

"almost" and "altogether!" "Almost in time" meant "altogether" too late; "almost saved" meant "altogether" lost; "almost certain" meant "altogether" in ignorance.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," said Agrippa; but the impression probably passed away, leaving him "altogether" a heathen. And so we see in all the concerns of life, to be "almost" is widely different from being "altogether."

"Almost persuaded." What does it mean? and who are they to whom the words may be applied? There are many, I fear, who may be thus called. They are those who acknowledge the necessity for a change of heart; they are melted to tears by a stirring sermon or a solemn scene; they can talk fluently on the great truths of the Gospel; they can discuss difficult questions of doctrine, and lament over the shortcomings of their minister or their neighbours. At one time they were dissatisfied with the life they were living—they began to be alarmed, and to fear that their state was not altogether a safe one. Like "Christian," the pilgrim, they could no longer stay quietly in the City of Destruction; they began to cast about for some means of escape; they set out on the way to the Celestial City, but they cast many a lingering look behind; they could not make up their mind to break off altogether from their former companions, their former pleasures, their former sins. "There surely can be no harm in doing this or that, or in going to such and such place of amusement: God is not so strict as to expect us to give up all the pleasures of life; and we can make up for it by being more diligent at our devotions afterwards." And so they go on in a miserable halting way, trying to serve God with half their heart, whilst they give the other half to the world. No wonder that they make no progress, that they do not seem to advance in the Christian life, that they get no happiness from their religion; it is an irksome task, a painful burden, always weighing on their mind and spirits, restraining and repressing them; and they sigh, and wish religion were a pleasanter thing.