

37131 009 536 236



*She gave her money and she gave her a sheet in
which to wrap the body*

See Page 23

Drawn by James Thoni

Engraved by Chas. Thomson

FANNY GARDEN :

A TRUE STORY.

OR,

THE HAPPY EFFECTS

OF

Sabbath School Teaching

ILLUSTRATED.

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM OLIPHANT :

SOLD ALSO BY CHALMERS AND COLLINS, GLASGOW;
AND J. NISBET, LONDON.

1820.

HISTORY
OF
FANNY GARDEN.

PART I.

WHEN the disciples of John the baptist were commissioned to wait on Jesus, to inquire whether or not he was the Christ, we are informed that “in the same hour” Jesus wrought all manner of miracles, and then dismissed these disciples, saying, “Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, TO THE POOR THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED.” Luke vii. 22.

My mind has often been forcibly impressed with the concluding sentence of this message—a message which most convincingly speaks the divinity of Christ. There is something remarkable in our Saviour’s stating so distinctly, that the gospel was preached to the *poor*. Was not his ministry per-

fectly public? And were not the glad tidings of salvation declared to the *whole* inhabitants of Judea, without restriction to any particular class of persons? These are questions which can only be answered in the affirmative; but still, we are constrained to acknowledge, that "to the poor the gospel was preached."

During all our Saviour's ministry, we find that he was attended by immense multitudes, who listened to his doctrines with astonishment, and expressed admiration at the instructions which he delivered. But of whom were these multitudes composed? Was it the rich and the great, the rulers and the rabbis who followed Jesus? No. It was the *common people* who heard him gladly. Children also seem to have followed Christ very frequently; and on one occasion we find them boldly in the temple singing "hossannas to the Son of David." But rarely did it happen that a chief man or a mighty man appeared among the crowd. Now and then, it is true, we observe a devout centurion and a faithful Jairus, rising superior to the prejudices of the age, and publicly testifying their belief in Christ as the promised Messiah. A young man of "great possessions" also makes an amiable figure in the gospel history, but his after-conduct only confirms the message to John's disciples; for when

Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!" Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, waited on our Lord during the silence of "night;" and Joseph of Arimathea, a counsellor, was also a disciple, "but secretly." These were persons raised above the multitude; but we see that they shrunk from a public reception of the gospel, and contented themselves with private instructions.

But to the poor, Christ openly and constantly preached, and the poor heard him with attention. The rich disliked his self-denying doctrines, and despised his affectionate warnings. So it has happened in all succeeding ages. The church—the true spiritual church—has seldom wanted a few members, whose rank and talents added to its lustre and respectability, while, at the same time, their characters displayed the sovereignty of divine grace, which can penetrate and sanctify every heart without respect of persons. But to this very hour it must be observed, that the great majority of those who are "rich in faith," are "poor" as to this world's goods.

In my humble labours at the Sabbath School, I have been led to remark, that the poor among the children lend the most attentive ear to the instruction which we en-

deavour to impart : and in this I can discern a bright manifestation of divine wisdom.

For many of the scholars being much elevated above the others in education, manners, and appearance, I am free to own that I might have formed an undue partiality towards them, had I not experienced, even amongst the children attending the school, that our Saviour's assertion was true, "To the *poor* the gospel is preached."

A small seat, nearest to my chair, was occupied by girls whose external garb denoted the poverty of their circumstances, but whose engaging countenances expressed the sincerity of their hearts.

On this seat, Fanny Garden generally took her place, attracted, I suppose, chiefly by the congeniality of sentiment and behaviour, which seemed to prevail amongst the other girls who sat beside her. She was one of my little flock, whose countenance beamed with lively interest, when she heard of the Saviour's amazing love to poor sinners. And I shall here mention the circumstances which first led me to a knowledge of Fanny's character, as I consider them not unworthy of narration.

As it is my constant aim to make the religious exercises of the school as pleasing and engaging to the children as possible, I have been in the practice of occasionally reading to

them such obituaries and memoirs of young people, as I conceived to be best adapted to excite their interest, and to impress their minds. This I do as a reward for correct recitation or good behaviour; and the children always regard it as a particular favour.

I had long desired a proper opportunity for reading the beautiful history of "the Young Cottager."

During last summer, the children went through a course of scriptural questions; and when they came to those which referred to the subject of death, and the liability of the young as well as the old to its irresistible summons, it occurred to me, that little Jane's death-bed and death, would form a far better commentary on the awful subject, than any words or explanations of my own: and with this view I put the tract into my pocket one Sabbath evening in the month of August. The children repeated their tasks to my satisfaction: so I began the interesting story, and read to them the two first Parts, occasionally drawing contrasts or making comparisons. I was listened to with great attention, and many of the girls in particular were much affected.

On the following Sabbath evening I continued the narrative, but had time to read no more than the third Part; in the course of which little Jane is represented as ex-

pressing herself with the utmost tenderness and concern about her mother's state. Here I paused, and said, 'I hope that I may be mistaken, but I think it very possible that some of you, my dear children, may have parents whose conduct resembles that of Jane's mother. If my supposition is true, O consider what an awful state they are in! and how thankful you should be for enjoying those means of instruction, which by the blessing of God, may not only prevent you from following their evil example, but may even enable you to be useful to them! I trust many of you know something of the value of an immortal soul; and think how happy it would make me to see you as anxious about your parents as Jane was.'

During the evening, several of the girls showed countenances deeply interested in what they were hearing, and many tears were shed.

At the dismissal, Fanny Garden came aside to me in great agitation, saying, "O Sir, I don't know what to do about my mother. She is as bad a woman as little Jane's mother. She is living very wickedly; and after what you have said to-night, I could not help speaking to you."

The poor girl was so absorbed in grief, that I felt keenly for her. I asked her a few questions, to which she gave me very

distinct answers. And perceiving something of unusual interest about the girl, and also in her history, (the particulars of which I could not at that time inquire into,) I requested her to call on me the next morning, when I should be able to talk with her more fully.

This girl had been a scholar for nearly three months. Her attendance had been uniformly regular, and her whole deportment very becoming. She had never failed to repeat her tasks with accuracy, and the great attention she was always observed to pay to the explanations and addresses of the teachers, did not escape notice. And this leads me to remind my young readers, how much pleasure their teachers have in observing their attention, and watching their progress. Children who really love to be instructed in the ways of God, will always imitate the example of this poor girl; and while they endeavour to learn with diligence, to repeat with accuracy, and to behave with seriousness, they will be sure of gaining the esteem and approbation of their teachers.

On the Monday morning, Fanny made her appearance in her working clothes, but very neat and clean. I immediately entered into conversation with her on the subject

she had mentioned to me the preceding evening.

‘I am sorry to think that your mother behaves so extremely ill,’ said I.

The girl burst into tears, saying, “Yes, Sir, I am much concerned about her. She is going on cursing and swearing, and drinking and doing every thing that is bad.”

‘But it pleases me to see that you take so deep an interest in your mother’s state. I suppose the story which I read to you last night of little Jane had roused your feelings.’

“I have often, Sir, had great anxiety about her; but when you spoke on that subject last night, I felt so much, that I could not refrain from mentioning it to you, Sir.”

‘You did quite right, Fanny: and I shall be happy if I can render you the smallest service at any time. Is your father alive?’

“No, Sir; he died more than three years ago.”

‘What was his trade or occupation?’

“He had been employed in cleaning the streets for seven years before his death.”

‘Have you remained with your mother since he died? and how have you been supported?’

“Shortly after my father’s death, my mother was committed to prison for miscon-

duct, and some ladies and gentlemen (naming them) took charge of us."

'How many brothers and sisters had you?'

"There were five of us altogether, Sir."

'And what became of you all?'

"My elder brother was at an apprenticeship, which he broke last harvest, and went a-soldiering. He is now in the 25th regiment. I was attending Lady M.'s school; and the three younger ones were sent to the Charity Workhouse. One of them died; another has since been got into the Orphan Hospital; and the youngest remains in the Workhouse."

'You certainly must consider yourself very much obliged to these good people who have done so much for the care and support of the family.'

The answer which I got to this question greatly pleased me. Poor Fanny felt thankful for the kindness of these ladies and gentlemen who interested themselves in the family; but she recognised the hand of Providence in it all. This is a useful lesson both to old and young. She said, "O yes, Sir; the Lord has been very kind in raising up supporters for us."

'And what has become of your mother all this time? where does she live?'

"I cannot tell you that, Sir: she never

enquires for any of us, and we don't know where to find her. She has no fixed home, I believe, but just ranges about the streets."

'But how do you think she subsists?'

"I am sure, Sir, I could not say. When we lived with her, she used to send me out to the streets to tell great lies and to beg money. And when my brother brought home his wages on the Saturday night—he had four shillings a-week—she took it all from him. We were left almost to starve, while she spent every sixpence in drinking."

'That is, indeed, a lamentable account, Fanny; and you have been wonderfully rescued from misery. Do you ever now reflect on what a dreadful life you spent when going about the streets lying and begging? You ought to be very thankful for having been taken away from such a mother.'

"Yes, indeed, I cannot be too thankful; but I am sorry for my mother." Here she was much affected.

'And you wish to know what you should do for her?'

"Yes, Sir," she replied, still sobbing.

'I really do not see that you can do any thing at present but pray for her.'

"O Sir, I do that every day, morning and evening." This she said with uncommon earnestness.

'That is precisely what I would recom-

mend Fanny ; and who knows but the Lord may not only hear your prayers, but by and by open up for you some way of access to your mother ? You remember little Jane's mother was brought at last to pay some attention to her daughter's admonitions. Perhaps if I give you a copy of this story, it might be useful to your mother, when an opportunity occurs to put it into her hands.'

" I am obliged to you, Sir ; but she cannot read any."

How generally do we find ignorance and wickedness combined ! This should make children very thankful for the pains which are taken to instruct their young minds, and very anxious to improve while they have the opportunity of attending Sabbath schools. When Fanny told me that her mother could not read, I replied, ' What a pity that is ! But it must just make you the more earnest in your prayers, on her behalf, to Almighty God, who can soften the hardest heart, and save even the chiefest of sinners. How old are you ?'

" Fifteen past in June."

' And how long have you been at service ?'

" Only since last May, Sir ; and it was at that time I came to the Sabbath school."

' Is your mistress kind to you ?'

" O yes, Sir ; she is very kind to me

She permits me to rise as early on Sabbath morning as on other days ; she always takes me to church with herself, and wishes me to attend the school. She gives me every encouragement."

You observe, that this poor girl did not lie in bed longer than usual on the Sabbath mornings, as is too much the practice both with parents and children. It is true the Lord's day is called *a day of rest* ; but that only means a rest from our worldly employments and recreations. If we love God, we will not weary in his service, nor wish to make *his day* shorter than the other days of the week.

'It is a great blessing,' said I to Fanny, 'to be in such a family : you certainly have many mercies to recount amidst all your calamities.'

I doubt not but this conversation has awakened an interest towards Fanny, in the heart of the reader. During the whole of it, her countenance was expressive of deep thought and great seriousness. But I felt very particularly pleased with that affectionate concern which she so strongly evinced about her worthless mother : and I fondly hoped that this anxiety for her parent's salvation proceeded from an experience in her own mind, of the joys and comforts of true religion.

After having learnt from Fanny the leading particulars of her interesting history, I wished to know something of the state of her mind.

‘When you attended Lady M.’s school,’ said I, ‘you would no doubt receive a great deal of excellent instruction *.’

“I only went there on the week-days,” replied Fanny, “but I was in the habit of attending different Sabbath evening schools.”

‘Then I hope you was benefited by going to them.’

Here she hung down her head, and owned that till very lately she had benefited little.

‘And have you now more pleasure in listening to the things which concern the salvation of your soul?’

“I used to be very careless and inattentive; but now I have my greatest happiness in these things.”

‘I rejoice to hear you give such an account of yourself.’

“Indeed, Sir; I formerly never thought about religion at all.”

‘And do you ever through the week reflect on those important subjects, to which we call your attention on the Sabbath evenings?’

* This is a private charity-school, endowed by a pious lady for the education of poor children.

“ Yes, Sir ; and I always read my Bible when I can spare a little time. But I have a great deal of work.”

‘ I hope you are also regular in your prayers.’

“ I rise every morning at half-past five o’clock, on purpose that I may have time to read the Bible, and say my prayers.”

‘ I am glad to think you do so ; and I hope this change of conduct arises from a change of heart, from a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness.’

To this she replied with seeming sincerity, “ I feel now as I never did before.”

O ! it is a blessed thing when children begin to taste and know that God is gracious. It is this which gives rise to feelings of inward peace and happiness to which they were formerly strangers, and convinces them, that wisdom’s ways are pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace. I could not but hope, from what Fanny had mentioned, that God had begun a good work in her heart, which induced me to ask her, ‘ And do you believe this has been effected in consequence of your coming to the school ?’

“ I think so, Sir ;” was the simple answer she gave to this question.

Here we were interrupted : and when I was desirous of enquiring into her views of

the gospel, I found it necessary to refrain, but could not allow her to depart without asking if she loved the Saviour.

“Yes, Sir, I hope so,” was her reply.

‘I am sure you would wish to do it.’

“O yes! I have much cause to love him.”

‘You have certainly been a child of providence, Fanny; and I sincerely trust it will also appear that you are a child of grace.’

As she went away I expressed a desire to see her soon again. With this request she cheerfully complied; and in a second conversation, about a fortnight afterwards, she made me still better acquainted with her history, and confirmed me in the opinion I had entertained, of her being really in earnest about the salvation of her soul.

When Fanny left me, I sat pensive for a while, lost in amazement at the display of divine grace which my eyes had just witnessed, and at the sweet accents which had broken on my ears. Copious reflections soon filled my mind, which I feel the less regret in suppressing, as I think the foregoing narrative is likely to give rise to similar reflections in the minds of those who may read it.

What is recorded in the preceding pages, speaks reproof to parents whose immoral conduct drives their children to wretchedness, unless protected by the hand of bene-

volence ; and it speaks comfort and encouragement to children, who, although deprived of religious precept and example at home, have other means of instruction provided for them. It shows that, where the Lord enables even the humblest of his servants to dispense the gospel invitations, there he will make a people willing to hear and to accept them. It is an additional evidence, that still, in an especial manner, *to the poor the gospel is preached.*

Jesus the ancient faith confirms,

To our great fathers given :

He takes young children to his arms,

And calls them heirs of heav'n.

Our God, how faithful are his ways !

His love endures the same ;

Nor from the promise of his grace,

Blots out the children's name.

PART II.

It is now many hundred years since God, speaking of his church, declared by the mouth of his prophet Zephaniah, " I will leave in the midst of thee *an afflicted and poor people*, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

Until the coming of Christ, this prediction was fulfilled in all its extent, both in the history of the Jews as a nation whom God had chosen, and of those pious individuals who occasionally were raised up to exhort an impenitent people, and who, on account of their fidelity in the service of the Lord, were subjected to poverty and imprisonment, to reproaches and death.

But the life of our Saviour himself most strikingly exemplifies the prophetic declaration. May it not with justice be said of *Him*, although he was King of kings and Lord of lords, that while he dwelt upon earth, he was "afflicted and poor?" Neither did he teach his followers to believe, that, in consequence of their attachment to him, they would be exempt from temporal privations and calamities. On the contrary, his warnings amply corroborated what the prophet had spoken so long before; and even on that memorable night previous to his crucifixion, when the blessed Jesus delivered a discourse so full of compassion and tenderness, he assured his disciples in the most unambiguous terms, that trials and afflictions were to be their portion: "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

Every one who takes up his cross to follow the Saviour, is soon made to experience that 'tribulation' meets him, in one form or another, at every step of his pilgrimage.

Indeed the christian's life from first to last is a state of trial. The Scriptures style it a 'warfare,' because, although there may sometimes be peace from enemies without, there must be an unceasing struggle with enemies within. But when young people first enrol themselves under the banners of the cross, they are often strangers to the varied and deceitful ways in which they may be attacked; and often too, they do not listen with sufficient attention to the instructions given by the "Captain of their salvation." Thus they may be brought into circumstances of extreme danger. But God, who is ever waiting to be gracious, does not leave them to perish. He first makes them to know that "the trial of their faith is much more precious than that of gold;" and then, "by a way that they knew not," he leads them out of their difficulties. He guards them against self-confidence, from the experience of their own weakness. He teaches them the all-sufficiency of divine grace; and impresses on their conviction, that it is only "through Christ strengthening" them, that they "can do all things."

When the history of Fanny Garden was first introduced to my readers, the prefatory observations tended to show, that since the commencement of Christianity, there has been a kind of secret connection betwixt genuine religion and external poverty.

In the few incidents which I am now to relate respecting this poor girl, *affliction* so strongly appears as the companion of *poverty*, that I consider her humble life to be a striking illustration of the prophetic prediction, “I will leave in the midst of thee *an afflicted and poor* people, who shall trust in the name of the Lord.”

It will be remembered that Fanny suffered great distress of mind on account of her mother. The conduct of this infamous woman continued abandoned in the extreme: and although her daughter was witness to none of it, yet the tidings which reached her ears from time to time, filled her pitying heart with the deepest sorrow, and proved a sore affliction.

The boy who had been admitted into the Orphan Hospital, where he was comfortably fed, and clothed, and educated, was seduced to forsake his mercies: and one day Fanny came in much grief to inform me that her brother had been taken up by the police. On inquiry, I found that twice before he had absconded, and was again admitted; but that now the managers had determined not to take him back. At the same time, the teacher told me, he was a fine smart youth, and a good scholar, but, for what reason nobody knew, there was no keeping him in the house.

I afterwards discovered, that this beha-

viour was occasioned by no peculiarly wicked dispositions in the boy, but entirely through the influence of his base mother, who decoyed him from the Hospital in the evenings, and made him the instrument in accomplishing many of her own sinful purposes.

How dreadful is it to think of a parent thus labouring to initiate her child in every species of wickedness! surely my young readers will lament the case of this poor boy; and if they have fathers and mothers who correct them for their follies, and endeavour to bring them up in the fear of the Lord, this is a blessing for which they cannot be sufficiently thankful.

By the benevolence of some individuals, the boy was soon liberated from custody, and placed in the Charity Workhouse school. There he continued to follow the same bad practices, and they proceeded from the same bad cause. But the hardened mother did not long reap advantage from the son whom she was training up to ruin. In consequence of a nocturnal exposure during the severity of winter, the boy caught cold: and in six weeks death snatched him from his cruel parent.

The circumstances attending this event I cannot withhold from my readers, because I think they must increase their interest in the "afflicted" Fanny.

One afternoon, this poor girl came to tell me, that while her brother was lying ill in the Workhouse, her mother had gone to a lady, informing her that the boy was dead, and she had nothing wherewith to bury him. The piteous story with which such characters often deceive a tender-hearted public, excited the lady's compassion. She gave her money, and she gave her a sheet, in which to wrap the body; and in addition, she recommended her to an acquaintance, from whom also she received charity. But, alas! all this bountiful provision for the burial of a child still alive, was spent in drinking. And the miserable woman, while awfully intoxicated, became so riotous that she was arrested as a disturber of the peace, and sentenced to a long confinement in Bridewell.

It may easily be supposed, that Fanny was much agitated, while she communicated this shocking account of her inhuman mother. Indeed, how could a feeling child be otherwise? After she became a little composed, I enquired about the boy, of whose death she had just received intelligence. She informed me that she had never seen him during his illness, having known nothing about it, until the mistress of the house sent her intimation of his death. She had at the same time invited her to come and see her brother's corpse before it was

laid in the grave. But in this Fanny was not gratified, for the funeral was over before she could reach the place.

‘Your brother,’ said I, ‘did not behave himself as he ought to have done when he was in health ; but I hope he was brought to see his folly before he died.’

“I hope so too,” replied Fanny. “The mistress told me, that with much sorrow he had confessed to her all his misconduct both in the workhouse and the hospital ; and assured me that, during his illness, he was frequently praying for mercy on his soul.”

‘If true, that is a very pleasant circumstance, and must be a great relief to your mind in the midst of such an aggravated trial. How old was the boy ?’

“He was about ten years of age.”

‘And what was his disease ?’

“It was a decline, Sir.”

‘Had he been long ill ?’

“No, only a few weeks.”

‘And how did his complaints begin ?’

Here Fanny was a good deal affected, but at length said, “I believe he first caught cold by my mother’s taking him from the hospital when she was in drink, and keeping him out all night.”

‘O,’ said I, ‘that was dreadful ; and where did she take him ?’

“I am told that they just lay in an open

stair without any shelter, and the boy never got the better of it."

' Well, Fanny, I cannot be surprised at the distress you feel on account of your mother. She really seems to be a sad woman. I fear she has been the means of killing her son.'

" Indeed I think so."

' Does she know of his death ?'

" I suppose not."

' But tell me if the mistress gave you any particulars respecting your brother ?'

" She told me, Sir, that on the Sabbath before he died, he fell into a kind of swoon, and in the time of it his lips were observed to be moving ; and on his coming out of it, they asked him what he had been speaking about. He said he was praying for mercy on his soul. Soon afterwards he fell into another swoon, and was seen moving his lips in the same way as before. They asked him again what he had been saying ; and he replied, that he was praying for his mother, and the rest of the family."

' Certainly, Fanny, there is something singularly pleasing in this account of your brother. I hope that his young and dying prayers will be heard, and that yet your mother will be brought to repentance. Did the mistress inform you of any thing else ?'

" Yes, Sir ; she said that on the Monday

following, when she did not suspect death was so near, she asked him if he could repeat the 23d Psalm. He answered, Yes, and began it ; but he was very weak. She assisted him ; and while they were repeating the last verse,* he expired."

' That was remarkable. I trust, then, he is now in the house of the Lord to remain for ever.'

I felt a peculiar interest in this little narrative, and embraced an early opportunity of calling at the Workhouse to talk with the mistress on the subject. I found her a sensible, pious woman ; and from her I received an account of the boy, which perfectly corresponded with what Fanny had mentioned. She told me that he had been quite aware of his dying state, and during all his illness, showed a peculiar fondness for religious conversation. He never wished the Bible from his bedside, and was always happy when any person read it with him. He was frequently engaged in prayer, and she really thought there was a saving change effected on his heart. The mother had done much to his injury ; but he was a fine boy,

* Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me ;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling place shall be.

and she had particular satisfaction in his death.

How wonderful are the ways of Providence ! God makes the very wrath of man to praise him. While this abandoned mother attempts the ruin of her child, the Lord punishes her by depriving her of his services ; but he blesses him by sanctifying his affliction, and taking him from the evil to come. In the death of this boy there is something unusually striking. What a contrast betwixt his peaceful death and the wretched life of his parent ! Here is a bright display of sovereign grace and divine mercy.

But poor Fanny was afflicted in other respects, besides these *family* distresses. She was appointed to the endurance of severe *personal* trials.

The mistress with whom she served at first, and from whom she had received so much attention, unhappily cooled in her kindness ; and Fanny was not only denied the privilege of reading at leisure hours during the week-days, but was even branded with false accusations. It was alleged against her, that she held secret intercourse with her mother, by whom she was prompted to acts of theft. Fortunately, the instances adduced were easily refuted ; but, vexed and distressed with such odious imputations, of which she felt consciously innocent, the poor

girl was obliged to leave her place under the most disadvantageous circumstances. And just at a time, when, in consequence of her own state of mind, as well as her many other woes, she would have required all the consolations of the gospel to soothe and support her, the treatment which she met with, almost proved a fatal stumbling-block to her faith.

But God is a father to the fatherless. While Fanny was enveloped in this adverse gloom, a ray of providential hope cheered her spirits, and brightened her prospects. Through the instrumentality of some of the Sabbath school children, a neighbouring family admitted her into their service.* Here she had the assurance of being kindly used, and of having plenty of leisure to read, as her work would be easy. For a short period she was comfortable and happy ; but ere long the clouds began to darken, and something occurred to keep her in mind of the Saviour's warning to his disciples—"in the world ye shall have tribulation."

As this part of Fanny's history is fraught

* It must not be overlooked, that in this instance Fanny's relief was procured through the exertions of some of her school companions. This trivial incident, beautifully exhibits the beneficial tendency of Sabbath schools, where the children are constantly taught not only to love God, but to love one another also.

with reproof and caution both to young and old, I shall extract a few particulars respecting it from memorandums taken at the time.

One evening a complaint was made to me against Fanny Garden, by a person employed for the purpose by her mistress. The nature of this complaint was, that Fanny had been detected in telling tales from one room to another, and in not adhering to truth. This distressed me a good deal, and I promised I would make some inquiry on the subject, and speak to her about it. On the following Sabbath, the question in course of catechising was, "What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?" Nothing could be more suitable; and I certainly endeavoured to explain the subject of lying in all its extent and consequences, with as much perspicuity and faithfulness as I possibly could. I took occasion to examine Fanny on the question, and said some very strong things to her on the nature of telling tales, and deviating from truth by any way whatever. But I could not discern any thing in her countenance to indicate conscious guilt. By desire she called for me a few days afterwards, when I plainly told her, that for several Sabbaths past she had not repeated her tasks so well as usual, which rather disappointed me. She said she was quite sensi-

ble of that, and very sorry for it; but of late she had had more work, and less time for learning. I then expressed my regret at having received a complaint against her from Mrs W——. Fanny was surprised at this, as her mistress had not complained to her. “Sometimes,” continued she, “I may not have done my work entirely to please her, but I know of nothing else.”

‘You remember the subject,’ said I, ‘on which we dwelt so fully last Sabbath evening at school?’

“Yes, Sir, I do.”

‘Now, I am informed that you have been telling tales out of the house, or from one room to another. If this be true, it is very bad indeed, and you must tell me honestly all about it; conceal nothing.’

“To be sure, Sir, two or three weeks ago there was something of that kind. One day, a lady, who lodges in the house, asked me if I had ever seen my mistress listening at the back of her room door. I told her that I had; and when she spoke to Mrs W—— about it, she was then very angry with me, and said I had told an untruth, as she never did any thing of the kind.”

‘But, Fanny, I fear you are more likely to be wrong than your mistress. You must not make the matter worse by concealing the truth. Give me the particulars.’

“ Indeed, Sir, I am perfectly certain that she did it ; and it was on a Sabbath-day when I was keeping the child in the kitchen. The door was a little open, and I saw her, standing with the Bible in her hand listening ; and when the child made a noise, she was displeased with me, because it disturbed her hearing.”

The artless minuteness of this statement convinced me of its truth : but I dare say, all my readers will feel as I did, when they think of Fanny’s mistress doing such an improper action *with the Bible in her hand !* We should beware of professing to know God in words, while in works we deny him. It would not have been prudent in me at that time, to say what I thought of this woman’s conduct ; but I expressed a hope that Fanny was quite satisfied in her conscience that she had told me nothing but the truth ; and then added, ‘ certainly, when the lodger put the question to you, it would have been, “ bearing false witness,” had you denied what you saw. But I fear your mistress will not treat you now as she has been accustomed to do.’

“ No, Sir. She does not say any thing to me, but she treats me very coldly ; for I was called before her and her husband and the lodger, and examined about that matter. But in presence of them all, I just repeated what I had said before.”

‘ It is a vexing business, Fanny ; but I trust you are innocent.’

“ I have told you the plain truth, Sir.”

‘ You know how it would grieve me, could I think you capable of telling a lie, after all that you have heard so often at school on the sin and guilt of such a practice. Are you to remain with Mrs W—— after the term ?’

“ No, Sir ; she is not to keep any servant during the summer.”

‘ Then you must be very careful in engaging yourself to another place. At your time of life, a great deal depends on the company you keep, and the example which is set before you.’

This conversation exhibits a picture of human character, which, it is to be feared, is by no means uncommon. It surely reproves the guilty, and warns the innocent. Other circumstances combined with the simplicity of Fanny’s narration to strengthen my belief in her innocence. Her mistress was detected in the indulgence of a most improper curiosity, and thought this poor girl would never have courage enough to gainsay her. My pity for Fanny was again excited. She left one house under a false charge of having broken the eighth commandment. She was now to be driven from another, unjustly accused of breaking the ninth commandment ;

and in going to a third family, her situation was not much mended. Still she continued to be "afflicted."

In her former places, however uncomfortable Fanny was in some respects, still she had perfect liberty to go to church and to attend the school. But in this new place, her distance from the school was too great to expect her attendance; and although her mistress agreed that she would regularly be permitted to go to church on Sabbath, yet during the three months that she remained, she was only once within a church-door. In this house Fanny met with many trials of a new and different nature from all she had formerly experienced. For one thing, her mistress complained of her indolence, while it was very usual for the girl to be kept out of bed until one or two o'clock in the morning, and again be obliged to be at work by four and five o'clock.

From this bondage she was happy to be relieved; but when she left it, she did not leave her trials. These continued to be little less distressing, although they now arose from very opposite causes. But I must not tire the patience of my readers with any farther attempt to trace particularly the rough and difficult ground over which this young christian has been appointed to travel. Her journey hitherto has truly been amidst thorns and briers; but yet, she

is upheld. And I humbly trust that all her disappointments and afflictions will be the means of drawing her nearer to God, and of increasing her dependence on Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

In the short life of Fanny, she has had an unceasing experience of Christ's declaration, "in the world ye shall have tribulation." But our Saviour, on the very same night, made a bequest of infinite value to his disciples; and from this unlimited source she appears to have drawn the greatest consolation—"Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: let not your hearts be troubled."

Fanny has always been poor, and to this hour she is afflicted. Sometimes, indeed, the sun has shone upon her with his smiling rays, but her fairest day was soon over-cast. Many events, at first, wore a propitious aspect, and she might be flattering herself with the hope of having found a comfortable resting-place; when suddenly the alluring calm gave way to a frowning storm, which again marred her comfort and dispelled her hopes.

While thus "afflicted and tossed," my readers will perhaps be anxious to know how Fanny felt and spoke. In the next part of this narrative, I hope to gratify their wishes. But on reviewing so much of the

way by which she has hitherto been led, we may, with propriety, adopt the paraphrased language of scripture, and say,

God gives in gladsome bowers to dwell,
Or clothes in sorrow's shroud :
His hand hath form'd the light ; his hand
Hath form'd the darkening cloud.

His voice commands the tempest forth,
And stills the stormy wave ;
And though his arm be strong to smite,
'Tis also strong to save.



PART III.

It is considered by many people, and especially by the young, that in religion there is something forbidding and gloomy. The humbling doctrines and the self-denying duties of the gospel are so directly opposed to the passions and the propensities of the human heart, that mankind in general chuse rather to enjoy 'the pleasures of sin for a season,' than to "crucify the flesh with the lusts and affections thereof:" although, in the one case, they expose themselves to present misery and eternal perdition, while, in the other, they will assuredly find, that

“godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life, and that which is to come.”

On the first reflection, it appears very strange, that men should be so blind to their true happiness and comfort. But the Bible unfolds the reason why such conduct is so prevalent. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” —“The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject unto the law of God, neither indeed can it be.”

But when divine grace enlightens the mind, and renews the will, and sanctifies the affections, this spiritual blindness is removed—this enmity gives place to love. Wondrous things are beheld in God’s law ; and the experience of true religion constrains to the acknowledgment that “her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

Still, however, it is not to be denied that religion is a service. On this account it is inconsiderately regarded as irksome, even by those very persons who are themselves labouring under a much heavier servitude—the slaves of sin and under the bondage of Satan—bound in fetters stronger than iron, although most probably they are unconscious of their captivity. But

in that religion which enjoins the service of the living God, there is “a glorious liberty.” And harsh and severe as that restraint may appear to ungodly men which the gospel prescribes, it would not be difficult to shew that this idea is imaginary and delusive. For, while the spirit of vital christianity imposes a strict moral rectitude, it also imparts a freedom from the dominion of sin, and a desire to depart from all iniquity. Thus the genuine disciples of Jesus “cease to do evil,” not by constraint, but willingly: and thus they “learn to do well,” not more from necessity than from choice.

It is true that christians are represented as labouring under a burden. Where, then, it may be asked, is the pleasure of religion? Unhappy and unsafe must they be, who do not feel the guilt of accumulated sins as a burden too weighty for them to bear. But here the affectionate invitation of Christ proves to the humble believer a powerful and sufficient antidote—“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

In this passage of Scripture the most sa-

tisfactory and conciliating encouragement is given. The Saviour himself acknowledges that in his service there is a 'yoke;' but he promises that it shall be an 'easy' one. He does not attempt to conceal that there is a 'burden,' but he kindly undertakes to render it 'light.' Yes: it is the peculiar privilege of christians to enjoy divine support under all the trials to which they may be appointed. They alone are enabled to say, "God is my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction"—"and his word is the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

Some account has already been given of the severe and varied trials to which Fanny Garden was appointed by her heavenly Father. She was indeed wearied with complicated distress; she was also heavy laden with sin: but she was taught to flee for refuge to Jesus Christ, as the only hope set before her in the gospel, and there she found rest to her soul. In the midst of her afflictions, her mind was exercised on important subjects; and as I am disposed to think that the following conversation, so far as it tends to exhibit her sentiments and feelings, is not destitute of interest, I shall make no apology for submitting the narration of it to the perusal of my readers.

As I was in the habit of lending out re-

ligious books to several of the children attending the Sabbath School, Fanny had her share. She occasionally visited me; and I generally embraced the opportunities thus offered to me of examining her as to her views of the gospel, and the influence which its truths had on her mind. I took pleasure in encouraging her in the good ways of the Lord.

One afternoon Fanny called on me for the purpose of receiving some books. I gave her what I considered suitable, with a hope that she might derive benefit from their perusal.

On inquiring if she persevered in the stated reading of the scriptures, I was happy to find that she did, and that this employment became increasingly delightful. I told her, as it was very possible she might meet with many passages, the meaning of which appears difficult and obscure, if she marked them, I should afterwards endeavour to explain them to the best of my ability. She was much pleased with this suggestion, and promised to attend to it; and all scholars will ever find their teachers ready to assist them in understanding the word of God. I learnt, moreover, that this hopeful girl read regularly every day a portion both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament—a plan of which I warmly ap-

proved, and in which I exhorted her to continue. But I did not omit to mention, that the New Testament has a peculiar claim on our attention, as being the most direct revelation of that blessed gospel which exhibits the only way of salvation for guilty sinners, and opens up life and immortality through Jesus Christ our Lord.

‘ This,’ said I, ‘ is a subject, Fanny, which concerns us all. To know Christ as our Saviour, is eternal life. I hope you are not destitute of this important knowledge.’

“ I love the Saviour, Sir, because he first loved me.”

‘ How do you think that he has loved you?’

“ Because he died for sinners; and I feel myself to be a great sinner.”

This answer pleased me, as conviction of sin is the first step towards true repentance. I expressed myself happy to hear that she looked on herself as a sinner, and then added: ‘ Every hour that we live may teach us this melancholy truth, that we all come short of the glory of God. Are you not conscious of doing many things which you ought not to do, and of sinning against God daily in thought, word, and deed?’

“ I just think sometimes, Sir, that I am the greatest sinner on the earth.”

‘ Well, Fanny, I trust you are on this ac-

count the more desirous of laying hold on Jesus as He who came to seek and to save them that are lost—who himself bare our sins in his own body on the cross, that he might save to the uttermost, even the chiefest of sinners.’

“ I believe that there is salvation in no other.”

‘ Yes: you remember what you heard very lately at the school, that “ there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved,” but that of Christ Jesus. And don’t you think sin must be a dreadful thing, when nothing else could wash it away, but the immaculate blood of the Son of God?’

“ A very dreadful thing indeed, Sir.”

‘ And surely it becomes us to think very meanly of ourselves, when we consider how powerfully sin predominates even in the best characters. Do not the long-suffering, forbearance, and tender mercy of God appear wonderful in preserving us amidst so many transgressions?’

“ It is a wonder that he spares me.”

‘ Yes, Fanny; it is a wonder that he spares any one; but I hope the goodness of God will lead you to repentance.’

During this conversation, I was particularly struck with the deep sense which this girl evidently entertained of her exceeding

sinfulness in the sight of God. I impressed upon her the importance of this feeling as much as possible ; for “ they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” And it is quite unnatural to come to Christ for pardon, and reconciliation, and acceptance, unless there is a previous conviction of transgression and alienation from God : “ The Son of man came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” I en- culcated the utility of self-examination, and assured her, that the more she saw the guilt of sin, and the more she felt its power, the greater would be her progress in other christian attainments.

‘ You know, Fanny,’ continued I, ‘ that Jesus, in his discourse with Nicodemus, said unto him, “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Can you tell me what is the meaning of being born again ?’

“ Being renewed, Sir.”

‘ Very right : but I must just ask you again, what is the meaning of being renewed ?’

“ Just, instead of thinking that I am not a sinner, coming to feel myself a very great sinner ; and in place of being satisfied with what I do, feeling that I cannot do any thing as it should be done.”

‘ I am glad that you seem to understand

something of this subject: you must be aware of its importance; for Christ expressly says, that none but those who are thus renewed shall ever enjoy the blessedness of heaven. How do you think this work is effected?’

To this question Fanny seemed a little at a loss what answer to make. I referred her to St John, iii. 8: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and ye hear the sound thereof, but ye know not whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” ‘Nothing,’ said I, ‘but the Spirit of God can renew our spirits; and the work is carried on in a way for which we cannot account. But those who are its happy subjects, are made to *feel* it in the enlightening of their minds, or, as you expressed it, in knowing themselves to be sinners, and in entertaining a sincere desire to turn from sin, and to follow after “righteousness and true holiness.” Other people also are made to *see* this change in its effects; because, whenever a sinner is “born again,” there is a manifest alteration of his whole conduct and conversation. Now, Fanny, interested as I am in your salvation, I would ask whether or not *you* feel any evidences within you of the renewing of the Holy Ghost?’

“I hope so, Sir; I certainly am very different from what I once was. I never used

to consider whether I was a sinner or not ; but now I feel very sorry when I discover so many proofs of my sinfulness every day."

' But that is not enough,' said I. ' Are you daily praying for deliverance from the dominion of sin in your heart, as well as from its awful consequences ? And are you sincerely desirous of receiving Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel, as *all* your salvation ?'

" Yes ; It is my wish to love and serve Him who hath done so much for me."

' I most earnestly pray that the Lord may lead you into all truth by his Holy Spirit ; and constrain you by his grace, ever to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness.'

Here I began to expatiate on the pleasures of religion, and the happiness of a life devoted to God. I said much to convince my interesting scholar, that she never would have cause to regret her having chosen " the good part," and gave her every encouragement to perseverance in the ways of holiness. I then inquired if she had any opportunity of enjoying the society of other young people who were like-minded. She said, that it was little in her power to do so, as she was always occupied in the house.

' But do you never meet with any of

the Sabbath School children through the week ?”

“ I don’t know many of them to speak to ; but I sometimes meet with Janet Tweedie when we are going to market.”

‘ Well ; and do you ever talk about the school ?’

“ O yes, Sir, we always do that.”

‘ I have a good opinion of Janet, but have never yet learned any thing very particular about her. She seems extremely attentive on the Sabbath evenings.’

“ She is very fond of the school ; and tells me she has great pleasure in coming to it.”

‘ I think if she and you could spend an hour together occasionally, you might do each other some good.’

“ She only gets to church, Sir, every other Sabbath ; and she once asked me to come to her on an afternoon, but I thought it proper to go to the church.”

‘ That was very proper, Fanny ; and I hope you will never go to church without feeling the benefit of it. But perhaps some better opportunity may occur for accepting of Janet’s invitation : and when you have read these books, which I gave you this afternoon, I should wish Janet to get a reading of them too. I think you have still a copy of “ The Young Cottager ” belonging

to me: let her have that likewise. How did you like little Jane, when you read her history a second time?’

“ I thought a great deal of it, Sir.”

‘ For my own part, I could look into it every day with pleasure. It exhibits a most beautiful display of christian principle and christian conduct. I am sure you would wish to resemble Jane in piety and knowledge.’

“ O yes, Sir, I should be happy to be like her.”

‘ Young as she was, little Jane had a strong desire to partake of the Lord’s supper, you remember: have *you* ever had any desire to do the same?’

“ I have been thinking about it at different times.”

‘ I am happy to hear of that. It is a delightful ordinance. You know it is not merely a commemoration of Christ’s dying love for us, but a public avowal of our supreme love to him. Every christian has pleasure in taking into his hands the appointed symbols of our Saviour’s broken body and shed blood, and in holding communion with his once crucified, but now exalted Lord. I would recommend your considering this subject with some degree of care and attention.’

I added a few observations, explanatory of the nature and objects of this holy sacra-

ment, and promised to look out some suitable books for her perusal by the time she called back to see me again.

Fanny went away with many expressions of gratitude to me, while my heart was raised in praise and thanksgiving to God, for the displays of his mercy and grace, which were manifested in the conversation of this girl. My mind was impressed with the sentiment contained in the following verses, which I regarded as expressive of the nature and cause of that change which appears to have been wrought on the heart of Fanny :

Salvation ! what a glorious plan !

How suited to our need !

The grace which raises fallen man

Is wonderful indeed !

But what is man, when grace reveals

The virtues of a Saviour's blood ?

Again a life divine he feels,

Despises earth, and walks with God.

May every reader of this simple narrative be made to experience the same blessed change ! And O that the young in an especial manner may be led to imitate the example of poor Fanny Garden, and testify a similar love to that Saviour who said, " Suffer little children to come unto me, and

forbid them not"—to that gracious God who for their encouragement hath promised, "They that seek me early shall find me."

FINIS.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by A. Jack & Co.