

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

Mr. Perkins and his wife were Universalists. When they sold their place in Sedgville, and moved to Clifton, it was a source of regret to Mrs. P. that there was no meeting of their own denomination in their new home. Her husband had not troubled himself to inquire about it before purchasing the farm at C——, as he cared very little for any Sabbath services. His wife, however, was religiously inclined, and though she had always attended upon that preaching which proclaimed salvation for all, irrespective of character, it was from habit rather than conviction of its truth. So when her only acquaintance at Clifton, Mrs. West, gave her a cordial invitation to go with her to Church, the fact that she would hear Orthodoxy there did not prevent her acceptance.

It is true that the doctrines which she now heard for the first time startled her by their novelty. She had always been taught that a fair external morality was all that a merciful God required of his creatures; but now she was shown, both from Scripture and philosophy of the human mind, the absolute necessity of a change of heart; and it did not take her long to see that she was walking steadily in the broad way "which leadeth to destruction." She found her heart opposed to the law and the holiness of God; and averse to the humbling doctrines of the Cross. She knew that she had never repented of sin, or received Christ as her Saviour, and when she now heard the declaration of Jesus, "He that believeth not is condemned already"—"shall not see life"—the wrath of God abideth on him," she felt that she was a lost sinner, and anxiously asked, "What shall I do to be saved?"

It was then that her new friends set before her the glorious plans which infinite wisdom had devised and infinite love executed to save a lost world. The necessity and sufficiency of Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice for sin; the gracious assurance of God's readiness to receive and welcome each returning sinner; the promised help of the Holy Spirit to those who truly and perseveringly seek it, thrilled her heart, and by the divine blessing brought her to the Saviour's feet. She saw how that Saviour had loved her, and sought her even in her

sins, and with a penitent and grateful heart she trusted herself to his outstretched arm of mercy, and felt herself his for time and for eternity.

Great was Mr. Perkins' wrath when he heard that his wife had become a Christian. It was at the market where he had carried the produce of his farm, that an ungodly man, whose acquaintance he had made, said to him with a sneer, "Don't know as you'll speak to an old sinner like me, now you're getting so good over to your house." "What do you mean?" was the wrathful answer. "Oh nothing—only the pious folks here have been making a saint of your wife—that's all."

The truth of this insinuation flashed upon the husband's quick perception, and stung him deeply. He now remembered to have noticed an unusual depression of spirits in his wife for a day or two previous. He was about to speak to her of it, when she suddenly regained her cheerfulness, and seemed happier than ever. He understood it now, and going home in a terrible passion, accused her of having become a saint and hypocrite: in his eyes the two were synonymous. "Fie on you!" he added, with a fearful imprecation, "you've been to hear those brimstone preachers till you've become as blue as they are. I used to be proud of my wife, but now I'm ashamed of you."

Mrs. Perkins did not return railing for railing. She remembered who had said, "a soft answer turneth away wrath." So she meekly replied, "Do not be displeased, dear husband; I cannot help loving the Saviour who has given his life for me. I am sorry to offend you, but I must not deny the Lord Jesus Christ, or be ashamed of his salvation, for he has said, 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven,' and 'whosoever shall be ashamed of me or my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'"

Mr. Perkins did not answer his wife; he could not. Her patience and gentleness disarmed his anger, while her frank confession of her faith, and her firm decision to "stand up for Jesus," commanded his respect and reverence. For many weeks he narrowly watched her. She knew that he would judge of her religion by its fruits,