



A Flag of Truce :  
or,  
Must We Fight for ever.

Testimony of protestant prose-writers

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**I**N the passages that will be presently quoted from Protestant writers, there may be mistakes concerning the bliss of souls, or the souls that are in bliss ; yet these errors do not invalidate the belief, which is prior to and independant of them, that in the invisible world souls dear to God watch over us, and help us.

Julius Charles Hare records in his *Life of Sterling* that that remarkable man believed that the spirits of his departed relatives might be spectators of his thoughts and actions, and that it was worth while to try and please them ; and in later life he would conclude : « How deeply rooted in human nature is the tendency to the worship of saints, to the beatification and deification of those whom death has hidden from our outward eyes ! » \* Surely either Sterling or his biographer here fails in accuracy of thought and language. Is it as corrupt a tendency of the human heart to *beatify* the dead, as to *deify* them ? Beatitude is the sight, the love, the fruition of the one true God. To deify a creature is to dethrone the one God and set an idol in His place. How was Mr. Sterling's belief a deification of the departed ? Did St. Peter deify the devil, when he affirmed him to be watching and studying our characters, and ever roving around us for our injury ? To suppose, then, that sainted souls may do for our good what the

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\* Memoir prefixed to *Essays and Tales* by Johp Sterling, p. viii.