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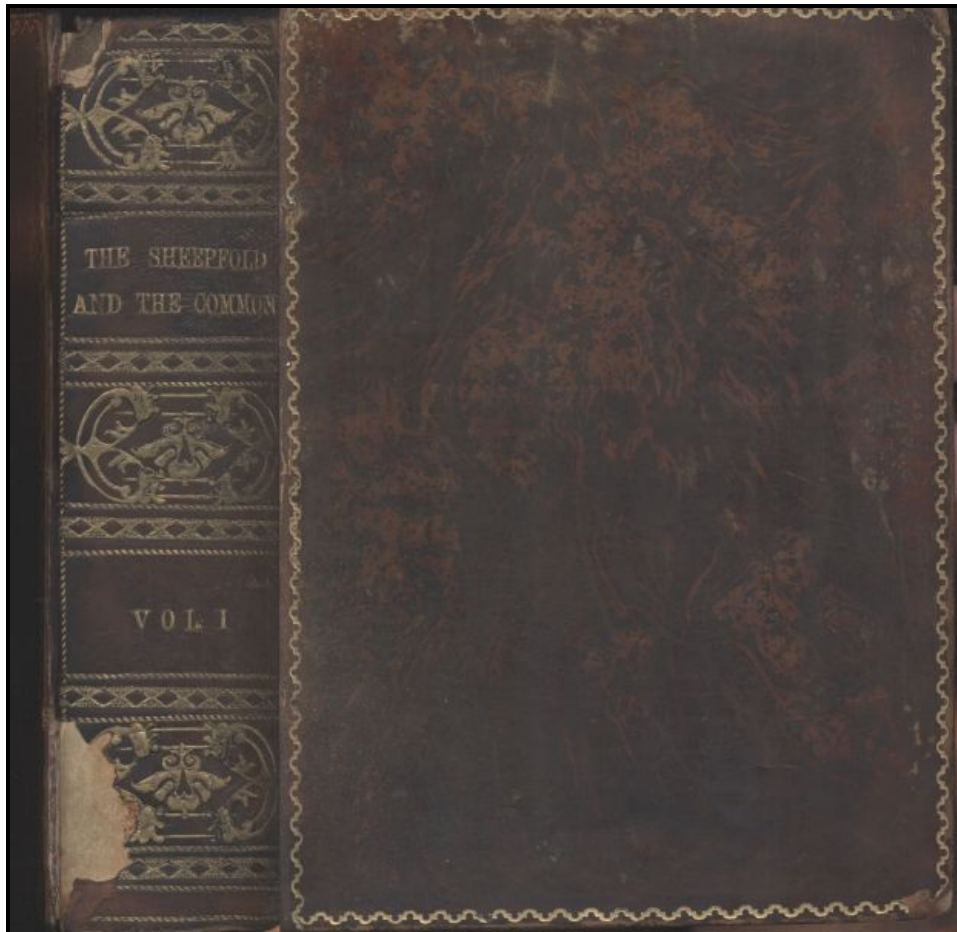
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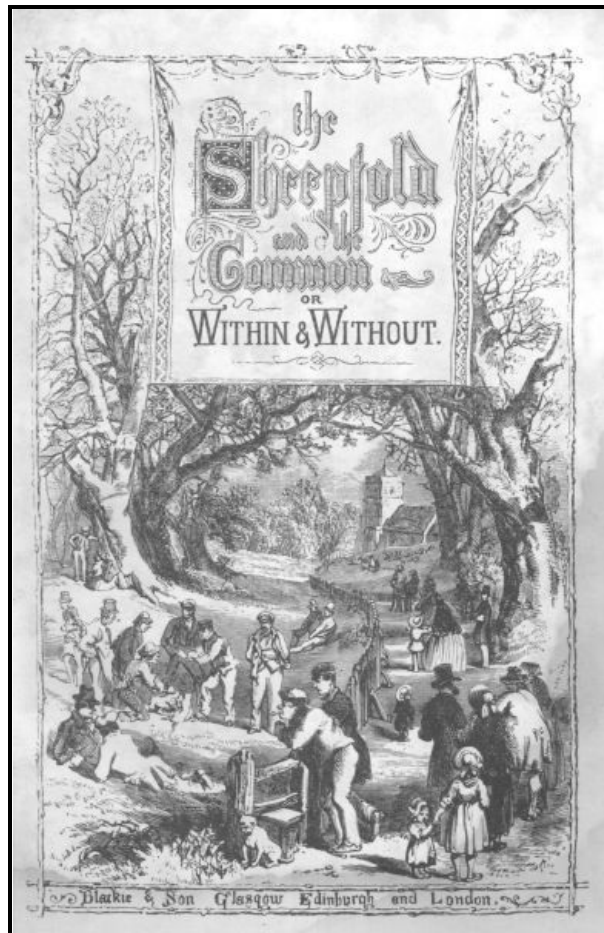


THE
SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON.



**DRAWN BY G. H. THOMAS. ENGRAVED BY W. L. THOMAS.
THE OLD SHEPHERD.**

Vol. i. page 2.



**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.

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 every-day 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 commonplace 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 beautiful 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.*

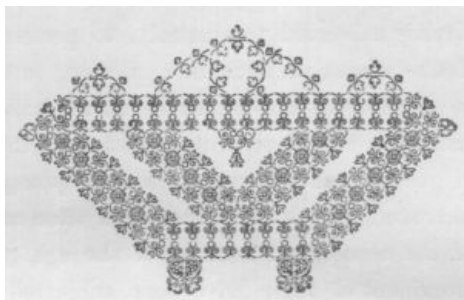
We have more definite and more vivid impressions of the invisible world—of the calm repose and fraternal fellowship of the saved, and of the privations and anguish of the lost, when reading our Lord's description of the condition of Lazarus and the rich man, than is produced on our minds by his announcement 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.*

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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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THE SHEEPFOLD AND THE COMMON.

THE LONELY WIDOW.



U n 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, I stopped in front of a small but respectable looking inn, whose honeysuckled porch and tidy exterior promised to afford a tranquil and comfortable place of sojourn, 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." [2]

"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?" [3]

"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 flippant 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." [4]

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."

[5]

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 the following verses of a favourite hymn, though the singer was concealed:—

"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."

[6]

I lingered here some time after the music had died away, luxuriating in my own hallowed reflections; and then advancing a few steps, I perceived, seated in a hollow, a decent middle-aged woman, and, apparently, her daughter, who were thus pouring forth their evening hymn of praise. I then 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.

[7]

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."

[8]

"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."

[9]

"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, America. 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."

[10]

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.

"Yes," 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."

[11]

"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."

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 temptations, 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.

[12]

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."

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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 tinged 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.

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"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

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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."

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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."

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"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.

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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 tavern, and other places, 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." [19]

"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." [20]

"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.

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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?"

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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 physician, 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 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?"

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DRAWN BY G. H. THOMAS. ENGRAVED BY W. L. THOMAS.

RETURN OF THE WIDOW'S SON.

Vol. i. page 23.

"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."

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"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.

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"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

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"—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.

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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.

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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.

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"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.

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"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.

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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,"

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.

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DRAWN BY S. READ ENGRAVED BY W. L. THOMAS.

A PROSPECT OF FAIRMOUNT.

Vol. i. page 32.

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 endeavoured 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."

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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 acceptance, 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.'"

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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 Mrs. 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?"

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"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.'"

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"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."

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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."

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"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!"

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"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."

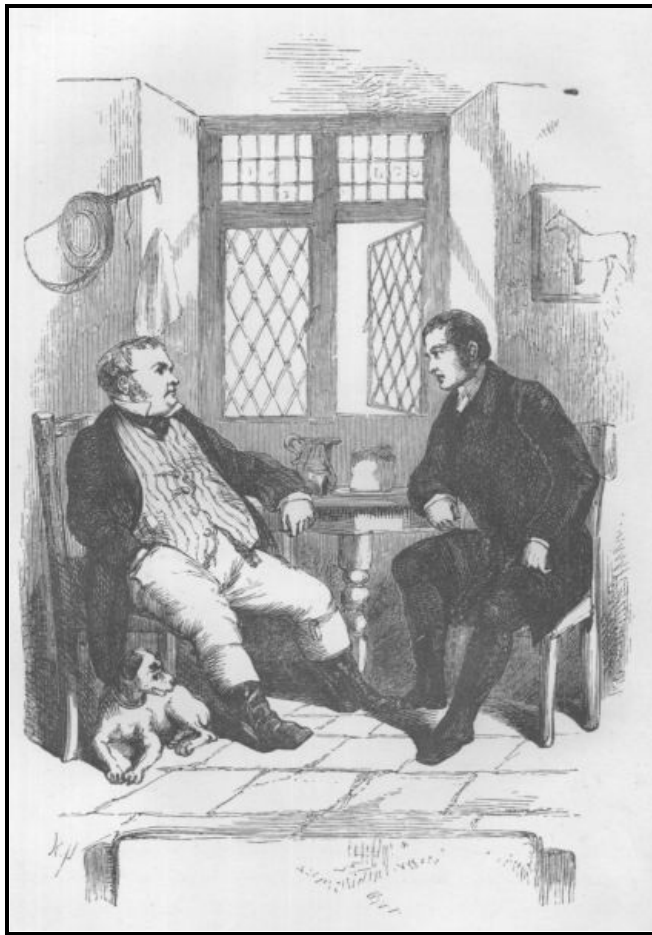
"I suppose that, though you live secluded from the world, you are sometimes visited by pious friends?"

"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."

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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 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.

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**FIRST INTERVIEW WITH FARMER
PICKFORD.**

Vol. i. page 47.

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."

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"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;^[1] 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."

"What sort of a gentleman is he?"

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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."

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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.

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."

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"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 unexpectedly 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."

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"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."

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"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 cruising 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; we 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."

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"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,^[2] he is now safe landed."

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

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"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, 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."

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"Was you with your mother when she died?"

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

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"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?"

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"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

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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 heartstrings 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."

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"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.

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My 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 intimacy, 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."

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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 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."

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DRAWN BY S. READ. ENGRAVED BY W. L. THOMAS.

THE CHURCH OF THE NEGLECTED PARISH.

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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."

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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:—

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"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, etc., 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).

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"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.

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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.

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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 hallowed 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?

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"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 conversation, 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 example 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 acceptance 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.

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"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 acceptation, 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.'"

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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,

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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.

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^[77] 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." [78]

"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." [79]

"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."

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"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."

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"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.

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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."

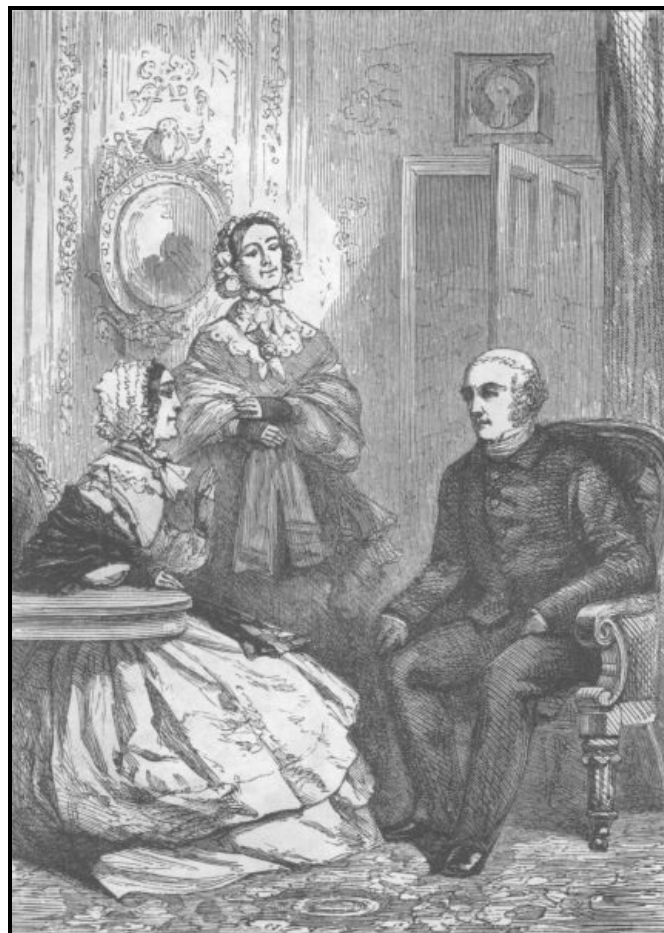
Mr. Guion.—"I wish, Madam, to pay respect to all my parishioners."

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.**

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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."

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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."

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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 expulsion 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

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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."

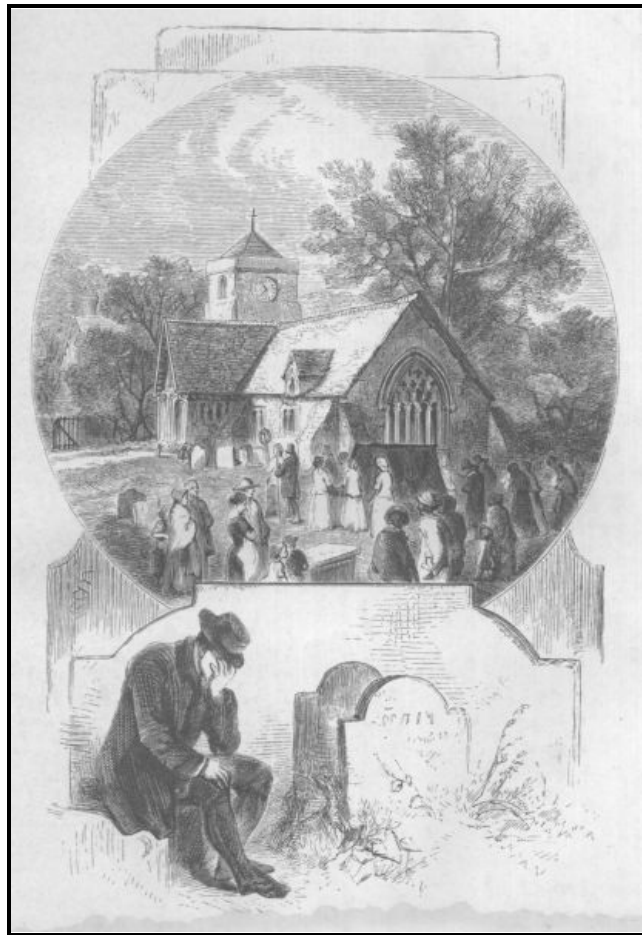
"Have they any pernicious influence over others to keep them from church?"

"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 embittered 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 grave-yard.



A LAMB OF THE FLOCK BORNE TO HER REST.

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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. [88]

"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 Teignmouth for the recovery of my health, which I have not obtained; *but there I found the pearl of great price*' (Rom. xi. 33). [89]

"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 [90]

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."

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"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.

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It 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?^[93] 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,
Glows 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 lowing 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.

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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."

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"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, indeed, 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."

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"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?"

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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?"

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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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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 downcast 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."

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"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."

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"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

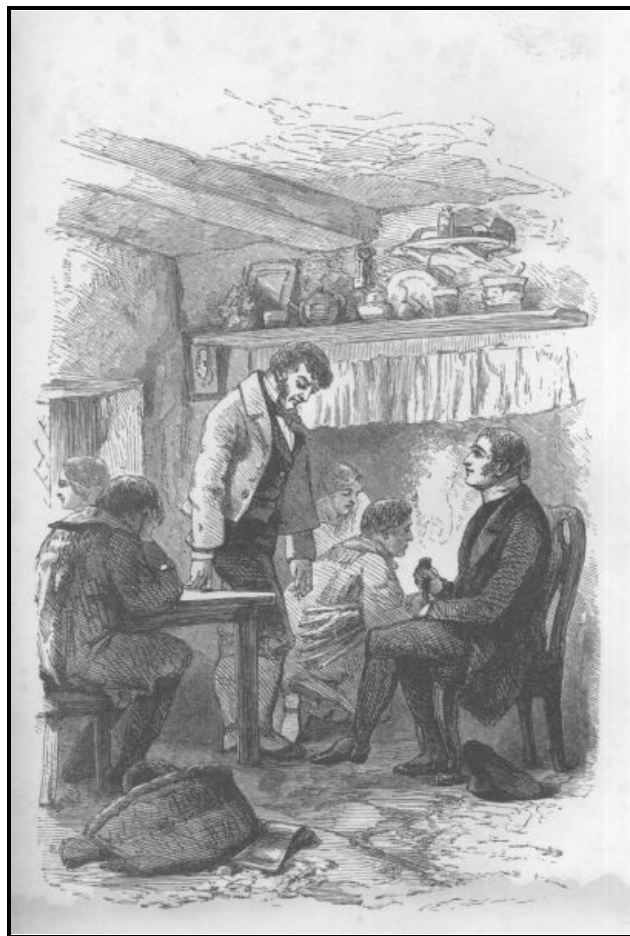
satisfaction."

"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; another, 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!"

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THE WOODMAN'S FAMILY IN TROUBLE.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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!"

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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 Redeemer'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.

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'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."

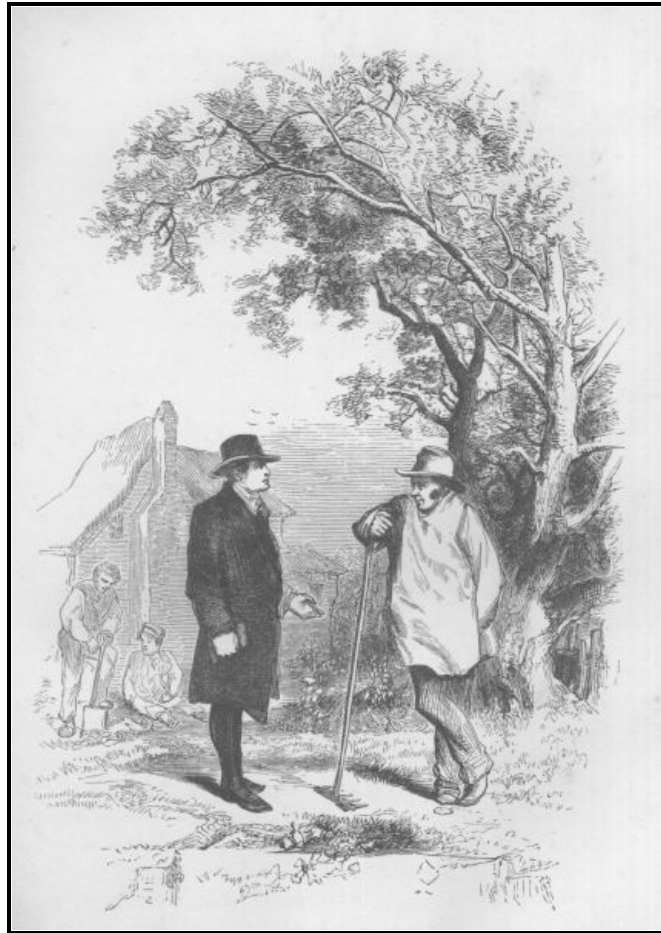
"Have you a Bible?"

"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 labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of

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the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son."



"WE WORK ON SUNDAY TILL DINNER-TIME."

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"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."

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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."

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

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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.)

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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^[122] 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."

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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 miner 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.

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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.

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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."

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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?'"

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"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 superintendence of her father, who was eminently qualified to enrich her mind with the treasures of knowledge 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 influence, 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 acceptance 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."

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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."

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"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."

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^[3] is in the grave." The 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.

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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."

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"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?"

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"You see, Sir, that little running brook which feeds the watercress 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."

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"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."

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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."

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"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?"

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"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)."

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"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."

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"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 genuineness 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."

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"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."

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"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

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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. [145]

"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 forever.*"

"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?" [146]

"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."

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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."

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"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."

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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."

THE BIBLE PRECIOUS.



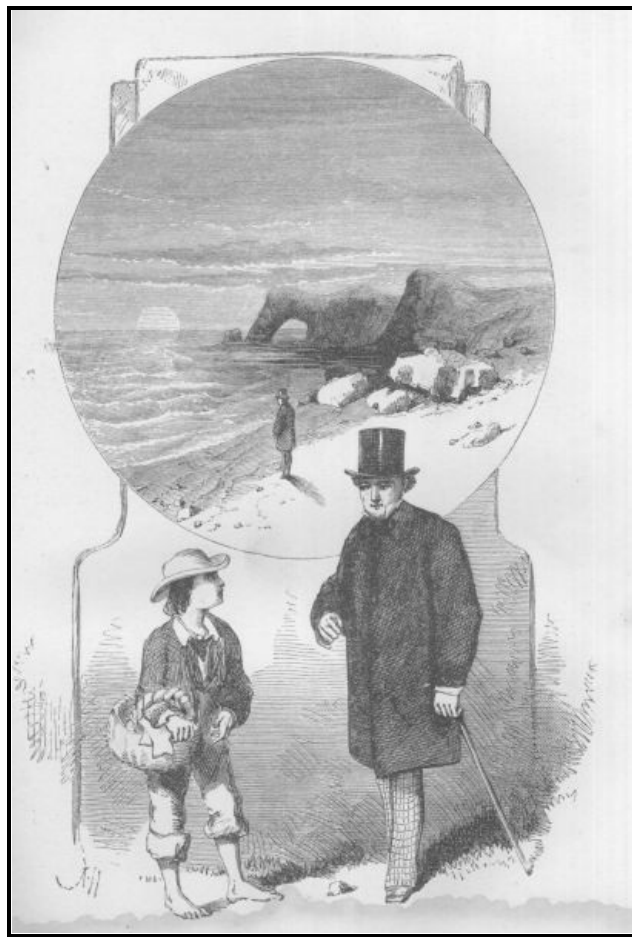
Some few years after my interview with Mr. Tennent, and when its vivid impressions had nearly faded from my recollection, I received the following letter, which I read with intense delight:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is possible that you may have forgotten me long since; but a slight reference to the remarkable incidents connected 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.

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"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 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.'

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MR. TENNENT AND THE TRACT SELLER.

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"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*⁴¹ 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.

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"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.*^[5]

"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.

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"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, 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-enkindled 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,

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"GEORGE TENNENT."

THE FAMILY OF THE ROSCOES.



Mr. 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.

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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.

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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 responses 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.

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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,^[6] 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 prefer the retirement of devout meditation to the noisy bustle and fantastic exhibition of human vanity and folly."

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"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?"

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"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.'"

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"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.'"

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"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 gaieties 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."

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"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 [165] 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?" [166]

"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?" [167]

"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 religious 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."

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"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."

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"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,

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"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."

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"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."

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"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^[7] 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.^[8] 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."

"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?"

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"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.'"

MISS ROSCOE.



There 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.

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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 news 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—

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'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."

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"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 'heartfelt 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."

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"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."

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"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.'

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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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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

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"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."

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?"

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"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 *sarmunts*, 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.

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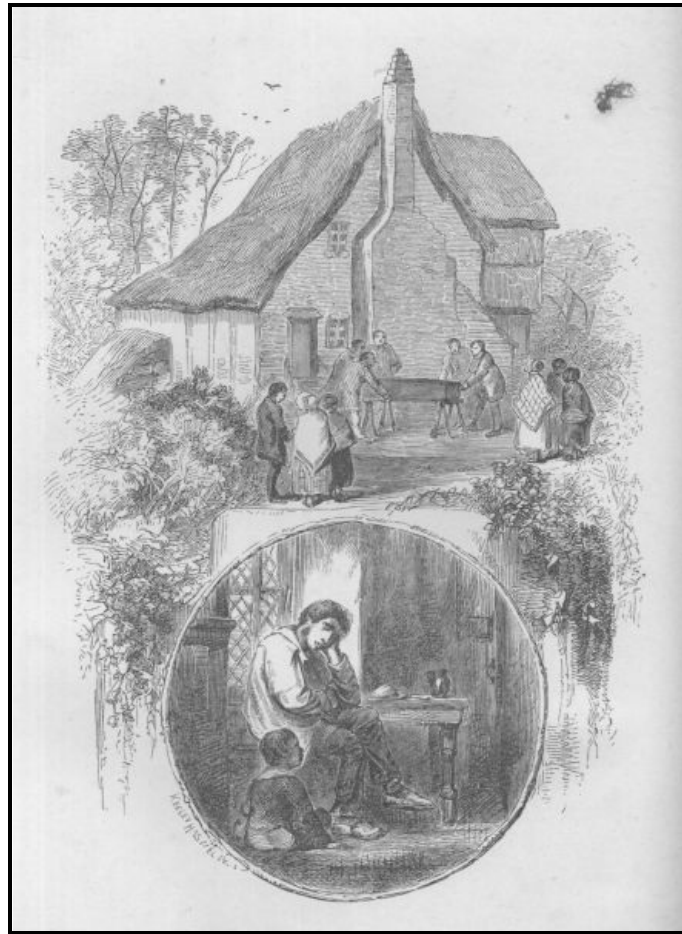


Death is a solemn subject of meditation; and it is one which presents stronger claims on our attention than any other, because we all *must die*. If to die were a mere cessation of being; if, when the mind ceases to think, and the passions cease to glow; if, when the active and the passive virtues cease 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 approaching 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.



THE HOUSE OF MOURNING.

Vol. i. page 187.

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 condemn 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."

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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.

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"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 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.

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"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.

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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

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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."

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"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."

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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.



As 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."

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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."

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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 unconsortant, 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."

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"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?"

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"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 compassion to the more degenerated and worthless, who ought to make such concessions, and pray in such strong terms of humiliation."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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 condemn 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?"

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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*."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."

FRESH PERPLEXITIES.



Mrs. 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'?" [210]

"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." [211]

"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." [212]

"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?'"

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"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!"

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"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 keyhole, 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."

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"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."

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"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."

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.

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"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." [219]

"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 astonished if they treat with contempt the excitement of such emotions in the breast of others."

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"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!"

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"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 faints 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."

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"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.

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"With what raptures did the celestial spirits hail his return, and with what joyful awe did they witness his re-investiture 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—

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"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."

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"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."

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"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.



It 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."

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"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."

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"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.

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"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 unlightened 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.

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"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:—

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"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 received 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.

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"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 ministers, 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."

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"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,^[9] whose knowledge of human life and manners was as comprehensive as his eloquence was brilliant and fascinating, has somewhere said, 'that to the great 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 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?"

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"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.'"

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 gentlefolks, 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

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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.

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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."

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"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."

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"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.

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"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."

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"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

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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?'"

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"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 Fairmount.

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.

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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 discountenanced—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.



he 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 conquer 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.

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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."

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"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?"

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"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 sinners, and I believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners. I do not want any supernatural illumination to confirm my belief of these facts."

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"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. [251]

"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." [252]

"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." [253]

"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." [254]

"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 convinced 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." [255]

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 [256]

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.'" [257]

SELF-DELUSION.



According 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?" [258]

"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." [259]

"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."

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"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."

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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."

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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.

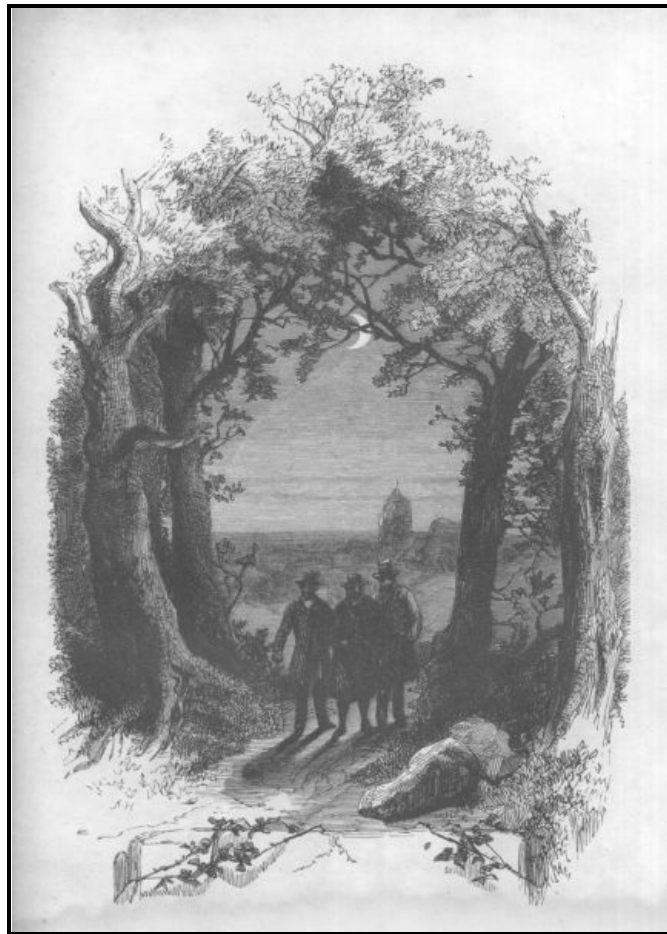
"Here is melody," said Mr. Roscoe. "Here is the song of innocence. Here is sweet contentment. And why is the bird of night more happy than man? Ah! why?"

"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 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."

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**"IT WAS A LOVELY EVENING. THE MOON
WAS JUST RISING AS WE ENTERED THE
GROVE."**

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"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 constancy; 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."

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"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."

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"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.

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lear 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 donkey, 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 blessings.

"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."

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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."

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"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.

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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."

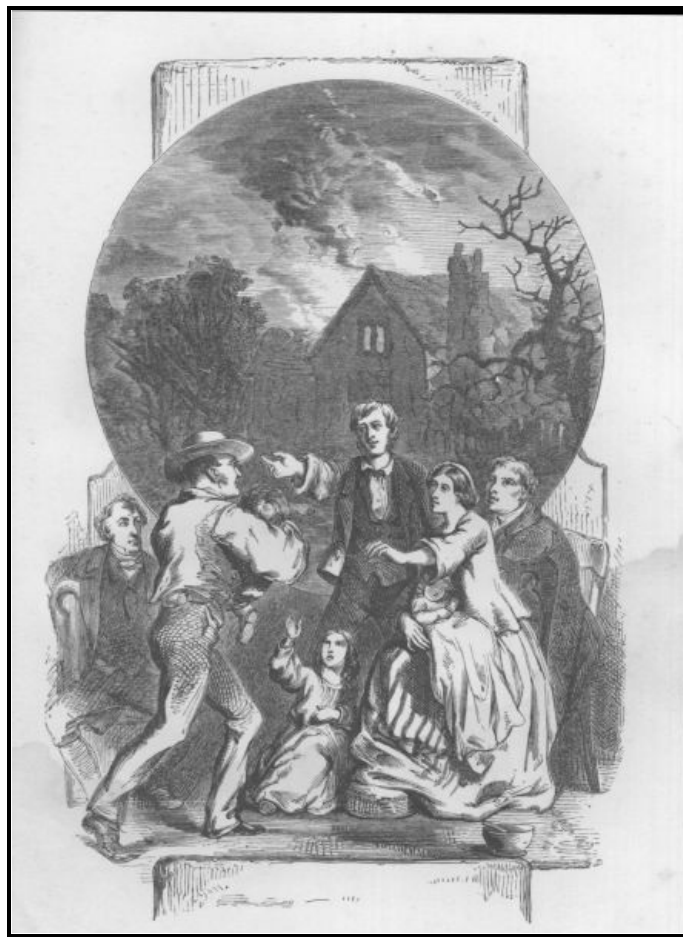
"But," said Josiah, as he stood gazing on the living wreck of his possession, "where is Henry? I don't see him."

"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.

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THE LOST CHILD RESTORED.

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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 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.

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"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, disdainful 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?"

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"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

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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.'"

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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 sufferings 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."

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"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."

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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.

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"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 unaverted 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 Christianity 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."

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"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.'"

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"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 always, 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."^[10]

"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."

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"But, mamma, would you not save a little child from being drowned, or a widow from being burned, if it were in your power?"

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"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."

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"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 expressions 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.



"Mamma," 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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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 interdict 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."

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"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

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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."

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"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.^[11] 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, 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."

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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."

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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!"

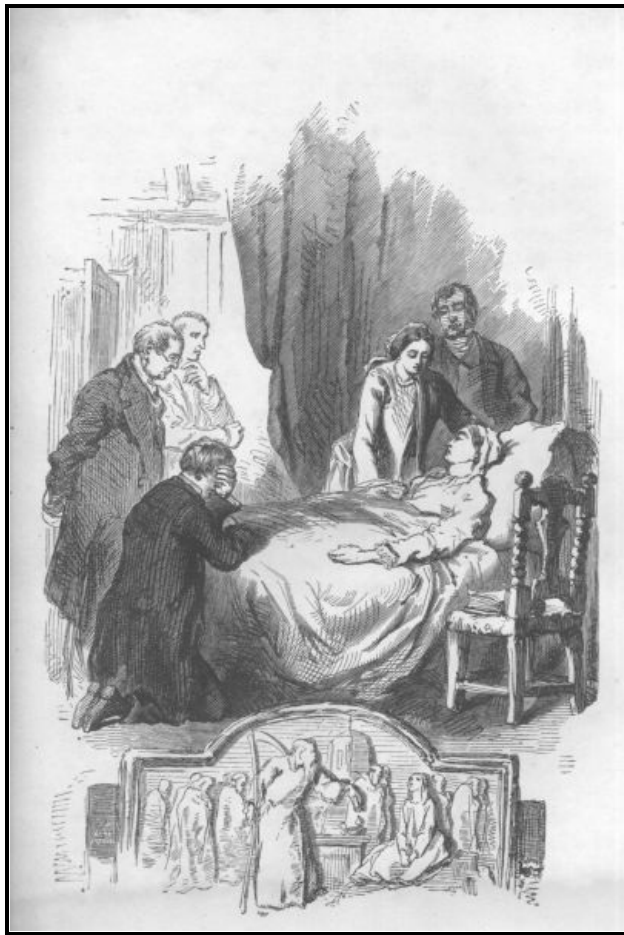
"You are happy, mother, in the prospect of death."

"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, 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.

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THE DARK VALE ILLUMINED.

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"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 mourning, 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.

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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."

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."

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"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."

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"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 throbbed 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.'"

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"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:—

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'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."

INTEMPERATE ZEAL.



he 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 [308] 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.'"

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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."

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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 together, 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?"

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"But a bad spirit will often induce a wavering hearer to suspect that the arguments are defective. An affectionate 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 yesterday, 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."

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"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.

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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."

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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.

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."

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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^[12] 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 godmothers 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."

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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?"

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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."

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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."

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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 to 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 he is 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!*"

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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.

The 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.

"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,

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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."

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."


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"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.

SPIRITUAL REGENERATION A REALITY.

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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.

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"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."

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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.*'"

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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?"

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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."

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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!"

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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."

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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 ease 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."

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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?*'"

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"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

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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."

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."

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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."

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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.'"^[13]

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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 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.

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"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."

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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?"

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Mr. Rosco.—"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?"

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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."

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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; but 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.

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"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 represent to be indispensably necessary to fit us for the kingdom of heaven."

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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."

ON CONVERSION.

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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."

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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^[14] 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 displeasure 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.'"

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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."

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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 utterances 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."

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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?"

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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."

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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?"

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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?"

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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 plenitude 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."

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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 insufficiency 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)."

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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*."

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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."

THE TENDENCY OF EVANGELICAL PREACHING.

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U n 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."

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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

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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.'

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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?"

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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 sentiments 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.^[15] 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.'"

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Mr. Roscoe.—"It is now about twelve months since I was travelling with an eminent physician. Our conversation happened to 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

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—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?"

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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."

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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

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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.'"

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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."^[16]

"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) 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."

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"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 godmother."

"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 spiritual 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." [383]

"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 unmistakable signs."

ON ATTENDING AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY.



Mr. 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 [384] 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." [385]

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?" [386]

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, recommend 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?*" [387]

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." [388]

Mr. Roscoe.—"But would it ever have been destroyed if we had not done it? A letter^[17] 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 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." [389]

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^[18] 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." [390]

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 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?"

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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."

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, blending, 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.

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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 overmuch;' 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?"

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"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 *schismatic*s, 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."

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"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."

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"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."

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."

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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.'" [397]

"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."

THE UNHAPPY ONE.



Mrs. 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." [398]

"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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 disrepute. 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."

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"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."

THE SCENE CHANGES.



An 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,^[411] 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."

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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.

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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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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."

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"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.

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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.

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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."

THE TRACTARIAN AT FAULT.



oon 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.

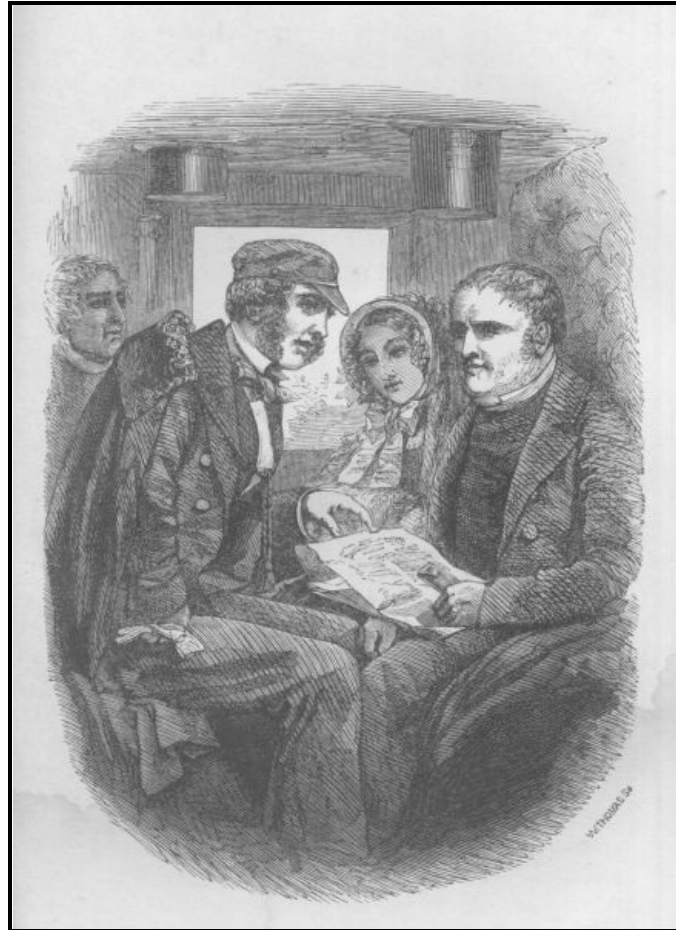
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"Mr. Robertson requested that he would favour him with the use of the paper. The favour was granted in silence, and with a somewhat haughty bow.

"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.

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"Perhaps, Sir,' said Mr. O'Brian, 'you are what in common parlance we call an unbeliever.'

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"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?*

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"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.'

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"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.

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"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,

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"SOPHIA."

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."

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"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,^[19] as a self-evident proof that baptism is not regeneration. The argument rising out of the possible loss^[20] 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 *man* changes,'[A] and I saw an illustration and confirmation of this in your papa. I recollected the

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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*,^[21] 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. 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."

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"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 returning from church, "that this is the last sermon of the Tractarian school we shall have from this pulpit."

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"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 contributed 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 descends 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—

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—'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."

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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."

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."

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"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).

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"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 philosophers, 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.

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"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.'

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"And now, forsooth, we have a new set of philosophers^[22] 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 develope 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.

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"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 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

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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.

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"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."

THE POPULAR DELUSION.

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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 privations 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!"

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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."

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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."

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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

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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 absolution, 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."

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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 becoming 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."

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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 Churchmen offer in defence of their

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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."

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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^[23] 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 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."

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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 intrenched 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 Establishment 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."

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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."

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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."



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).



M. S. MORGAN. T. BOLTON.

THE BRIDAL PARTY WELCOMED BY THE VILLAGERS.

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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^[24] 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 the Popery with which our church abounds. It is the destroying angel of a pure Protestant faith."

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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 unmistakeable 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.'" [461]

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." [462]

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. Lewellin.—"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." [463]

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."

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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."

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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

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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;^[25] substitutes absolute falsehood for Scripture truth, as no such moral wonders^[26] 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 them, and those who hear them made, very well know that they have no power to redeem them."

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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.^[27] 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, 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."

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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.'"

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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!"

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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."^[28]

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.'"

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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."

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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?"

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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,

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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."

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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."

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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."

RIGHT AT LAST.

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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 extra-human; 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.*"

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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."

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"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)."

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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."

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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."

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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.'

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"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 reverence 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."

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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 over 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?'"

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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."

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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 flitting 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."

Mr. Lewellin.—"They often silence them."

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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?

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"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

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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."

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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."

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"Our prayers," said Miss Roscoe, "are answered; my dear uncle and aunt are right at last."

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

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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 Quakerism 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."

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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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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."

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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."

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"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."

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"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)."

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

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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 Beveridge; '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?"

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"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

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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)."

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"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?"

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"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?"

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"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."

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"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 admission into the church; and if any member walked disorderly, he was separated from Christian fellowship."

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"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?

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'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.'

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"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.

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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 inhabiteth 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 inhabiteth 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?"

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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 original. 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.'"

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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."

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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 common-place. 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.'"

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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 affections, and in subjecting all irregular impulses and passions to a course of due restraint."

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"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

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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."

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"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."

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"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 likeness 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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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.

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"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?"

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"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!"

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"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)."

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"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)."

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"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)."

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"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)."

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"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 wonderful 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.

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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.'"

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"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."

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"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."

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"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.

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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."

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"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."

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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."

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"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)."

CHRISTMAS.



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^[545] 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.

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"I suppose, young gentlemen," said Mr. Llewelin, "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.

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"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:—

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'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 expose herself to the night-air, lest she should be incapable of going to church in the morning."

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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. Llewelin?"

"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. Llewelin. "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."

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"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.

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"Bigotry amongst us! A libel! a libel!" Mrs. Stevens returned, with an expression of feigned indignation. [551]

"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 cheerfully 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. Llewellyn 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. [552]

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—

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"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.

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"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

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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."

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"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."

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"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?"

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"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. Llewelin, 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. Llewelin 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. Llewelin 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.

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.

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WINTER SCENES.

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he 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,^[29] 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, 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.^[30] 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.

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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 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."

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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:—

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"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 would 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."

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"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."

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"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 otherwise 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."

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"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 donations in the unfrequented paths of misery, no less than in the open field of want."

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"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."

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"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."

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"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."

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"How can we account for such strange conduct, which is so opposed to the injunctions of the Word of God?"

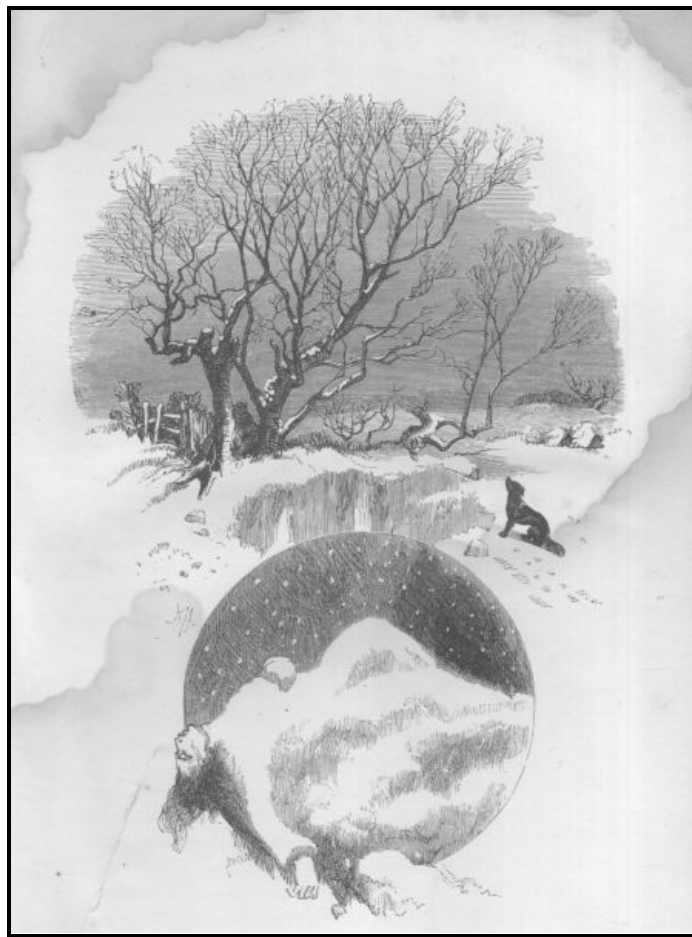
"Very easily, Madam," replied Mr. Roscoe. "These public societies will blazon the name of the munificent donor through the British dominions in their annual reports; and as such a lady wishes to be seen of men when performing her acts of charity, she is willing to pay the price which is demanded."

"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 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."

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THE DEATH OF THE WOODMAN.

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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.

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.

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"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!"

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"And make you new creatures," Mr. Lewellin 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."

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"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.

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*,^[31] 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.

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"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 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.'^[32]

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"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*,^[33] 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 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."

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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)."

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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^[34] 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."

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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 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."

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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.*"

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Mr. Roscoe.—"Your very just and forcible remarks remind me of a paragraph in the *Edinburgh Review*,^[35] 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 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 adverting 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."

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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."

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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 conscious 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."

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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."

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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,^[36] '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 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.'"

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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

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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.

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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;^[37] it never has been done, and every attempt to do it has proved a mortifying failure."

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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 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."^[38]

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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 happening 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."

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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 pardon and salvation, not on sacraments or ceremonies, but on Christ, the sure foundation which the Lord hath laid, and not man."

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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.*"

END OF VOL. I.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] The epithet Methodist is taken in its popular acceptance, as employed by the antievangelical part of society.

[2] 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:—

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 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!'"

[3] See p. 106.

[4] See note, p. 58.

[5] A poor, half-witted man, named Joseph, whose employment was to go on errands 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, Aldermanbury. 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.

[6] See p. 129.

[7] See page 43.

[8] See page 105.

[9] Burke.

[10] "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 sufficiently 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 often-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!"

[11] See page 6.

[12] 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."

[13] Dr. Mant.

[14] 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.

[15] 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 necessities 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.

[16] See page 78.

[17] See page 228.

[18] "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).

[19] See page 321.

[20] See page 348.

[21] See page 344.

[22] 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.

[23] Miss Rawlins, of London.

[24] Rev. Mr. Logan, a priest at Oscott College, near Birmingham.

[25] See page 320.

[26] 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.

[27] "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.*

[28] 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."

[29] See vol. i. p. 92.

- [30] See vol. i. p. 104.
- [31] *Missionary Enterprises in South Sea Islands*. By Rev. John Williams.
- [32] See Dr. Hook's Sermons on Church and Establishments.
- [33] *The Life of the Rev. John Williams*. By the Rev. E. Prout. Snow, London.
- [34] If we suppose, with some of the Tractarians, that he was now ordained to the *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.
- [35] April, 1843.
- [36] Whately on the *Kingdom of Christ*, p. 180.
- [37] "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 dependent on the imposition of 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.
- [38] 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.

Transcriber's note:

Minor typographical errors have been corrected without note. Irregularities and inconsistencies in the text have been retained as printed.

The illustrations have been moved so that they do not break up paragraphs, thus the page number of the illustration might not match the page number in the List of Illustrations.

Mismatched quotes are not fixed if it's not sufficiently clear where the missing quote should be placed.

In the table of contents the transcriber has changed the page number for "A Village Funeral" from 187 to 186.

Page 105: The page number in the caption has been changed from 165 to 105 to match the table of contents order.

For "Spiritual Regeneration a Reality", the page number has been changed from 337 to 336.

Page 324 The transcriber has added the word "to" after the word "wrath": "Will they, if warned to flee from the wrath come, apprehend any danger ..."

Also on page 324 "though he lives and his a sceptic or a blasphemer"—The transcriber has changed "his" to "he is".

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