

"I was called on another occasion to visit a friend, a brother sceptic, who was sick and likely to die. I had often visited him when he was well, and we had managed on those occasions to interest and amuse each other; but now we were helpless. Both were in sorrow, and neither could console his brother. And there we were, looking mournfully on each other in the face of death, speechless and comfortless. * * * My friend, like myself, had been a Christian in his earlier days, and had rejoiced in the assurance of God's love and favour and in the hopes of future and eternal blessedness; and now he was passing away in utter cheerlessness. He died, and I followed his remains to the grave: I spoke, but I had no great comforting truths with which to cheer the sad hearts of his weeping kindred. I looked down with his disconsolate widow and his sorrowing children into the dark, cold vault, but could say nothing of a better life. We 'sorrowed as those who have no hope.'

"We had a young woman who had lived with us, with the exception of two short intervals, all the time we had lived in America. She had come to regard us as her natural guardians, and we had come to look on her as one of our own family. The second time she left us she caught a fever, and returned to us in hopes that in her old and quiet home she would soon be well again. We procured her medical aid, but the fever got worse. The doctor lost hopes, and it soon became evident that she was doomed to a speedy death. I attended her during the last sad night of her sufferings. I heard her moanings. I wanted to comfort her, but I had not the power. I could once have spoken to her of a Father in heaven and of a better world; but I could speak on those subjects no longer. I could once have knelt by her side and prayed; but I could pray no more. I could neither comfort myself nor my dying charge. She passed away without a word of consolation, or a whisper of hope to cheer her as she trod the dark valley of the shadow of death.

"She was interred on the slope of the hill, on the opposite side of the stream over against my farm, within view of the field and garden in which I often worked, and the lonely dwelling in which I frequently slept. There on that quiet farm, and in that solitary dwelling, with that one melancholy grave in view, I passed at times the long sad days and the still and solemn nights, in utter loneliness, gazing on the desolate scene around, or feeding on saddening thoughts within, 'without God and without hope in the world.' * * * I was wretched and apart from God and Christ, and immortally, my wretchedness was incurable; and the sense of wretchedness constrained me to look once more in the direction of the religion that had cheered me in my earlier days."

[His return to God, and great happiness in coming back to the fountain of living waters, will have to be deferred till another time.]