

THE
POWER OF INSTRUCTION.

NO. 786

GUILTY TONGUE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE LAST DAY OF THE WEEK.

*"The Lord will not hold him guiltless
that taketh his name in vain."*

LONDON:

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The Guilty Tongue
THE
POWER OF INSTRUCTION,

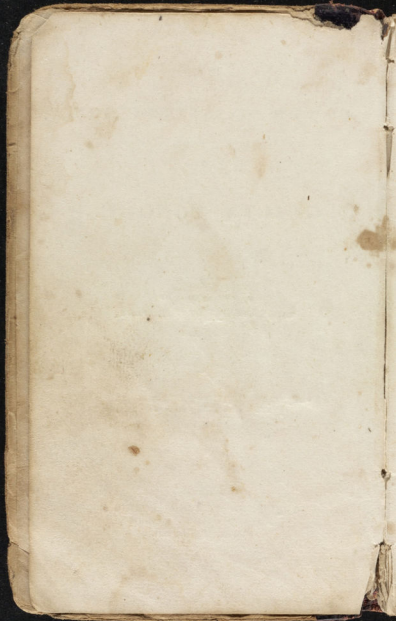
OR
FRANK, THE

GUILTY-TONGUE.

My baby
—+—
BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE LAST DAY OF THE WEEK.

any-baby
—+—
"THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTYLESS THAT
TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN." Exod. xx. 7.

Boston :
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As I drew nearer, I observed three of the lads to be in an excessive passion, whilst one of the others looked with a calm steadfastness, that was perfectly dignified.—PAGE 56.

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A B C D E F G
H I J K L

PREFACE

TO THE BOSTON EDITION.



The following pages, the production of a distinguished author, are intended to arrest the beginnings of a vice, reproachful to human nature. The work of counteracting profaneness is here attempted in the most effectual manner, by resting the obligation to purity of conversation, upon the authority and command of Almighty God. No means of preventing iniquity and of encouraging virtue have been so powerful, as those which are drawn from revelation, and pressed upon the conscience by the irresistible motives which it reveals. And when

this salutary influence obtains a place in the youthful heart, its grasp is not easily loosened.

This book shows the happy reformation in manners, which may be effected by kind reproofs and admonitions, and the power of instruction when administered in the spirit of the gospel. It illustrates the interjection of Job, "How forcible are right words!"

THE
POWER OF INSTRUCTION.

—●—
CHAPTER I.

Prudence in Conversation.

THERE was an unusual expression of seriousness in the countenance of my friend as we were breakfasting together. I had taken a long and early ride, to be with him in time for his breakfast hour. He had received me with pleasure, but with an aspect of gravity, which at first surprised me; and when I observed it to remain, notwithstanding the conversation I addressed to him, and even during the little attentions of the table, which he as politely as ever paid, I began to reflect upon what might be the probable cause, and wishing to know if he were disposed to communicate that cause, I changed the current of my conversation, by asking him if he felt quite well?

Quite well, thank you, he replied; and passing his hand over his forehead, he added, with a heavy sigh, I fear you find me bad company this morning; but, to tell you the truth, I cannot shake off the depression which is on my spirits.

May I ask in what it originates? Is there any thing I can do to relieve you?

I have no concealment to make; but you will be surprised to hear it is occasioned by a dream, which engaged my thoughts the whole night, and has left such a strong impression—it will not wear away in a moment.

I own I am surprised; you are not superstitious. Will you communicate the subject of the dream?

The *origin* of the affection on my spirits is not in the dream, but, following as it did upon a train of thought which had already oppressed my heart, it has corroborated the feelings which were previously excited, by a circumstance which happened when I was walking out yesterday evening. I am sorry to say it was no unusual circumstance; but it was strange I never before reflected upon it in the serious way I now do.

I was walking on a high bank, on which the footpath run on the side of the high road. A waggoner had stopt his team, and was talking to an acquaintance on the same footpath with myself. He had turned his back upon the horses, and they were frequently making movements, as if impatient at being so long detained. When he heard their motion, he spoke to them in the usual way to keep them quiet; when, finding them restless, he turned quick, and cracking his whip with a violent jerk, and a tremendous oath, he bid them go on. The animals, started by the sudden command, and visibly afraid of the whip, set off full speed, turned the brow of the hill, and were impelled forward down the steep with frightful velocity. The man set off after them swearing loudly, until, finding himself spent, I

stopt, and with awful expression that God would curse the horses and send them to the devil, he waited to watch if they would stop at the bottom of the hill.

I felt appalled with the violence with which he vociferated his curses in the name of God, and waited to see the end. They were all before me; the team horse swerved off the road, the waggon was thrown over, and dragged some paces onwards by the impetuosity of the fore horses, which, at length feeling the check, stood still. The man now run, as you may easily imagine, with no decrease of passion and oaths. Some men came to his assistance from the fields, and during the whole time that they were righting the waggon, and helping the struggling horse that was down, the man, I perceived by his actions, was proceeding with the same profane language.

I hastened, in the hope that a word of reproof might be timely addressed, when a fine looking young man said,

If you do not stop that blasphemy, I'll leave you to manage for yourselves.

This only turned the abuse from the horses to himself, when the young man appealed to me—

Will you kindly lend a helping hand, Sir? If I had but this poor animal fairly upon his legs, I'd go back to my work.

I immediately lent all the assistance in my power; but it was not an easy job; the frightened animals, trembling at the voice of their driver, could with difficulty be held. It was at length effected, and another man took the charge of them. It was in vain to speak to the driver; every attempt to argue with him increased his

rage ; and I gladly withdrew into the field with the young man, who said,

I perceive, Sir, you are struck with the wickedness of that man : he has called upon God to curse those horses—their eyes, their bones, their legs,—and one would think that God meant to give him his desire. Did you *see them*, Sir ?

Yes, they seemed to be mad with fear, or as if they were indeed actually universally cursed.

The man had his business to attend to, and I proceeded on my way home, reflecting on the dreadful sin of swearing, and on all the different shades of sin comprehended in that prohibition, “THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN.” And my mind rested on that scripture, “Because of swearing the land mourneth.” Remaining on my mind, it gave a turn to my thoughts in my dreams on my bed.

I imagined myself on the top of a very high hill, looking on a beautiful country, but surrounded with people who to my horror all had the aspect of the waggoner. They all seemed to have their different avocations, and whilst some were busy in their trades, others were engaged in amusements, and others again in conversation.

A trembling seize'd my limbs, as I cast my eyes over individuals. The scowling brow, or the flashing eye, or the contracted jaw, all bespoke the murderous and blaspheming heart, and *my* heart sickened with fear, as in one moment my ear seemed to open to hear the words they were *uttering*. Oaths, imprecations, Revenge, seemed to fire every tongue. The tradesman—the artizan—the labourer—all cursed their several employments, tools, or animals. The gambler—the sportsman—all cursed their horses, their dogs, their

games, their cards, their dice, and whatever they were engaged with. The conversationists broke out in mutual curses of each other, for differing sentiments, or provoking contradictions. In an almost frenzy of horror, on finding myself so surrounded, I threw myself down on the ground, and laid my head in the dust, that I might no longer hear. But from this position I was roused by rumbling sounds in the earth. Again I stood up; I lifted up my eyes to the heavens; I saw them gather blackness, and the oaths proceeding from men's mouths seemed to take a visible form, and to ascend as a thick smoke. Then there appeared a vision of a fiend gathering the rising vapour into an immense funnel-formed vessel, which being inverted, drew it under as into a dome, and it thence issued in a column through the upper aperture with condensed and deepened blackness, a voice like hollow thunder crying out, Hear their prayers! hear their prayers! In instant reply, a flash of lightning, which seemed to open heaven, drove back the column, spread it wide over the face of heaven, and it descended in a destructive torrent down upon the earth whence it had arisen.

In a moment the face of every thing was changed—diseases, blindness, madness, destruction, death, showered down on men, animals, and things. A blight blasted the vegetable world, which before bloomed in beauty. Shrieks of horror, and howls of despair, broke forth in the same moment, and then, all was still as death, silent as the grave.

Devastation was all around, and in an awful voice I heard these words, They have their hearts' desire; their curses are come down upon

them,—“Because of swearing the land mourneth!” Then lamentation and woe was heard, mourning and sorrow. Then in an agony of mind I took up the sorrowful cry, “Because of swearing the land mourneth!” and repeating it audibly, I awoke.

This, my friend, is the vision which has saddened my heart, and spread my countenance with gravity.

There was something so affecting, both in the dream, and in the manner in which my friend related it, that I remained silent, awfully impressed with the solemnity of his feelings.

After a long pause, he said, But what can we make of these impressions? Can we do any good? Can we stop the torrent of vice? Can we warn sinners? O that I had the spirit, the heart, the calling of a Reformer,—then would I go forth and proclaim the command of God in the drowsy ears of men, with a voice which should let them know, that **“GOD SPAKE THESE WORDS, AND SAID, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN!”** He rose spontaneously from the breakfast table, and I also; and, with a kind of mutual understanding, we walked into the garden, and fell into a more quiet conversation on the important subject.

Suppose, I said, we endeavour, by the blessing of God, to bear this subject in mind, and in our way, as it shall please Him to help us, we make it a principal point, in our future conversation amongst men, to lift up the command, and set it before them.

Let us do so, and if we are only blest to

make one sinner think, it will be well ; and we shall grow in a watchful spirit over our own lips, that we offend not with our tongue.

We spent a few hours in a very profitable investigation of the full bearings of the commandment ; and with the precious Guide in our hands, the Word of God, each employed ourselves in drawing out the various passages which could elucidate this subject, and impart a clear and defined idea of taking God's holy Name in vain ; during which we did not sit as judges of others only, but oftentimes were compelled to judge our own selves, and by so doing, were led to petition we might not "be judged of the Lord," but enabled so to "sanctify the Lord God in our heart," as to "hallow" His Name at all times.

In the midst of this engagement, a lady was announced, who was a near relation, and we hastened to receive her.

I esteem myself uncommonly fortunate, she said, that I meet you both together, for I have some particular business to communicate, in which you are both concerned : it is quite a providence—it will save so much trouble—I'm thankful to God—really it is a very lucky circumstance.

My friend passed a most expressive glance towards me : I cast down my eyelids, for I feared to offend too quickly : but certainly just at that moment, this speech appeared the most extraordinary jargon, and did not seem to fit in with our Bible language.

My dear cousin, said my friend, before we proceed to the business which engages you, would you allow me to ask you one question ?

She looked surprised, and said, Yes, certainly ; you will ask nothing wrong.

Will you take it in good part, and forgive me if I offend ?

What in God's name can you ask, that you need to use this precaution ?

There is the very thing, he quickly replied : Tell me then if you *worship* God ?

Strange man ! are you turning Methodist, and wanting me to become one too ?

No, no ; I only wish we should both *worship* God.

Upon my word, cousin, I fear you are growing crazy ; I do not understand you.

Well then, I will be plain, for love and for conscience sake. You talk to us in a strain, which implies, that though you call yourself a Christian, you hear and take that Name in vain ; for you mix heathenish allusions to fortune, luck, &c. &c. and put Providence upon the same standard, as all being equally overruling in bringing about this happy meeting. Now, knowing that you, as well as myself, must often pray to God, *Hallowed* be thy Name, I think it is contrary to this spirit to use that Name, and God's Providence, with an unholy freedom, and with a list of heathen deities.

My dear cousin, you are too serious ; these are only common modes of expression, and mean nothing.

It might be very well that heathenish terms meant nothing ; but I hope you will not vindicate the other expressions, of God and His Providence, as meaning nothing ; for how strange a breach would it be of the commandment, *not to take that Name in vain* !—for, in that case, you

spake what you did not think : you did not mean it was providential that we met ; you did not mean that you were thankful to God ; and thus you have offended, and will not be held guiltless ! And, perhaps, you did not mean any thing else that you said, and you have no business at all to communicate !

Well, really you astonish me. Must we be so prim and exact, and discard all the usual expressions of the world ?

Yes, we must. You have no right to ascribe any thing to fortune, nor to make any assertion upon your word.

You would not surely say there was any harm in my word ; I am accustomed to *speak truth*.

Very likely, but if you are, there is no occasion to say more than Yea, yea, Nay, nay, and whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. And your word is fallible : there is but one infallible word, which is *Yea* and AMEN.

She was a good-tempered woman, and without resentment said, Well, I cannot answer you, and I see you are too grave to be joked with. But, turning to me, she said, Tell me, Henry, do you not think he is carrying things too far ?

No, Fanny, I am quite of his mind, and I should like to bring you into our way of thinking.—As, however, you are anxious on the affair you came about, (for I believe you *did mean* that,) let us know the matter, and when we have attended to you, we will open out the more serious engagement we have in the Name of the Lord.

No, no, she said, I can at present defer my business ; and as I really do not like to be in the wrong, I will listen *now* to all you will say.

So encouraged, I briefly related the impression we had upon our minds, and presented to her some written memorandums I had put down in the margin of my Bible for the rule of my own observations. Now tell me, Fanny, if, in your usual speech and conduct, you have not wholly lost sight of the power of the third commandment, and are habitually taking the Lord's name in vain? I know it is a fault of yours continually to interlard your conversation with ejaculatory appeals to God, which, as you too justly say, *mean* nothing, but which, for this very *vanity*, lay a load of guilt upon your head and tongue.

She coloured extremely,—a watery fullness suffused her eye,—and, laying her hand on my shoulder, I own it, she said; I am convicted—it is very light and sinful: help me to correct it: I will not be a refractory disciple,—only that stern gravity of Charles appals me.

Do not be afraid of *me*, he said; I *mean* affectionately to warn you. And, O! Fanny, think if my human countenance, a fellow sinner's, is unpleasant to you, what will be the frown of Him, who will see the guilt of impenitent blasphemy, and tell them who say, “Lord, Lord,” in vain, that he never knew them?

Hush, Charles, say no more: I will lay my hand on my lips, and acknowledge “I am vile”—that my mouth has utterly offended—and from this time, God helping me—she paused—yes, *God helping me*,—I did not say *that* in vain,—I will set a watch

Well, Fanny, now my heart rejoices in this *providential* interview; I have cause indeed to *thank God* who brought us together this day. We will love His *commandment*, rely upon *His*

word, and seek His grace. But I would offer one advice to you,—watch your *heart*, whence proceeds every evil thing, and do not indulge in the vanity of light, trivial, and foolish conversation. The fashion of this world will fade away: let us endeavour, for solid transformation of heart and mind, that deep and sanctified thoughts of God may not only preclude the *vain* use of his name, but adorn our conversation with meekness and holiness, or, as the scripture says, “Season it with salt, to the edifying of the hearers.”

I have one request to make, she said, and in a playful tone of voice, turning to Charles, *Will you allow me to ask you one question? Will you take it in good part, and forgive me if I offend?*

Charles could not but relax his features at this good tempered sally, and she then continued, *Although I suppose you are engaged to spend the day together, you will I hope go home with me. I expect my husband back from his visit in time for dinner, and then we can converse together on the business which brought me here.*

We agreed to the proposal, but said we would walk together, and follow her in time for the engagement.

She took leave, saying, *I think I shall never forget this morning*

When she was gone, I addressed my friend,—*Now do you not think we have had an encouraging opening to our new purpose? I believe we have always opportunities of acting in a reformer’s spirit, if we do but remember first to pull out the beam which is in our own eye, and then we shall*

see clearly to pull out the mote which is in our brother's eye.

I own I am comforted by a hope of being useful, and if we were but faithful to that injunction, Not to suffer sin upon a brother, we should often be blest with success in stopping the course of vice, and be saved from the contamination which cleaves to us, when we have heard and seen open offences without rebuking them. When we testify against them, it is like shaking off the dust from ourselves ; but when we check the dictate of conscience, it is not to be wondered at that we should grow less alive to offences, and therefore more prone to fall into them ourselves.



CHAPTER II.

An Adventure of Peril.

WE were not long before we commenced our walk. It was a beautiful day, and the lovely prospect, all around, of blooming country, with the happy turn of the preceding event, contributed to cheer the mind of my friend, and to relieve his brow from the contraction which had given it so austere an expression. The feelings of his heart rose in ardent admiration of the works of God, which were displayed before us.

Look around, Henry, he said, see the beautiful fields, rich in luxuriant promise,—see that field white, as our Lord said, already to the har-

vest ; look beyond, and see the blossomed beans ; see here the green pastures filled with thriving cattle ; see there the heath studded with the golden grain and spotted with the whitened flock ; beyond is the hanging wood darkly shaded with the thick foliage of beech and oak ; below the silver rill with the light willow marking its course, and the young plantation on its banks ; there the lonely cottage, there the scattered farms ; behind the busy town, on the left the mouldering ruin, on the right the arched bridge ! All, all looks fair ! all looks blessed ! all looks happy ! From, above shines forth the generating sun ! The heavens seem to smile, and the earth to laugh and sing ! Shall such a creation be blasted by man's iniquity ? Shall the sins of men frustrate their own blessings, and bring down a desolating storm, or a pestiferous blight which shall change the face of all nature, and make that scene, which now gladdens our eyes and rejoices our heart, a sad and mournful monument of the crimes of men ?—Shall men use the Name in vain of Him who created all, and instead of blessing Him in holy praise, blaspheme Him in wicked effrontery ; or instead of owning his goodness, call upon Him for curses ? O, my heart again shudders at the thought, how soon this prospect might exhibit a mournful aspect, “Because of swearing.” If men would trace the judgment of God, and review their own sins, I do not doubt they, many, many times, would find themselves led direct to some blaspheming moment, when they marked themselves as amongst those who should not be held guiltless, by the oath or the murmuring discontent against God's dealings, or the abominable sin of a vain

mentioning of the Name of Him, on whom they depend for life, and breath, and all things.

It is, I said, a monstrous state of sin, and proves indeed how far we are fallen from Him who created all, when, though living under the constant providence of his bounty, we find men bringing guilt upon their heads in this awful way, and by the very abuse of that holy Name which they blaspheme, at the same moment confess they know the Name, and despising it, increase their guilt and defy the Avenger !

My friend suddenly seized me by the arm, See there, he said, here comes wickedness.

I threw my eyes forward, and saw a waggon with a team of horses come galloping on the road towards us ; the driver was standing in the front of his waggon, using his long whip without mercy, and vociferating words in loud accents, which, as he drew near, we heard were oaths.

A groan of horror burst from the heart of my companion, and he exclaimed, I know him well ! Look at his countenance, his attitudes, but, if possible, stop your ears against his words, and you see the man who struck me such an awful impression but yesterday. Let us stand a moment, and try if we can arrest that tongue by the sign of our observation.

We did so, and as the waggon came nearer, the man's eye glanced towards us, the furious flash of which betrayed his recollection of his reprover, and, as if determined to escape another warning, which he saw prepared for him, he redoubled his strokes, and, as he rapidly passed us, wished he might be for ever cursed, if he cared for any man that dared to meddle with him. The man was in imminent danger, but as regard-

less of the temporal fate that awaited him, as of the eternal doom of his blaspheming soul. The rough jolting of the waggon often threw him off his balance, and, before he could recover himself from one of these shocks, one of the fore wheels jerking over a large stone in the road, threw him over. For an instant he endeavoured to save himself, but the motion prevented his seizing hold; he fell with his face to the ground—the wheels rolled directly over his legs—we flew to help—the horses soon left him behind a mangled body! We endeavoured to raise him, but he lay as dead, and we found both his legs were broken.

My friend undertook to stay beside him whilst I hastened to seek assistance. I soon obtained the friendly help of a cottager, who ran to beg some straw from a neighbouring farmer, whilst I took an inner door of his house off the hinges. Two or three men came to our assistance, and we soon had the pitiable body laid as carefully as possible on the door. The man uttered a groan of agony, and raised his hand as if to remove the veil from his eyes; but no! his face was covered with blood, and so torn and bruised, that it appeared to have none of its original form remaining; the eyes were swelled up, and we feared they were for ever gone. The farmer permitted him to be lodged in an out-house, until surgical assistance could be obtained. As soon as he had been bled, and his legs were bound up and his face bathed, he began to show some signs of returning sense: but what can describe the horror of our minds, when the first words he uttered were a renewed curse on his horses, and threatening to give them double for this!

Blasphemer, stop ! said my friend, in a slow and solemn voice, you are now overtaken by the judgment of God. As you drove your horses, *you* have been driven by the devil to your own destruction. It is written in the Word of God of such as *you*, “ As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him.” “ As he clothed himself with cursing, like as with his garment, so let it come into *his* bowels like water, and like oil into *his* bones.”—And *so is* it come. Thou art guilty—thine own eyes and thine own bones are under the visitation of the curse, and thou mayest not have long time given thee for repentance, if happily thou shalt seek it ! Utter no more curses, lest *they* also fall upon thee, and thy guilty head be for ever crushed beneath their intolerable weight !

The man appeared to listen in awe-struck silence as to a supernatural voice. The standers-by turned pale as they heard the solemn words, and beheld the victim of blaspheming rage. My friend, peceiving the impression, seized the moment to appeal to their consciences, and under a glow of holy zeal he put the inquiry, directing his scrutinizing eye full into the countenance of each individual.

Do you know God's holy commandment, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN ? Do you attend to that solemn command, or do you heedlessly and wickedly break it ? He paused. One man turned paler still, another seemed lost in amazement, and a third shook his head with a look of independence, which seemed to say, Who made you a judge over me ?

In a softer and more persuasive tone, he then added, I beseech you look on this spectacle, let it touch your hearts, let it act as a timely warning, let it lead you to think on the unprofitableness of sin—of the judgment on sin—of the awful recompense which the Lord can in a moment bring on the wretched sinner's head. And, Oh ! let me entreat you to learn to hallow and bless that Name, which hitherto you have profaned, and to seek it as a refuge for your soul, for it is written, "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous fleeth into it and is safe !"

I watched the face of the wretched man to discover, if possible, what emotion might be expressed, but the deformed features were devoid of all expression. I heard a sigh, but whether it indicated mental or bodily suffering, I could not ascertain. Thinking it best to leave him now quietly under the care of the farmer, until his friends could remove him to his own home, I proposed we should at present pursue our way.

It is right that we should do so, and may he find that mercy which his soul so greatly needs !

As we walked on I pulled out my watch. Above three hours have passed in this affecting engagement—what a scene has been before our eyes for that time ! And if we contemplate what has been too probably passing under the omnipresent eye of God, which comprehends in one vast survey, the whole inhabitants of the universe, what may we conjecture to have been the scenes beneath *His* eye, which belong to this one sin only !—how in all parts, in all houses, in all places, the profanation of his holy Name has been presumptuously practised, and the holy majesty of the Most High has been offended ?

Can we calculate how many blasphemies he has as yet passed by ; how many souls he has visited in judgment within these three hours for this sin ; how many he has cut off in the midst of their iniquity ; and *none* held *guiltless* who take his name in vain ! Who shall say, what hath passed before Him ! Well may we understand from such a scene, how the land may mourn because of swearing ; and well may we be astonished at the forbearing mercy of God, who yet continues the prospect of blooming beauty to our eyes, which first attracted our admiration when we commenced our walk.

We seemed now to have our minds filled with subjects which served us best for meditation, and we walked on in silence. All was quiet on the road, and it appeared, as if that one voice stopt, had left a calm, which none would venture to disturb.

As we pursued our way, my mind reflected upon the extraordinary depravity of our nature, which the profanation of the Name of God exhibits. What a sure and certain testimony of the alienation of our hearts from Him ! Could we bear to hear the name of a beloved and respected friend abused by all around us ? or would we adopt, as a mode of expressing our passions or indifference, the use of the name of a father or benefactor ? No ; all our natural feelings would revolt from the disrespect and familiarity. And yet, how few feel this towards the Name of God, in whom every blessing is comprehended, and from whom every vengeance may be inflicted ! How deceitfully has our desperately wicked heart brought us to a pitch of indifference and ignorance on this subject ; and how artfully has sañan, the

great blasphemer, insinuated his temptations, and by firing our evil tongues, made them to flame forth in this hateful offence. It is the flame of hell—It is the language of hell, the boiling lake of which heaves with blasphemy and curses, which it would dash against heaven itself, and were it possible, interrupt the acclamations of angels, and the blessings of God, and the happiness of the redeemed, whilst they, in everlasting peace and joy, bow the admiring head, and repeat the unceasing chorus, Holy ! holy ! holy !

If we were to compare ourselves to the different states of the spirits in heaven and the spirits in hell, we might gain a lesson ; and by examining to which we were most like, gain a timely warning.

Those who swear and profane God's name, should remember the *sentence*, " I will not hold him GUILTYLESS," saith the LORD OF SINAI. He spake it in a voice of thunder, and in the fire of his glory, under which the mountains trembled and smoked !

I suppose my friend's mind was engaged in a manner similar to my own, for I at length perceived we were walking at an amazing rate, urged by the impetuosity of our thoughts, and in consequence we were sooner at our friend's house than we expected.

She rose with lively pleasure to welcome us, as soon as our names were announced, and when we were seated, said,

I have felt the day short, although you have disappointed me by being so late ; but I assure you I have felt the whole time as if you had been actually in my company. You have given such a new turn to my thoughts by what passed this

morning, that I have been unconsciously led into a criticising examination of all my usual expressions, and am ashamed to say, that I find myself frightfully self condemned. It seemed as if all my words were set in array before me, and such an accumulated witness against me, whether it proceeded from a proper operation of conscience, or from that evil spirit which is called the Accuser. However, be that as it may, I take it thankfully, that before I stand in judgment before my God, of whom I have so lightly spoken, I have time given me for better thoughts, and for a reformation in my habits.

My dear cousin, said my friend, though my heart has felt to-day as if it had been pierced through with the arrows of the Almighty, I have a sweet and soothing consolation in hearing what you now say. (May the Lord work in your heart by his transforming grace, renewing your mind and perfecting your conviction.) It is written, for every *idle* word we must give an account; but of *profane* words against God's holy Name, it is written in terms of death, we shall not be held *guiltless*: there is something so tremendous in this addition which concludes the third commandment, that could I not turn to the voice of mercy which flowed from Jesus the Redeemer's lips, my soul would seem to die within me. But *He* has said, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. To that word I flee for refuge and hope.

But, I interrupted, it must be found in the way of *cleansing*, as well as in pardoning grace. The *blood* must be applied which shall *blot out* the foul transgression; and He who shed that

blood for our cleansing, when He *pardons*, will also *sanctify*.

I perceive, said our cousin, why you have so eagerly added this salutary remark. You are afraid I should *presume* on mercy; but I know that not one jot nor one tittle of the law shall pass away.

I confess the reason, and whilst we look upon the law as binding on our conscience, though divested of its terrors because of the Lamb slain, we may also observe how the gracious Saviour *confirms* that holy law by his word spoken to us when dwelling with us. "Swear not at all"—Let your yea be yea, and your nay nay. So that, not only the broad and daring sin of open oaths is forbidden, but, in the latter, all those violent or exaggerated expressions, which so often abound in the conversations of men, are directly reprov'd. Simplicity of language will always express the pure and simple sentiments of the heart.

I fancy, Henry, it is this simplicity of conversation, which has always given me such a kind of peaceful satisfaction, when it has been my lot to be in the company of those who may be truly styled Christians. I have always thought there was a peculiar charm in their conversation, without exactly understanding why, or, indeed, I am sorry to say, without having felt a perfect congeniality with them.

Charles said, You will, I think, always find, that in proportion to the inward reverence of God, there will be a sanctity of expression, without that studied formality which we sometimes see adopted. It becomes the genuine feeling of the true Christian to hallow that Name they love

and fear, and in which they feel so intense an interest as their Saviour God, by whom they are living in all the hope of salvation and expectation of eternal glory.

I then said, Now, my dear cousin, as you seem to have entered into our feelings, may we hope to enlist you under the same banner of zeal for the name of the Lord of Hosts? Will you in your circle endeavour to check the vice so prevalent, and to diffuse, by your watchful example, a reverential awe of the Name of God?

You propose what I fear I cannot engage to meet. How can I, who am but this moment alive to my own sin, pretend to admonish others, or hope to be able to set an example worthy of imitation.

I acknowledge it appears almost a premature request; but being alive to your own fault will keep you continually on the watch, and quick to detect; and by humbly undertaking, in the grace and strength of the Lord, whilst doing good to others, you will be receiving a benefit to yourself. Remember, what pity we should feel for those who manifest, by the wilful breach of this commandment, that they are not held guiltless. Point them to the blood of sprinkling, and see if they can trifle with the Name of Him who died to save!

I promise nothing; but I feel I have got a new subject of attention, to which henceforth I am persuaded I cannot be indifferent. I am sensible I have a GUILTY TONGUE. But come, it is time we thought of some refreshment for you.

CHAPTER III.

Juvenile Indiscretion.

THE conversation, which had passed, gave a kind of seriousness to the manner of our cousin, which, whilst it was exceedingly pleasing, as indicating a real feeling on the subject which occupied our minds, did not pass unobserved by her husband, who met us at the dinner table, and who in a short time said,

May I ask what makes you so *sober* to day, my dear?

The question for a moment seemed to embarrass his wife, but soon recollecting herself, and being of a remarkably frank and open disposition, she replied at once to the point,—The consideration of the many ways in which we break the third commandment.

God bless my heart! are you going to be a little Methodist?

Ah! she said, half starting and shrinking, My dear husband, you have just proved my words.

I proved your words! what do you mean, he inquired, in a tone of surprise.

She looked a little afraid, but her natural openness again helped her, and she said, As you have asked me the question, you will not be offended when I say, I think you used the language of prayer just now without knowing that you prayed.

They were on the best terms of mutual confi-

dence in each other ; and, not at all angry, he only appeared to be re-considering his speech ; but so far from the fault striking him, he said with a smile, I hope in God, my love, you are not growing crazy.

The flush of anxiety which suffused her cheek, as the last sentence was uttered, unravelled the mystery in a moment to his quick eye, and again smiling, he said,

O, I perceive, you like not the appeal to God : but you know, my dear, this is a foolish strictness ; we should want terms of expression were we to be so particular, and all the world would be guilty of offences such as these : they mean nothing at all : and I wish I may never have any worse sins to answer for.

She looked at me with an expressive supplication, as if she would say, Do, Henry, take up the argument for me : and at the same time, as I perceived a severe aspect in my friend, who seemed ready to take up the subject at the first proper opening, I immediately intruded my observation—

I think, my dear Sir, it would be well to consider this subject a little more minutely, for we are sometimes apt to adopt a common error into our own use, as though the sanction were of indubitable authority, because of the usual custom of men. I own I have thought as you, or rather I should say, I *acted without* thought at one time ; but now that I do really think, I cannot comply with the ungodly habit of unmeaning ejaculations in the Name of God.

If, he said, I meant any offence, of course I should condemn it as much as any man. But, as I said before, it means nothing at all : it is done

only to give a little animation to our observations, and I do not believe that God will be so strict to mark what is amiss, if it be amiss.

I dare say I might excuse myself in the same way, but we can never, you know, justify a positive breach of God's Law, by saying He will not notice it, especially when we all know the penalty of that breach is *Death*.

You come upon me quite unawares, he answered, and rather seriously too. It would be an extraordinary contradiction of the mercy of God, I think, if we could suppose death were annexed to an innocent exclamation in His Name.

My friend in a kind of under tone, not addressing any one, but appearing as if only uttering his inward meditation, said, The commandments of God are very strict and binding.—Whosoever breaketh the least of these commandments, that soul shall die, saith the Lord.—So then, it shall die (for God hath said it) for breaking the *least* commandment.—He paused, as if reflecting deeply, and his peculiar manner had rivetted the attention of us all upon him. Which *is* the *least* commandment, I wonder, he continued. The least! Is there one that *means* little? Is there one which, when we break it, shall not be *noticed*? No, for the *breach* of the *least* we shall die—and in breaking of *one*, God says we are guilty of all! Let me see—Is it likely that the Lord God will not take notice when we make mention of His Name? No, for that would destroy our hope in prayer. But what will he do if, when we mention it, we do not use it in prayer? Surely he will call it taking His Name in *vain*. Then this brings us upon the Third Commandment, for breaking of which we shall die.

It is not then a *little* thing to take that Name in vain, against which there is a special command. No ; besides, the Lord, as if to remind us doubly of the penalty, adds to this more than to the others, "For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain." Now it seems to me, that the Lord is very jealous of His great Name, and that it must be a *great* commandment to have this double denunciation of wrath upon it, and is certainly comprehended in what the Lord Jesus himself called the greatest commandment of all—To love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind, and soul and strength.

Again he paused—and at last, raising his eyes, and looking at me, he said, Henry, a thought just occurs to me, that this important commandment stands placed in a very peculiar situation :—observe the order of the commandments. The First commands us to have none other gods but He ; and the Second commands that we shall not make any representations for worship of such things, because I the Lord thy God am a jealous God : and then comes the Third, following these as a warning to those who own no other God, neither make to themselves idols, but *confessing* the one only True God, and chastely adhering to the worship of Him alone, shall yet be warned to take heed that that Name be not lightly, profanely, or blasphemously, used ; for if they who broke the two first were guilty, neither should he be held guiltless, who, though owning One only Name, should use it without reverence and devotion. Thus they seem to say—First, Thou shalt have but one God—Second, Therefore beware of making to thyself other gods—and

Third, Be mindful also that my Name be held in *sacred* remembrance, for we are to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts.

The idea was striking, and seemed to have interested the attention of our friend intensely; for though Charles now paused, as if he had concluded his remarks, he seemed to wait in eager expectation for what more might be said. As we all remained silent, Charles turned to him, and said, Forgive me, my dear Sir, if I call a remark of yours to your recollection. Did you not say you wished you might never have a worse sin to answer for? I believe you did. But if you take my view of the subject. I think you will no longer place it in a comparative light, with the object of making it better, or no worse, than others.

This direct application seemed to excite a little commotion, for the prophet's conviction, "*Thou art the man,*" is strongly repugnant to us all, being by nature self justifying and too proud to confess a fault. But as my friend continued to fix his eye upon him, as expressive of waiting an answer, he rather awkwardly said, as he played with his folk,

I really do not know—I—suppose not. But, assuming a higher tone, he added, I cannot help thinking you are a little hard upon me, for you must remember this is the first time I have had the subject presented to my mind, and not meaning harm, I still think I may be excused.

Pardon me, he replied, I would not offend—I speak merely as a matter of conscience, upon the plain meaning of the command of God, without any presuming intention to sit as a judge on any man; but I cannot help thinking, when we say

we mean no harm, or we mean nothing, or we use the sacred Name merely as a rhetorical ornament, we condemn ourselves out of our own mouth, and make a positive acknowledgment without intending it, that we are absolutely breaking the Third Commandment—that is, using the Name of God in vain.

Enough, enough, he answered, You are a good preacher, and, Felix like, I could say, I will hear thee further on this matter when I have a convenient season.

The asperity of the tone with which this was said, led me to think the subject had been pressed far enough at that moment, and I was sure an arrow had fixed from the quiver of the Lord, which, however painful at first, would afterwards prove a wholesome discipline, for it made too deep an impression to be hastily forgotten. And turning the conversation to indifferent topics, we were all soon at ease again with each other, and our repast was concluded without another exclamation in that sacred Name.

In the evening we had the children introduced to us: we were enlivened by their playful tricks. My friend had a particular love for children, and he entertained both himself and them by asking them Scripture questions, which they were eager to learn to answer. One of them surprising little Harriet, she exclaimed, My goodness! He involuntarily started, and drew the child to his breast, as if he would shield it from some imminent danger, and with a heavy sigh dropt his head. The movement, and the pause in the engagement, now astonished Clara, who going up to her mamma, said, Gracious me! mamma, what's the matter? Charles lifted up his head

again, and fixed a look on our cousin, which seemed to say, Hearest thou? She blushed deeply; and as I saw more would ensue, I endeavoured to draw off the attention of the father to some other subjects; but I perceived, whilst he put on the appearance of attending to me, he was watching the result with a secret desire to understand.

In a low voice Charles said, My cousin, have you not read, Wo unto him that offendeth one of these little ones? Do you not trace the origin of these unsanctified expressions, and know to what they will lead?

Talk to the children, Charles, she said; I will listen as one of them.

He then drew the children to him, putting his arms round them; and placing them on each side of his knee, with the most benignant, yet serious countenance, he said,

Hear me now, dear children, I am going to speak for God.

Are you? said Harriet.

Yes. Do you remember, my dear, but just now I taught you to answer that question, What are you by nature?

Yes, and I said, A Sinner.

Did I convince you how it came to pass that you were so?

Yes, Through Adam's transgression.

Did I ask you if you had any proof of being so in your ownself?

Yes, you told me whenever I *did wrong*, or had a *wrong thought*, I proved it.

Did I not lead you to *confess* that very often you did wrong things, and thought bad thoughts?

Yes.

Did I tell you there was no good thing in you, and that there is none good but One, that is, God?

Yes.

Then why, dear child, when surprised, did you immediately after say, "My goodness!" You contradicted me directly, and set up your goodness, as though you would not believe God's word.

O, I did not mean to contradict you, did I, mamma? Do not we *often* say so? Were you angry with me for *that*?

I cannot say I was *angry*, Harriet, but I was grieved in my heart, because I love's God's holy Name, and I love your soul, and I do not like to hear you either speaking a lie, or breaking the Third Commandment.

How did I do that?

You spoke a lie if you meant to talk of your goodness, of which you have none, for in you, the Scripture says, that is, in your flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Or if you did but know it, and you ought to know it, "My Goodness" is a title given to God,—and so you took that Name in vain, for you did not even think of God.

I never thought of that, Charles, said her mamma. But now you mention it, I recollect David's beautiful address to God, in the 144th Psalm, where he blesses God.

Yes, it is so. Hearken, Harriet: this is the way David, the man after God's own heart, speaks to God whom he loved, and worshipped, "Blessed be the Lord my *Strength*, my *GOODNESS*, and my *Fortress*, my *High Tower*, and my *Deliverer*, my *Shield*, and He in whom I trust." Do not forget these Names, and especially as you have

often used that one, remember "My Goodness" is God's title, and Goodness is His attribute.

He then put his hand under Clara's chin to raise her eyes, which she had dropt, saying,

Did not Clara too say *Gracious me?* All that I have said to Harriet may be said to you. Are *you* gracious?

No.

Who is Gracious?

God.

Now then listen, and I will repeat one beautiful passage in the Bible, where God revealed his Name to that faithful servant of his, Moses, whom He called His friend:—"And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the NAME OF THE LORD: and the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed—THE LORD, THE LORD GOD *Merciful* and GRACIOUS, Longsuffering, and abundant in GOODNESS and Truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." And turning to their mamma, he said, Mark this, my cousin,— "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Now remember, Clara, *you* are not gracious—it is God's attribute, and in Him only can you be made so, as an object of Grace. Then again turning to their mamma—I beseech you, Fanny, "Give ear to God's commandments:" your sin is *already* upon your children, when they learn these unholy expressions from you. The next step will be, they will take God's name in vain, in a more avowed and formal manner. *My goodness* will soon become GOOD GOD! and *gracious*

me will soon become GRACIOUS GOD. They will get a zest for these unholy ways of expressing exaggerated feelings, and the God whom we trifle with, in mockery of the lips, will visit for this sin, and when our calamity cometh, He will mock.

Their father by this time had dropt even the appearance of attending to me, and was wholly engrossed by what he heard from Charles, who, now pausing, left a moment of silence, which he broke in a whisper to me—

Charles is a most extraordinary man ; he interests me, though he offends me, and I feel a power of truth in his words. Poor children !— he then sighed, looking tenderly towards them,— May my sins never rest on their heads ! Then, as if he would cast away the painful reflection, Come, he said, in an assumed tone of cheerfulness, it is time for the children to go to bed, my dear. The bell was rung, and they were given in charge to their maid.

The departure of these little ones, I said, reminds us, Charles, that we have a walk to take homewards ; it is time we set out.

True, he answered, and shaking hands with our friends, we were soon once again under the canopy of heaven.

It was a mild and beautiful night. The evening breeze “blew softly”—a few of the principal stars were visible, though the fading day-light yet lingered on the skies.

Such a night as this, I said, my friend, tell us that God yet thinks on mercy.

Yes, as David says, Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge ; and we can in his beautiful language call upon

the inanimate creation to do, what we do not find in the heart of men to do : we invoke the stars, as the creation of God, to praise their Maker,—“ Praise Him, all ye stars of light !” And see ! another tongue of praise is lifted up !—directing me to the quarter where the broad moon was just emerging from the dark cloud in the edge of the horizon —See the emblem of the Church of God, rising, as if in holy emulation, to tell the glory of Him whose light is reflected in her. See, my friend, to what we should be like ! As the moon is styled the faithful witness in heaven, witnessing to the light and glory of the sun, should not we witness, by His image upon us, that He who bowed on Calvary, and laid by his glory, is still the living, glorious Lord, who shineth upon us in His light, and riseth upon us with healing in his wings ? Were we like this beautiful emblem of the Church, we should come out of darkness into His marvellous light, and in speech, like unto the orbs of heaven, utter his praises to the uttermost parts of the earth. Should we *then* take His holy Name in vain, by whom we are illuminated, and confound the language of heaven with the speech of hell ? No, in one uniform desire to “ let our light shine before men,” we should glorify our Father who is in heaven.”

Our attention was at this moment drawn from the skies to the earth, by strains of simple vocal music. We stopt to listen : the notes seemed of *sacred* sound, and we shortly heard in the swelling breeze the following lines of that Hymn, which has so sweetly set David's meditation to English poetry :—

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
 The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
 And, nightly, to the list'ning earth,
 Repeats the story of her birth:
 Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
 And all the planets, in their turn,
 Confirm the tidings, as they roll,
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in solemn silence, all
 Move round the dark, terrestrial ball;
 What, though no real voice nor sound,
 Amid their radiant orbs be found;
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice,
 For ever singing, as they shine,
 "The hand that made us is divine."

Ah, said Charles, this is as it should be. Some holy souls are excited by the glorious handy-work of their God to join the chorus of the praises of the skies! O, I could linger here! How sweet, to hear the heart attuned to God!—We remained until all again was silent—but the heavens; and then moving on, I said, as we entered our abode,

The strains of the kingdom of Glory *never* cease; there is no *night* there, and no weariness—Worship is everlasting enjoyment, and Praise is eternal Rest!

CHAPTER IV.

The Suffering Waggoner.

NOTWITHSTANDING the close of our eventful day had been so sweetly soothing, I passed a most disturbed night. The visions of heavenly praise and peace were frequent, but they were often chased away by the apparent sound of the perturbed spirit of blasphemy, and thus I was kept in a constant agitation between holy rapture and awful dismay. But it was not an unprofitable exercise for my soul. In my slumberings on my bed, I seemed to have been forming a comparative estimate of the guilt of the one and of the sanctity of the other, so that to use Elihu's sentiment, it was as if God by his voice had *sealed* my instruction. It was, therefore, natural, that in the morning, one of my earliest engagements should be to visit the wretched waggoner, and inquire after his state, intending to return in time for my friend's breakfast hour.

By a little inquiry I soon found out his abode, which was a wretched looking place, from the ruinous condition into which it had fallen. By a string outside the door, I lifted the wooden latch, and, none hindering, entered. By the fireside sat a woman of a large and masculine stature. She had thrown her head back on her chair, and was fast asleep. I concluded she was either the wife or a nurse who had been watching all night, and overcome by fatigue, had dropt

asleep for a few minutes. With this idea, I was unwilling to awake her, and fearing my step should alarm her suddenly, drew back and gently closed the door again. My precaution, however, did not avail; she heard the movement, and hastily coming to the door, made this imperative inquiry—Who the devil's there? The language made me shrink, and in a moment told me a tale of direful import.

What did you please to want, Sir?

Asking her to excuse the unintentional interruption, I told her my errand was to see the poor man who was so hurt, and who I suppose is your husband.

That's true, she replied, we've been wed these nine years, and a pretty ends come on't at last.

As I wished to learn a little of the character of these people, I made no observation which might seem to prevent her free communication.

We shall be out of bread long enough now, if it may be he ever mends. I've listened to nought but groans all night, and was wearied out when you came to the door, sir.

I am sorry I awoke you out of a sleep which might have refreshed you.

O that's nought. It's that cursed lock won't hold the door.

Why do you call it a *cursed* lock.

Why I don't know, its a way I've got when things anger me.

Let me tell you it's a bad way.

A scowl of black shade came over her face, as her eye flashed an instant resentment, though she evidently did not wish it to be seen.

Can you let me see your husband?

Why yes, if you've a mind, sir; but we ha'n't a chamber fit for you to come in.
It is not the chamber, but your husband I want to see.

Why then, if you'll go up yon stairs, only mind that beam of light that's broken in.

My head sickened as I mounted. I felt as if I were going to the haunt of evil spirits, and indeed, I had no doubt such in reality it beca' that the name of them was "Legion, for they were many."

I approached gently, but what a spectacle I saw! wretchedness and poverty all round, and the man scarcely wearing a human visage—pale and bruised, and burning fever evidently lying on him. I spoke, but he either could not hear, or was insensible. I could do nothing; he was out of the reach of human counsel or comfort, and now none could deal with him but the Lord, or, alas! the evil one. As I gazed on this miserable object, I could not but contemplate his son's condition, so much worse than that of his body. Who, thought I, is now within him! Is there the Holy Spirit convincing of sin, or an evil spirit strengthening sin? Is there the Prince and Saviour giving repentance, or the power of darkness hiding it from his eyes! Alas! I received my answer—his tongue began to utter low tones, and then in rapid and higher utterance, a string of blasphemous oaths was flung out of his mouth without connexion and without provocation. I dare scarcely call them to mind, and much less dare I detail the defiling expressions. It seemed as if Satan used him as an instrument to assault my ears, and grieve my heart, by the catalogue of hell's blasphemies. I should have hasten-

he hearing him, ed out of the chamber, but his went, without came up. She listened a short rather ears and any expression of surprise or fear, sounds that heart were evidently unmoved by as to know made me shudder. She looked anxio

if he was *sensible*, but at last she said fever, I

He only raves, he's maddled with. If he'd think he knows nought. The doctor come soon.

Are you anxious for his recovery ?

I'se like, for he's all our dependence.

I wish he *may* recover, but it does not apply to me very probable.

Do you think not ? why then it'll go bad, with us !

How do you think it will go with *him*, if he dies ?

Why, it's the way of all flesh, and may be it's better as it's happened ; for if he lives he'll be a cripple most like, and he could do nought for his bread, and the parish will do nought, because we've been better to do once, and we have this home of our own, and a pretty home it is ! it's tumbling about our ears, and we've nought to prop it up with ; but it'll be down soon, and then I shall have neither husband nor house, and they *must* allow us something. Though, when I applied for relief once before, when he was ill of a kick from one of the horses, they would do nought ; but I cursed them to their face, for a set of hard-hearted parish overseers.

To tell you the truth, I think it looks as if there was a *curse* in the *house*, it's rotten with curses.

She looked angry, and in a sullen tone said, May be it's as wholesome as a *finer man's*.

Very likely, if that finer man is one like you and your wretched husband ; and loads himself and his house with curses of his own invention ; for a man that delights himself in cursing, will be cursed in riches as well as in poverty. You know it is a great God you call upon to curse you, and he can answer to the full all your desire. Suppose now I was to tempt you to call upon God most solemnly to send down his curse on you, and on all that you have, and to seal your doom with everlasting damnation in hell, would you do it ?

It's fine talking ; as if such a thing was likely.

You ought to know that you *do so*, however, though God forbid that I should provoke you to it. I never knew either you or your husband before yesterday, and if I were to write down all that I have heard you and him say in these few hours, you would perhaps be surprised to see how many miseries and calamities you have called upon God to send down. And do you not think he *hears* ? He that planted the ear, will he not hear ? Did you ever humbly ask God to *bleſs* you ?

Nay, marry ! we want no canting hypocrisy ; and when ought vexes me, I like to let it out at once, and pay it off as it deserves.

You do not know your Bible ?

Bible ! Nay, we've som'at else to do.

Then you may as well hear a word whilst you can. God has written in that sacred book, " This is the curse that goeth over the face of the whole earth, and every one that sweareth shall be *cut off*." I pointed to her husband, and she listened, " I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my Name." Here

I looked round about the room, and pointing to the decaying roof, and the broken beam, continued, "And it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall *consume it with the timbers thereof and the stones thereof.*" Now I can verify the truth of God's word, for so it is; for you and your husband are wicked sinners, and break God's solemn commandment, and load your tongues with guilt.

Again she looked resentment, but spake not, though she seemed to bite her GUILTY TONGUE with anger.

Do you know the commandments of God? one of which is, "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." And every friend of sinners should remind the man that delights in cursing, that God hath said, "So shall it *happen* to him; as he loved cursing, so let it *come* unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be *far* from him; as he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it *come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.* Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually." Did you ever hear these awful words before?

We were here interrupted by another raving burst from the husband—O, I said, take warning! There lies before us the very example of all I have told you, and does it not strike your hard heart with some terror, when you hear these ravings of a delirious and wicked mind? It is the abundance of his blaspheming heart, which is full of nothing but curses and oaths, which is now pouring out, when he has no consciousness

to restrain it, and no cause to excite it : perhaps he is sensible of pain ; but this is the way that the evil spirits express their suffering ; they blaspheme God in their torment, and their rage.

The woman heard all I said, and looked in a kind of amazement, but did not appear to *soften* in the least.

Alas ! I said, there appears a curse upon your heart. Will you not for once in your life ask a blessing, and beseech the Lord Jesus, who will forgive all kinds of blasphemy, to turn your hard heart, and grant you deliverance from the curses you have called down on yourselves ! Your husband now, most probably, can *never* pray : *you* still live and have your natural senses. Beware of that day when your *tabernacle of that body* shall fall down in the dust, and you be unable, even in the time of your calamity, to gain a single blessing from the Lord. Suppose in that day He shall laugh and have you in derision.

There was an awful sort of apathy about the woman. She seemed as though she had not understanding for the words of warning, and intimated she would hear no more, by abruptly saying, I wish the doctor would come.

And why will you not wish for a heavenly physician ?

At that moment the doctor arrived. He came up, looked at the man, shook his head. I fear it's a bad case.

The man again began to rave ; and as though driving his waggon, repeated all his customary dreadful language.

The doctor said, The man has such an awful unquiet mind, that he increases his own danger ; he cannot speak in this manner without exciting

increase of fever ; he is in a complete agitation of body, though he cannot move ; his heart beats with passion.

I fear, doctor, you have no medicine that will quiet that pulsation !

No ; what human skill can pacify that raging breast ? I am pretty well used to all sorts of sights, and all sorts of dying beds, but I own the death of a blasphemer will appal my soul more than any thing. When I see them in the power of the invisible almighty grasp of God, and toiling and raging to loose themselves from the hand that will not let them go, but that is determined upon taking their breath out of their nostrils, I have sometimes shook with fear, and fancied I could see the evil spirits grinning in ghastly satisfaction, waiting with eager impatience, and fiery hands, to receive their prey, when once the great God sets the soul loose, to be taken by them to its own place.

What an awful picture to be presented to your mind. But I declare to you, at this moment, and in the presence of this the wife of that wretched man, that I feel as though there were fiends in the room.

And who can cast them out ? This unhappy couple have always seemed to me to be saying, What have I to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ! I have often warned them both ; and but the other day, told that man he would come to some wretched end. His answer was, I'll warrant you, doctor, I'll call for a blessing before I die.

Did he keep his word ? I said, turning to his wife.

Nay, I heard nought of it, she replied sulkily.

Do you remember what I just now told you, God says in his word? As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be *far from him*.

Well, if he's to die, you might as well let him die in peace.

Peace! I said, What peace, saith my God, to the wicked! Is there a sign of peace in either that body or soul? And seeing he is out of our reach to help, I would have left this affecting scene before, but for the hope of putting before you, some of those Scripture truths, which, by God's blessing, may perhaps even reach your heart. I would fain hope *your* end may not be such as *his*, but that a blessing may yet be sought for your soul, in the blood of Jesus, and sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

Wishing the doctor good morning, with an oppressed heart I left the house, and could not help thinking of the words in Prov. iii. 33, The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.

As I went on my way, I was met by a boy running with remarkable swiftness from a man who was following, and who seemed likely to overtake him. There was an expression of great terror in the boy, and the man loudly called in a great passion, Stop! wishing in the awful language of blasphemy, that God would damn his soul. I instantly placed myself in the way, and, impeding his progress, gave the boy a little advantage.

What's the matter, man, I said, why have you asked such an awful thing of God?

Don't hinder me, Sir, that little rascal has been cursing and swearing at my little Peter,

and I'll give him a round for it, if I can but catch him.

Stop, stop. It was a great crime in the lad, he deserves to be punished ; but I am afraid you are not the man to do it.

Why not, Sir ? None so fit as me, I *heard* the dog ; and he muttered another word in his teeth, which was the same as that I first heard him speak. He sha'n't curse and swear at *my* boy without getting something for his pains.

Come, come, I said, be pacified a little whilst I tell you something. He will certainly get his punishment in a more severe way than perhaps you *intended* when you called for the worst that could happen to him ; and that dreadful thing may happen to him, unless some kind friend will chastise him in time. But you seem to me to be more angry at the insult put upon your boy, than at the sin of the boy against his own soul.

Why, *I* have nothing to do with *his* soul ; he and his father may look to that ; but I *have* to do to revenge for my own lad, when he's abused.

You are very angry because you heard him abuse your child. And do you not think there is one who will be angry with *you*, having without any doubt *heard your* oaths, and desires of damnation on the soul of that wretched boy ? Would you like to see his curse sealed before your eyes ? Depend upon it, God is angry with you, and will follow *hard* after *you* with wrath and indignation. Death is pronounced upon all who transgress the commandments, and especially upon those who take God's holy Name in vain, or for wicked purposes.

Do you think now you are a fit person to take the chastisement of that boy upon yourself, when

for every curse he uttered you will perhaps utter double, and so whilst you would deal blows on his body, you teach him a whole catalogue of blasphemies from your own mouth, and exhibit yourself before his eyes as an object of God's anger, laying up for yourself an *even* recompense on your own head—stripe for stripe, and curse for curse—breaking the sacred charge of God, Not to render cursing for cursing.

He looked somewhat pacified and self-condemned. I therefore urged upon him the consideration, that every word we speak is of such consequence that we shall be called upon to give an account even of idle words; and that for every blasphemy, we have the positive certainty of guilt before God. I do not offend you, I hope.

No, sir, no.—It hadn't need; when my passion's off, I can hear reason.

Well then, you encourage me to speak on, and to ask you, if you do not see, by these two consequences attached to one word, that it is very evident you have one, even God, keeping watch over us, and that there must be a register of the offences of our lips, which, if not cancelled, will one day be opened and brought against us? I waited, intending to induce an answer. Do you not know this?

Why, to be sure, it's plain reasoning.

Well then, that boy's register may be produced against him, but that will not at all prevent the register of *your* sins appearing against *you*. You excuse yourself on the ground of being provoked, but this will not alter the sin that went out of your lips. There is a hand writing against you, and except the Lord Jesus in mercy take it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross, whercon the

blood of atonement and cleansing was shed, it can never be blotted out.

I believe that's true.

Now then, thank God, that He has been pleased to set these things before your eyes ; and whilst it is called to-day, seek grace to change your passionate heart, and to pardon your GUILTY TONGUE. Go back to your own son ; remember what a sad example you have set him ; confess the wickedness of it, to the child, and endeavour to teach him, that all manner of blasphemy, cursing and swearing, are abominable to God, and that they mark the soul that is guilty of them as in alliance with hell. Save your boy, if you can, from the evil of the evil communication he has this day received, lest the curses you heaped on the head of the other, fall on you, and through *you*, light on *him*. Let your revenge be turned against yourself in stern indignation for your own sin, and in working patience and carefulness in you for the future. Go, and see if you can wipe out the stain from his ear and mind, with which your tongue envenomed them. Love your own boy with a father's *true* love, and *bless* him.

The man's lip trembled, and his eyes swam with the tear of parental affection ; he drew the back of his hand across his eyes ; I patted him persuasively on the shoulder, and pursued my way.

I heard his footsteps behind, and he soon passed before me with a quick step. He touched his hat as he passed, and before he had measured many steps, I heard him blow his nose with that kind of sound that indicates the suffusion of pungent feeling.

My prayers followed him, that he might henceforth "Swear not at all."

especially, and be so engraven in your hearts, that it may be the rule of your conversation with each other henceforth.

When you are inclined to make strong asseverations, and to justify yourselves as speaking truth, by calling God to witness, or pledging your *word*, or your *life*, to confirm your assertions, it is a proof that you are not simple yourself, and that you think your friend not to be so: and when others require of you to give satisfaction of the truth of your word by these wicked devices, it is altogether a proof that the lying wickedness of the heart is so well known, and so commonly evidenced, that man can have no confidence with man; and then the devil, taking advantage of one sin to urge to the commission of another, impels deceitful men to become blasphemers, and to transgress the commands of God.

Then I have often overheard you say to each other, "May I never speak another word if it is not true—I'll lose my head if it is not so—I'll lay my life it is so—As true as I'm alive—As true as God hears me—As God's my witness it is so." Now all this *cometh of evil*; it cometh of a lying heart, and a blaspheming tongue.

Why cannot you be content to say, Yea yea, nay nay? *Truth* is always *simple*, and piety will always be obedient. *Truth* has said enough in Yes and No, and piety will not presume to break the law of the Lord. And the humble and informed man knows he has no right to *pledge his life* or his *head*, nor to put his privilege of speaking another word on his own veracity, nor dares to appeal to God in an irreverent and unmeaning manner, upon every light and foolish

question, in which his fellow creature shall think fit to doubt his word.

Learn then, to "Sanctify the Lord God in your heart"—to "Speak truth one with another"—to "Think no evil," for whosoever swear-eth by any device, is committing evil, and the Lord says, "Swear not at all:" neither by *heaven*, for it is *God's* throne; neither by the *earth*, for it is *his* footstool; neither by *Jerusalem*, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by *thy head*, for thou canst not make one hair white nor black. But let your conversation be yea yea, nay nay; for whatsoever is more than these *cometh* of *EVIL*.

At first you may have some difficulty to overcome. One will be, your own natural propensity to make these appeals and asseverations, to give, as you imagine, more strength to your assertion; but this argues a sense of your own word being justly doubtful. Another difficulty will be the backwardness of others to give credit to what you say; but this condemns you as liable to suspicion. You must overcome both by an habitual simplicity of expression, which, in a little time, will not only gain the credit of others, but will give you more assurance of your own integrity of purpose. So that in time you may be able to say as St. Paul, With me it is not yea *and* nay, that is, not a swearing, deceitful, and changeable mind, or the *same* thing to say yea *and* nay; but what is yea is yea, and what is nay, nay. And thus by grace we attain to some similitude to the image, into which, as children of God, we are destined to be conformed, even to Him who is *THE TRUTH*, whose word is yea and amen for ever!

I hope also, my friends, you will find in me, as your earthly master, one ready to believe your simple yea or nay, upon any occasion when I may have to question you, whilst I observe in you a watchful spirit over yourselves, remembering whom you serve, even the Lord Christ, who is alike the Master of us all. And so we may be helpers of each other's faith and obedience in the way of truth and uprightness. I desire that I and my house may serve the Lord, and be under the government of his holy law: and that we should keep up a lively and practical recollection of the third commandment, in the fear of God, and in the love of his precepts, that we may escape the condemnation of the GUILTY TONGUE.

We then bent our knees with him before the Throne of Grace; and I believe from the appearance of serious attention all had shewn to the address of my friend, that all with sincerity of heart accompanied him in his prayer for a renewed heart, to *hallow* the sacred Name of God, and to keep the issues of the heart and the door of the lips. In simplicity of mind to speak the truth always, in words void of offence, in the ear of God, that through the grace and wisdom of our Lord we might order our conversation aright, and "fear that glorious and fearful Name, **THE LORD THY GOD**"

When all were withdrawn, turning to me, he said, Now Henry, I will tell you what has given rise to the reflections I have just made with my family.

As I supposed you to be gone to inquire after the miserable waggoner, I thought I would take a short walk the mean time. I turned my steps

the opposite way, and, as usual, my heart was soon elevated by the contemplation of the works of God, and in the strains of David, I could not help saying, "Unto Thee, O God, do I give thanks, unto Thee do I give thanks, for, that thy NAME IS NEAR thy wondrous works declare!" Under the present state of my mind, it was a peculiarly sweet reflection, which seemed to convey a balm into my soul, that that Name, which is so often blasphemed by sin and wicked men, is *still near* to those who love the Name, and that He condescends, in infinite love, to draw us into the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, through *communion* with that Name, Father, Son, and Spirit, Jehovah!

I was interrupted in my meditation by a knot of young boys, who in earnest contention, uttered some words, which seemed to tell me they had no thought of that *Name so near*: they seemed of the ages from eight to twelve; and there were three apparently opposed to two. As I drew nearer, I observed three to be in excessive passion, whilst one of the others looked with a calm steadfastness, that was perfectly dignified; and the one who appeared his friend, was earnest in persuading him to something.

You *did* take it then.

I told you I did *not*.

Will you *swear* it?

I didn't take it

Swear it then, said another.

He dare not swear it.

Will you swear it by God?

Why should I *swear* it? I've told you I didn't take it.

I won't believe you if you won't swear it.

Do swear it, said his friend, and *end* it.

Why should I swear it? I've said *no*, and that's enough.

All the three then began to pour out of their young mouths, volleys of oaths, and abuse, with voices in imitation of men: nor did there seem a curse nor a blasphemy with which they were unacquainted. God and the devil were alike invoked to bring down curses on him and themselves; threatening to thump him as long as they could stand over him.

As they approached him with double fists, the boy reddened with resentment, and his eyes flashing with indignant fire. Stand off! he said, in an authoritative tone. I won't strike *first*, but I'll let you see I can *defend* myself.

Swear it then, and we'll let you alone.

If you come on me like *devils*, I'll say no more than *no*; I've told you the *truth*.

His spirit and firmness arrested them.

One of them with a curse in his teeth, said again, Why don't you swear?

For a reason, he replied, it seems you don't know; and all I wish is, that you'd leave me to myself, for I *hate* your blasphemies.

Oh, Oh! the biggest boy cried, A saint! a saint! a saint! This turned the current of their abuse, and now they all with *one* voice vociferated, A saint! a saint! pointing the finger of scorn.

Though my spirit groaned within me at the sight and sound, my attention was chiefly fixed upon the boy, who stood so firmly to his point. I was in a moment amongst them, and the three, taking alarm from my countenance, caught up their sticks, and ran off like lightning, before I

could get hold of any. I did not pursue, as I expected to find them out afterwards, and I was anxious to know a little of "*the saint.*"

I laid my hand on his head, and said, What do they call you, my boy?

George, sir, he replied with readiness, but his voice still in agitation.

Where do you live?

There, sir, pointing to a house near the end of the lane.

You have had a strong contest with those sons of Belial.

Yes, sir, I'm glad they're gone.

Tell me, George, why you would not yield to them when they wanted you to swear?

Because, sir, I'm afraid to offend God, and my father and mother always bid me be careful not to swear.

How then came you to be in company with such boys?

I wasn't in company, sir, I only pass'd by just when they lost their ball, and they would have it that I pick'd it up, and they wouldn't believe me when I said I hadn't.

Why did you not give them some stronger assurance without swearing?

Because, sir, father says, Remember what the Lord says, "Let your conversation be yea yea, nay nay, for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil;" and he charges me to take notice, if they won't believe me for yes or no, that they only want to tempt me, and after all wouldn't believe me a bit the more for any more words; and so, sir, if they won't believe yes or no, I'm not going to say any more.

But suppose they had all set upon you, would

you have remained steady to the point, without being afraid?

Why, sir, father says, George, mind you fear not them who, after they have killed the body, have no more that they can do; fear Him, who when he hath killed the body can cast both body and soul into hell. So, sir, I tried to set the law of God before me, and I hope I'd ha' bit my tongue out before I'd sworn an oath to please them.

Well, my lad, your father has taught you well by the rule of God's word, and God, in faithfulness to his promise, has given a blessing to his instruction. You owe much to such a father, and more to your heavenly Father, who gave you strength, and simplicity to *keep* his word.

I'm sure of that, sir, for I'm frightened when I hear such words as the boys used. I feel that I could soon learn them if God was to leave me to myself, and they are very catching, even when one don't mean it, and so by keeping to father's great rule of yea yea and nay nay, I'm saved from falling into that way of wicked words.

Now when he repeated this, which has always been a favourite scripture with me, I was exceedingly impressed by the present application, and walking on with the boy I remained silent, meditating upon the depth of this great rule. He perceiving my mind engaged, set off in a trotting run homewards, and was soon at his father's cottage door.

I was too much pleased and edified by my new acquaintance, not to desire to know more of him, and to see, face to face, parents who so wisely and piously trained this boy to mark the

word of God. I therefore followed, and, though I had little more time, determined to gain an introduction, which will I hope lead to a better acquaintance.

It is a neat little cottage with a garden in front, which seems to have been taken from the waste ground, in beautiful neatness; potatoes growing, and a few cabbages, and in a bed along the front of the house some pretty flowers, all neatly trained, with a white rose and woodbine nailed against the wall, and hanging about the window. I like to see the exhibition of industry, neatness, and taste in these little dwellings, and could not help thinking it was an indication of the consistency and order of the family within.

I looked over the little gate just in time to say, Good morning, to the father, before he shut to his door, for he had met his boy, and they went in together talking to each other.

He came back to answer my salutation, and I said, I came on purpose to have the pleasure of telling you your boy has remembered this morning the great rule of the Lord, "Let your conversation be yea yea, and nay nay," as I had the profit of witnessing.

I thank you kindly, sir, he said, bowing his head with a civil demeanour; I am glad when I hear my lad keeps the word of God in his heart.

I thought that the father who teaches his son so well, would like to know that his "Labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Thank you, thank you kindly, sir, he answered; and as I had not more time to stay, I asked

if I might come again, and talk with him on the words of the Lord, and then took leave.

I propose to myself great pleasure in this acquaintance, for the rule he has given to his boy, proves that he is no superficial professor, but has dived into the depths of the heart, and understands the radical remedy of laying the axe at the *root* of the offence. I have frequently observed, simple minds have often an acuteness of discernment, which a man puzzled with more of human wisdom fails to attain; and whilst he would range over the exterior branches, spending his time in trimming and pruning, but producing no effectual cure, the simple mind will in one view perceive where the disease rises, and by applying the axe to the right spot, hew the whole away.

We sat a little while, conversing on the wonderful effects which are produced on humble and unlearned men, through the study of the Word of God—how they gain a wisdom which confounds the wise and proud of the earth: and then my friend proposed we should walk together, saying,

I have my mind and heart so full of our undertaking that I feel a kind of restless missionary zeal, which prompts me to be looking to the haunts of men, and to be continually watching against the Guilty tongue, that we may, by the Lord's blessing, warn them of God's judgment.

My own feelings being in complete accordance with his, we were soon on the way which led to a little village on the side of the hill.

Men talk much, I said, of the innocence and purity of the country people, let us inquire whether that innocence and purity, with which

they would invest them, leads to a reverence of the Name of God.

Alas ! he replied, when men speak so, it always grieves me to the soul, as proving their want of knowledge of the human heart. What is man ? Can the situation in which he lives, or any earthly atmosphere that he breathes, change the original nature of his birth ?—a creature who, in all situations, is “conceived in sin”—“shapen in iniquity”—“born in sin,” corrupt in nature, ignorant of God, deceived in himself ! Can such a one be innocent and pure, because they are peasants, or because they dwell in fields, or among woods, or in a village ?

Look over the hedge, there is a ploughman coming down the furrow, let us wait until he is nearer—he is alone, and looks as purely a countryman as any I ever saw. He is preparing his ground, in hope, for the seed, with a beautiful extensive fallow before him, and all around the rich luxuriance of the bounties of God's blessings on his preceding labour. His patient horses, obedient to his training, and his word, are pacing slowly down the hill—we might imagine his mind to be occupied in reflection on the goodness of the Lord, who sends his sun and rain and dews to mellow the soil, and fructify the seed, and ripen the grain, and crown the labour of his hand with the blessed increase—who tames the animals under his command, and gives them an intuitive intelligence to know the meaning of his words, that they will turn to the right or to the left, move on or stand still, pull slow when caution is necessary, or redouble their exertions where more strength is required. Surely he will be giving thanks, or rendering praise, or delight-

ing himself in that "merry heart" which sings psalms, for every thing around him is calculated to inspire devotion, and to show him on whom he is dependent.

We admired the horses as they came down, with their broad breasts and strong shoulders, and soon caught the sounds of a short whistle from the man, and then a few words which he sung. Harken! There is no *sacred* sound there! *Unholy* words! His mind is evidently *not with God*. He drew near, and checked his horses a moment, then vehemently urging them to pull, they put to their strength. He was now wanting them to turn, and they quietly obeyed, but he finding some difficulty in getting them in the exact line for the return of the plough, immediately began to call God's curse and damnation on the horses: he lashed them with passion, and by his own unreasonable pulls and words impeded their otherwise willing steps. They turned their ears back in the most expressive attention to catch the direction of this wicked tongue, and to be prepared by the too well known language, to escape the lash by anticipating his desires. At last they got into the right line, and pushed on up the hill with amazing vigour, and with the unthankful and blasphemous accompaniment of the reiterated oaths and curses of the ploughman, which distance soon took beyond our hearing.

Now, said my friend, let the romantic and the unscriptural imagination receive its confutation, and behold the *innocence* and *purity* of the *countryman*!

O but you will recollect, they will say he is

contaminated by the vicinity of this village to the town.

Very well, so they may, but let them say how these *innocent* and *pure* people happen to *take* contamination? and let them extend their inquiries to the most remote parts of the kingdom—and I hesitate not to assert, that wherever God is not absolutely and avowedly worshipped in Spirit and in Truth, they will invariably find the evil nature of man broadly denying the assertion of his innocence, by the fact of the guilt of his tongue in the breach of the Third Commandment of God.



CHAPTER VI.

The idle little Girl, and the Profane Farmer.

On entering the village, we were pleased by the sight of a neat, modest-looking woman, sitting at the door of her cottage, and a fine little girl at the step beside her. They were both sewing, and as we drew near, the girl said,

Mother, when I've done these wristbands, will you put them on that shirt for father?

Yes, Mary, if you get 'em done in time.

Then I will, mother.

But *saying* you will won't *do* 'em: you've been a long time about 'em

But I *will*; I should like father to have *my* wristbands.

You want pleasure without trouble: he'll never wear 'em if you don't do 'em.

They take a *deal of doing* though, mother.

Talk less and do more, and they'll get done: father wants a new shirt, and we must work hard.

We were tempted to join the conversation. Can your little girl sew *neatly*? I said to the mother.

She looked up, and with a pretty mild smile, said, I hope she will, Sir, with more practice.

Will you get your wristbands done, little Mary?

Yes, I will *indeed*—*I'm sure* I will.

Hush, Mary, said her mother, looking very chidingly, What do you say so *much* about it for? If you will, you will: you've no occasion to say *indeed*, and *I'm sure*; you're not at all sure—no more am *I*; and I think *now* you won't do 'em.

The child looked ashamed, and hanging down her head, began twist her work round her fingers.

May I ask why you rebuked little Mary for saying “indeed, and I'm sure?”

Because, Sir—(look at her now)—if she'd meant what she said, when she said I will, she would have plied herself to her work; and then she wanted to hide her idleness by making many words. She knows what her uncle tells her, to be content to say—*Yea, yea, Nay, nay*, and then she would learn to mind truth.

Who is her uncle? inquired my friend.

They call him John Smith, and he lives but a little way off: he's a great comfort to me, Sir, in many a sorrow; and oft instructs me how to manage my children by the rule of God's holy word,—he's my *husband's* brother, Sir. She sighed, and resuming her employment, I per-

ceived she had bent her head to hide a tear, which dropt on her work, and, wetting the thread she was sewing with, stopt the progress of her hand a moment.

Mary looked in her mother's face, and with a sweet expression of sympathy and love, she put her arm round her neck, and said, I'll be a good girl, mother—don't cry.

She was somewhat confused by her little girl's thus betraying her observation, and said, Well then go, dear, and get father's things ready; he'll be angry, you know, if you hav'n't remembered.

Ah, I see, said my friend, you are one of those who can testify that "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward."

Her heart was full: she rose up with her work in her hand, evidently wishing to escape further notice, and to retreat into the house. Of course we immediately withdrew: she curtsied a reply to our good morning, and we passed on.

There is something very interesting in the manner of that villager, I said.

There is indeed; and I have a further interest, for I believe her husband's brother will prove to be the same I became acquainted with this morning. We would extend our walk by going home that way, but that I have a burden on my conscience until I have discharged it, by warning the country ploughman. If we pass by that pathway across the field, I think we shall come in direct contact with him. I cannot hear an oath, or a profane word, without warning the offender. I feel Ezekiel's charge upon my head, to whom the Lord said, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest

woman caught the sympathy of his countenance, and returned the look, with an expression that implied compassion was a comfort to her.

It is a great affliction to be deaf, he added.

It afflicts them that have to deal with her, the woman answered.

How did this deafness come on? Did it please God that she should be born deaf? or has it been left by his hand after some illness?

Nay, sir, it came by little and little, till it's well if I don't get a consumption at my lungs with shouting to her.

Again the man laughed.

How can you laugh at such an affliction? I remember being deaf for a few months with an illness, and I found it a great trial. If I had not known that God had permitted it, I should have repined at the loss; but I had *kind* friends round me, who were patient and tender, and who prayed that it might be sent for a good purpose to my soul, and that he would bless me under it with patience and submission.

This kind of conversation did not appear to be very agreeable, and they were all silent.

How different it seems to be with this poor woman! she appears to have no kind friends, and no support to comfort her.

The woman coloured, and said, She wears one out.

If you are of an impatient spirit, you should try to correct it, and to feel ipty for the afflicted. It is not impossible such a thing may happen to yourself.

Nay, God forbid!

I have heard in this little time God's holy Name mentioned three times, and every time

asking something of God, and what makes me mention it, every time it seemed used either without devotion, or in absolute wickedness of a worse kind. I think you spoke it in vain just now, without thinking of God; and I think, the other time you spoke it in such a way, that, as the Scripture is true, will bring upon yourself the curses you wish to fall on her. Nay, you need not look angry, for God himself says, "Thou shalt not curse *the deaf*, but shalt *fear* thy God; I am the Lord." Every one who loves cursing has reason to expect those curses to happen to himself; and whosoever taketh the Name of God in vain, will not be held guiltless.

I have often observed, that the power and authority of the Word will silence a Guilty tongue, when it would submit to nothing else, and so it seemed now. No answer was attempted.

He then inquired of the deaf woman where she lived, and told her he would go and see her, if God permitted. As he spoke in a gentle tone, and slowly, she heard him; and answering his inquiry, looked as if his visit would be welcome, and then we left the party.

CHAPTER VII.

The Profane youth reclaimed.

WE could not help remarking upon the dreadful prevalence of the sin of blasphemy, and irreverence of God, which presented so many opportunities of warning and rebuking; and as we approached near our cousin's residence, we began to anticipate the sort of offences we should have to encounter. I entreated him for once to beware of being too hasty in his reproof; for as we should, in all probability, have a long interview, we had better not alarm our young friend too soon, but by waiting, gain the better opportunity of convicting him for his amendment.

You impose a hard task upon me, he replied; but I will not promise; I will feel myself at liberty to be governed by circumstances.

I submitted to this determination; and we were soon in the drawing room, where the family party was assembled. The introduction being over, we had time to observe our new acquaintance, who was a handsome, genteel looking youth, and from the whole appearance of the young man, we should have felt exceedingly prepossessed in his favour, had not the knowledge of the evil of his tongue been already communicated. He seemed in the midst of some story, which animated his countenance, and he was standing up.

I beg we may not interrupt the conversation—

proceed, I pray, just as though we had not intruded on your subject.

The young man accepted the permission with a courteous bow of the head, and proceeded.

You must know, mother, that he mistook the whole of my intention, for I declare, in the Name of my Maker, I meant no offence.

I saw the involuntary shrug of my friend's shoulders, and our host did not fail to observe the instantaneous effect upon him.

Ah! bless my soul, sir, I said, allow me to convince you, for upon my life you totally mistake my meaning. I explained and explained, but he was in such an ungovernable rage, he would believe no other than that I was wishing to make a plausible *excuse*. At last I felt myself growing warm, and in as great a rage as himself, for I was much provoked at his stupidity. But, as Providence would have it, by the luckiest chance, my college friend came in at the moment, or I swear I believe we should have ended it by a pistol shot.

My friend took out his pencil, and tearing a leaf out of his pocket book, I supposed he intended to withdraw his mind from this wicked style of speaking, by engaging himself in some other way.

Od's Ounds, man, says Tomlinson, what are you about? Do you mean to blow out the brains of your best friend? Take my advice, sit down in that corner and say the Lord's prayer, and by the time you come to the end you will perhaps be cool enough to hear reason. This sort of argument did him some good, and he began to swallow his rage; or, my soul, mother, you

would have either buried your son, or have seen him flee over the channel to escape a trial.

My mind was exercised many ways during this extraordinary account. The mother seemed to listen to the whole as to an interesting narrative, in which her son had been marvellously delivered from some dreadful danger, but without the slightest expression of repugnance to the blasphemous use of God's Name. The father seemed to reflect with something like displeasure, at the ease with which the impending duel was intimated.—Our cousin was suffused with crimson blushes, and was stroking the hair of her little Harriet, in such a way as to lay it over her ears, pressing her hands close as they passed over them, as if to stop them from receiving the pernicious sounds, the child all the time listening with fixed attention and losing nothing of what was said. My friend appeared to be making memorandums, and the master of the family was watching the whole scene with a scrutinizing and grave reflection, whilst the young man, who was so absorbed in the detail of a subject in which he made himself the hero, looked full of self complacence; and yet I could not but think the whole tissue of his narration sat upon him like an affected garment, which was not properly his own.

A little relief took place by the young man's father asking some questions about the family of Tomlinson, when something seemed to occur to his mind in which Tomlinson's connexions were concerned, he uttered a little inward laugh, and happening at the time to look at Harriet, she said,

You are laughing at *me*, Frederick.

No, Harriet, he answered, but wishing damnation to himself if he were.

Did you not say something *wicked*, Frederick ?

He blushed slightly, but resolutely threw back the mounting witness, saying, O you little *innocent*, you are only just out of the *egg shell*.

Her father immediately rose, and going up to his wife, My dear, he said, the nursery is the best place at present for Harriet, send her to play with Clara.

Gladly, she answered, with an expression of gratitude, I will take her myself.

As she crossed the room, she passed close by me, and said in a low and reproachful voice, Henry, Henry, what are you about ?

Patience, patience, Fanny, I answered, come back again, and wait the issue.

I even thought I saw a look of resentment glanced towards me from her husband.

This move stopt all conversation for a little while ; but the voluble self complacency of the young man could not keep long silent ; and endeavouring to draw my friend into the number of his auditors, he addressed him.

You are sketching, I presume, sir—can you take likenesses to the life ?

No, sir, he quickly replied, I have not much ability *that way*—at *present* I am sketching the likeness of *Death*.

A *grim* subject, said the young man, looking with some surprise.—I once bet a wager with my friend Harvey, on how many many ribs *Death* had on each side, and we went to a surgery to settle the dispute ; but I declare to my Maker, when the skeleton was shown to us, we were

both so frightened that we came away without counting.

Charles, in a great agitation, hastily put down something more on the paper, and then stretching it out with a hand that trembled with angry zeal, said,

Can you *deliberately* count *this* side, sir? I have left the other *blank* to be finished up after.

Frederick, with amazement, but with a smile, which indicated pity for a man half mad as he supposed, took the paper,—he looked surprised—then his eyes opened wide, as if to ascertain whether he *saw* correctly.—Then the blood mounted to his face, and after deeply tinging every part, returned with equal rapidity, and left him a corpse-like white.

His mother started up. Frederick, my dear, are you ill?

His father rose in great alarm, evidently thinking of a duel, and ready to interpose.

Our host sat quite collected, with his arms folded across his breast, and watching to gather the explanation.

And as for myself, I was not without exceeding interest, supposing it some of Charles's extraordinary methods of convicting the conscience of the blasphemer, and stopping the Guilty Tongue.

To the repeated inquiries of his mother, he at last said with recovered mind and great resolution, Nothing, nothing, mother—and forcing a laugh, he said, A skeleton is an ugly thing! and he put the paper in his waistcoat pocket.

The circumstance occasioned an emotion through the party, which was not easy to overcome, and our young friend had received a check

which put him into a modest retirement for the evening, though I observed an occasional side-glance of resentment cast towards Charles.

But whilst Charles had the manner of extreme anger when he was roused on such occasions, it was a holy zeal from which it proceeded; and as his purpose was always to warn the sinner, so as to turn him from the evil of his ways, there was at the same time a visible compassion of soul in his countenance, which to the most offended, always appeared to convince them that his motive was pure Christian charity. It appeared so at present, and I remarked that every succeeding glance of inquiry and feeling which Frederick cast towards him, became softer and softer, and expressed that he was sensible all was *kindly meant*, though very unpleasant in the *application*.

I was glad to see the result, for I had felt some compunction of conscience for having laid a restriction on my friend, which hindered his prompt zeal from adopting his usual manner of rebuking all blasphemy in the first instance, and so preventing the repetition of the offence, especially when I also reflected on the possible consequence of the little girl's fixed observation, and I was therefore desirous to turn the conversation on the subject, so as to awaken the attention of the parents, and to deliver myself from the suspicion of being one of those who could not alike in all companies, and with all people, declare unto men their transgressions, and confess the holy Name of my God, and the power of His holy commandment. With this intention I said,

If the present company will excuse the sudden

turn I am about to make in the conversation, I would quote a passage of scripture, which applies so directly to myself, that I feel some degree of uneasiness until I have declared it, and taking my pocket Bible into my hand, I turned to the passage, "*Confess your faults* one to another, and *pray* one for another that ye may be healed." Our young friend there I hope will pardon me if, in confessing my own fault, I am under the necessity of pointing out *his*. He slightly bowed his head.

The fault of which I am now so guilty is this, that I have trifled with my conscience—I have suffered a fellow sinner to accumulate one sin upon another, and I must appear to have been delinquent upon this point of absolute duty, "To have compassion on some, and others to save with fear"—"pulling them out of the fire," hating even the garments spotted with sin.

Allow me then to state, the occasion of this has been through your extremely guilty practice, Frederick, of taking the Name of God in vain. If you had never said more than has passed your lips this evening, it is sufficient to stamp you under the character of those whom the Lord will not hold guiltless; but from the readiness of your tongue in uttering such expressions of blasphemy, I fear it is too sure an evidence of an habitual state of presumptuous sinning against God; and which, from the excessive degree in which it pervades your conversation, I should imagine you have adopted in imitation of some very ungodly character, with whom you are so unhappy as to have formed an intimacy, and which the natural corruption of the heart has induced you to admire. Let me then, I beseech you, whilst

endeavouring to discharge my own duty, be permitted to speak to you as a friend, and to warn you of the imminent peril in which you lay.

You, madam, I said, turning to his mother, seemed to rejoice in the preservation of your son from some threatened temporal danger: you surely then would rejoice in his deliverance from a double sentence of death, which the transgressors against the Third Commandment lie under. When we see a soul *dead in sin*, it is more mournful than the death of the grave, only that there is still a hope the Lord may say, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!"

You, my dear sir, turning to his father, appeared justly angry and alarmed at the infidel ease with which a duel could be spoken of. But consider what an encounter that must be, when a soul sets itself in defiance of God's Law and wrath, and would rush upon the thick bosses of the buckler of the Almighty! The blasphemer madly challenges the Most High; and did not his mercy endure for ever, He would be a swift witness against them, and cut them off in his sore displeasure.

My friend's mind seemed to get relief from this open communication, and he joined in with me, but like himself, quite direct to the principal offender of the moment.

Frederick, whatever may have induced in you the habit, whether example in your childhood, or a careless indifference on the part of your parents, who ought to watch every word of their child, as they would watch the blossom by which to anticipate the fruit, let me, on a subject of eternal consequence, on which hangs life or death, show you at once that the fountain of the

sin is in yourself. "Out of the heart proceed blasphemies"—Out of *your* heart proceeds the blasphemies you have uttered: had there not been this monstrous corruption within, you never could have adopted a sin so detestable, so contaminating, so presumptuous, so infidel; and whilst you are flattering yourself, that you are speaking in a manly strain of bold independence, you expose yourself as one who contemns God and His word, and who had rather be thought in league with Hell, than, in a reverent fear and holy love of the Lord, to be delighting in His righteous paths. Learn to correct this evil, and to dread a Guilty Tongue: Learn to prefer to be in modest silence, or in simple truth relating plain matter of fact, remembering that Truth shines with a brilliant reflection from the Lord of Truth, whilst oaths and blasphemies and vain speaking and curses blaze in the light of the fire of that hell which has enkindled the Tongue of Sin. "It is set on fire of hell."

The changing countenance of the young man marked conflicting feelings to be working in his breast, and Charles stretched out his open hand to him, saying, Frederick, I will never join hands with a blasphemer, but I will extend the helping hand to a convicted soul, to draw it, by the blessing of God, from the ways of sin, and lead it into that way which in holy light shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

Frederick half raised his hand to meet that of Charles, but dropt it again; when Charles quickly caught it, and in a tone of inexpressible persuasive affection said, Let us henceforth enter into the bond of Christian fellowship, to "Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto His Name!"

Frederick enclosed the hand of Christian love between both his, without speaking one word ; but by this action he sealed the compact, and from that moment they were knit together.

Our cousin just then returning, we judged it best to take our leave. She threw an inquiring look round the party, as if in tremulous fear to be again within hearing of defiling words. She quickly perceived things were in a different state to that in which she left them, -and her husband giving us each a hearty shake by the hand as we parted, told us plainly that his heart was in the cause.

Once more we found ourselves passing together the path homeward, under the vaulted firmament, in which were set the "Moon to rule over the night," and "the stars also."—The heart of Charles burst into a strain of prayer.

Great and Glorious God, blessed for ever be Thy holy Name, for thy mercy endureth for ever—Oh that men would *praise* the Lord ! May we learn another lesson from the works of Thy hand, and remember Thy people are set like the faithful witness in heaven, to be employed by Thee to divide the light from the darkness ! May we earnestly strive with increasing zeal to rescue sinners from the shadow of death, and show them Thee, thou Light of Life ; and that thy people are "a peculiar people, a holy nation."

After a short silence, he said, I have a plan in my mind for to-morrow, if the Lord will, which I hope may be attended with good. My heart yearns over that misguided young man : and if you will accompany me, we will call upon him, and take a walk round by the cottager's. A conversation with that pious man may tend to set

some simple principles before us, which I trust will be useful to our desires of reclaiming him from his sin.

My feelings being all in unison with his, we were agreed in a moment; and finally retired to rest for the night, under the engagement to meet early in the morning, with the Lord's permission.

After our usual morning avocations, we were preparing for our purpose, when a servant entered the room, with a request, that my friend would silence a wicked woman who had been begging, and on being refused was pouring out abuse which frightened them all. Step here a moment if you please, sir, and you'll hear what she says.

You can give me a bit of broken bread if you choose.

No I can't, it's not mine to give.

Why your master will never ask whether you gave it or eat it. What worse will he be?

Go away, or I'll call him.

I'll call down curses on you for refusing a poor beggar woman. She then recommenced the abuse which had led the servant to bring information, and there was scarcely a curse in the imagination of the wicked heart that she did not imprecate, wishing the servants might come to want, and be without bread or water, and that none would help them, but that they might be beggars, and miserable and diseased.

Hold your tongue! Hold your tongue! you wicked woman.

We went immediately to the door, and when the woman saw us, she assumed a milder voice, and curtsying, asked charity.

The charity I will give you is this, said Charles, to warn you of your wickedness, and to tell you, that whilst you are cursing others, you are laying up curses for yourself—God hears—but he hears in a different manner to what you are thinking, and I know the trick you are trying, to alarm the servants, and to tempt them to give, to stop your curses; but I hope you are fortified against such temptations, he said to them, by knowing the word of God, “The curse causeless shall not come.” Whilst he had turned to speak to the servants, the woman walked off.

I assure you, sir, said the cook, I am often hard tempted when beggars curse in that way; and if it was my own I’d give it to stop them, for I’m always afraid of their coming down on my head.

You speak very ignorantly. Do you think that the Lord of Grace will hearken to such prayers? If indeed they meant what they say, “the prayer of the wicked is an *abomination* to God.” “*They* are cursed children whose mouths are full of cursing.”

Yes, sir, but you know the devil—he’s a malicious spirit.

Charles, in an angry voice, said, Can the devil injure whom the Lord will not have injured? Do you know how strong a hedge he encompasseth his people with.

Well, sir, don’t be angry pray, but more than that, if I could remember it, I know there’s a scripture about the curse of the poor.

I know what you mean; it is this, “He that giveth to the poor shall have no lack, but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.”

Yes, sir, I believe that's it.

But cannot you distinguish between the liberality we are to feel towards the poor, as a general body of fellow men and women, to whom we are bound continually to open our hand wide, and the loose and disorderly people who walk about to extort, by begging and wickedness, the mite, or the portion, which should be given to the honest or orderly, or sick or needy poor? The very fact of the blasphemous tongues of these common beggars, and the wickedness of their lives, ought to show you at once that such are not meant: they are a disgrace and a burden to society, and generally speaking far off from God. But towards the *poor indeed* we should feel as a brother or a sister; and may the Lord forbid we should incur the displeasure by shutting the bowels of our compassion from them! The Lord will mark such, and prove it at that day, when he will tell them who said, Lord, Lord, and did not his will, I was naked and ye clothed me not—Thirsty and ye gave me no drink—Hungry and ye gave no meat,—for inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.—But as to the curses of the wicked, who shall curse whom God hath not cursed? “The curse causeless *shall* not come!”

Neither should you be tempted and deceived by the words of blessing which they can adopt. They mean nothing of prayer, but are very awfully breaking God's commandment. Content to have obtained their own desire, and not afraid to take the Name of the Lord in vain. O! Beware of the GUILTY TONGUE.

CHAPTER VIII.

Children's Expressions regulated.

HAVING settled the minds of the servants on the subject of the language of beggars, we set out on our intended excursion, and without meeting with much by the way to arrest our attention, we were soon at our cousin's house. We were shewn into the room where she was sitting with her two little girls, engaged in teaching them a hymn.

With great pleasure visible in her countenance, she said, I am particularly glad to see you this morning—I have much to tell you. But first let me again thank you both for awakening my mind to my sin, and through the mercy of God making it a means of leading me into a sort of exquisite pleasure, the meaning and nature of which I never before understood; for in proportion as I have felt a fear of offending against the holy Name of God, I seem to have grown into a delight in the reverence of that Name, and in blessing Him, to find my own soul blessed by Him. I cannot explain to you the sacred joy I feel that I can use the words of David with sincerity of heart, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, Bless His holy Name!"

I can enter into your enjoyment, and bless God that we are made partakers together of the same joy. When we look further, and examine, by Gospel revelation, into the mystery of that Name, we know the source of that delight in the

words of the Apostle—"Grace be unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

But now, she said, let me tell you of Frederick. It is not long since he left the room, and we had a serious conversation on the subject. He followed me here, and began by saying, You were not in the room yesterday evening when the most extraordinary circumstance took place, and I wish to talk with you about it. I have had no sleep, and still feel greatly agitated, between offended pride, and a better feeling of grateful regard towards our visitor last night. He appears a very peculiar character; he is *very severe*, and yet he is *kind*.—Did my foolish conversation disgust you yesterday?

I told him my full opinion without disguise, and also gave him an account of your proceeding with me, and of the cause I felt I had to be thankful, that though at the risk of offending me, you had ventured, in the conscientious discharge of your duty to God, to tell me of my sin and ignorance, and to open out to me a new source of happiness.

He then described to me the whole of what had passed during my absence, and taking the piece of paper out of his pocket, said, Here are the Ribs of the skeleton Death. See, I have written for a lasting memorandum this title—

The Anatomy of Frederick.

1. In the Name of my Maker.
2. Ah! bless my soul.
3. Upon my life.
4. Much provoked.

5. As Providence would have it.
6. Od's 'ounds.
7. The Lord's Prayer.
8. By my soul.
9. Soul pledged to damnation.
10. I declare to my Maker.

O, he said, it is a frightful memorandum ! I feel confounded, and could think Blasphemy were written on my forehead. But Charles told me it proceeded from my *heart*. Presumptuous, vain fool that I am ! But I will ask him even to fill up the blank side, that I may see the whole ; and when I think such a hand-writing may, nay *must* be recorded in God's book of condemnation, I have no relief but to confess that I am vile ? He will not forget me, I hope—I wish I could see him again. Now, continued our cousin, I think if you would go into the shrubbery, you would find him walking there.

Charles immediately went, and I thought it best he should go alone, and spent the time in conversation with our cousin, and her little girls.

Do you know the Lord's Prayer perfectly, Clara ?

Yes, I can say Our Father.

Can you *pray* the Lord's Prayer ?

Yes, I say my prayers every night and every morning.

Who do you pray to ?

I used to pray to mamma, but now she will not let me kneel at her knee.

Do you not know the *reason*, Clara ? said her mamma.

Yes, you said I was to pray *to God*, and so I did, mamma, I thought.

No, Clara, you know I told you you took

God's holy Name in vain, when you were *saying* your prayers, for I know you did not think of God.

How do you know, mamma?

Because I saw you looking at my head all the time, and when I bent your head down, you began to count with your fingers all the spots in my muslin dress, and when you had finished, you told me that I had that pretty coloured ribbon on that you liked the best. Did not I tell you, Clara, you had been taking God's Name in vain, and that, when you were kneeling down, and pretending to pray, and calling God your Father, and asking him for so many blessings, and all too when you were saying *hallowed* be thy Name! Was it not wicked to be thinking of so many foolish things that were before your eyes? If your *heart* had been looking to God, and you had been meaning what you said, then you would have been *praying*, but as it was, you were only mocking, and breaking the Third Commandment. And your Tongue, though so little, was very *Guilty*!

Mamma, I did try to pray to God this morning, and I kneeled down by myself, and shut my eyes. I know I did think of God *more*, but yet many thoughts came to my head, and they came when I was thinking that I was thinking about God!

That was the fault, my dear girl. You should not have thought about what you were thinking of: perhaps there was some pride in your heart in supposing yourself better. Ask the Lord to put the Holy Spirit within you, who will then teach you to pray thinking only of God, and make you ask all you want in Spirit and in

Truth—in the Name, and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

This led us into a review of the prodigious offences which are committed against the Name of God, when men are engaged in the external act of devotion. How little of true prayer there is in what is called prayer! How little the privilege of communing with God in secret is estimated! How in family, or in public prayer, there is generally only a formal profession in the act! I have often seen in the little family assemblages, the minds evidently engrossed about other things—entering the room for prayers without the feeling of Hallowing the Name of God—busy in thought about the earthly duties before them, and suffering Satan without resistance to pick away the seed of the Word out of their heart; and perhaps during the whole day there is never a recollection of what is read in the morning; so that, though prayer and the word are meant to sanctify all we do, the purpose is perverted through a profane mind, and it becomes a sin, such as that of which God said, “Even your holy things are an abomination to me.”

You recal to my mind what happened to myself one day, when I was arrested with the observation on the public congregation in the Lord's house, and was actually absorbed with the criticising inspection of all the faces I saw, until I was involuntarily self-condemned, in detecting myself concluding a prayer in the Name of Jesus Christ, without having had my mind, much less my heart, occupied with one of the petitions which had been offered, and besought, in that all-prevailing Name.

Ah, we are all dreadfully guilty, and we have two great considerations connected with it.

The first is the ACTUAL GUILT incurred by this profane indifference to the service in which we profess to be engaged. We declare that we assemble together to render thanks for the great benefits we have received—To ask those things which are requisite for the body and soul—To confess our sins, and to obtain forgiveness: and yet the heart and mind are often wholly alienated from the Object of prayer, and taking His holy Name in vain, through whom we are expressing our expectation of all blessing: it is a crime so deep, so daring, that we might wonder at the forbearance of the offended Majesty of God, in suffering us to live to repeat the offence, and to mock Him to his face.

The second consideration is, the ACTUAL LOSS we incur. Think what a day a Sabbath would be, to people and nation, were we all indeed addressing the God hearing prayer and willing to give what we ask, in a true praying spirit, with our hearts and minds bent upon drawing down the blessings from Him which He has promised to give, and through the Name which is All-powerful, and by the Spirit who knoweth the mind of God, making intercession from within! What showers of heavenly riches would come down upon us! How God Himself would manifest Himself unto us! Jehovah would fulfil His covenant engagement to come unto us, and make His abode with us in the plenitude of bliss! O fools that we are, to throw away our own happiness, by forfeiting the promises made to those who ask aright in the Name of Jesus, through the sin of our heart, and the Guilt of our Tongue

—without compunction, or feeling for ourselves, breaking the holy commandment, Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain—and fixing upon ourselves the condemnation, For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain !

What a nation would this be, if we all from our heart implored Wisdom and Grace for our Governors and Rulers, and for Magistrates, and for Bishops, and Ministers, and for all sorts and conditions of men ! Reflect, my dear cousin, if we were not asking these things in a vain mockery of an empty, careless, and sinful mind, but with the true spirit of prayer, assailing heaven with the language to which God will hearken and answer, what would be the blessed condition of Rulers and of People !

At this moment we caught a sight of our friends coming towards the house in earnest conversation.

Tell me, said my cousin, what effect you expect will be produced on Frederick ?

There are two things, I replied, that lead me to anticipate at least an *abiding conviction* on his mind ? first, that his natural character appears open and ingenuous, yielding to the feeling of the moment ; besides which, I believe the sin has been principally called out by the vanity of *imitation*.

I have known young men under temptation, who in the idea of displaying a new acquirement, or of some character which happens to obtain a fashion in their circle, will desperately adopt the practice in spite of inward remonstrances of conscience, and in that case they generally

introduce an excessive frequency of blasphemous expressions.

They soon joined us, and Frederick taking Charles by the arm, drew him to the writing table, and placing the sketch of Death before him, said,

Now I have to request you will complete the delineation, and fill up the *blank* side of this paper.

Charles, with that sort of sigh, which is the token of a heart full of prayer and praise, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and then taking the pen, wrote,

May the hand-writing that is against us be nailed to the cross of Jesus, and be by Him taken out of the way ! For there is no condemnation to them that are *in Christ Jesus*, who walk *not after the flesh*, but *after the Spirit*. And this is the covenant that I will make, “ I will put *my laws* into their *mind*, and *write* them *in their hearts*, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will *I remember no more.*”

As Frederick read it over, his heart seemed to melt with gratitude, and folding up the paper, he put it in his bosom, saying,

Welcome, little Witness ! faithful friend ! which depicts to me Life and Death—my death in trespasses and sins, and the hope of life in Christ Jesus, the Forgiver of Blasphemy, and the Giver of Repentance and newness of life.

This animated and feeling ejaculation proved that whilst Charles had taught the strictness of the Law, he had also preached the Gospel of Grace.

Little Harriet's eyes were again rivetted on Frederick, and she whispered, Mamma, how Frederick is altered; he was very *wicked* yesterday.

Yes, he was, but he will not now take God's holy Name in vain, nor swear at all. Charles told him it was wicked, and that it was a dreadful thing to have a Guilty Tongue.

I now proposed that we should pursue our intention of visiting the cottager: Frederick expressed his readiness, and looked as if he would go any where with Charles.

Look out of the window, said our cousin, and see a lady coming up to call. Now I wish you would stay and help me: she is one of those who perpetually exclaims in the Name of God, but she does it in the covered way of using *French words*. I think I never heard her say, My God! in English, but for every trifle she exclaims, O Mon Dieu! Do stay.

We cannot, our time is short; but do not forget to call her attention to the sin: it is now *your* duty. Ask her if she does not think that God, who confounded the speech of men, by sending them the judgment of different languages, will not understand her breach of the Third Commandment just as well in French as in English? Tell her it is a deception on her own mind, and a vain cover before God, who will blow away the flimsy deceit with the breath of His anger.

Whilst on our way, Charles related to Frederick the circumstance which led to the knowledge of the cottager. When we arrived at the cottage, he desired we would look at the order and industry visible in the garden. I will go first,

and inquire whether we may be permitted to sit with my new friend for half an hour.

The door was open, and the man immediately met him with a look of pleasure.

You're welcome, Sir; will you sit down a little in my humble cottage?

I came to ask to be admitted, and also to desire you would let me introduce two friends, who are my companions this morning.

With all pleasure; pray come in, gentlemen, if you'll do me so much honour.

We instantly accepted the invitation, much prepossessed with the courteous manner of the cottager, the friendly and Christian politeness of which shed a pleasing expression on his countenance.

We were surprised to see another man sitting in a corner of the room, who upon the first glance seemed to take some alarm, and hastily snatching up his hat, made his escape.

Surely I know that man, said Charles, and turning to me, he continued, If I am not mistaken, he is the ploughman with whom we conversed yesterday.

Did you talk to him about swearing, Sir? said the cottager.

Yes; he appears an awfully guilty man in that sin. I hoped he felt a little what we said; it would be a great blessing if God's Grace would visit him and turn his heart.

This explains then what has happened this morning, for he came as though to make inquiry after my arm which I sprained violently; but I could not help thinking he'd another reason, for he staid on, and seemed to want to talk about something else. I observed he *stopt* an oath two

or three times, when it was coming ; but I thought that was out of respect to me, though I can't say he ever shewed that before, though I hav'nt spared from telling him of his sin.

May I ask if your name is John Smith ?

Yes, Sir, they call me John Smith.

Then you are the brother, of a very pleasing woman we saw yesterday in the village—she lives in the second cottage on the right hand.

She's my sister by marriage. The man we were just speaking of is my brother, and her husband.

Is he so ? then we have got into a history at once ; and I can easily credit how she would patiently endeavour to arrest the curses of her unhappy husband by her prayers and blessings. Her whole manner had the air of suffering patience.

Poor soul, said John, with a sigh of compassion, she has had a hard struggle, but I hope she will find a real blessing at last.

I think she has found it already in a meek and quiet spirit, which is above all price : her prayers seemed to have returned into her own bosom at least, so that they have not returned void to Him who giveth the heart of prayer.

And in due time she shall reap if she faint not. I have a hope that her prayers for her wicked partner will be answered in time. I oft cheer her with this hope, which the Lord Himself sets before us—"The prayer of faith shall save the sick"—there's no sorer disease, Sir, than a blasphemous tongue.

But I am much surprised to find this man to be your brother. How does it happen that you are so very different ?

There's no man can answer St. Paul's question better than I, Sir—"Who made thee to differ?" And no man ought to be more ready to give the glory to God than such a one as me, Sir, that spent many a long and sad year in nought but blasphemy and swearing, and taking God's Name in vain. You may think my brother's bad enough, but he's nought to what I was. He gets a check many a time by a friendly warning, but I mocked at reproof, and why God did not mock at me I know not, except through that mercy which is in Christ Jesus. When Jem asked me after my arm, I could not help saying, though I hoped through mercy it would soon be better, I had no cause to be surprised if it was to rot off my body with the curses I'd oft and oft put upon it. But the Lord has Grace abundant to put away the curse, and give a blessing.

Then you are able through a *sad* experience, to speak to your brother.

Ah, Sir! he said, interrupting Charles, I do not know how to speak, but my own sin is oft thrown back upon me in condemnation. When he gets angered he vents his rage by taunting me with my own GUILTY TONGUE, and then I have nothing to do but to sit silent, and pray in my heart to be made no longer a stumbling-block to my brother!

And then I tell him he might make use of me for a better purpose, and take warning and encouragement by seeing how by Grace we may overcome sin. He oft tries hard to fret my temper, and tempt me to curse again; but I have, as it were, *felt* the fire of Hell on my Tongue, and like a burnt child, I dread to come near that dreadful flame any more; and for that reason it

is, Sir, that I take hold on the Wisdom of Jesus, and find my security in his counsel—"Let your Yea be yea, and your Nay, nay;" for if whatsoever is more than these *cometh* of evil, I know too well to *what more* it would drive me.

That rule which you have taken has often been in my mind, since I heard your boy declare it to be the command by which you had taught him to govern his Tongue, and the more I reflect upon it, the further I find it to extend its influence. I see that it corrects many smaller degrees of sin, which, if indulged, evidently trains the lips to utter stronger and stronger expressions.

Sir, I have thought it to be like the sin of drinking. Men begin by little and little, till they can't do without stronger and stronger: and they get from one liquor to another till they end in dry drams, and so consume away their own life. I know well how blasphemy works, and it had better never be begun, lest it shouldn't stopt till it comes to that point that will not be forgiven, and so eternal death be sealed.

You seem to have impressed your lesson well on your boy.

God in his infinite mercy has blessed my prayer and my endeavour.

What plan have you pursued with him to fasten it so upon his recollection?

I've watched over him, Sir, in two ways—one, because he's my child, and I desired to bring him up for the Lord, and for his own eternal happiness—and the other, because he is my child, and the curse of his father might come down upon him! O my God! he exclaimed in a fervent ejaculation, I beseech Thee, visit not

my sin upon my child, but show mercy on him, since thou hast shown it to me, in turning me from my transgressions.

How did you watch him ?

One thing, I've never suffered him to use words such as children generally do—Good la—My Goodness—Bless me—I'll be bound—I'll warrant—By my word—or other foolish sayings that may be thought nothing but fun. I never would let him pretend to be amazed, and struck with wonder, and so use great swelling words ; for if you notice the way in which they say them, and the swearing tone of their voice, you may know they *come of evil*, and they prepare the Tongue for worse and worse. Especially when they hear other words, they soon imitate them. I always stopt him if he was going to say any thing more than plain Yes or No ; and never let him *make* great words of surprise at any thing he saw or heard. It's a bad way to let poor children do so ; so that at last they'll say, or do nothing, without taking God's Name in vain : and many a child of three or four years old, no sooner begins to speak for itself, than it takes the language of its wicked father, and shows the truth, that the sin of the fathers is visited on the children unto the third and fourth generation.

You seem to be disengaged to day ; would it trouble you, if, as you are laid up, we were to ask you to tell us a little more of your history ? I think it would be edifying to us all, to learn how God dealt with you, in converting you from the error of your ways, and giving you such a clear and conscientious feeling of your duty to your child.

A simple story's soon told, Sir ; and as I am

bound to glorify God in His Goodness, I will tell you with pleasure, if you'll have patience to listen. My wife's gone to take some needle-work home, and won't be back yet a while, and my boy's at school for the day.



CHAPTER IX.

An interesting Story.

JOHN looked round upon his guests to observe if they were comfortably seated, and upon our all declaring that we were quite at ease, he began his story.

My father, sir, was a weaver in a small market town, and my mother, who had been brought up in a better kind of fashion, used to earn a good deal by her needle, and they were both so bent upon working hard to get a good and plentiful livelihood, that they left me and my brother pretty much to ourselves. I oft try to trace the beginning of my sin, and though I'd be sorry to say anything disrespectful or undutiful of my parents, I believe the first seeds of blasphemy were laid in my early childhood.

We had a neighbour who was much given to the sin of swearing, and he had three boys and a girl that used to be our playfellows from morning to night, so that Jem and I were used not only to hear him use the most dreadful oaths, but they were continually repeated in our ears

by our playmates. There's something in the sin of the heart which loves to hear and see what's kindred with it, so we soon became as bold and wicked in the transgression as any of them. I remember very well, the first oath I ventured to use before my father, surprised him, he said, "Hey lad! what dost thou swear for?" But I saw him wink and smile at my mother, and it was plain they thought it as spirited as I did myself. That *look*, sir, did away all the good of his word, for I saw that he did not *think* it wrong. Now, sir, if my father had but inquired out where I'd learnt such a word, and had stopped our acquaintance at once, I might ha' been saved a deal of sin and shame; but he didn't think about the nature of it, and never knew perhaps the curse of God upon it.

Instead of being checked, I felt encouraged; and I grew so fond of swearing at length, that I never spoke the commonest thing without taking the Lord's name in vain. I seized any new form of oath I heard as greedily as a hungry man would take his morsel, and soon became in my turn an inventor of curses, and it would have surprised any one to have heard how fruitful my wicked imagination was in framing wicked words. I remember, as well as if it was but yesterday, sitting under a hedge with my companions, and betting wagers on who should outnumber the other with the lists of oaths and curses that he knew, and we took a square stick which we marked with chalk and clay with the number we each uttered—I remember biting my tongue with passion when I thought I should stick fast, but as if the evil one himself helped me, a new and dreadful oath came from my lips, and

I triumphed as though I'd won a hero's laurel, when it was confessed that I'd beaten.

I now became an open, profane swearer ; and when I sometimes uttered a string of such things before my father, he used only to say, "Hey, hey, man ! not so fast, not so fast !"—whilst my poor mother used to look as if she thought she'd a fine valiant son growing up, who would protect her in her old age.

One day I was at play with my companions, and going on in the usual way, when an elderly gentleman stopt to watch us. After waiting a little time, he beckoned us to him—Here, lads ; tell me if you go to any school ? We all answered, no, and he said, I think, you'd better all come to me to-morrow morning, and I'll give you something, and take you to a nice school where there are many lads like you.

The morrow was Sunday, and in the hope of the something to be given, we all went in good time to the gentleman. He ask'd what we could read, and gave us all a book suitable, and then took us to the Sunday school. We did not like that, and felt as if we'd been taken in ; but just as we entered the room, a boy was repeating the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain." A young gentleman was explaining it, and the gentleman that took us immediately put us into the class. The novelty of the thing took my attention, and I believe to this day I could repeat pretty near the whole of what was said in explanation of the commandment, and received this instruction, that the profane swearer and presumptuous trifler with God's holy name, was held *guilty* by the holy God. But we'd no fancy for such things,

and made our escape when the boys were coupling to go down to Church. Thus God was good to let me hear so much, and to put it so deep in my memory; but I was wicked, and would none of his reproof and warning; so that I even turned it into another form of dreadful oath.

So I went on corrupted and corrupting, till it was time to put me to learn a trade. My brother mean time had been taken by our uncle, and I chose to be a flax-dresser. This was not a trade likely to break me of my sin; for I was put in a shop where twenty men worked, and where I heard language suited to my wicked taste. The men look'd with some astonishment, when they heard how seasoned my tongue was to their awful dialect; and one man clapping me on the back, said, You're welcome, my lad; you speak out like a man, we shall be jolly friends. I was as much puffed up by this commendation, as though it had been to my honour; and a serious looking elderly man came up to me, and said, Poor boy! remember, the Lord will not hold him *guiltless* that taketh His Name in vain.

Again God was gracious. This word was not repeated to my ears without recalling the Sunday school to my mind, and a kind of sickness came over me for a minute—I know not why, but as the testimony that God has given to every man a conscience, “accusing or else excusing,” and it passed off in the moment that the other winked and said, O, *he's* an old saint, we should all sit down and mope if we listened to *him*. This raised a din of murmuring and abuse from all against the old man; and the number of the party against him, as well as my own sin, made

me join hands with the blasphemers, and cast in my lot with them.

After I had been about two years in this situation, I remember well a remarkable storm of thunder and lightning with heavy rain. I was a good deal frightened, and not the less so, when I saw all the men trembling and stopping work. But the *old saint*, I observed, went on calm and quiet, sometimes looking out of the window, and exclaiming, how beautiful the flashes were!—and when one of the peals came very loud, he stopped his hand a moment, and in a devotional expression, said, “The voice of the Lord is in the thunder!”—he might have *preached then*, and none would have mocked. But a gentleman came hastily into the shop, and asked if he would give him shelter till the violence of the rain was over. All were quiet and civil, and the gentleman asked if he was known to any of us: we all said, No. I’m sorry for it, he said, for you ought to know your *Minister*, and I fear you know as little of the house of God.

He gave us a real sermon upon all the sins which he had reason to think we were guilty of, and said, I hope you will some of you listen to me as to a friend, and that God’s goodness may be hereafter shown by thus providentially bringing your *Minister* to you. I see you are all alarmed by this thunder storm; it is very awful; but you will have to see *another*, which will *awake the dead*, and *consume the earth*, and *call sinners* before the *judgment seat of Christ*, to give an account of the sins done in the body.

He then addressed himself to me in particular; whether it was that I was the youngest, or because he saw sin in broadest characters on

my face, I know not, but he warned me solemnly against all sin, and the contamination of evil communications. Alas, he did not know that I was one who could give more contamination than I could receive; and he concluded all by saying, "Beware of blasphemy!" The rain abating, he left us, though the thunder still roll'd, and paler lightning flashed. We remained all silent, till a sudden burst of the sun seemed to revive us, and in an hour's time, when all was once more peace and sunshine, the language of the shop was just the same as if no alarm had been given.

Not long after this, a discontent arose between the masters and their men, about wages, and, as is customary, all the men combined to "turn out," as they call it, and I of course was thrown at home all the day it lasted in *idleness*, a state which did not improve my soul. I was now growing heady and highminded, and the comfort and authority of my parents were nothing to me. My father's trade was affected by the turn out, and my mother had no employment. In this, our temporary poverty, I had occasion to let my parents see something of the effects of my sin; and my heart aches, sir, as I have to tell it. Many's the time that I have cursed them both, when I could not have what I wanted; and I always alarmed my mother by threatening to enlist in a recruiting party that was in the town; and so, between insults, oaths, and threatenings, I extorted from her many a thing that she needed for themselves. I often joined the party of recruits, but I was wary enough to keep out of touching the King's money, as they call it, for I'd no fancy for a soldier's life, though I liked

their company, and enjoyed their wicked conversation. I was come to that pitch that I hated all authorities and rule, and without scruple cursed the King and Princes, and rulers of the land. O, I could even now groan at the recollection how many curses I was then *laying up* for *myself*! "Thou shalt not revile nor curse the rulers of thy people," I now know to be a command of God. And the curses on the cursers of parents are awfully denounced, "He that curseth father or mother shall surely be put to death." And even the Lord and *Saviour*, in express words, adds from his own lips, "He that curseth father or mother, *let him die the death.*" O, gentlemen, when I think now of this part of my sin, that I can never now make any amends for, to my poor parents, my heart feels ready to break; *they* are laid low in the grave, and I cannot tell them I repent: I did not love them then, but I *do* love them *now*, when I can't *bless* them as I would! Oh! why? what hindered my blessed Saviour from *letting me* die the death! what made him snatch me from perdition, and not doom me to hell to utter eternal blasphemies! His love unspeakable—His pity and compassion—His own love for His own Name's sake.

He could proceed no further at that moment; and folding his arms upon the corner of the table near which he was sitting, he dropt his head upon them, to hide his tears and smother his sobs.

Our young friend's heart was strongly agitated; he got up and sat down, and at last throwing his arm and hand over the back of his chair, exclaimed, Poor John!

The sound of sympathy made John lift up

his head again, and in a broken voice he continued,

You cannot wish to hear any more, gentlemen, of such a loathsome story; you must be wearied out with the history of blasphemies. He stopped, as if to inquire whether we were still disposed to hear more.

Charles, then forcing himself to speak, said, Go on, John, go on, you must not stop short in the history of that grace which has *changed* you. I can bear to have my heart broken, in the expectation of its healing, when the Sun of Righteousness shall shine upon you.

Well, sir, then I'll go on. You may perceive that I was come to that pitch of blasphemy, beyond which there was but one more step. Let him beware, he said, in a solemn voice, who curseth *Kings* and *Rulers*, and *authorities appointed of God!* and let him beware who curseth *father or mother*—he treads hard on the threshold of that greater than all, from which we have no escape.

Amongst the disorderly company that resorted to the public house, was a young man about my own age, who had been for two years employed as footman in a gentleman's house. His character is easily conceived. It is enough to say a young man haunts an ale-house, and associates with blasphemers, to settle what he is himself; no where than at an ale-house can it be better seen that "Birds of a feather flock together." He was a vain and presumptuous fellow, whose master was of that infidel character which refused all faith in the revelation of God's word, and owned no Lord but himself. His wicked way of talking of his sin before his servants had not

been without its effect, in contaminating the mind of this young man ; and full of proud independence, and mightily pleased with the liberty he imagined himself to have obtained, in throwing off the shackles of the law of God, he came to the ale-house to ape his master, and to repeat, at second hand, all the blasphemies he heard against God's word.

Now, though by my life before, gentlemen, it was as easy to see that I was in heart an infidel, yet I had never *thought* of the subject at all. God was altogether out of my mind, except as I delighted in blaspheming his Name. I had never come to the state of coolly and deliberately declaring I would believe nothing of God's word. The way in which this fellow talked, took my fancy ; I thought him wonderfully wise and free ; and all that he said was true. Yes, he, a man, a liar, was esteemed by me above God who is Truth. When I read that scripture, " Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar"—this sin always flashes me in the face. I now adopted his way, and became as talkative a preacher as any against the truth of revelation, and thus hardened my heart more and more, and put myself still further off from God.

As the turn-out still lasted, I began to feel pinched for money, and finding my fare at home to be very poor, and my clothes wearing out, I determined to try for a place : and my new friend used to let me go and help him, by way of learning how to set about the business of the little jobs in a house ; he promised to get me a place, and introduced me to a company of men servants, who I think were all of them as fond of blasphemy as myself, though they had not so deeply learned

the language ; but in general they had plenty, and had a string of *genteel* oaths which were new to me, and which they had learned from their own masters.

Ah! it's a cruel crime in masters to let their tongues loose in the ears of their servants, and to fill them with blasphemies! They may expect what they invariably get, that their servants will vent their curses on them whenever they are displeas'd, or out of hearing. To such a master I was soon recommended, and I did not fail to return his instruction to me in this way tenfold, in the ears of his eldest son. I had a pleasure in training the poor child to blasphemy, and urged him to say it out boldly, as though he cared for no man. His father did not watch what was doing, and he might just as well have committed his child to a wicked spirit as to me. I was rather awkward in doing the business of a servant, and was dismissed after half a year's trial.

Again out of employment, I sought shelter for my head under my father's roof ; but my mother only was there. She sprung with a mother's love to embrace me, and in sobs and tears told me my father had died a fortnight before, and declared he would not have me sent for to curse him on his death bed. Now, my son, she said, you must be a husband to me, and take care of me. I'll care for thee, John, with all my heart, and if you can get into work again, we shall do well yet. Poor mother, you did not know any thing about the one thing needful, and that as I had not *that*, nothing could be well with us! I settled a few days, and when I blasphemed, she used to say, Don't John, for thy *father's* sake—she thought nothing of the *Lord's* sake. Work offer'd, but

as I'd tasted the ease and plenty of service in a gentleman's house, I desired to get into one again. I did so; and after many changes for some years, was at last thrown out again; and one day, when I was idling at the corner of an ale-house, and was haranguing in my usual wicked way, a gentleman rode up, desiring a pail of water for his horse. He dismounted whilst the animal was refreshed, and was not long before he began to listen to my speech. When I paused—

Young man, he said, do you know the guilt you are incurring by that dreadful blasphemous language? I remember I put on an impudent look, such as might be expected from an infidel blasphemer, and, twirling the seals of my watch-chain, attempted, like an ignorant ape, to imitate the shrug and smile I had often seen expressed by my betters.

The gentleman remained perfectly calm and said, "THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN." It was a remarkable instance of God's mercy, that I never could hear that sentence simply repeated, without the sting of conscience, which testified that I heard it the *first* time in a way that made an *impression*; and I believe it affected my countenance, for he pressed the subject. But the *more* he *said* the *less* I *felt*, and as he remounted his horse, I resumed my conversation as before. He proceeded a few paces, but returning, said, Perhaps you do not know, young man, that I have the legal power of fining you for every oath you swear in my hearing. This provoked me, and being a little heated with liquor, with an oath I said, then I might as well give him *plenty*, for as I'd no more money than would pay for a *few*, I

would get what I could for my pence. So impudent, so vile was I become. The gentleman looked at me with an expression of horror, as well he might, and turning to an elderly man, who passed by at the moment, he said, Take notice, within eight days from this day I will summon that man before the Justice of Peace, and shall call upon you for a witness. And there is a word of God which binds this upon you as a duty, which is this, "And if a soul sin, and *hear the voice of swearing*, and is a witness whether he hath seen or known of it, if he do not *utter it*, then he shall *bear his iniquity.*" Lev v 1.

The inward rage that filled my breast I can't describe. Scorning as I did all magistrates and rulers, I determined upon braving the worst, and swearing that no man should touch me, I increased my guilt by the number of oaths which followed, to show I was in earnest.

The gentleman made a memorandum of each, until he thought he had enough for his purpose; and with a sigh turned his horse's head, and rode homeward. But he left me in a fret of temper, which could not be quieted. Often the threat came into my mind, and when the sixth day passed without a summons, I settled it in my mind that I should hear no more of it. The seventh day arrived, and when I had not the least idea of it, the constable appeared, and told me he was sent to conduct me to the Town Hall, where the Justices of the Peace were sitting. Though taken by surprise, I determined upon going at once, thinking to take an opportunity of passing some *insults* upon the *Magistracy* of the town; and was soon summoned to answer for the offence laid to my charge. The gentleman looked me in the

face, and made oath in the most solemn and impressive manner, that I was the person guilty of swearing, taking out the list he had written down, and reading them over with the number in order to each, in all *ten*.

Frederick started, and turning to Charles with a quick glance, said, *The Sketch of Death!*

John looked a little surprised, but not knowing all he meant, said, Indeed you say true, Sir ; it's just so ; it's all death ! death !

The witness being sworn also, and I not denying it, the facts were established, and I was convicted. In the whole of this proceeding, I was under an influence which I could not account for.

The solemnity with which the oaths were administered, and made ; the evident *sincerity* of *appealing to God*, made a cold shiver run through me, daring as I was. It was the terror of the law upon my conscience, and God's will to shoot an arrow of conviction. The Justice was a godly man, and he gave me a short but solemn warning, and then passed through the form of convicting me, and of laying the fines : he read up the law, so that I might know it was all according to law : I know the words well.

“ If any person shall profanely curse or swear, and be thereof convicted on the oath of one witness before one Justice of the Peace, or Mayor of a town corporate, or by confession, every person so offending shall forfeit as followeth—that is to say, every day labourer, common soldier, common sailor, and common seaman, 1s. ; and every other person under the degree of a gentleman, 2s. ; and every person of or above the degree of a gentleman, 5s. ; and if any person after

conviction offend a second time, he shall forfeit double, and for every other offence after a second conviction, treble." After inquiry made as to my condition in life, the fine was laid at 20s., or 2s for each oath.

On declaring my inability to pay the sum, to my astonishment I found myself "committed to the house of correction, there to remain, and to be kept to hard labour ten days."

The whole proceeding had such an effect upon me, that I seemed to lose my common faculties, and my Guilty Tongue was tied; and as I know with perfect memory all that was done and said, I know to my shame and confusion that there *stands a hand-writing against me, filed, and kept amongst the public records, which is worded in this form—*

Frederick again interrupted, by saying to Charles, Cannot it be "*blotted out,*" and "*taken out of the way?*"

John said, No, Sir, no; a *public act can't be undone*; my only hope is that my Saviour's blood will blot it out from *His remembrance.*

May the Lord grant it! said Frederick. But you were going to say the form of the record; let us hear it, I beg.

It stands in this way, Sir.

"Be it remembered, that on the twenty-third day of June, in the sixth year of his Majesty's reign, was convicted before me, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county aforesaid, of *swearing ten profane oaths—given under my hand and seal the day and year aforesaid.*"

The business being thus completed, I was in due form taken to the house of correction; and I thought the gentleman who had wrought all this

looked with compassion ; and I felt as though a powerful hand was upon me that I could not resist. When I reached my destination, I felt as if nothing was real, and that all was a dream from which I should soon awake. But my appointed task soon roused me from the stupor of my faculties, and I saw but too well that all was reality. My pride was wounded beyond all description, and it remained too high to suffer me to betray a resistance, which I was sure would be of no use ; and whilst appearing to submit with patience, I burnt with inward rage, and gnashed with my teeth.

I began to condemn myself for my *folly* in betraying myself to the power of the law, and for bringing myself under an authority that I had despised, and cursed, and could not resist—the conviction came, that they were set as a “terror to those who do evil ;” and by experience I felt they did not “hold the sword in vain.” But I had not the least sorrow for my offence, and would have vented my rage in curses and oaths, but I *feared* the law could do more. So I sulkily brooded over my condition.

The next day we were all ordered to be in readiness to attend a lecture from the clergyman, who came twice a week. When he saw a new face, his custom was to inquire what offence had brought us there ; and mine being stated, he made *Blasphemy* the subject of his discourse ; and after showing it in all its forms and wickedness, he directed us to look to the Saviour for pardon and healing, and that by the Holy Spirit’s grace we might be sanctified in heart and tongue. It is a terrible thing, he said, to be under God’s law, for its condemnation is death. This house of

correction is *but for a time*, yet it is grievous and hard to bear; but if sentenced by God, the Judge of quick and dead, and the recompenser to every man according to his deeds, remember the prison-house is hell, and the punishment not *labour*, but *torment intolerable*, where the blasphemer's tongue shall burn forever with the curse. If for every idle word you will have to give an account, what sort of a reckoning, think you, will there be for "taking God's holy Name in vain," for curses and blasphemies? But you have hope whilst you are on this side the grave—that hope is IN JESUS, who giveth repentance and forgiveness of sins—and the Holy Ghost, teaching you to pray, and changing your wicked heart, will enable you to overcome your sin, and to learn to *bless* the Lord. Bear this in mind, he said solemnly, Pardon and grace are with Jesus, but they who "take the Name of the Lord their God in vain," the Lord will *not hold guiltless*.—He took his leave, after making us kneel with him, whilst he besought God to remove the condemnation of the law through the blood of Jesus.

I can't possibly, Sir, tell you the effect this discourse had upon me. The word of the Gospel was a new sound, and again was deeper fixed my feeling of the penalty of the law. My situation made me feel something of the *shame* of being found *guilty*, and my mind was for a time taken up with the thought of JESUS, a name I had never used, neither heard, but to *blaspheme*; and then, I said to myself, it is in vain then to expect aught from *Him*, for I've done all I could to provoke Him. Whilst I thought in this way, I suffered a struggle of heart and mind, more painful than I can tell of, and persuading myself there

could be no forgiveness, I grew in a state of despair, and gave myself up to blasphemous thoughts. I began to condemn God himself, and charged him with making me suffer the fire of hell in my breast before the time. I felt an inward temper, and as I now firmly believe, the evil one himself, afraid I might in my agony find the sight of the cross, pressed on my ignorant soul to compel it to blaspheme against Him in whom alone is help. And once, I remember, when I was near to thinking all this misery *might be conviction from God* to lead me to good, I was hurried in a moment to accuse the Lord again, and then the gleam of hope was darkened. Since I knew the scripture, I can believe that I had this temptation put before me which was before Job, "Curse God and die." But he, whom I knew not, in mercy kept back my already Guilty Tongue from this aggravated guilt, and saved me from that double sentence in Lev. xxiv. 15, "Whosoever curseth his God shall *bear his sin.*"

Sir, he said, looking seriously at Charles, Nothing now frightens me so much for sinners, as when they begin to think "*hard thoughts of God,*" and to "*charge Him foolishly,*" and to lay it to His account that He does not give them the Holy Spirit. I know to what this approaches; and it is a temptation levied against the soul to prevent its having the hope that is in Jesus, who said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the *Son of Man*, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither

in the world to come." I tremble when I hear sinners swear and curse by *Jesus*,—"Beware of Him, saith the Lord, for My Name is in Him." They then contemn Him in whom alone is salvation : but He still pleads in the mercy of His love, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Further than *that*, he seems to tell us He intercedeth not ; and I often think how wonderful the mercy of God is in restraining men from passing beyond this, though Satan so often tempts, and so often harasses poor broken-hearted sinners with the fear of this heavy guilt. But, however, he that *fears* it may take comfort, and may humbly offer his soul's request to the Holy Ghost, to keep him, and sanctify him, and fill him with confidence and love.

You speak truly, John ; the best relief to a harassed and trembling soul is, to *take the occasions* to offer his prayers for the *communion* of the *Holy Ghost*, who leadeth us into all truth and peace.

Sir, I've brought you to the pitch of my blasphemies, until it pleased the Lord to give commission, "Take away his filthy garments." Whilst toiling in the agony of my mind, I thought little of the labour of my body, and cared as little whether it should be for ten days or ten years ; when one day, I saw the gentleman come in through whom I had been brought to that place : I looked at him, but felt no resentment ; I forgot my offence to him in thinking of my offence against God. He stood by, and watched me at my work : I didn't speak.

At last he said, Young man, how is it with you ? What are your feelings towards me ?

I looked at him again but did not answer.

Are you tired of this place ?

It suits me very well.

Are you tired of your ways ?

There's no help for that.

Yes, there is help in One that is Mighty.

Mighty to afflict.

His chastisement is in mercy !

His punishments are very *severe*.

He is mighty to save !

But not to save *me*.

Yes, to save the *chief* of sinners.

Then he would save *me*.

He looked at me as if he would read every thought that passed in my breast. You're not out of the reach of His Almighty grace : He will have mercy on *whom* He will have mercy.

No, the Saviour himself is against me.

But it is His gracious undertaking to make reconciliation.

But I am guilty,—“The Lord will *not* hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.”

But He was wounded for our transgressions.

But I have made His wounds my sport, and blasphemed by them.

Here Frederick shuddered, and asked if it was possible any man could be so hard.

Charles turned to him, and said, Yes, indeed, but Satan and sin have devices by which the tongue deceives itself.

How do you mean ?

I have heard men in a foreign country, where they, through the superstitious view they have of the most affecting subjects in which our redemption is concerned, have become habituated to make use of the most solemn transactions of the covenant of Grace in common ejaculations, and

even those wounds which were inflicted on the cross are made the channel by which passion, revenge, and idle speaking, are expressed thus—"The five wounds of Christ,"—wounds which are meant to humble in lowest reverence, and to teach us to calculate something of the infinite love which paid the ransom price, and shed the blood of atonement!

O dreadful blasphemy!

And yet, Frederick, in the lightest conversation *you* made use of the same.

Frederick started, and looked unbelieving.

Even so; your tongue was deceived: but what did you mean by that expression, 'Od's 'Ounds? do you not see the cover? that only two letters are left out? and though you meant it not in that sense, it shows what idle words are, and vain imitations of ungodly men.

Frederick looked confounded, but at last said, Proceed, John; do not let us interrupt your story.

Well, Sir, the gentleman answered me continually in this way, *holding* me to the sound of the *infinite love* of *Jesus*, and my heart insensibly became softer; and he concluded by saying, Come, hear this; the Son of Man came to seek and to save them that were *lost*. Believe this, that he has removed my heart towards you, and sends me as His servant to offer you his full compassion.

He paid me short visits for every day that I remained in my place of punishment, not ashamed to come unto me in prison for the sake of *Jesus*.

And when the term was out, he inquired what I meant to do?

In an agony of mind at my forlorn and wretched condition of soul, I wrung my hands, and said, Would that I might stay *here*—Oh, that I might hide my head, and hear more of God's Mighty Love ! I'll fear no more His punishments, if he will but let me hear they are in love.

If I could help you to a place in a good family, would you go ?

Ah ! but who would take me in ?

It's enough to say, Sir, that the gentleman took me for that night to his own house, and in the morning offered to give me a trial himself. I could do nothing but weep. Love seemed manifested, and I seemed to tread the first step towards the Saviour's bosom. And never can I tell to man what passed in my heart, when for the first time in my life I saw a family assembled together to worship that God whom I had only blasphemed. My mother had taught me a little reading, but, as you may judge, I had not improved it, and was a bad scholar. I stammered through a verse, in my turn, of the chapter for the morning, and my ear and heart drank in the words of life, which our blessed Lord had caused to be written for our instruction. My new master knelt down to prayer, and with him we all bent our knees. His prayer was, "Our Father, which art in heaven, HALLOWED BE THY NAME ;" from which words he made all his prayer, beseeching the Holy Spirit to teach us to Hallow it right, and that Jesus, in his love and tender compassion, would fulfil His encouraging assurance, that all manner of blasphemy might be forgiven unto men.

Frederick interrupted him by asking, if he was entirely cured of swearing from that time ?

I think, Sir, I may say I was, as to the intention: never more, I believe, did I use *God's Name* in any thing like an oath; but I used continually to watch myself in the bad habit of using exclamations; but I was so tender, through grace, that I think I never did it without a reproof of conscience; and at last my mind being turned to my Saviour's direction, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay," I endeavoured to frame my words according to it, and when aught happened to provoke my temper, St. James's counsel used to come to my mind, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation."

I have had many opportunities of observing a very remarkable thing, that as soon as ever a sinner begins to *inquire after God*, and to *fear Him*, his mouth *instantly* ceases from oaths. The fountain is getting healed, and sends forth no longer sweet words and *bitter*; and I take it as a sure sign to judge by, whether men are sincere or not with God.

Charles said, I remember being once told by a clergyman, that he remarked the *first* sin his parish children in the schools *put off*, was swearing; and when any did not do this, they never remained in the schools. But you have not finished yet, John.

Sir, I've little more to say, except that in a few days I thought of my poor dear mother, and determined now to let her hear me *bless her*. I

went, but she was on her death-bed : she had heard of my disgrace, and the agitation of her mind threw her into a fever, which ended in typhus. She was delirious when I entered her room, and I had the heart-rending affliction of hearing her, in all her ravings, reproach me with bitterness, or in affecting words beseeching me *not to curse her so*. Oh ! he groaned, when I think of that last scene of my dying mother, it is more than I can bear. Isn't it marvellous that I live, and that I live in grace, and that my Saviour did not turn from me in everlasting wrath, and say, "Let him die the death!!"

After pausing to recover himself, he proceeded—I remained five years in my place, and it was five years of happiness and peace. And then, having taken a love for the young woman who is now my wife, my master gave us his favour, and put us into this nice cottage, and he and his lady employed us both with constant work for some years, so that we got put into a good way of earning our bread. I ought to tell you, gentlemen, that the ground of my love for my wife, was her meek and patient behaviour to her old father, who was a terrible blasphemer ; but she showed that Gospel spirit and obedience, "When they curse, bless thou." I have seen her in many a trying moment, but she never varied, but prayed for them that despitefully used her. One who loved God, and obeyed his precepts, you may be sure, gentlemen, makes a good wife, and she's a blessing from the Lord. And now, gentlemen, I've ended a long story of sin, and a story of everlasting grace. Bless the Lord, O my soul !

Our hearts were full, and we took leave. On our way back, Frederick said, Charles, when

can I repay you for your love to me ? can I hope as John, to be cured of my sin by Grace ?

Charles said, Remember that inquiry in the 119th Psalm, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ?" The answer is, "By TAKING HEED thereto ACCORDING to thy word."

You will therefore, I trust, my young friend, do as the Psalmist, who said, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."

And resolve, as he did, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me."

And change the society you have kept, so that you may be able to add, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."

These verses give you a whole course of conduct, in the pursuit of which you will be blessed; and you must look with faith and love to that Saviour, who manifests himself as God of all grace.

We walked together in profitable communion, until we came to the spot where the road parted into two directions, the one leading to our cousin's house, and the other to my friend's.

Here we must separate, I believe, said Charles, as it will be needful for me to be at home this evening.

Frederick held his hand out to us both, and said, As I am now to endeavour to walk by Scripture rules, and to be a companion of them that fear the Lord and keep his precepts, you will permit me to return your call to morrow, and perhaps you may introduce me to some more useful scenes and instructions.

The proposal was accepted with readiness, and we parted for the day.

CHAPTER X.

Salutary Admonition.

THE next day we made our arrangements to inquire again after the waggoner, and waited at home for Frederick's arrival, that we might go together. As he approached, we met him at the gate, and immediately turned our feet into the way leading to the wretched sufferer's.

I ought to apprise you, Frederick, said Charles, that we are going to witness a very different scene from that we enjoyed yesterday, and you must be prepared to see such a one as John Smith *was* before the grace of God changed him, and I greatly fear now beyond all hope of life here or hereafter.

Can I stand it, do you think? I am a coward in looking on death.

It may be profitable to witness the contrast, and therefore I hope you will endeavour to stand it.

When we reached the house, we met the doctor, coming out, and saw by his countenance that all was sad within.

I would advise you not to go in, gentlemen, he said, You can do no good, and the scene is too distressing. The unhappy man has not many hours to live. The pain of approaching mortification has been dreadful; but as he is becoming quieter, I believe the fatal sentence is sealed, and that his soul will soon be before its Judge.

Can we say a word which may yet point to Jesus?

Alas! no; he is insensible to every thing that

is addressed to him, and I believe him entirely deaf. The sight, I think, would be too much for your young friend, even if you could endure it: I own I have scarcely had power to visit him, but as my professional duty obliged me.

Does he speak? Has he uttered a single word which could give a hope?

I cannot describe him in clearer language than that of the Psalmist, "His inward part is very wickedness, his throat is an open sepulchre." I beseech you not to take that young man within hearing.

But his wife! can nothing be done for her?

Hopeless case at present. You must try her hereafter, if it may please God to touch her heart. You had better return, and let us walk together; I shall be thankful for a little company to share the burden of my heart at this moment.

As he stated the case, we judged it best to return with the doctor, and we endeavoured to improve the time by a conversation on the event.

The doctor's mind, suddenly carried back to the state of this dying man's actual condition of body, he said, I think he will die without a struggle; the great conflict is over.

And if he does, what will they say who attend his last moments? They will say *this*—He was wicked to be sure, but when he came to the last, he died like a lamb! How sinners deceive sinners! and how many take encouragement from such things to flatter themselves, that though they live like a devil, they shall die like a lamb.

There is nothing surprises me more, he replied, than the extraordinary way in which people comment upon the last scenes of death. Circumstan-

ces calculated to excite the strongest conviction, and to warn men to number their days, so as to apply their hearts unto wisdom, are all rendered of no effect through the hardness of the heart, and the perverse way of deceiving themselves into ruin.

As the doctor had to pursue his duty, we were obliged to separate after a little time ; and I proposed that we should endeavour to get another interview with John Smith's brother and his wife ; and therefore turned up the hill leading to the village ; and we were no sooner there than we saw the woman in the same place where she had been before, with her little girl beside her at work. This gave us an easy opportunity of speaking to her, and I asked, as we stopt, if her little girl had finished her wristbands ?

No, Sir, she gravely replied, it's as I said—they're not done yet, and I'm putting on a pair I've stitched myself.

The little girl began to cry, and said, I can't finish 'em now, mother, because you won't put 'em on that shirt.

I'll put 'em on the next shirt if you'll get 'em done.

No, I don't care for that ; I wanted 'em to be for *that* shirt. So I shan't finish them.

But, I said, I heard you say you *would* finish them. I am afraid you do not care about speaking *truth*.

A boy came out of the cottage, attracted by hearing conversation.

Ah, said Charles, that is the boy who wanted George Smith to swear, to put an end to the insults of the other boys. Are you George Smith's cousin ?

Yes.

George did not swear.

No, I know he didn't.

Why did you want him to swear ?

Because I see no harm ; father swears hard enough.

The mother coloured deeply, and sighing, said, More's the pity, Tom ! Why won't you learn that it's very wicked to swear ?

Well, mother, I don't *want* to swear ; only you know father *does swear*.

She held down her head.

We know your husband, I said, and have talked to him a little about this sin—I hope he may be changed. How did it happen that you formed a marriage with a blasphemer ?

I'm sorry to say, Sir, I thought as Tom does. I was wicked like him to see no harm, though I didn't swear myself : but now I know very different : my brother, John Smith, and his wife, are always instructing me, and she is always telling me to try to get grace from the Lord to teach me always to bless and pray when he curses and reviles ; and now I've got so full of it, that directly I hear a curse, I have a blessing ready, and this somehow gives me more peace. I wait with patience, hoping God in his own good time will put away his curses, and send his blessing by turning my husband's heart. But it grieves me sadly when I see my children divided between us, and often taking that way they know is bad ; and it's hard to have to tell them their own father is guilty of breaking God's commandment. I've never yet heard Tom swear a bad oath, but I see he's in danger ; and, O ! if I heard my children take the way of death, what should I do ?

You must go on reproving their sins, and never shrink from telling them truth, and from blessing and praying, that they may by Grace be saved from the sin of blasphemy.

I hope I shall always try to do so, Sir.

But you have *more* to do. You must not stop short by telling them only of sin—You must win them by telling them of the beauty of holiness. You must set Jesus before their eyes, and teach them His precepts—Show them the great love of Jesus, who died for such sinners as we are, to save them from their sins—Tell them of His Blood that cleanseth—Of the Holy Spirit who sanctifieth. Not only yourself bless, and pray, but teach *them* to bless and pray—Fill their young mouths with the praises of Him who redeemeth us, and do not stop merely telling what way they must *not* go in, but teach them the way they *should go in*: train them in it, and see if the Lord will not bless you to your children.

Oh, Sir, but I know so little, I don't know how to train them.

Ask counsel of the Lord, and He will teach you wisdom ; ask the advice of John, and he will instruct you out of God's holy word. Remember, a *mother's* duty is an ACTIVE DUTY. It is not enough for you to mourn, and sigh, and tremble—you must be alive to your duty—you must be *Teaching*, and *Restraining*, and *Persuading*, and *Watching*, and always awake to their souls' concerns. Set before them the delights of Heaven, and they will be more likely to turn from the miseries of Hell ; and forget not to watch what companions they make : beware of letting them loose to seek their own play-mates ; choose *for* them, and by training them to be good company,

make other good parents not afraid to let children be with theirs. If you mind not duty, they will go with wicked companions, make all you do of no effect.

It's all true that you say, Sir, and I thank you kindly for telling me my duty.

It is, you know, quite natural for a child to speak the language of its father. Now, remember, you have to seek for them to be made the children of God, and when they are *His* sons and daughters, they will no more make your heart fearful by a blaspheming Guilty Tongue, but will speak the language of Zion, and their conversation will be seasoned with that salt which will make it acceptable in the sight of God.

Whilst we were engaged in this conversation, her husband came in sight, returning from the fields. He saw us, and looked very uncomfortable; but he seemed to feel he could not make his escape without appearing to run away, and he came forward very reluctantly. He said something like Good day, and casting his dark and surly looking eyes over the faces of each of his family, he went slowly into his house.

His wife looked frightened, and said, Good day, gentlemen, I must attend to my husband.

Come here, Tom, said my friend to the boy—Go in and tell your father that as we are no strangers, I wish he would kindly let us sit down a few minutes.

Tom went in with great alacrity, and we heard him say, Do, father, they're kind gentlemen, I like to hear 'em talk.

They're like then, was the answer.

Tom came back with his message, You're like to come in then, father says.

We accepted the permission. He got up without bidding us welcome, and leaving his chair as if for our use, he sat down on the corner of the table under the window.

I would not disturb you, said Charles, but I thought you would not refuse me hospitality: and as you know my heart is full of the best interest for you, I wish to take the opportunity of saying a few words—Tell me now honestly if you do not think that they are your best friends, who would wish to turn you from a way of danger, to the paths of safety and peace.

I dare say ye mean it well.

I do indeed, and it would be dreadful, if I who know the dreadful sentence of God on the Guilty Tongue of blasphemers, should not warn you.

If I saw a sword hanging over your head, and ready to drop on you, I should be a monster if I did not tell you, that you might seek an escape. And if I saw great riches, and pleasure, and delight within your reach, and yet because your back was towards them you did not see them, should I not be cruel and uncharitable not to say, Turn Jem, turn, and see the blessings that are there, and take what is freely offered to you. If I went away and said, Let him go without—or let him die under the sword—you would have reason to think me an enemy: but if I say, Beware of death, and seek for happiness—you ought to think me your friend.

Now we know “God is angry with the wicked every day.” If he *turn not*, He will whet his sword; He hath bent his bow and made it ready—He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death.—O then, I beseech you, flee for your life; turn, and think, and look upon the love of Jesus, who has shown His great love to

your brother John, and to thousands and tens of thousands more, and who would not withhold mercy from any who seek it, for He will in no wise cast away any that come unto Him

You have never yet known the happiness of delighting yourself in God, and you never can, unless you leave off that dreadful sin of swearing. Is it likely that God, upon whom you are continually calling to send curses and damnation, will let you feel happiness in Him whilst you are doing so? Your abominable prayers are all against yourself, and it is as much as to say, Let me never be a holy man! Let me never have a blessing! Let me never enter into heaven! Let all that I have, my wife and children, be shut out from heaven!! Let all my property be wasted! Let my soul and body be given to the tormentors, and let there never be an end of my misery, or of the misery of my wife and children!

Nay, nay, Sir, that's more than I say.

I assure you it is not at all more. You do not consider the meaning of what your dreadful oaths express, if you do not understand all this is true. And more than that, you do know when you call for damnation from hell, and curses from God, that they mean every thing that is dreadful. But when your passion is off, or when you will hear reason, then you flatter yourself that God will not believe you mean what you say, and that the devil will not take you at your word. But out of thine own mouth thou art continually condemned. And you should bear in mind, whenever you use such words, you are *held GUILTY*; and that a cry for a curse necessarily implies a prayer to be denied a blessing.

And though in the pride and unbelief of your

heart, whilst you still live and have your health and can work for your livelihood, you imagine you want nothing, remember a day of death will come when you will feel the desolation of being without God. And even now, to them who know and love the Lord, you appear *as one dead*. A man without God in the world has not the true principle of life in him. For a man to be without spiritual life, he is in a worse condition than the brute that perisheth, for his *soul* must pass to appear before God, with whom he has no part in grace, and to whom he has never before approached through the blood of Jesus.

Charles was encouraged to proceed, seeing the man listened, and evidently carried his mind along with the chain of reasoning. He waited a little, and then resumed the subject.

Now, I beseech you, think well of what I have stated. You must have heard in a country like this, that Jesus Christ died to *save us from the curse*. He knew that *the curse* is what we cannot endure, and what must for ever shut us out from God. He came to *save us from* this awful condition. He came to *remove all curses from off our heads, by bearing the curse for us*.—He *did bear it for us* in His own body on the tree ! And yet, the blasphemer throws all these mercies back, as it were, in God's face, and refusing to accept His love and mercy, continually *RECALLS the curse*. He acts as if he would wrest his own share of the curses out of the hand of Jesus, who is mighty to redeem us from it ; and the blasphemer determines in mad and awful rebellion to bind them on his own head, and overwhelm his own soul with them, that the Law of God may

be executed upon him, and that he will not be held guiltless, but chooses to have the full weight of God's vengeance on his body and soul forever. He *chooses* the bed of hell, and the torment which is told by the gnashing of teeth—he chooses to be given over to the worm that never dies and the fire that is never quenched—he every day and every hour says, I WILL BE CURSED !! “Oh put off blasphemy out of your mouth !!”

The boy was intently engaged in listening to all that was said; looking earnestly in our faces, and sometimes glancing towards his father.

My friend ceased, and after a short silence, I said, Come here, Tom. Take care you do not learn to curse and swear and take God's holy Name in vain, breaking the Law of God, but pray to be taught the Love of Jesus, and to have the Holy Spirit given you. Pray that God may not hearken to the curses your poor father has used, but that he will wash them away in His own blood. I think your father will one day be sorry, and will grieve to think that he has ever desired an evil thing to fall on you, and your sister, and your poor mother, and he would be sorry to think that God should cut him off, and leave you without a father. The little girl came up to my knee and attended to all I said—whilst the mother, holding her apron to her eyes, sobbed aloud. The father's eyes were red, but he resisted the starting tear.

I then turned to Charles, and requested he would let us kneel down in this house where so many curses had been uttered, and pray for a blessing henceforth to fall on it and its inhabitants.

He instantly complied—we knelt down togeth-

er.—I pressed the children down by the shoulders to oblige them to kneel, and the man after appearing in great confusion, and at a loss what to do, was at last constrained to kneel also.

And in a voice which expressed the fulness of his soul, Charles prayed :—

O, Thou Most Mighty God, whose name is Holy, and whose ear is ever open to the voice of man, grant that we now provoke Thee not with vain speaking, but that we may indeed *hallow* Thy Name, and address Thee in words dictated by the Spirit of Truth, and acceptable to Thee, through the blood of Jesus !

Thou sin-avenging God ! we pray Thee, that Thou wouldst put into our hearts the *fear* of Thy Name, that we may never mention it without the recollection that it is Holy, Great, and Terrible—that we may no more provoke Thee, and incur the sentence due unto our guilt !

Thou Sin-pardoning God ! we pray Thee, that Thou wouldst lead us all in that way which shall find the forgiveness of sin—that every one of us now before Thee, may, through the atonement of Thy Blood, be taken into Thy reconciled love ; though the hour of our calling be at different periods, bring us all, we beg, finally into the glorious hope of salvation.

We beseech Thee *not* to pass the sentence of damnation upon this house and family—we beseech Thee *forget* the prayers of abomination—we beseech Thee *not* to send down Thy curses on them—we beseech Thee to *stop* the blast of Thyne anger from them—we beseech Thee *not* to curse their basket and their store—we beseech Thee *not* to blast their families—*not* to hurt their

senses—*not* to injure their limbs—we beseech Thee *not* to curse their souls—*not* to send them to hell—*not* to give them over to Satan!

But CONTRARIWISE! O Lord God of forbearing mercy and compassion, we beseech Thee by Him who bled and died for sinners, that Thou wouldst in infinite love look upon this house and family, in pitying saving grace—that Thou mayest bless them with all blessings, through the knowledge of Jesus Christ the Righteous! O *save* them from sin and death and hell! *Bless* their families, and keep them both body and soul.—Bless them with the Light of Thy Salvation.—Turn them from darkness to light, from death to life, from *cursings* to *blessings*.—Take away all blasphemy from among them, and fill them with love and reverence of Thy Holy Name!

And inasmuch as they have been far off from Thee, do Thou, in mercy, draw them nigh to Thee. Send thy Holy Spirit into their hearts to convince them of sin, to instruct them in righteousness, to lead them to Jesus; and teach them to cry Abba Father! and to HALLOW THY NAME.

Lord, turn the hearts of *all* blaspheming sinners, wherever and whoever they may be. Remove their awful curse from *our land*, that it may no more mourn under the avenging dispensations, for the Guilt of the Tongues of men. And let it be said, instead of “Because of swearing the land mourneth,” Because of the fear and love of Thy Name, the valleys laugh and sing, and the hills rejoice together.

We ask all these things in the sacred name of Father, Son, and Spirit, and through the inter-

cessions of Jesus Christ, in whom we have the promise of all good, and the redemption from all evil.

Hear us then, for His Name's sake.—Amen.

We rose—James turned away his face from us—and without speaking a single word more, we departed from the house with prayer in our hearts.

W. B. P.
THE END. *W. B. P.*

W. B. P.
M N
A B C D E F G
H I

1st
Lampson

Mary B. Child

Mary B. Child

B. Child

