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Profession is not Principle;

OR

THE NAME OF CHRISTIAN

IS

Not Christianity.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF 'THE DECISION.'

Wm. Kennedy

'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.' 2 Cor. 5:17.

From the second Edinburgh Edition.

BOSTON:

SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG, AND CROCKER & BREWSTER,

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1824.

From



☆ Mrs. E. N. Vanderpoel

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INTRODUCTION.

IN the following pages, an attempt has been made to delineate the effects that necessarily follow the introduction into the soul, of a principle characterised as that 'which overcomes the world;' and which is declared to have its origin direct from God. It is not surprising that such effects should appear extravagant to those who are unacquainted with the powerful principle from whence they proceed; or that they should regard them with aversion, as the proofs of a state of mind utterly at variance with their own. The important question, however, is,—Which is indeed the right state of mind? In

attempting to answer this question, the delineation of character has been chosen, as most likely to convey that answer with force and interest to the reader. Those who are acquainted experimentally with the all-powerful principle alluded to, will perceive, that only its most common and universal effects have been ascribed to the characters introduced. If the Reader feels himself still ignorant of its nature, and of its power, it is hoped he may be induced to examine whether it is safe to remain in that ignorance.

PROFESSION IS NOT PRINCIPLE, &c.

Persons Introduced.

HOWARD, }
CONWAY, } *Old Friends.*
CHARLES HOWARD,

Mrs. HOWARD,
EMMA HOWARD,
SERVANTS, &c.

The Conversations take place at Howard's country Residence, a short distance from London.

An Apartment in Howard's house.

HOWARD AND CONWAY.

How. Now, my dear Conway, that we are at last alone, allow me to state the cause of this kind visit of yours. It is this. You have, during the last eighteen months, heard so many strange reports concerning me, that you have at last been unable to resist believing in the truth of some of them. You have heard that the illness I had, just after your leaving England, and then the death of my poor boy, have together had the effect of impairing my intellects; and painful as it was to separate yourself from Mrs. Conway in her present delicate state of health, and inconvenient as it was in every way to leave your family abroad without you, yet you could not rest satisfied till you had yourself seen whether it was so; and you have travelled from Lausanne to England, for no other purpose. You are silent, Conway. Tell me, then, have you perceived any change in me? We have now spent two days together in London, and constant-

ly in society, and you have seen me most part of this day in the midst of my family. Be perfectly frank with me; were any thing so sad as a real change of intellect to happen to me, whom in the world, Conway, should I so soon look to as yourself, for sympathy and support?

Con. My dearest Howard, believe me, upon my honor, I see no change in you whatever; unless (*smiling*) perhaps a few more grey hairs.

How. Yes, Conway, many more. Yours, too, my friend, have increased since we last met; and we both smile on observing this,—such is the power of habitual affectation.

Con. Affectation!

How. Yes, Conway, in plain words, affectation. We both suppose ourselves superior to any thing so contemptible; but is a smile the true expression of the feeling we experience, on observing in our dearest friends the approach of decay, and age, and death?

Con. There speaks the unchanged character of my friend's mind! The same nicety of truth,—the same ascription of deep feeling to slight and transient emotions. I will not allow, however, that my smile was affected, though my feelings might have a mixture of sadness at the moment I smiled.

How. Well, I am glad you consider my mind still the same. You would find it difficult, however, to prove that your smile was free of affectation,—but we have not time to define smiles. Tell me, dear Conway, what have you heard of me? I shall regard it as a proof of your conviction of my sanity, the more unreservedly you tell me every thing.

Con. I shall tell you all I recollect, my dear Howard, without the slightest reservation.

How. I intreat you may.

Con. You know, my friend, I was saved the misery of hearing of your illness, till I heard, also, that you were recovering. At that time, you know, poor Maria was considered in a very precarious state of health. I shall not recal those days of anxiety and suffering. The first person I saw from England, after your illness, was Harley, your neighbor in Suffolk. When I inquired for you, he seemed so embarrassed, and unwilling to speak of you, that I was quite alarmed. He assured me, that your physicians had informed him your complaints were quite removed, and that they had not the slightest doubt your health would soon be perfectly restored. Still, however, his frank kind nature seemed always on the alarm, whenever you were mentioned; and, at last, after many importunities on my part, he confessed to me that you were considered, by those most intimate with you, to be greatly changed,—that the approach of death had been dreadfully alarming to you,—and that, in short, it had actually terrified you into fanaticism.

How. Terrified me into fanaticism! Did Harley say so of me; and could he believe it?

Con. He said, that for a time he could not. He, however, had it not in his power himself to see you; and, at last, he found it impossible to disbelieve what was told him by some of your most intimate friends, who had seen and conversed with you, and over whom you still possessed such influence, that they actually seemed themselves to be infected with your fanaticism, and attempted to defend it. Poor Harley himself spoke of you with a gravity very unusual

to him. 'Ah! Conway!' he said to me, 'we may all tremble now at the approach of sickness. It has subdued the strongest mind, and the noblest spirit amongst us.'

How. (*Thoughtfully.*) Terrified into fanaticism! So that is what is said of me,—and it is to that supposition, then, that I perhaps owe those looks of contempt, which from some quarters I find it so ill to bear. Well, adieu to pride of character, at least. But go on, Conway.

Con. Why should I go on? I only pain you.

How. No, no,—go on. I wish to hear all; and you have promised, Conway.

Con. Well, dear Howard, I heard many such reports about you; some rather inconsistent with others. At one time I was informed by an English gentleman, who, however, allowed that he was not personally acquainted with you, that you had changed your party in politics, and now constantly opposed ministers. I was soon after told, by our old acquaintance, Colonel Grey, that your new opinions gave you considerable influence with some men, with whom your superior talents never would have given you any; but that, joined to such opinions, they were rejoiced to avail themselves of those talents; and that you, therefore, were known to carry a considerable number of votes, which ministers could always count upon. I need not repeat those contradictory reports respecting your public character, all of which, however, agreed in the one point, that you were altogether changed. I heard almost as many reports regarding your private conduct. I was told, that you yourself prayed extempore in your family, —that you heard fanatical preachers,—that you

received no visits on Sunday, nor would listen on that day to one word on business, however important,—and, my dear Howard, that your family were treated with severity by you, at least Charles, though to the death of poor Arthur I had heard partly ascribed the unaccountable change in your character.

How. Why, Conway, did you not apply to myself for an explanation of all those contradictions?

Con. Because, my dear Howard, I could not conceal from myself that the strain of your letters was really changed. I tried to make myself believe, that the reports I had heard perhaps influenced me while I read, but it was impossible to convince myself of this. Your letters are changed, Howard, in their whole character; and I confess, without further reserve, that you are right in your supposition. I have returned to England, the first time I could feel at sufficient ease about Maria to leave her, for no other purpose than to see and judge for myself, whether I was so unaccountably deceived, or whether you were really changed,—and now I am almost at as great a loss as ever, for I see no change.—Yet, somehow——

How. (*Smiling.*) Somehow I am not the same.

Con. I know not how it is, but——

How. Do not puzzle yourself, my dear Conway, to discover what it is about me that leads you to believe, you can scarcely tell why, that I am changed,—that I am not exactly what I was when we last met. The truth is, Conway, that I am not. You shall know all respecting this change, that I myself know. It is not only

in my opinions, it is infinitely more in my feelings; and in both, most particularly so with regard to the Supreme Being, and the relation which man bears to him. How often have you and I, dear Conway, compared our opinions and feelings on those most important subjects. When we last met, we were nearly of the same mind regarding them. With what composure have we at times traced the character of the God of our conceptions, after having admired the wonderful order of his heavens, and the exalted sublimity, and touching beauty of the works of nature.

Con. Yes, Howard; and why not with composure? Is not a calm and rational state of mind the most suitable, when attempting to conceive or to trace the character of the Supreme Being?

How. Yes, Conway. Certainly we ought to trace the attributes of that Being from whom we received existence, and with whom we expect to pass eternity, with every power of our souls deeply and solemnly engaged, and as free as possible from all distraction. But what I wished to recal to your remembrance, was the remark we so often made, in the days of our warmest emotions, Conway, that while nature was before us,—while we gazed on the mingled grandeur, and softness, and tenderness, of a glorious sun-set, for instance, or autumn moon-light, we did not reason,—we loved, we adored. It was when the impression was past that we began to reason. We considered the result of those reasonings very beneficial to us, and those moments of rapture which led to them as the purest and sweetest of our lives, and I doubt not they did tend to calm and elevate our minds.

But, Conway, did we after all know God? or did we in truth ever worship him?

Con. Did you not say this moment, Howard, that, on viewing the sublimity and beauty of God's creation, we loved, we adored?

How. Yes, Conway; our hearts were filled to painfulness with feelings of love and adoration, but on what or whom did we bestow those full affections? We gazed on the loveliness of creation, till our hearts panted to find and love its Creator,—but did we find him? We retired and became calm; and recollecting the beautiful order of the heavens, and the profusion of charm that was displayed through all nature, we saw dimly, that he who created and sustained the greatness, and minuteness, and loveliness, and order of the whole, must himself be inconceivably great, and inconceivably wise, and inconceivably lovely,—and we felt that in our natures we were at an inconceivable distance from him; and he passed from our thoughts as altogether inconceivable, while we believed, that amidst the wonderful vastness of his providence, we, as a part, and in connexion with other intelligent parts of a great machinery, would be sustained in existence till we came to the moment when we must submit to the common fate, and pass through death—we hoped to immortality; but the nature of that immortality we guessed at too dimly, to rest our thoughts upon it,—at all events, it would be happy to the virtuous.

Con. Well, Howard, I know not that by reasoning we can approach any nearer to God. But, my friend, you speak as if we had actually denied the truth of Christianity; now, in a mod-

ified sense, neither of us ever rejected the Bible as the guide of our hopes,—and its morality, at least that of the *Néw Testament*, though perhaps impracticable, we considered beautifully pure,—and its Founder——

How. Do not proceed, Conway. Pardon me for interrupting you, but I know your opinions; they were mine, and it is in these opinions I am utterly changed. Those I formerly held, now appear to me tremendously guilty. You are offended, Conway; but I must speak to you, my friend, dear to me as my own soul, what now appears to me truth as clear as day. Conway, we have both erred, dreadfully erred. My letters to you have betrayed the change in my soul. Oh! if you knew how I have attempted to express my meaning in those letters so as not to shock you, or seem to you a madman!—and now I have almost convinced you that I am one.

Con. Will you answer me one question, Howard, without reserve, and without being offended at my plainness?

How. I will, Conway, whatever it is.

Con. Then, in the very plainest words, my dear Howard, were you afraid to die?

How. Plain enough indeed that question, Conway. Do you think I should have felt so much mortified, as I confess I did on your saying such was the report concerning me, had it been true?

Con. Pardon me, dear Howard; yet sometimes we are betrayed into weaknesses which we would not wish known.

How. True, Conway; forgive my being hurt at your question,—I shall answer it as truly as I can. I was not, I suppose, more afraid than ev-

ery man in his senses is, of the agonies of death. Of what should follow I had no painful dread, though now I think my feeling of security on that point was most presumptuous folly. But, Conway, there are many things in death we must shrink from, if we have any feeling. That man is happy, if he is prepared for it, who dies in battle, or wherever he escapes the looks of wife, and children, and friends. I passed some indescribably sad hours, when I considered myself dying. In these moments, the soul feels its own weakness, and searches for something out of itself to lean on,—I could find nothing. My illness was accompanied with comparatively little fever, and left my mind astonishingly clear; yet I declare to you, on my word, I felt no fear which I believe is not common to every man in similar circumstances, either of death or of its consequences.

Con. What then, my dear Howard, has so changed your opinions and feelings with regard to God?

How. I shall describe to you, as exactly as I can recollect, what has passed in my mind, Conway; and you shall stop me, and we shall reason on any opinion I have adopted, which to you appears irrational.

Con. I am all attention.

How. I need scarcely remind you, Conway, of the warmth with which I have loved Emilia and my children, nor of my plan in their education, to make the character of the father, and his authority, merge as early as possible into that of the friend and confidential guide. You know I succeeded, and that I enjoy a large share of their love and confidence. They all gather-

ed to me when I was ill. Even poor Arthur, to whom travelling was so difficult and painful, came directly to London. You know, Conway, that I have arrived at my present age with very little experience of misfortune, but in the misfortunes of that poor boy. I remind you of all this, that you may be able to enter into the train of thought and feeling I mean to describe to you. It was on perceiving myself, as I was convinced, out of danger, that I began to reason on what I had felt when I believed myself near death. Now, Conway, listen, and object to the smallest error in my reasoning. I felt conscious of extreme pleasure and lightness of heart, in the prospect of being restored to health and to those I loved, and almost unconsciously I uttered internal thanks. 'Great God, I thank thee! Merciful, gracious, pitying Creator and Preserver, accept of my gratitude!'—were for a time the constant feelings and internal utterings of my soul. Was this irrational, Conway?

Con. Assuredly not, dear Howard.

How. Well, then, this was my reasoning on these feelings.—If I am so powerfully moved by a sense of that kindness which restores me to life and all its blessings, and if this feeling is a right one, which the very pleasantness and sweetness of it would alone almost convince me that it was, can I have been innocent, while enjoying all those blessings so long without a feeling of gratitude? Certainly not. Am I right, Conway?

Con. I cannot vindicate ingratitude, Howard; but surely making the very best and highest use of the health and talents bestowed upon us, is the truest way of proving our gratitude.

How. But what is that highest and best method of using our talents, Conway?

Con. Surely you, Howard, need not ask that question, while your every moment is given to your country, or your friends, or to the unfortunate and miserable:—whose integrity in public, and worth in private life, are almost a proverb,—who is the beloved friend of the first and best men of the day, the benefactor of hundreds, the kindest master, the——

How. Stop, Conway; that character is drawn by a most partial friend. Let me now describe, as it really is, the character of your most proud, —most blind friend.

Con. (*Rising hastily*) I have no patience for this. How can you, Howard, condescend to such mere cant of a sect? Will you next tell me that all men are alike,—the honorable,—the noble,—the upright, and the base,—the corrupt,—the profligate? What incomprehensible infatuation!

How. Hear me, Conway; I have not said all men are alike,—it is absurd to say so. Some men, in natural dispositions, are almost angels compared to others; and, Conway, to please you, I will allow, that I did receive from nature a mind that loved to soar to the highest flight in honor and integrity, and scorned all that was mean and base. Nature also gave me a taste exquisitely alive to perfection and beauty in all things, and added to all this, warm and constant affections.

Con. (*Sitting down again.*) Well, Howard, and do you mean to say such a character is not a virtuous one?

How. No, I do not.—Such dispositions form characters that are naturally approved of in society. They also lead to an high value for the love and approbation of society. Those are therefore contented happy men, who possess such characters.

Con. And deservedly so. But what then, my friend?

How. This, Conway. They are characters who generally pass on to eternity without fear or dread, while they really are utterly unprepared for eternity.

Con. How can you prove that, Howard? Is a virtuous life an unfit preparation for eternity?

How. Who formed my mind, Conway? Who bestowed on me those dispositions which gained your love? Who gave me warm affections, and good taste? Who gave me rank, and friends, and influence, and all the sweets of life? And why did I, more than so many others, receive them all?

Con. (*Smiling.*) You have indeed been treated as a favored child, Howard; but you have shewn your gratitude, by abusing none of the gifts bestowed upon you.

How. Oh! Conway, God is not God, unless he is as perfect in justice as in goodness. Such gifts require a vast return, and what return have I made?

Con. I must just repeat what I have said, you have made a good use of all those gifts.

How. (*Smiling.*) Now, Conway, I must retort, and say, 'What incomprehensible infatuation!' I do not know in what language to clothe what I would say,—religion has worn out all language. In the simplest words, Conway, do you

think that a person who has received favors without number from God, and yet lives without seeking to know or to love him in this world, can be prepared to live with him through eternity?

Con. What do you mean by living without the knowledge and love of God in this world.

How. I mean, living with scarcely any recollection of his existence,—without considering whether our opinions, and feelings, and actions, are such as he approves,—without candidly examining the evidence of what claims to be a revelation of his character and will;—in short, without knowing as we may know if we will, and loving as we would love if we knew him, that glorious Being who is the source of all perfection, and of all loveliness.

Con. Almost every term you use, Howard, would require explanation. That would be endless. I shall allow, therefore, that ignorance of the character of God is a bad preparation for entering on that state of which we know only that he is present there,—and beg you will proceed.

How. Well, Conway, I shall return to the history of my own mind and feelings. To me it appeared perfectly just reasoning to conclude, that I was in a very deep degree guilty of ingratitude to God. It appeared also clear to me, that I had acted like a fool in superciliously neglecting, as I had done, the only book in the world, whose pretensions to inspiration had borne the test of the strictest examinations of ages; and on which, those men whose characters I revered as the wisest and best the world ever saw, had rested their hopes of immortality. Nor did I

myself know of one single instance where candid examination had ended in a different result.

Con. My dear Howard, I cannot help doubting that last assertion.

How. I only say, Conway, that I never knew of its ending differently. Amongst all those with whom I have conversed intimately on the subject of religion, I have never met with one who even pretended to know the Bible thoroughly, but those who are guided by it. On the contrary, it is as general to despise the knowledge, as the belief of it. I know men, indeed, who, from early education, are pretty well acquainted with the language of the Bible, and who can quote it fluently for bad purposes; yet even they, I now find, are ignorant of the general scope of scripture, and the connexion of the words they quote,—or if not ignorant, they shamefully pervert their obvious meaning. I appeal to yourself, Conway, when you and I last met, though we termed ourselves Christians, and had partaken of Christian rites to qualify ourselves for holding civil offices, did we know the Bible?

Con. I cannot say that I am intimately acquainted with the Bible; yet I *have* read it through more than once, and often read portions of it on a Sunday,—besides, you know I frequently attend church with my family, where I have so often heard it read, that it seems quite familiar to me. I cannot, however, pretend to be master of its contents.

How. I understand you, Conway, from my own experience. We hear detached portions of scripture in church, till we become intimate with its peculiar language, while we have scarcely admitted one of its precepts or doctrines into our minds.

Con. Perhaps so, Howard; but proceed.

How. Well, my friend, you know me well enough to believe that I would no longer continue in this state of ignorance, at least of the Bible, which it was in my power to examine. As to my ingratitude, I prayed to God to forgive me. When I sought, however, for a plea to urge, that I might obtain forgiveness, I could find none. I said, 'Merciful God, forgive me, for hitherto I have not been aware of the guilt of this ingratitude;' but why have you not been aware? was a question I could not answer, but by going a step further in acknowledging guilt,—'because I have been so much occupied with thy gracious gifts, that I have forgotten Thee the giver.' I felt that I had no excuse to plead. I had from my youth been my own master. Time for investigation, and a disposition for research on other subjects, had been gifts of God bestowed on me. How then could I be excusable in having found God himself the only subject of no interest. Conway, I cannot describe to you the utter change which was produced in my soul by this strong feeling of self-condemnation. I had been accustomed to regard myself as one above the common level in character; but all appeared a vain dream, when I discovered that I had been a fool on the only subject in the world which is in reality of any lasting importance. In those moments, Conway, our speculations regarding God seemed to have as much resemblance to the truth, as the setting sun has to death,—the one is a beautiful image,—the other an awful reality. I felt as if I had brought myself near to God by my heartfelt attempts at thanksgiving; and the idea

of his presence was awful to me beyond expression. I had always, I supposed, believed in the omnipresence of God. I now felt what really believing it was. I felt continually, as it were, surrounded, and wrapt in the presence of One, so pure in holiness, that I shrunk from my own character in comparison, as from what in His sight must be pollution,—One so incomprehensible in the wisdom and vastness of his ways, as to make me feel the utter, inexpressible insignificance of every pursuit that did not lead to the knowledge of his character and will. I longed to read the Bible, for I felt that the little I knew of its language suited to my feelings, could alone express them.—such as these words of Job, ‘I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent—’

Con. What an expression, Howard! abhor yourself! Can you be serious?

How. If you recollect the character of Job, Conway, you will allow that mine never could have borne a comparison with his; yet these were his feelings on receiving a clearer manifestation of the character of God, than he had enjoyed before his days of adversity. It is ignorance, and inexperience of the vividness, the at times appalling vividness, with which the Spirit of God manifests truth to the soul, that makes us regard such language as extravagant. You are silent, Conway, but you look dissatisfied. Do you now, (*smiling,*) think me mad?

Con. My dear Howard, did you, at the time you experienced those vivid impressions you describe, imagine yourself under the influence of supernatural agency?

How. No, my dear friend. Such an idea had never then entered my mind. I have since learned from Scripture, to ascribe to the Spirit of God all manifestation of religious truth to the soul.

Con. Proceed then, my friend, I intreat you.

How. Well, Conway, I wished to read the Bible. I was then, however, still unable to sit up above a very short time, and my poor Emilia continued to watch me with an anxiety which proved to me that she did not consider me out of danger. When I begged her to bring a Bible to me she became as pale as death. Only she and Arthur were in the room with me. He instantly started up, and clasping his hands together, rung for his servant, and hastened out of the room. 'You feel worse, Howard, said Emilia, attempting to appear composed. I assured her I did not, but she would not believe me; so unusual is it for us who call ourselves Christians, to consult, when in health, the source of our pretended faith. Emilia gazed on me with looks of apprehension, as if the time of our separation must be near. I felt that I had not strength for the exertion that a real avowal of my feelings would have occasioned; so soothed, and rallied her, till at last she was persuaded to leave me alone with a Bible which Arthur had brought to me. On opening this Bible, I found written on a blank leaf at the beginning, 'Arthur Howard, my first read Bible, though styling myself a Christian, and in my twentieth year.' So my poor boy has also discovered his criminal ignorance, thought I. Or rather your criminal neglect, said my now vividly awakened conscience; for I had never seriously attempted to

instruct, or lead him to inform himself on the subject of religion. Poor Arthur's reflection on himself spoke volumes to me. All my other children had been equally neglected. They had all, you know, Conway, been educated in the observance of the forms of religion; but further I had taken little charge on the subject, thinking it a part of their education in which their mother would succeed better than I. This unfortunate boy, who, by the carelessness of those to whom we had entrusted him, had been rendered an object of painful anxiety to his friends, and unable from his childhood to participate in any of the pleasures suited to his age; and who, from extreme sensibility, shunned society, in which, he said, every eye changed its expression when it turned to him,—this dear boy, for any thing I had taught him, was as little fitted for another world as for this. While my heart condemned me, it was at the same time inexpressibly softened; and though I felt unworthy to raise my thoughts to God, still I adored his goodness in thus having been a father to my neglected boy. Arthur's Bible had many passages marked.

Con. (*Moved.*) Poor fellow! I am glad it was
80.

How. Aye, Conway; but why so? Why is it, that when those we loved are gone to another state, we never think they were too religious, but feel the more secure of their being happy, the more certain we are of their having devoted themselves to God in this world?

Con. It is so, Howard; but go on.

How. I turned up several of those passages marked by Arthur. One arrested my attention.

It was this,—‘Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace.’ Now, Conway, what do you think is the meaning of that passage?

Con. I think the meaning pretty plain, Howard. We have only to recollect the wretched superstitions of Heathen nations,—the miserable parent sacrificing his own offspring,—or the poor dark-minded devotee, with a sensitive conscience, but ignorant of the true God, attempting to propitiate his fancied deity, by tortures and blood,—we have only to recollect these, to enable us to understand how the knowledge of the true God imparts peace to the soul. That passage, I think, bears the stamp of inspiration.

How. I thought as you do, Conway, when I read it, and I also understood it in the same way; but on turning to some other passages, I began to doubt whether I really understood this,—at least the meaning I attached to the words did not seem to penetrate farther than the surface, when compared with such passages as these,—‘God is my strength,—my shield,—my salvation,—Lord, lift on us the light of thy countenance,—as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!—my soul thirsteth for the living God.’”

Con. My dear Howard, that is eastern language and metaphor?

How. Supposing it is so, what is the meaning of the metaphor? To what does it allude?

Con. To that state of mind which you yourself described, Howard, when you said your heart had at times been filled to painfulness with love and adoration towards the Creator of the beautiful works of nature which surrounded you.

How. No, my dear Conway, the words I have quoted from the Bible, express the longings of the soul after a known and felt enjoyment. 'My refuge, my hope, my joy,' are not expressions ever used by those who know God only in his works. They are used by those who know, and have experienced, that there is such a thing as real intercourse between God and the human soul, on this side the grave.

Con. And do you, Howard, really believe that there is?

How. I do, Conway, most firmly. I know it is considered mere enthusiasm to believe this truth, though it is plainly revealed in the Scriptures. I once thought it was so myself, though there was to me a something so lovely in the dream, as I supposed it, in which religious enthusiasts lived, that I never felt the same scorn for them that I saw others do.

Con. I see nothing lovely in religious enthusiasm. How many poor ignorant creatures have had their brains crazed by such fancies, and then given, in their vulgar language, their disgusting dreams to the world.

How. Nothing that is the production of a vulgar mind can be relished by a refined one, I confess. It was not from such productions I learnt the sentiments of those I deemed enthusiasts. It was from the writings of Augustine particularly, and others of a later date, who are of the same sentiments, in all of which I found this firm belief in a felt communion of soul with God. But I shall proceed in my own mind's history. After I had read a good many of the passages marked by Arthur, I became so exhausted, that I was obliged to lie down, and

soon fell asleep. When I awoke, I perceived that Arthur had come unheard into my room, and was seated close to my bed. He leant upon it, his cheek rested on his hand, and his eyes raised earnestly to heaven. You remember, Conway, how sweet and expressive his countenance was; at that moment it really was heavenly. He seemed as if his spirit held intercourse with an adored, but invisible intelligence. For some moments I did not interrupt him, but watched his looks. They expressed adoration, and earnest intreaty, mingled with a softness of confiding love that filled his eyes with tears.

‘Arthur!’ said I, at last, ‘who is there present here, besides you and I?’

He looked at me, rather alarmed at the strangeness of the question, as I lay so as easily to perceive there was no other person present.

‘I have been watching your looks, my dear boy,’ said I. ‘You seemed to feel the presence of some loved but invisible being.’

He blushed deeply, and seemed embarrassed, and hesitated for a moment; then recovering himself, ‘Yes, my dear father,’ he replied, firmly but with much feeling, ‘my soul did seek to feel the presence of Him, whom having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’

‘Arthur,’ asked I, with much interest, ‘Do you mean Almighty God by those expressions?’

‘I do, Sir,’ replied he, ‘but I believe I do not exactly mean your idea when you say, ‘Almighty God.’ I mean God the Son,—he by whom alone we can have access to God the Father.’

I asked him what he meant by 'feeling' the presence of God. But I need not tell you his answer to this question, Conway. To me it was not altogether unintelligible, because I had myself experienced the difference between a supposed belief in the omnipresence of God, and a real effectual belief of it. Feeling the presence of God, is only going a step farther in faith; for that there may be such a feeling, is equally revealed.

Con. Are there any plain grounds in scripture, Howard, on which to rest such an opinion?

How. I shall just remind you of one passage, Conway, and leave you to judge for yourself. Jesus Christ says, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.'* Now, Conway, what do you think is meant by this manifestation?

Con. I do not know. But surely, Howard, to suppose we feel the presence of the invisible God, is mere enthusiasm,—the dream of imagination.

How. If I could prove rationally, Conway, that scripture does reveal a means by which we may attain to such a felt presence, do you think the attainment desirable?

Con. Certainly. We think heaven desirable on that account.

How. Do we think heaven desirable, Conway? Which of us then wishes to go there? Which of us does not shrink from the idea, and cling to almost any wretched state of existence, rather than enter his presence, who we never-

* John 14:21.

theless pretend to believe is perfect in all that is worthy of love and adoration. O Conway, in what a delusion do we dream away our days! in what a labyrinth of self-deception! We form a standard of morals, a standard of feelings, and a standard of actions, very little superior to what in some places had existed before Christianity. We call ourselves Christians, and we desire that the mass of mankind should be instructed in, and guided by, Christian principles, because we consider the morality of Christianity as perfect as the most perfect philosophy could teach, and its motives and sanctions easily understood and felt, without any preparation of other knowledge; but still we superciliously ask, what has it revealed or done really of importance, that philosophy had not done without it, where it was understood? We ask this question, because we will not listen to, or take the trouble to acquaint ourselves with, its peculiar doctrines; and when those who do, go beyond our standards, we regard them as extravagant and irrational: and when we are forced to see that the revelation of God itself is contrary to, or goes beyond those standards, we regard it also as either incomprehensible, and therefore justly a subject of skeptical uncertainty, or we venture to make distinctions respecting inspiration, and reject it altogether.

Con. If you said, contrary to our reason, instead of contrary to our standards, my dear Howard, I believe you would speak with more of your usual candor.

How. No, my dear Conway, I am calling things by their right names. Of what use is reason, without some light to guide it, separate from itself? Reason alone is no more light than

the eye is light. The eye cannot discern an object unless light is present; neither can reason discern what is truth, but by the light of experience or revelation. True philosophy is merely the light of experience. All that reason can do with regard to what claims to be a revelation from God, is to examine on what it grounds that claim. Jesus Christ simply appealed to reason under the light of experience, when he said,—‘The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.’ The Jews knew by their own experience, and by the evidence of the experience of all former ages, that the miracles of Christ could only be wrought by supernatural agency; they therefore acted contrary to the dictates of reason in rejecting him. What our reason has to do now, is, by the light of experience, or true philosophy, to examine the evidence respecting the manner by which the Bible has been preserved from generation to generation, till it has reached us,—the evidence respecting the writers of its different parts, the credibility of those writers, and the certainty of their testimony, according to experienced rules of judging on the subject. When our reason has examined all these, and we have perceived truth step by step in our progress, till we have arrived at the conclusion, that ‘all scripture is given by inspiration of God,’ as the Bible itself says, then we act contrary to reason, if we do not receive the Bible as the light and guide of our reason.

Con. I think, Howard, you have confined the powers of reason within very narrow limits. I do not feel convinced that you are right; but I

am not prepared to argue this point, as I have not been thinking on the subject.

How. But I, my dear Conway, have been thinking much upon it; and have discovered, from my own experience, that one great impediment to our ever acquiring the knowledge of true scriptural religion, arises from an indistinctness respecting the place which the usual light which guides our reason ought to hold in the inquiry: and if you will examine the subject, my dear Conway, you will find, that we attempt to elucidate revelation, by bringing with us a light inferior to it, and which only darkens it. We reject the truths revealed in scripture, not, as you say, because they are contrary to reason, but because they are unknown to experience. In proof of this, you will find, that we fully acquiesce in any part of revelation which has also been proved by experience. Experience, however limited and frequently most imperfect as it is, must be inferior to revelation; and it is folly to make it a test by which to try the wisdom of God, for we make it nothing less.

Con. Well, now, my dearest Howard, let us be perfectly candid. Do you think, even allowing that the authenticity of scripture cannot be disproved, that it is possible to believe absolute inconsistencies, or to see those inconsistencies, and believe they proceeded from God?

How. Can we, Conway, be justified in rejecting the authority of what cannot be disproved to be a revelation from God, on account of its supposed inconsistencies, when, at the same time, we avow ourselves not masters of its contents? Are we wise,—or rather, are we not absolutely mad, in risking our lot for eternity,

by negligently adopting unexamined opinions on a subject so momentous?

Con. But, my dear Howard, can the most zealous advocates for the inspiration of the Bible, agree respecting its meaning? Why are there so many sects, each positive that it alone understands the scriptures? Why should I, or any man, now hope to understand or reconcile what has kept the world in contest for centuries?

How. The number of sects, my dear Conway, only argues the imbecility of the human understanding with regard to sacred things. Each sect attaches a meaning to some particular, and perhaps unimportant, part of scripture, which to it appears plain, and of great moment, and regards the neglect of it, or its being understood in a different sense, as a sufficient cause to separate from those whom they conceive to be in error. Did all men's understandings agree in finding the Bible incapable of being understood, then we might perhaps trust to that power as a guide; but while all sects conceive that they understand it, though they continue to differ as to the meaning of some parts, we must believe that the defect is in men's understandings, not in the scriptures. No sect, Conway, rejects the Bible as unintelligible, but that one which is satisfied to risk all that is involved in rejecting it, rather than take the trouble to examine it.

Con. My dear Howard, you press me very closely on this point. I acknowledge that I have not studied scripture with the attention which perhaps I ought; yet I believe my ideas of God are gathered chiefly from thence. But is it not true wisdom on this subject, to adopt opinions, let them be gathered from scripture or experi-

ence, or wherever you will, which all men agree in thinking worthy of God, and not to interfere with mysterious, and disputed, and incomprehensible dogmas? Can I be wrong in forming as high an idea as I am able of perfection, in clothing the divine Being in this exalted idea, and then proving my devotion of heart to this all-perfect Intelligence, by attempting to resemble him as far as I can?

How. There is only this objection, Conway, that you have as much authority for worshipping the sun or stars, as for worshipping this Being of your own ideas.

Con. But I have said my ideas are chiefly gathered from scripture.

How. At least you suppose so; but without certainty, and without any firm persuasion that scripture itself is a revelation from God. My dear Conway, your religion is what mine was two years ago. I have not forgotten the state of my own mind and feelings then. I, too, supposed that I had adopted the truly wise and moderate part in such matters.

Con. Well then, Howard, let us argue no further, but proceed with your own mind's history. I beg, however, that you may conceal nothing from me, because you suppose I shall regard it as unintelligible. To me nothing can be more unintelligible, than that you should require to be changed. Tell me Arthur's answer to your question.

How. I shall, my dear Conway. His answer was from scripture, and was this. 'Faith,' my dear father, 'is the evidence of things not seen. By it the true Christian lives,—proceeds on his way to heaven,—hopes,—endures, seeing him

who is invisible. This seeing by the soul,—this perception of the presence of ‘him who is invisible,’ is what I mean by feeling the presence of God; and it exists in exact proportion to the strength of our faith, and distinctness of our knowledge of scripture. ‘Faith,’ itself, ‘is the gift of God,’ the operation of his Spirit in the soul.’

Con. But if so, my dear Howard, it is supernatural, and consequently we are not accountable for the want of it. This is surely a mysterious and useless dogma.

How. The very objection I made, Conway; but forgive me, when I say it only proves extreme ignorance of scripture. Arthur immediately proved this to me. He said there was nothing in scripture more simply plain, than the direct offer of the Spirit of God to operate on our minds, if we ask this of God; or more easily understood than the effects described as produced by his operation. My dear boy answered me always in the words of scripture. He seemed fearful of taking from the force of inspiration, by giving its meaning in any language but its own.

Con. And what is the language of scripture on this point?

How. It is the simplest imaginable. Jesus Christ says, ‘If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.’ Then, as to the *manner* of the operation of the Spirit of God, Christ says again, ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth, and

thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' 'The effects of this operation of the Spirit are declared with equal plainness. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Christ also most solemnly declares, that this operation of the spirit on the soul, is absolutely necessary to salvation:—'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.' And St. Paul says, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;' and, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' You are silent, my friend; does this appear to you one of those incomprehensible dogmas, which it is wisdom not to meddle with.

Con. Not as you have stated it; or rather, any thing said on such a subject by that gentle young spirit who is now in eternity, comes to me with the force of irresistible truth. But go on, dear Howard. I at least feel the powerful impression such subjects are calculated to make on the human mind.

How. In the state of my mind at that time, Conway, every word that Arthur uttered from scripture, seemed itself to be spirit; and I continued to converse with him with the most intense interest. He seemed, on his part, when unable to find scripture words exactly to express his meaning, unwilling to express it at all; and most particularly so, when I asked him to explain the answer he had made to me on my

asking, whether he had sought to feel the presence of Almighty God? If you recollect, his reply was, that he had sought to feel the presence of God the Son, by whom alone we had access to God the Father.

Con. I do recollect. How did he explain that answer?

How. He said that Jesus Christ had with the utmost plainness taught his disciples, that he was the only medium of access by which man could approach God the Father, or by whom they could comprehend his character. Christ said to his disciples just before his death, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' And again, Christ says, 'No man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' And St. Paul says, 'Through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father.' 'A new and living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.' He repeated other passages clearly and strongly to the same effect, but added not a word of his own. I remarked this to him. 'Because, my dear father,' replied he, 'I am, in mind, in experience, in every thing, a child compared with you. I dread adding any of my own weak thoughts to the words of inspiration, lest they should appear to you to partake

of that weakness; and most particularly on this subject.'

'And why so particularly on this subject, my dear boy?' asked I.

'Because,' replied he, with the deepest earnestness, 'there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus; neither is there salvation in any other.' How inexpressibly important is it, therefore, that our opinions and belief regarding this only Savior, should rest entirely on God's own revelation respecting him!' He was moved as he spoke, and pressed his forehead against my hand, in which I held his. I remarked, what I felt forcibly at the time, that men were unaccountably careless on a subject so momentous. 'Yes,' replied he, much moved, 'God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has given the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.' But how few perceive this glory! 'He is the image of the invisible God. By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible. All things were created by him, and for him, and by him all things consist.' This glorious One, 'being in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' And yet how few love him!—how few know him!

'Know him!' repeated I.

'Yes, my dear father, know him. St. Paul expresses what all feel who know him.' '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.' My dear boy spoke with the most fervent interest,—but you have had enough of this, Conway.

Con. I find all you tell me of Arthur most deeply interesting. But where had he acquired these opinions?

How. I soon asked him that question, and found that he had been led to examine the subject of religion, by a young friend who lived in his neighborhood in the country. You know his health prevented his residing in London, and for three years he had spent his time chiefly with my sister in Cornwall. We had all seen him frequently during that time, for short intervals. He told me that his prejudices against some of the doctrines of Christianity had been very strong,—that his friend had labored with the most unwearied interest and kindness to overcome these prejudices; but that it had only been within a few months before he came to me, that he fully, and from his heart, became a Christian. You know, however, how modest and reserved he was, respecting what concerned himself. He several times succeeded in changing the subject, when I attempted to lead him to tell what had passed in his mind, previous to his adopting these religious opinions; and when I at last plainly avowed to him the new and deep interest I myself felt on the subject, and asked to be acquainted with the manner in which his mind had overcome its prejudices, and attained the settled and happy state in which it then seemed to be, he promised to write me all; adding, that he must leave me in a few days, (for his health was then beginning to fail,) and

that he could not employ them in speaking of himself. 'If,' said he, 'God has in mercy called me, the first of my family, to the knowledge of himself, it is, I trust, because he knows my time to seek to glorify him on earth will be the shortest.'

Con. Poor fellow! He seemed, indeed, to be prepared for a better world.

How. When I was obliged to send him from me, I cannot describe to you, Conway, how dear I felt he was to me.—But no more of this,—I have infinite cause for thankfulness on his account.

Con. You saw him again?

How. I did. I witnessed his death, or rather the departure of his spirit to where it longed to be. When we part for the night, Conway, I shall give you his account of the change of his opinions, which he wrote to me. I think it will interest you, and you are so early in your morning hours, you will have time to read it before we meet to-morrow.

Con. I shall like much to see it; and am not surprised, dear Howard, that religious opinions presented to you under such circumstances, should have left a powerful impression on your mind.

How. I cannot say, Conway, that Arthur's opinions had much influence in changing my sentiments,—at least, only thus far,—they confirmed my belief in the reality of a more deep-felt, more irresistibly powerful impression of what relates to God and unseen things being experienced by real Christians, than seemed to be regarded as rational or necessary, even by the reflecting part of the world. But the mind,

in arriving at truth must seek it step by step, for itself. Arthur's difficulties in the search, and mine, were not the same. Circumstances, to a certain degree, give a cast to every character. His early misfortunes, and my constant prosperity, had given a very different turn to our thoughts. I had also been accustomed to act, he to reflect. His difficulties arose from the apparent inconsistencies between the attributes of God, and the existing state of things; mine proceeded from the experience of my incapacity to obey the divine law, which seemed to increase in the strictness of its pure demands, the more earnestly I attempted to obey,—or rather, every step I proceeded in that attempt, only seemed to lead to some new and unfulfilled duty, while conscience was unsatisfied with all I did.

Con. And were you not convinced by that, my dear Howard, that you had adopted erroneous opinions? Can a just God demand what it is not in our power to fulfil?

How. I often asked myself that question, Conway, but the language of scripture was perfectly plain; and it was not long before I perceived, with the fullest conviction, that, as far as I had made myself acquainted with it, the law of God was 'holy, and just, and good,' and that 'his precepts concerning all things were right,' and suited to increase whatever was valuable in character, or that tended to real happiness. Jesus Christ sums up all the divine law in these two requirements, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.' And are not

these two requirements as much calculated to secure the happiness of man, as they are honorable to the great Lawgiver?

Con. They have surely one defect,—they for whom they are intended, are utterly incapable of obeying them.

How. And whence that incapacity, Conway? Why is it, that while we profess to believe that God is supremely worthy of our love, we cannot love him supremely? And while we admire his beautifully simple and just rule, by which he instructs man to secure the happiness of his brother man, that we cannot obey it?

Con. To answer that question, my friend, I must proceed step by step to account for that which has never yet been accounted for,—the origin of evil.

How. No, my dear Conway, that would only lead you from the point. If we would submit to the teaching of him, who we profess to believe is the only wise,—the only omniscient, and whose teaching is fully confirmed by our own experience, we would believe that the cause of this incapacity is the aversion of our hearts to the purity of his nature and laws. We do not see, with the clearness that he sees, this state of our feelings, because we never experienced that fulness of love for him,—the all-perfect, all-lovely,—which he intended at our creation should constitute the full satisfaction and happiness of our natures, and with which, when he contrasts the present state of our feelings, he terms it plainly ‘enmity;’ and we, full of self-love as we are, will allow that, at times at least, we feel a distaste for thoughts of God, an impatience under his moral restraints, and a disposi-

tion to forget his existence, and to act as if we ourselves were the end of our own being.

Con. And how is all this to be prevented, Howard? How are we to change these hearts, and restore them to that state for which they were intended?

How. That is the only inquiry of any importance, amongst all the inquiries of the busy human mind; because, till it is answered, every other pursuit is mere vanity,—mere trifling on the brink of an eternity of separation from God. The answer of God to this question, throws light on all that is of any moment for us to know on this side the grave.

Con. And what is the answer of God to this question?

How. It is this,—he has himself undertaken to renew us by his Spirit, after the image of Christ, if we will only bend our stubborn souls, and ask him to do so. You look disappointed, Conway.

Con. I confess I am, there is something so uncertain, so visionary, in this doctrine of supernatural agency. I am sure I never could convince myself that I was under the immediate teaching of the divine Being.

How. Do you think, then, that all I have told you respecting myself is mere delusion?

Con. I cannot exactly say so, my dearest Howard; but you must give me time to think over this subject, when separate from you. It is not easy to form an opinion on a subject so new as this is to me. Forget what I have last said, or regard it as the result of confirmed habits of thinking and judging.

How. Oh! my own dear Conway, these stiff and rigid habits of thinking and judging, make me tremble. We have, my friend, arrived at that age at which we turn away with apathy from what pretends to be a new opinion, and with disgust from an old one assuming an importance which common consent had long ago deprived it of. This is the result of experience, and perhaps on every other subject may be true wisdom; but, on the subject of religion, it is, forgive me, dear Conway, mere folly.

Con. Why so?

How. Because there is not a doctrine, or precept of Christianity, which men have not involved in obscurity by their explanations and glosses. Those explanations are fully better known than the simple Bible itself; indeed, on some points supersede it; and when we come to examine the subject, we find that many of those very opinions we considered most contrary to reason, and which have been rejected by those who were considered rational explainers of scripture, are indeed the very plainest doctrines of the Bible. Every man, therefore, ought to go direct to revelation for his religious opinions.

Con. (*Smiling.*) We always return to the same point again—the Bible, nothing but the Bible.

How. Yes, dear Conway; the revelation from God, and nothing but that, to inform us of what we cannot otherwise know, is, I confess, my only guide in finding truth respecting God, and our relation to him.

Con. Well, my friend, I think I am now master of that part of your creed. I beg I may not interrupt your mind's history any farther.

How. I struggled hard, Conway, to obey those laws of God, which in my conscience, and soul, and heart, I approved of as altogether good and right. You have only heard truth respecting my attempts to worship God in my family. I did determine, that 'whatever others did, I and my house would serve the Lord.' I had been loved and honored by them as their head and guide in earthly things, and I resolved, late as it was in my course, to attempt to fulfil my duty as their parent and master in heavenly things. As soon as I was able to join my family, I plainly told them the truth,—that I had before neglected my duty, from having been most blameably ignorant on the subject. I laid down rules, to which I intended they should conform; and gave my domestics a fortnight to think on the subject, promising to those who disliked the strictness of my plans, characters as faithful servants to an earthly master, and remuneration for sudden dismissal, but positively making it a condition, that no servant should remain under my roof, who did not strictly conform to my regulations.

Con. And what were those regulations?

How. It would be tedious to mention them in detail, but the amount of them was,—that all should keep regular hours, and meet me at prayers morning and evening,—that perfect temperance and order should reign in every department,—and that the Sabbath should be kept to the letter of the commandment, as explained by Christ. In so doing, my dear Conway, it was impossible to avoid being singular; I am, therefore, not the least surprised at your having heard that I was so.

Con. But why such sudden extremes, Howard? Why not adopt gradually, and shall I say unostentatiously, such revolting singularity?

How. Those impressions of unseen things, Conway, which you consider as visionary, were too powerfully present to my mind, to suffer me to shrink from plain duty from the dread of ridicule or contempt. I knew I should provoke both; but, when compared to the displeasure or approbation of God, they were nothing to me.

Con. And yet your conscience was unsatisfied?

How. It was, because I attempted in this way to make out a righteousness, in which I might appear with an expectation of everlasting reward at the bar of God. A firm belief of the scripture-doctrine,—that I should appear there, to give ‘account of the deeds done in the body,’ led me, at the close of day after day, to examine by the test of scripture, and with an anxiety proportioned to the clearness with which I at the time viewed the importance of the result, whether I had indeed fulfilled what I considered to be the conditions of acceptance with God; and the examination of the conduct of each day proved to me, that I had come short in every particular, and that there was a mixture of some unholy principle in all my thoughts, words, and actions. When we attempt, in this sincere manner, to obey God, we find, Conway, ‘that his commandment is’ indeed ‘exceeding broad,’ and ‘his word pure,—pure as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.’

Con. But, my dear Howard, do not even the strictest religionists allow that it will be by the

sincerity, not by the perfection of our obedience, that we shall be judged at the last day?

How. No, Conway; that is one of those glosses in explaining scripture of which I spoke, and one which has completely established itself as an undeniable religious truth, while there is not a shadow of ground for it in the Bible. Can you, Conway, recollect any passage in scripture, which implies that our omniscient Judge will accept of a sincere but unsuccessful attempt to obey, in the place of exact obedience?

Con. Does not Christ himself make an excuse for his disciples, when, instead of watching with him, as he had requested in his hour of agony, they fell asleep? He said, in pity of their weakness, and aware of their sincerity, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' I have always admired the gentleness and magnanimity of these words, at such a time.

How. And yet, Conway, if you will examine the passage which is constantly produced in favor of your opinion, you will find that you have been admiring an explanation of our Lord's words which they cannot bear. We shall read the passage as St. Mark has it; (*reads*) 'And Jesus cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou?' (Why so pointedly address Peter, and not James and John, unless in allusion to his having so confidently declared that he was ready to suffer and die with his Lord?) 'Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.' Is this an excuse? Is it not rather a most serious and gracious warning, to which, had the sincere but self-confident Peter attend-

ed, he might have been saved from the—weakness, will you call it? I must say—crime of denying his Master an hour after. There is, besides, no other instance which can possibly be understood, as you understand this. Christ never extenuates the faults of his disciples; on the contrary, he always reproves them; and had he done otherwise, he would not have been, as he was, the teacher and the example of the most perfect holiness.

Con. How then, Howard, shall you ever stand accepted before God? What is to be done, if you neither can fully obey his laws, nor be acquitted, though you obey them to the utmost of your power? I have, of course, supposed sorrow for failure, amongst your attempts at obedience, for that too is commanded.

How. Yes, Conway; and had you seen your friend's soul, when he has remained for hours prostrate before that holiness he adored, becoming every moment more conscious of his own impurity, when seen in the light of the perfections he attempted to trace in that one holy, one wise, one good, one adorable Being, whom he loved in trembling,—on whose mercy he cast his soul, though the way by which mercy and justice could meet in judging him he yet saw so darkly, that the anxiety he endured sometimes amounted to agony of mind, you could not speak so lightly of that consciousness of sin, which, when joined to some perception of the attractions of his glorious character against whom we have sinned, produces real repentance.

Con. And that deep-felt repentance, was it too of no avail? Oh! Howard, forgive me for not understanding such doctrines,—such feel-

ings. Could you even wish me to understand them?

How. I should wish, my dear Conway, that the anxiety I have suffered should be sufficient for us both; and that you would believe me when I assure you, that had you, even for one hour, felt as I have done the alarms of a conscience awakened to its own darkness and guilt, by that brightness of holiness by which it is to be judged, you could never again have that hour brought to your recollection, without a feeling returning with it, that would arrest every lighter thought in a moment. It is the Spirit of God who convinces us of sin; and when he touches the soul, the impression proves the presence of him, whose operations there are termed a 'Baptism of fire.'

Con. But, my dear friend, allowing that these impressions really are made by the Spirit of God, to what do they tend? Can the conviction that it is impossible to obey the laws of God to their extent of purity, make us more pure? Or, supposing it would add to the earnestness of our exertions, of what avail would they be, if, as you say, we never can attain to perfect obedience, and God will accept of no other?

How. I will answer you in scripture words, Conway. 'The law,' when we perceive its purity and strictness, 'is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.'

Con. Explain yourself, my friend; I am not sure that I understand you.

How. How do you understand the words I have quoted from the Bible?

Con. I have, I think, heard the words before, but I am not certain that I ever attached any meaning to them. I scarce think, however, as you seem to do, that the *moral* laws of God can be intended. It is allowed, I believe, that the rites of the Jewish religion, the sacrifices for instance, were meant to prefigure the death of Christ. In this way the numerous ceremonies mentioned in the Old Testament, might lead the Jews to understand the purpose of Christ's suffering, and have been as a school-master to lead them to receive him.

How. These rites were unquestionably intended to prefigure the death of Christ, and the ends for which he suffered; and the laws regarding these rites, are included in what is called 'The law.' But the moral laws of God are also included, for St. Paul says, 'By the law is the knowledge of sin;' or, in other words, the law points out what things are sin. That this is his meaning, is proved by what follows, when he says of one sin,—that he would not have known it to be sin, unless the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' Now, you will recollect that this prohibition is part of the moral law,—it is the tenth commandment.

Con. I do; but what do you mean by saying the knowledge of the moral law brings us to Christ?

How. I mean, that the knowledge of our incapacity to fulfil the moral law, brings us to see that it is impossible we should ever be justified before God, unless there is some other way of acceptance with him. St. Paul says, 'By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is'—not the

knowledge of the way of acceptance, but—‘the knowledge of sin,’ and ‘the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Eternal life, my dear Conway, cannot be attained by any obedience which it is now in our power to fulfil. It is a gift which we receive through faith in Christ: ‘The law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.’

Con. This is no new doctrine, Howard; and you must be aware, that its tendency to immorality is the cause of its being one, of which all who value pure morals dread the dissemination.

How. No, Conway, it is indeed no new doctrine. It is that doctrine, by which every soul who has entered heaven has been justified, from the days of Abel to the present moment; and again I appeal, for the truth of this, to the one unchanging source of truth,—the Bible. ‘By *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.’ ‘By *faith* Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.’ ‘By *faith* Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.’ By *faith* Abraham, Moses, David, and all the fathers, were justified. By *faith* St. Paul declared that he was justified: ‘Therefore,’ says he, ‘being justified by faith, we have peace with God;’ and he spurns from him all those qualifications on which he had, before his conversion, rested his hopes of heaven, as what were of no avail, but, on the contrary, were worthless and vile:

—‘What things were gain to me, these 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.’ Men, my dear Conway, in that wisdom which, by its results in this instance, God proves to be folly, would banish this doctrine from the world as dangerous to morals; or, if too honest in understanding the plain words of scripture to go thus far, would cloak it in glosses and explanations, out of the sight of the multitude; but they do so from mere ignorance of its nature and tendency, and because they shut their eyes to the most glaring facts. They see, that in those countries where this doctrine is without gloss or explanation held by their churches, and fearlessly preached to the people, there are the purest morals,—there the greatest value for religious and moral instruction, the most industry, and most of all those domestic virtues and affections which accompany pure morals. They see too, or may see, that wherever this doctrine is plainly and boldly preached, there a proportionally deep interest is felt on the subject of religion. And what is it, Conway, that always accompanies the accusations against an individual who adopts this doctrine? Is it not almost in every instance, that he has become absurdly strict and particular in his conduct?

Con. True, my dear Howard, it is so. Yet, does it not seem a contradiction to believe, that what absolves us from the necessity of strict obedience, should in fact make us more strict in obeying? Can we be deserving of blame, for not receiving the evidence even of facts, in proof of so plain a contradiction?

How. Yes, Conway; because it is ignorance of the nature of that faith I have mentioned, which makes us dread its adoption as a foundation on which to build our hopes of heaven; and we ought to search with candor into the real nature of a principle so extraordinary in its effects, before we reject and condemn it. That must itself be a pure principle, which leads to an exactness in morality and devotion, thought unnecessary by those who still rest their hopes of heaven on their obedience; and which, at the same time, regards that strict exactness still so defective, as to require continual forgiveness.

Con. Well, Howard, I cannot deny what you say; and I shall listen with real interest to your explanation of the nature of that principle. Whatever secures the purest morality, must be the best religion.

How. The great error we fall into on this subject, my dear Conway, is this,—we insist on uniting what shall secure our acquittal at the bar of Christ, with what is to prepare us to live with him forever; and we make the first depend on the last, while the whole economy of redemption keeps them apart. Christ died as a propitiation for sin, and on his account alone are our sins forgiven, and we acquitted at the great judgment. The Spirit of God sanctifies, or makes holy, our souls, to fit them for the pres-

ence of God; but so gradual is his work, and so does the soul, under his guidance, perceive the extent and purity of real holiness, that the most strictly pure *real* Christian would feel that he was lost forever, were he told that his future acquittal depended on his past obedience. But our hour for evening prayer approaches. I must meet my family in the Library. Will you join us, Conway?

Con. Certainly, if you will admit me.

How. Yes, dear Conway, your presence will animate my prayers; and I am glad to give you an opportunity to judge for yourself, of one of those means to lead a family to serve God, which is considered by the world so condemning a proof that a man is become weak in intellect.

Con. I am glad, also, Howard, to have an opportunity of witnessing one of those customs of yours, which are considered so extravagantly particular. I only begin to fear I shall soon deserve to be classed amongst those over whom you still possess so much influence, that after having been with you, they cannot help even defending your enthusiasm, and being infected by it.

[*They leave the Room.*]

THE LIBRARY.

A Table, on which are placed a large Bible, and other Books.

HOWARD *and* CONWAY.

How. I always come here a short time before my family, that I may study the passage I mean to read.

Con. Do you explain it to them?

How. I attempt to do so. Here, however, I feel most painfully the unhappy consequences of my long neglect of this most important of all studies. I fear to trust my own understanding, lest, ignorant as I am on innumerable points, I should lead those into error who trust to me for instruction. My method is this. I first study the passage I mean to read, praying to God for his Spirit to enable me to understand it aright. I then consult some approved commentator; and, if I find that we agree, I proceed with some degree of confidence to give my opinion. If not, I must leave the passage unexplained, at least for a time, till I have discovered its true meaning. Had I, as I ought, been studying the Bible for the last thirty years, I should now have been capable of obeying God's command, to train up my family in his knowledge.

Con. Are you not a little inconsistent, my dear Howard? You say the Bible, and only the Bible, ought to be the guide of every human being in learning the truths of religion, even of the poorest and weakest in intellect; and yet must it cost you thirty years labor to understand it?

How. It is not by force of intellect, my dear Conway, that we understand the Bible. There is a way of understanding it, imparted to the poor and uneducated,—to women,—to children,—which the highest intellect cannot obtain in any other way than they obtain it; and that is, by simply asking the power from God. There are, my friend, many ways of reading the Bible. One is, to read it attentively, trusting to your own understanding to comprehend it, as you would in reading another book. No man will continue

long to read the Bible in this way; for the 'natural man,' the natural understanding, cannot relish the things of God. 'They are foolishness to him,' because what is dictated by the Spirit of God, can be loved and understood only by that mind which is under the influence of the Spirit. There is another way of reading the Bible, which is still not the right one, but which is more interesting and effectual than the first; that is, when the Bible is perceived to have a deeper meaning than is obvious to him who expects to understand it as he does another book. To this last reader, it seems involved in much obscurity; yet what he does comprehend, has infinitely more influence over him, than what is understood by the first. The only way to read the Bible with real effect, however, is to open it as the word of God, himself,—to receive every verse as the dictate of that Spirit who 'will guide into all truth;' and who speaks now in the word, just as at the moment in which he first inspired it,—to implore his aid to enlighten our understandings to receive all in the sense he designed it to bear, and to seal its contents on our souls, as the principles from whence are to proceed that 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance,' which are the fruits of the Spirit,' ingrafted by him into our rational souls, by means of his word. Reading the Bible in this way, my dear Conway, is inexpressibly pleasurable. All its contents, its precepts, its promises, its revelations, respecting him who is 'Wonderful, Counsellor,—the mighty God,'—the Bridegroom of his church,—'the beloved,—all come home to the soul with an energy, a

delight, inconceivable to him who has never experienced it; and those who have been enabled thus to understand the Bible, ought never to rest satisfied with a less clear and powerful meaning of any passage. It is as free and open to the meanest suppliant, as to the most exalted intellect. This is the meaning I wish to seek before I attempt to explain any part of Scripture to my family; but to obtain it, requires time, attention, and prayer; and I feel assured that my earthly sun must set for ever, ere the light of God's Spirit has dawned to me on half the glorious truths revealed in this word of life. Had I made use of those means of information, those talents intrusted to me, it might have been otherwise.—The passage which comes in course to be read to night, is one which I have studied so carefully—to satisfy my own mind, that I think I may venture to give the meaning I have adopted; and, indeed, our hour must be come, for I hear the bell which assembles my people. Sit by me, dear Conway.

Enter Mrs. HOWARD, EMMA, CHARLES, Servants, and some others. All take their places. HOWARD and CONWAY rise, and all stand, while HOWARD prays, in St. Chrysostom's words:—

‘Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications to thee, and dost promise, that where two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt grant their requests,—fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth,

and in the world to come, life everlasting.' Amen.

All sit down, while HOWARD reads the first seven verses of the 13th chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which he afterwards paraphrases.

'Though I understand all human languages, and could speak with the highest eloquence in each; nay, could I even speak in the language of angels, and with angel eloquence, and my own heart remained devoid of love, I should myself receive no more benefit, than if I were an instrument of brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

'And though God should make use of me to prophesy, and though, for the benefit of others, he should enable me to understand and explain all mysteries, and give me knowledge in all things; and though I should receive that peculiar faith by which I could work miracles, yet, as Balaam prophesied, and as Judas cast out devils, I might do both, and without love be nothing,—be without that which alone prepares me for heaven.

'And though, to make merit with God, I should bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I should give my body to be burnt to obtain his favor, without love it would profit me nothing.'

What is the nature of this charity, this love, so indispensable to make our services to God acceptable?

'Love suffereth the failings, and wickedness, and unkindness of others, and yet retaineth kindness and good will towards them. Love envieth not the superior advantages of others, or their

endowments, or riches, or happiness; real love rejoiceth in all these. Love boasteth not of its own superiority, and is not elated by it,—never behaves haughtily, but is gentle, not preferring its own gratification,—not easily displeased,—unwilling to think evil of the objects beloved, but rejoicing in their advancement in all true goodness.

‘Real love beareth all things; believeth all favorable things; hopeth every good thing, and in hope endureth every painful thing.’

This love, so beautifully described by St. Paul, is a definition of that love so frequently, and solemnly, and particularly inculcated by Christ, as that ‘new commandment’ which he gave to his disciples; and we ought to examine our knowledge of, and obedience to, Christ, by this test. Many take refuge in the recollection, that they have never injured any one,—in their benevolence,—in their alms-giving. But do they, and have they, *loved* every neighbor, rich and poor, with this love described by inspiration? Is it the spontaneous, ready, first feeling of their hearts, towards every human creature? And not only so, but are they long-suffering with every one, hoping, enduring? Let us not deceive ourselves, by attempting to explain away this description of perfect charity, so as to make it agree with the partial, imperfect good-will towards those who never injured us, which we call benevolence. Christian love is of the very nature of that love of which Christ himself gave us an example; it is a principle in us, not by nature, but implanted by his Spirit, to make us meet for *his* presence, who ‘is love;’ and is declared to be one of the ‘fruits of

the Spirit.' Yet this very grace is claimed by the world, as one of those virtues which it triumphs in possessing, and in which it far exceeds strict Christians. We only ask those who make this claim, to examine the nature of true charity, and true benevolence, by the description of them given by St. Paul; and leave their consciences to decide, whether it bears any resemblance to that compact for overlooking each other's vices, which they call charity. For ourselves, let us look at this perfect law of love, and while we perceive how far short we still are of fulfilling it, cling closer to Him without whom we can do nothing; and earnestly implore his Spirit to impart to us, from that fulness which is treasured up in him, more of this indispensable grace, which is the reigning principle in heaven, and without a portion of which, we deceive ourselves if we suppose we are his disciples.

Let us pray.

HOWARD'S PRAYER.

'O thou high and lofty One, that inhabitest eternity, whose name is holy!—thou Almighty so little feared!—thou Omniscient so unknown!—thou Omnipresent so forgotten!—we desire to feel thy presence,—to bow our souls in the dust before thy holiness, and thy long-suffering patience,—to confess, that wert thou to enter into judgment with us,—wert thou to show us our sins in the light of thy holiness, we could not stand before thee, nor answer for one of a thousand. Yet thou art our Father, O God! the source and end of our being,—separated from thee, our existence is continued death. But, O

God! we choose to separate ourselves from thee,—we cling to death. Thou art light, but we hate thy light, and choose darkness. Thou art love, but in our darkness we believe it not. O God! what return can we make to thee for thy glorious,—thy subduing method of proving to us that thou art love? What return can we make to thee, who art the image of the Father? —Thou brightness of his glory!—thou mighty God!—thou Beloved!—who left the Father's bosom to become an infant of days,—a servant of rulers,—a man of sorrows,—to be rejected and despised,—to bear our griefs, to suffer the chastisement of our peace,—to have all our iniquities laid on thy innocence,—to heal us by thy stripes. O God! nothing is left for us, but to receive this cup of salvation with thankful, joyful hearts; and to give ourselves to thee, that as thou hast redeemed us, so thou mayest finish thine own work, and make us meet for thy presence. For this we humbly approach thee, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Grant us, according to thy riches in glory, to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith,—that beholding his glory, we may be changed into the same image, by the Spirit of the Lord. Our inmost hearts are all known to thee, O God!—rend away the darkness which enwraps any of them, and awaken them ere it be too late, by the light of truth. Lord, thou knowest our fears,—our anxious thoughts;—thou knowest those that lie nearest our hearts, and heaviest on them;—thou hast invited us to cast our cares on thee,—Lord, we would do

this. We have known thy power to support, and comfort, and elevate. We have also known thy power to awaken, and convince, and renew. We commit our own souls, and the souls of those we love, in humble hope to thee for this life, and for that which is eternal.' Amen.

After HOWARD'S Prayer, he reads a Hymn, which all afterwards join in singing.

THE HYMN.

'Vain and presumptuous is the trust
Which on our works we place,
Salvation from a higher source
Flows to the human race.

' 'Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin;
His mercy sav'd our souls from death,
And wash'd our souls from sin.

'His Spirit, through the Savior shed,
His sacred fire imparts,
Refines our dross, and love divine
Rekindles in our hearts.'

After the Hymn is sung, the servants, &c. retire.

HOWARD, CONWAY, MRS. HOWARD, EMMA, and
CHARLES.

Mrs. How. We hoped, Howard, that Mr. Conway and you would have returned to us.

How. Our conversation became so interesting, at least to me, that the real truth, my love, is,—I forgot that you would expect us.

Mrs. How. Well, Emma and I were so deeply occupied with Mr. Conway's beautiful prints,

that we sometimes could have forgotten that we did, had not Charles occasionally stopped his walk of three hours duration about the room, to remind us.

[HOWARD *turns away gravely, and sighs.*]

Charles. Sir, may I translate your looks into words?

How. Can you, Charles?

Charles. (*Half gaily, half sadly.*) They said, 'O that my reprobate son's eyes were opened, to see the value of that time he so trifles away?'

How. You have translated well, Charles. And now do my looks say, that trifling with knowledge is even more criminal than trifling with time?

Charles. (*Gloomily*) Can knowledge, without conviction of its truth, do any thing?

Emma. Dear Charles, remember!

[*Looks steadily at him. He turns away, and walks to the other end of the room.*]

A servant opens the door into another apartment, where there are refreshments. All enter, and HOWARD approaches the table and says

A GRACE.

'Ever present, ever gracious, ever merciful God, we thank thee for thy continued blessings. Open our eyes to see,—open our hearts to feel thy goodness, for His sake through whom we sinners may at all times approach thee as a reconciled Father.' Amen.

How. (*Aside to Conway.*) Why so silent, my friend?

Con. Do not mind me, dear Howard. I shall tell you my thoughts afterwards. I wish to observe Charles.

Charles. (After looking at the things on the table.) I wonder what length of grace the old laborer I watched at his dinner to-day, would think it necessary to say before this supper, or whatever it may be called.

How. (Smiling.) Perhaps shorter than before his own dinner. I have heard it remarked, that the length of the grace was generally in proportion to the badness of the fare.

Charles. Yes; so naturally does the vanity of man lead him to suppose himself a favorite with Heaven, that he can even construe black bread in a measure so scanty as barely to keep him from starvation, into a mark of it.

How. Or rather, so averse is the heart of man from desiring or valuing the favor of God, that no profusion of blessings will induce him to seek it; and it is only when taught his utter dependence, by a merciful penury, that he is brought to bow his proud soul before the Being, without whose constant providence he could not exist a moment, either in profusion or poverty.

Charles. Perhaps so,—however it is, the poor old creature I mentioned, spoke to me as if he considered his precious existence, and all his little affairs, as the peculiar charge of Heaven, and though he could not give a rational answer to any objection I made, yet still seemed quite satisfied.

Mrs. How. And could you, Charles, attempt to deprive the poor man of a belief so consoling?

Charles. I wished to ascertain whether he rested his belief in the immediate care of Provi-

dence, on any rational grounds. When I first observed him, he had just seated himself on the outside of the garden wall, in its shade. At the top of the wall, over his head, a branch of a pear-tree had got loose, and, loaded with fine fruit, rested on it, and partly hung over. On sitting down, he seemed much fatigued,—threw off his hat, and laid himself back in all the misery of heat and lassitude; while I, as I looked at him, internally moralized on that strange state of things which compels the *many* human beings to toil in wretchedness, that the *few* may be supported in idleness and luxury. In a few minutes, a little girl approached with the poor man's dinner. He sat up, and, as if recollecting himself, paused before he took it from her, then putting down a little pitcher of milk she had brought, on the ground beside him, he, with an air of mildness and thankfulness, as if he had received some precious gift, unfolded a coarse napkin, from which he took a piece of the darkest colored bread I ever saw, and holding it in his hand, raised his eyes to heaven, then covering his face with his hat, kept it so, for, I am sure, at least ten minutes, showing by the motion of his hands, that he was in earnest supplication.

Emma. Good old man! I think it must have been poor old Watkins. I know he was working at the fence near the garden to-day.

Charles. Now, Emma, there is one of your religious absurdities. You think you must know all the paupers in the country; and you forget how inconsistent it is with your professions of sanctity, if you do know them, to suffer your fellow Christians to starve on black bread and

buttermilk, while you deck yourself out in splendid silk and lace. But (*looking closely at the trimming on Emma's gown,*) is that lace? I don't believe it. I'll lay any wager you are wearing some trumpery imitation, that you may give your money to beggars,—and this is what your wonderful religion teaches you,—to defraud the honest manufacturer, that you may pamper idleness.

Emma. (*Laughing.*) How admirably consistent your remarks are, my wise brother. My trimming will, I believe, however, satisfy you, both as to my religious opinions about lace, and the improvement I have gained by your lectures on political economy. It is composed of good British lace, bought, if my orders were obeyed, from a set of distressed manufacturers. So pray go on with your story.

Charles. Well, Emma, I wish you would change natures with me. One can scarcely look in your face, without feeling something like gentleness and peace stealing over one's soul.

Emma. You know the secret of peace, Charles,—but pray go on with your story.

Charles. I have no story to go on with. I only attempted to impart some of the gall of my own spirit to the feelings of the old man.

Emma. How could you do so?

Charles. After he had finished his wretched meal, I left the place where I had remained unobserved, and went near and entered into conversation with him. After listening to a great deal about the care Heaven took of him, I said, 'But friend, surely a dinner of black bread and buttermilk is no such great proof of care, and

scarcely deserves so long a grace as you said to yours a little ago.' 'Sir,' replied he, 'when we know that we deserve nothing but punishment for our sins at the hand of God, we look upon every mercy with wonder and gratitude.' 'But what has made you such a sinner?' asked I. 'An evil heart, Sir.' 'And when did your heart become so evil?' 'Ah, Sir, it was so from my birth, I received it with my life.' 'Then, friend, it is no worse than other people's,' said I, 'and yet, just look above your head, and see how they are provided for. They live at ease, while you toil for them,—they have every enjoyment, every luxury; and some of them feel as secure of heaven as you do. Why, then, is there such a difference between them and you, if your hearts are alike, and you are the children of a just Father?'

How. (*With sternness.*) I will hear no more. Did you not feel, while you attempted to poison the source of this poor man's happiness, that you were a very agent of him who 'was a murderer from the beginning.'

Charles. (*Rising from table.*) This before so many witnesses!

How. Give me an opportunity to speak to you alone, and you are safe before witnesses. You know this, Charles.

[CHARLES leaves the room.]

Mrs. How. Emma, my love, it is late, we shall retire. Good night, Mr. Conway. I hope Howard will not monopolize you so completely to-morrow. (*Looks anxiously at HOWARD, and is going.*)

How. Emma, my love, good night. (EMMA kisses his hand, he presses her to his bosom.) My good child, God bless you.

[MRS. HOWARD and EMMA retire.]

Con. My dear Howard, why are you, against your nature, and at the expense of so much emotion, thus severe with Charles?

How. Because, my dear Conway, I dare not suffer my dark-minded boy to sin thus boldly against God, and not reprove him. (*Rises, and fetches a Bible.*) Do you remember, Conway, the tremendous warning we have in scripture, against this weak indulgence of our children. (*Turns to the passage and reads.*) ‘And the Lord said, Behold I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day, I will perform against Eli, all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.’ And you recollect, Conway, how literally this awful threatening was fulfilled, when in one day Eli heard that both his sons had perished,—that the ark of God, deserted by him for their wickedness, was taken; and that the glory had departed from Israel.

Con. (*Thoughtfully.*) It is strange, that the religion professing peace, and love, and good will, should, when most rigidly observed, generally prove a promoter of discord.

How. (*Turning over the Bible, reads.*) ‘Think not that I came to send peace on earth; I am not come 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. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.' Such is the promise of peace in this world, Conway, to those who believe in Christ. His is indeed a religion of peace; but it is peace between the soul and God,—a peace which leads to war with whatever opposes itself to God and holiness,—a war, my dear Conway, both external and internal. But do not look so deeply grave, my friend! Come, let us view that bright moon which seems disposed to outshine our dim lights. (*Throws open a window.*) How reviving is this air!

Con. Reviving, indeed! Dear, cool, English air? And that bright sky,—looking at it with you, Howard, recalls other days.

How. (*Throwing his arms round Conway.*) Would you say happier days, Conway?

Con. I do not feel very happy at this moment, Howard.

How. Because you are dissatisfied with me, Conway.

Con. Or with myself. If you are right, Howard, in what state am I?

How. In the most interesting of all states, my beloved Conway. You are on the eve of making the most important of all changes. You are leaving a state of indifference about the most momentous of all concerns, and entering

upon one of anxious inquiry. Be not afraid to proceed. I hope my experience may be of some little use to you; and I thank God, that if one of us was to suffer from ignorance and misapprehension respecting the way of knowing Him, it has been the one who was always most proud and self-confident.

Con. And the one who has always been the leader and guide in whatever was worthy of pursuit.

[*A footstep is heard approaching under the window.*]

How. (*In a whisper.*) It is poor Charles. He will have no rest till he has made his peace with me. (*CHARLES stops for an instant under the window.*)

Con. (*In a whisper.*) Speak to him, poor fellow.

How. (*In the same tone.*) I must not, my friend. [*CHARLES passes quickly on.*]

Con. Why not speak to him?

How. Because I am his father, and he has been in the wrong. He knows I am ever more than willing to receive him, if he chooses to return to me.

Con. He seems in a very extraordinary state of mind.

How. He is. His soul is perfect enmity against true religion; yet he seems unable to think on any other subject, and always finds means to introduce it into conversation, apparently for the very purpose of expressing his bitter feelings against it. His warm affections, and really amiable dispositions, are miserable and uneasy under the influence of these bitter feelings; yet he cannot get rid of them. I be-

lieve in his heart he blames me for all his uneasy sensations, and has attempted to live absent from us, but seldom remains away above a week or two. There seems to be a strange and powerful struggle between light and darkness in his soul. I can only pray for him, and, as far as in me lies, oppose every evil sentiment which my silence might lead him to suppose he could innocently indulge.

[Some one softly enters the room.]

Con. (*Turning round.*) Charles!

Charles. May I intrude so long as to say good-night to you, Mr. Conway, and to ask my father's forgiveness for——

How. You have my perfect forgiveness, my dear Charles. (*Holding out his hand to him.*)

Charles. Good night, Mr. Conway.

How. You need not leave us, Charles. (*Retaining his hand affectionately.*)

Charles. (*Moved.*) My too kind father! I must go. (*Clasps his father's hand in both of his, then hurries out of the room*)

Con. I see you are right in your treatment of him, Howard. Your rectitude of conduct, according to your own principles, must succeed in making him what you wish.

How. Succeed! O how little prospect I yet see of success! But, no more of this,—why should I expect to succeed in changing the very character I have assisted in forming, the instant I attempt to do so; or feel disappointed, that my prayers are not immediately answered? I have felt deeply disappointed, Conway; but I will say no more.—Look at that sky,—how glorious it is! How often has gazing on its brightness calmed my saddest hours, since I learnt to know Him

who reigns there! Sometimes I have thought he heard me not, and disregarded all my sad and earnest supplications, when a few moments contemplation of that wide expanse of glory, and order, and beauty, has led me to rest on the omnipotent arm which sustained it all, with an indescribable feeling of adoration and security; while I felt as if addressed by that Spirit who is the Comforter, in language so sublime in meaning, so simply, so sweetly plain in expression. 'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created all these that bringeth out their host by number? He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth. Why sayest thou, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' And then I have been enabled to leave all my cares with Him, and to trust my most anxious wishes to be fulfilled according to His most gracious and unerring will. How beautifully true, Conway, are the words of inspiration with respect to those heavens. They do, indeed, declare the glory of God. No curse has marred the order and beauty of that magnificent expanse. All is still as He created it,—a visible manifestation of the power, and wisdom, and beauty of the Divine Mind.

Con. All creation does, indeed, manifest Him to us, if we would regard it.

How. Yes, dear Conway, but no part of creation known to us remains perfect, but those heavens. 'The whole earth is,' indeed, 'full of the glory of God;' but we cannot perceive that glory, until we know and understand, in the scripture sense, 'that God is holy.' Without this knowledge, we must continually be at a loss to account for the many imperfections every where visible in our still beautiful part of creation. I allow that it does so greatly display the wisdom, and care, and power, and tenderness of its Creator; and so attracts the heart by its profusion of beauty, and grandeur, and sublimity, that we anxiously attempt to discover perfections in its very imperfections, and some purpose of good in its most apparent evils. But ought we to look for perfection where God himself has marked his curse?

Con. His curse! How harsh and gloomy the idea seems.

How. It is truth, Conway. God cursed the earth for man's sake. Yet when we carefully examine the nature of the curse, we find that, as in all the works and ways of God, so in it there is a glory,—a glory in the wisdom that pronounced it, and a glory in the tenderness which is mingled with its fulfilment. To perceive this, however, we must believe the revealed truth, that our world was once, like him for whom it was intended, a perfect work of a perfect Divine Mind, but is now, like man, and fitted for fallen man, a marred work, a beautiful design, but with a blight, a curse upon it.

Con. Allowing the truth, Howard, that there is a curse on the earth for man's sake, I cannot see any tenderness in it, or any good result

to man from it. You have just been describing the elevating effects produced by the contemplation of those bright and perfect heavens;—were we surrounded with equal perfection on earth, would it not have the same effect?

How. No, my dear Conway, experience says the contrary. Those heavens we can only contemplate. Whatever man has in his power, is polluted and perverted by him. If it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter heaven, how incalculably greater must the difficulty have been to the whole human race, had they been exposed to the temptations arising from a world in a state of such luxuriant abundance, that it only required man 'to dress it,' to repress that luxuriance? Let us only suppose all mankind in that state of idleness, and outward enjoyment, and we shall instantly see the mercy of that curse which made 'the sweat of the brow' necessary to make the earth produce what was necessary for their existence.

Con. I believe you are right. At this moment I recollect some men, to whom, I am sure, it would have been mercy to have compelled them to toil for their support, that they might have been kept from the misery their extravagance and vices have brought upon them.

How. Experience, my dear Conway, will always be found to confirm the truth and wisdom of God, in all his ways; and if you would, while you admire the beauties of nature, and feel a sad pleasure in viewing its decays and changes, recollect that it is in them we see the curse of sin for our sakes, I think you would

perceive a tenderness in all, that would enhance a thousand-fold the pleasure you experienced.

Con. (*Smiling.*) I think, my dear Howard, this is one of those theories in which your mind is always deeply interested.

How. Perhaps it is. I confess that the beautifully perfect sympathy which exists between our feelings, and the natural objects which surround us, has always been very striking to me; and now I think I perceive its use,—it leads us to perceive the infinite wisdom, and infinite tenderness, of him who so suited them to each other, as to produce this exquisite union, even when clothed in a curse. Were natural objects altogether perfect, Conway, should we feel this sympathy?

Con. I believe not.

How. No. It is the resemblance of their changes and decays, their alternate sunshine and clouds, to human feelings and human affairs, which makes natural objects so indescribably attractive; and this manifestation of the character of God may be traced over the whole face of nature. In every part we may observe the curse of an holy God, the consequence of sin, and his mercy and tenderness in so mingling that holy curse in all things, as to produce instruction to the soul, conveyed in objects, sad perhaps, but most powerfully touching and attractive. But, if I enter on this subject, I shall keep you up all night.

Con. You may, Howard; I shall not sleep soon to-night.

How. Why not, my dear friend?

Con. I can scarcely define my own feelings; to-morrow I may be able. But can I see you,

Howard, hitherto so consistent, so firm, so unchanged in character, thus earnestly and practically devoted to what, a year or two ago, you could take no interest in, and what I know nothing of, without feeling anxiety, alternately about you, and about myself, and those dependent on me? I must separate from you, before I can use my own judgment; for, as there ever was, there still is, a something in all you say, which makes me wish to be of your opinion, whatever it is.

How. Is that *something* not *truth*, my own Conway?

Con. I know not. What you said last came on the heart like truth; for who has not felt the exquisite sadness produced by the contemplation of the changes and decays in nature? But I cannot tell whether it is truth or not, respecting those feelings, that they are produced by the Almighty having so suited his very curse on natural objects to the fallen nature of man, as to speak to him, wherever he turns, in language so sadly yet powerfully instructive.

How. I do not say positively, Conway, that it is truth. That there is a curse on the earth for man's sake, is a revealed truth; but the manner in which this curse is executed is no farther mentioned in scripture, than that it should render the earth unproductive without the labor of man, and that, like his own hard and alienated mind, it should spontaneously produce what, if not cleared away, would prevent the growth of whatever was valuable. As in all other matters not of vital importance, so in this, only the amount of the truth is given, and it is left to us to trace the ways of God by

the other means he has put in our power. I feel as if I really was tracing his ways on this subject, but I may be in error. I shall only say one thing more. Let us reverse the idea, and suppose a perfect being, not subject to death, which you know is the consequence of sin,—let us suppose such a being placed on our earth, what sympathy could exist between him, and the natural objects which surrounded him? What feeling, for instance, could the decay of nature at the close of Autumn, excite in a perfect being, unacquainted with the idea of death? No feeling which could have any interest for his perfect soul. No sympathy could exist there with the surrounding sadness of withering nature, or with the mournful sound of the blasts that brought on the desolation of winter. Perfection would shrink with wonder and aversion from such scenes. Amidst them, however, poor fallen man feels at home. His heart is in unison with them all, and they convey to him lessons, sad certainly, but to which his ruined spirit listens with less aversion than to any other. But, dear Conway, this is a subject of comparatively little importance; and will you forgive me if I say, that I shall rejoice at your being unable to sleep, if you are prevented by anxiety to ascertain whether you or I are in the right. Thank God, I have little fear for the result of such an examination. I know your candor; and mercifully you are not involved in any wretched entanglements of sin, or habits of vice, which, far oftener than absolute disbelief of the truth, make men determinedly reject its authority. Once I would have said this both of you and of myself, Conway, with much pride, and

sense of moral superiority; now I view it as a subject of the greatest thankfulness.

Con. Well, Howard, I am not unwilling to be alone. I shall have much to say to you to-morrow. In the mean-time, however, you must fulfil your promise, and give me our dear Arthur's account of his change of opinions. I wish to know every thing on this point, and shall feel nearer an unseen world, while I read what was dictated by his now perfect spirit, when it was hastening to that state.

How. Yes, dear Conway, I wish you much to read it. I shall bring it to your apartment. You will find in the packet with the account of his conversion, some papers written by him before that change, and also some written after. I have marked them so that you will easily distinguish the first from the last. Let us go, my friend. [*Exeunt.*



EARLY IN THE MORNING.

CONWAY'S APARTMENT.

CONWAY seated before a table at an open window, from whence is seen a beautiful view of the country. The sun not long risen. A packet of papers are before him. He sits in deep thought for some time, then opens the packet. The first paper is marked in HOWARD'S hand:—

“Some Fragments found by me in my son Arthur's writing desk after his death.”

I. WRITTEN BEFORE HIS CONVERSION.

September 28, 18—.

‘A beautiful evening. The sky perfectly clear, excepting towards the horizon bounding the sea, where there is a slight haze. From this haze, the moon has just risen in soft and yellow light. Its beams are reflected on the water, and while in other parts the sea is dark, this stream of soft light slants from where the moon has risen to the shore, and in its brightness is seen the motion of the restless waves. Why is such a scene as this so powerfully soothing, so delightfully calming, that while we gaze at it our thoughts go in search of something pleasurable to rest upon? And why must this something still present itself in the character of a living, feeling being? Why cannot the soul be satisfied with thoughts excited by that magnificent expanse, where so many worlds roll in boundless space,—by that pure and softening light, and that living restless ocean, and the unceasing voice of its wide waters? Still, still the heart, or at least *my* heart, is unsatisfied. All these glories only seem to make it ache for something more, liker itself,—nearer,—what would unite it intelligibly with the mysterious attractiveness which surrounds me.’

II.

‘What power is this within me, which judges of my reason? Can a faculty judge itself? There is a something within me, which discovers

the limits of my reason and its weakness,—what power is this? Are the united faculties of the soul, the soul itself? Or, as the senses and powers of the body minister to the faculties of the soul, do they, on their part, minister to a something still higher than they? And is this something my spirit,—myself? And what or who is it? and to what or whom does it minister? Is it that emanation from God himself, which is said to have been breathed into man? And as the faculties of my soul receive their impulse from, and fulfil their end by ministering to it, does it, or ought it to receive its impulse from, and fulfil the purpose of its existence by ministering to God? And would that ministration constitute its felicity, and in its felicity that of all its powers? And is this restlessness which I feel,—this constant stretching of thought into futurity,—this aching consciousness of disappointment from whatever is *present*, occasioned by the pressure on my spirit of that barrier,—that dark veil, which intervenes between it and its God, its source, its felicity, its end? And why and whence that barrier? And who will, or can, answer these questions?—Will death?

III.

‘How blindly have I deceived myself! I supposed all my soul had been reasoned into calmness, and prepared to meet with complacency whatever should occur, satisfied, that however unfortunate my situation was, there still remained to me those objects of men-

tal pursuit, for which many of the most distinguished amongst men had forsaken all others. Witnessing one scene of happiness, which I never can enjoy, has taught me the vanity of all my reasonings. One painful touch upon the heart, has proved to me that all my powers of mind are only slaves to it. While it sleeps, they may act or seem to reign; but, if it is awakened, they must all bear the impress of what it feels, be it joy or sorrow. And can the heart never be reasoned into calmness? Too surely no; its existence is emotion; and while we boast of liberty of will, we are poor creatures of necessity, who cannot shield this source of feeling and of motive, but must leave all its sensations bare and naked to whatever Heaven sends. Could I withdraw to where I should never witness what recalled my own sad circumstances so painfully, should I escape sorrow? No,—loneliness has its own sorrows? this also I am doomed to know. Already I am almost in solitude, and in soul I am alone; for who is so destitute of all that is valuable on earth, as to sympathise in those sad feelings which are so constantly awakened in me, as to constitute my existence? *Why* is all this? Why was I created to be wretched? And whence this voice within me, which seems to reprove me for complaining; and whence this indignant stubbornness which rises in rebellion, and will complain? Is it the voice of power, declaring that its creature shall not with impunity say 'wherefore' to any of its decrees, and the reply of suffering weakness? How vain, how unequal is the contest! But, can power be loved? Can'— * * *

IV.

‘Amongst all the uncertainties of external and of internal things, of this I am, from painful experience, most certain that the indulgence of evil passions produces more unmixed misery, than any external circumstances without that indulgence could produce, however unfortunate. All those feelings tend to bitterness and misery, which lead to repining, and rebellious indignation against—whom? Against the Author of my being, and the Creator of all the loveliness of nature!—of all that in better times makes my soul thirst, pant, to recommend itself to Him by its purity and resignation to whatever His wisdom appoints for me. These wretched feelings are ever turning me from that path of acquiescence and calmness which my soul would tread, till that veil is withdrawn which separates us from God, and conceals from me that benevolence which can only intend ultimate good by the infliction of present suffering. Father of all thine intelligent offspring! Let the sorrow I now feel, atone for these deviations, of which, in my calmer hours, I most sincerely repent.’

V.

‘At times, particularly in my waking hours during the stillness of the night, a flash of truth beams into my soul with overpowering brightness, showing immortality so near as to startle me, and make all else appear of no more value than a dream,—and then the question, ‘Can

those hours which hurry on so rapidly, indeed comprehend all the time of my probation for eternity?" is asked in my inmost soul, with a force and clearness that makes it tremble. And when I turn to those thoughts with which I can at other times meet the idea of death, they seem all darkness and uncertainty. After these moments of vivid light have passed away, the recollection of them throws a doubt over all my hopes.'

Arthur's Letter to his Father.

'My revered and beloved Father,

'You have, for the first time in my life, urged me to an openness with you, from which, I confess to you, I shrink. Since it is so, however, I shall begin by attempting to express feelings, which, if my poor, morbid, proud, and once wretched heart, is to be made known to you, ought first to have utterance; and those are the deep (I have not words to say how deep) feelings of gratitude to you, which I hope you have discovered, but which I have never found resolution to express. Now that I begin to see all things in the calm light of truth, I look back with wonder on the extreme delicacy and love with which I, so unlike all the others,—so useless,—on whom no pride, no hope could rest,—have ever been regarded by all my family; but still above all, by him whom I loved above all, whose love was most valued by all, and whose slightest mark of disregard would have made me wretched. Never did my blindly indulged self-love receive one such

wound from you. When surrounded by your other children, all lovely, all hopeful, in their flush of health, and animation, and strength, though each regarded his father as his best and kindest friend yet most particularly so that one who could never disguise from himself, that the constant and peculiar gentleness and tenderness bestowed on him, proceeded from feelings, not of pleasure, like those felt towards the others, but of compassion and sadness. I can say no more on this subject,—one way of unburdening my full heart is now made known to me; and I trust the Hearer of prayer will answer my earnest and unceasing requests, by imparting to your soul a full, full measure of his own light, and peace, and joy.

‘I feel ashamed to commence my own history,—yet it is only a history of the pride, and self-love, and rebellion of the human heart, which no circumstances, nothing but the operation of the Spirit of God, can awaken from delusion. I shall not, my dear Father, describe those feelings, which, as far as I recollect, always guided me before my health made it necessary for you to send me from you. Your treatment of me proved, that you observed and understood them. Neither shall I describe those hours of sadness which I rather sought and indulged, than attempted to guard against, and overcome, on first leaving you. The mildness of the climate in Cornwall, the perfect quiet, the absence of that constant society in which I could not avoid mixing while under your roof, and in which my self-love generally made me wretched, gradually revived my weak spirits, and restored me to something like a feeling of health. My aunt

was unboundedly kind; her own habits were retired, and her society became very agreeable to me. You know we have few neighbors, and those few I very seldom saw, as my aunt, in the simple trueness of her character, plainly avowed my dislike to strangers, and when she thought herself called on to see company, herself undertook to make my apology, and suffered me to remain unmolested in my own apartments. I shall not say that I was free from sadness when there; for though I preferred solitude to most society, yet the recollection of the cause for that preference, produced repining thoughts; and this indulgence in seclusion made me a thousand-fold more alive to every impression which, when compelled to be in society, I received from others. On the whole, however, the first year I spent in Cornwall was perhaps the most tranquil I had passed since I was a child. I had begun to study with considerable assiduity; and cut off from all other objects of ambition, began to look forward, with some degree of interest, to *literary fame*, as the end of my existence.

‘It was at the close of this first year, that my aunt received the account of the death of Mr. Travers, the proprietor of the domain bordering on her own, and whose lady, you know, was her most intimate friend. Mr. Travers, you will recollect, my dear Sir, died on his return to England, after he and Mrs. Travers had accompanied their only son to several parts of his tour on the Continent, and remained abroad, while he extended it with his tutor.

‘A few months after this intelligence, my aunt received a letter from Mrs. Travers, written in

sadness, but in all the warmth of confiding friendship, and announcing her intention of returning immediately to Cornwall. Her son, she said, would accompany her; and added, that it gave her much pleasure to hear one of the young Howards was with my aunt, as her son, though he would necessarily be much occupied at times, when he wished for society, would find little other suited to him in their neighborhood.

‘And the young Howard will not suit him much either, said I coldly to my aunt. She shook her head. ‘I fear not, Arthur; yet I think I must ask you, at least on his first coming to Cornwall, to *try* to be kind to my young friend.’

‘I kind to him,’ said I; ‘who cares for my kindness? It is I to whom every one must try to be kind.’

‘Indeed, Arthur, you set a value far too high on some things, and on others far too low,’ replied my aunt. ‘Your conversation, my dear nephew, would be more valued by such a young man as Travers, than the greatest strength, or spirits, or skill, possessed by the best sportsman in the country. And, I am sure, were you yourself as strong as Hercules, you would prefer one hour’s intercourse with a cultivated, refined, feeling young man of your own age, to all those pursuits you seem to think are so highly valued by others. Will you oblige me, by trying to meet Travers kindly?’

‘What kind of character is this Travers?’ asked I. ‘He has been, I know, from his birth the idol of his parents; does he look upon himself as the most important of human beings? His mother’s letter seems to say so, since no neighbor is worthy company for him.’

‘Now,’ Arthur, said my aunt, ‘I see that my young friend’s coming disquiets you, and I withdraw my request. Do not think yourself obliged to pay him any attention. Your health is at all times too good a cause for no one expecting any exertion whatever from you.’

I could not resist my aunt’s kindness, and promised to try to meet Travers as a friend of her’s; satisfied, however, that from partiality to me she was no judge in this matter, and that I should find this young man an interruption to that calmness of mind which it was my first object to preserve, and which I too well knew, from experience, was never more painfully disturbed, than by intercourse with such favorites of fortune as (I then would have considered) young Travers. I tell you all this, my dearest father, to shew you how completely I was then under the dominion of pride and self-love. Had I been, I shall now say, *cursed* with the advantages possessed by my brothers, joined to this extreme anxiety, that self should never suffer humiliation, to what heights of ambition might it not have excited me? while, in my proud career, I might have followed its impulse, blinded by its elating power, and unconscious that the principle of all my actions, was that most abhorred and condemned by God. Oh! how gratefully have I thanked him, for having so suited his discipline to the diseased soul of his blinded creature!

‘In a very short time, Mrs. Travers and her son arrived in Cornwall, and my aunt went immediately to meet her widowed friend. She remained two days with her; and, on her return, seemed quite absorbed in thought, and most deeply grave. I attempted to engage her in

conversation, but for once her kindness remained unawaked by all my efforts, and she continued absent, and apparently unhappy. You, my dear Sir, know my aunt's frank character, and will not wonder that I soon felt alarmed by such unusual reserve. I dreaded that, while absent, she had heard some distressing intelligence, and my fears were immediately at home.

'I see you know something, which you dread telling me, my dear aunt,' said I at last, as calmly as I could. The tone of my voice startled her, and she looked at me with surprise. I repeated what I had said.

'I know nothing, my dear Arthur, which I dread telling you.' Then recollecting herself, 'Forgive my silence and thoughtfulness; I have seen strange things since I left you.'

'What kind of things?' asked I.

'Young Travers, the creature on earth whom I should have least expected to grieve any one, is utterly changed; and instead of being a comfort and pride to his mother, is now a source of anxiety and pain. And,' continued my aunt, in all the bitterness of disappointment and sorrow for her friend, 'his father is in the grave, and he is now of age, and will henceforth have no one to check him, and he will do exactly as he chooses,—and friends, reputation, all must go, while he is yet a mere boy.'

I attempted to hold out better hopes.—'He has got into improper society abroad; he will resume his former habits, on returning to England.'

'Improper society! Yes; but not such as you suppose. The improper society was his own tutor,—so highly recommended, so praised for

talent and acquirement, so uncommonly prepossessing in manners,—a mere wild enthusiast, a narrow-minded bigot, a learned fool, or a most consummate hypocrite. He has led poor Basil into all his ridiculous notions; and now, his mother tells me, there are not half-a-dozen people in England he thinks will get to heaven. He is for ever attempting to convince her, and all around him, that they have done nothing but sin ever since they were born, and that, unless they become—I know not what, like himself I suppose, they shall all go to perdition.’

‘Travers must be a fool,’ observed I, ‘to be led by any one into such absurdities.’

‘And yet,’ said my aunt sadly, as former recollections came into her mind, ‘how fair was the promise! On what hope may we dare to rest?—In all things so superior! Ever first at school,—at college gaining prizes contested by the finest talents there,—respected and beloved by all; so little elated, so pleasing, so kind in heart.’ My aunt could not restrain her tears. ‘My dear friend,’ continued she, ‘how she doats on him!’

‘Is his conduct to his mother changed?’ asked I.

‘Oh! no. She says it is impossible to describe his feeling and gentle attentions to her, during the sad scenes they have passed through lately; or the generosity and delicacy with which he has arranged his father’s affairs, which, from his aversion to business, had been left rather in confusion, particularly regarding a provision for his widow. But these were Basil’s natural habits; I could have expected nothing less from him!’

‘Opinions, my dear aunt,’ observed I, ‘which do not affect our conduct, are of very little importance.’

‘But his opinions do affect his conduct. What do you think of his collecting all his household, the very evening of his arrival at Lymecourt, and every evening and morning since, and the young enthusiast himself praying to them?’

I laughed heartily, so ridiculous did this appear to me at that time. My aunt smiled too, but soon sighed heavily, and said, ‘My poor friend thinks it best to indulge Basil in all his whims, and is present at his prayers, but I could be no such hypocrite; and when, in his own insinuating way, he came and invited me to join my prayers with his, I said I should do no such foolish thing, but, in his absence, would pray the God of rational Christians to restore him to his right mind.’

‘Was he offended?’

‘No; he smiled, and said affectionately, ‘I shall offer the same prayer for you, my dear, and always sincere Mrs. Talbot, to the God of *real* Christians.’ While I remained at Lymecourt, we conversed a good deal about his new opinions, and I confess I never heard any one argue with such temper. His mother and I often became very warm, as he treated all our opinions as unscriptural and erroneous; but he continued perfectly respectful and gentle to us both, though he sometimes did playfully take advantage of the failures in argument our warmth led us into; men do argue so much better than women. I wished a thousand times that you, my dear Arthur, had been present. I do believe, after all the strong things we said,

he regarded us just as two old women full of inveterate prejudices.'

'I should like to converse with him,' said I, in my pride of reason. 'I should have no former recollections to warm my temper, and I think his opinions could not probably meet cool arguing.'

My aunt was delighted. 'My dear Arthur, you could not do me a greater favor on earth, than to converse with that dear boy,—you could not do his mother a greater favor. He asked a great deal about you, but I could not, after seeing you so discomposed at the idea of his coming, venture to say much for you; I only said, as they are to be with me to-morrow, that, if you were well, I hoped they would meet you at dinner. Mrs. Travers says, she already perceives that Basil has set his heart on making a convert of you.'

I smiled in conscious strength; and my aunt seemed already to see her young friend reclaimed. This, my dear father, was the state of mind in which I first met Travers,—confident of my own powers of reasoning, and though believing that a very careful education had developed to their highest power, my young opponent's talents, yet doubting their real superiority, when so easily led into what I supposed absurd and irrational errors.

I was present next day when Travers was announced. He had been riding, as he afterwards told us, to visit some of his old favorite haunts, and arrived before his mother. Travers was altogether different in manner and appearance from what I had expected. I looked for a refined, polished, highly cultivated, amia-

ble young man of fashion, such as I had often seen at home; and who, spoiled by prosperity, and feeling whatever he did, excite interest in those around him, was at present indulging the caprice of being a religious enthusiast. Travers appeared the exact opposite of all this. You have not yet met with him, my dear father, so I shall describe him to you. He is tall, and handsomely though strongly formed. His countenance marked and striking,—peculiarly expressive of feeling, good sense, and talent. His manners remarkably modest and sincere; and though singularly pleasing, and sufficiently polished, yet apparently perfectly careless of address or appearance. When introduced to each other, he regarded me with an expression of so much feeling and interest, that my heart instantly warmed to him. You know, my dear father, how much my sickly sensibility used to be annoyed, even by the interest my situation excited in strangers. There was, however, in the expression of cordial kindness and sympathy with which Travers regarded me, so much of reality and sincerity of feeling, that when, on Mrs. Travers being announced, I raised myself on my crutches to receive her, and his looks were bent painfully on me, I could not help alluding (which you know I scarcely ever can do) to my situation, and saying, ‘I do not suffer,—all this is a second nature to me.’ He looked away for an instant, without answering, then said emphatically, ‘How difficult it is to believe that suffering is inflicted as a mark of love by Heaven.’

I cannot tell how, or why those few words so deeply affected me; but so it was, and I instant-

ly felt for him who uttered them, as I had never felt for any one before. He asked me many questions about my lameness, what exercise I could take, the effects of want of health upon the mind, and so on, in such a way, as to make it a pleasure to me to answer him with perfect confidence. You, my dear father, will believe this, when I tell you, that on dinner being announced, not my servant, but Travers, was my tender and powerful assistant to the dining-room. When there, the conversation became general. Mrs. Travers seemed very amiable, but still under the impression of deep sorrow, and without spirits herself to join much in what passed; but she listened with interest, particularly when I spoke. I understood the cause of this, and myself began to long for the introduction of that subject, on which I now felt anxious to know my most interesting young friend's opinions. He did not, however, allude to it; and his conversation, though he too looked sad, was so very interesting, that it was only when recalled by the expressive looks of Mrs. Travers and my aunt, to the subject nearest their hearts, that I recollected it. At last they left us. I believe we both felt a little embarrassed on finding ourselves *tête-a-tête*, as each was perfectly aware of the anxious wishes of Mrs. Travers and my aunt. Travers spoke first.

'I believe, Mr. Howard,' said he smiling, and reddening as he spoke, 'our friends expect and hope that you and I shall commence our acquaintance by making war on each others opinions on a certain subject. I know for whom conquest is ardently wished; therefore, as one against many, I think I shall take what advan-

tage I can, and begin, by plainly asking you of what religion you are?’

‘Of what religion!’ repeated I, smiling in return; ‘of the Christian religion, I presume.’

‘Then we are on plain ground. A Christian must mean a disciple of Jesus Christ, and that is all I aim to be; and if I misunderstand any of the doctrines taught by my divine Master, or disobey any of his precepts, I most earnestly desire to be better informed, and to be more faithful in future.’

I said that he had indeed gained an advantage over me,—that I had spoken without reflection,—and that I perceived I had an opponent with whom I must define terms.

‘Then, may I beg of you to define your idea of a Christian?’

I hesitated.—‘Why, a Christian is now a national appellation. It was, I believe, in that sense I used the term.’

‘May I ask you to define its meaning in that sense?’

‘Why, it is opposed to the ignorance and grossness of Heathenism and Mahometanism. A Christian in this sense, particularly a Protestant, means a person whose mind is perfectly freed from superstition, who regards himself as a free and intelligent being, and who worships that true God, whose character is, in his mind, freed from those dreadful attributes in which ignorance and superstition clothe it; and this Being he boldly ventures to worship, according to the dictates of his own conscience.’

‘And where is Christ, in this system of Christianity?’ asked Travers, gently.

‘He was the Founder of the system.’

‘How?’

‘He visited this world to reveal more perfectly the character of the God of mercy and benevolence to mankind; and himself to show them an example of perfect virtue.’

‘Do national Christians consider themselves bound to follow that example?’ asked he, looking earnestly at me as he spoke.

‘Certainly; following that example, I might have said, was the definition of a Christian.’

‘In what do they follow it?’

On Travers asking this question, I recollected what my aunt had said of him,—that he did not believe there were half-a-dozen people in England who would get to heaven. ‘Do you expect,’ asked I, ‘that imperfect creatures can follow a perfect model? As it is, was the standard of morals ever so high in any country, as it now is in this? Are not the very purest morals of Christianity, those to which the voice of the whole nation appeals, when, in any controversy, its voice is heard?’

Travers smiled.—‘True; you have described the effect that the knowledge of true Christianity has upon a nation. Every conscience bends to its authority, as what the light of truth there says, would be right and just in all. You have traced this universal knowledge of morality, in this country, to its true source,—the knowledge of Christianity; but you have not answered my question.’

‘I cannot answer it otherwise. If making the morality taught by Jesus Christ, the morality of a whole nation, does not constitute a Christian nation, I know not what would.’

‘Let us leave these generalities,’ said Travers, ‘in which we forget individual responsibility, and allow me to ask one question. Do you suppose all those men, who receive the sacrament to qualify themselves for civil offices, believe in the doctrine which that ordinance represents, and which they profess to believe by appearing there?’

‘I certainly do not.’

‘And is there any part of the New Testament, which would not condemn that appearance as hypocrisy, deceit, and fraud?’

I could not say there was.

‘Can men who do this, really be disciples of Jesus Christ?’

I was silent.

‘Can they, in sincerity, worship a pure and holy God? To what, or whom, can they internally direct the excuse they make, when they thus perjure themselves? If they really in heart adored a holy God, they would not dare thus to disregard his omniscient and omnipresent holiness. If they worship a Being who they think will not condemn such falsehood, they worship,—not the God of Christianity, but the Satan, whom Christianity warns us against as the god of this world.’

‘You state the matter too strongly,’ said I, half displeased; ‘I know men, who would spurn from them with indignation the very idea of hypocrisy and fraud, who yet thus qualify themselves for office without any scruple.’

‘And without believing in that atonement represented in the sacrament?’

‘Yes; without being able to believe any thing so incomprehensible.’

‘Are they Christians, then, either in faith or morals?’

I felt that I was becoming warm, and remained silent; and Travers immediately changed the subject, and did not resume it again during that visit.

After he was gone, I thought intently on what he had said, but in vain tried to find arguments by which I might convince him that his opinions were narrow and bigotted, which to me they at first seemed to be. It was true, men might attempt to satisfy their consciences, by supposing that in partaking of, to them, an unmeaning ceremony, they supported laws which were intended to exclude those whose admission into office was dangerous to the state; yet still they virtually professed belief in what they, in fact, did not believe, and strict morality could not allow of such equivocation. In a religious sense, it was still more criminal. My aunt, to whom I mentioned the opinion of Travers on this point, in the perfect integrity of her principles, entirely agreed with him; and she wondered that the guilt of this too common practice had not before struck her.

Travers, after this, visited me almost daily, and so perfectly did I confide in the sincerity of his manner, for he said little to prove it, that, in a very short time, I felt satisfied that he regarded me with a degree of affection, almost as warm as that which was taking possession of my heart for him.

For several succeeding visits, he seemed studiously to avoid the subject of religion. All his sentiments, and opinions, however, seemed to be dictated and regulated by the purest and

most elevated principles; while his uncommon information, his confiding frankness, his lively imagination, and warmly kind feelings, made his society delightful to me; and this new charm of life promised to be continued to me. Travers had immense property in Cornwall, and on that property several mines. The men who worked in those mines, he seemed to regard as committed by heaven to his care; and he spoke of Cornwall, as, for a time at least, the place of his constant residence.

One beautiful evening, Travers had assisted me to the terrace behind the house, from which we admired together the magnificent sea-view, which you know is seen from thence; and which I had often before spent hours in gazing on in solitude. Both our hearts were warmed, and mine more than usually opened by the almost tenderness of his kindness. I recalled to him our first conversation, and avowed to him, that, on reflection, I had thought him right. He seemed very much pleased.

‘I was afraid I had gone too far,’ said he; ‘I have never since dared to come on the subject.’

‘*Dared* with me, Travers! I think I could *dare* to say any thing to you.’

He smiled, and shook his head.—

‘This is a delicate subject, Howard,—I mean religion. I cannot soften any of its truths, even to please those I love most.’

‘Soften truth!’ repeated I; ‘can you suppose I could wish you to do so?’

‘No; but I can suppose truth might seem harsh and revolting to you.’

‘Try me, Travers. You know I am not bound to receive all you say as truth.’

He hesitated, and remained silent. I urged him to be perfectly frank with me.

‘My dear Howard,’ replied he, ‘you know perfectly that our opinions are almost entirely different on this subject. You know, also, that it is comparatively new to me, the only subject of any importance. You may therefore easily guess how very anxious I am not to say any thing which may prejudice you against my opinions. I feared that I had already done so’——

‘But I have told you that you have not,’ interrupted I; ‘do not, therefore, any longer, dearest Travers, avoid that subject with me, which is nearest your own heart; and respecting which, I am most anxious to know all your opinions. But tell me first, how do you know that I so completely differ from you? We have never but once spoken on the subject.’

‘That once proved it to me, Howard. There is one test by which every true Christian will instantly discover true Christianity in another; and that is, by the manner in which he speaks of Jesus Christ. One expression of yours regarding *Him*, betrayed to me, that, on the subject of religion, we had no ideas in common.’

‘What was that expression?’

‘It was the slight manner in which you mentioned the atonement of Christ, as an incomprehensible dogma, that might innocently be disbelieved; and the commemoration of which was an unmeaning ceremony. Have I stated your opinions fairly?’

‘I confess you have.’

‘Then, my dear Howard, there is not one point on which we shall agree; for the cross of

Christ is that which every true Christian regards as the foundation of his whole religion. To him, 'Christ crucified,' is a manifestation of the 'power of God, and the wisdom of God.' Your feelings regarding it are not new. They began to be excited by the very first preaching of the doctrine. St. Paul says, 'We preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.' The Jews conceived, that their knowledge of the true God, and his laws, was sufficient to continue to them the favor of the God of their fathers; and though they looked for a great Messiah to deliver them from temporal oppressors, were offended at, and could not believe in a crucified Messiah,—a sacrifice for their sins,—a deliverer from spiritual oppression. The polished, learned, philosophic Greeks, regarded the whole doctrine as foolishness. You, my dear Howard, resemble the philosophic Greek. To you, this doctrine appears foolishness. To me, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God; my comfort and glory in time; my only and all-sufficient hope for eternity. What opinion, my dear friend, can we then have in common? The God whom you worship, is not the God whom I worship. You worship a God whom you, a creature, amiable as you are in the sight of your fellow men, yet yourself must know, not perfect in purity of heart, or in any virtue,—whom you may approach without fear, and from whom you may claim, as what you deserve, eternal felicity. I worship a God so holy, that the highest order of angels must veil their faces when they approach him; ascribing holiness, infinite holiness, only to him; who so abhors the slightest taint of evil, that his nature

cannot look upon it. I dare not approach this God without a Mediator. I have no claim on him but a claim of death and banishment from his presence for ever; because there is not on record a promise of any other doom for him who has, as I have, disobeyed his laws ever since I had a being. To me, therefore, Christ, the Son of God, sent by him to suffer this punishment in the place of lost, ruined man, and to open, through his sufferings, a new and living way to that God who has thus proved his abhorrence of sin, and his love for the sinner—Christ to me is precious, I have not words to say how precious. He is my all,—and to every true Christian he is the same.’

I was silent. There was a something in Travers’s manner; an earnestness, a devotion, yet so much soberness of truth, that I could not answer him. Indeed, almost all he had said respecting myself was truth; and I felt, that what he said of his own belief had an advocate for its truth in my soul.

‘Are you displeased with me, Howard, for so plainly saying you are no Christian?’

‘No, Travers. In your meaning of the term, I *am* no Christian. Excepting in one point, you have said the exact truth of me. In one point you do not know me. I do not at all times approach the God whom I attempt to worship, without apprehension; nor do I claim eternal felicity, without, at times, experiencing a trembling misgiving, that there may be conditions which I have not fulfilled.’

I was surprised with the emotion Travers betrayed, on my saying this. He grasped my hand, and his eyes even filled with tears. I

looked for an explanation, but, for a little, his utterance seemed choked.

‘I have been mistaken,’ said he, at last. ‘We, at least, thank God, have *feelings* in common on this subject,—opinions will follow. My dearest Howard, that apprehension you experience on approaching our God, may proceed from an undefined dread of power, and of the greatness, and incomprehensibleness, of the divine attributes; but that trembling misgiving that there may be conditions which you have not fulfilled, is the voice of conscience, and of truth, and is, in reality, an aspiration of your soul after your yet unknown Savior: for there are conditions which you, or no human being has ever fulfilled, which he took your nature upon him that he might fulfil: and till you know him, conscience will still demand those conditions. Listen to its voice, my beloved Howard. Do not shrink from its requirements. It asks no more than God will demand somewhere. Howard,’ continued he, ‘why do you not read the Bible?’

‘How do you know that I do not read the Bible?’

He smiled.

‘I have been trying to discover. The first day I was in the room where your books are, I looked round amongst them for a Bible, and discovered one on a shelf, beneath several other large volumes, in apparently the most neglected corner of your book-case. I have looked at it several times since, but I do not think it has ever been moved.’

I confessed I had not opened it during that time; and told him the truth, that I had never read it carefully through.

‘Might I hope you would consent to read it through with me?’ asked he.

‘Would you, Travers, read it with me, and make me master of your opinions as we proceed?’

‘I desire nothing so much.’

I was delighted. ‘Let us begin this very evening,’ said I.

‘With much pleasure,’ replied Travers, immediately taking a small Bible from his pocket.

‘Do you always carry a Bible in your pocket?’ asked I.

‘Yes. It is my charter for heaven, my guide, my compass,—I must always have it with me.’

I took it into my hand, certainly with a feeling I had never experienced for any other book. It was a small Poliglot Bible, and every page was marked with different kinds of characters, in ink or pencil. I looked at some of the marked passages.

‘You do not understand my hieroglyphics,’ said Travers, pointing to some of his marks; ‘I will explain them to you some future day. They have been useful to me in pointing out my progress in understanding the meaning of scripture.’

He then turned to the beginning of the Bible.

‘One thing I must ask of you, my dear Howard, is this,’ said he, ‘that you will stop me, and mark down those passages which appear to you to require more careful study. If, after you have bestowed that study upon them, you still cannot agree with, or receive them, I beg you will write down your objections, and allow me to attempt to overcome them. This will prevent our arguing as we go along, which would

inevitably make our progress very slow.' I agreed, but afterwards, as I was very anxious to become acquainted with the system of religion adopted by Travers from the Bible, I rather wished to proceed, and become master of that, than to stop and overcome each difficulty as we advanced.

In a few months we had finished the scriptures, and I certainly found them altogether different from the idea I had formed of them, gathered from my partial knowledge of their contents, and from the opinions of others. During this time, I had also read several works on the evidences of their authority. This I thought satisfactorily proved; and my difficulties now were with the scriptures themselves. I wondered at the opposite doctrines (as I supposed) which Travers believed. I could not reconcile the attributes of God with his treatment of his creatures. Travers insisted on my writing my objections, and allowing him to answer them in the same way. His reason for this seemed to me very extraordinary.

'The enemy of our souls,' said he, 'magnifies every objection to the Bible. There are but very few that cannot be answered easily, and these few he presents to us as insurmountable, when the truth is, that the difficulty does not lie in revelation, but in want of revelation. No philosophy, no reasoning, no search, has ever accounted for what scripture has left in darkness with regard to God, or his dealings with men.'

I felt how true this was when I began to write my first difficulty. Yet it was one which, while it retained its influence over my mind,

prevented my being able to experience one feeling of love towards God. I wished at times that I had never read the Bible,—that I could disbelieve its authenticity. I tried the last, but could not succeed. I shall give you, my dear Father, the difficulty as I stated it, and the answer I received from Travers.

‘Many of those attributes which the scriptures ascribe to God, and which you, my dear Travers, seem to love so ardently in the supreme Being, such as mercy, compassion, patience, long-suffering with his guilty creatures, are only manifested in consequence of the existence of evil, which must exist by the permission of that eternal and all-powerful Being, without whose permission nothing can exist, or rather, I should say, can cease to be such as he created it; for evil is not itself the existence of a new thing, but the disorder, or disorganization of what was created perfect. Who then produced this disorder? If you answer, Satan; I must ask, was not he, too, originally a pure, perfect, faultless spirit, the creation of a perfect Being, to whose nature evil was abhorrent? What indeed is evil, but that which is contrary to the nature and will of him who has named himself, ‘The Holy One, truth, light, love.’ Whence, then, the first taint of evil, the first evil thought in the first spirit who fell? Can you, Travers, answer this question! Or can you, while it is unanswered, bend your heart and reason in humble adoration of attributes called forth by an extent of misery too desolating and tremendous to endure contemplation, all which might have been prevented, must be permitted, by the Being you adore?’

Answer.

‘Yes, Howard, I can bend my heart, and every power of my soul, in adoring gratitude for the manifestation of those attributes, when I contemplate them in the crucified Son of God. There I see the *proof* that God is holy, and that ‘God is love.’ I see a proof of the truth of what is revealed, so ample, so overpowering, that I can at his cross believe, that he who so loved the world, as to give his own Son to suffer in the place of every one who will accept of pardon through his blood, does most assuredly abhor evil, and has so constituted all his moral creatures, as to make misery its inevitable consequence. There I also see, that he so loves us, blinded, corrupted as we are by this abhorred taint, as to lay all the sufferings we must otherwise have endured, on his own Son, ‘the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory.’ He put him to grief,—would not suffer the cup to pass away from him till he drank it,—till he endured all that is comprehended in the felt wrath of God,—the withdrawing of his presence from the soul,—the being forsaken of him. When I contemplate this manifestation of God’s abhorrence of evil, and of his pity and compassion for guilty creatures, I can, without your question being answered, rest satisfied, nay pleased, to wait till that day, when my faith in all his revealed attributes shall be swallowed up in vision; and those apparent inconsistencies reconciled, which he has at present withheld from us the power of reconciling. Nay, I can even thank God for

the deep secrecy in which he has involved the answer to your question. Had the enemy of our souls been permitted to place before us that which ruined him, could our weaker natures have withstood it? I foresee, however, my dear friend, that this account of my own belief and feelings on this subject, will not, in your present state of mind, satisfy you. I have been on the same ground on which you now are; and know both how painful it is to continue on it, and how difficult it is to leave it. But, my dear Howard, is this point made clearer by any other light than it is by the light of revelation? Could you, before you made yourself acquainted with the scriptures, either account for, or deny the existence of evil? Has it ever been accounted for? Did not you suppose you worshipped the One Almighty,—and was mercy not one of the attributes of your God? If it was, then this difficulty must have been equally strong. Is there any system of religion which does not teach that suffering shall be the consequence of sin? Do not our own hearts painfully prove to us that it is so? And suffering must be a consequence of evil,—of evil which you say must have been permitted by the One Almighty,—evil which I know, and see, and feel to exist, but which I believe, because God has said it, is abhorred by him. I know no more; nor shall I, excepting one idea, attempt to convey into your mind one thought, or rather, I should say, speculation on the subject; for I dread, that when I attempt to be wise above what is written, my mind may not be free from the influence of the prince of evil, who, I know, has a mysterious access there. The idea which

I shall venture to mention, was one which threw at least a faint gleam of softening light over the subject, when it was one of gloom, and of hardening darkness to me. It is that of President Edwards, and in substance is this:—‘God is the author of evil, in the same sense that the sun is the author of darkness and frost. The absence of the sun creates darkness and cold, but he himself is light and heat.’

‘I do not say that this explains the subject, but it is the only attempt I ever met with, that did not make it darker.’

This answer of Travers, though it did not overcome my difficulties on this subject, gave my thoughts a new direction. I attempted to contemplate God’s attributes of mercy and holiness in that manifestation of them on which he seemed to rest with so much firmness of faith and love. But here all was difficulty.

‘How can the sufferings of an innocent being do away the guilt of a criminal?’ asked I next.

Answer.—‘*How can?*’—‘I attempt not to answer these words, when applied to the ways of God. If you ask how faith in this sacrifice operates upon the soul to purify it, I can describe my own experience. It took away that barrier which a sense of having disobeyed the laws of God, placed between my soul and him. It represented him as offering to be reconciled to me, as having himself provided the way of reconciliation,—a way which, by its love, subdued my soul, and brought me to him, mourning for, and abhorring that evil which had separated me from him; and earnestly desiring what he freely offered,—the washing away of my guilt, and the renewing of my nature.’

My next difficulty was this:—‘If my nature is evil, where is my guilt? How can I act but according to my nature. I cannot, however, allow what you, my dear Travers, constantly assume, that my nature is evil. I must say exactly what appears to me to be truth, though I may seem to you to estimate the good in myself too highly. I ever desire to do what I think right. There is even a constant uneasiness on my mind on this account, for my anxiety to do what I approve of, exceeds my ability. The resolutions of my soul, when it calmly forms them, are all on the side of virtue; and it is from circumstances which I have not foreseen, and over which I have no control, that I am led to break my resolutions, and to feel and do what in after moments my soul condemns and repents. I therefore may require strength to support my nature, but not a power to renew it.’

Answer.—‘Whence is that want of power to keep your resolutions? whence that yielding to the temptations attendant on circumstances? Can you conceive any circumstance that would betray you into stabbing your father? No,—your whole nature rises in horror at the thought. Why does it not also resist, spontaneously, naturally, those temptations to all evil which is abhorrent to the nature of God? Because it is not abhorrent to your nature; but, on the contrary, finds a congeniality there which cannot resist mingling and joining with it: and that which you call the calm voice of your nature, is only the voice of conscience, the unceasing restrainer and reprovcr of nature.’

‘If so, I again ask, Where does the blame rest? Who created my nature?’

Answer.—‘The blame rests with you, my beloved Howard. You allow that God created man at first perfect. You allow, that he is now, at least, too weak to be virtuous. You know I cannot agree to trace evil farther with you than revelation traces it. Revelation traces its first entrance into man, to the temptation of him who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning; and its continuance, to the taint inherent in our natures, as the descendants of the first human sinner; and to the power of our continued enemy and tempter, who is said to blind the eyes of the children of disobedience. Christ has come into the world to destroy his delusions, and to deliver those who are led captive by him; and you, my dear Howard, have this deliverance offered to you,—pressed upon you. You are intreated to accept of it; God, in his word, implores your acceptance of it. ‘Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?’ Who then, Howard, shall be to blame if you refuse? O my friend! dear to me as my own soul! stay no longer in the wretchedness of doubts and cavillings. Try to come to Jesus Christ, and to unbosom every difficulty of your soul to him. Try it once, dear Howard. When you read this, stop,—believe that He who suffered agony and death for you, is present with you,—that he intreats you to come to him,—that he still has your nature in union with his own divine nature—that he has felt your feelings,—that he has been tempted in all things like you,—that he overcame all temptation, and is able, therefore, both to feel sympathy for you, and to enable you to overcome. Oh! venture to call him Redeemer,—Lord,—Master,—Friend! Venture

to cast your soul on him, and to trust him,—to trust him with your whole salvation.'

The ardent affection expressed for myself, in this answer of my friend's, affected me very deeply, and would have induced me to attempt any thing he wished. I therefore did attempt all he asked,—but oh! how coldly! He who 'is fairer than the sons of men,' had, in my eyes 'no form nor comeliness.' I still, in my heart 'despised and rejected him.' I did not feel that I needed his kind of salvation. Travers discovered, in our next conversation, that this had been the case, and seemed disappointed and saddened. He had now, however, some of that kind of pleasure most delightful to him, in witnessing the earnest and increasing interest with which my aunt listened to whatever he said on the subject of religion. She had soon perceived, that, as on all other subjects, so on this, Travers defended his opinions in a manner she could not answer. She saw, too, that I could not convince him in argument. Indeed, when we spoke on the subject in her presence, though for a time she always began by joining with me, and differing from him, yet cool reflection generally led her to adopt his opinion. This she would frankly tell him at the next meeting; and at length his first question on seeing her generally was, 'Have you adopted my last strange opinion yet, my dear Mrs. Talbot?' The care Travers bestowed on his people, delighted my aunt; and from pitying his mother, she began to blame her, and that too frequently in his presence, for not being thankful to Heaven for such dispositions in her son. With his mother Travers was

not so successful. With me his patience continued unwearied. One difficulty after another, prevented my receiving religious truth, yet it gradually became the subject of all my thoughts. I was dissatisfied, too, with myself. When I compared my life with that of Travers, it seemed utterly useless. From morning to night, he appeared to have but one object in view,—the promotion and dissemination of the knowledge of that which he considered the only means of giving present and everlasting happiness to his fellow-creatures. With all my imagined benevolence of feeling, I never had attempted, farther than by giving alms, to do good to a human being. I frankly avowed this feeling of dissatisfaction to Travers, and its cause. He smiled, and seemed much pleased.

‘You are discovering, my dear Howard,’ replied he, ‘to what kingdom you have hitherto belonged.’

‘To what kingdom I have belonged!’ replied I, utterly at a loss to comprehend his meaning.

‘Yes, Howard. There are just two kingdoms in the world,—the kingdom of him who is called by Christ ‘the prince of this world,’ and the kingdom of God. The one all delusion, and show, and pretension; the other all reality and truth.’

‘I am not conscious of having been subject to show and pretension.’

‘No, dearest Howard, but you have to delusion. Forgive me, my friend, but can there be a greater delusion than you have just complained of,—an idea that we feel benevolence towards our fellow-creatures, while we really experience no anxiety to be of use to them. Giv-

ing money to those in distress, you have yourself acknowledged, is a relief to your own feelings, the indulgence of which it would be painful to resist.'

'You are right, Travers,' replied I; 'this is complete delusion. But will your patience be exhausted, if I confess, that while I acquiesce in the truth of this, you have said another thing, which places before me a new difficulty in your religious system,—'The *Prince of this world!*' How strangely great must that spirit be! How unaccountable the continuance of his power and existence, on the supposition that there is one Omnipotent.'

'Shall any spirit cease to exist?' asked Travers. 'Is not the very essence of spirit, immortality? The condemnation on the soul that sins,—'That it shall die,' but does it cease to exist? No, Howard. There is a living death,—an everlasting, felt, desired separation from God,—a dread of his holy presence,—which is represented to human feelings under the idea of that agony of terror, which would make a human sinner call on rocks and mountains to fall on him, to hide him from it. Does this imply the destruction of his original powers? No; but it implies their disorder and perversion, and their power to suffer, tremendous in proportion to their extent.'

I was unsatisfied with this answer. Travers perceived that I was, and again asked me to state my difficulties in writing. I did so.

'You have, my dear Travers, convinced me that the powers of man cannot trace evil to its origin. You have convinced me, too, by your

own example, that it is possible to love God ardently and rationally, without an explanation of that mysterious darkness, by which some of his holiest attributes still appear to me to be clouded. Now, I ask you to account for the existence and continuance of a power, which, if I may use the expression, seems to contend, and that successfully, with Omnipotence.'

Answer.—'I attempt not, Howard, to account for any thing which revelation has not accounted for. *Why* Satan was permitted to seduce our first parents, is not revealed. That he did tempt them, that he succeeded, and that man willingly withdrew himself from the authority of God, and believed Satan rather than his Creator, is revealed. Man chose to admit into his soul that evil which brought on him his threatened doom,—for evil instantly separates from God, and leads to a desire of separation from him: 'Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God.' It was by man's own choice that he became subject to Satan; he listened to him in preference to God, and his dominion still consists in seducing the soul to do the same. Satan has and does here, indeed, contend successfully, but it was and is with man, a creature by nature inferior to himself. Man became, and still is, by choice, his subject; and every soul who is rescued from his power, is so by the substitution of a ransom. This language is used, because subjection to Satan is subjection to evil; and God has declared, that suffering shall be the consequence of evil. Every human being, therefore, who is delivered, and brought back

from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God, is so on account of the sufferings of Christ. Here again, Howard, we are at the cross of Christ. There the ransom was completed, a sufficient sacrifice was offered, the sin of every believer was suffered for, and blotted out forever. There 'Christ spoiled principalities and powers;' there he 'divided the spoil with the mighty,'—the mighty enemy of man. It is in this sense, my dear Howard, that Satan is described as so great in power. We forget this distinction; and if you will recollect from whence you have derived your ideas of 'the prince of this world,' you will be able, perhaps, to trace their origin,—not to the Bible account of him, but to Milton's. That, however, is not the scripture account; far less are some of those given by the followers of Milton, who, without his religion, have imitated, and gone further than he, in attempting to throw a species of sadness and interest over the character of the prince of fiends. The Bible uniformly describes him under characters of unmixed malignity, cruelty and wickedness: 'A liar,—an accuser, a serpent,—a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,—a murderer,—a destroyer.' This is the enemy with whom our souls have to contend, powerful in comparison of us, because far higher in nature and capacity, and old in the experience of the depths of wickedness. But see him in the presence of God,—see him in that scripture account, (and from scripture alone we derive all our knowledge respecting him,) on the occasion where he is represented as most bold,—as an accuser.* He dare not, he cannot, injure a

* Job, chap. i.

hair of the head of one of the redeemed servants of God, without his permission. See him when, for wise and gracious purposes, he receives that permission, and is suffered to indulge his horrid desires, and has gone to the last verge of his permission, and has spoiled Job of every thing but life,—still he has no power to introduce evil into his soul,—still the ransomed servant of God trusts, and loves, and clings to his Redeemer, even though the usual sense of his supporting presence is withdrawn, and Satan's malignant attempts only prove the power of the Almighty. See this mighty Satan, and all his powers of darkness, in the presence of the Son of God, when even veiled in humanity, foiled,—cast out,—made subject to Christ's fishermen disciples,—commanded to resign their power over men,—instantly obeying,—intreating not to be tormented, not to be banished into the 'great deep,'—asking permission to enter into swine, rather than be prevented from indulging their inconceivably debased natures. Regard Satan himself, the chief, and ruler, and wisest of them all, in his greatest effort,—he has succeeded in seducing a disciple of 'the Son of man' to betray his Master. 'The Son of God' is bound, and standing before an earthly tribunal, where Satan reigns in each judge,—he is condemned, scourged, led to Calvary, nailed to the cross, expires, and is laid in the grave,—Judas listens to Satan's continued suggestions, and destroys himself,—every plan has succeeded. The third morning dawns, and he discovers that he has only been fulfilling the 'determinate counsel of God,' and opening a way

of escape from his power to the whole human race.'

This answer satisfied me so far, but a new difficulty soon presented itself from my own experience. Travers constantly urged me to believe in Jesus Christ, to receive him as he was offered to me in the gospel, as a Savior, a Guide, a source of newness of life. I said I could not,—that I had no power to do so,—that my reason must be convinced,—I must really see that he was all these, before I could believe him to be so. He urged me to pray for faith, saying that it was the gift of God, and that the objects of faith never could be perceived by reason alone. I said such language was contrary to reason, and argued in defence of the power and liberty of the human will. He seemed to find this an intolerably uninteresting subject, and left me that day sooner than usual. In an hour or two after, he sent me Edwards on Free Will, with the following note:

'Forgive me, dear Howard, for feeling impatient when you began to talk on the subject of free will. If you knew how I wearied out the patience of the beloved friend who was the means of leading me to the knowledge of the truth, by my endless cavils on this interminable subject, you would feel how little excuse I can have for feeling impatient with you; but in proportion to the difficulties it threw in my way, I think I now feel it unimportant and uninteresting. I send you Edwards. I believe my opinions are the same as his; but perhaps not exactly, for I have puzzled over the subject, till I scarcely recollect whose ideas I have adopted.

The amount of my belief on this point now is, I think, that liberty and necessity are, with respect to my own soul, the same. Could I be assured, that to-morrow God would stamp a bias on my soul, and upon my will and affections, which no temptation could ever again, in any the slightest degree, change, to love God supremely, and in every iota to be of one will with him, then to-morrow I should feel myself altogether free, and altogether happy,—and, let the advocates of free-will say what they choose, I should also be altogether good; as to merit, it is a term I have no wish to meddle with. But, Howard, what is regeneration but the beginning of that new bias, stamped upon the soul by the Holy Spirit,—the introduction of a new nature into the soul,—a necessity to holiness, which shall be made complete in ‘the spirits of the just made perfect.’

I believe the truth is, that as there is but one God, there is, in reality, but one will that can be followed without misery by the whole universe. What, in reality, is the liberty that is contended for? Is it not a power to be of one will with God, or to be of a different will from God? Was such a power as the last offered, who that had ever known its misery, and escaped from it, would again accept of it? This, I conceive, my dear Howard, is the difference between natural and moral liberty. Natural liberty consists in the freedom of the body to follow the dictates of the soul; moral liberty consists in the freedom of the soul to follow the will of God. When my almighty Redeemer shall have delivered me from that corruption of my nature, which leads me to have a different

will from that of God, then, and not till then, shall I feel that I have entered into 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God.'

'Again, dear Howard, I intreat your forgiveness for my unpardonable impatience. Prove to me that you have forgiven me, by telling me any difficulties that arise in your mind while reading Edwards. I believe he is considered unanswerable.——Ever your attached

B. TRAVERS.'

I would have proved my forgiveness by soon again plaguing Travers with difficulties; but the day after I received his letter, I was called into circumstances, in which I, for the first time, really longed for, and attempted to seek, strength from heaven. On that day, the hour in which Travers usually visited me passed, and he did not appear. His society had become the very charm of my existence, and I watched with impatience for his arrival. At last, I was told that his servant wished to see me. I sent for him, and immediately perceived by his looks that something distressing had happened, and desired him to tell me at once what it was. The poor fellow wished to be composed, but though at other times remarkable for a grave steadiness of manner, his feelings overcame him, and he with difficulty told me that his master had met with an accident, and was severely hurt; but had desired him to come to me himself, and say that he did not suffer much, and hoped I would visit him next day. The man seemed averse to telling me the nature of the accident, but said he had a note from the doctor to my aunt, which would inform me of

every thing. I hastened with this note to my aunt. It contained an earnest intreaty, on the doctor's part, that she would go immediately to Mrs. Travers, who was, he said, almost distracted; and proceeded to inform her, that Travers, while benevolently inquiring into some grievance complained of by his miners, had himself gone into a newly worked part of a mine; that while there, the miners, in moving a mass of stone from a vein of ore, had from some negligence left so much to the strength of one man, that the stone must have slidden forward, and crushed him to death, had not Travers rushed to his assistance. Others instantly followed; but the exertion Travers made, had been so great, that he had ruptured a blood-vessel in his breast,—had lost a great deal of blood,—and, the doctor added, would require the greatest care and quiet, to prevent dangerous consequences.

My aunt immediately went to Lymecourt; and I followed as soon as I could. The doctor intreated, however, that neither of us should see Travers that night, as it was necessary he should be kept perfectly quiet; and his mother had already disturbed and affected him very improperly, by betraying her distressed feelings.

You will believe, my dear father, that I passed a wretched night. At last, I attempted to pray, and for the first time in my life found support, and calmness of mind, follow in a degree that surprised myself. The Bible now, thanks to my beloved friend, was familiar to me, and I at this time found myself using it as the language of my own soul. I remembered that God had said, 'Call on me in the day of trouble;'

and I now found how real that rest of soul is, which is found in God. This night of real distress, was my first night of real knowledge and experience of his power, as 'a present help in time of trouble.'

Next morning I was permitted to see my friend, though warned by his doctor, that he must on no account be induced to speak, as that exertion might prove very injurious.

Travers looked anxiously at me when I approached him, and made a signal that he wished to write. He was supported by pillows, and wrote with a pencil without any exertion. He wrote, 'You look wretchedly fatigued, Howard, and will make me miserable unless you take every possible care of yourself.'

I assured him I should do so, and intreated him not to think of me. He wrote again, 'I have desired Morrice (his servant) to see every thing arranged for you in the same manner as at Mrs. Talbot's, in the hope that you might remain with me; but if I see you look ill, I shall be obliged to ask you to leave me.'

'My dear Travers,' replied I, 'you mistake my looks.—I confess I did pass a very anxious night; but my anxiety led me to seek support where you would wish me to seek it, and I found it in a degree that surprised myself.'

Travers seemed much pleased, and raised his languid eyes in thankfulness to Heaven. He looked very pale, and breathed short, and with apparent difficulty. I asked him if he suffered pain. He wrote, 'I do not suffer much pain, but the injured part is uneasy. I feel, my beloved Howard, as if there was very little between me and death.'

I started when I read this. He pressed my hand in his, and looked earnestly and sadly at me for a few moments, then wrote, 'At this moment, though all the distress my death would occasion my mother, and all the sorrow it would cost you, my too dear friend, are painfully and vividly before me, yet so much more powerfully and sweetly do I feel assured that God's will must be really best; and so clear, so strong, so near is my perception of the glory of his character to whom I go when I leave you, that I feel entirely resigned to his will, whatever it is. I feel that 'peace which passeth understanding;' and though the awfulness of that last step I may be about to take, and which will fix my state for eternity, at times comes upon my soul, and would make me fear, yet my love smiles at this fear; and I can cast myself for eternity on his love, who first loved me,—who found a ransom for me,—who drew my soul to place its hope in that ransom,—who has himself made me 'accepted in the Beloved.'

I could not reply. The expression of his countenance was in perfect accordance with what Travers wrote. There was sadness in it, but far more of elevation, and deep seriousness. He seemed as if collecting all his powers into the calm waiting for the coming of his Lord.

After a short time, he wrote, 'Read to me the last prayer of our Lord, our Forerunner, when about himself to pass through death, and to receive its sting into his own gracious bosom, that we might never feel it.'

I began to read that prayer, and was myself so much moved, that I could scarcely proceed. For the first time, something of the glory of his

character dawned on my soul, of whom I had till then heard, and read, and spoke, without knowing him, or feeling as I then felt, that his Spirit can so accompany the reading of his word, as to bring him near to us, and make us feel that he is indescribably dear and precious.

Travers seemed to regard my emotion as proceeding from sorrow, and sighed deeply, while from the sad expression of his countenance, as he raised his eyes to heaven, I thought he was praying for me. When, however, I attempted to express something of what I felt, Travers listened with the most evident delight, and raised his clasped hands to heaven with the most softened expression of thankfulness and love,—then wrote, ‘At last, Howard, my prayer is answered. He has begun to reveal himself to you, whom, when you know, you will love, —O how love! One sorrow in leaving you is thus graciously removed.’

I shall not attempt, my dear father, to describe what I felt, when I admitted into my thoughts the possibility that Travers might be taken from me. The dread of it was so overwhelming, that I was forced to seek refuge continually in God. During the first week after he met with the accident, I was almost constantly, when absent from him, engaged in prayer. Thus was I taught really to pray, and to feel my dependence on God for all the happiness I possessed. During that week, Travers had continued much the same. He had sent for his tutor, that, as he said, something might be attempted amongst the people when their hearts were softened, and they were willing to listen to instruction. Mr. Elford was all I had heard

in exterior and manners; but Mrs. Travers still retained so strong a prejudice against him, that I saw very little of him. He resided with a friend in the neighborhood; and, except when with Travers in his own apartment, never visited at Lymecourt. Travers, to prevent my rising earlier than usual, had begged me not to visit him in the morning. After Mr. Elford came, I discovered that he himself passed every night, on a pallet, in the same room with Travers.

One morning I entered my friend's apartment, before Mr. Elford had left him. I saw that Travers had been moved even to tears. He held out his hand to me, and would have spoken, but was again so much moved that he could not. I looked at Mr. Elford for an explanation.

'I have been mentioning a wish of his people to Mr. Travers,' said Mr. Elford.

'My poor people!' said Travers.

'What is their wish?' asked I, applying to Mr. Elford; for though Travers was now permitted to speak, I still dreaded his doing so when under emotion.

'A deputation from them came to me yesterday,' replied Mr. Elford, 'to inquire particularly how Mr. Travers was. Then the speaker of them said, that the very last time Mr. Travers had visited their village, he had spoken to several of the heads of families on the duty of praying with their children, and teaching them to pray. At the Sabbath schools, also, he had urged the same duty on the children,—had himself taught them the meaning of prayer, and given them books on the subject. Neither parents or children had forgotten what he had said, and

they hoped never would forget it,—and that now they wished to join with one heart, in asking God to spare to them their young master, and had come to ask me to meet them in the church, to lead their prayers; and I agreed that this morning we should meet together for that purpose.’

I instantly felt the strongest desire to join this meeting of people, that I might unite my prayers with theirs; and Mrs. Travers at that moment entering the room, I left it with Mr. Elford.

‘Might I join in those heartfelt prayers?’ asked I.

He seemed pleased and moved. ‘Assuredly, my dear sir.’

‘And will you wait till this poor frail tenement is carried to church?’

‘I will walk by your carriage,’ replied he, ‘if you will be seen in such company.’

I looked at him,—he smiled. ‘You know, sir, I am in this mansion considered an infectious pestilence,—every bad thing.’

I remembered my own former opinion of him, and felt that I blushed. My aunt came into the hall at that moment. I mentioned where I was going, and she instantly said, she, too, would join us. Several of the servants had also heard of the meeting, and were going. When we entered church, it was full of people. You know, my dear father, I had scarcely ever been in a church, since I was a child. The observation I attracted, made me shrink from going; and nothing I met with there, led me to overcome that feeling. On this day, I did not think of myself, till my carriage stopped at the church door. I was, however, too much occupied with other thoughts, to

feel annoyed. When we reached the family pew, all eyes were turned towards us, and many of the people were moved to tears. Seeing part of the family, seemed to bring their young master nearer to them. I had never witnessed a scene so affecting as that then before me, according as it did with my own feelings. Rough, strong, hard looking men, all with an air of deep seriousness on their countenances—women turning away to weep,—young people, children,—all seeming to be inspired with one feeling of sorrow and anxiety; and that produced chiefly by their young master having cared for their souls,—having so plainly proved among them his love for God, and trust in him, that their very love for their young master now led them to seek his God.

Mr. Elford was much moved on entering the pulpit, but soon recovered himself. He began by selecting a chapter of the Bible to read, and said, while turning over the leaves, 'I think, my friends, no part of the scriptures will be listened to by you with so much interest at this time, as that portion which Mr. Travers himself asked me to read to him a few hours ago. Instantly every one's attention seemed riveted to the subject of this chapter. It was the 14th of St. John. The beginning of it came with holy sadness on my soul; and I afterwards observed not what passed around me. Mr. Elford's prayers defined my confused aspirations. My soul seemed one with his while he prayed; and when he finished his earnest entreaties, by leaving all at the disposal of him who 'is love,' and then blessed us in the name of the Triune God, I felt as Jacob did when he first found himself on holy ground, 'Surely the Lord is in this place. This is none

other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' I scarcely knew what passed, till I found myself on my return to Lymecourt, and observed my aunt walking near my carriage, in earnest conversation with Mr. Elford, on whose arm she leaned. This attracted my attention, for my aunt, too, had been prejudiced very strongly against him; and even her love and admiration for Travers had not entirely removed that prejudice. As for myself, at that moment I felt the greatest veneration for him. When we approached the house, he took leave of my aunt, and then came to take leave of me. 'I think,' said he, 'your young friend will be obliged to remain with us. So many simple and earnest hearts,—so many young,—so many children, all uniting in one request, will bring the wished-for blessing.' I felt assured of the same thing, but had not yet ventured to speak the language of faith, and only assented, by returning the pressure of Mr. Elford's hand as he left us.

'He *will* go,' whispered my aunt, as we went into the house, 'but surely this day must do away every prejudice in every quarter.'

On my return, I immediately went to Travers. I found him alone. He opened his arms to receive me, and pressed his eyes upon my breast to restrain his tears. I told him what Mr. Elford had said. 'I feel the same assurance,' replied he. 'If it is so, I trust God will enable me to fulfil my duty to those dear people. I now look upon my life as theirs. And you, my own Howard, I cannot tell what I feel for you at this moment.'

'You ought to feel for me as your spiritual son, Travers,' replied I, 'for I begin to think what I feel must be the birth of a new nature

in my soul; and if so, you have been the means of introducing it there.'

'If it is so,' said he, pressing me closer to him, 'there is no nearer bond on earth, and it will last for ever.'

Travers after this gradually recovered. It was, however, several weeks before he was allowed to leave the house. During that time, I was constantly with him, and our conversation was generally on the subject of religion. Mr. Elford remained in the neighborhood till his young friend was evidently recovering; but Travers had not the happiness of seeing his mother's prejudices against him removed. How completely, my dear father, do we see it proved by facts, that the renovation of the heart proceeds immediately from God. He, indeed, uses means; but the same means, operating under the same roof, and on people in the same circumstances, are made effectual in one instance, while they are utterly disregarded in another. My aunt also remained at Lymecourt. To her Mrs. Travers listened with more patience on the subject of religion, than to any other. My aunt has herself gradually adopted most of Travers's opinions, and now looks forward to meeting you, my dear father, with a new and delightful feeling of relationship; but she has, no doubt, herself written to you on the subject.

My own mind, at that time, could receive pleasure from, or take interest in, nothing but religion. Still, however, my natural disposition led me to stop at every difficulty. If I met with one while reading, or in conversation, it only served to start several in my own mind. Mr. Elford soon observed this part of my character,

and recommended a book to me, which I found of great use. It is quaintly written, and, had I opened it a year before, I should have turned from it with disgust; but when the mind is really in search of truth, and finds it convincingly and powerfully conveyed, O how indifferent does it become to the garb in which it is dressed! After reading this book, and some others of the same date, I even associated the idea of strength with the old style of their authors. This book was, 'Memoirs of Thomas Halyburton,' Professor of Divinity in a Scotch University at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is a kind of analyzation of a cavilling, unbelieving heart, and the process of its passing from darkness into light, attempting in its way to rest in one error after another, but in vain, till at last it finds rest in truth. One remark I met with in this writer struck me very forcibly, because, though I had read but few infidel writers, yet those I knew were considered the most powerful; and before I was acquainted with Travers, their arguments and ridicule had, I shall not say shaken my belief, because I really never had believed, but they had given me a contempt for those who could receive some of the leading doctrines of Christianity. When, however, I really wished to believe, the arguments of those infidel writers seemed trifling, and futile, and easily answered, compared to those suggested by my own mind. Halyburton says, 'I must observe the wise providence of God, that the greatest difficulties which lie against religion, are hid from atheists. All the objections I met with in their writings, were not near so subtle as those which were often suggested to me. The reason of it, from the

nature of the thing, is this: such persons take not a near-hand view of religion, and while persons stand at a distance, neither are the difficulties that attend it, nor the advantages of it, discovered. Again, Satan, finding all things quiet with them, keeps all so; and finding they are easily ensnared, he uses not force. It is when he is in danger of losing a person, that he uses his utmost efforts; when Christ is ready to cast him out, then he rages and tears poor souls. Besides, the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, permits not all those hellish subtleties to be published, in tenderness to the faith of the weak. He that sets bounds to the raging of the sea, and says, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed,' keeps Satan under chains, and he cannot step beyond his commission.'

If I should argue from my own experience, my dear father, I should imagine that every person of a reflecting turn of mind, and who studied the subject with that deep attention with which every true Christian studies it, must arrive at that firm belief which produces holiness of life, through a host of difficulties, far, far greater than those which infidels consider sufficient cause for their rejecting Christianity,—difficulties, never known, perhaps, but to their own souls, and to that God, whose character has been so far manifested to them, as to induce them to struggle on through all difficulties, rather than give up the pursuit of a nearer and clearer manifestation of it, till at length this is so far attained, as to cast all their difficulties into the shade, and to enable them to wait in faith and hope till that promised time shall come, when 'they shall know even as they are known.' My dear

Travers had arrived at this state. 'Faith' was to him 'the evidence of things not seen.' He relied simply on the word of God, and searched and studied it continually. He had examined the evidences of its authenticity;—he was critically acquainted with the languages in which it was originally written; and he learned his religion entirely from it. The consequence was, that his heart was devoted to God, and to the good of his fellow-creatures. He was himself, to me, the strongest proof of the power and truth of Christianity. Though he now turned from the examination of difficult, and not vitally important points, as uncongenial with his feelings, and too apt to end in speculations of the head, rather than in bringing the heart nearer to Christ; yet in my state of mind, it was difficult for him to stop our conversation, just on coming on these points. He had other methods, however, than arguing, to bring me to his opinions. One evening, we had been conversing on the mysterious subject of the Trinity. He had brought many passages from Scripture, to prove the unity of the three divine persons,—in essence,—in purpose,—in all things.

'Then,' said I, 'another rather painful idea strikes me. If in all things one, God is still alone. How solitary in his greatness. Can we conceive happiness in solitude of being and of nature?'

'Are you not entering on a subject beyond our powers of comprehension?' asked Travers. 'Can we by searching find out *his* mode of being, or *his* sources of happiness? If 'in his presence there is fulness of joy,' from whence comes that joy, if not from Him, the source of it? What

is it to enter into the joy of our Lord?' And one 'fruit,' one gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed on us by him from himself, while we are still on earth, is 'joy.'

But in his own far exalted being, said I.

'We have no means of conceiving of God,' replied Travers, 'but by what we have known and felt ourselves; therefore, all that he reveals regarding himself, he has clothed in ideas known to us. Your notion, that oneness of soul, in distinct persons, constitutes solitude, is quite contrary to our experience. But, this subject is beyond our comprehension.—What a scene!' exclaimed he, starting up, and drawing aside a curtain, which had been placed so as to exclude the too bright rays of the sun. It was now setting in all its glory, and, for a time, I forgot every thing but the magnificent scene before me. Travers drew his chair closer to mine.

'What do you feel, Howard,' asked he, 'while you contemplate all that profuse display of his glory, who gathered light into that orb, and appointed him his course, and taught us to regard his bright beams as an emblem of his own spiritual light? How beautiful the emblem! How perfect the resemblance! How those rays change the aspect of whatever they rest upon! Those cold rocks seem to glow in warmth; and yonder grey clouds,—were he absent, they would be all sadness; now he gilds them with his glad beams, and they are all softness and beauty!'

'And that ocean,' continued I, entering into his ideas, 'emblem of eternity,—how vast, and dark, and cheerless when he withdraws, and now how inexpressible the feelings inspired by

its boundless grandeur, as he pours his glowing light on its calm unruffled fulness! Dear Travers,' added I, in the delight of the moment, 'surely this is something like the happiness of a better state. Thus, while our very souls seem one, to view the same objects with the same feelings,—while one love warms our hearts for that one glorious Being, who speaks to both in a language which has the same powerfully touching meaning to both!' I looked round in his dear expressive countenance, as I spoke. He smiled.

'Do you not feel a painful solitariness in such union of soul, Howard?' Then instantly becoming serious,—'We cannot comprehend the subject I allude to,' said he; 'our highest conceptions of it are poor, and faint, and unworthy. But your opinions, my friend, must be erroneous.'—Thus he attempted, not only with me, but with all around him, to speak to the heart.'

I have little more to say, my dear father. Travers gradually led me to form all my opinions and sentiments as he himself did, simply from scripture; and in doing so, that glorious One, who is the manifestation of the Godhead, became daily more precious to our souls. I was in this state of mind and of feeling, my beloved father, when I heard of your illness. I shall say no more; Travers was then tolerably recovered, and was all to me that one human being could be to another. His letters after I was with you, were, next to Heaven, my comfort and support. You must conceive what I felt, for I cannot describe it, when I saw you, my beloved father, an humble searcher for the

way of life, in that very Bible in which Travers had pointed it out to me.

On my return to Cornwall, I found my friend perfectly recovered; and he is now actively employed in all his useful labors of love and kindness. He has also taught me that I may be of some use to my fellow-creatures. I anticipate with delight, the time when I shall have it in my power to introduce to each other's acquaintance, my most kind and beloved father, and my beloved friend.

A. HOWARD.

(CONWAY rests his forehead on his hands, and continues for some time in deep reflection. HOWARD enters. CONWAY turns round.)

How. I thought I should find you thus employed, my dear Conway. Have I been right? Have you found our dear Arthur's account of himself interest you?

Con. Most deeply. Dear Arthur!—blessed spirit!—there is no gloom in thinking of his departure to another state. And what a friend Heaven gave him! Is this the Travers you mentioned to me?

How. He is. I have more to tell you of him; but I must now join my family at morning prayers. I came to say, dear Conway, that I shall be obliged to leave you for some hours after twelve o'clock. You know many of our friends are to meet you here at dinner, and tomorrow you must leave us. Yet I must have some further conversation with you. Will you finish those papers while I join my family, and allow me to order breakfast for you and me af-

terwards in the Library? We shall thus have some hours conversation; and my family may have you all to themselves, when I am obliged to be absent.

Con. An excellent plan. I shall come to the Library, as soon as I have finished these memorials of my heavenly young friend.

How. Adieu, then, for a little, my dear Conway. [Exit HOWARD.]

CONWAY alone. Opens some papers, on which are written, in HOWARD'S hand, "Fragments written after Arthur's conversion."

I.

'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*
To whom are those words addressed, and by whom? By God the Father to God the Son. To him, 'who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,' yet left all, and veiled that glory, and undertook to bear the sins of the whole world, and 'took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man,—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!'—who was despised, and had not where to lay his head!—yet who, amidst all this, spoke to the winds and the waves, and they obeyed him; cast out devils, raised the dead, and proved that he was Lord of the world, of hell, and of death, and the grave!—who felt our feelings, and, being God and man, was able, and in his love chose, to bear all the burden of our guilt! Now our victorious, exalted Lord,—

* Heb 1:3.

Lord of heaven and earth!—our all-prevailing Intercessor!—our High Priest, who bears upon his heart, before God, the names of all his true Israel. Oh for language to express his glory! How immeasurably distant are our poor conceptions, from the fulness of even what is revealed! Yet the impressions left on our souls, after having received, by the light of his Spirit, some perception of his glory,—of his inconceivable perfections,—his power to fill and satisfy, beyond its highest capacity, every faculty of the soul,—of his irresistible power in subduing into inexpressible tenderness every feeling of the heart;—these impressions teach the soul to thirst after his presence as its chiefest joy. They also purify the soul. We see our own worthlessness in the light of his perfection,—we are abased before him. We deeply feel our unfitness to be loved by him, while we exquisitely perceive his power to attract our love. We adore him, and ardently long for communion with him; but we veil our guilty heads, and lowly at his feet, implore him to bestow on us that new heart, those pure affections, which may fit us for his presence. How sensible do we then become to the presence of evil! How do we resist the admission of a sinful thought! How earnestly do we implore him not to take his Holy Spirit from us! How do we groan to be delivered from that which would separate us from him! O how true it is that our hearts are purified, and only purified, by faith in Christ!

II.

‘My whole soul is changed, and all things are changed to me. Nature,—the condition of man,—time,—futurity, all appear under a new aspect. In nature I see, wherever I turn my eyes, a manifestation of the power, or wisdom, or beauty, or tenderness of the divine mind, and now know what that aching void in my soul proceeded from, which formerly saddened and embittered the pleasure I received from all its glory. That void is now filled by the faith of his presence, who created all I gaze upon. In tracing his works, I have communion with him. When my soul intensely feels the beauty of any part of his creation, it is, in a measure, of one mind with him in whose image it was originally formed. O how elevating, how rejoicing to the heart, is this communion! I cannot see a flower with its soft pencilling, or a light summer cloud, without my soul being led to him, who in them manifests the tenderness and softness of his character. The wide expanse of heaven, with all its stars,—its worlds,—manifests attributes, in the contemplation of which my whole powers of soul are deeply, and intensely, and joyfully engaged, and yet seem but on the verge of their fulness. What is man without the knowledge of God? What I was,—a being separated from the source of happiness to all his powers, and to all his affections; feeling the unsatisfying unfitness, the vanity, of whatever else he looks to for that happiness, yet ignorant where to turn. I see this separation from God stamped on almost all the pursuits of man. What a weary, what

an unsuccessful pursuit after happiness, does all I hear, or all I read, of the busy world, now place before me! What a turning away from the true source of that which they still are panting after? What neglect of all that is of any value! Time, so awfully important, so rapid in its flight, how disregarded!—murdered! Futurity seems unveiled, and faith sees Him from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away,—and the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books are opened; and all that passes between that moment and this day, seems of importance, only as it is employed in preparation to meet with God. And where is this preparation? Who is making any? One here, one there, but how tremendous the proportion of those on whom that awful meeting comes unawares!

III.

‘How weak is the principle of faith still in my soul! I have no happiness but in God. Yet, after all I have known of the wretchedness and disappointment which ever repaid me for trusting to any earthly promise of enjoyment, still I leave the ‘fountain of living waters,’ and seek to prepare for myself ‘broken cisterns, that can hold no water.’ How precious is the knowledge of Christ to such a soul as mine! When I have thus been unwatchful and unbelieving, and have turned away from seeking to abide in Christ, and his Spirit has been grieved, and I no longer feel the love of God shed abroad in my heart, still my knowledge of Christ as the pro-

pitiation for sin, reproves my soul for its ingratitude,—makes it tremble at the certainty that God abhors sin, and will assuredly punish it,—brings the remembrance of his love, whom I thus choose to forsake,—till convinced, and terrified, and softened, I again return to him, and am enabled to believe that his blood cleanseth from all sin; and, trusting the eternal pardon of my guilt to that alone, I mourn for, and abhor, that for which he whom my soul adores and loves suffered shame, the horror of being forsaken of God, and the agony of the cross. O for an increase of faith! Of that faith which worketh by love!

While CONWAY is reading the last Fragment, the sound of voices, singing a hymn, is heard from the windows below, which seem to be open. CONWAY rises and goes closer to the window, to listen. When the voices cease, he again reads and when he has concluded, remains thoughtful for some time, then, sighing deeply, says aloud,

‘There must be something real in all this!’

[Leaves the Room.]

THE LIBRARY.

HOWARD. CONWAY enters.

How. Welcome, my dear Conway! After having engaged you to meet me here, I have been thinking that you have perhaps had too

many of my new opinions, as you call them, this morning; for you would perceive that Travers, Arthur, and I, are all of one mind?

Con. No, my dear Howard; I am still most anxious to hear your definition of that principle, the nature of which you say I misunderstand, but which produces such powerful effects. I am anxious, too, to hear more of this interesting Travers; and also, what effect your change of opinions, or rather, I should say, your change of character, has had on your other children. Emma, I could almost say, is already your child in soul.

How. She is. But how have you perceived this? I have scarcely heard her speak since you came.

Con. Nor I. Neither can I very well tell what it is that makes me conclude she is so,—but there is a quiet thoughtfulness in the expression of her lovely young countenance, and a sweet gravity in her manners, which convey an impression that her mind is occupied with more important subjects than is common at her age.

How. It is so. She has, I trust, begun her course of faith, and is a precious lamb in the great Shepherd's fold.

Con. 'Her course of faith!' Begin your definition of that mysterious word, my dear Howard. What is it? What do you mean, when you ascribe every thing to faith?

How. If you feel as I did, the last time we were together, Conway, the very word, faith, will bring into your mind the recollection of a dull definition, in technical terms, of an abstruse dogma. I scarcely know how to express myself, without using expressions that would then

have made me yawn. But do you yourself attach any idea to the term, faith? You know it is constantly used in the Bible.

Con. Why, I am not sure that I have attached any idea to the term, in a religious sense, but as what denotes a something which fanatics and enthusiasts put in the place of a virtuous life; and which, they suppose, absolves them from cultivating morality.

How. Your idea is, I believe, a very common one, and was my own. It arises partly, I imagine, from those innumerable and voluminous explanations, and definitions, and disputations, which have buried the meaning of this most simple term, out of the sight of those who do not take the trouble to look for it in its own original plain signification. Were I, Conway, to tell you any thing respecting myself, which no one could know but myself, or were I to make you a promise which it was in my power to fulfil, would you not believe what I had told you, though others might try to persuade you that it could not be true: and would you not trust without hesitation to the fulfilment of my promise?

Con. Most assuredly, my dear Howard. There is not a man of your acquaintance who would not.

How. That is just putting faith in me, Conway; and what is meant by faith in God, is to believe what he has told us respecting himself, and which none could tell but himself; and to believe that he will fulfil whatever he has promised. Can any thing be more simple?

Con. Nothing, certainly.

How. Faith, then, in a religious sense, my dear friend, is simply this,—to believe God.

Con. Supposing it to be so, can merely believing that God has said so and so, save us, without our also fulfilling his will?

How. Not believing that God has said so and so, but believing that things are so, because he has said they are.

Con. Well,—just believing that they are so, —will *believing merely*, save us?

How. I most firmly believe it will. You have, however, brought me directly to the point to which I wished to lead you gradually. Let us, therefore, listen to what God says in answer to your question. ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’ St. Paul says, ‘We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through *faith* in his blood; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who *believeth* in Christ Jesus.’ Can any thing be more plain. Here it is said, that we are justified and saved by *faith* in Christ. How else, indeed, can we receive the benefit of his propitiation? So deeply interesting is this one point to every human being, that the idea of *faith*, when at all understood, presents itself to us under this aspect almost exclusively.

Con. And when under this aspect, it involves innumerable difficulties.

How. That is, innumerable things it is difficult to believe.

Con. Yes; either to believe or comprehend.

How. I do not deny that it does. In admitting this, I am believing God. He has said, ‘Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest

in the flesh.' This is the greatest of all mysteries, yet it is plainly stated in the word of God.

Con. You know, Howard, many profess to believe the scriptures, and to be guided by them, who do not receive this doctrine; and who say that scripture does not bear the meaning put upon it by those who do.

How. I know there are, my dear Conway. I was myself one of those, as far as I regarded the subject at all; but now I think the rejection of this doctrine involves disbelief in the plainest passages of scripture, indeed, disbelief of Christianity altogether; for it involves the rejection of all its leading doctrines. It makes it necessary, also, to quarrel with, and change every received translation of the Bible: and those who reject it, cannot agree among themselves, what place that Being whom they would rob of his divinity, holds amongst those higher spirits whom, it is plainly said in scripture, he created. 'For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible, and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Con. These are, indeed, strong terms.

How. Too strong to be got over; therefore they must be newly and unintelligibly translated. This doctrine, however, my dear Conway, is not one which can be examined so hastily as we must necessarily do, if we touch on it at present. It will require your most careful attention, for it has enemies on every side. It is, notwithstanding, the very foundation of Christianity. Faith in Christ, as God and man, is that

principle which I have described to you as so powerful. I shall, however, in the mean time, if you choose, point out a few passages which appear to me conclusive on this point, before we proceed farther.

Con. I beg you will; for, I confess, all my prejudices are in favor of opinions different from yours.

How. I know it, dear Conway. Our opinions were once the same on this subject. I shall first remind you of that appellation so constantly used in the New Testament, and which the plainest mind cannot misunderstand, 'The only begotten Son of God.' Every one comprehends the simple meaning intended to be conveyed in these words. Every man knows, that his own son is of the same nature with himself. He is not an angel, or spirit, or animal, but is a man of the same nature with his father. So, in this most familiarly understood language, God plainly teaches us, that his Son is of the same nature with himself. Let me now read you a passage from Isaiah.* 'In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him who cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I

* Isaiah 6:1-5.

dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' Now, Conway, of whom do you think the prophet here speaks?

Con. The passage says, he 'saw the Lord.' I think, from the ascription of the seraphims, that the prophet in vision saw the Almighty.

How. But St. John says, this was a vision of the glory of Christ. In alluding to it, he says,* —'These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him.' I shall mark down those passages for you, my dear Conway. When you begin to study scripture on this point, (and I hope you will at least study it first,) you will find these passages lead to many others equally strong.

Con. Thank you, my kind friend. That is indeed a wonderful passage, if applied to Christ.

How. Here is another from the prophet Jeremiah.† 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.' Is not this the prerogative of the omniscient God, the Judge of all the earth?

Con. Assuredly.

How. But Christ says of himself,‡ 'I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.'

Con. In those words, he undoubtedly assumes the character of God.

How. You remember the well known passage,||—'In the beginning was the word; and

* John 12:41.

† Jer. 17:9,10.

‡ Rev. 2: 5:23.

|| John 1:1.

the word was with God; and the word was God.'

Con. I do.

How. And that passage of St. Paul,*—
'Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever.'

Con. If that is the real undisputed translation of the words, I think the controversy may be at an end.

How. You can examine that point for yourself, my dear friend. As far as I know, every attempt to give a different meaning to this passage has utterly failed. It can have no other that is intelligible. I shall just mention two other passages at present, but shall note down more in the first letter I write to you; because, if you have any prejudice to overcome, I think you ought to seek the truth as it is in the Bible, before you proceed farther.

Con. But would it not be most fair on this point, to show me those passages which are against your opinion, as well as those that favor it?

How. I know of none against my opinion of any weight. Those which are perverted to that purpose, I shall not yet point out to you, because all your preconceived notions are on the same side; and prejudice, so long rooted as it is in the mind at your age and mine, Conway, is not easily overcome. After you have examined all the strong proofs I shall offer in support of truth, still I shall dread its ascendancy,—yet your opinions deserve no better name than prejudices, for they are not the result of examination.

Con. Perhaps not. But proceed.

* Rom. 9:5.

How. The two passages that I thought of, were these:—Christ says,* ‘He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.’ And also,† ‘I and my Father are one.’ And you know the cause assigned by the Jewish rulers for condemning Christ, was,‡ ‘Because he made himself the Son of God.’ And, previous to that condemnation, the Jews sought to stone him, ‘Because that he, being a man, made himself God;’|| and at another time, because he said that ‘God was his Father, making himself equal with God.’ Surely the Jews understood the meaning of their own language better than our modern opposers of this doctrine can suppose they do.§

Con. And this doctrine is a part of that faith which you consider so simple and easily understood?

How. I did not say that the objects of faith were simple, or easily understood. On the contrary, I have said that scripture itself declares their great mysteriousness; but I say, that believing them saves the soul.

Con. But, my dear Howard, belief is not a thing in our power. Belief is an effect, a consequence.

How. An effect, or consequence, of what?

Con. (*Smiling.*) I know to what that question leads.

How. All I wish is, to induce you to do that which will produce this effect, this consequence.

* John 14:9. † John 10:30. ‡ John 19:7. || John 10:33.

§ Passages of scripture proving this doctrine, are too numerous to be stated here; but if the reader is inclined to pursue the subject farther, the following are a few equally strong with those quoted above:—Phil. 2:6. John 20:28. John 1:18. John 3:13. Isaiah 9:6. Heb. 1:8–11. Acts 20:28. Rev. 1:9–18. Rev. 21:5–7. A common Bible, with marginal references, will point out many more to the same purpose.

If you fairly and candidly do your part, if you examine your own mind, and discover what those objections are, which lead you to but half credit the Bible, and then listen with candor to the answers which learned, and wise, and good men, have given to these objections, I shall not fear the result: and if, at the same time, you examine scripture itself with the degree of faith you already possess——

Con. (*Interrupting him.*) The faith I already possess! Do you think I already possess any of that which you call faith?

How. My most dear Conway, you do not possess the faith which will save you, but you possess that which, if alone, will condemn you. You believe in God, yet you make scarcely any attempt to know his character or will. You believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to teach us that will, yet you take no pains to make yourself acquainted with the character or office of that 'Teacher sent from God.' You half believe the scriptures are inspired, yet you rest satisfied to remain half ignorant of them. To what, then, my friend, can your belief lead, but to make you criminal in the sight of that God, whose word, and whose heavenly Messenger, you have thus slighted? Faith, without effects, according to St. James, 'is dead.' It is nothing, or worse than nothing. Have I said more than the truth, Conway? for I have been describing my own state of mind when I last saw you.

Con. No, you have not. All is too true. I desire that this state of things with me should be changed. I feel the folly of my past neg-

lect on this subject. But how is this condemning faith to assist me in examining the scriptures?

How. Thus, my dear Conway. You already believe the scripture doctrine in part concerning God. You believe in him as Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Almighty.

Con. I do, most firmly.

How. Again, when you bend your soul before him, and confess his rights over you, as your Creator, Preserver, and God, you believe the scripture doctrine, that he is the 'Hearer of prayer.'

Con. I do assuredly.

How. There, then, my friend, the faith you possess, places you in the presence of the true God. The Bible says that God is merciful, and willeth not the death, the eternal death, of the sinner, but that he should repent and live,—live eternally. Now, Conway, do you as firmly believe this?

Con. I do not so clearly believe it, because it involves some difficult and unexamined points. But suppose I do, and go on.

How. I shall,—and by this supposition, faith places you as a suppliant in the presence of a merciful, as well as Omnipotent God, willing and ready to pardon your sins. But allow another declaration of God, to be interposed here, and offered for your belief,—'Without shedding of blood there is no remission;'^{*} and where must your faith rest next?

Con. In the atonement made by Jesus Christ. I begin to perceive what you mean. Suppose I believe in that also.

^{*} Heb. 9:22.

How. Then your faith places you in the presence of an Almighty, and merciful, but also most holy God, who will not suffer sin to go unpunished; who will not clear the guilty, except by washing him in blood, but who has himself provided that blood, and freely offers it to all. Now, Conway, in what way can we receive the purifying effects of this blood? You are silent. Is there any other way of proving your acceptance of an offered gift, but by receiving it? And in the acceptance of a gift wholly intellectual, what can the soul do but firmly believe the offer, and really look for and expect the promised benefit? This is faith. And with regard to the atoning and purifying effect of the blood of Christ, it is saving faith; for when the offer of this blood to wash away sins, is fully believed and accepted of by the soul, it actually receives the benefit of it,—its sins are actually remitted, really washed away. The soul shall never be called to account for them, because Christ himself has borne their punishment; and God has pledged his word for all this, and the soul has believed him. In all this there is nothing but faith, the soul has done nothing but believe; yet it is perfectly safe, because what it rests upon is God's own express promise, and thus it is 'justified by faith.'

Con. What you call saving faith, then, is the belief that your sins shall be forgiven, if you believe on the atonement of Christ.

How. It is not exactly the belief that I shall be forgiven, if I believe,—it is the simple belief itself. How strangely difficult it is for the mind to receive and understand this principle, when it has a reference to God. You have

promised, my dear Conway, to take my young ward, Stanly, and place him at a school at Geneva, and to see him often when there. I therefore can remain at perfect ease in this country, because I simply and firmly believe your promise,—not because I believe that I believe it. My peace of mind arises from my trust in your promise, not from the consciousness that I believe it. Why should we use such language with regard to God? Faith is simply believing God's word, whether spoken to us by his servants, or by his well-beloved Son. Saving faith is believing that Christ's death will save us, because he has said it will.

Con. I wish I *could* believe this. I wish I could believe that the death of Christ had atoned for all my sins.

How. And why not, my dear Conway? Why not believe him? If you believe his plainest words, you become a partaker of the benefits of his death. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'—'Whosoever cometh to me,' saith Christ, 'I shall in no wise cast out.' Why not credit the word of the Son of God, Conway? Why thus dishonor him?

Con. I am too ignorant, Howard. I must inform myself farther, before I can with confidence rest my belief on detached passages of scripture.

How. And may I hope you will immediately inform yourself, my dearest Conway?—that you will persevere in doing so, after the impression has worn off which may have been produced by your regard for me?

Con. I do not think it will easily wear off; but I give you my promise that I will, even if it should. I am not satisfied, however, respecting this principle of faith. I perceive the manner by which you think faith saves you; but how does it produce that change of character which has taken place in you, and that devotion of every power to the service of God, which seems to be its immediate consequence?

How. Thus, my dear Conway. We believe Christ, when he says that we must be born of the Spirit, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. We earnestly search to discover what this birth of the Spirit means, and we find that it means an entire change of heart; or rather, the introduction of a new and holy principle into the mind, the power of which continues to increase, till every faculty of the soul, and every affection of the heart, is brought under its influence. This is represented to us under many images. It is called the 'new man,' and those evil affections which it overcomes, and which we have by nature, are called the 'old man.' We are exhorted to 'put off the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.' We are told that the fruits of the Spirit are 'love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' We examine our own hearts and lives, to discover whether we possess those virtues, and find that we are deficient in them. We then search the word of God for directions how to obtain them, and we are told by Christ, that God will give his Spirit, the author of those graces, to every one who asks him. Again,

faith receives this declaration,—we ask, and obtain; all this is still received by faith. The Spirit speaks in the word,—convinces us of sin,—shows us the purity of God's law;—gives us the impression in our souls of its beauty and fitness,—makes us see the charm of holiness, so as earnestly to desire to be ourselves holy,—seals us with his own graces,—prepares us for the presence of God, and the enjoyment of heaven.

Con. But, my dear Howard, if you cannot enter heaven without this holiness, it is not the death of Christ which saves you, it is this holiness.

How. No, dear Conway, it is in consequence of my being saved by Christ, that I receive his Spirit, to fit me for that inheritance which he has purchased for me. I am saved from the punishment due for my sins, wholly by the death of Christ; I am made holy and fit for heaven by his Spirit, imparted to me as he sees meet, by Christ my head; without whom I can do nothing,—severed from whom I could no more produce one good thought, than a branch severed from its parent tree could produce fruit.

Con. Well, my dear Howard, I think I understand your meaning; and I feel as if I myself were, in some degree, a different being since yesterday morning.

How. This is natural, Conway. Your mind has been occupied with new ideas, and your regard for me has given interest to all I have said. But I trust your promise, my dear friend; you will employ yourself, immediately and seriously, in thoroughly searching into this subject,—you will write to me, as you have ever done, without the least reserve.

Con. I will, assuredly; and now beg you will satisfy me about your family. And tell me first, did that faith you have described, support Arthur's soul in the immediate approach of death?

How. It did,—O how triumphantly! A few months after I received that account of his conversion which you have read, his aunt wrote me, that she thought the unusually severe winter had materially injured his most delicate constitution. He had been almost constantly obliged to confine himself to the house; and as the spring advanced, she did not see that improvement in his health, which usually accompanied the return of mild weather,—he still shrunk from the least cold. His medical attendant had pressed his going out, but he had felt more unwell after following his advice. My sister wished me to see him, and to bring a physician with me. I was immediately alarmed; and his mother, Emma, and I, set out directly for Cornwall, accompanied by Dr. ——. We found Arthur looking very delicate indeed, and with all the symptoms of consumption in his appearance; but with an expression of heavenly calmness in his countenance and manner. This was unusual on first meeting with his friends. Formerly, on such occasions he was much agitated; then, though he received us with his usual warmth of kindness, he was more composed than any of us. His poor mother was much struck with this change; and, when we got alone, gave way to her apprehensions.

‘He is gone, Howard!’ said she emphatically; ‘he no longer even looks like this world,—that sweet young countenance expresses nothing earthly. How he regarded us all! Oh! I too

well understand the calm sad meaning of his looks!’

I felt the same, yet asked Emilia if she could wish to keep him here? She gave me no answer. You know, Conway, this was the first time we had been called to meet the approach of death amongst our children, and nature for a time yielded to the agonizing thought. Next day when we met, I believe all of us understood each other’s feelings, but poor Emma. She was deceived, and supposed the calmness with which Arthur met us was a proof of strength. She doated on her brother, and rejoiced in being with him; and he, too, seemed to feel deeply the devoted kindness of her tender cares and attentions.

The day after we arrived, Travers came at an early hour to visit his young friend. I was alone with Arthur when he entered. On being introduced to me he became very pale, and was much moved, but struggled to recover himself. I, however, guessed the cause of his emotion, and perceived from it what his opinion of Arthur’s situation was. He sat down by Arthur, and inquired most anxiously how he felt.

‘Hastening home, dear Travers,’ replied Arthur.

His eyes met mine as he said this, and for an instant he became deadly pale. I was obliged to leave the room, and retire to seek strength from Heaven. Before I saw him again, I had urged Dr — to give me his real opinion,—it was hopeless. He considered Arthur in a rapid consumption, and too weak to bear any attempt to remove to a warmer climate.

I shall not attempt to describe what we all felt for some days. After Arthur was aware that we knew the worst, he began to speak to his mother and sister on the subject, as he saw they could bear it. To me, and to Travers, whom he seemed to regard with the most ardent affection, he spoke with perfect calmness and ease of his approaching death, of his ideas of a future state, and of the perfect security he felt that his soul was safe. His natural disposition to examine into every thing, and to see all difficulties and objections, did not however forsake him. He believed that his soul was safe, and he clearly saw the grounds in scripture on which to rest this belief; but he did not so distinctly see revealed what the state of existence was of separate spirits. O how earnestly does the enlightened soul desire to be perfectly satisfied respecting all future things, when it feels itself on the verge of eternity. Travers urged the joyful anticipation of St. Paul, that 'when absent from the body, he should be present with the Lord;' and, as the time approached nearer, Arthur could rest his faith on that anticipated presence. To be 'present with the Lord,' seemed an idea so full of joy, as gradually to overcome all darkness, and all apprehension.

When we had been about three weeks with our beloved patient, it became evident that his death was very near. So heavenly had been his conversation during that time,—so patiently had he endured suffering,—so feelingly grateful to all around him,—so gentle, yet so faithful in declaring religious truth to them,—and so prepared did he appear to be for his Master's coming,

that we too waited for it in an attempted resignation, as what alone could satisfy him.

One night I thought him much worse, so did Travers, and we both sat up with him. He seemed to suffer great uneasiness, and was very restless, his breathing high, and quick, and oppressed; and though not asleep, he seemed almost unconscious of our presence. Travers, sat near, watching every motion, and every expression of uneasiness that passed over his still beautiful countenance; and with the utmost tenderness arranging his pillows, or adjusting his uneasy bed. I sat on the other side attempting the same; and we interchanged looks of grief or apprehension, or together raised our eyes to Heaven, for his presence to give that relief which our love sought in vain to do. At length he fell into an uneasy slumber, which gradually became more peaceful, till at last he slept. This continued for about an hour. He then awoke, and observing who were with him, he looked earnestly first at Travers, then at me, and holding out a hand to each,

‘My two dearest friends on earth!’ said he.

For a few moments he was much moved. Travers, too, was almost overpowered, but at last said, repeating Arthur’s words,

‘*On earth!* yes; but even while with us, you love another Friend, with a love unlike—far, far above that love that you bear to us, a love which produces ‘joy unspeakable, and full of glory.’ ’

Arthur’s countenance changed to an expression of calm joy, and looking earnestly at Travers,

‘Yes, my most beloved Travers, my eyes must

soon close on you, but to open on him whom, having not seen, I love,—with whom I long to be. At this moment faith so perceives his glory, as to make me willing to be absent from you, that I may be present with him. Willing! far more than willing,—I ardently long to depart, that I may be with him! And when the veil is withdrawn, when I shall really enter his presence, when I shall behold him?—

He could say no more, but his countenance expressed the rapture of the anticipation. In a little while, he said, ‘I think the day begins to dawn.’

Travers drew aside the window curtains. The sun was just rising. Arthur begged to be supported, so as to see it; he again held our hands.

‘Let me feel you near me as long as I am here,’ said he. He looked earnestly at us again, then a long look at the sun and sky. ‘How I have loved that light!’ Then turning to us, ‘I shall soon see you in glory,—but that sun, shall it be quenched for ever? It matters not,—I go to the source of all light.’

He then begged Travers to read to him the 4th chapter of the 1st Epistle of John. While Travers read, he listened with an expression of heavenly composure. Before he had finished, however, he said,

‘I do not hear you, Travers,—dear, dear Travers! My father!’

He became quite faint, and we laid him down. He looked at us smiling, and said in a very low voice,

‘This is death,—it has no sting; all is peace,—joy.’ Then looking up with an expression of rapture, and, as if he saw the approach of some one, he said, ‘Come, come’—

His lips still moved, but we heard no more. After a few long breathings, he was at rest for ever.

Con. How tranquil! How peaceful!

How. It was so indeed.

Con. And poor Travers!

How. Dear Travers! he suffered sadly. While Arthur lived, he never seemed to have a thought for himself. All his endeavor was to make death welcome to his young friend; but when he was gone, all saw how ardently he had loved him. He could see no one for two days; but, after that, I never shall forget his conduct, so feeling, so Christian!

Con. You said, Howard, you had more to tell me of him. Did you mean that which you have now told me?

How. No; I meant to tell you that, if God spares us all, he is soon to be my son.

Con. Emma's husband!—from my soul I rejoice to hear it.

How. I do indeed give her to him with my whole heart; and feel most deeply, what cause I have of thankfulness to him who so continually loads me with benefits. He has now given me this most dear Travers, in the room of my departed Arthur.

Con. And Emma and he will be of one soul in religion.

How. Travers would not have married any woman who was not so. In this, too, he acted like himself. During our dear Arthur's illness, Emma and he, while attending him, were constantly together, and thus became intimately acquainted with each other's amiable qualities; but at that time both were too deeply occupied with

their beloved patient, to remark any thing in each other. Travers, ever kind and manly in his feelings, and in a situation so interesting, treated Emma with a tenderness and feeling, and she him with a regard and confidence, which might insensibly endear them to each other; but on their separating after Arthur's death, there was nothing more. A few months after that event, Travers came to London on business. He had promised to make my house his home when there, and came to us. He was still very sad, and also found us so. We talked of our beloved Arthur, and he remarked how strikingly Emma's countenance recalled his friend to him. You know, Conway, she is very like what her brother was. Her every expression reminded Travers of his friend, so that the instant she spoke, his looks were attracted sadly towards her.

A month or two after this first visit, Travers paid us another and longer. We had then in some degree recovered our usual cheerfulness. Travers, too, was less sad. Yet I still remarked him, when Emma spoke, regard her with an expression of great melancholy. I begun, also, to remark, that Emma did not appear so easy under his observation as formerly; and as he prolonged his visit, this increased. He seemed not to observe it, till one day that I myself could not help being attracted by Emma's striking resemblance to Arthur, though I said nothing. She seemed unusually thoughtful, and not happy; and while I anxiously regarded her, I observed that Travers did so also. She raised her eyes, and meeting his looks, blushed excessively, and turned away with an expression of annoyance and dis-

pleasure. I looked at Travers. He seemed surprised,—again regarded Emma,—himself reddened deeply, and continued for an instant or two in intense thought. Next day he left us, and we did not again see him for six months. During the first part of that time, poor Emma seemed very unhappy, and I blamed myself severely for my imprudence; for I had shown her Arthur's letters, and had always spoken of Travers with that admiration so calculated to strike a young imagination. After some time, however, Emma gradually resumed her cheerfulness; and with its return, I observed an anxious desire for religious information. She soon became quite frank with me on the subject, and I saw with delight, that her young mind was rapidly advancing in the knowledge of, and love for, divine things. I was therefore rather grieved, when about six weeks ago, I had a letter from my sister, in which she mentioned that Travers was soon to be in London, and would visit us here. Poor Emma, I saw, was not unmoved by this intelligence; and when Travers did come, though she betrayed emotion in no other way, than by becoming excessively pale, yet I observed she left the room, as soon as with propriety she could.

That very evening, Travers sought an opportunity of being alone with me, and asked my consent to his attempting to gain Emma's affections. I hesitated, as I did not quite understand either his sudden departure the former time he had been with us, or his equally sudden proposals now, and I plainly asked an explanation; for when you know Travers, my dear Conway, you will feel satisfied, that when you do not

understand his conduct, there must be some other cause than caprice or change in him.

Con. And what was his explanation?

How. Simply this.—He did not know, at the time he left us, whether or not Emma was truly religious; and though the observation of her emotion and displeasure had excited an emotion in himself, which taught him that she was an object of very dear interest to him; yet, until he knew her state of mind on that subject, he dared not proceed a step farther.

Con. Was that not really going too far? Educated as Emma had been,—so truly amiable.—Surely that was too narrow, too bigotted.

How. No, dear Conway, he was perfectly right; and this proof of the perfect sincerity and strictness of his religious principles, increased my love for him a thousand-fold. In a union so near, there ought to be one soul on this point; scripture, indeed, commands it, and experience teaches the unhappy consequences which follow the neglect of this command. Travers was too devoted, and hoped to have an assistant in all good things in the partner of his heart too ardently, to think of being united to any one whose views were not the same as his own. Esteem and affection will lead to every attempt to please the object beloved; but where the true principle of faith does not exist, nothing can produce its effects; and however Christian husbands or wives may love and value the amiable qualities in their partners, yet, where this is wanting, the very soul of soul is wanting, and they must painfully feel that it is so at every turn.

Con. And how did Travers satisfy himself that Emma thought exactly as he did?

How. I asked him that question, but he smiled, and declined answering me. He must, he said, first obtain Emma's forgiveness for the means he had used; and, without her permission, must not divulge them even to me. I left him to manage this as he best could; but told him my own opinion with regard to Emma, and gave him my most full, and joyful consent to win her affections.

Con. And what were the means he had used; or must I not ask?

How. He had himself been her unknown correspondent and teacher.

Con. Travers! and how?

How. On returning to Cornwall, after many struggles between his principles and regard for Emma, he at last imparted his secret to my sister, who feels for him as for a son, and for whom he feels as for a mother. She, also, could enter into his religious scruples; and is, you know, so strictly upright, that one feels almost implicit confidence in the view she takes of a subject being the just one. She immediately decided that he ought not to indulge his regard for Emma, unless she was indeed 'in the faith,' but said she might be so, though, as yet, in her soul, the principle were only as a 'very little leaven.' She had corresponded regularly with Emma, and showed Travers those passages in her recent letters, which referred to the subject of religion. Emma had been deeply affected by many things her brother had said to her during his last illness; and there was much interest in the subject of religion, expressed in her let-

ters, but it was not satisfactory,—it was merely a desire to fulfil his last wishes, and which led her to determine to increase her efforts to fulfil every duty. Travers was disappointed; but my sister reminded him that Emma was in a situation where her errors would be pointed out to her. Travers seemed to perceive them so clearly, that my sister offered, if he would state them as from her, to give them a place in her next letter. This continued. Emma wrote with much interest on the subject, but combated, as she supposed, her aunt's opinions. Travers replied, and entered so fully into the state of her mind and feelings, that she soon was convinced; and, as I told you, eagerly sought religious instruction, and came to me with all her difficulties. She fully described her change of sentiments to her aunt, ascribing that change, under Heaven, to her kindness and patience. You may imagine how gratifying this was to Travers, and what an endearing additional bond of union it is between him and Emma. Now she has not a thought, but how to fit herself for that important situation in which she is about to be placed. How different are her preparations from those of my other daughters, when in similar circumstances! Amiable as they were, and marrying, too, from affection, yet how trifling in comparison were the objects to which they looked forward, as the sources of their future happiness. Emma's share of what this world can give, will even be greater than theirs, but how differently does she regard it all; yet I taught them nothing better, nor did I look for religion in those to whom I entrusted their happiness. Emma is anxiously acquiring every information

which may enable her to assist Travers in every good work; and also such as may prepare her to join him in drawing that most difficult line, between kindness to worldly people who choose to seek their society, and conformity to their manners and pursuits. But now, my dear Conway, it is twelve o'clock, and I fear I must leave you.

Con. I must, then, hear of your other children when we again meet. I trust you will soon see them all of one mind with Emma and yourself.

How. And you also, Conway, do you wish the same for yourself?

Con. From my soul, I do.

How. And you will 'seek, that you may find.'

Con. I will.

How. Conway, there is one hour every night, after all my household have retired, that I spend alone; or rather, I should say, with God. Will you meet me at that hour to-night, and spend it with me, seeking the same presence?

Con. With you?

How. Yes, my dearest friend. We have had intimate union of soul in many pursuits,—why shrink from it in this?

Con. I do not shrink from union of soul with you, Howard; but this seems so strange,—yet I shall meet you; whatever follows.

How. Farewell, then, for a little. My family will again suppose I mean to monopolize you entirely. Let us go to them.

