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Title: No Sect in Heaven

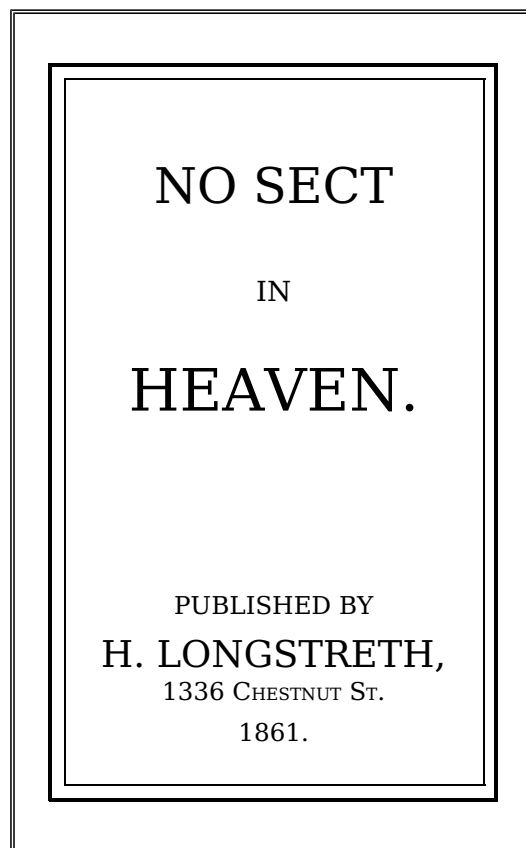
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NO SECT IN HEAVEN ***



NO SECT IN HEAVEN.

TALKING of sects till late one eve,
Of the various doctrines the saints
believe,
That night I stood in a troubled dream,
By the side of a darkly flowing stream.

And a "Churchman" down to the river
came:
When I heard a strange voice call his
name,
"Good father, stop; when you cross this
tide
You must leave your robes on the other
side."

But the aged father did not mind,
And his long gown floated out behind,
As down to the stream his way he took,
His pale hands clasping a gilt-edged
book.

[4]

"I'm bound for heaven, and when I'm
there,
I shall want my book of Common Prayer;
And though I put on a starry crown,
I should feel quite lost without my
gown."

Then he fixed his eye on the shining
track,
But his gown was heavy, and held him
back,
And the poor old father tried in vain
A single step in the flood to gain.

[5]

I saw him again on the other side,
But his silk gown floated on the tide;
And no one asked in that blissful spot,
Whether he belonged to "*the Church*" or
not.

Then down to the river a Quaker
strayed,
His dress of a sober hue was made;
"My coat and hat must be all of gray,
I cannot go any other way."

[6]

Then he buttoned his coat straight up to
his chin,
And staidly, solemnly, waded in,
And his broad-brimmed hat he pulled
down tight
Over his forehead, so cold and white.

But a strong wind carried away his hat;
A moment he silently sighed over that,
And then, as he gazed to the farther
shore,
The coat slipped off, and was seen no
more.

[7]

As he entered heaven, his suit of gray
Went quietly sailing—away—away,
And none of the angels questioned him
About the width of his beaver's brim.

Next came Dr. Watts, with a bundle of
Psalms
Tied nicely up in his aged arms,
And hymns as many, a very wise thing,
That the people in heaven, "all round,"
might sing.

[8]

But I thought that he heaved an anxious
sigh,
As he saw that the river ran broad and
high,
And looked rather surprised as, one by
one,
The Psalms and Hymns in the wave went
down.

And after him, with his MSS.,
Came Wesley, the pattern of godliness,
But he cried, "Dear me, what shall I do?
The water has soaked them through and
through."

[9]

And there on the river, far and wide,
Away they went down the swollen tide,
And the saint astonished, passed

through alone,
Without his manuscripts, up to the
throne.

Then, gravely walking, two saints by
name, [10]
Down to the stream together came,
But as they stopped at the river's brink,
I saw one saint from the other shrink.

"Sprinkled or plunged, may I ask you,
friend,
How you attained to life's great end?"
"Thus, with a few drops on my brow."
"But *I* have been dipped, as you'll see me
now.

"And I really think it will hardly do, [11]
As I'm 'close communion,' to cross with
you;
You're bound, I know, to the realms of
bliss,
But you must go that way, and I'll go
this."

Then straightway plunging with all his
might,
Away to the left—his friend at the right,
Apart they went from this world of sin,
But at last together they entered in.

And now, when the river was rolling on, [12]
A Presbyterian church went down;
Of women there seemed an innumerable
throng,
But the men I could count as they passed
along.

And concerning the road they could
never agree,
The *old* or the *new* way, which it could
be, [13]
Nor ever a moment paused to think
That both would lead to the river's brink.
And a sound of murmuring long and loud
Came ever up from the moving crowd,
"You're in the old way, and I'm in the
new,
That is the false, and this is the true,"—
Or, "I'm in the old way, and you're in the
new,
That is the false, and *this* is the true."

But the *brethren* only seemed to speak, [14]
Modest the sisters walked, and meek,
And if ever one of them chanced to say
What troubles she met with on the way,
How she longed to pass to the other
side,
Nor feared to cross over the swelling
tide,
A voice arose from the brethren then:
"Let no one speak but the 'holy men;'
For have ye not heard the words of Paul,
'Oh, let the women keep silence all?'"

I watched them long in my curious [15]
dream,
Till they stood by the borders of the
stream;
Then, just as I thought, the two ways
met,
But all the brethren were talking yet,
And would talk on, till the heaving tide
Carried them over, side by side;
Side by side, for the way was one,

The toilsome journey of life was done,
 And priest and Quaker, and all who died,
 Came out alike on the other side.
 No forms, or crosses, or books had they,
 No gowns of silk, or suits of gray,
 No creeds to guide them, or MSS.,
 For all had put on Christ's
 righteousness.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NO SECT IN HEAVEN ***

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