

"These lines," says Dr. Hanna in his Biography of his father-in-law, "with the date 11th June 1823, and the addition, 'I am your very sincere, affectionate father, John Hastie,' were found, after Dr. Chalmers' death, in one of his repositories, where nothing but papers on which he put the utmost value were deposited. The lines were in Dr. Chalmers' own handwriting, on a small slip of paper; and below them he had added, 'This from a common weaver in Marlborough Street inscribed on a Bible to his only child. He had been an infidel till within a few months of his death.'"

John Hastie was the only son of a widowed mother, who feared the Lord. As a boy he was placed under a master who was an infidel, and who not content with his own denial of a God, laboured to instil his evil views into the minds of the apprentices committed to his care. So successful was he that every one of them joined the ranks of scepticism, John Hastie forming no exception. He was eventually married to his employer's daughter, as bold a free-thinker as himself, and when his godly mother learned his ways, and heard his oaths, her reason recoiled, she became a lunatic, and died in an asylum. Seized at length with lingering consumption, unable to work, having ample time for serious reflection, the proud unbeliever was cast into the depths of spiritual anxiety.

"A minister," says Dr. Hanna, "was sent for, who attempted to reason with him; but he was 'too deep,' and the wound remained unhealed. It so happened that he was living at this time in the district of St. John's parish, assigned Mr. John Wilson, one of the most valued and beloved of Dr. Chalmers' elders, who soon brought his minister to see the dying man. The simplicity, the earnestness, the sympathy displayed by Dr. Chalmers, won the man's confidence, and it was not long till he related the history of his unbelief. Weekly, during three months, Dr. Chalmers' visits were repeated. The instructions given, and the prayers offered at the bedside were blessed; a sinner was turned from the error of his ways, and a soul was saved from death."

It was very soon before the weaver's death that the interview with which we have begun this paper took place; for we are told that, immediately after the inscription on the Bible had been penned, "he laid his head back on his pillow, and expired." It was in allusion to this case that, when exchanging his ministerial labours in Glasgow for the chair of Moral Philosophy in St. Andrews, and preaching a farewell sermon in the chapel of ease which had been erected in the parish of St. John's, Dr. Chalmers said:—

"While I would urge upon every obstinate and stout-hearted sinner the hopelessness of a death-bed repentance, I must not omit to mention how in the Bible there is recorded one instance of repentance even then, that none might despair, though only one, that none may presume. For myself, I never met with decisive evidence of a saving change in a malefactor's cell; and, out of many hundreds, I can quote exceedingly few in the chamber of a last and fatal disease. There is, however, one very delightful experience of this sort that is still fresh upon my memory, and which I relate in this place because the scene of it was in the immediate neighbourhood, and within the confines of that territory of which this chapel stands * * * * * This, doubtless, is but one example yet enough to prove how worthy of Christian cultivation are those vast and untrodden spaces that teem with families who are altogether beyond the pale of the word and of ordinances; enough to prove that there is not an aggregate of human beings through which a minister of the gospel might not ply his unwearied rounds, and learn the triumphs of a high and heavenly apostleship; enough to set at rest the obstinate incredulity of those who affirm of the cities of our land that such is their hard-favoured and impracticable resistance to all the endeavours, whether of kindness or of Christianity, as to give the visionary character of a dream to the dear and delightful prospect of their ultimate reformation."

When flowers are full of heaven-descended dews, they always hang their heads; but men hold theirs the higher the more they receive, getting proud as they are full.