

# THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE. . . . . Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

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*For the Colonial Churchman.*

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The following narrative is extracted from the "Pastor's Testimony" an excellent work lately published on Confirmation. The circumstances are related, I believe, just as they occurred. Its insertion in your useful paper will oblige

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The winter of 1829 was a season of uncommon gaiety in the city of — (U.S). The amateurs in pleasure had introduced several kinds of amusements, and there seemed among the devotees of fashion and gaiety, an untiring strife, who should go to the greatest extravagance and excess. Among the gayest of the gay, who sought to tread every path of pleasure, and drink from every stream of earthly bliss, was Miss Mary —. Her family were of the highest respectability. She had been brought up amid ease and affluence. Her sky had ever been bright, and her path strewn with perennial flowers. She was now in the May morning of life—young, beautiful and admired. With an elasticity of spirits and buoyancy of mind peculiar to her age, she looked upon the world as one wide field of pleasure where she was to take her pastime and seek her happiness. Like thousands of others, she had no idea in living, only to please and gratify herself.

A pious relative of her's had sought to lead her mind to serious things. At first she pretended to listen to his advice with attention and respect; but it was only to find a new source of frolic and fun. All the well meant efforts of her friend were, in his absence, the subject of ridicule and fun. When those efforts were repeated, and the solemn realities of eternity were pressed upon her attention again and again, she soon became highly displeased, and told her adviser that she did not wish to have her life clouded and her enjoyments marred with the moping melancholy of religion—that it would be time enough to be troubled about such things, when she was old, and could no longer enjoy the world. Her relative finding her heart utterly opposed to divine things—and that she became indignant upon the slightest allusion to any thing of a serious nature, was obliged to desist.

Such was Mary —, on the evening of the first of February, 1829. Her heart was completely set on vanity, the world had fast hold of it—and God was in none of her thoughts. It was Sunday evening, she determined to go to church merely as to a place of fashionable resort, (for no other object than to see and be seen) and enjoying the society of her young friends. She was accompanied by a young gentleman—to whom she was attached, of similar views and character with herself. When the service was concluded, she could not have told a word that had been uttered while the congregation had been offering their petitions to God, in whose temple they were assembled; her thoughts had been occupied by anticipated scenes of pleasure. The next evening she purposed to attend a fancy ball, and many bright visions of expected pleasure were floating before her mind.

The minister ascended the pulpit and announced his text — "Escape for thy life." These were the first words that arrested her attention. Her startled mind seemed as if just awoke from the slumbers of a dream. Though she had always attended public worship, she never before had heard a sermon. The minister's voice had been like the unmeaning sound of some distant water fall. But the finger of God had now touched her heart. She heard every word. And every word entered like iron into her soul, and seemed to describe her case. She plainly saw

that she was a rebel against God—that her soul was exposed to infinite wrath, and that if she did not flee and escape for her life, she must be lost for ever. She became so agitated that she wept, and could not conceal her feelings from her young and gay companions. Before she left the church, she determined that she would not go on the morrow to the fancy ball, with which her thoughts had been so much occupied. After she retired, and was alone with herself and God, her sins rose to view in such vivid and awful colors, that she never closed her eyes in sleep till the dawn of day. Still she struggled against these feelings. She expected and hoped that they would wear off. But they continued with undiminished impression upon her mind. When she found that neither gay company, nor scenes of pleasure, nor light reading, could banish these reflections; but that there rose continually before her the thought that she was a sinner against God, and that his terrible frown rested upon her—and the echo of the solemn warning that she had heard—"Escape for thy life"—still rung in her ears—she determined to seek for comfort in religion. She began to read her Bible. She became a strict attendant upon the ministrations of the preacher, from whose lips she at first heard the truths that aroused her to reflection. Her convictions now deepened, and though at times she strove hard to shake them off, she still was constant in her attendance upon a preached gospel. Several weeks thus passed on, and her mind continued like the troubled ocean when it cannot rest. She felt that she was a lost sinner, and that she must "flee from the wrath to come." Yet she knew not the way. A thick darkness surrounded her.

A little more than two months had now elapsed. She came to church on Easter Sunday with a heavy heart. The communion was to be administered: the minister in the conclusion of his discourse adverted to the circumstance of the probable separation of the worshippers in that house on the resurrection morn. It might be the same separation that was about to occur. The Table of the Lord was spread. All were invited to come and feed on the heavenly banquet. A portion of the congregation would come forward in obedience to the divine mandate, and take their places at the feet of Jesus their Redeemer. Another, and perhaps a larger portion, would decline the invitation, and turn their backs upon the Table of the Lord. And as the invitation of Jesus was about to separate families, brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, that morning, who could say but what it would be precisely the same separation which would take place at the awful hour when the same Jesus should sit in the judgment seat, and make an eternal separation between earth's inhabitants? The one division is to be placed on the right hand—and the other on the left. "And where" said he "do you choose your place? your conduct this very hour will decide that question. By kneeling at that altar you will say 'Lord Jesus, when thou comest in thy kingdom remember me.' By slighting this invitation, you practically proclaim that you are content to be found among those who will be eternally excluded from the bright abodes of blessedness." These words pierced like a dagger through Mary's bosom. The echo was still ringing in her ears—"Escape for thy life." When the communicants gathered around the consecrated table of Jesus, she, almost unconscious of what she did, joined their company, and knelt down. Darkness rested upon her mind—she wished to escape the coming wrath—she stretched out her hand to receive the memorials of the Saviour's dying love. Her feelings had well nigh overpowered her, she could hardly rise from the altar to return to

her pew. Her whole appearance attracted the attention of the minister who was distributing the elements. He immediately the next morning sought her out. Her mind was still dark and confused he pointed out the simple way of Salvation through Christ. He bid her go and roll all her sorrows and hersins on Jesus—to look to Him with faith as an infinite and all-sufficient Saviour—to cry unto him in prayer and earnest supplication, until he lifted upon her the light of his reconciled countenance. In a few days her mind became enlightened—her fears tranquilized, and her soul calm and happy. And now she feared not to take her stand on the Lord's side. Her young friends had done every thing to discourage her attendance upon lectures and evening meetings. But now, when she came out boldly and told them that she had found peace and happiness in believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that she was determined to be a decided christian, they laughed outright, and tried all the power of ridicule to dissuade her from her purpose.

She had a most difficult part to act. She was a great favorite with two or three of her brothers who were older than herself. They were gay young men, and determined that she should not be pious. They used every argument, persuasion, and threat to turn her from her purpose. They were joined in these efforts by the young gentleman to whom she was engaged to be married, added to this, a beloved sister and a very intimate friend, who as a companion, had run with her the round of gaiety and fashion, felt, and gave utterance to their feelings, that they had rather see her die, than become religious. All these opposed her from day to day, and week to week. And when they saw they could not alter her determination, they tried to convince her that she was deluded—that she might be religious and at the same time enjoy the pleasures of the world. They sought to dissuade her from attending upon the ministrations of the person under whose preaching she had been awakened, declaring that he was an enthusiast.

All this opposition and these efforts, were wisely permitted by divine Providence to try her character and furnish an opportunity for the exercise of the temper and disposition of a christian. She was firm and unmoved, but at the same time meek, gentle and forbearing. She never answered them angrily. The tear would sometimes trickle down her cheek, and that was all the reply that she made to their harshness. And when they sought to ridicule and deride serious things, she would say—"well if I can do nothing else, I can pray for you."

Though this opposition continued for several months, Mary remained steadfast. She was evidently daily growing in grace. There was a consistency about her conduct. In her dress she became plain, in her manners retiring, and all her leisure time was spent either in devotion or works of charity and benevolence. The transformation that her character had undergone was observable to all. But it was most observable in the retirement of her home. Her whole family could not but see that she was indeed changed, and made infinitely more lovely by the change. Her whole delight was now in the holy exercise of religion and in doing the will of her heavenly Father. Her heart, changed and purified by regenerating grace, became filled with ardent desires for the conversion of her family and friends. evening after evening, while they were engaged in scenes of fashion and gaiety, she was on her bended knees imploring God to open their eyes, and shew them their ruin.

Her prayers were heard. The marked change in her character had compelled several of her gay companions to admit that there must be a divine reality in religion. In