, and to perpetuate the remembrance of it?”

“It does.”

“Then as people are not so foolish as to erect monuments to commemorate what never took place, the historic certainty of the death of Jesus Christ receives an indisputable confirmation from the perpetual celebration of the Lord’s Supper?”

“Exactly so.”

“This is a new idea to me, and an important one. Then I must disapprove of the conduct of Friends, who have not merely defaced this monumental pillar of the Christian faith, but entirely removed it. Why, the removal of a landmark is more like the work of an enemy, who has an interest in destroying boundary lines, than the work of a friend, who has an interest in preserving them. I wonder that Joseph Gurney did not see this.”

“But this ordinance does something more than perpetuate a remembrance of the historic fact of the death of Jesus Christ; it is significant of its moral design. When he gave the cup of wine to his disciples, and commanded them to drink of it, he added, as explanatory of the purpose which he had in view by this arrangement—‘For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins’ (Matt. xxvi. 28).”

“Yes, I see it is this that attaches supreme importance to the ordinance, which would become an unmeaning ceremony if we exclude the atonement from our theory of belief.”

“Very true. The historic fact, and its moral design, are inseparably blended; and the truthfulness of both is confirmed by the same ceremonial rite. When our Lord had supped, he took the cup, saying to his disciples, ‘This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come’ (1 Cor. xi. 25, 26).”

“I am quite satisfied that the ordinance should be received by the

disciples of Christ, in obedience to his authority, when they believe that they are his disciples. And I must say, that I think the Friends are wrong in rejecting it as an obsolete ceremony. By doing so, they remove an ancient landmark."

"It is worse than that," said Miss Chester; "it is destroying an ancient monument which was designed to perpetuate, as long as time shall last, a remembrance of the great event it was erected to celebrate."

"Do you," said Miss Osbourne, "administer the Lord's Supper indiscriminately to persons in general, or do you restrict its administration to the decidedly pious?"

"Amongst us Dissenters it is a test of character; none are permitted to partake of it, unless they profess repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and, at the same time, give some practical proof that they are renewed, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called."

"What is called open communion prevails, I believe, in the National Establishment."

"It does. The clergyman of our national church is the minister of the parish in which he officiates, and he baptizes all children whose parents wish him to do it; and unless they should be excommunicated, which is rarely done, they are treated as members of the church, and have the right of access to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper."

"Indeed! What! are any immoral persons ever permitted by a clergyman to partake of the Lord's Supper? I should judge from what I read in the New Testament, that it belongs exclusively to true believers in Christ."

"Yes; in National Establishments, all the varieties of the human character, from the most pious to the most profane, may be seen mingling together at the sacramental table."

"Indeed! this must be a perversion of the ordinance. The apostles, if I recollect rightly, required repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as essential qualifications for admis-

sion into the church; and if any member walked disorderly, he was separated from Christian fellowship."

"It is so amongst us Dissenters. We do not profess to have a perfect church, but we do not suffer any one to remain in membership with us who dishonours his profession by any known act of impiety or immorality."

"That seems to me to be adhering to the rule of the Scripture."

"To that rule we should always adhere; and hence it is obligatory on all to observe the ordinance who are trusting in Christ for salvation. They should do so, as a visible expression of their subjection to his authority, and of their gratitude and love to him for his marvellous loving-kindness in shedding his blood for the remission of their sins, and for giving his life a ransom for their redemption. I recently heard an esteemed minister deliver the following address, just before the administration of the ordinance:—

"We are now, my dear Christian brethren, going to commemorate the death of a beloved Friend, whose friendship derives its value from his death. We often muse with intense interest on the wondrous events of his wondrous life; we repeat to each other, with strong emotions of delight, his soul-inspiring sayings. But it is his death which enkindles the purest, the most powerful, and the most joyous emotions of our heart. It is true, he was crucified by wicked hands, but crucifixion touched no vital part. He could have lived on the cross as long as he pleased, free from pain, and with as much placid ease as, when seated on the mountain side, he dictated the beatitudes to his disciples. He could have stepped down from the cross, had he pleased, and arrayed himself with as much celestial beauty as when he stood transfigured on Tabor; and he could have changed in a moment the humiliating and conflicting scene of Calvary into the awful grandeur of the final judgment; and at his bidding the trumpet would have awakened the dead, to stand before him for their final sentence. But no. Such prodigies of power, and displays of justice were not to take place then and there. The only event to take place then and there was his shedding his

blood for the remission of sins, and his giving his life a ransom for sinners. This he did, unsolicited, voluntarily, and cheerfully; and when he calls on you to take the cup, in remembrance of his sufferings and death, will you hesitate to do so? or can you do it with formal indifference?

‘O for this love, let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break,  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Saviour’s praises speak.’”

“I like the sentiments and expressions of this address; but I think you must admit that hesitation does not always bespeak reluctance.”

“Very true; but it arrests the progress of obedience, and entails the loss of spiritual privileges and enjoyments.”

“I hope, my dear Miss Osbourne,” said Miss Chester, “you now feel no reluctance to yield obedience to the dying command of your beloved Saviour and Friend; and that you will, by one sacred resolve, yield yourself to him as one alive from the dead—have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

“A sublime termination to a painful, and often a depressing conflict! It would be wrong in me not to confess that I have derived instruction from the conversation of the evening. Some new ideas have been suggested to me, and some lingering doubts have been removed. My hesitation, which sprang from caution, rather than reluctance, now yields to a sense of duty. I will do what my Lord commands me; and because it is his command. You will both pray for me, that my faith fail not, and that I may endure to the end, steadfast in the path of duty.”

She kept her promise; and on the first communion day, with us commemorated the death of the Lord Jesus Christ in the way of his appointment. Soon after, I received an interesting letter from her; and as its conclusion is an appropriate sequel to the long and painful conflict through which she had to pass, its transcription may serve as a guide and solace to others.



“O, happy day, that fixed my choice  
On Christ, my Saviour and my God!

\* \* \* \* \*

Now rests my long-divided heart.’

“My experience proves the truthfulness of a remark you made in our recent interview ‘obedience brings its own reward.’”

Those who have been early initiated into the Christian faith, and who have advanced, under judicious training, from one stage of inquiry and attainment to another, till they have acquired a perfect knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, both in its unity and harmony, and who have felt it on their hearts, in the spirituality of its power, can form no just conception of the severe and often prolonged conflict to which others are subjected, who have not been favoured with similar advantages. They are in a moral condition somewhat analogous to that of the lonely traveller who, when on a strange road, is suddenly enveloped in a mist—hearing sounds of danger, while unable to discover from whence they come, why they are given, or how he shall effect his escape. Their mind gets bewildered, jaded, and paralyzed by its own fruitless labours and solitudes; becomes irresolute, unwilling to relinquish the question of inquiry, yet unable to pursue it; and like the maniac amongst the tombs, seeks for rest, but cannot find it. The secret of relief to all such anxious inquirers, lies imbedded in the invitation of Jesus Christ: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28). This invitation has ministered consolation to myriads; its efficacy now, is as powerful as it was when it first fell from his lips; and whosoever receives it in faith, and yields to it, will find rest to his soul.

## AN ESCAPE FROM A FALSE REFUGE.



WHEN surveying my congregation one Sabbath evening, I noticed an interesting stranger in the front gallery, whose manner indicated that he had never been in the chapel before. I had selected for my text Isa. lvii. 18: *“I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.”* As he sat just opposite the pulpit my eye caught his, when delivering the following introductory remarks:—

“No one can read the Bible with serious attention, without feeling that he is brought into contact with God. While intently fixed on the subject which engages his attention, he feels isolated from others—existing apart from others, yet existing in immediate connection with God and the eternal world. The same novel effect is sometimes produced, and often to a greater degree, when a congregation is attentively listening to the ministrations of the pulpit. People are drawn together into a place of worship: the reading, the singing, and the prayer are gone through; and then the preaching commences. The preacher is known, but he is soon lost sight of; his subject absorbs attention, excites emotion; impression succeeds impression; and though, in some instances, there may be a momentary degree of astonishment awakened as to the source from whence the preacher has obtained his knowledge of individual character, yet that astonishment soon subsides, and nothing is left to engross the attention of the hearer, but an overwhelming sense of his own guilt, misery, and danger, which is now discovered, and felt, FOR THE FIRST TIME. Yes, many a person has entered this chapel to scorn, who has left it to breathe the prayer of the publican—‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ Yes, many a person has taken his seat with others, and by being blended with the mass of the congregation, has seemed to lose the individuality of his existence; but the high and lofty One, that

inhabiteh eternity, whose name is Holy, speaks—and though his voice is not heard, it is felt—‘ I have seen his ways.’ Yes, O sinner, he has seen your ways in the gone-by times of your impenitence, when you were living without him, and without hope in the world. Yes, he has seen your ways, when you either neglected the ordinances of religion, or observed them with careless indifference, as though they bore no relation to the Holy One, who inhabiteh eternity. Yes, he has seen the ways you have adopted to obliterate your religious impressions ; to pacify your consciences ; and to reconcile your habits of gaiety and folly, with a sense of your obligations to him. But he has never yet seen you walking in the narrow way that leadeth to eternal life. He has never seen you at his footstool deploring the error of your ways, and praying for mercy. Shall he abandon you to your irreligious course, and leave you to perish ? or shall he come to heal you, to guide you, and to comfort you ?”

His attention was arrested ; he looked and listened as though he had never previously seen a minister in a pulpit, or heard a sermon ; and on his countenance there was impressed an air of expressive solemnity, indicating profound thought.

I saw him again on the next Sabbath evening, then I missed him for several Sabbaths ; he again re-appeared, became more frequent in his attendance, and at length I saw him walking up the area of the chapel accompanied by a lady, whom I presumed to be his wife. On this occasion he was invited into a pew belonging to one of my elders ; and at the close of the service they left the chapel together. On inquiry I found that this elder knew him ; and from him I obtained the outlines of his history, which he prefaced by saying, “ I was not at the chapel on the first night of his attendance, and was rather surprised when he told me of it, because I rather apprehend he is a sceptic, though he does not avow it. However, though he gave me no reason to expect that he should repeat his visit, he made one remark which I was gratified to hear, as it was a proof that he had listened to the discourse, and was rather pleased than otherwise. ‘ The sermon,’ he said, ‘ was simple and plain, yet somewhat origi-

nal. I have heard more eloquent, and more argumentative discourses, both in my own country, and in England, but I never heard one which took such a firm hold of my attention, or one which brought after it such a train of novel thought; indeed, I cannot escape from a recollection of it.”

Mr. Christopher Lobeck, the gentleman in question, was born in Berlin, in 1794. His parents were Protestants, with whom he lived till he had finished his literary education; and then he travelled for two years, visiting Spain, France, and Switzerland, and the principal manufacturing districts and marts of commerce of his own country, to qualify himself to engage in mercantile pursuits. Soon after the termination of the war in 1815, he was introduced to an English merchant, with whom he made an arrangement to serve his establishment in the capacity of a corresponding clerk; and this led to his settlement in London. While in this situation, which he held for seven years, he married the daughter of a citizen of worth and distinction; and by his advice, and with the concurrence of the house in which he had been engaged, he accepted an eligible offer of partnership in a firm of high respectability in ———, to which place he removed in 1822. His private residence was situated about a mile and a half from the centre of the town, a neat snug cottage, with the usual appurtenances, &c., &c. “He is,” the elder added, “both intelligent and communicative, and has acquired a large amount of scientific and general information; and notwithstanding his doubts on the great question of the Christian faith, he generally attends church on Sabbath morning with his wife and children. Mrs. Lobeck is a contrast to her husband on religious matters; he looks with equal indifference on all the external forms of Christianity—she is one of the most impassioned admirers of Episcopacy and its clergy I ever knew. She is, in fact, what may be termed a devotee—excited, as by an electrical shock, if she hear any remark derogatory to the absolute perfection of her church and its priestly orders.” He concluded by saying, “I think you should now go and see them; as they have both been to hear you preach, I

think it likely they will be expecting it as an act of courtesy. It is possible that this may be the opening of a new epoch in their moral history, which may lead to some grand spiritual result."

I made a call, and was gratified by my reception. Mr. Lobeck was very cordial, and Mrs. Lobeck very polite; he was free and easy in chit-chat, but she was rather reserved; yet both seemed to be pleased by my visit. After looking through his museum, which contained a choice though not very extensive collection of birds, reptiles, and fossils, a few coins of different ages and countries, and a good assortment of autographs, I then strolled round his garden and shrubbery, and took my leave of them—both equally pressing for a more lengthened visit. Their attendance at the chapel now became more regular on a Sabbath evening, and occasionally on a Sabbath morning; and after the lapse of a few weeks, I met a select tea-party at their house, and though nearly all were strangers to me, and most of them high church, yet I spent a very pleasant evening. No controversial subject was introduced for debate or discussion; conversation was desultory, without being frivolous, and was sustained without being prosy, or degenerating into dry commonplace. Having intimated to Mr. Lobeck that it was my usual habit to conduct family prayer where I spent an evening, the Bible was presented to me; I read Psalm ciii., offering a few expository remarks, and then we knelt together at the throne of grace.

At a subsequent interview, when Mr. Lobeck called on me, he said, "We have decided on attending your chapel if we can be accommodated with a pew." On expressing some degree of surprise that Mrs. Lobeck should be willing to leave her church, with all its long-cherished predilections and associations, he replied—

"She still gives it the preference, but a paramount sense of duty now compels her to take this step. She was pleased with the extreme simplicity of your mode of worship the first time she came; and has on several occasions expressed her approbation of the momentous truths you have inculcated on the attention of your audience; but your discourse on Sabbath evening, from Acts xvi. 14,

brought her long-hesitating mind to this decision. As we were returning home, after alluding to the hymn, and to the singing, which she very much enjoys, she remarked she now felt no surprise that I should prefer the preaching at the chapel to the preaching at the church; because, in her opinion, it is more interesting and instructive. 'It is,' she added, 'quite a relief to hear no more prosing about the regular succession question, or about the font and its mysteries. This clergyman makes one think of one's self, of God, of another world, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'

As they were now become my stated hearers, a close intimacy soon sprang up between us; and on one occasion, when alluding to the state of religion on the Continent, he said, with emphatic earnestness, "My country, Sir, is the land of spiritual barrenness; death reigns there. Infidelity is awfully dominant, and fatally powerful."

"But I have heard it now assumes an aspect somewhat different from the infidelity introduced by Voltaire, and which I believe was aided in its progress by the more fascinating genius of Rousseau."

"Yes, Sir, it is now the infidelity of Goethe, a man of extraordinary mental power—a most subtle and beguiling writer. Voltaire was an *intellectual* sceptic, who denounced Christianity as an imposition on human credulity, and he advocated its suppression and extermination. Rousseau was a *sentimental* sceptic, who contemplated Christianity with the same class of emotions as he surveyed the beauties and the deformities of nature; regarding it as a strange compound of moral grandeur and of meanness, which, in his estimation, might remain amongst a people without doing any social injury, and might be got rid of without their sustaining any irreparable loss. Goethe is a *rational* sceptic, or what is called in Germany a rationalist. His disposition is not mocking like that of Voltaire and others, nor does he ever indulge in burlesque or ridicule, when speaking of the popular faith. He uniformly evinces a marked respect for the ordinary doctrines and ethics of Christianity, while the drift of his writings is to prove that the real religion of a man's heart, and the real end of his existence, lie in the refined cultivation of his mind and affec-

tions, and in subjecting all irregular impulses and passions to a course of due restraint."

"The infidelity of these sceptical writers who have done so much mischief on the Continent, and in England too, is substantially the same in its origin, in its essence, and in its tendencies, though there is a slight variation in its phases, its developments, and in its designs."

"Infidelity, Sir, under any phase, or in any form of development, is a destroying power; and its progress may be traced, like that of an epidemic, by the scenes of desolation which it leaves in its track. There would be some difficulty in adjusting the comparative injury which these distinguished sceptics have entailed on the moral and religious world; but it is very evident to any one who studies their writings, that they all tend to the same issue. The primary lessons which they all teach are these—that man needs no Divine instructor, which supersedes the necessity of revelation; that his own reason is sufficient to enable him to discover the safe road to true happiness and moral greatness, which supersedes the necessity of priestly instruction and training; and that he need do nothing more for his present well-being, and his future destiny, if there be a futurity, than cultivate his own tastes and social virtues."

"But I suppose Goethe has done more moral injury amongst the theologians of Germany than any other sceptical writer."

"I have no doubt of it; and also amongst all classes of literary men. I was once one of his devoted disciples; he ruled my mind with despotic sway. I revered him as an oracle. He stood, in my estimation, both in intellectual greatness and in the accuracy of his moral discoveries, far above any of the writers of the Old or New Testaments. He gave me a distaste for the Bible, and a loathing against its sublime and momentous doctrines; and I believe that his writings have tainted to a fearful extent the theology of the pulpits of Germany. There are a few able and eloquent men, who preach Christ and him crucified, in close imitation of Paul; but only a comparatively small number. Human reason is the popular idol

amongst the majority; they keep the cross of Christ in the background; the atonement is repudiated by them. They maintain from the press and from the pulpit, and with as much strenuous earnestness as any of the infidel fraternity, that man has within himself a self-sufficient power to secure his present and his future happiness, without being at all dependent on the grace of God or the love of Christ."

"A sad change since the palmy days of Luther, and the other great Reformers."

"A most melancholy one; I should not like to return to live amidst such signs of decay and scenes of moral desolation—it is as Eden in ruins."

"Your removal, Sir, to England has proved a very important event in your history."

"It has indeed; a local change often leads to many other changes. If I had tarried in Berlin, I had not known my wife or had my three dear children; and most likely I should still have remained a disciple of Goethe, rather than become a disciple of Jesus Christ."

"Will you permit me to ask you one question, What circumstance induced you to come to the chapel the first time you came?"

"Your question, Sir, revives in my recollection a proposition which you illustrated by a series of facts, when delivering a discourse on John iv. 6, 7, and which, if my memory does not fail me, you stated in the following words:—'When a crisis approaches in the history of a nation, or even of a private individual, we may sometimes observe prognostic signs of its coming; and in taking a review after its occurrence, we may sometimes see a marked conjunction of determining events naturally leading to it.' The fact is, on the Sunday of my first visit to your chapel, we had arranged with a few friends to take a drive into the country; but just as we were in readiness to start, a tremendous thunderstorm compelled us to give up our jaunt. After it had cleared off, as it was too late for our country excursion, I took a walk into the town to see an old friend; but the rain again came down in torrents, just as I was passing your chapel; I ran into it for shelter, not for worship. I had no



more thought of being converted to the faith of Christ when I entered your chapel, than the woman of Samaria expected to see the Messiah when she left home to get some water from Jacob's well."

"The Psalmist, when calling on all the powers of the celestial and terrestrial creation to praise the Lord (Psal. cxlviii.), speaks of fire and hail, of snow and vapour, and stormy wind as fulfilling the Divine purpose; they come and go at his command, doing the work he assigns to them."

"So I *now* believe. I recollect, when watching the coming up of the dark thunderstorm, feeling vexed that it should come just then, when we were all in such high glee, and in complete readiness to be off. I did not then know that on that storm my future destiny was depending. Had it not come when it did come, we should have been desecrating the Sabbath by recreative indulgence; and had it not been followed by the second storm, I should have been with my friend enjoying the convivialities of hospitality and mirth. In either case, when laying my head on my pillow, on that memorable night, my bosom would have heaved to other emotions than those which your discourse had stirred up within it. There and then I felt what I never expected to feel; and if the strange commotion had been predicted by an angel of God, I should have ridiculed it as a mere phantom. Indeed, my philosophy, which led me to believe that such a moral change as I have experienced was unnecessary, compelled me also to believe that it was impossible."

"I recollect the text from which I preached on the occasion to which you refer, but I do not recollect employing any arguments to expose the fallacy and delusions of scepticism, or any in confirmation of the Divine origin of the Christian faith."

"Argument, Sir, in favour of Christianity I could have withstood; but I could not withstand the great moral power by which I felt awe-struck and subdued."

"Do you think you were renewed in the spirit of your mind during the first service you attended at the chapel?"

"I know I felt very differently when I came out of the chapel that

evening, from what I felt on entering; but whether I then actually passed from a state of spiritual death to newness of life, is a question I cannot decide. But now I can say what Paul said—By the grace of God I am what I am.”

“Do you ever doubt the reality of the spiritual change which you have undergone?”

“No, Sir, that’s impossible. I know that I was once living in a state of spiritual death, or mental alienation from God, neither loving nor fearing him—living without him in the world; but it’s the reverse of this now. I now revere him as my sovereign, whose laws are my delight; and I now love him as my reconciled Father through Jesus Christ. All through life, up to my first visit to your chapel, the invisible world flitted before my imagination, more as a fairy land than a real world of spiritual beings; and the immortality of man I considered more a thing of speculation than of positive certainty; but now I am compelled to believe, and by the force of evidence which sophistry cannot falsify, that it is the habitation of the high and lofty One whose name is Holy, and before whom I hope to be presented faultless with exceeding joy when the crisis comes.”

“But, Sir, does your old philosophy never suggest to you the idea that these new discoveries and emotions, with their consequent anticipations, may be referable to the mysterious action of a disturbed imagination, rather than the direct action of a supernatural power—what scepticism designates the flights of fancy?”

“I must confess that such an idea has more than once obtruded itself on my mind; but I at once dismiss it as an intangible fiction; for when I turned my attention to study the Christianity of the Bible, which I did very closely as soon as I felt the new impulse from your first sermon, I perceived that it not only offers remission of sin to the penitent and contrite sinner, but that it is essentially a restorative scheme of grace, constructed for the very purpose of rescuing man from the moral ruin in which sin has involved him, and ultimately to re-produce that spiritual similitude to the Divine like-

ness in which man was created, and which would still have adorned humanity, if the first transgression had not been committed. Hence the discoveries and emotions I have made and felt, and the conflicts through which I am now passing, are the initiate of this grand design of the high and lofty One—the preparatory steps in the progress of recovery, which is to lead to such a glorious issue.”

“Have you, Sir, any distinct recollection of the order of thought which followed—the unanticipated impressions and emotions which you felt while listening to the sermon?”

“I recollect saying to myself, when passing home—I have heard many sermons in my own country, and many in England, more elaborate, more argumentative, and more brilliant; and yet no one ever produced such a series of novel and strange convictions and impressions as this simple and plain appeal to which I have been listening. Myself, my moral condition and danger, now absorbed my attention: I felt, and for the first time in my history, that I had been living without God—living the life of a practical atheist—that I deserved his anger, and that he might justly leave me to perish.”

“Did you entertain any idea that this new moral discovery would lead to an eventful issue; or did you suppose it would vanish away, and leave you to live as in former years?”

“Why, Sir, I felt that the discovery I had made was no mental illusion, but a palpable and awful reality; and though it excited emotions of alarm and terror which I could scarcely endure, yet I felt more inclined to cherish than repress them; and at times during the ensuing week, I did indulge a vague hope that God would have mercy on me and comfort me.”

“Did you tell Mrs. Lobeck where you had been, and what you felt?”

“No, Sir. I deemed it inexpedient to do that; because I knew it would distress her to hear that I had been to a Dissenting chapel. But there were other considerations which imposed silence. I knew not what opinion to form of the issue of the mental process through which I was passing. I thought it might bring on some change in

my moral character and history; and I also thought it might end in nothing. I therefore resolved, while in this state of perplexity and confusion, not to say anything to any one on the subject, till I actually knew the result."

"Did you remain long in this state of mental perplexity and distraction?"

"For several months, during which time I accompanied my family to our church every Sabbath morning, and very generally I was at your chapel in the evening. I perceived that the religion of the two places is the same in its broad outlines; yet I soon discovered a great difference, not only in its impressiveness, but even in the doctrines of its public ministrations."

"The Rector and his Curate, I believe, dwell principally on the efficacy of the sacraments, and the absolute necessity of a steady adherence to the church, as an implied condition of salvation."

"Yes, Sir: they virtually reject what many of our Protestant ministers in Germany openly repudiate—the inherent depravity of man, the atonement for sin made by Jesus Christ, and the necessity of the agency of the Divine Spirit to enlighten and renovate the soul of man. In fact, they adopt the leading principle of Goethe's philosophy, and place our hope of future happiness on our doings and attainments. Goethe and his disciples work the principle without the alliance of any auxiliary powers or influences; but the clergymen of our church identify it with ecclesiastic ceremonies and associations. In either case, it is man doing something for himself which makes him his own saviour."

"I often wonder how it is that intelligent persons, who admit the authority of the Bible, can make such egregious mistakes as they often do on the question which relates to the way of salvation, or the method of a sinner's reconciliation with God; when it is stated with so much explicitness and precision by the sacred writers, 'Believe and be saved.' 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father' (Ephes. ii. 18)."

"The terms are very explicit and simple—believe and be saved:

but judging from my own experience, I should say they are very difficult of apprehension, and for this reason, we cannot trace a connection between such an action of the mind and such a glorious result."

"Nor, Sir, are we required to do so: we are to rest our belief on Christ and his promise, and then expect the issue."

"The discourse, Sir, which you delivered some time since on John iii. 14, 15, set my mind at rest on this simple and important question. You sketched the scene in the camp of Israel—the people dying under the judicial infliction; and when representing one and another, on moving out of their tents, feeling an instantaneous cure when they looked on the elevated brazen serpent, the scales fell from my mental vision, and I saw clearly, through the medium of this illustrative fact, that it is by faith in the death of Jesus Christ that we are to be saved. I shall never forget the effect which this discovery excited within me. I felt joy and peace in believing. The cloud of obscurity which had hung so long over the sacred page, and over the spiritual parts of your ministrations, instantaneously vanished; and I saw *THE truth* in its clearness, because I again felt it in its power. I hastened home under an impulse of emotion which I know not how to describe; and as soon as I saw Mrs. Lobeck, I disclosed the long pent-up secrets of my heart. She listened to my communications with intense interest; and after offering me her congratulations on my escape from the snares and delusions of my sceptical philosophy, she then added, what both surprised and delighted me to hear—'I will very willingly go with you on a Sabbath evening, where you have received so much spiritual good, if you will continue to go with us to church on a Sabbath morning.' I at once consented to this proposal, and we continued for many months to alternate an attendance at the two churches, till at length she came to the decision which I have mentioned. We are now one in spirit, and I hope one in faith; but I regret to say that at times she feels a mental depression which I know not how to account for, nor can I remove it."

Mrs. Lobeck was a truly interesting person—as genteel in her manners, as she was amiable in her disposition; and as our intimacy increased, she gradually threw off her constitutional reserve, and became more free and communicative. She was naturally more buoyant in spirits than her husband, yet there was an expression of grief in her countenance which excited my sympathy, and I felt desirous of ascertaining the cause of it. She had been, from her youth up, a most rigid devotee of ecclesiastical formalism; no Puseyite could be more scrupulous in observing the times and seasons and ceremonies of his church. I knew, from many incidental allusions, that she had idolized her Prayer Book, which led her to neglect her Bible; and this made me suspect that she was still placing some undue dependence on ecclesiastic ceremonies. I had preached a sermon on the eunuch going on his way rejoicing (Acts viii. 39), to which she made a reference when I was spending an evening with her.

“To be candid, Sir, it is not with me as it was with the eunuch; for I am not quite so easy in my mind now, as I was before I left the church; sometimes I think I must return, though I should regret depriving myself of the benefit I derive from your ministry.”

“You do not feel quite so much at ease in your mind now, as you did when attending to your long established religious customs?”

“I do not. Indeed, I feel at times quite unhappy.”

“Were you quite happy when you were attending to your religious duties. Did you habitually feel that you were prepared for death; that is, were you assured that your sins were forgiven, and that you would go to heaven when you died?”

“No, Sir, I was never perfectly happy, because I was not quite assured that I should go to heaven, but I always thought that if I continued to the end in the religious course in which I had been trained, the Almighty would take me to himself. I recollect mentioning to our Rector the fears which I occasionally had on this subject, when he quoted a passage from the Bible which gave me much comfort, ‘*He that endureth to the end shall be saved.*’ I now feel that I am failing in this duty, which makes me unhappy.”

“Did you, when practising your religious duties, think much about Jesus Christ, and much about coming to him by faith, to save you? Did you ever feel that you loved him?”

“I always thought he was our Saviour, but I have thought more about him lately than I used to think. Your preaching puts some new ideas into my mind about Jesus Christ, but they soon pass away. I cannot retain them, because I do not clearly understand them.”

“If I do not mistake, you cherished a hope that the Almighty would save you, because you were regular and conscientious in the observance of your religious duties?”

“Yes, Sir, I did. Was I doing wrong by doing this?”

“You will see presently. In consequence of having left the church, you cannot now attend, with the uniformity of former times, to the same order of duties; and therefore you cannot now indulge the hope that the Almighty will save you. And this depresses your spirits and makes you feel unhappy.”

“It does, and very painfully so. I think I have forfeited the blessing, because I am not enduring to the end.”

“You say you always thought that Jesus Christ was our Saviour; but do you not perceive, that as long as you indulged the hope of being saved in consequence of your scrupulous and constant attention to your religious duties, you were expecting to be saved without being indebted to him for your salvation? If you had succeeded, you would have got into heaven without his help; how then could he be your Saviour?”

“Then, Sir, was I doing wrong by placing my hope of being saved on my religious life and practice?”

“You were living under the spell of a common, but fatal delusion.”

“Indeed, Sir! Such an idea has struck me, more than once, when I have been listening to your discourses; but it has passed from me; I could not entertain it, it is too horrifying.”

“If, my dear Madam, to live under the spell of a fatal delusion be

horrifying, what must it be to die under one—to pass away from earth, expecting to go to heaven, and when disembodied and alone, to be left to sink into hell!"

"But, Sir, if a person be sincere and constant in his religious duties—if he endure in them to the end of life, do you think the Almighty will suffer him to die under such a delusive expectation as that? The thought of it is truly painful. It makes me shudder."

"Allow me to call your attention to the following passage, which is a quotation from the words of Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness—'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' (Matt. vii. 21-23)."

"How awful! Their doom is the reverse of what they expected. This passage is conclusive; delusion is possible, and it sometimes proves fatal. The question is, How can it be detected before the discovery comes too late for correction? I feel confused."

"Did you often pray to be kept from self-delusion, during the time you were engaged in your religious duties?"

"I always used my prayers twice a-day, morning and evening; and on some special days I used them more frequently. When travelling, or when we had visitors at our house, I sometimes neglected them, but then I always did double duty the next day, or as soon after as possible. But I don't recollect that I have any prayer which refers especially to self-delusion. Such an idea I never entertained. The idea is quite new to me."

"Then you merely read your prayers; you did not pray?"

"Why, Sir, is not that praying? I am quite sure that I was sincere when I was doing it, and I always felt a pleasure when I had done it."

"The apostle Paul, even when he was an enemy to Christ, and



when persecuting the disciples of Christ, even to bonds, imprisonment, and death, was very devout and zealous in all his religious duties; as touching the righteousness of the law, that is, the duties of the ceremonial law, he says he was blameless. He said his prayers, or he read them; but it was not till after his conversion that Jesus Christ said of him, '*Behold he prayeth*' (Acts ix. 11)."

"The subject of our conversation is somewhat alarming. It agitates me. It will increase the depression of my spirits. I shall feel quite unhappy. I see nothing before me now but real danger, I may say awful danger. What can I do now?"

"The prophet says, 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord' (Hosea vi. 3). In nature there is progression, and so in grace. The light shines brighter and brighter from the faint dawn to the clear meridian. This is an emblem. You will find Scripture truth come out of its obscurity as you advance in your inquiries and researches; and therefore, my dear Madam, you should not yield to despondency, but rather give diligence to make your calling and election sure, and if you do this, you will ultimately rejoice in hope."

Several weeks elapsed before I visited her again. I had preached one Sabbath evening from Luke xv. 2, proving that Jesus Christ takes supreme delight in saving the chief of sinners. I noticed, when delivering the subjoined passage, the fixedness of her look, and the varying aspect of her countenance, indicating both astonishment and delight. "If he saved our men of refined taste and literary eminence—our great historians and poets—the noble aristocracy of our country—our active spirits who go about doing good—persons of artistic and professional skill—the heroes and heroines of valour and adventure—many would be more gratified than surprised: this, they would say, is as it ought to be; due respect is paid to mind, to moral worth, to rank—the dignity of order is preserved. Well, brethren, he will save any of the various orders to whom I have referred; but then they must come out of the fascinations and embellishments of their social position, and get into the

position of sinners, as he did not come to call the intelligent, the renowned, and the righteous, but he came to *call sinners to repentance*; he *seeks* and *saves* those and those only who feel that they are lost, and in danger of perishing for ever. *He receiveth sinners*—the chief of sinners—sinners of vulgar habits and atrocious crimes—sinners who are shunned by the refined and virtuous, and scowled upon by our sentimental moralists and men of taste; and he saves them—they constitute a large portion of the population of the celestial world. He receiveth sinners; but on what terms and conditions? Believe and be saved; believe now, and be saved. You see, my brethren, that sinners are not sent to mend their ways, before Jesus Christ will save them; they are not sent to embellish their character with a few constitutional virtues, before he will save them; they are not sent to learn a creed, or become proficient in the art of any ceremonial observances, before he will save them; the soul-stirring proclamation is, ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else’ (Isa. xlv. 22).”

“Your discourse, Sir, on Sunday evening, pleased me, but it has greatly perplexed me. It is an inversion of my order of thinking. I always thought that the intelligent and the virtuous were sure to go to heaven, but I had my doubts about others.”

“They *may be saved*; though their intelligence and attainments place their salvation in great jeopardy. The virtues of some, like the vices of others, militate against them, and often decide the fatal issue.”

“You greatly alarm and perplex me. As much danger in superior intelligence, and superior virtue, as in vulgar ignorance and offensive vice!”

“Yes, Madam, and sometimes there is more. The Pharisees of the New Testament were intelligent persons, and they were also virtuous and very religious; and yet with what fearful solemnity, and in what terrific forms of expression, did Jesus Christ denounce and condemn them—‘Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear

beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt. xxiii. 27, 33)."

"My dear Sir, you stagger and confound me with alarm."

"You overlook, my dear Madam, one great fact, which is a solution of the perplexity which confounds you."

"And what is that fact?"

"All have sinned against God; and as a palpable proof of it, the sentence of death has been passed against all. This is a judicial sentence, which could not be inflicted unless there was delinquency, and consequent guilt. As the apostle says, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned' (Rom. v. 12)."

"Then, Sir, am I to understand that all persons—the intelligent and the virtuous, and the ignorant and the vicious—are in the same moral condition—all on the same level?"

"You see that they are all doomed to death; because they have all sinned. The virtue of the most virtuous is no protection against death."

"True, Sir, but may it not prove a safe passport to heaven?"

"In that conception lurks the fatal danger of constitutional virtue, with its fascinating accompaniments of intelligence and mental attainments."

"I don't quite apprehend your meaning."

"Don't you perceive, my dear Madam, that by entertaining the conception that virtue will prove a safe passport to heaven, you substitute virtue in the place of Jesus Christ, the Friend of sinners; virtue is transformed from a mental quality into a saviour, and man saves himself? Now, we know from the infallible testimony of the Bible, that none are received from earth into heaven but *redeemed* SINNERS; and all when actually saved, ascribe their salvation to the death and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. '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' (Rev. i. 5, 6)."

"I am now convinced that I have much to renounce, and much to learn, before I can become a true Christian. I was taught to believe I was regenerated at the font of baptism. This delusion was practised on me when I was confirmed by the bishop. Why, Sir, I have been enveloped in delusion all my life. This is a most painful discovery. It takes me by surprise."

"Had you died under this delusion, you would have been at this moment a lost soul, moving about the dark and terrific world of spirits in absolute despair. You ought, my dear friend, to feel truly grateful to the God of all grace and consolation, that you have made the painful discovery before it is too late for rescue and effective relief."

"But, Sir, what must I do? I am compelled to leave the false refuge in which I have been dreaming of safety; but where shall I find the true one?"

"Jesus Christ receiveth sinners, when they *feel* that they are sinners, and *then* he will save them."

"I now feel that I need his help; but I do not know how to obtain it. My mind, Sir, is distracted—most painfully distracted. I don't know what to do. I see nothing clearly. I feel confused—painfully perplexed."

"You can pray, *Lord save me, or I perish.*"

"I can offer that prayer, and offer it from the depth of my heart; but will Jesus Christ hear it, and will he answer it?"

"He will."

"Then I will try."

A few days after this interview I received a note from her, requesting me to make an early call; and when I went, she informed me that she had such a dread of delusion, she had made up her mind to search the Scriptures, and pursue the investigation till she thoroughly understood—quoting an expression she heard me use when in the pulpit—the unity, and harmony, and glory of the won-

derful economy of redemption. To assist her in her studies, in addition to recommending Dr. Doddridge's *Family Expositor*, I forwarded to her a copy of Dr. Bates' *Harmony of the Divine Attributes*, giving it as my decided opinion, that she would acquire a larger amount of profound and accurate theological knowledge from a careful study of it, than from any other book in the English language.

During the time she was pursuing her spiritual researches, I deemed it expedient to avoid calling on her; but I had the gratification of seeing her both punctual and regular in her attendance at public worship. There was also a perceptible change in the aspect of her countenance; the pensive, and somewhat gloomy impression was entirely obliterated; her eye had resumed its native radiance; she appeared at ease. After the lapse of several weeks, I renewed my visit, which yielded me an adequate recompense for all my preceding solitudes.

"I used, Sir, to read my Prayer Book more than my Bible, which made me idolize the church; but then I lightly esteemed Jesus Christ, the Rock of my salvation. I used to be very fond of the Oxford tracts, but they mystify the truth. They unduly exalt the sacraments, and cast a dimming shadow around the cross. They perpetuated the delusions of my early training, and were preparing me, not for heaven and happiness, but for Popery and its lying wonders. But, Sir, in what a state of delusion our clergy are living, and they don't know it; they are deceiving others, and don't know it!"

"That is true, Madam—painfully true. A spirit of delusion has come forth from the Evil One, and it has alighted on the great majority both of the clergy and laity of the Church of England; and, like insane persons, they are pleased and satisfied with the delusions under which they are living (Mat. xxiii. 13-28)."

"They should be warned of their danger; and warned, Sir, before it is too late."

"They scorn to heed warning when it is given. They hold fast deceit, as though it were the pearl of great price."

"What a wonderful and merciful escape I have had! Yes, Dr.

Bates' *Harmony* is a safe antidote to mental delusions. I can now understand my Bible. I can now understand your preaching. I can now understand what is included in a favourite expression of yours, which for a long time so greatly perplexed me, 'The grand economy of human redemption.'

"And I hope, my dear Madam, you have felt the renovating power of Divine truth and grace in your heart; that you have passed from a state of spiritual death to newness of life, and are become a new creature in Christ Jesus; that old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new."

"I certainly feel conscious of some internal spiritual change, when I compare the present state of my mind with its state some time since; though I sometimes doubt whether it is the spiritual regeneration of the soul of which I read so much in my Bible."

"But why do you doubt it? The change has not been produced by yourself, but by the grace of God; why, then, do you doubt either its reality or the divinity of its origin?"

"I do not doubt its reality, but I strongly suspect the divinity of its origin; because, after the most minute investigation of what has passed and still passes in my mind, I can discover nothing there but my own thoughts, emotions, desires, and purposes. These I find succeed each other in a natural, *unforced* order, under the guidance and control of my own will; which is as free to choose or reject them, as though no superior being were able to control it."

"Accurately to define the exact point where the human will and a Divine agency meet in the moral renovation of the soul, or to say when this mysterious junction takes place, requires a knowledge of the laws of the spiritual world which we can never hope to attain in this imperfect state. Unquestionably, your thoughts and emotions, your desires and purposes, appear to rise spontaneously in your mind, and actually succeed each other in a perfectly logical order; but who first sprang this new mine of thought and feeling? and by what power are these desires and purposes cherished and nurtured in your heart? If you suppose that all originated in

the uninfluenced action of your own understanding and will, you are reduced to the necessity of denying the scriptural statement of the entire depravity of the human heart."

"That I cannot do; I admit that we are morally dead in relation to God, though we may cherish many of the social virtues in relation to each other; and I admit also *that no one knoweth the things of God, but by the Spirit of God.*"

"Then you are compelled to admit *his immediate agency* in imparting a spiritual discernment; and an inclination also to receive those truths as the source of your most sacred and elevated joy, which appear to the natural man either as unnecessary or absurd. His Spirit acts, but we see only its effects. All is under his guidance and control, yet all appears to be the result of our own thoughts and purposes. He leads us in the way in which he would have us go, but his hand is unseen. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, while we suppose that we discover them ourselves. He draws us to Jesus Christ, and enables us to depend on him for salvation; but we seem to direct our own steps, and put forth the unaided strength of our own mind. Thus the Holy Spirit effects our renovation, and makes us willing, in the day of his power, to come to Jesus Christ; while he sees fit to conceal his agency, and condescends, when we are examining ourselves to see whether we are in the faith, to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God."

"I thank you, Sir, for this very satisfactory explanation of a mental process, of which I have been conscious, while unconscious of the concurring power of the Divine Spirit, by whom it has been conducted. It reminds me of what the apostle Paul says in one of his epistles, which I have often meditated on, but could not clearly till now apprehend his meaning—'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure' (Philip. ii. 13). I now perceive that the volitions and doings are ours, but it is God who works them within us; we have the blessing, and he claims the consequent gratitude and love."

“If, my dear friend, we differ from others, as I trust we do, to ascribe its origination to ourselves would be to arrogate the glory which belongs exclusively to God; and though we may sometimes suspect that the difference is not of Divine origin because we are not already perfect, yet I think we cannot fairly doubt its reality when we are brought into direct intercourse with the unenlightened and unrenewed, even though they may profess the same external forms of the Christian faith with ourselves.”

“I can subscribe to the correctness of this remark; for when retiring from such society, I have often felt very grateful to the Lord for giving me views of truth, and enkindling in my soul emotions and desires, of which they appear absolutely destitute.”

“The Psalmist says, ‘All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee’ (Ps. cxlv. 10). The new creation of the soul is the most wonderful specimen of the Divine workmanship; and every one in whom it is effected, will perpetually and for ever advert to it with mingled emotions of astonishment and gratitude.”

No great while after Mrs. Lobeck had acquired this more perfect knowledge of the theory of Divine truth, and became rooted and grounded in its belief, she was received, with her husband, into fellowship with the church. They both distinguished themselves by their liberality, and by their activity in the various departments of labour connected with my congregation; and Mr. Lobeck was eventually elected an elder, by the unanimous choice of his Christian brethren. There was one praiseworthy habit they formed even before their membership; and from which no circumstances, except illness or absence from home, could induce them to deviate; and that was, neither to receive company, or pay any fraternal visits on the evenings when public worship was conducted at the chapel. They thus pursued their onward course with undeviating consistency; walking worthy of their sacred vocation; an example to their Christian brethren, in faith, in charity, and in zeal; blending in their character so many lovely excellencies, as to justify a beautiful remark made by an intelligent



observer, that they had sustained as little injury from the fall, as any couple he had ever known.

Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, is an aphorism which was first uttered by an inspired writer, and now it has passed into current circulation amongst the faithful in Christ Jesus; and as all chastisements, whether light and momentary, or heavy and prolonged, are designed to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, they should be submitted to with meek submissiveness of spirit, and unwavering faith in their necessity and utility. In general the Lord is pleased to give his people some intimations of their coming trials, that they may look to him for strength and patience to endure them; but sometimes he departs from this general rule, and, as in the case of Job, the storm rises out of the dead calm—the affliction is as sudden, as it is unexpected. The Lobecks had three children, two sons and a daughter, the living personifications of vigorous health and sprightliness; but the youngest child, a beautiful little boy about seven years of age, sickened and died within the space of a few hours. I hastened to the house of mourning to offer the expressions of my sympathy; and there I saw the intensity of parental sorrow, held in subjection to the triumph of heroic faith. There was a dignified placidity in Mr. Lobeck's countenance, but he could not repress the falling tear. "Our dear child is taken from us," he said in a mild but firm tone; "yet we must not forget that the Lord has done it, who has reasons for what he does; he does all things well. He never errs."

"This, Sir," said the mother, "*is a great trial*. I feel it at the very core of my heart. So sudden! We had no warning of its coming. Our medical friend did not apprehend any danger. But how thankful ought I to be to our heavenly Father, who has permitted me to see the bow in the overhanging cloud; the dear little sufferer said, just before he died, '*Ma, I am going to Jesus.*' Sweet words!"

"The bitter, my dear friend, often yields sweetness. He was commissioned to announce to you his elevation, even before he had seen the King in his beauty, and received his appointment."

“The sound of his sweet voice still lingers on my ear, but the sweeter words of his lips have sunk deep into my heart; and they soothe and comfort me. He is happy, because a glorified spirit; and though I cannot help mourning over my loss, yet I dare not repine. Yes, he is with Jesus, and must be safe and happy.”

“You may mourn your loss. This is natural. Jesus wept at the grave of his friend, even though he knew that he was coming back to life. Your dear little one will long live in your memory. You will often recall his form, his looks, his sweet smiles and embraces, his inquiries and his sayings. These reminiscences will keep in continuous flow the waters of maternal grief. But turn from his grave, to heaven his present home. Think of his premature elevation, his dignity, and his blessedness—the sorrows and the conflicts he has escaped. Think of the honour which God has conferred on you; you are now the mother of a glorified spirit.”

“I feel it to be an honour, and a great honour. But I shall never forget my sweet little Harry. He was the miniature of his father. I watched his rapid growth, and the premature development of his mind with intense pleasure. His looks, and speech, and manners were so engaging. I anticipated his coming manhood. Alas! he is taken from me.”

“Taken from the evil to come; and the Lord has done it.”

“I bow to his holy and sovereign will. He saw there was a necessity for this severe stroke, or he would not have permitted it to fall upon us. Perhaps we were too fond of our children, and getting too fond of the world; and therefore he has sent this trial to wean our affections from earth; to purify them; to concentrate them supremely on himself.”

“Many have been heard to say, It hath been good for me that I have been afflicted. Hence afflictions, even the most severe, are not positive evils; they are blessings in disguise to the people of God. They unsettle the affections which were cleaving too closely to earth; they elicit the hidden meaning of the precious promises of the Bible, which distil the dew drops of Divine love on the heart; and

by giving palpable demonstrations of the vanity of all human possessions, they imperceptibly invest the glory to be revealed with a freshness of reality which is felt to be elevating and sublime."

At a subsequent interview, when adverting to this severe domestic bereavement, she thus expressed herself:—"I can now say, what I could not say before this trial came upon us—I know in whom I believe. My fears and misgivings have all left me. I am happy, because I know I am safe now; and expect to be more happy, when heart and flesh faint and fail, because then the Lord will be my portion for ever."

"Your dependence for safety and happiness, here and hereafter, is not *now* placed on your religious ceremonies, or on your virtuous attainments."

"O no! *It was*, when I was living under the beguiling delusions of the Tractarian heresy; but *now* I can say with the apostle, 'Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and 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' (Philip. iii. 8, 9)."

"I congratulate you, my dear friend, in having lived to see this day—a day of sorrow, but a day of greater joy and rejoicing. Your husband has exchanged his long cherished scepticism for the faith of Christ, and is now safe for eternity. Your dear little one is with Jesus, in heaven, waiting your entrance. And you are now delivered from all your perplexities and depressive fears, and can anticipate the glory to be revealed in you."

"These, Sir, are facts, great facts, astounding facts. No delusions, grand realities. What an escape has my dear husband had from the subtle devices of scepticism, and what an escape have I had from the equally fatal devices of Tractarian superstition; and I cannot forget the subordinate part you have taken, in effecting these deliverances; nor can I feel too grateful. I thank you for your wise

counsels, for your faithful warnings, for your sympathy and your friendship; but my purest and most ardent gratitude is due, and is often presented to HIM, who has produced these wonderful changes in our character and condition.

“And they are changes, my dear friend, which we may look upon as preludes and pledges of still more glorious changes, when the end cometh. ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is’ (1 John iii. 2).”

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## C H R I S T M A S.



THE Christmas season carries the mind back to the origin of our faith, and all the wondrous events connected with it. It has been made the time for gathering together family connections, and drawing closer those bands of kindred hearts, which the cares, and sorrows, and pleasures of the world are continually operating to cast loose; of calling back the members of a family who have launched forth into life, and wandered far asunder, once more to assemble around the parental hearth, that rallying place of the affections, there to grow young again among the endearing remembrances of childhood. And though this season is commonly devoted by the gay and the thoughtless to scenes of frivolous mirth, thus diverting the attention from the contemplation of the glorious event which the observance of Christmas Day is designed to commemorate, yet that circumstance should not deter the pious Christian from availing himself of the opportunity which national custom affords of mingling in the friendly circle, and partaking of its innocent gratifications. The spirit of our religion neither requires us to shut ourselves up in a monastery, nor practise the austerities of a recluse: but while it

purifies the affections, and throws a salutary restraint upon the appetites and passions, it permits us to enjoy the comforts and the felicity of social intercourse. It teaches moderation, but does not prohibit indulgence; it condemns levity, but sanctions cheerfulness; and, like its illustrious Author, it does not hesitate to attend the festive gathering, when hallowed by the influences of pious friendship and domestic love.

Fully two years had now elapsed since my return from Fairmount, and during the interval I had been engaged in close and unremitting attention to the care of my flock, and I believe I may say, without undue exultation, that my labours had been blessed. I frequently corresponded with my country friends, and when, in the close of 18—, Mr. Stevens sent me a pressing invitation to spend the Christmas with him, I resolved, after securing a suitable substitute in my absence, to proceed to Watville, along with Mr. Llewelin, who was to accompany me on my visit. We left London by the stage coach on a fine frosty morning, the 23d of December, and as evening was closing in we reached Salisbury, where we were to pass the night, Mr. Llewelin having some business to transact there. Our journey was exceedingly pleasant. After emerging from the smoke and bustle of London, we passed through a beautiful country, attractive even in winter, the aspect of which was all the more delightful to me from my long previous confinement to a city. We travelled the greater part of the way with two young gentlemen, who were going home to spend the vacation. They were brothers, of nearly equal age—the one destined for the profession of the law, the other for the church. The elder boy was sprightly, the younger somewhat grave; both were very agreeable and intelligent. With the happy buoyancy of youth ere its day-dreams are dispelled by the sad experience of maturer years, the present was to them a joyous reality, only to be exceeded by the realization of the bright visions of the future. Their conversation was the complete overflow of youthful spirits, rejoicing in the release from school discipline, and the prospect of again meeting their friends, and returning for a time to

all their country recreations. They also alluded to their prospects in life—of their success, in which no desponding thought had as yet ever crossed their minds; but, though thus sanguine in their anticipations, they possessed too much good sense to suppose that distinction could be attained without industry, or honour acquired without desert.

“I suppose, young gentlemen,” said Mr. Llewellyn, “you intend to devote your holidays to amusement.”

“Not entirely,” said the young lawyer; “I intend to read history at least two hours every morning;” “and I intend,” said the young divine, “to con over the classics as long, and then, Sir, to amuse myself.”

“I am happy to hear,” added Mr. Llewellyn, “that you have come to such a decision; while your recreations unbend your minds from the severity of close application, the adoption of such a habit will keep them in trim for future service.”

“Very true,” replied the lawyer; “if we wish to rise to eminence, we must redeem time, rather than suffer it to be wasted in indolence and inactivity.”

The young clergyman, who was looking out of the window, suddenly exclaimed, “Here’s old William standing at the gate with our horses, and yonder is papa coming on Smiler across the close.”

The coach stopped, and out stepped our interesting companions, who, after bidding us adieu, left us to pursue our journey alone. We soon lost sight of them, but, in the space of a few minutes, a turn in the road revealed them again to our view; their father, alighting from his horse, joyfully embraced his children, after which they all mounted their steeds, and we watched them galloping off towards a beautiful country-seat, which we had been admiring before our young friends left us, but then had no idea that it was their destination.

The stage now drove on, and about five o’clock we were rattling through the streets of Salisbury, where, after refreshing ourselves at our inn, Mr. Llewellyn sallied forth to transact the business matter which had led us to take this route, and I ensconced myself

comfortably by the side of a blazing fire, where I commenced reading Cheever's *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, then just published. The charms of the narrative entranced me, and I gradually lost myself, crossing the pass of the Grand St. Bernard to the charming Val d'Aoste, or sailing on the romantic Lake of Luzern. Mr. Llewellyn was detained for several hours; I accordingly had time to traverse a considerable part of Switzerland in company with my pilgrim. He at length appeared, and we shortly afterwards retired to rest. On getting up in the morning I proposed a walk to the cathedral, as we had some time to spare before the coach started. On reaching it (the hour for morning service not having yet arrived) we found the attendants busy decking the cathedral with evergreens for the ensuing day. Though both Mr. Llewellyn and myself were decided Dissenters, we could nevertheless well appreciate the majesty of the noble structure in which we were now standing, and feel even something of a religious awe as we gazed down the long aisles, and listened to the echo of our footsteps as they reverberated through the building.

"After all," observed Mr. Llewellyn, "the simplest form of worship appears to me the most to be commended, where the mind runs no danger of mistaking the mere excitement of the imagination for a burst of devotional feeling."

"Certainly," I returned; "and I quite agree with Cheever's remark in his *Wanderings*, which I was reading last night, that it is generally the period of greatest spiritual declension where we find ecclesiastical architecture most magnificent. But hark!"

The organist had, unseen by us, ascended to the loft to practise; and at this moment pealed forth a majestic voluntary, which sublimely rolled away to the extremity of the building, and then returned in a softer strain through the re-echoing aisles. Another and another succeeded. We both stood for some moments rooted to the spot, surrendering ourselves to the overpowering influence of the sacred strain. The music ceased for a few moments, and, recovering myself, I exclaimed, "Let us haste from this bewitching influence,

which I am afraid savours but too much of mere earthly excitement." "I think so too," rejoined Mr. Llewellyn; "and, nevertheless, I can well understand the lines of the poet Gray:—

'Where through the long drawn aisle and fretted vault  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.'

As our time was then nearly expired, we returned to our inn, and shortly afterwards started again in the coach; and after a journey of some hours, reached Watville, where we found Mr. Stevens' carriage waiting to convey us to Fairmount. It is needless to say how warmly we were welcomed by our friends, whom we had the pleasure of finding in excellent health. Soon after the first greetings were over, and we had arranged our toilet and made ourselves comfortable, Mrs. Stevens, with a peculiar smile on her countenance, which *told tales*, said to Mr. Llewellyn, "Mr. and *Miss* Roscoe are engaged to spend the evening with us; no doubt this will be a gratification to you." This communication at once raised his spirits, which had been gradually sinking as we approached the end of our journey. I was no longer at a loss to account for the sighs which had occasionally made their escape from his breast during the short intervals of silence that took place in the course of conversation. His countenance now brightened up, and he seemed to be animated by a more than usual flow of spirits.

A storm of snow began now to descend as we gathered snugly around the cheerful fire, and for a time enjoyed ourselves in familiar converse by its uncertain light. Candles had been brought, and Mrs. Stevens was busying herself with the tea arrangements, when the bell rang, and Mr. Roscoe was ushered into the parlour; but he came alone. "I am sorry to inform you, Madam, that Sophia will not be able to be with you this evening, as she has caught a cold."

"I hope, Sir," said Mr. Llewellyn, with a certain awkwardness of manner of which gentlemen are sometimes guilty when they feel *too much to express*, "that she is not materially affected by it."

"O no, Sir, it is only a slight cold, and she is unwilling to ex-



pose herself to the night-air, lest she should be incapable of going to church in the morning."

After tea our conversation turned upon the festivals of the church, and the propriety of observing those days which are set apart for the celebration of the great events which stand connected with the redemption of man. "I was once," said Mr. Roscoe, "superstitiously attached to these days, and regarded them with more reverence than I did the Sabbath; but I have now corrected the error into which I had fallen, and though I still reverence them more than the common days of the year, I do not look upon them as equal to the Sabbath in obligation or sanctity."

"Some Dissenters," said Mrs. Stevens, "who wish to get as far away from the church as they can, reprobate this observance as savouring of Popery. Is it not so, Mr. Llewellyn?"

"Yes, aunt, they do; and in doing so, they go from one extreme to the other. Their aversion to superstition is so strong, that they cannot observe these commemorative days of Christianity with feelings of reverence and delight, because the zealous patrons of the church invest many of them with more sanctity than they attribute to the Sabbath. As time is the regular and unbroken succession of minutes, hours, days, months, and years, one portion of it cannot be more sacred than another, unless it derives a sanctity from the command of God; and since he has enjoined the observance of the Sabbath only, as that portion of time which we are to hold sacred, we feel ourselves under no obligation to keep the holidays which are set apart by mere human authority."

"But, Sir," interposed Mr. Roscoe, "though we do not exalt the holidays of our church to equal sanctity with the Christian Sabbath, yet as the recurrence of the anniversaries of great events in the history of man is known to impart to past transactions a degree of interest which is not so powerfully felt at other times, is there not a propriety in observing these commemorative days, if we are anxious to derive from past events the powerful lessons which they ought to teach?"

“Most certainly,” returned Mr. Llewellyn. “I do not object to these commemorative days, though some of my brethren do, but gladly avail myself of them, as a means of recalling to remembrance the great facts which stand inseparably connected with my redemption. I can go with you to church on a Christmas morning, to celebrate the birth of my Saviour—on a Good Friday, to commemorate his death—and on an Easter Sunday, to rejoice in his resurrection. And though some may censure this as a dereliction of principle, I do not so view it. It gives me greater pleasure to unite with my fellow-Christians, than to live in a state of alienation from them : and while I would condemn all superstitious attachment to these days, I would reprobate the spirit which treats them with contempt.”

“I am happy to find,” observed Mrs. Stevens, “that you have not lost your catholic spirit by associating with your brethren in the metropolis; and I hope you have been the means of diffusing its mellowing influence amongst them—softening down their prejudices, and bringing them over to a more friendly intimacy with their fellow-Christians of the Establishment.”

“Since you left us,” rejoined Mr. Roscoe, “I have examined some of the reasons which induce you to dissent from our Establishment: and though they have not produced the same effect on my mind which they have on yours, yet I think it right to confess, that they have convinced me of the impropriety of censuring you, and of the folly, not to use a stronger term, of allowing a difference of opinion on minor questions of religion to operate as a barrier to Christian fellowship.”

“I am really happy to hear you make such a concession; it exactly accords with my own views:” and turning towards Mrs. Stevens, he said, “You seem to think, aunt, that all the bigotry of religion is on our side.”

“Quite enough of it,” she replied.

“Too much, I grant; but with all due deference, I think that you of the Establishment have the greatest share amongst yourselves.”



CHRISTMAS EVE.

"Bigotry amongst us! A libel! a libel!" Mrs. Stevens returned, with an expression of feigned indignation.

"I suppose, aunt, you are become a believer in the modern doctrine of libel; which teaches us, that *the greater the truth, the greater the libel.*"

"Well, well, we won't contest this point; but rather regret that there should be still found amongst any of us a vestige of that anti-Christian spirit, which keeps asunder those who are united in the bonds of the everlasting covenant, and who look forward to dwell together in that heavenly world, where no discordant notes will ever break the harmony of holy fellowship."

"It is when we view religion," remarked Mr. Roscoe, "as connected with this world—as coming in contact with our prejudices, and our passions—as trespassing upon the sanctity of our opinions, and threatening to disturb them, that we imperceptibly imbibe an anti-Christian feeling towards those who differ from us: but when we view it as connected with eternity—as involving the glory of God in the transformation of the human character; and when we distinctly recognize the action of his power, in setting apart a peculiar people to display before the men of the world a palpable evidence of the unity of our essential faith, our mind becomes imperceptibly imbued with the spirit of the Redeemer, who loves no disciple *more* because he is a Churchman, and no disciple *less* because he is a Dissenter—having given his life a ransom for all who trust in him for salvation."

The conversation was here interrupted by the sweet voices of children singing a Christmas carol in front of the house. We listened for some minutes, when Mrs. Stevens proposed that the choir should be invited into the hall, where they would be sheltered from the snow which was drifting against them. I immediately opened the door, which threw them into some confusion, and they were on the eve of scampering away. I requested them to come in; and taking hold of the hand of the youngest girl, I brought her into the hall, when, after some backwardness and hesitation, the rest cheer-

fully followed her. Mrs. Stevens welcomed them, and was pleased to recognize in the young singers some of her own Sunday scholars, who, in spite of snow and drift, had carried out this plan of showing their attachment to her. Their bonnets and cloaks were taken off; and after they had had some refreshment and warmed themselves by the fire, Mr. Llewelin consented to play on the piano, and we all joined the youthful choristers in singing the praises of the Redeemer. Thus pleasantly passed away the hours of the evening, without entailing guilt or self-reproach; and having rewarded those who came to afford us gratification, we allowed them to depart, happy and contented.

On the following morning we rose at the usual hour, and after the devotions of the family were concluded we took breakfast. The ground was carpeted with the snow which had fallen last night, but the weather was clear and dry above, and we contrived to reach church without much inconvenience. On entering the sacred building, in which I had on past occasions listened with delight to the glad tidings of salvation, and where many who were then assembled had received the first impressions of truth on their hearts, my eye caught sight of the venerable Rector, who had just raised his face from its concealment under the folds of his surplice, having invoked in silent prayer the Divine blessing on himself and his congregation. The time that had elapsed since I had previously met with him had not passed lightly over his head, for he now bore evident marks of increasing age and infirmity. When the audience stood up, as he began the service, I thought of the venerable patriarch who, when addressing the tribes of Israel just before his departure, said—"I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in." Though his hand shook, and his general appearance indicated great bodily weakness, yet his voice was strong, and he read the whole service with great impressiveness and solemnity. Having finished it he threw off the surplice, and ascended the pulpit; and looking around with a benignant smile on his crowded auditory, he once more knelt to pray

to Him who rewards with the open manifestations of his grace the prayers of his faithful servants. He chose the following text:—  
“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. ix. 24-26). After a few introductory observations, he said, “Allow me to call your attention to—

“I. The Saviour’s appearance on earth. Mark,

“*First.* The time of his coming. It was in the end of the world; that is, at the conclusion of the Levitical dispensation.

“*Second.* The design of his appearance—to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

“*Third.* The perfection of the sacrifice which he offered—verses 25, 26.

“The Jewish sacrifices,” said the venerable Rector, “removed ceremonial defilement, and the guilt of the sins which were committed against the political and ecclesiastical laws of the theocracy; but they could not expiate the guilt of the sins committed against God, nor restore peace to the conscience of the transgressor: and their perpetual repetition, during the succeeding periods of that dispensation, was an unequivocal proof of their inefficacy. But such was the efficacy of the sacrifice which Jesus Christ presented, when he offered up himself to God, that he made a full expiation for the sins of his people, and procured for them pardon, acceptance, and eternal life. When his enemies stood gazing on him, as the blood was flowing from his veins, they were unconscious of the great moral effects which that precious blood was actually producing. It was throwing back an influence on the ages which were past—cancelling the arrears which were due to the justice of God from the redeemed who had been pressing into the kingdom of

heaven from the death of Abel to that hour; and it was extending forward to the end of time a source of merit, which would take away the guilt of all who should believe in him. And yet, my brethren, though the Scriptures declare, in the most decisive terms, that we have redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of our sins, many impeach the efficacy of the atonement, and some would expunge it from the Christian system. But if they are disposed to mistrust its efficacy in relation to themselves, why not suffer it to remain for the benefit of others? Take away the atonement of Christ from the scheme of redemption, and you commit an act more cruel towards man than that of which a Levite would have been guilty had he, under cloud of night, carried off the brazen serpent, which was the only means of saving the people from the agonies of a lingering but certain death. Take away the atonement of Christ from the scheme of redemption, and you commit a deed more cruel than that of which the high-priest would have been guilty, had he drained off the waters of Bethesda the night before the descent of the angel, by whose mysterious power they became the means of healing the withered, the halt, and the blind. O, take not from the sanctuary of the Lord the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel: it is the only voice that speaks the words of peace to man, when stung by remorse, or agitated by fear.

“II. The Saviour’s appearance in heaven.

“*First.* Where does he appear? In heaven itself.

“*Second.* For whom does he appear? For us.

“*Third.* For what purpose does he appear?

“It hath pleased God,” said the preacher, when illustrating this part of his subject, “in the conveyance of blessings to man, to appoint a regular system of agency and means as the medium through which they are given. To object to such an appointment is no less an insult to his authority, than an impeachment of his wisdom. It is but rarely, indeed, that such an act of folly and impiety is committed in relation to the minor gifts which he bestows. Life is preserved,

not by a direct and arbitrary exertion of his power, but by the reception of food prepared by the labour and skill of man, and received according to the ordinance of his appointment. Evils which threaten our honour and happiness are averted, not by a visible interposition of his providence, but by the influence and exertions of our friends, who are employed under his direction. If, then, on this general principle the ordinary affairs of his wise and benevolent administration are conducted; and if this principle be admitted by us, and we feel its practical utility, why should we object to the adoption of it in reference to a more important and a more momentous course of procedure? Why refuse to admit that Jesus Christ is the medium through whom all the designs of mercy and grace, in relation to man, are accomplished? If it hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, ought we to object to such an arrangement? Is it wise? Is it becoming? Is it safe? But, brethren, I hope better things of you, though I thus speak. You feel too deeply your obligations to the Redeemer, for laying down his life a ransom for you, to wish to rob him of the glory of your salvation—and are too deeply interested in the result of his appearance in the presence of God for you, to exclude him from your affections and confidence. He now appears in the presence of God to intercede for you; and on his intercession your present safety and happiness, and your future glory depend.”

The looks, the tones, and the manner of the speaker showed that he was thoroughly impressed with the importance of his subject; and being earnest himself, an evident impression was produced on his audience.

On leaving church, I was walking a little behind Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, and Mr. Llewellyn, and was much pleased to find my old friend, Farmer Pickford, and his wife, waiting on the roadside to speak to me.

“I am main glad, Sir, to see you back amongst us once more; and I hope you will come some day and take pot-luck with us.”

“Yes, do, Sir,” said Mrs. Pickford, “we shall be so glad to see you.



Our eldest son often talks about you. We hope what you said, when reading the Bible, and your prayer, have been made a great blessing to his soul."

"He'll be a better man than his father, and no mistake. Why, Sir, he knows more of the Bible already than Parson Cole; he can say more verses than the Parson can; and he can tell the meaning of them too. I and my mistress often sit up a bit at night, after the rest are gone to bed, to hear his talk about the good things of the Bible."

"Have you established family prayer in your family?"

"Yes, Sir," said Mrs. Pickford. "Our son prays with the family every night."

"Aye, Sir, it would do your heart good to hear our Harry pray. He often makes me weep when I am hearkening to him. Why, at his age, and a longful while after, I was a wild, wicked man. I have sinned a main lot of sins in my time, the more's the pity; but now I know the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. What a mercy! Things are changed amongst us for the better."

"Yes, Sir," rejoined his wife; "the wilderness is now a fruitful field. We have no swearing, or drunkenness, or Sabbath-breaking, amongst us now. We are so happy, and thankful to the Lord and to you."

"I suppose, farmer, you would not like to have things changed back again to their former state?"

"I would rather die first, and no mistake. What! swear again—and get drunk again—and break the Sabbath again—and be the same man I was when you gave us the first talk about the worth of the soul. The Lord, I hope, will never let that come to pass."

"My heart would burst to see it," exclaimed Mrs. Pickford. "Our Henry tells his father, that when the Lord begins the work of grace in the soul, he always goes on with it."

"The Lord has done a little for me, I do believe; because I should never have done it myself without him; but I can't get on in knowledge and in grace, like my mistress and our Harry. I am dullish

like, except in the matter of farming. But I hate sin, love my Bible, trust in Christ for salvation; and I think at times it will be well with me at last. I am happy to tell you, Sir, we now all go to chapel at night."

"So then, farmer, you have got over your scruples, and go and hear my friend, Mr. Stevens, on a Sabbath evening."

"He's a wonderful man. I sometimes think he can preach better than our Rector; though he is a main good preacher. He is more simple and plain-like. Somehow or another, but I don't know how it is, what he says gets farther into my heart, and stays longer there than our Rector's sermons. I wish he would preach in the morning too. The youngsters like him best. Our Harry leads the singing at the chapel, and teaches in the school. He is a kind of a right-hand man amongst 'um."

"Keep steadily on, farmer, in the good way; avoid temptation; let no sin have dominion over you; read your Bible, be constantly coming by faith to Jesus Christ, to pardon, to purify, and save you, and I shall see you in heaven at last."

"The Lord grant it may be so. Will you speak to me then if you should happen to see me there?"

"Speak to you! yes; and hail you as a son of God, made perfect in knowledge and in purity."

"Well, I'll live in hope. You will come and take pot-luck with us before you leave Fairmount?"

"Yes, do, Sir," added Mrs. Pickford; "we shall all be so glad to see you, and so will dear Henry."

"I forgot to say one thing," observed the farmer, "which mainly you would like to know, Sir."

"And what is that, Mr. Pickford?"

"Why, my mistress and our Harry have set up a bit of a prayer meeting like, in our kitchen, on a Wednesday night. Our youngsters and sarvants, and some of the neighbours come to it, and fill it; and we have some good singing, and all the rest of it, as they have at Mr. Stevens' chapel."

"I am happy to hear this, farmer; but have you a sermon?"

"No, Sir, not always; but we have a sarmunt now and tan, when we can get hold of a preacher; and when we 'ant got one, our Harry says a few things from the Bible, and you would be main pleased to hear him. He puts out what he says in a plainish sort of a way, but we all see that what he says comes from his heart, and it gets into our hearts, and does us good. Will you come, Sir, some Wednesday night while you are here, and give us a prayer and a sarmunt? You shall have a full kitchen."

"Yes, do, Sir," said Mrs. P.; "we shall be so glad to see you and hear you. I'll invite all our neighbours."

"And if the kitchen be not big enough to hold them, I'll have the barn cleared out, and we'll go there."

"Very well. I'll be with you next Wednesday."

We then shook hands and parted, and I hastened to rejoin my friends, who I found, in the interval, had met with the Roscoes, including Miss Roscoe, who had now happily completely recovered from her cold, and consented, evidently to the satisfaction of Mr. Llewellyn, to accompany her parents in the evening to Fairmount. I informed them of my conversation with Farmer Pickford, and how I had arranged to conduct a prayer meeting at his house on the ensuing Wednesday. We then proceeded homeward, discussing the topics of the sermon we had just heard, with, I trust, much mutual profit. Early in the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe, and Miss Roscoe, appeared, agreeably to their promise, and we spent a very pleasant Christmas evening together. The tranquil joy visible in the countenances of Mr. Llewellyn and Miss Roscoe was especially manifest—our courting days, as Goldsmith remarks, being generally about the happiest in our lives. After tea we had a little sacred music, both Mr. Llewellyn and Miss Roscoe being admirable performers on the pianoforte. We then all joined in singing together the Evening Hymn. Thus terminated our Christmas at Fairmount, during which we had all experienced how much better is the employment of the day in the purposes of devotion than in those of conviviality and mirth.

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On Christmas Day, when the scattered members of a family are gathered together to enjoy, around the social hearth, the pleasures of social intercourse, those who are the avowed disciples of the Redeemer should be on their guard, lest they conform to the custom of the world, which too often celebrates his birth by indulging in the pleasures of eating and drinking, and thoughtless merriment, rather than by improving conversation and the interchange of devotional sentiments. We are required to set an example; and while I am no advocate for the exclusion of innocent recreations and indulgences from the domestic circle, I must enforce the imperative necessity of a dignified consistency of conduct on the part of those who profess to be wiser in their generation than the men of the world, and who contemplate, with wonder and with gratitude, the scheme of redemption, consummated by the appearance of the Saviour, on which many pour contempt, or look with unmoved indifference. You may have your family parties, and you may invite your friends to partake of your bounty, and you may assume and wear an air of cheerfulness and pleasantry; but no excess of eating, or of drinking, or of levity should be tolerated, as your profession has raised you to the summit of observation, and the irreligious, no less than your fellow-Christians, expect that you will let your moderation appear unto all men. Your children, if they are not decidedly pious, may wish, on this day of festivity, to trespass a little farther on the gravity of your domestic habits than they presume to do on ordinary occasions; and though I would not advise you to transfer the sanctity of the Sabbath to this day, as you have no authority for so doing, yet there is a propriety in observing it with decorum, as commemorating the birth of him who came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The slightest reference to the *design* of his mission will suggest to your mind the importance of celebrating this day in a suitable manner, by offering "thanks unto God for his unspeakable gift," and by giving a practical proof that he came to save his people from their sins. .

## WINTER SCENES.



THE weather had been intensely cold since our arrival at Fairmount, and for two days the snow had descended without intermission; but on the second evening a severe frost set in, and when I stepped out in the morning, I found that the fallen flakes had become so hardened that I could walk on them without leaving the impression of my foot on the surface. I love the country at all seasons, and, though certainly preferring it in the genial seasons of summer and autumn, when the woods are decked in their mantle of green, and the fields brighten in the sunshine with their waving crops of golden grain, I have nevertheless frequently experienced a large amount of pleasure in rambling during winter along the frozen roads and lanes, or contemplating the bleak landscape spreading out before me, with its white carpet of snow.

After walking briskly onward for a little distance, I determined, after some hesitation, to revisit the spot where, on a former occasion,\* I had sat to feast myself on the enchanting scenery of the country, which was then clothed in its gayest summer dress; but now the scene was completely changed. The skeleton trees extended their leafless branches sprinkled with snow-flakes; many of the evergreens in the shrubbery presented a withered and scorched aspect, from the influence of the frost; while the little birds, who in the summer had delighted us with their music, were now roaming about the country in search of food, and some of them not unfrequently found dead on the roadside from hunger and cold.

As I stood viewing the change which the winter season had made in the appearance of nature, my mind reverted to the changes which as suddenly take place in the dispensations of Providence; and I recalled to my remembrance many who, during my short pilgrimage,

\* See vol. i. p. 92.

had sunk from the heights of prosperity to the depths of adversity, and whose opening spring of plenty and of hope had been succeeded by the sterile and stormy winter—closing up the visions of their anticipated bliss in the gloom of disappointment and of woe. While thus musing on the mutations of nature and of Providence, I saw two lads approaching from a distant meadow, and when they drew near enough for me to trace their features, I recognized the children of the woodman whom I visited on the evening when his little daughter died.\* They looked very sorrowful and dejected, and exclaimed, as soon as they recognized me, "O, Sir, we are again in trouble—we have lost father! Have you seen him, or heard of him? We have been walking about ever since daybreak, but we can't find him." They then gave me an account of the calamity which had befallen them.

After the interment of his daughter, he regained his usual flow of spirits, and felt resigned to the will of God; but within the last few weeks he had sunk into a low, desponding state, and often spoke of his decease as one who believed the hour of his departure was at hand; and yet health nerved his arm, and he was strong to labour. "Mother often told him," said the eldest son, "that he ought not to mistrust Providence, who had always provided food and raiment for us; nor yet to think that he was going to leave us. But she could not comfort him; for, after coming home at night, he would sit and weep, and talk to us till we all wept with him; and we knew not why, for we saw no danger coming. We were all well and happy except father."

He had gone to his work on the preceding day, at his usual hour, taking with him, in his bag and bottle, his refreshment, and was seen by his master about noon, walking away from the field in which he had been at work, with his dog by his side, but neither of them had been heard of since. "We fear, Sir," said the lad, who sobbed aloud as he spoke, wiping away at the same time the falling tears with the sleeve of his frock, "he has tumbled into some pit, and has

\* See vol. i. p. 104.

perished in the snow; but, Sir, we cannot trace any marks of his footsteps, nor yet hear Trail bark nor howl. Farmer Pickford and his son have just been away searching for him in one direction, and we in another; and the whole village is up looking for him, but we can see nothing like him anywhere, and I feel assured that poor father is gone. O, Sir, if you could but come and speak a word of comfort to mother! She is so unhappy, she does nothing but wring her hands and cry, for she does not know what to do."

Having heard this tale of woe, I resolved to accompany the two lads to the cottage, and endeavour to soothe their mother's distress. The distracted wife was standing at the door, and, on seeing me, she clasped her hands in an agony of grief, and began to repeat to me the affecting tale. "I have thought, Sir, at times, he would not live long, for within the last two months his spirit and his prayer all seemed to prove that he was getting ripe for glory; but I did not expect to lose him so soon, nor in this way."

"You do not," I remarked, "suppose that he is murdered?"

"O no, Sir! He has tumbled into some pit and perished in the snow, which fell yesterday in larger and thicker flakes than I ever saw before; but I feared no danger, because he knows the parts so well. I expected him home sooner than usual, on account of the badness of the weather; and as I thought something warm would comfort him, I had got a stew ready, but"—she could add no more.

I was very much affected by the aspect of the interior of the cottage, which still showed the preparations made on the preceding evening for the poor woodman's return. The neat round table stood near the fire, covered with a clean cloth; a deep wooden trencher, with a spoon and salt-cellar made of the same material, were placed beside it; the oak chair was in readiness to receive its owner, and the small kettle was still hanging over the fire, which had been suffered to dwindle from the bright blaze into dying embers. I endeavoured to comfort her in this hour of her sorrow; but she was so overpowered with anguish, that words of consolation appeared to be of no avail; and after praying with her I left, with a promise that I

would call again. The lines of the poet Thomson, with which I had been long familiar, now recurred to my recollection, and I could not repress the tear which their remembrance on the present occasion involuntarily caused:—

“ Ah! little think the gay licentious proud,  
Whom pleasure, pow'r, and affluence surround;  
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,  
And wanton, often cruel riot, waste;  
Ah! little think they, while they dance along,  
How many feel, this very moment, death,  
And all the sad variety of pain.  
How many sink in the devouring flood,  
Or more devouring flame! How many bleed,  
By shameful variance betwixt man and man!  
How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms,  
Shut from the common air, and common use  
Of their own limbs! How many drink the cup  
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread  
Of misery! Sore pierc'd by wintry winds,  
How many sink into the sordid hut  
Of cheerless poverty! How many shake  
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,  
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse!  
Whence, tumbling headlong from the height of life,  
They furnish matter for the tragic muse.  
Even in the vale, where wisdom loves to dwell,  
With friendship, peace, and contemplation join'd,  
How many, rack'd with honest passions, droop  
In deep retir'd distress! How many stand  
Around the deathbed of their dearest friends,  
And point the parting anguish! Thought fond man  
Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,  
That one incessant struggle render life,  
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,  
Vice in his high career would stand appall'd,  
And heedless rambling impulse, learn to think;  
The conscious heart of charity wou'd warm,  
And her wide wish benevolence dilate;  
The social tear would rise, the social sigh;  
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,  
Refining still, the social passions work.”

On my return to Fairmount, I found the Roscoes there; and, on entering the parlour, Mrs. Stevens said, “ We have felt somewhat



uneasy on your account. I hope nothing unpleasant has detained you."

"I have been, Madam, to the house of mourning, where grief is still raging unassuaged." I then narrated the melancholy tale, which deeply affected the whole party; and various plans were suggested for the recovery of the lost woodman.

"It will be impossible for us," said Mr. Roscoe, "to do anything in the way of searching for this poor man; but we may make some provision for the support of his widow, as I fear she may now too truly be termed, by commencing a subscription for her, which I think is no less our duty than our privilege."

"Very good," replied Mrs. Stevens, who immediately drew from her pocket-book a five pound note, which sum was increased to the amount of £17 by the donations of the rest of the party.

"How soon," remarked Mr. Stevens, "may a mysterious Providence lay waste the pleasant things of our possession, and leave us in a state of destitution and affliction! I saw the woodman and his family at church on Christmas morning; the bloom of health was on his countenance, and a fine glow of delight came over it when Mr. Ingleby was describing the effects which would be produced on the mind of a redeemed sinner when taking the first look at the Great High Priest of the heavenly temple. I have no doubt but he spent the evening of that day in the bosom of his family, blessing them with his prayers and instructions."

"At no season of the year," said Miss Roscoe, "am I so powerfully impressed by a sense of the Divine goodness, as during the inclement season of winter; when I am sheltered from the rude storm, which often beats through the shattered roof of the poor man's cottage—am warmed by the cheerful blaze, which seldom burns on his hearth—have extra clothing to cover me whenever I am exposed to the severity of the weather—and have all the comforts and conveniences of life, while many,

" 'Sore pierc'd by wintry winds,  
 ——— sink into the wretched hut  
 Of cheerless poverty!"

But why am I favoured with these mercies of which many others are deprived? I might have been doomed to work for my daily bread, or perhaps to beg it from door to door; or, looking at the fate of this poor woodman, such a calamity might quite as likely have befallen one of my dearest friends."

"If we wish to trace our mercies," said Mr. Lewellin, "to the source from whence they proceed, we must go to the fountain of all goodness, and acknowledge that 'every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' No other reason can be assigned why we are so distinguished by the munificence of his kindness in preference to others, than the sovereignty of his will."

"And does it not," said Miss Roscoe, "enhance the value of our mercies, and tend to excite our gratitude to still higher degrees of ardour, when we receive them as coming from the fountain of all goodness through the mediation of our Redeemer, who gave himself for us!"

"And," remarked Mr. Stevens, "if we are distinguished in preference to others, when we can present no stronger claims on the Divine bounty, I think we ought to act an equally munificent part towards the more needy and afflicted of the human family. I am at a loss to conceive how any Christian can consent to be comfortably clothed and fed, while so many, even of the household of faith, are suffering all the evils attendant on a state of poverty. What we possess is intrusted to our care as stewards, not given to us as proprietors; and though we are allowed to partake of it, yet are we not commanded to distribute to the necessities of the saints?"

"I have no doubt," said Mr. Roscoe, "there are many pious and benevolent Christians who would distribute a much larger portion of their goods amongst the poor and the needy, if they knew the extent of their privations; but living apart from the suffering community by which they are surrounded, and seldom hearing of its woes, they have no conception of the prevalence of distress, and from ignorance rather than avarice, withhold the assistance they would other-

wise most willingly afford. I have long entertained this opinion; for I generally find, that when any special case of distress becomes a subject of notoriety, or when any benevolent scheme is promulgated to promote the comfort of the poor, especially on any pressing occasion, contributions flow into the treasury of benevolence to a large amount."

"Yes, papa," answered his daughter; "when the public see the pallid and emaciated form of misery moving before their eye, or when they hear the mournful relation of its sufferings, the common sympathies of their nature are powerfully excited, and they cannot help affording some degree of assistance without doing violence to their Christian feelings; but is it not our duty, as the disciples of the Redeemer, to imitate his example *in going about continually doing good*? We are told that 'the poor shall never cease out of the land;' and can poverty exist unattended by its consequent evils? Would it not, on our part, be a profitable exercise, were we sometimes to leave our warm fireside, during the inclemency of the weather, and visit the huts and cottages of the poor, to examine for ourselves how they are clad, and how they are warmed and fed?"

"Certainly, my dear; and I think that those Christians who possess wealth to any extent beyond the immediate wants of their own family, who never pay such a visit to the poor man's dwelling, not only deprive themselves of one strong incitement to gratitude, but act a faithless part to him who has employed them in the capacity of stewards to distribute his bounties."

"I quite agree with you," said Mr. Lewellin, "in your opinion respecting the benevolence of the public when any case of distress, or when any scheme of charity becomes the subject of notoriety, but the benevolence which takes its rise from the mere sympathies of our nature, or that is stimulated to excitement by the example of others, is a defective principle, and essentially different from the pure benevolence of Christianity, which, taking its rise from the authority of the Divine law, proposes the example of the Redeemer as the pattern of its own conduct, going and distributing its dona-

tions in the unfrequented paths of misery, no less than in the open field of want."

"What you say, Sir," replied Mr. Roscoe, "is very true; and it possesses another property which you have forgotten to mention—it is less dependent on excitement, and consequently more steady in its exercise. I once heard of a lady of rank who rode out in her carriage one frosty morning, but having passed the suburbs of the city, felt the weather so intensely cold, that she ordered the coachman to drive home as fast as possible. Turning then to a friend who was with her, she said, 'I will immediately purchase twelve pairs of blankets for the poor, who must be nearly frozen to death. In the afternoon, when reminded of her promise, she said, 'I think the weather is become so mild that they will not require the blankets.' 'Yes,' replied her friend, 'it is milder in this parlour than it was in the carriage, but it is equally severe in the open air.' In this case, as in many others, the intensity of the weather excited the benevolent feeling, and extorted the pledge; but as soon as the bitter cold outside was exchanged for the comfortable warmth within, the feeling gradually subsided, and the poor were left still to suffer without enjoying the benefit of relief."

"I was so much struck," said Mr. Stevens, "with the description of charity which I met with in the course of my reading some time since, that I transcribed it into my common-place book, and, by your permission, I will now read it:—

"Charity is no intermittent thing that now and then breaks out into brilliant munificence, and then retires to slumber in the lap of indolence and selfish repose; that, like a burning mountain, emits occasional sparks and flashes of splendour, and then rolls forth nothing but smoke and darkness. It is a lamp that is always burning, sometimes with a brighter and sometimes with a fainter light, but is never extinguished. It is a vital principle—a generous life—the pulses of which are continually proceeding, now with stronger and now with more languid beats, but never come to a stand still. The life of a charitable man consists not merely of a few detached

acts of desultory bounty, separated from each other by long intervals; his heart is an inexhaustible fountain, that supplies a current of kind attentions; that sends forth a stream of services to his fellow-creatures, few of which may be signal, but all of which are sincere, and which, though separately considered, may appear small, yet, collectively, are of great amount.”

“But,” said Mr. Lewellin, “we rarely find a pure and unremitting charity, except among those who are the real disciples of Jesus Christ; and the motive by which they are induced to cultivate it is very powerful. In the twenty-fifth chapter of the gospel by Matthew, our Lord has given us an impressive description of the solemnities of the future judgment; and when replying to the interrogation of the righteous, whom he had commended for their benevolence, he says, to explain the language he employed, ‘Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’ He thus teaches us that we are to perform our acts of beneficence and kindness, not merely because others set us the example, nor yet to gratify our own feelings of sympathy or vanity, but to express our gratitude and love to him for his love and compassion *towards* us. When we are governed by this motive, which the men of the world would deride as the figment of an enthusiastic imagination, our benevolence becomes one of the established laws of our moral system, which admits of no suspension or diversion, without occasioning a shock to our sense of right and wrong. And when we act on this principle, it is as if we addressed a poor person in the words which I lately read in an admired author:—‘I relieve you in your distress, because of the near relation you bear to that blessed Person who has relieved me in all mine—my Friend, my Benefactor, my Saviour, my God. I, too, was an hungered, and he gave me the bread of life; I was thirsty, and he gave me the water of life; I was a stranger, not belonging to the fold, and he took me into it; I was naked, and he clothed me with the robe of righteousness; I was sick, and he visited me, and comforted me, and made me whole; I was in prison, and he came to me, loosed

the bands of sin and death, and brought me forth unto light, liberty, and salvation. You come recommended to me as one of those whom he condescends to call his brethren. Accept, for his sake, what I can give you. I would it were more; all I have is too little.’”

“There is,” observed Miss Roscoe, “a touching force in the language of our Lord which no real disciple can withstand; but there are many who have no ability to exemplify the influence which it assumes over them, for they have no wealth to distribute; and yet, if they do what they can to testify their love to him, they will be equally commended with the most munificent benefactors of their race. For he by whom actions are weighed and motives are judged—who gives to his servants what proportion of talents he pleases—often sees much given, where nothing is contributed; and will reward the benevolence which would gladly contribute if it possessed the means, no less than the munificence which commands the homage and respect of men. While, then, *we* are so highly favoured as to be exempted from the poverty of the poor and the selfishness of the rich, and profess to derive our motives from such a pure source, let us, in the stations in which we are placed, and according to the ability which we possess, endeavour to promote the comfort and happiness of others, remembering that where much is given, much is required; and that our Lord will receive every act of kindness which we perform to our poorer brethren, as an expression of our love to himself.”

“I have occasionally noticed,” said Mrs. Stevens, “a strange phenomenon in what may be called the religious world—a person holding rank as a devout disciple of Jesus Christ, ever ready to administer to the spiritual wants of the destitute, but systematically unwilling to help them in their temporal distresses.”

“I, too,” said Mr. Lewellin, “have known the same strange thing. I know a wealthy lady who will forward handsome contributions to the treasurer of a Bible, or Tract, or Missionary Society, but if applied to on behalf of a needy person, even though a fellow-member of the same church, she will put on such a scowling look, and speak

in such harsh and repulsive tones, that few will venture to ask her for alms. Her own pastor, on one occasion, ventured to ask her for a small donation, to assist a poor worthy minister who was in the depth of poverty, and, by excess of importunity, he obtained a few shillings; but within a few weeks she sent £50 to the treasurer of a society for the support of aged and infirm ministers."

"How can we account for such strange conduct, which is so opposed to the injunctions of the Word of God?"

"Very easily, Madam," replied Mr. Roscoe. "These public societies will blazon the name of the munificent donor through the British dominions in their annual reports; and as such a lady wishes to be seen of men when performing her acts of charity, she is willing to pay the price which is demanded."

"How contemptible! A female Pharisee of the old school embalmed while living, and reserved as a specimen of the detestable order from which she is descended, that we may see broadly developed the meanness and odiousness of vanity, which gives liberally to the public institutions of Christianity for self-display and self-satisfaction."

In the morning we proceeded to the woodman's cottage, and on our way overtook the sad procession of his corpse brought home on a hurdle carried by some countrymen, his weeping children and his faithful dog walking alongside. He had been found in a pit near the edge of the wood; his dog was sitting beside it, and moaning the fate of his master, whom he was unwilling to leave, though nearly perishing with hunger and cold.

On the body being brought into the house, the spectacle of grief which was then exhibited became almost too much for us to endure. His wife wiped off the snow which was still hanging about his face and hair, and then kissed his cold black lips, bedewing them with her tears, while the children pressed around her, sobbing as they looked on the altered countenance of their father, and then turned away to mourn apart. Mr. Roscoe spoke kindly to her, which soothed her spirit, and he assured her that she should not want. "I



THE DEATH OF THE WOODMAN.



know it, Sir," she replied, "because the Lord is my Shepherd, and he can spread a table for me, though my husband is not spared to bring me the provisions." He then informed her that a subscription would be raised for her support, which he had no doubt would be sufficient to enable her to bring up her family respectably. "O! Sir," said the two eldest boys, "mother shan't want while God gives us strength to work, nor shall the little ones." "Don't cry, mother!" said the youngest girl, who had just drawn back her finger from touching the face of her father; "father is gone to see Jemima. Don't cry, mother! for that won't make father speak to us again."

The body was interred, with great decency and solemnity, the seventh day after his decease, Mr. Ingleby reading the burial service. Such was the esteem in which he was held, and the degree of interest his death had excited, that one of the largest funeral processions known in the village for many years accompanied his remains to the grave, and all expressed the most tender sympathy towards his surviving family. By the exertions of Mr. Roscoe and Mr. Stevens, a large subscription was raised for their benefit; which in some measure tended to abate the intensity of their sufferings, though it could not heal the deep wound which had been inflicted on their domestic happiness.

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Mr. Stevens and Mr. Lewellin accompanied me when I went to preach at Farmer Pickford's, and on our arrival we found that the barn was lighted up and seated for the occasion.

"There is a power of people," said the farmer, on giving me his hand, "come to hear the sarmunt, and no mistake." The congregation was much larger than any one had anticipated, and showed a marked attention to the sermon, which was on the conversion of Zaccheus, from Luke xix. 1-9. We intended to return to Fairmount immediately after the service was over, but felt compelled to yield to the kind importunity of the farmer and his wife, and stay to take supper with them. "A hearty welcome," said the warm-hearted farmer, as we entered his kitchen, where an ample supper

was set out, consisting of a joint of roast beef, a boiled turkey and ham, custards in abundance, and tankards of the best home-brewed ale.

"Is this what you call pot-luck, Mr. Pickford?"

"No, no; we don't live after this fashion every day; but my wife and me made up our minds to give you some of the best on it; and I think that the best the house can afford is all too little in return for the sarmunt you have just given us in the barn."

Before we sat down to supper, Henry Pickford, at my request, asked the blessing, and we then set, with sharpened appetite, to the consumption of the good things before us. The farmer was so much excited, that his wife could not refrain from saying, "Master, you talk so much that you prevent conversation."

"I beg pardon, but I can't help it. What's in, will come out. I never thought of having the honour of such a company as this Gemmen, I hope you will all enjoy yourselves as much as I do."

"We feel very much obliged to you, Mr. Pickford. As you see, we are all enjoying ourselves; and I hope we shall live to meet again."

"I trust so, too. I never expected to see such a day as this; and I was thinking, when you were preaching in the barn, that when Zaccheus got up in the morning he little thought what would happen to him before night."

"And I was thinking, Sir," said Harry, "when you were preaching, that when Zaccheus got up in the sycamore tree he didn't think he should be converted before he got down."

"It was quick work," said the farmer; "done in no time."

"And I was thinking," said Mrs. Pickford, "that everybody must have felt surprised that Jesus Christ should notice such a notorious sinner as Zaccheus was, and should condescend to go and be a guest at his house."

"Nobody more so," said the farmer, "than Zaccheus himself. I know he felt just what I feel myself. Why, it is but t'other day, and I was a wicked, drunken, and swearing fellow, that thought no more about my soul than one of my cows; but now I hate such

sins, and my main concern is to get my soul saved. At times, I can hardly believe my own knowledge. What mighty power Jesus Christ has, to bring to, such wicked and hardened sinners as Zaccheus and myself!"

"And make you new creatures," Mr. Jewellin here remarked; "the old things of evil to pass away, and the new things of grace and religion to come, to reform your character and bless your house."

"That's it, and no sham," replied the farmer. "Parson Cole called t'other day to have a talk with me. He heard I was gone mad. I told him what Jesus Christ had done for my soul, and how happy I was, and what a change had come over my Harry and the rest of us. He called it all a *lusion*, or some such a word which I didn't understand; but I made out his meaning, and I told him it was a real thing. Poor fellow, he could not understand such things—more's the pity; and he said, by way of mock-making, 'Why, Jesus Christ appears to have a great liking for you great sinners.' This made a big stir within me, and I spoke my mind. 'Yes,' I said to him, 'he is the great and good Physician that comes to cure those that otherwise were incurable.' I said to him, 'Does not Paul tell us that he began by saving the chief of sinners? and I can say he has not left off doing it yet, as I hope he will save me.'"

"No one, I think," said Mr. Stevens, "can doubt the ability or willingness of Jesus Christ to save the chief of sinners, who reflects on what he has done. He saved Zaccheus, a hard-hearted extortioner, who had grown rich by deeds of fraud and oppression; and who was justly held in such detestation by the people, that they expressed a high degree of astonishment when they found that Jesus Christ was going to be his guest."

"His conversion and salvation makes good what I said to Parson Cole, that Jesus Christ cures the incurable. I was thinking, in the barn, just when the sarmunt was over, that if any of the people who knew Zaccheus had been asked if they thought it possible for any one to convert him into an honest and charitable man, they would

all have said 'No, it can't be done; he is incurable.' But Jesus Christ did it in no time."

"And I was thinking," said Mrs. Pickford, "that many a poor widow, and many a poor orphan, and many a poor tradesman, listened with great joy to the report of his conversion, when he set about doing what he said he would do—give half his goods to the poor, and make a fourfold restitution to every one he had injured."

Having now finished supper, Mr. Lewellin read the 103d Psalm, after which I brought the evening to a close by conducting family prayer. On taking leave of the farmer, he said, "There are three things I shall never forget:—I shall never forget your first call, when you talked to me about the worth of my soul; I shall never forget your preaching in my barn; and I shall never forget this story about Zaccheus, which lets us know what Jesus Christ can do in a little time."

"I hope, Sir," said Mrs. Pickford, "you will come again and see us. We shall feel so much pleased and profited too."

We then shook hands with our hospitable entertainers, and returned to Fairmount, much gratified with the pleasant evening we had spent.

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## ON APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.



ON our return from Farmer Pickford's, we heard that the Rev. Mr. Roscoe and his lady had arrived rather unexpectedly at his brother's mansion; but we regarded it as a flying rumour without any foundation. However, the next morning Miss Roscoe called and confirmed the intelligence, and said she was commissioned to invite us to meet them and a select party on the following Monday evening. Addressing

me, she said, "You will see a great change in my dear uncle. He is no longer the bigoted Tractarian, contending for legendary dogmas and ceremonial rites; but is now a devout and simple-hearted minister of Jesus Christ." We cordially accepted the invitation; and, on the appointed evening, had the pleasure of meeting our esteemed friends all in excellent health and spirits. After tea, a casual reference having been made by Mrs. John Roscoe to Williams' *Missionary Enterprises*,\* we indulged for some time in a free and easy interchange of remarks on the labours of missionaries in foreign parts. This, somewhat unexpectedly, led to a grave discussion on the popular question of Apostolical Succession.

"In this extraordinary narrative," said the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, "which I have read with intense delight, we have a detailed account of the success of Mr. Williams' labours. In islands where an impure and demoralizing idolatry, which often demanded human sacrifices, existed from time immemorial, there is now a Christian population, organized into churches, observing the sanctity of the Sabbath, and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The printing-press is also at work; the Bible is in free circulation; and the natives are exerting themselves in various ways for the spread of the gospel amongst their yet unenlightened brethren of other islands. In fact, there is such a moral and spiritual transformation that it cannot be accounted for, otherwise than by the concurrence of a supernatural power with the human agency which has been employed in effecting it."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"The results of the labours of Mr. Williams and his coadjutors in the propagation of the gospel, form a very strong argument against the dogma of Apostolical Succession, for which a party in our church are contending with so much Jesuitical artifice and overbearing intolerance. Dr. Hook, one of their leaders, says—and all the clergy of his school subscribe to his sentiments—'Unless Christ be spiritually present with the ministers of religion in their services, these services will be in vain.' I admit this: but

\* *Missionary Enterprises in South Sea Islands.* By Rev. John Williams.

then he adds, what I cannot admit, because it is in palpable opposition to indisputable facts—‘ But the only ministrations to which he has *promised* his presence, are to those of the bishops who are successors of the first commissioned apostles, and the other clergy acting under their sanction and by their authority. I therefore,’ he adds, ‘ at once abandon expediency, submission to constituted authority, decency, and order, as the ground of our defence of our clerical commission, and appeal to the promise given by Jesus Christ to his apostles, and which promise, by coming down to us as their successors, marks us *exclusively* for God’s ambassadors.’\*

“ If we contrast this vain boasting of the Tractarians with indisputable facts, how strange does it appear! Here I find from the life of Williams, that instead of studying at Cambridge or Oxford, he was serving as an apprentice to an ironmonger, in the City Road, London; and, if not a positive infidel, he was addicted to habits of impiety, if not intemperance, spending his Sabbath evenings at a public tavern. On one occasion, a pious female friend saw him loitering about in front of the tabernacle in Moorfields, where he expected to meet the companions of his nightly revels; but to mortify them because they were not punctual to their engagement, he yielded to her entreaties to go with her into the tabernacle and hear the sermon.” Then, taking up the *Life of Williams*,† which lay on a side table, he read the following passage:—“ Such a state of mind was anything but favourable to the serious consideration of sacred subjects; and few ever entered the house of God less prepared to profit by its services. The Rev. Timothy East, of Birmingham, occupied the pulpit that evening, January 30, 1814, and preached from the weighty question, ‘ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ (Mark viii. 36, 37). The word came with power, and with demonstration of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of his youthful auditor.” “ Now

\* See Dr. Hook’s Sermons on Church and Establishments.

† *The Life of the Rev. John Williams*. By the Rev. E. Prout. Snow, London.

this young man," continued Mr. Roscoe, "reclaimed from the error of his ways by what Paul calls the foolishness of preaching, after tarrying at home long enough to give evidence of the genuineness of his conversion to God, and receive instruction to fit him for the work to which he had devoted himself, goes to the South Seas, learns the language of the natives, and commences the work of evangelizing them; and this book is a faithful record and report of his extraordinary labours. He received no episcopal ordination in the regular line of descent; but was he not God's ambassador of grace and mercy to these once savage and cannibal islanders? and if so, Dr. Hook asserts what is not absolutely true, that none are God's ambassadors except the clergy of the Church of England and Papal priests."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"The minister who preached the last anniversary sermons in my chapel, in behalf of our Sabbath-schools, informed me, when we were chatting about apostolic succession, that he knew the ecclesiastic ancestors of Mr. Williams, and gave me his pedigree, remarking that he was descended from 'a succession of bishops, who neither had palaces nor seats in the House of Lords.' Mr. Jay, of Bath, was the instrument employed by the Spirit of God in the conversion of the Rev. O. A. Jeary, of Rodborough, Gloucestershire, who was employed by the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the Rev. T. East, and he was employed by the same Divine agent in the conversion of the Rev. J. Williams. We thus see that the moral revolutions and spiritual transformations which have taken place in the South Sea Islands are not to be ascribed, in the slightest degree, either subordinately or instrumentally, to the intervention of Episcopal power or authority. Not one employed in any department of this wondrous work, occupied a position in the regular line of descent from the apostles, nor had any one of them received ordination from an Episcopal bishop."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"A Tractarian who admits the truthfulness of Mr. Williams' report of the success of his own labours, and those of his coadjutors, would probably look on this as an exceptional

case to the established law of order prevalent in the church, which we all know requires ordination to precede preaching or the administration of the sacraments. And I see no very strong objection to this view of the matter, because we find that, even in apostolic times, the disciples who were scattered at the persecution of Stephen went to different places preaching the Word, though they were not ordained to the work as the apostles were (Acts xi. 19, 20)."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"I admit there is some force in the popular saying—'There is no rule without an exception;' and I admit, also, that the exception establishes rather than subverts the rule from which it is a deviation; but then there must be some proof that it is really an exception. Regarding the case of the dispersed disciples to which you have referred, I see no evidence in confirmation of its being a deviation from any fixed rule of government established within the pale of the church, because I find other cases reported which bear such a strong analogy to it, that I am compelled to believe that no absolute and undeviating regulations on this subject can be found in the New Testament. We find for example (Acts i. 26), that Matthias was chosen to the apostleship as the successor of Judas; but it does not appear from the record of the transaction, that he was ordained to this office by the other eleven apostles with whom he took rank. Again, the case of Paul is still more decisive against the Tractarian dogma that no one can preach or administer the sacraments with efficacy, unless he derive his official authority and power to do so from the apostles, or some one to whom they have delegated their authority and power. He assumed the designation of an apostle, and did the work of an apostle, some years before he saw any one of the twelve, acting as independently of them, as they did of him; and when they met at Jerusalem they did not require him to submit to ordination administered by them: and, at a subsequent period of his history, when he was called by the Holy Spirit (Acts xiii. 1-5) to go and preach the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews in Seleucia and other places, he\*

\* If we suppose, with some of the Tractarians, that he was now ordained to the



was set apart to *this work*, not to *any office*, by *subordinate members* of the church at Antioch, termed prophets and teachers, who, when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on Paul and Barnabas, sent them away. These things occurred just when a new system of government was introduced into the church, that was to be perpetuated through all future ages. Here, then, we see pious laymen sallying forth and preaching in different places the Lord Jesus, with such power that many believed and turned unto him (Acts xi. 19-21); and we see also some holding the highest office in the Christian church without undergoing the ceremony of consecration by pre-existing officials, and yet these facts are recorded in Scripture without any notification that they are exceptions to fixed and absolute laws. Such a notification would have proved a decisive evidence in confirmation of such laws had they been established. We thus see that the plain, indisputable facts of the New Testament are in direct opposition to the high church principles of our Tractarians."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I have long maintained that this dogma of apostolical succession is an ecclesiastical monopoly which has no sanction from the Word of the Lord, and it is too selfish in its nature to harmonize with the free and generous spirit of the Christian dispensation. If it be the will of Jesus Christ, the supreme Legislator of his church, that no one shall preach the gospel or administer the sacraments with spiritual efficacy until he is ordained to the work by an apostle, or some bishop who can trace his lineal descent from an apostle with absolute certainty, how can such a restricted law as this be known unless he expressly enacts it either by an immediate revelation of his will, or through the medium of the inspired writers? No one pretends that an express revelation has ever been given in reference to such a restriction, and I have never been able to find an implied regulation in any

*apostolic office*, then we have a series of irregularities: he labours for years before he receives ordination, and when he does receive it, it is not from the hands of *apostles*, but some very *inferior officials* connected with the church at Antioch.

chapter or verse of the New Testament. To say that we, and we exclusively, are the priests of the Lord, and, if you wish to be saved, you must intrust your souls to our ghostly power—that we, and we only, have the keys of the kingdom of heaven—that we open and shut by virtue of the authority delegated to us by St. Peter and St. Paul—is nothing less on the part of the Papal and Tractarian clergy than a monopoly of official authority and power, unsanctioned by the authority of Jesus Christ, and a subtle manœuvre to magnify their own order. That a Papist should believe this, who is trained in the belief that the laws and regulations of his church are absolute and unchangeable, is not surprising; but that a Protestant should believe it, who has free access to his Bible, and been taught to hold its absolute and exclusive authority on all articles of faith and practice, is indeed a moral paradox which I cannot explain.”

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—“Yes, Sir, it is a monopoly which has no sanction from Jesus Christ, the supreme Legislator in his church, and one which entails repulsive and fearful consequences. It compels its advocates to shun all Christian alliance with many of the excellent of the earth, and drives them into the closest connection with many who are moral miscreants, men of impurity, sceptics, and scoffers. Such men as Chalmers and Wardlaw, Robert Hall and William Jay, are branded as usurpers in the church, with whom it would be a sort of treason to associate, and whose ministrations must be denounced as a fatal curse to their deluded adherents, while those clergymen who have received the so-called apostolical ordination, however immoral they may be in conduct, or heterodox in teaching, are to be revered and obeyed as the true and faithful ministers of Jesus Christ. There is in all this something so repugnant to common-sense and Christian feeling—so derogatory to personal dignity and pure taste—and so calculated to excite the contempt of infidels against the whole clerical order, that I am astonished how any one who cherishes the slightest degree of reverence for the authority of Jesus Christ, or who has imbibed a particle of his pure and loving spirit, can submit to its dominion and governing power, especially

when he is told that, *if he has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Your very just and forcible remarks remind me of a paragraph in the *Edinburgh Review*,\* which I marked for reference, and which, by your permission, I will read: it is an amplification of your remarks on this very objectionable feature of Tractarianism:—"The strongest and most irrefragable argument against the principles held by the Tractarians appears to us not their absurdity, though that is flagrant enough, but their essential uncharitableness. We stand absolutely confounded at the fatuity of men, who, with the New Testament in their hands, profess to be willing to fraternize with Rome, but cannot fraternize with Lutherans and Presbyterians; who affect to consider the points of difference between the Church of Spain and the Church of England less vital than those between the Church of England and that of Scotland; who, for the sake of such a figment as apostolical succession and other figments as shadowy, remorselessly exclude a large portion of the communities of Christendom from the very name, rights, and privileges of Christian churches; who can imagine the great doctrines in which both they and their opponents coincide, and which form the theme and triumph of inspired eloquence, of less moment than doctrines and rites on which the Scripture is ominously silent, or which seem to stand in shocking contrast to the moral grandeur and magnanimous spirit of the Christian institute. Yet so it is; and we need no other evidence of the degrading and narrowing effects of such principles than that this most melancholy result of them should inspire so little sorrow, or rather should be so frequently proclaimed more in triumph than with regret. The generality of the Oxford school proclaim the consequences of their principles not only with an arrogance which ill befits such equivocal conclusions, but without a particle of sorrow, which, if true, they would naturally excite in the breast of every benevolent man."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"As they are, in common with their Papal

\* April, 1843.

brethren, intolerant on *principle*, and that *principle* one which, in their opinion, involves the honour of the church, and the final happiness of the soul of man, they cannot feel any regret, when advert- ing to its necessary consequences in its application to other churches and sects, without being self-convicted of positive inconsistency; they must adhere to their principle of exclusive intolerance, in spite of all the odium it may cast on their theory of belief. And this stern and steady adherence to a principle which compels them, as by the force of a Divine law, to prefer fraternizing with the Papacy, with all its arrogant claims, its assumed prerogatives, and its repugnant ceremonial regulations, rather than fraternize with their Protestant brethren who contend earnestly for the pure faith of the New Testament, is to me a conclusive proof that their theory of belief is anti-Christian in its character and tendency, as the unerring test may be applied to *principles* as well as to *persons*—‘*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,*’ Rom. viii. 9.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“If we are to receive the doctrine of apostolical succession as correct, we must then admit as a fact what to every reflecting mind will appear most incongruous and extraordinary. The theory held by our Tractarian clergy in common with the Romish Church, is, That each bishop, from the apostolical times, has received in his consecration a mysterious gift, and also transmits to every priest in his ordination a mysterious gift, indicated in the respective offices by the awful words, ‘Receive the Holy Ghost;’ that on this the right of priests to assume their functions, and the preternatural grace of the sacraments administered by them, depends; that bishops, once consecrated, are invested with the remarkable property of transmitting the gift to others; that this has been the case from the primitive age till now; that this high gift has been incorruptibly transmitted through the hands of impure, profligate, heretical ecclesiastics, as ignorant and flagitious as any of their lay contemporaries; that, in fact, these gifts are perfectly irrespective of the moral character and qualifications both of bishop and priest; and reside in equal integrity in a Latimer

or a Bonner—a virtuous man or a profligate—an imbecile or a genius.”

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—“I believe, Sir,” said he, addressing the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, “you were once a strenuous advocate of this theory of apostolical succession; will you permit me to ask you a few questions, which may tend to expose its gross absurdity—its shameless jugglery to magnify the glory of an ambitious priesthood, who evince more zeal and devotion in behalf of their own order than they do for the purity and spiritual triumphs of the Christian faith?”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“Yes, Sir; I confess, with some degree of shame, that I once entertained the belief that some mysterious gift was transmitted from the bishop to the priest at the time of his ordination.”

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—“Was this gift, in your opinion or belief, transmitted to the intellect or to the heart, or to both? Or in other words, did it give additional acuteness to your intellectual faculty—extend the range of your knowledge of Divine truth, or did it increase the purity of your soul, and raise your affections to a higher pitch of devotional feeling?”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“To be candid, Sir, I took for granted the truth of the doctrine as to the mysterious transmission of a mysterious something; but when I reflected on it, as I sometimes did, even before I was rescued from the meshes of Tractarian delusions, I felt as though my mind were revolving in a circle: I could see nothing; I could feel nothing. I was the same man in knowledge, in intelligence, in taste, and in devotional feeling, after the solemn words, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, were uttered, as I was before they fell from the lips of the bishop.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“It amounts then simply to this, and it is of no use to attempt to disguise the fact, that what is deemed the *essential part* of the ordination service, is either a solemn farce, or it is a positive reality, and in that case it must be received without a particle of evidence in its support. The bishop who transmits the gift is not con-

scious that he possesses what he pretends to give; and the person who receives it is not conscious of receiving it at the time it is imparted: both the giver and receiver are in the same condition of unconsciousness, during the mysterious process of giving and receiving the inexplicable and inconceivable something, on which the authority of the priest to officiate, and the vital efficacy of all his ministrations, are made dependent. This is most marvellous! more like an extravagant invention to answer some special device, than a sober reality of Divine appointment."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"I have no doubt but a scrupulous and conscientious clergyman will sometimes feel a painful degree of perplexity when musing on the very mysterious process of bestowing and receiving this gift, so essential to the identity of his priestly character, and the vital efficacy of his official labours; and should he begin to doubt, as possibly he may, whether the bishop actually bestowed on him the gift, or whether he actually received it, his doubts must remain, and will very likely increase and multiply, because no living oracle, or conclusive evidence, or logical reasoning can afford him any relief. Though I am not very fond of introducing caustic irony in the discussion of such a grave question, yet the following paragraph from the *Review* already quoted may not be inappropriate:—

"We can imagine the perplexity of a presbyter thus cast in doubt as to whether or not he has ever had the invaluable 'gift' of apostolical succession conferred upon him. As that 'gift' is neither tangible nor visible, the subject neither of experience nor consciousness—as it cannot be known by any 'effects' produced by it—he may imagine, unhappy man! that he has been regenerating infants by baptism, when he has been simply sprinkling them with water. 'What is the matter?' the spectator of his distractions might ask. 'What have you lost?' 'Lost!' would be the reply; 'I fear I have lost my apostolical succession; or rather, my misery is, that I do not know and cannot tell whether I ever had it to lose!' It is of no avail here to suggest the usual questions—'When did you see it last?'

‘When were you last conscious of possessing it?’ What a peculiar property is that, of which, though so invaluable—nay, on which the whole efficacy of the Christian ministry depends—a man has no positive evidence to show whether he ever had it or not! which, if ever conferred, was conferred without his knowledge; and which, if it could be taken away, would still leave him ignorant not only when, where, and how the theft was committed, but whether it had ever been committed or not! The sympathizing friend might probably remind him, that as he was not sure he had ever had it, so, *perhaps*, he still had it without knowing it. ‘*Perhaps*,’ he would reply, ‘but it is certainty I want.’ Such a perplexed presbyter, and doubtless there are many such, is in a regular fix; and there he must remain, calling on his idols for help, but, like the priests of Baal, calling in vain, as there is no power in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, which can rescue a man from the terror of his own delusions, till the delusions themselves are abandoned as visionary and absurd.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“This question of apostolical succession, when cleared of its legendary mysticism, and brought within the pale of sober reality, may be employed as a very cogent argument in confirmation of the historic truthfulness of the Christian faith and its institutions, in refutation of some of the objections of infidelity. ‘The existence of such an order of *men as Christian ministers*, continually from the apostles to this day, is perhaps,’ as Archbishop Whately remarks,\* ‘as complete a moral certainty as any historical fact can be; because it is plain that if, at the present day, or a century ago, or ten centuries ago, a number of men had appeared in the world, professing (as the clergy do now) to hold a recognized office in a Christian church, to which they had been regularly appointed as successors to others, whose predecessors, in like manner, had held the same, and so on, from the times of the apostles—if, I say, such a pretence had been put forth by a set of men assuming an office which no one had ever heard of before, it is plain that they would at once

\* Whately on the *Kingdom of Christ*, p. 180.

have been refuted and exposed. And as this will apply equally to each successive generation of Christian ministers, till we come up to the time when the institution was confessedly new—that is, to the time when Christian ministers were appointed by the apostles, who professed themselves eye-witnesses of the resurrection—we have a standing monument in the Christian ministry of the fact of that event as having been proclaimed immediately after the time when it was said to have occurred. This, therefore, is fairly brought forward as an evidence of its truth.’”

\* *Rev. Mr. Guion*.—“Yes, Sir, the unbroken succession of the ministerial order, from the times of the apostles till now, is, in my opinion, an irrefutable evidence that Christianity took its rise at the period of its asserted origin, and that we have the *essential substance*, at least, of the same faith which the apostles established in Jerusalem, Ephesus, and other places; and that this same faith is administered by a distinct order of men, whose business it is, and ever has been, to propagate it and hand it down to the next generation succeeding them. As an argument of confirmation and defence in relation to the historic certainty of our faith and its institutions, it is of great value and importance; but, as Whately very justly remarks in his incomparable *Essays*, Successionists are guilty of a fallacy in the use which they make of it—‘The fallacy consists in confounding together the unbroken apostolical succession of a *Christian ministry generally*, and the same succession in an unbroken line of *this or that individual minister*.’ The existence of the order may be traced up to the times of the apostles; but this supplies no evidence in proof that each, or any one minister of the order now living is a legitimate descendant, in the genealogical line, from either of the two favourite apostles, St. Peter or St. Paul. And hence the argument, which is a splendid triumph to Christianity, is a dumb oracle to Tractarianism.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby*.—“When reading the Oxford tracts, and some other publications of the same school, I have often felt astonished that the writers are not startled when advocating their favourite



dogma; because, if they could establish it as a positive truth, they would prove self-destroyers—be guilty, in fact, of what I may term ecclesiastical suicide. They maintain, first, that no one is duly qualified to take office in the church of Christ—to preach and administer the sacraments—until he is ordained by some bishop, who can trace up his descent either to the apostle Peter or Paul. And they maintain, in the next place, that, when so ordained, they are in verity God's ambassadors to men; but, if not so ordained, the laity cannot expect to receive any spiritual benefit from their official labours. Or, in other words, each clergyman of our church must be in the unbroken line of succession from the times of the apostles, or he holds an office to which he has no legitimate appointment, and administers sacraments which cannot take effect. A Tractarian, then, *is* either *in* the unbroken line, or he *is not in* it—if *in* the unbroken line, all is *right*; if *not in*, all is *wrong*. If *in*, the people are blest; if *not in*, they are unblest. He *believes* he is *in*, but this does not prove that he is; he may be mistaken, self-deceived, and quite unintentionally deceiving others. And he cannot know he is *in*, unless he can prove it, and prove it as all facts of history are proved, by moral evidence. He may be able to prove his own ordination, and perhaps the ordination of the bishop by whom he was ordained, and also a few preceding bishops; but as an intelligent and conscientious man, he ought not to administer the sacraments, or appear as a clergyman amongst the people, till he has, with the clearest and most unequivocal evidence, traced back the successive ordinations of the bishops through the long lapse of past ages, up to the time when Paul or Peter conferred the rite of ordination on the bishops to succeed them. This done, he may remain in the priest's office; but till this is done, on his own principle of belief and reasoning, he ought to hold his peace—he ought to do nothing; because he has no evidence that the laity can derive any spiritual benefit from his ministrations. Thus his faith, and its consequent reasoning, impose silence and inaction, till he has performed this process of historical research; or, if he continue to

labour, it will inevitably be in a state of ceaseless disquietude, because, ceaseless doubt.

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"Soon after Dr. Hook preached his celebrated sermon on '*Hear THE church,*' I delivered one on the same subject. On leaving the pulpit one of my hearers, a shrewd clever man, followed me into the vestry, and, in the presence of my wardens, asked me to hang up under the tablet containing the ten commandments, a genealogical pedigree of my ecclesiastical descent; assigning as a reason for such an application, that he and his family had an interest in knowing it, as I had taught them to believe that the efficacy of the sacraments on their souls depended on my ecclesiastical legitimacy. I felt greatly mortified by his application, and especially when my senior warden said such a document, he had no doubt, would prove very satisfactory to many—and would tend to allay the disquietudes of those who sometimes complained that they derived no spiritual benefits from the church sacraments."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"This is what ought to be done in self-defence, and to satisfy the scrupulous anxiety of others; but who can do it? that is the perplexing question. Dr. Hook says, and his asseverations are echoed by his fellow-Tractarians, 'the prelates who at this present time rule the churches of these realms were validly ordained by others, who, by means of *an unbroken spiritual descent* of ordination, derived their mission from the apostles and from our Lord. 'This continual descent is evident to every one who chooses to investigate it. Let him read the *catalogues* of our bishops, ascending up to the most remote period. There is not a bishop, priest, or deacon amongst us who cannot, *if he please*, trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul.'"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Dr. Hook is a very rash man to give such a boastful utterance, when he knows, or ought to know, that this tracing of a spiritual descent is an absolute impossibility; \* it never

\* "There is not a minister in all Christendom" (says Archbishop Whately, and he is an authority on this question). "who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree. The sacramental virtue dependant on the imposition of

has been done, and every attempt to do it has proved a mortifying failure."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"Two things in relation to this question of spiritual descent are certain, at any rate they are as certain as any positive and negative evidence can make anything certain—first, our Tractarian clergy cannot prove their spiritual descent, and therefore, on their own principle, they have no authority to officiate in the church; and, secondly, if they could do this thing, which has never yet been done, they cannot prove that they are invested with

hands, with a due observance of apostolical usages, by a bishop himself duly consecrated, after having been in like manner baptized into the church and ordained deacon and priest—this sacramental virtue, if a single link in the chain be faulty, must be utterly nullified ever after in respect to all the links hanging on that one. For, if a bishop has not been duly consecrated, or had not been previously rightly ordained, his ordinations are null, and so are the ministrations of those ordained by him, and their ordinations of others, and so on without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irremediable extent.

"And who can undertake to pronounce that, during that long period usually designated as the dark ages, no such taint was ever introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed we have even historical proof. Amidst the numerous corruptions of doctrine and of practice, and gross superstitions that crept in during those ages, we find recorded descriptions not only of the profound ignorance and profligacy of life of many of the clergy, but also of the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form. We read of bishops consecrated when mere children—of men officiating who barely knew their letters—of prelates expelled and others put in their places by violence—of illiterate and profligate laymen, and habitual drunkards, admitted to holy orders; and, in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder, and reckless disregard of the decency which the apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that any one, even moderately acquainted with history, can feel a certainty, or any approach to certainty, that, amidst all this confusion and corruption, every requisite form was, in every instance, strictly adhered to by men, many of them openly profane and secular, unrestrained by public opinion through the gross ignorance of the population among which they lived; and that no one not duly consecrated or ordained was admitted to sacred offices."

The inference which the Archbishop\* draws from these historic statements is this: "The ultimate consequence must be that any one who sincerely believes that his claim to the benefits of the gospel-covenant depends on his own minister's claim to the supposed sacramental virtue of true ordination, and this again on perfect apostolical succession as described, must be involved, in proportion as he reads, and inquires, and reflects, and reasons on the subject in the most distressing doubt and perplexity."

\* See *Essays on the Kingdom of Christ*, pp. 176-9.

the mysterious gift on which the validity of their ministrations depends. Therefore, on their own principle, the laity can derive no spiritual benefits from their labours. They are a pompous order of self-created exclusionists, uttering great swelling words of vanity, when, on their own principle, they are self-convicted usurpers in the priestly office; and, while vaunting that they, and they only, are God's ambassadors to man, they decline producing their commission of appointment, even when pressed to do so, though they say they could easily do it if they pleased.\*

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But after all, the practical influence of those high church principles, constitutes, in my opinion, the most cogent argument against them. We shall find that pernicious as they are to the clergy, they are still more fatal to the laity, though they do not always operate with the same uniformity of result. Some they lull into a callous apathy and indifference, from which nothing can rouse them to the soul-stirring question—WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? They have unbounded confidence in their parson, that he is in the regular line of succession—firmly believe in the fact of their regeneration in baptism, as they have seen the public record of its performance—and calculate that when death comes, a despatch will bring the duly qualified official to give them absolution and the sacrament, and then the debt of nature may be paid without reluctance, as their peace with God is settled, on the authority of the unalterable laws of the church, of which they are *bona fide* members and devoted advocates."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"I knew an instance in which these high church principles had a contrary effect; they plunged an old friend of my own into a state of mental perplexity and depression, which was not only painful but appalling. This friend was a sincere and a conscientious member of the Church of England, and a firm believer in the Tractarian doctrines of the Oxford school; but happen-

\* It is a somewhat ominous sign that neither Dr. Hook nor any of his brethren has been pleased to do this very easy thing, though they have often been challenged to do it, as essential to their priestly identity and the validity of their ministrations.

ing to meet with Archbishop Whately's *Essays on the Kingdom of Christ*, he began to entertain some doubts that he was not quite so safe, in relation to eternity, as he had been accustomed to believe. On one occasion, he confidentially disclosed his fears and his misgivings to myself, confessing that they arose from the degree of uncertainty attachable to the legitimacy of the spiritual descent of his Rector from the apostles, and the consequent validity or invalidity of the administrations of the sacraments. I wished to direct his attention to a safer way to final happiness than through the medium of the sacraments; but his predilection for the church and its ordinances was so inveterate, that I could not succeed; his long-cherished associations prevented the free exercise of his reasoning faculty, and in this state of perplexity and depression, he lived for years: he died a few months since, but how he died, I know not, though I fear he died under the spell of the awful delusion in which he had lived."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"I recollect a somewhat similar occurrence, happening to a near and dear friend of my own, but with a very different result. She also was a member of the Church of England, and a great admirer of the Oxford tracts, which she read, and, I may say, studied with close attention, having no more doubt of the reality of baptismal regeneration than she had of the fact that her Vicar had administered it to her. However, some circumstances, though I never heard what they were, led her to suspect that there was a difficulty, if not an impossibility, for any one minister of the Episcopal church being able to trace up with absolute certainty his spiritual descent from either of the apostles, and for a while she felt perfectly bewildered. At length she was advised by a pious friend to turn from man to God: to put aside the Oxford tracts, and search the Scriptures, to exercise her own judgment when doing so, and pray to the Holy Spirit for wisdom and grace to lead her in the right way to mental peace and to heaven. She did so, and now she has made her escape from the delusive errors of Tractarianism, and feels secure, because she now builds her hope of par-

don and salvation, not on sacraments or ceremonies, but on Christ, the sure foundation which the Lord hath laid, and not man."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"This painful controversy which is shaking our church from its centre to its remotest extremities—alienating friendships, making us a by-word amongst Papists, and a scorn amongst infidels—will, I fear, continue to rage for a long time to come; but I am sanguine in my anticipations of the final issue. Our church was slumbering in ease and security, paying but little attention to her responsibilities to her Divine Lord and Master; but these corruptions of heresy and error have roused her, and called upon her faithful sons to come forward in the defence and support of the truths of the New Testament. If we act wisely, we shall be prepared to surrender any tenet or mode of expression incorporated in our prescribed formularies or other articles of belief, which has not the direct sanction of the Word of God; and shall evince a greater zeal for the extension and for the triumphs of Christianity herself, than the honour and glory of our own church or its ministerial orders. If we can bring our minds to this resolve, and if we rely on HIM who is the invisible Head of his visible church, we need fear no evil; the truth, however obscured for a time, will at length shine forth, and the fabrics of human superstition and device totter and fall like the dwelling of the foolish man, which built his house upon the sand."



J. GODWIN.

W. L. THOMAS.

THE FARM-HOUSE KITCHEN.

Vol. ii, page 236.

THE  
SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON:

OR,  
WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

VOL. II.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”—JOHN x. 27.

“Them that are without God judgeth.”—1 COR. v. 13.



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MDCCCLVIII.



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THE  
SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON.

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OLD RACHEL, THE BLIND WOMAN.

**A**ND so I hear," said Mrs. Stevens to the Rector, when we were spending an evening at his house, "that poor Old Rachel is dead. I really thought she had died long since, as I have not heard anything about her for a long time."

"Yes, Madam," replied Mr. Ingleby, "she is dead, and was buried yesterday; she lies very near some of the finest of my flock."

"She must have lived to a great age, for she was an old woman when I was but a little girl."

"She was, I believe, upwards of ninety, and for several years she lived with some relatives in a state of almost entire seclusion. I had quite lost sight of her, and it was owing to a very casual circumstance that my acquaintance with her was renewed."

"How did you happen again to meet with her?"

"It was in this way. I required some one to weed my garden; and hearing that there was an active clever woman residing at Street, about two miles from the rectory, who was a good hand at such work, I took a walk to find her. On reaching her house I knocked at the door, but received no answer; and just as I was going away, rather disappointed at having made a fruitless journey, a neighbour stepped out of the adjoining cottage, and said, 'If,

Sir, you want Mrs. Jones, she has just gone out, but I will go and look for her, if you will perhaps come in here, and rest yourself for a few minutes.' I thanked her, and followed her into the house, where she placed a chair for me, saying, as she left to go in search of Mrs. Jones—'It's no use, Sir, to say nothing to my mother there; she is quite blind, and so deaf, that she can't hear a word which nobody says to her.' The person to whom she pointed sat in an arm-chair, on the opposite side of the fire, wrapped up in flannel, her face nearly concealed by her cap and bonnet, and as motionless as a statue. I sat for a few moments in silence, and then, yielding to a feeling of curiosity, and I would also hope to a better motive, to endeavour to ascertain whether I could impart the soothing influences of religious consolation to the seemingly inanimate object that sat opposite to me, I arose, and placing my lips as near her ear as possible, without touching her, said, audibly and distinctly, 'You are very old.' No reply. This was followed by several common-place questions—such as, 'What is your name?' 'Do you want anything?' 'Are you in any pain?' These and other questions I continued to repeat; but they produced no more effect on her than they would have done on a log. 'Poor thing,' I exclaimed, 'it's no use to try, as she is living out of my reach. The door of access is locked, and the key lost.' I resumed my seat. My anxiety to gain access to her mind increased in proportion to the apparent impossibility of succeeding, and I made another effort. '*Do you ever think about dying?*' There was a slight convulsive movement of the hand, but this was no satisfactory proof that she heard my question; however, it showed that the inner spirit was awake, and might possibly be bringing itself to a listening attitude. I then put the all-important question—'*Do you know anything about Jesus Christ?*' Never shall I forget the effect of this question. Her hands were suddenly raised, her arms extended, and her face glowed with more than human radiance, and, in a tone of transport, she exclaimed, 'What! is that my beloved pastor? It was under your ministry I was brought to know Christ, and feel the preciousness of his

love.' This unanticipated exclamation astonished and delighted me, especially when I recognized, by the sound of her voice, *Old Rachel*. To all my questions relating to her secular condition and wants, she was as insensible as though actually dead. I stood and looked on her with joyous wonder, never having previously known a similar case. I repeated question after question, but had no response, till I asked, '*Is Christ precious to you?*' Her reply was prompt and audible: '*He is precious to my soul—my transport and my trust.*' The reply had an electrical effect on my spirit. Marvellous! I never witnessed such a scene as this. I varied my questions again and again; but there was no sign of hearing, or even perceptible motion, though I took hold of her hand. It was as though some angelic spirit kept watch, to prevent any thought relating to earth or time from obtruding itself on her attention, now she was waiting on the verge of the celestial world. One question more, and all intercourse was over. '*Do you long to see Christ?*' She instantly replied, '*My soul is in haste to be gone.*' Again she relapsed into her statue-like appearance, and in that state continued till the return of her daughter with Mrs. Jones, after transacting my business with whom, I took leave, and walked home, musing on the history of Old Rachel, and resolving that I would soon again pay her a visit."

"I should like," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "to have witnessed this scene, and heard the retiring spirit thus appearing to bear testimony to the more than magic power of the Saviour's name, and of the preciousness of his love."

"And so, Madam, should I," said the Rev. Mr. Guion; "it would have been to me like a voice speaking from another world, in confirmation of the genuineness of our faith, which sees the invisible, and holds conscious intercourse with Him, though we hear him not. I generally find, that a singular ending is closely connected with a singular origin, or a series of eventful occurrences. Can you favour us with some account of her history?"

"Yes, Sir, I can, and it is both interesting and peculiar. I did not know her till she was advanced in age, and had lost her sight;

yet, before I knew her, I had often heard her spoken of as an intelligent woman, very fond of books, and remarkable for the neatness and cleanliness of her person, and her regular and punctual attendance at her parish church. When her sight failed her, she was compelled to relinquish the school by which she had gained her livelihood; but she was so much esteemed, that a good allowance was granted by the parish, and this was augmented by weekly subscriptions from some of the members of her church. On passing by her cottage one day, I looked in to see her, though she was not one of my parishioners; but as she had imbibed the Tractarian doctrines of her Rector, and felt a strong repugnance to evangelical truth, I at once perceived that my presence was more disagreeable than pleasing. I therefore withdrew, not intending to repeat my visit until I had prepared her to desire it. I soon hit upon a plan to accomplish this. The old woman had a little favourite granddaughter in my Sabbath-school, and it occurred to me that I could employ her as the medium of communication; and I commenced operations by giving her and lending her some little books of anecdotes and descriptive stories. After the lapse of several months, I gave her, as a reward for reading to her grandmother, the sketch of the Rev. John Newton's conversion; and this was followed by a tract on regeneration, with which the old woman was so much pleased, that she requested the loan of another on the same subject. No great while after reading this tract she came to hear me preach, and soon became a regular attendant on my ministry; and ere long she sent, to say she should be glad if I would call on her. I went; she apologized for her rudeness of manner on my former visit, and excused herself by referring to the influence which superstitious prejudices had acquired over her. From these superstitions she hoped she was now rescued by the attractive power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“When it was noised abroad that Rachel, the old blind woman, had left the church, where Tractarian doctrines and ceremonies were the theme of the Rector's ministrations, she received a visit from

some of her lady friends, who were very anxious to get her to return, intimating that if she did, they would continue their subscriptions towards her support, otherwise she must not expect to receive any more favours from them. She heard all they chose to say, and thus announced her final decision:—"I have, ladies, attended my parish church for more than fifty years without getting any benefit to my soul, but where I have been only a few Sabbaths I have heard and felt the truth as it is in Jesus, and there I shall continue to go as long as my feeble limbs will carry me. I thank you for all your acts of liberality and kindness to me, but I cannot barter away my freedom, and run the risk of losing my soul. I must live free, though in poverty; and my salvation is now the one thing I value above all price." She continued for several years both regular and punctual in her attendance on my ministry, but at length was compelled, by increasing infirmities, to give up her house and go to reside with a married daughter. Years rolled on—the grand-daughter had left my school—the cottage where the old woman had resided was occupied by another—she gradually faded from my recollection, and in process of time I had quite forgot her."

"I used," said Mrs. Stevens, "to see her, with her grand-daughter leading her, coming to church and going from it; but she sat in some pew which concealed her from my sight when in the church."

"She was, Madam, one of the most retiring women I ever knew; she had a great objection to be seen, as she knew her conversion and her leaving the ministry of her former Rector had excited a good deal of talk."

"The circumstances attending her conversion to the faith of Christ," observed the Rev. Mr. Guion, "is an evident proof of its genuineness, and of its having been effected by the Holy Spirit; otherwise it would have been impossible for you to have gained her over to the reception of salvation by grace through faith, as she was so self-satisfied with her own Tractarian delusions, and so much under the power of the active agents of the same fatal heresy."

"I must confess that no event in my long pastoral career ever gave

me more real pleasure, or excited purer emotions of gratitude to my Divine Master, than being allowed to witness the termination of her course—so unexpected, and so novel.”

“I have known,” said the Rev. Mr. Guion, “some delivered from their terrors and misgivings, just prior to their departure, who have been in bondage all their life, through fear of death, and then they have felt even a transport of joy in anticipation of the end of their faith, but I have never known a case like this of Old Rachel.”

“I recollect,” said Mr. Roscoe, “reading in the *Times*, some years ago, the report of a case bearing a strong resemblance to it in some of its distinctive peculiarities. Mr. M——, of ——, who had through a very lengthened course distinguished himself by his activity in secular life, and by his practical piety, when drawing near his latter end, appeared quite indifferent, if not positively insensible, to everything bearing a relation to earth, though surrounded by its wealth and honours; but even then he gave unmistakeable signs to his pious relatives, that he was filled with all joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” \*

Mr. Lewellin remarked:—“An intimate friend related to me, some time since, the following circumstances, which belong to the same remarkable order with that of Old Rachel and Mr. M——. He knew a Mr. Griffith, who left Wales when a young man, and settled in London, where he practised as a surgeon for half a century with very considerable success; but feeling the infirmities of age coming on, he disposed of his business and withdrew into private life. From his youth up he had maintained a good report amongst his Christian brethren. He lived for years after he had relinquished his practice, but latterly fell into such a state of apathy that he was unable to recollect his own children, and had even forgotten the English language, which he had spoken for more than fifty years,

\* In reply to an application which the author recently made in reference to this case, an intelligent son of this eminent Christian requests that the name of the deceased may be suppressed, saying, at the close of his letter—“The prayer of my dearest father was, God be merciful to me a sinner! and his last word, the name of that Redeemer on whose merits he relied, and to whose honour he had lived.”



JAMES GOWEN.

GEORGE III AND THE DYING GIPSY.

Vol. III. p. 7.

W. L. PROCKS.



using, in his Scripture quotations and audible prayers, his native Welsh. He would remain for many hours in succession without appearing to notice any visible object, asking any question, or replying to any observation relating to secular matters. He had withdrawn from the world, living surrounded with invisible realities, the varying aspect of his countenance indicating some active process of thinking and emotion; but when he heard the name of Jesus mentioned, or any allusion to his love in dying for sinners, his eyes would sparkle with peculiar radiance, his hands would clasp together, and he would pour forth expressions of gratitude and joy, which betokened the vital energy of his soul, and the intense interest he felt in anticipation of the grand crisis. On his favourite theme of meditation he evinced no dulness, nor lack of mental energy; he would emerge from his seclusion to hold intelligible intercourse with his Christian brethren, when he heard them give utterance to the *joyful sound*, and then drew back, without any distinct recognition of their persons, to dwell alone in the pavilion of the Divine presence.\*

\* The following anecdote of George III. (from *Legends and Records*, chiefly Historical: by Charles Taylor, M.A.), supplies us with another interesting case of the aptitude of the mind to understand and feel the power of religious truth, after it has become inaccessible to every other mental communication. His majesty had been hunting in Windsor Forest, and after the hunt was over, as he was returning, his attention was arrested by a little girl who sat on the ground weeping. He alighted from his horse, and, having ascertained the cause of her grief, he followed her to a tent, in an unfrequented part of the forest, where lay an old gipsy on her dying-bed, with her face towards the inside of the tent. She appeared too far gone to hear any of the sympathetic inquiries which he instituted. However, his eye was attracted by a torn and dirty book, which lay open upon the pillow of the dying woman, and he had the curiosity to see what book it was.

"Ah, Sir," said an elder girl, "I believe there's a deal of fine reading in that book; and my grandmother set great store by it, torn and soiled as it is. While she could use her eyes she used to be spelling it over and over again; but now, she says, the letters are all dark and dim before her sight, she cannot see them."

His majesty said nothing, but, taking up the book from the pillow, he sat down on the green turf close to the head of the dying woman. The book was the Bible. He chose some of those beautiful passages which are easy to be understood, and, at the same time, full of hope and comfort to the sinking and fearful heart. He read of the tender compassion of the Father of mercies to his guilty creatures, in giving his own Son Jesus Christ to die for them, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life! Though she heard not what he said when he first spoke to her, she heard and felt

“These are spiritual phenomena,” said the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, “which, like the phenomena of nature, are too plain and palpable to be denied, even though it may not be in our power to give all the explanations about the causes of them which our curiosity would like to receive.”

“Very true, Sir,” said Mr. Ingleby; “but there are certain statements and expressions in the New Testament which throw light enough upon such phenomena to demonstrate that they have their *natural causes*, and thus they are rescued from the supposition that they are self-originated and self-sustained movements of the human spirit, in some complexed and eccentric condition of existence. Our Lord says to his disciples, ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit’ (John xv. 5). The life of the branch depends on its adhesion to the tree which supplies the sap of nourishment. Again, he says, ‘I in them’ (John xvii. 23). The apostle says, ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me’ (Gal. ii. 20). Again, ‘Your life is hid with Christ in God’ (Col. iii. 3), denoting its invulnerable security. From the passages which I have now quoted, and there are many others of the same import, we arrive at this conclusion, which is an explanation and a defence of the spiritual phenomenon, that there is an actual, though inexplicable inhabitation of Jesus Christ in the soul of a believer (Rev. iii. 20), sustaining the spiritual life within him, as the vine nourishes the branch which bears its own fruit. And as He has life in *himself*, he can do this with perfect ease, not only when the believer is in vigorous health, and in the full exercise of all his mental faculties, but when he is labouring under those physical

the words of the Scriptures, for she turned entirely round and opened her dull eyes with a vacant stare; she endeavoured also to speak, but could only make a faint uncertain sound, in which no word could be distinguished. Then she drew her hands together, and clasped them as if in prayer, taking that way, it seemed, to show that she was quite sensible to hear and understand what was read to her; and the young girls drew near, and knelt down quietly beside the bed, listening also to the sacred words of life, and feeling a sort of happiness in their sorrow, as they looked upon their beloved parent, now as calm as a sleeping infant, except that tears stole down her hollow cheeks; but any one might see that they were tears of joy, for all the while a smile was on her lips.

diseases and mental infirmities which, by a slow progression, lead to his decay and death."

The Rev. Mr. Guion observed, "That to deny the existence of such phenomena, and others which bear some affinity to them, simply because they are extraordinary, would be an act of absurdity which no spiritual or even philosophic mind would venture to defend, because the evidence in proof of their actual occurrence is so clear and conclusive. The real question of difficulty to decide is simply this:—Are they supernatural manifestations, or illusions of the imagination? but, in either case, they go off into their own element of mysteriousness, compelling us to believe what we cannot explain. On a supposition that they are real manifestations of Divine power and love, which I fully believe they are, I cannot help thinking that the highly-favoured spirit (Old Rachel, for example), while in such a state of *lucid and active unconsciousness*, if I may use such an expression, must exist in something like an intermediate position between the material and immaterial world—dying off from one by a very slow progression, and getting meet for the other by a similar process; occasionally stepping back to give unmistakable signs of the continued possession of the faculties of thought and emotion, and then retreating, as into a citadel standing near the dark frontier of the invisible world, and into which its celestial rays sometimes penetrate."

"In these cases of rare occurrence," said Mr. Roscoe, "it is the soul of the spiritual man retreating from visible and audible fellowship with his pious associates; but biography supplies us *with another order of moral phenomena* equally inexplicable, yet equally gratifying, tending to confirm the reality of the connection between the visible and invisible world which the Christian revelation so plainly and positively announces. I received, some time ago, the following statement from an elder of a Scotch church, on whose testimony I can place implicit dependence:—'About the month of August, 1838, I went to see my grandfather, a pious old man, ninety-two years of age. I sat by his bedside, and others also were with

him. He had been silent and motionless for about five hours, when he opened his eyes, his countenance beaming with joy, and raising his hands he said, I see heaven open, and Jesus Christ at the right hand of God, and the angels of God descending to receive me. These were his last words, and when he had given utterance to them he expired.’”

“This reminds me,” said Mr. Lewellin, “of an incident which occurred at Stepney College,\* not long ago. When Ebenezer Birrel, a student there, was dying, he requested all who were in the room with him to keep silence. He also was silent and motionless. At length he looked and gazed in rapture on some glorious object, which to him alone was visible, exclaiming, as he gazed, ‘*Beautiful! beautiful!*’ and in uttering the word ‘GLORY!’ his head fell and he expired.”

“The case of Dr. Gordon, of Hull,” said the Rev. Mr. Guion, “differing, as it does in some particulars, from all the specimens we have had of these spiritual phenomena, is, I think, deserving of our special notice. ‘He appeared,’ says his biographer, ‘just as he was expiring, no longer conscious of what took place around him. He gazed upwards, as in wrapt vision. No film overspread his eyes. They beamed with an unwonted lustre, and the whole countenance, losing the aspect of disease and pain, with which we had been so long familiar, glowed with an expression of indescribable rapture. As we watched, in silent wonder and praise, his features, which had become motionless, suddenly yielded for a few seconds to a smile of ecstasy which no pencil could ever depict, and which none who witnessed it can ever forget. And when it passed away, still the whole countenance continued to beam and brighten, as if reflecting the glory on which the soul was gazing. This glorious spectacle continued for about a quarter of an hour, increasing in interest to the last.’”

“I have heard of other cases,” remarked Mr. Ingleby, “bearing a strong resemblance to some which have been mentioned; but I have never made much use of them, except as supplementary proofs in confirmation of my own belief in the inseparable connection of

\* The Baptist College, Stepney.

the two worlds. They are not absolutely necessary to establish this great fact; yet we must all admit, that such proofs *can be supplied*, if it should please God to do so; and we know he has done it more than once. Not to dwell on the vision of the apostle Paul, I would just advert to the case of Stephen. When his enemies were gnashing on him with their teeth, expressive of their indignation against him, for accusing them of having betrayed and murdered the JUST ONE—‘He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God’ (Acts vii. 55). He saw clearly what the others saw not, and for reporting what he saw he was denounced a blasphemer, and was led out and stoned to death. This case settles two great facts:—First, that God can, when he pleases, unveil to mortal vision the glorious forms and appearances of the invisible world; and secondly, that he has done it.”

“I feel unwilling,” said the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, “to object to any evidence which tends to confirm our belief in the connection between the visible and invisible world; but I think great caution is necessary in employing such cases as have now been reported in proof of it. What the old Scotchman and the youthful student saw, or thought they saw, may, after all, have been nothing more than the illusions of their own disturbed imagination, left at the closing scene uncontrolled by the immortal spirit itself, while in the act of passing from its material tabernacle, and away from its material senses, into another, a higher, and more congenial economy of existence.”

“True, Sir,” said Mr. Ingleby; “but then, if we admit that they really are illusions, we must also admit that they are illusive only by a *forestalling process*; the imagination bringing to the senses, yet bounded by the material economy, objects of vision belonging to another state of existence—framing types of invisible realities—lifting up, in the living temple of humanity, prefigurations of what will be seen when the fulness of time comes for the disembodying of the soul and its glorification. The illusion then relates, not to the UNREALITY of *what is seen and felt*, but to the *unreality* of the act

of *vision*, and its *consequent excitement and impression, both mental and physical.*"

"We know," said Mr. Roscoe, "that God very rarely deviates in his providential administration, from the established laws of his government; but we also know that he does sometimes, and for the purpose of making us know more impressively that he is the LORD, who exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things he delights. Hence, there have been two translations from earth to heaven, without the intervening infliction of death, but only two, since the fall of man. In reference to the remarkable cases under consideration, there may be some difficulty in deciding whether the persons actually saw what they are reported to have seen, or were imposed on by the mysterious action of their own imagination; but yet I cannot bring my mind to the conclusion, that the visions were positive illusions, and that the happy spirits who saw them, and spake of them, and whose radiant countenances betokened the truthfulness of their testimony, were dying under the spell of self-deception. Such cases, we know, but very rarely occur, and when they do occur they make their appearance quite unexpectedly; but I think they occur often enough, and with such varying peculiarities, as to make us hesitate to pronounce them positive illusions, even if we cannot admit with confidence that they are positive realities."

"At any rate," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "the spell of self-deception, if they were deceived, was soon broken, as in each case death came immediately after they uttered their last joyous exclamation; and then the sublime vision of immortality opened upon them, with all its glorious realities."

The Rev. Mr. Guion here remarked that, "in general, the Lord's people die in hope and with great calmness; and sometimes they rise to confidence, and even to joy, and joy unspeakable. Few, indeed, rise higher than this; but I have known enough, and heard enough, to satisfy me that some do. The case of Dr. Gordon, who uttered no exclamation, is to me a decisive proof of this. He is calm, motion-

less, wrapped in profound thoughts, when his countenance, which had long been marked by the lines of disease and pain, begins to radiate, till at length its lustre was so clear and bright, attended by an ecstatic smile so ethereal, that the spectators were awe-struck, standing and gazing for the space of a quarter of an hour on this more than human vision. At least, they thought it more than human while they were gazing on it."

"Every effect," said Mr. Ingleby, "must have some adequate cause; and this extraordinary radiation on the countenance of Dr. Gordon was produced either by the action of his own thoughts, or by the intervention of a supernatural power. If produced by his own thoughts, what a hold must his soul have taken of invisible realities when he was dying, to give such a glowing brilliancy to his pallid face! If produced by the intervening action of supernatural power, it was a premature shining forth of the glory to be revealed more fully in the disembodied state. In other words, he did what was done by the impulse of his *own* conceptions, or God was especially with him in his dying chamber, shedding upon him some effulgent rays of his own glory."

"But to return," said the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, "to the case of Rachel, the old blind woman, which, because it is capable of a more practical bearing, I must confess, interests me more than the splendid case of Dr. Gordon, interesting as it is. But, before I touch on this, will you permit me to ask how long she lived after your unexpected interview with her? and whether there was a recurrence of the astonishing responses to your inquiries?"

"I sat gazing on her," said the Rev. Mr. Ingleby, "some time after I ceased speaking; and before I left her, her countenance had resumed its statue-like appearance of positive insensibility; and every feature was fixed, as though set by the cold hand of death, and there was not a movement of any part of her body, except the breast and the shoulders, from the more powerful action of the lungs. The following week I took a friend with me, in expectation of having another interview with her; but I was disappointed. On entering

the cottage, her daughter informed me, that having awoke in the night, and thinking she heard her mother utter some sound, she went with a light to her bedside, when the old woman, after a slight convulsive struggle, raised her hands, and said, '*Dear Saviour, I come to thee,*' and died."

"What a splendid transition!" said Mrs. Stevens; "the cottage exchanged for a mansion! What a glorious sequel to all her privations and sufferings! Her happy spirit, long confined in total darkness, is at last liberated, and is now beholding the glory of Christ, and living and moving amidst the celestial beings and sublime grandeur of immortality."

"And yet we are told," said Mr. Roscoe, "that the faith of Christ, which unveils such grand prospects of a future state of existence, is a mere delusion, and that we who indulge them are self-deceived. If we admit this, we must also admit that it is a very remarkable delusion, as it usually comes in its most vivid forms, and with its most attractive influences, just at that period of human existence when all things of earth and of time are vanishing away. At that awful crisis, when the pomp of distinction, the fascination of sensible objects, and the grandeur of wealth, are all losing their hold on us—and nothing is left to man but the shroud, the coffin, and the grave—at that very time the Christian faith opens up a scene of grandeur which no words 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 sceptic that all is a delusion, and he is self-deceived. But he heeds not such random assertions. He moves forward, repeating the soul-inspiring words, '*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*' (Psal. xxiii. 4)."

"But this case of poor Old Rachel," said the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, "does something more than exhibit the efficacy of the Christian faith, in sustaining the human soul when the *dread hour comes*—it supplies a proof of the immateriality, and, by a fair inference, of the immortal-



ity of the soul itself. We are told, by some sagacious sceptics, that the mind of man, like his body, is material, only that it has passed through a more refined process, and is endowed *by nature* with certain faculties analogous to the senses; and as they came into existence together at the time of his birth, and live together through life, so they will go out of existence together when they pay the debt of nature, and, at last, perish together. And I must confess that humanity has, in some instances, seemed to give a confirmation to this opinion, as the body and the mind have appeared to wither and decay together, as age and infirmities have come upon them. Hence there has been a loss of memory with the loss of animal vivacity—a loss of intellectual vigour with the loss of physical strength—a loss of imaginative power with the loss of sensitive acuteness—the mind and the body undergoing this reciprocal decay before the change comes which, according to the sceptic's theory, is to end in their extinction. But, then, I have met with another class of cases bearing some analogy to this reciprocal decay, but, at the same time, putting forth indications in confirmation of a reversed issue, as in the history of Old Rachel. In her we see the memory losing the impression of earthly objects, but retaining the impression of heavenly ones. Her intellect lies prostrate and powerless in the presence of sensuous and secular inquiries, but it springs into vigorous activity when spiritual ones are addressed to her. The affections of her heart have died off from the relationships of life; but they are concentrated on the perfection of moral beauty, and cleave to Jesus Christ with an intensity and ardour surpassing that of a youthful passion. Here we have a living exponent, and a confirmation of the truthfulness of the apostolic expression, 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' (See Johu xi. 25, 26)."

"And there is another practical lesson," Mr. Ingleby remarked, "which this case of Old Rachel teaches us, and it is this:—When a man is enlightened by the Spirit, and is brought into fellowship with Jesus Christ, and has felt the power of the world to come, he never outlives his knowledge of these wondrous realities which stand

out in bold relief when his remembrance of all other things is blotted out. He may forget the wife of his bosom, and the children who revered and loved him—he may forget his mother tongue, and not recognize the hand which feeds and clothes him—and he may live till almost every sense has become extinct, and the avenues of communication between the imprisoned spirit and the living world are blocked up—but he will never forget by whose blood he has been redeemed—he will never become insensible to the charm of His name or the preciousness of His love—nor will he ever lose sight of the bright and unfading inheritance of which he has received the earnest. Old Rachel was living at ease, conscious of her possessions, even when, in the estimation of others, she was unconscious of her own existence; and indulging the sublimest anticipations of faith and hope, while in the dark cell of her confinement.”

“Without giving any opinion,” said the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, “as to which of the cases reported this evening is the most remarkable, or presuming to decide, whether they are to be referred to some mysterious action of the imagination, or to a real, yet marvellous manifestation of the Divine presence—leaving each case to stand for your decision on the ground of its own merits—I think we may make a good practical use of the whole of them, as, when we see lights burning, though of varying degrees of brightness, we may avail ourselves of their radiance even if we cannot tell by whom they are enkindled. We believe that the evidence which the Bible supplies, in confirmation of the existence of another world, is sufficiently ample and decisive to satisfy us of its reality; but still it is not so ample and decisive as to preclude the desirableness of some additional evidence. This is often given in the death-chamber of the Christian believer; and not only to him, when dying, but to those who are eye-witnesses of the mode of his departure. When, for example, we see a man of intelligence, of taste, of great sobriety of thinking, and of courteous speech, quite calm on his death-bed, and alternately strongly excited—when we hear him speak of the hope he entertains of a glorious immortality—when we see him rising

above hope into full assurance, eager to depart, though surrounded by many of the attractions of earth—when every look, and aspiration, and utterance, beats in harmony with his long-settled expectation of a grand issue to his faith—we may very naturally take his experience, not only as a safe guide, but as a valid testimony to the certainty of what we believe in common. But now suppose, if, in addition to this tranquil state of mind, we should see a bright radiance beaming on the countenance of our dying friend, previously pallid and careworn by disease—and suppose we should see him raise himself up in bed, looking intently, as if seeing some beautiful object concealed from us, and, after a profound silence and stillness of some minutes, we should hear him speak of actually seeing, while in the body, what we believe he will see the moment he is out of the body—would not this tend to strengthen our faith, even though we are unable to decide whether he actually saw, or merely thought he saw, the scenes he described? I think it would; and that even the most dubious on the question of illusion or reality would retire from such a hallowed spectacle, filled with emotions of deep solemnity and joyous delight, similar to what a primitive believer must have felt when looking on the face of Stephen, shining with angelic brilliancy, a visible attestation of the reality of his miraculous vision.”

“I think so too,” said the Rev. Mr. Guion. “I should like to witness such a sight and hear such an exclamation; and though I will admit that such things may be nothing more than the illusive action of the imagination, yet how comes the imagination, when performing its very last operations, to act with so much power, as to imprint such a visible radiance on a death-struck countenance? I cannot resist the impression that such cases as Old Rachel’s and Dr. Gordon’s, belonging certainly to a diverse order of spiritual phenomena, are real manifestations of the glory and love of God, and are intended by him, like the translation of Enoch and Elijah, as supplementary evidence to confirm the faith, and animate the hope of his redeemed and beloved children. At any rate, such is the effect they have on me.”

“They have the same effect on my mind,” said Mr. Ingleby; “especially this case of poor Old Rachel, which will retain its power of impression as long as I exist. I shall never forget the last interview I had with her, nor her death-like appearance when I left her; but when I see her again—and I trust to see her ere long—she will appear in a beauteous form, arrayed in the spotless robe of celestial glory. We know that our latter end is coming, but we know not *when* it will come, or who of the living will be with us when it does come; nor do we know whether we shall pass away, like Dr. Gordon, while beams of glory are radiating our countenance, or steal out of life like poor Old Rachel, as from under a pile of material ruins; but, for our consolation, we know that our dear Redeemer has promised that *He* will come to receive us to himself when we depart hence, and that where he is we shall be also, and for ever: ‘Wherefore, comfort one another with these words’ (1 Thess. iv. 18).”

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### DIVERSITY OF OPINION VERY NATURAL.



ONE morning, while Mrs. Stevens was conversing with Mrs. John Roscoe, a girl who had been attending Mrs. Stevens' Sabbath-school, and who was going into service, called at Fairmount for a Bible which had been awarded to her for her diligence and propriety of behaviour. After expressing her thanks on receiving it, she added, in a very modest tone, “I shall value it for your sake, Ma'am, and I hope I shall love it for its own sake.”

“I was very much pleased,” said Mrs. John Roscoe, “with the appearance and manners of your young protégé. The reason she gave for loving the Bible is a proof of superior intelligence, and, I should hope, of decided piety.”

"Yes, she is an amiable girl, and I hope she is pious. She is a *rescue* from a godless family. Her parents are very profane persons, and their other children are following their example. I have no doubt of her attachment to the Bible, for she has made herself very conversant with it."

In the evening, when a few friends were assembled, Mrs. John Roscoe mentioned how much pleased she had been with the Sabbath-school girl, and repeated the remark she made on receiving the Bible from Mrs. Stevens.

"FOR ITS OWN SAKE," said the Rev. Mr. Guion; "that is a substantially good reason for loving the Bible. It is a somewhat singular fact that no book, on any subject or in any language, has so completely divided public belief and sympathy, both on the question of its origin and its practical utility."

"It certainly," Mr. Roscoe replied, "is a very singular, and a very wonderful book: wonderful, if true; more so, if false. If true, we can account for its origin; but how can its origin be accounted for if it be false? If false, it is an invention; and not the invention of one man, but of an organized conspiracy, and a conspiracy of good men, for the Bible is too good a book for bad men to write."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"I admit that a bad man may write a good book; but to suppose that a number of bad men would conspire to write such a good book as the Bible, is to admit as great a moral impossibility as to imagine that a number of good men would form a confederacy in fraud and duplicity, and then palm off their lying inventions as positive realities. Now, let us look at the case fairly, and I think we may make some logical progress in settling the question of its origin. Here is a Bible, and it consists of two parts—the Old and the New Testament; and we must recollect that the Old Testament would be incomplete without the New, and the New Testament would be incomplete without the Old. Each of these parts consists of different books, or distinct writings, variously designated, occupying the space of nearly 2000 years in the composition of them. If the Bible had been written by any one man in

any one age, or if it had been written by contemporary writers living in the same city or country, its integrity might be open to very strong suspicion. But the writers of the Bible lived in different ages and in different countries, spoke different languages, belonged to very different ranks in social life, and most of them were unknown to each other; and yet there is, on all the facts and doctrines, and institutes of these records, an exact concurrence\* of testimony running through the whole of their writings. Amongst the writers we find legislators, kings, poets, herdsmen, fishermen; one was a publican, and another a tent-maker, who, at one period of his life, denounced as false some of the facts of its record, which, on investigation, he found to be true, and attested the integrity of his new-formed belief by yielding to a martyr's death. And it will be at once perceived by the intelligent reader, that these men were no common-place writers; they moved in no beaten pathway of

\* The sceptic will sometimes endeavour to perplex and entangle the faith of an unlearned believer, by insinuating that, as he has never traced, through the medium of exact evidence, the origin of the different books of the Bible to their source, he cannot be assured that his belief is substantially a true belief—it may be, after all, nothing but the belief of a fiction. The following quotation from a distinguished writer, will, I think, prove as a shield of defence to the faith of the unlearned, and convince the sceptic himself, that his objection, plausible in appearance, is wanting in logical force:—"It is manifest that the concurrent testimony, positive or negative, of several witnesses, when there can have been no concert, carries with it a weight independent of that which may belong to each of them, considered separately. For though, in such a case, each of the witnesses should be even considered as wholly undeserving of credit, still the chances might be incalculable against all agreeing in the same falsehood. It is on this kind of testimony that the generality of mankind believe in the motions of the earth, and of the heavenly bodies, &c. Their belief is not the result of their own observations and calculations, nor yet again of their implicit reliance on the skill and good faith of any one or more astronomers; but it rests on the agreement of many independent and rival astronomers, who want neither the ability nor the will to detect and expose each other's errors. It is on similar grounds that the generality of men believe in the existence and in the genuineness of manuscripts of ancient books. It is not that they have themselves examined these, or that they rely implicitly on the good faith of those who profess to have done so; but they rely on the concurrent and uncontradicted testimony of all who have made, or who *might make*, the examination—both unbelievers and believers of various hostile sects, any one of whom would be sure to seize any opportunity to expose the forgeries or errors of his opponents."—*Whately*.

This observation is the more important because many persons are liable to be startled and dismayed, on its being pointed out to them that they have been believing something, as they are led to suppose, on very insufficient reasons, when the truth is, perhaps, that they have been merely mis-stating their reasons.

general knowledge; they are no copyists—they are originals: what they tell us no other men had ever thought of, or, if they had, their thoughts died with them, as they never gave publicity to them. The writers of the Bible appear amongst us as scribes coming from another world, well instructed in the mysteries of a unique faith, admirably adapted to the peculiar exigencies of disordered and perplexed humanity. In addition to the origin of the world and of evil—the mediatorial work and government of the Son of God, the moral character and condition, and responsibilities, and final destiny of the soul of man—and a future economy of existence to last for ever—are the momentous truths which they make known to us, through the media of their multifarious and diversified compositions; of history, prophecy, parable, poetic songs, and plain didactic prose.”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“And what is especially deserving of our attention, is the perfect ease and harmony with which they write on these new and sublime discoveries of moral truth, while they all write independently of each other. They admit that they are subordinates, unworthy of the honour of their appointment; yet each one speaks and writes, and without any appearance of dogmatism or ostentation, in the same dignified tone of absolute authority; the voice which speaks and the hand which writes, is human, but what is said or written, comes from some other source.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“Yes, Sir, I think the correctness of your remark can be demonstrated; at least, it comes as much within the range of demonstration, as any moral or historic truth, or fact, can be brought. The Old Testament is incomplete, and comparatively valueless, without the New; and yet it is written under the obvious impression and belief, that it would be completed; but on what data could its writers base their calculation, that they should have successors who would carry on and perfect what they had begun and advanced through several stages of its progress. Now, I readily believe, that a person of a very acute and comprehensive mind, who has carefully watched and studied the facts and philosophy of his-

tory, may, on some special occasions, give some general outline of what will be the state of things within a very *near* futurity, if he cautiously avoid going into specific and minute details. But the writers of the Old Testament have opened up the roll of a *very remote* futurity,\* and have recorded extraordinary events, with their dates and localities, long before their actual occurrence, portraying the likeness of MESSIAH the PRINCE, ages before his appearance on earth, and doing it with so much exactness, that it is a perfect resemblance of the wonderful original. How could they have done this, unless they had been guided by a prescient Spirit, to whose eye all the future is as visible as all the past?"

"Foretelling at the same time," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "his tragical death; which no one would have expected as the termination of his benevolent career."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"It is, I believe, a law in the republic of letters, which no one has attempted to repeal, that all writers shall have the right of giving, if they please, their authorities for what they say; and of letting us know from what source they derive the information which they supply to us. Hence, no one can reasonably object to let the writers of the Bible have the protection of this law, which is of universal application. And what do they say on the question relating to the source of their knowledge? We will take their answer, and then form our own judgment of its integrity from the facts and evidences of the case. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God:† holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."‡ This is a concise statement of their testimony on this great question; and its integrity is fairly sustained by positive and incidental evidence. We see that they have given proofs of foreknowledge which far surpasses the capabilities of the most acute and comprehensive human mind; while, at the same time, they have made known to us a connected series of moral and

\* Deut. xviii. 15; Psal. xlv. 1, 2; lxxii.; Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 22, 27; Zech. ix. 9; Mal. iii. 1.

† 2 Tim. iii. 16.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 21.



spiritual truths, to which no other writers make any allusion, and of which they could have formed no conception, unless they had been under superhuman tuition. What they have done, is its own defence against the imputation of fraud and dishonesty—standing as an imperishable memorial of the love of God to man; and of the fidelity of his servants, in disclaiming the honour of inventing a theory of faith and morals which justly claims a Divine origin. This view of the case, which is their own explanation, settles the question, without requiring us to believe physical impossibilities, or compelling us to reject the unrepealable law of moral evidence.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“And we may, I think, very properly regard the great *moral power* of the Bible as a very telling collateral argument in favour of its Divine origin. You may take any other book, on any other subject, and put it into circulation amongst a mass of people, either semi-barbarians or highly-polished citizens, but it will work no beneficial changes in the general aspect of their moral character. It will leave them, as it finds them. If it finds them, as in India, bowing down and doing homage to stocks and stones, it leaves them worshipping the workmanship of their own hands—still revelling in their cruel and obscene abominations. If it finds them, as in Rome, kissing the crucifix—offering up their adorations and orisons to the Virgin Mary—or visiting the tomb of a real or legendary saint, in expectation of some miraculous healing, it leaves them practising these puerile and senseless exercises. If it finds them, as in Russia, crouching in terror before the great Tyrant, doing his biddings like beasts of burden, it leaves them in this prostrate state of degradation and misery. But put the Bible into circulation amongst the same class of people, and, after a while, you will perceive that it is taking effect upon them. One reads it, and feels its moral power on his conscience and his heart; another reads it, and he is subdued by its authority; others read it and the same result follows: they are drawn together by the attractive power which emanates from it, and become the nucleus of a new order of human beings springing up in the midst of the unchanged natives of the place. They are of the same ancestral

origin, and follow the same civil and social avocations and professions; but they are a peculiar people, resembling the primitive believers of the New Testament in intelligence and daring courage. They are new creatures in Christ Jesus; and, in process of time, as they increase in number and consequent activity, they give a new tone and energy to the moral, the political, and the religious sentiments and feelings of an entire community. It is to the Bible that Scotland is indebted for her moral greatness; and England never would have risen to her present eminence had it not been for the old Puritans, who were animated and sustained by the examples, and principles, and spirit of the Bible, in their passive sufferings and active exertions in resisting the encroachments and the cruelties of tyranny and oppression."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Your argument, Sir, is a legitimate one, and it is as logical, as it is historically true. The book which effects the changes which are essential to the happiness and well-being of men as individuals, or men living in a community, but which cannot be effected by the wit or eloquence of man, may fairly put in a claim to a higher and a purer origin than mere humanity."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"Unbelievers, in general, do not trouble themselves to account for the origin of the Bible; they take for granted that it is a book of mysticism and fraud, and at once direct their virulence against it, and hold it up to scorn and contempt."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"And yet, notwithstanding all these attacks on the Bible, it still lives and commands attention. In the estimation of wise and good men, it takes precedence of all other books: they not only admire, but revere and love it. I have in my parish a good old man who has a large library, and has been a great reader for upwards of twenty years, but now he very rarely reads any book except his Bible. On referring, one day, to his devoted attachment to the Bible, he said—'I feel, when reading it, in the presence of God, and what I read comes with authority and power. The more I read it the more is my attention fixed on another world, and the more intensely do I desire to depart hence. This is a

mean and comfortless place of residence when compared with the mansion our Lord is preparing for us in his Father's house."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Pious people are very fond of the Bible, and their attachment to it increases as they advance in years; their passion for it is often very strong in death."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"Your remark, Sir, recalls to my remembrance what passed, the other day, in a casual conversation between an intelligent, yet very candid sceptic, and myself. 'There is,' he said, 'one phenomenon connected with the Bible which has long puzzled me to account for; if you can solve it, I shall feel obliged. I have noticed wherever I have been—and I have travelled through Europe and America—I have visited India and some of the islands of the South Seas, and resided for awhile amongst the black population of the West Indies—and whenever I have met with any persons who believe in the truth of the Bible, whether they were refined and intelligent or the reverse, they uniformly evinced for it the same profound reverence and supreme attachment.' 'The solution,' I replied, 'is easily given. They revere it as their statute-book, containing the code of laws which their Divine Legislator has issued to test their obedience to his authority; and they love it, as bringing life and immortality to light; making known to them a Saviour who is able and willing to save them from the wrath to come, and to give them peace of soul as an earnest and a pledge of future and eternal happiness; and they value it for its exceeding great and precious promises, which have a soothing and sustaining influence over their hearts in the times of their sorrows and afflictions.' 'But how is it,' he added, 'that while they cherish such a profound reverence for the Bible, they differ so widely in the interpretation they put on its meaning? How will you account for this rather puzzling fact?' The sudden entrance of several strangers into the room prevented me from making a reply."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"This difference of interpretation, which sceptics often bring forward as a plausible argument against the Divine origin of the Bible, very frequently perplexes conscientious believers. I recently received a letter from a gentleman who says—'When I

think of the sentiments which are held by different bodies of Christians—sentiments which are directly opposed to each other, and which appear to me to admit of no adjustment; and when I recollect that they all profess to derive them from the same source, and are in the habit of appealing to the same authority in support of them—I feel myself approaching a difficulty which I know not how to solve. Is the Bible really such a mysterious book that it is incapable of being understood? Is it an oracle which utters truth and falsehood? If so, it cannot be a safe guide; and if it be not so, how do you account for the very different interpretations which it receives?"

*Mr. Stevens.*—"How did you meet the difficulties of the case?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I did not go fully into the question, because I knew, from the cast of his mind, that he would work himself right. I merely stated that conflicting opinions do not, of themselves, possess sufficient weight to set aside any law, or destroy the truth of any proposition which comes attested by its own proper evidence. And to give force to this very obvious truism, I reminded him of our judges, who sometimes give different interpretations of a statute law, without impairing its authority; and of our philosophers, whose different opinions on the primary cause of motion, do not disturb popular belief in the diurnal revolution of our earth. But, after all, we do not differ in our interpretations of the Bible so much as many imagine. It is true there are separate and distinct denominations of Christians, who are regarded by the ignorant and bigoted as the disciples and abettors of very opposite religious creeds; yet if we inquire into the actual state of the case, we shall find that most of them agree in all that is essential and vitally important in the Christian scheme, and that they differ only on what is subordinate, and comparatively unimportant."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"It is supposed by many that this diversity of interpretation which is given to some parts of the Bible would have been prevented if a logical or systematic order had been scrupulously observed. If, for example, the sacred writers had arranged the

facts, the doctrines, the precepts, the institutions, the sanctions, the evidences, and the final recompense of the Christian faith, systematically—presenting the whole in a compendious form—there would be, in that case, so much compactness, such symmetrical order—one part of the theory would hang so naturally on another—that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any division of opinion to spring up amongst us on the question of its import or design. We should then think and believe alike. This is what I have heard some speculatists say; but I have no confidence in the integrity of their opinion.” \*

\* “No such a thing,” says Archbishop Whately, “is to be found in our Scriptures as a catechism, or regular *elementary introduction* to the *Christian religion*; nor do they furnish us with anything of the nature of a systematic creed, set of articles, confession of faith, or by whatever other name one may designate a regular, complete compendium of Christian doctrines; nor, again, do they supply us with a liturgy for ordinary public worship, or with forms for administering the sacraments, or for conferring holy orders; nor do they even give any precise *directions* as to these and other ecclesiastical matters—anything that at all corresponds to a rubric, or set of canons.” Why these omissions? A great defect in our Scriptures, say some; but, in my opinion, it amounts to a self-evident confirmation, that the writers of the New Testament were under the special dictation of the Divine Spirit, as to what they *should*, and what they *should not* record. If they were carrying out a fraudulent design, conceived by their predecessors, who wrote the Old Testament, they would, from their educational training and desire to act in character with their confederates, have imitated their example, and been very specific and minute in all their ecclesiastic arrangements. They would have inserted the law of dictation and prescription, which was so absolute under the Jewish theocracy, in the Christian code, and thus have rendered division of opinion and freedom of action impossible. The question then turns upon us: Why did they not do what it was very natural they should do, and what the necessity of the case would seem to require to be done, according to the judgment of every intelligent and reflective mind, who looked at it through the medium of the existing ecclesiastical regulations of the age and country? Their *not doing* what was thus natural *they should do*, and what the necessity of the case, according to human judgment, *required them to do*, is of itself a proof that they were not left to the guidance of their own understanding, but were held in subjection, according to their own confession, by the controlling power and wisdom of the Holy Ghost, under whose inspiration all Scripture is given. “The Jewish ritual, designed for one nation and country, and intended to be of temporary duration, was fixed and accurately prescribed. The same Divine wisdom, from which both dispensations proceeded, having designed Christianity for all nations and ages, left Christians at large in respect of those points in which variation might be desirable. But I think no *human* wisdom would have foreseen and provided for this. That a number of *Jews*, accustomed from their infancy to so strict a ritual, should, in introducing Christianity as the second part of the same dispensation, have abstained not only from accurately prescribing for the use of all Christian churches for ever the mode of Divine worship, but even from recording what was actually in use under their own directions, does seem to me utterly incredible, unless

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"The objections against an inspired compendium of Christian doctrine and practice, are, in my judgment, more powerful than the arguments in favour of it. If we had it, we should revere it, and learn it; it would perpetually recur to our recollection in our reflective moments, and by rendering a studious examination of the other parts of the Scripture unnecessary, we should be liable to sink into 'a *contented apathy*' of spirit, under this conviction, that as we can repeat all, we know all that is necessary for us to know."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"Archbishop Whately, when alluding to this subject, says, 'that if we had this compendium, both it and the other parts of the Scriptures would be regarded as of Divine authority; but the compendium itself would be looked upon by most as the fused and purified metal; the other, as the mine containing the crude ore. And the compendium itself, being, not like the existing Scriptures, that *from which* the faith is to be learned, but *the very thing to be learned*, would come to be regarded by most with an indolent, unthinking veneration, which would exercise little or no influence over them.'"

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Universal experience proves, that facility in obtaining a supply to our physical necessities, is not so beneficial to the energy and vigour of the human constitution, as difficulty, which stimulates to labour and invention. Compare, for example, the natives of the South Sea Islands, whose bread-fruit ripens of itself,

we suppose them to have been restrained from doing this by a special admonition of the Divine Spirit."—*Whately.*

At any rate, whether these omissions are to be attributed to the controlling power of the Holy Ghost, or the extraordinary policy of the writers of the New Testament, we arrive at the same conclusion, that, while we are required to believe, and to contend earnestly for the essential facts and doctrines of the Christian faith, which are set out with great precision and explicitness, a freedom of action is allowed on what may be deemed the subordinate and non-essential parts of the same faith. Hence we may differ on some things, without any valid impeachment of our Christian wisdom and integrity, unless we allow our difference of opinion to produce alienation of brotherly affection. When it does this, we make a sacrifice of our honour, and give a sanction to the accusation of the common adversary, that our hostile divisions are a proof that our religion does not come from a wise and benevolent Being—that it is of the earth, earthy.

with the hardy Highlanders of Scotland, who have to toil for their living through frost and snow, as well as sunshine—what a difference in their muscular and masculine conformation and appearance. And the same remark is equally applicable to the mind of man, whose knowledge on any subject, in any department of science, and especially the science of Biblical theology, is accurate and profound, in proportion to the efforts he is obliged to make in its acquisition. A compendium would be the bread-fruit, within reach, and easily plucked. We should, if we had it, become dwarfs in Biblical theology. It is only when our energies are roused by a love of the truth, and stimulated by the difficulties connected with its attainment, that our knowledge in the mystery of Christianity gets perfected, and becomes practically powerful in its influence over the heart and the character.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“And in addition to the relaxing influence which a compendium would exert over the mind—indisposing it to any labour in searching the Scriptures, except the labour of the memory, and that to a very superficial extent—I have another objection to such a projected scheme, which is this:—I do not think it possible for the Christian faith to be reduced to such a compact, or what you term compendious form, as shall secure amongst its advocates and defenders a perfect unity of belief on all points, without the perpetual exercise of a supernatural agency in the illumination and guidance of the mind, which would amount to something like a plenary inspiration to every believer. Now what can be more logically explicit than the articles of our church; and yet what a very different construction do different men put upon them!”

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—“That is true. If I were in a church on a Sabbath morning listening to a Tractarian; if I returned in the afternoon, and heard a Moderate; and if, in the evening, I occupied the same pew, while an Evangelical was doing duty in the pulpit, I should find myself in a modern Babel, witnessing, on a small scale, a new specimen of the confusion of tongues.”

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—“But this difference of opinion and diversity of

interpretation on the same theory of belief, prevails amongst others as well as amongst us. Even amongst unbelievers, who almost deify reason—asserting and maintaining, that it is fully equal to all the exigencies of humanity, without being under any obligation to a Divine inspiration—there is almost an endless diversity of belief and opinion on all questions relating to God, to human responsibility, and the final destiny of man. They are obliged to pass a toleration act to live in peace.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“I like a toleration act; it is essential to our peace. The period is coming when we shall ‘see eye to eye;’ but that will be under a dispensation very different to the present; we must now agree to differ, and while contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we must live together as brethren.”

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—“Jesus Christ said to his disciples—‘These things I command you, that ye love one another’ (John xv. 17); and he says the same things to us. And if we love one another, we shall never vote for a repeal of our toleration act, which admits of some shades of difference in our religious belief and opinions.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“It was doubted, a few years since, whether even the spiritual members of our various denominations cherished any fraternal esteem and affection for each other—they often acted more like gladiators than brethren; but now they are cultivating a spirit of union and peace.”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“This change in their spirit and conduct is a very gratifying and auspicious event; but some good men maintain that the entire abolition of the distinctive denominations and their union in one undivided body, would be more conducive to the honour of Christianity, and more favourable to its progressive triumphs.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“This I conceive to be impracticable during the partial obscurity of the present dispensation; and I must confess that I do not think it advisable. I have no objection to those divisions of opinion which separate us into different denominations, though I deplore the spirit which they sometimes engender. I think that a variation in belief, on some of the minor questions of



religion, by keeping our attention awake and active, tends to preserve the more important truths in a purer state; and the action and re-action of one Christian denomination on another, prevents that stagnation of feeling, and that inertness of principle, which an unbroken and undisturbed uniformity admits of."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"But, would not the church assume a more imposing aspect, and put forth a more powerful energy, if she could unite all her members in one undivided body, under the immediate authority of one Head, than she does now, broken as she is, into so many subdivisions?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir, if she could preserve her purity uncontaminated; but we ought never to forget, that while the religion we profess is Divine in its origin, and indestructible in its nature, it is human in its forms and administrations. Hence it alternately displays resistless power and exhausted weakness—the sanctity and grandeur of its Author, along with the infirmities and imperfections of the agents to whom it is intrusted—sometimes exciting the profound veneration of the multitude, and at other times their contempt or indifference. And it is this admixture of what is human with what is Divine, that renders it expedient that there should be some exposure to the influence of that re-action of distinctive opinions, and of social attachments, which, by keeping us alive to *the purity and extension of our separate communions*, tends to promote the purity and extension of the faith which we hold in common."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"Your opinion exactly accords with my own. Hence, instead of regarding the Established Church, and the various denominations of orthodox Dissenters, as hostile foes, aiming at each other's humiliation and destruction, we should look on them as subjects of the same monarch, each bearing the distinctive insignia of his own order; yet mutually supporting each other without the formality of a visible contact, and, as his sovereign will directs, advancing, each in his own way, the work of reclaiming to a state of allegiance the people who have revolted from his authority."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Or, to vary the figure, we may view them as so many servants belonging to the same master, who are employed in cultivating the great moral vineyard, whose reward at last will be in proportion to their fidelity to him, and their affection for each other. If this comparison be just, then, if we cherish a complacent feeling exclusively for those who belong to our own class, and attempt to lord it over our fellow-servants who may belong to another, or treat them discourteously, we dishonour ourselves, and offend against the law of our Lord, who has commanded us to love each other as brethren."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"When I consider the fallibility of the human mind—the prejudices of education—the influence of accidental reading and associations—and the extensive prevalence of erroneous opinions, instead of being astonished by the shades of difference which prevail amongst us, I am surprised that we think so nearly alike. We agree on the substantial facts, and doctrines, and institutes, and precepts of revelation, while we differ on some of its forms and ceremonial enactments. But these trifling differences, which do not endanger the safety, nor add to the stability of our faith, ought not to excite jealousy and suspicion, and cause alienation of affection, as though we were avowed enemies. No. When this is the case we give a decisive proof that we do not possess the spirit of the gospel; or, if we possess it, we do not display it, which aggravates rather than extenuates our sin."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"In the last prayer our Saviour uttered, just before he presented himself the expiatory sacrifice for human guilt, he earnestly entreated that all his disciples, in every future age, might be one, even as he and his Father are one; and he assigns the reason—*That the world may know that thou hast sent me.* For some ages, the object of that prayer was realized in the harmony which prevailed amongst Christians whose religion was a bond of union more strict and tender than the ties of consanguinity; and with the appellation of brethren they associated all the sentiments of endearment that relation implied. To see men of the most contrary

characters and habits—the learned and the rude—the most polished, and the most uncultivated—the inhabitants of countries alienated from each other by institutions the most repugnant, and by contests the most violent—forgetting their ancient animosity, and blending into one mass, at the command of a person whom they had never seen, and who had ceased to be an inhabitant of this world, must have been an astonishing spectacle. Such a sudden assimilation of the most discordant materials; such love issuing from hearts the most selfish, and giving birth to a new race and progeny, could be ascribed to nothing but a Divine interposition; it was an experimental proof of the commencement of that kingdom of God—that celestial economy, by which the powers of the future world are imparted to the present.”

*Mr. Stevens.*—“It must have been a spectacle no less delightful to the eye of the Christian than astonishing to the unbeliever; and had the visible church always exhibited such a spectacle of union and affection, her history would have been the records of her spiritual triumphs, rather than of her persecutions and her miseries. But her bonds of union have been broken asunder, and her love of the brethren has been quenched in the bitter waters of strife. We are the descendants of the holy men who first caught, and first displayed the spirit of the Prince of Peace, but how little do we resemble them! We imbibe the same faith, plead the same promises, claim the same privileges, participate in the same spiritual enjoyments, bear the same distinctive and relative character, and anticipate the same high destiny; but we too often act as though we were released from the obligations which they admitted and discharged; and instead of attempting to convince sceptics and unbelievers of the divinity of our Lord’s mission, and the moral efficacy of his death, by our union and our reciprocal affection, we strengthen them in their infidelity by our anti-Christian spirit. Can no remedy be devised to correct this noxious evil, which, like a withering blight, tarnishes the moral lustre of all our distinctive denominations, and does more to embitter the spirit, and extend the triumphs of infidelity, than

the most virulent works which issue from her corrupt and hostile press?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Why, Sir, I hope the evil is in some small degree abated by the influence of our public institutions. Those who, a few years since, were envious and jealous of each other, now associate together on the most friendly terms. If the Bible Society has not terminated the contest, it has been the means of concluding a truce between them; and I flatter myself that there will be no renewal of hostilities, even though some of the more bigoted belonging to the different denominations should feel disposed to revive them."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"I fear, Sir, you are rather too sanguine in your expectations. In the little circle in which we move, in this isolated spot of the religious world, the spirit of fraternal love and union is cherished; but what commotion and strife prevail just now between both the clerical and lay members of our own church!"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir, I know it and deplore it. It is the spirit of dry formalism setting itself in array against the spirit of vital Christianity; and the contest will be severe, but the issue is certain—the Word of the Lord will prove more powerful than the traditions of man."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"I must confess that I am rather sanguine in my calculations of the moral influence of the Bible Society on the best and most active men of our age. Dr. Mason, of New York, says, in the preface to a work which he has published—'Within a few years there has been a manifest relaxation of sectarian rigour among the different denominations in America, so that the spirit of the gospel, in the culture of fraternal charity, has gained a visible and growing ascendancy. This happy alteration,' he adds, 'may be attributed, in a great degree, to the influence of missionary and Bible societies.'"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"And it is so amongst us to some extent. Till the Bible Society arose, and gained a settlement in our land, we had not an inch of neutral ground on which we could assemble, and unite with each other in any religious enterprise; but now we have

the province of Goshen assigned us; and the air of that place is so salubrious, the light so clear and brilliant, the atmosphere so temperate and serene, and the harmony of its inhabitants so profound, that we venerate it as the mystic inclosure in which we have an emblematical representation of the celestial inheritance—in which the spirits of the just live in closest union and sweetest concord. May the catholicism of grace and truth wax stronger and stronger, till Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; the strife of sect being overcome and banished by the all-subduing love of God our Saviour!”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—“And what is it but prejudice, arising from ignorance and misconception, which prevents this cordial union and fraternal attachment? No one, I am conscious, who understands the genius of Christianity, or who has ever felt his bosom glow with supreme love to the Redeemer, can for a single moment presume to recommend disunion amongst the members of the household of faith, though they may occupy different compartments, and commune at separate tables. It is prejudice that kept me aloof from Dissenters, and made me unwilling to associate with them; because I understood that the generality of them rejected the essential doctrines of Christianity; but now my error is corrected, I esteem them as my brethren in Christ; and as I hope to meet them in heaven, and unite with them in the sublime exercises of that holy place, I feel a pleasure in mingling with them on earth.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“I have lived on terms of intimacy with many who do not belong to the church of which I am a minister, and some of the happiest moments of my life have been spent in social and spiritual intercourse with them. Our conversation, when we have been together, has not turned on the questions on which we differ, but on those on which we agree; and I have often retired from these interviews with my mind relieved from its cares, and both animated and enriched by the interchange of devout sentiment and feeling. And in looking forward to the final consummation, I indulge a hope of partaking of much holy delight in associating with

Luther and Calvin, with Fenelon and Claude, with Whitfield and Wesley, with Hall, Foster and Chalmers, and other illustrious men, of the same and other denominations, who have entered into rest. I have lived in stormy times, but I have never increased the fury of the tempest. I have seen the spirit of party raging with desolating violence, and have known some of those, who have borne the image of the heavenly, stand in opposing columns to each other in the field of fierce and angry debate; but I have been enabled, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to hold on my way unconnected with their unhappy hostilities; and now it is with no common feelings of gratitude and delight that I indulge the hope of leaving the church and the world at a period when, if the temple of war is not actually closed, yet our denominations are forming a more correct estimate of each other's relative strength and importance, in the conflict which we have to sustain against the combined powers of superstition and infidelity; and this will necessarily tend to increase our reciprocal esteem and confidence."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"If, in our intercourse with each other, we always acted on your prudential maxim, of conversing on questions of general agreement, rather than on controversial ones, the spirit of discord would be exorcised from amongst us, and then we might, I think, justly calculate on a more copious measure of the influences of the Spirit poured down from on high, when we should intuitively feel, by a force of evidence too powerful to be withstood, that *God is love*, and that we never please him more than when we embrace, with cordiality and esteem, all who bear his image, without distinction of sect or party."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"In these sentiments of Christian liberality and charity I now concur most heartily."

## UNION WITHOUT COMPROMISE.



THE Rev. Mr. Ingleby, on resuming the discussion of the question of union amongst the various denominations of believers in the Divine origin of the faith of Christianity, made the following very pertinent remarks:—"If it were the will of God that the various denominations of Christians should all think and act alike, as the tribes of Israel were required to do under the Levitical dispensation, we should have laws laid down for our guidance with the same minuteness and explicitness as was done for them. But such is not the case. We have certain general principles laid down, and the motives by which all our actions should be governed set before us with clearness and precision, but we have no particular directions as to the external form of church government. We are therefore left free to adopt that ecclesiastical system which, after careful examination, we find most in conformity with the spirit of the New Testament."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"You mean, Sir, I presume, that we are left free to choose either the Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Congregational form of church government?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir; and though I do not profess to be deeply read in casuistry, yet I believe that very much may be collected from the facts and incidents recorded in Scripture, and from the casual expressions of the sacred writers in favour of each of these forms of church government."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"And so I think. We are not living under a law laid down with minute exactness, like the ancient tribes of Israel, but have the right of exercising our choice on these matters of church polity, and our choice is determined by preference or expediency, or both. That is, I may deem it expedient to be an Episcopalian in one country, or a Presbyterian in another, or a Congregationalist in a third; and I may, at the same time, most decidedly

prefer one of these modes of church government to either of the other, as being, in my opinion, the nearest approach to the teachings of the New Testament. To adopt such a principle as this is, appears to me more in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament dispensation, than putting in a claim for the Divine right of Episcopacy, or Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism; it is an equitable concession to others of the liberty we claim for ourselves; and hence, without being guilty of any degree of inconsistency, we can cultivate Christian fellowship with our brethren of other denominations, without compromising our own principles."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"You will still leave, I presume, as a question open for discussion, the relative conformity of each mode of church government to the New Testament model?"

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"Most certainly; and when discussions go on, untainted by the dogmatism and acrimony of party predilections and antipathies, and are conducted in a liberal and loving spirit, they tend to give solidity to the foundation on which our relative union is based; and show, at the same time, that it can be cemented and perpetuated without any dishonourable compromise."

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"I was present in a company some time since, when an ingenious Scotchman made out, as he thought, a very strong claim for the superiority of Presbyterianism to the other forms of church government. Episcopacy, he remarked, has the monarchical element too dominant in her constitution—*the clergy are everything*; in Congregationalism, the democratic element is too dominant—*the people are everything*; but Presbyterianism unites the two elements, and in about equal proportions *the clergy and the people act together*—they are a combined power."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Ingenious, if not just. However, without pausing to discuss this question, I think it is very plain that the writers of the New Testament evince a much stronger predilection for the facts and doctrines of the gospel than they do for its rites and ceremonies—deeming the one essential to the integrity of the faith, while the other is subordinate and non-essential; and I think



we cannot do better than imitate them; for after all, the forms and ceremonies of church government are but as the chaff to the wheat—the mere attire of a living personage, not the person himself. I prefer Episcopacy to either of the other forms, though I will not take upon myself the task of defending every appendage which has been affixed to it; yet, with all my predilections in its favour, if the pure faith of Christianity were ejected from an Episcopal pulpit, *as it often is*, I would go and worship in a Congregational chapel; and I have no doubt but a spiritually-enlightened Presbyterian would rather listen to the glad tidings of salvation in one of our churches, than to a merely moral sermon in one of his own. In my opinion, the three distinct orders of churches may be planted on the same soil, may grow in harmony side by side; and without any compromise of principle, may co-operate with each other, in combined movements, against either their Papal or sceptical opponents, and feel also a high degree of joyous satisfaction in witnessing each other's prosperity and honour."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Yet I still prefer fellowship with our own church, while cherishing fraternal esteem and fellowship with our Christian brethren of other churches."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Certainly. When we say that the members of our church, and the various orders of Dissenters who have seceded from it, ought, in obedience to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to cherish reciprocal esteem, and live in peaceful harmony, we do not mean that they are to separate themselves from their own communions, or cease to give them a decided preference."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"In that view of the case I heartily concur; for if the spirit of a comprehensive brotherly love and fellowship were to lead to alienation from our distinctive denominations, it would want one of the evidences of being a peace-maker—healing the breaches which party spirit has unhappily made amongst us. As a member of a family ought to feel a stronger regard, and take a deeper interest in its prosperity and happiness, than he is expected to cultivate towards the community at large, so I think the mem-

ber of any individual Christian church, may and ought to cherish a greater affection for his brethren with whom he lives on more intimate terms of fellowship than he does for his fellow-disciples in general."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"You have, Sir, very clearly expressed the view I now entertain of our relative obligations. We are to do good to all when we have an opportunity, but more especially to those of the household of faith with whom we are united in church fellowship—uniformly endeavouring, by our prayers, our influence, our wealth, and our sympathy, to promote their individual and collective prosperity and happiness."

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—"You are now leading us from the sentimental and ceremonial to the practical department of Christian obligation, in which I think, from motives of gratitude to our Divine Master, we ought all to be increasingly active, provoking one another unto love and good works. This will be acting more in harmony with our faith, and prove more beneficial to ourselves and others than a rigid adherence to any sectarian form. When returning home the other day from one of my pastoral visitations, I met a very poor man, who had a severe affliction in his family, and he said rather abruptly, 'I wish, Sir, you would give us a sermon from the words of the apostle John, 'But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' (1 John iii. 17).' I was not surprised at this application, when I found that he had just been to the Hall, the residence of a very wealthy professor of religion, to ask some assistance for his distressed family, but had received only a few words of vague sympathy and regret for his misfortunes."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Well may the apostle say—how dwelleth the love of God in such a heart! But, alas, wealth too often proves a curse to its possessor. How kindly and tenderly does the apostle address us: 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'"

*Rev. Mr. Guon.*—"Our Divine Master exhibits himself as the model for our imitation; making, at the same time, our love for each other the test of the genuineness of our Christian character: 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (John xiii. 34, 35)."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"As I have loved you!—emphatic words, expressive of the spirit we ought to cultivate towards all our Christian brethren, especially the afflicted, and prescribing the rule for our conduct towards them. If we imbibe this spirit and act upon it, we shall then endeavour to cheer them with our sympathy in the hours of their grief and mourning, and cheerfully draw from our worldly resources to afford them relief when in want. I remember now an anecdote told by the Rev. Mr. Jay:—A pious, but poor member of his church being visited by one of the deacons, and presented with five shillings as a church gift, with the remark, 'Here is a trifle for your necessities,' replied, 'What you call a trifle, I call an estate.'"

*Miss Roscoe.*—"I believe, dear uncle, that you now have in your congregation an organized society, labouring to promote the physical as well as the spiritual good of the needy and destitute."

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"O yes, we are working the principle of practical benevolence, and on the basis of a comprehensive union; and I am happy to say it works well in spite of the grumblers who would rather sleep on and take their rest than be roused to action. The gentlemen take the management of the domiciliary society, going from house to house with tracts, &c., &c., and the ladies manage the Dorcas society, which is in a very flourishing condition. In addition to a pretty large number of subscribers, we have twenty working members who meet once a fortnight for the purpose of making clothes for the poor. Some of these are persons of wealth, others are in moderate circumstances; and, as in the gentlemen's society, some are church people, and some are Dissenters, you may there see sitting in peaceful harmony, members of the

various denominations, all busily engaged in the same sort of labour, and heartily prosecuting the same work.

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"Then you have grumblers amongst you!"

*Mrs. Roscoe.*—"Indeed, we have. They are a very prolific family—they may be found everywhere, and the whole fraternity is distinguished by a strong family likeness."

*Miss Roscoe.*—"Do you give the clothes to the poor, or do you sell them?"

*Mrs. John Roscoe.*—"In general we sell what we make, yet very much below the cost price; but in extreme cases we give clothing, and, in addition to this, when any of those who require relief are ill, we visit them, and we often find that a kind visit is esteemed as much, if not more than our gratuities."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"I can easily believe that, because there is great power in sympathy to alleviate the sorrows of the heart. We cannot explain the action of moral power, nor conceive the mode of its operation, however sensible we may be of its effects. What power, for example, in a frown to depress! and in a smile to elevate and tranquillize! What power in words both to cheer and sadden the heart! *As I have loved you*—these expressive words should guide our fraternal intercourse with our Christian brethren, who, when they feel our sympathy to be real, will often attach a much greater value to it than to any amount of pecuniary assistance."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"We are too apt to forget that our Christian brethren, in common with ourselves, are children of one Father, and that we are all now passing through a preparatory discipline to fit us for a higher and purer condition of existence in another world. If these great facts were more powerfully impressed on our hearts, there would be more sympathy and more charity; the rich would cheerfully administer to the wants of their poor brethren, and those who have but little worldly substance to bestow, would more often soothe and enliven them by their sympathy and good wishes. Christian fellowship would then be more than a mere term—it would be a reality."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Your remarks, Sir, are quite correct. And

here we see the wisdom as well as the love of our Redeemer in grafting our obligations to the most intimate Christian fellowship on the very constitution of our nature, which inclines us to live in social intercourse; guarding us at the same time from the danger of contracting a sectarian spirit by enjoining on us the duty of doing good *unto all men*, as well as to those who belong to the *household of faith*.

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"It is to be lamented, Sir, that there are many who do not keep pace in liberality of sentiment and feeling, and generosity of disposition, with the denomination or church to which they belong—they will not labour in the field of practical benevolence, and they do not like to see others exerting themselves; in fact, they will do nothing but find fault with the active labourers, either impeaching the purity of their motives, or predicting the failure, if not the pernicious results of their efforts. And when these morbid grumblers happen to be imbued, as is often the case, with a sectarian spirit, and take rank with high churchmen or with bigoted Dissenters, the moment they see a conjunction of the different orders, they tremble for the safety of the ark of *their* covenant, and raise a hue and cry against the union of the sects—become bitter in their spirit and censorious in their speech—and appear in a light very unbecoming the genuine disciples of our Lord.

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Such professors do essential injury, not only to the honour of the church and denomination to which they belong, but to the cause of religion in general. The evil which results from the anti-Christian temper and spirit of these arrogant and censorious professors, who usually contrive to attract more notice than the rest of their fellow-members, is incalculable. It supplies infidels with their most plausible topics of invective; it hardens the conscience of the irreligious, weakens the hands of the good, and is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Holy Spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world. If, then, we wish to make any deep and permanent impression on the sceptical and irreligious—to silence their objections and convince them of the Divine origin of the faith which we profess—we must correct our tempers—we

must live in peace amongst ourselves, discover no disposition to injure or annoy each other, and give unequivocal proof that the questions on which we differ are the subordinate tenets of revelation, which may be received or rejected without affecting its truth, or impairing its strength; and, by a union of affection and concentration of our talents, we must advance in the beautiful development of our Christian life, remembering that the wisdom which is from above is 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' When the pious members of the Establishment and the various denominations of evangelical Dissenters are brought to merge their speculative and ceremonial differences in the cultivation and display of this Christian temper, the eulogium pronounced on the primitive disciples may then with truth be applied to us—'See how these Christians love one another!'"

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"The novelty of the sight would certainly command attention; and though I am fully persuaded that nothing but a supernatural power can renovate the human heart, yet such a display of united affection might have a wondrous effect, almost approaching that of a miracle, in the conversion of the world."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"If it be true that our personal happiness bears a proportion to our conformity to the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ, it is evident that a liberal-minded Christian must partake of a much larger share of enjoyment than one who lives under the influence of that sectarian bigotry which keeps him in a state of alienation from his brethren of other communions."

*Mr. Stevens.*—"Most certainly, Sir; and by your permission I will now read you a paragraph with which I was very forcibly struck when I first lighted upon it. The author is speaking of bigotry, and he says, 'This sectarian and intolerant spirit can view no excellence out of its own pale, and deems every opinion heresy that does not bow to its authority. Its plans of doing good always betray the selfishness of their origin; and unable from its very nature to form designs commensurate with the grandeur of religion and the necessities of the

world, it not only refuses to co-operate with Christians of another party in promoting the well-being of society and the advancement of religion, but contemplates with jealousy and often with abhorrence, the noblest efforts of benevolence, when not performed under its exclusive auspices. Persons governed by such a spirit cannot view with complacency the separate divisions of the universal church, though there is nothing in their constitution that necessarily militates against *the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace*. This unlovely bigotry narrows the range of the intellect—perverts and contracts the best affections—and, under its influence, even good men forget the charities of their renewed nature, and sometimes prostitute their talents to bear false witness against each other. To this bigotry, that religion, whose very essence is love, is directly opposed. Christians who imbibe the spirit of the New Testament, and who suffer that holy book to operate with full force upon their minds, are distinguished by a noble freedom from sectarian antipathies. They can say from the heart, ‘Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.’ Without verging to the extreme of latitudinarian indifference, they can rejoice in the success of parties different from their own, and they do not complain because ‘devils are cast out by those who follow not with them.’ Every man is a friend and a brother who consecrates his being to the glory of the Saviour, and every society a church in whose temple Jesus evidently records his name.’”

*Rev. Mr. Roscoe.*—“Yes, Sir, I am conscious that a pious man, who possesses the pure spirit of his religion, is at once the most useful and the most happy man. As his happiness arises from sources more refined than those to which the men of the world have access, his usefulness is of a more important and more durable nature. I remember an observation which was once made on a friend of my own, when he withdrew from a select company to which he had been communicating some benevolent scheme—‘When he visits us he always leaves something behind that is worth thinking of and worth talking about.’”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir; as the spirit of the gospel is a liberal so it is an active spirit. It does not wish to monopolize the immunities of religion, but to diffuse them; and such is the intensity and ardour of its benevolence that the meanest, the most abject child of sorrow, the poor outcast from the common sympathies of humanity, the forlorn object of woe whom few men would pity, whom no man could save, are the partakers of its bounties."

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"As the general well-being of society is essentially benefited by the active benevolence of Christianity, may we not, Sir, indulge a hope that the prosperity of vital religion in our different communions, would be promoted by the cultivation of a reciprocal affection?"

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"There may be, I grant, external prosperity in our churches, even while the vital spirit of religion is languishing in the hearts of the people; as the oak may send forth its spreading branches and luxuriant foliage, when at the heart the tree is hollow and rotten. And perhaps the vital spirit of religion is exposed to more danger in the season of external prosperity than in the season of external adversity. When the congregation is large, and the spirit of unanimity and liberality is generally displayed—when a cordial attachment subsists between the pastors and their people; and the lookers-on are heard to exclaim, *they are of one heart and of one soul*, some may be tempted to forget from whom these invaluable blessings proceed, and cherish a self-complacent, if not an independent spirit. But I never knew vital religion flourish amongst any people *who were not united*. The Spirit of the Holy One never comes to breathe on the dry bones of the slain when the valley echoes with the neighing of the horses, and the rattling of the chariots of war. Wars must be made to cease, the bow must be broken, and the spear cut in sunder—the chariots must be burned in the fire, and the tranquillity of unruffled peace must reign over the whole scene, ere he descends to unite the disjointed parts, and animate the lifeless body. It is to the influence of the Holy Spirit over the mind that we are to ascribe that portion of vital religion which we enjoy. He still



dwells amongst us, yet not in the plenitude of his power. *Occasionally* he descends in the ministry of reconciliation, and effects a moral transformation on the character of a large proportion of the people, as in the islands of the Pacific Ocean; but in general, the exercise of his power is restricted to a small number in our congregations, who are, at distinct and distant intervals, made alive from the dead. But as this is emphatically termed the dispensation of the Spirit, and as the honour of glorifying Christ, in giving efficacy to the truth which he has revealed and attested, is reserved for *Him*, to what secondary cause shall we attribute his very partial communications, except to the offence which our discords and alienation of attachment have given him? If He require peace and affection in an individual church, as the precursors of his gracious visitations, does He not require the same amongst the separate divisions of his universal church?"

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"Most unquestionably, Sir, though the fact has not produced that deep impression on the popular mind which its importance demands. But the day of peace, I hope, is dawning upon us, and the union of Christians of various denominations will, I trust, be drawn closer as time moves on in its course. The voice of prayer is more frequently and more generally heard for the outpouring of Divine influence on the external means of grace, and already we see here and there some verdant spots of spiritual beauty and of life, amidst the surrounding desolations of evil and of death; thus exhibiting to us, as in miniature, the future state of the whole moral world, 'when judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; and when the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.'"

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"The miraculous gifts with which the apostles were endowed, while they had to contend 'against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the high places' of pagan idolatry, and social profligacy, have long since ceased, with the exigency which called

them forth; but the renewing and sanctifying agency of the Spirit remains, and will continue to the end of time—the express declaration of our Saviour not admitting of a doubt of its perpetuity:— ‘And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.’ And if, as we have reason to believe, his extraordinary outpouring on our churches will not take place till we are united in the bonds of peace, it behoves each individual Christian to cultivate the spirit of concord, with the utmost degree of vigilance and caution. To our prayers for his concurring testimony with the word of life, we must add a watchfulness over our own tempers, lest we should be involved in the charge of preventing the bestowal of the blessing which we solicit, by grieving the Agent on whose will it depends.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“Your remarks, Sir, are just, and I wish they were deeply engraven on the heart of every Christian, by the Spirit of the living God; and then the ministration of righteousness, intrusted to us, would display a glory surpassing the brightest emanation of the Divine presence which the annals of the church record. Then we should see the prejudices of the people, which now obstruct the progress of pure evangelical religion, giving way; and the result would bear a spiritual resemblance to the blessed effects produced by the descent of the angel of Bethesda.”

*Mr. Levellin.*—“May we not suppose, Sir, that the general impression which is produced amongst the pious of all denominations of the absolute necessity of the outpouring of the Spirit on the labours of ministers at home, and of missionaries in foreign parts, viewed in connection with the growing liberality and esteem we cherish towards each other, is one of the spiritual signs which indicate the bestowal of the blessing so earnestly implored?”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“I think we may. It is the beginning of that great work which the Divine Spirit will complete when the fulness of the time comes, and the effects of which being of a moral and spiritual nature, will continue to bless the world after the subordinate agents of its production have entered into rest. ‘Nevertheless,

we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.’”

*Mr. Lewellin.*—“And as this union and affection will form one of the most powerful evidences of the divinity of our Lord’s mission, it will, at the same time, be a practical refutation of some of the charges which have been brought against Christianity, as though it had an anti-social and repulsive tendency; and it will also exhibit the finest representation of the internal economy of the heavenly world which can be given. *There* is diversity of rank but unity of thought; and though the various orders of beings may occupy superior and subordinate stations under the government of the Eternal King, yet no one is envious of another’s elevation, or jealous of another’s influence.”

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—“There is one circumstance connected with our entrance into heaven, which I think ought not to be overlooked. It is this. When we enter, or when we are anticipating that great event, we shall place no dependence on our distinctive peculiarities; nor advert to them, except to express our regret on account of the evil effects which they too often produce. At that period in the history of our being, the mind will be too deeply absorbed in the contemplation of its specific character and condition—will be too solemnly affected by the anticipation of its final destiny, and will feel too deeply abased, under a consciousness of its utter unworthiness of the Divine favour, to dwell even for a moment on any other subject than its redemption from all evil and from all misery by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In comparison with this, every other subject that has engrossed our attention, or interested our feelings, will vanish away, as a thing of nought; and after having thus disengaged ourselves from all association with the minor questions, which now agitate, and divide, and dishonour us, we shall be free to enter the joy of our Lord, as sinners redeemed by his blood, rather than as saints belonging to any one denomination of Christians.”

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—“I have just had, Sir, a practical illustration of

the truthfulness of your observations. I was sent for early, a few mornings ago, to visit a pious member of my own church, and in the evening of the same day, at the request of a friend, I went to see a member of a Dissenting church, a very godly man; and, to the rejoicing of my heart, I found them breathing the same spirit—avowing the same belief—deriving consolation from the same source—and giving utterance to the joyful anticipations of mingling their grateful feelings together in the same heavenly temple, where they hope to serve the Lord day and night in harmony and peace.

*Mr. Lewellin.*—"And, as we shall mingle together in heaven, I presume, Sir, we shall *know* each other *there*. Some pious Christians entertain doubts on this subject, but as it is one which has such a tendency to reconcile our minds to the departure of our friends, I cannot avoid cherishing it with fond attachment."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"Yes, Sir, some good people have their doubts on the subject; but I wonder how they can entertain them. Even though on such a subject we receive no light from the testimony of Scripture, still it is so congenial with the dictates of enlightened reason, and the warm attachments of pure friendship, that I am at a loss to conceive how any one can disbelieve it.

‘ Deep, deep the love we bear unto the dead !  
Th’ adoring reverence that we humbly pay  
To one who is a spirit, still partakes  
Of that affectionate tenderness we own’d  
Towards a being, once, perhaps, as frail  
And human as ourselves.’ ”

*Mr. Roscoe.*—"Nothing, in my opinion, is more calculated to dispel the fear of death, than a firm belief that we are going home to dwell in our Father's house along with our departed brethren in Christ, whom we shall meet and recognize. This thought, which is so gratifying to our feelings, is supported, I think, by the language of the New Testament."

*Rev. Mr. Ingleby.*—"I think so too. The apostle, when writing to the Colossians, says, 'That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;' by which, says Dr. Paley, I understand St. Paul to

express his hope and prayer, that at the general judgment of the world, he might present the fruits of his ministry perfect in every good work; and if this be rightly interpreted, then it affords a manifest and necessary inference that the saints in a future life will meet and be known again to one another; for how, without knowing again his converts in their new and glorified state, could St. Paul desire or expect to present them at the last day? The celebrated Baxter says, and I think there is much force in the statement, 'I must confess as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven, principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought I should never know them, and consequently never love them after this life is ended, I should in reason number them with temporal things, and love them as such; but I now delightfully converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them for ever; and I take comfort in those of them that are dead, or absent, as believing I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love that shall there be perfected.' "

"Then," said Miss Roscoe, "death will merely suspend our intercourse with our friends for a little while—it will not break it off for ever. This is a thrilling subject of thought and meditation. We part, but shall meet again in a purer and happier world, and in a more glorious form, and then we part no more. We may then hail Death as a herald of mercy, instead of shrinking from his approach as the King of Terrors."

*Rev. Mr. Guion.*—"Then, when mingling together, if we ever advert to the scenes of our earthly existence, as we probably shall often do, we shall rejoice that our union is now complete, unbroken by any discordant opinion; and, while exulting amidst the unfading glories of the celestial world, we shall gratefully ascribe our salvation to the free and discriminating grace of God, our Father and Redeemer."

## THE STAGE COACH.



THE time had now come for my departure from Fairmount, which I quitted with much regret, Mr. Lewellin accompanying me as far as London, where it was arranged that I should stay a few days with him previous to returning home. Our kind friends were very urgent in pressing us to remain a little longer; but business required Mr. Lewellin's immediate attention, and I was getting anxious to resume my pastoral duties. We left Fairmount in the carriage early in the morning, and reached the turnpike gate about a quarter of an hour before the mail came up. There was one outside passenger, and two inside. Having bidden adieu to Mr. Stevens, who had accompanied us thus far, we stepped in, heard the well-known signal from the guard. *All's right!* and felt ourselves moving towards the imperial city at a rapid pace. Though I have not, like Lavater, studied physiognomy, and have often experienced the fallacy of its conclusions, yet on this occasion, as on most others, I began to examine and note carefully the features of the two strangers who sat opposite me. The one was a Friend, who had long since passed the meridian of life. He was dressed in the neat garb of his order, had a fine Roman nose, keen blue eyes rather deeply set, and a countenance whose expression of intelligence and benignity strongly prepossessed me in his favour. But had his general appearance been less attractive, I should have felt a profound respect, as I once had a mother who spoke the plain language, and taught me to speak it in my younger days; and though in riper years, I left the denomination of my youth, yet I still revere that interesting Society of professing Christians. The other was a lusty gentleman, about the age of fifty, but there was no feature in his face that gave me any pleasure.

We rode on in silence, till we came to D—s, where we changed horses; and while we were waiting for the guard, who was detained

at the post office, we amused ourselves in looking at a group of boys who were playing at trap-ball, in the market-place. The stout gentleman (whom I shall call Mr. Sykes) said, pointing to the boys, "There is perfect happiness." As no one offered to make any reply to this remark, Mr. Lewellin observed, "Perhaps, Sir, their happiness is not perfect. In the midst of their gambols, and while feeling elated with the high honour of winning the game, the sudden recollection of a lesson yet unlearned, that must be said to-morrow, may perchance give them a pang." This natural remark, expressed in the most good-natured manner, gave offence to Mr. Sykes, who, assuming that demeanour of defiance which appeared most natural to him, said, "And pray, Sir, do you not suppose that the happiness of childhood is the most perfect happiness which mortals ever enjoy?" "It ought not to be, Sir," replied my friend in a very modest tone. "Ought not to be, Sir!" Mr. Sykes returned, with some degree of sarcastic warmth; "then, Sir, how must you have spent those days of innocent mirth, not to be able to look back on them with envy!" This sarcasm roused the spirit of my friend Lewellin, who, though mild, was not disposed to be run down by unprovoked insolence; and he said, in a tone somewhat elevated, "Then I presume, Sir, you look back to the days of your childhood, and sigh over joys departed, never to return; but permit me to ask, how have you spent the years of manhood, not to have yet attained the possession of a much more rational and exalted happiness than you enjoyed when you were flying a kite or spinning a top? If you think, Sir, that I misimproved my boyish days, by not acquiring that perfection of happiness which they generally bring, you force me to conclude that you have misimproved the years of manhood, if in the decline of life you are compelled to look back to your childish days, as the happiest you have ever known."

Mr. Sykes, perceiving, from the smartness of this reply, that he stood no chance of carrying his point, without assistance, turned round, and appealed to the Friend, who did not appear to have taken any interest in the question. "Why, truly," said the Friend,

"I think with my neighbour opposite, that if thou wert more happy when a boy, than thou art now, thou canst not have improved thy time as thou oughtest to have done." "Well," said Mr. Sykes, "as this is the first company in which I have ever heard the sentiment called in question, I suppose I am along with a class of human beings of a new order." "Perhaps thou art," rejoined the Friend, "and at any rate thou must confess, that this new order of human beings, as thou art pleased to term us, excel all thy former associates in one very important point." "In what point, Sir?" inquired Mr. Sykes, in his native tone. "Why in this: while thou and thy friends have outlived your happiest days, we are now enjoying ours. Hence, while it is to our advantage to live in a state of manhood, it would have been to yours, to have continued in a state of childhood."

This remark re-established the reign of silence, which continued undisturbed, till some children ran out from a few miserable-looking huts, which stood near the roadside, and followed the coach for a considerable distance, attempting to excite our generosity, by their piteous moans, and antic gestures. "There, Sir," said Mr. Sykes, "If you look out, you will see the picture of perfect happiness." Our sagacious Friend, who appeared to have high purposes revolving in his breast when not engaged in conversation, was rather startled by this observation, as he had not seen the group of juvenile beggars, by which we were annoyed; but on looking out, as requested, he shrewdly replied, "I was not aware that perfect happiness was reduced so low in life, as to become a common beggar." "Poverty, Sir," said Mr. Sykes, "is no disgrace, and poor people are happy as well as rich." "Very true," replied the Friend; "but it is a disgrace to any parents, to train up their children to the practice of begging. These children certainly look healthy and sprightly, but if thou wert to be present when they return from an unsuccessful race, thou wouldest see a picture of perfect sorrow." "Well," said Mr. Sykes, "they shall have one happy day," and immediately tossed out a few halfpence. "Now," said the Friend, "if thou wilt look back, probably thou wilt see a violent contention between them;





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some crying because unable to get the prize, and some fighting over the division of the spoil." "I suppose, Sir," Mr. Sykes remarked sarcastically, "no one ever fought over any of your scattered gifts." "I never saw any," the Friend replied, "as I am not in the habit of scattering my gifts with an indiscriminate hand; nor do I approve of those acts, misnamed charitable, which have an evil tendency." "But, Sir," said Mr. Sykes, "what evil can result from giving a few pence to some poor miserable-looking boys and girls?" "Why," replied the Friend, "thou hast seen one evil in the contention which immediately followed, but this is not the greatest; these children who are initiated into the begging system at such an early period of life, are taught the art of deception; they are thrown off from the resources of industry and frugality, on the precarious supplies of charity; and if from the influence of vagrancy, they are not led to thieving, they will never feel any reluctance to receive support from the parish rate. Charity is a virtue which we all admire, and which we ought to cultivate; but I have long thought, that where its bounties are not administered with discretion, society sustains more injury, than it derives advantage." "Discretion! O yes, discretion!" said Mr. Sykes, "is a great virtue; with Sir John Falstaff it is the better part of valour, with you of charity; but in my opinion it is more frequently an apology for cowardice, or for covetousness."

We soon after parted with Mr. Sykes, when our sage Friend addressing himself to Mr. Lewellin, said, "I have no doubt but the passenger who has just left us has some excellencies, but he does not excel in the art of rendering himself agreeable, an art which few learn, and fewer practise; but it is one of great importance to personal dignity and relative comfort."

His place in the coach was soon occupied by a young man in a red coat, who was going to a fox-hunt near M—. He was very loquacious, but his conversation turned principally on horses, and dogs, and game, and the various qualifications of a good shot. Mr. Lewellin made several efforts to introduce other topics, but he could not succeed, as no pointer ever stood truer to his bird, than he did to

his favourite theme. He told us of his hair-breadth escapes, of the fatigues which he had endured, and the feats which he had achieved, with as much glee as the huntsman throws off at a chase ; and dwelt with peculiar delight on his good fortune the preceding day, when out of twenty-five who started, he was the only one *in at the death*, and exhibited the *brush* as the proud memorial of his honour. After he had told and re-told his tales, which gave no one pleasure but himself, he fell into a dead silence, hummed "Old Towler," and commenced beating a sort of tattoo with his fingers on the coach window. At length, turning himself to the Friend who sat by his side, and whose patriarchal simplicity appeared to amuse him, he said, with an air of low satire, "I believe, Sir, your sect are not much given to such sports?" "Why, no," replied the Friend, "we have too much humanity, to attempt to extract pleasure from the sports which inflict torture on dumb animals." "I have read," said the sportsman, "all your objections ; but, Sir, they have no point—they don't hit the mark—nature points to game, and we are to follow. I love the sound of the horn, more than the silence of meditation." "I have no doubt," said the Friend, "that thou dost, but thou shouldst remember, that some prefer silence, to noise." "I take you, Sir ; you intend to say, that you would rather have silence, than my conversation." "I have no objection," the Friend replied, "to conversation, when it is interesting or profitable, but thou must be aware, that the present company take no interest in the detail of thy field achievements." "Well, Sir," said the sportsman, "I have no objection to turn the conversation to a graver subject ; and as I am a young man, just beginning to turn my attention to religion, you will permit me to ask you one question, which puzzles me. It is this, Sir : As we have so many religions in this kingdom, which is the best?" "Why," said the Friend, "that which makes the simple wise, and teaches young men to cultivate the grace of modesty." "Very smart, Sir : then you think such a religion would do me good?" "I think it would."

When the sportsman left us, his place was immediately occupied

by a gentleman who, as I afterwards learned, had lately returned to England, after an absence of many years. He was an interesting and intelligent looking man; and I flattered myself from his general appearance, that we should have agreeable society during the rest of our journey. Nor was I disappointed. He was rather reserved at first, but after Mr. Lewellin and I had engaged for some time in a desultory conversation, he fell in with us, and willingly contributed his share. There is a strong propensity in some minds to sacrifice truth, in narration and description, especially when relating their own adventures. They will not utter direct and palpable falsehood, but they are so accustomed to exaggeration and high colouring, that a man who respects his own reputation will never venture to repeat their statements. Their design is to produce *effect*, and hence they often leave the beaten path of sober truth to amuse or astonish their hearers with the fanciful or the extravagant. But nothing of this kind was visible in our companion; as he gave us no description of persons, of places, or of things, which staggered our belief. He had sailed on the boisterous sea, without having just escaped the horrors of shipwreck; he had passed through woods and mountains, without encountering brigands or assassins; he had resided in crowded cities, and had traversed lonely wastes, where he met with no flattering attentions from the great, or rude insults from the vulgar. He had travelled through the greater part of Europe, had visited the East and West Indies, and had spent the last two years in America: but intended now to fix his abode in his native country, where he said he hoped to rest in the same grave with his fathers.

“You have seen, Sir,” I remarked, “a great part of the world; but as you intend to fix your final residence in Old England, I take for granted that you have not discovered any country which rivals her in your estimation.”

“No, Sir,” he replied, “I have not. I love England—I love her changing seasons, and her fruitful soil—her fine national character—her political constitution, and that spirit of liberty, both civil and religious, which she cherishes and which she diffuses—I love every-

thing that is English; and I disown the Briton who is not enthusiastic in the praise of his country."

"The love of liberty," I remarked, "is a passion which gives a peculiar and powerful energy to our national character; but you must confess, Sir, that this passion is not exclusively ours. America cherishes it with an equal degree of ardour."

"Yes, Sir," he replied, "she does, but her love of liberty is a selfish passion. She has fought for her own freedom, and she has won the laurels, but she continues to enslave others. When the foot of a poor captive touches the soil of Britain, his chains burst from around him; his life is taken under the protection of the law; no one can insult him with impunity; he is as safe in his hut, as the lordly baron is within the walls of his castle. But in the United States of America, there are upwards of three millions of human beings, now living in a state of slavery, bought and sold like cattle—subjected to the cruelty of men, in whose bosoms every atom of humanity has long since been annihilated. What, Sir, is freedom, where all are not free—where the greatest of God's blessings is limited with impious caprice to the colour of the skin? Having bled at every pore, rather than submit to wear the yoke of a foreign authority, why does she not, amid all her prosperity and improvement, act a just and generous part towards her black population? She is worse than the chief butler of Pharaoh, who, when he had gained his freedom, merely forgot his fellow-prisoner: but she remembers those who were once in bondage with her, and rivets the chains of slavery still closer upon them. She may vaunt herself on the love of liberty, and on her rising greatness in the scale of nations; but as long as the groans of three millions of human beings resound through her land without obtaining redress, she will have a badge of infamy affixed to her national character, from which no virtues will ever redeem her. We did a noble deed when we abolished the slave-trade, but we did a still nobler deed when we abolished slavery. We have thus set America a good example, which, in spite of all opposition, she will some day follow."

We were very much pleased with the polite manners and the interesting conversation of this gentleman, who formed a striking contrast to our other coach companions. On taking leave of him at the Swan with two Necks, we exchanged cards, when we found that the stranger's name was Wilcox, and he exacted a promise from me that I would call and see him before I left London.

A few days after this, as I sat in Mr. Lewellin's front parlour listening to the strange cries of London, and observing the countenances of the numerous pedestrians, who, with hurried steps, passed to and fro, as though each was intent on some great purpose, I saw the postman at the door, who brought me a letter, which on opening I found to be from our interesting fellow-traveller, requesting that we would dine with him on the following day. We accepted the invitation, and spent a very pleasant evening together.

On this occasion Mr. Wilcox informed us that he had been pressed to sign a petition for the repeal of the Maynooth grant; but had declined doing so, because he knew nothing about its origin, or the reasons which induced the government to make it; adding that, as a general rule, he thought America acted more wisely than we do on all such questions; she repudiates a *state religion*, and therefore leaves every religious sect to act and provide for itself. I then gave him a brief history of the matter as follows:—On the 14th of January, 1794, the Roman Catholics of Ireland presented a memorial to the government, praying for permission to erect a college for the education of their priests, who, up to this time, had been compelled to get their education in foreign countries; stating in their memorial, that they were both able and willing to build the college, and defray its current expenditure at their own expense. Their prayer was granted: and to their astonishment the Irish Parliament voted a grant of £8000 per annum towards its support, which in the year 1807 was increased to £13,000. No pledge was given that it should be a permanent grant, and as a proof of this, in the year 1799 it was withheld altogether, and during that year they were compelled to do what they said,

when they declared that they were able and willing to defray its expenses by their own voluntary contributions.\*

“It seems somewhat strange,” said Mr. Wilcox, “that the government should vote a large sum of money, when they are told that it is neither expected nor needed. To account for such an act of profligate expenditure, we must suppose there was a strong undercurrent of political influence forcing them to do so.”

“Why, Sir, the fact is, that Ireland was at this time, and for a long time after, in a strongly excited state; one outburst of popular tumult succeeded another, with so much rapidity and violence, that our leading statesmen, both Whigs and Tories, became alarmed, and they hit upon the expedient of attempting to conciliate the priests, by proposing to take their church into union with the state, and thus render them independent of the voluntary contributions of their people; and this munificent generosity in behalf of the Maynooth College, was the gilded bait of allurements. However, that projected union is now abandoned as a Utopian vagary; for the Roman Catholics disdain to come into ecclesiastical fellowship with Protestants, and therefore common sense requires, that as they are resolved to stand by themselves, they should be left to do what they said they were able and willing to do—educate and support their clergy by their own contributions.”

“I think the principle is bad,” said Mr. Wilcox, “both politically and morally, which compels one sect to educate and support the clergy of another sect. There is an outrage committed on the conscience of an enlightened Protestant, if he be compelled to contribute to the education and support of the Roman Catholic clergy, not simply because they are the ministers of another church, but because they are ministers who, in his estimation, reject the essential doctrines of Christianity, and substitute in their place, dangerous and fatal heresies; and not only so, but he believes, and their past history confirms him in the belief, that they constitute the vital, the most

\* In 1845 Sir Robert Peel introduced a measure, and carried it, to increase this grant to nearly £30,000 a-year.

active, and the most unscrupulous part of an organized conspiracy, whose object is to extinguish both civil and religious liberty throughout the world."

"Toleration," said Mr. Lewellin, "is all that such a dangerous set of men ought to receive under a Protestant government, and to that I should not object; but it is an act of legalized injustice to compel me to pay for the training and comfortable support of Roman Catholic priests."

Mr. Wilcox remarked, "We don't punish the footpad till he has committed his crime; but we should deem the wealthy traveller a maniac at large, who would voluntarily contribute towards the training of such desperadoes. I will certainly, now that I understand the matter, sign for the repeal of the grant, and do all in my power to hasten it. Indeed, I would not give my vote to any parliamentary candidate, unless he pledged himself against the continuance of this very obnoxious grant."

"My attachment to Christianity," said Mr. Lewellin, "makes me revolt against this offensive grant, as my loyalty to our queen would make me abhor a proposition to contribute to the training of traitors, to subvert her throne and bring her to the block."\*

\* When Lord John Russell was speaking in favour of the measure brought before the house by Sir Robert Peel in 1845, to increase the grant to nearly £30,000 per annum, he said—"But if you found you were doing that which was mischievous to the community, and that the religious scruples of the community would not allow of the continuance of the grant, or, with reference to civil and political reasons, you found that those you meant to be teachers of religion had become the teachers and conductors of rebellion; if I say," his lordship added, "you found from any of these causes that there was ground sufficient to refuse this grant, then I can see no valid reasons why any compact should restrain you, or why, upon strong grounds of this kind, the house would not be justified in declaring that it would give no further allowance." (See Hansard's *Debates*, v. 3, p. 92, session 1845.) The Right Hon. William Gladstone, M.P., recorded his opinion of this grant, before Sir Robert Peel brought forward his measure in 1845. "In principle the grant is wholly vicious, and it will be a thorn in the side of these countries as long as it is continued." There are several reasons, which, in the judgment of Lord John Russell, would justify the discontinuance of this grant, without subjecting our government to the charge of violating any existing compact; but I merely mention the following, which I give from the speech of his lordship: if "*the religious scruples of the community would not allow of the continuance of it.*" Now let us see how the case actually stands, and then we shall be able to form a correct judgment of what the British government and we ourselves ought to do. It is an undisputed fact, that the measure of 1845



## A SABBATH IN LONDON.



IN the institution of the Christian ministry, we have one of the most salutary provisions ever made to promote the improvement and happiness of man. If we suppose, with the enemies of Christianity, that it is of human origin, and that its functions are discharged by human agents, who are actuated and governed by selfish or ambitious motives, still it will occupy, in the estimation of every wise man, a high station, as a powerful ally to the cause of patriotism and of virtue. It enjoins on the various ranks and orders of society submission to the powers that be, and reverence for God; and it explains and enforces, with the utmost precision, our relative duties towards each other; while the veneration in which it is generally held in this kingdom is favourable to its influence. To say that every one is strictly virtuous who listens to its maxims of wisdom, would be to advance an assertion which facts would contradict; but if we judge from the present state of society, we shall be compelled to admit that there is a larger portion of virtue amongst those who attend upon a stated ministry, than among those who treat it with neglect and scorn. Hence its abolition would be a national evil, as disastrous to our moral improvement and happiness, as the triumphs of political

was forced through parliament in direct opposition to the most unequivocal expression of hostility on the part of the religious community, of all denominations; and their hostility to its continuance is increasing in inveteracy and strength as time moves on in its course. I am at a loss to conceive how any one except a Roman Catholic who has a beneficial interest in this money grant, or a lukewarm Protestant, who cares no more for the spiritual religion of the New Testament than he does for the legendary tales of Popery, can come forward as its advocate and supporter. The Catholics say they are able and willing to support their own religion and its institutions. Let them do so; but do not compel us to work with them, when we believe that their religion, with its institutions, is the greatest curse that ever has been inflicted on man since the Fall; and when we believe that its clergy, if they had the power, would immediately establish the Inquisition amongst us, and at once consign us to torture and to death, if we refused to bow down and to do homage to their pontiff and his myrmidons.

anarchy would be to the well-balanced constitution of the British Empire.

But even this institution, with all its advantages, would prove comparatively useless were it not for the appointment of the Christian Sabbath; for such is the ascendancy which the cares, the pleasures, the fascinations, and the commerce of the world have acquired over the public mind, that very few would have an opportunity to benefit by it, unless some specific portion of time was set apart for this express purpose. If the husbandman were compelled to toil in the field, and the mechanic to labour in the shop—if the tradesman, the merchant, and the other members of the community had to devote themselves to their respective avocations without any intermission, except what caprice or indolence might dictate, the minister of the gospel might faithfully proclaim all the words which relate to the life to come, but he would not be surrounded by a large and an attentive audience. The temple would be forsaken, and the powers of *this* world would so engross the attention of men, that those of the next would be generally, if not universally disregarded. To prevent this fatal evil, one day in seven is set apart, by the immediate authority of God, which we are commanded to devote to the exercises of private and public worship; but alas! how many treat this sacred injunction with contempt. Some in the higher ranks of life, who disdain to be thought religious, employ it as a day for travelling or for feasting; and multitudes of the lower orders, regard it as a day either for pleasure or for dissipation.

On the Sabbath after my arrival in London, as I was walking down Bridge Street on my way to Surrey Chapel, I saw a party of young people whose gaiety of manner ill accorded with the sanctity of the day, and just as I was passing them I heard one say, "Indeed I think we shall do wrong; my conscience condemns me; I must return." "There can be no harm," replied another, "in taking an excursion on the water, especially as we intend to go to chapel in the evening." "I must return," rejoined a female voice; "my conscience condemns me. What will father say if he hears of it?" By this

time they had reached the bridge, and the foremost of the party was busily engaged with a waterman, while the rest stood in close debate for some minutes, when they all moved forward towards the water.

I watched the party as they went down the stairs to the river. Two of the gentlemen stepped into the boat, two more stood at the water's edge, and the females were handed in one after another; but I could perceive great reluctance on the part of the one who had previously objected, till at length she yielded to the importunities of her companions, and the boat was pushed off. It was a fine morning, though rather cold. Many, like myself, were gazing on them, when a naval officer called to them through the balustrades and said, "A pleasant voyage to you." One of the gentlemen arose to return the compliment, but, from some cause which I could not perceive, he missed his footing and fell into the water. This disaster threw the whole party into the utmost consternation; and each one, instead of retaining his seat, rushed to the side of the boat over which their companion had fallen, by which the boat was upset, and all were instantaneously plunged into the river. The scene which followed, when the spectators beheld this calamity, exceeded any I had ever witnessed. Some females screamed, the passers-by crowded together to the parapet of the bridge, and everything was bustle and excitement; boats immediately put off; and in a few minutes I had the satisfaction of seeing the watermen rescue one, and another, and another from a premature grave. Having picked up every one they could find, the different boats were rowed to shore, where some medical gentlemen were in waiting. But when the party met together, no language can describe the horror depicted on every countenance when they found that two were still missing.

"Where's my sister?" said the voice which had said, only a few minutes before, "There can be no harm in taking an excursion on the water, especially as we intend to go to chapel in the evening."

"Where's Charles?" said a female, who had appeared the most gay and sprightly when I first saw them.

At length two boats, which had gone a considerable distance up



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the river, were seen returning; and on being asked if they had picked up any one, they replied, "Yes; two." This reply electrified the whole party, and some wept for joy.

"Here's a gentleman," said a waterman as he was coming up to the foot of the stairs, "but I suspect he's dead."

"Where's the lady?" said her brother, "Is she safe?"

"She is in the other boat, Sir."

"Is she alive?—Has she spoken?"

"No, Sir, she has not spoken, I believe."

"Is she dead; O tell me!"

"I fear she is, Sir."

The bodies were immediately removed from the boats to a house in the vicinity, and every effort was employed to restore animation. In little more than ten minutes it was announced that the gentleman began to breathe, but there was no allusion made to the lady. Her brother sat motionless, absorbed in the deepest melancholy, till the actual decease of his sister was announced, when he started up and became almost frantic with grief; and though his companions tried to comfort him, yet he refused to hear the words of consolation.

"O my sister! my sister! Would to God I had died for her!"

They were all overwhelmed in trouble, and knew not what to do. "Who will bear the heavy tidings to our father?" said the brother, who paced the room backwards and forwards. "O! who will bear the heavy tidings to our father?" He paused; a death-like silence pervaded the whole apartment. He again burst forth in the agonies of despair—"I forced her to go against the dictates of her conscience; I am her murderer; I ought to have perished, and not my sister. Who will bear the heavy tidings to our father?"

"I will," said a gentleman, who had been unremitting in his attentions to the sufferers.

"Do you know him, Sir?"

"Yes, I know him."

"O! how can I ever appear in his presence! I enticed my only sister to an act of disobedience, which has destroyed her!"

How the father received the intelligence, or what moral effect resulted from the disaster, I never heard, but it suggests a few reflections which I wish to press upon the attention of my readers. As the Sabbath is instituted for the purpose of promoting your moral improvement and happiness, never devote its sacred hours to pleasure and recreations. He who has commanded you to keep it holy, will not suffer you to profane it with impunity. He may not bring down upon you the awful expressions of his displeasure while you are in the act of setting his authority at open defiance, but there is a day approaching when you must stand before him as your judge. And can you anticipate the solemnities of that day, while continuing in a course of sin, with any other than the most fearful apprehensions? You may, like many, suppose that that day is very far off; but you may be undeceived by a sudden visitation of Providence; and in a moment may be removed from amongst your gay companions, to appear in his presence. And should this be the case, with what terror-struck amazement will you look on the awful scene around you; with what fearful and agonizing emotions will you listen to the final sentence—*Depart!*

Resist the *first* temptation to evil, or your ruin may be the inevitable consequence. “Indeed I think we shall do wrong; my conscience condemns me; I must return,” said the unfortunate girl, when she got near the river; but having yielded to the first temptation, she was induced to overcome her scruples, and within less than half an hour from that time she was hurried into the eternal world. Had she refused when her brother solicited her to leave home, she might have lived to comfort her father in his old age; but by complying, she first lost her strength to withstand temptation, and then her life. What a warning! And is this the only one which the history of crime has given you? Alas, no! Have not many, who have ended their days on the scaffold, traced their ruin to the profanation of the Sabbath? This is the day in which the spirits of evil are abroad, enticing the young and the thoughtless to vice and impiety; and if you wish to avoid the misery and degradation in

which others have been involved, devote its sacred hours to the purpose for which they were appointed. Attend some place of worship, where the truths of the Bible are preached with earnestness and power, and attend regularly; and though some of your associates may ridicule you for your habits of devotion, yet will you suffer yourself to be conquered by such weapons? The youth who regularly attends a place of worship on the Sabbath, and receives the truth under a deep conviction of its excellence and importance, often enjoys a high mental feast, and becomes imperceptibly fortified to resist the fascinations of the world; but he who spends the sacred hours in the society of the thoughtless, amidst scenes of gaiety and dissipation, becomes an easy prey to the worst of temptations, often retires to rest reproaching himself for his folly and impiety, and is gradually led from one crime to another till iniquity proves his ruin.

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As I wished to hear a celebrated preacher in the evening, I asked Mr. Lewellin to accompany me, but he declined, for reasons which raised him in my estimation as a young man of prudence and consistency. "I am, Sir," he observed, "decidedly of opinion that London offers many temptations to professors of religion which require, on their part, constant vigilance to withstand; and one of the most specious is, the celebrity of popular preachers."

"But," I replied, "do you think it wrong to go and hear these ministers?"

"I would be cautious how I censured any one; but I certainly think that the love of novelty in religion often proves pernicious, not only to those who are enslaved by it, but to their families. Let me suppose a case. Here is a religious family who professedly attend the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Watkins, but the father is in the habit of hearing every celebrated preacher. Will not this roving disposition prevent his forming that attachment towards a pastor and his flock in which the essence of Christian fellowship consists? And will not the influence of his example have an injurious effect on

his children? If he take them with him, he imperceptibly teaches them to believe that he is not so much delighted with the truth as with the agent who conveys it. And what is this but sinking the importance and value of the truth in the estimation of those whose hearts are naturally averse to it. If he refuse to take them with him, and compel them to go, while they are young, to their regular place of worship, yet, as he does not go with them, they are left without the controlling influence of his presence, and are exposed to the temptation of absenting themselves for some scene of amusement. If he leave his more stated minister to go after these popular preachers, unless he has a greater measure of prudence than such roving professors generally possess, he will institute comparisons in the presence of his children between them and the settled pastor. And will not this excite prejudice in their minds against the clergyman whose ministry they are *forced* to attend? Will not this prove injurious to them? Will not this tend to alienate their minds from the love of the truth, and to make them regard its accidental associations as the main thing; and by teaching them disrespect for their stated minister, they may, in time, turn away contemptuously from the message he delivers. And these are not the only evils which result from the indulgence of this roving disposition; it is invariably found no less injurious to the private reputation of a Christian, than to his domestic piety."

"But how so?" I replied. "What injury can it do the private reputation of a Christian?"

"Why, he will be regarded as an unstable man; and though he may have many virtues, yet if this imperfection be associated with them it will materially injure him. For what influence can an unstable man ever acquire, unless it be the power of doing evil? Who can respect him? Who can place any dependence on him?"

"But," I asked, "may not a Christian leave the ministry of one preacher, to attend that of another, without sustaining or producing any moral injury?"

"Most certainly," said Mr. Lewellin; "we are at perfect liberty to



go where we please, and to hear whom we please; but we should avoid that fickleness of disposition, which is ever moving from one place to another. Some admire the last preacher they have heard more than any preceding one, and have the censor always ready to throw the incense of flattery around the *next* who may make his appearance. Instead of examining themselves, to see what progress they make in knowledge and in grace, and attending to the religious instruction of their children and their servants on the Sabbath, they are ever asking, Who is in town? or, Who is expected? But though I condemn most decidedly such a volatile spirit amongst professors, yet I think we *ought* to attend that ministry which we find the most profitable. *The truth which we hear is Divine, but the agent who preaches it is human;* and though the tone and the manner of proclaiming it will not add to its importance, yet it may tend to give it a more commanding power of impression; and hence, it is both our duty and our privilege to attend the ministry of that man, whose style of preaching is the most calculated to profit us. The poet in speaking of government, has said,

‘Whate’er is best administered is best.’

The same may be nearly said with regard to sermons. There is not such a great difference between the thoughts and arrangements of one preacher and another as some imagine. But who has not been struck with the difference of the impression and effect? One man shall speak, and how dry, and sapless, and uninteresting is he! Let another deliver the very same things, and there is a savour that gives them freshness—the things seem perfectly new. One preacher, by his monotonous tones and manner, soon lulls us to sleep; while another, by his earnestness, his pathos, and his impassioned appeals—by the aptness of his illustrations, the chasteness of his style, and the unction of his spirit—not only fixes our attention, but penetrates the inner man of the heart; we feel ourselves subdued, enlightened, and powerfully excited by the Word of God. When a man of this attractive order appears in the pulpit, by the mysterious

action of the sympathetic faculty, his presence is felt by the people, even before his voice is heard; and in the lines of Cowper we see a great moral fact, clothed in the vestments of poetic beauty:—

‘ When one that holds communion with the skies  
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,  
And once more mingles with us meaner things,  
’Tis e’en as if an angel shook his wings—  
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,  
That tells us whence *his* treasures are supplied.  
So when a ship well freighted with the stores  
The sun matures on India’s spicy shores,  
Has dropp’d her anchor and her canvas furl’d  
In some safe haven of our western world,  
’Twere vain inquiring to what port she *went*—  
The *gale* informs us, laden with the scent.’ ”

“ But, Sir,” I remarked, “ if we do not derive improvement and consolation from the ministry on which we generally attend, we ought to attribute it to some fault in ourselves. I remember being very much struck with a remark which I heard a venerable clergyman make when addressing his congregation—‘ If, my brethren,’ he said, ‘ you come to hear *me preach*, instead of hearing *the truth* which I deliver, be not surprised if you are permitted to go away without having felt its purifying and consoling influence. I can do no more than give utterance to the sublime doctrines and promises of the gospel; it is the province of my Master to make them effectual to your salvation; and if you neglect by strong and ardent prayer to implore his blessing, he will withhold it.’ ”

“ A very just and important remark,” replied Mr. Lewellin, “ and one which I hope we shall never forget. We ought at all times to go into the temple in a devotional spirit, and to remember that as every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, we should, in the most humble manner, invoke his presence; and then we shall feel less disposed to rove and less occasion to complain of the want of spiritual enjoyment.”

We were now interrupted in our conversation, by the servant, who informed Mr. Lewellin that there were two gentlemen below who

wished to see him. "Desire them to walk up. I am not aware," said Mr. Lewellin, "who they are; and I regret their call, as I am not in the habit of receiving company on the Sabbath." They entered the room, and after offering an apology for this act of intrusion, one said, "I know, Sir, you will excuse it, as I have made up my mind to go with you to chapel this evening, along with our friend Mr. Newton."

I did not immediately recollect this gentleman, though his manners and voice seemed familiar to me; but on hearing his name, I instantaneously recognized Mr. Gordon, whom I once met in the country\* when enjoying an evening's ramble. "I am happy to see you, Sir" (addressing him), "as it gives me an opportunity of reminding you of a promise which you have not yet redeemed."

"Indeed, Sir! You have the advantage of me. Did I ever make you a promise, which I have not redeemed?"

"Yes, Sir, indeed you have done so."

"Where, and when, Sir, may I ask?"

"Were you never in a thunder-storm?"

"I beg your pardon. I hope you are well. I am happy to see you in London. I hope you will do me the honour of a call.—Why, no. I have not been able to inform you of the result of my inquiry; for, to be very candid, I have been too much engaged to turn my attention to it; but I have not forgotten it.—What a storm! How did you escape it? I took shelter in a cow-shed.

"I ran to a cottage, where I was kindly received, and in which I witnessed a deeply interesting sight. I regretted you were not with me, as I there saw an evidence in favour of the truth and the excellence of the gospel, which I think you would have admired."

"Indeed! what visible evidence do you refer to? A miracle?"

"If we define a miracle to be something above the production of human power, I should not hesitate to call what I saw a *moral miracle*." I then gave an account of the decease of the woodman's child, which he called a very interesting tale; but said he was not suffi-

\* See vol. i. page 94.

ciently enlightened to perceive how such a fact tended in any way to establish the truth or display the excellence of Christianity. "We may," he remarked, "have an opportunity to debate over it before you leave our great city; but, as we propose going to chapel this evening, perhaps we had better not begin, lest we should be obliged to break off the thread of our argument at an unfavourable point. But, though I have not investigated the important question which we discussed when we accidentally met, yet I will do it. You see the company which I keep (pointing to Mr. Lewellin and Mr. Newton) is a proof that I am *religiously inclined*; and, if a few doubts should still darken my powers of mental vision, yet the light which emanates from their chaste reasoning may ultimately disperse them, and we all *may* become believers together."

"A consummation I should hail with delight."

"I believe you, Sir; and I honour the motive which prompts such a devout exclamation."

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On passing along Cheapside on our way to the chapel which Mr. Lewellin usually attended, we were astonished at seeing a placard, announcing that the Rev. Mr. Guion was to preach that evening at Bow Church, in behalf of the Church Missionary Society; and at my earnest entreaty, we decided on hearing him. By a statement he made at the commencement of his discourse, we found his appearance in the pulpit was in consequence of the sudden illness of a brother clergyman who stood engaged to preach on the occasion; and this accounted for our not hearing of this London visit when we were with him at Fairmount. Having my note-book in my pocket, and my pencils in good working order, I took down his sermon, and will transcribe from my manuscript a few passages, which, when delivered, made a deep impression on the whole congregation. His text was taken from 1 Tim. iii. 16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." His arguments in confirma-

tion of the divinity of Jesus Christ were few, but popular and conclusive, yet not common-place.

“HE WAS SEEN OF ANGELS.”—“Our knowledge,” said the eloquent preacher, “of angels is very superficial; yet we know, they are beings of a superior order—holy, intelligent, powerful, and benevolent. Jesus Christ was seen of them, at his birth, during his temptation in the wilderness, when enduring the agonizing conflict in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the morning of his resurrection; and they came to witness, and to take a ministering part in his ascension, when he went to resume the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. This SEEING him, denotes the intense interest they felt in his personal honour, and in the design of his mission to earth. ‘Which things,’ says the apostle Peter—that is the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow—‘the angels desire to look into.’ They pry into and labour to comprehend the grand theory of human redemption; and watch with intense solicitude its practical working in the soul of man. Hence, our Lord says, ‘There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.’ Yes, brethren, these pure and exalted spirits become comparatively insensible to the glories of the celestial world, when in the act of seeing a sinner who is ready to perish, rescued from the fearful peril of his condition, as we should become comparatively, if not absolutely insensible to the grandest and most picturesque scenery of nature, if we stood on some eminence, gazing on the heroine coming out of her father’s cottage, hastening to the frothy beach, springing into the fishing-boat, braving the fury of the tempest and the wild uproar of the storm, to rescue the shipwrecked mariners from a vessel sinking in the deep waters. For it is a law of their nature, no less than of ours, that gratification shall yield to sympathy, and that the sight of deliverance from fatal danger, shall have a more gratifying effect on a sensitive and benevolent heart, than the most brilliant and exciting scenes which can be presented to the imagination, or to the senses;—thus demonstrating by a process as certain as any undeviating law of the material economy, that every order of being, except infernal spirits, have an

instinctive abhorrence of the disastrous crisis in the progress of suffering; and that they feel an ecstasy of emotion which no sights of grandeur or of beauty, and which no sounds of melody can excite, when they behold an unanticipated deliverance from some horrifying and fatal termination. There stands the poor criminal on the fatal platform, and the minister of death is near him, making the necessary arrangements for his execution; deep sympathy is expressed in every countenance, many sighs are heaved, and many weep; the silent prayer is offered up, and all are breathless, expecting the drop to fall which is to hurl him with convulsive agonies into the other world. But there is a momentary pause, as an act of homage to a stranger, who very unexpectedly makes his appearance. This stranger, to whom all the officials and the doomed man pay marked attention, is also an official armed with power, not the power of death, but of life; he is the herald of mercy; and with a loud voice proclaims his pardon. The multitude, long absorbed in sympathetic grief, now raise the shout of gladsome triumph, as they gaze on the once doomed man, as he passes from the death of agony and infamy, to newness of life; they revel in the excess of ecstatic bliss; and feel more joyful in spirit over this one criminal saved from the horrors of an ignominious death, than over a whole community of righteous persons who were never involved in a sentence of condemnation.

“HE WAS BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD.”—“The testimony of the Bible, and the records of ecclesiastical history, attest this fact, Rev. vii. 9, 10; and he is still believed on in the world. I know, brethren, that many persons of refined taste, and exquisite delicacy of feeling, greatly admire the character of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph and of Mary; and they feel a deep interest in the perusal of his history. Their imagination expands in reflecting on that magnificent scene beheld by the shepherds of Bethlehem, when his birth was announced by the angel of the Lord. His healing the sick in the temple—his opening the eyes of blind Bartimeus—and his raising the only son of the widow as the procession was moving to the grave, has a fine effect on their sensibilities. The Transfiguration

of Tabor sheds a halo of glory around his Divine form, which attracts and gratifies their love of the marvellous. They catch the inspiration of a powerful sympathy on seeing him bathed in tears, as he stands beholding in the distant vision the desolations coming on the city of Jerusalem. And when they gather around his cross, they feel intense regret, intermingled with no slight degree of astonishment, that one so kind, so humane, and withal such a friend to suffering humanity, should be so rudely and so cruelly treated, and the falling tear bespeaks the sorrow of their heart. Now go amongst these refined, these poetic, these sentimental believers in the Divine origin of the Christian faith, with the blood of atonement, and what consternation will you produce! They will soon evince a strange revulsion of feeling; the term itself is harsh and unintelligible; it is the jargon of the uncouth and the vulgar; the crucifix charms their sentimentalism—they abhor the cross. Go and talk to them about the necessity of believing in the Son of God to save them from perishing; go and talk to them about joy and peace in believing, and about the good hope through grace, and you will soon lose caste, and be sent adrift amongst the wild fanatics of the age. They will bow down and do homage to the Divine origin of Christianity—that ideal Christianity, which takes its nature, shape, and hue from the creations of their fancy; but let the Christianity of the New Testament come before them in her simple form—pure and spiritual, breathing her own spirit, speaking her own language, delivering her own precepts and her own promises, advancing her own claims, and offering her own celestial gifts, on her own humiliating and changeless conditions, and they will treat her, as the Jews did her illustrious Author, with contemptuous scorn; and would rather have her driven from the face of the earth, than be enrolled as her devotees, or retained as her advocates. Be it so. But this you regret, on *their account*, as you know that they who believe not, will die in their sins and perish for ever, even though superior intelligence be blended with the fascination of the most distinguished accomplishments. And you also regret this terrible calamity on your *own account*, as the pardoned

criminal necessarily feels an abatement of his joy when set free, by knowing that others are left for execution. But you, Christian brethren, believe on Him, and have the witness within. You believe on Him, and love Him; and to you he is precious. You believe on Him, and know that all is safe for time, safe in death, and safe for eternity."

"Really," said Mr. Gordon, as we were walking away, "I am almost tempted to believe in the truth of the Christian theory, on two accounts—it brings us into such close contact with beings of a superior order, so that in passing into the invisible world, we shall find that we are known there; and then it gives such security to the mind against the horrors of death." A sudden storm of heavy rain prevented any reply to these half-serious, half-ironical remarks; but on taking leave, as we were getting into our separate hackney coaches, he added, "I will call to-morrow evening, after business hours, and chat over those grave questions; and perhaps I can prevail on Newton to accompany me. Have patience; I may become a believer in the course of time."

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## THE SCEPTIC'S VISIT.



JUST after Mr. Lewellin had left home, to meet a friend on a matter of business, Mr. Gordon called, agreeably to his promise on the previous day, and we spent the evening together.

"I had a lucky escape yesterday," said Mr. Gordon, "but I did not know of it till I took up the *Times* this morning."

"From what did you escape, Sir?"

"I had an engagement, for yesterday morning, to go with a pleasure party on an excursion up the river, but I over-slept myself; and it was well for me that I did so, for the boat upset, and I regret



to say that a very excellent and accomplished lady, whom I much admired, was drowned."

"As I was passing Blackfriars' Bridge, in going to Surrey Chapel, I witnessed an accident such as that to which you refer."

"Indeed! It no doubt was the same, for it was just as they were setting out from Blackfriars' stairs that the disaster happened; it must have been an appalling sight!"

"It was, indeed, a harrowing sight; and I trust I shall never witness the like again. I heard that the lady who was drowned was a very interesting creature, and the only daughter of a pious father. The tidings of her loss must have been a sad blow to him."

"Yes, Sir, her father is one of your way of thinking, and I believe him to be a very worthy man."

"Have you seen him since the fatal accident?"

"No, no! I have no heart to visit such a house of mourning. The fact is, I shall never be able to see him again, for I planned the excursion, and induced his son and daughter to join it. This I now regret; but regrets are useless things."

"Regrets do sometimes produce happy results, and I should think that yours, just now, must be very keen."

"Indeed, they are intensely keen. It will be a long time before I get over the impression this fatal accident has made on me."

"You should take it as a warning."

"Well, I don't know how it is, but I never feel quite myself when taking a Sunday excursion; I feel a little qualm of conscience, even though I do not hold the Sunday in such reverence as you do. I thought some time\* ago that I had got over these qualms, but they will come back at times in spite of me."

"I am glad to hear you say that your conscience does reprove you when you profane the Sabbath, and I hope its reproofs will be more severe than they ever have been. They may be your protection against some fatal danger."

"Then, Sir, if I do not mistake your meaning, you wish me to be

\* Vol. i. page 17.

frightened into the adoption of religious habits. Is this a fair specimen of your Christian charity?"

"The storm sometimes saves the vessel which might become a wreck in the calm, as we heard in the sermon last evening; and I assure you I should be highly gratified to see you agitated by a salutary feeling of dread and perplexity regarding the state of your soul, as I then should indulge a hope that you would 'flee from the wrath to come,' and take refuge in the promises of the gospel."

"Well, I must confess that Mr. Guion is one of the most eloquent preachers I ever heard. The conclusion of his sermon was truly sublime; the congregation appeared to quail under its terror—a feeling which by no means surprised me. There is, indeed, a fearful terror in the words the *wrath to come*; and there was almost an irresistible impressiveness in the look and tones of the preacher when urging his audience to flee from it. I felt, just before he finished, that I must take refuge in the promises of the gospel; but the internal commotion soon subsided when I found myself beyond the reach of his voice, though still I cannot forget it."

"Now, Sir, to be candid; is not the terror you felt, when listening to the sermon we heard, and the abiding recollection of it, something like an unconscious homage instinctively paid to the positive reality of the Christian faith? for we can hardly suppose that you would invest a mere fiction with such power of impression."

"Why, no; I can scarcely admit that. My idea is, that my present feelings are merely the lingering influences of early religious training, with its accompanying associations; and we all know that such influences may subsist long after we have been led to form different opinions in our maturer years."

"They live to admonish and to warn, as well as to chastise. There *may* be a *wrath to come*. This you must admit, simply because you do not know there is not; nor can you know, unless God is pleased to tell you so. Hence your scepticism needs a Divine revelation to sustain it—mere disbelief goes for nothing in settling such a question."

"Well, I know there is great difficulty, and sometimes an impossibility, in proving a negative; but one thing is absolutely certain—I cannot compel myself to believe what you believe, any more than you can compel yourself to disbelieve what I disbelieve."

"My belief has evidence to sustain it; but your disbelief has none. And while your disbelief is accompanied by a feeling of uneasiness and perplexity, my faith exerts a soothing influence, which keeps my mind in perfect peace."

"Well, I admit that your faith does more for you than my disbelief does for me; but I cannot believe what you do without impeaching both the wisdom and the beneficence of the Deity. In other words, the Deity must sink in my admiration before I can admit the Divine origin of Christianity."

"But how so?"

"The eloquent preacher whom we heard last evening, when discoursing on the expression in his text, *he was believed on in the world*, advanced two distinct propositions, which he endeavoured to sustain by arguments taken from your Scriptures. The first was, that *there is salvation for the chief of sinners if they believe in Christ and trust in him*. You believe and are safe, and are happy because you expect to be saved. Now, I have no objection to advance against this; because I know that faith, or trust in Him, does produce these moral effects on true believers. But my nature revolts against his second proposition, which was, *that none can be saved who do not believe in Christ, and trust in him for salvation*."

"In sustaining those propositions the preacher said—and there is great force in the remark—that we can have no assurance that any will be saved but by a Divine testimony in proof of it; and that if it please God to limit the exercise of his saving power to one prescribed method, our objections against it will be altogether unavailing."

"Yes, Sir, you quote correctly. Now, in my opinion, it would be a reflection on the wisdom and beneficence of the Deity to suppose that he has bound himself under such a forced law of restriction as

compels him to exclude all from a state of future happiness but the few who do believe and do trust in Christ. Why, have we not amongst us many men of unsullied honour, of princely generosity, and of the most amiable dispositions—men who take the lead in benevolent enterprises and social improvements—poets, philosophers, historians, and statesmen, who are applauded in public, and admired and esteemed in private life, but who cannot bow down and do homage to Jesus Christ, by reposing an absolute dependence on him for a hope of future blessedness, even though they unwillingly pay an external homage to the regulations and institutions of Christianity? Are men of such a high order of mind—of such brilliant virtues—men who are the very life and soul of society—to be cast off and left to perish along with the dissipated and the worthless? It cannot be.”

“Your objection, then, does not lie so much against the salvation of the great sinners, who repent and believe in Christ, as it does against the law of restriction, which excludes all who do not repent and believe from the hope of salvation.”

“I can admit your first proposition, without much difficulty, even though I do not say that I actually believe it; but I cannot entertain a belief that the Deity has enacted a law which restricts the exercise of his beneficence to a select few, some of whom, on your own admission, are more distinguished for their vices than for their virtues.”

“But is not the law of restriction, even now, a fundamental law of God’s administrative government? For example, are superior intelligence, genius, or wealth, made common property—to be possessed by men share and share alike? Do we not see that the few surpass the many—that some are brilliant stars while others are mere glowworms; and while some occupy stations of affluence and grandeur, others are left without a settled home, or any of the comforts of life?”

“Why, if we really do believe that we are living under the administrative government of the Deity, then there is no denying the

existence of this restrictive law. Facts are stubborn things; those you mention are strongly corroborative of your views. But it does not necessarily follow that this law of restriction applies to our final destiny, even though it may be applicable to our present condition of existence."

"But this admission deprives you of the basis on which you rest your argument, that a law of restriction would be a direct impeachment of the wisdom and the beneficence of the Deity."

"Well, perhaps it does."

"If, then, facts compel us to admit that this law of restriction is in full operation *now*, while we are on earth, surely we must admit the possibility of its continuance in a future state of existence, without impugning the wisdom or justice of the Deity?"

"I never enter on a discussion on the questions at issue between us, without feeling compelled to do one of two things; and yet I cannot bring my mind to do either. I must admit the truth of revelation and its explanations, and this I cannot do; or I must abandon myself to *universal* scepticism, and this I feel unwilling to do. But I do confess that I feel it more easy to disbelieve than to believe. However, waiving further reference to this difficulty, allow me to call your attention to another point, which, if not more difficult than the one we have just been discussing, assumes, at least in my estimation, an aspect of great perplexity. Assuming then, for the sake of the argument, that the Deity does restrict the bestowal of future happiness to those who do believe and trust in Christ, could he not have devised some other scheme for this purpose, and one equally perfect and effective—one, in fact, less open to objections?"

"I will reply to your question by asking another. Could not God have made a world different to the one in which we live—one more congenial to our taste, and less exposed to those privations and hardships to which we are often subjected, and which we sometimes so much dread?—A world, for example, in which every convenience and necessary should be placed within reach; the earth producing spontaneously the supplies of corn and fruits necessary

for our subsistence—a sufficient supply of dew as a substitute for rain with its discomforts—the purification of the air effected by gentle breezes instead of by tempests and hurricanes—no diseases to rack the body nor cares to harass the mind; a world, in fine, in which universal happiness should prevail, and sorrow and toil be unknown?”

“Yes, there is no denying that the Deity could have done this.”

“But God has not done it; and therefore to object to what he has done, because we can imagine he could have done something better, is as useless, as it would be childish. Now, suppose for a moment some other plan of salvation had been devised, it would have been to accomplish what is effected by the present scheme—namely, the final happiness of man. The present scheme, then, answers the beneficent purpose of its Author—another plan could do no more than this; but it would be romantic to suppose that it could be so arranged, in its various parts and modes of application, as to preclude the possibility of any objections to it, when we well know it is next to impossible to find any twenty men who all think alike even on the most obvious facts. Christianity places before us two great practical facts, in which our present safety and final happiness are involved: first, there is a way to heaven or to a state of future blessedness—this should excite our gratitude; there is only *one* way—this should make us cautious, lest, through ignorance, prejudice, or carelessness, we come short of so glorious a consummation.”

“Your explanations, Sir, may be satisfactory to yourself, but they are not so to me. Indeed, the more I think of it, the more I feel disinclined to bow down and do homage to the Christian faith. Now, for example, it is an indisputable historic fact that many ages elapsed before Christianity was promulgated; and, during this long period, what countless millions of human beings must, on your hypothesis, have perished, without ever having had a chance of being saved! Would the Deity have remained silent so long if he had bound himself to your law of restriction—to save none but the few who believe and trust in Christ for salvation?”

“ If Christianity, which is the completion of the original scheme of salvation, was not promulgated till a comparatively late period in the history of our world, yet the essential substance of it was known from the earliest period of time. The apostle says, that Abel, the first man who tasted the bitterness of death, offered his prefigurative sacrifice in faith, which is a proof that he knew the way of salvation, to be perfected by the death of the promised Saviour ; and we may fairly presume that what he knew, would be made known to his descendants, from one generation to another. And the same apostle says, when speaking of his Jewish ancestors—‘ For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them ; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it’ (Heb. iv. 2). And Jesus Christ himself says—‘ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it, and was glad’ (John viii. 56). From the time of Abraham to the actual coming of Christ, the clearest and fullest revelations of this scheme of salvation were limited to Abraham’s descendants ; but we can collect from the records of ancient history, scanty as its materials are, sufficient evidence to prove, that amongst the people of other nations it descended by traditional report and testimony, from one generation to another, so as to leave them without excuse, if they perished in their disbelief, or from their own neglect of giving it due attention. At length they became so corrupt and debased that they were left, as a judicial visitation from God, to suffer the consequences of their depravity and impenitence (Rom. i. 21-25).”

“ But what immense numbers of human beings must, on your hypothesis, have perished during this long reign of ignorance and moral corruption ; and I do not see that the state of things is much improved at the present time. Now, let us look at the case just as it is. Christianity has been in existence and in active operation, so you say, for nearly two thousand years ; and yet how small is the space on the surface of our globe which is illumined by what you call her celestial light, in comparison with the vast regions which are enveloped in moral darkness !”

“I admit it,” I replied.

“But how will you reconcile such a tremendous state of things, with the acknowledged wisdom and beneficence of the Deity?”

“You are aware, Sir, that we are often compelled to admit as indisputable facts, what we cannot reconcile with the wisdom and benevolence of God—as the slave-trade, for example, slavery as it now exists in America, and the perpetration of murders, and other social crimes.”

“Very true, Sir; these are confounding facts. They often stagger me.”

“Permit me to say, that the arguments you adduce to disprove, if possible, the truth of the Christian faith, and its practical utility, are precisely those I would employ in proof of its Divine origin and beneficial tendency. Going back to an early period of time, let us consider some of the indisputable facts of history. The tribes of Israel, we know, had been held for centuries as slaves in the land of Egypt; and after their emancipation they went to reside in Palestine. In most of those qualities which command the respect and admiration of mankind, the Jewish nation was remarkably deficient. With the exception of their sacred writings, their literature appears to have been meagre in the extreme; no eminent philosophers, historians, or orators adorn their annals, and the fine arts seem scarcely to have had any existence among them. Compared with the Greeks and Romans, and other nations of antiquity, they were barbarians; and were spoken of in the language of scorn and contempt by their more accomplished and renowned contemporaries. In one department of knowledge, however, the despised Jewish people far surpassed the haughty statesmen and polished sages of Greece and Rome. They knew the only true God, and spoke of him in a style corresponding with his greatness, his condescension, and his paternal love. While the inhabitants of all other countries were abandoned to the grossest and most abject superstition and idolatry, the Hebrews alone adored one God, and alone appear to have possessed any suitable ideas of the dignity and holiness of the Supreme Being;



and while the worship of the pagan divinities was licentious and cruel, that of the God of the Jews was distinguished by its mildness and purity. Here is a contrast which must be traced to some adequate cause."

"The Jews most certainly, in this department of knowledge, claim a just superiority over other ancient nations; but this may have been owing to their isolation and their training."

"That I grant; but their isolation was a Divine arrangement, and their training a Divine dispensation. They were separated from all other people by the express command of the Lord their God; and their teachers who trained them in this department of knowledge—the knowledge of the only true God, and of the way of salvation, proclaimed that God had made himself known to them by special revelation."

"Yes, they said so, and I will admit that they believed it was so; but as they were not infallible, they may have been mistaken."

"Why, Sir, any person of common sense can easily distinguish between a discovery, and a communication as to matters of fact. However, to account for their superior knowledge on these sublime and recondite subjects, without admitting the correctness of their own testimony, 'that God spake to *their fathers*,' is absolutely impossible, unless we believe—what would be an outrage on common sense to imagine—that there is more acuteness in mental dulness than in superior intelligence; and that an untutored people, while devoting themselves chiefly to agriculture and the rearing of cattle, could eclipse, by the grandeur and sublimity of their discoveries, a people who has long enjoyed the highest degree of intellectual culture."

"But, Sir, your Scriptures prove that the Jews had amongst them men of genius and of great mental power. Isaiah, for example, in sublimity and lofty grandeur of conception and description, has no superior in any age or country; and the pastoral odes of David equal, if they do not surpass, anything we meet with in Pope or Addison. As a legislator, Moses stands at the head of his order, and, if my memory serves me, the great critic Longinus says he was no

ordinary man; and, therefore, it is not a matter of such wonderment that they made discoveries of the Deity which no other philosophers ever made."

"But you forget that what you call their discoveries were inspirations, which came upon them from the Source of all knowledge; and to these inspirations they uniformly attribute their knowledge of the only true God, and that scheme of salvation which he had devised on behalf of man. And this belief was entertained by all the tribes of Israel, not simply because their teachers said so, but because they confirmed the truthfulness of their testimony by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles."

"And yet after all their novel and sublime discoveries in regard to these all-important subjects, and after all the miraculous attestations which you say were supplied in confirmation of their truthfulness, we find that they apostatized from the worship of their Deity, and relapsed again and again into idolatrous worship and practices, and became corrupt and debased like the people of other nations."

"That is very true, Sir; and the consequences resulting from their apostasy supplies a very cogent argument in favour of my hypothesis. While they adhered to the worship of the true God, and observed the statutes and ordinances which he gave them, they were a united, virtuous, and prosperous people; and, though few in number, they were great in power. No invading force could subdue them, nor could any adjoining country into which they carried their arms withstand the shock of their assaults. But when they renounced their allegiance to Him, and relapsed into idolatry, practising at the same time the cruel and obscene rites of heathenism, they became debased and corrupt like other pagan nations; and then, when the protecting arm of the Lord their God was withdrawn, they fell an easy prey to their enemies, who reduced them to a state of slavery more galling to their national pride than that of Egypt. And, in further confirmation of my argument, just let us look at the present moral state of those countries which have not yet received and sub-

mitted to the authority of Christianity. There we find most triumphant evidence in favour of the moral superiority of the Christian system over every other at present existing in the world, in regard to promoting the dignity and happiness of mankind. Without descending to the gross idolatries of Fetichism, and other abject forms of superstition, what is the social condition of nations where Mahometanism or Buddhism is professed? and what, on the other hand, is that of those countries, where Christianity has been established?"

"To you, Sir, who believe that the Deity restricts the bestowal of a state of future blessedness to that comparatively small number who believe in Jesus Christ, the condition of those nations where Christianity is not established must appear truly appalling; but to myself it presents no such painful aspect, because, as the Deity has permitted this state of things to descend from one generation to another, for such a series of ages, I believe he looks with an *equal eye* of compassion and beneficence on all his offspring; and that, *if there be a future state of blessedness in reserve*, he will discard your law of restriction, and confer everlasting happiness on all, without respect to their faith, or their religious rites and customs. Hence I see no absolute necessity why you should embark in that crusade of missionary enterprise and labour, which we heard recommended and enforced with so much eloquence last evening; for we are not sure that if such a transfer of homage, and change in the mode of worship, could be effected, it would augment the happiness of the people who are the subjects of it, or improve their social habits and dispositions."

"I am rather surprised to hear you make these remarks; however, without noticing all of them, I think I can convince you that on some points you are labouring under a species of delusion, and that I shall endeavour to point out. I proceed, then, at once, to real or very probable matters of fact. A vessel, richly laden and scantily manned, may sail up the Thames or the Clyde in perfect safety, even if there are no weapons of defence on board; but if she were

to venture near the coast of some parts of the Indian seas, her passengers and crew would run the risk of a contest for their lives and liberty with the savages on shore. If a vessel should be wrecked on the shores of the once savage, but now Christian islands of Tahiti or Raratonga, its crew and passengers would be sure of a kind reception from the natives; while, if a similar disaster should happen on the shores of the Feejees or of Sumatra, they would run the risk of being seized and devoured; or, if spared this fate, would be compelled to live in degradation and misery. Here are striking contrasts, amongst human beings who are endowed with the same powers of intelligence and sympathy as ourselves; but to what singular cause are these to be referred, unless it be to the influence of the Christian faith, which, you doubt, will work no beneficial change in the character and condition of man?"

"You strike home now, and I feel I must surrender. But still, while the diffusion of Christianity may tend to tame the wild savage, and make him more like a human being, I do not see any necessity for your missionary labours amongst the Chinese or the Hindoos, who are highly civilized, and, upon the whole, intelligent. Why should any efforts be made to dispossess them of their religion, with its rites and ceremonies, which they inherit from their forefathers?"

"I think that no compulsory efforts should be made to achieve this end; but I presume you would not think it wrong that our government should introduce the humane laws of Britain into all her foreign dependencies?"

"Why, no; such a measure, I think, would be very advisable."

"I thank you for this admission in favour of the necessity of Christian missions, especially to India, where cruelties are still practised in broad day, such as we should be apt to regard as monstrous inventions, fitted only to gratify a morbid appetite for the horrible, were they not attested by faithful eye-witnesses. What think you of this specimen? At the annual festival in honour of Muha Div (the great god), many persons are suspended in the air by large

hooks, thrust through the integuments of their backs,\* and swung round for a quarter of an hour, in honour of this deity; and often over a slow fire. Others have their sides pierced, and cords are introduced between the skin and ribs, and drawn backwards and forwards, while these victims of superstition dance through the streets. Others cast themselves from a stage upon open knives, inserted in packs of cotton. Sometimes one of these knives enters the body, and the poor wretch is carried off to expire. If an infant refuses his mother's milk, it is often hung up in a basket on a tree, to be devoured by the vultures. This is no criminal offence, as it would be amongst us, but a ceremonial regulation of their faith. And in India, the mother often sacrifices her first-born, to conciliate her guardian deity in behalf of her unborn progeny. When the child is two or three years old, she takes it to the river, encourages it to enter, as though about to bathe it, but suffers it to pass into the current of water, when she abandons it, and stands an inactive spectator, beholding the struggles and listening to the screams of her perishing infant."

"I would have all these cruel rites and ceremonies put down by

\* We find, from a document which has recently come from India (December, 1856), that some of these cruel rites are abolished in a few of the provinces; and there is now no doubt but the work of legislative humanity and enlightened policy having been begun, will steadily advance, till the triumphs of missionary enterprise in our Indian empire are complete.

"An order has just been promulgated by the magistrate of Poonah, under instructions from government, prohibiting hook-swinging and other barbarous practices throughout the Poonah Zillah. Such a measure has long been desired by all who wish for the improvement of the natives. Of old it was believed—or careless and idle minds found it convenient to believe—that it was dangerous to meddle with any native practice, however immoral or revolting, that was connected with or claimed the sanction of religion. But times are changed, and innovations which might not safely have been attempted a century or half a century ago, the age is now ripe for.

"Another barbarous custom, also prevalent at Jejooree, is interdicted by the proclamation of Mr. Davidson. A man runs a sword through the fleshy part of his leg for about a foot, and, drawing it out, sprinkles the blood on the entrance of the temple. For this feat he receives large free-will offerings; and the right to perform it is vested, as a valuable privilege, in a body of about fifteen families, to each individual of which it comes round once in about six or seven years. These men, however, long ago declared that they would be glad to discontinue the practice (which some think is a remnant of the rite of human sacrifice) if their incomes could be assured to them."

the force of law; which, of course, would supersede the necessity of your missionary enterprise."

"As experience is a safe guide in the settlement of doubtful questions, a reference to it, on the present occasion, will supply palpable evidence that the labours of our missionaries in India have been of great importance and value, both to the natives themselves, and also to the government, by facilitating the introduction and peaceable establishment of a humane policy. The history of their labours proves that they were not visionary speculatists, but sober-thinking men, who knew and realized the fact, that wherever Christianity prevails it uniformly conduces to the progress of mankind;—that it communicates that just manner of thinking upon the most important subjects, which, extending its influence thence to every department of speculative and moral truth, inspires a freedom of inquiry, and an elevation of sentiment, that raises its disciples immeasurably above the level of unassisted nature. This great historic truth gave them confidence in the prosecution of their herculean labours. Let me now notice what they have already accomplished, and that without creating any popular disturbances amongst the natives, thus falsifying the predictions of their opponents, who, from the press and in both houses of parliament, were accustomed to say, that the safety of our Indian possessions was endangered by the presence of our missionaries there; and that our Indian empire would be irrecoverably lost if any legislative measure were introduced to suppress or control the superstitious customs and rites of the natives. In the first place, the missionaries have given us correct information on all matters relating to the Hindoos—their worship, and its various ceremonies—their character, and social habits; and thus, by an accumulation of authentic facts, they have disproved the statements of our popular writers, that the Hindoos are not only an intelligent, but a very virtuous people; and that their religious rites and services, though novel and repulsive to Europeans, are both chaste and humane. Since the missionaries exposed this deception, which had been so long practised upon us, no one has

ventured to eulogize the virtues, or defend the religious practices of the Hindoos. In the second place, they established schools for the education of the youth of India, both male and female; and thus they have succeeded, to a very considerable extent, in diffusing both scientific and biblical knowledge, which is noiselessly but effectively rescuing them from the dominion of the debasing ignorance and superstition under which their forefathers had been living from time immemorial. And no one doubts, who is at all conversant with the present state of things in India, but the rising generation will far surpass any preceding one, in mental acuteness, in knowledge, and in moral character. In the third place, by their writings, their preaching, and their intercourse with the natives, they have proved useful pioneers in clearing the way for the peaceable introduction of the laws promulgated by the British government for the suppression of many of those cruel practices to which I have already alluded. In the fourth place, without employing any undue modes of attack and exposure, they have succeeded, to a very considerable extent, in shaking the confidence of the Hindoos in the truth of their national faith; and a powerful conviction is impressed on the Indian mind—an impression which is becoming deeper and deeper every day—that the days of their mythology are numbered, and that ere long its humiliation and subversion will be achieved. And, in addition to these proofs and indications of their success, I have to report another of their triumphs, and that refers to *your own fraternity*—the conversion of many of our own countrymen, who, on their settlement in India, became first speculative, and then practical unbelievers—rejecting, as visionary or fabulous, the faith of their early training, and often distinguishing themselves by their virulent hostility to the Christian missionary and his labours; but who now zealously cooperate with him in his exertions to spread the knowledge of the way of salvation.”

“To you, these doings of your missionaries are splendid triumphs in confirmation of the Diviue origiu of that faith, which restricts the bestowal of a state of future blessedness to the comparatively

few who believe in Jesus Christ; but to me they appear nothing more than the natural consequences of a well-concerted attack on a long-established and nearly worn-out order of things, which we know invariably results in dividing popular opinion. On all such occasions *Divide and conquer* is the motto, and when this is done, then the pruning off from the old stock of belief and opinion, and the engrafting on the new one, is an operation as natural as it is easy. Human nature is given to change; the love of it is an essential element in our mental constitution, and nothing is more common than going from one extreme to another, or more likely than the change from Brahminism or Buddhism to the faith of Christianity."

"And from Deism to Christianity also, as I have shown you. Hence, to quote your own words, I indulge the hope that you will become a believer, if we have patience."

"A possible event, on the assumed correctness of your hypothesis, as then I may be operated on by some Divine influence, which I shall have no power to withstand; but on my own supposition, as remote from possibility as the junction of the antipodes."

"We shall see. You have already advanced some way in the right direction. But to return to India. Here is a fact, which was not publicly known amongst us, till it was reported by our missionaries—that one whole tribe in India has uniformly destroyed every female child born amongst them, so that they have been obliged to take their wives from the tribe next in rank to them. On one occasion a father's heart recoiled when the emissaries of murder demanded his daughter; and he repelled them from his presence. Her life was spared, and she grew up tenderly beloved by her parents; but the sight of a girl rising to maturity in the house of a Rajpoot, was so novel, and so contrary to the customs of the tribe, that no parent sought her in marriage for his son. The grief-worn father, suffering under the frowns of his own tribe, and trembling for the chastity of his daughter, and the honour of his family, bore her off to a pathless desert, where, with his own hand, he slew her, leaving her body to be devoured by wild beasts."



“Horrid! horrid! Such transactions as these, if true and believed, are enough to rouse popular indignation against our government for not adopting some prompt and severe measures to prevent their repetition. I would annihilate the whole tribe, rather than suffer such inhuman monsters to live on earth.”

“You then would recommend a wholesale massacre to save a few lives; while I would advocate the introduction amongst them of a pure and humane faith, which teaches and enforces the relative obligations of parents and children as they prevail amongst ourselves. This sense of relative obligation, and the social improvement which necessarily follows it, Christianity, by its mild and persuasive influence, has already succeeded in establishing in the cannibal islands of the South Sea, and also, to some extent, amongst the natives of civilized India. Christianity can do, and I have no doubt will do, for India what she has done for Britain—subvert her idolatry, with its cruel and obscene rites, and raise up an enlightened and renovated native population, who, with gladsome voices, will sing the song of Bethlehem, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men’ (Luke ii. 14).”

Mr. Gordon, on rising to take his leave, said, “Well, there is no denying the fact, that the world is in a sad disordered state; and if you think you can improve it by your missionary labours, I will not impeach the benevolence of your motives, though, without hesitation, I may predict the failure of your sacrifices and exertions.”

“But, Sir, you must acknowledge that it is more honourable to fail in the cause of philanthropy than to make no effort.”

“This honour, I believe, is in reserve for you, though I must say you merit one more brilliant. Go on, my dear Sir; but don’t be too sanguine. Utopia I know is very rich in splendid scenery, but unfortunately it partakes much of the nature of the mirage. Good night; with many thanks for all your good wishes.”

## A RENEWED ENCOUNTER.



THE night before I left London, Mr. Gordon again called, and, after some desultory conversation, our attention happened to be directed to the book entitled *No Fiction*, which was lying on the table. This led to a somewhat sharp and lengthened encounter.

"I dipped into that book," said Mr. Gordon, "the other day, and it gave me some amusement, as the tale is made to appear a very natural one. Its author narrates and sketches extremely well, for a divine, and it is highly creditable to his talents, which must certainly be of a superior order."

"Yes, Sir, he is quite a superior man. There is one paragraph of his tale to which I should like to direct your attention, and which, by your permission, I will read to you."

"Read on, Sir, and I'll give all due attention."

I then read as follows:—

"I have often been delighted," said Douglas, "in reading the accounts of the power of religion on the minds of children; but this is the *first* instance which has fallen beneath my own eye. What a religion is ours! How great—and yet how plain! It is so sublime, that it rises beyond the conception of the most enlarged mind! and so simple, that it brings home its lessons to the bosom of a little child! The elements of the gospel, like the elements of our nourishment, are adapted to the endless varieties of age, and character, and circumstance, throughout all the human race."

"And this appears," said Lefevre, "to be a feature in our religion which distinguishes it from all false religions. As far as I am acquainted with the subject, no one of the pagan systems *could* have been rendered universal. They all received their character from national prejudice, national policy, and predominant national vices."

"Yes," rejoined Douglas, "and as, in their own nature, they were not adapted for the benefit of mankind as such, so their great teachers discovered an indifference to the bulk of the human race, incompatible with everything which deserves the name either of religion or morality. With haughty pride they exulted in their own wisdom, and looked down with scorn or ridicule on the folly

of those who were not initiated into their false philosophy. Man scarcely deserved their notice, but as he claimed the proud titles of rich, or wise, or noble; and women and children were utterly abandoned to ignorance and wretchedness. Jesus, our blessed Saviour, was the first Master in religion who opened the door of knowledge to all—who carried his instructions and his tears to the cottage of the poor! This appears to me to involve a powerful evidence of the truth of Christianity, that may well perplex and confound the hosts of infidelity. I have more than once thought that the psalmist must have referred to this use of the subject, when he said, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, because of thine enemies: that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.’”

“This passage, if I remember rightly,” Mr. Gordon remarked, “refers to a tale very similar to your story of *The Woodman’s Daughter*; but I must confess, with all due deference, that I see nothing very remarkable in it; and how you can think of adducing it as an argument in favour of the Divine origin of Christianity, rather surprises me. Children, we know, are imitative. They take the manners, the habits, and the tones of their parents and teachers; and if they should adopt their sentiments, feelings, and expressions, it certainly ought not to be considered remarkable. But yet I should like to hear how you contrive to connect such a fact and the divinity of the gospel together.”

“Such a fact, Sir, proves that the Christian religion is adapted (as we may fairly presume it would be, if of Divine origin), to the moral condition of man, irrespective of his age—of the strength or weakness of his intellect—or the peculiar shades of his moral character. To suppose that this adaptation is by accident, would be no less objectionable than to conclude, with the sceptics of the French school, that it is by chance we see, hear, and speak. If you are prepared to admit that the marks of contrivance, which we can easily discover in the construction and organization of our senses, supply us with a legitimate argument in favour of the existence of a God, by whose power and wisdom this organization has been arranged, I cannot conceive how you can avoid admitting the marks of contrivance which we can as easily trace in the Christian

scheme of salvation, as conclusive evidence in favour of its Divine origin."

"O Sir! it has been invented by a few crafty men, who wished to display their skill at the expense of our credulity, and they have done it most dexterously. They were certainly adepts in invention."

"I know that this is a favourite opinion with you Deists; but I do not think that you can support it. How came these men to devise a scheme of religion which is so admirably adapted to the moral state of man? From whence did they gain their information? They tell us that they wrote under the dictation of an infinitely wise Spirit, and, in common fairness, their testimony ought to be admitted; and, I think, a candid examination of what they have done, and the style in which they have done it, will satisfy us that they are truth-speaking men. I form my judgment on this point as I should on another somewhat analogous to it. If, for example, I saw an epic poem equal to that of Virgil or Milton, or a treatise on logic superior to that of Dr. Watt's, written by a boy of ten years of age; and, if on expressing my astonishment and admiration, he should say—'The writing, Sir, is mine, but nothing more—I wrote from the dictation of Wordsworth and Whately,' I should at once believe him, from a consciousness of his incompetency to produce such compositions by his own unaided powers. So with the sacred writers. We know that, with very few exceptions, they were unlearned and ignorant men, and their contemporaries who knew them spoke of them as such; and yet they have surpassed all other men in the science of moral and spiritual truth. In confirmation, too, of this internal evidence of the truthfulness of their testimony, that they wrote under the dictation of an infallible Spirit, we find, on examination, that the various parts of their comprehensive, yet minute theory, are in perfect harmony with each other, while, at the same time, the theory itself is admirably adapted to the moral condition of humanity. The marks of contrivance are too obvious to allow us to refer the arrangements to chance, or the mere skill of

man. For our guilt, it provides a propitiatory sacrifice, whose blood cleanses from all sin—for our depravity, it provides a renovating influence, by which we are made partakers of the purity of the Divine nature; regarding us as oppressed with cares and sorrows, it animates us with exceeding great and precious promises, by which we are enabled to put our trust in God, and thus rise above the trials of this life; and, viewing us as panting for immortality, it unveils futurity, and delights us with the sublime vision of endless happiness.”

“To you, who are initiated into a firm belief of the Divine origin of Christianity, this apparent adaptation of it to our moral condition and necessities, and its revelations of a future state of happiness, must appear as the consummation of wisdom and benevolence. But I cannot resist the impression, that it is to the activity of your imagination you ought to attribute this correspondence, rather than to any actual fact; and that you are, at least so I think, unconsciously beguiling yourself with pleasing anticipations which will all prove visionary.”

“The gospel, Sir, is a living reality, and it works moral wonders.”

“I don't quite comprehend your meaning.”

“I mean, that it answers the purpose for which it was intended, or, in other words, it does the moral work which is ascribed to it, and does it effectually; this I can prove by an appeal to living testimony. Hence, when it is received by faith, it *does* give peace to a wounded conscience; it *does* infuse a renovating power, by which man becomes a new creature, in his moral principles and social habits; it does administer the most soothing and strengthening consolation to the child of sorrow, and it animates the dying believer with the hopes of a blissful immortality. These are moral facts which the experience of myriads can attest.”

“Yes, I see how it is; the imagination traces a correspondence between its own impulses, and aerial flights, and the component parts of your scriptural theory; and you very naturally think that you would be robbed of an inestimable treasure, and the world at

large sustain an irreparable loss, if your theory of faith should be exploded as a worn-out relic of an antiquated superstition."

"But, after all you say against the Christian faith, I do not think you would vote for its expulsion from the earth, even if you thought you could succeed in effecting it; and I will tell you why. Its expulsion would be as great a calamity to the moral world, as the total disappearance of the solar light would be to the physical—we should at once relapse into a state of profound ignorance on all the important questions which relate to God, to our origin, our immortality, and our destiny. We should then find ourselves groping about, like the ancient heathen, amidst vain and foolish speculations, striving to unravel the mysteries of our nature, and finding no resting-place for our troubled spirits. I have often thought, when musing on such a fearful occurrence, what an awful gloom would spread over the world if we knew that the fatal hour was coming, when, by some supernatural process, all our knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the design of his mission and death, would suddenly pass away from human recollection; and when every leaf in our Bible, and of all other books referring to him, should become as blank as they were before they were printed—leaving us, like the doomed spirits of the infernal world, without a Saviour, or any promise of mercy."

"*You* would anticipate such a strange event with sad and awful forebodings. The disappearance of Jesus Christ from your theory of belief would be to you, and to all of your way of thinking, an irreparable calamity; though I must confess, that I cannot account for the hold he keeps on your imaginations. To me, this is a mystery which deepens in profundity the more I try to fathom it. His very name appears to be a charm, and of more than magic power."

"Yes, Mr. Gordon, there is a charm in the name of Jesus, which at all times, but more especially under circumstances of great privation and danger, both soothes and elevates his disciples. They fear not to die in the tranquillity of their own homes or the raging of the tempest, on the scaffold or the battle-field."

"I will not attempt to deny a fact which general testimony confirms; but permit me to ask, if you can assign any rational cause for what appears to me so mysterious?"

"I can; the fact admits of a fair explanation. Those who have faith in Christ believe that, though invisible, He is ever near them to succour and to comfort them. Hence, the sailor, when pacing the deck during the dark and stormy night, prays to HIM, who, when sailing with his disciples, rebuked the winds and the waves; and he feels that he is addressing one who hears him, and can save him. Yes! and in the dreary cell of tyranny—at the stake of martyrdom—in penury, suffering, and in death—the name of Jesus is uttered with thrilling accents, and awakens associations which have tenfold greater power over the soul than the kindest expressions of human sympathy and love. I was an eye-witness, not long since, to a display of Christian heroism in death:—A young man, of superior intelligence and station in life, who had been rather sceptically inclined, was taken ill, and during his continued illness his sceptical notions vanished, and he became a simple believer in Christ Jesus. After the lapse of some months, his physician told him he must die, as his disease was beyond the reach of human skill. I was present when this announcement was made, and he received it without expressing either surprise or regret. When his medical attendant withdrew, he said to his mother and his sisters, who stood weeping by his bedside—'I am not surprised by your tears, for I know you love me; but weep not for me, for I am nearing the end of my course. My confidence of a glorious issue is placed on HIM, who is mighty to save; he is with me, though I see him not. Death's dark vale is illumined with the light of life, and I shall soon pass through it, and then I shall be safe and happy for ever.'"

"Most marvellous! and yet I believe it. Such incidents as these are most impressive. We are mysterious beings, alternately terrified by our own imaginary fears, and excited to ecstasy by the illusions of our own fancy."

"But the extinction of Christianity and its sacred records might

prove a great disaster to you sceptics; especially at some of the turning points of your history."

"To us! you now really take me by surprise; but, to be serious, how do you make this out?"

"Why, it is well known that sceptics, when in expectation of death, often call on Jesus Christ to save them."

"A drowning man will catch at a straw."

"He would prefer a life-boat."

"True."

"I ask you one plain question—If you lived on a dangerous coast, would you ever scuttle a life-boat which has rescued many from destruction, and which possibly you may live to need?"

"I see your drift, and admire your ingenuity. Of course, I would not."

"Well, I will venture on another supposition, and leave you to decide whether I am not right in my conjectures, that even you, with all your antipathies to Jesus Christ, may be surprised in circumstances which would render the sound of his name the most effectual solace that could be given. Suppose, for instance, we were walking together in some vast forest in the far northern part of America, and saw advancing toward us a band of apparently ferocious savages, should we not tremble with fear and apprehension? But suppose, while in this state of terror, we should hear them singing in chorus a verse of some familiar hymn, would you then recoil in terror? Would you experience additional consternation on perceiving that these barbarians had been instructed in the Christian faith?"

"I like your illustrations—they amuse me. Can't you favour me with another?"

"I will try. Suppose you were sailing among the islands of the South Seas, and, when nearing one of them, would you not rather see the natives on the beach clothed in European dresses, as at Tahiti and Raratonga, than in a state of savage nudity? and would you hesitate to drop anchor if you heard them singing in harmony—



'Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run:  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

"In arguing," said Mr. Gordon, "there is nothing more desirable than a good illustration, which gives pleasure, even when it does not produce conviction. Well, then, I will admit that there is a strange fascinating power in a name, and in mental associations, for which our most sagacious philosophers are unable to account; but that's no reason why I should give it my sanction, if I believe, as I do in these cases, that it springs out of a superstitious belief; and, therefore, leaving the sailor in the storm, and the prisoner in the cell, with the rest of your illustrative examples, and not caring to conjecture how I should act or feel if I were placed in such circumstances as you describe, I certainly, according to my present views and impressions, would vote for the expulsion of Christianity, if my suffrage could bring about such an event; but I fear that it is too deeply fixed in the prejudices of the public mind ever to be rooted up—at least in our time."

"But would you not tremble in anticipation of the success of such an effort? Expel Christianity from the earth! Why, what evil has she done? You may trace her progress by the improved condition of the people whom she has visited and blessed. Where she finds a wilderness, she leaves a fruitful field for the sickle of the husbandman; she meets with briars and thorns, and converts them into the myrtle tree and the rose; she encounters all the base lusts and ferocious dispositions of our nature, and supplants them with the tranquillizing affections of purity and peace. She improves the intellect, refines the taste, and humanizes the character; and, by raising men to a state of spiritual communion with the Supreme Being, imprints on them the image of his benevolence, and animates them with his love of righteousness. She mitigates the violence of sorrow—binds up the wounds which adversity inflicts in the heart of man—reconciles the mourner to his bitter loss—disarms death of his terrors—and exhibits beyond the grave a scene

of tranquillity and of joy which no hand can portray or tongue describe. Expel Christianity from the earth! Then, Sir, you would give perpetuity to those horrid systems of idolatry which maintain their dominion over the great majority of the human race, as no power will ever destroy them but that which the gospel of Christ displays. Nay, Sir; if you were to succeed, you would prove the greatest enemy to man that ever visited the earth since the author of all evil triumphed over our first parents: for how many thousands would you, by such a wanton act of cruelty, deprive of their sweetest sources of consolation, and their brightest prospects of happiness!"

"You are eloquently severe; but, my dear Sir, you may spare your severity, as it is not likely that I shall ever make the attempt, and less likely that I should succeed, were I vain, or, to quote your own language, wanton and cruel enough to do it. I willingly admit that Christianity has done some good, but you must allow that she has done some evil; and it is but fair to balance the one against the other, to see which preponderates. If she has promoted peace in one country, she has planned massacres in others; if she has blessed one family, she has introduced discord and division into others; and if there are a few solitary individuals animated by her promises of mercy, there is a larger number who tremble under the awful denunciations of her vengeance."

"Her promises of mercy are addressed to all, and all are invited to receive the blessings which she is willing to bestow; but if they disdainfully reject them, and treat her message of grace with contempt, she turns away, and announces their approaching doom; and she does this in a tone, and with a lofty majesty of speech, which often makes the most daring quail before her. But why do they tremble, if they believe she has no power to punish? Your other charges against her I will meet by a quotation from a book \* which I wish you would peruse, and which I shall be happy to present to you:—

"That men calling themselves Christians have persecuted others

\* Dr. Bogue's Essay on *The Divine Authority of the New Testament*.

with unrelenting cruelty, and have shed rivers of innocent blood, is but too true. Did Christianity countenance this conduct, it would merit unqualified reprobation. But far from such a disposition, it forbids all violence and injury to be employed in its defence. Christianity never shed a drop of its enemies' blood since the day that Christ died on the cross; but it has been lavish of its own. It never forged a chain to bind a heretic or an adversary, nor erected a prison to immure him. Christianity never dipped her pen in tears of blood, to write a penal law denouncing vengeance on infidels. She never made her bitterest foe heave a groan, from any bodily suffering inflicted by her hands. Her only weapons of offence and defence are truth and prayer. She returns good for evil, and blessing for cursing.

"If men, wearing the garb of the disciples of Jesus, instigated by pride, and the lust of dominion, and a desire to gratify the worst passions of the human heart, injure any of the human race under a pretence of zeal for religion, they act in direct opposition to the gospel, and you cannot condemn them with too much severity. But surely Christianity should not be condemned for what it forbids men to perpetrate under pain of the Divine displeasure. Or if such as were truly Christians ever sought to put a stop to infidelity or error, and to propagate the gospel in the world by force (and it is to be deplored with tears of blood that such there have unhappily been), they will receive no more thanks from Christ than the three disciples when they wished him to bring down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans:—'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' Nor would he account the words, which he directed to Peter on a different occasion, too severe to be used to them here:—'Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but the things which be of men.' Both the principles and precepts of the gospel, and the conduct of Christ and his apostles, are as remote from persecution as the east is from the west."

"I admire the candid and amiable spirit of the writer, and will certainly read his book, if only from respect to the friendship which dictates the present; but I will not flatter you with any hope of bringing me over to your belief. However, waiving all personal remarks, allow me to ask you if you really believe that Christianity will ever become a universal religion? and, if so, how do you think it will be propagated through the earth?"

"That it is *adapted* to become a universal religion, no one can

doubt who has ever inquired into its nature and design, or who has ever read the history of its progress. It is suited to man as a rebellious subject of the Divine government; and it has been embraced by men of every rank, of every clime, and of every description of character. Hence, if you could bring together, in one place, some natives of Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, or from any of the islands or cities which belong to either of these great divisions of the earth; and could, by some miraculous influence, impart to them the power of speaking the same language, you would find them all, if they had embraced the pure faith of Christ, giving utterance to the same sentiments—expressing the same feelings—exulting in the same prospects—and disclosing all the peculiarities of the same singular and extraordinary spiritual character.”

“But, Sir, if this hypothetical statement be correct, how will you account for the endless divisions which prevail amongst those who are known to embrace the same Christian faith?”

“You ought, Sir, to distinguish between a real and a nominal Christian; and though I will not deny but there are diversities of opinion even amongst real Christians, yet they relate to minor and subordinate questions. Consider Christianity as coming from God—it is pure and unspeakably good; view it as received by men—it will be, as the schoolmen say, *secundum modum recipientis*. If the difference of capacity, and the prejudices and passions of mankind be duly weighed, we shall not account it strange if they do not all think alike, nor receive the truth in all its purity. But this is not peculiar to the Christian religion. There are divisions and dissensions in matters of religion among pagan idolaters, among Mahometans, and among Deists. You cannot deny it. But the Deist does not consider this as a reason for rejecting Deism. If so, neither is it a reason for rejecting Christianity. More particularly, some men are destitute of every noble principle—they are full of deceit, avarice, pride, and sensuality. We see them abuse the gifts of nature, and of Providence; is it wonderful, then, if they pervert Christianity too, and entertain different ideas of many of its doc-

trines from wise and godly men? It is no more an objection against Christianity being from God, because such persons come short of its purity, than against the gifts of nature and other temporal blessings being from God, because they are often abused. Weakness of intellect will produce peculiarities of sentiment on every subject, and, consequently, on religion. The prejudices of education and early habits will generate attachments to certain opinions and rites; hence, also, differences in religion will arise; but the fault is not in Christianity, it is in man. From similar causes we see a diversity of opinion among the learned regarding sciences of great utility—medicine, law, politics, philosophy; but, notwithstanding this, all allow them to be highly beneficial to mankind—none deny their usefulness, although people differ about some particular points. To reject the gospel, because bad men pervert it, and weak men deform it, and angry men quarrel about it, displays the same folly as if a person should cut down a useful tree because caterpillars disfigured its leaves, and spiders made their webs among its branches.”

“I have no objection at present to offer to this fair explanation of the difficulty which has often perplexed me; but you will permit me to refer you to my former question—Do you think that Christianity will ever be universally established?”

“I do, Sir; and my belief is founded on the following basis. Christianity is adapted for a universal religion; it foretells the fact of its universal establishment; its disciples are commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to seek its universal propagation; and it is now spreading itself with unexampled rapidity through the nations of the earth. You cannot, Sir, but be conscious that the aspect of the times indicates some approaching change in the destinies of man; and though you, on your principles, cannot hail any redeeming power by which the curse that inflicts such mighty evils on suffering humanity can be rolled away, yet we can on ours; and hence, while you are left to speculate on the charms of a philosophy which has never ameliorated the moral condition of man, we can speak with confidence of the intervention of *Him*, who will turn the curse into

a blessing, and make this earth the abode of purity, of harmony, and of bliss."

"But how do you expect this great and mysterious change to be brought about?"

"Not by force. That has been tried by short-sighted rulers in former times, and has utterly failed. Conversion to Christianity which is effected by such means produces no change in the human heart. The *man* remains the same, though his professed belief may vary. The circulation of the Scriptures, the distribution of religious treatises, and the preaching of the gospel, are the only means which we employ to accomplish this great design. But, even when these means are used in the most judicious manner, we do not calculate on accomplishing the purpose which we have in view without the influence of a supernatural co-operation; for it is not by the power of man that the demon of superstition, or the Moloch of idolatry is to be dethroned, and Christianity established, but by the Spirit of the Lord."

"I rather admire your dexterity in avoiding, *on principle*, the mortification attendant on any failure in your pious efforts in behalf of the perishing heathen."

"I don't quite understand you."

"Why, you say, your success is dependent on the concurrence of a supernatural power; and, consequently, if you fail in your pious undertaking, you lay the blame on the inactivity of this supposed preternatural influence, never for a moment doubting your own sagacity, or questioning the efficacy of the means which you employ."

"If you examine the theory of the Christian faith, you will find that, in every moral operation, this concurrence of supernatural power with human agency forms an essential part of it. 'Man sows the seed of truth, it is God who gives the increase.'"

"As such a theory must tend to limit exertion, and depress an ardent mind, it strikes me that it is an ingenious invention to provide a pleasant solace in the season of disappointment, which, I believe, has its periodical visitations in your ecclesiastic annals."

“It has analogy in its favour. We eat and drink to sustain life, but the efficacy of the nourishment to sustain life depends on God. The farmer casts the seed into the soil, but it is God who causes it to grow and yield its increase. His confidence in God gives a stimulus to his own exertions.”

“Well, I won't dispute this point with you; but, after all, does it not tend to discourage your pious exertions, when you believe that a successful issue is dependent on an influence which you cannot control, and over which you have no power?”

“No. It has a contrary effect, as in the case of the husbandman. We look upon ourselves as mere active instruments employed in accomplishing the Divine purpose of grace and mercy in behalf of the perishing heathen; and the established law of the economy of our faith and practice is embodied in the following record of inspiration: —‘For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands’ (Isa. lv. 10-12).”

“I bow before such an ingenious theory of faith; but still entertain my doubts. Patience must still hold on, or you will abandon me in despair.”

“I will continue to hope, even against hope; because I know there is an unseen power which is capable of effecting such a transformation, as I devoutly trust may yet be accomplished in you.”

## THE EFFECT OF A WORD SPOKEN IN SEASON.



NOT long after I had returned home, and was again busily engaged in my pastoral duties, I received a letter, informing me of the last illness and death of an esteemed friend and occasional correspondent, Mrs. Hastings. Her history is an interesting one, and aptly illustrates the effect of a word spoken in season.

“ You must often,” says Dr. Chalmers, “ have been sensible, in the course of your history, how big, and how important the consequences were, that emanated from one event, which in itself was insignificant—how on the slightest accidents the greatest interests were suspended—how, moving apparently at random, you met with people, or with occasions, that gave rise, perhaps, to far the most memorable passages in your life—how the very street in which you chanced to move, brought you into contact with invitations and appointments, or proposals of some sort, which brought results of magnitude along with them; insomuch that the colour and direction of your whole futurity have turned on what, apart from this mighty bearing, would have been the veriest trifle in the world. A word—a thought—an unforeseen emotion—an event of paltriest dimensions in itself—may be the germ of an influence wide as a continent, and lasting as a thousand years—may, in fact, change the current and complexion of a person’s social history and character, and lead to consequences which shall be durable as eternity.”

Many years ago, I was unexpectedly called to London, on a matter of great emergency. My travelling companion, for part of the way, was a lady, attired in deep mourning. I endeavoured to draw her into conversation, by referring to the beautiful scenery, and other common-place topics, but I could not succeed. At length, on seeing



her drop a tear, which she endeavoured to conceal, I said, "This world is rightly denominated a valley of weeping."

"Yes, Sir, it is," replied the stranger. "I hope you will excuse my weakness. I have sustained the greatest loss that can ever befall a woman. I am a widow. I had one of the best of husbands; but cruel fate tore him from me, even without permitting me to see him, till his corpse was rudely exposed before me."

She then told me that her husband left her early one morning to go out shooting, but, on passing through a hedge, it is supposed, the trigger of his gun got entangled in the briars, as he was found, an hour after the report had been heard, lying on his face, with his gun by his side, and his dogs crouching before and behind him, as though their master was asleep.

"Since that fatal hour, Sir, I have not had one pleasant feeling in my desolate heart; and now I have left a spot on which nature has lavished her beauties, to seek a tranquil death in some distant shade."

"But, Madam, do you never expect to see another happy day?"

"No, Sir, never! No, never! I have tried every expedient in my power, but they have all failed. I have been to Bath, to Cheltenham, to Brighton, and have travelled on the Continent. I have read the most popular novels of the English and the French schools; but all is useless—mine is a hopeless case."

"No, Madam, it may not be hopeless. I can direct you to a source of consolation which you have not yet thought of."

"Indeed, Sir; then I'll try it. I would freely part with wealth for mental ease; for wealth, without happiness, is but an aggravation of misery."

"I would recommend you, Madam, to read the Bible. That book was composed for the express purpose of promoting our happiness; and if you read it with attention, and pray for wisdom to understand it, and for a disposition to receive the truths which it reveals, you will find that it will do you more essential good than all the expedients which you have been trying."

“If, Sir, I had not received a favourable impression of your benevolent disposition, I really should imagine that you were disposed to turn my intense grief into ridicule. Read the Bible! Why, Sir, what is there in that obsolete book to interest me?”

“No, Madam; the book is not obsolete, and never will be, as long as human misery abounds in the world. That book has healed wounds as deep as yours, and mitigated sorrows no less poignant; and, if you examine it, you may find it as a well-spring of life to your withered happiness.”

“Your advice, Sir, is prompted, I have no doubt, by the kindest sympathy; but my heart instinctively recoils from adopting it.”

“Why, Madam?”

“Because I cannot conceive how the reading of a book, which I have always regarded as a collection of legendary tales, can remove or assuage such sorrows as wring my spirit. I have neither faith nor taste for such reading.”

“Have you ever read the Bible, Madam?”

“O no, Sir, never! I may have read some passages as a school lesson, but I don't remember any. My mother died when I was but a little girl. From what I have heard an old servant say, I believe that she was fond of the Bible; but my father abhorred it, and he trained me to abhor it. He used to call it the Grand Mogul of superstition. Its style of composition, I have heard him say, is as offensive to correct taste, as its sentiments are revolting to a cultivated mind.”

“If you will permit me, Madam (taking out my little pocket Bible while speaking), I will read you a few passages, and then you can judge how far your belief is supported by evidence.”

She bowed assent, and I then read the twenty-third psalm. I saw, by the expression of her countenance, that the chaste imagery of the psalmist pleased her; but before we could interchange any remarks the horn blew, and the mail suddenly stopped. However, when she alighted to step into the carriage which was in waiting to receive her, she said, in a tone of subdued seriousness, “I will follow your

advice, Sir, and read the Bible to form my own judgment of its character and tendencies; and if you will favour me with your card (which I gave her) I may, possibly, some day let you know the result, especially if it should be what, I do not doubt, you wish it may be."

A long period had elapsed after this occurrence took place, and it had nearly passed from my recollection, when it was very unexpectedly revived by a letter from the lady. The letter was subscribed Susannah Hastings, and, after calling to remembrance the circumstances in which we had met, she proceeded to give me a general outline of her subsequent history, accompanied by an interesting account of her severe mental conflicts in her spiritual inquiries, and a pressing invitation to call and see her, should I ever pay a visit to London, where she then resided. I acknowledged the receipt of the letter, congratulated her on the great moral and spiritual change through which she had passed, and stated that she might expect to see me very soon. Not long after that I had occasion to be in London. Within a few days after my arrival, I called on her, and had from her own lips a more detailed account of the process of her conversion from darkness to light, than she had given me in her letter. My visits were repeated during my sojourn there, and since then we kept up an occasional correspondence. From these two sources of information—her letters and her verbal communications—I am able to give a finished sketch of her somewhat marvellous, if not romantic history.

Having entertained, from early childhood, a belief that the Bible was a very objectionable book, both in point of sentiment and style of composition, she says, in her first letter, "I was not only surprised but delighted, by your reading the twenty-third psalm. I saw the rural scene vividly depicted; the sheep feeding in the green meadows, while the shepherd was reclining on the bank of the gently flowing stream, watching the glad movements of the sportive lambs, as the evening sun glided in noiseless splendour through the sky. I at once resolved to purchase a Bible, thinking,

then, that it was merely a work of the imagination—an antique relic of some early poetic age.” But on her arrival in London, she was prevented from doing this so soon as she intended, in consequence of the assiduous attentions of her friends, who were ceaseless in their efforts to raise her drooping spirits; naturally thinking that, if they could succeed in doing so, she would get reconciled to her fate, and again enjoy life. Hence she was lured from one gay scene to another still more exciting, and every expedient was adopted which ingenuity could devise, to amuse and gratify her. But she soon found, that neither the opera, nor the theatre, nor the fascinations of private parties, could assuage the tumultuous agitations of her heart. “I moved amongst them,” she said, “more like an automaton than a living being who felt any pleasure in existence.”

An incident now occurred, that led her into a new train of thought, which proved the beginning of an eventful issue in the history of her life. On passing her bookseller’s, she looked in, to inquire about a new novel, which she had seen announced as just issued from the press. There she saw on the counter a small Bible, which brought our conversation in the stage coach to her remembrance, and she purchased it. In her first letter, she says, “I soon found the twenty-third psalm, and as I re-perused it, its poetic imagery appeared to my mind more beautiful than ever. I then turned to Psalm ciii., which I read with more solemnity of feeling. It made me think of myself, and it brought me imperceptibly into contact with God. I was delighted by his assumption of the paternal character. This was the first time in my life I felt any force, or perceived any intelligible meaning, in the petition in the Lord’s Prayer—*Our Father, who art in heaven*; but yet my perceptions of its meaning were very vague and indefinite. They did not excite any emotions of love, or of gratitude, or filial trust; but they left a strong impression on my mind. It was a strange and startling impression, that, though an inhabitant of earth, I was moving towards another world. I am sure I had not thought so much about God or another world all my life, as I thought that night, and

particularly when my head was on my pillow. My day-thoughts came up in my dreams, and in a more lucid form, and produced a more powerful effect. When I awoke in the morning, I felt a strange sensation of mental ease, which greatly astonished me, as I knew not by what cause it had been produced. The agitating forces of bitter grief and sullen discontent were in a state of quietude; and though not really happy, yet my spirits were buoyant, rising at times to cheerfulness."

At this juncture she had to fulfil a long-standing engagement—to accompany a party of friends on a tour to the north; and though she endeavoured to excuse herself, yet she felt compelled to yield, as the excursion had been planned principally on her account. When alluding to this excursion, at my first interview with her, she said:—"At an earlier period of my life, I should have been delighted, when wandering through the Trosachs or sailing on Lochlomond, when gazing on the wonders of Staffa or surveying the magnificent scene from the top of Goatfell; but my mental susceptibilities were unstrung, and I felt no response to the scenes of beauty and grandeur which I beheld. But never shall I forget the little unobtrusive inn at Brodick, nor my neat little bed-room there, as I there saw a Bible, the first I had seen since I left home. I sat me down, and, in addition to the two psalms that had become favourites with me, I read Psalm cvii., which greatly excited me, as it revived the fearful emotions of the preceding day, when, on nearing Arran, we had to encounter a terrific storm."

On her return home, she resumed her reading of the Scriptures, and passed from the Psalms to the Prophecies of Isaiah. The bold imagery of the prophet delighted her, but she could not trace its application, or its meaning; and, in reference to his sixth chapter, she was greatly perplexed to decide whether it was a poetical fiction, or a real description of heaven. "My first course of reading," she says in her letter, "left an impression on my mind that we have not, in any of the walks of literature, such a class of men as the writers of the Bible. These men possess some rare endowments;

they appear to know more about God and another world than any other writers whose works I have ever read. There is a majestic simplicity, and sublime grandeur, in all their statements and descriptions of the unknown world, and its great spirits."

Having no one to guide her in her study of the Scriptures, her reading was very desultory; she passed from one book to another in great mental perplexity, and could not discover any obvious connection between them, resembling the continuity preserved in other works with which she was familiar. At length she turned to Paul's Epistles, but they were dark and mystical, and rather repulsive to her taste, being so unlike the poetic and the prophetic books; to her mind they presented no sublimity or beauty; and yet she admitted, it was a strange repulsiveness—it gave her no offence, or even distaste to the Bible. "I now," she adds, "began reading the Gospels. They were more intelligible. The narratives pleased me. I was delighted with some of the scenes, particularly the Prodigal Son, and the Pharisee and Publican in the Temple. The tales interested me; they seemed to wear the air of truthfulness, and yet at times I thought them inventions. The history of Jesus Christ very soon took a strong hold of my imagination, and I soon began to admire the fine blending of majesty and meekness, of dignity and tenderness, of lofty bearing, which no insults could disturb, and sweet compassion, which his character so broadly exhibits. Yes, I often said, he is a real person, for no human genius could invent such a person, or draw such a character. I followed him through the dark period of his agonizing sufferings, from his prostration in the garden to Calvary, where he was crucified. I wept when I saw him on the cross."

In one of the interviews I had with her, she said, that two things both surprised and perplexed her. She was at a loss to conceive the reason why his countrymen treated Jesus Christ with so much unkindness and cruelty, when he was such an extraordinary benefactor, and so benevolent—going about doing them good, healing their sick, restoring their injured senses of sight and hearing, and even

raising their dead. The other thing that surprised and perplexed her was, that he should continue to live amongst them, when they were so rude in their manners, and insolent in their speech, and when he knew they were often plotting to take away his life. Why did he not leave them, and go and live amongst some more humane and generous people, who would return such a style of treatment by courtesy and gratitude? The more she thought of these things, the more she was perplexed. She felt so bewildered, that she put her Bible in her book-case, under an impression she should never be able to understand it. And yet she could not let it remain there long. Her curiosity was too much excited, and her self-imposed prohibition tended to increase her eager solicitude to make out the meaning of what she read. Hence she resumed her reading exercise; and on going through the Gospel of John very carefully, a ray of light fell on *one fact* in the history of Jesus Christ, which, while it increased her perplexity, opened the way towards a discovery to be made in some future stages of her inquiry. The fact was this: she perceived that, when in conversation with his disciples, he occasionally made emphatic allusions to the *necessity* of his death. This she thought very strange, as it was a case without a parallel within the compass of her reading. However, it fixed her attention; and, on a more minute examination, she perceived that he professed to come from heaven, and avowed his intention of returning thither; and that he spoke of dying, as though he had a stronger interest in death than in life, foretelling to his disciples the agonizing death he was to die-(Matt. xx. 17-19). His not recoiling from such a death, and doing everything in his power to escape it, led her to think that he was some incarnate being of a peculiar order, who had some special mission to fulfil, and yet she could not imagine what that mission could be—a mission, depending for its accomplishment on death, rather than on life, appeared to her a mystery too profound for human ingenuity to unravel. “At length,” and I cannot do better than quote from her letter, she says, “a thought struck me, and I acted on it, and the labour of doing so produced a momentary

suspension of my oppressive anxiety. I arranged, as well as I could, some of the passages which appeared to assign the REASONS for Christ's death, to which he often alluded, particularly the following:—'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many' (Matt. xx. 28). 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.' 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.' 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father' (John x. 11, 15, 17, 18). I endeavoured to work out an intelligible meaning from these passages, but I could not. A mysticism enveloped them which I could not penetrate. I wanted a living expositor. I longed for an interview with you, and more than once half-resolved to come and see you, as, though you were a stranger, I felt you were a friend, and I knew no other whom I could consult. I had no book in my library which gave me any help, and I knew not what book to inquire for, if I applied to my bookseller. No language can depict the excited state of my heart. I felt intuitively assured there was some latent meaning in these mysterious sayings of Jesus Christ, or he would not have uttered them. He was too wise and too good to utter what was false or foolish. But I could not trace out the clue of discovery. This at times repulsed me, but, on cool reflection, it appeared like a silent proof that the Bible was not a book of human invention, as, in that case, I thought, by dint of application, I should be able to decipher its meaning. One thing now surprises me, and that is, that, while cherishing the idea that the Bible was a Divine book, rather than a human one, I never thought of lifting up my heart in prayer to God for wisdom and grace to understand it."

In this state of painful bewilderment, depressed by repeated failures in her efforts to acquire the knowledge which she deemed



essential to her happiness, yet resolutely determined to prosecute her inquiries, she wrote to her uncle, a clergyman of the Church of England, stating her case, with its painful perplexities, and desiring his sympathy and advice. He replied, expressing some surprise at the receipt of such a letter, and intimating his apprehension that she had been hearing some methodistical or evangelical preaching, which he denounced as a fatal heresy, more calculated to drive people into a state of derangement, than to advance them in virtue or in happiness. He assured her that, as she had been, in baptism, made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, she need not cherish any anxieties about her spiritual safety or final salvation. He advised her to banish the absurd chimæras, which were disquieting her, and go and take the sacrament, which, he said, was the spiritual nourishment which Almighty God had provided to sustain the inner life of the soul; and, in addition, he recommended her to mingle rather more in the circles of gaiety, so as to drive away her melancholy ideas. This letter was both mystical and unsatisfactory. It contradicted her experience, and she felt astonished that a clergyman should advise her to go more frequently into the gay world. "I knew," she said, "that my own ideas were not fanciful, but the vague conceptions of some great truths of the Bible; and I felt as unable to banish them from my heart, as a person, when asleep, feels unable to banish the dreams which disquiet him. However, she decided on joining in the communion; and being then at Bath, away from all her gay friends, she went to church, and took the sacrament—a thing she had never done before. But it had no tranquillizing effect; indeed, it increased her perplexity, and for awhile made her think that her case was a hopeless one, and that it would be better for her to abandon all further solicitude and inquiries, than to cherish and prosecute them. But she could not bring herself to such a decision; and the more she laboured to do so, the more anxious she became to get the clue of discovery, which she thought was to be found *somewhere*. In this state of intense anxiety and great

depression, she returned to her town residence. Her friends were more assiduous to please than ever; but some were mortified, and others were offended, because she would not again enter into the gay scenes and habits of former times; occasionally they hinted their apprehensions that she would soon turn an Evangelical, and become as scrupulous and devout as any of the sect. These sarcasms, in conjunction with her uncle's letter, suggested to her the idea of going to some church, where an evangelical minister did duty, thinking it possible that he might give her the explanation she so much desired; but she long hesitated about doing this, as she had not gone to any place of public worship for many years, with the exception of the time when she took the sacrament at Bath. Her desire at length became so strong, that one Sunday morning she left home, not knowing where to go; but, on passing along the street, she saw some respectable and sedate-looking people going into a church, whither she followed them. This church was a Dissenting chapel, which, she said, she should not have entered if she had known it, as she had been accustomed to hear Dissenters spoken of as an uneducated and uncouth people. She felt a strange sensation on seeing the clergyman ascend the pulpit in a plain black coat, instead of going into the reading-desk in a white surplice; but the soft melody of the singing, and the emphatic solemnity of his style of reading the Scriptures, calmed her momentary agitation, and she listened to his prayer with devout seriousness. This was the first extempore prayer she had ever heard; and when speaking of it, in one of our interviews, she remarked that, in one particular, it bore a resemblance to her Bible reading—parts were plain and intelligible, and parts were under a veil of mysteriousness. The minister seemed to know the desires and emotions that were stirring within her, and he expressed them with so much accuracy and force, that it greatly astonished her. "Had I confessed to him," she remarked, "he could not have had a more perfect knowledge of what was passing in my mind."

When God has any special design to accomplish, we may often

trace the harmonious conjunction of the various agents and agencies which he employs in effecting it. The Ethiopian eunuch was sitting in his chariot, reading the prophet Esaias, when Philip, under a Divine impulse, went and seated himself by his side. The passage he was reading was veiled in darkness, and he asked for an explanation, which was immediately given, understood, and felt; the moral transformation took place by the concurring action of Divine power; he avowed his newly originated faith; was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing—the visible agent of the great transaction disappearing, that the tribute of adoring gratitude might be offered up exclusively to the God of all grace. We pass from this wondrous scene to another, stamped with the same moral insignia, though not quite so obviously conspicuous. Here is a person of superior intelligence, who has long been labouring, by her own unaided reason, to decipher the hidden mysteries of the truth as it is in Jesus, and labouring in vain. She leaves her own home on a Sabbath morning in quest of a living expositor, yet not knowing where to find one. An unseen hand guides her to a chapel, which she would have disdained to enter had she known its denominational character. Her latent prejudices spring up into powerful action when she observes a slight deviation in the order of the service from that with which her eye was once familiar; and yet they are overcome by a devotional exercise, which surprised her by its novelty, while it strongly interested her by its appropriateness. The question she left home to have solved is a simple, yet a very important one; and on its solution her happiness is dependent. The second hymn is sung. The minister rises in his pulpit; his Bible is open before him, and, after a short pause, he announces his text, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John xii. 32, 33). The sketch he gives of the crucifixion is thrilling; and many weep while he presents to their view the chief actors who performed their parts on this tragical occasion. Mrs. Hastings also weeps. The preacher now passes from description to explanation; from a detailed state-

ment of facts, to an elucidation of the design for which the Son of God groaned, and bled, and died. She listens with breathless attention, as he unravels the thread of mystery which ran through all the passages of the Bible which she had arranged and studied, without perceiving their import. "I felt," she said, "intuitively assured, when he entered on this part of his subject, that the light of explanation was coming; and I was intensely eager to catch every utterance. I now perceived that the death of Jesus Christ was a voluntary ransom, to redeem and to save the lost and the guilty. The first part of his sermon awakened my sympathy; the latter part touched another chord of my heart. I wept again; but from a different cause. My sins made me weep; and the love of Christ in dying to expiate them, made me weep—and I now wept as I had never wept before. It was with some difficulty I could refrain weeping, even when the clergyman had finished his sermon, which lasted rather more than an hour. I could have listened to him much longer. I never knew time go so rapidly. I left the hallowed place with reluctance, thinking, as I paced back to my home, that I was now entering as into a new world of existence, abounding with mystic, yet intelligible wonders. I was in a tumult of emotion, yet it was a calm ecstasy of feeling. I clasped my Bible, and pressed it to my bosom. I thought of your words, which I never forgot, though, when I first heard them, they sounded in my ear as the mockery of grief:—'That book has healed wounds as deep as yours; and if you examine it, you will find it a well-spring of life to your withered happiness.' I now can attest the truth of your declaration. I have tasted its sweet waters; they are indeed the waters of life. None other so sweet or powerful. I can now respond to the truthfulness of the following paraphrase of Dr. Watts, whom I now prefer to Byron or Wordsworth—he is the poet of the heart weighed down by sorrow and anxiety:—

'Lord, I have made thy word my choice,  
My lasting heritage:  
There shall my noblest powers rejoice,  
My warmest thoughts engage.

' The best relief that mourners have,  
It makes our sorrows bless'd:  
Our fairest hopes beyond the grave,  
And our eternal rest.' "

I was happy to find that she had withdrawn from the gay circles of fashion, and, while she kept up a partial intimacy with some of her former associates, her spirit and example bore a testimony against their vain and ensnaring pursuits. She had put on a religious profession, and felt it to be an honour to obtain membership with the church of which her spiritual counsellor and guide was the pastor. This gave great offence to her clerical uncle, and also to some of her other relatives who resided in London, but she was too independent in spirit to submit to the arbitrary control of those who were the secret enemies of the cross of Christ; and though she did not court reproach as a desirable test of principle, yet she gave proof, by her steadfastness in the faith, and the amiable placidity of her temper, that it possessed no power to warp her judgment or disturb her peace. She was too retiring in her habits to take an active part in any of the public institutions connected with the church and congregation of which she was a member, but she became a generous contributor to their funds, doing good and working righteousness, not desiring to be seen of men—a devout woman, who feared God above many. She might again and again have changed her widowed state, and with flattering prospect of distinction and happiness, but she had fully made up her mind, that she would never put off the weeds of widowhood till the set time came when she was to pass away from earth, to be arrayed in the vestments of the heavenly world. She cherished through every stage of life the memory of her dear departed husband with an intensity of feeling which appeared to increase as she advanced in years. To the poor of the household of faith she was a warm-hearted and liberal benefactor; in no exercise did she take more delight than in visiting the sick and afflicted; and though a Dissenter, she was free from bigotry and prejudice, and could say,

with the apostle, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen" (Eph. vi. 24).

Our correspondence was kept up for a number of years, and in one of her last letters she says:—"I am truly thankful to God that he gave me grace to withdraw from the gay world. It is altogether a gorgeous sham—a fascinating delusion; felt as such even by those who are spell-bound by its charms. I often look back, dear Sir, with astonishment and gratitude, to our casual meeting in the stage coach, which has proved to me the most eventful and the most important occurrence of my life. It has been the introduction of a new era in my history. The mystery of my irreparable loss is now explained. The husband of my devoted attachment was smitten, and died. He was taken from me without my being permitted to say farewell, and, even to this hour, I feel a bitter pang when I think of his melancholy end. Had he been spared to feel what I have felt of spiritual sorrow, and of spiritual consolation and hope, we should have lived in the sweet anticipations of eternal life. I pine, but I dare not murmur. The past is the fearful thunder-storm of desolation, from which, praise be to God, I have now emerged, and enjoy the brightness and calm of a serene and unclouded sky.

"When, my dear Sir, I contrast, as I often do, my present, with my former self—my present, with my former tastes—my present, with my former habits, and my present bright prospects of immortality with my former prospects, overshadowed by the deep gloom of ceaseless sorrow—I appear a wonder to myself. I am the same person I was when I repelled your advice to read the Bible, thinking it a piece of wild fanaticism; but how changed am I now in heart and feeling—become, I trust, a new creature in Christ Jesus." Psalm ciii. 1-5.

My friend who announced to me the decease of Mrs. Hastings, informed me that her preceding illness was not of long duration, nor was it attended by any severe physical sufferings. During its continuance, her mind was kept in perfect peace; and at times, she felt a joy unspeakable in anticipation of beholding the Son of God,

who was crucified on Calvary, seated on his celestial throne; and of mingling with the countless myriads, in offering their adorations and praises. Her last intelligible utterance was, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and, after a slight convulsive struggle, she cast one look on the friend standing by her side, and then expired.

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## THE FAMILY OF THE HOLMES.



ON my return one afternoon from a round of pastoral visits, I was informed that a gentleman was waiting to see me; and I received a most agreeable surprise in finding that it was no other than Mr. Holmes, an old and much valued friend, and whose eldest daughter Louisa has already been casually mentioned as a friend and correspondent of Miss Roscoe.\* He informed me that he had just left his family at Dawlish, their favourite summer resort, where they had been rusticated for nearly two months, and had come to transact some business in my neighbourhood. I pressed him to remain a few days with me, but he would consent to stay only one night, as he had already been occupied a longer time than he expected. Before leaving, he extorted a promise from me that, as soon as my avocations permitted it, I would pay him a visit at the Elms, his seat near London, whither he and his family expected to return in the end of the summer.

The history of Mr. Holmes' career in life is an interesting one, and furnishes a striking example of those gradual elevations from poverty and obscurity to affluence and an honoured position in the world, which are, perhaps, more frequently to be met with in the ranks of English society than in those of any other country. I will here give some account of it, as exhibiting an instructive example

\* Vol. i. page 232.

of persevering industry and upright conduct, crowned by honour and success.

Mr. Holmes was the second son of a respectable farmer, who rented a small estate in the county of Warwick. When a little boy he was very inquisitive, fond of mixing with his seniors and superiors, from whom he gained much information; and though there was no good school in the neighbourhood, yet, by the assistance of the kind and amiable Vicar of the parish, he acquired the rudiments of a useful education. That leisure time which other children usually devote to play, he gave to reading and study, and before he was fourteen, he was a very good accountant. He happened, when about nine years old, to read the popular story of *Whittington and his Cat*, and such was the deep impression it made on his mind, that it became the perpetual subject of his conversation; and he would often amuse the other members of the family with visionary tales of his future eminence. He would say to his brothers, "I will leave *you* to feed cows, and pigs, and horses, and turn up the clods of the field; but when I grow up, I will go to London, and see if I cannot become as great a man as Whittington." So completely had this passion gained an ascendancy over him, that he would often walk miles to see the mail coach pass along the road towards the far-famed city; and after listening to the sound of the horn, with an ecstasy of delight which no other notes could inspire, he would return home to talk and to dream of his future adventures.

When about the age of fifteen, his father died, leaving a large family unprovided for; and as Henry could not think of remaining any longer at home, his mother gave him a guinea and a few shillings, and he set off to seek his fortune. His youthful ardour kindled into rapture when he first saw the distant dome of St. Paul's towering above the buildings and smoke of the wondrous metropolis. Though he occasionally shed a tear of affection at the remembrance of his beloved relatives in his native village, yet he was so absorbed in the visions of his own fancy, that he was rarely depressed. Several days were spent in fruitless efforts to obtain a situation—his



few shillings were expended, and the shadows of another night were deepening into darkness, when he sat down on the stone steps in front of a gentleman's house to rest himself. While he sat there ruminating over the scenes of his boyhood, and pleasing himself with the hopes of brighter and better days, a gentleman in a gig drove up to the door; and as he was getting out, Henry rose and offered his assistance by holding the horse. The quickness of his movements, and the pleasing smile on his fine ruddy countenance, attracted the notice of Mr. Lucas, who asked him his name and place of residence. "My name, Sir, is Henry Holmes," he replied; "I was born in the county of Warwick; my father was a farmer, and he is just dead. I did not like to stay at home to be a burden to my mother, who has a large family to bring up, so I left home last Monday, to see if I could get a place of work in London; and if you will hire me, Sir, I will try to please you." This simple, artless tale made its way to the heart of Mr. Lucas, who said, "How long have you been in London?" "Three days, Sir, but I have not been able to get any work." "Have you any money?" "Yes, Sir, I have a guinea which mother gave me when I left home, but I am afraid to change it, for if I do, all my money may soon be gone." This circumstance gave Mr. Lucas such a high opinion of Henry's carefulness of disposition, that he at once resolved to take him into his service. Having obtained his mother's address, he wrote to her and also to the Vicar of the parish. In a few days he received an answer which confirmed the truth of the statement of the adventurous youth, and at the same time bore honourable testimony to his fidelity and industry.

Mr. Lucas was a grocer, who lived in Fore Street, and had acquired a handsome fortune by his trade. Like most wealthy citizens, he had his country-house, where he resided during the summer months, coming to business in the morning and returning in the evening. As his groom had just left him, the thought struck him that this country lad might very well supply his place; and Henry rejoiced to enter on his new employment. He had to clean the horse

and gig, the knives and shoes, and look after some choice poultry; and such was the attention he paid to his work, and the amiability of his disposition, that he soon became a favourite with the whole family. On their return to town for the winter he accompanied them; and as he possessed talents which fitted him for a higher situation, his master took him into the shop, where he distinguished himself by his close attention to business. No one was cleaner in his person, or neater in his dress; no one was more obliging in his disposition; the rusticity of his appearance soon wore off; his punctuality and habit of despatch became proverbial; and though his temper was hasty and irritable, yet he kept it in a state of subjection, and uniformly displayed a union of excellencies, which is but rarely found in so young a person.

Such is the precarious tenure on which men hold their reputation under the mysterious dispensations of Providence, that it is often endangered no less by their virtues than their vices; and those who at one period are esteemed and admired by the wise and the good, are at another plunged into the depth of misery by the malignant cruelty of the wicked. Thus it was with Henry. There were two persons belonging to the establishment, his seniors in age, and superiors in rank, who were jealous of him; and as they could not shake the stability of his character by any just accusations, they resolved to destroy it by artifice. One of them who had the care of the till-drawer complained for several succeeding evenings of having missed some money, and it was arranged that some marked money should be put into the drawer. This was done; at nine o'clock the money was counted, and the sum of five shillings and sixpence was missing. This fact was immediately communicated to Mr. Lucas, who called all the servants into the counting-house, and proposed that each one should have his person and his boxes searched, without being permitted to leave the room. To this proposal they all assented; and lots were drawn to determine the exact order in which the search should be made. The first name drawn was the head-shopman, who immediately gave up all his keys to Mr. Lucas, and underwent the

strictest examination, but he was pronounced innocent; the second was the man who had the care of the till, and he also was pronounced innocent; the third was Henry Holmes, who, after being searched, said, "My box, Sir, is not locked." Mr. Lucas then quitted the room to search it, and on his return, looking steadfastly in Henry's face, said, "I certainly did not suspect you, Henry, but I have found the money in your box" (producing it), "and as you have given me such a proof of your ingratitude and perfidy, you shall leave my house to-morrow morning."

"Sir," replied Henry in a firm tone, "I am innocent. Some one has placed the money in my box, which might be very easily done, as I scarcely ever lock it."

"I have suspected you for a long time," said one of the shopmen; "for no one is so likely to be guilty of fraud, as he who overacts the part of virtue."

Mr. Lucas now withdrew into the parlour, when he related the whole circumstances, and as soon as Mrs. Lucas heard the accusation of the shopman, she said, "Henry is innocent. He is the victim of another's treachery, and some plan must be adopted to detect the culprit. In my opinion the accuser is the guilty party, or at least an accomplice. It is fair to presume that he who stole the last sum, stole the preceding sums that have been lost. How then will you account for finding only the five shillings and sixpence?"

"It is impossible," said Miss Lucas, "that Henry can be the thief. We never lost anything when he was with us in the country, and we know that he does not go out to places of amusement like the others, and therefore he is under less temptation to extravagance than they are. There is a plot to effect his ruin, which I hope and trust will be discovered."

While they were talking, the housemaid entered the parlour, and said, that she had just overheard the two young men talking together on the subject, and she distinctly heard one say, "It was well planned, and well executed, and now we shall get rid of him." She was requested to take no notice of what she had heard, but

to act as though she really believed that Henry was guilty. As these two young men slept together, Mr. Lucas removed some tea chests which stood against a thin partition that separated their bedroom from an upper warehouse, and having placed himself near an aperture in one of the boards, he waited till they retired to rest. Having, from their conversation, received a full conviction of their guilt, he withdrew, and informed his wife and daughter that he was perfectly satisfied of Henry's innocence.

The next morning he rose rather earlier than usual, and before the porter had opened the shop, he summoned all the shopmen into his presence, and charged these two men, first, with the crime of stealing the money, and then with the still baser crime of attempting to involve an innocent person in their guilt. This unexpected charge—the indignant firmness with which it was brought—the involuntary movement of Henry, who came forward to look his accusers in the face, confounded and abashed them; and though each made some faint efforts to deny it, yet when Mr. Lucas repeated the conversation which he had overheard the preceding night, and threatened that if they did not immediately acknowledge their guilt, and solicit Henry's forgiveness, he would send for the police, they made a full confession, and implored mercy in the most suppliant manner. Henry at once forgave them, and interceded for them; but Mr. Lucas would not consent that such men should remain in his service, and having paid them their arrears of wages, he discharged them.

This plot, which was laid to effect Henry's ruin, led to his advancement, and he now rose rapidly, step after step, till he became the manager of Mr. Lucas' establishment.

We often see tradesmen, when they have amassed a large fortune, affecting contempt for the rank of life in which they have moved, discovering at the same time a strong anxiety that their children, especially their daughters, should form alliances with those who move in the higher and more exalted circles of society. Hence they will often sacrifice a daughter at the shrine of their vanity, and



THE CONSPIRACY DEFEATED.

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give a large portion of the wealth which their industry has accumulated, to some titled pauper, whose extravagance first reduces her to beggary, and whose unkindness at length breaks her heart. But Mr. Lucas was a wise man. He never rose in feeling or in expectation above the level of his station. He had but one child, and he wished to see her happy; and when he perceived that a mutual regard subsisted between her and Henry, he expressed his entire approbation, and they were married. On this event taking place, Mr. Lucas retired from business, and at his decease, which happened about twelve months after that of his wife, he left the greater part of his property to Mr. Holmes.

Mr. Holmes, who had thus risen, by the Divine blessing on his industry, from a humble situation to a position of wealth and eminence, would often allude in conversation to his original condition, and exhibit his guinea as a proud memorial of his former poverty;—thus rebuking, by his example, the pride of many a modern Cræsus, who is no less anxious to conceal from others his origin, than to make an ostentatious display of his wealth. He had a large family, and as he took considerable pains with the education of his children, and set before them an example worthy of their imitation, he had the pleasure of seeing them growing up, esteemed and respected, bidding fair to be the ornaments of a future generation. His two eldest sons were in partnership with him, his youngest was studying medicine, one daughter was married to a country gentleman in Warwickshire, and three were still living with him. He had long resisted the importunity of his children to take some country residence, that they might enjoy an occasional retreat from the noise, and smoke, and bustle of the city; but when his wife urged the measure, it was at once adopted, as he was no less anxious to gratify her wishes than she was to avoid the indulgence of unsuitable gratifications.

After many unsuccessful efforts to obtain an eligible residence, he purchased a small estate about seven miles from London, where he erected a neat and commodious mansion; and as his two sons were now able to manage his business, he retired from the more active

and laborious duties of it, to spend the evening of his days amidst rural scenes, with which his earliest and deepest impressions were associated. Having been accustomed, when a child, to attend his parish church on the Sabbath, he regularly observed the practice through life; and though for many years he had no clear perceptions of the nature or the design of the gospel, yet soon after the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Newton at St. Mary Woolnoth, he began to feel its enlightening and purifying influence. At first he disliked his style of preaching, and the pride of his heart rose up against that plan of salvation which requires the man of virtue to implore mercy in terms as humiliating as those which the chief of sinners employ; but as his knowledge increased, his prejudices gradually subsided, and though he could not remember any specific time when the great moral change was effected, by which he passed from death unto life, yet he uniformly spoke of it as the most important and blissful event of his history.

The renovation which the grace of God produces in the human character, often leaves the ruling passion to retain its ascendancy, while it gives it a new direction; and he who undergoes it, usually displays the same bold decision or hesitating precaution—the same spirit of active enterprise or prudent consideration, in his religious profession, that he has been accustomed to display in the avocations of everyday life. But on some occasions it is just the reverse; and we see the avowed infidel, when convinced of the truth of the gospel, halting between two opinions—the active tradesman, who keeps the machinery of a large and complicated concern in a brisk and constant motion, a lukewarm Christian—and the man who could face, without flinching, the most appalling dangers, discover a shrinking timidity when the obligations to a life of practical devotedness to God are pressed upon his attention. To account for such a moral phenomenon would be absolutely impossible, unless we advert to the powerful influence which sensible objects are known to possess over the mind, especially during that period in the religious experience of a Christian when his faith in the Divine testimony is weak

and defective; but as that great moral principle increases in strength and animation, the natural dispositions recover their native tone and vigour—the mind no more vacillates—but rising to a full conviction of the superior value of the things which are unseen and eternal, gives to them its supreme attention and affection.

Mr. Holmes felt the transforming power of the truth soon after his marriage, which led him to the adoption of religious habits and customs; but he was too deeply involved in the cares and perplexities of business to become a very zealous and public-spirited Christian. His moral character was unimpeachable, and he brought the great principles of religion to regulate his conduct in the ordinary affairs of life; but his heart was too much in the world—the fervour of his devotional spirit bore no just proportion to his diligence in business, and he was less anxious for the higher attainments of faith than for the acquisition of wealth. He regularly attended the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Newton on the Sabbath; but that ministry was more frequently the word of reproof than consolation; and though the hope of a blissful immortality would sometimes dawn upon him, yet it shone with too feeble a ray to afford him entire satisfaction; as it is wisely ordained that a full assurance of eternal life shall be imparted only to those who give *diligence* to make their calling and election sure.

Mrs. Holmes was certainly more devout than her husband, and devoted a larger proportion of her time to reading and meditation; but her associations were unfavourable to the growth of her piety, which, though sincere, was too much tinctured with superstition. She thought more of her duties than her privileges—of her defects than of Him who came to repair them—placed more dependence for consolation and hope on prayer and watchfulness than on the blood of sprinkling; and, while she did not doubt the truth of the promises, she uniformly gave a more implicit assent to the threatenings of the sacred volume. She was rather a disciple of the mortified Baptist than of the merciful Redeemer. Her devotions were sincere and fervent, but not elevating. They consisted much in con-



trition, but little in praise—much in sorrow for sin, but little in hope of its pardon. She did not sufficiently cast her confidence on the great Propitiation. She firmly believed all that the Saviour had done and suffered for sinners, but she could not claim for her own enjoyment the benefits resulting from his mission and death. While she was painfully working out her salvation with fear and trembling, she indulged the most unfounded apprehensions of the Divine displeasure, and lived more in dread of perishing than in expectation of being saved.

No circumstance gave them so much uneasiness, on their removal to their country seat, as the loss of that ministry under which they had been brought to feel the power of the truth; especially as the Vicar of the parish was decidedly opposed to evangelical sentiments. The junior branches of the family were intelligent and accomplished, but they made no profession of religion; and now they were liberated from the restraints which a faithful and an enlightened ministry had thrown over the evil tendencies of their nature, they evinced a strong inclination to adopt the habits, and conform to the customs of fashionable life, which greatly perplexed and depressed their pious parents, especially their mother. An intimate friend (Mrs. Loader), who spent some weeks at the Elms, saw this manifest change in their predilections, and availing herself of a favourable opportunity, she alluded to it, when in conversation with Miss Holmes, and delicately, yet most earnestly, urged her to be on her guard, or the change in their place of residence would become a snare, if it did not break up all their religious habits, and prove fatal to their spiritual happiness and safety. This admonitory warning Louisa received with gratitude, as a fresh proof of the kind concern her friend felt for the best interests, both of herself and of the entire family. "Indeed," she remarked, "the world abounds with evil, but no temptation is so pernicious, or so much to be dreaded, as irreligious society; and this is the only society which we now have. I fear it will prove destructive of all the good impressions we have received under the ministry of the venerable Mr. Newton.

His appeals operated as a check and as a restraint on the evil tendencies of our nature; but now we are allured into worldly habits, by being told from the pulpit that we ought to see life, and have free access to all its scenes and sources of pleasure and amusement. Mamma has been endeavouring to persuade papa to take an excursion to Dawlish, which will remove us from this scene of danger, and I hope on our return we shall be enabled to withstand every enticement injurious to our religious habits." On taking leave, Mrs. Loader presented her with a copy of Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, which Miss Holmes said she had read, but promised to peruse again, as a compliment to the kindness which had dictated the present.

Miss Holmes' two sisters, Emma and Jane, were several years younger than herself. They bore some resemblance to each other in the general outlines of their character, but materially differed in some of its more prominent features. As they had just finished their education in a school, where all the accomplishments could be acquired, except the one most essential to human happiness, they felt themselves in their native element when moving in the circles of gaiety and folly. Emma had the finest figure, but Jane possessed the most cultivated mind. The former excelled in gracefulness of manners, the latter in sweetness of disposition; and while Emma was rather fond of display, there was an unobtrusive modesty about Jane which inclined her to conceal her most attractive charms. Emma appeared to most advantage in a large party, where she moved, and spoke as though she were the presiding spirit of the scene; Jane, in a select circle, where the interchange of thought and sentiment could take place without being subjected to the interruptions and breaks which a promiscuous throng invariably occasions. Emma was rather of a satirical temper, with a keen sense of the ludicrous; but Jane surpassed most of her own age in that practical good sense which is more valuable than artificial polish. Though, however, they thus differed so materially in some of the more prominent features of their character, they were nevertheless passion-

ately fond of each other, and much attached to their parents, their brothers, and sisters.

As Mr. Holmes had applied himself to the toils of business with unremitting constancy for so many years, and had acquired a large fortune, he yielded without hesitation to the solicitations of Mrs. Holmes and his daughters, and took a tour with them through the west of England, visiting in their route all the localities either famed for their natural beauty, or interesting by their historical associations. Travelling by easy stages, they at last reached Dawlish in Devonshire, with which they were so much delighted that they remained there for several months. Here it was that Miss Holmes was introduced to Miss Roscoe, with whom she formed an acquaintance, which soon ripened to an ardent friendship, and proved in future years a source of much spiritual enjoyment.

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## A MISFORTUNE OFTEN A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.



**S**HORTLY after the return of the family to the Elms, from their Devonshire excursion, Miss Holmes sustained an accident, which, though apparently an untoward occurrence, she used afterwards to speak of as having exercised a most salutary influence on her character. As she was stepping out of the carriage one day, the horses suddenly moved forwards, by which her foot got entangled between the step and the wheel, and she was very much injured. A messenger was immediately despatched for a surgeon, who, on examining the bruised parts, reported that no bones were broken, but said that the ankle joint had been violently sprained. After the application of leeches, and giving orders to prepare a fomentation to reduce the swelling, he requested that she would immediately retire to rest;

and if she felt any pain in the morning, not to attempt to walk, but keep her foot in a horizontal position. These instructions were attended to; but she passed a very restless night, and in the morning was much worse than had been expected. This accident confined her a close prisoner for some months, so that she had no opportunity of renewing her former intimacies, which had been interrupted by the excursion to the west of England. Many called and left their cards, and some of her more intimate friends would come occasionally and sit with her; but a sick chamber possesses few attractions for the votaries of pleasure, who generally turn from it with careless indifference.

As she usually enjoyed a great flow of spirits, and was rather volatile in her disposition—more fond of the pleasures of society than the grave exercises of meditation—she was very depressed and irritable during the first few weeks of her confinement, often censuring in strong terms the inattention of the servant in leaving the horses; but she gradually became more reconciled to her state, and at length turned her attention to reading, to divert her mind and beguile the tedious hours. She would have preferred some of the popular tales and novels of the day to any of the volumes in her father's library; but she had too much regard for his authority and his feelings to send for works which she knew would be displeasing to him.

One afternoon, when her parents and sisters went to dine with her brothers in London, leaving her alone, she requested the servant to bring her a book; and one book after another was brought, and closed almost as soon as she had read the title-page. At length she thought of the book which her esteemed friend, Mrs. Loader, had given her, and of her promise to peruse it. She took it up from the table near which she was sitting, but after turning over a few leaves put it from her, saying, "I have read it." But as she had pledged herself to read it again, she took the book once more—reluctantly and carelessly read the running titles which are prefixed to its different chapters, till she came to the tenth, when her attention was imper-

ceptibly arrested, and she perused it with a degree of interest which no other religious composition had ever excited.\*

“Thus far have I often known convictions and impressions to arise, which, after all, have worn off again. Some unhappy circumstance of external temptation, ever joined by the inward reluctance of an unsanctified heart to the scheme of redemption, has been the ruin of multitudes. And, ‘through the deceitfulness of sin, they have been hardened,’ till they seem to have been ‘utterly destroyed, and that without remedy.’ And therefore, O thou immortal creature, who art now reading these lines, I beseech thee, that, while affairs are in this critical situation, while there are these balancings of mind between accepting and rejecting that glorious gospel which I now lay before you, you will give me an attentive audience, while ‘I pray you in Christ’s stead that you would be reconciled to God.’

“One would indeed imagine there should be no need of importunity here. One would conclude, that as soon as perishing sinners are told that an offended God is ready to be reconciled—that he offers them a full pardon for all their aggravated sins—yea, that he is willing to adopt them into his family now, that he may at length admit them to his heavenly presence—all should, with the utmost readiness and pleasure, embrace so kind a message, and fall at his feet in speechless transports of astonishment, gratitude, and joy. But alas! we find it much otherwise. We see multitudes quite unmoved, and the impressions which are made on many more are feeble and transient. Lest it should be thus with you, O reader, let me urge the message with which I have the honour to be charged; let me entreat you to be reconciled to God, and to accept of pardon and salvation in the way in which it is so freely offered to you.

“I entreat you, ‘by the majesty of that God in whose name I come,’ whose voice fills all heaven with reverence and obedience.

\* The author has transcribed, from Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress*, nearly the whole of this chapter and the subjoined prayer, as he conceives they will prove very acceptable to those of his readers who have not the original work.

He speaks not in vain to legions of angels; but if there could be any contention among those blessed spirits, it would be, who should be first to execute his commands. Oh, let him not speak in vain to you! I entreat you, 'by the terrors of his wrath,' who could speak to you in thunder—who could, by one single act of his will, cut off this precarious life of yours, and send you down to hell. I beseech you by his tender mercies, which still yearn over you, as those of a parent over 'a dear son,' over a tender child, whom, notwithstanding his former ungrateful rebellion, 'he earnestly remembers still.' I entreat you, 'by all this paternal goodness,' that you do not compel him to lose the character of the gentle Parent in that of the righteous Judge.

"I beseech you further, 'by the name and love of our dying Saviour.' I beseech you, by all the condescension of his incarnation, by that poverty to which he voluntarily submitted, 'that you might be enriched' with eternal treasures; by all the gracious invitations which he gave, which still sound in his Word, and still coming, as it were, warm from his heart, are 'sweeter than honey or the honey-comb.' I beseech you, by all his glorious works of power and of wonder, which were also works of love. I beseech you, by the memory of the most benevolent Person, and the most generous Friend. I beseech you, by the memory of what he suffered, as well as of what he said and did; by the agony which he endured in the garden, when his body was covered 'with a dew of blood.' I beseech you, by all that tender distress which he felt, when his dearest friends 'forsook him and fled,' and his blood-thirsty enemies dragged him away, like the meanest of slaves, and like the vilest of criminals. I beseech you, by the blows and bruises, by the stripes and lashes, which this injured Sovereign endured while in their rebellious hands; 'by the shame of spitting, from which he hid not that kind and venerable countenance.' I beseech you, 'by the purple robe, the sceptre of reed, and the crown of thorns which this King of glory wore, that he might set us among the princes of heaven.' I beseech you, by the heavy burden of 'the cross,' under

which he panted, and toiled, and fainted in the painful way 'to Golgotha,' that he might free us from the burden of our sins. I beseech you, by the remembrance of those rude nails that tore the veins and arteries, the nerves and tendons, of his sacred hands and feet; and by that invincible, that triumphant goodness, which, while the iron pierced his flesh, engaged him to cry out, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' I beseech you, by that unutterable anguish which he bore, when lifted up upon the cross, and extended there as on a rack for six painful hours, that you open your heart to those attractive influences which have 'drawn to him thousands, and ten thousands.' I beseech you by all that insult and derision which the 'Lord of glory bore there;' by that parching thirst, which could hardly obtain the relief of 'vinegar;' by that doleful cry, so astonishing in the mouth of the only-begotten of the Father, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' I beseech you, by that grace that subdued and pardoned 'a dying malefactor;' by that compassion for sinners, by that compassion for you, which wrought in his heart long as its vital motion continued, and which ended not when 'he bowed his head, saying, It is finished, and gave up the ghost.' I beseech you, by the triumphs of that resurrection by which he was 'declared to be the Son of God with power;' by the spirit of holiness which wrought to accomplish it; by that gracious tenderness which attempered all those triumphs, when he said to her out of whom he had cast seven devils, concerning his disciples, who had treated him so basely, 'Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.' I beseech you, by that condescension with which he said to Thomas, when his unbelief had made such an unreasonable demand, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold mine hands, and reach hither thine hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.' I beseech you, by that generous and faithful care of his people, which he carried up with him to the regions of glory, and which engaged him to send down 'his Spirit,' in the rich profusion of miraculous gifts, to spread the progress of his saving Word. I beseech

you, by that voice of sympathy and power, with which he said to Saul, while injuring his church, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me!' by that generous goodness, which spared the prostrate enemy when he lay trembling at his feet, and raised him to so high a dignity as to be 'not inferior to the very chiefest apostles.' I beseech you, by the memory of all that Christ hath already done, by the expectation of all he will further do for his people. I beseech you, at once, by the sceptre of his grace, and by the sword of his justice, with which all his incorrigible 'enemies' shall be 'slain before him,' that you do not trifle away these precious moments, while his Spirit is thus breathing upon you—that you do not lose an opportunity which may never return, and on the improvement of which eternity depends.

"I beseech you, 'by all the bowels of compassion which you owe to the faithful ministers of Christ,' who are studying and labouring, preaching and praying, wearing out their time, exhausting their strength, and very probably shortening their lives, for the salvation of your soul, and of souls like yours. I beseech you, by the affection with which all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity long to see you brought back to him. I beseech you, by the friendship of the living, and by the memory of the dead; by the ruin of those who have trifled away their days and are perished in their sins, and the happiness of those who have embraced the gospel and are saved by it. I beseech you, by the great expectation of that important 'day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven;' by 'the terrors of a dissolving world;' by the 'sound of the archangel's trumpet,' and of that infinitely more awful sentence, 'Come, ye blessed, and depart, ye cursed,' with which that awful solemnity shall close.

"I beseech you, finally, by your own precious and immortal soul; by the sure prospect of a dying bed, or of sudden surprise into the invisible state, and as you would feel one spark of comfort in your departing spirit when your flesh and your heart are failing. I beseech you, by your own personal appearance before the tribunal of



Christ (for a personal appearance it must be, even to those who now sit on thrones of their own); by all the transports of the blessed, and by all the agonies of the damned, the one or the other of which must be your everlasting portion. I affectionately entreat and beseech you, in the strength of all these united considerations, as you will answer it to me, who may on that day be summoned to testify against you; and, which is unspeakably more, as you will answer it to your own conscience—as you will answer it to the eternal Judge—that you dismiss not these thoughts, these meditations, and these cares, till you have brought matters to a happy issue—till you have made a resolute choice of Christ, and his appointed way of salvation; and till you have solemnly devoted yourself to God in the bonds of an everlasting covenant.

“ And thus I leave the matter before you and before the Lord. I have told you my errand; I have discharged my embassy. Stronger arguments I cannot use—more endearing and more awful considerations I cannot suggest. Choose, therefore, whether you will go out, as it were, clothed in sackcloth, to cast yourself at the feet of him who now sends you these equitable and gracious terms of peace and pardon; or whether you will hold it out till he appears, sword in hand, to reckon with you for your treasons and your crimes, and for this neglected embassy among the rest. Fain would I hope the best; nor can I believe that this labour of love shall be entirely unsuccessful—that not one soul shall be brought to the foot of Christ in cordial submission and humble faith. ‘Take with you,’ therefore, ‘words, and turn unto the Lord,’ and say unto him, ‘Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously; so will I render the praise of my lips.’”

The impression which this reading produced was such as she had never previously felt; the arrow of conviction had pierced her heart, but the feelings excited were more those of joy than of grief. She re-perused the chapter; it disclosed new beauties—it sent forth a still stronger power of excitement. Her soul was alternately elevated and depressed, agonized and composed, as though she had

no control over its movements. She recalled to her remembrance those powerful, yet momentary impressions of truth, which she had experienced in former years, when sitting under the ministry of the venerable Newton; and trembled lest those under which she was now labouring should prove equally transient. It was this fearful apprehension which gave her more pain, than a discovery of her moral danger; because she knew that there was salvation for the chief of sinners; but she knew that if these impressions left her they might never return. She arose from the couch of weariness and suffering, and stood resting on the back of her chair, while she gave vent to her feelings in the following form of prayer:—

“Blessed Lord, it is enough! it is too much! Surely there needs not this variety of argument, this importunity of persuasion, to court me to be happy, to prevail on me to accept of pardon, of life, of eternal glory. Compassionate Saviour, my soul is subdued; so that I trust the language of my grief is become that of my submission, and I may say, ‘My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise’ (Psalm lvii. 7).

“O gracious Redeemer! I have already neglected thee too long. I have too often injured thee; have crucified thee afresh by my guilt and impenitence, as if I had taken pleasure in ‘putting thee to an open shame.’ But my heart now bows itself before thee in humble unfeigned submission. I desire to make no terms with thee but these—that I may be entirely thine. I cheerfully present thee with a blank, entreating thee that thou wilt do me the honour to signify upon it what is thy pleasure. Teach me, O Lord, what thou wouldst have me to do; for I desire to learn the lesson, and to learn it that I may practise it. If it be more than my feeble powers can answer, thou wilt, I hope, give me more strength; and in that strength will I serve thee. O receive a soul which thou hast made willing to be thine!

“No more, O blessed Jesus, no more is it necessary to beseech and entreat me. Permit me, rather, to address myself to thee with all the importunity of a perishing sinner, that at length sees and knows

'there is salvation in no other.' Permit me now, Lord, to come and throw myself at thy feet, like a helpless outcast that has no shelter but in thy generous compassion; like one 'pursued by the avenger of blood,' and seeking earnestly an admittance into the 'city of refuge.'

"I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait; and in thy word do I hope,' that thou wilt 'receive me graciously.' My soul confides in thy goodness, and adores it. I adore the patience which has borne with me so long; and the grace that now makes me heartily willing to be thine; to be thine on thine own terms, thine on any terms. O secure this treacherous heart to thyself! O unite me to thee in such inseparable bonds, that none of the allurements of rank, or of fortune—none of the vanities of an ensnaring world—none of the solicitations of sinful companions, may draw me back from thee and plunge me into new guilt and ruin! 'Be surety, O Lord, for thy servant for good,' that I may still keep my hold on thee; till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting experience, how complete a Saviour thou art. Amen."

As she sat musing on the wondrous scene which had passed before her, adoring the long-suffering which had borne with her follies, and the grace which had so unexpectedly invested the truth with such attractive and subduing power, she was roused by the entrance of her mother. "I hope, my dear Louisa," said Mrs. Holmes, "you have spent a more pleasant day than you anticipated." "I have been more free from pain than usual," she replied; "and upon the whole, the hours have passed away agreeably, though I certainly felt my solitude to be irksome."

Many who have felt the renewing influence of the truth, when looking back to the earlier periods of their history, can recal to their remembrance some text of Scripture, an observation in a sermon, or a remark in conversation, which had an extraordinary effect at the time it was heard; fixing their attention as though it spoke with commanding authority; and which may be regarded as the first strivings of the Spirit of God within them. These sacred

occurrences have served as the rallying point of hope, when the mind has been driven to the remotest distance from the faith of Christ; and notwithstanding the preference which may have been given for a season to the pleasures of sin, there has been a secret inclination for those of righteousness—God having implanted a witness in the bosom who has never ceased to warn and to reprove.

Miss Holmes, when about the age of twelve years, heard Mr. Newton make the following remark, in addressing himself to children: "You should treasure up in your memory, while you are young, all the religious knowledge which you can obtain, as it may be of great service to you at some future day, when your attention may be directed to the momentous question of your salvation. You will then, when convinced of sin, and awed by the terrors of the world to come, know how to obtain relief, and be kept from that state of deep perplexity in which many are plunged, who are brought to see their danger, while ignorant of the way of escape."

This judicious remark struck her with peculiar force, and ever afterwards she listened to the preaching of the gospel, in anticipation of the future benefit which she might derive from it. From that moment she lived in the full expectation of the great spiritual change, which was ultimately produced in her mind. Often, at different periods, would she retire from the fascinations of the world to pray for a new heart; and though she had urged her request till hope began to wane, yet she was never permitted to despair of obtaining the blessing. It is true, the paralyzing influence of her new connections and habits had greatly diminished her anxieties and solitudes for the one thing needful; but the early impressions of its importance which she had received, when listening to the faithful appeals of Mr. Newton, were too deeply imprinted in her heart ever to become obliterated; and though she usually assumed great ease of manners, and wore the smile of complacent cheerfulness, yet beneath these outward appearances there lay concealed a wounded, and at times an agonized spirit. She would sometimes join in the satirical play of wit on the eccentricities of professors,

but always discountenanced any attack on the truth or sanctity of religion; and though she was becoming more and more conformed to the world, yet she could not disengage herself from the influence which the powers of the world to come had early acquired over her judgment and her conscience. She had too much religion to be happy with the gay, and too little to be happy with the pious; mingling with each, yet not being able to partake of the enjoyments of either, she was doomed to a life of perpetual mortification.

As her character usually received its peculiar tone and complexion from the society with which she last associated, it was perpetually varying from gay to grave and from grave to gay; her spirits would occasionally rise to the highest mirth, and then sink to the lowest depression; sometimes she appeared open and bland, at other times reserved and gloomy; alternately devoting herself to the pleasures of the world, and the external exercises of religion, it was not till after she became a new creature in Christ Jesus, that her most intimate friends could ascertain the real cause of such extraordinary changeableness in her character.

The impressions of Divine truth on the heart, when produced by a supernatural power, are deep and permanent; but when they claim no higher origin than the agency of man, they soon pass away like the morning cloud and early dew, and leave no trace of their existence. They may, during their continuance, induce an order of thought and reflection, in strict accordance with the general tenor of the Scriptures, but they effect no real change in the heart or character. As they bear a resemblance when they are first received, and at successive periods, to the operations of the Holy Spirit, they are frequently mistaken for them, and a profession of religion made under their influence is often abandoned as soon as they subside. Hence the annals of the Christian church record the names of many who have outlived their avowed attachment to the faith of Christ; and the most awful passages of the sacred volume are directed against those who, after pleading its promises, with the hope of obtaining eternal life, relapse into a course of worldliness or infidelity.

It was under a trembling apprehension of the transitory nature of her religious convictions and feelings, that Miss Holmes formed a resolution to make no reference to them, till by a process of trial she had acquired some satisfactory evidence of their permanency. She remembered an observation which she once heard the venerable Newton make, when preaching on the parable of the sower:—"Genuine religion is distinguished from that which is spurious, not so much by the dissimilarity of its first impressions, as by its power to resist temptation, and to bring the dispositions of the heart into subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ."

Her indisposition, though severe and protracted, was at no period considered dangerous; it kept her away from the scenes of gaiety to which she would otherwise have been exposed, and gave her an opportunity of devoting her attention more calmly and dispassionately to that subject which now began to appear pre-eminently interesting and important. She knew that her sins were more in number than she could calculate, and that the sentence of condemnation which stood recorded against her might be executed without any impeachment of the justice or benevolence of God; but such was the strength of her faith in the efficacy of the Saviour's death, and in the power of his intercession, that she "was filled with all peace in believing, abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Her transition from a state of nature to a state of grace—from vain and passing pleasures to those of religion—from the delusive charms of the visible to the more attractive glories of the unseen world, was sudden, but tranquil—unattended by those deep convictions of guilt and that overpowering apprehension of future condemnation which sometimes torture and distract the mind of the young disciple. This was primarily owing to the accurate knowledge of the scheme of salvation which she had acquired by sitting under the enlightened ministry of Mr. Newton; for while it must not be concealed, that the beginning and consummation of personal religion in the heart is to be attributed to the immediate action of a supernatural power, yet it is equally evident that its progress

in allaying the fear that produceth torment, in instilling the peace which passeth all understanding, and in elevating and fixing the affections on things above, is usually in proportion to the accuracy and extent of the theological information which is possessed.

“Many,” says an interesting writer, “are too prone to look for a conversion always uniform, not only in its effects, but in its operation, and too much bordering on the miraculous. The soul must be first overwhelmed with fear—then pierced by grief and anguish—then plunged into despair—then suddenly filled with hope, and peace, and joy; and the person must be able to determine the day on which, and the sermon, or the paragraph, or the providence by which the change was wrought. But this is by no means necessarily, or generally the case. There is a variety in the temperaments and habits of men, and in the methods employed to bring them to repentance. We should remember that there are differences of administration, but the same Lord; that often he prefers to the earthquake, the wind, and the fire, the small still voice; that he can draw by the cords of love and the bands of a man; that he can work as effectually by slow as by instantaneous exertions; and that he may change the soul in a manner so gradual and mild, as to be scarcely discernible to any but the glorious Author. And here we are furnished with evidence from analogy. In nature some of God’s works insensibly issue in others, and it is impossible for us to draw the line of distinction. The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But who can ascertain which ray begins, or which ends the dawn? If you are unable to trace the progress of the Divine life, judge by the result. When you perceive the effects of conversion, never question the cause. And if perplexed by a number of circumstantial inquiries, be satisfied if you are able to say, One thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see.”

The chastened seriousness of spirit which Miss Holmes exhibited, and the new course of reading which she adopted, induced the family to suppose that she was taking a religious turn, though she cautiously

abstained from making any reference to it. She felt convinced that some essential change had taken place, yet at times she doubted if it was anything more than the effect of her own spontaneous thoughts and reflections; and as she had, more than once, experienced a mental excitement of a similar nature, she rejoiced with trembling. She knew that the righteous hold' on their way, because they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; but as she was often perplexed, when endeavouring to ascertain whether she belonged to that specific denomination of character, she could not anticipate the issue of her impressions with unmingled satisfaction. She felt a distaste for those objects of pursuit and sources of gratification which *had* acquired such a powerful ascendancy over her; and now she longed to partake of the more refined enjoyment which results from communion with the members of the household of faith and the public exercises of devotion; but she dreaded the prospect of coming into contact with the world, lest another relapse of feeling should take place, which would leave her still more insensible than ever to the unseen realities of eternity.

The Saviour, in his various offices, was now precious to her, as he is to all them that believe. She dwelt with holy awe and delight on that union of majesty and condescension, purity and compassion, justice and grace, which he displays in his mediatorial character; but she was apprehensive, that when exposed to the rival influence of temporal pursuits, her mind would again be enslaved by their charms, and she would lose the relish she now felt for her new themes of contemplation and enjoyment.

Thus it is wisely ordained, that at every period in the experience of the Christian, there shall be some circumstances to perplex his judgment—some uncertainty to darken his prospect—some apprehensions to disturb his peace, to convince him that here 'perfect bliss cannot be found;' and that no attainments, however high—that no anticipations, however bright and animating—are capable, while we are encompassed with infirmities, of yielding unmingled satisfaction and delight. At times Miss Holmes felt very anxious to disclose to



some one the change through which her mind was now passing, that she might have the advantage of Christian sympathy and guidance; but the perplexing question was, to whom should she make the communication. She often thought of speaking to her mother, but when she made the attempt, her courage failed her. At length she addressed the following letter to her friend Mrs. Loader, who had evinced so much solicitude for her spiritual welfare:—

“THE ELMS, 16th Oct., 18—.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am much obliged by your affectionate epistle, which I received on the 10th; and I regret that you should deem any apology necessary for the introduction of that specific advice which it contains. My obvious indifference to the momentous question of personal religion, and my growing conformity to the customs and habits of the gay world, must, I have no doubt, have given you very considerable uneasiness; and I assure you that it often plunged me into the deepest depression of spirit. I was often cheerful, but never happy; often trying fresh expedients to divert my attention from what I deemed *the gloomy subject*, but never could succeed; and though I became more insensible to the attractions of religion as I grew in years, yet I exposed myself more frequently to the keenness of its reproofs and the awful terrors of its threatenings. My associates, who had not had the privilege of a pious education, could enjoy the world, and treat with levity the prohibitory injunctions of the Scriptures, but I could not. I never could divest myself of the full conviction that God has the first claim on the affections of the heart; and that he has appointed a day when every human being ‘must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.’ These thoughts would rush into my mind, not only when alone, but also when in the midst of the gayest company, and by no expedient could I succeed in driving them away.

“It was under the most agonizing mental conflict I ever sustained,

that I hailed our tour to the west as likely to dissolve the fatal charm by which I was subdued and enslaved; but I found, on my return, that my *heart* had undergone no change, as I often secretly anticipated a re-entrance into those scenes which my conscience so severely condemned. I once heard Mr. Newton remark, that as our dangers often spring out of our comforts, so the greatest blessings sometimes grow out of our heaviest afflictions. The correctness of this remark I can *now* attest from experience. It was on our return from Devonshire that I met with the accident which has confined me a close prisoner for more than two months; but to that accident which I called disastrous, I owe all my present happiness and my prospect of eternal glory.

“You express a hope that I have given the book which you so kindly presented to me, a candid perusal, presuming that no season can be more favourable for such subjects of inquiry than those which we denominate afflictive. Yes, my dear friend, I have read it, though I felt such a reluctance to do so that I put it from me several times; and had not my word stood pledged to read it, I had still been a stranger to its soul-stirring contents. I read on carelessly till I came to the tenth chapter, when the subject fixed my attention, and I hope penetrated my heart. Then I *felt* that I was a sinner—then I *felt* that I stood solitary and alone, in the immediate presence of my Legislator and my Judge, confounded, because righteously condemned—then I *felt* that I needed a Saviour. I have had many strong convictions of the truth and the necessity of religion in the earlier seasons of my life; but those produced on this occasion were more clear, and full, and impressive, than any that ever preceded them. They came with an authority which I could not resist; they prevented all vacillation of mind, and constrained me, with a force which I had no disposition to withstand, to yield to their power; and though my evil heart of unbelief would sometimes suggest that all is a delusion, artfully practised on my imagination by Satan, who sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, yet I can say, in reference to Him who is the chief among ten

thousand—‘Whom having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’

“When, my dear friend, I received that present from your hand, I did not calculate on the effects which it was ordained to produce; for though I feel unworthy of the notice of the Friend of sinners, yet, on reviewing the recent change which has taken place in my sentiments, my taste, and my feelings, I cannot avoid ascribing it to his sovereign and predetermined will. But though I am fully convinced that a great change has been produced, yet I must not conceal from you the dread I sometimes feel lest it should prove only a momentary excitement. I now can see the vanity of the world; but shall I do so when I am again able to go about? I now can consecrate myself to the service of the Redeemer; but shall I have courage to take up the cross and follow him, when again enticed to mingle with the gay votaries of fashion? It is not my province to dictate to infinite Wisdom, nor prescribe the method by which my religious principles shall be tried; but it is my earnest, and my daily prayer, to be kept within the walls of my solitary retreat, till He whose I am, and whom I wish to serve, has prepared me to resist every temptation by which I may be assailed, and to perform every duty which may devolve upon me.

“Now that I have given you this explanation, you will doubtless be able to account for that singular variation in my disposition and manners, which you must have so often noticed; but if you had known the strange revulsion of feeling to which my poor unhappy mind was perpetually subjected, you would have considered it as perfectly natural. I am by nature a child of imitation—apt to catch the spirit and temper of those with whom I come into contact—easily captivated by imposing manners—averse to all appearance of singularity—volatile and impetuous in my disposition; yet at the early age of twelve, I was so powerfully impressed with the truth and necessity of personal piety, that I do not think I ever spent a day without giving it my most serious attention.

Hence, when carried away by the example of others to scenes of gaiety, my spirits would naturally rise to a high pitch of feeling, yet on returning to my graver and more important subjects of reflection, I felt so abased and confounded—so terrified and alarmed in prospect of futurity, that I could scarcely endure the anguish I was doomed to suffer. I do not know that I can better describe the state of my mind, than by quoting the language of Dr. Watts, with a few slight alterations:—

‘I was a helpless captive, sold  
Under the power of sin:  
I could not do the good I would,  
Nor keep my conscience clean.

‘My God, I cry’d with fervent breath,  
For some kind power to save,  
To break the yoke of sin and death,  
And thus redeem the slave.’

“The charge which is often brought against religion, as tending to abridge our comforts, and induce a melancholy and dejection of spirit, I can repel from experience. Infallible Truth declares, that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are paths of peace; and now I know, and feel it. My mind, which has been tossed about on the surging billows of doubt and perplexity, has at last gained that haven of rest, where, I trust, it is destined to remain.

“No one of my family has any knowledge of the present state of my feelings, as I have cautiously abstained from making any allusion to religious subjects; not because I am ashamed of religion, but because I am unwilling to make a premature profession; and though perhaps you may censure me for withholding from my dear parents a communication which is so calculated to give them pleasure, yet if I should be permitted, after having made it, to relapse into my former course of gaiety and folly, the disappointment will be so great that it may entail on them perpetual sorrow. Pray that I may be kept in the evil hour—that I may be enabled to walk circumspectly towards them that are without—that I may have courage to make a profession of my attachment to the Lord Jesus, and grace to adorn

it, and at length be presented faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.

“I need not say how acceptable another letter from you would be; but I certainly should prefer a personal interview, if you could make it convenient to pay us a visit. I am happy to inform you that I am much better, and that all the rest of the family are well.  
—Yours affectionately,

“LOUISA.

“To Mrs. Loader.”

True piety does not act to be seen of men, nor speak to gain their applause; but though for a season it may remain unobserved, yet the meekness of its spirit and the lustre of its character are marks by which it will always indubitably be known. For the reasons which have been previously assigned, Miss Holmes had abstained from communicating to her family the change which had taken place in her sentiments and feelings; but she was not able to conceal from them the external proofs of it which her conduct and her occasional conversation necessarily supplied. As she was reserved on the subject, so were her parents; and though they felt anxious to ascertain if her great seriousness of manners was anything more than a recurrence of her former deep depression of spirit, yet they knew not how to do it.

It often happens that young persons can make a more free statement of their religious experience to strangers or distant friends than they can to their own parents; but this in general argues some essential defect in the bringing up and arrangements of the family. There may be, I grant, on the part of the child, in the earlier stages of his experience, a reluctance to disclose to any one “the secret movements and operations of his heart towards the best of Beings;” but if Christian parents were to incorporate, in their course of religious instruction, the habit of a free and unreserved conversation on the practical effects of truth, and if they would occasionally retire with their children, to pray *with them* and *for them*, specifically and alone, it would imperceptibly beget such a union and intimacy

of spirit, that *they* would be no less anxious to unburden to them the anxieties and sorrows of their heart, than the parent would feel delighted to become their spiritual counsellor and friend.

When Miss Holmes was sitting with her mother, one Sabbath evening, an allusion happened to be made to the sermon which had been preached at church, and with which Mrs. Holmes expressed her dissatisfaction. "Perhaps," remarked Louisa, "it would be difficult to procure a more pleasant residence than our own, or one which is more conducive to our general health; but I assure you that I often deplore the consequences which must inevitably result, from our being deprived of the privilege of attending an evangelical ministry."

"It gives me pleasure, my dear, to hear you deplore the loss of such a privilege, as it is a proof that you value it."

"Yes, Mamma, I do value it, but now, alas! I have no prospect of enjoying it. Yet I feel more for others, than I feel for myself, especially for the junior members of our family; as I fear, now that they are removed from the restraints which pure evangelical truth imposes on the heart and conscience, they will devote themselves to the pleasures of the world, which will give them a distaste for those of religion."

"And does my dear Louisa then prefer the pleasures of religion to those of the world?"

"I trust, Mamma, I do; though I am almost afraid to speak with confidence on such a delicate and important question. I know from past experience, that there may be deep religious impressions, and powerful religious excitement, even while the heart retains all its evil propensities and antipathies; but I hope it hath pleased God to employ my late affliction as the means of bringing me into fellowship with himself, and his Son Jesus Christ. I murmured when he smote me, but now I can say, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.'"

"Both your father and I have thought," said Mrs. Holmes, "that

God was dealing graciously with your soul, and we have often prayed that you might come out of this affliction a new creature in Christ Jesus; yet we could not overcome the strange reluctance we felt to speak to you on the subject; but as it hath pleased God to answer our prayers, I must convey the glad tidings to your father, who will embrace you as one alive from the dead."

"As you have drawn me into a premature disclosure on this subject, I certainly cannot object to your communicating to my dear father the substance of our conversation, but I must request that you will take no notice of it to any other person. For if I should now make a profession of religion, and on the return of health and energy, should relapse into my former course of gaiety and folly, I shall do essential injury to others."

"But, my dear, you may be 'confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'"

"Yes, I know, that when the work of grace is begun, it will be carried on, notwithstanding the various impediments which may obstruct its progress, or the artifices which may be employed by the great adversary to effect its destruction; but I am not quite satisfied that what I feel *is* the work of grace. It may be nothing more than the effect of my own fears; and if so, it will disappear as soon as they subside; or it may be the necessary consequence of that train of serious thought and reflection, which a lengthened indisposition generally originates; and if so, every trace of its existence will be obliterated, when I again intermingle in the pursuits of active life."

"But have you not, my dear Louisa, *tasted* that the Lord is gracious, as well as *felt* his terrors which have made you afraid? and can you, on cool reflection, suppose that He will ever abandon you, now that you have surrendered your heart to him?"

"I have felt none of the terrors of religion, which may be an essential defect in my experience; and the excitements which I have ascribed to the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, may prove the momentary joy of the stony-ground

hearer, in whom the seed of truth could not thrive, because it took no root. If, after a period of trial, I am induced to believe that I have felt the renovating power of Divine grace, I trust that I shall then have courage given me to make a decided profession of the faith of Christ, without regarding the remarks to which it may subject me; but till then, it is my earnest wish, that you intrust to no one but my dear father the communication which I have almost unintentionally made to you. I have seen so many throw off their religious profession, and return to the course which they had abandoned; and I have such a dread of apostasy, that it is my fixed determination to have some practical proof of the efficacy of my principles to resist temptation, and bring the dispositions of my heart into subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ, before I make any profession."

"I approve, my dear, of your decision; but while jealous of yourself, you must guard against mistrusting the faithfulness and loving-kindness of God your Saviour, who has pledged his honour to keep you by his power through faith unto salvation."

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## CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.



THE scene which opens on the imagination of the young Christian is often so beautiful and enchanting—it so deeply fixes his attention, and enchains his affections—that he turns with an eye of comparative indifference from the objects and pursuits to which he has been previously devoted, under a full conviction that they cannot *now* yield him the gratification they once did; and that he cannot *now* derive permanent happiness, except from that new source of felicity which he has discovered. It is, when he is under these novel and powerful impres-



sions, that the long neglected Bible discloses new beauties; no theme of meditation or discussion presents any subduing charm in comparison with Christ Jesus, and him crucified; and having felt the transition from a state of spiritual death to a newness of life, to be attended by such hallowed emotions, he is in danger of anticipating too large a portion of spiritual enjoyment, which not unfrequently becomes the occasion of great mental perplexity, and sometimes of deep depression.

During the continuance of her indisposition Miss Holmes felt so intensely interested in reading her Bible, that she might clearly understand the sublime theory of the Christian faith, and so absorbed in her spiritual exercises, that her health sustained some injury by the severity of her application. As a very natural consequence, a shade of melancholy was cast over her spirit. She was forewarned of the possibility of such an effect being produced; but the usual apology which she made to her pious mother was, "Can I take too much interest in that important subject, into which angels desire to look? or can I ever hope for a more favourable time for its investigation than the present, when I am precluded from mingling in the employments or the amusements of the world?"

The following form of self-dedication to God she now drew up and signed, having vowed in the most solemn manner to observe it to the full extent of her pledge:—

"Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah! thou glorious Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men, I desire with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to bow down at this time in thine awful presence, and earnestly pray, that thou wilt impress my heart with a clear perception of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories.

"To thee do I now come, invited by the exceeding great and precious promises of thy Word; trusting for acceptance in the efficacy of the Saviour's death, beseeching thee to 'be merciful unto me a sinner.' The irregular propensities of my depraved nature have in ten thousand aggravated instances wrought to bring forth fruit unto

death, And if thou shouldst be strict to mark my offences, I must be silent under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction. But thou hast graciously called me to return to thee, though I have been a backsliding child. I come unto thee, O Lord, convinced not only of my sin, but of my folly ; and while I implore mercy through the mediation of Jesus Christ, I would be no less importunate for the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, that I may be entirely conformed to thee. Permit me to bring unto thee those powers and faculties which I have ungratefully alienated from thy service ; and receive, I beseech thee, thy poor revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to her, and who desires nothing in the world so much as to be thine.

“I bring to thee a dark benighted mind, to be illuminated with Divine knowledge. Thou hast the words of eternal life ; I therefore resign my understanding to thy teaching. I bring to thee a corrupt and deceitful heart ; do thou cleanse and make it upright before thee. Do thou expel all the evils which lurk within it, and make it a temple for thyself. May the same mind which was in Christ Jesus be in me. May I possess the same humility which he displayed, the same indifference to the riches and the pleasures of the world, the same spirit of zeal for thine honour, and of benevolence towards man. May I ever wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit ; be enabled to adorn the profession which I hope to make ; and finally be admitted into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“And I do now most solemnly give myself unto thee, as one whom thou hast made alive from the dead, with a firm and unalterable determination to live devoted to thee ; loving thee supremely, walking in thy fear, and glorifying thee in my body and my spirit, which are thine.”

The practice of self-dedication, which is often recommended to the young Christian, may tend to increase his reverence for God, and to make him more watchful over his own spirit ; but unless he has very clear perceptions of the way of salvation, it may be pro-

ductive of essential spiritual injury. For though we are told in the most express language, that "we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast;" yet when the distinction between obedience, as the fruit of faith, and obedience as the hope of reward, is not accurately and perpetually observed, there is a danger of contracting a self-righteous spirit, which by aiming at personal perfection for ostentatious display, or as a source of mental confidence, may bring the soul into a state of spiritual bondage.

Miss Holmes having most solemnly dedicated herself to God, and formed a sanguine opinion of the high capabilities of the renewed mind, began to prescribe a set of rules for her self-government, which she resolved to observe. If these rules had related merely to her conduct in social life, she might have kept them; but as they included the regulation of the disposition, and the frame of her mind towards God, they were founded on a mistaken conception of her own ability. They imperceptibly diverted her attention from the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, by faith in which sinners are accepted and justified, to a laborious effort to attain a high degree of sinless excellence; and as she progressively discovered so many, and such lamentable defects in her obedience, the peace of mind which she enjoyed when "first she knew the Lord" was destroyed, and she gradually sunk into a state of despondency. By making this fatal, yet common mistake, she was led to the conclusion, that the attainments of the genuine Christian were placed beyond her reach, and that it would be an act of presumption if she attempted to acquire them.

An evangelical ministry is instituted to promote the edification of them that believe, no less than to convert sinners from the error of their ways; to guard them against those misconceptions of truth, which may prove injurious to their happiness and spiritual prosperity; and to explain that mysteriousness which rests over their earlier experience, when there is a constant, and often a rapid interchange of hope and of fear, of sorrow and of joy, of a bright prospect of

future blessedness, and a foreboding apprehension of future woe. Those who attend such a ministry, partake of the advantages of it, without being conscious of the benefit which they receive; but if indisposition, or any other circumstance, prevent a Christian from availing himself of this ordinance of grace, he may linger for a long time, especially in the earlier stages of the spiritual life, in a state of great mental perplexity, and may gradually sink into a morbid depression, without being able either to remove or account for it.

Domestic engagements prevented Mrs. Loader from paying a visit to the Elms; but the following letter is a proof of the deep interest which she took in the welfare of her friend, and also of her ability to give her judicious counsel:—

“MY DEAR LOUISA,—I am fearful lest you should construe my silence into indifference; but I flatter myself, that the following explanation will protect me from such an imputation. I was from home when yours of last month arrived; and since my return, family matters so engaged my attention, that I have been prevented replying to it. It is impossible for words to express the pleasure I felt on the perusal of your first very interesting letter; and though the degree of that pleasure was somewhat diminished on the reception of your second, yet I cannot refrain from offering you my sincere congratulations, on account of what the Lord has done for you, and is still doing. Clouds and darkness are often round about him, while he is silently and unobserved carrying on his own work; and when it is not in our power to trace the operation of his hand, we are required to stand still, and he will show us his salvation. In the early experience of the Christian there are many circumstances which perplex and confound him, and which appear to place his good hope in the most imminent danger; but it is the province of faith calmly to wait the issue, which is certain, and will be glorious.

“I am not surprised, my dear Louisa, that you should regret having made what you call a premature disclosure of your Christian experience, especially as you begin to entertain some strong

doubts of its being genuine. This is very natural, and very common. If the experimental influence of the truth fell under the immediate observation of our senses, we should be able to mark its progress with the most perfect accuracy; but as the seat of its first and most powerful operations is the heart—that province which the eye can never penetrate; and as it merely diffuses itself over the exercise of our intellectual and moral faculties, without acting alone, and independently of them, we almost necessarily, at times, suspect whether we have ever felt it. It is true, we may see a change in our conduct, and a change in the disposition and temper of our mind; but as this uniformly takes place in consequence of our full conviction of its propriety, we may, especially in a gloomy hour, be incapable of tracing it up to a supernatural cause.

“The first impressions of Divine truth on the heart are generally strong and deep—they produce a powerful excitement of the affections; and such is the intense degree of interest which is sometimes felt at such a period, that no variation is anticipated, except it be some higher and more blissful elevation of soul—some ascent to a spiritual Pisgah, from whence the lot of our future inheritance with the saints in light may be clearly seen. But when the mind becomes more familiar with the sublime truths of religion, they lose somewhat of their novelty; and though they still retain their ascendancy over the judgment, yet the impressions which they produce become less powerful. This change in the feelings often induces the young Christian to suspect, that the cause of its original production must be found, not in the grace of God, but the uninfluenced operations of his own faculties and passions. It is when the mind is thus variously exercised, that the invisible enemy of our peace often comes to augment our perplexity, by insinuating, that if we were renewed, the fact of our renovation would be so conspicuous, that we could never doubt it—that if we did really love the Lord, our love would glow with undiminished ardour—that if our faith were genuine, we should never be permitted to stagger at any of the promises of God through unbelief—that if we were

made partakers of the Divine nature, we should for ever escape the corruption that is in the world—and if our spiritual emotions were actually produced by the operation of a supernatural power, they would neither subside nor fluctuate.

“If then, my dear Louisa, you should doubt, where others have doubted before you, and if you should feel those causes of perplexity and depression operating on your mind, under which the faithful in Christ Jesus in every age have laboured, you ought to comfort yourself by the reflection that you are now passing through the usual trials of Christian experience. If you had no doubts, you would have cause to fear; and if you knew no change of feeling, you would have cause to suspect your change of heart.

‘Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear,—  
*She* has no hope, who never had a fear:  
And *she* that never doubted of *her* state,  
*She* may perhaps—perhaps *she* may, too late.’

“I am happy to find, by your last letter, that you have disclosed the state of your mind to your dear parents; for while I certainly approve of the motive which induced you to conceal it from them, yet I think you have acted wisely in breaking through your resolution. As they so often wept over you, when you were living without God, and without Christ in the world; and have, with so much fervour, intermingled their supplications at the footstool of the Divine throne for your conversion, it would have been an act of unkindness to have kept them in a state of ignorance on a subject in which they are so deeply interested. You should communicate to them not only the general fact, that you are *now become* ‘*a fellow-heir of the grace of life,*’ but also the perplexities which disquiet and depress you, as they are so well qualified to give you that instruction and consolation which you may require. It is by giving vent to the feelings of the soul, that we gain relief from our most poignant griefs; and though you perhaps can more readily communicate your experience to an absent friend than to your own parents, yet, if you make the effort, the barrier which obstructs an unreserved disclosure

of all you feel, and all you fear, will soon be broken down, and then your spiritual intercourse will be free and unfettered. It will require, on your part, I have no doubt, a great sacrifice of feeling, to take the step which I now venture to recommend; but you know who has said, My grace shall be sufficient for thee—as thy day, thy strength shall be; and if you by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your request unto Him, He will give you wisdom and strength to follow the advice I now offer.

“I have often regretted your removal from London, especially when I found that you are not favoured with an evangelical ministry in the church. This circumstance must operate as a serious drawback upon your social happiness; and now you are brought to feel the importance of religion, I am not surprised that you should deeply deplore it. You ask me what you are to do, now you are able to attend public worship. This is an important question, but I feel no hesitation in giving you the advice which I have given to others, who have been placed in similar circumstances. If there be no Dissenting chapel within a convenient distance, in which the gospel is preached, go to your parish church as usual, to avoid the appearance of Sabbath profanation; but if there be one, I think it your duty to attend there. I do not recommend you to secede, for the mere sake of secession; but for your spiritual improvement, which will depend more on a pure evangelical ministry, than any other secondary cause. Some, I am aware, would urge you to prefer your parish church to a Dissenting chapel, even if the minister be an irreligious man, and to stay there till it shall please God to introduce the gospel into it; but as it is not in my power to reconcile such advice with the injunction of our Lord, *Take heed what ye hear*, you cannot expect that I can approve of such a course. The eminently devout Christian loves the habitation of the Lord's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth; but we have no reason to believe that God visits any place with the manifestations of his love, where the minister does not preach salvation by grace through faith. But suffer the word of exhortation. You are now coming out amongst the difficulties of

a public profession of religion; one friend may recommend you to adopt one plan, and another, another; and the more you consult, the more you may be perplexed, till at length you may be incapable of coming to any decision. To obviate this evil, go and meditate seriously on the following passage—‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.’ Reduce to practice the admonition of the wise man, and you will find that the Lord will give wisdom, as well as strength.

“I am much obliged by your kind invitation to the Elms, and intend, as soon as I can leave home, to pay you a visit, when I hope to find you in perfect health. Remember me very kindly to every member of your family, and believe me to be, yours affectionately,

“E. LOADER.”

One of the most common-place charges which is brought against evangelical religion, is, that it has a tendency to make its possessor melancholy; and if we were to form our judgment of it from the appearance and manner of some who profess it, we should be disposed to admit its correctness. They not only abstain from all the pleasures and amusements of the social circle; but habitually wear a gloom on their countenance, which indicates a singular dejection and moroseness of spirit. But this dejection of spirit, which we may sometimes discover in a professor of evangelical religion, is not produced by his religious principles, but by his sense of personal guilt, and his want of that assurance of forgiveness, which the gospel of Jesus Christ is intended to convey. He may be permitted to remain for a season, by the Holy One of Israel, whose laws he has violated, and whom he has neglected to glorify, under the sentence of self-condemnation; but when he is enabled to rely on the atonement made by Jesus Christ, and to appropriate the promise of mercy, he enjoys the peace which passeth all understanding. If then, we wish to form a correct estimate of the real tendency of evangelical truth, we must not go to the penitent sinner while he is suffering



under the deep convictions of guilt, as then he is more prone to put from him the words of consolation, than to embrace them; but we must go to the established believer, who, having received the truth in the love of it, is enjoying its sacred and blissful influence. He will repel the charge as a libel on his faith, and unblushingly avow, that he never knew solid and substantial happiness till he derived it from communion with God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and a hope of being presented faultless in his immediate presence. And though the spirit of scepticism, which is so prevalent in all ranks of society, may ridicule such an avowal, as a delusion attempted to be practised on human credulity, yet surely no one, on reflection, can presume to say that a Christian is not competent to bear testimony to a fact of his own experience. The religious principles which he has embraced, are represented by those who have never felt their influence, as having a tendency to make their possessor melancholy; and yet he declares that he has had more mental satisfaction since he embraced them than he ever had before. Whose testimony shall we admit to be most conclusive?—the testimony of those who are entirely ignorant of the subject, or of those whose knowledge qualifies them to speak? Suppose, for example, a question to arise respecting the excellencies or defects of a piece of music, we should not venture to place any dependence on the opinion of a man who has no taste for the science. If we did, we should expose ourselves to ridicule or contempt. On such a question we should require the opinion of a competent judge; and I appeal to the sound sense of my readers, if they can allow those persons to pronounce a judgment on the tendency of religion who have never felt its holy influence on the heart. They may express their opinion, and they often do express it, but of what value or importance is it in relation to the subject? They may say that its tendency is to make us unhappy; but how can they prove it? Not certainly by appealing to the obvious design of Christianity, for that has been so unequivocally announced by the celestial messengers, that we cannot misconceive it. “And the angel said unto

them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." And if they venture to appeal to the experience of the religious man, he candidly says, "I am happy; but my happiness differs from yours, it takes its rise from a different source, and possesses qualities which are peculiarly its own; it is more pure, more exquisite, more substantial, because more intellectual and spiritual than yours. My happiness is the peace that passeth all understanding." But when we mention peace, we mean not the stupid security of a mind that refuses to reflect; we mean a tranquillity which rests on a tried and durable basis—a peace which, founded on the oath and promise of Him who cannot lie, and springing from the consciousness of an ineffable alliance with the Father of spirits, makes us to share in his fulness, and become a partner with him in his purity; a repose serene as the unruffled wave, which reflects the heaven from its bosom, while it is accompanied with a feeling of exultation and triumph, natural to such as are conscious that ere long, having overcome, they shall possess all things.

There are many periods in the history of human life, when the power of religious principles over the mind commands the respect, and excites the admiration of the most inveterate infidel. Go and see the poor Christian, contented amidst his privations—the suffering Christian, patient under his protracted affliction—the dying Christian, resigned and happy in prospect of his approaching dissolution; and if you do not pay a spontaneous homage to the influence of the principles which have such an effect in elevating and supporting the soul of man, when visited by these direful calamities, it must be referred either to a want of taste, or to a want of judgment.

"He is the happy man, whose life ev'n now  
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;  
Who, doom'd to an obscure, but tranquil state,  
Is pleas'd with it; and, were he free to choose,

Would make his fate his choice.

\* \* \* \* \*

Content, indeed, to sojourn while he must  
 Below the skies, but having there his home.  
 The world o'erlooks him in her busy search  
 Of objects more illustrious in her view ;  
 And, occupied as earnestly as she,  
 Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.  
 She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not ;  
 He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.  
 He cannot skim the ground like summer birds  
 Pursuing gilded flies ; and such he deems  
 Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.  
 Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,  
 Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth  
 She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,  
 And shows him glories yet to be revealed."

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## DOUBTS AND PERPLEXITIES.



HE change which had taken place in Miss Holmes, became the topic of general conversation in the circle of her gay associates ; and though some of them predicted that she would again appear amongst them, when "the fit of melancholy" was over, their anticipations were disappointed. She returned the calls of inquiry as soon as her health permitted ; but she left a deep impression on the mind of all her friends, that worldly pleasures had lost their charms for her, and that other and nobler objects of pursuit now engrossed her attention. One of the first proofs of her decision, was consenting to become secretary to a female branch of an Auxiliary Bible Society, which was established in the vicinity of the Elms, and which brought her into immediate connection with several pious families. Having derived so much spiritual benefit from the Scriptures during her long confinement, she felt anxious that they should be universally circulated ; and voluntarily devoted a large portion of her time and

her influence to secure the co-operation of others in accomplishing this important object.

One of the most conspicuous professors in her neighbourhood was a Mr. Corrie, whose father had attended the ministry of Romaine, and transmitted to his son a profound veneration for the memory of that distinguished clergyman. He was a widower, rather advanced in life, a man of wealth; and had residing with him two unmarried sisters. These ladies were amiable and intelligent—zealous and active in the cause of humanity and religion—and their chief delight was in going about doing good. Mr. Corrie usually spent the forenoon in his study, while his sisters went forth on their visits of mercy to the cottages of the poor; and they generally passed their evenings in agreeable and profitable conversation, or in reading to each other. They often read a portion of Mr. Romaine's Works, which they considered the standard of orthodoxy; and though they were willing to submit every religious opinion to the test of Scripture, yet they never thought of subjecting his opinions to such an ordeal. His treatises on the Life and Triumph of Faith, and some Letters which have been published since his decease, they regarded with almost as much reverence as the Epistles of the inspired writers; believing that no author equalled him in correctness of sentiment and depth of experience.

Miss Holmes, in her perambulations on behalf of the Bible Society, happened to call on the Misses Corrie, to solicit their subscriptions, just as they were sitting down to tea; and being pressed to remain, she consented to spend the evening with them. Their cheerfulness—the spirituality of mind which they discovered in their conversation—the fervent spirit of devotion which was apparent in Mr. Corrie when engaged in family prayer—and the confidence with which they spoke of their interest in Christ, operated so powerfully on her feelings, that she remained with them much longer than she intended; and when the lateness of the hour compelled her to leave, she could not do so without requesting permission to repeat her visit. “We shall be happy to see you at any time,” said Miss Corrie; “and if it

be in our power to teach you the way of the Lord more perfectly, we shall consider ourselves highly honoured."

Religious conversation is one of the most useful methods of instruction and consolation we can employ; but sometimes, when a false standard of experience is adopted, it becomes the means of perplexing and distracting inquiring minds. Our Lord taught his disciples, as they were able to receive instruction; keeping alive their attention, while he allayed the restlessness of an unprofitable curiosity, by saying—"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." And on this wise maxim the Holy Spirit condescends to conduct His process of instruction, that we may not be confounded by communications which we are unable to understand; but be led on step after step in the province of Divine knowledge, till we are "able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God." And it is of great importance, in relation to the government of our conduct towards others, and for our own tranquillity and spiritual improvement, that we rigorously adhere to the same maxim; or we may inflict a wound, while attempting to impart the consolations of our faith, and absolutely retard that growth in knowledge which we are anxious to cultivate and advance.

Mr. Corrie was eminently pious, but a man of rather weak understanding, and who had associated with but few intelligent Christians in the earlier part of his life. His first undigested thoughts had grown up into firm and immoveable opinions; and though he devoted a large portion of his time to reading the Scriptures, yet, owing to the bias of which he was not conscious, he more frequently searched for passages in support of his own peculiar notions, than studied them to enlarge his views of the entire scheme of Divine truth. He was positive, but not perverse; inflexibly attached to his

own belief, but not disposed to inveigh against that of another; and though he imbibed some religious opinions which have done great injury to the dignity and the amiability of the Christian character, yet in him their tendency was neutralized by the sweetness of his natural disposition and the fervour of his devotional spirit. He dwelt much on the high points of election and predestination; maintained with great pertinacity that human nature undergoes no moral improvement, but remains as impure and deceitful after the great change has taken place, as it was before; and he considered an assurance of our final salvation so essential to the nature of faith, that he would not regard as a true believer a person who did not enjoy an unclouded prospect of eternal glory. These topics bounded the range of his inquiry; and though at times he would unawares make concessions which compromised their accuracy, yet when apprized of his danger, he would step back with singular adroitness, and resist the force of an argument to expose their fallacy, by saying to an antagonist, "*You see through a glass darkly, while I see face to face.*" If these opinions had been confined within the circle of his own family, and the few pious friends who were of the same theological school, he would have done no injury, as their devotional spirit and habits would have proved a safeguard against their pernicious tendency. But by bringing them forward in promiscuous company, and by holding them up as essential articles of the Christian faith, he often involved the judgment of the young disciple in great perplexity, and unintentionally threw down some of those barriers which the Scriptures have raised to restrain the evil propensities of our nature. The effects of these opinions on the mind of Miss Holmes may be seen in the following letter, which she addressed to her friend Mrs. Loader, a few weeks after her introduction to this family:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I should have replied earlier to your last letter; but since my convalescence I have been so engaged with my new duties, as the secretary to our Auxiliary Bible Society, that I

have not been able to find time. I cannot express to you in words, how much pleasure I derived from your communication. It came at a season when my mind was sinking into despondency, and when I was tempted to give up my hope; but the Lord was pleased to employ it as the means of dispersing the darkness which was hovering around me, and I was enabled to rejoice once more in the light of his countenance. I had gained that elevated spot—that spiritual Pisgah, to which you so beautifully allude; from whence I could read

‘My title clear  
To mansions in the skies;’

and from whence I thought I should never be displaced; but alas! I am again compelled to give utterance to a feeling of despondency.

“I had my fears at the very commencement of my religious course, that my convictions and impressions, like the morning cloud and early dew, would soon pass away, and that I should be permitted to relapse into my original state of darkness and indifference; yet these fears came upon me only at times, like a sudden gust of wind in a serene evening. Now, alas! I have to mourn over their perpetual presence and desolating power; and I sometimes think, the doom of a backslider, or an apostate, awaits me. I shudder in anticipation of such a dreadful issue; and though I often pause and listen, yet I hear not the voice of the Comforter. Yet I cannot go back; perhaps I may say, when taking a survey of the more general state of my heart, I move slowly onwards between hope and fear.

“I have lately formed an intimate friendship with two excellent ladies, who reside with their brother, not more than a quarter of a mile from the Elms; and in whose society I spend a considerable portion of my leisure hours. From the influence of their example, and from their conversation, I anticipated much spiritual improvement; but the oftener I visit them, the deeper I am plunged in mental despondency; and though I have ventured to allude, in indirect terms, to the perplexed state of my mind, yet I cannot obtain from them the words of consolation which I need. They

and their brother have adopted the views of Romaine as their religious standard; and hold his memory in such veneration, that they rank him next to the inspired writers, and tacitly condemn all who, on any religious points, differ from him. They have lent me his treatises on the Life and Triumph of Faith, which I have read with close attention; but instead of deriving from them that satisfaction which I was led to expect, they have revived all my former fears, and invested them with a tenfold poignancy. He says, when addressing the believer, 'Thou must be first persuaded of thine interest in Christ, before thou canst make use of it, and improve it; and therefore the knowledge of thy union with him must be clear and plain, before thou canst have a free and open communion with him.' I might have passed over this passage, without having taken any particular notice of it, had it not coincided with the belief which has been so often expressed by my excellent friends, the Misses Corrie and their brother. They say, in the most express terms, that an assurance of our interest in Christ, and of our final salvation, is essential to faith; but this assurance I do not possess. Sometimes I have thought that the Saviour has looked with an eye of compassion on me, and has raised my desponding soul to the ineffable manifestations of his love; but I cannot say that 'he gave himself for me.' I rely on the efficacy of his death for acceptance and eternal life; but I dare not say that my dependence is genuine. In some favoured moments, I have anticipated the blissful interview, when I have hoped to see him as he is, but I cannot speak with confidence—O no! I dare not. While my necessities compel me to go to the Saviour, and plead his promises, my want of assurance keeps me back; and thus, being suspended between these propelling and repulsive powers, I suffer extreme mental torture.

"But this is not the only subject on which my mind is perplexed. In a conversation the other evening, when we were tracing up the bestowment of every good and every perfect gift to the free and unmerited grace of God, Mr. Corrie asserted, with the utmost degree of confidence, that no true believer in Jesus Christ can doubt his



personal election to eternal life. This assertion, made by so good and amiable a man, and which met the decided approbation of his sisters, fell upon my ear with all the terror of the condemning sentence; and from that moment to the present, I have been driven, as an outcast, from the promises of mercy, I have read the Scriptures to satisfy my mind on this point, and there I read of sinners being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world—of their being elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father—of their being predestinated; but this high point appears invested with such terror, that my spirit recoils when attempting to approach it; and though I have prayed for faith to receive the hidden mysteries of revelation, and for wisdom to understand them, yet I cannot believe that I am one of the selected number, whose name has been enrolled in the Lamb's book of life. But should I feel all this terror on my spirit, when adverting to a doctrine which appears stated, with the utmost degree of explicitness, by the inspired writers, if I had that faith which is of the operation of the Spirit of God? Should I, if I possessed like precious faith, recoil, with almost instinctive dread, from a subject on which my pious friends speak with so much animation and delight? Surely there must be some defect in my experience, which renders me incapable of disengaging myself from the bondage of fear in which I am held; and which holds me back from a participation of that glorious liberty which I see enjoyed by the children of God around me.

“There is one point of resemblance between my experience and that of my friends, too striking to pass unnoticed; yet, when reading the Scriptures, it has merely served to involve me in a still more perplexing labyrinth of difficulty. It is this—they maintain ‘that our hearts undergo no moral improvement when the great renovation takes place, but remain as impure and deceitful as before.’ I certainly did anticipate, when I first felt the influence of the truth, that I should grow in grace as well as in knowledge; and that I should attain to a more near conformity to the image of Jesus Christ; but on a close and impartial examination, I am compelled to believe that

I have made no progress: indeed, I fear I have made a retrograde movement. I do not feel that calm satisfaction, or any of the blissful emotions I felt, when my attention was first arrested by the unseen realities of eternity. I do not feel that indifference to worldly objects, which I felt when confined to a couch of pain and languor. I am not so deeply affected by the unparalleled love of Christ, as I was when I first viewed him bearing away the iniquities of the people by the agonies of his death; nor does sin appear so exceedingly sinful, as when I first experienced its bitterness. I am neither so grateful for my mercies, nor so abased on account of my transgressions, as I was when the light of a supernatural manifestation first threw open to my view my neglected obligations and concealed defects. I feel, if possible, more fully convinced of the absolute need of a Saviour, than I was when I first felt the burden of guilt upon my conscience, but yet I am less able to exercise faith in him; and instead of that peace which was diffused through my heart when I first believed, I am sometimes driven to the verge of despondency.

“I have not yet communicated to my dear parents the present perturbed state of my feelings, as I am unwilling to give one pang of sorrow to their tender bosom; and though I sometimes pray that the Lord would be pleased to turn away from me the face of his anger, and comfort me, yet I cannot pray in faith. Surely no one else ever felt what I feel, or suffered what I suffer. There are two verses in a favourite hymn, which, I believe, was composed by the venerable Newton, which I can repeat with intense earnestness:—

‘Lord, decide the doubtful case;  
Thou who art thy people’s Sun,  
Shine upon thy work of grace,  
If it be indeed begun.

‘May I love thee more and more,  
If I love at all, I pray;  
If I have not lov’d before,  
Help me to begin to-day.’

“I am happy to inform you, that there is a Dissenting chapel about three quarters of a mile from the Elms, in which the gospel is preached

with great simplicity and power, and where my esteemed friends, the Corries, usually attend; so that a kind Providence has made that provision for our spiritual necessities outside the pale of the Establishment, which we should have preferred within, but which is denied us unless we go to a considerable distance. We have attended this chapel regularly for some time, and are much delighted with the minister. He is an amiable, unobtrusive man—imbued, I trust, with the spirit of his Master—cheerful in his disposition, but rather reserved. Those who are admitted into more familiar intimacy, speak of him in the highest terms of affectionate respect; and he is much esteemed by his people. You know we are attached to the Church; but, after mature deliberation, we are satisfied that it is our duty to hear the gospel; and as it is not preached by our Vicar, we feel it no less a duty than a privilege to go where the Lord has sent it. Our decision has offended some of the *anti-evangelical* high church families, who regard the Church of England with as much veneration as a Roman Catholic would a relic of St. Peter; but we must obey the dictates of conscience, which will no longer permit us to attend a ministry where the truths of the gospel are not preached.

“From some of our new clergyman’s discourses I have derived consolation, but he has not touched on any of the points of perplexity in which my mind is involved; and though at times I have thought of soliciting a personal interview, to make known to him all I feel, and all I fear, yet I cannot assume a sufficient degree of confidence to do it. Indeed, I cannot speak freely on such delicate subjects to any one but to you; and I hope, if you cannot spare time to pay us your long promised visit, that you will favour me with your advice, and I know you will not neglect to pray for me.

“My sister Emma, I regret to say, continues to manifest a decided aversion to the things of the Spirit of God—they are foolishness to her; but Jane is becoming much more serious. I do not think that she is yet decided, but I hope the good work is begun. I often find her with her Bible, and sometimes she retires to her own room in

the evening, where I hope she spends some portion of her time in praying to her Father in secret; and if so, He who seeth in secret will ultimately reward her openly.—Yours affectionately,

“To Mrs. Loader.”

“LOUISA.

When a young Christian searches the Scriptures for correct information on the great questions of religion, and is favoured with the assistance of judicious and pious friends, he usually passes on from one degree of knowledge to another without meeting with the formidable obstructions and perplexing embarrassments to which he is exposed, by the conflicting opinions which are prevalent amongst us. The light which shines on the sacred page, when it comes *directly* from above, is clear and pure, and makes distinctly manifest, to the judgment and the conscience, the truth as it is in Jesus, in its simplicity and power. But when it passes through a human medium, it often shines in an oblique course, throwing into the shade some essential parts of the economy of Divine truth; and hence a defective theory is sometimes embraced, which always proves unsatisfactory, and sometimes fatal to our peace. It is therefore impossible to exercise too much caution, in the early periods of our experience, in the choice of our religious associates, and of the books which we read; as it is in the power of error, whether it comes from the lips of friendship or from the press, to do more essential injury than the truth may be able to repair, till after a lengthened period of extreme anxiety and disquietude. And as we are so liable to receive pernicious impressions from the numerous errors which are in perpetual circulation around us, we cannot depend with too much simplicity, or docility of disposition, on the Holy Ghost, whom the Saviour has promised to his disciples. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have

said unto you. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Hence it is indispensably necessary for the Christian, in every period of his life, but especially when entering on his religious course, to implore the gracious influence of the Divine Spirit, to guard him against every species of error—to lead him into all truth—and to invest the truth with that holy unction, which will render it no less a source of the highest intellectual improvement, than of the most exquisite mental enjoyment. Such a habit of dependence on Divine aid will be an effectual safeguard against the spirit of self-sufficiency, which proves so fatal to those who are enslaved by it; and while it will stimulate to mental diligence in searching the Scriptures, that we may ascertain what is the mind of the Spirit, it will keep us in a state of independence of human opinion.

But while I wish to point out to the attention of the young Christian, the dangers to which he is exposed from the society of his pious yet injudicious friends, and to bring him into immediate connection with the Spirit of truth, I would, at the same time, guard him against indulging any visionary expectations respecting the mode of His instruction, or the infallible certainty of the opinions He may permit us to form. He teaches through the medium of the Scriptures, even while the judgment is altogether unconscious of any supernatural assistance; but His communications are restricted to those points in the system of truth which are essential to salvation; leaving us to form our own judgment on questions of minor importance. Hence the agreement amongst the disciples of Christ, on what is essential, and their diversity on what is non-essential.

But even when we are taught by the Holy Spirit, and thus imbibe the truth in its most perfect state, it will not always retain its original power of impression, but will admit of a partial declension in moving the affections, even while its authority over the judgment and the conscience remain undiminished. Hence the lines of Cowper are often employed as expressive of the disconsolate state of the heart:—

"Where is the blessedness I knew,  
 When first I saw the Lord?  
 Where is the soul-refreshing view,  
 Of Jesus and his Word?  
 What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!  
 How sweet their mem'ry still!  
 But they have left an aching void,  
 The world can never fill."

And this cessation of a powerful excitement, which usually succeeds the first impressions of truth, is often regarded, by the Christian, as an indisputable evidence of the decay of his religious principles, when it may be nothing more than a necessary consequence of the more advanced progress of his personal experience, as the change of the leaf, from living green to the auburn hue, is a plain indication that the fruit is advancing in its ripening process.

The above account presents an instance, which has many parallels, of the struggles, anxieties, and perplexities, which so often beset the mind of the believer on his first entering on his career of Christian experience. I shall return soon to the continuation of the history of Mr. Holmes' family; but, in the meantime, must beg the courteous reader to accompany me back, for a short space, to my own town, from which I have been led by this digression in my narrative.

## THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS.

### PART I.



ONE morning, while musing on the changing scenes of my eventful life, recalling the past, and speculating on the future, I received a letter from an old friend, requesting that I would call on her as soon as I could make it convenient. From the tone of the letter, and some expressions contained in it, I judged she was in trouble, and accordingly proceeded immediately towards her house. As I was passing along,

I remembered that, several years before, I had received a similar note, written by the same hand, and in a similar strain of grief. The writer was a widow, whose husband had been cut off in the flower of his days, leaving her to provide for their children, who were at that time all dependent on her. On the occasion I speak of, I found her bewailing the alarming illness of her only son, a youth of about fifteen years. She complained with bitterness that the Almighty, who had taken away her husband, was now about to take away her first-born also. I attempted to bring her mind into a state of acquiescence to the Divine will, by reminding her that no affliction came by chance—that he who works all things after his own counsel, often sends an early affliction, to prevent a more painful one—and that when he is pleased to take from us our choicest comforts, it is “for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” She replied that the Almighty might tear her son from her, but she could not surrender him. When I expostulated with her, she did not attempt to justify her opposition to the will of God, but excused herself from the affection she bore her son; and earnestly requested me to pray for him, and pray that his life might be spared. We prayed together for the lad, and in due time he was restored to health. Having removed soon after this to a different quarter of the town, I had seen but little of him or his family for a considerable time.

Perhaps, thought I, as I drew near the house of sorrow, the life of this son is again in danger. He has been spared a few years, as the staff of his mother’s strength, and now she is inured to her troubles, he is about to be taken from her. Indulgent, yet mysterious Providence! The lines of the poet recurred to my recollection with peculiar force—

“The ways of heaven are dark and intricate.  
Puzzled with mazes and perplex'd with errors,  
Our understanding traces them in vain—  
Lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless search. Nor sees  
With how much art the windings turn,  
Nor where the regular confusion ends.”—*Addison.*



JAMES GODWIN.

W. L. THOMAS.

THE MOTHER'S HOPES BLASTED.

Vol. iii, p. 178.



When I entered the room, I found her reclining on a sofa, and in tears, her three daughters weeping apart. Though I knew not the cause of their distress, I felt at once that some great calamity had befallen them. My presence seemed to revive their grief, for when they beheld me, there was a spontaneous burst of anguish. At length, when nature had given vent to her feelings, and recovered a portion of that strength which had been consumed by the violence of grief, the sufferer informed me that her son had brought upon them a deluge of sorrow. Without going into particulars, she requested me to read the following letter, which was lying on the table:—

“MY DEAR MOTHER,—Apprehensive that you may be alarmed by the abruptness of my departure from home, I write to inform you that I am well; and when I reach the place of my destination, I will send you my address. I now regret the course I have taken, but this will not bring back my departed reputation, nor heal the wound which I have inflicted on your peace. Had I taken your advice, and kept myself from evil companions and vain amusements, I had still been a virtuous and happy man—your comforter, and the support of the family; but I disregarded your lessons, and became a regular attender of the theatre, to the fatal attractions of which, I am convinced, I now owe my ruin. From the theatre, it was but one step to the tavern and the gaming table. To gratify my passion for the latter, I embezzled my masters’ property, and am now a wretched fugitive from the pursuit of justice. Remember me very kindly to my sisters, and tell them never to enter a theatre, for it is to my attendance at that place of dissipation, that I attribute my first deviation from the right path.—Your undutiful, yet affectionate son,  
W. HARVEY.”

“Oh! my poor William,” exclaimed his mother, “oh! that I should ever have lived to see this day! Our disgrace is all over the town this morning. Look at this, too,” she continued, producing a hand-bill offering a reward of £50 for the apprehension of William Harvey, absconded.

After perusing these, I expressed my heartfelt sympathy with the family, and tried to soothe their feelings and offer words of comfort; but what comfort could I impart in such circumstances! In answer to my inquiries, I drew from her, amidst sobs and tears, an account of her son, and the causes which had produced the fatal transformation in his character. It was to the following effect:—At the decease of his father, he was removed from school, and placed in the counting-house of Messrs. —, extensive merchants in the town. Being a lad of strong natural powers and quick perceptions, active and industrious in his disposition, he soon made himself very useful, and within the space of three years, had so established himself in the esteem and respect of his employers, as to be promoted to a post of responsibility and trust. He was distinguished from most young men of his age, by the soundness of his judgment, and the sobriety of his habits, and so devotedly attached to his mother and his sisters, that he made the promotion of their happiness his constant study. In the morning he went to the duties of his station with cheerfulness; and in the evening, when the toils of the day were ended, he either retired to his own room, to read the amusing or instructive page, or passed it away in their society. He would often admit, when conversing with his pious mother, the necessity of personal religion, yet he thought some distant futurity a more convenient season for attending to it than the present time; and hence the strong impressions which he occasionally received, when engaged in the public exercises of devotion, were soon obliterated by the tumultuous anxieties of commercial life. But when about the age of eighteen, he began to feel the necessity of personal religion; and though he did not suffer its interesting and important inquiries to divert his attention from his secular pursuits, yet he was convinced that it was no less his duty to be “fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” than diligent in his business.

His mother witnessed this moral renovation of his character with peculiar delight; and soon had the pleasure of hearing him lead the devotions of the family both morning and evening. For the space

of two years, he was equally distinguished for his diligence in business and his fervour of devotion, till at length he fell into the company of a young man who ultimately effected his ruin. This young man was the son of a wealthy citizen, as accomplished in manners as he was corrupt in principles; and though he made no profession of religion, yet he affected to treat it with great respect, and thus more effectually gained an ascendancy over young Harvey. Their first acquaintance soon ripened into the maturity of an ardent friendship; and notwithstanding the dissimilarity of their opinions, they became almost inseparable companions. Each felt anxious to gain the other over to his own course, and adopted what he conceived to be the most likely method; but it soon became apparent, that evil communications more speedily corrupt the virtuous, than good communications reclaim the vicious. One of the earliest symptoms of this corruption of principle, was his becoming an occasional frequenter of the theatre, a place which, hitherto, the pious admonitions of his mother had prevented him from entering. Then came abandonment of his home, and of the society of its inmates, after the business of the day had terminated, which broke in upon the devotional order of the family, and often led to inquiries and remonstrances which were natural, but painful. These gentle and affectionate remonstrances at first had a powerful effect, and he was induced to return to his former habits; but in process of time, they were either heard with indifference, or resented, and he who had officiated at the family altar, in a humble and apparently contrite spirit, informed his mother that he should in future decline engaging in such a responsible office. She besought him in the most urgent and imploring manner, to rescind his avowed determination, and once more break away from that fatal charm, which was seducing him from the path of righteousness and peace; but she could not succeed. He was resolute and decided; and after this time rarely returned home till very late at night.

“I have sat alone,” said his mother, “watching for his return, till one, two, three, and even four in the morning; and when I have

opened the door, he more often abused me for my kindness, than apologized for his misconduct. Having spent his midnight hours in dissipation, he consumed those of the morning in sleep; and sometimes did not get to business much before noon. Though he foresaw what might be the consequences of his folly and impiety, yet no arguments were sufficient to induce him to change his course. He grew worse and worse, till at length he disappeared two days ago, and I heard nothing of him till yesterday, when I received the letter which has thrown us all into such misery. This trial, which would have been a severe one under any circumstances, is to me peculiarly poignant; as it brings to my remembrance my sins. It is now just seven years since the Almighty appeared to be taking him from me, and such was the heavenly frame of his mind, that he was not unwilling to go. Had he died then, I should have wept over his grave, but I should have had the prospect of meeting him in a better world. Or if I had felt resigned to the will of God, he might have been restored to me in mercy, as was Isaac, when the angel of the Lord forbade his venerable father to slay the sacrifice which he had so willingly bound, and placed on the altar; but I was rebellious. I prayed for his life, because I thought it essential to my happiness; and his life has been spared; but alas, he is become the destroyer of our peace. It is now, Sir, only two years since he began to turn his attention to religious subjects, and to lead the devotions of our family; and though, like most parents, I rejoiced with trembling, yet hope preponderated, and I thought he would have been my support and comfort in my old age; but alas, the vision of bliss has disappeared, and I am left to desolation and despair." Here she paused to weep, and then resumed her tale of sorrow. "I watched his gradual departure from the ways of righteousness with much anxiety, and made many efforts to reclaim him; and though he yielded at first to my solicitations, and made many solemn promises, yet he broke them all, and gave himself up to the company of the wicked. *The stage has been his ruin.* 'Till he entered the ill-fated theatre, which throws out its unhallowed attractions to beguile and captivate the thought-

less and the gay, he was one of the best of sons, and one of the kindest of brothers, fond of home, and devoted to his mercantile duties; but after he had acquired a taste for its scenes and its performances, he became undutiful to me, unkind to his sisters, indolent and extravagant, unwilling to submit to the control of authority or of reason, and determined to follow the devices and desires of his own heart, even though he should plunge us all in ruin. It was in the theatre that he fell into bad company—it was there he lost his strength to resist temptation; and being once overcome, he surrendered himself, a willing captive to the service of iniquity. Ill-fated place! There many a virtuous youth has become the victim of sin! and there my William fell, and in his fall he has destroyed my happiness for life. Where he is gone, I know not, nor do I know what destiny awaits him; but this I know, from bitter experience, that the theatre will corrupt the most virtuous; and while it professes to afford only amusement and instruction, it often becomes the destroyer of personal honour and of social happiness.”

I retired from this scene, my mind loaded with anxiety on behalf of the unfortunate family, deeply regretting that it was not in my power to afford them any effectual relief. I could not reclaim the infatuated youth, nor yet repair the moral injury which the attractions of the theatre had brought upon the honour and peace of their household. I was grieved by their tale of sorrow; but it did not surprise me, as I had met with too many proofs of the debasing tendency of theatrical amusements, to be astonished by such a narrative.

I had an engagement to spend the evening of the day on which the above conversation took place, at the house of a friend, who had invited me to meet a gentleman from London, an acquaintance of his, who was then paying him a visit. On arriving there I found a small party assembled. In the course of the evening, after a desultory conversation on various matters, we found ourselves involved in a close, though not angry debate. The circumstance which led to this spirited discussion, was a reference to a recent verdict which had been given against a celebrated comedian, for a

crime which never can be visited with too much severity, as it tends not only to the corruption of public morals, but the destruction of private and domestic happiness.

“It is of importance,” said Mr. Proctor, the gentleman at whose house we were spending the evening, “that they who lash the vices of the age, and who hold them up to scorn and contempt, should be virtuous themselves, or they will do more injury by their example, than they will do good by their professional labours.”

“Very true, Sir,” replied a Mr. Talbot, one of the party, who was a great admirer of the drama, “but we must not expect to find the perfection of human nature in a profession which is exposed to so many and such powerful temptations!”

“The perfection of human nature!” exclaimed Mr. Proctor’s London friend, Mr. Falkland, “perhaps it would be impossible to find a class of men, in any single profession, in which we shall find so little virtue and so much vice as in the theatrical profession.”

*Mr. Talbot.*—“But, Sir, do you really mean to say, that the stage never exhibits, in the private character of its performers, the beauty and consistency of virtue? Surely you are not so uncharitable!”

*Mr. Falkland.*—“I will not say that every one who appears on the stage is immoral, in the broad acceptation of that term; but I mean to say that the great majority are more depraved in their tastes, habits, and conduct, than the general average of society. This is a fact which I presume no one will attempt to deny, who possesses an accurate knowledge of the character of the performers at our theatres.”

*Mr. Talbot.*—“There is, I admit, too much truth in what you now say; and how will you account for it?”

*Mr. Falkland.*—“To account for it is not difficult—the moral tendency of their profession is a sufficient reason; and that we may have the most palpable and unequivocal evidence of its nature, it is allowed by Providence to operate in the first place and to the fullest extent on the morals and character of the persons who are engaged in it.”

*Mr. Talbot.*—"There, Sir, I am at issue with you; for I maintain that the moral tendency of theatrical amusements is favourable to the cultivation and growth of private and public virtue; and though some who are touched with the puritanical spirit of the age, may assert the contrary, yet I think they will not be able to prove it."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, if the moral tendency of theatrical amusements be favourable to the cultivation and growth of private and public virtue, will you be kind enough to say, how it comes to pass that the very persons who are employed to conduct them, are, in general, the most profligate members of society?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, Sir, they are profligate before they enter the profession."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"But can't men of high-toned virtue be induced to enter a profession, which is intended to promote the moral improvement of the age—to make us wiser and better?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Very few. The majority are persons of talent, who go 'through all the vagabondry of life,' and then offer themselves to the stage as a *dernier* resort."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"They first become profligate, and then betake themselves to the stage, as a forlorn hope!"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"They are profligate before they enter on the stage, which is an evil every virtuous man must deplore."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"And remain profligate after they are on."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Too many."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"The majority, Sir."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Perhaps so."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, if the tendency of their profession be favourable to the cultivation and growth of virtue, how is it that it does not reclaim these profligate players? How is it that it does not scatter the seeds of virtue among them, and raise it to a high state of culture?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, Sir, are there not many who wear the gown immoral?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"I fear there are, Sir."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"And yet, I presume, you will admit, that the moral tendency of the clerical profession and duties is favourable to the cultivation and growth of private and public virtue."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Most certainly, Sir."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Then, how comes it to pass, if it be so, that these men still remain immoral?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Permit me to say, that the introduction of this question is no satisfactory reply to my argument. Answer that in the first place, and then you are at liberty to propose what queries you think proper. If the tendency of the theatrical profession be favourable to the cultivation and growth of virtue, how is it that it does not reclaim these profligate players? This is the question under debate, and let us keep to it. We may ramble after we have settled it."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, Sir, there are two reasons which may be assigned—their extreme profligacy before they enter their profession; and the numerous and powerful temptations to which they are exposed after they have engaged in it."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, theatrical amusements will not reclaim extreme profligacy, nor produce virtue where it is most needed?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Perhaps not."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, you require a stock of virtue to insert your graft on, or you do not calculate on raising any good fruit?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Exactly so, Sir."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, as men of high-toned virtue, with few exceptions, cannot be induced to engage in the theatrical profession; and as it is found incapable of reclaiming the profligate, we can never expect to find a preponderance of virtue amongst the members of that profession; and, consequently, we are reduced to the necessity of admitting this astounding fact—the men who are employed to chastise the vices of the age, and to cultivate its virtues, are, with few exceptions, the most profligate in their manners!"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"But, Sir, will you make no allowance for men and



women who are necessarily exposed to so many temptations in the discharge of the duties of their profession?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Why, Sir, what peculiar temptations to vice ought to stand connected with the duties of a profession which is intended to promote private and public virtue?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, you know they often appear, when on the stage, in a rank far above the level of their condition, which may imperceptibly induce them to cherish those habits of extravagance in private life, for which they are so notorious. But the most fatal temptation to which they are exposed, is the too familiar intercourse which necessarily takes place between the actors and actresses on the stage, which cannot be avoided, unless the most popular plays are suppressed; and would it not betray an ignorance of human nature, to expect that this circumstance should produce no injurious effect on their moral character?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Certainly. You reason very properly. You have given a faithful, just, and true account of an evil which is generally admitted. But, in accounting for this evil, have you not made a concession which invalidates the correctness of your general position, that the tendency of theatrical amusements is to promote the cultivation and growth of private and public morals?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"No, Sir, I have merely assigned the causes of that general profligacy of manners which prevails amongst players, as a reason why you should be more indulgent towards them; and why you should not expect the perfection of virtue to grow in such near contact with the most fascinating temptations."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"I know full well what you intended to do, and also what you have done. May I be permitted now, to place your leading assertion, and your last concession, in one sentence?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Yes, provided you do it fairly."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"I will attempt it. The tendency of theatrical amusements is to promote the cultivation and growth of private and public virtue; but the actors and actresses, who are employed in this good work, are necessarily placed in a position which destroys

their own virtue, and brings on amongst them a general profligacy of manners. That is, their representation of vice and vicious characters on the stage often leads to immoral practices in their private conduct. Does not this prove that the tendency of their professional duties is injurious to their own morals?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Have I not admitted it, Sir?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Yes, and proved it, at the extreme hazard of endangering your own proposition, that the stage is favourable to the interests of *private* virtue."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"But, Sir, are there not many who wear the gown, and who make much higher pretensions to virtue than players do, who, after they have given their public lectures on morality, will retire and sin in secret. Now, permit me to ask, if the sanctimonious hypocrite is not a more odious character than the profligate player?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"I regret, Sir, that you should overstep the bounds of the question under discussion, to attack the clerical profession; but lest you should imagine that you are occupying a position from which no fair argument can displace you, I will for once attempt to follow you. I admit, then, for the sake of the argument, that there are some who make higher pretensions to private virtue than the actors and actresses of our theatres, who, after delivering their public lectures on morality, retire and sin in secret; but will the vices of one class of men justify the vices of another? If some of the clergy are corrupt, will the fact of their corruption diminish the magnitude of the players' vices? Why you have introduced this charge against the clergy into the discussion I cannot say, as it has nothing to do with the question at issue, which is the necessary connection between a player's profligacy of manners and the duties of his profession. That is, that the very performance of his duties, when he is engaged in promoting the morality of the public, has a tendency to produce a corruption of his own morals. But you can bring no such charge against the moral tendency of the clerical duties. A clergyman is not compelled, in the discharge of his func-

tions, to give utterance to any expressions, or to perform any actions, which have even a remote tendency to vitiate his taste or corrupt his morals; so that if he should turn out a bad man, you must look for the cause of it, not, as in the case of the stage-player, in any impure and contaminating influence of his profession, but in the depravity of his nature. If he become immoral, he acts an inconsistent part, offers an insult to the sentiments of the virtuous part of mankind, and loses his place in society—as a man who is a disgrace to his profession, whose example is in direct opposition to the acknowledged tendency of his ministerial functions. But as a pure moral character is not necessary to qualify a man to appear on the stage, no one feels at liberty to charge a theatrical performer with inconsistency, even if he should become notorious for swearing, gaming, drunkenness, or debauchery. He may revel in these vices, and yet appear before an audience with as much confidence of affording them gratification by his performances as he would feel if he were a man of the purest moral excellence. It is true, that if publicly convicted of some flagrant offence, and held up, through the medium of the press, as the base wretch who violates the sanctity of friendship, the admirers of the drama will express a virtuous indignation, and wish him to perform a sort of quarantine before he again makes his appearance before them; yet they will never regard it as a lasting disqualification for his professional duties.”

*Mr. Talbot.*—“Well, Sir, after all the attacks which you have made on the character of theatrical performers, and the defence which you have set up in favour of the clergy, I maintain that the sanctimonious hypocrite who retires from the pulpit, where he has delivered his grave moral lectures, to sin in secret, is a more pernicious character than the most profligate player that ever disgraced his profession. For do not the vices of the clergy shake our confidence in the truth of religion, which you know is never done by the vices of the stage; and is not their example, in consequence of their more powerful influence over the public mind, more destructive to the morals of society?”

*Mr. Falkland.*—"If, Sir, your belief in the Divine origin of Christianity is ever shaken by the vices of its professors, you give a decisive proof that it does not rest on the legitimate evidence which is offered in confirmation of it. Christianity claims a Divine origin, and she adduces irrefragable arguments in confirmation of it; but the consistent conduct of *all* her professors is not one of them. Judas was a traitor, but his treachery did not weaken the force of evidence which the miracles of Jesus Christ supplied in favour of his Divine mission; and though it is very common for us to look for an exact correspondence between the life of a Christian and the purity of his professed faith, yet if all who profess to believe in the Christian religion should become as licentious in their manners as the most notorious libertines, their profligacy would not weaken the evidences on which Christianity founds her claims to our belief. They would be convicted of the crimes of which they are guilty; but by what process of fair argumentation could you bring the verdict recorded against them to disprove the divinity of a system of religion which is supported by the evidence of prophecy, of miracle, of testimony, its own internal purity, and its more than magic power in the renovation and transformation of the most impure and debased of men?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Well, perhaps I made a slight mistake by saying that the vices of the clergy tend to shake our confidence in the divinity of our faith. It would have been more correct to say, they have a tendency to make us mistrustful of the integrity of the clerical character. But will you not admit that they have a most pernicious influence over the popular mind—more especially on young men who are just entering into active life?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Yes, Sir, I readily concede that the vices of the clergy have a more pernicious effect on the morals of society than the vices of players, because the clerical character is held in higher estimation, and because the clergy have free access to families who would feel themselves degraded if a player was to be introduced into their company. The clergy who support the dignity of their

profession, as the great majority of them do, are esteemed and respected—their friendship is highly valued and assiduously cultivated; but players are doomed to neglect when off the boards—they are shunned in the ordinary intercourse of social life, and kept in a state of exclusion, which is something like an instinctive evidence, pervading all classes, with a few exceptions, that they must be kept aloof from the sacred precincts of the family circle. And it is to this sensitive abhorrence, which the virtuous part of society feels, against any familiar intercourse with players, that we are to attribute the comparatively trifling injury which the profligacy of their private character does to the morals of the public; but if ever this safeguard should be broken down—if ever the line of demarcation which estranges us from them should be removed, and they should have free access to our homes—allowed to associate with our sons and daughters, they would introduce amongst us a degree of moral corruption which no authority could check or influence subdue.”

*Mr. Talbot.*—“But, Sir, I have known some players introduced into the highest intellectual circles of London and Edinburgh. Why, it is a well-known fact, that the Kembles and Siddons, Bannister, Young, and many others, were often guests at the mansions of some of the most virtuous and accomplished of our nobility.”

*Mr. Falkland.*—“I admit, Sir, that the intellectual eminence of a few of the profession has procured for them an admission into the society of literary men; but a virtuous public, and even that part of the public which admires the drama, with few exceptions, will not receive them into its private or social friendship. And in the case of the few exceptions into whose circles they have been received, shall we find no husband or father who has not had occasion to rue the day when he consented to call an actor his friend? It would be invidious to give names, or I could, from my personal knowledge, mention some instances of the lamentable results of intimacies with players. Enough was brought before the public to justify the remarks of the *Times*:—‘The conduct of persons who appear on the

stage has never been the most irreproachable; and it may be doubted whether such a mass of living vice, as the actors and actresses but too generally present in their private lives, is not more injurious to public morals than the splendid examples of virtue which they exhibit in their theatrical characters are useful.' "

*Mr. Talbot.*—"And, Sir, has no unsuspecting family had occasion to rue the day when they received into their friendship the ministers of religion? Have *they* never broken down the fence that guards the sanctity of domestic virtue? Have *they* never been publicly convicted of crime?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Yes, Sir; but when you compare the relative numbers of the two professions, you will be compelled to admit that there are but very few of the clerical order who trample on the decencies and virtues of social life, and yet continue to discharge their ministerial functions. Only let a clergyman be suspected, and he is shunned; but let him be convicted, and he is disrobed, and held in abhorrence, not only by the public, but by his brethren. And though the light and trifling spirits of the age are fond of traducing the reputation of the ministers of religion, and often impute to them crimes of which they are not guilty, yet I fearlessly assert that, with rare exceptions, they are an ornament to society, and are not surpassed, if equalled, by any order of men, for sobriety, chastity, benevolence, and all the virtues which bless and adorn social life."

*Mr. Proctor.*—"I very much dislike the introduction of reflections on the clerical order into these discussions, because they are irrelevant to the question before us, and tend to perplex and embarrass it rather than to bring it to a fair issue. The question is simply this, '*Is the moral tendency of theatrical amusements favourable to the cultivation and growth of private and public virtue?*' It is admitted that the members of the theatrical profession are, with few exceptions, loose in principles and profligate in manners; and our friend has attempted to prove that their profession has a tendency to make them so. Now, I think if these amusements are favourable to the cultivation and growth of virtue, we have a right to expect that the

persons who are employed to conduct them should exhibit in their own character the virtues which they profess to inculcate. But they do not. This is a fact. We never think of recommending our sons or our daughters to go to the actors and actresses of the stage, for models from which to mould their own character. If we knew that they were forming an intimacy with any of them, we should forbid it, under a full conviction that such intimacies would sink them in the esteem of the more respectable part of society, and expose them to the most powerful and seducing temptations. Thus far, I think, our friend has gained his point; but the question is not yet decided. The players may be profligate, and a close connection may be traceable between their professional labours and the corruption of their moral principles and habits; but notwithstanding this, *we* may derive great advantage from their theatrical representations. 'Their business is to recommend virtue and discountenance vice—to show the uncertainty of human greatness, the sudden turns of fate, and the unhappy conclusion of violence and injustice'—to expose the folly of pride, the baseness of ingratitude, the vileness of hypocrisy, and to prove, by an appeal to the senses, rather than by logical reasoning, that virtue is its own reward and vice its own tormentor; and surely, Sir," addressing himself to Mr. Falkland, "you will not presume to say that the immorality of 'their private lives' disqualifies *us* from receiving the moral benefit of their public labours? This, I think, would be a position which you could not maintain."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"But, Sir, I maintain that the frequenters of our theatres sustain, with rare exceptions, more moral injury from the representations they witness on the stage, than they receive moral benefit. Your friend Mr. Talbot admitted, in an early part of this discussion, that familiarities of expression and action take place on the stage which offend modesty, and if so, I appeal to you whether such expressions and actions can produce any other effect than an impure and demoralizing one."

*Mr. Proctor.*—"But these offensive familiarities are not of perpetual occurrence."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"But they are of frequent occurrence; and when they do occur they taint a pure mind and inflame a corrupt one. The following is a just critique on our popular comedies:—"The English comedy is like that of no other country. It is the school in which the youth of both sexes familiarize themselves with vice, which is never represented there as vice, but as mere gaiety.'"

*Mr. Proctor.*—"I admit the correctness of this statement to a certain extent; and will confess that I have at times wished my children out of the theatre, from an apprehension of the possibility of their sustaining some injury from what they saw and heard; yet I still cleave to the stage, for a reason which, I think, you will not controvert."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"And what may that be?"

*Mr. Proctor.*—"The stage is a source of amusement—I may say, of great amusement. It drives away the vapours, raises our spirits, and gives an agreeable variety to life. I willingly overlook what is objectionable in expression and action, for the sake of the high gratification which a good comedy yields; and so do others. To be candid, we think less about our virtue than our enjoyment. We must have some sort of excitement to help us to endure the cross purposes and the ups and downs of life."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"I have no doubt but the great majority who frequent the theatres, enjoy, even to ecstasy, the scenes which are exhibited, and retire from the enchanting place deeply regretting that the dull uniformity of life presents no attractions half so exciting. They smile and laugh, and even chuckle with delight, when the intrigue of double-dealing has ensnared its victim—when the lewd debauchee ogles his mistress, and by some sudden spring seizes her by surprise—when virtue is made to look ridiculous by the tenderness of her scruples—when the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion are caricatured by the profane witting of the stage—and when vice, disgusting and appalling vice, speaks out its profanity, or acts its part with the adroitness of consummate villainy. Then it is that 'the feast of soul' is enjoyed, and the spirits which have



been exhausted by *ennui*, or by the monotonous duties of a long day's labour, are recruited, and the agreeable alterative of the mind takes place. O yes, the stage amuses! It is indeed an elysium of bliss; and if it should be closed, many would weep and sigh who never wept or sighed over a remembrance of their sins; and deem that life a burden which was given, not for the participation of such polluting enjoyments, but for the nobler purpose of deriving pure felicity from the invisible Fountain of all goodness and excellence."

*Mr. Proctor.*—"But, my good friend, must we be always weeping over our sins, and never allowed to partake of any pleasure but what arises from religious pursuits?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"I presume, Mr. Proctor, you will admit that we ought *sometimes* to mourn over our sins; and ought *sometimes* to devote our attention to religious pursuits, unless we reject the entire system of revelation as a cunningly devised fable?"

*Mr. Proctor.*—"I think, Sir, I am as firm a believer in the Divine origin of Christianity as yourself, though probably we may differ on some high points of speculative opinion; yet I cannot perceive that Christianity condemns the theatre, nor am I disposed to object to its performances *in toto*, because an audience sometimes derives a momentary gratification from scenes and expressions which a severe moralist might condemn. I admit that the stage would derive some benefit by being submitted to a purifying process, but I would rather retain it as it is, with all its faults, than have it abolished."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"If, as Mr. Falkland appears to contend, the Christian religion condemns theatrical amusements, and if, notwithstanding, they are innocent and rational, it then follows that man was not made for the Christian religion, although that religion was made for man; the scandal of such an inference, and its infallible support of scepticism, cannot but make it highly desirable to prove that the Christian religion does *not* condemn them."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"If they are innocent! and if they are rational! But I maintain they are not innocent; and, if viewed as they ought

to be, in connection with our eternal destiny, I maintain they are not rational. But to avoid anticipating arguments which may be afterwards adduced, I at once challenge you to bring forward proof from the Scriptures in favour of these corrupting amusements."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"I have no positive proof to adduce in favour of them, as the Scriptures are entirely silent on the subject; but is not that silence a strong presumptive evidence in their favour? Did any of the apostles ever condemn the theatrical exhibitions of the times in which they lived? but would they not have done it if they thought their tendency had been at variance with the spirit and design of that religion which they came to propagate amongst mankind?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, because they did not in their epistles, which were addressed to the converted pagans who had renounced their former evil customs, condemn the gladiatorial exhibitions of Rome and of Greece, you think that a fair argument arises in favour of them?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, if they had considered them unfavourable to the morals of the people, they most certainly would have condemned them."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"What if the persons to whom they wrote had previously renounced them?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"But we have no proof that the early Christians did abstain from these sources of amusement."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"There, I think, you are mistaken. We have incontestable evidence to prove that the early Christians not only abstained from them, but condemned them in the most unqualified terms of reprobation; and I will now, with your leave, read a collection of testimonies on the subject, with which I was lately favoured by a friend:—

"‘The Romans,’ says Cæcilius, the heathen, in Minutius, ‘govern and enjoy the world, while you Christians are careful and mopish, abstaining even from lawful pleasures. You visit not shows, nor

are present at the pomps; you abhor the holy games—a melancholy ghastly people ye are.’

“‘True,’ says Octavius, ‘we Christians refrain from the play-house, because of its intolerable corruptions. We cannot be present at the plays without great sin and shame.’

“Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, who flourished about the year 170, in his book to Autolicus has these words:—‘It is not lawful for us to be present at the prizes of your gladiators, lest by this means we should be accessories to the murders there committed. Neither dare we presume upon the liberty of your shows, lest our senses should be tinctured and disoblged with indecency and profaneness. The tragical distractions of Tereus and Thyestes are nonsense to us. We are for seeing no representations of lewdness. God forbid that Christians, who are remarkable for modesty and reservedness—who are obliged to discipline and trained up in virtue—God forbid, I say, that we should dishonour our thoughts, much less our practice, with such wickedness as this!’

“Tertullian, who flourished in the same century, is copious upon this subject:—‘We Christians have nothing to do with the frenzies of the race-ground, the lewdness of the play-house, or the barbarities of the bear-garden.’

“Clement Alexandrinus, who lived about the year 200, affirms that a circus and theatre may not improperly be called the ‘chair of pestilence.’—*De Pædag.* lib. iii.

“St. Cyprian, who lived in the third century, has spoken at large upon the stage, and after having described the diversions of the play-house, he expostulates in this manner:—

‘What business has a Christian at such places as these? A Christian who has not the liberty so much as to think of an ill thing?—Why does he entertain himself with lewd representations? Has he a mind to discharge his modesty, that he may sin afterwards with the more boldness? Yes: this is the consequence. By using to see these things, he will learn to do them. Why need I mention the levities and impertinences in comedies, or the ranting distractions of tragedy? The folly of them is egregious, and unbecoming the gravity of believers.

‘As I have often said, these foppish, these pernicious diversions must be avoided. We must set a guard upon our senses, and keep the sentinel always upon duty. To make vice familiar to the ear is

the way to recommend it. And since the mind of man has a natural bent to extravagance, how is it likely to hold out under example and invitation? If you push that which totters already, whither will it tumble? In earnest; we must draw off our inclinations from these vanities. A Christian has much better sights than these to look at.'

"St. Cyril, who lived in the fourth century, in his Catechism for the newly baptized, has these words:—

'You have said at your baptism, I renounce thee, O Satan; I renounce all thy works and all thy pomps. The pomps of the devil are the diversions of the theatre, and all other the like vanities; from which David begs of God to be delivered: 'Turn away mine eyes,' says he, 'that they behold not vanity.' Do not then suffer yourself to be led away by a fondness for the entertainments of the stage, to behold there the extravagancies of plays full of wantonness and impurity.'"\*

The discussion between Mr. Talbot and Mr. Falkland was here broken off, but shortly afterwards resumed, as follows in the next chapter.

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## THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS.

### PART II.



THESE quotations which you have read from the ancient fathers," said Mr. Talbot, "merely express their private opinion on the expediency of not attending such scenes of amusement; but as they were not endowed with the spirit of infallibility, their opinions may be submitted to the ordeal of examination no less than your own."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Nay, Sir; these quotations do more than express the private opinion of the historians from whose works they are taken; they record the fact that the primitive Christians did not

\* The author is indebted to the late Rev. Mr. Simpson for these testimonies.

attend public places of amusement, because they knew that their moral tendency was unfavourable to the cultivation and growth of virtue. They also prove that the stage undergoes no moral change—indecant and profane in the olden times, when amusing Greeks and Romans; indecent and profane still—*semper eadem*.”

*Mr. Talbot*.—“But, Sir, do not the expostulations of these writers, and the arguments which they employ against an attendance at the theatres, lead us to the conclusion that some of the early Christians did attend them?”

*Mr. Falkland*.—“No doubt, Sir, that some of the early Christians did attend them; but their attendance was considered as the first step to the abandonment of their religious principles—as an act of inconsistency, which subjected them to the censures of their brethren—an approximation to the customs of the votaries of paganism, which, if persisted in, was visited by an exclusion from church-fellowship. This, I think, you must admit to be decisive of the opinion which the pure part of the primitive Christians held respecting the lawfulness and tendency of theatrical amusements.”

*Mr. Talbot*.—“But, Sir, waiving the opinion of the ancient fathers, allow me to ask you one question: If the moral tendency of such amusements be unfavourable to private virtue, how is it that there are no express prohibitions against them in the writings of the apostles?”

*Mr. Falkland*.—“But, Sir, do you believe that the apostles approved of every practice which they did not *expressly* condemn?”

*Mr. Talbot*.—“Why, yes, Sir, and I think there is strong presumptive evidence in favour of such an opinion. Were they not employed to furnish us with a code of laws for the government of our conduct? and is not that code perfect? If, then, there be no law to condemn our attendance at such places of amusement, are we not at liberty to believe that their silence is a tacit, though not a positive sanction?”

*Mr. Falkland*.—“If, Sir, we adopt the principle for which you are now contending, we shall be reduced to the necessity of admitting

that every modification of evil, which is not expressly condemned by the sacred writers, is actually sanctioned by them. The absurdity of such an opinion is not more flagrant than its tendency would prove pernicious to the welfare of society. Is the crime of gaming, or bull-baiting, or of forgery expressly condemned by the Scriptures? and yet, Sir, would you venture to appeal to the silence of the Scriptures as a tacit sanction of these vices? Some of the vices to which human nature is addicted, in every age and in every country, are expressly condemned, while others, which spring out of local customs, and casual temptations, are condemned only by implication. As a proof of the correctness of this assertion, nothing is said in Scripture against the savage custom of exposing children; nothing against slavery; and nothing expressly against duelling. But is not the exposing of children condemned in that charge against the Romans that they were 'without natural affection?' Is there not a strong censure against slavery conveyed in the command to 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you?' and against duelling, in the general prohibition of murder contained in the sixth commandment?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"I admit the validity of your argument, in its application to the crimes which you have mentioned, because they are the more refined modifications of crimes which are expressly condemned; but permit me to say that I do not recollect any passages in the sacred volume, which by a fair implication, really condemn theatrical amusements."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, by your permission, I will quote a few. 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful' (Psal. i. 1). Does not this passage condemn our going into the assemblies of the ungodly? 'But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment' (Matt. xii. 36). Are there no idle—no profane words spoken on the stage? and if it be a crime to utter them, can it be less than a crime to go and listen to them? 'Let

no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers' (Eph. iv. 29). Do no corrupt communications proceed from the mouth of players? and if it be a crime to advance them, can it be less than a crime to receive them? 'But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks' (Eph. v. 3, 4). Are there no filthy expressions—no unhallowed jesting on the stage? and if these vices are not to be named amongst Christians, ought they to be sanctioned by them? 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you' (1 Pet. iv. 3, 4.) Does not the apostle, in this passage, commend those to whom it was addressed, for having renounced their former revellings and banquetings? and does he not arm them against the reproaches which their exemplary conduct would bring upon them? and can we suppose that, if the apostle was now on earth, he would give his sanction to the practice of some modern Christians, who are to be seen, now at church, and anon at the theatre?—now receiving the sacrament on bended knees, and anon kindling into rapture by the exhibitions of the stage?—now giving utterance to the solemn words, *O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us miserable sinners*, and anon applauding expressions and sentiments which no lips can articulate but the lips of impurity? And, Sir, lest we should, through inadvertency, expose ourselves to the hazard of being overcome by the force of temptation, are we not commanded to 'abstain from all appearance of evil?' (1 Thess. v. 22);—to have 'no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them?' (Eph. v. 11). Are not these injunctions violated by those who frequent the theatre? Are we not taught to pray, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver*

*us from evil?* and do we not offer a violence to our own belief, and an insult to our Father in heaven, when we pass from the attitude of prayer, into the place over which the evil spirit reigns in undisturbed sovereignty, and where temptations of the most seducing tendency abound?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"But, Sir, in the application of these passages of Scripture against an attendance on theatrical amusements, you have taken for granted that their moral tendency is injurious to the cultivation and growth of private and public virtue, which, permit me to say, without intending to reflect on your good sense, is a species of logical artifice, which I did not suppose you would condescend to employ. It is an attempt to carry a position by surprise, which you should have approached openly—a jesuitical manœuvre to take the question of debate by the adroitness of a sheer cunning, rather than by fair argumentation. If, Sir, you had first proved that their tendency on the morals of society is, what you assert it to be, injurious and pernicious, I grant there would be a propriety in the application of the passages of the Bible which you have made, and the contest would soon be terminated; but, as that point has not been proved, and as I now challenge you to the proof of it, allow me to say that your reasoning has produced no effect."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"You are at perfect liberty to examine any arguments which I may adduce against theatrical amusements with the utmost degree of severity, and to employ what terms you please when expressing your opinion of their character, or of their effect; but, Sir, you cannot expect that I shall submit to your descriptions if I think them unjust. You accuse me of taking for granted what remains to be proved, which, you say, is not only unfair but useless. But I appeal to your candour if I took more for granted than what was tacitly admitted in proof, if not actually recorded. Has it not been admitted, that expressions are sometimes uttered on the stage which the lips of virgin modesty could not utter? If so, will you presume to say, that the quotation which I made does not condemn them—'But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall



speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment?' Has it not been admitted, that expressions are uttered, and some actions are performed in the theatre, which have a tendency to corrupt the minds of the actors and actresses? and if so, will you say that the injunction which commands us to *abstain from even the appearance of evil*, does not prohibit our witnessing such actions or listening to such expressions? If this be not proof against theatrical amusements, what will you call proof? If this argument does not fairly apply, it is not because it has not strength to strike, but because you are endeavouring to raise the dust, that you may bear off your colours to prevent them being taken. But that you may not shout victory on your retreat, nor taunt me with unfair dealing when you are going down, I will consent to clear the space, and meet you on the question of the obvious and direct influence of the stage on the morals of society."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"I grant, Sir, that the Bible censures all indecent and profane expressions, and that it points the severity of its rebuke against every action which has a demoralizing tendency either on the mind of the performer or the spectator; but I presume you will not take upon yourself to say, that our best and most popular comedies come under this sentence of condemnation? There are two questions, I apprehend, which have an immediate claim on our attention—first, What is the design of comedy? and, secondly, Will the desired result be attained through its instrumentality? In reply to the first question, I will quote the language of the celebrated Dr. Blair:—"Comedy proposes for its object, neither the great sufferings nor the great crimes of men: but their follies and slighter vices—those parts of their character which raise in beholders a sense of impropriety, which expose them to be censured and laughed at by others, or which render them troublesome in civil society." And I doubt not, but with all your rancour against the amusements of the theatre, you will agree with him in the following opinion which he pronounces on the tendency of such a mode of attack:—"This general idea of comedy, as a satirical exhibition of the improprieties and

follies of mankind, is an idea very moral and useful. There is nothing in the nature, or general plan of this kind of composition that renders it liable to censure. To polish the manners of men, to promote attention to the proper decorum of social behaviour, and above all, to render vice ridiculous, is doing a real service to mankind.' This is the design which comedy proposes to accomplish; and now, Sir, we will, if you please, pass on to the consideration of the second question, Will the desired result be attained through its instrumentality? By the exhibition of folly and vice, in the persons of the actors and actresses, who are held up to ridicule and censure, a moral effect is produced on the audience, who retire from such a scene, where the absurdities of the human character have been exhibited to their view, infinitely more disgusted by them, than they ever felt when listening to the grave lecture of censure or condemnation from the pulpit. And I think, Sir, you will admit that the worthy doctor has given us a proof of the correctness of his judgment, when he said, that, 'Many vices might be more successfully exploded by employing ridicule against them, than by serious attacks and arguments.' And though, Sir, I have too much reverence for the pulpit to treat it with contempt, and form too high an estimate of its moral utility in correcting the disorders of society, to run it down, yet I doubt whether it *can* wield such a keen and powerful weapon against the folly and vices of the times, as the well-regulated and well-conducted stage."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Your last remark, Sir, savours so much of infidelity, that it is both offensive to my taste, and repugnant to my understanding; and though it does not affect the question at issue, yet I cannot let it pass without replying to it. The pulpit, Sir, when it is the oracle of truth, is denominated the *power of God*—that moral instrument which he uses to renew and sanctify our corrupt nature; and on which he has conferred the singular honour of employing it as the means of subverting the idolatry of ancient and modern times, and of reclaiming many thousands of the children of disobedience to the wisdom of the just; but has

he ever identified himself with the stage? has he ever employed the stage to turn men from darkness to light—from the power of Satan to himself? O no! Did the stage ever recover Greece or Rome from their licentious and barbarous rites and ceremonies? It found them corrupt, and corrupt it left them. And what has it done for modern Paris, where it exists in the plenitude of its glory? There you have a proof of the weakness of its strength to reform a people, and of the charm of its power to corrupt them. Indeed, Sir, it requires a high degree of moral corruption as the basis of its exhibitions, for it will be found that its performers, and its admirers, are alike strangers to that elevated moral purity, which brings the human spirit to some degree of resemblance to the immaculate sanctity of the Divine nature. Hence, while many who profess and call themselves Christians, rank amongst its advocates and its friends, it is a fact too notorious to be concealed, that they who are a *peculiar people*, and whose moral peculiarities are those which the Scriptures hold out as the distinctive evidences of the Christian character, shun it, as the habitation of evil, from whence they are excluded no less by the force of principle than by the voice of authority. A real Christian in a theatre, animated and delighted with the scenes which he must behold, and with the sentiments and expressions which he must hear, would be as great a phenomenon as a stage player weeping at church when confessing his sins, or overpowered with gratitude when receiving, on his knees, the sacramental memorials of the Saviour's death."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"I was not aware, Sir, that the accidental expression of an opinion, which has no bearing on the question at issue, would have called forth such a spontaneous burst of disapprobation; and though it would not be very difficult to turn back some of your pointed interrogations to your own annoyance, yet as that would probably consume too much of our time, we will, if you please, confine our remarks in future to the subject under discussion. To my questions, Sir, if you please."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Well, Sir, then to the first question. You have

given such a very flattering description of the *design* of comedy, that you remind me of a certain painter who engaged to draw a likeness that should represent a whole fraternity, but when he produced it, it was found to resemble no one, having been sketched from fancy rather than real life. I admit that a comic writer, of rare and extraordinary powers, could get up a piece that would keep in view, through the whole of its plot, the censure and reprobation of the follies and vices of mankind; but have the writers of English comedy done this? Did not the author from whom you have made your quotations speak the truth when he said, '*that the English comedy has been too often the school of vice?*' And is it not so? Do not the most popular plays that are acted on the English stage exhibit such scenes as must compel virtue, if present, to hide her blushing face, and wish herself away? Do they not give utterance to sentiments and expressions, which, to say the least, border on profanity and blasphemy, and which, if admired or approved of, must contaminate and defile?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"But, Sir, I hope in the ardour of your zeal against the stage, you will not overlook the distinction which the wisest and best of men have made between the *use* and the *abuse of a thing*. I grant that certain abuses, at various periods of its history, have disgraced this department of the drama; but what then? is it an argument against the thing itself, any more than the impositions of priestcraft are arguments against the value of true religion? I grant you that the most obscene and licentious compositions have disgraced the stage, but is the abuse of a thing any objection against its use? Licentious writers of the comic class, as Dr. Blair very justly remarks, have too often had it in their power to cast a ridicule upon characters and subjects which did not deserve it; but this is a fault not owing to the nature of comedy, but to the genius and turn of the writers of it."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"It happens unfortunately, however, for your side of the question, that its *abuse* has hitherto been almost the universal characteristic of comedy, while its *use* has scarcely ever

been exemplified. Indeed, I defy any one who has a regard for propriety to go to a theatre without hearing something to shock his moral feelings."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, Sir, you are aware that no play can be acted on the English stage unless it is licensed by the lord-chamberlain, fourteen days before it makes its appearance in public; and do you not know that he is invested with full power to prohibit the representation of any play, if he thinks it militates against the interests of virtue?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, if I understand you, it is lawful to introduce any play on the stage which the lord-chamberlain licenses?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Exactly so, Sir."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Indeed! is not this rather singular! But if a licentious play should pass through the chamberlain's office without being detected, and come to be represented on the stage, what would be its reception? Are you quite sure that it would be hissed off by a British audience?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Nothing, Sir, can be a stronger proof of the respect which a British theatrical audience feels for pure virtue, than the well-known opposition made to the re-appearance of K——, after his disgraceful conduct."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"That determined opposition on the part of the more respectable public was very gratifying; but yet I am decidedly of opinion, that if he had absented himself for a few months, or weeks, till the public feeling had somewhat subsided, he would have met with a cordial reception on his re-appearance on the stage. But he was precipitate, he did not dream that there could be much more virtue before the scenes than behind; in this, so far happily, he was mistaken. He forgot that many who will connive at the vices of the stage while they remain in comparative obscurity, or are only whispered abroad in private circles, dare not, out of respect to the decent little observances to which they are attached, connive at them when they are sent out of a court of justice with a badge of indelible infamy hanging about their

necks. His precipitancy was the cause of his rejection, rather than his crime; for even his greatest opponents promised him their support, if he would refrain, only for a fortnight, from appearing on the boards, in deference to the taste and voice of the public."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Well, Sir, after the public had expressed their disapprobation of his disgraceful conduct, and compelled him to perform a theatrical penance, did you expect them to force him off the stage for ever?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"No, Sir, I did not expect it. I know them too well. The vices of the players will never be the means of excluding them from the stage, if they possess the talent of pleasing the admirers of the drama. These are a humane people whose mantle of charity is so broad, that it will easily cover a multitude of sins; and though some of them, when goaded by the severe invectives of the press, will raise their indignant voice against the bold transgressor who passes at once from a court of justice, where his delinquencies have been exhibited in all their enormity, to the stage, the so-styled school of morals, yet the lapse of a short interval will soon induce an oblivion of his offences, and the charms of his acting will soon re-establish him in the favour of the public. But I must now return to the question under consideration. It is not, What will a theatrical audience do, when an actor is convicted in a court of justice of one of the worst of crimes that can be committed against the sanctity of domestic honour and happiness? but, What is such an audience *accustomed to do*, when a lewd or profane comedy—a comedy which is the abuse of the thing—a comedy which is the school of vice—is brought on the stage, and acted in their presence?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, Sir, I presume you know that the public often reject plays?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Yes, when they are not to their liking."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Well, Sir, then the point is decided."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Nay, good Sir, not till you have proved that their lewdness, their profanity, and their demoralizing tendency,

was the cause of their being rejected. Prove that, and you have gained your point, and redeemed the audience from the heavy charge which I bring against it, of having uniformly given the least degree of support to the purest plays, and the greatest degree of support to the most objectionable. When the writers of comedy mix up with their plots incidents which we could not tolerate in virtuous life, and introduce characters in their scenes which we should shun as the corrupters of our manners, and do this to excite ridicule and contempt against the religion of our country by holding pious people up to obloquy, the audience have uniformly exclaimed, 'Ah, ah, so we would have it! This is to our taste!' The play is again and again called for. What you call the abuse of the thing, has been, and still is, more popular than the thing existing in what you call its purity. How will you account for this, unless you admit that the taste of the audience is formed from the character of their amusements, which tend to deprave and vitiate it?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, Sir, I admit that many who attend our theatres are persons of dubious virtue; yet, formerly a great play-goer, I can flatly contradict this imputed propensity on the part of the public to applaud a licentious play. I have always heard noble sentiments echoed in public applause, and, on several occasions, the lurking remains of the old broad comedy received with marked disapprobation. And whatever be the opinion of those who do *not* go to the theatre, these facts will be corroborated by all who *do*."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"You say that all who go to plays corroborate the facts that noble sentiments are always applauded, and obscene expressions are marked with disapprobation. Now, Sir, I can flatly contradict this assertion, though not from personal observation, yet from undoubted testimony. I grant that fine passages, delivered in an eloquent style, and which breathe the noble sentiments of patriotism, and valour, and benevolence, and indignation against some *unpopular vice*, are heard with pleasure; but the self-same audience, which makes the house ring with its acclamations on these occasions, not only silently sanctions but likewise loudly applauds

profanity and indecency at other times. If this be not the case, how is it that the plays, which are the school of vice, still appear on the stage, and still retain their hold on popular favour?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"What plays do you refer to?"

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Why, Sir, *The Hypocrite* is one."

*Mr. Talbot.*—"The *Hypocrite*! What! do you object to *The Hypocrite*?—A comedy which was applauded by royalty, and in which a striking example is afforded of the attempt of fanaticism to undermine the principles and well-being of society for its own individual advantage, under the specious garb of religion! Surely, you must be a very fastidious person indeed, to find anything objectionable in that most excellent comedy! I can hardly think you are serious."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"The design of that comedy is to hold up personal piety to ridicule and contempt, by associating it with the weakness of the intellect, the vulgarity of unpolished manners, and the vices of the human character; and though the writer makes an effort at the conclusion to redeem it from such an imputation, yet such is its obvious tendency, and such is the effect which it is known to produce on an audience. But as I wish to shape my objections into a tangible form, allow me to say that the introduction and exposure on the stage of any person making pretensions to elevated piety is, of itself, an objectionable feature, and more calculated to excite prejudice against all professions of religion, than to induce the hypocrite to throw off the mask. Is this favourable to the cultivation and growth of virtue? It may be of the virtue of a theatrical audience, which reaches not the maturity of its growth till it has acquired the art of caricaturing righteousness, after it has been accustomed to make a mock of sin; but it is destructive of that pure religion which teaches us to avoid all 'foolish talking and filthy jesting;' and to correct our personal imperfections, instead of making sport with the vices of others. I have read this disgusting comedy, and I do not hesitate to say, that its indecent allusions and profane language, are enough to corrupt any mind; and that the woman who can re-



tire from the theatre after the curtain drops with a desire to see it performed again, must have lost all that refined delicacy of feeling which forms the greatest ornament of her sex.

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Stop, Sir! I cannot allow this libel to be pronounced, without entering my protest against it."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"No, Sir, it is not a libel. The allusions, the language, and some of the actions of that play, are more becoming a house of ill-fame than the school of virtue, as you wish me to believe the play-house is; and I am conscious that no decent persons, in any rank of life, would tolerate such allusions or actions in their families. Allow me to ask one question, What opinion would you form of a female who would consent to read that comedy in the presence of an indiscriminate assemblage of young people?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Of course, Sir, I should not solicit her to do it."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"But suppose she *was* solicited to do it, and suppose she *did* it without faltering and without blushing, what opinion would you form of her modesty, or of the tone of her mind? Would you like that female to be either your mother, your wife, your sister, or your daughter?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Perhaps not."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"So I presume; for, as the poet says—

'Immodest words admit of no defence,  
For want of decency is want of sense.'

If, then, you would not like to hear a female read that play in a private party, especially if that female was your own daughter, how can you attempt to justify your conduct in wishing her to go and see it performed?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Why, there is a little difference between the two cases."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Yes, I grant there is a little difference between the circumstances of the two cases; but, Sir, I appeal to your candour and to your judgment, whether that comedy, when acted on the stage, can promote the growth of virtue, which would have a demoralizing effect if read in a private circle?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"In a theatre, each one is lost in the mass of the audience, and hence no immediate effect is produced."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then, Sir, how can the stage, when it exists in its purity, promote the growth of virtue, and how, when it is abused, does it become the school of vice, if no immediate effect is produced by the sentiments and actions which are there delivered and performed?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"I mean, Sir, that a female does not sustain that injury in the opinion of others, who goes to see this comedy performed, which she would, if she read it to a promiscuous assembly."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"I grant it, Sir; but will her imagination sustain no injury by the polluting impressions which it will receive? Will her moral taste sustain no injury by the obscene sentiments and allusions which she will hear? Will she retire as pure from all corrupt associations, as she was when she first entered the theatre? Will her memory carry away no expression which you would rather she would forget?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"But, Sir, when people become familiar with the stage, none of these evil effects are ever felt, which you imagine must be the consequence of their attendance."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"They may not be felt so forcibly as at first, because by habit the taste becomes reconciled to them, which proves that the stage lowers the high tone of virtue, and brings it down so softly and so imperceptibly on a level with impurity, that eventually its more disgusting forms and expressions merely excite the passing smile or the burst of laughter.

'Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,  
As to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.'

*Mr. Talbot.*—"It is no use, Sir, to argue against facts. I have gone to the theatre without being injured by it; and I have known many of my friends who have never been injured by it."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"It may be so; but would you like a son or a

daughter to acquire a passion for theatrical amusements? And would you suffer them, if they had acquired it, to go alone?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"No, Sir, I should not like my children to become *passionately* fond of the theatre, though I should not object to their occasional attendance, yet I would not suffer them to go alone."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Not like them to become passionately fond of an amusement, which is intended and calculated to promote the growth of their virtues! Surely, good Sir, you don't wish their virtues to be stunted for want of nutriment; and though I can easily conceive that the expense attending this source of gratification and moral improvement, may form one formidable objection against its repeated indulgence, yet, can money be better laid out, than on the cultivation of our children's virtuous principles and habits? Suppose, for example, you have a son who is somewhat inclined to an evil course—one, over whose mind the grave lectures of morality which the clergy deliver have lost their influence—who is rather prone to treat parental authority with contempt; would you not wish to see him cherish a passion for theatrical exhibitions, which, according to the opinion of Mr. Proctor, and in which opinion you concur, are designed and adapted to recommend virtue and discountenance vice; and thus prove, by an appeal to the senses, rather than by a process of reasoning, that virtue is its own reward, and vice its own tormentor? If he should feel no deep interest in these exhibitions, it is not likely that they will produce any more powerful effect on his mind, than the grave lectures of morality which he instinctively abhors; but if his passions are strongly excited, and he returns to this school of wisdom and of virtue, *con amore*—if he cannot refrain from going, without doing violence to his feelings—if he long for the hour of evening dress, and for the agreeable alterative of mind, which is to divert him from the dull, monotonous duties of his station—if he enter into the spirit of the comedy, which usually makes a libertine the most attractive character in the piece—or if the spirit of that character enters into him—do you not suppose that he will soon be reclaimed from vice, and be so smitten with

the charms of virtue, as to follow her through evil and through good report? And suppose several such young men should meet in the lobby of a theatre, which you know, Sir, is not impossible; and suppose they should sit together during the play, and should retire together, after the curtain falls, and the last charms of the comic muse have passed from the eye and the ear, do you not think that they will very naturally begin to resolve on amending their evil course, and as naturally resolve to become chaste, and temperate, and domesticated in their habits? Of course you cannot for a moment imagine that they will retire from this school of virtue to the tavern or the brothel! No, Sir! The comic muse would stand in their way, and dispute their passage, even if they should have a secret predilection for such haunts; as a dumb ass once reproved the madness of a certain prophet, on whose mind no other agent of persuasion could operate!"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"Satire is no argument, Sir."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"But it often puts forth a biting one, from under the folds of its concealment; yet, as you seem to dislike it, I will dismiss it, and return to the more grave form of debate. Permit me, then, to ask you, if the company into which the young are introduced at a theatre, does not form a very powerful objection against it?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"This is an objection against theatrical amusements, which I have been expecting to make its appearance for some time; and now it is out, I am not unwilling to meet it. I will then confess, 'that the English box lobbies are too much disgraced by the open display of female prostitution,' and that too many of the baser sort of our own sex frequent the theatre; yet, as the wisest and the best are always to be found in attendance on the comic muse, we may very easily keep with them, and thus avoid that contagion of evil, to which you imagine we are necessarily exposed. We know that vice, like every other marketable commodity, will be offered for sale in all great public assemblages. But, Sir, can you see the vast majority of an audience rivetted on the scenic representation, with-

out confessing that many a youthful passion is preserved from the *out-of-doors* temptation to vice, by this intellectual occupation of his time within? London, and all large towns, are, by reason of their congregated numbers, hotbeds of vice; you know licentiousness would find other haunts, and not be one whit limited by the suppression of the theatre; it would be hard, indeed, that virtue should imprison itself, because vice frequented the same resort; on that principle we might not walk the great streets of the metropolis, in broad day light, because of the 'polluted' neighbours on all sides."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Then you admit that the theatre is one of the haunts of vice; and yet you say that the wisest and the best are always to be found in attendance there, *and from choice!* How odd, that the wisest and the best of our wise and good men and women, young and old, should choose to go where the most profligate and licentious resort! Surely, you will not adduce their conduct on this point, as a conclusive argument in favour of their superior wisdom, or their superior love of virtue! You say, if we go, we may keep with them! But, how shall we know the wisest and the best from the most depraved, in such a promiscuous throng as usually crowd a theatre?—From instinct? or from some secret sign which, like that of the Masonic order, is concealed from every one but the initiated?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"When I go to the theatre, if I go alone, I keep apart from others; and if I go in company, I keep with them; so that I have no intercourse with the general audience."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Very possibly; but do all who attend the theatre adopt the same judicious maxim?"

*Mr. Talbot.*—"They may if they choose, and if they do not, they alone are to blame."

*Mr. Falkland.*—"Yes, they may! but do they? No, Sir, they do not! Is it not there that the evil spirits of impurity spread their nets for thoughtless and unsuspecting youth? Is it not there that he often picks up an acquaintance, who leads him, after the play is concluded, to the tavern—to the gaming-table—and to the house of

ill-fame? Is it not there, that the profligate female practises her arts of seduction,\* that he learns a profane language, and familiarizes himself with vice in its most disgusting forms? Is it not to this school of virtue—to this resort of the wisest and the best—to this elysium of bliss—to this paradise of excellence—that many of the young of both sexes have ascribed their ruin? Wonder, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth! The school of virtue teaching vice!—the resort of the wisest and the best the haunt of the most licentious!—the elysium of bliss the common receptacle of outcast misery!—where iniquity reigns, as in the high place of its dominion, and on which thousands look in all the bitterness of anguish, as the spot where they fell from their original purity and honour to degradation and crime!”

*Mr. Talbot.*—“You can paint, Sir.”

*Mr. Falkland.*—“But not the theatre as it is. That’s impossible. I cannot describe the evils, the contaminating evils, to which a young person is exposed who visits this haunt of vice—this dwelling-place of sin—this temple of lewdness, of whose priests and priestesses ‘it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret’—this Augean stable of infamy, which no waters have ever been able to cleanse. You say, that while the youth is within the theatre he is preserved from the temptations which are out of doors—a truism no one will doubt; and so he is, when in a gaming-room, and so he is when in a tavern; but, Sir, is he not, when coming away from the theatre, exposed to the out-door temptations, and very often prepared, by what he sees and hears, to yield more easily to them. The following fact, which is too well attested to be denied, lets us into the awful secret of the tendency of theatri-

\* An intelligent gentleman, who had served the office of constable in a large midland town, once remarked to the author, “I observed the number of prostitutes was considerably increased very soon after the opening of the theatre; many also coming from neighbouring towns during the theatrical season.” Strange, indeed, if the stage be the school of virtue, that these pests of society should always be found existing near it! When we see the vultures flying towards any particular spot, there we may expect to find death and corruption.

cal exhibitions; and if it were necessary, I could adduce many instances of the most promising young men, and of the most amiable females, who, by frequenting a theatre, have lost their character; blasted their prospects of happiness for life, and brought down the gray hairs of their parents with sorrow to the grave:—

“The robberies committed daily in the streets, during the representation of the *Beggar's Opera*, were beyond the example of former times; and several thieves and robbers confessed in Newgate, that they raised their courage in the playhouse by the songs of their hero, Macheath, before they sallied forth on their desperate nocturnal exploits. So notorious were the evil consequences of its frequent representation become, that the Middlesex justices united with Sir John Fielding in requesting Mr. Garrick to desist from performing it, as they were of opinion that it was never represented on the stage, without creating an additional number of real thieves.’ Thus we see the debt of gratitude which the morality of the public soon contracted with this agent of its reformation, who, for sixty-three nights in succession, during the first season of his labours, delivered his maxims of wisdom, and his lessons of virtue, which, by some peculiar fatality, became the means of corrupting the audience to a most alarming extent; but to hold the stage responsible for this, would be, of course, a breach of the law of charity! ‘The second season of this opera was as productive as the first; nor were the provincial stages without their gleanings from the poet’s harvest; it was acted fifty nights at Bath and Bristol. Not only Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, but Minorca, and other distant regions, saw it in their theatres; while its songs were everywhere to be read on fans, handkerchiefs, and fire-screens.’ Wherever this thief-maker went, he was received with raptures by the admirers of the drama; they sung his praises and gave him the homage of their affection as the idol god of their theatrical adorations, and he had, like ancient Moloch, the high gratification of seeing many of his devoted worshippers doomed to an untimely destruction. And yet, Sir, with such facts staring you in the face—with such confessions of convicted guilt—you have the

temerity to maintain that the theatre is favourable to the cultivation and the growth of public and private virtue! Can you hope to gain proselytes to your opinion? Do you imagine that we are to be duped into the admission of an assertion which no argument can support, which recorded facts so unequivocally disprove, and which the worst men, in common with the best, reject as an insult offered to the obvious dictates of their understanding? Do you suppose that we have reached the dotage of our existence, when the intellect, paralyzed by some extraordinary visitation of Heaven, or worn out by the intensity of its own labours, is to sit down at the feet of absurdity, to receive the monstrous extravagancies of convicted falsehood as the lucid and resistless enunciations of oracular truth? No, Sir. A general belief is gone abroad, and it exists no less firmly amongst many of the admirers of the drama, than amongst its most determined opponents, that while the stage may be vindicated as a source of amusement, an attempt to vindicate it as the handmaid of virtue is no less disreputable to the understanding, than it is to the moral taste of the advocate, who, however dexterous he may be in his pleadings, labours under the disadvantage of appearing in court, after the judges have taken the verdict of an honest jury."

*Mr. Proctor.*—"I am now, Sir, decidedly of your opinion on this point; though I must confess I have often enjoyed a good play. The stage, in its present state, amuses many, and gratifies their taste, but it certainly does defile the imagination, and too often pollutes the heart; and where one young person receives any moral good, very many, I do believe, are corrupted and ruined. It may be defended as a source of amusement, but it is no handmaid of virtue; it is a very demon in the art of seduction. I had many qualms of conscience, when I did go to the theatre; but it is now more than two years since I entered one, and I must confess, that the present discussions have satisfied me, that I have acted a wise and a safe part by abstaining from going; nor will I ever go again, or allow any child of mine to go. In fact, I think it would be a public good, to shut up all the theatres in the country."



*Mr. Falkland.*—"My respected friend, I assure you, I am highly gratified to hear from your lips, such a candid confession and such a noble resolve; and I think my formal antagonist in these discussions, on cool reflection, will admit, that a passion for theatrical amusements had better be repressed than encouraged; as it is always hazardous, and sometimes fatal, especially to the young and incautious."

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## UNITARIANISM RENOUNCED.



THE power of early impressions and education is universally admitted; and when erroneous views have been imbibed from infancy, and become associated with everything that is hallowed in our domestic recollections, the influence exercised by them on the mind is so strong as very generally to maintain undisputed authority throughout life. Truth will sometimes, however, assert her supremacy, and succeed in producing conviction, even where she has to contend with the most deep-rooted feelings and long-cherished prejudices. These remarks are suggested by the history of Mr. Macfarlane, an intelligent and pious young man, whom I met at the house of Mr. Proctor, on the occasion of the discussion narrated in the foregoing chapters. I had frequently heard of him from a friend, of whose church he was a member, and been led to take a great interest in him from the account which had been given me of his religious history and that of his sister. This I shall now proceed to narrate, as exhibiting the progress, from the frigid zone of Unitarianism, to the warmth and sunshine of pure evangelical religion.

Mr. Macfarlane's father was a wealthy merchant in the town where I resided, universally esteemed for his amiable character and

unsullied integrity. Descended from ancestors who had borne a distinguished part in the struggles for civil and religious liberty during the seventeenth century, he was himself the son of pious parents, but their death, within a short period of each other, while he was but a child, deprived him of the advantages which he might have derived from their example and instructions. Left to the care of a maternal uncle, whose sentiments were of no decided order, he grew up to manhood with no one to guide him in his religious belief; and having, on his first entering into business, formed an intimacy with some zealous Unitarians, he imbibed their opinions, and regularly attended the ministry of one of their most celebrated preachers. He was too eager in the pursuit of wealth to devote much time to speculative inquiries, and of too retiring a disposition to take any part in discussion when theological topics became the subject of conversation; but he cheerfully and conscientiously supported the benevolent institutions connected with his denomination, which he thought the most enlightened and intelligent in the kingdom. While he admitted the truth of the Christian religion, he thought its records so ambiguous, or so corrupted in the early ages, that they ought not to be implicitly received. "I will believe nothing," he often used to say, "which I cannot fully comprehend; and I feel myself as much at liberty to dispute the opinion of an apostle, when he speaks on any speculative doctrine, as I do to examine the opinion of any other man." He rejected the divinity of Jesus Christ as indignantly as a Christian would the divinity of the pagan deities—often expressed his surprise that any enlightened man could be brought to believe in the doctrine of the atonement—and regarded the belief in the reality of a supernatural influence over the human mind, as one of the corruptions of Christianity, which exposed it to the ridicule and contempt of infidels.

But though a decided Unitarian, he did not condemn those who differed from him, believing that the Supreme Being is altogether regardless of our speculative opinions, if we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with him. "If we are virtuous in this life we

shall be happy in the life to come,"—was with him a favourite saying. He was the living personification of the social virtues; and justly esteemed for his kindness, his generosity, his integrity, and universal benevolence. Mr. Macfarlane, Senior, was a widower, with two children, a son and daughter, who, at the time I speak of, were between twenty and thirty years of age. The son was in business with his father, and the daughter managed the household affairs. Miss Macfarlane was a young lady of amiable temper, retired in her habits, fond of reading, and devoted to the promotion of the happiness and comfort of her father and brother. As she had a good deal of leisure at her disposal, she was employed as the almoner of her father's bounty; and took much pleasure in this work of mercy.

She was somewhat religiously inclined; but as the system of religion under which she was educated possessed no power to interest the heart, her religion was confined to a cold assent to a few speculative opinions, and the observance of some external ceremonies. She occasionally read the Bible, but from her religious training she yielded no submission to its authority; and, as a natural consequence, she was strongly prejudiced against the evangelical sentiments of orthodox Christians. Though she had several friends belonging to their number, and among others Miss Reynolds, a young lady of decided piety, yet even with her, notwithstanding their great intimacy, she invariably declined to enter into conversation on the subject. She usually accompanied her father and her brother on the Sabbath to the Unitarian chapel, where the celebrated Dr. R—— preached, to whose ministry they were all much attached. On one occasion he delivered a discourse from the beautiful words of the psalmist:—"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm xvi. 11). After an eloquent dissertation on the nature of the Deity, and the assistance afforded by Him to those following the arduous path of virtue, he concluded thus:—"Supposing the ideas which I have set before you

to be no more than the speculations of a contemplative mind, such as were wont of old to be indulged by the philosophers of the Platonic school, still they would deserve attention, on account of their tendency to purify and elevate the mind. But when they are considered in connection with a revelation which we believe to be Divine, they are entitled to command, not attention only, but reverence and faith. They present to us such high expectations as are sufficient to determine every reasonable man to the choice of virtue, to support him under all his present discouragements, and to comfort him in the hour of death. Justly may they excite in our hearts that ardent aspiration of the psalmist:—‘My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; O! when shall I come, and appear before him?’ But with this wish in our hearts, never, I beseech you, let us forget what was set forth in the first part of this discourse;—that in order to arrive at the presence of God, *the path of life* must previously be shown to us by him, and that in this path we must persevere to the end. These two things cannot be disjoined—a virtuous life and a happy eternity.”

As they were conversing together in the evening of the Sabbath, a reference was made to this discourse, when young Macfarlane expressed the high degree of pleasure which it had given him. “I never,” he remarked, “heard a more interesting sermon. What a sublime prospect does Christianity open before us! I wonder how any intelligent person can reject it.”

“Yes,” said his father, “it was a very judicious sermon. I was much delighted with it. *We* have something to look forward to when it shall please God to remove us by death; for as I have often told you, *If we are virtuous in this life, we shall be happy in the life to come.*”

“But, father,” said the son, after a short pause, “if only the virtuous can attain to a state of felicity in heaven, as we were informed this morning, what will become of the wicked?”

“I cannot tell; and I think that Dr. R—— displayed his accustomed good sense in making no reference to them.”

“But, father, we know that the majority in every age, and in every country, are wicked; and it strikes me, though I confess I have never thought on the subject before, that if the Deity condescended to reveal a system of religion, to promote the present and future happiness of his creatures, he would reveal one that is adapted to the moral condition of the majority, rather than to that of the select few.”

“We have nothing to do with others; it is enough for us to know, that if we are virtuous in this life, we shall be happy in the life to come.”

The subject was now dropped till after their father had retired to rest, when it was resumed. “Your remark on the sermon we heard to-day,” said Miss Macfarlane to her brother, “I think is a very just one. It certainly demands attention. If the virtuous only can be saved, the great majority of the human race must perish.”

“Very true; and we know that many who become virtuous in old age, have been dissipated in their youthful days. Can such persons expect a state of future felicity as confidently as though they had always been virtuous? And, after all, what is virtue? It is simply a line of conduct that runs parallel with the requirements of the society amongst which we live, and which we know varies so much in different nations and amongst different people, that what some call a virtuous action, we should condemn as an outrage on the feelings of humanity. A Hindoo applauds the virtue of the eldest son, who sets fire to the pile which is to consume his deceased father and living mother; but were he to do such a deed here, he would be execrated as a monster, and amenable to the law. Can we suppose that the Supreme Being will award a state of future happiness to a Hindoo, for an action for which he would punish an European, by excluding him from heaven? Impossible!”

“And beside,” said Miss Macfarlane, “how shall we know when we have acquired that *exact degree* of virtue which will entitle us to expect a state of felicity in the life to come? The more I think on

the subject, the more I am perplexed. What shall we do, for I feel the subject too important to be dismissed?"

After some further conversation, they resolved to examine the Scriptures, to see if they could gain any information; and providentially they turned to the fifth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. There they read the following verses with deep interest:—"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." "Here we find," said Mr. Macfarlane, "the apostle speaking of the salvation of *the ungodly*, of *sinners*, and of *enemies*." They proceeded in their examination, and perceived, from many passages which they met with in other epistles, that the current language of the Scripture plainly and unequivocally proves, that the revelation of mercy was intended to benefit the guilty and depraved as well as the virtuous.

One passage particularly arrested their attention in the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians—"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." On reading these verses, Mr. Macfarlane remarked:—"We are to remember, that at the period when Christianity was first promulgated by the apostles, the whole of the Gentile world was sunk into a state of the grossest ignorance, superstition, and vice; and though some of its most celebrated philosophers and statesmen were distinguished for their love of virtue, yet the immense majority of the people were addicted to almost every species of gross immorality. If, then, a state of future felicity is reserved only for the virtuous, and no provision is made for the salvation of the wicked, the labours of the apostles must have been restricted to the few who had kept themselves from the moral corruptions of the age in which they lived. But such an opinion

receives no sanction from this passage, which speaks of the salvation of those who had their conversation in times past in the lusts of their flesh, 'fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.'"

On turning their attention to the brief delineation which the apostle has given of his own character before his conversion to the faith in Christ, they were struck with his declaration respecting the design of our Lord's mission. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." "You perceive," said Mr. Macfarlane to his sister, "the apostle says, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; and saved the chief of them, as a pattern for the encouragement of others who may deem themselves equally guilty, to hope in the mercy of God."

"We thus see," said Mr. Macfarlane, "that the epistles prove that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners from a state of future misery, and to fit them for heaven; but then comes the question, What degree of dependence ought we to place on their testimony? May they not have become corrupted in the course of time? or may not the writers of them have committed some mistake?"

"So, brother, we have been taught to believe, but it is possible that we may be mistaken. However, as we cannot now, by any process of inquiry, decide on the genuineness of the passages which we have been examining, let us turn our attention to the gospels, and see if they exhibit the same views on this subject as the epistles. Because we may fairly infer, that if the whole of the Bible is written by the inspiration of the Almighty, we shall find a continuity and harmony of thought running through the various parts of it, and especially on that paramount question which now engages our attention."

“As it is now getting very late,” Mr. Macfarlane observed, “we will not go into that question to-night; but I will contrive to get home to-morrow rather earlier than usual, when we will pursue our inquiries.”

“My mind, dear brother, is painfully excited by the discoveries we have already made, as they have convinced me that our theory of belief is in direct opposition to that of the apostles, who were initiated into the Christian faith by the oral instructions of Jesus Christ.”

“Yes, this I feel. But still the discovery should not distress us; it should rather excite our gratitude; for if we find, on more careful inquiry, that we have been holding false opinions, we can renounce them, and adopt the true system of belief.”

They continued their investigations of Scripture from evening to evening, sometimes together, sometimes apart, and made rapid progress in the knowledge of Divine truth.

“I have hitherto thought,” said Mr. Macfarlane, as he sat with his sister one evening, “that Jesus Christ came as a teacher, to instruct us how to attain to a state of future happiness, and to inculcate on us, by the purity of his example, the cultivation of the social virtues. However, on a careful examination of the New Testament, I feel very much struck with the express reason which He gave to his apostles, for his coming into the world—‘Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many’ (Matt. xx. 28). He certainly knew what he came to do—and he says he came to die—to die voluntarily, by giving his life, not giving it as an act of martyrdom, but as a ransom to redeem many. Now this must refer to the *many*, in some condition of danger; not to any select few of the amiable and virtuous, in no danger.”

“I also,” remarked his sister, “feel very forcibly impressed with the reason which Jesus Christ assigns for his going to visit Zaccheus, who appears to have been before his conversion a great sinner. ‘For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which



was lost' (Luke xix. 10). There is nothing about teaching, as the direct import of his mission, but seeking after sinners to rescue them from the danger of perishing. This harmonizes with the statement of the apostle Paul, which has already engaged our attention."

"Very true. And if we take for our guidance the undisputed axiom, that facts determine and explain theory, we may, by a careful examination of the narratives which are reported by the evangelists, make some safe progress in the inquiry we are now pursuing as to the design of the mission of Jesus Christ. You have been turning your attention to the conversion of Zaccheus, and I have been turning mine to that of the thief on the cross, both ranked among the chief of sinners; but both were converted and saved by faith in Christ. The malefactor, when dying, made his appeal to Jesus, saying, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom' (Luke xxiii. 42). How prompt and benign is the answer, 'Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise!' What a solace this promise must have been to the poor sufferer—a bright and soothing prospect in the midst of his agonies! And with what authority Jesus speaks—assuming the right of fixing the final destiny of this dying criminal, and of advancing him to the honour of associating with him in the celestial paradise! He must have been something more than man to speak thus, and to assume such a prerogative, on such an occasion."

"Such a conviction," observed Miss Macfarlane, "forced itself very strongly on my mind, when reading the Gospel of John, particularly the following passages, which never attracted my attention before: 'For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. . . . And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . . And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live

for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world' (John vi. 33, 35, 40, 51). 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . I and my Father are one' (John x. 15, 30). We here see that he claims an equality with his Father, which would have been an act of blasphemy to have done if he were only a man; he lays down his life of his own accord, for the benefit of man; asserts that the possession of everlasting life is made dependent on our believing on Him; and says, that if we do so, He will raise us from the grave at the last day."

"You have compressed within a very narrow compass, a series of truths which now appear novel to us both, though we must often have seen them when reading the New Testament; and which most certainly are of immense importance, demanding our most serious attention. Hitherto we have regarded Jesus Christ as a mere man, though one of a superior order—surpassing all other men in intelligence and personal excellencies; but I begin to regard him as God in the form of man, as on such an hypothesis, all his sayings and doings, I believe, will be found to harmonize. On coming home this evening, I stepped into a bookseller's shop, and asked for the best work on the divinity of Jesus Christ. I bought the one recommended, and here it is—*The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, by the Rev. Dr. J. P. Smith. Let us then postpone all further discussion on the subjects of our present inquiry, till we have carefully read Dr. Pye Smith's book. When we have done this, we shall be better qualified to pursue our inquiries, and arrive at some satisfactory conclusion. There are three leading questions we have to attend to—*First*, What is the testimony of the sacred writers as it relates to the person of Jesus Christ?—is he a mere man, or does he unite in his person the Divine with the human nature? *Second*, What is the express purpose for which he came into the world?—was it to teach the lessons of wisdom and of virtue, enforcing his instructions by the purity of his example? or was it for the purpose of redeeming sinners from some fatal danger? And, *third*, Are his

sufferings expiatory—the meritorious cause of human salvation? or must we look upon them as a contingent evil, inseparably connected with his mysterious history?”

“Yes,” said Miss Macfarlane, “these three questions will include everything we want definitively settled; and I hope the Spirit of wisdom from above will guide us in our researches, to understand what is revealed to us in the Bible. I will take, if you please, the Doctor’s second volume, which I see is an examination of the narratives given to us by the evangelists.”

“And I will go through his third volume, which gives us the testimony of the apostles; and when we have done this, we will examine together his first volume, which is a record of what the prophets predicted concerning him.”

The absence of Mr. Macfarlane, *Seur.*, for a few weeks, on his annual visit to a brother who resided in Yorkshire, gave them an opportunity of devoting their attention more uninterruptedly to the important inquiry in which they were now engaged. As they advanced, they felt the evidence in confirmation of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and his vicarious death, gradually increasing in clearness and force, till they arrived at the full conviction that he was the Son of God, on an equality with his Father, though appearing on earth as the Son of man, and giving his life as a ransom to redeem the guilty and worthless.

They now began to feel anxious in behalf of their father, who was living in the rejection of the essential truths of the Scriptures, under the delusive spell of Unitarian error. They, however, deemed it advisable to proceed with caution, lest he should peremptorily refuse to have any discussion whatever on the subject. On the Sabbath after his return, they excused themselves from going with him to chapel, which astounded him; but he had too much respect for the right of private judgment to attempt to impose any restraint. In the evening, as they were conversing together, he said, “Why did you leave the intelligent preaching of our learned minister, to hear the mysterious doctrines of Calvinism enforced? Have

you been as much pleased as you were with the excellent discourse we heard the Sunday before I left home?"

"The discourse which we then heard," replied his son, "we thought very excellent; but we were so much struck with the remark of Dr. R——, that the felicities of heaven are reserved only for the virtuous, that, on reflection, we could not agree with him; because on such an hypothesis the vast majority in every age, and in every country, would be consigned over to a state of hopeless misery."

"And do you now think that any other but virtuous people will ever be received into heaven?"

"On searching the Scripture, which we have done with diligence during your absence, we find that the ungodly—that transgressors—that those who are enemies to God by wicked works—that the children of disobedience—and that the chief of sinners, may be saved. This new view of the revelation of mercy, which is sanctioned by the current language of the Bible, appears to us more consistent with the benevolence of the Supreme Being, and much better adapted to the real character and condition of the great mass of mankind, than the statement of Dr. R——."

"By your permission, Papa," said Miss Macfarlane, "I will read Dr. Doddridge's 'Paraphrase and Improvement of one of our Saviour's Parables,' which I think is so excellent, and so much in point, that it will afford you as much pleasure as it has given me."

"I have no objection to your reading a quotation from Dr. Doddridge, because I have always considered him a moderate, as well as a very learned man. I think he is mistaken in his views of some of the speculative truths of revelation; but I like him as a practical writer."

The parable is contained in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel by Luke, and the paraphrase runs thus:—"But [Jesus] for the encouragement of these few penitents, as well as to rebuke the censorious and uncharitable Pharisees, spake to them this parable, and said,

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine, that were feeding together in the pastures of the wilderness, and go from place to place in search after it, and having at length found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, greatly rejoicing, as a man in such circumstances naturally would? And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, and says unto them with great pleasure, My friends, you may now rejoice with me; for my labour and search have not been in vain, but I have found my sheep which was lost. And as he thus is more delighted with the recovery of the sheep which he had lost, than with the safety of the rest, which had not wandered, so I say unto you that greater and more sensible joy will be in heaven among the blessed and benevolent spirits that dwell there, over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance, or such a universal change of mind and character.

“How graceful and lovely does our Lord appear, while thus opening his compassionate arms and heart to those wretched outcasts, for whose souls no man cared! Who can choose but rejoice at this jubilee which he proclaimed among them, and at the cheerful attention which they gave to these glad tidings of great joy? May we who are his followers never despise the meanest, or the worst of men, when they seem disposed to receive religious instruction, but rather exert ourselves with a distinguished zeal, as knowing that the joy of the heavenly world, in their recovery, will be in some measure proportionable to the extremity of their former danger.

“Let us often recollect the charity and goodness of these perfected spirits, who look down from their own glory with compassion on mortals wandering in the paths of the destroyer, and who sing anthems of thankfulness and joy, when by Divine grace they are reclaimed from them. Let every sinner be touched by a generous desire that he who has been in so many instances the offender and burden of the earth, may become the joy of heaven by his sincere conversion.”

“You know, my children,” said old Mr. Macfarlane, “that I have endeavoured to train you up in the paths of virtue, and to give you what I conceive correct views of religion; but if you on examination feel dissatisfied with any opinions which I have inculcated, you ought most certainly to renounce them. You have the same right to think, and judge, and decide for yourselves, as I have; and I feel too much affection for you to throw on the path of your inquiry the slightest shadow of opposition. I know you are virtuous; and if I see you happy, I shall be satisfied. You will proceed in your inquiries after truth with caution—weigh with the greatest nicety the evidence which may be submitted to you; as many opinions, when they first strike our attention, appear very specious and plausible, which will not endure the ordeal of a critical investigation. I cannot give you better advice than that which the apostle gave to the believers of Thessalonica, ‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.’”

“To be candid, my dear father,” said his son, “the result of the investigation which we have been pursuing with close, and I may say prayerful, attention, is a firm belief in the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ; and also in the reality and efficacy of the atonement he made in behalf of sinners by his vicarious death.”

“I certainly regret that you should adopt such a belief, which, I have always told you, is a corruption of Christianity.”

“No, father, it is a belief which owes its origin to the concurrent testimony of the sacred writers. If the sacred writers, and if Jesus Christ himself had made no statements on this subject, the question of his divinity would never have been agitated, neither would the question of his atonement for the sins of the world. If, then, it be an error, it is one for which they are responsible; they assert the fact of his divinity so clearly, that I feel compelled to do one of two things—either impeach their integrity, or admit his divinity. To give you a specimen. The prophet Isaiah says, ‘His name shall be called Wonderful, the MIGHTY GOD;’ the apostle Paul says, ‘He was GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH;’ and Jesus Christ himself, who knew who and what he was, asserts his EQUALITY with his

Father, in *power*, in *knowledge*, and in his claims on the homage and love of his disciples. Would the prophets and apostles have used these expressions if they had been Unitarians, believing in Christ's exclusive humanity?"

"You must not form your judgment from a few isolated passages of the Bible, which are susceptible of a different interpretation."

"I admit this; but, in the first place, Dr. Pye Smith, and other men of learning, have proved, that the most correct interpretation of the passages I have now quoted, is the orthodox interpretation; however, waiving that debateable point, would any Unitarian, if left to express his own opinion of the person of Jesus Christ, employ terms which should allow any one fairly to infer that he is a Divine Incarnation?"

"Why, no, I should think not."

"Then, why have the sacred writers done it? But to proceed: in the next place—these isolated passages, dear father, are in exact harmony with the general statement of all the sacred writers. Surely we cannot suppose that the very men who were employed as the agents of a Divine revelation, would be allowed to entrap us into the double crime of idolatry and blasphemy, by compelling any one who admits their integrity, to bow down and do homage to Jesus Christ as to God. There is one fact in the history of our Saviour, which, in my opinion, may set at defiance the most ingenious and subtle casuist that ever made an effort to subvert or mystify human belief. In addressing his opponents, he adopted a style of speech which stirred up their wrath, and made them accuse him of blasphemy for making himself God, that is, by trying to make them believe he was God. Now, father, I put this plain, common-sense question, Would any good man, especially one so good as Jesus Christ, when speaking of himself, employ expressions which should convey to others the idea that he was God in the form of man, to whom all men are to pay homage, and on whom all who hope to be saved are to depend for salvation and eternal life?"

“There is a great deal of ambiguity in the language of the Scripture, which, as the apostle Paul says, is hard to be understood.”

“That I admit; but such an admission does not affect the question before us; which is this—Would any man of intelligence and virtue, when speaking of himself, use any expressions which should induce people to believe that he was God? In fact, would not such an attempt, if made, as has happened occasionally in modern times, be considered a proof of insanity? The rejection of the divinity of Jesus Christ would indeed reduce me to a very serious dilemma. In the first place, I must impeach the integrity of the sacred writers, which would compel me to reject the entire system of revelation, as a gross imposition on human credulity; and, in the next place, I must look on Jesus Christ as an insane person, or a blasphemer. I see no alternative between universal scepticism and the devout reception of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and his atonement.”

“I certainly should prefer what is called orthodoxy to universal scepticism; but I shall never be able to bring my mind to receive what I cannot comprehend; and this a believer in Christ’s divinity and atonement is compelled to do.”

“This, my dear father, is one of the delusive objections to the orthodox faith, under which we have too long taken refuge. Why, is not a Unitarian compelled to believe what he cannot comprehend? For example, do you not believe in the eternal existence of God—a glorious self-existing Being, who lives by the power of his own volition, with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning?”

“True; though I must confess it never struck me before. This staggers me. Well, my dear children, our difference on points of speculative belief will make no alteration in our mutual attachment; you will remain, I have no doubt, pure and virtuous, as you always have been; and I trust we shall together participate in the felicities of heaven, when our earthly course is finished, even if we should never, as we once did, believe exactly alike.”



In the course of the following week, Miss Macfarlane received a visit from Miss Reynolds, her pious friend already referred to, who was not more astonished than delighted by seeing her at the chapel in — Street, on the preceding Sabbath. After a little desultory conversation, Miss Reynolds said, “We were rather surprised to see you and your brother at our chapel on Sabbath; but I hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you there again.”

“Your surprise,” replied Miss Macfarlane, “is very natural. Yes, you will see us again, as we have both decided to attend Mr. — in future. The system of Unitarianism, in which we have been educated, we have discovered is delusive—a fatal perversion of the theory of revealed truth; and though it may suit the virtuous part of society, who have no perceptions of the evil of sin, yet, as it makes no provision for the salvation of sinners, it cannot afford peace to a wounded conscience.”

“And has my dear Eliza at length discovered that she is a sinner!”

“I have not only discovered it, but I have felt it; and I still feel it. You know how I have repelled such a charge in time past; but I can repel it no longer. My conscience bears testimony to its truth. I cannot accuse myself of having violated any of the laws of social life, but I perceive that I have broken the law of God, and stand guilty in his sight.”

“As this is a new discovery, will you tell me how you made it?”

“The first circumstance which excited our attention was a very excellent sermon, preached a short time since by Dr. R—, on the felicity of heaven, which he said was reserved only for the virtuous. When conversing together on the subject, in the evening of the Sabbath, my brother said to Papa, If the virtuous only can attain a state of felicity, what will become of the wicked, who we know constitute the great bulk of society in every age and in every country? As his reply gave us no satisfaction, we began to search the Scriptures, which soon convinced us that even the chief of sinners could be saved. The subject of inquiry appeared to us no less important than it was novel; it deeply engaged our atten-

tion, and we pursued it with intense application. Dr. Pye Smith's *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah* settled our belief; and now we feel compelled to withdraw from all religious fellowship with those who refuse to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ. Knowing, from your testimony and that of others, that your excellent pastor stands very high in public estimation, we decided on hearing him, and I trust that the impression which his discourse made on our minds will never be effaced. He has given to us, if I may use such an expression, the clue of a clearer discovery on some important branches of revealed truth; and now we can perceive beauties in the sacred volume which lay concealed from our eye, and we can now understand many passages which had ever before appeared obscure and inexplicable. But at times I feel a depression of spirits which I cannot remove; yet it does not proceed from any regret at the step we have taken, or any mistrust in the truthfulness of our new belief, but from a keen sense of my personal unworthiness of the Divine favour."

"I am rejoiced, dear Eliza," replied Miss Reynolds, "to hear you utter such sentiments. God is dealing graciously with your soul. He wounds to heal. He has convinced you of the evil of sin, and unveiled before you that abyss of danger, to which you were exposed, so as to prepare you for the manifestations of his favour, beaming on you through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"But I fear that the Saviour will not look on me with an eye of pity, as I have so often insulted him by denying his divinity, and the efficacy of his death as an expiation for human guilt. I am now astonished how I could reject doctrines which are so plainly revealed in the Bible; and sometimes the guilt of my conduct appears so great, that I am more disposed to despair of mercy than to cherish the hope of obtaining it."

"If you still persisted in denying his divinity, and rejecting the atonement which he has made for sin, you might despair of mercy; but if you admit these essential doctrines of the Christian scheme of salvation, you may plead the promises of grace with confidence.

The Redeemer will execute judgment in the last day upon ungodly sinners for all the hard speeches which they have spoken against him, if they die in a state of confirmed impenitence; but if they repent of their evil deeds and hard speeches, he will, as a faithful and merciful High Priest, have compassion on them, will intercede for them, and will save them."

"I now receive these doctrines as essential parts of the system of revealed truth; but yet I sometimes feel a recurrence of my former prejudices against them, which causes me unutterable distress. When pleading the atonement as the foundation of my acceptance with God, I am tempted to mistrust its efficacy; and when my heart begins to glow with warm affection for the Redeemer, it is suddenly chilled and suppressed by the influence of early opinions and associations. They have taken such a firm hold of my imagination, that I cannot disengage myself from them; and I fear they will always continue to perplex and depress me."

"That does not surprise me. It is no easy thing for the human mind to disengage itself from the influence of early opinions, even after they have been renounced; but the Lord has laid help upon One who is mighty, and whose grace will be found sufficient for you. I would advise you to read the Scriptures with close and devout attention; but your greatest dependence for deliverance from your early associations should be placed on prayer. For the judgment may be convinced of the truth by a logical process of investigation and reasoning, even while the heart is unimpressed by it; God having reserved to himself the power of making the truth effectual to the salvation of them that believe, which power he exercises in answer to prayer. The language of the psalmist is very applicable to the present state of your mind—'Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving-kindnesses: for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor

my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.'

"There is one part of the system of revealed truth," continued Miss Reynolds, "which has not yet engaged your attention, and as it is one of vital importance, I cannot avoid alluding to it. The part to which I now refer, is the agency of the Divine Spirit, by which we become strengthened in our inner man, to receive the truth in the love of it, and to discharge the high and sacred obligations which devolve on us. By your permission, I will read to you an extract from a book which I happen to have brought with me: \*—

"As we are indebted to the Spirit for the first formation of the divine life, so it is He who alone can maintain it, and render it strong and vigorous. It is his office to actuate the habits of grace where they are already planted; to hold our souls in life, and to 'strengthen us, that we may walk up and down in the name of the Lord.' It is his office to present the mysteries of salvation; the truths which relate to the mediation of Christ and the riches of his grace, in so penetrating and transforming a manner, as to render them vital operating principles, the food and the solace of our spirits. Without his agency, however intrinsically excellent, they will be to us mere dead speculation—an inert mass: it is only when they are animated by his breath, that they become spirit and life.

"It is his office to afford that anointing by which we may know all things; by a light which is not merely directive to the understanding, but which so shines upon the heart, as to give a relish of the sweetness of Divine truth, and effectually produce a compliance with its dictates. It belongs to him 'to seal us to the day of redemption,' to put that mark and character upon us, which distinguishes the children of God, as well as to afford a foretaste, as an earnest of the future inheritance. 'And hereby,' saith an apostle, 'we know that we are of God, by the Spirit which he hath given us.' It is his office to subdue the corruption of our nature, not by

\* See a *Treatise on the Work of the Holy Spirit*, by the celebrated Robert Hall, of Leicester.

leaving us inactive spectators of the combat, but by engaging us to a determined resistance to every sinful propensity, by teaching our hands to war, and our fingers to fight, so that the victory shall be ours, and the praise his. It is his office also to help the infirmities of saints, who know not what to pray for as they ought, by making intercession for them 'with groanings which cannot be uttered.' He kindles their desires, gives them a glimpse of the fulness of God, that all-comprehending good; and by exciting a relish of the beauties of holiness, and the ineffable pleasure which springs from nearness to God, disposes them to the fervent and effectual prayer which avail-eth much. In short, as Christ is the way to the Father; so it is equally certain, that the Spirit is the fountain of all the light and strength which enable us to walk in that way.'"

"I assure you, my dear Matilda, both my brother and myself feel devoutly thankful to the God of all grace, for rescuing us from the fatal delusion of Unitarianism, which we conscientiously renounce as an anti-scriptural system, no less derogatory to the honour of God, than inapplicable to the moral condition of man—a system which flatters the pride of the heart, but which makes no provision for the relief of a wounded conscience; and which, by placing the hope of final blessedness on the attainment of personal virtue, supersedes the necessity of the Saviour's death and mediation, which constitute the most prominent and essential parts of the grand scheme of redemption."

After the lapse of a few months, Mr. and Miss Macfarlane were admitted as members into the chapel in — Street, of which the Rev. Mr. — was pastor. They were received into communion amongst their Christian brethren, with the utmost degree of cordiality and affection, and are still living, the faithful witnesses of the truth as it is in Jesus. They had many virtues adorning their character when they were called Unitarians, but now they carry their virtue to a greater height, by deriving their motives for its practice from the authority of God, rather than the praise of man. While, therefore, they feel it to be their duty still to add to their

“virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity;” they are fully conscious of their innumerable defects, and wait in humble expectation of eternal life, not as a reward for their good deeds, but as a sovereign and unmerited favour.

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### THE PATH OF TRUTH FORSAKEN.



**I**F all who make a public profession of religion remained faithful unto death, we should be led to form such a high opinion of the steadfastness of the Christian character, that we should never dread any change of feeling or of principle. But, alas! who has not seen the most ardent zeal grow cold—the most fervent devotion degenerate into a lifeless formality—and the most spotless integrity become corrupted by the maxims of the world? Who has not seen the most eager stopping short in their course; and some, who once bade fair to occupy stations of honour and usefulness in the church, break away, either suddenly or gradually, from all their religious connections, to mingle again with the workers of iniquity, and place themselves in the seat of the scorner? What more melancholy sight than this can be presented to the real Christian? and how can he sufficiently deplore such a calamity? In plaintive accents he often says, “O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” But there are circumstances which sometimes render this melancholy occurrence peculiarly affecting. If the renegade from the faith be a near relative, or an intimate friend—one with whom we have taken sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in

company—one who rejoiced over us “when first we knew the Lord” —who poured the soothing words of consolation into our minds when we first felt the deep convictions of guilt—who was our guide and counsellor—and whom we loved with an ardent and tender affection—how much more intense is the pain of such an infliction; and how applicable that noble passage of Robert Hall to such an event:—“Where shall we find tears fit to be wept at such a spectacle? or, could we realize the calamity in all its extent, what tokens of our compassion and concern would be deemed equal to the occasion? Would it suffice for the sun to veil his light, and the moon her brightness, to cover the ocean with mourning, and the heavens with sackcloth? Or were the whole fabric of nature to become animated and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe?”

In the previous chapter I have described the influence of truth prevailing over long-cherished feelings and deeply-rooted prejudices, and the substitution of correct evangelical views for the erroneous tenets of Unitarianism. The history I am now about to record is of a different description, and presents a melancholy contrast to the former, exhibiting the abandonment of the faith after a fair and apparently sincere profession, and teaching us the necessity of constant labour and watchfulness, if we wish “to make our calling and election sure.”

Henry Beaufoy was the only son of poor but respectable parents, who resided in the beautiful village of Brookcombe in Devonshire. This village remained for a long series of years in a state of spiritual darkness, till it was visited by some of the local preachers of the Methodist Connexion. At first, when they declared the glad tidings of salvation amongst the people, they were insulted and reproached; and the few who received them became a by-word and a proverb amongst their ignorant and bigoted neighbours. But regardless of all opposition—bearing patiently every species of reviling—and demonstrating by their gentleness of spirit, that they knew how to

return good for evil, they ultimately succeeded in subduing the prejudices of ignorance and the violence of bigotry, and established a flourishing society.

It happened here, as in many other places where the introduction of the gospel has been opposed, that some of the chief of the opponents were the first to feel its renovating power. Among this number the parents of Henry Beaufoy held a distinguished station. At first they, in common with many others, entertained strong prejudices against the preachers, and endeavoured to persuade others from attending their ministry; but at length their curiosity was awakened, and they went to the chapel. They listened—the word came with power—they felt the deepest contrition for their past sins, especially their sin of opposing and ridiculing the gospel of Christ; and eventually became no less distinguished for their attachment, than they had been for their enmity to the faith. Their son Henry was about twelve years of age, when this moral change took place in his parents, and though he felt somewhat surprised at the suddenness of the transition from the most determined hostility against the Methodists (as they were reproachfully termed), to the most cordial attachment, yet he was too young and too thoughtless to examine into the causes of it. He generally accompanied them to the little chapel, which was erected under the brow of a hill; and as he was fond of music, and had a fine voice, he assisted in leading the psalmody of the congregation. No material change, however, took place in him, till after he had attained his eighteenth year; when, being on a visit to Plymouth, he went to hear the Rev. Samuel Bradburn, who was one of the most celebrated and one of the most useful ministers of his day. The text from which he preached on that occasion was selected from Heb. iv. 12—“For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Young Beaufoy was struck with the colloquial simplicity of his style of address, no less than



by the force of his argumentative reasoning; but when he directed his bold and masterly appeals to the consciences of his hearers, his heart was deeply wounded, and, like the Philippian jailor, he could not refrain from saying, "What shall I do to be saved?" On his return home, the unusual gravity of his manners, his more frequent attendance at the village chapel, his habit of reading the Bible, and of retirement for the purposes of devotion, led his parents to indulge the hope that their Henry was become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and after the lapse of a few weeks, they had the satisfaction of hearing an account of his conversion from his own lips.

If it be possible to excite in the soul of a pious parent a feeling of joy approximating to the pure unmingled bliss of the heavenly world, it is when his child comes to him to state the fact, and detail the manner, of the great spiritual change which has taken place in his heart. It is then that the prayers of the godly father are turned into praises—that the deep and tender anxieties of the virtuous mother begin to cease, as they then can recognize in their son or daughter, a fellow-heir of the grace of life, with whom they expect to live for ever and ever.

It was about this period that I first became acquainted with the Beaufoy family. I had gone to Devonshire for change of air for a few weeks, and took up my abode in the village of Brookcombe, where I lodged in the house of the father and mother of young Beaufoy. I was much pleased both with them and their son, the latter of whom used frequently to accompany me on my excursions into the surrounding country. On these occasions we used to have long conversations together, in which he displayed an intelligence far above what might have been expected from his position in life, and this, joined to his amiable temper and pleasing manners, led me to take a great interest in him. On leaving Brookcombe, I suggested that he should occasionally write to me—a proposal which he received with much satisfaction, and we maintained for a number of years a close correspondence. Shortly after parting with him, however, an event occurred which materially changed his prospects in

life. The same intelligence and amiable qualities which had won my heart, recommended him to the notice of a wealthy citizen of London, who came to visit his patrimonial estate in the neighbourhood, and he gave him the offer of a lucrative situation in his employment. The offer was accepted, and he prepared to leave the scenes of his youth. His pious mother, who dreaded the temptations of London as much as she would have dreaded the plague, said to him on his departure, "My Henry, I am sorry you are going to leave us. I wish you could have remained amongst us, and continued the solace and comfort of your father and myself. But when you are far away, exposed to the snares and dangers of the great city, I shall have no sleep at night, for I shall lie awake to pray for you; and I shall have no peace by day, for I shall be always trembling for you, my child."

"Oh! mother," said Henry, whose heart was full of the thought of parting, and whose fortitude began to fail at the sight of his mother's tears, "do not weep. God can keep me from the temptations of the city as well as the temptations of the village; and I have no doubt but I shall escape them. I'll come and see you once a-year, and then we will rejoice together."

"But how can I endure the thought of looking on you, my child, only once in the year, on whom I have gazed these one and twenty years with so much delight! My eyes will be dim with sorrow before the first year is up."

"But I will write, mother, once a-month."

"But letters can't speak as I have heard you talk for nearly twenty years. I wish the gentleman had never come amongst us. He has broken down the fence of our union, and taken away the first-fruits of our wedded happiness, and what have we left to make up for our loss? But I know I must be resigned—yet I have not Abraham's faith. The Lord bless you, and keep you, and bring you back to your father's house in peace, that we may bless you before we die."

Henry set off in company with the gentleman who had taken him under his patronage, and though he felt the pang of separation to

be violent, yet he bore it with firmness, and, turning away his thoughts from the scene of grief which he had just left, he began to amuse himself with the varied objects which presented themselves to him in the course of this his first journey to the metropolis.

On arriving in London, he took lodgings in the City Road, in the house of Mr. Jordan, whom the reader will remember as the worthy landlord of Mr. Lewellin.\* This was shortly after the return of the latter from the country, on recovering from the dangerous illness which had produced so important a change in his moral character. From residing together in the same house, a close intimacy sprang up between Mr. Lewellin and young Beaufoy, which was much strengthened by the similarity of their religious sentiments. Though belonging to different evangelical bodies, they, nevertheless, zealously co-operated together in the advancement of all the various schemes instituted by Christian benevolence, for the promotion of the spiritual and temporal happiness of our fellow-men. Mr. Beaufoy, who had received his first religious impressions amongst the Wesleyan Methodists, and imbibed all their peculiar opinions, very naturally chose to attend their chapel. They received him with their usual kindness, and for several years he grew in their esteem and confidence, as a young man of superior intelligence and decided piety. For a considerable time I both corresponded with young Beaufoy, and also, on one or two occasions, when in London, I called on him, and invariably met with the warmest reception. I frequently held conversations with him on the subject of religion, and from the deep interest which he seemed to take in the subject, I believed that he had indeed become a decided Christian. But how deceitful sometimes are appearances, and how cautious ought we to be in forming conclusions from mere external circumstances, however fair the prospect may be which they present!

Henry Beaufoy possessed a mind admirably qualified for business, and his abilities, in this respect, enabled him to make rapid progress

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in the counting-house of his employer, where he soon filled a lucrative and responsible situation. About five years after his first arrival in the metropolis, he married a young lady occupying a good position in society, but who made no decided profession of religion. She attended the chapel because she had been accustomed to do so from her earliest childhood, and felt attached to the people amongst whom her parents lived and died; but she had no clear perceptions of the nature or design of the gospel, nor had she ever felt its enlightening or renovating power. She was handsome, amiable, and intelligent, but she did not possess *the one thing needful*; and though her habits and associations were of a religious nature, yet being destitute of its pure and heavenly spirit, she became a snare to her husband, by drawing off his mind, by imperceptible degrees, from things that are unseen and eternal, to those that were visible and temporal.

Mr. Beanfoy's income was, as already mentioned, considerable, which, together with the fortune he had with his wife, enabled him to live in a style far above his early expectations; but he had too much good sense to involve himself in debt, and too much regard for his parents to allow them to be in difficulties, while he had abundance. He often used to say, when in his native village, "I covet wealth that I may enjoy the luxury of doing good;" and when Providence granted him his desire, he partook of this source of gratification to a very large extent. His regular remittances to his parents exceeded their wishes; while his liberality to the poor, and every religious institution with which he stood connected, raised him high in the esteem of his Christian brethren. But, alas! his spirituality did not keep pace with his prosperity; nor did the fervour of his devotional spirit equal the degree of his diligence in business.

In compliance with custom, he spent the first few weeks after his marriage amidst scenes of gaiety and pleasure—in receiving and returning the visits of his friends and associates; and though he found an apology for this course of life in the example of others,

yet he felt it to be injurious to the religious tone of his mind, and longed to return to his more settled religious habits. Had Mrs. Beaufoy possessed a similar spirit, this incursion into the land of the enemy would not have been productive of any essential injury; but as she was now treading on her native soil, and moving in an element congenial to her taste, she succeeded in estranging her husband from the simplicity of a religious life, and induced him to adopt the habits of the men of the world. The prayer-meeting, in which his voice had often been heard, leading the devotion of others, was now deserted for dinner and evening parties. The sacredness of religious conversation with those who loved and feared the Lord, was exchanged for the vain and trifling conversation of the votaries of fashion; and though on the Sabbath-day he was seen in his pew, yet the marked seriousness and peaceful serenity of his countenance was supplanted by the knitted brow, or the listless and inattentive air. The society of his former religious friends, including Mr. Le-wellin, now became less agreeable to him than that of some gay worldlings, into whose company he was frequently thrown. His letters to myself also were shorter and more reserved; but I was still far from suspecting the dangerous nature of the career on which he was now entering. Thus while retaining a name and a place amongst the members of the church, he was rapidly receding from the purity and fervour of the Christian spirit.

One of the earliest symptoms of apostasy from the pure faith of Christ, is a fastidiousness of hearing, which few preachers can please. The truth as it is in Jesus is tolerated on account of the form or the manner in which it is presented; and the messenger is admired more than the message which he delivers. Though we would not condemn a predilection for the more graceful and the more eloquent appeals of the pulpit, nor insinuate that a correct taste is a *prima facie* evidence of a heart in a state of departure from God, yet it requires no lengthened argument to prove that when the truths of the gospel are not loved and received for their own sake, and on account of their beneficial tendency, it is a decisive proof that the

tone of the mind is injured; and that, notwithstanding the outward appearance of devotion which may be kept up by a professor, he is not walking in the fear of the Lord, nor in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. He may have his favourite preachers; but if the truth which they preach is not esteemed when it is delivered by men equally zealous, and equally devoted to God, though not equally gifted, we are supplied with a melancholy symptom of his being in a backsliding state. It was this spirit of preference for the learning of Paul—for the eloquence of Apollos—and for the peculiar charms of Cephas, amongst the members of the church of Corinth, that the apostle regards as an evidence of their indifference to Christ; and which he adduces as a proof that a corrupt leaven was then working amongst them. “For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos,” is it not a convincing proof, that the speaker is more delighted with the correctness of the language which a preacher employs, than the purity of the doctrines which he preaches?

Mr. Beaufoy, on his settlement in London, gave a decided preference to the most evangelical and the most experimental preachers in his Connexion; but now he began to admire the most fanciful and the most florid, to whom he listened as an amateur does to a piece of music—more for the gratification of his taste than the spiritual improvement of his mind; and as he could not always hear them, he began to absent himself from the chapel when they were not expected. His habit of attendance at length became so irregular, that some of his Christian brethren, who had watched with great anxiety the progress of his defection, felt it their duty to have him admonished; and they deputed an aged elder, in whom dwelt the spirit of wisdom and of grace, to visit him.

The manner in which reproof is received often develops the real temper and disposition of the mind, and supplies us with a good criterion to form a correct judgment of character. “Let the righteous smite me,” said the Psalmist, when reviewing the imperfections of his conduct, “it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.”

And it is by the kind admonitions and the gentle reproofs that we timely receive from those of our friends who watch over us, that we are often indebted, under the Divine blessing, for our spiritual prosperity, and to which we may trace our recovery from that state of religious declension, to which we are so fatally prone.

“Indeed,” said Mr. Beaufoy to his venerable friend, in whose company he had formerly passed many a pleasant hour, “I think I am at liberty to attend where and when I please, without being subject to the inquisitorial interference of others. And though you are pleased to say, that my late conduct has given my best friends reason to fear that I am not so spiritual as when they first knew me, yet you will permit me to say that I am the best judge on that subject.”

“You certainly,” replied the venerable elder, “are at liberty to go where you please; but I hope you will not go away from Him who ‘hath the words of eternal life;’ and are at liberty to go when you please; but do not forget the Divine injunction which commands us to ‘consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.’”

“I hope I shall not, Sir; but I must be permitted to consult my own taste in the choice of the preachers on whose ministry I attend, without being censured for any decrease in the spirituality of my mind. If I do not talk quite so much on religious subjects as I once did, that is no proof that I feel less; as we become reserved on these high and awful considerations in proportion as we are impressed by them.”

“The Psalmist says,” replied the elder, “‘While I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue.’ I know you are displeased with me, my brother, for the language which I have addressed to you; and I assure you, that your displeasure gives me greater sorrow than the cause of my visit, inasmuch as it convinces me that your heart is not right with God. I have but a few years to live, and perhaps only a few hours; and as I may not live to repeat a visit which is as unacceptable to you as it is painful to

myself, I cannot leave you without giving you and Mrs. Beaufoy a message from the Lord—‘Take heed, lest there be in you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.’”

“I have no doubt, Sir, but your motives are good, and that you deem the solemn admonition of the apostle necessary; but you will permit us to form our own judgment on the propriety of its application.”

The venerable elder then arose, took his young brother by the hand, and wept; and after struggling for some moments to subdue the feelings which were agitating his breast, he said, “My brother, I fear that you have departed from the Lord, and that his Spirit has departed from you; but let us kneel together at the throne of grace, as we used to kneel when the light of his countenance shone upon you, and pray for its return.” He then knelt down, and offered up a solemn and affecting prayer, which bespoke the fidelity of his affection for his erring brother. When he arose, he received the cold thanks of courtesy for his labour of love, and retired under a strong presentiment that he should see his fellow-member’s face no more. And so it proved; for his feeble frame had received a shock that evening from which he had not strength to recover. He hastened home as fast as his tottering limbs would carry him—partook of his frugal meal—read the twenty-third Psalm, and, in company with his pious housekeeper (for he had buried his wife about six weeks before this affliction came upon him), he knelt down, and closed the toils of the day in the hallowed exercise of communion with God. One petition he presented which he had never been heard to utter before—“And if, Lord, it should please thee to call thy servant this night, I thank thee that I am at last enabled to adopt the language of Simeon—‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’” This petition was expressed with an energy of voice which indicated the animation of a mind feeling its near approach to the prize of its high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He retired to bed at his usual hour, but he was restless and feverish; and about midnight he rang the bell. His



housekeeper entered his room, and on drawing aside the curtain of his bed, heard him say,

“O! the pain, the bliss of dying.”

He requested her to fetch his pious medical friend, who speedily arrived, but it was only to confirm his old servant's worst fears. The dying elder now related to the doctor, as a member of the same church with himself, the particulars of his visit to Mr. Beaufoy. “I know,” he said, “I am dying, and that in a very few hours I shall see the King in his beauty; but death hath lost its sting, and I have lost my fears. I have long waited for my salvation, and now it is come. I die in full and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life. Give my dying love to my dear wandering brother, and tell him that the language of the prophet is so impressed on my mind, that I cannot leave the body without expressing a desire that he will meditate on it. ‘Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee; know, therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.’” He now gently waved his hand as he repeated the triumphant language of the apostle:—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and reclining on the bosom of his friend, he had one strong convulsive struggle, and then expired with a smile settled on his venerable countenance.

The sudden death of this devout elder, who had been for more than fifty years an ornament to his Christian profession, produced a powerful sensation through the whole Society; and many attended his funeral as an expression of the esteem and veneration in which they held his character. Deep and heartfelt was the sorrow expressed on the countenance of the assembled throng on that occasion, and every one seemed to mourn as though he had lost a father or a brother. On the following Sabbath, his funeral sermon was preached in the

chapel by the Rev. Mr. R——, from the words, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. xvi. 31). After a correct delineation of the character of the deceased, he described the closing scene of his life. "He was," said the preacher, "not only a good, but a devout man, and pre-eminently endowed by the God of all grace, with a double portion of the spirit of wisdom and understanding. Tremblingly alive for the honour of his Master's cause, he would often weep when it was endangered by the inconsistent conduct of its professed friends; and it was to an extraordinary excitement occasioned by a visit of mercy to a fellow-member, that we may ascribe his sudden decease. His tender and sympathetic spirit yearning over the object of its solicitude, was thrown into an agitation from which his feeble frame never recovered. Having finished the work assigned him, he sunk beneath the weight of his own grief, but not till he had assured his mourning friends that he died in full and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life. Be ye followers of him, who through faith and patience is now inheriting the promises; and be on your guard, lest, in departing from the living God, you should bring down the gray hairs of some venerable elder with sorrow to his grave, whose love may impel him to manifest a care for your soul." Mr. Beaufoy heard this discourse, but it was evident by his restlessness, and the indignant look which he cast towards the preacher, that his pride was mortified, by the allusions which were made to him.

Fidelity on the part of a minister is essential, not only to his happiness, but his usefulness; yet when he permits his feelings to overpower the dictates of prudence, he is in danger of frustrating the design he wishes to accomplish. He should declare the word of life without fear; but in administering reproof, he should never be so personal in his remarks or allusions, as to turn the eyes of an audience on the individual who may deserve it. By the adoption of such a course no one would feel secure from attack, when he comes to hear the message of grace; nor is it likely that the offender will be reclaimed from the error of his way, when he finds himself made a

spectacle of reproach in the presence of his brethren. Instead of relenting, he will be hardened; and may be induced to abandon the place which the angel of mercy visits with his healing power, rather than remain to receive instruction and reproof. A minister should always combine the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove; and while he desires to be faithful in the pulpit, he should be solicitous to guard against all appearance of personality.

When the power of vital religion is declining in its influence over the mind of a professor, and he begins to cherish feelings and adopt habits which are opposed to the purity of his avowed principles, he will not be able to endure the close appeals of the pulpit. Prudence will often keep him from making any complaints against the general fidelity of the ministry, even while his heart is writhing under it; and his habits of intimacy with his Christian brethren will sometimes prevent him from leaving a society with which he has formed a close and a sacred union; but when the principle of apostasy has gained ascendancy over his conscience, and he begins to treat the friendly remonstrances and admonitions with contempt, he will soon discover some justifiable cause of offence, and retire in disgust, if not in wrath.

Thus it was with Mr. Beaufoy. Stung to the quick by the allusions which the preacher made to the visit of the venerable elder, and the supposed cause of his sudden death, he left the chapel in the greatest indignation; and the following morning, he sent his arrears of subscription to the managers, requesting, at the same time, that they would consider him as no longer a member of their church.

On being informed of her husband's abandoning his connection with the Wesleyans, Mrs. Beaufoy was rather pleased than disappointed, as she hoped she would now have greater scope for sharing in the amusements of the gay world. Both thought it right, however, still to attend some place of worship, and thus keep up the appearance of respect for the public services of religion. Where to go, was a question which they could not easily determine; but as

some of their friends, whose acquaintance they had lately made, attended a Socinian meeting in E—— Street, they resolved to go there on the following Sabbath. This sudden transition, from the fervid devotion of Methodism, to the frigid apathy of Socinianism, produced no unpleasant impressions on the mind of his wife, but Mr. Beaufoy was not quite prepared for it. His heart was become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, yet he still believed in the essential doctrines of Christianity, which retained their dominion over him, though they had lost their original power of impression. They were both struck with the gracefulness of the preacher's manner, and admired his elocution; but Mr. Beaufoy could not renounce the divinity, or the atonement of Christ, nor could he regard the doctrine of regeneration as a corruption of the gospel. Mrs. Beaufoy thought that every modification of Christianity was equally acceptable to God, but Mr. Beaufoy was capable of distinguishing truth from error; and while she adopted for her creed the poet's stanza,

" For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ;  
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right,

he was convinced that no man ought to be considered a Christian, who rejected the leading doctrines of revelation.

At length, when expressing his abhorrence of some of the daring charges which he heard advanced against the orthodox faith, and which he considered as tending to universal scepticism, she replied, " Well, my dear, you can very easily retain your own opinions, and yet attend on Mr. B——'s ministry, because he cannot force you to believe against the dictates of your own judgment, and if you sometimes hear them controverted, that circumstance ought not to disquiet you. As your belief is founded on evidence, and matured by deep reflection, you are in no danger of being carried about with every wind of doctrine, but may fairly calculate on your ability to hold it fast, amidst all the efforts which may be employed to destroy or disturb it." " Very true," he replied, " I like the morals of Soci-

nianism better than the doctrines. Well it shall be so;"—and so it was. They took their pew, and occupied it; and as the only restraint which had kept them for a long time from a more extended course of gaiety was now removed, they began to walk more openly in the ways of their own heart, and in the sight of their own eyes. Hitherto they had kept up some semblance of religion, but now they began to conform to the customs of the world, and to avail themselves of the various sources of gratification which its pleasures and amusements afford. Family-prayer, the last vestige of their former habits of devotion, was now entirely neglected. The Bible, which they once revered as their guide to everlasting life, was thrown aside; and though Mr. Beaufoy could not forget that he had been a religious man, yet he wished others to believe that now he was a more happy one.

It has been very justly observed, that when we begin to think lightly of error we are in great danger of being corrupted by it; and the experience of all ages proves, that if a professor hold the truth in unrighteousness, he is ultimately given up to believe a lie. That there have been many departures from evangelical principles in modern times no one will presume to deny; but if they were closely examined, it would be found that they were preceded by a neglect of private prayer, watchfulness, self-diffidence, and walking humbly with God; and every one may perceive that they are followed with similar effects. It has been acknowledged by some who have embraced the Socinian system, that since they entertained those views they have lost even the gift of prayer. Perhaps they might draw up and read an *address to the Deity*; but they could not pray. Where the principles of the gospel are abandoned, the spirit of prayer and all communion with God will likewise depart. The confession of Peter, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, is thought to be that which our Lord denominates the rock on which he would build his church. We are sure that the belief of this article of faith was required as a test of Christianity; and who can look into the Christian world with attention, and not perceive that it still continues

the key-stone of the building? If this give way, the fabric falls. Relapses of this nature are infinitely dangerous. He that declines in holy practice has to labour against the remonstrances of conscience; but he that brings himself to think lightly of sin, and meanly of the Saviour (which is what every false system of religion teaches), has gone far towards silencing the accusations of this unpleasant monitor. He is upon good terms with himself. The disorder of his soul is deep, but it is of a flattering nature. The declension of serious religion in him is no less apparent to others than the physical decay of the body in a consumption, where in each case the party himself frequently has no suspicion of his danger.

As Mr. Beaufoy had no family, the love of accumulation had less dominion over his mind than the passion for display, which had taken an earlier possession of his mind than he himself was aware of, and to its fatal tendency may be attributed, in a great measure, all the evils and misery of his subsequent life.

On this subject we may here quote the words of a judicious writer:—"We need not affect singularity in things indifferent, but to maintain a constant endeavour to follow in the train of fashion, is not only an indication of a vain and little mind, but is certainly inconsistent with pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The desire of making an appearance has ruined many people in their circumstances—more in their characters—and most of all in their souls. We may flatter ourselves that we can pursue these things, and be religious at the same time; but it is a mistake. The vanity of mind which they cherish destroys everything of a humble, serious, and holy nature, rendering us an easy prey to the temptations which are thrown in our way. A Christian's rule is the revealed will of God; and where the customs of the world run counter to this, it is his business to withstand them, even though in so doing he may have to withstand a multitude—yea, and a multitude of people of fashion; but if we feel ambitious of their applause, we shall not be able to endure the scorn which a singularity of conduct will draw upon us. Thus

we shall be carried down the stream of this world ; and shall either fall into the gulf of perdition, or if any good thing should be found in us towards the Lord God of Israel, it will be indiscernible and useless."

Mr. Beaufoy's amiable disposition, and admirable conversational powers, made his society courted by an extensive circle of acquaintances. Balls, parties, and theatres now consumed the hours of the evenings which were once devoted to reading, meditation, and prayer; and not unfrequently the sanctity of the Sabbath was violated by excursions to the country. It was just after they had made an engagement to take an excursion on the Thames on the ensuing Sabbath, that Mr. Beaufoy received a letter from his aged mother, whom he held in the highest veneration, and from whom he wished to conceal the fact of his apostasy. It breathed a spirit of gentle reproach and remonstrance, and opened to his view her agony of mind, occasioned by the intelligence of the defection of her beloved son from the paths of righteousness:—

"BROOKCOMBE, *12th July*, 18—.

"MY DEAR HENRY,—You know I always dreaded your going to London, and now, if what I hear be true, I have cause for my fears. A friend called on us the other day, and told us that you had left our Society and become a Socinian. I don't know much about Socinians, but I understand they say that Jesus Christ is nothing more than a man, and that we must not expect 'redemption through his blood, or the forgiveness of sins through the riches of his grace,' but from our own good works. And have you, my Henry, forsaken that Saviour whom, unseen, you loved when you lived at home with us? and have you made a shipwreck of that precious faith which once filled you with so much joy and peace in believing? and have you departed from the ways of the Lord for the pleasures of sin, which are only for a season? We have had no rest since we received these awful tidings, and the spirit of your poor dear father is so broken with sorrow, that he has not had a smile upon his coun-

tenance since. And can you, my dear Henry, leave the Saviour who once had compassion on you, and did such great things for you, as you so often told us of? If you leave him now, how will you be able to stand before him, when he comes with 'ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him?' O let me entreat you to return to the Lord with weeping and supplication, and he will yet have mercy upon you, and heal all your backslidings; he will accept you graciously, and love you freely. I cannot give you up, no, I cannot! You are my child, and I cannot endure the thought of living separated from you in another world. Let me hear from you directly, and tell me if you are as happy, and as holy, and as spiritually-minded now, as when you first believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Your father joins me in love to you and dear Sophia, and in beseeching both of you to consider the error of your ways ere it be too late.—Your affectionate mother, AMELIA BEAUFOY."

This letter shook the unhallowed purpose of his soul, and neither he nor his wife could venture on their excursion up the river. It brought over their imagination the scenes of departed bliss—revived recollections which were sacred and subduing—and plunged Mr. Beaufoy into deep mental agony. Mrs. Beaufoy, however, was of a more heedless turn of mind, and endeavoured to assuage her husband's grief by saying, "You know you still believe the gospel;" but she had no power over the anguish which was consuming his happiness. "Yes," said he, "I do believe it, or this letter would not disquiet me. I have departed from the Lord, and I am gone past recovery. Mine is no common apostasy. My doom is fixed. My end will be awful. Where, ah! where can I go when he cometh 'to execute judgment upon all?' Yes, I do believe the gospel. I feel I do. I believe it, and tremble. Its terrors are upon me. The piercing language of the prophet has been following me ever since



the death of that holy man, whose warning voice I despised, and now they enter as fire into my bones: 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know, therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.'

The Lord employs various means to recover his people from a backsliding state; and though for a season he compels them to feel the evil and the bitterness of their sin, yet he finally restores unto them the joy of his salvation. When, however, an apostate has been given up to the hardness of his heart, neither the language of mercy, nor the terrors of judgment will produce any other effect than that of accelerating the dreadful catastrophe. He goes on from bad to worse, till at length he comes to the fearful end of his career. Thus it was with Mr. Beaufoy. The extreme agony into which he was thrown by the simple appeals of his mother's letter gradually abated; but he felt it necessary to adopt some new and extraordinary expedients, to gain some small degree of tranquillity. His attachment to his wife was strong, and it had gained such ascendancy over him that he refused to leave his home except she accompanied him; but now a melancholy gloom was cast over all his pleasant things, and those from which he had extracted the sweetest comforts of life became as bitter as wormwood to his taste. Though he forbore, at this early stage of his mental anguish, to reproach her as the cause of his apostasy, yet he secretly laid the sin to her charge, and began occasionally to feel that her society aggravated the evil, which her kindness prompted her to attempt to alleviate. He became reserved, refused to attend any place of worship, and often stayed from home to a very late hour. At first Mrs. Beaufoy hoped that another sudden change would take place, and bring back the domestic happiness of former times; but at length she was awakened to a full discovery of the extent of the misery by which she was surrounded. Her husband was no more the interesting and affectionate companion of her retired hours—no more the attentive and fond lover. He became

now a thoroughly dissipated character, rarely returned home till long after his wife's eyes had become heavy by watching for him; and when he did, it was only to exhibit his own disgrace, and torture her feelings. She would sometimes venture to remonstrate with him, and hang over him with all the affection of former days, when he would relent, and pledge himself to change his course; but he had lost the power of self-control, and felt compelled to seek for ease from the anguish of his spirit amidst scenes of convivial mirth and folly.

The whirl of dissipation and the riot of intemperance are expedients to which many resort when trouble comes upon them; but they increase the evils sought to be removed; for though a temporary exhilaration of the spirits may be produced, and the fearful forebodings of future woe driven away for a short season, it is only to make them return with redoubled force to inflict keener anguish. A voice is sometimes heard speaking from the celestial glory, saying, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee;" but that voice cannot be heard amidst the revelling and excitement of a theatre or tavern. It speaks to the penitent sinner when he is alone—bowed down beneath his burden and despairing of help. Retire then, thou poor backslider, from the haunts of evil—and yet hope for mercy. Thy guilt is great, thy wound is deep, but there is virtue in the balm of Gilead when applied by the great Physician. Go, then, into thy closet, shut the door, confess thy sins, shed the penitential tear, and implore forgiveness. Here others have acknowledged their iniquities, and here they have obtained consolation. Your case may be desperate, but it is not hopeless; and though you may be tempted to despair, yet resist those whisperings of Satan, which, if listened to, would seal your final doom.



JAMES GODWIN.

MR. BEAUFOY'S EMOTION ON RECEIVING HIS MOTHER'S LETTER.  
Vol. II, p. 267.

W. L. THOMAS.  
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## THE FRUITS OF APOSTASY.

**A**S many months had now elapsed since either Mr. or Mrs. Beaufoy had been to any place of worship, the latter availed herself of an opportunity which occurred to allude to it, when her husband replied, "I wish you to go, Sophia, for it is enough that one of us perish." Dreading the return of his paroxysm of agony, she diverted his attention from the subject, and endeavoured to soothe and cheer his spirits. She so far succeeded as to bring over his countenance the pleasant smile of former times, but little did she imagine that this pleasing sign was so soon to be obliterated. The servant entered the parlour with a letter, which she gave to her master. He placed it on the table and sat musing for some minutes. He wept, though unconscious of the tear that involuntarily trickled down his cheek, and sighed, as if unconscious that any ear was listening. He again took the letter—pressed it to his lips, and wept, and sighed again, as though he thought himself alone. "Yes, my mother, I know thy hand, and if thou knewest the agony of my heart, thou wouldst pity me." He opened it; but he had not read many words before he started from his seat, as if wounded by an invisible hand, then, with firmly pressed lips, perused the letter, threw it on the floor, and was retiring abruptly from the room, when he recognized his wife. "What's the matter, Henry?" she exclaimed, as she attempted to follow him. "Read that," he sternly replied, pointing to the letter, and, suddenly, walking to the door, left the house. Mrs. Beaufoy, with trembling hand, picked up the letter and read as follows:—

"MY DEAR HENRY,—Your father is no more: he died last night, just as the clock was striking eleven. He ne'er smiled on us after he heard that you had forsaken the Lord, and he went to the grave mourning. He said just before he died, 'Tell my dear boy, for he

is still my son, that my last tear was shed on his account.' When I wiped off the big tear that was rolling down his cheek, he became composed for a few minutes, and then prayed, 'O Lord God, heal the backslidings of thine Ephraim,' and died before he could finish the supplication.

"And now, my son, you have broken your father's heart, I grieve to say it, and, I believe, will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. O! consider your dreadful state, and how fearful to think of, should you be suddenly cut off in it! Remember your dear father's last words.

"I feel quite unable to write you a longer letter to-day. If you can come down to the funeral, I need not say how glad I should be to see you; if not, may the Lord reclaim and bless you.

"I know you love Sophia, and I wish you to love her; for she has been a kind wife to you, and a most attentive daughter to your father and myself, but I fear she has been a snare to you. If she had feared the Lord she would have kept you from evil. May the Lord bless and reclaim you both.—Your bereaved mother,

"AMELIA BEAUFY.""

On reading this communication, Mrs. Beaufy's conscience smote her, and she wept long and bitterly. Then perusing it anew, she exclaimed, "Cruel charge! A snare to my husband! the cause of his being led astray! cruel charge! Is it not enough for me to bear his unkindness, without having to endure such reproaches?" She threw the letter from her, and rose, endeavouring to cast off the load of sorrow which oppressed her spirit. "I cannot endure it. I am of all women the most miserable. I have no one to share my grief. Oh death!—no!—I am not prepared to die." She resumed her seat, and though the letter possessed a sting sharper than that of a scorpion, she took it, read it again, and again it wounded her. "If she had feared the Lord she would have kept you from evil." "Cruel charge! I have tried to keep him, but could not." She paused, then could only ejaculate, "Woe is me!"

The ringing of the bell announced the return of Mr. Beaufoy; but his dark, lowering look bespoke the inward conflict. On taking his seat his eye caught sight of the letter near the place where he had thrown it down a few hours before. Moving back, as if from an adder, he said, "Have you been reading it?"

"Yes, Henry, I have."

"And what do you think of the charges?"

"They are cruel."

"Rather say, they are just, though severe."

"You know that I have often attempted to reclaim you."

"But did you not first lead me astray? Till I knew you I was a happy, because a religious man; but from that ill-fated hour when, enticed by your influence and example to abandon the house of prayer for the theatre and ball-room, I have had no mental peace. I have forsaken God, and he, in anger, has forsaken me."

"But why recriminate on me the guilt of your own sin? You have withdrawn from me your love and your society, and will you now in exchange give me your reproaches? If we have sinned together, and provoked the Lord to anger, let us now kneel together before his mercy-seat, and together confess our sins, and implore forgiveness."

"You may pray and obtain mercy, but I cannot; no, I cannot."

"The Lord waits to be gracious."

"Yes, to the penitent, but my heart is too hard to feel penitential sorrow."

"But is not the Redeemer exalted to give repentance?"

"To *you* he will give it, but not to *me*. I have fallen away, and incensed justice renders it impossible to renew me again to repentance, for I have crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

"But justice relents when a sinner prays, and mercy"—

"Oh! speak not of mercy."

"But mercy rejoiceth over judgment."

"Yes, but when mercy is rejected, as in my case, justice avenges

the insult in a terrible form. Let us change the theme, Sophia. I am too full of agony to dwell on it. It awakens recollections that I wish to banish for ever. It is like handling the deadly weapon which is to extinguish life."

"The blood of Christ, dear Henry, cleanseth from all sin."

"But I have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing."

"But, Henry, is He not still able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and have you sinned beyond his recovering grace?"

"I know my doom," he curtly replied.

It is not always in our power to ascertain the precise moment when the Divine Spirit begins the good work of grace in the heart, nor yet to say what specific means he employs to effect it, but sometimes an unpremeditated effort to convey instruction, or warning, or consolation to another, is made to re-act on the speaker to produce the great change. Thus it was in the experience of Mrs. Beaufoy. She felt the force of her own remarks, and when reflecting on them, at a subsequent period, she could not but yield to their influence. The charge brought against her, of having led her husband astray, she *now* admitted to be just. But what an admission! to be not merely accessory to his apostasy, but the primary cause of it—not merely a partaker of his guilt, but the means of its contraction and its accumulation. Her sin, which had been concealed from her, *now* started up in all its aggravated form and appalling aspect. "Yes, 'tis true; if I had feared the Lord, I might have kept him from going astray, and we might have been walking in his commandments and ordinances blameless. I enticed him from the paths of righteousness, and into what an abyss of misery are we both plunged! I remember the night when I first induced him to leave the house of prayer to accompany me to the theatre, and I remember the anguish of his spirit after our return. I then told him that he would not injure his principles by yielding sometimes to the customs of the world, but alas, I was deceived! I alone am to blame, and if I could suffer

alone, I would patiently endure the terrible inflictions of justice I have merited. But alas! I have raised the storm which has long since laid waste all our domestic felicity, and which is now threatening a deluge of wrath! Where, O where, can we take refuge from the impending evil!"

As she was thus bemoaning her unhappy state, she thought of her long-neglected Bible, and taking it from the book-case, she pressed it to her lips and prayed for grace to understand and feel its instructive and consolatory truths. On turning over its pages, her eye caught the following passage, which in a few moments mitigated in a slight degree the agitation of her mind—"And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." But as there are •

"No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,"

so there is

"No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals;"

and though her distressed spirit was lifted up above the overwhelming flood, yet it was still enveloped by the gloom of desponding fears. She attempted to pray, but her heart was too tightly bound by mental anguish to give vent to her grief. Hitherto she had borne her sorrows with an unbending spirit, and usually wore a placid aspect when in the company of her husband or her other friends; but now her countenance was changed, and it was evident her soul was in trouble.

"You appear unhappy," said her husband, one day, on finding her in tears; "is it on my account or your own?"

"I am unhappy on your account, Henry, and I am unhappy on my own; and I know not where to go for relief. I feel the justice of our dear mother's charge, though I deemed it cruel at the time. I have indeed led you astray, and am the guilty cause of all the misery into which we are both plunged. If I could suffer alone, it would be an alleviation of my anguish, but I cannot. O, Henry,



return with me to the Lord, from whom we have departed, and as we have sinned together, and now suffer together, let us enter his presence, and confess our guilt; and then his anger will be turned away, and he will comfort us."

"*You* may obtain mercy, Sophia, but *I* cannot; yours have been the sins of ignorance, but mine have been committed against the clearest light and the deepest conviction of their aggravated guilt. You may plead the promises of the Bible, as a sinner under the first convictions of sin; but I bear upon me the reproach of having forsaken the God of my mercies; and while there are no obstructions in the way of your access to the throne of grace, that throne is guarded by a flaming sword which turneth every way to keep me off from touching the sceptre of mercy. I know my doom, and I deserve it."

He continued in this frame of mind for many months; and though he abandoned the society of his former companions, and the haunts of evil which he had been accustomed to frequent, yet no arguments, however weighty, or entreaties, however urgent, could induce him to revisit a place of worship, or resume his practice of family devotion. At length an insidious disease, which had long been undermining his constitution, began to manifest itself, and it was evident that his course in this world was fast coming to an end. He was urged to try change of air; and with this view he proceeded with his wife to the pleasant village of Parkdale, from which I was somewhat surprised, shortly after my return from Fairmount, to receive a letter written by Mrs. Beaufoy, earnestly beseeching me to come and see her husband, as she feared he had not long to live, and had expressed a wish to see me. My intercourse with Mr. Beaufoy had been completely suspended for some years past. As already mentioned, his letters first became shorter and more reserved, and at length ceased altogether. On one occasion that I called on him in London, his manner was so dry, and expressed so little cordiality, that I felt convinced my visit was disagreeable, and, consequently, never repeated it. On hearing, however, of his lamentable defection

from the path of truth, I deemed it my duty to address two or three letters to him on the subject; but to none of these did I receive any answer. When at Fairmount, Mr. Lewellin informed me that he had seen nothing of Mr. Beaufoy for a long time, as latterly he had become quite estranged from his early friends, and established himself in the midst of gay and irreligious society. On receiving the above communication, I at once resolved to proceed to Parkdale, about forty miles distant, in the earnest hope that I might be of some benefit to Mr. Beaufoy, whom, notwithstanding all the past coolness between us, I still continued to regard with considerable interest. On my arrival, I found that I had been anxiously expected by his wife, who appeared to be much relieved at seeing me, and after a short conversation, led me to her husband's room. He received me with strong expressions of affection, and regret for his past rudeness and neglect. "O! Mr. —," he exclaimed, "this is indeed kindness to come and see a poor dying wretch, whose conduct has been so deserving of censure. I have been a wicked man, an undutiful son, and a renegade from the faith; and now I feel a dagger thrust through my heart, which can never be removed."

"Dear Sir," I replied, "there is one Physician who can remove it, and one specific that can heal the wound."

"I know it. I do not doubt his power, as that would be an insult to his omnipotence; but I cannot believe in his willingness. No, I cannot!"

"But which is the greatest insult, to doubt his ability to save to the uttermost, or his willingness? Has he not said, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out?'"

"But, Sir, the passage which you have now quoted, is addressed to sinners under the first convictions of sin, and not to apostates who have fallen from their former steadfastness. My doom is fixed, and you have only to read the words of the prophet to know its nature. 'Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.'"

“But why, my friend, should you appropriate that awful passage to your condemnation, when you live under a dispensation of grace, which has made provision for the salvation of the chief of sinners?”

“I do it, Sir, because I know and feel that it is a debt of justice which I owe to the insulted grace of Heaven. That passage is the only one in the Bible on which I can dwell with any degree of ease.”

“But can you derive any mental ease from reflecting on a passage which denounces indignation and wrath?”

“Yes, Sir, because then I sink to the level of my condition, and silently approve the equity of the sentence; but when a promise of mercy recurs to my mind, its involuntary stirrings to embrace it throw me into a more agonized state of feeling. But I do not complain. I deserve all I suffer, and all I have to suffer, and I will submissively bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.”

“May you not hope, that this spirit of submission to the righteous manifestations of the Divine displeasure, is a proof that you are not totally abandoned by him; for if that were the case, you would feel disposed, either to impeach the goodness, or murmur against the justice of God?”

“No, Sir, I am not abandoned by him! If I were, I should enjoy the fatal ease of *unfelt* guilt. I am held in bondage, I am alive to the peril of my state, and am compelled by the irresistible convictions of my conscience to admit the equity of my condemnation, but I dare not hope for any symptoms of returning mercy. Returning mercy! No, mercy is clean gone for ever.”

“Nay, my friend, the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever; he delights in it, and I have no doubt but the Sun of Righteousness will break in upon the midnight darkness of your soul, and cheer you with the returning light and bliss of hope.”

“O! speak not to me of mercy or of hope! You do but agonize me with fresh tortures.”

“But will you not admit that God *can* turn away his anger from you, and comfort you?”

“I admit, Sir, that all things are possible with God, which are in accordance with his purity and his justice; but I do not think that he can renew me again unto repentance, because I have crucified to myself the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. I wish, therefore, you would allow me to remain undisturbed by any allusions to mercy, as such allusions bring to my recollection joys that are past, never to be recalled, and plunge me deeper and deeper in the abyss of mental agony. O that I had passed from the nuptial altar to a premature grave! then I should have been resting in peace; but I will not reproach. May my sad doom operate as a warning to others against a departure from God.”

I was much distressed at this scene, but still did not abandon hope; and, therefore, at the urgent solicitation of Mrs. Beaufoy, consented to remain with them for a few days. His disorder continued to increase, and on the morning after my arrival, he consented that his mother should be sent for—a proposal which he had hitherto always rejected, as his attachment to her, which was sincere, made him averse to occasioning her any alarm. On receiving the intelligence of his illness, which had hitherto been concealed from her, she hastened to Parkdale. Her son, on hearing of her arrival, said to his wife, “Conceal from my dear mother the state of my mind; she cannot help me, and if she knows that I die in despair, she will never taste another drop of comfort in this vale of tears.” As she entered the room, he raised himself on his bed and embraced her, and they wept in silence together for some minutes.

“And why, my son,” she remonstrated, “did you not let me know of your illness before now? I would have come and nursed you as I used to do long ago.”

“I hoped that I should recover, mother, and I was unwilling to alarm you.”

“Well, my son, I hope the Lord is dealing graciously with your soul now you are in the dark valley?”

“He is dealing righteously.”

“Yes, my child, he always deals righteously; but is he dealing graciously?” A long pause ensued.

“But why are you silent, my son? Tell your mother how the Lord is dealing with you.”

“He is dealing righteously with me, and it is our duty to bow in submission to His will.”

“I am happy to hear that you are resigned to His will; that is a proof that He is dealing graciously. May the Lord continue to bless you, my dear child, and may He lift upon you the light of his countenance and give you peace.”

On resuming her inquiries next day, she asked him, “Have you a good hope through grace, of being presented faultless before the presence of the Lord with exceeding joy?”

“To throw off the veil of concealment which I wished to rest over the state of my mind, I confess, my dear mother, that I have no hope.”

“No hope, my child! Not one cheerful beam of hope! Is the Lord’s arm shortened, that he cannot save? or is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear?”

“No; he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and it is his immutability that plunges me into despair.”

“How so, my dear son?”

“He is immutable in his threatenings against those who depart from him.”

“And is He not immutable in his promises of mercy to those who *wish* to return?”

“But there are no promises of mercy that suit my case.”

“No promises! Why, don’t you recollect what our blessed Lord said, ‘Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out?’ And don’t you recollect what Paul says, ‘Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them?’”

“Oh, mother, I have gone away from Him who hath the words of eternal life.”

“Then come back; He will not cast you out. Does the shepherd refuse to take back the lamb into his fold, which has happened to stray from him?”

“But I have no strength to return.”

“But you can pray; and as the shepherd goes to look after the strayed lamb, when he hears his bleating, so our blessed Lord will have compassion on you who may be out of the way, and will not suffer you to perish, if you wish to return to him. Don't despair of mercy, my son, while our blessed Lord lives to intercede for the chief of sinners.”

These tender appeals coming from the lips of his mother, reduced his spirit to a more composed state, and for the first time he wept. When she saw his tears, she wept with him, and said, “I am glad to see you weep; it is the first sign of returning mercy.”

“Mercy! no!” he replied; “mercy, I fear, will return no more! I have despised and insulted mercy, and am consigned over to the offended justice of Heaven. It must be a miracle of mercy to recover me from the ruin I have brought upon myself.”

“Very true, my child; and mercy often performs a miracle of grace; and if you look by faith to Christ, he will recover you, and he will put a new song into your mouth, ‘even praise unto our God: many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.’”

On the evening of the day following his mother's arrival, as we were all standing round his bedside, she asked him if he yet felt more composed, or if he could indulge a good hope of future happiness.

“Composed, mother! No, I am in perfect anguish, and expect to be lost.”

“But he who raiseth the whirlwind, and directeth the storm, is the God of salvation; and though he allow all his waves and his billows to go over you, yet he will command his loving-kindness in the daytime; and when the thickest darkness of the night comes upon you, then his song shall be with you, and your prayer shall be unto the God of your life.”

“O mother, I am about to leave you, and you, my wife; and I leave you with a full conviction that we shall never meet again. A few hours will decide the long-agitated question—

‘Am I his, or am I not?’

I wish you would retire and leave me, nor suffer any one to disturb me, as I wish to be alone for a little. I shall ring the bell when I am prepared to see you again.”

We withdrew to an adjoining room, when his mother said to his afflicted wife, “This is a solemn moment. You are about to lose a husband, and I a son; but if it should please the Lord to visit him with the light of his reconciled countenance, I trust we should then be enabled to bow down in submission to his sovereign will.” I then, at their request, knelt down and prayed, as Elijah prayed when he besought the Lord to send forth the rain of heaven to refresh the parched lands of Israel. When I had finished, old Mrs. Beaufoy said, “Let us go and see if there be yet any signs of returning mercy.” “But,” said her daughter-in-law, “perhaps he is now wrestling with the Lord, and if we go we may disturb him and ruffle his spirits.” Such, however, was the yearning of his mother’s heart, that she could not refrain from going to listen, if, peradventure, she might hear something to comfort her. She heard him repeat again and again, “Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me! Lord, save, or I perish!”

Just as she was returning to inform us that the silence of despondency was broken by the voice of prayer, the bell rang, and we entered the room together. “Well, my child,” said his mother, “I hope the Lord is now dealing graciously with you.” “He is dealing righteously; and against the equity of his conduct I can raise no objection. He is just when he takes vengeance.”

After a long pause, during which time the terror of unabated agony was depicted in every countenance, he raised his down-cast eyes towards heaven, and, with a feeble voice modulated to the subdued tenderness of the expression, he said—

“Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,  
Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,  
Would light on some sweet promise there,  
Some sure support against despair.”

He now became exhausted, and reclining his head on the pillow, fell asleep, and slept several hours. When he awoke, he was composed and calm, and said, “My sleep has been refreshing to me.”

“I hope,” said his mother, “that your soul is refreshed, as well as your body.”

“I am more composed than I ever expected to be, but I am not happy. My composure is no less a source of terror than my former agitation, as I know that the cessation of pain is sometimes an indication that the disorder is approaching a fatal termination, even when the patient may be anticipating his recovery.”

“But, my friend,” said I, “the terror you feel under your composure, is a proof that you are unwilling to seize a premature hope; and may be regarded as an evidence, that the Lord who refused to appear in the whirlwind, in the earthquake, or in the fire, is graciously appearing in the still small voice of love.”

“Oh, my old and tried friend, my sins appear too great and too aggravated to be forgiven.”

“But, Henry, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; and He is sent, not only to proclaim liberty to the captive soul, but to heal the broken-hearted.”

“Oh!” he exclaimed, “I would believe. Lord, help my unbelief.”

Death was now rapidly approaching; and having pressed the hands of each of us, he reclined his head on his wife’s bosom, and fainted away. On recovering from this fit, which lasted several minutes, he once more opened his eyes, and casting a mournful look on us, said, “I die an unworthy and guilty sinner at the foot of the cross; but will He permit me to perish when crying to Him to save me? Impossible!” he exclaimed; and then, as if having exhausted all his strength by this last effort, his head fell back on the pillow, and he expired.



Thus died Henry Beaufoy, who, in his youthful days, bade fair to exhibit, in after life, an example of the beauty and consistency of the Christian character; but having been seduced from the paths of wisdom and of piety, he entered upon a career of evil, which at length brought him to a premature grave. His submission at the last to the visitations of Providence, as an infliction which he deserved; and the avowal he made, when yielding up the ghost, gave to his surviving friends a *hope* that he died in the Lord, and is at rest from his sorrows; but still gloomy shadows would sometimes fall upon their spirits, and they often sighed and wept over his memory, as of one who had come short of the kingdom of heaven.

As female influence is so powerful, and has often been employed to seduce the man who fears the Lord, from the paths of righteousness and the ways of peace, let him be on his guard when about to form a connection for life, and not suffer beauty and accomplishments to become a substitute for decided piety. He may think that he shall be able to withstand every ensnaring art, and every fond entreaty, and that he shall ultimately gain over his wife to the obedience of faith; but in this he may be deceived, and have cause to mourn over the consequences of his imprudence, when it is too late. But if a man should violate the sanctity of the Divine law, and marry a woman who is not decidedly pious, let her be on her guard, lest she become the cause of his moral ruin. Let her beware of enticing him to a theatre, or an evening party, when his inclinations would take him to the house of prayer—let her beware of manifesting a spirit of indifference or hostility to the practice of family devotion, which his conscience constrains him to observe. She may not regard such proceedings as wrong, or likely to prove injurious to the reputation or the happiness of her husband, but she may be mistaken; and if her persuasions or her indifference should prove successful, as is too often the case, she may be called to feel the bitter consequences of her folly and her guilt, amidst the wreck of domestic happiness. She may suppose, that the religion of her husband, like her own, has nought to do with the inner man of

the heart, and that it may be thrown aside, and resumed, as caprice may dictate, but she is mistaken; and if she should induce him to abandon it for a season, she may live to be stung by his reproaches, and tortured by her own, when he is brought to suffer the due reward of his deeds.

From the preceding sketch, which has been taken, not from the conceptions of my own fancy, but the facts of real life, we may see that it is an evil thing to forsake the Lord God; and though his tender mercy may stoop to recover the backslider just as he is sinking into despair, yet he seldom throws the light of his countenance over the death-bed of such an individual. I am aware that some employ the partial and the final apostasy of professors, as an argument to prove that our perseverance in religion is quite precarious and uncertain, depending solely on ourselves, without any regard to the counsel of Jehovah. That it does depend on ourselves, I admit—but not solely. We are to walk in the ways of the Lord; but he has promised to uphold our goings, that our footsteps slip not. We are to cleave to him with full purpose of heart; but he has promised never to leave us, nor forsake us. We are commanded to keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; but he has promised to keep us by his power through faith unto salvation. We know that the beginning of the work of grace in the heart, is to be ascribed to the immediate operations of his power; and it is to be viewed as the commencement of a continued series of operations, which will ultimately issue in the salvation of the soul. And though the faith of some may be overthrown, “nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” His designs will be accomplished, but accomplished in a natural way. They do not supersede the necessity of our exertions. They do not suppose that we are passive machines, acted on by some supernatural power; but living agents, endowed with a Divine principle, which works within us “both to will and to do.”

They do not relax our obligations to watchfulness—to prayer—to an avoidance of evil—and to the cultivation of the spirit and habits of devotion, but increase them ; and the reciprocal influence of our exertions, and of the concurrence of Divine strength, is so nicely balanced in the purpose of grace, that while we are compelled to ascribe to God the honour of our preservation and final salvation, yet we are made responsible for every act of transgression and disobedience. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. x. 12).

One of the chief causes of decay in religion, is our forgetting that the means necessary for first bringing us to God, are no less essential for retaining us steadily in a close walk with him. To watch and pray was no less the duty of the disciples, when they had left all for Christ, than when they first approached his presence, and sought his pardon and love. He has prayed that we may be kept from the evil of the world ; but we must look for an answer to this prayer—in our choice of good, and rejection of evil—in the control of our passions—and in the integrity and uprightness of our conduct.

It has been observed, that apostasy begins in the closet ; secret prayer is at first carelessly performed—then occasionally omitted—and then entirely neglected. When this is the case, the religious taste becomes fastidious—a roving habit is often indulged—the customs of the world are yielded to, and the principle of sin, which once lay dormant in the heart, rises up with renewed strength, and breaks forth in open manifestations of evil. This process in moral degeneracy may be slow or rapid, according to the degree of influence which circumstances may be permitted to supply, but when it has once begun, it is always going on ; and though it may not be in our power to assign the *primary* cause, yet too much secular prosperity is generally one of the most operative. The more a Christian is indulged with temporal blessings—the higher he or his family rises in the world—the more he ought to have his heart glowing with love and gratitude to God. But so inveterate is the depravity of human nature, that uninterrupted prosperity imperceptibly deadens

the best affections of the soul, which becomes so completely engrossed in worldly objects and pursuits, that religion is rarely thought of but on Sabbath, and even then it is entangled and mixed up with the things of time and sense. When prosperity comes thus to act on a person who possesses only the form of godliness, while destitute of its power, its fatal effects may be looked for with almost perfect certainty.

Another cause of the evil which we are so often called to deplore is the indulgence of a speculative turn of mind in matters of religion. We are commanded to search the Scriptures—to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. When this investigation is pursued from a pure motive, and a spirit of prayer attends it—keeping the mind in a teachable and devotional frame—the greatest benefit will be the result. But when once the Word of God is treated with levity—when liberties are taken with it—when one part of it is impugned as mysterious, another rejected as apparently contradictory—when its doctrines are denounced, as incomprehensible, and its precepts objected to, because they are too unaccommodating to the habits of the age—an evil spirit enters into the heart, which first corrupts it and then entangles it in a labyrinth of error. This spirit of unbelief commences its operation by reducing the magnitude of the evil of sin; the necessity and then the reality of the atonement is rejected; prayer is considered useless; the influence of the Holy Spirit in the renovation and sanctification of the heart is denied; and then the apostasy becomes complete.

But one of the most prevalent causes of this evil is an adoption of the principles and a compliance with the customs of the world. There are some customs which exist amongst us to which we must conform; but there are others from which we are commanded to abstain. We may mingle with the men of the world in business, and also in social life; but we are to have “no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” We may, in common with others, have our social enjoyments, and partake of the innocent recreations of life, without sustaining injury to our

morals or our Christian reputation ; but if we venture to cross the line which separates the lawful from forbidden ground—if we form habits which the spirit of the gospel condemns, and venture into those places of amusement to which the children of folly are so much attached—though we may not immediately feel their corrupting influence, yet we shall become bitterly sensible of it at last, when the evil is beyond our control. We may silence the remonstrances of conscience, by resolving not to depart from the ways of righteousness, and may affect to treat with contempt the kind admonitions of our more pious friends ; but by no species of artifice shall we be able to form a junction between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world ; or retain the fervour of devotion within the walls of an assembly-room or a theatre. The experiment has been often made, and the result always proves morally disastrous. In some instances the professor has passed from all connection with pure spiritual religion, into a state of confirmed indifference or avowed hostility ; in others, he has retained the form, while he has lost the spirit of devotion, and the closing scene of his life has been occupied by the most heart-rending reproaches, and the bitterest lamentations of misery and woe.

As apostasy from the faith and purity of the gospel, from whatever causes it may proceed, invariably inflicts on the apostate, when awakened to a clear perception of his sin and danger, the most awful and agonizing mental sufferings, I wish to do all that is in my power to arrest his progress ere it be too late, and lead him back to the source of pure felicity, which he has forsaken. I would ask him if the gaieties, the follies, and the amusements of the world, afford him such substantial happiness as he once enjoyed, when he walked in the light of God's countenance ? I would ask him if he does not often regret the exchange he has made ? and as often condemn himself for his folly and ingratitude in having made it ? I would ask him if he does not wish to return once more to taste that the Lord is gracious—once more to feel that Christ is precious—once more to partake of the peace which passeth all understanding—

and to live, as in the early days of his profession, in the sublime anticipations of eternal glory? I would ask, Have you never made the attempt? As time advances, are you not gradually sinking into a state of mental dejection, from which you see no chance of being delivered? I do not propose these questions to inflict fresh torment, or increase the anguish which presses upon your guilty conscience, but to induce you to return to the Lord from whom you have departed, that you may again experience his loving-kindness, and that your prayers, mingled with songs of praise, may again ascend to the God of your salvation.

In illustration of this subject, I shall here conclude by quoting the following from a deceased divine:—"If you ask, But how am I to return? how am I to regain my long-lost peace? I answer, In the same way in which you first found rest to your soul, namely, by repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

"In general, I may observe, the Scriptures assure us of the exceeding great and tender mercy of God, and of his willingness to forgive all those who return to him in the name of his Son. It is necessary that we be well persuaded of this truth, lest instead of applying as supplicants, we sink into despair. If a sinner, newly awakened, be in danger of this species of despondency, a backslider is still more so. His transgressions are much more heinous in their circumstances than those of the other, having been committed under greater light and against greater obligations; and when to this is added the treatment which his conduct must necessarily draw upon him from his religious connections, he may be tempted to relinquish all hopes of recovery, and consider himself as an out-cast, both from God and man. Unhappy man! Thy sin may be great, and the language of an awakened conscience may suggest, Who can heal me? Yet do not despair. 'Hear what God the Lord will speak. He will speak peace unto his people and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.'

"There are circumstances which may render it almost impossi-

ble for forgiveness to be exercised amongst men; and therefore men are ready to think it must be so with respect to God. 'But with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption.' He will not only pardon, but pardon abundantly: 'for his thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.—The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.—If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' The threatenings against the unpardonable sin itself do not affect the truth of these merciful declarations: for that sin is all along described as excluding repentance, as well as forgiveness. The party is supposed to be given up to hardness of heart. If, therefore, we confess our sin with contrition, we may be certain it is not unpardonable, and that we shall obtain mercy through the blood of the cross.

"But the great question is, How we shall repent of our sins, and return to God by Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly it is much easier to get out of the way, than to get in again; to lose the peace of our minds, than to recover it. Sin is of a hardening nature; and the farther we have proceeded in it, the more inextricable are its entanglements. But, however this be, we either do desire to return, or we do not.

"If my reader be in such a state of mind, it is with a mixture of hope and tenderness that I attempt to point out to him the means of recovery.

"I would recommend you to embrace every possible season of retirement for reading the Holy Scriptures, especially those parts which are suited to your case, and accompany your reading with prayer. God's Word hid in the heart is not only a preservative against sin, but a restorative from its evil effects. It both wounds and heals; if it rebukes, it is with the faithfulness of a friend, or if it consoles, its consolations will melt us into contrition.

"Read especially those parts of Scripture which are addressed to

persons in your situation, as the second chapter of Jeremiah; or those which express the desires of a returning sinner, as the twenty-fifth, thirty-second, thirty-eighth, fifty-first, and hundred and thirtieth Psalms. You may not be able to adopt all this language as your own; but, nevertheless, it may be useful. To read the genuine expressions of a contrite heart, may produce at least a conviction of the disparity between the frame of mind possessed by the writer and yourself; and such a conviction may be accompanied with a sensation of shame and grief.

“It is also of importance that you read the Scriptures *by yourself*. To read a portion of them in your families is right, and ought not to be neglected; but there is a great difference, as to personal advantage, between this and reading them alone. Your mind may then be more at liberty for reflection; you can read, and pause, and think, and apply the subject to your case.

“It is of still greater importance to unite prayer with it. Reading the Word of God and prayer are duties which mutually assist each other: the one furnishes us with confessions, pleas, and arguments, while the other promotes solemnity and spirituality of mind, which goes farther towards our understanding of the Scriptures than a library of expositions.

“It was in one of these seasons of retirement that David put up this petition, ‘I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.’ He seems to have had in his thoughts the condition of a poor wandering sheep, that had left the flock and the rich pastures where it was wont to be led, ranging rather like a native of the woods, than one who had been used to be led, and fed, and protected by an owner. Bewildered by its own wanderings, entangled in the thorns and briars of the wilderness, and exposed to beasts of prey, it feels its forlorn condition, and bleats after the shepherd and the flock! Is there nothing in this that may suit your case? Yes, thou art the man! Thou hast gone astray like a lost sheep, got entangled in thine own corruptions, and knowest not how to find the way back; yet it may be thou hast not



utterly lost the remembrance of those happy days before thou wert led to deviate from the right path. Let thy prayer then be directed, like that of the psalmist, to the good Shepherd of the sheep: 'Seek thy servant.'

"Prayer is a religious exercise which is necessary to accompany all others. 'In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' Solemn approaches to God are adapted to impress the mind with a sense of sin, and to inspire us with self-abhorrence on account of it. It was by a view of the holiness of God that Isaiah felt himself to be a 'man of unclean lips;' and it was by conversing with the Lord that Job was brought to abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes. The very exercise of prayer carries in it an implication that 'our help must come from above;' a truth which in all cases it is absolutely necessary for us to know, and with which, in this case especially, we cannot be too deeply impressed. We easily get out of the way; but if ever we return to it, it must be by His influence, who restoreth our souls and leadeth us in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

"To tell a person who is out of the way, that he has no help in himself, and that if ever he get in again it must be by the restoring grace of God, may seem to some people paradoxical and disheartening; but it is a truth, and a truth which, if properly understood and felt, would go farther towards our recovery than we at first may apprehend. Paul found that 'when he was weak then was he strong,' and many others have found the same. The more we are emptied of self-sufficiency, the more sensibly shall we feel our weakness, and the more importunately implore that the Lord would save us, and restore us.

"This was the way in which we at first found rest for our souls, and this must be the way in which we recover it. An awakened sinner frequently labours hard after peace, without being able to obtain it. Wherefore? 'Because he seeks it not by faith, but by the works of the law.' In all his labours there is a large portion of self-

righteous hope, or an idea that God will pity him on account of his endeavours to please him. But if ever he obtain peace, it must be by utterly despairing of all help from himself; and falling, as a sinner entirely lost, into the arms of sovereign mercy. This is walking in the good old way, which brings rest to the soul; and the same sense of our insufficiency which is necessary to find rest in the first instance, is equally necessary to find it on all future occasions.

“We may pray from year to year, and all without effect. It is only the ‘prayer of faith’ that succeeds; the distinguishing characteristic of which is a sense of there being no help in us, and a laying hold of the mercy and faithfulness of God, as revealed in the gospel. David for a time *groaned*, and even *roared*, ‘by reason of the disquietness of his heart;’ but he obtained no relief from this. On the contrary, he sunk deeper and deeper into despondency. At length he betook him to another manner of praying: ‘Out of the depths cried I unto thee—and thou heardest my voice!’ We find him here pleading the exceeding greatness of God’s mercy, and the plenteousness of his redemption. Here he found rest for his soul! Jonah also for a time was in much the same state. With a conscience so far awakened as to deprive him of all enjoyment, he retired to the bottom of the ship; and, wearied with the load of his guilt, slept away his time. Even the horrors of a tempest did not awaken him. At length being roused and reproved by heathens, and marked out by lot as the guilty person, he confesses who he is, and what he had done, and advises them to cast him into the sea. Humanity struggles for a time with the elements, but in vain; he must be cast away. Think what must have been his state of mind at this time! He is thrown into the deep, is swallowed by a fish, and retains his reason even in that situation; but no light shines upon his soul. Conceiving himself to be on the point of death, his heart sighed within him, ‘I am cast out of thy sight!’ But ere the thought had well passed through his mind, another struck him, ‘Yet will I look again towards thy holy temple!’ He looked, and was lightened: ‘Out of the belly of hell cried I unto thee, and thou

heardest my voice! When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.' \*"

## THE FARM-HOUSE KITCHEN.



IN the parish of Woodford, about twenty miles from the town where I resided, there were a few cottages, pleasantly situated on an eminence which commanded a beautiful and extensive view of the surrounding country. They were principally occupied by the peasantry who were employed on the neighbouring farms. No less than five church spires could be seen rising in the distance, from amongst the trees, of different parishes; but they were too remote for the aged and the infirm to visit, and the more robust and healthy were also very ready to plead the length of the way as an excuse for their non-attendance at public worship.

Mr. Annesley, a Dissenting minister in the village of Woodford, on passing this hamlet one summer evening, had his attention arrested by an interesting looking young man, about the age of four and twenty, who appeared to be in the last stage of a decline. He presented to him a few religious tracts, which the young man received with an air of indifference; but when informed that they were intended to prepare him for that world into which he was likely soon to enter, he seemed pleased, and said, "That is what I want, Sir." This young man, who was the son of a respectable farmer, lived about two months after the first interview Mr. Annesley had with him; and died avowing his entire dependence on the death of

\* The author is indebted to a work of the late Rev. A. Fuller for the quotation with which this chapter closes.



BRINGING IN THE LAST LOAD OF CORN.  
THE REAPERS' HYMN OF PRAISE.

Vol. II, page 205.

JAMES OGDWIN.

W. L. THOMAS.

Jesus Christ for eternal life: blessing God in the most simple and ardent terms, for his goodness in sending to him at the eleventh hour a knowledge of the way of salvation.

After his death, the old farmer, his father, when lamenting that they enjoyed no religious advantages in that remote part of the parish, very readily consented to have his large kitchen licensed for preaching; and Mr. Annesley engaged to give them a sermon on Tuesdays every week. When he commenced his labours he had to pass through the ordeal of mockery and contempt. Sometimes he was insulted by the poor rustics, when attempting to explain to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but by visiting them in their own cottages, and displaying a kind and affectionate disposition, he gained their confidence and esteem, and they pressed to hear him with devout and earnest attention.

Having resolved to make an excursion to Woodford, and pay a visit to this rural place of worship, of which I had often heard, I took my seat in the coach, one afternoon in the month of September, as far as the village of Woodford, from which it was a walk of three miles to the farm-house. The weather was unusually hot for the season of the year; but towards the evening, the cool breezes which sprung up made me enjoy my journey exceedingly.

After getting down from the coach, I quitted the village by a cross road, and then turned aside into a fine shady lane. On passing by a farm-yard, I observed an extraordinary rush of men, women, and children, and being anxious to know the cause of it, I advanced into the yard, where I saw a group marching before the last load of corn, which they were bringing from the field, and singing the following, as a harvest hymn of praise:—

“But now his hand hath crown'd our toil,  
We joy like those that share the spoil,  
The harvest home to bear:  
With shouts the laughing pastures ring;  
With grateful hearts we reapers sing  
The praise of heaven's eternal King,  
Through whose paternal care we bring  
The produce of the year.”

I tarried some time, intermingling my feelings with those of the enraptured swains, and participating with them in this feast of innocent delight; but on looking at my watch I found that I must hasten onwards, or I should be deprived of the higher gratification of witnessing a more interesting and a more important sight. On proceeding up the lane that led to the rural temple of devotion. I occasionally heard the harmony of Zion's strains, which became more distinct and impressive as I drew nearer, till at length I was enabled to catch the following words which the congregation were singing:—

“Shall I beneath thy gospel stay,  
And hear the call of grace;  
And at the awful judgment-day,  
Be banish'd from thy face?”

I got into the passage just as Mr. Annesley arose to pray, but I did not choose to advance, lest I should disturb the devotions of the little assembly. While standing there, two ladies approached towards the door, and, like myself, waited in silence till the prayer was ended, when we all entered together. Our appearance excited considerable attention, but whenever we had taken our seats, every eye was attentively directed towards the minister. To one who has been accustomed to offer up his prayers and his praises, in the fixed and appropriate language of our national liturgy—and to listen to the enunciation of life and immortality within the walls of a church—the scene of rustic simplicity exhibited in this farm-house kitchen must have appeared very singular. Mr. Annesley stood in a corner of the room, his Bible lying open before him on a small round deal table, the family clock ticking behind him; his rustic audience was variously disposed of—some sitting on the dresser to his right, others in the chimney-corner to the left, the majority on forms in front of him, and a few bending forwards from the passage, being incapable of gaining admission. As they were singing the hymn which intervenes between the prayer and sermon, an expression which I had recently met with came to my mind, and with such

force, that no external decoration was wanted to render either the place or the truth more acceptable to my taste—"A religion without a Saviour, is the temple without its glory, and its worshippers will all desert it." Just as the minister read his text, the countenances of several changed; all were attentive, and appeared to have forgotten the toils and the fatigues of labour, while listening to the discourse, which was founded on the following words of Jesus Christ:—"But there are some of you that believe not" (John vi. 64). He had not been speaking long, before my spirit involuntarily said, "Here is religion with a Saviour, and wherever his truth is preached, there he condescends to dwell."

The sermon delivered was simple, perspicuous, and well calculated to fix the attention of the audience. The figures of illustration and description were selected from the rural scenes and occupations with which the congregation were familiar; and from the looks, the tones, and the actions of the speaker, it was evident that he was really in earnest, and desired to impress his hearers with his own views and feelings. When expostulating with those who did not believe, he suddenly paused, his eyes, more than half suffused with tears, told more forcibly than language could express, how deeply he felt; while his lips, quivering with tremulous anxiety, gave utterance to the interrogation—"Why won't you come to Jesus Christ, and be saved? Do you think you need no Saviour? Impossible! Do you imagine that he is unable to save you? Do you suppose he is unwilling to save you? Impossible! Do you think you are in no danger of being lost? Do you imagine that the misery of a lost soul is less terrible than the Scriptures represent it? or that the happiness of a redeemed spirit is less joyous? Impossible! *Why then won't you come to Jesus Christ, and be saved?*" No profound arguments were employed in pressing on the attention of his rustic audience these pointed questions, and yet they came with an almost irresistible force. As the people were retiring, I heard some of them saying to one another, "Ah! why don't we come to Jesus Christ, and be saved?"

Being seated nearly opposite the two ladies who entered along with me, I could not avoid noticing the behaviour of one of them, which contrasted strongly with the simple and devout attention of the cottagers. Sometimes she listened with apparent seriousness, but more than once the smile of contempt and the look of scorn seemed to gather on her countenance; and at one part of the sermon, when the preacher was speaking of the entire depravity of the human heart, she made an effort to leave, but was apparently prevented from doing so by her friend. When, however, this simple question fell from Mr. Annesley's lips, she became still and thoughtful, and I observed tears fall from her eyes, an unconscious response to the earnest appeals of the preacher.

After service I introduced myself to Mr. Annesley, who insisted on my spending the night at his house. On our talking over the occurrences of the evening, I mentioned what I had noticed in the conduct of one of the ladies, and expressed my belief that her heart was penetrated by what she had heard. "If, Sir," he remarked, "that lady should be converted, she will be a living witness of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and afford a strong corroborative testimony of its Divine origin. I have," he added, "no personal acquaintance with her; nor was I aware that she was present this evening, till I saw her leaving at the conclusion of the service, but I have long known her character; she resides at Hollyton, a village about a mile and a half distant, and, I believe, is one of the most agreeable women you could meet with in society, but she is a professed infidel; and though most of her relatives and friends are religious, she will rarely consent to attend any place of worship with them. She says that the scheme of salvation is a cunningly devised fable, got up by the priesthood, and palmed upon our hopes and fears by the policy of our rulers; and unhesitatingly avows that it is the duty of every person, who feels a proper respect for the dignity of the human species, to employ all his influence to dissipate the delusion. She will not, I understand, enter into any discussion on the Christian religion, because, she says, no evidence could induce



her to believe it—no, not if she had seen the miracles performed which are ascribed to Christ and his apostles—and often quotes the inconsistent conduct of its professors, to show that its moral tendency is unfavourable to the growth of virtue. The lady who accompanied her is of a very different stamp, and a pious member of the church. I presume her influence has induced Mrs. Farrington to attend our meeting this evening. I trust that she may yet be led to see and repent of her errors.”

“I am mistaken,” I remarked, “if her scepticism has not received its death-blow to-night. She will be thinking soon about coming to Jesus Christ to be saved.”

“Amen. The Lord grant that it may be so.”

I then referred to the interesting scene I had witnessed on my way to the farm-house, and was informed by Mr. Annesley that the labourers whose festivities I had witnessed, belonged for the most part to his regular congregation at Woodford, and were in the employment of Farmer Hopkins, one of the most esteemed and influential members of his church.

The next morning, as we were sitting at breakfast, a note was handed to Mr. Annesley from Mrs. Farrington, requesting that he would be so kind as call on her in the course of the forenoon. She added, that she understood he had a clerical friend with him at present, whom she had observed at the meeting on the previous evening, and that she would feel much gratified if he would accompany him.

“Your discourse,” I observed, “has already borne fruit.”

“I trust so,” he replied. “You will of course go with me on this visit to Mrs. Farrington’s. I have never been in her house, and I should like to have a friend with me, more especially as she seems anxious for it herself.”

I would have excused myself, on the ground that I had already been longer absent from home than I had intended; but my objections were overruled, and I consented to remain another night with Mr. Annesley, and return to town next morning. In the course of

the forenoon, we proceeded to Mrs. Farrington's, and were received by her with the utmost courtesy. She mentioned that she had recognized me the previous evening as a clergyman in ——, whom she had once heard preach, and on her way home she had learned that I was to be the guest of Mr. Annesley for the night. She endeavoured to assume her accustomed ease and sprightliness of manner; but still I felt persuaded that she was labouring under strong mental depression, which she was anxious to conceal. The conversation turned on the scenery around us, which had now assumed the beautiful autumnal tinge; and when Mrs. Farrington pointed to a double row of fine elm trees, whose thick and extended branches overshadowed a lovely walk in the front of her cottage, I could not refrain from repeating the following lines of Cowper:—

“Meditations here,  
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart  
May give a useful lesson to the head;  
And learning wiser grow, without his books.”

“But,” said Mrs. Farrington, “to quote from the same author—

‘Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
Have oftentimes no connection. *Knowledge* dwells  
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;  
*Wisdom* in minds attentive to their own.’”

“Very true,” said Mr. Annesley, “and hence we sometimes see those who are endowed with the greatest intellectual talents, and enriched with the largest stores of knowledge, acting the most foolish parts in the drama of life, and terminating their career without any hope of a blissful immortality.” This allusion to a future world, threw a shade over the countenance of Mrs. Farrington, and more than once she endeavoured with difficulty to suppress a sigh.

“We have high authority for saying,” I remarked, “that it is not good for the soul to be without knowledge; but considering the relation in which we stand to God, and our condition as sinners against his righteous government, there is no knowledge so essential to our happiness, as a knowledge of his character, and the way in which his

favour is to be conciliated. Without this, we are left in absolute uncertainty respecting our final destiny, which must be perplexing and alarming, in proportion as we seriously meditate on the capabilities of the human soul to suffer or enjoy in a future state of existence. Hence arises the desirableness of a revelation of the will of God; and the advantage of having such a revelation, when made, committed to writing, that it may be preserved from the corruption and uncertainty to which oral tradition is necessarily exposed. This revelation we have in the sacred Scriptures; its purity and adaptation to our moral condition are strong internal evidences of its genuineness; and I am at a loss to conceive how any one can reject it, without destroying his own peace of mind. It delineates our character, as guilty, depraved, and unhappy, with the most perfect accuracy; and points our attention to a Saviour, who came to save and to bless us, and to fit us for a nobler life than we can ever live on earth."

Mrs. Farrington became deeply affected, burst into tears, and left the room, but soon after returned, offering as an apology for her weakness and her rudeness, as she termed it, an excessive nervous irritability under which she was then labouring. After a moment's pause, Mr. Annesley said:—"Pray, Madam, is not your mind now powerfully affected by those religious truths which you once rejected as the fallacious opinions of man?"

"Yes, Sir," she replied, "it is, and has been since I heard you preach last night in Farmer Rogers' kitchen. I have hitherto rejected the gospel as a cunningly devised fable, and generally looked with pity or contempt on those who embraced it, but then I was convinced of its divinity, and by the force of an evidence which I had not previously examined."

"What fresh evidence of the divinity of the gospel," said Mr. Annesley, "did you receive last night, for I do not recollect advancing any?"

"The evidence of experience," she replied, "for the gospel came not in word only, but in power, and I could no longer resist it.

Curiosity led me to that sequestered house of prayer; and at first I was disposed to treat the whole affair with contempt. The pride of my heart rose up against the statement which you gave us of the entire depravity of our nature, and I should have left in disgust, had not my friend prevented me; but when you proposed that simple yet important question, '*Why won't you come to Jesus Christ, and be saved?*' I felt as though an arrow had pierced my soul, and from that hour till now, I have been suffering the agonies of a wounded spirit. I could get no sleep last night, reflecting on my condition; and early this morning I despatched a messenger to your house, with the note which you received. I feel deeply obliged for the promptness with which you and Mr. — have responded to my request, in coming to see me."

"But," inquired Mr. Annesley, "as the interrogation you refer to was no direct proof of the Divine origin of the gospel, how came it to produce such a conviction in your mind?"

"I have been revolving that question, and it has created some strong doubts of the correctness of my present belief; but yet now I can no more reject the gospel as false, than I could before receive it as true. That interrogation came with a power which was super-human, and its impressions on my heart bore the stamp of the same agency; and now, Sir, the only question which I wish resolved is this: May I be permitted to hope that that Saviour whom I have so long rejected, and so often and so grossly insulted, will ever condescend to cast one tender look of compassion on me?"

"In the conversion of a sinner," said Mr. Annesley, "it pleases God to display his sovereignty, no less than his power and his grace; and hence he generally accomplishes it in a way which compels us to acknowledge his direct and immediate agency. Had he chosen to convince you of the Divine origin of that system of truth, which you have so long rejected, by the slow and rational process of a logical argument, your judgment might have been convinced, while your heart remained unaffected by its awful and sublime communications; but by convincing you of your guilt, and of your

danger, and of the necessity of a Mediator and a Saviour, he has rendered that argumentative process unnecessary, in compelling you at once to seek the consolations of mercy as essential to your happiness."

"Oh! yes, Sir, they are essential to my happiness, indeed they are, but I fear they will be withheld. What plea can I urge for mercy? On what basis can I rest a hope of acceptance?"

"It is usual," Mr. Annesley replied, "for a person who is just awakened to a belief of the gospel of Christ, to suppose that its consolations are far beyond his reach, whilst he stands in dread of its awful denunciations; but this is a delusion which fear practises on the imagination. In the operations of Divine truth on the heart, there is a natural process observed on the part of the great invisible Agent who conducts it; the convictions of personal guilt, connected with an apprehension of merited punishment, prepare the way for the reception of pardon and salvation, as the free gifts of God."

"Am I then to consider what I suffer and what I dread as preparatory visitations of Divine grace, to compel me to take refuge in Christ from the wrath to come?"

"Yes, Madam. The feelings which you now experience, and which excite so much alarm, are intended to prepare you for the manifestations of the Divine favour and love. You have now to fix your attention on Jesus Christ, who is able and willing to save all who come unto God by him. And hear the encouraging and consolatory language he employs—'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37)."

"But what reason have I to believe that such gracious words relate to myself?"

"Their insertion in the Bible is your authority for so applying them to yourself. But lest you should suppose that this gracious declaration was designed, in any sense, for the exclusive relief of those to whom it was originally given, the revelation of mercy and grace concludes with language equally encouraging:—'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' (Rev. xxii. 17). Why then should you doubt? Why should you pause? Why should you continue to linger around the promises of salvation, and not embrace them as the source of your comfort?"

"I do not hesitate to plead the promise of salvation from any doubt of its necessity, or of its truthfulness. I feel, however, such a burden of guilt on my conscience, for having uttered so many hard things against the Redeemer and his great salvation, and feel so oppressed by a sense of unparalleled unworthiness, that I seem more inclined to endure the chastening of the Lord, than venture to implore the exercise of his pardoning love and mercy."

"You are, it is true, unworthy, but not unwelcome; unworthy, but not unfit: for

' All the fitness he requireth,  
Is to *feel* your need of him.'

How simple! Believe, and be saved; come to me, and I will give you rest."

"Yes, Sir, the plan of salvation is both simple and suited; but these attributes of its character stagger and perplex me."

"How so, Madam?"

"It appears more consonant to the awful majesty of Divine justice to demand from me some costly sacrifice—to call upon me to endure some severe privations and sufferings, as the condition of pardon and acceptance, rather than to offer them freely and gratuitously. I ought, I think, to suffer some extreme and prolonged affliction, before I ought to cherish a hope of salvation."

"That is true; but, as the apostle says, 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast' (Eph. ii. 8, 9)."

"I feel thankful that I am not now what I was yesterday—a proud and haughty sceptic; looking with scornful contempt on the Bible—on the Sabbath, and its public services—and on all who make a pro-

fession of love to Jesus Christ ; but I dare not lay claim to the spiritual blessings which God graciously bestows on his redeemed and renovated people. I hope in his mercy, and pray for its manifestations to my guilty conscience, but I cannot do more ; indeed, at times, I tremble while cherishing a hope in his mercy, lest I should add the sin of presumption, to the many other sins I have committed against him."

We now closed the interview by reading the Scriptures and prayer ; and then returned, devoutly thankful to the God of salvation for what we had seen and heard.

In this state of agitating uncertainty, as to the final issue of her hopes and her fears, Mrs. Farrington continued, as Mr. Annesley afterwards informed me, for several months, suffering at times intense remorse, and often strongly tempted to abandon herself to despair. But by a patient continuance in the study of the Bible and listening to the ministry of the Word, in meditation and in prayer, she felt in process of time the sacred power of the promise of mercy and grace ; tasted that the Lord is gracious, and eventually had hope and peace in believing ; living through life in the fear of God, and giving a practical exemplification of the truth of the apostolic declaration, that "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 11-14).

The conversion of this lady to the Christian faith, after having signalized herself for many years by her unceasing hostility to it, is a very strong evidence in confirmation of its Divine origin. What human power could have effected such a moral renovation as that which was produced while she was listening to this sermon by Mr. Annesley ? She anticipated no such a change, nor did she desire it. In the sermon, which curiosity prompted her to hear, there was no

concentration of argument to carry conviction to her judgment—no outbursts of eloquence—nor any decorations of style, to impress her feelings or attract her taste, but merely an interrogation, and that one of the most simple. From whence, then, came the all-powerful energy by which her haughty spirit was made to quail before the truth, which she had so long stigmatized as a cunningly devised fable? Whence, unless from Him who can easily subdue all things to himself; and whose spiritual triumphs are often graced by the spontaneous submission of his most malignant enemies; thus turning a prophetic announcement into an historic fact—"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

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## A PARTY AT THE ELMS.



**I**MUST now request the courteous reader to return with me to Mr. Holmes and his family, at the Elms, where, as it will be recollected, we left Louisa, the eldest daughter, in a state of great mental perplexity, though somewhat soothed by the judicious letter of her worthy friend Mrs. Loader. It will also be remembered that Louisa had addressed a second letter to the latter, detailing further her career of Christian experience, and asking additional advice and assistance as to her future course.\*

According to annual custom, a large party dined at the Elms, consisting principally of Mr. Holmes' old city friends, who came to enjoy a day in the country, and have a talk over the events of former times. They had all sprung from an obscure origin—had commenced to push their fortunes in London about the same time—and were now in the possession of considerable wealth. The party

\* Vol. ii. p. 177.



dined early. When the cloth was removed, the worthy host said he would give a toast, which he hoped the ladies would respond to as well as the gentlemen, though he admitted he ought to apologize for attempting to revive a practice which was now becoming obsolete—"Prosperity to the citizens of London; and may they ever express their gratitude to God, by supporting the institutions of benevolence." This toast having been duly honoured, the ladies withdrew, leaving the gentlemen to their debates and discussions.

Miss Holmes proposed a walk—a proposal which the ladies and young people gladly fell in with. It was a fine tranquil evening, at the close of one of those beautiful days which frequently occur in this country in the month of October. The sun was sinking in a sea of crimson and gold, behind a finely wooded hill to the west, and throwing his rich amber light through the foliage of the pleasure ground in which the party was now sauntering. Everything tended to soothe and tranquillize the mind, while not a sound could be heard, but the rustling of the autumn leaves beneath the feet, or their fall as the branches vibrated in the almost imperceptible evening breeze.

Among the young people composing the party that day at the Elms, was Miss Martin, an intimate friend of Miss Holmes, and decidedly religious, but between whom and Louisa there had hitherto been but little sympathy on this subject. Without possessing the years and experience of Mrs. Loader, she nevertheless possessed an affectionate disposition, with a fund of sterling good sense, and was thus well qualified to impart consolation to the agitated and distressed mind of her friend. Louisa felt her heart gradually lightened as she conversed with Miss Martin; and the two ladies, walking on together a little in advance, got engaged in so interesting a discussion, that they soon lost sight of the younger members of the party, who had set off to amuse themselves in another direction. Louisa now recollected that she had promised a Bible the day before to an old woman in the neighbourhood, and invited Miss Martin to accompany her with it there—a proposal to which her friend

gladly acceded. They accordingly proceeded down a narrow path which led from the shrubbery to a retired country road. They then walked along a short distance till they came to a neat cottage, at the door of which they gently tapped. It was opened by the old woman, Mrs. Kent, who invited them to walk in and sit down. They readily consented, and spent there a most interesting hour.

"I feel deeply obliged, ladies," said Mrs. Kent, "by your kindness in fetching me this Bible. It is indeed a treasure. A large printed Bible like this is just what I have long been wishing to procure, as my eyes are become so dim I cannot see to read this small print" (exhibiting a Bible which bore the marks of age).

"I am very glad, indeed, that you are pleased with it," replied Louisa, "and I trust you may long be spared in health to enjoy its stores."

"I have great reason to be thankful to God for the health he has given me. I am in his hand—he doeth all things well."

"You have really a pretty cottage here," said Miss Martiu, "and it is very tastefully adorned. Have you lived here many years?"

"About twenty years. I was turned out of the cottage I lived in before, by Lord Harwood's steward, because I would not give up my religion; but the Lord opened the heart of a good man who lives in the village, and he built this little cottage for me, and I have lived here rent free ever since."

"How long may it be since you first knew the Lord?"

"More than forty years. I was, when young, a very thoughtless girl, and took great delight in vain pleasures; but the Lord was pleased, blessed be his name, to call me to a knowledge of the truth, and to love and serve him, when I was about your age."

"And you are not weary of his service?"

"Weary of his service!" said the venerable matron, her eyes sparkling as with youthful ardour—"no, Miss, though I often wonder that the Lord is not weary of me, as I am such an unprofitable servant."

"Then after forty years' experience, you can bear testimony to the



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MISS HOLMES AND MISS MARTIN TAKING LEAVE OF MRS. KENT.

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truth of what Solomon says of religion: 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace?'"

"That I can. I have been a widow five and twenty years. I have outlived all my children but one, and I have not seen him for more than sixteen years. I have had many troubles, but the Lord has brought me through them all. He has given me a spirit of resignation and contentment, and I can say, Let him do with me as seemeth good in his sight. He is too wise to err."

"Then you don't envy the rich and the noble?"

"No, Miss, I envy no one. If the rich have comforts that I have not, they have cares and temptations, from which I am protected. May the Lord incline you, my young friends, to seek him in your youth, and then you will find a treasure which is of more value than thousands of gold and silver."

"I hope he has inclined us to seek him," said Miss Holmes; "and as you have known him so many years, I shall be happy to come and visit you, that you may teach me the way of the Lord more perfectly."

"I shall be glad to see you at any time, if you will condescend to come and see me; but it is not in my power to teach *you*. The prophet says, 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.'"

"I will soon come back again and have a long chat. Good night."

"Good night, ladies. May the Lord bless you."

"She is a dear old woman," said Miss Martin. "I have quite fallen in love with her."

"Yes, my dear Mary, she is one of the Lord's hidden jewels, set apart for himself. I am very glad to have made her acquaintance, but I confess that I neglected to do this till the other day, though I had often seen her knitting on the seat in front of her cottage as I passed by."

The two friends now re-entered the avenue, and, taking a by-path, ascended a little rising ground, which commanded a fine view of the

surrounding country. "How delightful it is, Louisa," said Miss Martin, "to get a day's excursion away from the bustle and smoke of London. What a beautiful landscape you have here—that venerable church tower rising in the distance among the trees, and that fine old mansion at the foot of the hill, with the deer feeding in the park in front; and see what a pretty object Mrs. Kent's cottage makes, when seen through this vista in the trees."

"It is certainly a beautiful prospect, Mary. I often come here to contemplate it. I made a sketch the other day of Mrs. Kent's cottage, which I shall show you when we get into the house. It is both a picturesque object when viewed from a distance, and loses none of its attractions on a near approach. She has displayed great taste in the way she has disposed the evergreens and flowers around it. But its chief glory is within."

"Very true, my dear Louisa. It is a sacred spot—often visited by unseen messengers, when they come to earth on errands of mercy. Strangers would pass by, and admire only the neatness of its external appearance, but we have seen its concealed beauties."

"I was quite delighted," said Miss Holmes, "with the first visit I paid her. She certainly possesses a very cultivated mind for a person in her station. She has been a great reader in her time, but now her favourite study is divinity, and the Bible is her textbook. She gave me some particulars of her history. Her life has been a chequered one. I was quite taken with the artless simplicity of her conversation, and with the ease, I may almost say elegance, of her manners. I shall certainly often stroll to her cottage for a chat; and you must come here again soon, and pay her another visit along with me."

"I am glad, my dear, that you are partial to her," replied Miss Martin. I shall be delighted to accompany you again to Mrs. Kent's. I hope you will often visit her. You will derive, I have no doubt, much spiritual benefit from her conversation. There is nothing which so polishes and refines the character as the influence of religion. It improves the taste, without making it fastidious;

enlarges the intellect, without engendering vanity; softens and sweetens the temper; and inspires a consciousness of individual worth and importance, while at the same time it pays a respectful regard to the laws and customs which prevail in society. Hence a Christian appears as dignified in a cottage as in a mansion; and living comparatively disengaged from the temptations of the world, he is more at liberty to commune with the Redeemer, by which he imperceptibly receives a more perfect impression of his image."

"But do you think, Mary, that every Christian exemplifies the correctness of your remarks?"

"No, my dear. Some do not feel the influence of religion till late in life, when their taste has been vitiated, their habits formed, and their tempers set; and though it will correct some of the evils which they may have contracted, yet it rarely happens that their character receives such an amount of refinement as it would have done, had they felt its transforming power at an earlier period."

Just at this moment they were startled by a deep groan, that came from the wood near which they were standing, and on running to afford some assistance to the supposed sufferer, Miss Holmes beheld her facetious sister Emma, with a group of young friends, attempting to conceal themselves, but who burst out into loud laughter when they were discovered.

"What's the matter, girls?"

"Nothing, ladies; O nothing!" said Lucy Cooper, with a suppressed smile.

"We were afraid, from the groan we heard, that some one had been hurt, or was suddenly taken ill."

"It was only Emma, feigning illness, to disturb you in your grave musings."

"O! Emma, I wonder how you could be so foolish! I am glad, however, that there is nothing the matter; and I do not regret having been disturbed, as it appears to have contributed to your mirth."

"We have just been seeing Mrs. Kent," said Emma, "and she told us that you, and I suppose Miss Martin, had been there."

“O what a lovely placé!” exclaimed several voices.

“How I should like to live in that beautiful cottage!” said a little girl; “I wish grandpapa would buy such a one for me.”

“The old lady,” said another, “was looking over the Bible you gave her when we tapped at the door, and she rose and received us with as much grace and ease as though she had been a duchess. She appears to be a very contented, nice old woman, and seems to be very religious in her way. Is she not, Emma?”

“Yes, she is.”

“Aye, she is at a good age to become religious, and she has nothing else to engage her attention. I should like to have another talk with her.”

“We shall be happy to see you, Lucy, at any time,” said Miss Holmes; “and I think both you and Emma would be all the better for a few lessons of staidness and sobriety from Mrs. Kent.”

“O yes, I know I should; but as my propensity is to be religious, I must check it, or I shall get quite unhappy. It won’t do for me to associate much with such devout people. I shall be sure to catch the infection, from my natural habit of imitation.”

Miss Holmes would have made some reply, but the appearance of her brothers, and some of the gentlemen from the house, put a stop to further conversation.

“Come, ladies,” one of them exclaimed, “where have you been rambling to all this time? We thought we had lost you. You have forgotten how late it is, and we must be off for town in an hour or two.”

The youthful party, thus summoned, hastened to the house, where, after partaking of tea, the guests prepared to depart, just as the moon began to rise. The family then being left alone, drew their seats round the fire for a few minutes before they retired to rest, and began to talk over the incidents of the day.

“This has been a very happy day,” said Mr. Holmes; “for though our friends are not all religious people, yet they are very worthy, excellent persons.”

"It must be a high gratification to you, father," said his eldest son, "to see the companions of your youth sitting around your table, with your children, and, by mutual intercourse, recalling the early scenes and incidents of your career."

"Indeed it is, William; and I hope God has reserved the same enjoyment for you all; and that, when I am resting in the grave with my fathers, you will think and talk of these gone-by times."

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A few days after this, Miss Holmes received the following letter from her esteemed friend, Mrs. Loader, which she had been anxiously expecting for some time:—

"29th Oct., 18—.

"MY DEAR LOUISA,—I received your letter of —, and was glad to find that you were so far restored as to be able to occupy yourself in the service of Christian benevolence. The duties which now devolve upon you are no less novel than they are important; and while you may provoke others to scorn by the activity of your zeal, you may sometimes likewise involve yourself in perplexity and mortification. You already begin to feel the loss of the spiritual enjoyments which you so largely participated in when "first you knew the Lord," and you suppose that this is a conclusive evidence of the declining influence of religious principle over your mind; but you ought not to draw such a conclusion. If, dear Louisa, you expect that the realities of the unseen world will always retain that ascendancy over your affections which they acquired when you first felt their power, you proceed in your calculations on mistaken data. When you were first impressed by the truth, you were a prisoner—confined in the solitary chamber; you held but little intercourse with the world around you, and your feelings were rendered more susceptible of strong excitement, from the influence which a protracted affliction had imperceptibly acquired over them; but now you are out and abroad—your spirits are braced up by the pressure of calls and engagements, which demand your attention;



and you are compelled to engage in the duties and pursuits of social life. Can such a change in your habits take place without having some powerful effect on the state of your affections? Impossible! An active life is less favourable to devotional feeling than a contemplative one; and though I would not throw out a remark which should operate as a discouragement to exertion in the cause of Him who became obedient unto death for us, yet I assure you, that in proportion as the number of your employments increase, you will be deprived of the pleasures of retired devotion, even though the truths of religion retain their ascendancy over your judgment, and its holy principles reign in your heart.

“I have thought it right to make these observations, to guard you against the common error into which young Christians often fall, in supposing that their faith is not genuine, because it does not uniformly act with the same degree of activity and power.

“That you should, at times, admit the possibility of the entire passing away of your religious convictions and impressions, and should look forward with shuddering dread to the consequences and final issue of such a calamitous event, does not surprise me, neither does it give me any alarm. This is usually one of the earliest mental trials a young disciple has to endure. You say that, notwithstanding the ceaseless terror which agitates your heart, you are moving forward, though slowly, between hope and fear: and if so, you are safe in the right way to the city of habitation, as fear will keep you from presumption, and hope from despair. Yes, my dear Louisa, the harmonious blending of these affections of the soul, will ever prove, in their restraining and sustaining influence, a shield of defence against the subtle temptations of the great adversary, and a well-spring of consolation in the season of gloom and depression. We read, ‘The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy’ (Psal. cxlvii. 11). But you are unconsciously guilty of a capital error—you think, and feel, and write, as if there were no being in existence who is able to keep you from falling, and who, at the same time, has no personal interest in doing it. Has

a father no personal interest in the preservation of the life and happiness of his child? Hear what your heavenly Father says, when speaking to you from the celestial glory—‘Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands’ (Isa. xlix. 15, 16). Can you suppose that Jesus Christ, after dying to redeem you, will abandon you and leave you to perish, when you are praying—‘Lord save me!’ He loves his own; and all who come to him to be saved are his own, and none else will come; and when they come, he will in no wise neglect them or cast them out. Meditate often on the following words, which he spoke when on earth to his disciples, and which he has had recorded in the sacred volume, for the consolation of his disciples of all future times—‘I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil’ (John xvii. 15). You may have great and sore trials in your Christian course—you may be exposed to severe temptations and great moral dangers, but you are safe; HE will not overlook you, or leave you, who gave his life as a ransom for your redemption. Your final salvation depends on no doubtful contingency. It is fixed and certain. And HE who gave his life for you, is now preparing a place for you in heaven—is doing something in your behalf which implies the exercise of power—getting in readiness, as I heard an eloquent preacher remark the other Sabbath, a quiet chamber for the accommodation of his beloved disciple in the house of his Father. And after preparing this mansion, he will not suffer its intended occupant to perish by the way. No; ‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand’ (John x. 27, 28).

“I am happy that you are intimate with the Corries, who used to be our next-door neighbours when we lived in London. They are a very excellent family, decidedly pious, and very benevolent. They are Christians of the old school—still retain their attachment to the

singular phraseology which at one time was much in vogue amongst our evangelical preachers—and have imbibed a few opinions which, I think, need revision.

“ You appear to have had your peace disturbed, and your cheering prospects darkened, by your intercourse with them ; but be not alarmed, as the more your faith is tried, the stronger it will grow ; and instead of sustaining any injury from the conflicting elements of doubt and suspicion, which threaten to tear it up by the roots, it will strike them still deeper and deeper in that holy soil, in which it is ordained to flourish.

“ Your friends are not singular in their views of the nature of faith, but I do not think that they are correct ; and as you have requested me to give you my opinion, I will cheerfully do so. They confound a plenary conviction of the truth of the Christian scheme of salvation, with an assurance of a personal interest in its invaluable blessings. This is the error into which they have fallen, and on the eve of which you are now standing ; but it does not require much force of reasoning to show its fallacy. Faith is an assent of the mind to some truth, or some system of truth, which is established by satisfactory evidence. As this assent becomes weaker or stronger, in proportion to the clearness and force of the evidence by which it is produced, a full assurance of faith is that high degree of it which admits of no suspicion. Hence, you are convinced that Jesus Christ came into this world—that he sojourned in the land of Judea—that he performed the miracles which are ascribed to him—that he died on the cross to expiate the guilt of sin—rose from the dead—and is now seated on the right hand of the majesty on high, receiving there the ascriptions of praise from the lips of the redeemed.

“ You want no miracle wrought in your presence to induce you to believe this, because you believe it on the testimony of the inspired writers ; nor is it necessary that a voice should speak to you from the celestial glory to confirm it. But though you are fully convinced of these facts, yet you are not so fully convinced that he died *for you*—or that he is gone to heaven to prepare a mansion for you, in the

house of his Father. You believe that there is 'redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' but you sometimes doubt whether *you* are redeemed and forgiven. You believe that 'he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them;' but you are not fully persuaded that he is interceding for you. You feel your need of such a Saviour; and you know that 'all that the Father giveth him shall come to him;' yet you doubt whether the Father ever gave you to Christ, or whether you have ever come unto him in a scriptural manner. You cannot believe the truth of the gospel more firmly than you do believe it—you cannot place a more entire dependence on Christ for salvation than you do place—you cannot feel more disposed to give him all the honour of your salvation than you do feel; and yet, at times, you doubt your acceptance—your safety—and your final blessedness. Does not this clearly prove that faith in Christ, and an assurance of an interest in him, are essentially distinct?

"Nor can we doubt the correctness of this assertion, if we attend to the order of the Spirit's operations on our mind. He inclines us to believe the truth which he exhibits; and he enables us to do it, 'For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you; all things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.' This is his *first* act; but it is a *later* act, to bear testimony with our spirit that we are born of God; and as some space of time must necessarily elapse after he has performed the first act, before he performs the second, it is evident that faith may exist in its purity, and in its power, even when there is no assurance of it. Hence it follows, that a person who relies on the atonement of Christ for salvation is as safe, though he live and die without any firm persuasion of his future blessedness, as one who is enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Indeed, my dear Louisa, I should tremble to make the final

happiness of my soul depend, in the slightest degree, on my personal assurance of its safety. This would be nothing less than intermingling a personal attainment with the efficacy of the Saviour's death; and placing my hope of a blissful immortality on the precarious basis of a fluctuating feeling, rather than on that immoveable foundation which God has laid in Zion. If you peruse the biographies of some of the most eminent Christians, you will perceive that during their pilgrimage on earth, they frequently complained of that alternation of feeling which you now experience; and some have been left for days, and for months, to walk in mental darkness without the light of the Divine countenance. Your favourite poet, Cowper, was a man eminently imbued with the spirit of Christ; and yet in what a dark and gloomy frame of mind did he leave this world. His biographer says, that within a few days of his decease, after a near relative had been attempting to cheer him with the prospect of exchanging a world of infirmity and sorrow, for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, he threw from him the words of peace, and exclaimed, 'Oh, spare me! spare me! You know, you *know* it to be false.' Having given utterance to this despairing language, he sunk into a state of apparent insensibility, in which state he continued for twelve hours, and then expired without moving a limb, or even uttering a moan. Thus terminated the mortal career of one of the greatest poets that ever consecrated the powers of his mind to the cause of Christ: entering death's dark vale without a ray of light to cheer him in his lonely passage.

"But shall we say that he died without faith, because he died without an assurance that he possessed it? Would not such an opinion necessarily tend to destroy our confidence in the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, by making our final happiness depend on the peculiar frame of our mind in that solemn hour, when some latent physical cause may bring over the spirit a gloom which no human effort can dispel? If we *trust* in Christ, we shall be saved; and though we may sometimes doubt the genuine nature of our act of faith, yet that circumstance will not endanger either our present

safety or our future blessedness. Indeed, I have known some most exemplary Christians, who have trembled to speak with confidence of attaining the recompense of reward. Removed at an equal distance from the dread of perishing and an *assurance* of being saved, they have been enabled to cherish and display those dispositions and principles which have satisfied their judgment of their safety, without affording an entire relief to all their anxieties.

“But though, my dear Louisa, an assurance of your interest in Christ is not essential to your salvation, yet it is essential to your happiness. You cannot doubt it, without feeling a deep pang; and if you should habitually doubt it, you will live in a state of perpetual dejection. I urge you, then, to attain it in the spring-time of your experience; or you may accustom yourself to feel more inclined to cherish, than to expel despondency. ‘Wherefore,’ says the apostle, ‘give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.’ And that you may attain this assurance of hope, which will be as an anchor of the soul during the perils and conflicts of time, look up, by faith and prayer, to the invisible Source of all consolation and joy; ever remembering that ‘the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. viii. 16, 17). This witnessing testimony is as necessary to superinduce this assurance, as the precious blood of Christ is necessary to remove the guilt of sin. Never forget this.

“And if you should not immediately attain a full assurance of your interest in Christ, do not suffer your mind to be overwhelmed with anxiety; as this is an attainment which belongs to the more advanced Christian, rather than to the young disciple. It will not come at once by an overpowering force, driving away every gloomy fear, and throwing open before you a clear prospect of a blissful immortality, but gradually, at intermitting seasons, weakening the strength of your doubts, and strengthening the weakness of your faith; till at length the God of hope will fill you with all joy and peace in believing. I was much struck with a paragraph in a devo-

tional treatise which I recently perused, and which I here quote—  
‘Great consolation is often received at different seasons, even during the period when our general feelings are intermingled with dark and painful forebodings. Hence, the weakest believer sometimes returns from the closet, and from the sanctuary, strong in faith, though he may again relapse into his more stated frame of despondency. The clouds occasionally separate, to enable him to view the Sun of Righteousness, and feel the healing virtue of his presence, though they may again unite to obscure his vision, and leave him to grope on his ‘darkling way.’ These intermitting seasons of darkness and light, of high enjoyment and deep dejection, have a salutary effect, and serve to prepare him for that state of settled assurance, which, in fact, they tend in some measure to produce.’

“As I have so far exceeded the ordinary bounds of a letter, I shall not enter on the other very important questions to which you refer in your last; but will do it at some future period. It gives us great pleasure to hear that you have such an excellent minister near you, and though he preaches in a chapel which does not belong to our Establishment, yet, if he preach Christ and him crucified, I have no doubt you will enjoy his labours. The feet of the messenger that publisheth peace, are no less beautiful on the mountains, than in the city; and his proclamation is as interesting to the self-condemned sinner, when delivered in the unconsecrated chapel, as in the majestic cathedral; and though we may retain our partialities to forms and places, yet, if we ever suffer our prejudices to deprive us of our spiritual privileges, we shall be guilty of a suicidal act against both our peace and steadfastness in the faith.

“The account which you have given me of your sisters has awakened an opposite class of feelings in my breast. Emma, I fear, is under some fatal influence which you have not yet detected, and will, unless subdued by the loving-kindness of God our Saviour, devote herself to the pleasures of the world. Her beauty has made her vain, and the versatility of her talents is a snare to her. You must watch over her with great care, and pray that He who called *you*

out of darkness into his marvellous light, would be pleased to renew her in the spirit of her mind. Jane is a lovely girl. She has an elegant mind, and if the good work is begun in her heart, she will be an interesting companion to you. Let me hear from you as soon as you can spare a few moments from your numerous engagements, and believe me, yours affectionately,

E. LOADER."

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## FAMILY SKETCHES.



IN a large family we often find that some of the children discover a peculiar aversion to the religious habits which prevail amongst them. Though the primary cause of this hostility may be traced up to the depravity of our nature, yet we ought not to overlook the secondary causes which may have contributed to its growth and manifestation. For though there is an innate propensity to evil in the heart, and though that propensity is much stronger in some than in others, yet it rarely breaks through the barriers which a judicious course of instruction throws up, unless it is brought into contact with strong temptations, which *might* have been guarded against. Hence most pious parents, when mourning over the impiety of their children, have to reproach themselves for some omissions or compliances which have directly or indirectly tended to produce the evil, and which very naturally lead to a fatal indifference or open hostility to the claims of religion, which no subsequent remonstrances are able to correct or control.

This was the case in the family of the Holmes. Miss Emma was a beautiful girl. Her manners were exceedingly graceful. She was witty and satirical in her disposition, and from her childhood gave unequivocal proofs that she required more than ordinary at-



tention in the cultivation of her mind and the formation of her character. From the superior vivacity of her spirits, the playfulness of her fancy, and her intellectual acuteness, she gained a powerful ascendancy over the affections of her parents, who, trusting too much to the maturity of her judgment for the correction of budding ills, paid less regard to the formation of her habits than they had done with their other children. The partiality for dress, which she discovered when a child, increased as she grew up, till at length she lavished nearly the whole of her attention on her external appearance. After having spent a few years in the establishment where her elder sisters had finished their education, she was sent, at the age of sixteen, to a fashionable boarding-school, in which too much attention was paid to mere personal graces and accomplishments. It was here that she formed an intimacy with the daughter of Colonel Orme, who resided near the Elms, and which proved a source of poignant sorrow to all the members of her family. After leaving school, she was permitted by her unsuspecting parents to exchange visits with her young friend, who was, by the influence of her sentiments and example, gradually destroying that reverence for the authority of religion, and that attachment to its practices, which they were so anxious to cherish and to strengthen. Miss Holmes saw with deep regret the fatal bias which her sister's mind was receiving; and though she availed herself of every opportunity which circumstances offered to check and subdue it, yet she constantly met with determined resistance.

"Indeed," said Emma, after her sister had been urging her to return some novels which her friend had sent for her perusal, "I shall not do it till I have read them. They are amusing and interesting; and if they contain any objectionable sentiments, I can easily reject them."

"Yes, they may amuse and may interest, but they will not improve your mind. They will give you false views of nature and the world—imperceptibly reconcile you to sentiments and opinions at which you would now shudder—induce such a love for the marvel-

lous and romantic that you will be dissatisfied with the dull uniformity of life, and destroy all the religious impressions which our dear parents have been so anxious to produce."

"When I feel the injury to which you allude I will give them up, but till then you must permit me to follow my own inclination without control. I am old enough to judge for myself."

Whether the varieties which are apparent in the human character are to be traced up to the different methods employed in its formation, or to some inherent peculiarity in the constitution of the mind, is a much vexed question amongst philosophers. Education and example no doubt exercise a most material influence, but they do not operate in a uniform manner, as we have known the most opposite characters rise out of the same family. To account for this, unless on the principle that there is some inherent propensity in our nature, which gives to each person an individuality of character, would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, as we should naturally expect a uniformity of result where the same means are taken to secure it, unless there be some latent cause by which this is prevented. Hence some of the most improved systems of education make provision for a difference in the style of instruction, and in the mode of treatment, to accord with the natural temper and inclination of the pupil; supposing, that by such a judicious arrangement, his moral and intellectual improvement may be more effectually advanced.

But how often does even this method fail of accomplishing its intended effect; as we see the children of a large family discovering a diversity in their taste—their disposition—and their habits—no less striking than they would have done, if no wisdom or discretion had been employed in their cultivation. Meekness and irritability—an affable demeanour, and a proud hauteur—a placidness and tenderness of disposition, and a violence and resentment of spirit—a love of display, and a native modesty which withdraws from public notice—a passion for some individual pursuit, and a restlessness which no object can fix—are the moral lights and shadows

which often fall on the members of the same family, giving that variety of hue and tinge which we discover in the aspect of the natural world.

Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, in their plan of domestic government, endeavoured to do three things—to attach their children to their own home; to encourage them to repose unlimited confidence in their parents; and to train them to cultivate pure and ardent love for each other. By the adoption of these maxims, they displayed their good sense and parental regard; as it is uniformly found, that when a child outgrows his love for his father's house, he has lost the sheet-anchor of his safety; that if he have not free and unrestricted access to his parents, he will become suspicious of, and estranged from them; and that if he feel no peculiar pleasure in the society and interest in the welfare of the other branches of the family, he will cherish a jealous and envious disposition, not more destructive of their happiness than of his own.

When speaking of the excellencies which so finely budded on the opening character of some of their children, they often expressed their regret at the unpromising appearances of others; yet indulged the hope that they would outgrow their "flaws unseemly," and ultimately display, not only the strength of reason, but the beauty of virtue. As they advanced from childhood to youth, and from youth to riper years, they gradually developed the peculiarities of their tempers and dispositions, which were so dissimilar, that no uniform mode of discipline could be adopted with any chance of proving beneficial. Mr. Holmes was too much occupied in his commercial affairs, to pay any great attention to his children while they were young, and, therefore, the chief responsibility of their education devolved on their mother, who, feeling anxious to discharge the trust reposed in her, availed herself of all the information which she could acquire. The following paragraph, which she met with in a favourite author, gave her an insight into the art of a judicious management. It inspired her with a good hope respecting those who appeared the most unpromising, because the most untractable:—"A

discriminating teacher will appreciate the individual character of each pupil, in order to appropriate her management. We must strengthen the feeble, while we repel the bold. We cannot educate by a *receipt*: for after studying the best rules, and after digesting them into the best system, much must depend on contingent circumstances; for that which is good may be inapplicable. The cultivator of the human mind must, like the gardener, study diversities of soil, or he may plant diligently, and water faithfully, with little fruit. The skilful labourer knows that, even when the surface is not particularly promising, there is often a rough, strong ground, which will amply repay the trouble of breaking it up; yet we are often most taken with a soft surface, though it conceal a shallow depth, because it promises present reward and little trouble. But strong and pertinacious tempers, of which, perhaps, obstinacy is the leading vice, under skilful management, often turn out steady and sterling characters; while, from softer clay, a firm and vigorous virtue is but seldom produced. Pertinacity is often principle, which wants nothing but to be led to its true object; while the uniformly yielding, and universally accommodating spirit, is not seldom the result of a feeble tone of morals, of a temper eager for praise, and acting for reward."

It is often remarked, that children are men and women in miniature; and as they grow up to their full stature, we often see them exhibiting, in broader and more palpable development, the excellencies and defects of their juvenile character; but when they are subjected to the operation of extraordinary causes, they sometimes undergo an entire transformation, and become new creatures. The most hopeless turn out the most valuable—those who have inflicted the most pungent sorrow ultimately become the source of the purest delight—the prematurely promising have faded in the spring-time vigour of their virtue—and those who have been endowed with the greatest talents have brought down the gray hairs of their parents with sorrow to the grave.

The eldest sons of this family, William and Edward, who suc-

ceeded to the business when the father retired, had turned out everything their parents could wish, but presented no prominent traits of character, beyond that of well-conducted, pious young men. The youngest son, John, who was devoted to the medical profession, possessed more adroitness and vivacity than his brothers; but either from the laxity of parental control, or the peculiar connections which his pursuits in life led him to form, he disappointed the high expectations which he had raised, and eventually became the source of domestic grief. He was greatly attached to his sister Emma, whom he most nearly resembled, not only in person, but in disposition; and having imbibed sceptical notions on religious subjects, soon after he commenced his professional studies, he infused them into her mind, and thus did her great injury. There was an unobtrusive modesty about Jane, which naturally induced her to retire from public notice, and rendered her fully appreciated only by her more intimate friends; while Emma's good qualities were unfortunately, to a great extent, obscured by her inordinate vanity and desire of admiration. The love of dress, as already mentioned, early took possession of her mind, and her parents injudiciously nourished this passion, by allowing her to do as she pleased in this respect, not conceiving that by such a compliance she would sustain any moral injury. But they lived to see and deplore their error.

"It is a just remark," says an excellent writer, "that objects in their own nature innocent, and entitled to notice, may become the sources of disadvantage and of guilt; when, being raised from the rank of trifles to ideal importance, they occupy a share of attention which they do not deserve; and then they are pursued with an immoderate ardour, which at once indisposes the mind to occupations of higher concern, and clouds it with malignant emotions." Perhaps there is no subject which will more strikingly illustrate the correctness of this remark, than that passion for fashionable attire by which some are enslaved. "If, in addition to that reasonable degree of regard to propriety of dress, which insures the strictest neatness, and a modest conformity, in unobjectionable points, to the

authority of custom, a young woman permits her thoughts to be frequently engaged by the subject of exterior ornaments, occupations of moment will be proportionably neglected. From the complacency natural to all human beings, when employed in contemplating objects by means of which the flattering hope of shining is presented to them, she will be in the most imminent danger of contracting a distaste to serious reflection, and of being at length absorbed in the delusions of vanity and self-love. It is, undoubtedly, a matter of indifference, whether a lady's ribands be green or blue; whether her head be decorated with flowers or with feathers; whether her gown be composed of muslin or of silk. But it is no matter of indifference, whether the time which she devotes to the determination of any of these points is to be reckoned by hours or by minutes; or whether, on discovering the elevation of her bonnet to be an inch higher or lower, and its tint a shade lighter or darker, than the model which prevails among her acquaintance, she is overwhelmed with consternation and disappointment, or bears the calamity with the apathy of a stoic."

The love of dress, like every other improper affection, has a material influence over the formation of the character; and though it operates by a silent process, yet it is invariably found to have a pernicious tendency. It induces habits of expenditure, which are often beyond the resources of the individual; saps the foundation of morals, and involves in inextricable difficulties. Bills are left unpaid, and every excuse and apology which ingenuity and artifice can devise, is employed to silence the remonstrances of the creditor—whom the debtor avoids with an instinctive dread, no less sensitive than the child does the place supposed to be haunted by an evil spirit.

But, if the resources are sufficient to satisfy the demands of justice, has benevolence no claim on the female sex? "The fact is, that an unguarded fondness for ornament has been known, in a multitude of examples, to overpower the natural tenderness of the female mind, and to prevent the growth and establishment of dispositions pronounced in the gospel to be indispensably requisite to the Chris-

tian character. If the purse be generally kept low by the demands of milliners, of mantua-makers, dealers in trinkets, and of others who bear their part in adorning the person, little can be allotted to the applications of charity. But charity requires, in common with other virtues, the fostering influence of habit. If the custom of devoting an adequate portion of the income to the relief of distress be long intermitted, the desire of giving relief will gradually be impaired. The heart forgets, by disuse, the emotions in which it once delighted. The ear turns from solicitations now become unwelcome. In proportion as the wants and the griefs of others are disregarded, the spirit of selfishness strikes deeper and stronger roots in the breast. Let the generous exertions of kindness be tempered with discretion: but let a disposition to those exertions be encouraged on principles of duty; and confirmed, in proportion to the ability of the individual, by frequency of practice. Before the world has repressed, by its interested lessons, the warmth of youthful benevolence, let experience establish a conviction that the greatest of all pleasures is to do good. She who has accustomed herself to this delight, will not easily be induced to forego it. She will feel, that whatever she is able, without penuriousness or improper singularity, to withdraw from the expense of personal ornament, is not only reserved for much higher purposes, but for purposes productive of exquisite and permanent gratification.

“Another, and a very important benefit which results from fixed habits of moderation as to dress, and all points of a similar nature, will be clearly discerned by adverting to the irreparable evils into which young women are sometimes plunged by the contrary practice. The lavish indulgence in which they have learned to seek for happiness, becoming, in their estimation, essential to their comfort, is able to bias their conduct in every important step. Hence, in forming matrimonial connections, it exercises perhaps a secret, but a very powerful influence. The prospect of wealth and magnificence, of the continuance and of the increase of pleasures supposed to flow from the pomp of dress and equipage, from sumptuous mansions,

showy furniture, and numerous attendants, dazzles the judgment, imposes on the affections, conceals many defects in moral character, and compensates for others. It frequently proves the decisive circumstance which leads the deluded victim to the altar, there to consign herself to splendid misery for life.

“There are yet other consequences which attend an immoderate passion for the embellishments of dress. When the mind is fixed upon objects which derive their chief value from administering to vanity and the love of admiration, the aversion, which almost every individual of either sex is prone to feel towards a rival, is particularly called forth. And when objects attainable so easily as exterior ornaments occupy the heart, there will be rivals without number. Hence, it is not uncommon to see neighbouring young women engaged in a constant state of petty warfare with each other. To vie in ostentatiousness, in costliness, or in elegance of apparel—to be distinguished by novel inventions in personal decoration—to gain the earliest intelligence respecting changes of fashion in the metropolis—to detect, in the attire of a luckless competitor, traces of a mode which for six weeks has been obsolete in high life—these frequently are the points of excellence to which the force of female genius is directed. In the meantime, while the mask of friendship is worn, and the language of regard is on the tongue, indifference, disgust, and envy are gradually taking possession of the breast; until, at length, the unworthy contest, prolonged for years under habits of dissimulation, by which neither of the parties are deceived, terminates in the violence of an open rupture.

“The Scriptures have spoken so plainly and so strongly respecting solicitude about dress, that I cannot quit the subject without a special reference to their authority. Our Saviour, in one of his most solemn discourses, warns his followers against anxiety as to ‘where-withal they should be clothed,’ in a manner particularly emphatic, classing that anxiety with the despicable pursuits of those who are studious ‘what they shall eat, and what they shall drink;’ and by pronouncing all such cares to be among the characteristics by which



the heathens were distinguished. It ought to be observed, that these admonitions of Christ respect men no less than women. The apostle Paul speaks pointedly concerning female dress, saying—‘I will, in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety: not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works.’ In another passage, St. Peter also speaks expressly of the female sex: and primarily of married women, but in terms applicable with equal propriety to the single—‘Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart’ (the inward frame and disposition of the mind), ‘in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.’ It would be too much to assert, on the one hand, that it was the intention of either of the apostles, in giving these directions, to proscribe the use of the particular kinds of personal ornament which he specifies; but, on the other hand, it was unquestionably the design of both, to proscribe whatever may justly be styled solicitude respecting any kind of personal decoration; and to censure those who, instead of resting their claim to approbation solely on the tempers of the soul, in any degree, should ambitiously seek to be noticed and praised for exterior embellishments, as deviating precisely in that degree from the simplicity and the purity of the Christian character.”

The young ladies of the Holmes family, were allowed a stated income to meet their current expenditure, besides receiving occasional presents. One custom prevailed in this family, which the writer hopes will never become extinct amongst us, as it belongs so appropriately to the English character. The birthdays, especially those of the parents, were duly celebrated, and an interchange of presents made between the members of the family. On the occasion of the recurrence of Mr. Holmes’ birthday, which took place a few weeks after the party referred to in the foregoing chapter, the usual

compliment of presents was made in the morning; and in the afternoon, after the old gentleman's health, and many happy returns of the day, had been drunk with due honours, he presented to each of his daughters an envelope, containing a bank note for £20.

In the evening, as the young ladies were taking their walk, their conversation turned on the unexpected liberality of their father, when Emma asked her sisters what they intended to purchase.

"I intend," said Jane, "to purchase my freedom."

"Your freedom, my dear!" said the facetious Emma; "I did not know that you were in bondage to any man; but if you are, surely you do not think of offering to pay him for your liberty?"

"I am not," replied Jane, "in bondage to *any man*."

"No! To whom then?"

"To woman kind!"

"Woman! What! Woman enslave her own sex!"

"Even so."

"What woman are you in bondage to?"

"The mantua-maker! Here are the fetters of my captivity (exhibiting the undischarged bills), which I will now go and break asunder, and hope never more to wear them."

"You are to be commended, my dear," said Miss Holmes, "and I hope Emma will follow your example; for, with our liberal allowance, and the presents we receive, we ought to have something to spare to the claims of religion and benevolence, rather than have the disgrace of unpaid bills lying in our drawers."

"Indeed," Emma replied, "I think Papa gives away quite enough to purchase our redemption from the taxes of charity. When I am settled in life, it is my intention to appropriate a regular sum to charitable purposes, but now I cannot afford it. We must be just before we are generous."

"On that maxim I shall act," said Jane; "I will discharge my debts as an act of justice, and then I shall have it in my power to be generous to the poor and needy."

"I have no doubt, Emma," remarked Miss Holmes, "that you are

sincere in your proposed intentions respecting your future charities; but I suspect, if you go upon the principle of waiting till you are rich, you will never have anything to give. You must know, dear Emma, if you reflect on the subject, that you are now forming your habits for life—giving to your principles and propensities a fixed and changeless tendency; and is it not of great importance that you should begin now to cultivate the virtues of charity and self-denial?"

"It may be so, but there is no rule without an exception; and as your habits and mine, dear sister, are so dissimilar, you cannot expect that I can follow your example in all things."

"Then, my dear, follow the example of Jane, and you will feel more at ease; and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that those you are indebted to are not distressed by the want of the money you owe them."

"Indeed, I am at ease. They charge enough, for the few articles I purchase, to allow me to take a long credit."

"That is very true. They charge in proportion to the length of credit they give; and hence, you pay such an exorbitant price for your dress. You impoverish yourself by the very method you employ in expending your money; and never have the satisfaction of being free from the pressing claims of dress-makers and milliners. Thus you deny yourself the noble gratification of relieving the necessities of others; for when an appeal is made to your benevolence, you are obliged to resist it, because you have previously exhausted your resources."

"You reason admirably, dear sister, and I shall not forget your observations; but I must get a new dress, as I have worn my old one so long. I will spare something out of the next present Papa gives me. I hope this will satisfy you, as you know I always keep my word."

It is, generally, in the more private occurrences of domestic life, that the peculiarities of the human mind are developed; and events, trivial in themselves, often acquire a degree of importance from the

indications of character which they exhibit. The bestowment of a birthday present, was an expression of paternal regard, but what different dispositions and tendencies did it call forth, and what a different moral effect did it produce!—Miss Holmes devoted a portion of her present to the claims of charity and religion, and with part of the remainder, she purchased a silver snuff-box, which she presented to her father, with a few appropriate verses. Jane, who had been enticed into extravagance by following the example of her sister Emma, went and discharged her debts; while Emma, after ordering her dress, and paying a sum towards her previous account, took a fancy to a beautiful shawl, and ordered it to be sent to the Elms, and in this way got deeper in debt than she had been before.

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## AMUSEMENTS.



MISS ORME, the friend of Emma Holmes, accepted an invitation to spend a few weeks at the Elms, and being aware of the religious habits of the family, she resolved to conform to them with the most scrupulous exactness.

When she played, she generally selected sacred music, as a compliment to the taste of her pious friends; and even condescended to accompany them to chapel, though she avowed her decided preference for the forms and ceremonies of the Church. She was naturally of a very pliable disposition, and had she been under a different course of moral training, she might have devoted her attention to the claims of religion; but being surrounded by the fascinations of gay life, and taught to regard the pursuit of pleasure as the chief end of her existence, she became one of the most zealous devotees that ever bowed down at the shrine of fashion. She possessed an intelligent mind; but the books she read, and the subjects on which

she generally conversed, had a tendency to impair its strength, and to keep it from ranging in the field of useful knowledge. She was rather shrewd, and would sometimes make a reply, or give a turn to an observation with considerable effect; but her resources were soon exhausted, and she would fall back into a state of ennui, unless the conversation related to the fashions or the amusements of the day, and then she would speak with great fluency and animation. In her disposition, she was so good-natured and amiable, that she would bear reproof with the utmost degree of mildness, but never thought of amending her ways; would acknowledge herself in the wrong, when it was pointed out to her, yet persisted in its practice; and often confessed that she had no doubt but a religious life was most acceptable to our Maker, yet as often expressed her astonishment that any young person could think of becoming religious.

As Mr. Holmes could not conscientiously suffer his daughters to attend any of the public amusements to which society devotes such a considerable portion of its time, he endeavoured to compensate for the loss of such sources of gratification, by making them happy in their home; and by treating them with occasional excursions, where they might enjoy a change of air and of scenery, without running the risk of sustaining any moral injury. To gratify her friend, Emma had persuaded her father to take them to Windsor, where they were to spend one night, and return the following day; but there had been so much rain in the early part of the morning, and it continued to descend in such torrents, that they were obliged to postpone their visit. This disappointment was borne with great cheerfulness by all but Miss Orme, who felt it to be a most irksome burden, and said more than once during the day, "What a misfortune that Providence should allow it to rain to-day, when, I suppose, he knew we were going to Windsor!"

"Why, perhaps," said Mr. Holmes, "he has sent the rain to prevent some calamitous accident."

"Dear Sir, do you think he ever pays any attention to us, and such little things as a pleasure excursion?"

"Yes, most certainly. Our Saviour says—'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.'"

"Then of course it is so, but it never struck me before. I always thought that God looked after other worlds and their inhabitants, and that he left us to our fate."

"You forget the first petition in the Lord's Prayer—'Our Father, who art in heaven.' A kind father—and God is love—pays great attention to his children."

"Exactly so, Sir, but it never struck me before."

As she was sauntering up and down the house, leaning on the arm of Emma, bitterly deploring the continued descent of the rain, which precluded the hope of their getting out of doors, she broke in upon Miss Holmes, busily engaged in finishing a dress for a poor woman, who was daily expecting the birth of her firstborn.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Holmes, for this act of intrusion. We are sauntering away dull time."

"Walk in, and I will give you some employment."

"Indeed, I am not fit for work. This is one of the dullest days of my life. I wish the rain was over and gone. Is it not a great misfortune that it should come to-day?"

"Perhaps, my dear Miss Orme, it is sent by our heavenly Father to prevent some greater misfortune."

"That's what your Papa has just been telling us. What a striking coincidence between his sentiments and yours! They are new ideas to me. Very devout and proper."

"Sister is Papa's living echo," remarked Emma.

"As you two idlers," said Miss Holmes, "have nothing to do but saunter away time, perhaps (addressing Miss Orme) you would have no objection to read, it may prove a little relief to your dullness."

There were several books lying on the table, which she carelessly examined and closed, when Emma said, "Here is one which you

have not seen." She took it, read the title—*An Inquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex*. "A learned dissertation, I have no doubt, on woman. I wonder what he says. He has, I see, a chapter on the employment of time; shall I read that, Miss Holmes?"

"If you please."

"Time is a sacred trust consigned to us by the Creator of the universe. To use it well is a lesson which duty and reason concur to suggest. The duration of the period to be confided to our management, though predetermined in the counsels of Omniscience, is undisclosed to the individual concerned, and is placed beyond the reach of calculation; that uncertainty respecting the future may operate as a continual and powerful admonition wisely to employ the present hour. Would you perceive the ingratitude and folly of squandering so precious a deposit? Reflect on the gracious purposes for the accomplishment of which it is committed to you. Reflect how plainly incompatible a habit of squandering it is, with the frame of mind which is the fruit of Christianity. Reflect on the infinite importance which you will hereafter attach to time past, when the consequences flowing from the right or wrong use of it, will be discerned and felt by you in their full extent."

"This is too grave a subject for me," said Miss Orme. "It will just add to the load of melancholy on my mind, which is already oppressed beyond endurance by the horrid gloom of the weather. I am fond of reading, but I prefer the lighter productions of the press." She closed the book and was taking up another, when Miss Holmes said, "You will oblige me by reading another paragraph in that chapter, which may prove advantageous to you, even though it may not exactly accord with your present taste."

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"To every woman, whether single or married, the habit of regularly allotting to improving books a portion of each day, and, as far as may be practicable, at stated hours, cannot be too strongly recommended. I use the term *improving* in a large sense; as comprehending all writings which may contribute to her virtue, her useful-

ness, and her innocent gratification—to her happiness in this world and in the next. She who believes that she is to survive in another state of being through eternity, and is duly impressed by the awful conviction, will fix, day by day, her most serious thoughts on the inheritance to which she aspires. Where the treasure is, there will her heart be also. She will not be seduced from an habitual study of the Holy Scriptures, and of other works calculated to imprint on her mind the comparatively small importance of the pains and pleasures of this period of existence; and to fill her with that knowledge, and inspire her with those views and dispositions, which may lead her to delight in the present service of her Maker, and enable her to rejoice in the contemplation of futurity. At other seasons, let history, let biography, let poetry, or some of the various branches of elegant and profitable knowledge, pay their tribute of instruction and amusement. But let whatever she peruses in her most private hours be such as she needs not to be ashamed of reading aloud to those whose good opinion she is most anxious to deserve. Let her remember that there is an all-seeing eye, which is ever fixed upon her, even in her closest retirement. Let her not indulge herself in the frequent perusal of writings, however interesting in their nature, however eminent in a literary point of view, which are likely to inflame pride, and to inspire false notions of generosity, of feeling, of spirit, or of any other quality. Such, unhappily, are the effects to be apprehended from the works even of several of our distinguished writers, in prose and in verse. And let her accustom herself regularly to bring the sentiments which she reads, and the conduct which is described in terms, more or less strong, of applause and recommendation, to the test of Christian principles. In proportion as this practice is pursued or neglected, reading will be profitable or pernicious.”

“Now, really, my dear Miss Holmes,” said Miss Orme, stopping short, “I cannot go on with such reading. Have you nothing in the shape of a novel? I can take an interest in *that*. You object to such compositions, I believe?”



“Yes.”

“But why, when they display so much ingenuity, are so delightful, and have such a good moral tendency?”

“I cannot reply to your present remark in more forcible language than the writer has done, whose book you hold in your hand, and if you will permit me I will read an extract.”

“Very well,” replied Miss Orme, with a yawn.

“Works of this nature not unfrequently deserve the praise of ingenuity of plan and contrivance, of accurate and well-supported discrimination of character, and of force and elegance of language. Some of them have professedly been composed with a design to favour the interests of morality. And among those which are deemed to have, on the whole, a moral tendency, a very few, perhaps, might be selected, which are not liable to the disgraceful charge of being occasionally contaminated by incidents and passions unfit to be represented to the reader. This charge, however, may so very generally be alleged with justice, that even of the novels which possess high and established reputation, by far the greater number is totally improper, in consequence of such admixture, to be perused by the eye of delicacy. Poor indeed are the services rendered to virtue by a writer, however he may boast that the object of his performance is to exhibit the vicious as infamous and unhappy, who, in tracing the progress of vice to infamy and unhappiness, introduces the readers to scenes and language adapted to wear away the quick feelings of modesty, which form at once the ornament and safeguard of innocence; and, like the bloom upon a plum, if once effaced, commonly disappear for ever. To indulge in a practice of reading novels is, in several other particulars, liable to produce mischievous effects. Such compositions are, to most people, extremely engaging. That story must be singularly barren, or wretchedly told, of which, having heard the beginning, we desire not to know the end. To the pleasure of learning the ultimate fortunes of the heroes and heroines of the tale, the novel commonly adds, in a greater or less degree, that which arises from animated description, from lively dialogue, or from inter-

esting sentiment. Hence, the perusal of one publication of this class leads, with much more frequency than is the case with respect to works of other kinds (except, perhaps, of dramatic writings, to which most of the present remarks may be transferred), to the speedy perusal of another. Thus a habit is formed—a habit at first, perhaps, of limited indulgence—but a habit that is continually found more formidable and more encroaching. The appetite becomes too keen to be denied; and in proportion as it is more urgent, grows less nice and select in its fare. What would formerly have given offence now gives none. The palate is vitiated or made dull. The produce of the book-club, and the contents of the circulating library, are devoured with indiscriminate and insatiable avidity. Hence, the mind is secretly corrupted. Let it be observed too, that in exact correspondence with the increase of a passion for reading novels, an aversion to reading of a more improving nature will gather strength. Even in the class of novels least objectionable in point of delicacy, false sentiment unfitting the mind for sober life, applause and censure distributed amiss, morality estimated by an erroneous standard, and the capricious laws and empty sanctions of honour set up in the place of religion, are the lessons usually presented. There is yet another consequence too important to be overlooked. The catastrophe and the incidents of these fictitious narratives commonly turn on the vicissitudes and effects of a passion, the most powerful which agitates the human heart. Hence, the study of them frequently creates a susceptibility of impression, and a premature warmth of tender emotions, which, not to speak of other possible effects, have been known to betray young women into a sudden attachment to persons unworthy of their affection, and thus to hurry them into marriages terminating in unhappiness.”

“He reasons excellently well against such books; but to be candid, dear Miss Holmes, and I know you idolize candour, I must confess I am rather partial to them. They serve to beguile away the tedious hours of unoccupied time, and remove us to an enchanted land where we forget the mortifications of life. Then they often

enable us to get through a day with tolerable composure, when we are prevented taking our walks or drives abroad. And what a relief do they afford us when indisposed! Indeed, I don't know what I should do, if I were interdicted from such a source of exquisite gratification."

"I have no doubt but such reading affords you gratification, and enables you to get through the tedious hours of time with some degree of patience; but is it profitable? Does it enlarge and strengthen the intellectual faculty, or extend the boundary of our practical knowledge? Does it refine the *moral* taste, or call into action the best feelings of our nature? Does it tend to prepare us for our final destiny, as candidates for immortality?"

"Well, I don't know. Then, as you object to the novel, I presume you are equally averse to the card-table?"

"I am."

"But why, when it affords so much gratification?"

"Because it often gives rise to a passion for gaming, which has brought many to ruin."

"Well, I will admit, that it does sometimes lead to such a fatal issue; but I will suppose a case which frequently occurs in social life. A virtuous family receives a visit from a few select friends; and in the evening the card-tables are brought out, and they divide themselves into small parties, and play a few games for their own amusement, without risking more than a few shillings. Now, what evil can result from such a method of passing away the evening?"

"In the first place, there is a great sacrifice of time, without any adequate compensation. If the time thus devoted to an unprofitable amusement were employed in instructive conversation, some moral benefit would result from it. Then important and interesting questions might be discussed and answered—the events of the day would pass under review—enlivening anecdotes might be told—and every one would have an opportunity of displaying and increasing the resources of his mind."

"But, begging pardon for interrupting you, does not the introduc-

tion of cards, by occupying the attention of a party, prevent the conversation from degenerating into gossip and scandal? This advantage you have overlooked, but I have no doubt, on reflection, you will admit it to be a very important one."

"Why not, dear Miss Orme, allow a sense of honour and strict integrity to impose restraint on the tongue of scandal, without requiring the charm of the card-table to do it? This principle, when inwrought in the mind, will be always present, and vigilant in the exercise of its restraining power; but you cannot always have the card-table with you. But now to advert to the hypothetical case of the virtuous family receiving a visit from a few select friends. I admit, that they may sustain no positive injury, either moral or social, by spending the evening together in such a way; but if we advert to some facts which have come within our own knowledge, we must admit, that some of the party may sustain great, if not irreparable injury. I know a lady who never touched a pack of cards till after her marriage, but as soon as she did touch them, she became passionately fond of them. She first played with her husband—then a few select friends were invited to the game—then larger parties thronged her drawing-room—till at length, the passion became so inveterate in its influence over her, that she neglected all her domestic duties, involved her husband in pecuniary embarrassments by the sums she lost; and eventually abandoned her home and children, with a worthless wretch, who, after degrading her, threw her off on the merciless contempt of the world! In a conversation which I lately had with her, when endeavouring to point her to Him who came to save sinners (for she is now in the last stage of a decline), she owned that her ruin was owing to her passion for cards, which became so strong that she was unable to control it."

"This is a most painful case," observed Miss Orme: "happily an extreme one!"

"I admit this; but there is no disputing this fact, that card-playing very frequently kindles in the female breast, no less than in the breast of the other sex, a passion for gaming. Yes, many a husband

would have been saved from ruin, if his wife had employed that influence to subdue his passion for the card-table, which she has employed to keep it alive and vigorous. She has lived to deplore the evil, when it has become irreparable."

"Both the novel and the card-table," remarked Emma, "are the forbidden fruit of our Eden."

"I have no doubt, my dear," replied Miss Orme, "that your parents act conscientiously in prohibiting novels and cards; but you know that religious people, in general, do so: though I have known some rather conspicuous professors who have not objected to play a game at whist after family prayer in the evening."

"Yes, and so have I. I was on a visit at Mr. Ridout's, some few months since, when the card-table was brought out for our amusement; and I don't know when I have spent a more pleasant evening."

"And who is Mr. Ridout, my dear? Is he a pious man, or does he belong to the world?"

"He professes to be a pious man; and I should suppose he is one, for he has prayer in his family morning and evening."

"Had he family prayer, the evening you refer to, *before* or *after* the games were introduced?"

"O! it was omitted that evening."

"And why, Emma," here interposed Miss Holmes, "was it omitted? Was it not because he was ashamed to place the Bible on the same table with the cards; and because, after enticing others to a conformity to the customs of the world, he could not, in their presence, go and pray, that they might be renewed in the spirit of their mind? Do you recollect the remark which you made on your return home?"

"It has escaped my recollection."

"That he wanted only one thing to finish his character."

"And did I say what that one thing was?"

"Yes; you said, and said very justly, it was consistency."

"O! I recollect, that was the opinion I then entertained."

"And have you changed your opinion? Do you not think that religious people ought to abstain from the appearance of evil? Does

your moral sense, dear Emma, receive no offence, when you see a person, who makes a profession of personal piety, acting like a worldling?"

"Yes, it does. I remember that droll creature, Bessie Lane, came and whispered in my ear, just as we began a fresh game,—'Make haste, as Mr. Ridout has just rung the bell for prayers!' This remark was heard by all our party; and I must confess that I was hurt by some of the observations which were made."

"I don't know," said Miss Orme, "why the most religious people may not indulge themselves in these amusements as well as others; but certainly we think it strange when they do so."

"I love consistency," replied Miss Holmes. "If a family have prayer, they ought not, in my opinion, to spend the evenings in games which certainly have not a religious tendency; and if they have these games, they had better leave off prayer, as they cannot be prepared for it. I knew a young friend, the daughter of pious parents, who once had her mind very deeply impressed by a sense of the vanity of the world and the importance of religion; but in consequence of paying a visit to the house of a professor, who in the temple was grave, and in the parlour gay—who alternately played and prayed, sang songs or psalms, as fancy dictated—she lost all her pious impressions, and from that time she became inveterately averse to religion; and in a conversation which passed between us only a few days since, a reference being made to it, she frankly said she could not conquer her aversion, and she thought she never should. Example has a powerful influence, especially in doing moral injury; but the most pernicious and dangerous, is the example of a religious man who acts in opposition to the obligations of his profession—who, while he professes to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, displays a spirit that is at variance with the sacredness of that character—and retains his religious habits, even while he conforms to the customs of the world."

"Well, my dear Miss Holmes, no one will impeach your consistency; for you are, without exception, one of the most decidedly religious I ever knew."

"Yes," said Emma, "my sister goes rather too far; and I sometimes tell her that she is in danger of becoming a Pharisee. She sees, or think she sees, a dangerous moral tendency in almost every amusement; and such is the influence she possesses over the fears of our parents, that they are kept in a state of constant terror lest I should read a novel or dance a polka."

"And is it possible, my dear Miss Holmes, that either you or your parents can object to dancing!—an exercise so conducive to health—so calculated to give elegance to the form, to the walk, and to the action—an accomplishment of so much importance, that no female can be fit to move in polished society who has not attained it? I believe you learned at school, dear Emma; did you not?"

"Yes; but now I am not permitted to go out to parties, which I consider very mortifying. My parents allowed me to learn; and now I have learned, and am fond of the amusement, they will not suffer me to practise, except at home, where we never have any dancing parties."

"This is sadly mortifying."

"They permitted you to learn dancing," replied her sister, "that you might derive from it those personal accomplishments which Miss Orme has so well described; but as they are aware of its dangerous moral tendency, they very properly object to your going into large mixed parties."

"Then ought they not to have refused letting me learn to dance, if they intended to deny me the pleasure of it?\*" This is like a

\* The author knows a lady who, when young, requested her pious father to permit her to learn to dance. "No, my child," he replied, "I cannot consent to comply with a request which may subject me to your censures at some future period." "No, father, I will never censure you for complying with my request." "Nor can I consent to give you an opportunity. If you learn, I have no doubt but you will excel; and when you leave school, you may then want to go into company to exhibit your skill. If I then object to let you, as I most likely should, you would very naturally reply, Why, father, did you permit me to learn, if I am not permitted to practise?" This reply convinced her that her father acted wisely, though he opposed her inclination: and though she did learn, yet, not having his consent, she never ventured to expose herself to the dangers of the assembly-room; as she well knew that she could not do it without grieving her affectionate father. She is now become a parent; has often mentioned this occurrence as

father teaching his son the art of engraving, and then taking away his tools lest he should be transported for coining."

"You may dance for the purposes for which you were permitted to learn; but I appeal to your good sense, if it be not an act of kindness, on the part of our parents, in withholding their consent from your visiting the ball-room, when they apprehend you will sustain some moral injury?"

"But you know, dear Miss Holmes," remarked Miss Orme, "that the chief gratification which we derive from any attainment or accomplishment, is the opportunity of displaying it. What pleasure would there be in learning to paint, unless we had the liberty of exhibiting our drawings—or who would submit to the labour of learning the notes of the gamut, if, after she has succeeded, she is to be prohibited from playing?"

"We certainly ought to acquire the accomplishments which are necessary to fit us to act our parts in refined society; but to acquire them for the purpose of mere display, will be productive of two evils: in the first place, it will injure the moral tone of our mind; and, in the next place, it will expose us to the severe satire of the opposite sex, who have little charity for female vanity."

"I am sure the gentlemen admire a lady who can sing well, and play well, and dance well, and move with grace as she enters or leaves a room."

"Yes, my dear Miss Orme; but if she have no higher accomplishments, though she may be admired, she will not be respected; she may have her name mentioned with *eclat* in the circles of fashion, but she will not be held in esteem among the wise and the good; and she may do very well as a partner for a quadrille, but no man of sense would think of her as his companion for life. The bee is an insect of more value than the butterfly."

"But do you wish the assembly-rooms deserted? If so, I fear you

having had a powerful moral influence over her mind in her young and thoughtless days; and has incorporated this maxim in her system of domestic management—Never to comply with a request which may subject her to any future reflections from her children.



will never have your wishes realized. But, to come to the point, what are the evils which you think result from such scenes of amusement?"

"I do not expect to see such places deserted, as they hold out so many attractions; but they are productive of so many evils, that I consider them essentially injurious to the morals of society. There is the expense which they incur, and the long train of evils which often follow. What costly dresses! What a profusion of useless ornaments must be purchased, beside the incidental items of expense in going and returning, and paying for the admission ticket! If the whole expense of one evening's gratification were accurately calculated, it would astonish us. And what is the consequence of this? The bills of tradesmen are often left undischarged—the claims of benevolence are rejected—and a habit of useless extravagance is formed, which extends its destructive influence to other branches of domestic expenditure. But I have a still more serious objection to urge against such scenes of amusement: the perilous risk which a female often runs. She goes clad in a light attire—moves about in a warm room—and then suddenly exposes herself, without any adequate increase of clothing, to a cold and damp atmosphere, by which she often sacrifices her health, and sometimes her life."

"But you know, Miss Holmes, that this objection will apply with equal force against our attending a crowded place of worship."

"Not with equal force; because in a place of worship we remain still during the time of service, and usually go in warmer, not to say in more decent attire. The moral influence which such public amusements have over the mind, is another very powerful objection against them. By your permission I will read a paragraph from a good writer, who expresses himself in very correct and forcible language:—'The objects which, during the season of youth, most easily excite vanity and envy in the female breast, are those which are presented in the ball-room. This is deemed the stage for displaying the attractions, by the possession of which a young woman is apt to be most elated; and they are here displayed under circum-

stances most calculated to call forth the triumph and the animosities of personal competition. This triumph and these animosities betray themselves occasionally to the least discerning eye. But were the recesses of the heart laid open, how often would the sight of a stranger, of an acquaintance, even of a friend, superior for the evening in the attractions of dress, or enjoying the supposed advantage of having secured a wealthier, a more lively, a more graceful, or a more fashionable partner, be found to excite feelings of disgust and of aversion, not always stopping short of malevolence! How often would the passions be seen inflamed, and every nerve agitated, by a thirst for precedence; and invention be observed labouring to mortify a rival by the affectation of indifference or of contempt!"

"But do you not think it possible for a female to attend a ball without having her breast inflated with vanity, or surcharged with envy?"

"I certainly admit that it is possible, but not probable. If she excel others in the richness or the elegance of her dress, or if she receive any peculiar marks of attention, will she not feel the flush of vain-glory? And if others excel her, or receive more marked attentions, will she not retire from the company stung with envy? And can either of these passions be excited without producing some demoralizing effect? If she become devoted to her personal decoration, she will be under a strong temptation to neglect the improvement of her mind; and while this passion enslaves and governs her, the more amiable and lovely graces will be neglected. And if she become envious of the superior attainments or honours of others, she will be restless—mortified, consume her time and expend her money in making useless efforts to equal or surpass them, and may be induced to invent or to circulate tales of calumny to their injury."

"But you do not mean to say that these effects are invariably produced?"

"Not invariably; because there are some females who merely visit these places as a passing compliment to the fashion of the age. They

attend as spectators of the scene, rather than as actors\*—to oblige a friend, rather than gratify themselves; and having accomplished the design of their visit, they retire uninjured, because they felt no desire to be seen or heard, alike indifferent whether they have been the objects of attention or have remained unnoticed."

"You have stated the evils which you think often result from such public amusements, but you have made no allusion to the advantages which attend them; amongst which I reckon, the introduction which they give to the best society. You know that *we* are confined within the precincts of home—our duties and pursuits are of the more retired order—and though we may take our walks, and occasionally go to Bath or Cheltenham, or some other fashionable resort, yet, if it were not for these public amusements, we should have no opportunity of being introduced to the company of the other sex. Here we are brought together; and you know, dear Miss Holmes, that the most important consequences often follow."

"Very true; but these important consequences are not always the most beneficial. The writer to whom I have previously referred, has made some good remarks on this subject, which, by your permission, I will read to you:—

"An evil of great moment, which is too frequently known to occur at the places of amusement now under notice, is the introduction of women to undesirable and improper acquaintance among the other sex; undesirable and improper, as I would now be understood to mean, in a moral point of view. Men of this description commonly abound at all scenes of public resort and entertainment who are distinguished by fortune and birth—gay and conciliating manners—and every qualification which is needful to procure a

\* The author has known some professors of evangelical religion who have occasionally frequented these scenes of amusement; and though he would not condemn them as insincere in their religious profession, yet he cannot conceive how they can approve of their own conduct. If they go occasionally, others will feel at liberty to go habitually; and though they may go, and retire without sustaining any material injury to their principles, yet they know not how much injury their example may do to others, and especially their own children.

favourable reception in polite company. Hence, when they propose themselves as partners in an assembly-room, a lady does not always find it easy, according to the rules of decorum, to decline the offer; and she is sometimes enticed, by their external appearance, and by having seen other ladies ambitious of dancing with them, into a reprehensible inclination not to decline it.

“Women, in various occurrences of life, are betrayed by a dread of appearing ungentlely bashful, and by a desire of rendering themselves agreeable, into an indiscreet freedom of manners and conversation with men of whom they know perhaps but little; and still more frequently, into a greater degree of freedom with those of whom they have more knowledge than can fitly be indulged, except towards persons with whom they are connected by particular ties. The temptation is in no place more powerful than in a ball-room. Let not indiscriminate familiarity be shown towards all partners, nor injudicious familiarity towards any. To reject every boisterous and unbecoming mode of dancing, and to observe, in every point, the strictest modesty in attire, are cautions on which, in addressing women of delicacy, it is surely needless to insist.”

“Well, I assure you, my dear Miss Holmes, I think both you and the writer you have just quoted, overrate the dangers to which we are exposed by attending such scenes of amusement; for I have never known a friend injured by them, nor have I ever heard of such a thing.”

“You forget what befell Miss Moss.”\*

\* Miss Moss was a young lady of rare accomplishments—the only child of a pious and affectionate mother. Shortly after leaving school, she succeeded, with much difficulty, in obtaining her mother's reluctant consent to go *once* to the assembly-room, just to see the parties. She was dressed most elegantly; and having a graceful form, and a fine open countenance, glowing with health, she excited considerable attention. One gentleman, who had been very polite during the evening, and who was her superior in rank, solicited the honour of conducting her home, which was granted. Having ascertained the usual time and place of her evening walk, he met her—made her an offer, which she accepted; when, having secured her affections, he accomplished her ruin, and left her. This broke her mother's heart, and eventually broke her own; and the parent and the daughter were buried in the same grave, at the distance of about six months from each other's funeral, each deploring, when too late, the danger resulting from the assembly-

“I beg pardon. I do. Ah! that was a tragical event.”

“And how many tragical events have risen out of these scenes of amusement! You have read, I have no doubt, the following account of one which befell a very holy man:—‘When Herod’s birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised, with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist’s head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless, for the oath’s sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.’ How this damsel could so far subdue the common feelings of human nature, and still more the natural tenderness of her own sex, as not only to endure so disgusting a spectacle, but even to carry the bleeding trophy in triumph to her mother, is not easy to imagine; but it shows, that a life of fashionable gaiety and dissipation not only prevents the growth of the more amiable and useful virtues, but sometimes calls into action those feelings and passions which lead to rapine and murder.”

The late excellent Bishop Horne closes his life of St. John in such a forcible and beautiful manner, that the author does not conceive it necessary to offer any apology to his readers for its insertion on the present occasion:—

“The Baptist’s fate being determined, ‘immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went, and beheaded him in the prison.’ This deed of darkness must have been done in the season proper for it—the middle of the night; and

room. Nor is this an uncommon instance. At these places the spirits of evil resort, availing themselves of the freedom of intercourse which is tolerated; and having marked their victim, they proceed, with all the cunning and duplicity of the author of all evil, to accomplish their unhallowed purpose. If, then, parents wish to preserve the honour of their children uncontaminated, or if females, who are grown to years of discretion, wish to avoid the snarcs in which others have been overtaken, they ought to shun the resorts of the licentious and impure, as no one can be safe in their society.

St. John was probably awakened, to receive his sentence, out of that sleep which truth and innocence can secure to their possessor in any situation. The generality of mankind have reason enough to deprecate a sudden death, lest it should surprise them in one of their many unguarded hours. But to St. John no hour could be such. He had finished the work which God had given him to do. He had kept the faith, and preserved a conscience void of offence. He had done his duty, and waited daily and hourly, we may be sure, for his departure. He was now, therefore, called off from his station with honour—to quit the well-fought field for the palace of the Great King—to refresh himself, after the dust, and toil, and heat of the day, by bathing in the fountain of life and immortality—to exchange his blood-stained armour for a robe of glory—and to have his temporary labours rewarded with eternal rest—to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God—and as the friend of the Bridegroom, to enter into the joy of his Lord. From the darkness and confinement of a prison, he passed to the liberty and light of heaven; and while malice was gratified with a sight of his head, and his body was carried by a few friends in silence to the grave, his immortal spirit repaired to a court, where no Herod desires to have his brother's wife—where no Herodias thirsts after the blood of a prophet—where he who hath laboured with sincerity and diligence in the work of reformation is sure to be well received—where holiness, zeal, and constancy are crowned, and receive palms from the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world.

'So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
And yet anon uprears his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore,  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky—  
He hears the unexpressive nuptial song  
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
There entertain him all the saints above,  
In solemn troops and sweet societies;  
That sing, and singing in their glory move,  
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.'"—MILTON.

## THE UNHAPPY ATTACHMENT.

**T**HE institution of marriage is a provision made by Divine Providence to promote human happiness ; but owing to the imprudence and haste with which it is sometimes contracted, it not unfrequently becomes a source of extreme wretchedness. This union should never be formed, except by those who have a strong affection for each other ; and even then, the utmost degree of prudence should regulate their conduct, both in the appointment of the time when it should take place, and the adjustment of the various interests which it involves. When persons marry mainly for the purpose of adding to their worldly estate, or obtaining a higher position in society, it rarely happens that an alliance entered into from such motives can be productive of domestic happiness. And even when the purest feelings of affection and love influence the youthful pair, inspiring them with the determination to sacrifice the esteem of friends, and the attractions of this world's wealth, rather than break the solemn vow and separate for life, they should beware of rashness and headlong impetuosity, pondering well the desirableness of the connection they are about to form, and feeling well assured that it is really a step which must conduce to their welfare.

When persons, who have no parents or judicious friends whom they can consult, are making arrangements for marriage, they should exercise more than ordinary discretion, lest they plunge themselves into difficulties from which no one can rescue them. But when parents are living, not to consult them, and pay some degree of deference to their opinion, is an offence against the law of propriety, and generally productive of the most fatal evils. Parents are more deeply interested in the marriage of their children than any other persons, and no pledges ought to be given between the contracting parties till they have been spoken to on the subject. This is a mark of respect

to which they are justly entitled. And are they not, from their age, and experience, and affection, qualified to give advice? How far it is binding on a young person to obey his or her parents, who may disapprove of a proposed marriage, is a question which I shall not presume to decide; but that no young person ought to give or receive any inviolable pledge, till they have been solicited to give their opinion and sanction, is a point too obvious to the dictates of good sense and filial attachment, to need any lengthened discussion. But how very rarely is this the case! An affection is formed and cherished—it grows up into ardent and romantic attachment—interviews take place—letters and presents are exchanged—and after the imagination has been captivated with bright visions of future happiness, the parents are requested to give their permission, not their advice. If, now, they object, either from caprice, or from a full conviction that the proposed union is improper or unsuitable, what direful consequences often result! Their objections, in some cases, are treated with scorn, and the marriage takes place in defiance of their authority; and, in some instances, when their objections are admitted to be valid, they are still doomed to see the fairest flower of their family fade and die under the slow, yet fatal influence of a passion, which is too strong to be quenched, and too baneful to be cherished. These evils, which are so often springing up within the domestic circle—destroying the peace and the happiness of parents and of children, and setting at variance the members of the same household—might be avoided, if, before adopting any decisive measures, the parents—who have a right to expect such a mark of respect, who have so much of their own respectability and happiness at issue, and who are, in general, so well qualified to give judicious counsel—were consulted.

But do not parents sometimes bring upon themselves, and upon their children, the very evils which they are anxious to avoid? Do they not, by their reserve—by their sternness—by their positive unwillingness to admit their children into familiar intercourse, and by their uniform habit of neglecting to encourage them to ask their



advice in their different pursuits in life, indirectly compel them to concealment, from the dread of a furious outbreak of passion? How many a dutiful son has been known to say, "I would consult my father, but he will not listen to my solicitation!" How many an amiable daughter has said, on an offer being made her, "I should like to take counsel from my parents, but they will not give it. They will condemn my attachment without inquiry—without respecting my feelings, and without assigning any reasons for their decision!" Thus, the inexperienced child is often thrown on her own resources, in reference to the most momentous step in life, in consequence of being unable to apply for the advice of her parents; and dire necessity compels her to profound secrecy, till the fact of her attachment, having been discovered by some accident, is heard with indignation. An order to discontinue all further correspondence with the object of her affection is now peremptorily issued, which merely serves to increase the ardour of her attachment, and make her resolute in her choice, without regard to consequences. Let parents, then, if they wish to guide and control their children on these important occasions, induce them to repose in them an implicit confidence—to consult them, as friends, on every occasion of difficulty; and by the avoidance of dictation, imperative command, or stern, unexplained prohibition, endeavour to rule over them by a mild authority, tempered with the purest affection; and, by a course of practical wisdom, in assigning plain, palpable, and important reasons for the advice they give, make it evident that they are influenced by a regard for their children's welfare, rather than by mere caprice or an arbitrary will. And though instances may occur in the history of human life, in which such a wise method of procedure may fail in the accomplishment of its object; and a perverse or reserved disposition may lead the son or daughter to set at naught the kindest and best advice, when given in the most unexceptionable manner; yet there is reason to believe, that where parents have acted towards their children as they ought to act, such a disastrous result will be of rare occurrence.

As we are commanded by prayer and supplication, with thanks-

giving, to make known all our requests unto God, I cannot conceive of any matter in which we ought to seek his direction more earnestly, than in the choice of the person who is to be our companion for life. He knows our tempers, our dispositions, and our propensities; the future temptations and trials to which we shall be subjected, and all the various ills that will intersect our path in life; and he has promised, that if we acknowledge him in *all* our ways, he will direct our steps. Ought we not to implore his guidance in the selection of a suitable partner, to share our sorrows, and enhance our joys?—one who will soothe us, under the agitations of distress, tranquillize the irritation of passion, assist us by judicious counsel, and who will give a higher tone to our character, by inducing us to add to “virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.” But how rarely is this duty attended to, even by those who make a profession of religion, till they see one who captivates their heart; and then the sanction of God is requested, rather than his counsel; and he is importuned to remove the obstructions which impede the gratification of our wishes, instead of being solicited to keep us from forming an alliance which will be injurious to our happiness, our usefulness, and our honour!

And are not Christian parents, in general, too inattentive to this branch of their duty? Are they not, in the case of the marriage of their children, apt to depend too much on their own judgment to decide on its fitness? And are they not more frequently influenced in their decision by the love of wealth, and of worldly respectability, than by those moral and religious considerations, which ought ever to maintain an absolute authority over them? As their own peace, and the present and eternal happiness of their children, and their children’s children, depend so much on this important measure, they ought often to pray, as their children are rising to maturity, that he who fixes the bounds of our habitation, and determines for us the number of our years on earth, would be pleased to form their con-

nections, and sanctify their marriage by his blessing? Is it not by the adoption of such a course of practical devotion, that parents are encouraged to expect that their sons and their daughters will be preserved "from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood:" and be induced to form those alliances which will be no less a source of happiness than of honour—handing down not only their names, but their principles, their example, and their influence to bless and adorn the succeeding generation.

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The intimacy which subsisted between Emma Holmes and her young friend Miss Orme proved essentially injurious to the moral tone and feelings of her mind; and eventually brought on the family a series of trials which overwhelmed them in the deepest sorrow. This intimacy commenced at school, just as her character began to receive its complexion and its tendencies; and when she stood most in need of those checks and restraints, and that salutary advice, which she would have received, if her companion had been imbued with the grace of pure religion. From the cast of her mind, which bore no resemblance to that of either of her sisters, she imbibed, at an early age, strong prejudices against evangelical piety; and though at one period she felt the reproaches of an evil conscience, and the terrors of the law falling upon her, yet she soon cast them off, and became still more volatile and gay. The inconsistent conduct of some professors was the immediate cause of effacing her deep and solemn impressions of the vanity of the world and the importance of religion; and though she would readily admit that this circumstance was no valid argument against the reality of personal piety, yet she could never conquer that painful aversion which it had excited in her mind against the love of the truth.

This strong aversion was strengthened and increased by many accidental circumstances, from which at the time no bad effects were apprehended. Her sister Louisa had established a periodical interchange of visits between her own family and the Corries, and their uncouth

phraseology of speech was no less offensive to Emma's taste, than their dogmatic opinions were revolting to her moral feelings. Their intellectual weakness imperceptibly destroyed that reverence for the Christian faith which she had felt, when contemplating it as associated with minds of a higher order, and greater degree of refinement. Their perpetual recurrence to a few favourite opinions—the tenacity with which they held them, even when fairly refuted by sound argument—the self-complacency which they discovered in their assumed superior illumination, after an unsuccessful effort to support the dogmas of their belief—and the sang-froid with which they condemned as unenlightened and unconverted every one who professed sentiments differing from their own—excited in her mind a great dislike to evangelical religion. While these good people required from the chosen few a more entire renunciation of the world than is compatible with its claims on our attention; and while they visited with severe censures the slightest degree of conformity to its style of dress or of living—condemning even a taste for music, poetry, or art, as a proof of a carnal mind; they gave to the unconverted the utmost latitude, and maintained that pious parents should not attempt to impose any restrictions on their children, assigning as a reason that if they were not elected to eternal life, this was the only state in which they could enjoy happiness, and that to deprive them of it by prohibiting them from “walking in the ways of their own heart, and in the sight of their own eyes,” would be an act of cruelty and folly. In vain did Mr. Holmes argue, that secret things belong to God, and the revealed promises and prohibitions to us and to our children; they invariably met his arguments by saying, that the mysteries of the kingdom were concealed from the wise and the prudent, being revealed only to babes.

These speculative notions, if confined within their own pious circle, would have done but little injury, but being introduced as the theme of frequent discussion and debate in Emma's presence, they supplied her with a powerful argument in justification of her own predilections.

It was at this period, when her mind was vacillating between a lingering reverence and a positive aversion to evangelical religion, that she happened to pay a visit to Redhill, the seat of Colonel Orme, her friend's father. Here she passed at once from the chastened seriousness and fervent devotion of domestic order and piety, to the levity and gaiety of fashionable life; and being removed from the control of her parents, she devoted herself to worldly pleasures and amusements with an ardour of feeling which bespoke the energy of her ruling passion. The Colonel was a good-natured, pleasant man; he had been gay in his younger days, but was now become very domestic in his habits. He was a professed infidel; and though he had too much politeness to make a direct attack upon religion in Emma's presence, he nevertheless availed himself of every favourable opportunity to lower it in her estimation. He related facetious stories which had been got up for the purpose of burlesquing the doctrines of the new birth, and salvation by grace—introduced some grave tales to calumniate the conduct of the evangelical clergy, and gave it as his decided opinion, that the fanaticism of the country would destroy the energy and glory of the English character.

Mrs. Orme was quite the lady of fashion, fond of dress and cards, operas and balls; and as for Sunday, she was sometimes seen at church, but then it was principally to show a mark of respect to the clergyman, who was a particular friend of the Colonel's.

The Colonel had three daughters by his present wife, and one son by a former marriage. As it required all his income to support the style in which he lived, he could make no provision for his son beyond the commission he had obtained for him in the army, yet he flattered himself on being able to form for him some good alliance; and understanding that Mr. Holmes was possessed of great wealth, he resolved, if possible, to secure Emma as a partner for his son. He broached the subject to his wife and eldest daughter, and both agreed that the idea was most excellent.

“Indeed, Papa,” said Miss Orme, “I think she is the very woman

for Charles. I am sure he will be captivated with her. Such beauty, such elegance of manners, so much wit; and I should suppose, from the style in which the Holmeses live, such a handsome fortune."

"I don't look at beauty," said Mrs. Orme, "for that will fade; nor at elegance of manners, for that obtains no distinction in the present day; nor yet at wit, for that often brings people into trouble; but I look at the fortune. Can you form any idea how much she is likely to have? Have you ever spoken to her on the subject?"

"O dear, yes, Mamma; I said to her one day, as we were walking down the Green Lanes, just when we came opposite that beautiful house, with the lawn and carriage sweep before it: 'I suppose, Emma, nothing less than a carriage and four will please you,' at which she smiled. I do think she expects a very handsome fortune."

"Ay, ay," said the Colonel, "these London citizens never retire from business till they have feathered their nest very comfortably; but they are, like old birds, rather wary, and we must be cautious how we set the nets, or we shall not be able to catch the game. This business requires management, and as I understand how to manœuvre you must leave it to me. You women are too hasty in your movements."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Orme, "I don't care who takes the management of the business, so that it is managed properly. But I must suggest one idea before I have done, and that is, Emma herself had better be asked the question, whether she is engaged, or has any objection to the army."

"Yes, exactly so, Mamma. That idea struck me just now; and I think it a most excellent one; and as we are to walk out in the evening, I will propose it. I have no doubt but she will tell me; and if, Papa, she feels any reluctance, I could argue the case with her, and I have no doubt I should succeed. I am so delighted the idea ever entered your mind."

"You will each keep at your posts," said the Colonel, "and not move or speak in this business till I give the word of command. The first thing to be done is to ascertain if Charles will put off his present engagement with Miss Collingwood, and the next is to see whether he will take a fancy to Miss Holmes."

"Why, Colonel," said his wife, "I am surprised to hear you talk so irrationally! Do you think he would hesitate breaking off that engagement a single moment? Why, he said to me just before he left home, 'I am apprehensive, from what I heard at the mess, that Collingwood is not the man of wealth I thought he was when my intimacy with his family commenced, and I must make more particular inquiries.'"

"Perhaps he won't object," said the Colonel, "though you know it is a point of honour which every man can't pass; but as he has passed it once, he may again."

In the evening, just before they sat down to cards, the Colonel opened the campaign, by saying, "It is natural for every man to give a decided preference to his own profession; but for my part, if I were to begin life again, and had my choice, I would enter the army. There it is a man acquires glory."

"And there it is," said Emma, "he is exposed to danger."

"Why, very true, Miss Holmes, but you know that the field of danger is where the crown of honour is won!"

"Yes, but what sacrifice of feeling does it require?"

"Why, very true, but you know feeling is rather sentimental!"

"Sentimental, Sir!" said the lively young lady, "and did you think so when you received your wound in the head? It was then, I suspect, felt to be real."

"Why, yes," said the Colonel, somewhat embarrassed, "very true; but we don't pay much regard to feeling when engaged in the conflict."

"So I suppose; nor much regard to feeling in prospect of the conflict, and still less when it is over."

"There you are mistaken; for before the battle begins, a death-

like horror comes over the most courageous spirit; but when it is over, the shout of victory gives an ecstasy of delight."

"But how is it changed when you look round on the mangled bodies of the slain—on your friends and comrades weltering in their blood—or think of the wives and children whom the sword makes widows and orphans!"

"Ah, true, that's the worst of it: but you know that wars and fightings have been from the beginning, and will be to the end; and some must engage in them."

"I presume," said Emma, addressing herself to Mrs. Orme, "you must have felt intense agony of mind, every time the Colonel left you for actual service!"

"At first I did, but after I got used to it, I did not regard it, for use, you know, my dear, is second nature; and then there was so much pleasure on his return."

"There is, certainly," said the Colonel, "some danger attending the profession of arms; but it is the most honourable profession in which a gentleman can be engaged; and though humanity may shudder at sight of the evils attending it, yet a true soldier is one of the most tender-hearted men living."

"Your eloquence, Sir," said Miss Emma, "brings to my recollection what I once read:—'One murder makes a villain—a thousand a hero;' and though you descant most feelingly on the tenderness of a soldier's heart, you no doubt refer to it, when touched by the point of the sword."

"Or," said the Colonel gallantly, "when pierced by a woman's eye!"

Here the conversation ended, and they passed the evening at their favourite game. "I fear," said Mrs. Orme, as soon as she found herself alone with her husband, "she has no predilection for the profession; and if so, our hopes are blasted."

"Yes, yes, she has, only she has thrown up a masked battery in her own defence; but when Charles comes, you will see with what ease he will destroy it."



A few days after this conversation, Colonel and Mrs. Orme entertained a large party at dinner, at which a brilliant company of fashionable friends and acquaintances was present. As this was the first party that had been invited during her visit, Emma bestowed a more than ordinary attention on her personal appearance. Her dress, if not expensive, was elegant, and though there were other ladies who surpassed her in the richness of their attire, there was no one who equalled her in the beauty of her figure, or the grace and elegance of her movements. She now felt herself, for the first time in her life, in a position which gave her an opportunity of displaying her attractions, which she did with so much grace, that she excited the envy and admiration of the company, who were astonished when they heard that this was the daughter of Mr. Holmes. In the course of the evening the rumble of wheels was heard at the door, and soon after a handsome young man entered the drawing-room, whom Emma at once perceived to be Charles Orme, on his parents and sister hastening forward to meet him. He had just got leave of absence, he said, for a few weeks, and sooner than he expected, which had brought him to Redhill, without previously sending any notice. Emma was quite charmed with his appearance, and still more so when the Colonel, walking up to her, said, "Allow me, Miss Holmes, to introduce to you my son Charles—Charles, Miss Emma Holmes.

"This is an unlooked-for pleasure, Miss Holmes," said Captain Orme, performing his part in the ceremony of the introduction with the most polished gallantry; "I have often heard of you from my sister in her letters. What charming weather this is! Pray, may I have you as a partner, as I see they are getting up a quadrille?"

Emma gracefully consented; and from that moment her destiny in life was fixed. On the other hand, Captain Orme was quite struck with her beauty; and though the apparent heartiness of his manner, at his first introduction, was merely the result of that vanity which seeks to engross for itself the company of the most elegant woman present, he could not help experiencing, even in his cold and selfish heart, a somewhat deeper and more serious feeling,



FIRST MEETING OF CAPTAIN ORME AND EMMA HOLMES.  
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as he conversed with this young and beautiful girl. Colonel and Mrs. Orme viewed, with great satisfaction, the evident impression made on their son by Emma's beauty; and, accordingly, after their guests had departed, they communicated to him the matrimonial speculation they had in view for him.

"I am sure, Charles," said his father, "there could not be a more desirable match: youth, beauty, and last, not least (with a significant leer), a very handsome fortune."

"Has she her fortune at her own command?" asked his son.

"Why, no, the wealth of the Holmes family has all been accumulated by the old man; and I should suppose the amount of this girl's fortune must be dependent on his will. But he will, doubtless, give her a handsome portion, if he is satisfied with the match."

"Now, that is just the difficulty," said Mrs. Orme. "The family, always strong Evangelicals, have lately turned Dissenters, because, forsooth, Mr. Vaughan's sermons are not sufficiently methodistical to please them. Mr. Holmes has a great prejudice against the military profession, as one both of a questionable nature in itself, and beset with numerous temptations. We must, then, play our cards well, and act with caution."

"The first thing," said the Colonel, "is for you, Charles, to pay your addresses to Miss Holmes. I do not think there will be much difficulty with *her*."

"Well, I should rather suppose there would not," replied the modest youth, contemplating, with considerable satisfaction, his elegant figure in the mirror over the drawing-room chimney-piece; "it shall not be my fault if she does not become Mrs. Orme. But good night. I was up all last night at Lady Fortescue's ball, and must be off to bed."

"One word, Charles," said his mother, "what are you going to do with Miss Collingwood?"

"O, that has all been over for some time. I learned that her father has nothing to depend on but his pay, and that his daughter's fortune, left her by an aunt, amounts only to three thousand pounds,

and is so tied up, that I should never be able to touch a shilling of it. So I am well out of that affair."

The Captain was a young man about the age of twenty-five. He had inherited from his mother a handsome fortune, which he received on coming of age; but such had been his profuse extravagance, before and after he entered the army, that when he had paid his so-called debts of honour, and the Jew brokers who had advanced him money, he found himself unable to defray the bills of his tradesmen, who were clamorous for the settlement of their accounts. Various were the expedients which he employed to keep them from carrying their threats into execution; and at length he resolved on marriage, as the only alternative he could devise, to extricate himself from his embarrassments. He first paid his addresses to the eldest daughter of a country gentleman, but soon quitted her on ascertaining the small amount of fortune which she possessed. A similar reason, as above-mentioned, induced him to desert Miss Collingwood, the daughter of a retired major in the Indian army; and now he prepared to pay his addresses to the more accomplished and the more wealthy daughter of Mr. Holmes. He, of course, concealed from the latter the history of his former life, spoke of the fortune which fell to him by the death of his mother, as though it were still in his possession, and assured her that he had no other motive in view than the honour and felicity of being permitted to call her his wife. Unaccustomed to the duplicity of the world, and judging of others, from the integrity of her own heart, she listened to his overtures with pleasure, and though she proposed speaking to her parents before she ventured to give any decisive reply, yet this was overruled by Mrs Orme, who suggested the expediency of deferring it for the present. "You know, my dear," said the intriguing woman, "your Papa and Mamma, from their peculiar sentiments on religion, may feel some objection to Charles's profession, and it will be necessary to adopt some plan to reconcile them to it; and, as an opening has now been made, the Colonel and I both think that we had better establish a close intimacy with the Elms, before anything is said on the subject."

On her return home, she intermingled with the family as usual, preserved the same degree of decorum in her attention to religious duties, and at times appeared thoughtful and sedate, which induced her unsuspecting sister to imagine that she was beginning to feel the deep impressions of religion on her heart. Amidst all her gaiety, and sprightliness, and aversion to decided piety, she had always displayed an honest frankness when speaking on the subject, but now she had a part to act which required duplicity; and having been tutored to this vice at the Colonel's, she soon became a proficient. As her sister Louisa had made some reference to her comparative sedateness, and expressed, in very delicate terms, her hope that it was the beginning of the great change, she resolved to assume a more uniform gravity of manner, that she might more effectually conceal the passion which had taken such strong hold of her feelings. She made no allusion to the scenes of gaiety she had recently witnessed, and in which she moved as one of the most admired figures; nor did she express any wish to repeat her visit, which rather tended to confirm the hopes of her sister.

"Jane and I," said Miss Holmes, as they were all rising from the dinner table, "are going to see Mrs. Kent; will you accompany us, Emma?"

"Certainly. I long to see the old lady. She is a real Christian, I have no doubt; and if her mind had received the same degree of cultivation as her heart, she would have exhibited the majesty and force no less than the amiable traits of religion."

"I was not aware," replied Miss Holmes, with a smile of pleasure, "that you ever associated such qualities with the pure religion of Jesus Christ."

"O yes, I do; and I am delighted when I see them embodied in a living character; but they must be blended to produce their full effect."

"But is not the beauty of religion more attractive than its grandeur?"

"It may be so to some persons, but not to me. I prefer a mind

that can discourse on the doctrines of Christianity in a style of speech which bears some analogy to their sublime greatness."

"I hope, dear Emma," said Miss Holmes, "you do not now feel that strong antipathy to the Corries which you have heretofore manifested; for though they are weak Christians, yet you must acknowledge they are pious."

"Yes, they may be pious," replied Emma, with some sarcastic warmth of manner; "but who that has any feeling of respect for the honour of Christianity does not regret that their piety is not confined to a cloister? Mrs. Kent exhibits the beauty of religion, the Corries its deformity: Mrs. Kent would make an infidel believe, but the Corries would make a Christian doubt; she, by the artless simplicity of her instructions, would

. . . . . 'rear the tender thought,  
And teach the young idea how to shoot;'

till the principle of grace grows up laden with the fruits of righteousness; they, by their vanity and self-conceit, their dogmatism, and perverse obstinacy of opinion, would shake the strongest faith. Or, to speak in plain terms, such Christians as the Corries should never speak on religious subjects in the presence of the irreligious; for if they do, they will confirm the enmity which they wish to subdue, and give a degree of encouragement to sin which they do not intend."

The old woman had just finished reading a letter when the young ladies entered her cottage; and though she received them with her usual kind manner, yet she could not conceal the powerful agitation of her feelings.

"I hope," said Miss Holmes, "we are not intruding."

"No, Miss, I am very glad to see you; and I hope you will not allow my distress to give you any trouble."

"O," said Emma, "if you are in trouble let us know the cause of it; though I ought to apologize for having asked such an impertinent question."

“The question is not impertinent, and therefore I beg you will say nothing about an apology. I have just received a letter from my dear boy, who has been absent from me these fourteen years, and as I had not heard from him for many months I thought he was dead.”

“Where is he?”

“He is with his regiment at the Cape of Good Hope, very ill in the hospital, and says he does not expect that I shall ever hear from him again. He was once a good, obedient son, much attached to his mother, but he fell into evil company, and was enticed to enlist as a soldier. He said nothing to me about it for many days after he had done it, or I could have got him off by speaking to Squire Ridgeway; but I did not know anything about it till the night before he was marched off, and since then I have never seen him; and now he is confined in the hospital so far off that I can’t go to nurse him, nor speak to him about the Saviour who came into the world to save sinners. I hope you will excuse me, ladies, but a mother can’t help weeping.”

While the poor old woman was telling this affecting tale, the countenance of Emma underwent very perceptible changes, from the deep crimson blush to a deathlike paleness, till, overpowered by her feelings, she fainted in the arms of her sister. She was taken into the open air, and various expedients were adopted to restore her, which after a short time proved successful. “Dear creature,” said Mrs. Kent, fanning her, “she has a tender heart, and can’t bear to hear of another’s sorrows. I am grieved that I said anything about my affliction, it has proved too much for her.”

“She has,” Miss Holmes remarked, “a great esteem for you, which is the cause of her having felt so great an interest in your calamity; but she will soon be better.”

On recovering, she expressed her regret that the weakness of her nerves should occasion so much trouble; and having taken a draught of water, she rose, and leaning on the arms of her sisters, soon after walked home. During the evening she endeavoured to resume her

usual cheerfulness, but she could not, and dreading a recurrence of the fit, she complained of indisposition, and retired to rest. In the morning, when her sister Louisa went into her room, she found her in a sweet sleep; and, as she was stealing away, she saw a miniature lying on her dressing-table, and on looking at it thought it bore a strong resemblance to Captain Orme, who, after Emma's return home, had one day called with his sister.

The following day Mr. and Mrs. Holmes were surprised by a call from the Colonel and Miss Orme, who came to invite them to meet a select dinner party; and, though they had resolved not to intermix with the gay world, yet they knew not how to refuse such an expression of politeness, especially as they had been so kind to Emma. They therefore consented.

"Mamma requested me," said Miss Orme to her young friend, "to offer you the loan of this book, which she thinks you will like. *It is a very religious one. You may open it at your leisure.*"

The emphasis which was placed on this sentence, viewed in connection with the miniature painting, awakened the suspicion of Miss Holmes, who now believed that some secret correspondence was going on between her sister and Captain Orme; and an accidental occurrence took place in the course of the day, which removed every doubt from her mind. Emma on taking her handkerchief out of her reticule, as she was retiring from the parlour after dinner, dropped a letter, which her mother picked up, and read. She immediately presented it to Mr. Holmes, who also read it. This was a letter which Mrs. Orme had inclosed between the leaves of the book she had sent to Emma, informing her that Charles was well, and wanted to meet her that evening, at Mrs. Paton's. She added that she hoped she had contrived to keep all at the Elms ignorant of the affair, as the Colonel was still of opinion that they should not be spoken to on the business till everything was properly arranged.

This letter, which explained the obscure parts of Emma's conduct, involved the whole family in great perplexity; and they were at a loss to know what course to pursue, that would save her from the



snarcs which had been laid to entrap her. At length it was resolved to replace the letter, and leave the room. This was done, and on passing through the hall, Mr. Holmes met her, and said,

"I am going, my dear, to take a ride in the carriage this afternoon, will you go with me?"

"Certainly, Papa."

On entering the parlour she found her letter, and eagerly seized it, presuming that it had escaped detection.

She had given her promise to accompany her father when her feelings were strongly excited by the dread of having Mrs. Orme's letter to her discovered; but now she began to complain of indisposition, and wished to decline the proposed ride. However, her objections were overruled, and she went.

On the following morning, her father, finding her alone, took the opportunity of alluding to his anxiety for her spiritual and temporal welfare, and hoped that she would take no important step in life without the advice and approbation of her parents.

"Do you think it possible, Papa, that I could be so unwise or so undutiful as to take any important step without consulting you?"

"Tell me, my dear child," said her father, taking her by the hand, "have you not already been induced to do so, and that by the persuasion of others?"

This question, proposed in the mildest accents, and with every expression of parental tenderness, staggered and confounded her, and, after a momentary pause, she fell on her knees and implored forgiveness.

"Yes, my father, I have been induced to act a part which I sincerely regret. Forgive me, I beseech you."

She frankly confessed the whole plot; offered to return every letter and present she had received, and promised that she would never suffer herself to be again beguiled from the path of duty. These presents Mr. Holmes sent back to the Colonel's, accompanied by the following letter:—

“SIR,—Since your call on Thursday morning, I have detected the intimacy which has been formed between my daughter and your son; and am surprised that you and Mrs. Orme should so far forget the obligations which are due to a parent, as to dissuade my child from consulting me on a measure of so much importance to our happiness, and her own. Had the young people resolved to practise this species of deception on me without your knowledge or consent, I should blame them only; but as this plot has been got up by you, I must say, that the amount of their fault is lost in the greater magnitude of yours; and I have no doubt but your object is to repair the ruined fortune of your son at the expense of my daughter’s happiness. You will therefore allow me to say, that all intimacy between our families has ceased.—Yours,”&c.

After this abrupt termination of an intimacy which had opened before her the prospect of a connection for life, she appeared for a few days relieved from an oppressive burden of anxiety, and was assiduous in her attention to her parents; but her appearance and her manners soon proved that her affections were entangled, and that nothing but time and the tenderest treatment on their part could disengage them. She became low and dejected—careless of her person—unwilling to mingle in any company—the healthful bloom of her countenance passed away, succeeded by the sickly and pallid hue; she seldom took part in conversation, and endeavoured to avoid all intercourse with the other members of the family. At length her mother became much alarmed, and said it was her opinion, that unless they consented to a renewal of the intimacy with the Ormes, they must prepare to follow their daughter to the grave. “I never can give my consent to the connection,” said Mr. Holmes; “and would rather follow her to the grave than see her united to such a person. Captain Orme is a man who has squandered his fortune; destroyed the strength of his constitution by dissolute habits; is involved in debt by his extravagance; and would sacrifice the happiness, and even the life of Emma, with as

little remorse as he now feels for his past crimes. He is bad, but his parents, if possible, are worse; for they have not only given the sanction of their approbation to his conduct, but attempted to corrupt our child, and thus ruin our domestic happiness."

The conduct of a female, who accepts the addresses of a gentleman without consulting her parents, or her guardians, is deserving of censure; but when she is beguiled into the measure by the entreaties and persuasion of others, and especially those who have children or wards of their own, the voice of censure should reserve its severest expressions of reprobation for her tempters and seducers. Their delinquency, it is true, does not cancel hers, but it offers some slight degree of extenuation. What evils often result from that system of manœuvring, which is so much tolerated, nay, even applauded, in society! These match-makers and busy-bodies—these common nuisances and pests—who trample on all the sacred principles of honour and of friendship, and display such indifference when detected—ought to be excluded from every family which wishes to preserve the honour and happiness of its female members. Nor ought we to hold in less detestation and abhorrence, the conduct of those who allow our children to hold secret and forbidden intercourse with each other at their houses, or consent to become the agents through whom a correspondence is carried on. Such persons may express their tender sympathy for the young people who are not permitted to meet openly and in the face of day, and may pass some heavy censures on the cruelty of their parents; but can they, on reflection, approve of their own doings, and think themselves entitled to respect? Impossible! They are acting a part over which they wish the veil of secrecy to be thrown; and, often sacrificing on the same altar the virtue and happiness of the child, with the peace and honour of the parent, can offer no other apology for their conduct, than that "they did not mean any harm."

Mr. Holmes saw, with great anxiety, the declining health of his beloved Emma; and on surprising her, in tears, one morning as he entered her room, he expressed his fears that she was unhappy.

"Yes, my father, I am unhappy; and I believe that I shall never see another happy day in this unhappy world."

"But I understood, when I spoke to you on the subject, that it was your determination to renounce all further thoughts of Captain Orme."

"Yes, I said I would return his letters, and never suffer myself to be again beguiled from the path of duty; but I cannot subdue my feelings. I think if you knew him you would not object."

"My dear girl, I have strong objections to his profession, which is not favourable to the cultivation of those domestic virtues on which the happiness of a wife depends."

"But, Papa, he is one of the most attentive and amiable of men; and would, I have no doubt, make me happy."

"It is very rarely, indeed, that a rake ever makes a good husband."

"A rake! Papa; you are misinformed."

"Ah, my child, you are not aware of the deception which has been practised on you, by those you once thought, and perhaps still think, your friends. I have made the most minute inquiry respecting his habits, his property, and his character; and I can assure you, on evidence the most decisive, that he is dissolute in his habits—impoverished in his fortune—and his general character is the very reverse of what you imagine."

"O Papa! I think you have been deceived. He has his mother's fortune, which is very handsome. I have seen the original deeds which secured it to him."

"He had his mother's fortune, my dear, but he squandered it away before he came of age; and when it was actually transferred to him, it was not sufficient to pay all his debts."

"Are you sure, Papa, that you are not misinformed?"

"Perfectly sure, my dear Emma."

"And may I be permitted to ask, how you gained this information, which is so contrary to every statement I have received; and which, if true, must change my opinion of him?"

"I gained it, in the first instance, through the medium of your brothers; but as I was unwilling to believe such an unfavourable

account, even on their testimony, I obtained a personal interview with several of his creditors, who gave me ocular proof of the correctness of their statements. Indeed, one of them arrested him last week, for the sum of twenty pounds, which had been due more than a year and a half; and others have been induced to wait a few months longer, from the representations of the Colonel, who has told them that his son is just on the eve of marrying a wealthy citizen's daughter, when every claim shall be settled."

"Impossible! Such treachery cannot dwell in the human bosom!"

"It is true, my child."

"I am forced to believe it, Papa, and yet I cannot. Perhaps it is only a temporary embarrassment, arising from some act of generosity, or some species of fraud, that has been practised on him. And you know, Papa, a gentleman who is reduced to poverty, may rise again in society; and gaining wisdom by his experience, he may become more careful."

"Yes, my dear, if he be a man of probity and virtue; but if not, he will never rise."

"And is not Charles Orme a man of probity and virtue?"

"I am sorry to say he is not. He may appear such in your presence, and he may be described as such by his own family, but when his mode of life is inquired into, he will be found frequenting places and societies which a virtuous man would shun as offensive to his taste, and destructive of his honour."

When a forbidden passion has once gained an ascendancy over the mind of a female, it very often throws such a spell around her, that she becomes either unable or unwilling to see the inevitable ruin that lies before her; and though she will listen to the advice of her friends with apparent interest, and sometimes profess to adopt it, under a full conviction that it is such as she ought to follow, yet as soon as she comes into contact with the fatal object on which her affections are irrecoverably placed, she feels an influence which destroys all her wise resolves, and hurries her to her doom.

Thus it was with the infatuated Emma, who, after struggling

with her affections for many months, and endeavouring to recover that mental peace which she formerly enjoyed, rashly determined to follow the impulse of her will, though her ruin should be the inevitable consequence.

The family had accepted an invitation to spend a few days with an intimate friend, who resided near Tunbridge Wells, but as Emma did not wish to go into company at present, she was excused, and took leave of her parents and sisters with the tenderest expressions of attachment, and said she hoped they would enjoy the visit. On their return they were informed by the housekeeper that Miss Emma had not been home since the day after they left, but had requested her to present the following letter to her father as soon as she saw him:—

“MY DEAR FATHER,—Before you receive this, I shall have committed an act which will plunge you and every one of our family into the greatest distress; but I have been compelled to it by dire necessity. I could not conquer my passion for Captain Orme, and am therefore now his wife. Had I not consented, my life would have fallen a sacrifice to my feelings; and as I am not prepared to die, I judged it prudent to perpetuate a life, with some chance for happiness, rather than lose it, with a certain prospect of misery. I hope you and my dear mother will forgive me; and if you cannot suffer me to visit you, I hope you will pray for me. My present home is at the Colonel's, and though I do not expect to find it such a one as that which I have left, yet I trust it will not be without its comforts. With every affectionate regard to you, my dear Mamma, and sisters, and brothers, I am your undutiful, yet much attached,

“EMMA.”

## A SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING.



THE distress into which the Holmes' family were plunged, on hearing the contents of the letter just referred to, exceeds all description; and though, during the first ebullition of their grief, they gave utterance to heavy censures and bitter reproaches, yet, on cooler reflection, they felt more disposed to pity than blame the poor deluded Emma. "A deceived heart," said her father, "hath led her astray, and she needs not the vial of our displeasure to fill up the bitter cup which she has to drink. We, as a family, have had," he continued, "a larger proportion of happiness for a long series of years than has fallen to the lot of most; and if, in the decline of life, it should please an all-wise Providence to cast over us the clouds of sorrow, we must not repine, but rather bow in submission to his righteous will, and pray for wisdom and for grace, to guide and support us, when walking through the darkness by which we are now surrounded."

"But," said Mrs. Holmes, "this is an evil which I did not expect. I thought she had too much regard for her own honour, and too much respect for our feelings, to steal away from us in such a clandestine manner, as though her home were a prison, and her parents tyrants. She deserves all she may suffer; and if she has not become as callous as a rock, must endure a martyrdom of anguish."

"Yes, my dear, but she is still our child; and though she has torn herself away from us, we must not abandon her."

"Abandon her! no, impossible! I can never forget that I gave her birth; that I watched over her in infancy and childhood; and that she was the pride of my heart in my old age. It is the strength of my affection that gives me such intense pain when I think of her ungrateful conduct."

Her clothes, &c., were carefully packed up, and sent to Colonel

Orme's, according to her own request, accompanied by the following letter, which inclosed a draft on her father's banker for £50:—

“MY DEAR EMMA,—I shall not attempt to describe our consternation when on returning home we received your letter, which informed us of the step you have taken. To reproach you, now the deed is done, will not repair the evil, nor will it afford any alleviation to our distress. We hope you may be happy, and may meet that kindness from your new connections, which you, no doubt, have anticipated; but which we do not expect. I have inclosed a draft for your *own use*, as a token of my affection, and assure you that you will always meet with a welcome reception at the Elms, when you choose to visit us; but you must come alone. As you are now an inmate in a family which makes no profession of religion, I fear you will be exposed to temptations, which will efface every devout impression you have received; and you may be induced to treat with indifference, if not with contempt, the faith in which you have been educated. Remember, my dear child, that the fashion of this world is passing away, and that in a few years you will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and if, in that solemn and awful moment, you should be separated from us, by the impassable gulf, with what feelings will you await your sentence! We will pray for you; but our prayers will be useless unless *you* likewise pray, and repent, and believe the gospel.—I remain your affectionate father,

H. HOLMES.”

Her husband took this draft to the bank and got it cashed, but he kept the money; and when his wife ventured to ask him for it, he requested her to apply to her father for more. This she refused to do, which drew from him the first unkind expression she had heard him utter. As the news of his marriage spread abroad, his creditors became very clamorous for the settlement of their accounts; and though by dexterous manœuvring, he contrived to keep them from adopting any violent measures, yet he felt conscious that the crisis was fast approaching, unless Mr. Holmes could be



persuaded to assist him. He made a contrite apology to his wife for the unguarded language he had used—pledged his honour never more to wound her feelings—and assured her that nothing but dire necessity had induced him to appropriate the money to his own use, which was designed exclusively for hers. She accepted the apology, but felt startled by his allusion to pecuniary embarrassment, though she felt the subject to be too delicate to notice.

Her husband's family treated her with the utmost degree of respect and affection, and every one strove to promote her happiness. Captain Orme was unremitting in his attentions, studied her gratification in all his arrangements, and conducted himself with so much propriety, that she flattered herself with the prospect of enjoying a large portion of conjugal felicity. Six months had now passed away without any fresh interruption to her happiness, when she began to perceive a fixed gloom on the countenance of her husband, who absented himself more frequently, and for a longer space of time than he had been accustomed to do; and she heard some ambiguous expressions from her father and mother-in-law, which she knew not how to explain; nor would her high spirit suffer her to ask an explanation. At length, one day the Colonel informed her that some application must be made to her father for a settlement, as his son's pay was not equal to the expenses of the family which he was now likely to have.

"Captain Orme informed me, Sir, when he solicited me to leave my father's house to become his wife, and you assured me that his statement was correct, that his fortune was large, and that it was quite immaterial to him whether my father gave me a fortune or left me penniless."

"I deny it, Madam, and now tell you that your husband is in embarrassed circumstances, and it is useless to conceal the fact any longer. Something must be done, or you are both ruined."

"No gentleman, Sir, ever ventured to suspect the truth of my testimony, and I am sorry that I ever gave you an opportunity to do it."

“Well, well, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my reply. Perhaps I did say that his statement was correct; but to be frank, he is in difficulties, and we must endeavour to get him out as well as we can; and no one has so much at stake in this business as yourself.”

“If his difficulties have come upon him since our marriage I will submit to any privation, and will take upon myself any task to extricate him; but if they existed before, I do not know that it is in my power to forgive an act of deception so cruel and unjust as that which you have all practised upon me.”

“You talk,” said the Colonel, “like one who lived before the fall, in a state of paradisiacal innocence, rather than like one who has seen the world as it is. The world is governed by deception; in church, in state, in all the departments of social life; and if you have been deceived by any statements which might have been given to allure you to the altar, we have all been deceived since your return from it.”

“Not by me, Sir.”

“No, Madam, but by your father.”

“My father! no! impossible! As he is too humane to reproach, he is too sincere to deceive.”

“Why, we all expected, when the marriage was over, that he would provide handsomely for you.”

“I have no doubt that he will, ultimately, but I never gave you any reason to expect it.”

“But we *did* expect it, and I think we have a *right* to expect it. Can he suppose that my son is to meet all the expenses which you and your family may bring upon him, without receiving some assistance! If he do, he is deceived, and will entail on you and himself disgrace and misery.”

“But you know, Colonel,” said Mrs. Orme, “it is no use to wound the feelings of dear Emma so much. If Charles is in trouble, I know she will do what she can to assist him, without being very particular respecting the cause of his difficulties; and I would pro-

pose, without any further remarks on this very painful question, that she write to her father on the subject, or give her consent for you to write."

"What are his difficulties?" inquired Emma.

"O dear, only a small account which he is obliged to pay immediately."

"And cannot he pay a small account?"

"Why, my dear, he has had to settle several lately, which has taken from him all his ready money."

"How much is this small account?"

"O, only about £200."

"And do you consider this a trifling sum to owe one tradesman?"

"Certainly, my dear, for a gentleman of his profession."

"Well," said Emma, "I will have some conversation with Charles on the subject when he returns; and we will decide on the adoption of some plan."

"Why, my dear, I am sorry to inform you, that he is at present detained by the formalities of the law."

"Detained by the formalities of the law! I do not understand you."

"Perhaps not; but he cannot return home till the money is paid or some security is given that it shall be paid."

"Then, where is he?"

"Why, my dear, it will afford you no pleasure if I tell you. You had better not press the question."

"But I must press the question; and I must request to know where he is."

"Well, my dear, since you must have it, the gentleman who waited on him for the payment of the money, has very kindly given him permission to stay in his house till it is paid."

"What! is he in prison?"

"No, not exactly in prison; only the formalities of the law require that he should remain with the gentleman till the money is paid."

“Can I see him?”

“Why, you had better not. You had better write to your father on the business, or let the Colonel write.”

“Then let the Colonel write, for I can never consent to tell such a tale to my father, after having treated his remonstrances with so much contempt; and violating my most solemn pledge, that I would never suffer myself to be beguiled again from the path of duty.”

The Colonel wrote to Mr. Holmes, requesting that he would give his daughter some portion of her fortune; delicately hinting at the temporary embarrassments of her husband; soliciting, at the same time, the honour of an interview, when he had no doubt, but some expedient could be devised to bring about a friendly reconciliation, by which the happiness of both families might be placed on a substantial basis. To this letter Mr. Holmes replied, that he felt it his duty to make every provision in his power for the personal comfort of his daughter; but no circumstances should induce him to pay the enormous debts which he knew her husband had contracted by a course of extravagant profligacy; and while he was willing to admit her under his roof, it was not his intention ever to form the most distant intimacy with a family who had acted with such cruel duplicity towards his child, and sacrificed her happiness for life.

On the receipt of this letter, the Ormes were thrown into the greatest degree of perplexity; and though they did not read it to Emma, because it contained some severe reflections on their conduct, yet they judged it expedient to inform her, that Mr. Holmes refused to comply with their request. “You must now, my dear, apply for some cash,” said Mrs. Orme, “as you will soon want many conveniences, which it will not be in Charles’s power to procure, and I would advise you to press for a generous remittance.” This application, however, was rendered unnecessary, as a few days afterwards, she received a letter from her father, inclosing a draft for £30 for her own use, and informing her, that if she preferred being confined at the Elms, everything was ready for her reception.

She now began to see the extreme delicacy of her situation, and

to feel the direful consequences of her own imprudence; but she had no friend in whom she could confide or who could sympathize with her misfortunes. Her mind was in a state of perpetual anxiety, often deeply wounded by the neglect, or unkind looks and expressions of those who once professed the utmost degree of affection—with the near prospect, too, of becoming a mother, without a home, or any provision for herself or child, except by returning to her father's house—a step which she contemplated at present with extreme reluctance.

After an absence of several days, Captain Orme returned home in high spirits, informing his wife that he had had an interview with her father, who very generously forgave him, and drew a check on his banker for £300. "Now," said the Captain, "I'll give you a proof of my honour. I'll take you to the bank, you shall receive the cash, and pay yourself the £50, which necessity compelled me to appropriate to my own use."

"No, Charles," replied his wife, "if my father has forgiven you, so will I; and still indulge the hope, that our union, which has been embittered with grief, may yet prove a source of mutual felicity. I request that no further allusion be made to the money."

"Indeed, I cannot be happy unless you allow me to redeem my honour, which stands pledged to you for it. You must consent to take it, and I'll accompany you to the bank. You will wound me if you make another objection."

She entertained no doubt of the truth of his statement; and they accordingly drove to town together the following morning. Just as they were going into the bank, he said, "There's a friend whom I have been anxious to see some months; you will step in and get the cash, and after I have seen him, I will return and meet you."

As she was well known to one of the partners in the banking firm, who had often visited at the Elms, the check was honoured without much inspection; and having the money, she gave her husband £250, and then begged his acceptance of the £50, as an expression of her attachment. With this sum he paid the debt for which he

was arrested; and prevented another arrest which he had been daily expecting.

Things now wore a brighter aspect, and the unsuspecting Emma was induced to decline accepting her father's offer; choosing to be confined at the Colonel's, where she could enjoy the society of her husband, without giving any trouble to the members of her own family. Though often pressed to pay a visit to the Elms, she had always deferred doing so; but she now proposed a visit to express the pleasure she felt in prospect of a reconciliation between the two families. On mentioning this, however, to her husband, he urged her not to do it till after her confinement, saying, "The heir will be our advocate, and heal the breach." The eventful time drew near, and everything necessary for the occasion had been sent, with a pressing invitation to spend a few weeks at home, as soon as she was capable of doing so.

"I am happy to inform you," said her husband, a few weeks after the occurrences above narrated, "that I have had another interview with your father; after expressing his good wishes for your welfare, and requesting that I would accompany you to the Elms after your convalescence, he very generously said, that as our expenses just now must be very heavy, and he wished you to have the best professional advice, and every comfort that money could procure, he would beg my acceptance of this check for £400. Now, my dear Emma, we will go to town in the morning, and you shall get the cash, and do what you like with it." This was accordingly done in the course of the following day.

At night the family retired to rest as usual; but about midnight they were disturbed, and ere day-break the birth of a fine boy was announced. The news was immediately despatched to the Elms, with a particular request from Mrs. Charles Orme, that her sister Louisa would come to see her. The interview was interesting and affecting; for though the two sisters bore no resemblance to each other in taste or in disposition, yet their attachment was mutual; and increased on this occasion by the influence of misfortune and

sorrow. Miss Holmes remained at Redhill nearly three weeks; and on her return, when detailing the incidents of her visit, she referred to her father's generosity to Captain Orme.

"Indeed, my dear," said Mr. Holmes, "I have done nothing which has not been previously agreed upon by us."

"Why, father, it is very good in you to speak so of your generosity to Captain Orme. We were rather surprised, however, at your not even mentioning to us that you had seen him."

"I have not seen Captain Orme since the day of his marriage, and I am at a loss to conceive to what acts of generosity you refer."

"Not seen him, Papa! why, have you not given him two drafts on your banker, for a considerable amount?"

"I never did anything of the kind! You must be dreaming, Louisa."

"Emma informed me that you had; and that she went, at her husband's urgent request, and got them cashed."

"Then he has forged my check; and again imposed on the credulity of our dear child."

He immediately rode off to his banker's, and found forged checks to the amount of £700. This discovery involved the family in great distress; but they resolved not to take any steps in the business till they had seen Emma, which they expected to do in the course of a few days. On the morning she left for the Elms, Captain Orme requested that she would make no allusion to her father's generosity, as he did not wish it to be known. As she had already, however, mentioned the circumstance to Louisa, the request came too late, and Mr. Holmes, as above-mentioned, had now become aware of the villainy of his son-in-law. His resolve to question Emma on the subject, after her arrival, was abandoned, on witnessing the joy which she displayed on again meeting with her parents and sisters. The family all agreed that it would be cruelty to broach the matter at present, and that it had better be deferred to some more fitting opportunity.

Mrs. Orme had been at home a month, and was preparing to return to Redhill, when her father took an opportunity of asking her who it was she saw at the bank, how often she had been there, what sums of money she had received, and what circumstances induced her to go. To all these questions she replied in very direct terms, and when she had finished, expressed her gratitude to her father for his kindness, and hoped that now he would consent to be reconciled to her husband.

"Your husband, my child, has been pursuing one uniform plan of deception, from the time he first saw you to the present hour; and though this last instance of his duplicity is not the most fatal to your happiness, it is certainly the most hazardous for his own. I gave him no drafts, nor have I seen him since your marriage."

"Not seen him, father!"

"No."

"Nor given him any checks!"

"Never."

"How in the world did he get them then?"

"He has forged my name, Emma, and made you the innocent agent in his villainy."

"And is it possible! Am I the wife of such a man!"

"Such a man is your husband; and if the law now take its course, he will be liable to transportation for life."

"O! father, spare Charles. Have mercy on your poor Emma; though he were the most wicked man alive, he is still my husband."

"I shall refrain from prosecuting him; but it will be necessary to put a stop to such a system of fraud."

"O! my father, what will now become of me and my babe!"

"You have left your home once, my child, without my consent, but I hope you will not leave it again."

"Never, father! if you will permit me to remain, though I fear my presence will be a source of perpetual anxiety."

Mr. Holmes, after deliberating on the matter, sent the following



letter to Captain Orme, unsealed, in an envelope, addressed to the Colonel :—

“SIR,—I have seen the forged checks which you got cashed at my banker’s; and on inquiry find that you induced my daughter to present them, by telling her that I had given them to you, as a token of my reconciliation. I presume you are aware of the consequences to which you have subjected yourself; though you may suppose that a regard for my daughter’s feelings, and the reputation of her child, will induce me to forego a prosecution. I have, however, to warn you against the repetition of such a base and hazardous course, for there are bounds which the tenderest humanity will not suffer to be passed with impunity. I should hope, for the honour of your father’s character, that he was ignorant of the crime which you have committed; but I fear you are not the only person that is involved in the guilt of its commission.”

To this letter he received the following reply the next day :—

“SIR,—You say you have detected my fraud, and express your fear that I am not the only person that is involved in the guilt of it. Very true, Sir. Your own daughter suggested to me this mode of getting at some portion of her fortune—procured the blank checks—and went herself and got them cashed; and now you are at liberty to let the law take its course, if you please. She is unfortunately my wife; and as she is once more under your roof, I hope she will remain there till I send for her, which will not be till you are induced to give her a fortune equal to my rank, as I was fully entitled to expect on marrying her. My father, who feels too indignant at your base insinuation to reply to it, begs me to say, that he does not choose to admit your daughter into his house again. You will, therefore, permit me to return your own compliment, by saying, that all intimacy between our families has ceased, and you may be assured, that I regret that any intimacy was ever formed.—Your obedient servant,

“CHARLES ORME.”

This letter confirmed the suspicions which had been, for a long time, excited in the breast of Mrs. Charles Orme; and though the open avowal of her husband's baseness produced a painful impression, yet it decided the course which necessity compelled her to adopt; and she could not forbear sending him the subjoined letter:—

“MY HUSBAND,—I cannot, in justice to myself, remain silent, after reading your letter to my father—a letter which is a very natural sequel to your perfidious conduct. That you should feel at liberty to charge upon me the baseness of suggesting the crime of which you have been guilty, is more than I could have imagined; but it has relieved me from that bitter regret which I should otherwise feel in being separated from you for life. You have betrayed me—you have reproached me—you have insulted me—but this, it appears, is not enough: you now try to disgrace me. Have you lost all sense of honour? Does no feeling of generous sensibility move in your breast? Are you become an alien from every virtuous principle? and do you wish, if possible, to sink me into contempt, after having abandoned me and your child? I feel too indignant to throw back the reproaches which you have cast on me. I have a home, and a peaceful one, and you may rely upon it, that no false professions of attachment shall ever again induce me to leave it. I am unable to judge of your state of mind; but if you have the slightest degree of remorse left, conscience must reproach you bitterly.—Your much injured  
“EMMA.”

I shall now anticipate my narrative a little, and conclude the history of Captain Orme. Soon after sending the preceding letter to Mr. Holmes, he obtained a military appointment in the East Indies, through the influence of Lord —; and immediately embarked, without making any communication to his wife, or expressing any wish to see his infant child. She knew not the place of his destination for nearly two years after he had left his native country, when

she received a letter from him. On opening the letter she very naturally expected to find some relentings for his past unkindness, and some promises of future amendment, but she was disappointed. The influence of time, which generally softens down the asperities of temper, and brings about a cordial reconciliation between the most hostile parties, had only increased the malevolence of his disposition; and as though he had not already inflicted a wound sufficiently deep, he now proceeded to the most heartless and unmanly abuse. He accused her of infidelity; reproached her for her attachment to her own family, whom he reviled in the lowest terms; and concluded by saying, that she might now put on her weeds, as it was not his intention of ever returning to claim her as his wife, or even to acknowledge as his son the child she had borne.

As she still cherished an attachment for him, notwithstanding his cruel treatment, and had indulged the forlorn hope of seeing him reclaimed from the paths of evil, the contents of this letter produced at first a deep melancholy; but as she had now begun to derive consolation from a source of happiness which is concealed from the eye of the gay and the dissipated, she soon regained her composure, though she ceased not to pray for her erring husband. At length the report of his death reached her through the medium of a friend. She wept when she heard of his decease, and expressed a strong anxiety to know the cause of it. Many inquiries were made, but no information could be obtained, till she received a letter from a military officer who had known him in the East. This gentleman spoke in high terms of his courage, and of the important services which he had rendered to the government of India; expressing, at the same time, his regret that he fell a victim, not to the sword, but to his habits of intemperance, which became so inveterate, that neither reason nor authority could subdue them. Thus terminated a union planned by treachery, which a perverse will led Emma Holmes to contract, but which she lived to regret with bitter and unavailing sorrow.

Her husband's cruelty, in first abandoning his wife and child,

without bidding them adieu, and then insulting her by his base accusations, was not more flagrant and unjust than his perfidy in first inducing her to become his wife. Though pity could not withhold the sympathy which her sufferings excited, yet every impartial spectator was compelled to acknowledge that she had brought them on herself by her own imprudence. And though such instances of cruelty and treachery are frequently occurring in the history of human life, and though they are held up by the moralist as beacons to warn the incautious female of the danger to which she is exposed, yet how often, alas! do we see such warnings disregarded. Women are too often smitten by external appearances, and too easily imposed upon by the artful tales of the perfidious and the crafty, to listen to the advice of their best friends. Thus braving the opposition of their parents, they plunge themselves into a state of misery, without having, as a melancholy alleviation to their anguish, the solitary consolation that they were not apprized of their danger. I have seen, in my passage through life, many fine characters wrecked on this fatal rock, and wish to guard the thoughtless and inexperienced from a similar catastrophe, and though I cannot suppose that I shall be able to change the purpose, when it is once formed, yet I do not despair of exciting some degree of precaution in the unfettered and uncorrupted mind.

As that union, which is ordained to be the source of the purest felicity, or of the bitterest anguish, and which nothing but death or guilt can dissolve, is the most important that can be formed, no one ought to propose it, or consent to it, till after the most mature deliberation. In some instances it has been known that *short* courtships have led to happy marriages; but the instances are comparatively few. Two persons accidentally meet—strangers to each other—an offer of marriage is made, and immediately accepted; a few weeks of intercourse, or of correspondence elapse, and they are united for life. Can such a hasty union, which has taken place while the parties have been almost entirely ignorant

of each other, be expected to yield much domestic felicity? It may, but the chances are against it; as the history of social life demonstrates this fact, that domestic happiness is less dependent on the agreeableness of each other's persons, than on the harmony of each other's disposition; and though a magic charm often renders us blind to the defects of the beloved object, this blissful dream is soon dissipated when the wedded pair come to seek their happiness in the amiability of each other's tempers, and the goodness of each other's principles. And considering the immense importance of this correspondence in mental taste, tendencies, and inclinations, as a source of permanent domestic happiness, and the amazing diversity of tempers and dispositions which is known to prevail amongst human beings, will a wise man, or will a prudent female, venture to risk their felicity for life by a sudden and precipitate union? What! shall we deem it necessary to institute a severe inquiry respecting the temper, and disposition, and principles of the servants we take into our dwellings, and whom we may dismiss at our pleasure; and think that no such inquiry is necessary in relation to the person to whom we are to be united for life—who is to be our comfort or our torment, the means of elevating us to honour or sinking us into contempt! Would this be an act of wisdom or of discretion?

And is it not to be regretted that the period of courtship, which is intended to give to the parties an opportunity of judging of their fitness for each other, is usually the period in which the greatest degree of duplicity prevails? It may be justly denominated the intermediate state between the two conditions in human life, over which the evil spirit of deception presides—investing the character with imaginary charms—softening down rugged and uncouth tempers into the smoothness of the most subduing tenderness—curbing restless and ungovernable passions with the restraints of a crafty policy—and giving such a fascination to external graces, that they are received as substitutes for the most solid and substantial virtues. This is the fatal period, when suspicion is usually asleep;

when a slowness of heart to believe the rumours of report becomes proverbial; and it is not till the parties emerge from this delusion, to the realities of married life, and resume their real character, that they discover the deception they have been practising on each other. Then the work of mutual recrimination and reproach commences. Then it is their eyes are opened to see their folly and their danger, but their repentance, like that of Esau's, comes too late to repair the evil which they have brought upon themselves.

As the period of courtship is the most dangerous in the history of life, because the most deceptive, those who wish to enjoy a state of permanent domestic happiness, cannot, at this period, be too observant of each other's tempers and dispositions, or too inquisitive respecting each other's connections and manners. If they now discover a dissonance in any of these particulars, they would act a wiser part to separate by mutual consent, than to form a union which will inevitably become a fruitful source of misery, and may terminate in disgrace, if not in ruin. Some severe moralists contend, that when an offer of marriage has been given and accepted, no circumstances will justify either party in withdrawing from their pledge, but that it ought to be held as sacred and as obligatory as the marriage vow. Though the writer would not hazard an opinion which would tend to sanction a wanton inconstancy, yet he claims the privilege of differing from such casuists. For what purpose has the unanimous consent of mankind required some period of time to elapse, after the offer has been made, before it is formally, and for life decided? Is it not that the contracting parties may have an opportunity of judging of their relative fitness for each other? If not, they may pass at once to the nuptial altar, after mutually consenting to their union; but if it be, they are invested with a moral right to revise their decision, when fresh discoveries of character are made, which change their opinions, and diminish, if not alienate their affections. Suppose a gentleman makes a lady an offer, and she accepts it, under a firm conviction that he is a man of honour, of integrity, of virtue, and of prudence, whose disposition is amiable,

whose circumstances are respectable, and who is capable of maintaining her in the rank in which she has been accustomed to move. Suppose that on a subsequent inquiry, she finds out that these sterling qualities do not adorn his character—that he is violent in his passions—and that his means to support a family are not adequate to its demands. If she is now convinced that by consummating the union, her happiness for life will be sacrificed, ought she to be compelled to do so? She may be censured for giving her consent too hastily; but is a consent given under false impressions, and while in a state of total or partial ignorance, to be binding, when she discovers the delusion which has been practised on her, and sees nothing but misery and wretchedness before her? I think it is not. If Emma Holmes, when she returned the letters and presents to Captain Orme, had never more consented to see him, would any wise or prudent person have passed a sentence of condemnation on her conduct? No! Why not? Because she had given her consent under false impressions of his character; but after her marriage, though that took place under the same false impressions, she was bound by the laws of God and man to remain his wife.

But as there is always some risk of reputation, and sometimes some pecuniary risk, in breaking off an engagement which has been formed, it should not be done hastily, nor for trifling reasons. Though the mutual pledge is less binding than the nuptial vow, yet if it be treated with levity and contempt, society will resent the insult which is offered to its sense of delicacy and of honour. The faithless and inconstant will be marked out as the objects of its censure and reproaches. And no censures can be too severe, nor any reproaches be too bitter, to be directed against the man who gains the affections of a female, and then abandons her from caprice; or against that female, who acts the part of a coquette, by giving pledges she never intends to redeem, and exciting expectations she has resolved to disappoint. And this risk ought to operate as a powerful motive to induce the utmost degree of caution when making or when accepting an offer. As the right of overture is claimed

and exercised by man, he is supposed to institute every necessary inquiry before he makes his election, and to be perfectly satisfied that the female whose friendship and whose affection he courts is capable of promoting his happiness; and though on a closer intimacy he may discover some shades of imperfection which were not visible when he first knew her, yet if they are only the ordinary imperfections which belong to the human character, he would act an unwise, if not a criminal part, by making them the ostensible cause of breaking off the connection. We should ever remember, that the nuptial vow always unites two imperfect beings, whose mutual imperfections will call for the exercise of mutual candour; and when pure and ardent love glows in the breast of each, they will bear with each other's failings, and strive to promote each other's happiness.

It is then, in the opinion of the writer, only when some radical defect is discovered in the character—some strong repulsive quality, or some untoward and ungovernable passion—that the male sex, who exercise the prerogative of choice, ought to feel at liberty to disengage themselves, unless the female give her unqualified approbation. In that case the connection may be dissolved at any time, as it cannot be supposed that a marriage between two persons who are willing to separate for life can be productive of happiness.

But without acting capriciously, or presuming to encroach on the principle of equity, I should be disposed to concede to the female sex a greater degree of liberty on this point. When an offer is made to a lady, she may feel no reluctance to it—the person who makes it may be agreeable to her, and, by the ardour of solicitation, she may be induced to yield assent to the proposed union. She may do this before her modesty allows her to make those inquiries respecting temper, disposition, principles, and resources, which the gentleman is supposed to have made before he ventured to disclose his wishes. She may have been pressed to a compliance before she acquired that specific information which would justify and sanction it; and which, if advantage had not been taken of her amiable weakness, she would have withheld till she had obtained it. And perhaps, in addition to



this, she has been induced to conceal the overture from her parents, or her guardians, till some convenient season should arrive to make it known—that convenient season being to be determined, less by the decision of her own mind, than the mind of her lover. When these circumstances occur in the history of a courtship, though I would not say that the lady is quite as free to reject the offer, as she was when it was first made, yet I think she is more at liberty to decline it, than the gentleman who made it. Yet she ought not to act capriciously, nor ought she to sport with the feelings of the person to whom she has given her promise; but slighter reasons for breaking off the connection will justify her in doing so, than those which will justify him. She may discover no radical defect in his character, yet she may perceive “the flaw unseemly”—she may behold no predominating principle of evil, yet she may see its corrupting influence—she may feel no strong repulsive qualities, yet her affections may die off, while she knows not the cause—she may witness no sallies of an ungovernable passion, yet she may strongly suspect the amiability of his temper—she may not be able to find out any fixed habits of inconsistency, or positive vice, and yet she may be convinced that her happiness would be sacrificed for life if she consented to the proposed union.

A question now arises in which both parties are deeply interested. Ought a female to marry when she feels conscious that she cannot be happy with the person who wishes her to become his wife? or would it be an act of wisdom, or prudence, or of piety, in a man to drag a victim to the altar, who feels an abhorrence, not to the ceremony, but to its appalling consequences? No. As mutual love is the only substantial basis of the union, where that does not exist, the union ought not to be consummated; and though some evils generally result from a dissolution of the mutual pledge, yet they are fewer and less awful and destructive than those which follow a marriage without affection—or when the affection of one has to struggle against the cool indifference or positive dislike of the other.

And if circumstances should render it imperatively necessary that

either party should break off the connection, this should be done in the most delicate and honourable manner. The reasons in most cases should be expressly and unequivocally stated; all vacillation should be conscientiously avoided; no words of reproach or invective should be uttered; and for their mutual credit they should speak of each other among their friends in terms of respect.

But let no female expect that a libertine in principle, or a rake in practice, will ever make a kind and attentive husband, notwithstanding any professions he may make. Her charms may for a season operate as a spell on his passions, and he may, under their powerful influence, appear "a new creature." The company of the dissolute may be forsaken for the pleasure of her society; and the habits of vice may be broken off while he is courting the living image of virtue; but his character will remain the same. He may affect to deplore his past follies, and he may speak in praise of goodness and of religion, but, unless his *heart* is changed, he will soon give ocular proof that he is the same man as when he made an open mock of sin, and publicly contemned righteousness. That some who have been dissolute in their early days have become the ornaments of society, good husbands, kind parents, and faithful friends, is a fact too generally known to be doubted; but their reformation has usually preceded their marriage—rarely followed it. They have separated themselves from evil-doers, and they have learned to do well, before they have dared to solicit the affections of a virtuous female; and then having re-established their character, and fixed their habits of goodness and of religion, they have lived to repair the injury they have done to their own reputation and to the morals of others, by walking in a course of exemplary consistency.

But there are no females who ought to be so cautious on this subject as the children of pious parents. If they have imbibed the spirit of pure and undefiled religion, they ought to marry *only in the Lord*. No intellectual talents, no degrees of moral excellence, and no resources of wealth, should induce them to a violation of this positive injunction of the law of God. It would be, in addition to

an insult offered to Divine authority, a suicidal act in regard to personal honour and happiness; uniform experience proving that the intermarrying of the pious with the unconverted is followed by the most disastrous social and spiritual consequences.

And if they are not decidedly pious, yet if they have been accustomed to habits of religion, they ought not to calculate on permanent happiness if they consent to marry a person who is an avowed infidel, or one who cannot distinguish between the form of godliness and its power. For such a marriage will separate the woman from all intimate connection with her pious friends, and she will thus become to them a source of deep and poignant sorrow. But this, though an evil which a daughter ought to guard against, out of respect to the feelings of her parents, is a minor evil, when compared with the influence it will have over her own mind. The irreligion of her husband will tolerate none of the customs with which she has been so long familiar—no family prayer—no reading of the Scripture—no reverential references to God—to Providence, or to an eternal world—the Sabbath will be employed as a day of business, or of indolence, or of pleasure—or if the husband attend a place of worship, he will go, not

“Where the violated law speaks out  
Its thunders; and where, in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace;”

but where

“The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,  
And then skip down again; pronounce a text,—  
Cry hem; and reading what they never wrote,  
Just fifteen minutes huddle up their work,  
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene.”

Can this strange change take place without producing some ill effect? will she be satisfied and contented? will conscience never reproach her? will she have no misgivings? will the days of her life

“—glide softly o'er her head,  
Made up of innocence?”

Will she never institute a comparison between her present home,

and that in which she drew her infant breath, and spent the years of childhood and of youth? Will she never contrast the piety of her father with the irreligion of her husband?—the devotional lessons of her mother with her present course of life? But suppose she should outlive all reverence and respect for the habits of domestic religion, which she has been accustomed to revere and observe from the days of childhood, and yield herself to the beguiling fascinations of gaiety and worldliness, what will be her reflections and feelings in the hours of sickness, and from whence can she derive consolation and hope when death approaches? Ah, it is *then* the secrets of her soul will speak out! it is *then* that her criminal folly will appear in all its aggravated forms of guilt! it is *then* she will revert to her former home, her earlier associations, her pristine impressions of religious truth. Alas! she now goes back to these scenes, not for comfort, but for torture; not to gather up the fragments of hope, but to give a keener point to her desponding fears; to call back “joys that are departed,” and to increase the intensity of her mental anguish, by contrasting it with the happiness she once enjoyed. Yet, if she discloses what she feels, she is either ridiculed for her superstitious folly, or suspected of partial derangement—as no one understands her case. She lingers through the last stages of her life in sorrow and in sadness, the victim of self-consuming anxieties and grief; and may die in agonizing apprehension, if not in absolute despair.

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## THE VILLAGE CHAPEL.



HE painful and prolonged excitement occasioned by Emma's unhappy marriage, and its disastrous consequences, so greatly impaired the health of Mrs. and Miss Holmes, that a change of air and scene was deemed absolutely necessary. Dawlish, their favourite retreat, was thought

of, and they were making preparations for their departure thither, when a letter arrived from Mr. Newell, Mr. Holmes' son-in-law, in Warwickshire,\* announcing that the new chapel which Mr. Holmes had been the means of rearing near his native place, was all but completed, and inviting them to spend some time with him, and be present on the opening day. This induced them to change their mind. "I certainly," said Mr. Holmes, "ought to go, to witness the accomplishment of my design." "And we," said his wife and daughter, "should very much like to accompany you; we may thus reap a spiritual benefit while endeavouring to recruit our bodily health."

The village of Lynnbridge, Warwickshire, near which Mr. Newell resided, was delightfully situated on the slope of a hill, commanding an extensive and beautiful prospect. At the foot winded the Lynn, much renowned as an excellent trouting stream, and here crossed by a handsome stone bridge, over which lay the highroad to London. A narrow lane, richly adorned in summer with dog-roses and other wild flowers, led to the village above, which was rather of a straggling description, without any principal street. The houses were for the most part of a humble order, few rising to the dignity of two stories, but all displaying that air of neatness and comfort which so distinguishes our English villages above those of any other country. Each had a flower garden in front, very prettily kept; and the cottages, which were generally white-washed and thatched, had their walls often adorned with vines, ivy, or honey-suckle. At the extremity of the village, looking down upon the river, stood the parish church, a venerable Gothic edifice, with its churchyard, encircled by a row of ancient yew trees. Adjoining the church was the rectory, a picturesque and comfortable-looking old English mansion, with its pointed gables, well cultivated garden, and rather extensive pleasure grounds. Shady lanes led in all directions to the surrounding country; the prospect of which, as already mentioned, was of the most charming nature, comprehend-

\* Vol. ii. p. 129.

ing an endless variety of hill and dale, wood and corn-fields, and reminding the gazer unconsciously of Cowper's lines—

“Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,  
To peep at such a world.”

The population was for the most part agricultural, but there were some gentlemen's seats in the neighbourhood, besides a few farm-houses, and several villas with a few acres of ground attached to each.

Whether humanity is more depraved in a city than in a village, still remains an open question; but I have uniformly found that in both, the old and the young evince the same predilection for what is evil, and the same antipathies to what is pure; and if left without any enlightening and regenerating process, will bear a striking resemblance to each other in the great outlines of their moral character. Observation proves, I think, that the city, by its more varied attractions, facilitates the broader and more marked development of the essential depravity of our common nature. Yet in the inhabitants of a village we not unfrequently discover appalling ignorance, with its consequent vices of impiety, profanity, and intemperance, associated with extreme vulgarity of manners; an abject submissiveness to their superiors, and an extreme rudeness in their intercourse with each other.

In regard to moral and social features, Lynnbridge was a very fair specimen of an English village, neither better nor worse than the average number; it had its church and its rector, its wardens to attend to ecclesiastical matters, and its overseer to look after the poor. There was no school, however, for the training of the young in the way in which they should go; nor had the pure gospel of the grace of God ever been preached to the people. In the neighbourhood of this village, Mr. Newell had taken a farm, and been settled there a few years before the date of the occurrences which I intend to narrate.

The farm rented by Mr. Holmes' father, and on which he had

been born and brought up, was situated a few miles from Lynnhridge, and from old associations he naturally took an interest in the village. On one of his visits to his son-in-law, he was much shocked with the appearance which it presented on a Sabbath evening. The large green on the banks of the river was crowded by the youth of both sexes, devoting the sacred hours of the day of rest to various popular sports, while their seniors filled the public-houses. Loud bursts of laughter were heard from all quarters, and he learned that brawls and boxing matches were by no means of rare occurrence. It was while contemplating this scene of disorder that Mr. Holmes formed the praiseworthy resolution of having a chapel built, and supporting the minister till the people were able and felt disposed to do so themselves. As soon as he made known his determination, his son-in-law, and several other gentlemen, voluntarily offered to co-operate with him. One gave a piece of land, another supplied part of the timber, and others subscribed their money; and though some ridiculed the design, and a few interdicted their tenants and their labourers from assisting in its accomplishment, yet, like the Hebrew temple, the chapel gradually rose, in spite of all opposition, till at length it was finally completed.

Having heard that the Rector of the parish was much displeased with this projected encroachment on his ecclesiastical province, Mr. Holmes called on him, to explain the reason and motives of his conduct, and though he failed in obtaining his concurrence, yet he was assured that he would offer no opposition, as he held sacred the principle of unrestricted religious liberty. He returned from this interview more gratified than he expected he should be, having found the old Rector an amiable and intelligent man, far advanced beyond many of his order in the catholic liberality of his opinions and principles.

The chapel was finished within the space of six months; and when every preparation was made for opening it, Mr. Newell, as already mentioned, sent notice to Mr. Holmes, who accordingly set out for Warwickshire, accompanied by his wife and eldest daughter. On

arriving at Lynnbridge they found Mr. Newell waiting with his chaise to take them to Thornwood, about two miles distant, where they were received with the greatest joy by Mrs. Newell, the second daughter of the Holmes family, whom neither her mother nor sister had seen for a considerable time. After the first greetings were over, the conversation, as might be expected, turned on the late unhappy occurrences in the family, in connection with Emma's marriage. Then the subject of the new chapel, which was to be opened on the ensuing Sabbath, was introduced by Mr. Newell, who informed his father-in-law that the opposition raised against the measure had gradually died away, and some of the most violent and bigoted of its opponents had been brought to admit, that it was likely to prove advantageous to the morals of the people. After some discussion of this topic, which served to divert their attention from more painful matters, Mr. Newell assembled his household for evening worship, and shortly afterwards the family retired to rest.

The following days were employed by the ladies in visiting the dairy, the garden, the poultry-yard, and examining other objects of rural interest; and by Mr. Holmes and his son-in-law in rambling over the farm, and discussing the various agricultural operations then in progress. At length the Sabbath morning dawned on which the chapel was to be dedicated to God. Mr. Holmes rose at an early hour, but was rather disappointed to find the sky looking dark and lowering; on going, however, into the fold-yard, he met the old shepherd, who, on being asked his opinion of the weather, quietly surveyed the sky, and said, "I think, Sir, the dark clouds will blow off, and we shall have a fine day." This remark quite raised his spirits, as the shepherd was considered a sort of weather prophet, and this time at all events his words proved true, for as the morning advanced the clouds began to disperse, the bees were seen passing and repassing the parlour window; and just after the family had finished breakfast, the sun burst from the dark mantle in which he had been enveloped, and diffused his bright and enlivening rays.



"It is a pleasant thing," said Mr. Holmes, "to see the sun; but I have never gazed on it with more delight than at this moment."

"A fine emblem," Miss Holmes replied, "of Him, who sometimes in an unexpected moment breaks in upon the midnight of the soul; and who, I trust, will arise and shine on the inhabitants of this benighted village, and bless them with the light of life and immortality."

The chapel, a neat plain structure, was erected on a piece of freehold land, near the bank of the river, where the villagers had been accustomed to spend the sacred hours of the Sabbath in riotous amusement. It was crowded to excess, many persons having come from a great distance to be present at the opening. The Rev. Mr. Broadley of B — commenced the service by reading a hymn, which was sung with great animation and delight. This was followed by reading the Scriptures, and prayer; and then the Rev. Mr. Wyatt, who had arrived for the occasion from London, preached a very beautiful and impressive sermon from John iii. 16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"I am not aware," he remarked, after he had repeated his text, "that I could have selected a more important, or a more interesting passage than that which I have just read. So powerfully does it exhibit the love of God towards fallen man, that though I could speak with an eloquence equal to that of an angel, I should be incapable of doing it adequate justice. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; and yet, by many, this gift is esteemed as a thing of nought; and all references which are made to its immense value, are regarded as the sallies or excesses of a disordered imagination, or a mean and contemptible fanaticism. He has 'so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' But alas! the danger which awaits us is disbelieved; and the happiness the Son of God came to bestow is despised."

Mr. Wyatt divided his text in the following order:—

I. The moral condition of men, of every rank, and of every description of character, is alarming.

II. To deliver them from this state of moral danger was the express design of our Lord's mission.

III. Such is the tenderness of his compassion, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

IV. Saving us from the misery which we deserve, by the gift of his only begotten Son, is a most astonishing display of the love of God.

When speaking under the second division of his sermon, on the design of our Lord's mission, he delivered the following passage, which made a deep impression on the audience:—

“Had one of the highest orders of angels assumed a human form, and announced to us some scheme of redemption from evil and from ruin, it would have been on our part an act of folly and ingratitude to have treated the message of mercy with indifference. But, brethren, no angel, however exalted, could redeem man from the curse of a violated law, or conduct him to the repossession of that purity and honour, from which, by transgression, he has fallen. Therefore God gave his only begotten Son, who united in his own person every attribute of Deity, and every perfection of humanity; displaying a majesty, combined with a tenderness of character, which alternately excite our awe and confidence. With what ease did he rule the elements of nature—heal the maladies and disorders produced by sin—recall the souls of the departed from the invisible world; while, with all the familiarity and compassion of a near and beloved friend, he mingles his tears of sympathy with the suffering mourner, and diffuses the peace of heaven over the heart oppressed with sorrow.

“Suppose, my brethren, one of the elders of Israel, after having been present at the giving of the law at Sinai, and after having seen and heard the mysterious sights and sounds on that mount of awful majesty and terror, had then fallen into a trance, and continued in that state till the night before the vision of the shepherds on the

plains of Bethlehem. Suppose he had then awoke and been told, that the law, which had been given with so many awful accompaniments, had been broken, and that the Lawgiver was on the eve of sending his only begotten Son into the world—would he not have concluded that his mission must be one of vengeance? But no! ‘God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.’ He gave his only begotten Son that we might not perish, but have everlasting life. What is it for man to perish? I cannot tell—I have never seen the judgment-seat of Christ!—I have never beheld the awful glory of that scene of terror!—I have never heard the final sentence, Depart!—I have never been banished far and for ever away from bliss!—I have not endured the agonies of the worm that never dies!—the fire that is never quenched! Indeed, my brethren, I cannot tell what it is to perish! It is a state of misery which no imagery can represent—which no language can describe—which no imagination can conceive.—‘But have everlasting life!’ It is life which gives to every other possession its determinate value. For what is beauty without life but a fading ornament? what is wealth without life but a useless substance? what is honour without life but a bursting bubble? Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life. So much do we prize this invaluable possession, that rather than lose it, we will consent to part with one limb, and one sense after another, till all are gone. But, brethren, the period is not far distant, when, like our forefathers, we must resign it, and be numbered with the dead; yet Jesus Christ says, that he that believeth in him shall never die. This promise must be taken in a restricted sense, as his disciples are no less liable to the visitations of death than his enemies. Their faith in him does not operate as a charm to repeal the law of mortality; neither does it exempt them from the diseases and pains which usually precede its infliction. But though they die a natural death, yet they immediately enter on the full enjoyment of eternal life—when they dissolve their connection with the inhabitants of this world, they become fellow-citizens with the

saints in light—when they close their eyes on this earthly scene, they open them on the visions of celestial glory—and when their bodies are committed to the tomb, their immortal spirits are enjoying that endless life, over which death has no power. This life will be a life of perfect purity—of perfect knowledge—and of perfect felicity; and will continue unimpaired by sickness, and undisturbed by care, for ever and for ever.

“And our text says, that *whosoever* believeth in the Son of God shall have everlasting life. No one is denied the invaluable blessing on account of the obscurity of his origin, or the inferiority of his rank; for though these circumstances of distinction have a powerful effect on us, yet they have no influence over the mind of the Saviour, who looks with as much benign regard on a penitent villager as a repenting citizen; and is no less willing to save a poor neglected pauper than the rich nobleman who fares sumptuously every day. WHO-SO-EVER believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. The most debased, impure, and worthless, if they truly lay hold of the Saviour, come within the circle of this comprehensive promise, and have the same warrant to expect forgiveness and final salvation, as the apostles of Jesus Christ had. ‘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’ (Rev. xxii. 17).”

A short time after the Village Chapel had been set apart for the worship of God, and the Rev. Mr. Swinson, its minister, had commenced the discharge of his regular services, a spirit of opposition arose from a very unexpected quarter. Some of the more respectable farmers, and two magistrates, waited on the clergyman of the parish, to express their astonishment that he should give his sanction to a measure, which, in their opinion, was calculated to endanger the Church.

“Indeed, gentlemen,” said the Rector, the Rev. Mr. Trevor, “I have not sanctioned it. When Mr. Holmes called on me to explain his

motives for building the chapel, he said his object was to reform the village. I expressed a wish that he might succeed in that particular, but at the same time told him that I did not think he would."

"Reform the village, Sir!" said one of the magistrates, "the village wants no reformation. The people are honest, industrious, virtuous, and happy; and what reformation do they require?"

"But they are rather remiss in their attendance at church; and they have frequently pastimes on the green on a Sunday evening, which I think ought not to be tolerated."

"Why, certainly, Sir, they do not attend the church quite so often as they ought to do; but as for the pastimes on the green, I rather think you must have received some exaggerated report of them, for I candidly confess that I never saw anything to disapprove of."

"I have heard of their dancing on a Sunday evening," replied the Rector, "and of many of them getting intoxicated, which you must allow, gentlemen, are not very reputable engagements for a Sunday evening."

"They are a cheerful, merry set of folks, Sir; and some of them may sometimes take a little more ale than is good for them; but I never saw anything in their amusements to disapprove of. Indeed, I think the scene which the green presents on a Sunday evening is one of the most picturesque which a country life can exhibit; displaying, as it does, such varied lights and shades of rustic character. The young and old intermingle together; and those who are too infirm to engage in the innocent frolics of their youthful days, look on, while others react the parts they once performed. The utmost degree of hilarity prevails amongst them; and in these relaxations they forget the toils and cares of the week."

"Well, gentlemen," replied Mr. Trevor, "I certainly think that the poor, no less than the rich, ought to be left to choose their own pleasures, without being controlled by others; and if any of them prefer worshipping their Maker on a Sunday evening, to joining in a public gambol, they ought to be permitted to do it. I cannot consent to impose any restraint on the consciences of others, as I should

not like to submit to any restraint myself. Indeed, opposition on our part would be both impolitic and unjust; the spirit of an Englishman rises up in defiance against any interference with his religious opinions, and his opposition becomes more decided and more zealous in proportion to the efforts employed to restrain his liberty of conscience."

Though these persons could not induce their amiable and intelligent Rector to unite with them in their attempt to put down what they termed *the new religion*, yet they resolved to employ all the influence they possessed to accomplish their purpose. How to do it in the most effectual way, and yet not involve themselves in any hazardous responsibility, was a question which perplexed them. After various discussions they resolved to prohibit all their tenants and servants from attending the chapel—to withhold parish pay from those paupers who went—and to refuse associating with the more independent and respectable parishioners who gave it the sanction of their presence. Having agreed on their plan of operation, they proceeded to act on it with vigour, and the effects were immediately felt; for on the following Sabbath the congregation assembling at the new chapel was reduced to less than one-half of its usual number. This determined opposition was rather discouraging; but as yet Mr. Swinson and those who adhered to him were permitted to remain unmolested. But a storm was gathering; and the evil spirits who had set themselves against the introduction of evangelical religion into the village, resolved to make one desperate effort to expel it. Some of the baser sort were selected as the agents of the plot; and everything being arranged, they came in a body on a Sunday evening, and while Mr. Swinson was preaching, they entered the chapel, and by their noise and tumultuous behaviour, compelled him to desist and the people to retire. As he was quitting this scene of confusion, he was grossly insulted, some of the rioters brandishing their sticks over his head, and threatening that if he dared enter the chapel again, he should not be permitted to escape with his life.



MR. SWINSON ASSAULTED BY THE MOB.

The report of these proceedings soon spread through the neighbouring country; and while some raised the "loud laugh," and defended the conduct of the assailants, others came forward to aid in resisting the tyranny which was attempting to trample on the rights and liberties of the people. It was well known that the actors on this occasion were instigated secretly by parties behind the scenes—that they were the mere agents of "the respectable and intelligent few," who had resolved on the extermination of this so-called new religion; and though Christian sympathy wept over their ignorance, and mercy pleaded for their forgiveness, yet it was felt by Mr. Holmes and his friends, as a duty they owed to the reputation of the clergyman who had been insulted, and to the liberties of the people which had been trampled on, to bring the perpetrators of this disturbance to punishment. Warrants were immediately granted by a neighbouring magistrate for the apprehension of all the culprits, and they were bound over to appear at the next sessions, there to be tried for disturbing Mr. Swinson and his congregation, while engaged in public worship, and for threatening the life of the minister, if he attempted to continue the discharge of his pastoral duties.

No sooner had these thoughtless and misguided young men returned from the presence of the magistrate, than they began to regret the part they had acted; and frankly confessed, that they should never have engaged in the affair, had it not been for Mr. Wingate, an extensive proprietor in the neighbourhood, and his friends. "They put us up to it," one of them said, "and promised that no harm should come to us if we would kick up a *row*."

There is no class of men in society who occupy a more respectable or a more enviable station than our country gentlemen. But living on their own patrimonial estates, in the midst of a thinly scattered population, consisting for the most part of poor and ignorant peasantry, they frequently display more of the domineering spirit of feudal times than any other class of men in the kingdom: and though they have made some progress in intellectual cultivation, in



accordance with the spirit of the age, yet they still lag far behind the great body of their countrymen in liberality of sentiment and benevolence of disposition. They are too apt to regard the peasantry with supercilious contempt, and endeavour to keep down, by oppression, the rising spirit of freedom. They too often seem to consider those who have no riches, as beings having no rights—whose quiet complaint is to be considered as provocation, and whose mildest remonstrance is to be regarded as insolence. They have been in past times most active in opposing the introduction of the gospel of Jesus Christ into the villages over which they exercise an authority; and many of the popular outrages which have been committed against the ministers of the gospel, have originated in their suggestions or direct efforts. But now a change has come over the land for the better. This may be partly attributed to that spirit of independent inquiry which is spreading amongst our peasantry, who seem disposed to withstand all encroachments on their freedom of choice and action; and while they are not wanting in civility and proper subjection to their employers, bow not, as their forefathers did, to the yoke of arbitrary oppression.

When the sessions came on, the friends of the accused made every possible effort to defeat the ends of justice, but they were foiled in the attempt. The case was stated in a clear and forcible manner—the evidence which supported it was full and conclusive—and though their acquittal would have given many of the spectators of their trial a triumph, yet an honest jury returned the verdict which the injured laws of the country demanded, and the rioters were found guilty. As they made, however, a handsome apology, and entered into a recognizance to keep the peace, and to come up for judgment when called on to do so, Mr. Holmes and his friends consented to stay any further proceedings, and this gave general satisfaction.

After this decision, the spirit of persecution declined, and the peasantry, finding that they were protected by the laws of the country, resolutely determined to enjoy the freedom which no man could take from them. They now pressed in greater numbers to

hear the preacher, who had given such decisive proofs that he knew how to practise the forbearance which he enforced, and exercise the mercy which it was his duty and his delight to proclaim. When preaching one Sabbath evening, shortly after the trial, from 1 Tim. i. 13—"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I have obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief"—he saw two of the ring-leaders of the late riot sitting in a back seat in the gallery of the chapel. Without appearing to notice them, he took occasion, from the subject he was discussing, to make a strong appeal to their consciences. After delineating the character of Paul, as a blasphemer and a persecutor, and as one who had injured the reputation and destroyed the peace of others, he passed by a natural transition to his present audience, and thus addressed them:—"Happy would it have been for the world, if the spirit of persecution had died out of it when Saul of Tarsus was converted to the faith of Christ; but alas! my brethren, it survived that memorable event, and has continued in existence to the present day. In former times it dragged the disciples of the Redeemer to prison, confiscated their property, and then consigned them to the flames; and though its power is now restrained by the laws of our country, yet it still retains all its native rancour and malignity. It would now react the part by which it formerly disgraced our national history, and plunge us into all the horrors and sufferings which our ancestors endured; but thanks to a kind and merciful Providence, we are guarded from its violence by the majesty of the British law, and are permitted to assemble together, where and when we please, without dreading opposition or disturbance from any one.

"Our duty in relation to our persecutors is to pity them, for they do it ignorantly in unbelief, and to pray that they may obtain mercy. And have we not encouragement to do this, seeing that God is sometimes pleased to transform the persecutor into a preacher of the gospel? Hence the apostle, when writing to the church at Galatia, says: 'But they had heard only, that he which persecuted

us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.' What a change! What a miracle of grace! What a proof that Christ Jesus came to save the chief of sinners! And am I now addressing any one who has attempted to disturb us in the enjoyment of our religious privileges, or who has been in the habit of reviling or threatening us? You see how we are protected, and though we have not chosen to enforce the full penalties of the law, yet a repetition of the offence will render such forbearance in future absolutely impossible. But I flatter myself, that those who have opposed us, will do so no more; and that even the persecutors themselves may be induced to implore mercy. Yes, O persecutor, He against whom thou hast raised the rebellious hand, waits to be gracious—*he*, whose authority thou hast trampled on, and whose grace thou hast despised, is now looking down with an eye of compassion, more willing to pardon and to save, than to punish and destroy. If you continue in a state of rebellious impenitence, you will treasure up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath; but if you now repent and pray, and believe in him, you will be forgiven, and finally admitted into his presence in heaven, where you will enjoy a state of purity and happiness for ever. Let me then urge you to return home, and on your knees pour forth the prayer of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner;' and should it please God, who 'delighteth in mercy,' to answer this prayer, you will then feel a stronger attachment than you ever felt aversion to the gospel of Christ."

It often happens that the cause of the Redeemer is promoted by the very means employed to crush it; and of the truth of this remark the above narrative furnishes a striking instance. Mr. Swinson's congregation at Lynnbridge increased so rapidly, that it became necessary to erect a large front gallery in the chapel; and many of the inhabitants of remoter parishes, being induced to come and hear the man who had been so unjustly treated, solicited him to visit them and preach during the evenings of the week. "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed" (Acts xix. 20).

## VILLAGE CHARACTERS.



FEW weeks after the termination of the struggle, so successfully maintained by the managers of the village chapel, against the encroachments of bigotry and intolerance, I received a letter from Mr. Newell informing me that Mr. and Mrs. Holmes had quitted Thornwood to return to the Elms, but had left Miss Holmes to remain a little longer with him and Mrs. Newell. He proceeded to say, that as his friends who had filled his house were now departed, he should be very happy if I would pay him a visit, and that if I could arrange to remain for a little time, I might then accompany Louisa on her return to the Elms, and thus fulfil the promise which I had formerly made to Mr. Holmes. This invitation came very opportunely, as I had just been labouring under a slight indisposition, for which change of air was strongly recommended. I had a great desire, too, to see again both Mr. Newell and Miss Holmes; and, accordingly, after arranging matters for an absence of a short period, I took my seat in the coach to Lynnbridge, where Mr. Newell was waiting to receive me with his chaise. Till then I had never before been in that part of the country, and was quite delighted with the beautiful drive from Lynnbridge to Thornwood. On arriving there I had the pleasure of meeting again Miss Holmes and Mrs. Newell, neither of whom I had seen since the marriage of the latter a few years before in London. I need not here enlarge on the kind reception which I received from all, or recount the details of the pleasant and cheerful conversation in which we spent the evening.

The following day, after an early dinner, Miss Holmes, Mrs. Newell, and myself (Mr. Newell having some business to attend to) sallied out for a walk. "Louisa shall be our cicerone," said Mrs. Newell; "I think she knows more of the country hereabouts than I, who have lived in it for several years." "Perhaps, Mr. —," she con-

tinued, addressing me, "you would like to see some of our VILLAGE CHARACTERS. They are to be found everywhere; but I think this place has rather more than its share of them. Louisa, I believe, knows them all already, as she is a most ardent student of the different phases of humanity." I, of course, expressed my readiness to accompany the ladies wherever they chose to lead me; and we, accordingly, bent our footsteps towards a homestead about a mile off, occupied by Mr. William Harris, one of the finest specimens of the old English farmer I had seen for a long time. He was a stout-built man, rather inclined to corpulency, with a fresh ruddy face and a sharp keen eye; but the best description I can give of him is that furnished me by Miss Holmes, as we walked towards his house.

"Mr. Harris," she said, "is, as might be expected, blunt in his manners, but frank and obliging in his disposition, of an hospitable and genial nature, and as regular as clock-work in all his domestic arrangements. He lives in the house in which his grandfather was born, and which is shaded by a large oak tree, that has outlived many generations, and is likely to outlive many more. He rises in the summer about five, breakfasts at half-past six, takes his dinner exactly as the clock strikes twelve, smokes his pipe in the porch between six and seven, then takes his supper, and retires at nine, to sleep away the long and tedious hours of night. He is, upon the whole, a very worthy man, though rather pedantic in his way. He received what he calls an *edecation*, when young; his father having sent him for six months to a boarding-school about twelve miles off; besides giving the old parish clerk two guineas to teach him the rules of addition and multiplication. He farms a small property of his own, on which his modest mansion stands, and rents another farm about double the size, under Lord —; and is regarded by most of his fraternity rather clever in his profession. He is a good judge of live stock; is celebrated for the excellence of his butter and cheese; decidedly attached to his Church and his Queen; generally consulted on all parish questions; and universally admitted to be one of the best weather-tellers in the neighbourhood, though the shepherd

says he has known him out in his reckonings. He has served the office of overseer eleven times, which forms one of his chief tales in all companies; has been churchwarden six times; was, when a young man, regularly enrolled amongst the yeomanry of the country at the time of the threatened invasion in the year 1804, and often expresses his regret that no opportunity ever occurred to enable him to distinguish himself in the annals of war. He goes to church with his comely dame every Sunday; repeats the responses in an audible voice; reclines his head on the top of his staff, while *appearing* to listen to the sermon; reads one chapter in the Old Testament and one in the New every Sunday afternoon; and then indulges himself with an extra glass and pipe with a few friends, either at his own house, or at the inn on the green. But he is, to quote his own language, a *mortal enemy* to the Methodists; and will not suffer any of his servants, if he knows it, to attend the chapel. He says that the old religion is the best; and he thinks that no one ought to be suffered to change it. He often says he hopes to live long enough to see the Toleration Act repealed, which he declares is a disgrace to parliament."

He happened to be smoking his pipe, with his arms resting on the little gate in the front of his house, as we were approaching it; and in exchange for the courteous salutation we gave him, he invited us to taste his ale, which, he said, was a prime fresh tap. This offer we declined with thanks, as we preferred a glass of cold water, which excited his astonishment.

"You like water better than good ale! well, every one to his liking, I say; but give me a good tankard of prime home-brewed. You be a stranger, I think, Sir, in these parts," he continued, addressing me, "I don't remember of ever seeing you here before."

"I have never been in this part of the country before," I replied, "and have just been admiring the fine scenery which surrounds your village on all sides. There is a good proportion of hill and dale; and the parish church on the brow of the hill, looking down to the river, is a most interesting object."

"Yes, Sir, it looks very well. There were no trees about it, except the old yews, till I was appointed churchwarden, fourteen years ago, last Easter Monday, when I had them planted, and they have thriv'd very well. I have heard many gentlemen say it is a great improvement. They say it gives a kind of a finish to our church. They have often drunk my health for doing it."

"But the inside of the church is not so neat and clean as the outside is imposing."

"No, Sir, it's sadly neglected now; but when I was warden, it was the cleanest church in our parts."

"How often have you duty performed in it?"

"Once every Sunday, when I and my dame go as regularly as the doors are opened; except when it's very wet, and then I go alone. She has a touch of the rheumatics in bad weather; worse luck: and gets deafish if she goes."

"As it is so small, I suppose it is crowded on the Sunday?"

"Why, no, not much of that; for the people go to the chapel that's built yonder on the green. People now-a-days an't satisfied with the good old religion of the Church; they must have this new religion that's springing up all over the country."

"Do you know what this new religion is?"

"No, Sir. I'm satisfied with the religion my fathers had before me, and so I don't trouble my head about it; but I understand it makes people very miserable. Now, my religion never made me miserable, and I don't think it ever will. I am for letting well alone."

"I suppose you wish to go to heaven when you die?"

"Aye, to be sure, I do. I shouldn't like to go to t'other place. They are badish off there, so the parsons tell us; and I suppose they know all about it, as they studied at the univarsaty."

"But we ought not to expect to get to a place unless we go the right way."

"That's true, and no mistake."

"Have you ever thought much about the difficulty of getting into

the right way which leads to heaven? I suppose you have read what Jesus Christ says on this point? 'Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it' (Matt. vii. 13, 14)."

"Aye, I recollect reading them *verses* t'other Sunday, and I felt a bit puzzled to make out their meaning."

"But, Farmer, they have a meaning, and a very important meaning."

"So I guess, or Jesus Christ wouldn't had them put into the Bible. Can you tell me the meaning, as I should like to know?"

"Why, the meaning is just this: the many get into the broad way, that is, the wrong way, and they are lost, and perish in hell. Have you not read the verses which almost immediately follow?—'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' (Matt. vii. 22, 23)."

"Now, Sir, allow me to ask you one question. If we go to church, and pay every one his own, and are as good as we can be, do you not think that we shall go to heaven when we die? We can't be better than that, you know, Sir; and there are not many in these parts so good as that."

"As you have asked me a question, will you allow me to ask you one?"

"Yes, Sir; twenty, if you please."

"Are you as good as you can be?"

"Why, to be sure, Sir, I might be a bit better; but you know we are all sinners: the more's the pity."

"Then, how can you expect to go to heaven on your own principle of reasoning? Now, Farmer, let me tell you, that you are under a delusion which will prove fatal unless you are undeceived. If you



read the New Testament with attention, you will perceive, that two things are necessary to fit us for heaven: the first is, we must be born again; and the second is, we must repent of, and forsake all our sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Repentance: aye, that's very proper when people do wrong; but I have never done anything I am ashamed of. Why, Sir, I have been overseer eleven times; and there's ne'er a pauper in the parish but will say that I always acted with the greatest charity. I go to church—read my Bible—and pay everybody his own; and I don't think God requires anything more than this; and I suppose you will think this is very fair as times go?"

"But are you born again?"

"I don't know what that means; it puzzles my brains; but then I'm no scolar; though I know a good bit about farming, like."

"Then if you do not know what it is to be born again, that's a proof that you are not born again, for if you were, you would understand what it is."

"Well, I suppose I should. Then according to your talk, though I go to church, I am not likely after all to go to heaven. If you are right, I am on the wrong tack; but what must I do to get right? 'Tis time I looked about me, for I shall be sixty-eight next Lady-day, and that's a great age; though my father lived till he was fourscore, and my grandfather was ninety-one when he died; and I had an uncle who lived to see a hundred and three. You see we are a longish-lived set—about the oldest livers in these parts."

"I think you can't do a better thing than overcome your prejudices, and go and hear the preaching at the village chapel, where these things will be explained to you; and it is very likely that there you will gain in a few months more information on religious subjects than you have acquired in all your life."

At the mention of the chapel he shrugged up his shoulders and said, "Why, if I was to go there I should have half the parish laughing at me. I shouldn't be able to show my face at market. My old friends would give me the cold shoulder. No, no, it will

never do for an old warden, who has been in office so often, to leave church and our old Rector, for a Methody chapel and a Methody parson."

"One word, Farmer, and I will soon finish. Are you such a coward as to care for what others say, when you are doing a thing for your own advantage? Will you suffer the laugh of the ungodly to deter you from getting into the *narrow* way that leads to heaven; and consent to be lost with the many, rather than saved with the few?"

"These sartanly are plain questions, and I'll give them a turn over in my mind. I must confess that your talk has satisfied me—that I know but little—the more's the pity—about the good things of the Bible; and I think as how I shall take your advice, and go and hear the gentleman who preaches in the chapel. If I don't like what he says, I need not go again, and it is but right to give him a hearing before one condemns him."

"Very true."

We now wished Mr. Harris good day, and proceeded on our walk. A short distance onward we passed a neat cottage by the roadside, in the little garden in front of which we saw a lady walking up and down at a solemn pace. As Mrs. Newell was acquainted with her she stopped to ask her how she did. As she did not perceive us before Mrs. Newell spoke, being wrapped up in her own airy musings, she seemed startled, as though some spectre had suddenly made its appearance, but recovering her composure, she politely invited us to enter her modest habitation.

"I am sorry, Madam," said Mrs. Newell, in her usual kind manner, "to see you so indisposed."

"Indeed," said Miss Newnham, "I am very ill—very ill indeed. I was never worse in all my life. I have not had a wink of sleep these two nights. I sent for the doctor yesterday, but he did not come till this morning; and he says that I am not ill. But I feel that I am very ill indeed. Dr. Bland does not understand my case. I shall send for Dr. Gordon, who is more clever in his profession; so my aunt tells me, and so my old servant says."

"Have you been ill long, Madam?" I inquired.

"O no, Sir! I was very well this day fortnight. I spent the evening at Mrs. Paul's with a party, and stayed rather later than usual; and on coming home, just as I was passing along the church-yard, I saw a very bright star shoot down from the sky."

"It did not, I suppose, fall on you?"

"O no! it didn't fall on me; but, Sir, I had such a dream! and I awoke about three o'clock in the morning in such a terror, that I have not been well since. And every night, but two, since then, the screech owl has perched itself on the ledge of my window, and kept up its hideous noises so long, that I have been obliged to have my servant sleep in the same room with me ever since, and that's a very unpleasant thing: particularly so."

"And if, Madam, it be not an impertinent question, may I be permitted to inquire into the nature of your dream?"

"O Sir! I dreamed I went to Weston to purchase a new dress; and the shopman, by mistake, took down some crape instead of printed muslin; and just at that time in came Mr. Noades, the undertaker, and said he wanted some stuff for a shroud, for a lady who had died suddenly. And I awoke in such a fright! Indeed, I have not been myself since. My nerves are so shook. My very shadow makes me tremble. I am afraid I'm going to die."

"Well, Madam, it is certain you will die, and you may die suddenly; but do you think that this dream will hasten the time of your death?"

"But, Sir, when I awoke I heard the death-watch as plainly as you now hear me speak."

"And do you suppose, Madam, that the Supreme Being has communicated to this insect a knowledge of your approaching death, and sent it, in the stillness of the night, to give you warning?"

"But, Sir, I heard the death-watch several times when my sister was ill of a decline, and she died about six months afterwards. I said she would die. I was quite sure she would."

"Very likely; and though you may trace a connection between

her disorder and her death, yet what connection can you trace between the noise of this little insect and her death?"

"But, Sir, since the screech owl left my window, our dog has done nothing but howl for the last two nights. O! it is so dismal to lie awake and hear it. It makes me tremble like an aspen leaf."

"And do you think that the howling of the dog is a prognostic of your death, any more than the death of either of your servants?"

"I remember, Sir, the dog howled most awfully just before my grandmother died: and when she heard it she said she should be sure to die, and she did die sure enough."

"And how old, Madam, was your grandmother when she died?"

"Ninety-two, all but four weeks and three days."

"And she really did hear the dog howl some short time before her death?"

"Yes, Sir, about five nights before she died; and all the servants heard it; and they were so frightened; and they all said, nothing can save her after these howlings."

"Very likely; and as most dogs occasionally howl in the night, it would be very strange if some person did not die after such howlings; but can we suppose that the Supreme Being employs shooting stars, insects, owls, and dogs, to announce to us the approach of our death?"

"And don't you believe, Sir, in such omens? Everybody does in our parish."

"I believe that ignorance and superstition have invested these sights and sounds with an ominous import, and that many allow themselves to be terrified by them; but what can be a stronger proof of the absurdity of such a habit, than the fact that the star often falls, the death-watch often ticks, and the dog often howls, when the patient recovers, and lives for years to relate the terror and alarm which these scare-crows of superstition had excited in his breast."

"I hope, Sir, I may live, and if I do, I shall then have a proof that there is nothing in it."

“And pray, Madam, have you never known a patient recover from his illness even after he has been warned of his approaching death by these omens of terror?”

“O yes, Sir, my dear mother was once very ill, and for seven nights our dog howled as he did last night; but she lived seven years afterwards, and when she died no noises were heard.”

“Now, dear Madam, excuse me, a stranger, taking the liberty of talking so to you; after what you have just mentioned, what stronger proof do you require of the folly of being alarmed by sounds which the inferior tribes of nature utter, and which you must know, on reflection, are no sure indications of any future event in the history of human life? That you will die is certain; and that you will enter the eternal world is certain; and that you will stand before the judgment-seat of Christ is certain; and that you are ignorant of the exact time when these great events will take place is equally certain; but instead of allowing your mind to be agitated by these senseless sounds, you ought to be preparing for the final issue of life.”

Here our conversation ended, and we then took our leave, Miss Newnham thanking me for the interest I had taken in her welfare, and hoping that I would call again on her before I left Thornwood.

Addison has a good paper on the propensity which weak and superstitious people indulge, to give an ominous meaning to many of the casualties of life; and to allow themselves to be more terrified by the screeching of an owl, the clicking of an insect, or the howling of a dog, than the real and afflictive dispensations of Providence. As society improves in knowledge, especially the knowledge of the Scriptures, this propensity will become weaker and weaker; and though some traces of its existence may be discovered, at times, in the most cultivated minds, yet it is not invested with that magic power which it exercises over the illiterate. Many efforts have been employed to expose its absurdity, but if we intermingle with the uninformed inhabitants of a village, we shall have indubitable evidence that its influence still continues to operate. The same elegant writer to

whom I have just referred, observes:—"I know but one way of fortifying my soul against these gloomy presages and terrors of mind, and that is, by securing to myself the friendship and affection of that Being who disposes of events, and governs futurity. He sees, at one view, the whole thread of my existence, not only that part of it which I have already passed through, but that which runs forward into all the depths of eternity. When I lay me down to sleep, I recommend myself to his care; when I awake, I give myself up to his direction. Amidst all the evils that threaten me, I will look up to him for help, and question not but he will either avert them, or turn them to my advantage. Though I know neither the time nor the manner of the death I am to die, I am not at all solicitous about it; because I am sure he knows them both, and that he will not fail to comfort and support me under them."\*

\* In connection with the above subject, the author may be permitted to narrate the two following cases which occurred a few years since in the town where he then resided:—The chief actors in the scenes to be described were persons occupying a respectable station in society, and who habitually associated with intelligent and pious people. He and his wife accepted an invitation to dine with a large party. The dinner was laid out in first-rate style, grace was said with becoming solemnity, and we took our seats in due form, when our hostess rose suddenly and rushed out of the room, pale and affrighted, as though the turkey which she was preparing to dismember had suddenly metamorphosed itself into a hobgoblin. We then heard her exclaim, when she found herself alone in the hall, nearly breathless with terror, "O dear, O dear! there are thirteen!" I looked at my wife and she looked at me, in utter amazement, wondering what presage of coming evil could lurk under the number *thirteen*. At length our good-natured host said to one of his daughters, "Eliza, you must retire, and we will send your plate to you in the other room. You know your Mamma's objection to sit down at the table with such an unlucky number." Eliza quietly withdrew, and then her mother silently entered, almost as pale as a corpse, but her natural colour returned soon after she commenced her carving labours. *Thirteen* an unlucky number! How odd! I could not make it out, and continued to puzzle my head with it during dinner. However, we were informed, before the party broke up, that one person was sure to die very soon after eating a hearty dinner with *twelve*, however hale and vigorous they might all be.

The other case is as follows:—A friend of the author had been married, and he and his wife went to pay the customary wedding visit. The sister of the bride was in waiting to receive the company; her mother keeping watch, to see that everything was done in due order. There was a goodly muster of persons, including uncles and aunts, first and second cousins, and friends and acquaintances almost without number. At last the uncle of the bride, a fine portly man, made his appearance, and was in the act of entering the parlour with his hearty congratulations to his niece, when the door was suddenly and rather unceremoniously slammed to by his sister, as though he had been some grim demon, bent on mischief. "Daniel, don't come in; Daniel, you must not come in;

Shortly after leaving Miss Newnham, we turned aside into a fine old park; and feeling rather fatigued, seated ourselves beneath a clump of trees that stood near the foot-path. As we sat watching the hares and rabbits which came out of a neighbouring coppice, and the stately deer which fed around us, unawed by our presence, the Squire passed by, and in a most good-humoured and kindly manner invited us to take some refreshment at the Hall. The invitation was accepted; and we soon found ourselves in a large antique parlour, in which the spirit of hospitality had dwelt from time immemorial.

The Squire, or to call him by his own name, Mr. Bradley, was a fine looking old gentleman, of about sixty years of age, but with a deep trace of melancholy imprinted on his countenance. He had one child, who was sent, when eleven years of age, to a first-rate classical school, to be prepared for Oxford. When about the age of fourteen, according to a barbarous custom which still prevails in most of our great schools, he was chosen by a senior scholar to fight another boy about his own age. After contending till his strength was nearly exhausted, he received a blow on his right temple, which sent him lifeless to the ground. At first the boys thought him only stunned, and taking him up carefully, they carried him into a shed, when, to their horror, they found that he was dead! Horror-struck at this ghastly spectacle, they knew not what to do; but at length the dismal news reached the ears of the master—medical assistance was sent for, but it came too late. This fatal catastrophe happened

Daniel, you shan't come in," exclaimed the lady. "What's the matter now?" said Daniel, who apparently was as much surprised at not being permitted to see us as we were at not being permitted to see him. "What's the matter!" re-echoed his sister; "*why, you have got your black coat on!*" Daniel was obliged to doff his black coat and put on a blue one, made for a much smaller man, and then he appeared amongst us. Moving nearly as gracefully as a man would do in a strait waistcoat, his appearance was a severe tax on our gravity. The mystery of the black coat rejected, and the blue coat honoured by a presentation, still remained unsolved to my wife and myself, till we overheard a grave matron say, "It was very lucky, as the dear creature wouldn't die now." That is, as was more fully explained afterwards, the black coat would have betokened the death of the bride, if she had seen it. Alas! poor human nature. What a specimen of its absurdity and folly! The black coat of the author was invested with no fatal presage, as he belonged to the clerical order; otherwise, like Uncle Daniel, he must have changed it before he could have tasted a bit of the wedding cake.

just before Christmas, when the fond parents were preparing to receive their child once more under their roof during the holidays. When the tidings reached them, they were frantic with grief, and resolved to punish the authors of their calamity; but on cool reflection they forbore doing so, and sunk down into a state of melancholy, from which they have never perfectly recovered.

This sad bereavement brought about a singular change in the habits of the Squire, who now became a very religious man. He had family prayer morning and evening, attended church regularly, and observed the fasts with a degree of monkish austerity which is rarely met with amongst Protestants. As his religion, however, contained no recognition of a living Saviour, it did not reach his heart, nor produce that exquisite taste for the enjoyment of spiritual things which is formed when the inner man is renewed in its spirit and disposition.

And here the author would remark, before he gives the sequel of this interview with the Squire, that the Christian scheme of salvation differs from every other system of religion in one very important particular—it does not admit any person to the denomination of a believer, who does not feel its influence on his heart; nor can a person discern its adaptation to the moral condition of man, till such influence is felt. Hence it discriminates between the man who holds the truth in unrighteousness, and the man who receives it with meekness and in faith; and while it imparts to the latter all its consolations and its hopes, it pronounces the sentence of condemnation on the former, although his moral character may be adorned with the varied beauties of social virtue. To the one it unveils a scene of contemplation, which displays the purity and grandeur of the Divine nature—the equity and glory of his wise, yet mysterious dispensations of providence and of grace; to the other it remains as an unconnected and unharmonious scheme of religion, which no skill can simplify, and which no labour can methodically arrange. To the one it opens a fountain of living waters, of which they who drink never thirst after a more salubrious draught of happiness; to the



other it is as a stagnant lake, whose waters are bitter, like those of ancient Marah. To the one it makes known a Saviour, in the efficacy of his death, in the riches of his grace, and in the prevalence of his intercession: to the other it exhibits him as the Man of sorrows, who once fasted in the desert, and preached in the temple—who once wept on Olivet, and groaned on Calvary—and who derives all his celebrity from the records of history, rather than from the manifestation of his love in renewing and sanctifying the soul. So that while these two persons profess the same faith, bear the same denominational character, worship in the same church, and observe the same ceremonial rites and institutions; they cannot hold any communion with each other in spirit, because their perceptions, taste, and moral inclinations are as much opposed to each other as the purity of the Divine nature is opposed to the impurity of the human.

“It is now,” said the Squire, “fifteen years since I lost my son. It was a grievous affliction—one which has embittered life to me: and if I could overcome the dread of death, I should long to lie down in our family vault, to rest in peace with the dead of past generations.”

“To lose a child,” I replied, “in the common course of nature, must be a severe affliction to a parent; but to lose an only son, and in such a way as you lost yours, must be a trial almost too heavy to be borne.”

“O, Sir, it nearly bereft us of our senses; and we have gone but little into company since. There’s his likeness,” pointing to a good painting hanging over the fireplace, “and it is a very correct one; and here is his favourite dog, which we have preserved; but you see, like his master, his life is gone. This is the end of man.”

“Yes, Sir, it is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment.”

“And it is this judgment after death which makes death so dreadful. I have been preparing myself for my latter end ever since the death of my child; and the more I think of its solemnity and im-

portance, the more I am alarmed. We know what this life is; but of the next life we have no knowledge; and we know the beings with whom we now associate; but who can form a conception of disembodied spirits?"

"The dread of death often operates as a spell on the happiness of life; and brings down the wealthy and prosperous to a state of mental wretchedness, equally deplorable with that of the destitute and forlorn."

"Sir," said the Squire, with great emphasis, fixing his eye on myself as he spoke, "it brings us lower, because, as we have stronger temptations to the love of life, we have greater reluctance to resign it. Here we are distinguished by greater possessions, occupy a more exalted station, and have a greater variety of enjoyments at our command; but we are not sure that we shall be even admitted into the kingdom of heaven when we die; and, for aught we know, the same fate may await us which befel a certain rich man, of whom we read in the Bible."

"That fact, Sir," I replied, "is calculated to excite a high degree of terror in the breast of a rich man, because it teaches us, that God does not continue the line of distinction between the rich and the poor beyond this life."

"The distinction, Sir, may be preserved, but it may be against us, as poor Lazarus was comforted, while the rich man was tormented. I have a servant, who works for me in my garden, on whom I often look with envy; and if I could attain that composure in prospect of death which he possesses, I would gladly exchange my mansion for his cottage."

"I presume, Sir, he is a religious man?"

"Yes, he is a religious man, and so am I; but he has the art of deriving consolation from his religion, while I can derive none from mine."

"But how is that? Is he a more learned or a more virtuous man than you are?"

"No, Sir; he is virtuous, and he is intelligent for a person in his

rank of life; but he says he does not derive any consolation from his virtue."

"I presume, Sir, he is a man of prayer?"

"Yes, and so am I, though I use a form, and he prays extempore—so I have heard."

"I presume he attends a place of worship?"

"Yes; he now goes to the chapel which has lately been built in the village. This is the only thing in his conduct I disapprove of. I think we ought to keep to the Church, and not sanction this new religion, which is overrunning the country."

"But now, suppose this new religion, as you term it, should be the very religion from which your gardener derives all his consolation against the fear of death, would it not be an act of cruelty and of injustice if you were to attempt to deprive him of it?"

"But why can't he derive his consolations from the religion of the Church of England?"

"Then, Sir," I replied, "why don't you? You say that you have attended your parish church regularly for the last fifteen years, and yet you are as much in dread of death as you were when you first entered within its doors."

"Very true; there's a mystery about it which I can't unravel."

"Shall I explain it, Sir?"

"I wish you would; and as it is a question which perplexes Mrs. Bradley no less than myself, I will fetch her, if you will excuse me for a few minutes."

The Squire soon returned, accompanied by his lady, who welcomed us to the Hall, with the greatest cordiality and politeness.

"Now, Sir," said the Squire, "if you will explain to us how it is our gardener derives that consolation against the fear of death from this new religion, which we cannot derive from the good old religion of our forefathers, you will confer a great favour, and we shall esteem your visit the most agreeable one we have ever received."

"In the first place," I observed, "you have fallen into a mistake. The religion of the chapel is not a new religion, but the religion of

the Bible, exhibited in a simple and popular form, and does not differ from the doctrinal articles of the Established church."

"Indeed, Sir. Why, then, my gardener and I profess the same faith. But how is it he derives so much consolation from that which gives me none?"

"Because, to quote the language of the Scripture, he has been renewed in the spirit of his mind, and has had the eyes of his understanding enlightened, so that he is enabled to trace the connection between the facts of Christianity and their application to his mind; while you, for want of this supernatural illumination, admit the facts only, without perceiving how they can, or how they do, produce the intended effect. For example: you admit that you are a guilty sinner in relation to God, and under a sentence of condemnation, which is the reason why you dread death; and you admit that Jesus Christ died for sinners; but you cannot perceive *how* it is that his death operates to remove guilt, and to inspire a hope of eternal blessedness. There is, if I may use such an expression, a palpable darkness intervening between the fact of human guilt, and the fact of the Saviour's death for its expiation, which prevents your seeing how the latter does actually become the means of removing the former. Hence your faith in the death of Christ does not give you that consolation of which you sometimes hear your pious gardener speak; because, for want of an adequate power of perception, you cannot see how to apply its moral efficacy to your heart and conscience."

"How to apply the moral efficacy of the death of Christ to my heart and conscience! Why, I was not aware that anything more was necessary, on my part, than simply admitting the fact of his death."

"Then what meaning can you affix to the language of the apostle —'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?' But such is the spiritual darkness that rests on the human mind, that the moral design of his death cannot be perceived

without the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Why, the prayers and liturgy of your own Church most unequivocally recognize the necessity of this supernatural illumination."\*

"I never felt the necessity of this spiritual illumination to which you refer, or most likely I should have sought after it."

"I presume you would; but your not feeling the necessity of it forms no valid objection against the necessity of it. It may be necessary, and yet you may not perceive it; as the natural man, according to the testimony of St. Paul—that is, the man unaided by Divine assistance—'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'

"You have certainly opened a new path of inquiry before me; and though I cannot at present see the need of any supernatural assistance to enable me to understand what I read in my Bible, yet, if the necessity of it be clearly stated in Holy Writ, I shall not hesitate to admit it.† But, to advert to the religion of this village chapel, am I to understand that the doctrines of the Church of England are preached in it?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Then they have not brought a new religion into the village?"

"No, Sir; they have brought no new religion into the village, but merely present the old religion of the Bible and of Protestantism in a new form."

"And yet when they talk on religious subjects, they employ a very different phraseology of speech from that which we have been accustomed to use."

"Very likely, because they are more familiar with the phraseology of the Scriptures than you are; and they feel the power of religious truth on their heart more forcibly than you profess to do. Your religion, if I judge from your conversation, is the religion of opinion, theirs of belief—theirs of speculation, theirs of principle—theirs of forms and ceremonies, theirs of knowledge and of feeling—

\* See vol. i. p. 313.

† The reader is referred to vol. i. p. 249.

yours of times and seasons, theirs of habitual devotion; and while you derive no consolation from the routine of duties which you perform, they have peace with God through Jesus Christ."

"I have heard," said the Squire, "that their religion makes them happy, and raises them above the fear of dying—the great points I have been aiming to reach for fifteen years, but I am as far off as when I first began the pursuit."

"If, Sir, you had been labouring under some physical malady for the space of fifteen years, without deriving any benefit from the prescriptions of your regular family physician, I presume you would call in other advice?"

"I have no doubt of it, Sir; I should suspect his want of judgment."

"Why not, Sir, act on the same principle, on the more important question relating to your soul—its peace, and its salvation? Your attendance at the church has been in vain. Why not dismiss your prejudices, and go to the village chapel? You have ocular demonstration, that the people who worship there are happy, and live in the anticipation of future happiness. Why not make the experiment, which can subject you to no loss, and may lead to a glorious issue?"

"We are slaves, Sir, to prejudice. Yes, we create our own tyrant, and then yield to his iron sway! What fools we all are!"

"I should not object," said Mrs. Bradley, "to go to the village chapel, if I thought I could obtain any spiritual benefit. I am weary of life. I want something to bring peace to my heart."

"Make the experiment, Madam."

"I feel inclined to do it; but yet I have a strange reluctance."

"I will venture," said the Squire, "and give a proof that I am sincere in my efforts to obtain the hope of salvation."

We now left the Hall, much pleased with our visit, and bent our steps towards home. It was a beautiful evening, and as we passed along we were charmed by the varied notes of my favourite bird, the thrush, whose harmony was occasionally disturbed by the caw-

ing of the rooks on their return from their daily pilgrimage. We returned to the public road just as the sun was setting, and while admiring the lustre which he threw around him on his departure, I remarked to Miss Holmes, what a fine emblem it presented of the dying Christian, whose pathway through life resembles the shining light, which shineth brighter and brighter, yet reserves its brightest splendour for its setting, when a halo of glory encircles him as he disappears, leaving spectators astonished and delighted more by the closing scene, than by the progressive majesty of his course.

On ascending the slope leading to the entrance of the village, a respectable looking man stepped out of a cottage by the roadside, and on recognizing Mrs. Newell and Miss Holmes, with myself, as a clergyman, invited us to walk in. His large Bible was on the table, and the family were preparing for evening worship. After a little desultory conversation, he begged that I would lead their devotions, a request with which I gladly complied—reading a chapter of the Bible and offering up a prayer.

“I am happy, ladies,” said the cottager’s wife, when service was concluded, “to see you in my house; it is an honour which I have long coveted, but never expected; and we are much obliged to you, Sir, for your kindness in praying for us this evening. May the Lord reward you.”

“And I am happy,” I replied, “that you have an altar of devotion erected in your family; and I hope that your morning and evening sacrifices, like those of the Hebrew temple, will regularly ascend before the Lord of hosts, and be accepted by him.”

I was now agreeably surprised to find myself in the cottage, and in the company of the gardener, whose religion had been the subject of discussion at the Hall.

“We have just had,” I remarked, “a long and interesting conversation with the Squire on religious subjects; and we were much pleased with the seriousness of his manner, and the eagerness with which he listened to our remarks, but like many others, he has no clear perception of the nature or design of the gospel of Christ.”

“He is, Sir,” said the gardener, “a most singular man. Sometimes he is very devout—reads his Bible with great attention, and will often come to me in the garden, to talk about religion, and I have sometimes seen him so powerfully impressed by it, that he has shed tears when speaking of the restless state of his mind; but at other times he is equally gay and thoughtless, and disposed to turn religion and religious people into ridicule. He is very unhappy, though he is very rich; and has many good qualities, though he is not a spiritual man.”

“I suppose,” I said, “you would not exchange your cottage for his mansion, if you were obliged along with the exchange to part with your consolations and hopes?”

“O, no, I would not exchange situation and state with my master; for I am happy, but he is not—I can think of death with composure, but he dreads it—I can look forward to eternity with delight, but he shrinks back from its approach, as a child would recoil in terror on seeing some hideous figure.”

This pious gardener was the only son of a venerable elder of the Scotch church, who rented a small farm in the county of Stirling. He was a most industrious hard-working man; and his wife was a pattern for economy and frugality. For more than fifty years they lived together in the enjoyment of domestic happiness; but just as they reached the evening of life, they experienced a series of reverses, and poverty advanced upon them as an armed man, compelling them to give up their farm, to be cultivated by other hands. Their son took a little cottage for them near the church in which his venerable father had worshipped God for many years; and having acquired a scientific knowledge of horticulture, he obtained, through the medium of a friend, his present situation at the Squire's; and to his honour he supported his aged parents till it pleased God to take them to himself. When he came to England, he was a moral but not a pious man; nor did he feel the influence of the truth on his heart till after his marriage. His wife was the daughter of a worthy man, who gave her a superior education; and



to this the God of all grace had added the ornament of a meek and a devotional spirit. By her chaste conversation, and the influence of her example, she won over her husband to the reception of the pure faith of Christ; and though, like most others, they have had the ebbings and flowings of prosperity and adversity; yet, to quote their own language, goodness and mercy have followed them all the days of their life.

Had the gardener's father remained exempt from misfortunes, his son might have been living in the house in which he was born, and cultivating the farm his father tilled for fifty years; but then he had never seen his pious wife, and might still have possessed only the form of religion. That dispensation which came as the whirlwind and the storm, to drive him from his home and his country, led him at length to attain the blessings of contentment and peace. Thus we often see in the history of life, disastrous events proving the precursors of personal and domestic happiness, as the dark and tempestuous morning is not unfrequently followed by a serene and joyous evening; exciting gratitude and love to the wise Disposer of all human affairs, in exchange for the perplexity and sorrow which they may have occasioned.

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## THE PIOUS COTTAGER.



AFTER staying for about a week under the hospitable roof of Mr. Newell, I quitted Thornwood, to pay my long promised visit to the Elms, and was accompanied thither by Miss Holmes. We had the gratification of finding all well on our arrival, and I spent with my old friends a few days very pleasantly; after which it was necessary for me to return home, though much urged by Mr. and Mrs. Holmes to re-

main with them for a little time longer. During my stay at the Elms, I more than once accompanied Louisa to call on Mrs. Kent, in whom I felt much interested, but who, for some time past, had been in a very feeble state of health, and was now evidently hastening to her end. The evening before my departure she rallied a little, and on the ensuing Sabbath felt herself so strong as to be able to walk to chapel, at about a quarter of a mile's distance. On Monday, however, she was again obliged to return to her bed, from which she never rose. She now gradually sank, and in the course of ten days peacefully expired. Her history, and some incidents connected with her death, will be found in the following letter from Miss Holmes to Mrs. Loader:—

“THE ELMS, 17th June, 18—.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just sustained a great loss. Poor Mrs. Kent died yesterday, and I feel that I have indeed lost a friend. You have often asked me to give you some particulars of her history, and this I shall now endeavour to do.

“She was left a widow when about the age of forty, with four children, almost entirely dependent upon her for support. Her husband, who was a pious man, died of a consumption; the symptoms of which made their appearance within a few years after their marriage. But as his outward man decayed, his inner man was renewed day by day. During his protracted illness, though he had no raptures when anticipating his death, and the glory to follow, yet he was favoured with great composure; and when the hour of his departure came, he died in peace. While he lived, he and his wife had regularly attended the little Dissenting chapel in the village, and had always been allowed to do so unmolested, but shortly after his death the steward of Lord Harwood informed his widow, that unless she gave up her religious notions, and went to the parish church, she should not be allowed to remain any longer in her little cottage. Her reply to this unmanly and anti-Christian threat, at once displayed the characteristic independence and firm-

ness of her mind:—‘As I would not give up my religion to please his Lordship, you cannot suppose that I will do it to please you, Sir. You may turn me out of the cottage, but my Father, who knows that I want a dwelling for myself and children, will provide me with another, over which you will have no authority.’

“As soon as this threat was known, a very general murmur was expressed through the hamlet. Many, indeed, thought that it would not be carried into execution; but a pious gentleman, who felt a great respect for the memory of her husband, and who knew that she would always live in terror, while under the power of this petty tyrant, built a little cottage for her on his own estate, which she occupied, free of rent, till her death. Three of her children, one after the other, fell victims to their father’s complaint, and were all buried in the same grave. She was a very industrious, frugal, and prudent woman; greatly respected by her religious friends, who, much to their honour, provided an ample maintenance for her, when she became, through infirmities, unable to support herself.

“Her cottage, which was built on a piece of rising ground, within sight of the turnpike road, was the neatest in the parish, and bore, in legible characters, the following inscription:—‘A refuge from persecution.’ This memorial of his cruel spirit mortified the steward, by exciting public attention; and after smarting under it for some time, he offered to make any apology to the widow, on condition that it might be effaced. She became his advocate with her landlord, and the stone was removed; but ere he had made the application, Lady Harwood, on riding past in her carriage, having seen it, was induced to stop, and ask Mrs. Kent why her cottage bore such a singular inscription. The reason was given, and when she informed his Lordship, on his return from the Continent, he felt so indignant, that he sent for his steward, and, after a severe reprimand, dismissed him from his situation.

“I have spent many pleasant, and I trust profitable hours in Mrs. Kent’s company; and now she is gone, I find the remembrance of our conversations a source of great consolation. Her knowledge of

the Bible was very accurate and extensive ; and the remarks which she sometimes made on different passages were pertinent and striking. In her the word of Christ dwelt richly ; it composed her perturbed feelings—induced a spirit of resignation to the will of God—opened before her the prospect of future bliss, and supplied her with subjects of reflection and conversation, which made her society a source of much improvement to others. She was well qualified to guide the young Christian, amidst the perplexities which are apt to entangle his faith in the early stages of his experience, and guard him from the fatal evils by which he is often surrounded in his passage through life. To her conversation my sister Jane is more indebted than to any other means of religious instruction ; and even Emma would often gladly spend an hour in her society.

“A few months ago her infirmities began to increase upon her ; but we were not alarmed by any symptoms of approaching dissolution, till about a week before our visit to Lynnbridge. When sitting with her one fine spring evening, listening to the song of the black-bird and the thrush, I spoke of the bountiful provision which our heavenly Father has made for our necessities and gratifications, she replied in the beautiful language of the poet : ‘Yes,

‘—not content,  
With every food of life to nourish man,  
He makes all nature beauty to his eye,  
And music to his ear.’

But this is not the only provision he has made for us. He is now preparing a place for us, and soon he will come to receive us to himself.’

“On asking her if she had any fears in anticipation of the end of her faith, she said—

“I have had many, but they are all gone, and though I still have my spiritual trials, yet I can anticipate the final issue with great composure. I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.’

“ You long to be gone, I have no doubt ? ”

“ I certainly long to see HIM, whom unseen, I have loved for nearly fifty years, because then I shall be like Him ; but I am not impatient. Indeed, I am not yet prepared to go, for the ties which bind me to earth are not all broken.’

“ Then this earth still possesses some attractions ? ”

“ Yes ; I have enjoyed, and do enjoy a large proportion of its comforts ; and though I have felt, at times, the storms of adversity, yet I can say, ‘ The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage.’ Here I am, in my calm retreat—far away from the noise of contention and strife—waiting patiently the great change ; and if the Lord should be pleased to answer my prayers for the salvation of my dear son, I should then say, ‘ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.’

“ Then you think your son is still living, notwithstanding the report of his dangerous illness in the hospital at the Cape ? ”

“ Yes, I believe he is. As Abraham saw Isaac in a figure rising from the dead, so the Lord gave me a somewhat similar vision, the night after I received my son’s letter. I saw him leaving the hospital well, though leaning on his staff, and pale and wan, as if just recovered from illness. I have now only one painful trial.’

“ Presuming that she referred to the spiritual state of her son, I remarked, that parents must feel intense agony of mind, in prospect of having their children separated from them in the eternal world.

“ I have not that prospect to distress me. I have three already in heaven, and I doubt not but the grace of God will ultimately reach the heart of my prodigal son. I cannot doubt it. It would be a sin to doubt it. I have felt such a spirit of prayer come upon me at times, on his behalf, that I have wrestled for his conversion, as Jacob wrestled with the angel at Peniel ; and though I have heard no voice saying to me, ‘ It shall be unto thee even as thou wilt,’ yet I have departed from the throne of grace in peace, and found my faith strengthened with power from on high. My faith is so strong

and so uniform in its exercise, that it has cast out fear from my heart ; and I can rejoice in prospect of meeting all my children in my Father's house.'

"During my absence at Lynnbridge her illness continued to increase, and Jane used frequently to call on her, and take her some little comforts which her feeble state required. On my return I took Mr. —, who was paying us a short visit, to see her, and she seemed to derive great comfort from his conversation and sympathy. She now gained a little strength, and in a day or two felt herself so much better as to be able again to go about, and on Sabbath actually walked to chapel. The exertion, however, had been too much for her, and on calling at her cottage on the Monday forenoon I was grieved to learn that she had found herself so weak as to be obliged to return to bed. I left with her a little wine, which I had brought with me, and called again to see her in the evening. I perceived that I must now forego all hopes of her recovery, as her strength was evidently sinking fast. After some conversation regarding her bodily ailments, she said to me, 'I have been struggling through deep waters since your last visit, and even now the swellings of Jordan are rising higher and higher upon me ; and though I have not lost my anchor, I have been tossed as upon the billows of the great deep. I trust, indeed, all will be well at last ; but I now feel a terror in prospect of death, which I never felt before. I am now on the verge of eternity. I shall soon, very soon see God—the final sentence will soon be uttered ; and if I have been deceiving myself and others, what will be my doom !'

"But, my dear Mrs. Kent,' I remarked, 'you should look back on your past life, and think of the sacrifices which you have made for the cause of the Redeemer, and the numerous indications of his approbation which you have received.'

"I dare not look back,' she replied, with great solemnity, 'unless it be to increase the intensity of the anguish which at times weighs down my soul, for I have been an unprofitable servant, and am one of the greatest of sinners that ever indulged a hope of entering into

heaven. Look back! no, my dear. I am obliged to 'lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.'

"Two days after this visit I again called, and found her sitting up in her bed. On extending her hand, she said with great animation, 'The storm is over, and now the sun is shining upon my soul, in his full noon-tide strength. The bitterness of death is passed; and I have nothing more to suffer, except a few convulsive struggles, which nature will feel, when the moment of my departure comes.' Then raising her hands and her eyes to heaven, she burst forth into a strain of enraptured devotion. I have preserved a few of her expressions, which were principally quotations from the Bible, or Watt's Hymns; but it is not in my power to portray the calm dignity of her countenance, or the intense fervour of feeling with which she spoke. 'Blessed Saviour! thou art my Redeemer! Thou hast borne my sins, and carried my sorrows! Thou hast suffered the just for the unjust, to bring me to God! Thou art the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely! Thou art the author and finisher of my faith! To thee do I yield myself, to be redeemed from all evil—to be sanctified—to be presented faultless before thy Father's glory with exceeding joy! Yes,

'—every smile of thine,  
Does fresh endearments bring;'

and fixing her eyes, as though she saw her Lord. she extended her arms, and said,

'Haste, my Beloved, fetch my soul,  
Up to thy bless'd abode,  
Fly, for my spirit longs to see  
My Saviour and my God.'

"I happened just then to turn my head to the window, when I saw a soldier walking up the pathway in front of her cottage. Without thinking what I was saying, I exclaimed, 'Here is your son, Mrs. Kent, come back to you from the Cape!' Never shall I forget the scene which followed.

"'My son!—impossible!'

“We heard the latch of the door lifted up, and a deep manly voice calling ‘Mother!’ On that word reaching her ear, his mother sprang up in her bed, and exclaimed, ‘It is my son!’ but her feelings were so strongly excited that she had not strength to restrain them, and before I could return to her assistance, she fell back, and for some moments we thought her gone. I felt her pulse, but it had ceased to beat—her eyes were fixed—and while engaged with her faithful nurse in employing the usual means to restore suspended animation, the door of her chamber was opened, and her son entered with a smile on his countenance, which was soon exchanged for the strong expressions of filial grief. He saw what was the matter, and forbore to speak, but stepping gently to her bedside, he kissed her, and let fall a tear on her face. ‘How long has she been ill?’ he inquired; and just as these words were uttered, we saw a slight motion of her hand, and soon after she began to breathe softly. On returning to consciousness, her first impulse was to embrace her long lost child. No words were uttered by them, but a frequent interchange of the expressions, ‘My child!’ ‘My mother!’ I withdrew to the window while they remained for many minutes locked in each other’s embrace. I then handed the dying saint a glass of wine, which revived her; and after reclining on the bosom of her son for some time, giving vent to her feelings, she became sufficiently composed to converse with him.

“O mother, I am sorry to find you in this state; but you will get well soon, I trust.’

“Never while I remain in this world, my dear son. But I have every reason to be thankful. God has always dealt graciously with me. Even in the midst of the greatest tribulation, He has enabled me to sing,

‘Bless’d is the sorrow, kind the storm,  
That drives me nearer home.’

But this last expression of his kindness, in permitting me to see you before I die, is so unexpected, that it is like a miracle wrought in answer to prayer.’



“‘O mother,’ the soldier replied, weeping as he spoke, ‘your prayers have been the means of my salvation, and I am thankful that your life has been spared till I could come and tell you of it.’

“She sat and listened with great interest to his account of his adventures. While in hospital at the Cape he was visited by a pious missionary, to whose conversation he ascribed his conversion to God. ‘Before I saw him,’ he continued, ‘I had many qualms of conscience; and was often terrified at the thought of death, but never *felt* that I needed a Saviour till he spoke to me. His appeals were like an arrow shot through my soul, and I could get no comfort till I prayed to Jesus Christ.’ He paused to weep, and we wept with him; when he renewed his narration, and after giving us a detailed account of his recent preservation during a violent storm on his return to England, we knelt down, and he commended the soul of his dying mother into the hands of the Lord Jesus, after which I took my leave.

“Mrs. Kent remained for several days without undergoing any material change; but on the eighth day after her son’s return, he called at the Elms, and said that his mother was not expected to live through the day, and wished to see me. I immediately went, accompanied by my sister Jane. We found her in a most heavenly frame of mind. After a conversation which lasted about half an hour, I observed a sudden alteration in her countenance, which convinced me that the time of her departure was drawing nigh. She now sat for several minutes in perfect silence; a death-like stillness pervaded the room, and we all felt an awe on our spirits that seemed to betoken some great event. She then raised her head, and first expressed her gratitude to her nurse for her kind attention; thanked me and Jane for the few favours we had been enabled to show her; and then taking the hand of her son, she pressed it to her lips, and said, ‘Yes, thou art a faithful God! and as it hath pleased thee to bring back my long lost child, and adopt him into thy family, I will say, ‘Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation;’ then smiling, she

fell back on her pillow, and with one deep sigh her gentle spirit passed away and left us.

“Thus lived, thus suffered, and thus died, one of the Lord’s ‘*hidden ones*,’ set apart for himself, to show forth his praise first here on earth, and now for ever in the celestial world.

“I am happy to say that I can now refer, with some degree of satisfaction, to dear Emma, in whose welfare I know you take a deep interest. I speak with caution, yet I think I can say there are some appearances, which give us reason to hope, that her afflictions are beginning to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. She is now more frequently alone and with her Bible; still very reserved on the question of personal piety, but references and allusions accidentally escape her lips, which induce me to believe that the Lord is gradually drawing her to himself. Dear creature! she has passed through a sad ordeal, but I trust she will yet be enabled to say with David, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted.’ Pray for her, my dear friend, and also for your attached

LOUISA.”

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## THE CLOSING SCENE OF THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN’S CAREER.



MISS Holmes, as the reader has already been informed, had suffered much in her health, by the unfortunate marriage of her sister Emma; but her visit to Lynn-bridge had contributed greatly to her improvement, and her parents now fondly hoped that she was in a fair way of recovery. Shortly after the death of Mrs. Kent, however, she experienced a return of her former alarming symptoms, and an eminent physician was consulted, whose opinion, though rather reservedly given, was not of a very hopeful nature. Conscious herself of the

extreme delicacy of her constitution, and apprehensive that she had not long to live, she now prudently declined an advantageous offer of marriage which she had received. Her suitor was Mr. Alfred Reed, the only son of an intimate friend of her father's; a young man, about her own age, decidedly pious, and who was likely to come into the possession of a large fortune. He had been bred to mercantile pursuits, but eventually decided on entering the Church. His father opposed his inclination, till, being fully convinced that he was actuated by proper motives, he cordially gave his consent. He had passed through his examinations at Cambridge with great distinction, and was now spending the vacation at home, preparatory to taking orders. His person, his manners, and his profession combined to render him an acceptable suitor to Miss Holmes, who united in her character the varied excellencies which are necessary to qualify a female to fill the important station of a clergyman's wife. She was intelligent, amiable, discreet, and zealous in the cause of religion and benevolence, without the smallest tincture of ostentatious display. Her sense of duty, however, would not permit her, in her present state of health, to contract a union which might speedily be dissolved, and involve her husband in much perplexity and grief.

By the advice of her medical man, she was induced again to try a change of air as the best means of arresting the progress of her disorder. After much deliberation it was decided to go to Dawlish in Devonshire, both because they had so much enjoyed their former visits there, and Louisa preferred its retirement to the noise and gaiety of a more fashionable watering-place. Mr. Reed, who still continued faithful in his attentions to her, notwithstanding her refusal of his offer, and still cherished the hope of his proposals being accepted, on Miss Holmes' restoration to health, was allowed, at his earnest request, to form one of the party. He accordingly set out first, to secure a suitable lodging, and it was no small gratification to the family when they found he had taken the same house which they had occupied some years before. As they had travelled by easy

stages, and had been favoured with pleasant weather, Miss Holmes appeared much better on her arrival at Dawlish than when she left the Elms; and she continued to improve so rapidly, that all began to anticipate her entire convalescence. Her spirits, which had at times been deeply depressed, soon rose to the level of her accustomed cheerfulness; and though the hectic flush occasionally added fresh beauty to the sweetness of her countenance, yet, as it did not return so often, nor appear so deeply tinged by the florid hue as formerly, it did not occasion any alarm. On returning from a lovely walk, as they passed the little chapel which benevolence raised for the accommodation of the Christian pilgrim, who thirsts for the pure water of life, she facetiously remarked, addressing herself to Mr. Reed, "I presume, Sir, we cannot calculate on your accompanying us to-morrow to this unadorned house of prayer."

"Why not, Miss Holmes?"

"Of course, Sir, your clerical profession will lead you elsewhere!"

"I am happy to say, that I am not ashamed to go to offer up my sacrifice of prayer and of praise in any place in which the God of salvation will condescend to accept it. I prefer the village church to the village chapel, most certainly; but, as I have no wish to become a *dissenter*, I shall conform to the religious customs of the party during our visit."

"A clergyman in a Dissenting chapel! The last wonder! Of course, we must all be sworn to secrecy, and keep our pledge, or no bishop will ordain you."

There is no indisposition under which the human frame labours that assumes such a deceptive appearance as a consumption. In its early stages it will often work so insidiously on the constitution, that its subject is unconscious of its presence; and even, when it has advanced to a very considerable extent, there are generally those intervals of vigour and vivacity, that occasion sanguine expectations of a recovery to be entertained even to the last. And it is during these seasons, when the animal spirits return with great force—giving a degree of energy and activity which is regarded as an

unequivocal proof of restored health, that exertions are made by walking and by visiting, which often accelerate the fatal issue. To confine to the house the invalid, who longs to breathe the fresh air, or to keep her out of company, when the pleasures of social intercourse relieve the spirits from languor, is a task which the kindness of friendship cannot always perform; and hence she is often permitted to run the risk of shortening her life by efforts which exhaust her strength; or by exposures to the keen night air, which give a fresh impetus to the disease. It was during one of these intervals of renewed strength that Miss Holmes was induced to pay a visit to a family, who resided about two miles off; and though her father proposed to take her in a carriage, she preferred walking. She reached her friends' house without feeling fatigued; after dinner enjoyed a ramble in the country; and then, having taken tea, returned to Dawlish. It was a pleasant evening, but the air was rather cold; and though she bore the exertions of the day with great cheerfulness, yet before she got home she began to feel exhausted. On entering the drawing-room, she threw herself on the sofa, and said, "I fear I have gone beyond my strength." After resting herself some time, she retired for the night; but when she awoke in the morning, instead of rising at her usual hour, she requested to have her breakfast in bed. At noon she made her appearance amongst the family, in apparently good spirits; but her mother, who had watched the progress of her disorder with deep anxiety, felt alarmed on seeing the hectic flush on her cheek, accompanied by an occasional cough. Towards the evening the height of her pulse was considerably increased; the palms of her hands became dry and hot, and she complained of being chilly. These symptoms excited fresh alarm; yet, as they came on immediately after the fatigue of a long day's excursion, her friends flattered themselves that they would go off when she had taken another night's rest; but in this they were disappointed. On the following morning they assumed a more threatening aspect; her cough became more troublesome, the pain in her side returned, and though she appeared cheer-

ful, yet it was accompanied by an unusual gravity of look and manner. At length it was judged expedient to call in a medical man, who prescribed some medicines that afforded her a little temporary relief. When asked for his opinion, he said, "I do not despair of her recovery, though she must be very cautious. She must not exert herself beyond her strength, nor yet expose herself to the night air." The following letter, written to her friend Miss Martin, whom the reader will remember accompanying Miss Holmes to call on Mrs. Kent,\* exhibits the state of her mind at this critical period:—

"MY DEAR MARY,—An all-wise Providence has been pleased to guide my steps once more to Dawlish, where we expect to spend a few months. In revisiting it again, I naturally advert to that period of my life when I was living in a state of alienation from God—devoted to the pleasures and vanities of the world. Happy should I now be to ramble with you through this beautiful country, and talk of Him who lived and died for sinners; but, as that pleasure is denied me, I will converse with you through a more circuitous medium. You are aware that our journey here is mainly on my account. On my arrival I grew much better, and continued for some weeks to improve in my general health; but a short time ago I caught a severe cold, and have never been well since. Though my friends still cling to hope, as the sinking mariner hangs on the broken plank of the vessel, till the returning wave comes to drive him off, I am now very apprehensive as to the result. I know that my heavenly Father can lengthen out the thread of my life, and restore to full vigorous health the constitution which disease is gradually wasting away; but I think He is about to remove me. It costs, indeed, a hard struggle to view with composure the approach of death at my age, and nothing could reconcile me to it but the hope of immortality by which I feel animated and sustained. My Alfred is with me, and his kind attentions often depress me. He is still anticipating the day when he shall lead me to the altar; but

\* Vol. ii. p. 297.

alas! fond youth, I am marked out as a victim for the grave! Yes! and though I still feel I love him, yet I must give him up, and all the prospects which open before me on this side the tomb, to go and dwell with Him whom unseen I love! But 'thy will, O my Father, be done!'

"Though I have received the sentence of death, I do not expect that it will be executed speedily. No! I shall not be taken till all are prepared to resign me; and till every tie is loosened which now fastens my affections to 'things seen and temporal.' This is a kind provision which our heavenly Father usually makes to afford some alleviation to the sorrow of surviving friends; and to enable his children to retire from this vale of life, without retaining any lingering desires for a longer continuance in it.

"I have hitherto concealed from the eyes of others the most alarming symptoms of my complaint, nor have I yet given them an intimation of my own opinion; as I do not feel inclined to be at present the bearer of such heavy tidings. They still try to amuse me with the visions of futurity, and talk of my marriage with Alfred, and all its attendant circumstances, as if length of days was appointed for me: and though I feel conscious that a few months, unless a miracle of mercy prevent, will change the theme of social discourse, yet I cannot bring my mind to the severe trial of attempting to banish these fond hopes and anticipations from others.

"I am happy to inform you that my dear sister Emma is become decidedly pious. Her severe afflictions have had a salutary effect; and now, being purified and softened by their influence, she exhibits the features of the Christian character in all their attractive loveliness. Her natural volatility and satirical humour are now transformed to chastened vivacity and the sportive sallies of innocent wit.

"I need not say how much I should enjoy your company at Dawlish, if you could make it convenient to pay us a visit; but as that is too great an indulgence for me to expect, you will not refuse me the gratification of hearing from you as soon as possible. All here

join me in kindest love to you, and your Papa and Mamma, who, I trust, are both enjoying their usual good health.—I am, yours most affectionately,  
LOUISA.”

To this letter Miss Martin returned the following reply:—

“LONDON, 15th *September*, 18—.

“MY DEAR LOUISA,—I received yours of the 10th, but it is not possible for me to describe the impressions which it produced on my mind. I alternately wept tears of sorrow and of joy; and though that overpowering excitement, which its first reading produced, has somewhat subsided, yet I feel almost incapable of replying. And is the wise Disposer of all events about to remove you from amongst us? And have you, at such a comparatively early period of the spiritual contest, fought the good fight of faith, and gained the crown which fadeth not away? If so, I will say, ‘Happy, thrice happy saint!’ thou art highly favoured of the Lord! Yes, you will soon see the King in his beauty, and mingle your notes of praise with the multitude around his throne! You will soon partake of the fulness of joy, in which the spirits of the just made perfect participate!

“But how can we give you up? How can we take this cup of sorrow without praying that it may pass from us? How can we offer up the prayer, ‘Thy will, O Father, be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven,’ without feeling it quiver on our lips as we attempt to utter it? I now find that entire resignation to the Divine will, when those objects are placed in jeopardy on which our affections are strongly fixed, is an attainment which I have not yet acquired; and though I doubt not but the grace of Christ will be found sufficient for its full display, when the day of trial comes, yet, at the present moment, I am bowed down with so much heaviness of soul that I cannot give vent to my feelings. What a contrast do you exhibit! While I am restless, under the agitations of fear, you are calm, in the anticipations of hope! While I am praying that you may still be detained amongst us, to share our



joys and our sorrows, you are fluttering on the wings of eager expectation, ready to say, as you soar away from us, 'Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves.' Happy spirit!

"Indeed, my dear Louisa, your sweet composure at this awful crisis—your bright anticipations, viewed in connection with your attachment to your friends around you, have given me such an exalted opinion of the efficacy of the Christian faith to sustain the human spirit on the great occasions of its history, that I am not so much astonished at your tranquil joy, as I am at my own timid misgivings; and though I still hope I possess the faith which is the evidence of things not seen, yet in me it is small, like the grain of mustard seed, while in you it resembles the wide-spreading tree, beneath whose branches you rest in safety.

"As you, my dear Louisa, when drawing nearer the closing scene, may be subjected to the influence of the fears which not unfrequently disturb the peace of the dying Christian, I have taken the liberty of sending you an extract from a very interesting memoir, which I have just read with great pleasure, and which, with a degree of precision we rarely meet with in theological works, points out the difference between faith and hope.

"'This difference,' the writer justly observes, 'is not always sufficiently attended to; and much presumption on the one hand, and despondency on the other, have arisen from confounding them. One person considers himself a believer of high attainments, because he entertains no doubt of his being in a state of salvation; and another doubts whether he be a believer at all, because he cannot persuade himself that his sins are forgiven.' But it is obvious that two distinct and very different acts of the mind are here confounded and blended together;—one, which assents to the fact of Jesus Christ being the only and all-sufficient Saviour of sinners; and which places a reliance on the atoning sacrifice, for pardon of sin and acceptance with God, which is the province of *faith*; and another, which appropriates to itself the blessings of this salvation, and confidently expects a future state of felicity, which is the province of *hope*.

Now, it is clear that these persuasions of the mind may exist separately from each other; and that one of them may be very strong, whilst the other has scarcely any existence at all. St. Paul clearly recognizes this distinction, when he offers up a prayer for the Romans, that the God of hope would fill them with all joy and peace in believing. It is here implied that genuine faith may exist without either joy or peace; and by addressing his prayer to 'the God of hope,' he remarks that joy and peace are the fruits of hope, and are distinct blessings to be superadded to the grace of faith.'

"I regret that it is not in my power to visit you at Dawlish; but I assure you that I have you in my remembrance, when bowing before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and while I pray that you may yet be spared to us, I do not forget to pray, that if you are to be removed, you may be favoured with a joyful entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will present my kind affection to your dear parents, and your sisters.—Your affectionate friend,

MARY."

The alarming symptoms which immediately followed this return of Miss Holmes' disorder, suddenly disappeared, and she was once more restored to comparative health, though it was evident to all her friends that the vigour of her constitution was greatly impaired. She was again permitted to resume her rambles, and to breathe the genial air of Dawlish, which once more enlivened her spirits. As she now felt able to endure the fatigues of exertion, she was induced to comply with the wishes of her kind friends in the country, to pay them another visit. She rode there and back, and cautiously avoided running any risk, either by too much exertion, or by any exposure to damps or cold.

On reaching home, she changed her dress, and soon after retired to rest; but on awakening in the morning, felt a hoarseness, accompanied by a slight fever. She remained within for several days, but on the following Sabbath, felt so much better that she ventured to go to chapel, where she commemorated the death of the Redeemer.

This religious service she afterwards spoke of as one of the most impressive and the happiest of her life. When adverting to it, in a letter which she wrote to Mrs. Loader, she observed, "I have often felt a great degree of solemnity and delight when receiving the sacramental memorials of the Saviour's death; but last Sabbath, at chapel, I felt a joy which was unspeakable and full of glory. When the minister repeated the memorable words, 'This do in remembrance of me,' I could not refrain from saying, in the language of Dr. Watts,

'Why was I made to hear his voice,  
And enter while there's room;  
While thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?'

"I think I have more than once alluded, in my free correspondence with you, to my ceaseless dread of self-deception; and this makes me hesitate to ascribe to a supernatural operation, the religious impressions and tendencies of my heart; yet, on this occasion, I could respond to the following declarations with perfect composure:—

'Twas the same love that spread the feast  
That sweetly forced me in;  
Else I had still refused to taste,  
And perished in my sin.'

"Till that morning a gloomy shade always darkened my prospects of the future; but then the true light shone into me with such a bright radiance, that I abounded in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. I retired from the hallowed service refreshed and invigorated; and in the evening, when denied the privilege of returning to the house of prayer, I made a more solemn surrender of myself to God, than at any former period. What scenes of wonder opened to my view! The Lord of life and glory expiring on the cross! The high and lofty One condescending to admit a sinful creature into his presence! The Saviour making intercession for me! The gay and the thoughtless may pour contempt on the sublime pleasures of devotion, and rush for happiness into a world which abounds with evil; and under the spell of a fatal illusion, may ima-

gine they have found it. But our joys would be ill exchanged for theirs; and though it may not be in our power, while encompassed with the infirmities of our nature, to perpetuate the vivid impressions which we sometimes receive, yet they serve to demonstrate the superlative value of the faith which originates them; and may also tend to inspire within our breast an intense longing for that fulness of joy in which the spirits of the just made perfect are allowed to participate in the heavenly world."

A few days after Louisa's visit to the chapel, the symptoms of her complaint returned with renewed violence. The physician was again sent for, and on entering the room, she said, with a smile on her countenance, "I am happy to see you, Sir; but I am now convinced that my disorder is beyond your power to remove."

"Perhaps not."

"Yes, Sir, it is; God can restore me if he please, but I do not expect it."

He sat and conversed with her about a quarter of an hour, and then left her.

"Pray, Sir," said Mrs. Holmes, "what is your opinion?"

"She is very ill, Madam."

"Do you think it is a confirmed consumption?"

"I do. I fear the disease has made great progress."

"Do you think that a longer continuance in the country will prove beneficial to the dear sufferer?"

"To be candid, Madam, I do not think that it is in the power of human means to arrest the progress of the disease, though a judicious course of management may greatly alleviate her sufferings."

"Do you think, Sir, she can be removed without much inconvenience to herself?"

"She may, in the course of a few days, when her strength rallies; but I am clearly of opinion, that if you wait much longer, it will be impossible to remove her."

This information came as a death-blow to the hopes of all the family. Mrs. Holmes, with Jane and Emma, sobbed aloud. A more

silent though not less poignant grief marked the countenances of her father and Mr. Reed. "If she must die," said her father, "she had better be taken home to die." "My Louisa die! My dear Louisa die!" said Alfred, clasping his hands in an intensity of anguish, "And must she die? and must she be taken from me?" At length he became more composed, when informed by Mrs. Holmes that Louisa had just awaked out of a sweet sleep, much revived, and wished to see him. The family sat conversing together the whole of the evening, and arranged the plan for returning to the Elms, whither they determined to proceed immediately.

For the space of a fortnight after her return home, Miss Holmes continued to improve so rapidly in appearance that the hope of life began to beam once more upon all except herself. At this time she wrote the following letter to Miss Martin, who had now gone with her parents to Hastings for a short period:—

"MY DEAR MARY,—A kind Providence has permitted me to see the Elms once more, and once more to commune with my absent friend from my own room, a privilege which I could not have anticipated a few weeks since. After the reception of your kind letter, my disorder took a turn, and we again thought that the bitterness of death was passed; but in the midst of our joy the symptoms re-appeared, and I was brought near to the grave. I have again revived, but it is only to protract my course for a little time longer. I may live through the winter, and I may live to see another spring opening with all its beauties, but I do not expect it. The symptoms of death are upon me. The silver cord is broken, and my affections are dying off from earth. I am beginning to feel as a stranger amongst my most endeared friends and relatives; and though their sorrows excite my sympathy, yet I have no wish to remain here longer. No! I hear a voice they do not hear, and see a form of beauty they cannot see. I long to depart. I can look through my window on the walks which wind round our shrubbery, without wishing to retrace my former footsteps. I can muse on the pleasures

which I have enjoyed in the social circle, without desiring to taste them again. I still feel that I am a sinner—an unworthy sinner; my perceptions of the evil of sin are more clear and affecting than at any former period of my life; and at times I am almost overwhelmed by the indescribable manifestations of the Divine purity; but it hath pleased God to impart to me corresponding views of the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, so that I have no fears ruffling my peace. I am entering the valley, but it is not dark: nor do I hear any sounds but those of Mercy's voice. The enemy has not yet been suffered to stir up his strength against me, nor have I been once tempted to mistrust either the fidelity of the Saviour, or his willingness to save me. I thank you for the extract which you sent me. It defines the essential difference between faith and hope with great accuracy and precision; but I have now done with all human compositions. The only book I now read is the Bible. This is the fountain from whence I now draw the pure water of life; and though I feel thankful for the writings of those good men which have contributed to my spiritual improvement and consolation, yet, like withered flowers, they have lost their beauty and their fragrance.

“I do not think that I should have preferred any other period of my existence for my departure, to the present, even if I had been permitted to choose. If I had been taken earlier, I should have left some of my relatives in the gall of bitterness; and if spared longer, I might have left some hapless children; but now I can embrace all as fellow-heirs of the grace of life, who are nearly allied to me by the ties of nature, and I can quit the world without leaving any chasm which may not soon be closed. My friends will weep over my grave, but the hope of a re-union in a better world will mitigate the violence of their sorrow; and soon the days of their mourning will be ended, and earth will be exchanged for heaven.

“Farewell, my dear friend; but only for a season. We are soon to be separated, but we shall meet again. With kind remembrance to all.—Your dying friend,

“LOUISA.”

Miss Holmes had now another relapse, which destroyed all hope of her recovery. Addressing her mother, who was communicating, in a low voice, to Mr. Reed the opinion of the physician, she said, "You need not whisper, I have long known that I should not recover; and now *you* know it, let us converse together as those who are on the eve of parting."

"I have long feared it," said Mrs. Holmes, "though I have been unable to express my fears."

"But why, my dear Mamma, should you fear it? Death has lost its sting. The grave has lost its gloom. I am merely preceding you, and preceding you under the most auspicious circumstances."

"Then has my dear Louisa no dread of death?"

"No. I have outlived that dread of dying which once bowed down my spirits; and can smile on the king of terrors, who now appears transformed into an angel of deliverance."

"But have you," said Mr. Reed, "no wish to live?"

"I had, Alfred, but now I have not. I once wished to live to share your sorrows and your joys, and animate you in the discharge of your sacred duties; but now I wish to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

On seeing her mother and sisters weep, she said, "I am not surprised by your tears, because, if either of you were in my place, I should weep. I know that nature must give vent to her feelings; but you cannot expect *me* to weep. Weep I cannot, unless I shed the tear of grateful joy. No! My days of weeping are passed away; and soon my days of suffering will be over."

Though her disease had been for some time making rapid progress towards the fatal issue, her spirits were yet buoyant, and occasionally she was as energetic and cheerful as in former days. One evening, when the family were sitting with her, she talked with a vivacity and fluency which induced them to hope that she might be spared to them for some months, if not years longer. While indulging these expectations, they were aroused from their reverie by the sudden entrance of Emma, who brought her the following letter,

from her friend Mrs. Loader, which the postman had just delivered:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—The affectionate letter which I have just received from dear Emma, brings the mournful intelligence of your relapse, and that now all hope of your recovery has vanished away. This intelligence, though mournful to others, is not, I am thankful to hear, a cause of sorrow to yourself. You are now on Pisgah, with the dreary wilderness behind you; and the goodly land of promise in view, overshadowed by no darkening cloud. My sympathies I reserve for others; to you, I offer my congratulations. The contest is over; the victory is won, and ere long you will receive the fadeless crown of immortality. In a few weeks or days, you, who are now an inhabitant of earth, will be a glorified spirit, beholding the face of the Holy One, and uniting with the saints in heaven in the grand chorus of adoration and praise. What you will then feel, on looking back on the scene through which you are now passing; or how you will give expression to your thoughts and emotions, is beyond all power of conjecture; but it is sufficient to be assured that you will be perfectly happy, and released from all earthly cares and anxieties. Happy spirit!—happy, because redeemed;—happy, because brought in safety to the end of your pilgrimage;—and happy, now that the shadow of death is flitting across your path—the visible sign of the coming of your Lord, to take you to himself. Adieu, my much-loved friend, but not for ever; the hope of a re-union sustains the dying and the living. WE shall weep when *you* are rejoicing with the spirits of the just amid the unfading glories of the celestial world.

“The Lord be with you. Again I say adieu, my much-loved friend; but only for a season. My love and sympathy to all the dear members of your family.—Ever yours,  
E. LOADER.”

Miss Holmes read this letter, shed a few tears, and then presented it to Emma, saying, “When the crisis is over, acknowledge for me receipt of it; and tell Mrs. Loader what pleasure it gave me.”



The tide of life was now rapidly ebbing; and on her father entering her room, a few days after receiving Mrs. Loader's letter, she stretched forth her hand, and said, "I hope you are prepared to resign me, for I have not long to be with you."

"I have had," he replied, "a hard struggle to do it; but the Lord has at length enabled me to say, 'Even so, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.'"

"I am glad to hear it; and I hope you will all be enabled to feel the same resignation to the Divine will. I wish you would now pray with me, that I may be strengthened in my soul to endure the last struggle." When this hallowed and deeply affecting exercise was ended, she reclined her head on the pillow, and slept for two hours. When she awoke, she rose up in her bed, and casting a smile on all around her, said, "My sleep has refreshed me." After giving a few directions respecting her funeral, she delivered the keys of her desk, &c., to her mother, with a request that she would distribute the few trifling presents she had marked for her friends, and then added, "Now I have done with earth. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" As she gave utterance to this prayer, her countenance beamed with an indescribable glow of rapture, and with a gentle bending of the neck, she bid all farewell, her lips distinctly articulating, "Precious Saviour! thou art come," as they were closing in perpetual silence.

The sketch which I have exhibited of Miss Holmes' character and religious experience, has been taken from real life; and though on some points her experience may differ from that of the pious reader, yet that circumstance will not diminish the degree of interest which may be felt on examining it. We see what human nature is, even with all the advantages of a pious education, before the great spiritual change takes place; we see the process which is observed in the production of this change—the evidences by which it is attested—the various and the numerous conflicts which the subject of it has to encounter, while passing through this vale of tears—and the influence which a pure faith in the efficacy of the atonement has

in sustaining the mind in affliction, and in the prospect of death. And who can turn away from such a scene, without wishing to be made a partaker of the like precious faith? and without exclaiming, "Let me die the death of the righteous?" Compare Miss Holmes' character with that of the devotee of fashion; compare the uniform tranquillity of her mind, after she had obtained peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, with the restless uneasiness which agitates the gay; compare her death with the death of the thoughtless and the trifling, and what will be the result? What! a firm conviction must be produced, that the religion of the Scriptures, when it is brought to operate on the human mind, does more to elevate and refine it, and prepare it for its final destiny, than all the discoveries of science, all the speculations of philosophy, or all the boasted triumphs of reason. This is a fact, which is not merely supported by opinion, but also by the evidence of experience and testimony; and though it may not excite that degree of attention which its importance demands, yet the period may not be far distant when the reader will feel the force of it. Yes, the hour may not be far distant, when you may be called away from that circle in which you are now moving, and from those scenes of pleasure which now captivate and hold you in subjection; to bid farewell to lover and to friend, and let go your hold of life. Yes, the hour may not be far distant, when you will feel yourself entering an eternal world, when the solemnities of the final judgment will open upon you in all their awful grandeur, and when conscience, roused from her long repose of guilty quietude, will speak to condemn. Yes, the hour may not be far distant, when the raptures of bliss, or the agonies of despair, will be yours, and yours for ever. And will you remain in a state of indifference, while such solemn events are at hand? Will you pass on to meet them, as though they were cunningly devised fables? Can no argument produce a conviction of your danger, and can no motive induce you to avoid it? Will you resolutely withstand all the efforts which are made to save you from going down to death unprepared to meet your God? and as

resolutely devote yourselves to the follies and the amusements of the world, as though you were to live for ever? God forbid!

But I hope that the intelligent reader has felt that moral renovation of heart, without which all the attainments of the purest morality will prove unavailing; and is looking for pardon and eternal life through faith in the death and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. If so, though you may have your occasional fears respecting your personal interest in him; though you may often dread, lest at some future period, the deep impressions under which you now labour should be effaced from your mind; and though you may even start back from the approach of death, as from the visitations of a destroying angel, yet He who has begun the good work will carry it on—He who has drawn you into fellowship with himself will perpetuate it—He who has inclined you to hope in his mercy will sustain that hope in the final hour, and give you a peaceful entrance into the joy of your Lord.

Go, then, to the footstool of the Divine throne, and there offer up the sacrifice of praise to Him who has made you alive from the dead, and yield yourself unto God, and your end will be everlasting life. You may be reproached for such an act of decision—you may be contemned—you may excite the pity of some, and the sarcasm of others; but you will not repent the course you have taken, especially when your latter end approaches. Reflecting, then, on your past career in the world you are just quitting, and directing your anticipations forward to that on which you are entering, you will feel an elevation of soul which no remembrances can depress, and without a sigh of regret, or emotion of fear, will close your eyes in peace.

And when the conflict is over, and you have gained the prize of immortality—when you have undergone the anticipated assimilation to the likeness of God, and are as perfect in purity and knowledge as in blessedness—beholding the person and the glory of the dear Redeemer—uniting with the innumerable multitude around his throne, in their anthems of adoration and praise—you will then feel, that in being a redeemed sinner, you have experienced greater mani-

festation of Divine favour and love, than if you had been created from the first an angel of the highest order. And in your then glorified state you will often advert to your earthly sojourn—to your sins and to your sorrows—retracing the mysterious path of your Christian course, with the ineffably joyful consciousness pervading your heart, that you have not again to suffer, or to sin; that you have not again to pass through “death’s dark vale,” or again to dread the possibility of perishing; but to live for ever in the full enjoyment of unmingled happiness. Then, with what emotions of gratitude will you adore and bless God for having made you, when in this world, refrain from following the example of the gay and thoughtless; who, alas! will then be where the voice of mercy is never heard, and where the light of hope never dawns!

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## THE HAPPY MARRIAGE.



**D**URING all this time that has elapsed, what has become of our friends at Fairmount?

The reader has now probably conjectured from the account of my visit to Fairmount at Christmas,\* that a marriage would ere long take place between Mr. Lewellin and Miss Roscoe. It had been arranged in a subsequent visit paid by Mr. Lewellin at Easter, that the wedding should take place in the following June, and preparations were already made for the joyful occasion, at which I was invited to be present. On returning to London, however, to adjust some business matters, Mr. Lewellin found to his dismay, that an affair of great importance, which even threatened the stability of the mercantile house with which he was connected, required him immediately to proceed to Australia. The

\* Vol. i. p. 544.

disappointment and vexation thus occasioned to the youthful lovers may be conceived, but there was no alternative, and the wedding was accordingly postponed to the following spring, by which time it was hoped that the bridegroom would have returned. Unfortunately, however, the business which required Mr. Lewellin's attention at the Antipodes, proved of so tedious and protracted a nature, that instead of reaching home in the spring, as he expected, nearly two years elapsed before he could return to his native country. In the interval poor Miss Holmes, Miss Roscoe's attached friend, died, as I have narrated in the foregoing chapter, and her loss was deeply felt by Sophia. During Miss Holmes' last illness, Miss Roscoe was on a tour in Italy with her father and mother; and though her friend had been suffering from a severe cold when she quitted England, Sophia had no idea of the fatal issue to which this would lead, and frequently anticipated, during her travels, the pleasure with which, on her return, she would describe to Louisa the beautiful scenery and objects of interest she had seen while abroad. As Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe and Sophia travelled much in Italy, seldom staying long in one place, their correspondence with their friends in England was very irregularly maintained, and, consequently, no tidings of Miss Holmes' illness reached them; and it was not till passing through London, on their return from the Continent, that they learned, to their grief and dismay, that Louisa had expired about a fortnight previously. Before proceeding to Watville, they paid a visit to the Elms, and did their utmost to console the bereaved family. They were also very urgent in pressing Emma and Jane to pay them a visit, which the feelings of the latter would not permit them to do at the time, but they expressed their readiness to do so as soon as their minds were somewhat more composed.

Not long after Miss Roscoe's return home, her spirits were most unexpectedly revived by the arrival of Mr. Lewellin, who having brought his business to a satisfactory termination, had immediately thereafter stepped on board ship and reached England, a few days before the letter which he had sent to announce his return. The

joy of the youthful pair at meeting again, after so long a separation, is more easily imagined than described. Preparations were now made for the consummation of their union, at which I was earnestly invited to be present, but the multiplicity of my pastoral engagements prevented me from doing so, much to my regret. I, however, readily promised to pay a visit at Fairmount as soon as the married couple should have returned from their wedding tour.

At first it had been decided that the young people should settle in the vicinity of London, and that Mr. Lewellin should continue his mercantile pursuits as formerly, but this plan was ultimately abandoned. "I presume," said Mr. Roscoe to Mr. Stevens, when they met to adjust the final arrangements, "that your nephew will inherit your property, as my daughter will inherit mine, when it shall please God to remove us to a better world; and if so, I think they will possess a fortune quite large enough, without running the risk of losing any part of it by the speculations of commerce, and without encumbering themselves with the difficulties and anxieties necessarily attendant on them."

"This question," replied Mr. Stevens, "has often engrossed my attention, and I am happy to find that our sentiments on it coincide."

While Mr. Stevens and Mr. Roscoe were thus debating this grave subject, and determining what income they would portion off for the young people, they were disturbed by the sudden entrance of Mr. Lewellin and the ladies, who were ignorant of the point under discussion. "You two gentlemen look very grave," said Mrs. Stevens; "one would almost suppose that you have been discussing some question in which the destinies of Europe are involved."

"No, Madam," said Mr. Roscoe, "we have not been agitating any such question, but another, if not of equal importance, yet of equal interest to you."

"And what may that be, Sir?"

"I see your curiosity is awakened; but cannot you restrain it for a few hours, till you can coax your husband to gratify it?"

“Why, Sir, a woman very naturally feels anxious to know what, when known, will deeply interest her; and though you gentlemen sometimes practise the art of tantalizing, yet you must admit, that we can easily get at your secrets. When together, you can keep up the game; but when you separate, you give up the prize. You glory in your strength, when supported by each other's courage; but alone, you soon surrender.”

“Ah! so it is; we, the lords of the creation, are compelled to pay tribute.”

“Of course, Sir, tribute to whom tribute is due.”

“To Cæsar, Madam!”

“And to Cæsar's wife, Sir.”

“I see you are restless; and as I have too much compassion to keep you on the rack, I will announce in due form the question which we have been agitating. It is this—Shall your nephew and my daughter, after a certain event takes place, go to reside near London, or shall they reside near us?”

“A question, I presume, Sir, no less interesting to you than myself.”

“Equally so, Madam.”

“And how have you decided it, Sir?”

“We have come to no decision; but we should prefer their settling near us, rather than going so far away.”

“I am happy to hear you are of that opinion; it completely coincides with my own views. I was always averse to George and Sophia being settled at a distance from us.”

The reader will no doubt remember Miss Denham, whose death I narrated in a previous part of the book.\* Her mother did not long survive the melancholy event; and Mr. Denham, being now left alone, soon sank into a morbid melancholy, which embittered his last days. He had outlived nearly all the companions of his youth; followed those to the grave who were to have inherited his property; and after languishing in a state of mental gloom and

\* Vol. i. p. 421.

depression for several years, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. His property, which consisted principally of land, he ordered to be sold, and the proceeds to be divided amongst his poor relations, with the exception of a small estate which he bequeathed to an intimate friend. Mr. Roscoe became the purchaser of one of his estates, which was situated in the parish of Broadhurst, not far from Mr. Ingleby's rectory; and as the gentleman who had rented it had just resolved on removing to a more distant part of the country, Mr. Roscoe deemed it a most eligible location for the young people. It consisted of a good house, very pleasantly situated, with about eighty acres of arable and pasture land, well wooded and watered.

When it was known that Mr. Roscoe had made this purchase, Farmer Pickford called on him with the view of obtaining a lease of it for his son Harry.

"I hear, Sir, as how you have bought one of the farms belonging to Mr. Denham; and I have made so bold as to call and say, I can get you a goodish sort of a tenant if you should want one. One that will do justice to the land, and no mistake."

"And who is it you have been thinking of?"

"My son Harry. He'll make as good a farmer as his father, and that is saying a good deal; though, perhaps, I shouldn't blow my own trumpet. I will stand score for the rent, and the proper tillage of the farm."

"I thank you, Farmer, for your offer; and I should have much pleasure in accepting your son as a tenant, but I have purchased the farm with an intention of offering it to Mr. Lewellin, if he should feel disposed to become a farmer."

"I beg pardon, Sir; I hope no offence. I wouldn't have said a word, if I had known that. Howsomever, I shall be glad to have him for a neighbour; and anything I can do to sarve him, I shall have a power of pleasure in doing."

"Thank you, Farmer. He will need instruction beyond what I can give him; and I had resolved to call on you for a little advice."



"That, Sir, I will give at any time, with a power of pleasure."

"It is pretty good land, I believe, Farmer?"

"The land, Sir, has a good heart in itself; but it has been desperately run out. It will take a power of trouble and expense to bring it into a good working condition, and no mistake. Mr. Denham was a bad landlord. He never would make no improvements, nor help his tenant to make any. And I always find a bad landlord makes a bad tenant."

"I am very glad, Farmer, that you have called, and have referred to your son Harry; and I will now tell you what has been running in my mind. I know the farm has been mismanaged, and that it will require, as you say, much trouble and expense to bring it into a good working condition; now, could you not spare your son Harry for a year or two, to act as bailiff to Mr. Lewellin; and thus he will be doing something for himself, which you know won't prevent him from taking a farm, when you have an opportunity of doing so?"

"It shall be, Sir, as you say."

"Well, then, you and your son had better call in the course of a few days, and we will settle the terms of agreement."

"With a power of satisfaction. This will mainly please my mistress, and Harry too, and no mistake."

Farmer Pickford then took his leave, and Mr. Roscoe proceeded to Fairmount to acquaint the family with the projects he had in view, in which they all gladly acquiesced. "Indeed, George," said Mrs. Stevens, addressing herself to Mr. Lewellin, "I think you will sustain no loss by exchanging the smoke of London for the salubrious air of Rockhill, and may part with your prospects of civic honours without regret, to be enrolled on the list of country gentlemen. Though you may not at first be so expert in farming as in mercantile transactions, yet in process of time your rural occupations will be no less interesting, if not quite so profitable."

"The exchange, Aunt, will be made without regret, especially when made in accordance with the wishes of my friends."

"We all wish it," said Mrs. Roscoe, who had accompanied her

husband to Fairmount; "and it quite reconciles me to the idea of parting with my dear Sophia."

In the course of a few months Mr. Lewellin disposed of his business in London; the house at Rockhill underwent a thorough repair, and was neatly furnished, Harry Pickford was duly installed into his office, the farm stocked with the usual variety of live cattle, and the day for the celebration of the nuptial ceremony fixed. At length the wedding morning dawned, when the sun shone without a cloud, a circumstance which Sophia's good old nurse hailed as a happy omen of her future happiness. Every one was astir at an early hour. The friends invited to the wedding arrived, and the bride, with her father and mother and the rest of her party, drove off to the rectory, where they found Mr. Lewellin and Mr. and Mrs. Stevens and their friends waiting to receive them. "I am happy," said the venerable Rector, "that I have lived to see this day; and more happy that Divine Providence has conferred on me the office of uniting you in the bands of matrimony."

He then knelt down and prayed with them, and as he prayed warm tears were shed, but they were not tears of sorrow. Prayer being ended, they at once proceeded to the church. The good old Rector, dressed in the habiliments of his office, walked first, followed by the bride leaning on her father's arm and the rest of the marriage party. On entering the church they passed direct to the altar, where the ceremony was performed by Mr. Ingleby with great solemnity, in presence of a larger concourse of people than had been remembered in the village on such an occasion for many years. As soon as it was finished, the married pair proceeded to the vestry to attach their signatures to the register of their marriage, when Mr. Ingleby thus addressed them:—"I hope you will enjoy the excursion you are about to take; that a kind Providence will watch over you, to preserve you from all evil; and that you will return to us in health and peace. Accept this small packet as a token of the interest I feel in your happiness, and possibly you may retain it as a relic of friendship long after I have left you for a better world."

He then placed it in the hands of Mrs. Lewellin, saying, "You may open and examine it at your leisure." On re-entering the church, they were both unexpectedly greeted by the village choir, who sung in sweetest melody the 128th Psalm, from Sternhold and Hopkin's version.—

"Blessed art thou that fearest God,  
And walkest in his way;  
For of thy labour thou shalt eat,  
Happy art thou, I say.

"Like the fruitful vines on thy house side,  
So doth thy wife spring out;  
Thy children stand like olive plants,  
Thy table round about.

"Thus art thou blest that fearest God,  
And he shall let thee see  
The promised Jerusalem,  
And her felicity.

"Thou shalt thy children's children see,  
To thy great joy's increase;  
And likewise grace on Israel,  
Prosperity and peace."

The bridal party on coming out of the church were received with acclamations by the assembled rustics, who, all attired in their holiday clothes, thronged the churchyard, and pressed forward to wish the new married couple a long and a happy life. Nothing could more unequivocally testify to the universal popularity with which Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin were regarded among the villagers. The bells in the old tower rung forth their merriest peals, while the village children, with their little baskets, strewed the path with flowers. On reaching the churchyard gate, the wedding party stepped into the carriages which were waiting for them, and drove off to Mr. Roscoe's mansion. There the young couple proceeded to dress for their journey; and having partaken of some refreshment, left for the usual tour. The wedding party were entertained at dinner, by Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe, in celebration of the joyous occasion: while the company was cheerful and lively, there was no appearance of that levity which too often attends the celebration of



W. S. BORGAN.

T. BOLTON.

THE BRIDAL PARTY WELCOMED BY THE VILLAGERS.

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the nuptial vow, even amongst the decidedly pious. "There are some of the customs of the world," said the venerable Rector, "which a Christian may follow without in the least compromising his character; I shall therefore offer no apology for giving the following toast—'MR. AND MRS. LEWELLIN, AND MAY THEY LIVE LONG ON EARTH, AND FINISH THEIR COURSE WITH JOY.'" This toast was duly honoured by the whole party, who soon afterwards retired to the drawing-room, where the remainder of the day was spent in innocent festivity and social intercourse. A sumptuous rustic feast was likewise spread on the lawn for the villagers, who were thus furnished with the means of participating with their superiors in the general rejoicings of the day.

We now return to the wedded couple. "I wonder," said Mrs. Lewellin, as they rode along in the post-chaise, "what this packet contains: I must open it, and have my curiosity gratified. Ah!" said she, on discovering its contents, "it is just like Mr. Ingleby, he is always so kind and considerate. Here is his pastoral advice to us, who have just returned from the altar." She then proceeded to read to her husband as follows:—

"I am happy, my dear young friends, that, in the union which has taken place this day, there has been no sacrifice of Christian principle—no violation of filial duty, and that it has been consummated under the most auspicious circumstances. You are both, my young friends, fellow-heirs of the grace of life; so that you have each obeyed the Divine injunction by marrying in the Lord. Here are your parents and your guardians offering you their congratulations, while Providence is opening before you a scene of prosperity, which, I trust, you will ever continue to enjoy. But you will not find this world a paradise; nor will you be allowed to pass through it without meeting with trials. It is not my wish, certainly, on this joyful occasion, to darken your prospects with the shades of threatening evil, but permit me, an old man on the brink of the grave, to address a few words to you, which may be of service after I have gone to rest with my fathers.

“Ever remember that you are both imperfect Christians, which will keep you from forming extravagant expectations, and guard you against the depressing influence of those momentary disappointments which you may feel. It is generally admitted, by the most competent judges, that temper is the hinge on which the happiness of domestic life turns; and if you can contrive to keep this always in a good condition, you will never be disturbed by the gratings of discontent, or the harsher sounds of anger or of discord. You are, I believe, both amiable, and have, during a long courtship, preserved the equilibrium of your temper—

‘Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,  
Which humour, interposed, too often makes;’

yet you have now entered on a course in which you will find the correctness of the poet's remark exemplified—

The kindest and the happiest pair,  
Will find occasion to forbear;  
And something, every day they live,  
To pity, and perhaps forgive.’

“I have known some who have been very fond of each other before marriage, and for some time after it, but their affection has gradually dwindled into indifference, even while they have been unconscious of any change. This is an evil against which I wish you to be on your guard. You may now suppose that such an event cannot occur; but what *has* befallen others *may* befall you. Pure love is a delicate plant, which suffers by neglect; and though you may imagine that by virtue of its inherent strength, it will perpetually yield the fragrance and the fruit of conjugal felicity, yet it will not do so without the most assiduous care. Endeavour, then, ever to exercise towards each other an amiable and forbearing temper, which will make you appear no less lovely in each other's estimation when the gray hairs of age come upon you, than when in the full bloom of youthful vigour.

‘The love that cheers life's latest stage,  
Proof against sickness and old age,

Preserved by virtue from declension,  
Becomes not weary of attention ;  
But lives, when that exterior grace  
Which first inspired the flame, decays.  
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,  
To faults compassionate and blind ;  
And will with sympathy endure  
Those evils it would gladly cure.'

“ But if pure affection may be regarded as the foundation on which domestic happiness rests, it is the province of good sense to raise the superstructure—to decorate and embellish it—to secure its internal harmony, and to cast up those mounds and bulwarks which will protect it from external annoyance and danger. I do not know that I can define this expression better than by calling it, that sense of propriety which is suited to the situation in which the member of a family is placed. Good sense will teach you to keep your proper station in your family ; when to see and when not to see the faults and the excellencies of others ; when and how to administer reproof, or to give commendation ; and how to uphold your authority without the appearance of severity. It will also induce you to pay great attention to the little things of domestic life, which exercise so material an influence in promoting its happiness.

“ As *your* manners will have a material influence over all the subordinate members of your household, the exercise of your good sense will teach you the importance of keeping your proper station, lest you should, by an act of encroachment, give excitement to any evil tempers or dispositions, which the occasion may appear to justify. I am aware of the extreme difficulty of marking out the exact boundary within which you ought to keep in the exercise of your authority, or in your habit of personal inspection ; but as an improper interference with the opinions or the prescribed duties of others very rarely fails to give offence, even when no offence is intended, good sense will keep you on your guard against rousing unnecessarily irritable feelings. I do not wish you to suffer your servants to govern you, nor do I wish you to stand in awe of them, as I am convinced, from long observation, that the sceptre of authority should be held

by the heads of a family; but as your comfort will depend very materially on those by whom you are served, I would advise you to study their temper and their disposition, and so to shape your commands as to secure obedience without a murmur, and bring about reform without opposition. Remember that your servants are not slaves, to be governed by authority without reason—that they are not stoics, to be treated as though they had no feeling; but are your equals in relation to God, though your inferiors in relation to civil society—who have as strong a claim on your generosity, as you have on their fidelity, and who will in general reward your kindness and sympathy by their affection and grateful obedience.

“If there be one sight more lovely than another in the present world, that sight is a happy family, whose different members live together in love and in peace, bearing each other’s burdens, anticipating each other’s wants, and endeavouring, by the thousand nameless expressions of kindness which they may show to each other, to secure and augment each other’s felicity.

“As you are both disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will, I have no doubt, erect an altar of devotion in your habitation; but you must guard against the supposition, that all the duties of family religion are discharged when you have presented the morning and evening sacrifice. You may have servants to instruct who are ignorant of the nature and design of the gospel of peace, or whose positive aversion to every form of religion renders remonstrance or persuasion necessary. Though you may imagine that the instruction of the pulpit will prove the means of removing their prejudices, and imparting to them clear perceptions of the truth as it is in Jesus, yet I would advise you not to trust entirely to it. A little private conversation with them, when a favourable opportunity occurs, or a few familiar remarks made before or after reading a portion of the Scriptures, when you are collected together for the purpose of family prayer, may have a powerful effect on their minds, and lead them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. And if you should be instrumental in bringing any of them to repentance, and



to the knowledge of the truth, you will have an ample compensation for your anxiety and labour, in the more ardent attachment which they will feel for you, and the greater fidelity with which they will serve you.

“I have more than once heard it remarked, that social intimacy very often proves injurious to that intimate Christian fellowship, on which the growth, if not the vitality of personal religion very materially depends. Hence, husbands and wives, parents and children, frequently converse more freely on the experimental influence of religion with distant associates or comparative strangers than with each other. But this ought not to be. They who are animated by the like precious faith, and who have to encounter the same spiritual difficulties, ought not to suffer the closeness of their union to operate as a reason why they should hold no spiritual communion with each other. Let me then entreat you, now you are just on the eve of forming your domestic habits, to avoid this evil, into which too many fall; and by the most unreserved mental communications, become helpers of each other's faith and hope.

‘If pains afflict, or wrongs oppress,  
If cares distract, or fears dismay,  
If guilt deject, or sin distress,’

do not lock up your grief as a profound secret, which a false delicacy may wish you to conceal from one another; but rather disclose it without reserve, and you will meet in your reciprocal sympathy a relief from your burden of sorrow. And that you may cultivate this intimate religious fellowship, allow me to suggest to you the adoption of a habit, which I think eminently conducive to your spiritual prosperity. Always retire, during some part of the day or the evening, to pray *with each other*, and for each other; and you will find that the line of the poet records a fact, which your own experience will soon attest to be true, that prayer

‘Brings ev'ry blessing from above.’

It enriches the mind with the treasures of spiritual wisdom, while

it imparts a sweetness to the disposition, and an amiability to the temper, which cares and anxieties will not impair.

“And though, my young friends, I cannot cheer you with the hope of being able to pass through life without coming into contact with its temptations, its disappointments, and its bereavements, yet He in whom you trust, and to whom you have both devoted yourselves in the spring-time of your life, will never leave you nor forsake you, but will be a very present help in every time of trouble. If you are spared till the time of old age, I trust you will be ‘like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.’ And if you should be removed in early life, you will be transplanted to that celestial paradise, where you will flourish in undecaying strength and glory for ever. It is but a little while that I shall live on earth as a spectator of your bliss; but if spirits are allowed in their disembodied state to visit, though unseen, the abodes of mortals, I shall often be with you, ‘joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.’”

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## AN OLD FRIENDSHIP REVIVED.

**A**FTER a delightful tour through the west of England, and part of South Wales, Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin arrived at Malvern, where they intended to remain for some time previous to returning home. On the Saturday after their arrival, in ascending the hill behind the town, they passed two ladies, when Mrs. Lewellin said, “I think I know the tallest; she appears to be an invalid, and, to judge from her fixed look, I should infer that she had a faint recognition of myself.”

They turned back to pass them again, if possible, but they lost

sight of them in the little crowd of fashionables enjoying their morning promenade. As they were sauntering along on their return to their hotel, they passed what appeared to be a small place of worship, and on making inquiries, they found it was a Dissenting chapel.

"We ought," Mr. Lewellin remarked, "to be devoutly thankful to Divine Providence for raising up so many of these unobtrusive little sanctuaries—they are the retreats of the gospel, when it is driven out from the Established Church, as is too often the case."

"To me," replied his wife, "any place is a Bethel, if its walls echo to the name of Jesus."

The next day was the Sabbath. They were seated near the door of the chapel, when they saw the two ladies enter whom they had observed on the preceding day; but as they passed on to occupy a pew near to the pulpit, they could not get a sight of the face of either of them. The service was conducted as usual with extreme simplicity—singing, without the aid of any instrumental music, and extemporary prayer, free, however, from monotony or tautology. The sermon was short and impressive, setting forth the grand truths of revelation in a simple, earnest manner, and enforcing them in tones of mild, persuasive, yet commanding eloquence. The text would be considered by many a very commonplace one, yet it is one which embodies the whole theory of Divine truth—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). When the two stranger ladies were walking up the passage, after the close of the service, Mrs. Lewellin contrived to be standing with her pew door partly open, but drew it back as they were in the act of passing. The eye of the invalid lady caught hers; she paused, and exclaimed with emotion—"And is it you, my dear Miss Roscoe?"

"Not Miss Roscoe *now*," replied Mrs. Lewellin, waving her hand towards her husband; "I have exchanged it for Lewellin. And is it you, my dear Miss Rawlins?"

"Yes, still Miss Rawlins, your old friend. How marvellous that

we, who were once two such giddy girls, should meet after so great a lapse of time in a Dissenting chapel!"

"The God of grace often works wonders."

"Always when he saves sinners."

"And does my dear Miss Rawlins feel herself to be a sinner?"

"Yes, and one of the chief. Some others may be more vile, but no one can be more worthless."

"Is this an illusion, or a reality? Am I in some fairy land?"

"I do not wonder at your exclamation. It is more like romance than reality."

They walked away from the chapel together, and when parting, Mrs. Lewellin said, "If you are at the chapel in the evening we will sit in the same pew."

"O yes, my dear; we greatly prefer the chapel to the church. *There* we have the pomp of religion; *here* its beautiful simplicity. At *church* we hear the Church itself and its ceremonial rites held up to us from day to day; *here* the Saviour himself is placed before us as the Alpha and Omega of the service. We are more partial to the substance of the truth, than to shadowy forms."

In the evening a minister officiated, who was on a visit to Malvern for the improvement of his health. He was a fine looking man, though much emaciated, and preached as one whose eye was turned away from the vanities of time, contemplating steadfastly the glories of eternity. His text was strikingly appropriate to his own condition and to ours:—"The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 31).

"The context to this passage," said the minister, "tells us, my brethren, what experience confirms—that our abode on earth is short. St. Paul, therefore, exhorts us, and we will do well to attend to his exhortations, to guard against too fond an attachment to any relation or possession in life. You who weep, and you who rejoice, should moderate the intensity of your emotions; as you will soon be far removed from the influence of the causes which produce those feelings, and the possessions which you now hold on the most secure

tenure will soon be claimed by others. Set not, therefore, your heart on this world, which you must so soon leave. Its appearance is attractive, like the shifting scenes of a theatre, or a gaudy pageant in a public procession; but it will soon vanish from your sight, to amuse and beguile others in like manner. There is another world—more splendid, more glorious, and more durable—towards that you should turn your attention, and seek with the most intense ardour of soul to be prepared to enter it. Otherwise, when you depart from this world—and you may very soon depart—you will go into outer darkness, and be lost for ever.”

“I hope, my dear Mrs. Lewellin,” said Miss Rawlins, on the following morning, when they were promenading by themselves in a retired walk, “you will forgive me for not replying to the last letter I received from you. Indeed, I have often reproached myself for not doing it. It has been the occasion of bitter grief, and some tears, especially of late.”

“I can very easily forgive you, dear Miss Rawlins; but will you permit me to ask you why you did not reply?”

“It was, at that period of my life, absolutely unintelligible. I concluded you were become a mystic; and I foolishly imagined you were contemplating taking the veil, and that I should soon hear you had entered a convent. You will not be surprised at this when you advert to the foolish letter I wrote to you about religion.”\*

“If agreeable to you,” said Mrs. Lewellin, “I should like to hear by what means you were brought to see and to feel your real character and condition in relation to God and the eternal world.”

“My history is a very singular one—abounding with incidents that illustrate the workings of the special providence of God. You know, my dear, in what a gay circle I moved. The concert, the drama, the ball-room, card-parties, and novels absorbed my whole soul. I lived in a perpetual whirl of excitement and gaiety. But I was not happy, and often felt disgusted with my own frivolous pursuits. At length, I had a severe and dangerous illness, brought

\* Vol. I. p. 451.

on by imprudently exposing myself to the cold damp air, in returning from a ball. For some weeks my life was despaired of, and these were weeks of terror. I was brought to the verge of the dark world, and felt appalled at the thought of entering it. I was rebellious, too, and murmured against God for depriving me of life at such an early period."

"It was by a cold, caught at a ball, that your old friend, Miss Denham, lost her life."\*

"Yes; I recollect you alluded to her death in a letter I received from you. Were you intimate with her?"

"I was with her when she died."

"Indeed! I know she was a gay devotee to the world; and, therefore, it may be painful to hear how she died. What myriads are offered as victims to the Moloch of fashion!"

"No, my dear, not painful. Her head was reclining on the bosom of a pious friend, who was present with me at the interview; and her last words were—'I am dying, but not without hope of attaining eternal life, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"How thankful I am to hear that. It is like the rescue of a friend from shipwreck. But to resume my story. I was gradually restored to health, and re-entered the gay world, amidst the warm congratulations of my friends. At the close of the season we came to Malvern to spend a few months. Here the mystic roll of Providence began to unfold itself. One day, when rambling by myself over the common, I saw a neat little cottage, which I entered. It was occupied by an old woman, who sat reading her Bible. I apologized for my act of intrusion; when she requested me to take a seat.

"'I hope,' she added, looking at me benignantly as she spoke, 'you love your Bible. It tells us about Jesus Christ; about his love for poor sinners; and about his dying for them, to save them from perishing; and it tells us that if we come to him He will never forsake us. There is no book like God's Book.'

"I felt confused, and soon left her: but her words followed me.

\* Vol. i. p. 410.

They were perpetually sounding in my ears; and yet I could not draw out of them any intelligible meaning. A few days after this I met an old school-fellow, looking very ill; and having promised to call on her, I did so the following week. I found her confined to her bed, and evidently with but a short time to live. She said to me, when taking leave of her, 'You see, my dear Miss Rawlins, that I am now going into another world: and I go in peace, because I look by faith to Jesus Christ, who died to save sinners. He has assured me, in the Bible, that if I come to him, and trust in him, He will save me. You have been near death, but your life is spared; let me entreat you to leave the gay and thoughtless crowd, and come by faith to Jesus Christ to save you, and to make you happy.'

"These last words made a deep impression on my heart, and gave rise to some painful reflections. Must I then, I said to myself, withdraw from the gay world to be happy? Can Jesus Christ make me happy? How is this possible, when he is dead, and gone to heaven? These references to Jesus Christ reminded me of your letter, which, as it happened still to be in my writing desk, I again perused. I was struck with the harmony of sentiment and testimony between your letter, the observations of the old woman, and the appeal of my dying friend; and I felt its influence, even though it appeared to me, in a great measure, unintelligible."

"It is said of Samson," remarked Mrs. Lewellin, "that the Spirit of the Lord moved him at times; that is, he was occasionally acted on by an unusual impulse. And something analogous to this may be traced in our moral history; the recurrence of impressions and emotions, of a singular character, proceeding from some unknown cause. The Lord the Spirit is at work in the heart, but his operations are veiled in darkness; happily, the time for explanation comes at last."

"It has been so, my dear Mrs. Lewellin, in my experience. Singular events have been employed to produce those singular emotions; but at the time, I could trace them to no perceptible cause, nor did I ever suppose they would lead to any important issue. But the mystery is now graciously explained. Soon after our return home,

another incident occurred, which exercised a material influence on my mind. We went to dine with an old friend of my father's, who lived about ten miles from town, and intended to return in the evening, but such a violent storm came on, that we were glad to accept our friend's invitation to remain for the night. At nine o'clock the parlour bell was rung, and in a few minutes the servants entered, and our own coachman with them, when a large Bible was placed near a clergyman, one of the party. He read the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and offered up a very solemn and impressive prayer. This was quite novel; I had never before been present at such a service. I was again brought into contact with the great facts of revelation; and when on my knees before God in prayer, I became still more restless in my mind. I felt a strong inclination to go again to scenes of gaiety, to dispel the strange thoughts, and still stranger forebodings, which haunted me; and yet I recoiled from doing so, under an instinctive apprehension that they would make me still more restless and unhappy. I felt, at times, so miserable, that I took no interest in life. At this crisis, another incident occurred, trivial in itself, and apparently casual, but it was one of those agencies which were working together for my good. Our coachman brought with him, from the pious family which we had been visiting, some religious tracts; and on passing through the kitchen I saw one on the dresser; it was *Poor Joseph*.\* I took it and read it. It delighted me from its singularity. I involuntarily exclaimed, when I had finished reading it, 'What a contrast between this poor half-witted man and myself! he is in ecstasy when referring to Jesus Christ coming into the world to save sinners, but I can only refer to this great fact with apathy and indifference. How is this?' It appeared strange, and was a heavy burden on my heart."

"Our Lord says, 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick' (Matt. ix. 12). A man in health looks with indifference on the physician; but not so the dying patient. It is a

\* Vol. i. p. 152.



deep sense of personal guilt, and a vivid apprehension of positive danger, that fits a sinner to form a correct estimate of the need and value of a Saviour. When such a discovery is made and felt, then it is hailed with rapture, and mental repose is enjoyed as the consequence of trusting on the Saviour for pardon and salvation."

"I now perceive and feel this; but it would still have been hidden from me, had it not been for another circumstance. I had one gay friend to whom I was much attached; indeed, with the exception of my parents, she was the only person I really loved. She completely ruled me, though one of the most gentle creatures I ever knew. I was never so happy as when in her company. She was as fond of the gay world as myself. On one occasion we had both accepted an invitation to a grand ball given by Sir John Markham, but in the morning I received a note from my friend requesting me not to expect to meet her there; adding, 'I withdraw from the gay world, and for ever. It is a vain show, which promises happiness, but yields none. Don't be alarmed; I will explain when I see you.' This note took me by surprise; but I was more pleased than distressed. I refrained from going to the ball, and went to see my friend. She then informed me that her attention had recently been turned to her Bible, by a sermon she heard preached by the Rev. James Harrington Evans, and she had resolved to seek lasting happiness by yielding herself to God, through the redemption of Christ Jesus the Lord. Her conversation, though somewhat unintelligible to me, was in perfect harmony with the sentiments I had previously heard others express. I now readily complied with her earnest solicitation to accompany her, on the following Sunday morning, to hear the same eloquent preacher. We went together. His text was, 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 18). When he was explaining to us the nature of access to the Father, and showing us why and how we ought to come to Him, the veil was removed, and the light of life shone with clear radiance into my heart. I felt subdued, captivated; and, for the first time of my life, I could say, 'Now I know where true happiness is to be

found? *Now* I could understand your letter. I followed, then, without hesitation, my friend's example, in withdrawing from the gay world."

"I suppose," here remarked Mrs. Lewellin, "the secession of two such gay devotees from the circle of fashion, occasioned some little tumult?"

"O, yes, we had a few calls from some of the more inquisitive, who live on excitement; but we were both inflexible, and now we are subjected to no annoyance."

"What did your parents say?"

"I think they were more pleased than otherwise, especially my dear mother, whose health had been rapidly declining for some months. Very soon afterwards she was confined to her room; and God honoured me to be the instrument in directing her to the Lamb of God, who gave his life a ransom for many. She passed through a severe ordeal of mental suffering during her long illness; but when descending into the dark valley, she saw, by faith, Jesus coming to receive her; and she died in peace."

"These varied conflicts, my dear Miss Rawlins, in which you have been engaged, must have proved a severe trial to you."

"They have rather seriously affected my health, which has given way, and occasioned our present visit to Malvern."

"I congratulate you on your rescue from the allurements of a vain and giddy world. Now that you are made alive from the dead, you must yield yourself to God, to fear, and love, and glorify him, and show forth his praise."

"As I have now, my dear Mrs. Lewellin, unbosomed to you the secrets of my heart, I shall feel more at ease. But, O! where can I find words adequate to express my grateful feelings to my adorable Saviour, for the marvellous manifestations of his sovereign compassion and love to my dear mother, my beloved friend, and myself!"

The next day Mrs. Lewellin went with Miss Rawlins, to see the old woman who lived in the cottage on the common. On entering,

they found her in her arm chair, with her Bible open before her, so intent on what she was reading, that she did not appear to notice them, till she was spoken to.

“Sit down, ladies ; I am glad to see you.”

“At your old employment, I see,” said Miss Rawlins.

“Why, Miss, I don't know that I can be at a better. It is proper that a child should read his father's epistles of love, and that a servant should study to know what his master requires him to do and suffer.”

“Do you ever feel weary of reading the parts of the Bible you have read before?”

“It is, Miss, with God's Word, as it is with God's world. We enjoy a serene evening and the beauties and melodies of the spring, as much this year, as we did in any gone-by year of our life. I was just thinking, before you ladies came in, that I could say nearly off at heart the third chapter of John's Gospel; and yet I could read it again, with as much pleasure and profit, if not more, than I did the first time I read it. There is such a wonderful depth, and such a rich fulness and living power in God's Word.”

“What book,” inquired Mrs. Lewellin, “do you like next to the Bible?”

“O, dear, Ma'am, I have long done with all other books. I used to like good John Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, and I have read it through many times; but now I care about no book but my Bible. I sometimes think I should like to take the Bible with me to heaven, as then I should be able to have some dark sayings explained, which I can't understand now.”

“You have no doubts, I suppose, about the certainty of your salvation?”

“No, Ma'am; not *now*. Some time since, I was greatly distressed with doubts and fears, but now all my anxieties are at rest. I stand with my staff in my hand, waiting to hear my Father call me home. He will call soon.”

“How simple, and how dignified,” said Mrs. Lewellin, as they

were leaving the cottage, "are the anticipations of an old disciple, when approaching the entrance to the heavenly kingdom!"

"And what a contrast," replied Miss Rawlins, "to the devotees of fashion! They will amuse themselves at the card-table, till their hands become too enfeebled to play; and even on a death-bed will listen with deep interest to descriptions of operas and plays, a new singer, or a new actor; inquire with eager curiosity who wore the most splendid dress at the ball—what new marriage is now on the *tapis*—in short, will listen to anything, however trilling, to keep off the thought of dying."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lewellin; "and when, for form's sake, the officiating priest is sent for, and he has gone through the prescribed ceremonies—has read the absolution and given the sacrament, and they have thus made their peace with God—they still live on, as long as they can live, amidst the gay scenes of former times now gone from them for ever. But to that one great event in their moral history, which is so certain, and so near at hand, all references or allusions are imperatively forbidden, as though its entire oblivion could prevent its actual occurrence. O, it is painful to think of the terrific surprise and overwhelming horror which will seize on their spirits, when they pass into the eternal world!"

"Yes, my dear; and if *our* preparations for death, and if *our* reminiscences and anticipations when dying, should bear, as I trust they will, a nearer resemblance to the dignified deportment, and the sweet serenity of the old woman on the common, than to the criminal frivolity of these self-doomed devotees of fashionable life, we must, in imitation of the devout Psalmist, and with tears of joyous gratitude, ever say—'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake'—(Psalm cxv. 1.)"

On their return from this visit, Mrs. Lewellin said, with some embarrassment of manner, "We have now, my dear Miss Rawlins, been at Malvern longer than we contemplated. We leave to-morrow, but I hope that we may again meet somewhere on earth, to

renew the sweet and hallowed intercourse we have so much enjoyed here."

"I am thankful that you kept the secret of your departure to the last moment. An earlier intimation of the exact time would have had on my heart a very depressing effect. Our conversations at Malvern will ever be held by me in pleasing remembrance, and I shall long for an opportunity to renew them. Good night. We will have no formal parting. It will be too painful."

As Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin had exceeded the time which they had originally contemplated spending on their tour, they now proceeded homewards to Rockhill, where they found Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe, and a few other friends, waiting to welcome them to their new home. The meeting was a delightful one, nothing having occurred to either party, during their absence, to occasion annoyance or perplexity.

A few months after their return, Mrs. Lewellin received the following letter from Miss Rawlins:—

"DEAR MRS. LEWELLIN,—It will give you, I have no doubt, some pleasure to hear that I am again in my father's house, and in the enjoyment of perfect health and vigour. And you will, I doubt not, unite with me in humble adoration and gratitude to the God of all grace, not only for the grace bestowed on me—one of the most worthless of the unworthy—but for his marvellous loving-kindness to my dear father, who is so much delighted, and so deeply moved by the preaching of the Rev. J. H. Evans, that he attends his chapel with me regularly every Sabbath. Though there is no decisive evidence that he is become a new creature in Christ Jesus, yet I hope he is entering the narrow way that leads to life. He spends much of his time in reading his Bible and Doddridge's *Exposition*, and is very earnest in his inquiries about coming to Christ to be saved. Truly the God of grace often works wonders. My endeared friend, Miss Forrester, whom you saw with me at Malvern, is now, and is likely to continue to be for some time, an inmate in our family. We were one in spirit when we were living and moving amidst the

frivolous and ensnaring gaieties of life; and we are still one in spirit now we are both united to the Lord; but it is a spirit of a purer nature, and one that death cannot destroy.

“I often think of our unlooked-for meeting at Malvern, and the pleasant hours of Christian intercourse we spent together when there. I hope both you and Mr. Lewellin have been enjoying good health since your return home. I need not say how glad I shall be to hear from you. Write soon, and believe me, ever yours,

“LETITIA.”

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## THE WANDERER'S RETURN.



SOME months having now elapsed since Mr. Lewellin's marriage, I set off to pay my long promised visit to my esteemed friend and his lady. I was accompanied by Mrs. Orme, who joined me in London from the Elms, and after a pleasant journey we arrived safely at Rockhill. It was promptly decided that the first half of my time should be spent with them, and the other at Fairmount, with Mr. and Mrs. Stevens. The day after my arrival, I took a stroll round the farm with Mr. Lewellin, and I was much gratified by its general appearance. I did not see his bailiff, Harry Pickford, as he was gone to Weyhill fair, to purchase a few South-down sheep; but I had great pleasure in hearing that his master had every reason to be satisfied with him, and that great confidence was placed in his judgment and activity. “He is,” Mrs. Lewellin facetiously remarked, “an able professor in the science of agriculture; and I think, Sir, if you examine Mr. Lewellin, you will pronounce him an apt scholar. He has made much rapid progress in his studies during the session;—he may possibly take a degree.”

On the Sabbath it was arranged, while we were at breakfast, that

Mrs. Orme should ride to church with our kind host and hostess; but I preferred walking, as I wished to take the same route I had taken some years before, and ascertain, if possible, what practical effect had resulted from my casual advice to Robert Curliffe, whom, on a previous occasion, I had found working in his garden,\* with his two sons. It was a fine autumn morning, without a cloud; the air was genial and invigorating, and the stillness of the solitary lane along which I was passing formed an agreeable contrast to the noise and bustle of the thronged streets of my town residence. Robert's cottage still stood where I first saw it, but its appearance was greatly improved, and his garden was in a higher state of cultivation. These were auspicious signs, and formed, as will shortly be seen, fresh illustrations of an oft-repeated remark, that the work of grace in the heart contributes to the promoting of temporal as well as spiritual comfort. On entering his cottage, I found him dressed in his Sunday clothes, with his Bible beside him on the table, and in his hand Fuller's *Gospel its own Witness*. He expressed great joy at seeing me; and his wife, offering me a chair, said, "You will see a change here, Sir, since your first visit; the grace of God is a wonder-working power."

"And I suppose you are both happier than when you preferred working in the garden on the Sabbath to going to church?"

"Yes, Sir," said Robert, "we are; and we are better off in worldly matters. Our home is a quieter home. Our lads are more orderly in their manners, and both go to Mr. Ingleby's Sunday-school. We are a reformed family."

"I shouldn't like," said Robert's wife, "for things to go back into their old state; it would be like a good garden going back to a common waste."

"You have now something of more importance to think about and talk about, than about planting and weeding your garden."

"Yes, Sir, the wonderful facts of the Bible; especially God's unspeakable gift of a Saviour who is able and willing to save us."

\* Vol. i. p. 110.

“What the Lord has done for us in our souls, since you had the first talk with our Robert, has given me a wonderful liking to the Bible, and to Mr. Ingleby’s preaching. Before that time, if I read a bit of a chapter, I could not make out its meaning; and if I heard a sermon, it made no impression on my heart; it came in at one ear, and went out at t’other. Ah! dear; things are wonderfully changed in us. I shouldn’t like them to be changed back again; it would be worse than seeing our garden overrun with thistles and nettles.

I now pressed on to church. The Curate read the Liturgy with great solemnity and pathos. My Dissenting prejudices subsided as I listened to the solemn words of prayer; and the responses had a soul-inspiring effect. “Yes,” I said to myself, “the prayers are simple, sublime, and appropriate; they are such as a sinner should offer up, when kneeling before the Lord; they prepare the heart to unite with the voices of the heavenly kingdom in their chorus of thanksgiving and praise.” At length I saw the vestry door open; the venerable Rector walked out, ascended the flight of stairs, and entered his pulpit. After a short extempore prayer, he announced his text—“And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke xv. 20).

On my previous visit to Fairmount, I had observed that the infirmities of age were fast creeping upon Mr. Ingleby, and this was now much more manifest, though it could scarcely be wondered at, as the good Rector had considerably advanced beyond the period generally allotted to the life of man, being now upwards of eighty years of age. His voice, however, was still clear and sonorous; and though there was less activity and brilliancy of imagination, yet the same bold and impassioned appeals to the conscience and the heart came from his lips as when I first heard him. He commanded the attention of his audience, and he rewarded it. After describing the old man walking anxiously up and down in the cool of the evening in front of his rural mansion, situated, it might be, in some remote quarter of Palestine, he proceeded to recount



his supposed soliloquy, while thinking of his long-lost child:—"Is he still living, or has he been devoured by some wild beast of prey! Is he in affluence, or is he in want! Does he ever think of his home, and of his father, or has he forgotten both! Shall I ever see him again! Shall I ever embrace him again, as I embraced him the morning he left me! Shall I ever hear him address me 'father,' as I was once accustomed to hear him call me!' The old man is now just going to retire for the night, when something is seen moving in the distance—it advances—it is a man—a poor forlorn outcast, come to ask for shelter; he shall not be denied; he looks more fixedly—the figure advances, yet it is still a great way off; it is—no, it cannot be; he looks—it is, it is my son! See how the old man runs to embrace the traveller! What a joyous meeting! what a night of gladsome mirth and hallowed devotion! And who, beloved brethren, supplies me with the materials for this dramatic sketch? Jesus Christ. For what purpose? To assure us that our heavenly Father feels more compassion for a relenting sinner than he can feel sorrow for his sins; and that He feels more paternal delight in the exercise of mercy, than a sinner can feel joy by having all his sins forgiven him."

When the sermon was over, I saw Farmer Pickford and his wife standing at the corner of the lane, waiting for my approach.

"I am glad to see you back again. I have looked for this day, many a day, and many a night, since you were preaching in the barn. You look well, Sir. Time makes no change in your appearance."

"I hope, Sir," said Mrs. Pickford, "you will come and see us; we shall be so much pleased."

"We have had, Farmer, a very touching sermon this morning."

"It touched me to the quick, and no mistake. I have shed more tears this morning than I ever shed in any morning since I was born. It made me feel a power of trouble, like."

"And it greatly affected me," said Mrs. Pickford; "it made me think of our long lost George; shall we ever see him again?"

“He, my dear friend, who brought back the prodigal of the gospel, can bring back your dear son.”

“I hope he will,” replied the Farmer. “I don’t care in what condition he comes home, so that he does come back, and I live long enough to receive him. He may come in rags for what I care. I’ll give him a capital supper, and a new suit; and we’ll have a joyous merry-making, and no mistake. You’ll give us another sarmunt in the barn?”

“Yes, do, Sir,” urged his wife; “we shall be so pleased, and profited, too. One of our neighbours, Mr. Richards, was so impressed by your discourse on the conversion of Zaccheus, that he is quite a changed character. He was, before he heard it, a very irreligious man; but now he regularly goes to church every Sabbath morning, and to Mr. Stevens’ chapel every Sabbath evening. And he comes to our weekly prayer-meeting; and we often have edifying conversation with him.”

“Before he heard that sarmunt,” said the Farmer, “Richards was just what I was before your first talk to me about my soul—a drunken, swearing sort of chap; but now he keeps as sober as a judge; and his talk is quite heavenly. He gets on in the good things faster than I do; I’m still but a dullish sort of a scollard; worse luck. But after all, I know something about the one thing needful; that’s worth knowing. The Lord be praised; and many thanks to you, Sir.”

“I hope, Farmer, by this time, that you enjoy a well-grounded assurance, that you are accepted in the Beloved, and feel safe for eternity.”

“As for that, Sir, I must speak with great care. I must not be too bold. Howsomever, I don’t fear dying, and that’s a main good thing; a kind of a triumph, like; the Lord be praised. I love Jesus Christ—that’s certain; I love my Bible, and I love the services of God’s house more than I used to love the ways of sin, and that is saying a good deal. Will you give us another sarmunt in the barn, Sir?”

“ Yes; and I will let you know when I can do it.”

I dined in the course of the following week at Mr. Roscoe's, and much enjoyed my visit. It revived a recollection of the discussions of former times, between him and his Tractarian brother, now become an able advocate of the faith he then laboured to destroy. I never saw Mr. Roscoe looking better; his spirits were buoyant, rising at times to youthful cheerfulness. He abounded with anecdotes, both grave and facetious; and was, indeed, the soul of the social circle. We were deeply interested by the narration of an occurrence which happened on the preceding day, and which I will give in his own words:—

“ I walked yesterday as far as Brushwood House, on a little matter of business, and on my return home, just as I came to the corner of the coppice, I saw a respectable looking young man sitting on the stump of a tree in the hedgerow. He rose, bowed, and said, ‘ My name, Sir, is George Pickford, and I am just back from a long roving trip, on board of a merchant ship, and I have been watching a long while for some one to go and tell father and mother that I am back safe and sound. I am afraid to go home till some one has told them that I am here, because, as they don't know whether I am dead or alive, my abrupt appearance may startle them. And if, Sir, you will be so kind as to do this little job for me, I shall feel a power of gratitude. It won't take you far out of the way.’ After chatting awhile with him about the places he had visited, I asked him whether he had been successful and taken care of his money, ‘ Why, Sir,’ he replied, ‘ as I am so near home, I don't mind confessing to you what I have confessed to no man since I came on shore. I have saved upwards of £130; and I have it in a leather bag belted round my body under my shirt. I kept clear of the land sharks in every port we entered. I have for the last four years kept within compass—never gaming on board, and never drinking on shore; but before then I used to do such things.’

“ Mrs. Pickford saw me approaching the farm-house. She was all hurry and bustle to get herself, and her neat little parlour, in order

for my reception. I took a chair and talked some time about things in general, and then alluded to the sermon we had heard on Sabbath morning. The tear fell from her eye, as she said to me, 'Sir, it was a most painful sermon; it brought my George so forcibly before my mind.'

"'You may possibly,' I remarked, 'see him again.'

"'I don't expect it, Sir. He has been gone six years come the 8th of October; and we have not heard from him, or a word about him, since he left us.'

"'Be of good cheer; you will see him ere long.'

"'Her look was now wild and penetrating; and she exclaimed, 'What, Sir, do you say, and shall I see my George ere long?'

"'Be composed,' I added, 'I bring you glad tidings. Your George is back safe and sound; and he has requested me to come and tell you.'

"'Back, Sir! safe and sound; and you have seen him; tell me,' rising as she spoke, 'where he is, that I may see him too.'

"'I then said, 'If you will sit down, and promise to remain seated for the next quarter of an hour, you shall see him.'

"'A hard promise, Sir; but I thank the Lord he has given me an opportunity to make it.'

"I stepped through the fold-yard, hailed George, who was on the watch, and then led him to his mother. I shall not attempt a description of the scene that followed. She sprang into his arms, and he into hers.

"'Mother, forgive me.'

"'I do, my child.'

"'I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight, my mother.'

"'I forgive all, my dear, dear George; and bless the Lord for giving me this opportunity of telling you so.'

"His younger brother and his sisters, who stood gazing and weeping, all gathered around him, as soon as his mother withdrew her embraces. 'But where is father?' I heard him say, as I retired from this scene of domestic joy and happiness.



By S. MORRAN.

T. HUTTON.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

Vol. ii. page 480.

“One thing I must not forget to mention. When it came up in the course of our conversation, at our first interview, that I knew his old master, his robbery of whom occasioned his running away, he put a letter into my hand, and asked me if I would deliver it to him. It contained the amount stolen, with interest, and compound interest up to the present date: with a confession of his crime, and an entreaty for forgiveness.”

We were all deeply affected by this touching tale, particularly Mrs. Lewellin and Mrs. Orme, who said, both speaking at the same time, “We must go and see George and his mother, and congratulate them on their happy meeting.”

In the midst of life, we are in death. We had a most unexpected confirmation of this during my stay at Fairmount. Mr. Stevens had engaged to accompany Mr. Roscoe to Norton, on a trifling matter of business; and as they were to start at ten o'clock, Mr. Roscoe rose rather early, took breakfast with Mrs. Roscoe, conducted family prayer as usual, and then retired into his study. Mr. Stevens came, and as Mr. Roscoe did not make his appearance, Mrs. Roscoe rang the bell, and desired the servant to call him. The servant went to his room, knocked several times, but receiving no answer she opened the door, and saw her master in the attitude of prayer. This circumstance induced her quietly to retire, but on closing the door, she was so much struck with the singular position in which she had seen his head, that she returned towards him, and immediately exclaimed in consternation, “My master is dead!” This exclamation, which was heard by Mr. Stevens, induced him to run up stairs, where he found the servant standing, petrified by terror, near her venerable master, who had, when engaged in the holy exercise of communion with God his Saviour, left the scene of his earthly cares and bliss, to take possession of his heavenly inheritance. His hands were yet warm, and his countenance had undergone no change, but the eyelids and the mouth had fallen—there was no respiration, no motion, for he had ceased to be a citizen of earth. The consterna-

tion which this unexpected event occasioned cannot be described. It burst upon the family like a thunder-storm. Mrs. Roscoe hastened into the study. "My husband, my dear husband!" she exclaimed, and was carried fainting into an adjoining room, where she remained for a quarter of an hour in a state of total insensibility, unconscious of her loss, till she saw Mr. Stevens approaching her.

"And is my husband dead, Sir?"

"Be composed, my dear friend, it is the Lord's doing."

"Yes, Sir, I know it; but it is still a terrible trial. Does Sophia know it? Oh! tell her to come to me immediately."

Mr. Stevens hastened to convey the mournful tidings to Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin. When he rode up the lawn in front of their house he saw them returning from a morning's walk, and after an exchange of a few common-place inquiries, he took Mr. Lewellin aside, and communicated the intelligence. Mrs. Lewellin, on looking through the parlour window saw that Mr. Stevens was the bearer of some news that deeply affected her husband; and feeling apprehensive that it bore some reference to her parents, she immediately rushed out, and asked if all was well.

"Yes, my dear," said her husband, "all is well that the Lord does."

"Yes, I know it; but what has he done?"

"Your father"——

"My father! What! tell me!"

"Your father," said Mr. Stevens, "was taken suddenly ill this morning, and when I left him was not able to speak to me."

"Is he living, Sir? O, tell me! Suspense tortures me! Let me know the full extent of the calamity!"

"Your father is now mingling his praises with the redeemed before the throne!"

"What! and have I lost my father? Is he gone without giving me his blessing? How did he die?"

"We found him dead on his knees in the study."

"On his knees! O, happy saint!"

"His death has indeed been a translation."

"And how does my dear mother sustain the blow?"

"She wishes to see you immediately."

They hastened to the house of mourning, but on entering the breakfast-parlour in which Mr. Roscoe had only a few hours before partaken of his last meal on earth, Mrs. Lewellin's feelings overcame her. On recovering from this hysteric fit she became more composed, and expressed a desire to see her afflicted mother, and being supported by Mr. Lewellin and Mr. Stevens, she was led into the room where the bereaved widow sat, silent and motionless, in all the solitude and agony of grief. She rose to meet her daughter, and in a moment they were closely locked in each other's embrace, but they were too much overpowered with anguish to utter any words but those of sorrow. They wept aloud, but in their weeping there was the majesty of grief, bending in un murmuring submission to the will of their heavenly Father.

"And is my father dead?"

"Yes, my child, you have lost your father, and I have lost my husband."

Mrs. Lewellin looked round the room, and having fixed her eye on his full-length picture, she approached it, and said, "There he is! yes, there he is! My father! speak, my father! It is thy Sophia that speaks to thee!" She stood silent for a few moments, and then sunk in the arms of her husband. For several hours she continued in a state of high delirium, but became gradually composed, and retired to rest. Next morning she awoke with her feelings less agitated; and though she wept when she saw her mother, yet she spoke of their mutual loss with more tranquillity.

"Though it has pleased God," said the bereaved widow, "to deprive us of the visible presence of one we so ardently loved, we must not abandon ourselves to unavailing grief—we must not sorrow as others that have no hope; but rather bow down our souls in submission to his holy will and say, 'Even so, O righteous Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight.'"



“I hope, my dear mother, I can repeat that sentiment; but still I feel that I have lost one of the best of fathers that ever called a child his own; and if I should be unable to control my feelings, I hope you will bear with me. Ours is no common loss.”

To relieve myself in some measure from the depression which this bereavement had occasioned, I bent my footsteps towards Farmer Pickford's homestead, and there I saw his son George, and had from him a rough outline of his adventures, which I will briefly narrate.

He left the port of London, on board a merchant vessel, in company with Jack Summers, who had seduced him into the ways of iniquity; but poor Jack fell overboard, and was drowned, before he set sail. His first voyage was to Havana; where, one day, he went on shore with the ship's carpenter. They visited the slave-market, where they saw men, women, and children sold like beasts of burden. This sickened them, both of the West Indies and slavery; but he said, “We served them out,” for, on stepping into their boat they found, coiled up in the jib-sail, a negro lad, about the age of fifteen, who said, “Me let go wid you.” They contrived to get him on board without his being seen; George took off the top of an empty water butt, put the negro in, gave him a bottle of water and some bread and cheese, and told him to lie still till the ship was under weigh. Early the next morning the negro's master came to inquire if there was a black boy on board; and when the captain, who didn't know anything about it, assured him that there was not, he turned back; and soon after the vessel set sail. “We brought him away with us,” said George, “and he has been with me ever since, and he is one of the best fellows of the crew for work.” This voyage, upon the whole, was a very pleasant one, and he took a strong liking to a seafaring life. His second voyage was to Madeira, and this, also, was a pleasant one, notwithstanding a short though violent storm, which, to quote his own expression, “the little snug vessel outrode in gallant style.” His third voyage was to Calcutta; but, on rounding the Cape, they encountered a tremendous hurri-

cane, which lasted several days and nights without intermission ; fears were entertained for the safety of the vessel, as she got fearfully strained ; and now it was that the captain discovered the superior capabilities of George, for, having been apprenticed to a carpenter, he was able to take the berth of the ship's carpenter, who died some weeks before. On his return to port, the mate was promoted to the captain's berth, who took the command of another ship ; and George Pickford took the berth of the mate. His character for sobriety and activity gave much satisfaction to Messrs. B., his employers ; and he was a great favourite with the crew. Nothing occurred of any great importance for the next three years, till his last visit to Calcutta, when the ship was detained for upwards of two months ; the captain giving him permission to go ashore as often as he pleased. Here he met a young man whom he knew—a native of Broadhurst, but now a resident in Calcutta—a decidedly pious man, who invited him to spend the following Sabbath with him. He did so ; and they went together to the chapel in which Mr. James Hill, an English missionary, preached. As he sat directly opposite the pulpit, the eye of the preacher fell directly upon him—at least he thought so ; and the text, “ Be sure your sin will find you out,” (Num. xxxii. 23), brought his sin of dishonesty to his master, undutifulness to his parents, and his uniform forgetfulness of God, and contempt for his authority, with such vividness to his recollection that he hastened on board as rapidly as possible. There, in the quietude of his own berth, he pondered over this new discovery, which was accompanied by a train of novel and poignant emotions. His soul was overwhelmed with grief ; but yet it was a grief which gave him more relief than pain. It was pungent, but it did not drive him to despair. Mr. Hill, in the conclusion of his discourse, quoted the words of Jesus Christ—“ Whosoever believeth in him should not perish.” “ I caught hold of that promise,” he said, “ and I kept hold of it ; and I found it a rope strong enough to save me. I believed I should not perish ; I tried to pray, but could not get further than the prayer of the publican, ‘ God, be merciful

to me a sinner.'” He stated that he longed for the return of Sabbath during the whole of the week; and when it came, though his duties on board required his attention in the morning, yet in the evening he was at liberty, and he again heard the same minister preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God. He felt its great moral power on his heart, reducing the wild tumult of feeling to a peaceful calm, and giving him a good hope, through grace, of pardon and salvation. The next morning the ship weighed anchor, and set sail; and he closed his statement to me as follows:—“I left my home a wild lad, and a criminal; I lived in bold rebellion against God up to the age of twenty-three; I acted a most unkind and undutiful part towards my dear parents, by keeping them in a state of ignorance of my whereabouts. When I went into Mr. Hill’s chapel I had no more desire for conversion than I have now to be unconverted; but the Lord had compassion on me, and has saved me: glory be to his holy name. I am a brand plucked from the burning, if ever there was one plucked; now I wish to live to show my gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ, for saving me; and to do good to my fellow-sailors. I am glad to say that two of our crew are God-fearing men; and we often meet together for reading the Bible and prayer. I had many precious moments, in prayer to the Lord, on our voyage back; and sometimes felt his presence near me, especially one night in a fearful storm. I knew he had the winds and the waves under his command. I trusted in him, and felt secure.

On my return to Fairmount, after this interview with George, I met the Farmer, who gave me his usual hearty shake of the hand.

“Have you been to my homestead?”

“Yes, and have seen your son George, and had a long chat with him.”

“He is grown a finish sort of a chap. He’s more of the gemman than his father, and no mistake. He has seen a main bit of the world, like. How well he talks; and what a power of matter he has to say. He keeps us up rather latish with his stories. Some are funny and make us laugh; and some are shocking. Man is a bad

fellow everywhere till the grace of God touches his heart. Howsom-ever, George has scraped up a goodish bit of money. Ay, if a man has any luck at sea, he often gets on faster than we do here on land."

"Your son, I rather think, has found something more valuable than gold, or silver, or precious stones."

"The Lord be praised. Yes, he has found the precious pearl of great price. That's a proof to my mind that Jesus Christ is everywhere, or my George would not have found him in Calcutta, which, he says, is thousands of miles off. I suppose he has told you about the sarmunt that made him feel all at once that he was in a new world? He must have been as much surprised, when going out of the chapel as Zaccheus was when he dropped down out of the sycamore tree. What a wonder-working power the grace of God is, and no mistake!"

"You were not at home, I believe, when your son arrived?"

"No, I had been all the morning, along with two of my men, doing a bit of hedging and ditching in one of my lower meadows, t'other side of the hill. And all the while I was working, I was thinking over the sarmunt Mr. Ingleby preached on Sunday morning. It was one of great power; it touched me to the quick, like. And just as I was coming down the hill, to get a bit of dinner, I saw a chap running across the fold-yard into the house. I wondered who it could be. After a bit, he came out, and my mistress with him, and I saw her pointing towards me. I felt all at once a power of strange thoughts rush into me; and I stood still as the chap was running towards me, jumping over hedge and ditch, like a greyhound after a hare. When he got a bit nearer, about five hundred yards off, I thought all at once it was the step and swing of George; and I heard him cry out, 'Father! father!' as loud as he could bawl; but for the life of me I couldn't speak a word more, and I couldn't have been more frightened if I had seen two ghosts. I seemed stuck fast into the ground with my tongue tied; so that I was obliged to leave him to do all the work of hugging, and kissing,

and such like. When I got a bit over my fright, I told him I was main glad to see him back; and that I would give him as good a supper as was put on the table the night you gave us the sarmunt in the barn about the conversion of Zaccheus."

"It must have been a joyous meeting to you."

"I have been thinking two or three times since, that it is almost worth while to lose a youngster for a year or two, for the delight of seeing him come back safe and sound. You should hear him read the Bible and pray. It would do your heart good, Sir. Now, Sir, when will you come and give us the sarmunt in the barn? George shall read out the hymn, and pitch the tune, and then you will have a sample of his cleverness in such matters. Old William, the shepherd, says he'll take the biggest wether-bell he can find, and he'll go round to all the cottages and farm-houses in those parts, and cry notice of it. I must clear out both barns to find room for the people; they'll come as thick as rooks after the plough. The Lord be praised that I should ever live to see such joyous times and such wonderful doings: no sham work; and I must not forget to thank you for the part you have had in them."

"You may expect me next Wednesday week."

"Very well, Sir, I shall expect you on that day."

"But one thing I have to request, and that is, that you don't get such a splendid supper as you did last time."

"I never trouble myself about kitchen matters. I leave that to my wife, whose name is Martha; and you know that the Bible tells us that Martha always has a liking to give a good treatment to our best friends. No, no, I mustn't speak about such a matter; if I do, there will be a rookery in the kitchen."

"Then I must send her a note and make the request myself."

"Well, just as you like, Sir; but I guess it won't matter. Women, you know, don't like to be put out of their way; and I am sure of one thing, that if you give us a good sarmunt, as you are sure to do if you preach, she will give you a good supper, which she is sure to do if she does the cookery. Why, Paul says, if you mind,

Sir, that we must give our carnal things to them that give us spiritual things."

As I was taking my leave of him, he said—"Please, Sir, just stop one minute. It almost got out of my head; but it's back again. Did George tell you what he says to his mother and me? He says he is mate of this ship, which I suppose is a goodish sort of a thing; and he says he thinks he shall be made a captain after he has had another voyage or two, which I suppose is something better; and he says he'll take his brother Sam with him and show him Calcutta and —, I forget what he calls it, but it is where our tea comes from; and he says he'll make him a bonny sailor, which he says is better than ploughing or turnip sowing. But his mother don't like this talk, for she says she shall never sleep at night when the wind gets up and the lightning comes. Well, I would rather keep them both at home, than let either of them go; but George has a desperate liking for the sea: and it seems to be his calling, and we must trust the Lord to take care of them. O dear, how I forget things! My thinkings about George coming back to us and Sam going from us, drives almost everything out of my head. I heard Bob Curliffe say, as I was crossing the lane on the top of the hill, that he heard his master say to Mr. Ryde that Mr. Roscoe is dead, is that true, Sir?"

"Yes; he died suddenly, yesterday morning, when on his knees in prayer."

"That's just how I should like to die, and no mistake. What a wonderful change for a man—all in a moment; from earth to heaven in no time! Mr. Ingleby will give us a grand sarmunt on Sunday on this subject, or I am no prophet. I shouldn't wonder if he takes the matter of Enoch's getting into heaven without dying. I should like that way of going, but we must leave all to the Lord. After all, I don't care how I go, or who sees me go, so as I get into heaven at last."

The Farmer was right in his predictions. Mr. Ingleby did give us an excellent sermon on the translation of Enoch; and this was

followed by an admirable sketch of the character of our deceased friend. But I can do no more than transcribe the subjoined paragraph, which I took down at the time I heard it:—

“When it pleaseth God to visit our friends with a lengthened indisposition before he removes them, we have the pleasure of administering to them the consolations of religion—of exchanging the expressions of Christian sympathy—and catching from their lips some sublime expressions of anticipated bliss. The sufferings, however, which they generally endure are so keen and so poignant, that in many instances we are thankful when the contest is over. But if death comes in an unexpected hour, and bears off a friend without giving us any warning, we are plunged into the lowest abyss of sorrow, because we are denied the privilege of bidding him adieu: yet as a mitigation of our anguish we have this consolation, that he was not called to *walk* through the dreary valley, being borne as ‘on angels’ wings’ to heaven. In such a case his departure partakes more of a translation than an act of dying; he oversteps the grave, and enters into the possession of his purchased inheritance without having his fears awakened by the solemnity of his removal, or his peace disturbed by the anxieties and distress which it occasions to others. One hour he is with his friends on earth, busily employed in all the duties of his station—the next with his friends in the celestial world, joining with them in their ascriptions of praise to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. One hour he is mourning here below over the imperfections of his character—the next he feels himself made perfect in purity and in blessedness; and while those who revered and loved him are weeping around his breathless corpse, he is taking his part in the exercises of that sacred temple in which the worshippers serve the Lord day and night for ever.”

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At last the long expected Wednesday night came, and Mr. Stevens drove me in his gig to Farmer Pickford’s, where I found the barn full of people waiting my arrival. His son George commenced the service by reading a hymn, and he read it very well; he then led

off the singing; his brother Harry, a good tenor, standing on his left, and his father, a good bass, on his right. His mother, with two or three younger females, stood behind, and altogether a very effective rustic choir was formed. I selected for my text the 23d verse of the 11th chapter of the Acts—"Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

"This, my dear brethren," I observed, "is very likely the last time I may ever meet you, and address you, in this rustic temple, which is as glorious in the eyes of the Holy One of Israel, as the magnificent temple at Jerusalem, which was his local dwelling-place in ancient times. For here he has condescended to visit you, though unseen, and listen to your prayers and your praises: and here the glorious gospel of his grace has proved his power to your salvation. Yes, when you have finished your course, and the conflict is over, and when you have gained the prize of your high calling, your recollections will hover over this hallowed spot, as the spiritual birth-place of your immortal souls; where you were quickened into newness of life; and where 'after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory' (Eph. i. 13, 14). I solemnly charge every one of you to be faithful unto death, otherwise you will die in your sins, and be lost for ever. And how dreadful would such a loss be!"

The service closed in the usual way, and the congregation dispersed. The Farmer introduced several persons to me, who had received spiritual benefit from the sermon on the conversion of Zaccheus, particularly his neighbour Farmer Richards, of whose conversion he had previously given me some account, and who was invited to sup with us. This meal was as sumptuous as the former one. It was soon over; and then before I rose from the table I thus addressed them:—"Great spiritual changes, my dear friends, have taken place in your family since I took my first meal in this kitchen. You," addressing Mr. P., "were then an unen-



lightened and an unrenewed man, living without God in the world, without Christ, and without hope; but now, with your dear wife, you have passed from death unto life; have both tasted that the Lord is gracious; are made fellow-heirs of the grace of life; and can rejoice in the hope of your final salvation. Your first-born has long since yielded himself to God, as one alive from the dead; and there sits by your side your long-lost George, unexpectedly restored to you, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus before he came back to receive your parental benediction. And though the younger children are not yet brought within the bonds of the covenant"—(I was here interrupted by the Farmer, who, under an excitement he could not repress, exclaimed, "I think our Sam is, for I saw him on his knees in prayer the other night.")—"I am glad to hear this, and I trust that he, like his two brothers, will yield himself to God, to be renewed, sanctified, and saved; and that his dear sisters will follow their example; and that all of you will be saved, and glorified in the celestial world." "The Lord grant it may be so," said all. At the urgent request of Mrs. Pickford, I read a psalm, and prayed with the family. It was a solemn service—more solemn than any preceding one, because it was the last. Many wept when on their knees, and some wept when they rose up, to give and receive the final farewell. I hastily shook hands with every one in the room, simply saying, as I went out, "Lord bless you, and keep you. I hope we shall meet in heaven." "Amen!" was the response, given with an earnestness and a solemnity that was almost overpowering.

When the Farmer came to button the apron of our gig, he again took my hand; and he said, as the tear fell from his eye, "The Lord be praised for sending you to taste my ale and cream cheese, and you be thanked for coming. I hope you will pray for me, that I may stick close to the Lord, with all my heart and soul; and I hope you will always pray for our George and his brother Sam, when the wind gets up. Good night, gemmen; a safe ride to Fairmount. Farewell."

## A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.



ONE morning, while at breakfast at Fairmount, I was surprised by a note from Mr. John Ryder, requesting the favour of a call from me, at Aston, before I returned home. The reader will remember Mr. Ryder\* as a suitor of Miss Denham, and the affecting farewell of the latter to him on her death-bed.

"There is a mystery in this," said Mr. Stevens, "which I cannot account for. I have not seen Mr. Ryder for many months. Miss Denham's death was a dreadful blow to him, and since then he has never recovered his wonted spirits, but become quite a recluse, neither paying nor receiving any visits."

"Who can tell?" I remarked; "her death may issue in his spiritual life. I will send a reply, saying that I will call on him to-morrow evening."

"He is a noble character," said Mrs. Stevens; "and a young man of great intelligence and most amiable disposition. I trust his affliction has led him to direct his attention to the only true source of consolation. Indeed, I have some grounds for hoping that this is the case, as I understand he has been very regular in his attendance at church for some time past."

On going to Aston the following evening to call on Mr. Ryder, I unexpectedly met him, and we walked together to his house. After thanking me for my promptness in thus responding to his request, he proceeded to disclose to me, without much reserve, the deep perplexity and strongly excited state of his mind on the question of personal religion; asking me, at the same time, for my advice, and how he should act to obtain relief from his perplexities and depression of spirit.

He frankly confessed that prior to the death of Miss Denham, for

\* Vol. i. p. 420.

whom he had long cherished a most ardent attachment, he had imbibed some vague sceptical opinions against religion. Her dying farewell, however, both astonished and confounded him, particularly the last words which she addressed to him:—"We now part, but I hope not for ever. Death, which is now removing me, may soon call for you; and then I hope you will find that consolation in the death of a despised Saviour, which it has pleased God, very unexpectedly and undeservedly, to give to me." "I never," he remarked, "heard her say anything like this before. She was now entering the dark unknown world; but it appears that she derived consolation from the death of Jesus Christ. How is this? said I, as I withdrew from the chamber of death; and how can it be? I have said thousands of times since. However, what I saw and heard on that awfully appalling occasion left an indelible conviction on my mind, that there is a something in religion suited to humanity at the most momentous period of its history. But what is that something? I said to myself. Is it a hidden mystery which the great teacher death alone can explain; or is it possible to get the mystery explained before death comes? This is the emphatic question I wish you to solve, as my happiness both in this world and the next depends on its solution."

In token of his sincerity, he told me that he had altogether withdrawn from the gay world; regularly attended his parish church, and had taken the sacrament several times. He now read the Bible, and other devotional books, in preference to novels and periodicals; and went through a regular form of private prayer, both morning and evening. He closed by saying:—"But, like a man surrounded by a thick mist when crossing some wild moor, I know not whether I am going right or wrong—I can obtain no satisfaction."

I was about to reply to this communication, when our arrival at Aston, and the appearance of Miss Ryder, to whom I was introduced by her brother, put a stop to further conversation on the subject for the present. We now entered the house, and while tea was preparing, Mr. Ryder proposed that we should take a turn round the

garden. In passing along, my eye caught sight of a beautiful figure of Ceres, resting on a pedestal. I remarked, that it was by a very slow and painstaking process that things of real excellence were brought to perfection.

"Yes," replied Mr. Ryder; "a few months ago that beautiful figure was a rough, shapeless stone. I have often thought, when standing and admiring it, what an eye and what a taste its sculptor must possess! But after all, it wants life to give the full expression of beauty."

It stands as an emblematical figure."

"Yes, Sir; of the productive power of nature."

"And, Sir, of something else."

"Of what?"

"Of the man who has the form of godliness, but who has never felt its regenerating and life-giving power."

He paused, looked grave, but spoke not. After the lapse of a few moments he moved on in silence, as though my words had excited a new train of thought in his mind. At length he said:—"I do not clearly understand what you mean by the expression—the regenerating and life-giving power of godliness."

"I mean the regenerating power of the Divine Spirit, creating anew the human soul, and infusing into it spiritual life. 'You,' says the apostle, when addressing the members of the church at Ephesus, 'hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Eph. ii. 1)."

"But is man, at any period of his moral history, living in a state of death? Such a supposition appears to me to be paradoxical."

"Before the regenerating power of the Divine Spirit acts on the soul of man, he lives in a state of death, in two senses. We say, for example, of the culprit who is condemned to die, that he is a dead man. His life is not his own; it is forfeited to the claims of justice. And thus, while living in an unrenewed and unpardoned state, we are legally dead; our life is forfeited to the claims of Divine justice; and we are exposed to the penalty of the violated law of God."

“And what is that penalty?”

“Condemnation, including in its infliction the forfeiture of the favour of God; mental disquietude, remorse, and dread of death, exclusion from a state of happiness, on passing into the eternal world; and banishment to hell, in despair, for ever. For it is written—‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them’ (Gal. iii. 10).”

He again moved on in silence; and then suddenly stopping, and resting his eye for a few moments on the ground, he replied, under great excitement:—“This, Sir, is a fearful condition of existence. It is appalling. It chills my blood to think of it. Then my present restlessness and disquietude of soul are the lighter inflictions of this tremendous penalty—the premonitions of the coming storm of God’s righteous displeasure.”

“Yes, Sir; and they are given in mercy and in love.”

“You surprise me. What! does mercy ever employ such terrific forerunners to announce her coming? If so, for what purpose?”

“To rouse man, while living in a state of false security, to an apprehension of his guilt, and consequent danger. They are, in fact, warning voices, warning man to flee from the wrath to come, to repent of his sins, and to make him feel the absolute necessity of a Divine interposition to rescue him from the peril of his condition, that he may ‘seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near’ (Isa. lv. 6).”

We now entered a tastefully constructed grotto, covered with ivy, situated at the upper extremity of the garden. Here we had an enchanting prospect of the surrounding country, and stood gazing on it for a while in silence, when Mr. Ryder remarked—“This, Sir, is a beautiful world.”

“Yes, Sir,” I replied; “and it would have been a happy world, if sin had not entered and defiled it, and thus marred our happiness. The beasts of the field and the birds of the air appear to have escaped its withering influence. They are happy. It is only man, the noblest specimen of the Divine workmanship, who is groaning

and pining away in mournful sadness, under its polluting and destroying power."

"To me, Sir, it appears surprising that the Deity should have permitted sin to enter this province of his vast dominions, and allow it to become the active agent of so much crime and misery, when he could so easily have prevented it, if he had chosen."

"I am not surprised by your remarks, for unquestionably the dispensation under which we are living is awfully mysterious; but still, notwithstanding the impenetrable darkness which envelopes certain parts of the Divine procedure, other parts are plain and intelligible, obviously conducive to our present and final happiness. Hence, if we act wisely, we shall turn our attention from what we *cannot* know, to what we *may* know—from concealed reasons and causes, to revealed facts. Instead, then, of perplexing ourselves about the origin of evil, we shall sit at the feet of Jesus, and he will tell us what God has done to repair the injury of the fall—'For 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 iii. 16). This, Sir, is plain, and this is intelligible; and we are assured by the Son of God himself, that if we believe in him we shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Your remarks, Sir, interest me. They illumine the darkness in which my own thoughts have been long revolving in shapeless confusion. I begin to perceive that my salvation is possible. You referred just now to another sense in which man is dead, in addition to the forfeiture of his life, by his violations of the law of God; will you explain what that other state of death is?"

Our conversation was here interrupted by a summons to tea. Mr. Ryder was now profoundly silent on the questions which had engrossed our attention, leaving an impression on my mind that his sister had no sympathy with his spiritual anxieties and depression. She was about twenty-five years of age, of very pleasing manners, and an apparently amiable disposition—neither obtrusive nor reserved; sprightly, and somewhat of a facetious turn. When look-

ing at and listening to her, the words which our Lord addressed to the accomplished young ruler of Judea involuntarily occurred to me—"One thing thou lackest." Her brother now proposed another stroll in the garden, which was prevented by the arrival of some visitors, and the rest of the evening passed away without any recurrence to our former topic of conversation. On taking leave, Mr. Ryder made me promise that I would soon repeat my visit, which I accordingly did in the course of the ensuing week.

On this occasion I again met Mr. Ryder, as before, taking an evening stroll, and we walked to Aston together. On passing an old dilapidated mansion, we saw its proprietor standing in the porch, a nondescript both in appearance and character. "That, Sir," said Mr. Ryder, "is the most singular man I ever knew; he is very wealthy, and leads a very selfish and sensual life; he loves nothing but himself, his dogs, and his gun. He has sympathy for a dog when in pain, but none for a human being. His dogs are fed sumptuously, and taken the greatest care of, but he has never been known to give anything in charity to his own species. He shuns all intercourse with his fellow-men, and is, in fact, a perfect misanthrope—a being without a heart. Not long ago, his father, who lives in extreme poverty in the adjoining county, came to see him, but he peremptorily ordered him away without giving him bit or drop."

"This man," I replied, "loving nothing but himself, his dog, and his gun, not even his own father, is happily a very rare case, but it is one which is both illustrative and suggestive. He is a living emblem of the unregenerate man; who is a selfish being, loving nothing but what ministers to his own sensual gratifications. He has no heart to revere and love his heavenly Father, and is consequently unfit for heaven, and unfit to live amongst, and associate with the pure and happy spirits who dwell there. If he were taken to heaven in his present moral and spiritual condition, he would appear as strange a being amongst them, as this man does amongst you—shunning all, for want of congeniality of taste and disposition; and

shunned by all as odious and repulsive; his expulsion would be an act of necessity, both in relation to himself and to others. Hence it is obvious from the nature of the case, as well as from the Word of God, that before an unregenerate man is meet for heaven, the sentence of condemnation which is recorded against him must, by an act of free grace, be repealed, and then all his sins are forgiven. In addition to this, he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind, and a spiritual life must be breathed into him by the power of the Divine Spirit."

"I have, Sir, I think, a clear apprehension of what you mean by an act of grace in repealing the sentence of condemnation recorded against us for the sins we commit; but you say, that in addition to this we need the infusion into our mind of a new life, which you call a spiritual life. But if we are pardoned by an act of free grace, will not this secure to us an admission into heaven, without that additional operation to which you refer, and of which I can form no clear conception?"

"The exercise of free grace in pardoning a sinner is merely exempting him from a liability to punishment in this world, and in the world to come; but if he remain unrenewed, he will be the same in his moral principles, in his predilections, and antipathies, after he is pardoned, as he was while under a sentence of condemnation. He will feel no filial reverence for God; the love of Christ will not glow in his soul; he will possess no aptitude to hold fellowship with the pure spirits of the celestial world; nor can he live and move amongst them with dignity and ease, as one of their order."

"I perceive, Sir, the drift of your meaning; but yet it is enveloped in mysticism. One moment I seem to have it; but it is gone ere I can lay hold of it; it flits before me, and vanishes. However, there is one question which I shall feel obliged by you replying to: By what process can I originate, or get originated, this new spiritual life into my soul; and how must I set about it?"

"You cannot, Sir, originate it. As you cannot pardon yourself, neither can you renew yourself."



This remark fell with terrible force on his spirit, and cast a deep gloom on his countenance. He looked fearfully anxious, like a man who, on gaining an eminence apparently beyond the reach of the tide, sees his connection with the shore cut off by the unexpected rising of the waters.

“I am, then, in a hopeless condition! It appears, Sir, from your statement, that I came into existence in a state of spiritual death, and consequent condemnation, without possessing any self-quickening power. This, if true, forces upon me the conviction that I must look upon myself as a poor unfortunate being, involved in a tremendous calamity, which I could not avoid, and from which I cannot extricate myself. Why, Sir, I am in a state of hopeless and irrecoverable misery.”

“No, Sir, neither irrecoverable nor hopeless; for God, who is rich in mercy to pardon, is also rich in mercy to renew and quicken you into newness of life.”

“But will He do it?”

“Yes, if you are willing to have it done.”

“Willing! Sir; I am anxious to be saved, and saved on any terms, and by any process. I am willing to submit to any privations, any self-humiliation, any physical or mental tortures, to obtain the hope of salvation.”

“One of the principles of God’s wise and gracious administration is embodied in the following absolute promise made to his ancient people, accompanied by its contingent condition:—‘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 flesh, 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. Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock’ (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 37). A new spirit and a new heart is what you need, and now want; this God alone can give, and for this you must pray with great earnestness.”

We now arrived at Aston, where, after having tea, we sauntered out as before into the garden, and entered the grotto to admire the view. Here Mr. Ryder resumed the thread of our conversation by saying:—"Permit me to ask you a question, which I feel to be important. When the Divine Spirit breathes this spiritual life into the soul of a man who has been living in a state of spiritual death, is he conscious of the change produced?"

"In some rare instances, I believe that a man does feel the action of the renewing and life-giving power of the Divine Spirit, at the very instant of time he is passing from death to life, though he may not then know by whom the spiritual operation is performed."

"But, Sir, as it is only rarely that such a sudden transition from death to life takes place, by what signs are we to determine its actual occurrence, when it is the result of a more lengthened process?"

"I believe the infusion of spiritual life in the soul of man is always an instantaneous act, though a long time may and often does elapse before he actually knows that he is quickened into newness of life. And in all cases the signs by which we may decide as to its actual occurrence, are very similar to those by which we determine the reality of our physical existence. For example, I am conscious that I am alive, because I breathe, feel, see, and hear, which I could not do if I were not alive. By a similar criterion we arrive at a satisfactory belief of the reality of our spiritual life. I am made alive from the dead; and as a proof of it, I can utter the voice of prayer and of praise. I *feel* sin to be a loathsome burden, offensive to my taste; I can *see* the glory of Christ displayed in his life, in his sufferings, and in his death. I can *hear* the voice of the Lord speaking to me in his promises, to comfort and strengthen me; and in his precepts, commanding my subjection and resignation to his sovereign will; I can *walk* in the way of his commandments, and feel obedience to be a source of gratitude and delight. I often *hunger* and *thirst* after a more perfect conformity to his righteousness; and now my meditations on God are sweet and delightful; and I can say—'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon

earth that I desire beside thee' (Psal. lxxiii. 25). These are the unmistakable signs of spiritual life."

"You certainly, Sir, have supplied me with ample materials for thinking and reflection, and made an opening for my more easy understanding of the Bible. But there is one question of a more direct personal nature, which I wish to propose, and it is this—What am I to do? I am restless and unhappy. I want relief. Where, and how, can I obtain it? What positive thing am I to do, or suffer, to obtain it? That is the great question with me *now*. I perceive that the ulterior design of the Christian scheme of revelation is to restore man to the moral state from which he is fallen; but I have now to do with the present time, and the present state of my mind. What am I to do, or suffer, to gain peace of mind, and get that new spiritual life, of which you have been speaking?"

"I am happy, Sir, that it is in my power to give a specific, and I trust a satisfactory reply to your question. You are awakened out of your long dormant state of moral insensibility, to see and to feel your real character and condition in relation to God and eternity. This is the primary cause of your mental disquietude and restlessness. You have sought for relief in the outward forms of religion, and in the services and sacraments of the Church; but you have not succeeded in obtaining it. These expedients have proved to you the mirage of hope, not the well-spring of relief. Happily, there is a relieving power yet in reserve, which will not deceive or disappoint you—'For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost' (Luke xix. 10). As Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, he will not refuse to save any sinner who makes his appeal to his compassion and his power. Indeed, he assures us—'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37)."

He now arose, evidently much impressed, and walked slowly out of the grotto, pacing to and fro along the gravel walk. After some time I moved off in an opposite direction; but at length we again met.

"I hope, Sir," he said, "you will excuse my uncourteous act in leaving you; but I wished, by a little calm reflection, to settle in my mind the important statement which you have given me, before the vivid impressions which it produced went off. I trust I shall long remember this interview; and I hope the day may come when you will hail me as a fellow-disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ."

I then prayed with him, and shortly after took my departure. I did not see his sister on this occasion, as she was from home, but I left a copy of Dr. Doddridge's *Sermons on Regeneration*, with a note begging her acceptance of it, and a request that she would read it carefully.

Several months after this visit, when I had returned home to my ordinary duties, I received the subjoined letter from Mr. Ryder, which I read with emotions of gratitude and praise to Him who works all things after the counsel of his own will:—

"ASTON, 25th February, 18—.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—The conversation which passed between us, when I had the pleasure of a visit from you some months since, supplied the clue which I had long been searching for, to a right understanding of the Word of God on the great practical questions relating to my present happiness and final salvation. I know that my knowledge is still very superficial, but I trust I now understand the hidden mystery; what it is to pass from death to life; and from a state of guilt and condemnation to pardon and acceptance. I have taken the one decisive step, and cast myself at the feet of the Saviour, pleading his own promise, and he has given me rest. I have now obtained—what I long sought for in vain—peace of mind, and a good hope of final happiness; because I have been diverted from the refuge of lies, in which I too long trusted, to the true source of consolation.

"You will not be surprised to hear, that the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Cole became more and more distasteful, as I advanced in my knowledge of Christ and the mystery of redemption, till at length

I reluctantly withdrew from his church, which I have attended from my childhood. I now attend the church of the Rev. Mr. Guion, an excellent preacher and pastor, whom I believe you know. And it is with no slight emotions of joyous delight, that I have it in my power to inform you, that my beloved sister has been brought to feel the renewing influence of religion on her heart. This blessed result has been brought about by reading the incomparable sermons of Dr. Doddridge, which you so kindly gave to her. Being favoured with the enlightened and soul-searching ministry of our excellent pastor, she soon obtained joy and peace in believing. While I was left to wander in darkness, or in twilight, through many an anxious month, at times nearly despairing of a successful issue, her translation from darkness into light was almost instantaneous. She is now my helper in the Lord; and the affection which always subsisted between us is now doubly strengthened by the ties of Christian love and sympathy.

“I hope that ere long you will again be in this part of the country; and I need not say how glad my sister and I should be to see you.—With every sentiment of respect, in which Anna joins, believe me, yours very sincerely,  
J. RYDER.”

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## THE SCEPTIC RECLAIMED.

**B**EFORE leaving Fairmount to return home, I was unexpectedly gratified by a letter from Mr. Gordon, who had learned, from a mutual acquaintance, of my having gone to pay a visit to my friends in the west of England. His communication, upon the whole, much pleased me, and revived hopes which had almost ceased to exist. It satisfied me that his mind was restless, yielding in some slight degree to the

force of facts and evidence, though he still clung pertinaciously to his sceptical notions. He wrote as follows:—"I have been prosecuting my inquiries on what you call the grand question, having read carefully Dr. Bogue's essay, which you kindly presented to me. I have also conned over some of the facts and evidences which you brought forward at our last interview.\* This, I presume, you will say is taking a step or two in the right direction; and I suppose you will wish to know the practical result. I will first give you the negative: it has not issued in what you would hail as a glorious triumph—my conversion to the Christian faith. No; I am what I was when you left me—still a decided unbeliever. My heart recoils from admitting that a theory of religion, enveloped in such mystery, and accompanied by such conditions, can claim a Divine origin. However, this much I will confess, that it has led me to revise, in some slight degree, my own theory of belief, or what you may call my disbelief. You will excuse me going into detail, as that would spin out this letter to a tedious length. I admit, then, that Christianity may work very beneficially amongst savages; and it may promote the happiness of persons of intelligence and taste, who are trained up under its influence. I have now no desire to exterminate it. Indeed, I would rather consent to let the venerable tree, which has taken such deep root in popular prejudices, or, if you prefer it, in popular sympathies, remain to afford shade and shelter to you who regard it as the tree of life, than I would touch it to injure it. No, Sir; I respect the taste and feelings of others too much to wish to deprive them of the object of their attachment and veneration."

Mr. Gordon concluded his letter by saying that he hoped to have the pleasure of seeing me in London, as he presumed that I should pass through the metropolis on my way to my own town.

About a week after receiving this letter I quitted Fairmount, leaving Mrs. Orme, who was still to remain for a few weeks longer at Rockhill. From the pressure of my engagements in the metropolis I was unable to make out my purposed call on Mr. Gordon. Having

\* Vol. ii. p. 94.

occasion, however, about four months afterwards, to go to London to preach a charity sermon, I set out one evening to see him; but on reaching his house, was concerned to find that he was in a very precarious state of health, and had been unable to go out for some time. On sending up my card, I was at once admitted, and found him in the drawing-room reclining on the sofa. He looked very ill; but, judging from the expression of his countenance, I thought he was glad to see me. On making some inquiries as to the length of his confinement, and the nature of his disorder, he made a reply which brought on a lengthened conversation.

"It is now," he said, "nearly three months since I was in the city; and it is doubtful whether I shall ever go there again."

"Is your disorder, then, of such a threatening character?"

"Why, yes, it baffles Lawrence. But he is now trying another medicine, which he hopes will take effect; if not, he says, I must prepare for the worst."

"I hope, then, you are making the necessary preparations."

"To be candid, Sir, I am the same man as when we had the last chat on the question of Christian missions, with this only difference—then I was in vigorous health, but now I am prostrated by disease, and disease which threatens to be fatal, though it does not give me much pain."

"You must no doubt feel some anxiety when so near death—on the eve of the final extinction of your being, or of passing into another world of existence, and for ever?"

"Why, yes, I am no stoic; and therefore I feel emotions both novel and painful. I would rather live than die, especially if I could recover my usual health and energy; because it is better to be, than not to be. The prospect of a termination to my existence is no pleasing theme for reflection."

"Then you still believe that when death comes you will cease to exist, and perish for ever like the beasts of the field?"

"That is my belief."

"But you may be mistaken."

"I admit it, because mere belief and positive knowledge are two very different things."

"Then you are living in a state of uncertainty; as you know not whether you will be annihilated or live on for ever in another state of existence. Surely this must give rise to some fearful and depressing thoughts."

"No, I cannot say that it does, because I think the Deity who brought me into existence without my solicitation, and who has given me such a large portion of enjoyment throughout life, will still befriend me, if he decide that I shall continue to exist after death in another world. That I shall continue to exist, however, I do not expect."

"But do you not perceive the fallacious ground on which your expectation is placed, unless you believe, and without any clear evidence, that the Deity has made a special dispensation in your behalf?"

"I don't quite understand you."

"Why, you infer that your future condition of existence, if you are to live after death, will be similar to the one which you have enjoyed here, and which has been, upon the whole, a very favourable one. Suppose another person proceed on the same principle, he must infer, that his future condition will be a most painful and unfortunate one, simply because his present condition is so. There is, then, a self-evident and a dangerous fallacy in the proposition which allows two persons to draw from it such opposite inferences, the one for, and the other against himself, and without any reference to personal conduct or character."

"There may be a logical fallacy in my proposition, and in my reasoning on it; but it is the only ground of hope, when, in some moments of misgiving, I am led to admit the possibility of passing into another state of existence."

"Well, then, you are reduced to the necessity of making one admission, which is a terrible rebuke to your sceptical theory."

"Indeed! and what is that?"

"That your position, in relation to death, is an unenviable one,



especially when placed in comparison with that of a believer in Christ; indeed, it is one which should make you recoil in terror."

"I admit it. Yes, Sir, if you were in the same condition with myself, you would, I have no doubt, have visions of celestial glory fitting before your imagination, and you would be in ecstasy. Yes, a believer in Christ has a great advantage over us, when he approaches the crisis of his destiny. No gloomy thoughts or anxieties harass his soul; but on the contrary, a brilliant prospect stretching far into eternity opens to his view. Yes, a believer in Christianity ought to feel a transport of joy in anticipation of his death."

"Then, on your own admission, death to a believer in Christ is the morning star of a glorious day; but to a sceptic, it is the dark shadow of coming night."

"I admit you have brilliant visions, when death is coming to bear you off; we have none, we see nothing but darkness, and feel at times the terror of uncertainty. I admit you occupy the vantage ground then; you stand on what you believe is a rock; beneath us is the moving quicksand. Yes, you die in general better than we do, or can do. There is no denying this; and I shall not attempt to disguise it."

"Your condition, my dear friend, in my apprehension, is truly appalling. It agonizes me. I see you standing on the edge of a tremendous precipice. In a moment you may be lost, and perish, and for ever. Shall I pray with you, before I leave you? The prayer of faith may prevail for your rescue and salvation."

"Excuse me, dear Sir, without supposing that I undervalue your generous friendship. You would save me, I know, if you could. But I have no faith, and therefore it would not be honest to appear devout, and I cannot compel myself to believe."

I called again before I left London, but as he was asleep, I did not see him; but I saw his housekeeper, a very intelligent, pious woman, in whose integrity I knew he had great confidence. She informed me, that when sitting with her master during one very restless night; and thinking, from some heavy sighs which he occa-

sionally heaved, that some new feelings were stirring within him, she said to him—"It is a great pity, Sir, that you will cling so firmly to your infidel opinions when they cannot comfort you. You had better look up to the Saviour; he is able, and he is willing to comfort and save you."

"Well, Mary," he replied, "I admit it would be better if I could believe in a Saviour, as you do, than to remain in my present state of uncertainty; but I have no faith—I cannot compel myself to believe."

"Then, Sir, pray to the Lord Jesus, and he will give you faith to trust in him for salvation. He has compassion for them that are out of the right way."

"But how can I pray, when I have no faith in prayer? It may all be true what you believe, and if it should, I am irrecoverably lost, and for ever; but I have no faith in such a tremendous issue."

"But, Sir, such a tremendous issue may be certain, even though you do not believe it; and the bare possibility of its occurrence should alarm you."

"I admit that, but I can't compel myself to believe."

I returned home with a heavy heart, feeling as a humane person feels, on coming out of the prison, where he has had the last agonizing interview with an old friend, whom he has left under the sentence of death. Having requested Mr. Gordon's housekeeper to let me know if any change took place in his health, I received a note from her a few weeks afterwards, saying, the crisis was past, and that he was so far restored, that he was now at Maidenhead, trying the effect of a change of air and scene. This gave me pleasure—as a respite sometimes issues in a rescue. His form was ever before me. Many a petition did I offer up to the Hearer of prayer in his behalf; and more than once, on rising from my knees, I felt a strong persuasion that the prayer of faith would prevail. It was after a very remarkable season of special devotion, when I pleaded with the Lord with intense and hallowed earnestness, that I received from him the following letter, which was an ample recompense for all my labours and anxieties:—

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I yield at last. My only hope for pardon and peace is in the precious blood of Christ. My heart is too full to write much. It is full to overflowing. Do come and see me, and I will tell you all. I can secure you a spare room not far from my own lodgings.—Yours truly,  
ARTHUR GORDON.”

I set off immediately, and spent several days with him; and had from him and his housekeeper a detailed statement of the occurrences which had taken place, and which I will now reduce to continuous order, for the gratification of the reader. He had taken lodgings in a cottage occupied by a poor but pious family, and which was pleasantly situated near the banks of the Thames. Though he had no regard for the exercises of family devotion, yet he had no very strong antipathy to them. He therefore felt no annoyance by hearing the good man read and pray with his family morning and evening, though no one knew that he was in the habit of listening. The simple, yet earnest petitions (as Mr. Gordon afterwards confessed) which were offered up to the Hearer of prayer, in behalf of the stranger, for his restoration to the enjoyment of perfect health, and that his affliction might be sanctified to his spiritual benefit, often made a deep impression on his heart, but it passed away without any appearance of a beneficial result.

An incident now occurred which had nearly proved fatal to him, but it was overruled for good. He went with a party of friends to spend the day at Marlow; and as they calculated on the probability of seeing some wild ducks, one gentleman took his gun with him. On their return down the river in the evening, they resolved, as it felt rather cold, to walk the last two or three miles. In stepping out of the boat, one of the party slipped, and at that moment the loaded gun, which he carried in his hand, went off; Mr. Gordon, who was a little in advance, and stooping down to fasten his shoe, fell, and his hat was blown to shivers. All were terror-struck, under the impression that he was killed; but it was soon discovered that he had sustained no injury, beyond a slight wound on the right

side of his forehead, and the tip of his ear, which were slightly grazed. They pressed around him with their congratulations; one facetiously remarking, that he must have been born under a lucky star, to dodge death so dexterously, when it was so near him. The accident, and the escape, naturally engaged more of their conversation than any of the other occurrences of the day; but there was no reference to the special providence of God, except in the usual strain of sceptical derision. "A pious believer," said the facetious man, "would be for kneeling down, and offering up a tribute of thanksgiving for your lucky escape, Gordon; and so should I, if I believed in a special Providence."

"I don't believe," said another, "that God ever interferes in such little matters; if he did, he could easily have prevented the slip of the foot, which was the first moving cause of the explosion; and had he done that, Gordon would have saved his hat, and gone home without his scars."

These remarks, which at any other time would have been in harmony with his opinions and sentiments, by his own admission, now grated harshly on his ears; he felt his spirit recoil from them, and for the first time in his life wished himself out of such company. He was somewhat astonished, as he confessed to me, by the suddenly awakened antipathies, which beat so strongly in his heart. On arriving at his lodgings, he related to the family the particulars of his narrow escape from death; when the good man exclaimed, in a subdued tone of pious reverence, "The Lord be praised for protecting you in such an hour of danger. This, Sir, is an instance of what the Psalmist calls preventing mercy, for which you should be truly grateful to the Lord."

Mr. Gordon knew that his servant united with the family in their evening devotions; and thinking that this accident and escape would form a subject of reference in the prayers of the pious cottager, he kept his door ajar, and sat and listened. He heard his servant say, "My master is as kind a man as walks on the earth, and is thankful for any attentions which are paid to him by any one; but he has no

gratitude in his heart to the God of his mercies. He lives, as the apostle says, without God in the world."

"Well, then," replied the good man, "if he offer up no thanksgivings to the Lord for his miraculous escape from death, we will do it for him; and pray that he may be brought to feel as a child of our heavenly Father ought to feel." He then read the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, remarking, at the conclusion, that it was a great privilege to be able to believe the consolatory and soul-sustaining truths which they had been reading. One sentence in his prayer was uttered with emphatic earnestness—"We thank thee, O Lord, for preserving the life of the stranger now sojourning with us, when it was so near death; and we pray that he may feel towards thee as a child ought to feel towards his heavenly Father." This touched his heart.

"I never," he said to me, "felt such an emotion as I experienced when that simple prayer was uttered. It was as thrilling and as powerful as it was sudden and unexpected. I immediately arose and seated myself on the sofa, and was soon absorbed in a train of deep thought. Yes, death came very near me to-night. He has marked the signs of his nearness in the scar wounds on my forehead and my ear. Was it mere chance which gave me a hair-breadth escape from a sudden death? Yes, says infidelity; God never interferes in little matters. But would it have been to me a little matter if I had had an arm blown off, or a leg broken, or been sent out of life into another world; and probably to —. No. It would have been a great matter *then*. Is my preservation from death to be regarded as a little matter? Was God away from the spot where my friend's foot slipped? Yes, says infidelity; and I should have responded to this saying before the event occurred; but I cannot *now*. I doubt my own faith; I renounce it. It may do at a club, or a convivial party; but it won't do for the spot where death was coming, but where the victim has been miraculously rescued from his power. 'AS A CHILD OUGHT TO FEEL TOWARDS HIS HEAVENLY FATHER!' Beautiful expression! Yes, I ought to feel grateful

to God; but I have never considered him as standing in the relation of a father to me. But has he not on this occasion acted like one?"

On turning and looking carelessly round the room, he saw his copy of Tremaine lying on the side-board. He took it up and opened it; the chapter on Providence caught his eye, and he read it. "This," he confessed to me, he found to be but "starlight-reading; clear, but cold; brilliant, but wanting in power; expanding the intellect, and charming the imagination, but not finding its way to the heart. I read, and believed; read, and yet doubted. I was," he said, "completely bewildered; but I recollect saying, O that I had the faith of the cottager, or my servant, my mind would be in perfect peace."

His housekeeper, who, as yet, was ignorant of the novel process of thinking which was going on in his mind, informed me that she was astonished and delighted one evening by his asking her for the loan of her Bible. She fetched it, and on giving it to him, said, "That book, Sir, will do you good, if you pray over it when you are reading it." He read the sixth chapter of Matthew; read it several times; and when referring to it in our conversation, he said, "What a difference, Sir, between the two readings! Tremaine reasons closely and clearly; he almost demonstrates and compels belief; but there is no pathos, no power; the heart still remains sceptical and unmoved. Jesus Christ asserts, commands, and promises; the heart is captivated, and induced to place its trust in God. Yes! 'it must be,' as the pious cottager remarked, 'an inestimable privilege to be able to believe the consolatory and soul-sustaining truths which I have now been reading.' I believe now. But how is this? Logic has not been reasoning. My intellect is dormant; and yet it is spell-bound by novel and solemn thoughts. It is making new spiritual discoveries, which, I believe, are grand realities, but which I have long despised and rejected as legendary tales; and I feel tranquil. And yet, as the process of reflection goes on, I feel again bewildered. My calm is becoming a tumult; and out of satis-

faction springs up anxiety. Is this a delusion, or am I waking up out of a mental torpor amidst sublime spiritual realities? I am conscious of a change which has come upon me, and very unexpectedly."

"You do not doubt its reality?"

"No, Sir; it is no sham. I am as conscious of its reality as I am of my own existence. I am no sceptic *now*. I have no hostile feeling *now* against the remedial scheme of salvation. I adore Christ *now*. I can give him my heart. I am astonished by my own utterances; but they are the genuine expressions of my feelings."

"I presume, Sir, you ascribe the great change which has taken place in your belief, and in your moral taste, to a supernatural cause; to what the apostle calls the grace of God?"

"I do, Sir. There are three things which satisfy me that this marvellous change is the work of God. In the first place, I had no conception that such a change was either necessary or possible; in the next place, I had no more power or inclination to effect it myself than I have to raise a dead man to life; and then it has been produced so suddenly, preceded by no intimations or anticipations of such an occurrence, and by such apparently inadequate means. The simple prayers of the rustic cottager subdued me. They touched my heart. I could, as you know, withstand the assaults of the most acute and powerful reasoning; your persuasive eloquence touched no cord of my heart. I could repel, with a sarcasm, the most awful warnings; and stand immovable when death was advancing to execute the penal sentence; but I could not stand out against the simple prayers of the pious cottager. Indeed, I felt more inclined to yield than to resist. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. He made me willing in the day of his power. On this principle it can be accounted for, but on no other. Reason, as well as gratitude, compels me to say—By the grace of God, I am what I am. But O, my friend, where can I find language to give full expression to the astonishment and gratitude which I feel when reflecting on the long-suffering and the forbearance of God, whose majesty I have so often insulted, and whose authority I have set at

nought, defying his threatenings, and spurning his overtures of mercy! How marvellous the condescending compassion and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has at last brought me to penitence and contrition, and given me a hope of salvation!"

"I suppose you now recal to your recollection, at times, some of the subjects of our former discussions; both your objections to the various parts of revealed truth, and how I endeavoured to refute them?"

"In the first place, I may mention, that from the outset, on the Saturday evening we first met,\* and through every succeeding encounter, I had a latent apprehension that you were right; and that your belief, with its consolations and prospects, was far more conducive to human happiness, than my disbelief, with its suspicions and uncertainties; I clearly saw, that on your hypothesis, the loss of life, which is the greatest of human possessions, would be an incalculable gain; but on mine, it would be an irreparable loss. When reasoning in my calmer moments on these data, I arrived at this conclusion—for man's sake the Christian faith *ought* to be a genuine faith, even if it is not so; and I recollect when you were assigning the causes which invest the name of Jesus Christ with such great power over the human mind on its passing through scenes of extreme privation and peril, and especially when passing from one world to another, I felt that I would gladly exchange my disbelief and its uncertainties, for your faith and its assurances. I now, Sir, by the grace of God, can add my testimony to the truthfulness of what you asserted in that encounter. The Christian faith is both a renovating and consolatory power, and it does the work ascribed to it; it gives peace to a wounded spirit, and a hope full of immortality to the guilty and morally worthless."

"You would not now willingly be what you once were?"

"Be what I once was! no, Sir. As readily suppose that a glorified spirit, if left to his own choice, would choose to come back to earth, to re-tread its polluting soil, to raise again the standard of

\* Vol. i. p. 94.



rebellion against the Majesty of heaven, and again intermingle with the workers of iniquity. Be what I once was! no, Sir. Like the man in the gospel who found the pearl of great price, I have no wish to lose what I have miraculously found; I have found the Messiah, Jesus Christ the Saviour, mighty to save; and to his service I now consecrate myself for life and for ever."

He took me one evening to the place where the gun-shot accident happened, and when pointing with his stick to the spot where he fell, he stood a while speechless, the tears trickling down his cheeks. when he exclaimed, under the impulse of strong emotion, "What a mercy that I was not blown from this spot into hell! On this spot, Sir, I have stood every evening since the accident occurred, to offer up my adorations and thanksgiving to the God of my mercies, and to echo the utterance of Paul, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief' (1 Tim. i. 15). Yes, Sir, and I will visit it when the gray hairs of age hang upon me, if I am spared to old age; and shall I ever forget it when in heaven? But the gun-shot and my escape would have proved the materials for a profane joke in a convivial party, had it not been for the sovereign grace of God, who employed it as the precursor of my salvation—'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name' (Psal. ciii. 1).

He continued at Maidenhead till his health was thoroughly re-established, and then he returned to London. On his reappearance at the counting-house, in which he had long held an important office, he received the hearty congratulations of the firm, and of all his fellow-clerks, by whom he was greatly respected, for his close application to his duties, his gentlemanly habits, and the kindness of his disposition."

Shortly afterwards he had occasion to pass through my town on some business of his employers, and paid me a visit. We spent a very pleasant evening together. He then informed me that he had had a visit from Mr. Newton, and another infidel friend; who called

with their congratulations on his escape from the gun-shot, and the recovery of his health, and to propose an excursion to Greenwich, with a party, on the following Sunday. This invitation he at once declined, and added, "You probably will be surprised to hear that I renounce as false, and as fatal, all the sceptical sentiments and opinions I once held; and now embrace with gratitude and joy the glorious gospel of Christ, as a true and sublime revelation of mercy and of grace. In future, my Sabbaths will be held sacred to public worship, in preference to any other exercises or pursuits. And I would earnestly entreat you to turn your serious attention to the paramount claims of the gospel; its rejection, as a legend of superstition, will embitter your reflections and appal your anticipations in a dying hour." They listened to this with profound astonishment, making no other remark than simply wishing him well, and then abruptly left him.

I took occasion from this reference to Newton and his companion, to remark, that it would have been a great blessing for himself and others, if he had undergone this change at an earlier period of his life.

"Ah, Sir," he replied, and the tear stood in his eye as he spoke, "I reflect with shame, and at times with agonizing regret, on the efforts I have made to seduce others from the way of righteousness and peace. My friend Lewellin has happily escaped from the evil course into which I led him on his first settlement in London,\* and he is now a bright star in the church of Jesus Christ; but I fear that some have passed into the eternal world, under the fatal delusions with which I perverted their minds. These two old friends who lately paid me a visit of congratulation, and others still living who are lost in the crowd of gaiety and dissipation, have sustained incalculable injury from the influence of my example, and the fatal tendency of my former sentiments and opinions. A recollection of these facts will entail upon me bitter regret and stinging remorse through the whole course of my life; and though I may obtain mercy

\* Vol. i. p. 13.

from HIM whose name I have so often blasphemed, yet from them I can expect nothing but the severest invective for having misled them, or the keenest satire and reproach for turning a renegade, as they will term it, to the system of scepticism we once professed in common."

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### THE RECTOR'S DEATH-BED.



FOR several years Mr. Ingleby's health had been gradually declining, but to the last he displayed great vigour of intellect and vivacity of spirit. When I saw him on the occasion of my wedding visit to Mr. Lewellin, he appeared to be still hale and active, notwithstanding the great age which he had attained. In common with the rest of his friends, I expected that he might still be spared for a few years to instruct them by his counsels, and animate them by his example. Mr. Roscoe's death, however, proved a severe shock to him; he fell into a state of nervous depression; and after a violent cold which he took in going to visit a poor cottager, in a remote part of his parish, his parishioners began to fear that he would soon be removed from them. For several Sabbaths he was confined to the rectory; but when he grew a little better, he resumed the discharge of his pastoral duties. Though he brought into the pulpit the stores of knowledge which he had been collecting for many years, and felt his spirit still glowing with the ardour of an intense affection for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his hearers, his energy was now considerably abated; his voice, which was originally full and commanding, became low and enfeebled, and he often appeared exhausted by fatigue, even before he had half finished the service.

We sometimes see a congregation, which a minister has collected together in the days of his vigour, forsaking him in his old age, to pay

their homage to the rising sun of popularity; preferring the voice of a comparative stranger to that of their former shepherd; but the venerable Ingleby was never deserted. The people pressed to hear him when the silver locks of age adorned his head, with as much eagerness as when he possessed all the energy of youth; and felt as deep an interest in the last services which he conducted, as in any that had preceded them. It must be admitted that his situation did not bring him within the immediate influence of any strong competition for public favour; but though many of his congregation resided much nearer other clergymen, they nevertheless, at all seasons of the year, continued regular in their attendance on the ministrations of Mr. Ingleby to the close of his life. This attachment to their pastor took its rise in the usefulness of his public labours; and as he had uniformly conducted himself amongst them as a holy man of God, devoting his time and his influence to promote their happiness, his character rose in their esteem as circumstances gave him an opportunity of developing it. He acted on the following maxims, which were given him by an aged clergyman, not long after he took orders, and the practical utility of whose advice Mr. Ingleby soon experienced in securing him the permanent regard of his flock:—"Preserve the sanctity of your public character in the intercourse of private and social life. Do not visit your people often, except when they *need* your visits, and then convince them, that while you have no time to spare for the purposes of amusement or recreation, you are ever ready to attend to the claims of pastoral duty. Avoid engaging in the commerce of the world; yet never think that you are acting beneath the dignity of your station when engaged in giving advice to the inexperienced, or assisting others by your counsels, to guide their affairs with discretion. Let the poor of your flock know that their pastor is their friend in adversity, their advocate when oppressed, and will be their comforter when on the bed of sickness or of death."

About a month before his decease he arose on the Sabbath morning free from pain, the spirit of former times came upon him, and

he felt that he could get through the labours of the day, without availing himself of the assistance which his neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Guion, had so kindly offered. The text from which he addressed the congregation was taken from 2 Pet. i. 13, 14:—"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." When he read the words, the attention of the people was immediately fixed on him. The effect which was produced by the delivery of this discourse was very powerful. It was undoubtedly much aided by the peculiar circumstances of the speaker, who was grown gray and infirm in the service of the people, and who in his introduction informed them, that he was led to the choice of the subject, under an impression, which left no doubt of the propriety of its application to himself. The aspect of the preacher, pale, emaciated, standing on the verge of eternity—the simplicity and majesty of his sentiments—the sepulchral solemnity of a voice which seemed to issue from the shades, combined with the intrinsic dignity of the subject—perfectly quelled the audience with tenderness and terror, and produced such a scene of audible weeping as was perhaps never surpassed. All other emotions were absorbed in devotional feeling; it seemed to us as though we were permitted for a short space to look into eternity, and every sublunary object vanished before "the powers of the world to come." "I had often heard him," says Mr. Stevens, in a letter which I received from him, "when he was more energetic, but never when he was more impressive; when he discovered more originality of genius, but never when he displayed more intensity of feeling; when he employed a more polished and a more imaginative style of address, but never when he spoke with more authority and power; and, thinking with the rest of the audience, that he was now terminating his labours, I felt a high gratification that he was enabled to bring them to a close with so much credit to himself, as the able and faithful minister of the New Testament. His appeal to the people, after he had finished his discourse

and closed his Bible, delivered in simple and unaffected language, subdued the whole audience, and left us, when he had finished it, no alternative but an involuntary burst of sorrow that we should hear no more that voice to which we had so often listened."

The following is an extract from the Rector's farewell sermon:—

"My dearly beloved brethren, I have now served you in the ministry of the gospel for more than forty years, and am on the eve of closing my labours amongst you. Looking back on my life, I discover many defects in my character, and many imperfections in the manner in which I have discharged my public duties; these I most humbly deplore; but I trust they have been only the ordinary infirmities of a Christian minister, who has uniformly aimed to reach a higher point of excellence than he could ever attain. If I cannot, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, appeal to the holiness and unblameableness of my behaviour amongst you; yet I trust I can to the ardour of my affection, and the fidelity of my public ministrations; and while I would entreat you to cast the veil of charity over all the blemishes of my character, I would, at the same time, charge 'every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' The truth which I have preached to you is now my support in prospect of the scene which is before me. The time of my departure is at hand. My course is nearly finished. I shall soon stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. My eternal state shall soon be decided; and I shall soon know the final decision. But I am not alarmed. I do not dread death. The judgment-seat does not appal me. The final sentence awakens no fearful forebodings of sorrow. I am looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Whether I shall ever be permitted to address you again from this pulpit, is known only to Him who works all things after the counsel of his own will; nor do I feel very solicitous to do so. If I should, I shall appear amongst you in weakness, if not in fear and in much trembling; and if I should not, I hope you will be provided with another minister, who will, either in this church, or elsewhere, as the Lord

may direct, preach to you with more energy, and with more success, the glorious gospel which I have so often proclaimed to you. But I cannot leave you without saying, that as I have not shunned to declare the whole truth of God in the most faithful manner, if any of you should eventually perish, you will not have it in your power to say that it was owing to my unfaithfulness. Any of you perish! What! will you reject the counsel of God against yourselves? Will you refuse to come to Jesus Christ, that you may have life? Will you neglect the great salvation, which has been made known unto you; and sink down to endless woe under the accumulated guilt of your impenitence? Must I be compelled to appear as a witness against any of you, in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel? and, instead of seeing you accepted in the Beloved, shall I see you banished from the presence of the Lord for ever? And must I now terminate my labours amongst you, under the awful impression, that while they have been the means of saving some, they have become the innocent occasion of aggravating the just condemnation of others? and thus, like the apostle, while to some I have been the savour of life unto life, must I be to others the savour of death unto death?"

When the service was over, many of the people crowded into the aisle though which he passed; some stood in the porch of the church, others along the pathway which led across the graveyard, and some few followed him to the rectory, to shake hands with him and bid him farewell; sorrowing, like the elders of Ephesus, when they fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, most of all that they should see his face no more. This spontaneous expression of attachment, on the part of the people, deeply affected the venerable man, who wept as he reiterated his parting benediction to the aged and the young; and though he had strength given him to go through this trying hour, yet, on entering his parlour, he complained of a giddiness, and immediately fell fainting into the arms of Mr. Lewellin. This excited considerable alarm through the whole family; and one of the servants, in the paroxysm of her agony, sent forth the report

that her master was dead. On his being removed into the open air, however, he soon revived, though, from the distorted appearance of his countenance, it was evident that he had received a slight paralytic stroke. He slept the greater part of the afternoon, but towards evening became very animated, and for several hours conversed, with great cheerfulness, on the immortality of the soul, and its final and blissful destiny.

When Socrates was under sentence of death, he assured his friends, who came to offer him their sympathy, that his chief support in prospect of taking the fatal draught, was an expectation, not unmixed with doubts, of a happy existence after death. From reasoning and reflecting on the subject, he had been led to the conviction that something of man remains after his decease, and that the condition of good men will at last be better than that of the bad; but he could not discover in all his researches, any positive evidence in support of this opinion; and hence, while he expressed a hope of entering the invisible world on passing away from this, he candidly acknowledged that he had his doubts. "My situation," said the venerable Ingleby, "is more enviable than that of the sage of Athens. He doubted the immortality of the soul, while I firmly believe it. And why do I believe it? Not because my nature revolts at the thought of annihilation; not because I feel an instinctive desire to outlive the triumphs of death; but because He who sees the end from the beginning has said, that the wicked 'shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous shall go into life eternal.'"

"We ought," said Mr. Lewellin, "to be very thankful to the Author of revelation, for having announced the fact of our immortality in such a clear and unequivocal manner; for it has always struck me, that no other argument can be admitted as conclusive, but the testimony of one who has an actual knowledge of an endless futurity."

"I quite agree with you," said Mr. Ingleby; "for how is it possible for any being to know that I shall live for ever but that Great



Being who knows the end from the beginning? The communications which we have in the Bible, on this subject, are professedly his testimony; but if we reject these communications as fabulous, we must either give up our hope of immortality, as an idle fancy, or abandon ourselves to that state of dubious uncertainty, in which the Athenian sage lived and died. And to this dilemma the infidels of modern times are reduced; hence, while they cannot *disbelieve* in a future state of existence, they cannot anticipate it with any degree of confidence. If the gospel be, what they say it is, a cunningly devised fable, which has its origin, not in the records of truth, but in the invention of man, it is a fable which is eminently conducive to human happiness; and I should consider that man my enemy, who would even attempt to expose its fallacy. I am now near the close of life, the tomb is opening to receive me, and ere long I shall cease to be an inhabitant of this world. Am I to perish like the beasts of the field? or am I to exist in another state of being? These are questions which now present themselves to my mind, with an air of solemn majesty, which they never before assumed; but to whom can I propose them, with any hope of obtaining a satisfactory reply? There is no voice which speaks, but that which comes from the excellent glory; and that voice tells me, that this mortal shall put on immortality; that death shall be swallowed up in victory; and it teaches me to offer my thanksgivings to God, who hath given me the victory over the fear of death, and the terror of the grave, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The language," observed Mr. Stevens, "which our Lord addressed to his disciples, just before his departure, to assuage the violence of their grief, is no less calculated to afford us consolation under our sufferings, especially when we are brought near the verge of eternity:—'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'"

"I do believe in Him," replied the Rector, "and enjoy the influence of that belief, in the calm placidity of my mind. I do believe that he is preparing a place for me amongst the mansions of the blessed, and I enjoy the influence of that belief in the sublime anticipations of hope. Yes, I shall soon see him in all the glory of his majesty, and in all the tenderness of his compassion; and with the rest of the redeemed I shall soon bow down in his presence with mingled emotions of astonishment and delight! With astonishment, that he ever condescended to love me, and to employ me in his service; and with delight, at the scenes which I shall then behold, and the voices which I shall then hear. Then shall I be satisfied when I am assimilated to the Divine likeness."

"You have then no doubt of your final salvation?"

"No, Sir; I wait for it as an event of absolute certainty."

"I perceive," rejoined Mr. Stevens, "that you now make no reference to the opinion which you have so often expressed respecting the 'different degrees of glory which the righteous will have conferred on them in the heavenly world.'"

"I am too deeply anxious on the more important point of getting into heaven, to bestow even a moment's consideration on the degree of my future happiness. I know I shall have infinitely more than I deserve; even if I should have less than the least of all saints; and I am perfectly willing to take what portion my Lord may assign me, under a full conviction that—

'The man who dwells where Jesus is,  
Must be completely blest.'

"I once heard you say," remarked Mrs. Stevens, "that you had no doubt but we should know each other in the heavenly world. Have you, Sir, on more mature deliberation, been induced to change that opinion?"

"No, Madam. When I enter heaven, I shall not forget that I was once an inhabitant of earth—that I once lived in a state of rebellion against God—that he was pleased to bring me to repentance

and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—that he employed me in the ministry, and assigned to me the parish of Broadhurst as the scene of my labours—that I associated in the days of my pilgrimage, with you and your husband, your nephew and his wife, and other Christian friends—and that in the exercise of social communion I once enjoyed some tokens of the Divine favour. If then we shall retain a distinct recollection of places and occurrences connected with our earthly sojourn, we shall surely not forget the persons who gave to those places and occurrences their chief interest and importance. Suppose I should now, while you are sitting by my side, steal out of life, and enter heaven, should I on my passage lose a remembrance of the room in which I expired, or the events which have transpired this day? Impossible! And could I remember these things, without remembering you and my other pious friends? And when you arrive, and are presented faultless, will you not be presented faultless in the individuality of your person, with all *your* remembrances of places, of persons, and events fresh upon you? And will it be possible for us to associate with each other without making some reference to the former state of our existence, which will necessarily lead to a discovery of who we are, and from whence we came, even if there should be no more direct method of gaining a knowledge of each other? But apart from this general reasoning, we may appeal to the Scriptures, which, I think, give their decided sanction to these views. Hence we find the apostle, when writing to the Thessalonians, who had through his instrumentality been converted to the faith of Christ, says, ‘For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.’ I cannot affix any meaning to this passage, unless I believe, that each apostle, and every minister in every succeeding age of the church, will know the persons who have been converted to God through their instrumentality; and that from this knowledge will arise some peculiar degree of glory and of joy.”

“Then, Sir,” said Mr. Lewellin, “doubtless you can now antici-

pate a high degree of felicity from this source, as God has been pleased to make your ministry very useful?"

"I have no doubt but I shall partake of this source of happiness; but I am not now anticipating it. My mind is too deeply occupied by the important question of getting into heaven, to bestow one solitary thought on the minor questions of our speculative belief. I am nearing the borders of the holy land of promise; living now in the anticipation of soon seeing the King in his beauty, and of undergoing that transformation which I shall feel when I see him."

"Then, Sir, you think you will 'shortly put off this tabernacle,' and enter that 'house which is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?'"

"Yes, Mr. Lewellin; and I can put it off with as much composure as I can throw aside a worn-out surplice. The time of my departure is near."

"But," said Mrs. Lewellin, "what shall we do when you are taken from us? We shall be like the sheep, when the shepherd is gone!"

"No, my dear friend, the great Shepherd may pitch another fold, and lead you to another pasturage; but he will still 'feed his flock; he will gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom. and will gently lead those that are with young.'"

His friends now left him to repose. He slept through the greater part of the night, but towards the morning became very restless--often complaining of a strange sensation in his head. He took a light breakfast, and as he felt rather drowsy, requested that he might not be disturbed. About noon he awoke; but felt no disposition to rise. He again took a little nourishment, and again fell asleep, and slept till near five o'clock. When he awoke he asked the hour, but he paid no attention to the reply which was made to him. His physician now gave it as his decided opinion that he would not live through the night. "He is in no pain; and if I judge from the state of his pulse, I should suppose that his life will gradually depart from him; perhaps when he is asleep." But about seven

o'clock he suddenly revived, sat up in his bed, and requested to have his hands and his face washed. When this office of kindness was performed for him, by Mrs. Lewellin, he looked on her for some moments without uttering a word; and then stretching out his hand he said, "My dear, I thank you. You have not anointed me against my burial; but you have refreshed me to encounter the last enemy. Death is upon me, but he does not come in a terrific form. No; he is changed from the king of terrors into an angel of deliverance. I will thank you, Sir," addressing himself to Mr. Lewellin, "to read the eighth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and then pray for me; and pray that I may be favoured with a sense of the Divine presence when passing through the valley of the shadow of death." Mr. Lewellin having complied with his wishes, the venerable pastor then gave his friends his blessing; exhorting them to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart. After remaining silent for some minutes, during which time he appeared to be in the solemn act of commending his soul to God, he looked round with great benignity of countenance, and said, "Why, my children, do you weep?"

"Is it possible, Sir," Mrs. Lewellin replied, "for us to lose such a pastor and such a friend without weeping?"

"Well, I will forgive your tears, because I know you love me; but I cannot weep with you. Though I have not before me that scene of martyrdom which presented itself to the great apostle of the Gentiles, when addressing his son Timothy, yet I can adopt the triumphant language which he then uttered, and with an equal degree of confidence:—'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.'" And having uttered these words he reclined his head on his pillow, and gently breathed his last.

## THE RECTOR'S FUNERAL.



UPON the report of the pastor's death being spread through the village, a sudden shock was felt by almost every one, though the event itself did not excite much surprise. He had lived so long amongst his parishioners, and had endeared himself to them by so many acts of kindness, that they wept for him, as an affectionate child mourns for the loss of his father; and even the worldly and indifferent concurred in paying a just tribute of respect to his memory. On the day of his funeral, an immense concourse of people assembled. The instructions which he had given to his friend, Mr. Stevens, respecting his funeral, were minutely attended to; and they were in strict accordance with the chaste simplicity of character which he had maintained through life. There was no hearse with its nodding plumes—no hired mourners; he had selected twelve of the senior members of his church to carry his body to the tomb, and fixed on the spot where the bier was to rest while they relieved each other from the fatigue of carrying his mortal remains. The procession moved from the rectory about ten o'clock in the morning, preceded by the Rev. Mr. Guion and two other clergymen—followed by a few of his relations and a long train of friends, walking three a-breast, in deep mourning—many of his poorer parishioners, having only a piece of crape on their hats, fell into the rear, which was closed by the children of the Sunday-school, who wore a similar badge of grief. Immediately as the procession began to move, the bell, which had been tolling for more than an hour, ceased till the bier stopped at the appointed resting-place, when it again commenced to send forth its melancholy sounds.

On entering the churchyard, the Rev. Mr. Guion began the solemn service by repeating the animating words of Jesus Christ—"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he

were dead, yet shall he live." The coffin was taken into the church, and placed on an elevated platform before the pulpit, so as to be distinctly seen by the whole congregation; and after a few minutes, during which time the people were taking their seats, Mr. Guion began reading, in a most solemn and impressive manner, the lessons which are appointed for such an occasion. Agreeably to the custom at funeral obsequies in former times, after he had finished the two lessons, he ascended the pulpit, and delivered a discourse from the following appropriate text—"Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more" (Acts xx. 38). After a short and judicious introduction, he called attention to the following remarks, which he illustrated and enforced with great effect:—

"The decease of a minister is an event of great importance—

"I. In relation to himself. No class of men occupy a station so important, or are called to discharge duties so momentous, as ministers of the gospel. The eloquent advocate who pleads at the bar, sometimes snatches the victim from the altar, against whose life the foul conspirator has brought his charge, and he retires from the scene of his labours amidst the plaudits of the people; but in a few years they both sink into the same silent earth, and a remote posterity remains ignorant of their anxieties and of their triumphs. The fearless senator attacks iniquity in the high places of its dominion, or rouses up the slumbering principle of justice to vindicate her insulted honours; but he sleeps with his fathers, and having received the honour of his country's applause he is conveyed to the mansions of the dead. The effects of their labours terminate with the occasion of their exercise; or if they should stretch into a distant futurity, they are circumscribed within the boundaries of time. From man they receive their commission, and to man they resign it when it is executed; and though their conduct will undergo a revision at the day of judgment, yet it is from man they receive their official discharge. But it is not so with us. It is true that we are under some degree of responsibility to our superiors in the

ecclesiastical hierarchy, and it is equally true that we are under some degree of responsibility to the people of our cure; but our chief responsibility relates to a higher tribunal, and a more important decision awaits us than any which man can pronounce. Fix your attention for a moment on a minister of the gospel, see him tottering on the brink of eternity—he falls, we catch his descending mantle, ‘sorrowing most of all that we shall see his face no more;’ but while we are making preparations to perform his funeral obsequies, he is giving up an account of his stewardship. Then the motives which induced him to enter the ministerial office, and which induced him to continue it—the manner in which he spent his time, and discharged the hallowed duties devolving on him—will undergo a strict investigation, and the final sentence will be pronounced, which will fix his doom in raptures or in woe, for ever. If he be found faithful, he will receive the commendation of his Master; but if unfaithful, he will be cast into outer darkness, ‘where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.’

“It is an event of importance in relation—

“II. To the people of his charge. They lose their spiritual teacher, their counsellor, their friend, and their example. Yes! and some of you who are now looking on that coffin, if permitted to give utterance to your sentiments, would say, ‘There lies the holy man of God, who met me in my mad career of folly and of crime, and was the means of turning my feet into the way of peace.’ ‘There he lies,’ another could say, ‘who, when I was perishing for thirst, opened my eyes, and showed me the well of living waters.’ ‘Alas!’ another would exclaim, ‘I shall now see his face no more; who, when I was sinking into despair, under the virulence of my moral malady, told me of the balm of Gilead, and of the great Physician there, who healed and comforted me, giving me renovated health and a deathless life.’ Farewell, holy man of God; we shall see thy face no more, till we see thee the express image of thy Lord’s person.

“It is an event of importance in relation—

“III. To general society. No man, saith the apostle, liveth to him-



self. While we are individually pursuing our separate interests, we are advancing the general good, and not unfrequently serve others, while intent only on serving ourselves. If this be true of men in general, it is more emphatically true in relation to the ministers of the gospel. While they are discharging the functions of their office in relation to the people of their charge, they are diffusing principles abroad in society which will be found to operate more widely than is generally imagined. When they die, the influence of their example, of their character, of their precepts, of their individual exertions to promote private happiness, and to support public institutions—and of their prayers—is a loss which is felt not only in the immediate circle in which they moved, but to a much larger extent; though it may not be felt so instantaneously nor so deeply.

“But, my brethren, it is not in my power to calculate the loss which you have sustained by the decease of the venerated man whose corpse is now before us; and who, for more than forty years, has preached the gospel of peace in this pulpit.

“When he first entered on the duties of his office, he found a barren wilderness; but he has left a fruitful field. The church, which was mouldering to ruins, he repaired and enlarged; the congregation, which was scattered, he has gathered together; and many who have preceded him through the dark valley, and many whom he has left to follow him, he has been the means of saving from the impending wrath of the Almighty. It is now many years since the person who is now addressing you went, under the most unfavourable impressions, to hear him preach; but the word that fell from his lips came with power, and I, who went to scoff, returned to pray. From that hour I revered him as my spiritual father in Christ; and an intimacy soon after commenced, which continued unbroken and undisturbed till death. If I were now to give full scope to my feelings, I should probably be censured by some for pronouncing an extravagant eulogy on his character; but I am conscious that while he owed all his excellence to the renewing and purifying influence of Divine grace, he uniformly displayed, both in public and in private life, a

degree of excellence which has been rarely surpassed, if equalled, in modern times. As a preacher, he excelled no less in the descriptive than in the argumentative style of his address—combining in all his discourses strength of reasoning with the most happy modes of illustration—equally capable of awing his congregation by the solemnity of his manner, and subduing them by the tenderness of his appeals; compelling them by the ardour of his feelings, and energy of his utterance, to lose sight of the messenger who was speaking, in a devout contemplation of the message which he delivered; and giving to things unseen such a power of impression, that those which are visible seemed to dwindle into a state of absolute insignificancy.

“As a man, he was courteous in manners, and amiable in disposition; as a friend, he was disinterested and faithful in his attachments; as a Christian, he was devout and catholic in his spirit; as a minister, he was independent, yet attentive and affectionate—uniformly endeavouring to incorporate in his character the moral qualities which his Lord and Master developed in the progress of his history; and though a nice observer might discover a few shades of imperfection falling on it, yet they were scarcely perceptible. He approached the nearest to the perfect man of the Scriptures of any one I ever knew; but that which gave a distinctive peculiarity to his character, and which made him the object of general esteem and veneration, was his catholic liberality, his ever-active benevolence, and his amiability—combined with a chastened seriousness and sportive playfulness of disposition, which exhibited the gravity of religion untinged by the gloom of superstition, and its cheerfulness free from the levity of folly.

“He thought and judged for himself on every part of revealed truth, and maintained the doctrines which he held with the most determined firmness; yet he never suffered his mind to be soured by the spirit of controversy, nor was he ever known to treat those who differed from him with contempt or with indifference. He loved the catholic spirit of the gospel, no less than its sublime doctrines; uni-

formly condemned that arrogance of spirit which leads the bigot to say of the members of his own communion, 'The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord are we!' and demonstrated by his conduct that he was as anxious to preserve the bonds of peace unbroken amongst the different denominations of Christians as to keep the unity of the faith entire. And while he gave a decided preference to the Church of which he was so bright an ornament, yet he felt a deep interest in the prosperity of every other religious community which contends earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints; and admitted to his friendship and intimacy the pious Dissenter, with as much cordiality as he embraced an Episcopal brother.

"But his catholic liberality did not degenerate into latitudinarianism. He was willing to cultivate Christian fellowship with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and was anxious to narrow rather than widen the ground of difference between them; but he felt no inclination to compromise any essential doctrines of the gospel as a compliment to the semi-sceptical spirit of the age—choosing rather to run the risk of incurring the charge of bigotry, than sanction a popular opinion that there is no danger in speculative error, if the person who imbibes it be sincere in his belief, and display an exterior amiability of temper and conduct, in accordance with the laws of practical righteousness. His charity was not of that deceptive cast, which places a human being who rejects the leading doctrines of Christianity on a level, in the Divine estimation, with the humble disciple of Jesus Christ who implicitly receives them, as he was convinced 'that the charity which the Scriptures so earnestly inculcate, consists in a real solicitude for the welfare of others, not in thinking well of their state;' and thus, while he gave ample scope for the exercise of his compassion in aiming to promote the salvation of all his hearers, he felt awed by that authority which separates the believer from the unbeliever, and which marks, by a palpable line of distinction, the essential difference between those who admit, and those who deny the truth as it is in Jesus.

“Some men are benevolent, but the principle of their benevolence lies embedded in their mental constitution, like fire in the flint, and it is only by hard and reiterated strokes that it can be elicited. This principle, when exerted, may produce all the effects of a spontaneous flow of feeling; but it looks so much like that sullen selfishness which is absorbed in its own gratifications, that its occasional exertions are regarded only as a novel tribute to its own capricious taste.

“Others are benevolent, but the principle of their benevolence is associated with so much finesse and self-adulation, and with so many disgusting and offensive requirements, that while it relieves the wants of a sufferer, it inflicts a deep wound on his spirit, and makes him feel such an oppressive weight of obligation, that he cannot enjoy the comforts which have been administered to him. But the benevolence of our deceased friend was the master-passion of his soul, and it was ever wakeful—ever active; which required no qualifications for its exercise, but misery in some of her multiplied forms; it prescribed no bounds for its exertions, but the limits of his own means; and he bestowed his bounties with so much delicacy, that no other emotion was ever excited in the breast of the recipient than that of the purest gratitude to his kind benefactor.

“His kindness of disposition led him to feel great tenderness for the reputation of others; and though no one could reprove vice more keenly, yet he never sanctioned that habit of depreciating the character of absent individuals, which may be regarded as one of the most besetting sins of human nature. Hence, few men possessed more friends, or fewer enemies; it may be doubted whether among the numerous list of the former he lost the esteem of one.

“Perhaps no man ever united more closely in his private character the dignity and the cheerfulness of religion—preserving unimpaired the sanctity of his station with a lively and playful disposition; and maintaining the reputation of a holy man of God, while hailed in general society as the amiable, the intelligent, and the interesting companion. The line which separates the harmless

from the pernicious he was never known to pass, so that he never injured the sanctity of his public character by any levities in his demeanour, but inspired a greater reverence for it, by the dignified ease of his manners, and the uniform placidity and agreeableness of his temper.

“The closing scene of his life was no less beautiful than impressive; and forces from us the exclamation of the worthless prophet, ‘Let me die the death of the righteous! and let my last end be like his!’ He is gone! That face on which you have looked with so much pleasure, you will see no more; that voice to which you have so often listened with mingled emotions of awe and pleasure, you will hear no more, till you meet him before the judgment-seat of the Son of God; and, brethren, permit me to ask you, whether you think you are prepared to see him, and hear him there? He has preached to you the gospel of peace, with great fidelity, and with equal affection; but have you received it, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God? He has watched for your souls as one who knew that he must give an account; but have you, by your submission to the truth which he proclaimed, enabled him to do it with joy and not with grief? Is there no one in this congregation who has remained insensible to his moral danger, though that danger has often been pointed out to you in the most awful and impressive manner? Is there no one who has remained impenitent, notwithstanding the various efforts which the venerated deceased employed to bring you to repentance, and to a belief of the truth? Is there no one who has forced the aged pastor to retire from this pulpit to his study, and there to weep and to mourn, and to say, in the bitterness of his mental agony, ‘When I speak they will not hear: but put from them the words of life, and the way of peace they will not know?’ He is gone to enjoy the reward of his labours, and ere long you, my brethren, will follow him. But are you prepared to give an account of the manner in which you have improved his faithful services amongst you? If you are, you will again meet and again intermingle your social feelings and affections in a world where you will

enjoy an endless duration of bliss; but if not, let me beseech you to retire, and on your knees implore mercy and forgiveness, lest you should be taken off in the midst of your sins, and be cast out with the workers of darkness, where there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever."

When this discourse was finished, the corpse was removed to the vault; and when placed in it, the remaining part of the Burial Service was read. When the earth fell on the lid of the coffin, as the impressive words, *ashes to ashes, dust to dust*, were uttered, there was a spontaneous burst of audible weeping from the whole assemblage, which, for a few moments, so overpowered the feelings of Mr. Guion, that it was with some degree of difficulty he could proceed. At length the service was concluded; but on returning from the church the order of the procession was deranged, for while some few walked back to the rectory, others pressed round the tomb; and many stood about the churchyard in detached groups, recalling the various incidents in their history connected with their deceased pastor. "O!" said one athletic youth, who wept while he spoke, "I was a bold transgressor till I heard him preach." "I went to laugh," said another, "but I returned to pray." "He was my friend," said many voices; and all expressed their opinion that they should never see a successor equal to him.

After the concourse of people had dispersed, Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin continued wandering amongst the tombs, reading the epitaphs which surviving friendship had engraven on the head-stones of their departed relatives and friends. The place of sepulture in which they were now walking, was one of the neatest of rural burying places. The walks were free from weeds; there were no gaps in the hedges; the graves bore no marks of being trodden by the foot of beast or of man; the yew trees luxuriated in their native growth, without assuming those fantastic shapes and forms which a capricious taste sometimes compels them to take, and the green ivy overspread the walls of the venerable church. Many of the inscriptions on the earlier tombstones were nearly effaced, and those which were still legible,

like too many of the "good old times," recorded sentiments and expressions which are no less offensive to a refined taste, than to a scriptural faith. But in the later stones, which had been erected during the lifetime of the venerable pastor, a striking difference was observable. The inscription bore the name and the age of the occupant of the tomb, and beneath it some appropriate text of Scripture—recalling the words of an elegant writer, "It is meet, pleasant, and soothing to the pious mind, when bereaved of friends, to commemorate them on earth by some touching expression taken from that book which reveals to them a life in heaven."

Mr. Lewellin and his wife now entered the church, resolving to go and indulge their solemn meditations beside the uncovered tomb of the deceased pastor; but on passing down the aisle, were suddenly startled by the deep sounds of sorrow. On looking towards the vault where Mr. Ingleby's remains were deposited, they saw an aged couple leaning on their staffs, looking into the grave, but they appeared too much oppressed by grief to give any other vent to their feelings than by sighs and tears. "Come, Dame, let us be gone," said the old man to his wife; "it won't be long before we see him again." As they turned round from the grave, Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin advanced and kindly endeavoured to mitigate their sorrow. "O! Sir," said the old man, "he was a good man, and a faithful minister of Christ; and many will have to bless God for ever, for sending him amongst us. We thought we loved him while he was with us; but we did not know that we loved him so much till he was taken away. But it won't be long before we shall see him again." "Then," said Mr. Lewellin, "I presume you have received the gospel which he preached amongst you, not as 'the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God.'" "Yes, Sir, we have been enabled to receive it. Before he came to preach in this village we very seldom attended church, and never thought about the salvation of our souls; but, blessed be the name of the Lord, we were both called to the knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of his honoured servant; and have, for the space of near forty

years, been walking together as heirs of the grace of life. It was a great shock to our feelings when we heard of his death, though we expected it; but now he is gone, it is our duty to be resigned to the will of God. But, Sir, resignation may feel its loss; and the Saviour won't condemn us if we weep at the grave of our departed pastor, as He once wept at the grave of Lazarus. He was one of the most excellent of the earth. He preached well, and he confirmed the truth which he preached by the unblameableness of his life. He was a most benevolent man. He obeyed the words of the Scriptures, and did good to all, especially to the household of faith. We shall never see his like again."

My friend and his wife felt so deeply interested by the affection and piety of this aged couple, that they walked with them to their little thatched cottage. "This little cottage," said the old man, "was built for us by our pastor, who gave it to us for our life. This is the chair in which he used to sit, and this is the Bible which he gave us, and here is his picture, which we have had for these thirty years—and this is his walking-stick, that he gave me when I took my leave of him at the door of the rectory, the Sabbath before he left us." "And when," said the old woman, "I could not see to read my Bible, he gave me these spectacles; and he used to come, and sit with us, and talk to us of Him who lived and died for sinners, and made us forget the trials of the way, by discoursing to us about the joys of the end of it. But it won't be long before we see him again."

Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin were much affected by this touching account of their old friend, whose charity and benevolence formed a theme of grateful remembrance in the minds of those poor cottagers. Perceiving that their circumstances were much straitened, they presented them with a trifling sum, and then, amid the blessings of the aged couple, took leave and proceeded on their way to Rockhill.



## THE NEW RECTORS.



SOON after the death of the venerable Ingleby, the Rev. Mr. Cole, the Rector of the adjoining parish of Aston, whose health had been gradually declining, was taken very ill. He had accompanied several of his friends to a concert in a neighbouring town, and on his return caught a violent cold. No danger was apprehended for several weeks; but having imprudently accepted an invitation to spend an evening at a friend's, where he was detained to a late hour at whist, his favourite amusement, his indisposition gained a fresh accession of strength by exposure to the night air. He now began to entertain apprehensions of a fatal termination to his complaint, and said to his wife, when she was consulting him on the propriety of putting off a party which had been fixed for the following week, "My dear, I shall never appear amongst you again."

"Don't say so, Edward. You are getting low-spirited and unnecessarily anxious. You should keep up your spirits, and anticipate the pleasure which you will yet enjoy amongst your friends."

"I have no *wish* to die, Emily, but I *must* die. The doctors can do nothing for me. I should like to see my old friends again, but I have no spirit to entertain them."

"I heard Dr. Bailey say, that he placed great dependence on the prescription which he gave to Mr. Russel. Indeed, I think you look better. He says he has no doubt but you will recover; and all your friends say that you must banish the thought of dying, as nothing will tend so much to accelerate that awful event. I think they had better come: they will put new life into you."

"Yes, they may tell me to banish the thought of dying, but I cannot do it; it forces itself upon me in spite of all my resolutions to avoid it."

"Dr. Bailey suggested to me to read some amusing book to you.

Here are the *Pickwick Papers*. Let me read you a chapter about Pickwick and Sam Weller. I know how they used to make you laugh; and a hearty laugh, to my mind, does more good than all the medicine in the world."

"Neither Mr. Pickwick nor Sam Weller, my dear, would be proper companions for me just now. I must pay respect to the sanctity of my character. I should not object, if I get a little better, to your reading me the *Vicar of Wakefield*, or a paper from the *Spectator* or *Rambler*. But I fear my disease has gone too far to be checked by any human expedient. I must yield to the law of nature, and prepare for death; and it is, I assure you, an awful thing to die—to go from one world to another."

"Well, my dear," replied his wife, "as you have long since made your peace with God, you have nothing to fear; and therefore I hope you will keep your mind composed."

"My mind is tolerably composed, Emily, except when delirious thoughts come and throw it into a tumultuous agitation, and then I feel wandering about in a maze of confusion. Death may be looked upon by some, who have no taste for earthly enjoyments, with peculiar interest, as the forerunner of their future bliss; but I would rather live than die."

When Mr. Cole found himself getting worse, and his most sanguine friends began to fear that the hour of his departure was at hand, he wished to receive the sacrament; and the Rev. Dr. Greig, from a neighbouring town, was requested to come and administer it to him. The Doctor seemed much affected when introduced to his old friend; and, after gently squeezing his hand, as a token of affection, he sat down by his bedside.

"I am sorry, Sir," said the reverend Doctor, "to find you so extremely ill; but I hope you will yet recover."

"That, I fear, is impossible; I must die; and I wish, before I die, to receive the holy sacrament. I think it will put strength into my soul, and enable me to meet death without dread."

"I hope you have no dread of death."

“Why, no, Doctor, I have no dread of death; but as it is the passage into the eternal world, I feel that it is an awful thing to die—more awful at the crisis than in anticipation.”

“It may be awful to the wicked, but it cannot be to you, who have spent your life in the public service of our Church, promoting the cause of virtue and religion.”

“I confess, Sir, that I have nothing to reproach myself with. I have spent a long life in the service of our Church, and have endeavoured to teach my parishioners the way to heaven; and as a recompense for my well-meant efforts I hope eternal life will be given to me; but now that death is near, I feel it to be a more awful thing to die than when I viewed it at a distance. I now see the propriety of the passage in our Burial Service—‘O God, most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.’”

Dr. Greig now proceeded to read the Communion Service; and having partaken of the elements himself, and given them to Mrs. Cole and the nurse, he presented them to his dying friend, who ate the bread, and drank the wine, with great solemnity of manner. The service being ended, he said that he had one more request to make, and then he should die in peace. “I wish, Doctor, you would read the Burial Service at my interment, and preach my funeral sermon on the following Sunday; and you may tell my parishioners, that I *die in charity with all mankind.*”

In about six hours after his friend left him, a change took place, and he remained insensible the greater part of the night. Towards the morning he awoke out of a deep sleep; and, having taken a little refreshment, he sat very composedly for a few minutes. Looking at his wife with intense earnestness, he said, “My dear Emily, I suppose I must die;” and then he fell back on his pillow, heaved a deep sigh, and expired. On the seventh day after his death he was buried in a vault, near the communion table of his own church; and Dr. Greig, according to his request, read the service, and delivered his funeral discourse on the following Sabbath. The congregation, which

was unusually large, appeared deeply affected, especially when the Doctor pointed to the tomb in which their deceased pastor had just been interred.

In delineating the character of Mr. Cole, Dr. Greig dwelt for some time on his classical taste and his literary acquirements; paid a just tribute of praise to his amiable disposition and obliging manners, and commended him for his uniform attachment to the Church, of which he had been a minister for the greater part of half a century; and concluded by saying, "His religion was not of that austere cast which prohibits the innocent amusements and gratifications of society, and dooms its possessor to a life of perpetual gloom and mortification. It was an enlightened piety—a piety which united the gravity of wisdom with a cheerful and facetious spirit, which courted no popularity by the vanity of its pretensions; which sought retirement rather than publicity; and conciliated the favour of the Almighty by the practice of virtue, rather than by the dogmas of belief. His life is an epitome of moral virtue and social goodness, which may be read by all men with great profit. It will teach us all, and especially the clergy of our Church, how they should live, and what recompense they may expect to receive when called to die, as a reward for their fidelity to their charge. He did not, as we all know, in imitation of the example of some, rob other churches to fill his own; but was contented to preach to the select few who favoured him with their presence and their friendship; and who, I doubt not, will revere his memory as long as the power of recollection remains; and who, when the duties of life are discharged, will go where he is gone, to renew the intimacy of friendship, and enjoy the felicity of social converse. And who is not struck with the dignified serenity of his death! There were no raptures of enthusiasm in prospect of dissolution; no flights of fancy; no rhapsodies of expression, as though he were weary of life and longed to lose it; but a submission to the law of nature, which requires that we must die, accompanied by a sublime avowal which he wished me to make to you, *that he died in charity with all mankind.*"

In examining the character of these two clergymen, and reviewing the temper of mind which they displayed in the immediate prospect of entering the eternal world, the intelligent reader will perceive a manifest difference; and though it does not become us to invade the province of the Supreme Judge, and fix the final destiny of any human being, yet we may be permitted to say, that the venerable Ingleby bore the nearest resemblance, in his life and in his death, to the ministers of the New Testament. If Mr. Cole was the most learned man, Mr. Ingleby was the most spiritual; and though Mr. Ingleby derived no gratification from the trifling amusements of fashionable life, yet he uniformly displayed a cheerfulness of disposition which became the sanctity of his office. Mr. Cole consented to die because he could not live; while Mr. Ingleby yielded up his life as a free-will offering to God who first gave it, and then demanded it. In the death of Mr. Cole we can discover no humility on account of the imperfections of his character—no utterances of a mind delighting in communion with the great Supreme—no reference to a Mediator, by whom the guilty and the worthless are reconciled to the offended Sovereign—no ardent anticipations of a state of changeless purity and glory; while, in the closing scene of Mr. Ingleby's life, we behold a spirit, yet inhabiting the tabernacle of earth, springing forward to meet the great Deliverer—hailing his approach with mingled emotions of awe and delight—giving utterance to the sublimest conceptions of future bliss, and in language, such as Paul employed when treading on the narrow isthmus which separates time from eternity. The death of Mr. Cole was certainly the most calm; but it was the calm of a stagnant pool, whose waters move not because they are unaffected by any current; while the death of Mr. Ingleby resembled the peaceful ripple of the crystal stream, as it moves tranquilly from its source to swell the waters of the vast ocean. The one died like a philosopher, over whose mind the light of evidence produced a belief of the existence of an eternal world, which, alas! presented no powerful attractions; the other, like a sinner, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and made

meet to possess the inheritance of the saints in light, in comparison with which the brightest honours of earth pass away as things of no value.

When the pastor of a Dissenting church is called away from his flock, to give an account of his stewardship to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, an event occurs in its history which generally produces a most powerful effect on the minds of the surviving members. As he, while living, was the pastor of their choice, so, when dead, they cease not to venerate and esteem his memory. They pay him, it is true, no superstitious homage. All they show is the feeling of pure nature, which requires no artificial expedients to express its affection for the object of its esteem when he is taken away. But amongst them, while the pastor dies, the ministry lives. They turn away from his tomb to listen to the voice of his successor; and though they cannot easily transfer that strong attachment and profound respect which have been the growth of a long and close intimacy, yet they receive him in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation.

In the choice of a successor they have great advantages over their Christian brethren who are members of the Establishment. They are not compelled to receive a pastor, but are left to choose one; and hence, as is natural, they select one whose religious opinions agree with their own, whose manner of preaching accords with their own taste, and whose character is such as corresponds with the sacredness of his profession. And though a popular election is liable to some objections, yet, from the mode in which it is generally conducted amongst them, they are but as the small dust of the balance, when weighed against the sterling value of the privilege which it involves and secures. The argument employed by Dissenters in support of this practice is, in their judgment, quite conclusive. They say, As we claim the right of choosing the attorney whom we consult on a point of law—of choosing our surgeon and physician when visited by sickness—of choosing the tutor under whose care we place our children, we act still more in accordance with the estab-

lished laws of social life, and the most obvious dictates of enlightened reason, when we exercise the right of choice in relation to the pastor from whose public ministrations we are to receive the consolations of the gospel of peace. In this instance, no less than in others, a preference will be felt; and while we hold all in reputation for their works' sake, who discharge the sacred duties of the pastoral office with fidelity, we shall derive a greater gratification, and higher degree of improvement, from the labours of one for whose manner of preaching we may feel a decided predilection and regard. When this right of choice is denied us, we are compelled to receive a minister who has been appointed over us by the authority of another, and if he be just such a one as we like, no evil is produced; but suppose he reject the doctrines which we receive as true, or suppose his style of preaching be in direct opposition to our taste, or suppose his moral conduct be not in exact accordance with his profession, what in such a case ought to be our line of conduct? Can we expect to become established in our faith, by going where that faith is perpetually assailed? Can we expect to derive consolation, if we go where the manner in which the message is offered offends our taste? Can we expect to venerate the ministry, if the man who holds the hallowed office display not the same mind which was in Christ Jesus our Lord? Impossible! We may make the experiment, but it will not be found productive of the fruits of righteousness and peace; as the laws of nature forbid us to calculate on gathering grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.

Within a few weeks after the death of Mr. Ingleby, the living of Broadhurst was presented to Mr. Porteous, the grandson of a neighbouring magistrate of the same name,\* who took offence at the first sermon Mr. Ingleby preached; and though he felt a profound respect for his private virtues, yet he withdrew from his ministry, and usually attended that of Mr. Cole. This young man possessed a fine person, and the graces of a popular and commanding elocution; but he was gay in his manners, volatile in his disposition, addicted to

\* Vol. i. p. 69.

the sports of the field, and decidedly opposed to those peculiar doctrines of the gospel which his predecessor had so long and so faithfully preached.

As his character was generally known through the parish, the pious members of the Church were deeply depressed when they heard that he was appointed to succeed their deceased pastor; but they prudently resolved to hear him preach, having previously met on several different occasions to pray that a double portion of the Spirit of grace might rest upon him. The church was excessively crowded when he delivered his first discourse, which was founded on the following text—"Be not righteous over much."

He read the prayers with so much seriousness and propriety of emphasis, that the whole congregation was delighted with him. When he announced his text, there was a simultaneous movement amongst them; and for a few moments they looked at each other as though deeply amazed, and then the eyes of all were fastened on him. After adjusting his position and his attitude with great caution, and surveying his audience with an appearance of complacency, he began reading his sermon, which he delivered in fourteen minutes, and then concluded the service. The sermon was a severe philippic on the labours of his predecessor, and the piety of his hearers; and though in the conclusion he paid a passing tribute of respect to his private virtues, and the benefits which the parish had received from his pastoral visits, yet he gave it as his decided opinion that he had uniformly disregarded the *important* injunction of the text:—"That he erred from the purest motives we all must admit; and it must be some consolation to know, that his error was all on the side of virtue; but virtue is never so lovely as when she is kept from all excess of feeling—as when she spurns from her those restraints, which, by keeping her out of the circle of *innocent* indulgences, give her the appearance of grief-worn sadness—as when she enjoys life, and is contented to wait for the reward which the Almighty will confer on her honest and well-meant endeavours to please him. That it will be my endeavour to avoid the error into which my most



excellent predecessor fell, my intelligent hearers may calculate on; and I flatter myself by so doing, I shall diffuse over the whole of my parish, the air of cheerful gaiety and social pleasure; and that the gloom which has so long hung over you will soon disappear, as the lowering cloud retires from the face of nature, when the bright orb of day scatters his golden rays in passing from the horizon to the meridian."

When he had finished his discourse, he paused for the loud Amen; but the good old clerk disdained to utter it; and when, on retiring to the vestry, he was asked by Mr. Porteous, the grandsire of the new Rector, why he had neglected his duty, he honestly replied, "Because, Sir, I did not choose to sanction those perversions of the gospel which the Rector has been guilty of this morning; nor appear to commend the severe and unjust animadversions which he has made on the character of my deceased pastor."

"Then, Sir, you shall be turned out of office."

"I will not wait to be turned out, Sir, I will resign it; for I have too much love for the truth to sanction error, and hold the reputation of my deceased pastor in too much esteem to say Amen, after it has been so wantonly defamed."

"Then, Sir, I suppose you intend to raise the standard of revolt against my grandson; but if that be your mind, you shall suffer for it."

"As I live, Sir, in a land of freedom, and was never in bondage to any man, I shall not, now I am grown gray in years, sell my birth-right for a mess of pottage; and therefore, without wishing to give either you or the new Rector any offence, I frankly tell you, that while he continues to preach as he has preached this morning, I will never return to hear him."

"You are an obstinate fellow, and ought not to be suffered to speak to your superiors in this style."

"You asked for the reasons of my conduct, which I have given you; and also for the line of conduct I intend to pursue, and I have told you; and now, as you descend to abuse, I will retire."

This altercation with the old clerk, who was greatly esteemed by the congregation for his superior intelligence and decided piety, was overheard by many of the people, who were much pleased; first, by his silence at the conclusion of the service, and now, by the bold stand which he made against the perversion of the truth, and the unmerited attack on the reputation of the venerable deceased. On coming out of the vestry, he was commended by them, and urged not to suffer any threat to induce him to bend to the authority, which had so unhandsomely endeavoured to intimidate him.

As Mr. Lewellin had acquired a considerable degree of influence among the pious members of the Church, during the short time he had resided in the parish, they very naturally looked to him for counsel at this critical juncture; and though he was unwilling to take any premature steps, yet he gave it as his decided opinion, that they ought not to suffer the gospel to be driven from amongst them. "I am a Dissenter," said he to a few friends who waited on him; "but while the gospel was preached in the Church, I felt perfectly willing to worship there, and should have continued to do so, if the new Rector had followed the example of our deceased pastor, but as he has chosen to make such a bold avowal of his determination to extirpate the serious and devout piety of the parish, that he may propagate his gay and anti-Christian religion, I think we are called upon by the voice of Providence to prevent it."

"I cannot leave the Church," said one.

"Nor I," said another.

"Nor I," said a third.

"I should not like to leave it," said another, "but if I cannot hear the gospel in the Church, I will hear it where I can."

It was finally determined to let things take their course for the next few weeks, during which time they were to consult their friends on the question.

On the Sabbath after Mr. Porteous preached his first sermon at Broadhurst, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Cole's successor, took possession of his living at Aston, and preached his first discourse from Ezek. xxxvii. 3

—“ And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.” From these words, taken in connection with the entire parable, he gave a description of the moral condition of man, during the period of his unregeneracy; demonstrated the inefficacy of all human expedients to recover him, without the co-operation of a supernatural power; and traced the progress of his spiritual renovation by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, from its earliest symptoms to its final consummation in heaven. The sermon discovered some ingenuity, but more judgment; it abounded with striking remarks, expressed in the most appropriate language; but its predominating quality was a regular appeal to the understanding and the heart of the audience, conducted with such force of reasoning, and charm of persuasion, that many expressed their astonishment at their former ignorance of revealed truth; while those who had long enjoyed the ministry of the venerable Ingleby, rejoiced that God had sent another faithful messenger amongst them. Some few, who were the late incumbent's personal friends, and who often participated with him in the amusements of fashionable life, were displeased with the *length* of the sermon, though they were gratified with the chasteness of the language which was employed; and reprobated the austere requirements of the new religion, while they spoke in very complimentary terms of the elegant composition and the good delivery of the new Rector. The great majority of the people, however, were astonished and delighted; and from the conclusion of the sermon were led to anticipate in Mr. Hartley a very different pastor from Mr. Cole.

“Hitherto, many of you have lived,” said the preacher, “without any deep repentance on account of your sins—without any active and operative faith in the efficacy of the Saviour's death—without enjoying any spiritual communion with the great Invisible—and without anticipating your entrance into the eternal world with that sublime awe which such an event ought to inspire in your breast. It devolves on me to rouse you from this state of deep insensibility and criminal impiety. You live; but what is that life which you

have lived? Has it not been a life of social pleasure—a life of vain indulgences—a life of indifference to the interesting facts, the sublime doctrines, the pure precepts, and the glorious promises of the gospel of Jesus Christ! It now devolves on me to awaken you, if possible, out of this mental delusion, that you may ‘yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead;’ then ye ‘shall have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.’ To accomplish this, I shall add private admonition to public instruction; and though I have no wish to pry into the secrets of your families, nor to obtrude myself where my presence would not be acceptable, yet it will be my endeavour, as far as possible, to gain an accurate knowledge of the spiritual state of the whole of my charge, in the hope that by God’s blessing I may be able at the last day to present every one of you perfect in Christ Jesus. When you are afflicted, I will visit you; when in trouble, I will administer to you the consolations of the gospel; in your dying hours, I shall consider it a privilege to be permitted to cheer you with the hope of immortality; and as I am placed over you as your spiritual guide and friend, I assure you, that there is no sacrifice which I will hesitate to make, nor any duty which I will not most cheerfully perform, to promote your happiness; and I shall esteem the gratification of serving you an adequate recompense for all my exertions, as I seek not yours, but you.”

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## A SECESSION AT BROADHURST.



WHEN Mr. Hartley took possession of his cure at Aston, Mr. Stevens immediately declined having public worship conducted in his chapel any longer. On being remonstrated with by Mr. Langley, a zealous Dissenter, for breaking up a society which had been flourishing for many years,

he said, "I dissented, not from choice, but from necessity; but now I can hear the gospel in the parish church, I think it no less my duty to return to her communion, than I once felt it my duty to withdraw from it. The minister who is appointed over us is a good man; and as the church in which he officiates is large enough to contain the whole of the population, I see no reason why the people should be divided, especially as most of them have no conscientious objections against either the doctrines or the ceremonies of our Episcopal Establishment."

"But, Sir," replied Mr. Langley, "though the gospel be now preached in the church, you are not certain that it will be after the death or removal of the present incumbent; and then what are the pious members of the church to do, if you now shut up your chapel? Would it not be more prudent on your part, to secure the permanent continuance of the gospel in the parish, by perpetuating its public ministrations in your chapel, than thus hazard its entire expulsion? If you adopt this plan, there will be a place of refuge for the piety of the parish, if at any future time it should be compelled to retire from the Established church."

"Such a plan, I have no doubt," replied Mr. Stevens, "would meet with the approbation of many pious Dissenters; but I am not disposed to adopt it. If, under the ministry of our present Rector, the people should receive the truth, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, they will not suffer it to disappear from amongst them, even if they should be deprived of it in the church; but will most certainly avail themselves of their rights as British freemen, and erect for themselves a chapel, in which they may worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, and enjoy a ministry of their own choice."

But while the sun of prosperity was shining on the parish of Aston, dispelling the gloom of ignorance and superstition which had hovered over it for many years, it was setting on the adjoining hamlet, which had for a longer time enjoyed the light of truth, leaving the people in a most disconsolate state. "To lose our old

pastor," said an old Christian to Mr. Lewellin, "was a great loss; but to have the candlestick removed from amongst us, and the light thereof extinguished, is a much greater loss. While we had the light we rejoiced in it; but I fear that, like the church of Ephesus, we have lost our first love; and as we have not repented and done our first works, the Lord has visited us with this grievous judgment."

A few of the more influential members of the Establishment met at Mr. Lewellin's to consider what plan they ought to adopt on the present occasion. As they venerated the Church, and felt an ardent attachment to its forms and ceremonies, they were unwilling to withdraw from her communion. One gentleman said, he had been to consult the Rev. Mr. Guion, who gave it as his decided opinion that they should still attend their parish church, and pray for the conversion of the new Rector. "If," he said, "you have not the gospel in the pulpit, you have it in the desk; and though it may not please God to answer your prayers, yet you will have this compensation for the sacrifice you will be called upon to make—that you have remained faithful to your Church."

"I have no wish to leave the Church," replied another; "but I must hear the gospel. I am commanded to take heed *what I hear*; and if I disobey this injunction, how can I expect to enjoy the Divine blessing?" In this opinion they all concurred; and as they could attend the neighbouring church, it was proposed that they should sit under the ministry of the new Rector at Aston.

"But," said Mr. Lewellin, "though we who have vehicles can easily go three or four miles on the Sabbath-day, to enjoy a pure and an enlightened ministry, yet what are the poor and the infirm to do? They cannot attend; and shall we leave them to spend the remainder of their days in a state of spiritual destitution? Have they no claim on our benevolent feelings? Shall we, by deserting them in this their low estate, allow them to go and utter the mournful complaint at the footstool of the Divine throne, '*No man careth for our souls?*' Shall we provide no spiritual comforter, but suffer

them to live and die without having one near them to administer the consolations of religion? Shall we stand still and see this fine moral inheritance falling back into its original state of ignorance and vice; when, by acting that part which our deceased pastor more than once recommended, we may be the means of preserving it from decay? Did he not say, in the last sermon he preached to us, that he hoped the Lord would provide another minister, who would preach the gospel to us either in the church, *or elsewhere?* And in a private conversation, on the evening of his departure, he said, in reply to a question, ‘The great Shepherd *may pitch another fold, and lead you to another pasturage.*’”

“If,” said a gentleman, “I were to consult my own inclination, I should still attend with my family at Broadhurst; but I do not think we should act a generous or a Christian part if we were to make no effort to establish a gospel ministry in the parish. Cannot we do what Mr. Stevens did under similar circumstances? and then, if it should please God at any future time, to favour us with a Rector who will preach the same doctrines as those which we have been accustomed to hear, we can return to the Church, and live and die in her communion. And if not, we shall have this compensation for the sacrifice which we shall be called to make, that we have acted in accordance with the wishes of our deceased pastor, and, I trust, in accordance with the will of our Lord and Master.” This suggestion was eagerly seized by several others; and it was finally determined to build a neat chapel, large enough to contain about 500 worshippers; and to obtain the permanent labours of some good minister of Jesus Christ. As soon as this decision was made known, the pious villagers expressed their gratitude in the most affecting terms; and offered to contribute, out of the depths of their poverty, towards the necessary expenses which would be incurred; but their more wealthy Christian brethren rather chose to bear the whole burden among themselves.

One gentleman gave a piece of freehold laud, on which the chapel was erected; and adjoining it, a house for the minister, with a large

garden attached. It was built within the space of six months; and by the exertions of Mr. Lewellin, Mr. Drew, a pious and intelligent young man, was appointed to take the pastoral charge of the people. Being of a catholic spirit, and wishing to render his public ministrations generally acceptable, he prudently consented to read the Liturgy of the Church of England. Though, at first, some of the people sighed, and others wept as they passed by the venerable building in which for so many years they had worshipped the God of their fathers, yet in process of time they felt an equal degree of attachment to this second temple, which, if less imposing in its appearance, contained the Shechinah of truth, which departed from the altar when the venerable Ingleby fell asleep in Jesus. Some years after, in a conversation with the intelligent clerk, who held the same office in the chapel as he had filled in the church, he informed me, that his pastor bore a near resemblance to the deceased Rector, in the amiability of his temper, and in the ardour of his zeal for the salvation of his hearers, though he differed from him in the manner and style of his preaching. "The Rector, Sir," he remarked, "was a son of consolation, from whose lips the words of mercy fell in soft and subduing accents on the ears of the congregation; Mr. Drew is a Boanerges, the thunder of whose eloquence awes us by its majesty; but when he has wrought up our feelings to the highest degree of terror, he suddenly shifts the scene, and exhibits to our view the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Mr. Ingleby, I think, had the finest imagination, but Mr. Drew has the most powerful intellect; and though the former could enter into all the variations of Christian experience with the greatest ease, yet the latter applies the truth with equal force to the wounded conscience. Mr. Ingleby was distinguished by the gracefulness of his manner; Mr. Drew excels in the force and dignity of his delivery; and though we shall never cease to respect the memory of our former pastor, we are equally attached to our present. Under his ministry, no less than under that of his predecessor, many have been reclaimed from the error of their ways to the wisdom of



the just; while the young and the more advanced Christian have been built up in the faith and the hope of the gospel. The poor are visited in their cottages; the dying have a spiritual comforter with them in their last moments; and over the whole parish a moral vigilance is exercised, which receives the sanction of all the wise and the good."

After witnessing the changes which a few years had made in the external establishment of religion in these two parishes, while the same moral process was going on in the salvation of the people, I felt how superior, in its nature and tendency, is the spirit of the gospel to that of religious bigotry. Had Mr. Stevens felt a bigoted attachment to the principle of dissent, he would have kept open his chapel after the settlement of Mr. Hartley at Aston, and thus have divided the people into two distinct societies; while the congregation at Broadhurst, if they had venerated the church in which the venerable Ingleby had so long preached, more than the truth which he delivered, would have been left without an evangelical ministry. But by acting the part of wisdom and of piety, they perpetuated the truth in each parish, without occasioning any division amongst those who were attached to it. Though in one village they sat to hear its enunciations on unconsecrated ground, while in the other it addressed them within the walls of the Establishment; yet as it derived none of its importance or worth from the places in which it is proclaimed, nor from the ministers who preached it, they mutually received it with meekness, as the engrafted word which is able to save the soul. Nor can I doubt that the Saviour visited with equal delight each congregation which assembled together in his name—that the Divine Spirit conveyed the same resistless energy to the Dissenting as to the Episcopal ministry—that the angels of heaven hovered over the village chapel with as much pleasure as over the village church; and that those who were made meet for glory on unconsecrated ground, were received with equal rapture by the spirits of the just made perfect, as their brethren who had worshipped within the pale of the Establishment. They differed in their relation to the external

forms of Christianity, but possessing its pure and heavenly spirit, they stood in the same relation to Jesus Christ, who was their Saviour—to the Holy Ghost, who was their Comforter—and to heaven, which was their undefiled inheritance; and when, at the appointed time, any of them departed this life, they were neither commended nor censured for their denominative attachments while on earth, but admitted into the joy of their Lord as sinners redeemed by his blood. A friendly intercourse was kept up between the pious members of the two churches and their respective pastors, which demonstrated to the villagers that their religion was substantially the same in its nature and in its design, though it differed in a few external ceremonies. If they went to church, it was to worship God—to confess their sins—and to hear the glad tidings of salvation; and if they went to the village chapel, it was to engage in the same hallowed exercises, and listen to the same gospel of peace. As they felt no superstitious attachment to the places in which they assembled, nor imagined that the Episcopal form of ordination gave to the clergyman a degree of sanctity which the Dissenting minister did not possess, they intermingled in each other's society, not to wrangle or contend for superiority, but to cultivate the unity of their faith, and display the excellence of that grace which "teacheth us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Is it not to be regretted, that a similar spirit has not been uniformly cherished amongst the disciples of Jesus Christ? but, alas! they have in general caught the spirit of the mother of Zebedee's children, rather than that of their Master, and have been struggling for the ascendancy, instead of living in harmony with each other. And is it not to this cause, more than any deficiency of evidence, that we may fairly account for the too general rejection of the gospel; for can we expect others to believe in its Divine origin, when they see those who embrace it with the greatest eagerness, displaying an intolerant temper, and refusing to hold communion with each other because they happen to differ on a few points of opinion, which they all

acknowledge to be of secondary importance? Every Christian should examine the following prayer of Jesus Christ, and the reason which he assigned for presenting it:—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John xvii. 20-23).

When the spirit of religious bigotry takes possession of the youthful breast, we naturally feel disposed to attribute it to the immaturity of the judgment, or a deficiency in Christian principles. We therefore conclude, that in more advanced life these unamiable qualities will disappear, and a cordial attachment will be formed for all of every denomination who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth. This, I believe, is generally the case, though we sometimes see the evil spirit of bigotry souring the temper of aged Christians, contracting their benevolence, and rendering them more disposed to live apart from their brethren, than on terms of friendly intercourse; and if we venture to remonstrate with them, we are gravely told that they must preserve the consistency of their character. Consistency! And why not preserve the consistency of their character as Christians, who are required to love each other as brethren, rather than the consistency of their character as religious bigots, who neglect the weightier matters of the law, to cultivate the mint and cummin of ecclesiastical alienation and intolerance? Why not, when peculiar circumstances require it, overlook the little points of difference that exist between them; and unite as those who are endowed with the same spirit of faith—who are governed by the same authority, and who are moving on to the same state of blessedness and glory?

There were a few Dissenters who could not conscientiously worship

within the walls of the Establishment, even though they revered the character of the new Rector at Aston, and approved of his ministry. Not being able to support a society of their own denomination, they subjected themselves to the inconvenience and expense of travelling several miles every Sabbath to enjoy the privilege of communion with their brethren at Broadhurst. But though they could not unite with their fellow-Christians at Aston in the exercises of public devotion, they were, nevertheless, zealous in co-operating with them in the execution of those plans of benevolence which related to the moral improvement and the temporal advantage of the hamlet in which they resided. A latitudinarian would be disposed to censure this unbending spirit in reference to public worship, and feel himself justified in holding it up to general reprobation; but a wise man will be sparing of his animadversions on conscientious scruples, when they are not suffered to disturb the harmony or friendly intercourse, and do not disqualify those who feel them from uniting with others of a different faith in the cultivation or the affections and charities of social life.

The Rev. Mr. Guion, who resided within a few miles of Broadhurst, and who had been for many years the devoted friend of the venerable Ingleby, was so much displeased when the pious members of the congregation seceded from the ministry of Mr. Porteous, that he broke off all intercourse with them, and not unfrequently expressed his censures in rather strong language. As they chose, in opposition to his advice, to withdraw from the pale of the Establishment, though he knew that their new Rector preached another gospel than that which they had heard from the lips of their deceased pastor, he looked upon them as schismatics, with whom he could not associate, even in the ordinary familiarities of friendship, without endangering his reputation as a clergyman of the Church of England. Though he admitted that some moral good might possibly result from the establishment of a Dissenting ministry in the village, yet he thought the evil would more than counter-balance it. He was a good man, but not a perfect man; a zealous minister

of the everlasting gospel, but he wished that gospel to be preached only within the pale of the Established church; and though in private life he exhibited many traits of the Christian character, yet they were rather too strongly marked by the blemishes of a sectarian spirit.

He occasionally met Mr. Drew, the Dissenting clergyman at Broadhurst, at the anniversaries of the various Bible Societies in the country, and also at the houses of Mr. Stevens and Mr. Lewellin. On these occasions he behaved to him with all the courtesy of a gentleman, but for a long while he appeared more disposed to shun than to court his society. He spoke of Mr. Drew in terms of respect, but not with the warmth of a brotherly affection as one minister of Jesus Christ should speak of another. On one occasion, having spoken rather more unguardedly than usual, Miss Ryder, who was one of his own hearers, with a delicate severity of rebuke, said, "I presume, Sir, when an angel of the Lord reports to his fellow-angels that a sinner on earth is brought to repentance, they do not pause to inquire whether he is a Churchman or a Dissenter before their rejoicing begins."

"And I suppose," remarked Mrs. Stevens, "when they receive their appointment to minister to any of the heirs of salvation, they do not pause in their embassy, contending which shall have the honour of waiting on a Conformist, in preference to a Nonconformist."

This colloquy was here joined by Mr. Ryder, who was as catholic in his spirit, as he was decided in his love of the truth. "To me," he observed, "the ecclesiastical distinctions between church and dissent, on which some rest such importance, appear superlatively little and unimportant; when put in comparison with the essential doctrines of the common salvation; and the less attention we pay to them the better is it, I think, for our own peace and Christian consistency. I am a Churchman in part, because I was educated as one; and because I can hear the gospel preached by her clergy. If, however, I were living in a parish where the gospel is disowned, as

it is at Broadhurst, I am sure I should, without a moment's hesitation, turn a Dissenter, rather than not hear it."

"And so should I," said several voices.

It is satisfactory to be able to add, that Mr. Guion's prejudices gradually subsided, and that in course of time he returned to the catholic and liberal spirit which he had formerly displayed when he contributed so generously to the necessities of the Rev. Mr. Powell.\* Though, in the views held by him regarding the great body of Christians, he never attained to the largeness of heart so eminently displayed by Mr. Ingleby; he bore, nevertheless, in his character a strong resemblance to that excellent pastor, and appeared as his living representative in all that was lovely and of good report.

## A FAREWELL TO OLD FRIENDS.



ON quitting Fairmount, to return home, the reader will recollect that I left Mrs. Orme to remain for a short time longer at Rockhill, as Mrs. Lewellin felt much depressed in spirits by her father's death, and required the presence of a cheerful and affectionate friend to enable her gradually to dispel her grief, and regain her wonted interest in her ordinary domestic employments. Mrs. Orme's stay was protracted much longer than she originally intended, and the close of the year had nearly arrived before her kind friends would allow her to depart. During the period of her sojourn at Rockhill, she had gained many friends, who were attracted as much by the unsophisticated kindness and liveliness of her disposition as by her painfully interesting and romantic history. Among others, none formed a greater

\* Vol. i. p. 224.

intimacy than Miss Ryder, who, with her brother, was now a frequent visitor at Rockhill and Fairmount. Mrs. Orme was invited to spend a few days at Aston, where she found herself exceedingly happy in the cheerful society of her new friend Anna, and the hearty hospitality of her brother, who was led to take a deep interest in his guest from the fancied resemblance which she bore to Matilda Denham, the departed object of his youthful affections. On taking leave of Mr. and Miss Ryder, Mrs. Orme made the latter promise that she would pay her a visit in the course of the ensuing summer, at the Elms, as Anna generally went to London once a-year to visit an elder sister, who had been married and settled there for some years.

About two months after Mrs. Orme's departure from Rockhill, Mr. Ingleby died, as narrated in a foregoing chapter, and was shortly followed to the grave by Mr. Cole, the Rector of the parish in which Mr. and Miss Ryder resided. The reader is already aware of the remarkable religious revolution which now took place in Aston and the adjoining parish of Broadhurst, though of a very lamentable description in the latter place. In the course of the same spring, Mrs. Orme received intelligence of her husband's death, an event which naturally excited painful emotions in her breast, though, considering his past conduct, her grief for his loss could neither be very deep nor poignant. Her little boy was now nearly two years old, a lovely child both in appearance and disposition, and an immense favourite with his grandfather, who had insisted on his mother leaving him at the Elms when she went to visit her friends in the west of England.

On hearing of Captain Orme's death, Miss Ryder judged it best to defer her visit to the Elms; and consequently it was not till the following year that she had again the pleasure of renewing her friendship with Mrs. Orme, and thus becoming acquainted with the other members of her family. Nothing could exceed the kind attention paid her by Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, who felt grateful for the kindness she had shown to Emma while at Aston. They insisted

on her remaining for a considerable period with them, and also that Mr. Ryder should pay a visit to the Elms, and take his sister home.

Mr. and Mrs. Holmes had been much pleased with Miss Ryder, and also with her brother when he arrived at the Elms. The happy change, too, in his religious character, which had now taken place, led to a strong congeniality of feeling in the intercourse between him and his worthy host and hostess. Many a delightful excursion was taken by the family in company with their guests; a feeling of happiness pervaded every member of the household; and for the first time since the death of Louisa, the family regained their former liveliness and buoyancy of spirits. It was noticed, however, that on all occasions Mr. Ryder contrived to secure the company of Mrs. Orme to himself, both in the family excursions or when at home at the Elms. Various excuses were invented to favour their being by themselves, without awakening suspicion, which frequently excited a smile, and sometimes a good-humoured sarcasm from her sister Jane.

“Dear, dear,” said Mrs. Orme, “I left a small needle-case in the alcove where we were sitting last evening.”

“I will run, Emma, and fetch it.”

“By no means, dear Jane, I won’t trouble you; I can very readily put my hand upon it.”

Mr. Ryder of course accompanied her to the alcove—a sweet retired spot; and then they extended their walk to a Roman camp, at a few miles’ distance—contriving to be back in time to dress for dinner. On the following morning, Mr. Ryder, knowing that Miss Jane was under a special engagement to meet an old friend, said at the breakfast table, “I should like to take an excursion to town to-day, if you young ladies will accompany me.”

“I believe, Sir,” said the facetious Jane, with an arch look and significant nod and smile, “you know that I cannot go, which possibly may make the excursion the more agreeable.”

The carriage was ordered out; the excursion was taken; and an apology was in readiness to be offered on their return for the late-



ness of the hour. These, and many similar indications of a mutual attachment, were too obvious to elude the notice of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, and therefore it excited no astonishment when Mr. Ryder, one morning, with Mrs. Orme leaning on his arm, entered Mr. Holmes' study, and requested his consent to their union. The old man was so much delighted by this somewhat anticipated request, that without hesitation, he replied, "I will most cheerfully give it; and may the Lord bless you." At this moment Mrs. Holmes entered the room, and joyfully expressed her concurrence in the proposed match, which had already received the sanction of her husband.

After all the preliminaries were duly adjusted the wedding took place; and the ceremony was conducted by the Dissenting clergyman whom Mr. and Mrs. Holmes attended, and whose ministrations had proved so great a source of consolation to Louisa, on the last occasion that she was able to go to chapel.\* In accordance with the feelings, however, both of the bride and bridegroom, it was resolved that there should be no public display or large assemblage of guests, and that none but the most intimate friends on both sides should be invited. The marriage was consequently a very quiet proceeding; but though unattended by the public acclamations which greeted that of Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin, it was nevertheless quite as happy a one, both at the time of its celebration and in its results.

On the ceremony being completed, the married couple started for a tour of a few weeks on the Continent, proceeding by Antwerp and Brussels to the Rhine, thence passing through Switzerland to Geneva, and then returning home through France, by Lyons and Paris. On arriving at Southampton, to which they had crossed from Dieppe, they proceeded on their journey to the west of England, and in the course of a day or two arrived at Aston, where Miss Ryder had everything ready for their reception. And now the reader may suppose that as I have so satisfactorily disposed of Mrs. Orme, there remains nothing more to be said of their friends at the Elms; but I have not yet quite done with the family of the Holmes.

\* Vol. ii. p. 440.

When a professor of religion renounces his faith, and goes off into the world, we usually see, as in the case of Mr. Beaufoy,\* a most melancholy change in his character and in his habits. The man of sobriety often becomes intemperate; the man of unsullied moral character sometimes becomes a libertine; the habits of domestic virtue and religion are broken up, and all is desolation and misery. But when a sceptic embraces the faith of Christ, the moral and social change is equally conspicuous; and it invariably proves a personal and a relative blessing. Of this, a striking exemplification occurs in the history of Mr. Gordon, Mr. Lewellin's early friend. After he felt the renewing power of the grace of God, the old things of evil, to which he had long addicted himself, passed away, and he became a new creature in Christ Jesus—an essentially different man, in taste, in principle, and in social habits. He proved the genuineness of his conversion by the integrity and consistency of his conduct in all the subsequent stages of his career. In a letter which I received from him, some months after he had passed from death to life, he said, "Though I cannot doubt the reality of my spiritual renovation, and am compelled to ascribe it to the sovereign grace of God, and though I am persuaded that he will complete what he has begun, yet I deem it proper to let my principles be fairly tested, before I make any avowed profession of religion." On this resolution he acted. The first thing he did, that bore the aspect of attachment to the Christian faith, was to engage a pew in a church at Blackfriars', where the gospel was preached in its purity; and he was very regular in his attendance. And it so happened that his pew adjoined the one occupied by Mr. William Holmes, the eldest son of my old friend; who now, along with his brother Edward, carried on the business from which their father had retired. Young Holmes was already slightly acquainted with Mr. Gordon, having frequently heard of him from his sisters. In consequence of their sitting so near each other in church they frequently walked home together; a close intimacy sprung up between them, and they often visited at

\* Vol. ii. p. 240.

each other's houses. The account of Mr. Gordon's miraculous escape, and the marvellous change of mind and character which immediately followed, naturally interested young Holmes, and still more his family, who readily acceded to William's proposal, that the next time he came to the Elms he should bring his friend with him. Mr. Gordon was easily prevailed upon to accept the invitation; and so favourable was the impression made by him on Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, that he was requested to repeat his visit, and in a short time became so intimate as gradually to be regarded as one of the family. Many months had not elapsed before it was evident that a deep reciprocal attachment had been formed between him and Miss Jane, which at last terminated in a union, concluded under the happiest auspices. After their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon went to reside at Blackheath, where a few years afterwards I had the pleasure of being their guest. They had then three fine children; and though I have not seen either of them for some time, we still keep up an occasional correspondence. I am also happy to be able to say that after his marriage, Mr. Gordon became at once decided in his profession of religion, endeavouring in all things to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour. His natural *hauteur* was exchanged for the meekness and gentleness of Christ; and he became as zealous in the defence and diffusion of the faith once delivered to the saints, as he had been in his hostility against it. He was much esteemed by his Christian brethren, and so also was his wife, both of whom are now advancing together to meet the grand crisis of their destiny, without any dread of the final issue.

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Some time after Mr. Ryder's return to Aston, I received a letter from him giving me a sketch of his tour, and urging me to redeem the promise I had given him to pay the wedding visit. As the autumn was advancing, I resolved to go at once; and I spent two very pleasant weeks with him, visiting my other friends at intervals. One evening we had at Mr. Lewellin's a large gathering of some of the most prominent personages of my narrative, including

the Rev. John Roscoe and his lady, the Rev. O. Guion, Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, and Mrs. Roscoe. As soon as we were comfortably seated, with nothing to do but to partake of our friend's hospitality, and enjoy the charm of social fellowship, the Rev. Mr. Roscoe, addressing Mr. Guion, said, "Can you, Sir, tell me anything about my old friends the Misses Brownjohn? The last time I heard of them they were engaged in a lawsuit about a fortune, to which they supposed themselves entitled by the death of their nephew.\* Did they succeed in getting it?"

"Yes, Sir; and it was, I believe, a very large property. They started their carriage immediately afterwards."

"Do you know how they got over the difficulties occasioned by the non-production of the register of their birth and baptism?"

"I don't know how they got over the legal difficulties; but the other difficulty was not got over to Miss Susan's satisfaction for a long time after she came into the possession of the property."

"You refer, I presume, to the omission of her name in the parish registry, recording the fact of her regeneration?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Such a document," Mrs. John Roscoe remarked, "must be of immense value in the estimation of an unregenerated Tractarian. No getting into heaven without it! A parish registrar must be a very important functionary in the estimation of these High Church devotees. If he fail in his duty, alas! their hope of salvation vanishes—they are left to die in despair."

"To solve her difficulties," continued Mr. Guion, "Miss Susan applied to the bishop's secretary to lay her case before his lordship for his opinion. The reply was to this effect: that as she had taken the sacrament for many years, and had a distinct recollection of having been confirmed, and a faint recollection of her god-mother, it must be taken for granted that she was baptized. But even this official opinion from the highest ecclesiastical authority of the diocese, did not quite satisfy her, though her sister, Miss Dorothy, often told her

\* Vol. i. p. 230.

it ought; and gave it as her opinion, that if there was any omission she was sure the Almighty would overlook it."

"Against this, Miss Susan demurred. 'Take for granted what ought to be positively certain! no, sister, I cannot do that.' She was restless—ever going about from one aged person to another, in the hopes of finding some one who would give her some information as to her baptism. At length she found an old woman who recollected hearing that her uncle Robert, who died young, used to be spoken of in the family as her god-father. She followed up this clue, and found a son of this uncle Robert, who, on looking through an old account book, discovered the following entry:—'Paid for a silver cup, given to my god-child, Susan Brownjohn, of Norton, £3, 10s.' This cup she still had in her possession, bearing this inscription:—'The gift of Robert Fenton.' This was hailed as an unmistakable evidence of her regeneration; and now she felt sure of going to heaven when the Almighty took her from earth."

"How painfully absurd," said Mrs. John Roscoe, "to see an old lady trotting about, without regarding wind or weather, in search of the proof of her regeneration; or, in other words, of her title to the kingdom of heaven! Are Miss Susan and Miss Dorothy still alive?"

"Miss Dorothy is; but Miss Susan has been dead for nearly a twelvemonth. It is generally supposed that her death was hastened by her anxieties and exertions about the legitimate proof of her baptismal regeneration. When symptoms of decay became alarming, her sister engaged a professional nurse to wait upon her—an intelligent old woman, who afterwards gave me the following account of Miss Susan's last days:—

"The first time I saw her, she was in her own room, seated in a high-backed arm-chair; the neatest room I ever saw—so clean, and everything in such prim order. 'Now, Mrs.—, Mrs.—,' she said to me, 'I forget your name, and therefore I shall call you Mrs. Nurse. I am going to die, for Dr. Black told me when I asked him, that he thought it probable that the Almighty was going to take me to

himself; and I suppose it must be so. Now, Mrs. Nurse, I have a good many prayers to read; and a good deal to read out of this good book, *The Whole Duty of Man*; and I like to get all my reading over before tea, and then I can enjoy myself. You will now go out of my room, and not come back till I ring, which, I suppose, will be in about an hour's time.' However, the bell rung in about a quarter of an hour, and Miss Dorothy and I entered the room together. 'I can't,' she said to her sister, 'get through my reading so well as I used to do. I get sleepy as soon as I begin. But I see the cup.'

"O!" said Miss Dorothy, 'you are too scrupulous, dear sister; the Almighty is sure to overlook it.'

"I suppose he will; but I like to be particular. However, it's a great comfort to me, to see the silver cup, the proof of my baptismal regeneration; the thing necessary, you know, dear sister, to fit us for heaven. I would not part with it for another fortune from the Indies.'

"I saw,' said the old nurse, 'a little old-fashioned silver cup on the mantel-piece, on which she often looked with evident emotions of pleasure; but I could not divine the reason, till one day she gave me a detailed history of the whole matter. She then asked me whether I was baptized at the church; and whether I had satisfied myself that it was duly entered in the church register; assuring me, that unless it was, I stood no chance of going to heaven. At length,' continued the old woman, 'the crisis came.'

"I suppose,' said Dr. Black to her, after examining her pulse very carefully, 'you would like to take the sacrament, before the Almighty takes you to himself?'

"To be sure I should, Doctor; our Church appoints it.'

"Shall I request your Rector, Mr. Guion, to call?'

"To be sure not, Doctor. I never have had anything to do with the Evangelicals while living, and they shan't come near me when dying. No, no, Doctor; I'll keep to the clergy of the proper order—the clergy of our fathers.'

"Very good, Madam; I know your predilections."

“‘Yes, Doctor; and my antipathies.’

“‘The day and hour was fixed, and old Mr. Johnson, from Ottersley, came to administer the sacrament; and Miss Susan was dressed for the occasion, propped up with pillows in her high-backed arm-chair. Soon after the ceremony was over, I saw,’ said the old nurse, ‘a change, and I knew death was coming; Miss Dorothy was standing by her side.’ ‘I feel,’ she remarked, ‘a queer sensation coming over me. Give me a glass of water;’ but she expired when in the act of attempting to take the tumbler into her hand.’”

What a melancholy contrast this presents to the death of the pious cottager, Mrs. Allen! \*

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I was happy to hear from Mrs. John Roscoe, that the ministry of her husband and his pious Curate was working moral wonders amongst his parishioners. The church was uniformly crowded with attentive hearers; the people flocked to it from distant villages and hamlets. “But, Sir,” she added, “my husband has to pay the usual tax which is levied on all who distinguish themselves by their zeal and energy, in exposing the absurdity and fatal tendency of the popular superstitions, and trying to win souls to Christ. ‘The most favourable construction I can put on his conduct,’ said an old clergyman, in a large party, ‘is this—he is a little beside himself.’ I immediately replied, ‘It would be, reverend Sir, a great advantage to many of your parishioners, if you also were a little beside yourself; and then they would stop at home, and attend your ministrations, instead of having to walk three or four miles every Sabbath to hear my husband.’ This startled him, as he did not know that I was present. He then endeavoured to eke out an apology, which he would have been much wiser to have let alone.”

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I was sorry to hear that my old friend Farmer Pickford had sustained an injury by the slip of the ladder on which he was standing when lopping a tree, and that he had been confined to his bed

some weeks. On seeing me enter his room, he stretched forth his hand, and said, "I thought, Sir, you would give me a bit of a call, like. I am main glad to see you. Here I am, the Lord's prisoner. I would rather be the Lord's prisoner than the devil's free man, and no mistake."

"I hope the injury you have sustained is not likely to prove a lasting one."

"Why, as for that, I can't say. But now and tan I think I shall never be the man I was. I shall never be able to dig and trench, and mow and thrash, as when I was a youngster. And, at my time of life, I can't expect it. I am sixty-five come October. I tell you what, Sir, I see mercy mixed up with this affliction; and, as one of the Psalms says, I can sing of mercy and judgment. What a mercy that my neck was not broken; and that I had no broken bones. I never felt my heart so full of gratitude on going into my homestead as I did the morning when I was brought in on the hurdle. I couldn't help shedding some tears, like. The Lord be praised."

"Then you do not murmur, or feel disquieted?"

"No, no, Sir; not I. I an't going to commit that sin. I have had much comfort while lying on this bed, and no mistake. My mistress comes and sits by my side, and reads God's precious Book to me. I get main fond of the Psalms: they are like upland springs, they refresh my soul at once, like. And she comes, after church, on a Sunday, and talks over the sarmunts she hears there; and they come home to my heart. And Harry often comes, when he has struck off work, and he reads a bit, and gives the meaning of it, in his plain way, and what he says comes to my heart. So you see, Sir, I have many mercies mixed up with this affliction."

"Well, Farmer, I am happy to find that you are still holding on your way to the kingdom of heaven, and are full of peace and hope as you move onwards."

"Why, Sir, I hope you didn't think I should turn back, when you were gone. Turn back to the world and sin! and turn my back on the precious Saviour, who had compassion on, and rescued me



when I was a lost sinner! No, Sir; I would rather be hacked to death first, and no mistake. But I mustn't feel boastful. I don't keep myself. No. The Lord is my keeper. I mind a sarmunt Mr. Ingleby preached one Sunday morning. It made me strongish in faith, like; I got the text by heart before I took dinner, and I can say it, without missing a word—'And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand' (John x. 28)."

"The Psalmist says, 'It hath been good for me that I have been afflicted;' and I suppose, Farmer, you can say the same?"

"Yes, Sir, I cau, and no mistake. I am main glad for this affliction. It gives me a bit of breathing time, like; I can think over spiritual matters now I am in this quiet room, better than I could while busy at the farm work. It's all right. The Lord be praised."

"You expect, I suppose, that you shall soon get about again?"

"Why, as for that, I can't say. I have a main liking for this room. It is so quiet, and my thoughts now and tan be so delightful. It's true I have had a power of pain and suffering, but this has been overtopped by heart's ease and spiritual rejoicings. I can say, what my mistress read out of the blessed book, 'The Lord has made my bed in my affliction.' And here I am, willing to lie still or get up, to suffer longer or go to farm work, just as the Lord pleases. I a'nt much mindful about it."

"I suppose, Farmer, you have thought sometimes during your confinement, about your departure from earth, to be with Christ?"

"Aye, that's it, and no mistake. T'other night, when I was thinking a bit about dying and going into t'other world, I wondered how I should feel when looking at Jesus Christ for the first time, and what I should say to him, and what he would say to me. These thinkings came to and again, with such power, that tears streamed out of my eyes, and no mistake; and I wept on, till I fell asleep."

"He will appear in his glory, when he comes to receive you to himself; and it will be a glory very brilliant, yet it won't dazzle or

confound you, as your power of vision will be equal to the grandeur of the spectacle."

"What a marvellous wonder that he should ever take a bit of a liking to such a wicked fellow as I was! But it's just like him. When he was here, he looked out for the chief of sinners; after them that are lost. I a'nt forgot your sarmunt in the barn about Zaccheus. I shall think of it when I am in heaven, if I should ever get there, as I hope I shall. And I shall have a bit of wish to see him, as he had to see Jesus Christ, when he got up into the sycamore tree."

I was much gratified by finding him in such a heavenly frame of mind—so patient under his sufferings, so resigned to the Divine will, so joyful in hope, and so strong in faith. I read a chapter, making a few explanatory remarks, prayed with him, and left him; but he would not let me go without a promise that I would see him again.

On my next visit, I saw Mrs. Pickford, who appeared the picture of grief. She wept, and said—"My dear husband has been very ill the last two days, and in very great pain; I fear the Lord is going to take him from me. However, I have the consolation of knowing, that he has taken refuge in the ark of safety; he cleaves to the dear Redeemer with all his heart. It is quite wonderful to hear how he talks about the love of Christ; about feeling its power on his soul; and about seeing him, and being made like him."

I went into his room, shook hands with him, and had a long conversation. When speaking of the Saviour coming, in the spiritual manifestations of his presence, to comfort and animate his disciples in the chamber of affliction, or when entering death's dark vale, he interrupted me by a burst of natural eloquence, which greatly delighted us—"I can speak to the truth of what you say. He does come and comfort my heart. I have had more heart-rejoicings in this room, than I ever had at church or chapel, when hearkening to sarmunts, and that is saying a great deal. My soul has been taken up to the third heaven, and though I have not seen Jesus Christ

with my bodily eyes as Paul did, yet I have felt the sweetness of his love—the preciousness of his love, and no mistake. I say to my wife, I say to my children, I say to my servants, and all my neighbours, Take refuge in Christ, the living ark of safety, to save you from the wrath to come; and love him with all your hearts, and then when you die, He will come and comfort you, as he comes and comforts me. I beg pardon, Sir, for stopping you, but I couldn't hold no longer. My heart was too full."

It is now a long time since I was last at Fairmount; but I frequently correspond with Mr. Stevens and Mr. Lewellin, and hear how matters are going on in that part of the country, of which, though not my native place, I may truly say, from the pleasing associations connected with it, in the words of Horace—

"Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes  
Angulus ridet."

My friends Mr. and Mrs. Stevens continue as formerly in the enjoyment of good health and spirits, and though advanced in years, are still active in promoting the religious and moral improvement of the villagers in their neighbourhood. Mr. and Mrs. Lewellin have now a young family growing up about them; and Rockhill is quite the admiration of the country round for the great improvements effected on it by Mr. Lewellin, who, by diligent perseverance, and the valuable services of his bailiff, Harry Pickford, has become quite a scientific farmer. Mr. and Mrs. Ryder are very happy, with two sweet children, a boy and a girl, and a constant interchange of visits is kept up with Rockhill and Fairmount. Miss Ryder still lives with them; but it is doubtful whether this will be the case much longer, at least it is currently reported in the village that Mr. Hartley, the Rector of Aston, is shortly to lead her to the altar, a statement which receives some corroboration, from the circumstance that the Rector has lately been getting his house repaired and newly furnished. Mrs. Roscoe, shortly after her husband's death, took up her abode with her daughter and son-in-law, where she receives

every attention and kindness, and looks tranquilly forward to joining her beloved husband in a better world.

My old friend Farmer Pickford, after being confined for nearly twelve months, gradually regained his health and his physical energy, and is now become a hale old man, and has every prospect of attaining a patriarchal age. A few months since I received from him a basket of game, with the following characteristic note:—

“REVEREND SIR,—As you have left off honouring my wife’s cookery, she and I have been thinking that you would like to taste a bit of our game in your own house. I shot the hares, and Harry killed the partridges and the snipes. They are quite fresh—all killed yesterday. We hope they will come safe. I am happy to say that all’s well at the homestead. We get a good sarmunt now and tan, in the kitchen. I hope we shall all meet in heaven, and no mistake.—Yours devoutly,  
JOHN AND MARTHA PICKFORD.”

His son George is now captain of a vessel, and Sam is his mate. People say that Harry is to be married soon to a daughter of Farmer Goddard; and if so, it is believed that he will leave his situation at Rockhill, and occupy the adjoining farm, which will become vacant at Michaelmas.

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## CONCLUSION.



THE Author has now brought his labours to a close; and having thus finally disposed of the various characters in his story, it may justly be presumed that nothing more remains to be done but simply to thank his readers for their courteous attention to his narrative, and bid them a hearty and respectful farewell. But, perhaps, before doing so, he may be permitted to cast a retrospective glance on the course through

which he and his readers have passed together, and review some of the leading principles which he has endeavoured to illustrate and enforce in the course of his work.

In commencing his labours, the Author of the *Sheepfold and the Common* resolved to maintain a strict neutrality amid the various conflicting sects in the Christian Church, and avoid everything like an undue *clannishness* or *esprit de corps*. Assuming a position midway between the two principal religious parties which exist amongst us—Church and Dissent—he resolved to hold the balance of judgment and justice with an impartial hand—neither to lower the one, nor unduly exalt the other—allowing each to retain its own ecclesiastic polity, without presuming to encroach on the freedom which both so equitably claim. He has, he admits, exposed some of the imperfections of the Episcopal Establishment; but these very imperfections have been pointed out and animadverted on by many of its most intelligent and decided advocates and admirers, both of the clergy and laity. In so doing, however, it has been very far from his intention wantonly to impair the credit of the Church of England, or alienate her members from her communion; but to render his assistance in paving the way for a revision of her polity, which is now so loudly called for, and which, in general belief, will render her a greater and a more impressive instrument of moral and spiritual power amongst the great mass of the people. He has not attempted to set in hostile array against each other those who are united in the same faith, though differing in denominational opinions and practices. He has given no advice to a Churchman or to a Dissenter which stands in opposition to the pure and catholic spirit of the gospel; but he has endeavoured to induce all, from a profound regard to the authority of Jesus Christ, as well as their own moral dignity and happiness, “to add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity” (2 Pet. i. 5-7).

His main object throughout the whole of his labours has been to

present, in a popular form, the leading doctrines of the Christian faith; and to vindicate its integrity and purity against its ever-active opponents; and to prove, at the same time, that it is a remedial scheme to recover man from the ruin occasioned by the first transgression, rather than a mere educational or ceremonial one. He is aware that the heart of every man, while in an unenlightened and unrenewed state, presents an impassable barrier against its claims; but the regular marshalled forces of opposition are concentrated within the fortresses of scepticism and superstition. Scepticism assumes different phases, and takes various grounds of objection—alternately denying the truthfulness of the historic records of Christianity—impugning the credibility of its witnesses, and the rationality of its doctrines— inveighing against the so-called arrogance of its claims and requirements—and rejecting it as an ill-contrived theory, which answers no other purpose than to gratify the visionary, or affright the credulous. In the person of Mr. Gordon and others, the Author has allowed scepticism to express its hostility to Christianity; and the reader will form his own judgment of the way in which the arguments put forth by infidelity have been met and repelled. (See vol. i. pp. 96–104, 133–144, and 137; ii. 76–107.)

In endeavouring thus to explain and illustrate Evangelical doctrines, the Author has necessarily been led, by the nature of his subject, to expose and confute the various forms of heresy and theological error which appear to be more especially characteristic of the present age. On one of these—the Tractarian heresy—which prevails to such a lamentable extent among many members of the Church of England, he has deemed it expedient to dwell at considerable length, and has frequently introduced the views maintained by the High Church party, as a subject of disquisition. On this point it may, perhaps, be necessary to enter somewhat into detail, as to many persons the remarks on the doctrines professed by the Tractarian body, and the animadversions on the teaching of their clergymen, may appear somewhat severe and unwarranted.

It cannot, the Author conceives, be denied by any Christian, who

bows to the absolute authority of the Bible, and its obvious interpretation, that the only way to obtain eternal life is by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and that the spiritual regeneration of the soul is a necessary pre-requisite and qualification for an admission into the kingdom of heaven. But Tractarianism, like Romanism, virtually ignores this scheme of mercy, by introducing a ceremonial apparatus, by which a priestly power effects for its deluded victims and devotees all that is necessary for final salvation, without the concurrence of any supernatural grace, but what is supposed to flow through the artificially prescribed channels. To expose the absurdity, as well as the anti-Christian character of this heresy, the Author has introduced, in the person of Mr. Roscoe, the character of a devout and spiritually enlightened man, and in his brother, the Rev. John Roscoe, that of an able and zealous advocate of the Tractarian theory. The reader will form his own opinion on the merits of the question at issue, and the force of the arguments maintained by the supporters of the respective systems (i. 317-477).

No one, the Author thinks, can read the New Testament with careful attention, without perceiving that the sacred writers treat of two distinct orders of human beings—the natural, and the spiritual man; the one enlightened and renovated, and living in mental fellowship with God; the other, living through life under the governing influence of his constitutional principles, and conventional predilections and habits—in whose estimation, whether he be a libertine or a religious devotee, the necessity of a mental regeneration is viewed as a fiction, or a mere theological dogma. Hence, it devolved on the Author, in a work of this description, to draw plainly the broad line of distinction, which he thinks the intelligent reader will discover he has done in his illustrative and confirmatory examples, as well as by the simple process of reasoning, deducible from the authoritative data of the inspired volume. (See vol. i. pp. 198, 342-346, 352-356; see also paper on *Calm Discussion*, i. 246, and *A Struggle for Life*, ii. 493.)

This broad line of distinction between the two orders of men,

becomes more marked and decisive when they are dying, or when anticipating death. As an instance of this, the reader is presented with a contrast in the narrative of the deathbed of Mrs. Allen (i. 187, 188), as compared with that of Miss Susan Brownjohn (ii. 568-570), and in the respective accounts of the last moments of Mr. Ingleby, the Evangelical pastor; and Mr. Cole, the advocate of Tractarian principles (ii. 523-528, 540-544).

In separate papers, which form essential parts of his work, he has brought under the notice of his readers a variety of individual cases, which may prove as beacons, or examples of great practical utility. He would call the serious attention of the incautious, who may be exposed to beguiling temptations, to the case of Mr. Lewellin (i. 13), young Harvey (ii. 179), and Mr. Beaufoy (ii. 240).

To the case of the ANXIOUS INQUIRER, who is intensely concerned for his salvation, the Author has paid great attention, by explaining the *cause* of his mental disquietude, which is a penetrating conviction of personal guilt, and a clear perception of its consequent danger (i. 416 and 503).

The great question, *What must we do to be saved?* answered: see *An Escape from a False Refuge* (i. 530); also, *The Farm-house Kitchen* (ii. 292).

The spiritual perplexities to which all are subjected, in some degree, while working out their salvation, are specified and adjusted, and these are:—*The defective nature of repentance* (i. 176); *the declension of spiritual enjoyments*, and *the want of an assurance of final salvation* (ii. 159). See also Mrs. Loader's Letter (ii. 303).

In the person of Miss Roscoe we have a specimen of Christian decision, its sacrifices, its struggles, its conflicts, its triumphs, and its recompense of reward. Miss Holmes' religious history presents a very different complexion; in her we see the good work of grace beginning and advancing under favourable auspices; her conflicts are mental, and the final issue is glorious. In the case of Miss Emma Holmes is exhibited the painful consequences of duplicity and headstrong rashness, in entering into the married state.



Nothing, in the opinion of the Author, has a more powerful influence over the popular mind, to excite prejudice against Christianity, and to lead the profane and sceptical to call in question its Divine origin, than the multiplicity of sects which exist within the pale of the visible church; especially when they perceive the bitter and antagonistic spirit which they often cherish and express towards each other. The evil of this and its remedy, the Author has endeavoured to point out and illustrate (ii. 18-36.)

The Author has interwoven, in the progress of his work, many specimens of the wonder-working power of the grace of God, in the regeneration and conversion of persons of varying degree of moral excellencies and of moral worthlessness; and of the diversified mode of operation which is observed by the Divine Spirit when effecting it. He would call the attention of the intelligent reader to the following cases, which are so many living witnesses in confirmation of the Divine origin and blissful tendency of the truth, by which they are called out of a state of spiritual death to give their testimony:—Mr. Lewellin (i. 23), the Rev. O. Guion (i. 76), Miss Roscoe (i. 129), Mr. Tennent (i. 151), Mr. Roscoe (i. 278), Farmer Pickford (i. 47, 392, 571), Miss Denham (i. 414), Rev. John Roscoe (i. 428), Miss Osbourne, the Quakeress (i. 503), Mr. and Mrs. Lobeck (i. 528-544), Mrs. Hastings—see *The Effect of a Word Spoken in Season* (ii. 108), Mrs. Farrington—see *The Farm-house Kitchen* (ii. 284), Mr. Ryder—see *A Struggle for Life* (ii. 493), Mr. Gordon (ii. 511-515).

That the papers are very unequal in point of interest and execution, no one is more conscious of than the writer; but what he has written, he wrote as well as he could when it was written; and he must now leave it to be dealt with, just as the candid and impartial critic may decide. He knows that perfection has never been attained; and though he feels that partiality for his own productions with which authors are charged, and to which they are compelled to plead guilty, when they speak so as to be believed, yet he is not vain enough to suppose that he has attained it. The work has its faults, which he has not skill enough to conceal, nor temerity enough

to vindicate; and if it possess no excellence, it will soon descend to that state of oblivion from which no interest can redeem it.

“And now,” to quote the language of an elegant author, “could he flatter himself that any one would take half the pleasure in reading his numbers which he has taken in writing them, he would not fear the loss of his labour. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics, and the noise of folly; vanity and vexation flew away for a season, care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He arose fresh as the morning to his task; the silence of the night invited him to peruse it; and he can truly say, that food and rest were not preferred before it. Happier hours than those which have been spent in composing them he never expects to see in this world: very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along; for when thus engaged he counted no time. They are gone, but have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind; and the remembrance of them is sweet.”

It has been justly observed, that there are few things not purely evil, of which we can say, without some emotion of uneasiness, *this is the last*. Those who never could agree together, shed tears when mutual discontent has determined them to final separation. Of a place which has been frequently visited, though without pleasure, the last look is taken with heaviness of heart; and the Author, who has by a series of papers contributed to the improvement and gratification of society, may expect to be forgiven, if he should feel some novel sensations pervading his breast, when his last essay is before him.

Thus in the planning and execution of our schemes, life passes away, and we advance by unconscious steps towards its termination; and though by a singular species of artifice we contrive to keep our latter end in some distant perspective of futurity, yet in our more serious moments of reflection we feel that it is approaching. And can we anticipate it with cool indifference? Can we think of taking a last look at the varied beauties of nature, which have so often

charmed the eye—of hearing the last words of friendship, which have so often delighted the ear—of uttering the last adieu which is to separate us from all communion with the inhabitants of earth—without feeling a degree of pensive sadness, which nothing can relieve but the hope of a blissful immortality? And even when this hope breaks in upon our solemn musings, and dispels the gloom which envelopes them, it is not always in our power to regain that tranquillity which the approach of our *last* hour tends to disturb. Our *last* hour! It may now be distant, but ere long it will be near. Suppose it were now come! Suppose only sixty more minutes of time were allotted to us on earth! Suppose we were now within a few, a very few steps of the seat of final judgment! Suppose in a few moments we should be called to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil! Suppose, ere the village clock proclaims to the rustic inhabitants the departure of *another hour*, we should be doomed to receive the decisive sentence, which will

“Remove us to yon heav’nly place,  
Or shut us up in hell,”

what would be the state of our mind? Should we be calm, like the woodman, who after the toils of the day, goes home to enjoy his rest? or should we be alarmed, as when the mariner sees the first symptoms of the rising storm? Should we be in ecstasy, as when the captive is released from the prison-house of wretchedness, and restored to his home? or should we turn pale, and tremble like the condemned criminal, when he hears the first sound of his own funeral knell? These are questions which we may now dismiss under an apprehension that they relate to a remote period; but that period is not so remote, as when the questions first met the eye of the reader; and ere long it will be *the present time*. Are we prepared to live through our last hour; and to give up our life, when the last pulse shall beat through our veins, without wishing to prolong it? Are we ready to step across the boundary which divides the visible from the invisible world, without faltering in our passage? If so, we may live in

peace. We need fear no evil. We may range into futurity, without being appalled by any rising forms of terror. We may anticipate the last hour with tranquil joy, and calmly wait its approach. But if not, we ought to feel alarm. To be gay and sportive when treading on the verge of eternal woe, would be no less than a species of mental delirium. It would be an act of criminal folly; a treasuring up to ourselves wrath against the day of wrath; and impiously smiling as the storm of the Divine displeasure is accumulating its stores of vengeance.

Let me, then, before I have taken my final farewell of my reader, urge him once more to “work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.” Let me once more point his attention to “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” Let me once more tell him, in the language which fell from the lips of the Redeemer, when he was on the earth:—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

I have now done; and commending my well-meant though imperfect labours to the blessing of Him who alone can render them effectual to the salvation of my readers, I now retire to the more private duties of my station, yet not without indulging the hope of meeting some in the celestial world, to whom I have been the means of imparting consolation, while passing through this valley of weeping.

THE END.

