

'Please God, there'll be a better end some day. But do you try and sleep a bit now, and I'll look after both him and you.'

'I can't. I keep seeing him when I shut my eyes. And I'm thinking what he may be doing now; but I can't go out to see, I suppose.'

'I suppose *not*. You'll just lie still and take what I bring you; and what's to happen next is taken out of *your* hands. You did all you could.'

'That's just what one's never sure of,' sighed Oliver. 'And when it comes to being able to do nothing——'

'It often comes to that,' said Agar quietly. 'That's just what makes the hardest part of life. But one must just have patience.'

There was a tone in his voice as if he were speaking to himself as well as to

Oliver. And the young man turned his head and looked at him with bright, restless eyes that were full of questions, and seemed far enough from sleep. Perhaps Agar Wilson felt the pressure of that unspoken inquiry, for after a moment he went on—

'I must have patience too; that's what I'm thinking. I daresay you've wondered sometimes, lad, what I've been through, and why I have no belongings, like other men?'

'Sometimes,' answered Oliver. 'But I wouldn't have asked.'

'No. But once in a lifetime a man has a mind to speak out. I'm going now to get you something, and when you've taken it, I'll tell you what patience has got to help *me* through with, for it may keep you from thinking of your own troubles, poor lad, and of your father.'

(To be continued.)

The Presbyterians.

THERE are few questions which need to be more carefully considered by Christian people at the present time than that of the nature of the authority which resides in the Church, and of the origin and character of her ministry. Every society must have its officers to administer its laws, to be the instruments of the society in carrying out the objects for which it was formed, and through whom the identity and corporate life of the society is continued.

The Church of Christ, as an outward, visible organisation, has her officers and rulers in the threefold order of her ministers—the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; and what is most important for all to know is whence they derive their authority, and in whose name they speak. 'By what authority doest Thou these things, and who gave Thee this authority?' were questions put to Jesus Christ, nor did He refuse to

answer them and to give proofs of His mission.

There are two possible theories of the origin of the Christian ministry; of these one makes the ministry of the Church derive its authority from below, and regards the minister as the delegate of the congregation, appointed to represent the rest, and to perform sacred duties which might be as well performed by any Christian. The other view traces the ministerial authority back to our Lord Jesus Christ, and regards the ministers as His ambassadors and the stewards of His mysteries. According to this latter view their mission takes its rise from those words of our Lord—'As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you,' and has flowed down the ages in one appointed channel ever since.

There is an element of truth in the first view, in so far as the faithful laity are permitted to take part in the selection and