

Mrs George Cobb

No. 76.

THE
SWEARER'S PRAYER;

OR,

HIS OATH EXPLAINED.

WHAT! a swearer pray! Yes, swearer, whether thou thinkest so or not, each of thine oaths is a prayer,—an appeal to the holy and almighty God, whose name thou darest so impiously to take into thy lips.

And what is it, thinkest thou, swearer, that thou dost call for, when the awful imprecations, damn and damnation, roll so frequently from thy profane tongue? Tremble, swearer, while I tell thee! Thy prayer contains two parts: thou prayest, First, that thou mayest be deprived of eternal happiness? Secondly, That thou mayest be plunged into eternal misery.

When, therefore, thou callest for damnation, dost thou not, in effect, say as follows? “O God! thou hast power to punish me in hell for ever: therefore, let not one of my sins be forgiven! Let every oath that I have sworn, every lie that I have told, every sabbath that I have broken, and all the sins that I have committed, either in thought, word, or deed, rise up in judgment against me, and eternally condemn me! Let me never partake of thy salvation! May my soul and body be deprived of all happiness, both in this world and that which is to come. Let me never see thy face with comfort; never enjoy thy favour and friendship; and let me never enter into the kingdom of heaven!”

This is the first part of thy prayer. Let us hear the second.

“ O God, let me not only be shut out of heaven, but also shut up in hell! May all the members of my body be tortured with inconceivable agony, and all the powers of my soul tormented with horror and despair, inexpressible and eternal! Let my dwelling be in the blackness of darkness, and my companions accursed men, and accursed devils! Pour down thy hottest anger; execute all thy wrath and curse upon me; arm and send forth all thy terrors against me; and let thy fierce, thy fiery, thy fearful indignation rest upon me! Be mine eternal enemy and plague, and punish and torment me in hell, for ever, and ever, and ever!”

Swearer, this is thy prayer! Oh dreadful imprecation! Oh horrible! horrible! most horrible! Blaspheming man! dost thou like thy petition? Look at it. Art thou sincere in thy prayer, or art thou mocking thy Maker? Dost thou wish for damnation? Art thou desirous of eternal torment? If so, swear on—swear hard. The more oaths, the more misery; and, perhaps, the sooner thou mayest be in hell. Art thou shocked at this language? Dost it harrow up thy soul? Does the very blood run cold in thy veins? Art thou convinced of the evil of profane swearing? How many times hast thou blasphemed the God of heaven? How many times hast thou asked God to damn thee in the course of a year, a month, a day? Nay; how many times in a single hour hast thou called for damnation? Art thou not yet in hell? Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, at the goodness and long suffering of that God whose great name swearing persons so often and so awfully profane! Swearer, be thankful, oh be exceedingly thankful that God has not answered thy prayer—thy tremendous prayer! that his mercy and patience have withholden the request of thy polluted lips! Never let him hear another oath from thy unhallowed tongue, lest it should be thy last expression upon earth, and thy swearing prayer should be answered in hell. Oh let thine oaths be turned into supplications! Repent, and turn to Jesus who died

for swearers as well as for his murderers. And then, oh! then, (though thou mayest have sworn as many oaths as there are "stars in the heavens, and sands upon the sea-shore innumerable,") then thou shalt find, to thy eternal joy, that there is love enough in his heart, and merit sufficient in his blood, to pardon thy sins, and save thy soul for ever. . . . Swearer: canst thou ever again blaspheme such a God and Saviour as this? Does not thy conscience cry—God forbid? Even so. Amen.

THE PRAYER ANSWERED,

In the following, among multitudes of other instances.

In November, 1786, a person much given to swearing, being disappointed by one of his companions not returning to the public-house as soon as he expected, swore he would never drink with him again, and that if he did, it should be his last. Accordingly that day was his last. God took him at his word, and thus called him into eternity.

In November, 1787, one W—rs, a smith, spending the evening at a public-house, in Leather-lane, quarrelled with one of his companions, and, while swearing one of the most horrid oaths, God struck him instantaneously dead, with an oath on his lips, upon the bench where he was sitting. The jury who sat upon the body, after hearing all the circumstances of the case, brought in their verdict—that W—rs was struck dead as a judgment from God. This narration was given by the foreman of the jury.

Another remarkable judgment overtook a person living in Brewer-street, Soho, who, cursing and swearing in a most dreadful manner, was struck speechless, and died the same afternoon.

T. G. who lived in the parish of Sedgeley, near Wolverhampton, having lost a considerable sum at cock-fighting, to which practice he was notoriously addicted, swore in a most horrid manner that he would never fight another cock, frequently calling upon God to damn

his soul to all eternity if he did; and, with dreadful imprecations, wishing the devil might fetch him, if ever he made another bet.

His resolution, thus impiously formed, was, for a while, observed; but, about two years afterwards, Satan, whose willing servant he continued to be, inspired him with a violent desire to attend a cocking at Wolverhampton; and he complied with the temptation. He there stood up, and cried, "I hold four to three on such a cock." "Four what?" said one of his companions in iniquity. "Four shillings," replied he. Upon which the wager was confirmed, and he, putting his hand into his pocket for the money, instantly fell a ghastly corpse upon the ground.

"Who hath hardened himself against God, and prospered?" Job ix. 4.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," Exod. xx. 7.

"Because of swearing, the land mourneth," Jer. xxiii. 10.

"Every one that sweareth shall be cut off," Zech. v. 3.

Dear reader, art thou a swearer? O take this friendly warning; the next oath may be thy last: if thy prayer is heard, thy soul is damned for ever!