

run away from him before she married him would have been the best thing of all. There is no going back and no undoing in this life; and that is one of the most terrible truths we ever have to learn."

Griselda sighed.

"Then what we have once done we can never undo as long as we live."

"Never," replied Mark; "just as what we have once said we never can unsay. And, after all, why should your friend, Lois Stillingfleet, be punished for your sin, Lady Clayton? If it would have killed her more than forty years ago to learn that her baby was born dead, it would certainly kill her now to be told that the son she has worshipped all her life is not really her son at all. And she never shall be told it while I live, so help me, God!"

"I did it for the best," moaned Griselda.

Mark smiled.

"You thought you knew better than God did, and that is always a mistake. He knows His Own business best, you may depend upon it; and ours, too, for the matter of that."

Griselda was silent.

"And there is another thing," he continued, "which weighs with me in making this decision. I believe that God actually chose to speak to you, Sir Conrad, through the mouth of His prophet, the wandering preacher; and that therefore what that old man foretold must and will come true. You imagined, and naturally so, that the prophecy would be fulfilled through the violent death of Archie; but God found a more merciful and excellent way of bringing it to pass: but all the same, He is bringing it to pass; remember that."

"Yes, that is so," Sir Conrad admitted.

"I do not think, as you do, that God is a blind Force; I believe He is a living Person, stooping in His love