

father's name. It had never been associated with anything very distinguished in thought or action; and he was determined that no effort of his should clothe it with any distinction, for, when about twenty years old, he dropped Arouet, and assumed the name Voltaire. His friends give various fanciful explanations for the change; he never assigned any reason but that he had not been happy under his old name, and he hoped to be more happy under the new one.

As to the naming of this other boy, it is sufficient to say that his life was to prove that "there was a man sent from God whose name was John."

Let us now turn to the study of the influences which determined the characters of these men, and led them forth each in his chosen path. The French boy was unfortunate in his guardian. A prominent abbe was an intimate friend of his mother. It was thought a very desirable thing to secure so eminent and good a man for the influential position of godfather. And so, certainly, it should have been; but it is a fact which throws much light upon those times, that many who occupied the most exalted positions in the Church were hopelessly depraved in principle, and immoral in life beyond what is easily credible. This particular abbe was a rank libertine, and a reckless unbeliever in the principles of the religion of which he was a prominent teacher. Into such hands at the baptismal font, young Arouet fell. At this time a new poem, most scandalous and irreligious, was growing into popularity in the depraved society of Paris. It bore the name of "Mosaide," and described the career of Moses as an impostor. The unscrupulous godfather put this production into the hands of this

child, for the double purpose of teaching him to read and inspiring him with a contempt of Christianity!

At the same age the boy John was laboriously passing the portal of the great world of knowledge by spelling his way through the first chapter of the book of Genesis. Voltaire—Wesley. The Mosaide—Genesis. In those four words we have the germ of a large portion of the literary and religious history of Europe in the eighteenth century. Here is the first gate through which these two pass into their now fast diverging paths.

The unblushing abbe was very proud of his success with his precocious pupil. He boasted that little effect of the double baptism remained upon the boy, for though he was only three years old yet he knew the vile Mosaide by heart. It was the constant study of the guardian of the morals of this child to surround him with persons destitute of all sympathy with Christianity. They were not then hard to find in Paris. We, therefore, find him, at six years of age, in the midst of lewd and blaspheming men, encouraged by their applause of his incipient efforts to exercise his wit by insinuations the most base, and by open assaults the most bold, against Christianity. In relation to the Bible and religion the boy had no chance at all.

Place in contrast the young Wesley, within the Epworth rectory, a model of an almost perfect Christian home. The anointed touch of Susannah Wesley, in early life, was sufficient to determine a boy's direction though the might of an empire opposed. On one side a graceless abbe, on the other a sanctified mother, is it any wonder that, from the first beginnings of life, these two worked out the great problem before them on an entirely different