

of his gentle niece, who sought to win him to faith and service. He was a Deist of the old school, and he gained so easy an intellectual victory over one of his neighbors, Captain Sims, a godly man, that he became confirmed in his scepticism. Vanity and pride so filled his heart that he turned God's goodness to him into an argument for the conviction that he was a special favorite of the Deity. But tho unable to give the self-sufficient and worldly captain any other reason for his own belief in the Bible than this, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself," Sims did not cease to care for his neighbor's soul. Accidentally, as it seemed, Sims had his minister, Mr. Griffin, of Portsea, with him as a visitor on a day when he was asked to dine with Wilson, and the minister was included in the invitation. Sims saw his opportunity. Recurring to former debates, he appealed to his minister as to a man equal to the controversy. Mr. Griffin deprecated discussion in such circumstances, lest he should be suspected of being present by some underhand arrangement. This only stimulated Wilson, who said: "I am glad of the opportunity to converse on the evidences of the so-called Divine origin of the Christian Scriptures, and I never met the clergyman yet whom I could not foil in a quarrel of an hour." Thus challenged, the young minister accompanied his host to the garden, leaving Captain Sims with the niece and a lady friend, who was also a believer. It was a July sunset in a cloudless sky, when the work of soul-enlightening, soul-winning began. The Holy Spirit was with the young theologian, who had first silently invoked His power, according to promise. Step by step the two wrestled to this conclusion, pressed home on Captain Wilson with singular modesty but assured firmness, "If you reject the remedy provided by God, remember there is no other, and you may be finally wrong and finally miserable." As Sims approached them in the evening twilight, he said: "Has he convinced you, captain?" to which Wilson replied: "I will not say much about that, but he has said some things I shall never forget." He begged for a reading of Major Burns's "Christian Officer's Panoply," which he had before scoffingly returned to Sims, who had pressed it upon him, and he began to search the Scriptures for himself. He went to Mr. Griffin's service in Portsea on the next Sunday, when the prayers and the preachings alike opened his heart to the teaching of Paul, in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, as to how God had predestinated men to be conformed to Himself in His Son. The next sermon showed how those whom He did predestinate He also *called*, and Wilson saw all his past life in the light of that revelation. After solitary agonizing from darkness to light, the proud Deist, now a humble and joyful believer, visited Mr. Griffin to tell him this: "I have no language to express the happiness I now feel. The gratitude I owe to God will, I hope, be expressed in the life I have yet to live by my zeal in His service bearing some proportion to that which I have manifested in the service of Satan." The two joined in magnifying the grace of God. In 1796 James Wilson became a member of