

good or evil. Where are my good works? God of heaven! where are they to be detected in the dark waste of my years? 'Tis true, I sometimes prayed; the words of my lips mingled naturally with the light and passing air—they were not borne to the throne of God, for my heart was far from Him; I frequently came to mass on Sundays, but how often did I absent myself from that holy sacrifice for pleasure, from sloth, for no reason whatever I over and over again neglected it; and when I did come, how little did my soul participate in the unspeakable mercies of that wondrous sacrifice: public decency, human respect, some lingering habit of the past brought me; but while the blood of Jesus pleaded, I was among the curious, if not mocking spectators, on the mystic Calvary. The abstinence enjoined by the church, from early habit or association, I generally observed;—the fasts I did not—and why? because they were troublesome—because I did not love my God nor His cross; I would not be crucified to the world, nor to the concupisence of the flesh; I did not think on these matters as I do now, for I would not; and therefore has come upon me the prediction of the prophet: 'With desolation is the whole land made desolate, because there is no one who thinketh in his heart.' I often gave alms to the poor; feeling and not religion urged me; I gave as the heathen—not as the Christian; but how often has the cry of the poor, or the exigencies of what ought to have been, O God! it is still, my dear religion, appealed to me in vain. I had read in the book of Wisdom, that 'the hopes of the unthankful shall melt like the winter's ice.' And behold, my God, while I have lived for my own gratification, and to save up money, my hopes are tossed and melted in the tide of the great eternity that cometh; like water taken in the palm of the hand, the more I have grasped money, the more hath it escaped. I thought it my duty to labour for my family; Merciful heaven! I should also have laboured for my soul! On the day of my funeral, when my children shall count what I have accumulated, and think how they shall enjoy it, where will be my soul? O interest above all others rising above the world and the fading clouds, and dreams thereof, why did I forget thee! madman as I was, did I gain the whole world, what would it now avail me? These are my virtues; but if, as one of the fathers said, our justice is to be found injustice, what shall be said of our sins? and shall not my justice be found injustice? I was counted a good father—a good husband; I was thought kind to the poor; I wronged no one but God and my own soul; but over all these specious virtues a cloud of impenetrable darkness hangs: they never shone in the sight of God; I was out of the church. They never, therefore, can

count for me hereafter; they never were—they never can be meritorious of eternal life; dead works they were—they shall accompany me hereafter—the dead burying the dead. Merciful God! how often did I sit with thy temple when the Easter time did fall, and heard that ancient sentence of the church recorded, which obliged me under pain of mortal sin, and of virtual excommunication from time; that sentence was listened to in breathless silence by the people—through centuries it electrified the Church of God—it startled me, but it was momentary; the chains of my apathy and worldly mindedness were around me; and though I knew that thus one neglect must of necessity shed a withering, nay, a deadly influence upon every apparently virtuous action of my life, I would not give myself the trouble of attending to it. Woe is me! had I done so, in all probability it would have saved me." And the sinner in his anguish hid his head, and the tears of his bitter sorrow burst forth afresh over the madness of that criminal indifference which excluded him from the blessings of the church whilst living, and now bids fair to exclude him from heaven's brighter associations.

"I have been recounting my virtues, my claims to the crown of justice which the Lord, the just judge, shall give me on that day.' They are a nonentity; they weigh not a feather in the scales of eternity. And now for my crimes. The silence of the night is around me; its darkness covers me, the pulses of my life are fast beating to their close, and the tollings of eternity come awfully pealing on my ears. 'I will recount to thee, O God, my years in the bitterness of my soul;' the sins which I so selfishly feared to tell in the tribunal of penance will soon appear before the angels of God: the assembled universe must know them in the day of doom. I will tell them to Thee now, and to my confessor to-morrow. But why to Thee? Thou knowest them, O God! Darkness could not cover them from thy sight, nor the deepest depths of hell shield them from thy vengeance. The Psalmist said, 'my sin is always before me.' O that I had always seen mine, as I do now, in all their dark and hideous deformity. Behold, they stand out before me in gigantic prominence; the mountains which shall crush, but cannot cover me from thee. Through the darkness and waste of years their voices, loud and terrifying, call out to heaven for vengeance; frightful apparitions! sacred heaven, they are realities! They have burst their cerements; they come to escort me to my judgment: save me, O heaven, from those demon forms—the incarnations of impurity—which, rising from the abysses of the past, wave their flaming brands around me, and exultingly claim me for their own save me, O God, for the blood