

you aright? Can you vindicate the man who has so deeply injured that admirable creature? How has Clara displeased you?"

"True; how has she displeased me? Not at all, mother, not at all. She is so good, and so religious, and attends meetings and societies and all these things, like pious Mrs. Thompson;—and she intends to bring me to her way of thinking, as well as Edward; but I shall not be blinded by her any longer—and if Edward is, he is so at his peril. I will never marry him nor any other man, who will drag me about to meetings."

"Anne," cried the weeping mother, "you break my heart; what can you mean by this?"

"Mean, mother! I mean to take a walk this fine morning, so good-bye," and escaping from the apartment, she made her way into the street, through a back door, and thus avoided being seen by her lover, who was awaiting her appearance in the parlour:

Although Edward had observed her petulance, and even sometimes fancied she neglected him, yet, fondly confiding in her constancy and affection, he had imputed those aberrations to some accidental cause, which would, undoubtedly, if known, be a sufficient apology for her behaviour, and had therefore passed them over in silence: most probably, with more facility than he would have done, had not his mind been occupied with more important concerns.

More than a week had passed since his last conversation with Clara—but the time had not been wasted; her arguments had induced him to examine particularly those evidences of the truth of Scripture, to which she had referred him, and, as he read, he wondered at the blindness which had kept him from a knowledge of these things, yet even in pursuing the subject thus closely, he imagined himself obeying the wishes of her, who was to him the dearest of earthly objects; and he looked forward with pleasure to the time when he might be able to reclaim his beloved from the errors of unbelief into which himself had led her. Alas! the seeds of evil are widely dispersed and easily sown; but when we would gather them again, they are beyond our reach, fallen into fruitful soil, which "brings forth fruit abundantly."

While Edward awaited the appearance of Anne, he was joined by Clara, whose winning gentleness made her society always acceptable.

"I am come, my dear Miss Allen," cried he, "to congratulate you on having made a convert to your belief of the Bible, that is of the Old Testament."

"And of the New also," said Clara.

"Only in part; not the whole of the New Testament."

"And which parts do you believe?"

"Oh! the credible parts, certainly; but I will not

deceive you," he added more seriously. "I cannot credit all the wonders related of Jesus Christ."

"Perhaps, when you have investigated them more particularly, you may find reason to alter your opinion; many wise men have done this, and found happiness."

"Happiness! pardon the repetition; but how can a change of opinion affect my happiness?"

"If your opinions are well grounded, you do not need to change them—but if ill-founded, it may do much. Is it nothing for sinful man to discover that he has a constant and powerful Advocate with the Almighty being whom he has offended? Is it nothing to learn, that, having been tempted like ourselves, and subjected to similar sorrows, he can fully appreciate the degree of temptation that assails us, and sympathize in all our trials?"

"If we required such an Advocate, and Christ answered your description, we should find him invaluable; but you will allow that virtue itself is sufficient to carry us to Heaven; and if so, where is the need of an Advocate? You sigh, and that sigh declares me to be wrong in your opinion; but permit me to ask you a question—Are not virtue and holiness the same?"

"I think them entirely distinct qualities—a man may possess many virtues without religion, although he cannot be religious without virtue. I believe that even the virtues of the infidel are derived from the very Christianity he despises."

"How can that be? Will he be governed by that which he condemns?"

"Not knowingly—but in this land, where the lessons of our childhood are derived from the word of God, and our laws are founded upon its commands, it is not difficult to believe that our earliest impressions and those which are most lasting, must be on the side of principles obtained from the fountain of excellence."

"Which fountain you conceive to be the Bible. You are right—it does indeed contain a system of morality the most perfect and full, which is worthy of being made the guide of our conduct; but when I am required to believe in the divinity of its author, reason revolts at the absurdity."

"Do not call it an absurdity," cried Clara, and for a moment she seemed distressed; but, recovering herself, she continued: "You are convinced of the authenticity of the Old Testament, and in it, we find that the obedience of a whole life was barely sufficient to fulfil the law, and thus save man—and if he offended his maker, the High Priest alone could act as mediator for him—and only once in the year could he approach the most Holy Place. This High Priest was but a type of a more powerful Intercessor, who has been made our great sacrifice for sin. Let us not reject him. The opinion of the heathen philosopher was that mankind was so wicked, that they required some universal method to redeem them