



UNSCRIPTURAL
MARRIAGE;

OR,

THE HISTORY OF ELLEN.

“Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.”
2 Cor vi. 14.

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THE HISTORY OF ELLEN.

ELLEN was the only surviving child of a father who died while she was very young; and of a pious mother who brought her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and who, being herself an accomplished lady, with a limited income, had educated her with great care. At the age of eighteen she began to notice that her mother dwelt much on the subject of the world to come. Sometimes a foreboding entered Ellen's mind, which proved but too true; for her mother felt that heart and flesh were failing. As yet she knew not how to break the subject to her darling child; but the pallid cheek and the decaying form soon told the sad tale to the

alarmed girl, although for a while she supported her hope by depending on the efficacy of medical skill.

Now her mother would press the things of God on her attention with tenfold earnestness, and, while describing the condition of one truly converted, and the breathings of a soul adopted into the family of God, would ask with a faltering tongue, "Oh, my Ellen, have you found the work of the Spirit of God upon your heart? Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus?" Ellen would weep, and say she hoped she was; and the exhausted parent would weep and hope too. But Ellen, when alone, and pondering on those things, felt there was some difference which she could not account for; the deep interest which her mother had always manifested in the word of God, struck her mind as forming a strange contrast to her own formal perusal of its sacred pages. Prayer also, which

called forth so frequently all the emotions of her mother's heart, with her was rather repeating prayers than praying; still, she thought herself a Christian, for her conduct was outwardly blameless. Occasionally she would ask herself, "Can all this difference be owing to the diversity of years?" But these inward debates were soon absorbed in the alarm of the rapid advance of disease in her beloved mother. The Bible and Christ were her all. Even her dear child Ellen, in whom she had seemed bound to earth, was given up in faith to the Lord, and resigned to His guardian care; for she knew her end was near.

One morning she called gently to Ellen, who was alone with her, then hastily took her pocket Bible from its place on the pillow, gazed for one moment on it as a most precious treasure, then sweetly smiling on her pale and agitated child, as if to compose her alarm, and suddenly holding

to her the word of God, just uttered, "Here, Ellen, take, take this, faith for sight," and then fell asleep in Jesus.

The first perception that brought Ellen's thoughts to her own situation was the chill of the cold hand, which had been clasped in her own, while the bequeathed Bible was held in the other. She pressed the precious volume to her heart, had only strength to call the nurse, and then fell down insensible. On being restored from the swoon, tears came to her relief, and then the anguish of her bereaved condition began to open upon her.

Her guardian, although a professor of religion, was really devoted to gaiety, and Ellen wanted more than she found in all around her. There was no heart to feel as she did, or to share her distress. She was not only a mourner for the dead, but unhappy in herself, and knew not where to find a remedy.

At length she remembered how her

mother, in all her sorrow, had retired to her Bible, and there found consolation; and she devoted a portion of every morning and evening to the study of its sacred pages. Still, as she came to portions marked by her dear parent's hand, as having been found precious to her soul, Ellen wondered that she found none of that sweet consolation which she knew to have often rejoiced her mother's heart. In fact, many of its passages appeared to have some meaning which she could not grasp, to make some appeal to the soul which she could not feel; but while musing on the strange interest which her mother found in these holy pages, and at her own strange unconcern, the thought occurred, "Is not this very apathy a part of the burden which the Lord invites me to cast on Him? Must there not be some further opening of the understanding and affections of the heart, wrought by God, which I

have not known?" This consideration induced the afflicted girl earnestly to pray to God that what she knew not He would deign to teach her; that His light might be upon His word, and His power upon her soul.

The Lord was now gradually drawing her to Himself, yet it was not till after many weeks that she found peace. How differently did the Scriptures now affect her mind! They were 'full of interest, because there was the promised work of the Holy Spirit within, corresponding with the word from without; all its disclosures were suitable to her condition; she wanted what they presented. Hungry and thirsty, she came to the word of God, and was satisfied.

Nearly two years passed in this serene and happy fellowship with God, during which Ellen well sustained the reproach of the cross. Her views of the danger to which the frivolity and vanity she saw around

her, exposed the souls of her former companions, led her to endeavour to manifest that danger to them. The taunts, the sneers, the affected pity with which she was assailed, affected her not.

But a greater danger was near. She thought her mountain stood strong, and would never be moved. The duty of watchfulness over her heart was less cautiously observed, and that, too, at a time when a temptation was about to present itself.

She began to attract the attention of Mr. R——, a young man of most amiable disposition and elegant manners, who, with an elder brother, had just succeeded to a respectable competency by the death of his father. He had been educated for the law, but had now retired, content with a sufficiency for the comforts of life; and was distinguished for considerable attainments in literature—possessing at once an acute mind, great natural

powers, an excellent temper, an unblemished moral character, and a pleasing person.

Mr. R—— closely observed Ellen, and thought that if he could laugh her out of what he considered her too great precision of habit, and enthusiasm of religious feeling, she would form a partner in whom his heart would delight. When first he paid his addresses to her, every friend and acquaintance around congratulated her on her happiness. Objection seemed impossible, and Ellen herself could not but be prepossessed in his favour. She thought that nothing was deficient in him to form an exalted character but true religion, of which she felt conscious he knew nothing. Yet there was such a pliancy and gentleness, such a tendency to all that was good, that she thought, “May I not be the means of winning him over to the things of God?” Still, the word of God, with which she was well

acquainted, clearly forbade the union. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," &c. (2 Cor. vi. 14), was a barrier that her mind could not surmount. She knew that others had violated it, and yet were thought Christians still. She mused and hesitated. Conscience told her she ought to break off the acquaintance; but the conflict had now begun with inclination. She could not pray, as before, with the simple desire to know and follow the will of God, and the inward tumult made the attempt irksome. She relaxed in the endeavour, and though she ceased not to pray, yet it was now with a confusion and formality that sometimes told her all was not well within. The parley with temptation advanced till her own affections became entangled; and what with the assiduity of her admirer, and the urgent pressing of her aunt, and of other connections, the affair was hastily concluded, and Ellen

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became the wife of Mr. R—— before she well thought what she was doing.

Ellen R——, as we must now call her, was soon undeceived as to the hopes with which she had quieted conscience before her marriage. Her house, which she had fondly thought to preserve like the dwelling of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, where Jesus oft resorted with His disciples, presented no token of being graced with His presence, or of being ennobled with His blessing. Family prayer was out of the question with a master who was insensible of its duty, and undesirous of its accompanying influence—who thought this delightful service to belong only to ministers of religion. The day began there as if they had nothing to do with God ; so it passed throughout, and so it closed. Ellen sometimes mentioned it with desire to her husband ; but every allusion to the holy practice was answered with some general evasion, some playful

banter on "nun-like purity she had received in her solitude," and "which should now be exchanged for conformity with the practices of social life." When she sought to discourse more seriously on these topics, she found the subject was irksome to her husband, and was obliged to suffer the conversation to be diverted into some other channel. Indeed, on all other points it was so interesting, that, before she was aware, her mind was engaged on matters more congenial with his taste, and the subject dropped. Thus repeatedly foiled in the attempt to engage his thoughts on the things of God, the effort was more seldom renewed, and at length it ceased for awhile altogether, in a kind of understood, though not expressed, arrangement, that each was to pursue unmolested the course most agreeable to inclination.

But on Ellen a most seductive influence was being exercised in a

thousand forms ; all her husband's friends and connexions were as averse to heart religion as himself, although they paid it homage as to outward forms. Many of them were of a literary or scientific character ; and their intelligence, with readiness of expression, won her towards their habits, and sometimes induced her compliance with worldly practices, at which, before her marriage, she would have startled. The few pious friends whom she retained found their converse so little acceptable to her husband, and the general conduct of her household so repugnant to their views of propriety, while she herself had so far immersed into the torrent of worldliness, that they fell off one by one. And here, oh, what a sad reverse was experienced to her former joy and peace ! She felt, when attempting to retire for prayer, as entering into the presence of One whom she had displeased—whom she was

continually displeasing. There was no sacred fervour in prayer, no filial resting on her God and Father's love and promise; self-examination was a torture, and was less and less attempted, till it was given up altogether. The most fearful doubts preyed upon her mind as to the reality of all she had experienced of the work of divine grace; and these doubts were continually called into exercise, and strengthened by the converse of almost all with whom she mixed. She felt that she had sustained a loss of happiness which worlds could not compensate.

In this condition she continued almost nine years, during which period she had become the mother of four children. Jane, the eldest, now nearly eight years old, had always been delicate in health, and was remarkably quiet, affectionate, and humble in her demeanour. She took little interest in childish play, and

appearing always to prefer her mother's society, she became her almost constant companion when at home. The Scriptures attracted her greatest attention, and she would sometimes ask such affecting questions from them as brought tears into her mother's eyes. The dear child would notice them, and weep with her, then frequently endeavour to kiss the tears away, and ask their cause. Alas ! the unhappy parent could not explain to her beloved child how grievously matters stood between her soul and God ; but she would retire to pray if yet she might possibly once more rejoice in the light of God's countenance, from whom she had departed. Generally, the dear child would offer her hand so affectionately that refusal was impossible ; she became the companion of her retirement, and kneeling by her side, would silently unite in her solemn petitions. From such affecting causes Jane was very dear

to her, and she cherished the hope that her after life would not witness those wanderings from God, and those bitter sorrows which had been her own portion.

Anne, giddy, playful little Anne, then five years of age, was her father's darling, and indeed partook much of his natural vivacity, as well as of his likeness. Henry was three years old, a fine, healthy, promising boy; and William, only twelve months, had but lately been weaned, and began to run alone. At this period Ellen was seized with a violent fever, and as it soon assumed infectious and alarming appearances, it was determined to remove the children, who had from the first been kept separated from her, to an adjoining village; but before this could be accomplished, the affectionate little Jane, who could not bear the thought of departing without seeing her mother, left the nursery unobserved, and gently entered her

beloved parent's room. Ellen had just been left in a gentle doze, and the dear child had, after silently watching the panting breath and flushed countenance for a few moments, knelt down by the bedside to pray for her sick mother. In this posture did Ellen behold her daughter, and following the first impulse of nature, would have clasped Jane to her beating heart; but immediately recollecting her own condition, she rang the bell, and could only give the child her blessing, before she, sobbing with anguish, was removed. Jane went with the rest to the village; but that same evening she sickened, and in four days she died.

It was three weeks before Ellen was able to have the sad tidings broken to her; but the shock was less than had been feared, for the near prospect of eternity had greatly altered her state of feeling; she heard it, and bowed submissively to the will

of God. Yet, when able to leave her room, the company of her Jane was everywhere missed, and her image recalled by every object. On this account, as well as for change of air, an immediate temporary removal was advised to the south of Devon; and as soon as the journey could be borne, her husband took her with the family to lodgings prepared at the lovely watering-place, Torbay.

They were now removed from worldly company, and a continual succession of parties, which for years had been the bane of spirituality of mind. This was the time and opportunity for thought, which she so greatly needed, and while here, the first hope of recovering the peace and happiness, and of walking with God, entered her heart; especially did she date the expectation from a meditation one evening, while seated on a bench provided for invalids on the "Rock Walk" of Waldon Hill.

Ellen almost unconsciously repeated

to herself, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." Hope fixed on the idea, and from that moment she never abandoned the cheering thought of restoration to communion with God. This change gave a fresh impulse to both body and mind; health again bloomed in her countenance, and she decided to return home.

However, another awakening to God was yet reserved for her before leaving Torbay. One day Ellen was hurrying homeward, when the darkened sky alarmed her; and being unprepared for rain, she stepped into a small cottage, inhabited by one of the men employed in guarding the bay from smugglers, to borrow a cloak or some additional defence, and was earnestly persuaded by him not to adventure till the shower passed on.

She was more than three miles from home; a storm set in. The whole bay was covered with the white foam of the breaking billows; the thunder-

clouds rapidly advanced, and bursting over the sea, spread such a sheet of lightning as for a moment covered the whole expanse. Ellen's heart sunk within her when she heard the man repeating, as he viewed the storm—

“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly ;
While the billows round me roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past ;
Safe into the haven guide,
Oh, receive my soul at last !”

The rain and wind beat upon the cottage, as if about to sweep it into the sea, and a large portion of the cliff near them fell with such a crash that it shook the very place on which it was built ; still, the man was calm, and turning to her perceived her terror ; when he spake so forcibly of Christ as a Refuge from every tempest, and of the safety of the soul in Him, even when the elements themselves

shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, that Ellen regained sufficient composure to question her kind host how he attained this delightful confidence. "Through grace, by walking with God," was his reply; and it was a volume for her. (Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10; 1 John ii. 3-6.)

Being faint, she took some refreshment, which he thoughtfully placed before her, and accepted his offer of accompanying her across the sands as soon as the rain subsided; indeed, the assistance was necessary, for the land rivulets, which ran into the bay, were so swollen that she would have found great difficulty in passing them without aid. On the way they met her alarmed husband, who, by inquiry, had traced her route, and was anxiously seeking her. The next day they quitted the coast, and returned home.

Fully determined now to enter no more into that fatal course of world-

liness which had so fearfully destroyed her comfort, after spreading the matter earnestly before God in prayer, she seriously unfolded to her husband the whole state of her soul, and earnestly entreated his assistance in conducting their household, and training their children in the ways of God. She found his heart so deeply wounded by affliction that he did not at first attempt to waive the discourse, or to divert her attention from it, but expressed his willingness to unite with her in serving God. The only difference which remained was in what this devotedness consisted; for he could form no idea of that walking with God in the habits of fellowship and communion on which she was now intent. Religion to him appeared nothing more than strict uprightnes of conduct with our fellow-creatures, and regular attention to the outward forms of worship. Ellen founded her descriptions on the Scripture, and

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portrayed a Christian in his likeness to Christ, both in obedience to the requirements of love to God, as well as in duty to man. The following Scriptures helped her as to her daily walk: Rom. xii., Eph. iv. and v. In short, she found the Scriptures exhibited a Christian as one who, by being quickened together with Christ (Col. ii. 13), is dead to the world, and the world to him; who is renewed in the spirit of his mind, so as to set his affections on things above (Col. iii. 2); who is the property and the willing servant of Christ Jesus his Lord, whose will is his guide, whose work is his employ, whose fellowship is his happiness, and whose heaven is his home.

When she spake of having the heart fixed on heavenly treasures (Matt. vi. 19-24); according to the command of Christ, Mr. R—— acknowledged that it was not the case with him, but maintained that it was equally unpractised by others; and,

while he admitted the truth of all the Scriptural delineations of a true Christian, he contended that they were utterly above nature, and quite unattainable—rather set before us as marks to be aimed at, than a description of practicable piety. Yet he allowed that neither he nor any of his associates appeared at all to aim at such religion, and, in consequence, he could not but confess a sad deficiency, while he yet maintained that it was not fatal. But Ellen closed all his excuses by quoting 1 John v. 4: “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John ii. 16.) This was conclusive; for he could not but allow that he had always loved these things, and had been so overcome as

constantly to be influenced by them. He acknowledged that he had never possessed the faith treated of by the apostle.

Such conversations became long, and deeply interesting; and it was during a winter's evening, when he had, as usual, referred the commands of Scripture to the inability of nature, that Ellen entered on the subject of man being born again by the Spirit of God, and took the opportunity to relate to him her early experience of its truth, the sweet intercourse she had then enjoyed with God, the actings of living faith in raising the soul to heavenly things; and the clear distinction between this condition and her previous cold, formal, unproductive assent to divine truth. She declared her firm persuasion that before this change her state was one of unbelief, and of condemnation. Then faithfully, with the most earnest affection and many tears, she besought him no longer

to trifle with his soul. He was greatly moved, and starting at the idea, that because destitute, as he acknowledged, of this living faith, he was an unbeliever in the sight of God, he asked her eagerly if she thought that it was by this grace she had turned her back on the world, and entered into such a spiritual state of mind as he had before thought impossible? She declared it was, and deeply lamented the decay of its practice, assuring him that, much as she had appeared to take interest in worldly substitutes for this piety, she had never known what happiness was since she had ceased closely to walk with God, and concluded by referring him to Heb. xiii.

The result of this conversation appeared important. He seemed to be gradually yielding to conviction; yet still, although more faintly, he would question whether the influence of this living faith might not be some

enthusiastical impression on her mind, and whether her former morality was not as true religion as these spiritual feelings; but, unable to resist the force of Scripture, he gave way to her simple distinction of the believer, as an accepted, pardoned, blessed child of God, and the unbeliever as condemned, the enemy of Christ, and yet in his sins. The consequence was; that he seemed to desire such a change in himself, and gladly yielded to her design of forming religious acquaintances. Among these was a young couple of decided piety, who manifested the utmost willingness to cultivate mutual friendship; and the first evening of receiving a visit convinced Mr. R—— that the highest enjoyment of society might consist with the purest godliness. The conversation was animated, serious, and interesting. At the hour of eight o'clock the servants were called in to family prayer. The whole service

was conducted with simplicity and fervency; and, upon their return home, Mr. R—— could not refuse Ellen's arguments of the propriety, excellency, and duty of the sacred practice by all who profess to be followers of Christ. Indeed, he promised to take the matter into the most serious consideration, whether it were not really his duty as the master of a house.

He now read the Scriptures with care, and appeared so willing to enter into all Ellen's views, that her wound began to be somewhat healed for the loss of her Jane, whom she everywhere missed. The hope that possibly her husband's change might make up for the loss of her child began now to gladden her heart, and to introduce a new feeling of animation in the prospects of life. Alas! she little thought how much her own disobedience to her Lord, in forming the connection at the first, was to overthrow every pleasing anticipation.

Ellen observed one evening, as her husband was seeking some passages then in discussion, that he started and was absorbed in profound thought, which continued to hold him agitated and silent for nearly half an hour. At length she ventured to inquire the cause of his emotion. He laid his finger on 2 Corinthians vi. 14, and following verses: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" &c.; and then asked her whether she had observed this passage before their marriage. She sighed, and confessed she had.

"Then, my beloved Ellen," said he, "distress yourself no longer with the apprehension of any difference between your state and mine. I have not, indeed, felt as you have described, nor do I know of any change in my soul to constitute what you call being born again; but the idea is a mere delusion.

I know the innocence and integrity of your heart, and am sure that if your feelings had constituted you a believer —while I, with rectitude of conduct, and full persuasion of the truth of Scripture, but destitute of such feelings, was, in the Scriptural sense of the word, an unbeliever, you never could have been guilty of such a violation of God's command. No, my Ellen, we are, and both of us have always been, truly believers; these notions of yours are the mistakes of a virtuous mind, and of a too highly-heated imagination. Lay them aside, my dearest companion, and suffer not such gloomy and enthusiastical views to disturb your enjoyment of the pleasures of the present hour. I never before noticed the passage, or I am sure I should have been able to withstand and, I hope, to divert your mind from the superstitious views which have, indeed, lately had too much of your attention ——." What words can

describe the emotions of the astonished wife ! Reply was impossible ; she sat silent, convicted, overwhelmed.

Mr. R—— at length changed the subject, and tried to compose her mind. She hastened to be alone, and then confessed her transgression with sighs and tears.

A few evenings afterwards she attempted to renew the subject, in hope of yet convincing her husband of his unrenewed state. For this purpose she brought forward various passages to show that, although the renewed *spirit* sinneth not, yet that the fleshly nature does sin ; that it had actually led her into the sin of being unequally yoked. But he was now dead to every impression, considering her mind as labouring under delusive views of Scripture, and as prejudiced with uncharitable notions of upright persons ; nor could she obtain his attention to the subject ; but was grieved beyond degree to find

all his love for her urge him to divert her mind from every serious subject. The dread of their children being trained up to the same religious habits, led him to counteract every effort of hers to impress the things of God on their youthful souls. The customs and company, so far as he could affect them, became as contrary to true piety as ever, and for five years more she struggled on, sometimes momentarily seduced by the desire of answering to his unabated affection, to what she felt was a compliance inconsistent with the heart's devotedness to God. Beset with every possible hindrance in maintaining her own steadfastness; perpetually afflicted with the vain and worldly habits of her tender offspring, imparted and cherished by her own beloved partner; sometimes her continual sorrow of heart would threaten her health; and then, oh, the thought of leaving her family to such a soul-ruining system!

But amidst all, she was enabled by divine grace to adhere to the resolution she had solemnly taken : “ Let others do as they would ; as for her, she would serve the Lord.” How did she mourn that she could not, like Joshua, engage for her household also ; but she had read, “ Whoso loveth father, or mother, or husband, or wife, more than me, is not worthy of me.” (Luke xiv. 26.) Especially the concluding part of Matt. x., from the 32nd verse to the end, powerfully affected her mind to perseverance.

While reading Psalm ciii., she felt the scourge, which by her forbidden connexion with an unrenewed heart, she had prepared for herself. She loved God ; but she loved one who was a stranger to Him, and He was preparing her for an unexpected trial. What was the agony of her spirit when, during a season of retirement, she was aroused with the tidings that her husband had suddenly burst a blood-

vessel in a fit of coughing. After the first alarm was passed, and hopes were given that he might do well, she earnestly commended his soul to God in prayer, and determined to renew her efforts to bring him to Christ. The full opportunity was presented; for a while he seemed to gain strength, and at a period when they were alone together, while expressing her delight at his advancing recovery, at the same time she plainly intimated her apprehensions concerning the safety of his soul. He heard her calmly, and then replied, with grateful and equally affectionate language, that "he did not wonder at her concern; he could enter into her feelings, and if he thought as she did, he should very probably entertain the same apprehensions for one who did not profess the change or agitation of mind, which appeared to him to be mere enthusiasm; and which indeed," said he, with a smile, "has been the only

fault I have ever had to find with my beloved Ellen."

She answered in the words of our Lord, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." He declared that he needed no other dispositions of mind than those which he continually exercised, and that he was quite prepared for death, and had no doubts of his everlasting safety.

"Ah! my dearest husband," said Ellen, "that self-complacency is the very thing that concerns me on your account; it is so different from the views which a David, a Paul, a Peter, and all the inspired writers took of themselves, and it is so opposed to the judgment of God's word concerning those whose hearts and affections are entirely engaged by the occupations and amusements of this world. 'Love not the world,' saith 1 John ii. 3, 'neither the things that are in the world. If any man love

the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' So also St. Paul, 1 Tim. v. 6: 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' And our blessed Lord has clearly shown the true condition of our state before God in declaring, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' (Matt. vi. 21.) You cannot but feel that your heart has been engaged by earth; then, what ground have you in this condition to hope for treasure in heaven?"

"Indeed, my dear Ellen," he replied, "there have been many deficiencies in this respect; but my life has been upright, and I believe that Jesus Christ will do the rest for me. God is too merciful to condemn such an one as I have been." "But on what declaration of *Scripture* do you rest this hope?" inquired she. He felt the question embarrassing, and in vain endeavoured to recall some passage to warrant the vague expectation so contrary to the explicit testimonies

adduced by his wife, and then cut short the subject by declaring that he should be miserable if he adopted her views, and he earnestly hoped she would never infuse them into the minds of the children. She sighed, and reluctantly acceded to his wish of changing the topic.

He withheld his heart from God, yet maintained that God loved him. He lived in pleasure, and although the word of eternal truth pronounced him dead, he flattered his soul with the thought of possessing eternal life. In a few days more another blood-vessel broke, and after lingering three weeks, when unable to speak, he gave signs of wanting something. After many things had been brought to him in vain, the Bible was opened ; he signified that to be his object, but every precious passage seemed to make him more and more uneasy ; he appeared to be desiring something to buoy his hopes, which he could not

find, looked inexpressible disappointment, sunk into insensibility, and so died. Who can tell the sufferings of Ellen's mind during this awful interval? Day by day she wrestled, yea, she agonized in prayer for his soul, but the cloud grew darker and darker. She saw him approach eternity without one Scriptural hope, and it seemed as if in this matter she must feel the consequences of the forbidden alliance. And oh, when all was over, and her distracted spirit inquired after his — when still the affectionous, which had indeed been most fondly fixed, followed their beloved object—the bitterness was worse than that of Rachel mourning for her children, who would not be comforted, because they were not! she wished to be comforted, but *could* not. Where could she find a ray of hope? He was gone, and she knew he was gone for ever; they were parted, and she knew they were parted *for ever*.

“Would to God I had died for thee!” was her only passionate cry, save that now and then the exclamation burst forth, “Oh, his soul, his soul!” Then, again, the consciousness of this agony of spirit being the consequence of having been unequally yoked together, and not in the Lord, extorted the piercing words from her quivering lips, “Oh that I had never loved, or never lost!” It was, indeed, an anguish of soul that no words can describe, nor any mind conceive, that has not trodden the same path of disobedience at the beginning, and of similar suffering afterwards. We forbear tracing the horrors of this period—they did not soon nor easily subside; but at length her heart bowed to the will of God with more quiet endurance of its woes in a case which admitted of no consolation. The wants and cares of her family also tended to arouse, and, in some measure, to divert her from thoughts that were

preying on her health, and even almost on her reason. The Lord graciously mingled spiritual comforts with these otherwise overwhelming sorrows, or she might possibly have sunk into the pitiable condition of a melancholy lunatic. Sometimes in communion with her God she felt the smiles of His reconciled countenance, and for a while forgot her misery.

The engaging intercourse with her children, after some months, drew Ellen's mind to other subjects; but even in these hours of soothing maternal employments, she was often unconsciously pierced to the heart by the questions and observations of her dear little companions. One day, while discoursing with them on the Scripture, she told her little Henry to seek of God to make him a Christian indeed, he asked her what it was to be one. While endeavouring to explain from Scripture the Christian character in its upright and beneficent

conduct to its fellow-creatures, and in its holy walk with God, the young disciple assured her he would be one; but pausing, as if comparing some past recollections with what he heard, he innocently inquired, "But, mamma, was dear papa a Christian indeed?" Her heart was ready to break! she could only cover her face and weep. They gazed on her, and in the simplicity of love wept with her. There was seldom on these occasions a question asked why; for tears had been lately too frequent to be strange.

After a lapse of some months had produced an alleviation of the first burst of grief, her husband's brother, who was left executor of his will, and appointed guardian to the children, proposed to enter on the arrangement of various matters, and asked her plan in regard to the education of the children. Ellen informed him that she intended to instruct them all herself if spared, at least till Henry's

age would require other tutors ; but to her dismay he told her, in the most delicate manner, that his duty would not permit him to accede to her desires on this point ; that for one twelve month he wished all the children to remain with her, as their company might soothe her affliction, but after that period, it was his imperative duty to place both Anne and Henry at schools which he named (places which Ellen knew to be fashionable seminaries, where anything but religion would be inculcated), assuring her that, although he earnestly desired that they might never imbibe her views of piety, yet he would not interfere in such a matter but for his departed brother's express wishes, which he showed to her, written to him during the period of his first attack of illness, and that under such circumstances he thought the directions of the dead were binding on them both. Ellen did not

think so. She pleaded that the directions of God superseded every other, and were binding on everybody; but she could not prevail, nor could she help herself. Mr. R. had the power in his hands, and nothing could dissuade him from using it, as enjoined by his brother; at the same time, he politely begged that she would invariably avail herself of any assistance which it might ever be in the power of his friendship to afford her; adding his conviction, that she had fully deserved the utmost kindness of all his brother's family; and that even with all the objection he saw to the enthusiasm of her religion, she had made one of the best wives he had ever known. With these acknowledgments he took his leave.

Ellen shuddered at the long prospect of continued evil which she saw must yet arise from her unhappy forgetfulness of God in her unscriptural

marriage. To be separated from her beloved children was no light trouble to her affectionate breast; but the effect which such unchristian training must have on their souls filled her with serious alarm. Anne was now of an age wherein the character often receives impressions that last through life, and she perceived it already to need the utmost maternal pious care, to counteract a disposition naturally giddy, and much influenced by the worldliness and frivolity that had been constantly before her observation. "Alas!" said she, "and must *you* also, my precious children, partake the consequences of your mother's transgression? Must it expose you also to the corruption which is in the world, of enmity to Christ? and while I would bring you in my arms to Him for His blessing, must I see you trained by His foes—His despisers—to reject and forget Him like themselves?" And now for the first time

she was led to see the mercy which had sheltered her blessed little Jane in the bosom of the Saviour from the evil to come.

We forbear to trace her through complicated difficulties, which were constantly unfolding some fresh hindrance to every pious desire; what could she otherwise expect from an alliance with that world which God declares to be lying in wickedness? We close this warning to those who may be under the like temptation, with a letter written by Ellen to a young friend professing piety, who was receiving the addresses of a suitor, who, though moral, was yet destitute of the Scriptural evidences of being a child of God.

“MY BELOVED L——,

“I cannot see you advance to the brink of a whirlpool, strewed with wrecks of peace and piety, without calling to you, as you love God and

your soul, to pause and escape from the ruinous snare while yet it is in your power. If you know not the Lord's commands on the subject of the union of His people in bonds that nothing but death can dissolve, read 2 Cor. vi. 14, &c., and then will you take the members of Christ, and make them those of a stranger to His grace? Oh, my friend, *there can be no happiness & disobedience to God.* Is it a light matter to prefer a heart wherein He does not dwell, to Himself? You fondly hope to be the means of converting your proposed companion for life; but is rejecting God's word a likely way to be thus blessed? You may say there is much that is promising in his character. Let there be all things else, if there be no evidence of divine grace in the heart, he is not 'in the Lord,' and therefore your *Lord and Saviour* forbids the union. It may now cost you much to retrace your steps, but infinitely more to con-

tinue them; and, cost what it will, God clearly requires the sacrifice, and He will support you in it. You probably know not how to break off matters; suffer me then to advise. Simply show your suitor the word of God, and tell him you dare not disobey. (1 Cor. vii. 39.) When you feel the pain of this step, think of me.

“But it is not for me to ch^oylain. I am a wonder of grace. The Lord hath restored my soul, when its own folly had well-nigh ranked it among those who forget God. Oh, my friend, remember the poor sufferer who warns you! Break the snare, and endure anything but the wretchedness of an unscriptural marriage. Sometimes pray for the affectionate but broken-hearted

“ELLEN R———.”