

## **A brief memoir of the late Thomas Bateman ... who died 9th April 1821.**

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A  
BRIEF  
MEMOIR

OF  
THE LATE

THOMAS BATEMAN, M.D.

PHYSICIAN TO THE PUBLIC DISPENSARY, CAREY STREET;  
AND TO THE FEVER INSTITUTION,  
GRAY'S-INN LANE, LONDON :

WHO DIED 9th APRIL 1821.

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*Sixth Edition,*  
WITH AN APPENDIX.

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London:

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## BRIEF MEMOIR.

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IN order to introduce to our readers the following interesting and useful Memoir, for which we are indebted to a friend, it is only necessary to state, for the sake of those of them who are unacquainted with the name of Dr. BATEMAN, that he was a physician of considerable eminence in London, and well known as the author of several medical works which we believe are held in high estimation in the profession; besides which he conducted the medical department of Dr. REES'S Encyclopedia, and was joint editor of the Edinburgh Medical Journal. His zeal and ability in superintending a Public Dispensary, and the House of Recovery or Fever Hospital, in London, were highly beneficial to those institutions, and to the public. He expired last April, at Whitby, in Yorkshire, in the prime of life, at the age of 43 years.

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THE late Dr. BATEMAN settled in London soon after his graduation at Edinburgh in the year 1801; and his professional merits being very considerable,



he was speedily elected Physician to two public institutions—a large Dispensary and the House of Recovery for Fever. He continued to distinguish himself, as he had done in Edinburgh, by his zeal and industry in the pursuit of science and literature; though he contrived to mix with his severer studies a large portion of the dissipations of gay society, and carried with him, into both these opposite pursuits, an energy of mind and of feeling which rendered him more than ordinarily susceptible of the enjoyments which either of them can afford. He always retained a high “sense of honour,” as it is called, and was strictly careful to avoid, in all his conduct, every thing that the world esteems discreditable. He lived, however, to see and to feel, what at that time he had no conception of, how meagre a system of morality is that which the world is satisfied with, compared with the comprehensive morality of the Gospel—that Christian holiness without which “no man shall see the Lord.” His habits of life thus concurring with the natural corruption of the human heart, and estranging him more and more from God, he soon became confirmed in his leaning to the wretched doctrine of Materialism, which he had been already tempted to adopt during the pursuit of his anatomical and



physiological studies at Edinburgh. This lamentable tendency was strongly increased by the society which he now fell into of some men of considerable talent, who had already espoused all the principles of that unphilosophical as well as unchristian system ; and though never able *fully* to embrace those opinions himself, he was yet sufficiently influenced by them to become sceptical respecting the truth of Divine Revelation, and was therefore of course a stranger to the hopes, as well as negligent of the duties, of Christianity.

In the summer of 1815, his health began to decline, and in the following year a complaint in his eyes came on, which threatened loss of sight, and precluded him from all his accustomed sources of occupation and amusement. Under these circumstances, the writer of this memoir became his constant companion and attendant ; and for four years had the misery of witnessing his total estrangement from God and religion. His health continuing to decline, he left London in July 1819, with an intention of trying the effect of a sulphurous water at Middleton, in the county of Durham, on his debilitated constitution. He was taken ill on the road, and with difficulty reached a village near



Beverley, in Yorkshire ; where he was obliged to remain during the following winter ; and finding, at length, that his health required the sacrifice, he finally determined not to attempt returning to London. He had for some time been subject to attacks of the most alarming nervous languor, during which he was thought by all around him, as well as by himself, to be dying ; and these now returned upon him continually, especially after using the least bodily exertion. During the winter he was considerably better ; but on the return of warm weather, early in the spring of 1820, he had a severe attack of languor after a short ride. His dread of these attacks was so great, and they were brought on so frequently by the smallest fatigue, that he gradually relinquished all exertion, as he even believed that the exhaustion which would be produced by the effort of walking across a room, might prove fatal.

It was on Sunday the 9th of April that he first spoke to me on the subject of religion. He had passed the whole of the day in a state of extraordinary suffering, from languor, and a variety of nervous feelings, which he always said it was impossible to describe, farther than that they were



inconceivably painful and distressing; and he went to bed at night with a firm persuasion that he should never again quit it; and, in fact, he did confine himself to it for the following three weeks, from the mere apprehension of the consequences of exertion. Religion was a subject which, for many reasons, had never been discussed between us. Though the tenour of his life had made me but too well acquainted with the state of his mind, he had always avoided any declaration of his opinions, knowing the pain it would give me to hear them. He was habitually fond of argument, and skilled in it; and I knew that I was quite incompetent to argue with him. I considered too that the habit of disputing in favour of any opinion, only serves, in general, to rivet it more firmly in the mind; men commonly finding their own arguments more convincing than those of their adversaries. And, above all, I knew that this was a case in which mere argument must always be insufficient,—for “it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness:” and in most, if not all, cases of scepticism, the will and the affections need to be set right even more than the understanding; and upon these, argument can have no influence.—On the evening of the day I have mentioned, Dr. BATE-



MAN had been expressing to me his conviction that he could not live much longer, and complaining of the dreadful nervous sensations which continually harassed him; and then he added, "But all these sufferings are a just punishment for my long scepticism, and neglect of God and religion." This led to a conversation, in the course of which he observed, that medical men were very generally sceptical; and that the mischief arose from what he considered a natural tendency of some of their studies to lead to materialism. I replied, that the mischief appeared to me to originate rather in their neglect to examine into the evidences of the truth of the Bible, *as an actual revelation from God*; because, if a firm conviction of that were once established, the authority of the Scriptures must be paramount; and the tendency of all inferior studies, in opposition to their declarations, could have no weight. He said, he believed I was right, and that he had in fact been intending to examine fully into the subject, when the complaint in his eyes came on, and shut him out from reading. Our conversation ended in his permitting me to read to him the first of Scott's "Essays on the most important Subjects in Religion," which treats of "The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures." He listened with



intense earnestness; and when it was concluded, exclaimed, "This is demonstration! complete demonstration!" He then asked me to read to him the account given in the New Testament of the resurrection of our Saviour; which I did from all the four Evangelists. I read also many other passages of Scripture, with some of which he was extremely struck; especially with that declaration, that "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." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

For two or three days he shewed increasing interest in the subject of religion; and I read to him continually the Scriptures, and other books which seemed to me best calculated to give him the information he thirsted for. When I went into his room a few mornings after, he said, "It is quite impossible to describe to you the change which has taken place in my mind: I feel as if a new world was opened to me, and all the interests and pursuits of *this* have faded into nothing in comparison with it. They seem so mean, and paltry, and insignificant, that my blindness, in living so long immersed in them, and devoted to them, is quite inconceivable



and astonishing to myself." He often expressed in the strongest terms, and with many tears, his deep repentance, and his abhorrence of himself for his former sinful life and rebellion against God ; but he seemed to have from the first so clear a view of the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's atonement, and of the Christian scheme of salvation, as freed him at once from that distrust of forgiveness which is so apt to afflict persons at the first sight of their sins, and of the purity and holiness of Him "with whom they have to do." The self-abasing views which he entertained of himself necessarily enhanced his sense of the pardoning love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus, thus graciously extended to him : and which he felt so strongly, that he was filled with the liveliest emotions of gratitude and joy, and in this happy state continued for several days.

He soon, however, experienced an afflicting reverse of feeling. One evening I left him to visit a near relative, at that time confined to her room in a precarious state of health ; and his mother, who had been in attendance upon her, took my place at the bed-side of her son. Dr. BATEMAN told her, that I had been reading to him various detached portions of Scripture, and that he now wished



to hear the New Testament read regularly through from the beginning. She consequently began to read, and had proceeded as far as the tenth chapter of St. Matthew, when he suddenly exclaimed, that he could not believe in the miracles of the Saviour, and that therefore he must perish for ever.\* This suggestion of his spiritual enemy threw him into a state of the most dreadful anguish, and I was immediately sent for to his bed-side. On my arrival he had become a little more composed, but was still in great agitation; and was praying in agony to be saved, and not to be given up to this dreadful state of unbelief. To comfort his mind, we said what we could from Scripture, and from the experience of other Christians: and he was a little relieved by hearing some passages from an Essay in the volume before mentioned, “On the Warfare and Experience of Believers;” finding that his was not, as he had supposed, a case of new occurrence; but that the author of that work was

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\* It needs scarcely be pointed out, how much more properly this might be called *temptation* to unbelief, than *unbelief* itself. While the difficulty of believing was felt, the awful consequences of not believing were fully admitted; that is, were firmly *believed*.



already acquainted with its symptoms, and augured favourably of them, as often accompanying the progress of religion in the soul. Still the idea that his death was fast approaching, and that there was no hope of his mind being convinced before it arrived, quite overwhelmed him. Feeling ourselves to be very inadequate guides and comforters in these afflicting circumstances, we gladly adopted a suggestion of a friend that we should request a neighbouring clergyman of piety and judgment to visit him. Dr. BATEMAN himself grasped eagerly at the proposal, and I wrote immediately to the clergyman in question; but he was from home and was not expected to return for two or three weeks. A few days after this unwelcome intelligence, Dr. BATEMAN told me, he had no doubt this disappointment was for his good; and that it was better for him to be left to himself, as he did not think any thing could have convinced him so fully of *the efficacy of prayer*, as the sensible relief which he experienced from it during those conflicts of doubt and unbelief with which his mind continued to be harassed. He added, that he now spent whole nights in prayer. He felt perfectly assured that these doubts were the suggestions of the great adversary of souls, and remarked, that they were



vividly and manifestly darted, as it were, into his mind, instead of arising from his own reflections, or resulting from any train of reasoning; and the absurdity of them, in many instances, was so obvious, that his judgment detected it at once, though he still had not power to drive them from the hold they took on his imagination, or to banish them, for the time, from his thoughts.

These paroxysms of distress and conflict, which sometimes lasted many hours, he continued subject to for about a fortnight: but they gradually became less long and violent, and he experienced increasingly great relief from prayer during their continuance; till at length they subsided entirely, and left his mind satisfied on all those points which had before presented so many obstacles to his belief.

About this time he received an unexpected visit from a medical friend, whose piety and truly Christian character distinguish him still more than his eminent abilities and professional skill. This gentleman, with great difficulty, succeeded in persuading him that he was by no means in that state of danger and debility which he had apprehended, and that he had the power of taking exercise if he



could but exert sufficient resolution to attempt it. Experiment convinced him that this opinion was correct: he was prevailed upon to leave his bed, and in a very few days was able to be some hours daily in the open air, and to take considerable exercise; and it is remarkable, that from this time he had no return of languor after fatigue, except in one instance. Thus was he delivered, by the gracious providence of God, from those overwhelming apprehensions of immediate death which had been so instrumental in bringing him to Christ, as soon as they had effected that blessed purpose.

He now rarely spoke of the state of his mind and feelings; for such was the extreme reserve of his character, that it could only be overcome by deep and powerful emotions; and when no longer agitated by these, he returned to his natural habits, and was silent on the subject that most deeply interested him. Still it was abundantly evident that it *did* interest him. The avidity with which he listened to the word of God—his eagerness to attend public worship (which for many years he had entirely neglected,) and the heartfelt and devout interest which he obviously took in the service—his enlarged and active benevolence—the change which



had taken place in his tastes, inclinations and pursuits—all testified that he was indeed “brought out of darkness into marvellous light:” “old things had passed away, and all things had become new.”

In the course of the summer his health and strength were considerably recruited: but towards the close of it, a little over-exertion in walking brought on an accession of fever, and a great aggravation of all the symptoms of his disorder; but still he continued able to take a little exercise. While he remained in the country he had much leisure, which was devoted entirely to religious reading; for every other subject had now become insipid and uninteresting to him; and never did the pursuits of science and literature afford him such vivid enjoyment as he now received from these hallowed studies. In November he removed to Whitby for the winter: and his health continued in much the same state till a short time before Christmas, when a walk, rather longer than usual, again produced increased fever and debility; and from that period his strength and appetite visibly declined, while his spirit was as visibly ripening for heaven. His faith and patience were strengthened; his hope was increased; his charity enlarged: yet he was naturally



so extremely reserved in the expression of his feelings, that he rarely spoke of them till within the last month of his life, when he rejoiced "with a joy unspeakable and full of glory," which bore down all opposition; for he experienced a happiness to which all the accumulated enjoyments of his whole previous life could bear no proportion or comparison, even that "peace of God" which "passeth all understanding," and which must be felt, or at least witnessed, in order to form any just conception of its nature and effects. What a striking example did our dying friend now exhibit to us! From his early youth he had devoted himself with delight and industry to the acquisition of knowledge and the pursuits of literature and science; and he had "*had his reward*" in the honour and reputation which his success had procured for him, a reward which he keenly enjoyed and very highly prized. Those who have known only the pleasures which arise from worldly gratifications, surely ought to recollect, that, being confessedly ignorant of those spiritual enjoyments which they despise, they cannot be competent to decide upon their reality or their value: it belongs only to those who have experienced *both*, to appreciate either. And how did Dr. BATEMAN appreciate them? In



contrasting, as he frequently did, his present happiness with all that he had formerly enjoyed and *called* happiness, he seemed always at a loss to find words to express how poor, and mean, and despicable all earthly gratifications appeared to him, when compared with that “joy and peace in believing,” which now filled his soul: and “one particle of which,” he sometimes said, “ten thousand worlds would not tempt him to part with.” And it should be remembered, that this was not the evidence of a man disappointed in his worldly pursuits: he had already, as before observed, “had his reward” in this world—he had experienced the utmost success in the path which he had chosen—he had been keenly susceptible of intellectual pleasures; and of these, as well as of all inferior amusements, he had enjoyed more than a common portion; but when the only object that can satisfy the affections and fill the capacities of a rational and immortal being was revealed to him—when he viewed by the eye of faith that life and immortality which are brought to light by the Gospel—earthly fame, and honour, and pleasure sunk into the dust; and, in reflecting upon his past life, the only thing that gave him any satisfaction was the hope that his labours might have been



beneficial to his fellow-creatures, for whom his charity had now become unbounded. He often said, that “the blessing of his conversion was never out of his mind day or night; that it was a theme of perpetual thanksgiving; and that he never awoke in the night without being overwhelmed with joy and gratitude in the recollection of it.” He always spoke of his long bodily afflictions with the most devout thankfulness, as having been instrumental in bringing him to God; and considered his almost total blindness as an especial mercy, because, by shutting out external objects, it had enabled him to devote his mind more entirely to spiritual things. Often, latterly, he expressed an ardent desire to “depart and to be with Christ;” but always added, that he was cheerfully willing to wait the Lord’s pleasure, certain that if he was continued in this world it was only for his own good, and to make him more “meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

He bore his bodily afflictions with the most exemplary patience, and even cheerfulness, and continually expressed his thankfulness that they were not greater; sometimes saying, “What a blessing it is to be allowed to slip gently and gradually out of



life as I am doing !” He would not allow any one to speak of his *sufferings*, always saying, “ they did not deserve a stronger name than inconveniences.” He neither complained himself, nor would permit others to complain for him. Once, when the nurse who attended him said, “ Oh that cough ! how troublesome it is !” he replied, “ Have a little patience, nurse : I shall soon be in a better world ; and what a glorious change that will be !” Indeed, the joy of his mind seemed to have absorbed all sense of his physical sufferings. I once remarked to him, that he appeared to have experienced no intermission of these joyful feelings ; and he answered, “ For some months past *never*, and never the smallest rising of any thing like impatience or complaint.” His mind, naturally active and ardent, retained all its powers in full vigour to the last moment of his life : and was never once clouded or debilitated, even in the most depressing nervous languors. Indeed, after the whole current of his tastes and affections had been turned into a new channel, its ardour and activity rather increased than diminished, from the deep conviction which he felt of the superiority of his present views and pursuits to all that had hitherto engrossed him. During the last week of his life, especially, the



strength and clearness of his intellect and of his spiritual perceptions, were very remarkable; and on its being one day observed to him, that as his bodily powers decayed, those of his soul seemed to become more vigorous, he replied, "They do, exactly in an inverse ratio: I have been very sensible of it."

He conversed with the greatest animation all the day, and almost all the night, preceding his death, principally on the joys of heaven and the glorious change he was soon to experience; often exclaiming, "What a happy hour will the hour of death be!" He dwelt much on the description of the new Jerusalem in the Revelation of St. John, and listened with great delight to several passages from Baxter's "Saint's Rest," and to some of Watts's hymns on the same subject. Once in the night he said to his mother, "Surely you are not in tears! Mine is a case that calls for rejoicing, and not for sorrow. Only think what it will be to drop this poor, frail, perishing body, and to go to the glories that are set before me!" Not more than an hour before his death, when he had been expressing his faith and hope in very animated terms, I remarked to him, how striking the unifor-



mity of faith and of feeling expressed by believers at every distance of time and place, and spoke of it as an indisputable evidence that these graces are wrought by "one and the self-same Spirit," and as a proof of the truth of the Bible, the promises and descriptions of which are thus so strikingly fulfilled and exemplified. He entered into the argument with his accustomed energy, and assented to its truth with delight. It seemed remarkable, that though he had during his whole illness been very sensible of his increasing weakness, and had watched and marked accurately all its gradations, yet he spoke, in the last moments of his life, of going down stairs as usual (he had been carried up and down for several days,) and said "it could not require more than a very few weeks now to wear him out;" not appearing to be at all aware that his end was so very near, till about half an hour before his death. Finding himself extremely languid, he took a little milk, and desired that air might be admitted into the room; and on being asked if he felt relieved at all, said, "Very little: I can hardly distinguish, indeed, whether this is languor or drowsiness which has come over me; but it is a very *agreeable* feeling." Soon after, he said suddenly, "I surely must be going now, my



strength sinks so fast ;” and on my making some observation on the glorious prospect before him, he added, “ Oh, yes! I am GLAD to go, if it be the Lord’s will.” He shut his eyes and lay quite composed, and by and bye said, “ What glory! the angels are waiting for me!”—then, after another short interval of quiet, added, “ Lord Jesus, receive my soul!” and to those who were about him, “ Farewell!” These were the last words he spoke: he gradually and gently sunk away, and in about ten minutes breathed his last, calmly and without a struggle, at nine in the morning of the 9th of April, the very day on which, twelve months before, his mind had first been awakened to the hopes and joys of the ever blessed Gospel!

What a contrast did his actual departure form with what I had had reason to apprehend, when I watched over his couch in London, expecting that every moment would be his last; and when, with a hard indifference and insensibility, he talked only of going to his “ last sleep!” And how can I worthily acknowledge the goodness of Almighty God, who effected such a change in his state!

It appears that he preceded his revered, though



unknown, instructor, Mr. Scott, exactly one week. He never ceased to remember, with the deepest gratitude, his obligations to that excellent man. It was only the evening before his death that he was recommending with great fervency, to a young friend, whose mother, under affliction, was first beginning to inquire after religious truth, to engage her to read "Scott's Essays," acknowledging, with fervent gratitude, the benefit he had himself received from that work, and concluding an animated eulogium, by saying, "How have I prayed for that man!" What a blessed meeting may we not suppose they have had in the world of glory!

The medical friend before alluded to has most justly remarked, that "the entire simplicity and sincerity of Dr. BATEMAN'S natural character give additional value to all that fell from him. He never used a language that was *at all* at variance with his real feelings, and was in no degree given to vain imaginations." This testimony is very true, and this remarkable simplicity and sobriety of his natural character remained unaltered in the great revolution which took place in his principles and dispositions: he went into no exaggerations of feelings, or excesses of enthusiasm. And surely the merciful



Providence which preserved his sound understanding, in all its integrity, to the last moment of his life, must silence the gainsayer and "the disputer of this world," who might strive to attribute the sacred influence of religion on his mind to the errors of an intellect impaired by long disease and suffering.



**APPENDIX**

**TO THE**

**MEMOIR**

**OF THE LATE**

**THOMAS BATEMAN, M.D.**



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OF HIS PROFESSION, AND HIS PRACTICE, AS  
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HOSPITALS OF HIS COUNTRY, AND AS  
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## APPENDIX

TO THE

MEMOIR OF THE LATE THOMAS BATEMAN, M.D.

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No. I.

*Objections which were suggested to the Friends of Dr. BATEMAN, against the Propriety of detailing his Scepticism and subsequent Conversion, in a Memoir of his Life, proposed to be published in a Periodical Work.*

“IF during twenty years of active exertion all the relative duties of social life were fulfilled in an exemplary manner, without the influence of Christian principles, the unbeliever may enquire what is the evidence of their necessity as an encouragement to virtue or a restraint upon vice; and those who value religion may be surprised that the character of one in whom this great deficiency is stated to have existed, should be held up as entitled to admiration and the highest esteem. Again, it may be said, how could one whose judgment was so sound, suffer himself to remain during so long a period without considering, or rather indeed *disregarding* those evidences which afterwards, when set forth in the



Essay of Mr. Scott, struck his mind with the force of demonstration: and although, in the ordinary trains of thought, the mind retained all its wonted clearness and energy, yet as at the period of his friend's visit to him, about the time when this change took place in his views, there was so remarkable an erroneous impression with respect to the state of bodily strength and power, may not those who are disposed to cavil, insinuate that there was a morbid susceptibility of emotion on the subject of religion?"

*Extracts from a Letter in Reply to the preceding  
Objections.*

“ WITH respect to the mention of Dr. BATEMAN'S conversion, and of his previous unbelief, we are not, it seems, agreed. It appears to me that biography, like history, to answer its best and most valuable purposes, should be a faithful narrative of *facts*; so that, even setting aside the general obligation to truth and fidelity, I should, if I were writing a memoir, think it as necessary not to suppress defects and faults, as not to create or exaggerate virtues. That Dr. BATEMAN'S character for morality would stand high in the world, I make no doubt, for he never lost the influence of early education and habits, and was always careful to avoid in all his conduct every thing that the world calls discreditable. Yet it was from the defectiveness of his moral views and principles, which on many occasions was manifest to my observation, as well as from his neglect of all religious duties, that I was led to infer with certainty that his religious belief was wrong, though I never heard him express a single sceptical sentiment: and his conversion



would have given me little satisfaction, if it had produced no change but in the state of his *feelings*: we have a more severe and safer test; ‘by their fruits ye shall know them.’ The change which took place in his conduct and dispositions was quite as obvious as that which affected his feelings and views; he evidenced the soundness of his conversion by realizing the description of the Apostle; he was ‘a new creature;’ ‘old things had passed away,’ and *all* things, principles, motives, tastes, affections, dispositions, conduct, ‘*all things* had become new’—vices which before he had tolerated, he now abhorred; his acquisition of humility, that truly christian virtue, was especially striking; and the almost total eradication of selfishness, with the substitution of the most enlarged benevolence, generosity, and kindness, was little less so; opportunities of doing good to the bodies and souls of men were not only *not omitted*, they were sought out and improved with zealous activity, and it was gratifying to see with what constant and cheerful readiness his own ease and pleasure and convenience were relinquished, whenever they interfered with the wants of the meanest of his fellow-creatures. No, my dear Sir, we need not leave it to the unbeliever to say that ‘to him religion was not necessary,’ ‘men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles,’—no merely human motives, no motives I mean which have their origin and their end in this life, ever produced such a character and such a conduct as he now exhibited. The morality of the world differs from that of the Christian as the counterfeit differs from the jewel, and this difference was never more strikingly displayed than in Dr. BATEMAN, before and after his conversion. That his mind became more susceptible of the impressions of religion through the influ-



ence of suffering and affliction, is a fact which I should not seek to hide, and upon which no objection could, I think, be justly founded; it is in itself on the contrary, a confirmation of many of the declarations of Scripture, and it is matter of common observation and experience that while man *retains the power* to enjoy and to pursue earthly things, he rarely looks for higher sources of gratification; but when affliction, or disappointment, or some striking providence, has opened his eyes to the delusions of the world, and shown him its utter insufficiency to provide him with any substantial happiness, then only two alternatives remain for him; either with our blessed friend, he 'acquaints himself with God and *is at peace,*' and exclaims with him and with David, and with thousands of the servants of God in all ages—'It is good for me that I have been afflicted!' or else he drags on a listless and insipid existence, without interest and without enjoyment, which too often ends in open profaneness and immorality. That religion then can afford to man, consolation and joy and hope and peace, when all other resources have failed him, and every earthly gratification has dissolved from his grasp, is a fact that surely cannot be calculated to bring discredit upon it.

It was not the fault of Dr. BATEMAN'S *judgment* that he so long remained in ignorance of those important truths which afterwards brought such powerful conviction to his mind, for he had long seen the necessity of enquiring into their evidences, and determined at some time or other to enter upon it, when he was shut out from reading by the affection of his sight; the cause was to be found rather in the perversion of his affections, which were devoted to earthly things; and it requires



but little observation on ourselves and others to convince us how little, in general, *judgment* influences the conduct, if it be powerfully opposed by inclination: he did not find the blessings of religion till he *sought* them, 'Ask and it shall be given you,—*seek*, and ye shall find,'—the promise is explicit and positive, the condition is natural and reasonable: and it is no inconsiderable evidence to the truth of Scripture that its promises are thus fulfilled, and its descriptions realized in the daily experience of individuals throughout all ages and generations of men. Neither should I hesitate for fear of objections which might be drawn from the morbid state of his nervous sensations at the time when the first religious impressions were made upon his mind; he was nervous *then*, no doubt, but he was not at all nervous when, through the remaining year of his life, he devoted all the powers of his vigorous mind and discriminating judgment to the investigation of religion, pursuing it as he would have done any other science, with minute and cautious examination, though with all his characteristic ardour; and that ardour too increased, not so much by the novelty of the pursuit, (for I have never been acquainted with a mind so little liable as his was to be affected by mere novelty,) as by the conviction which was impressed upon him more and more forcibly at every step, as light and knowledge increased, of the infinite value and importance of the subject. I do not see that any solid objection could be founded on the *previous* nervousness, unless it could be proved that the powers of his mind had been weakened by it; and that this was not the case, all who conversed and all who corresponded with him could bear ample testimony. With regard to his profession, he never practised it with more acuteness and zeal,



and certainly never with more success, than during the last winter; besides many patients among his old friends and acquaintance in his native place, the poor came to him daily, and he often examined into a case with all his accustomed vigour and discrimination, when he was obliged to dictate a prescription, unable from bodily weakness to use a pen. Still, however, I do not doubt that many people, unwilling to admit the necessary inferences from these facts, would attempt to invalidate the facts themselves, by making the animadversions which have been anticipated. Men are, in general, disposed to ascribe all such remarkable changes as that which we are considering, to some weakness of mind or unsoundness of intellect, to call it in short 'foolishness.' Experiment is allowed to be the only basis of sound knowledge in all other sciences, in religion alone it is despised and ridiculed, and we are disbelieved only because 'we speak that we do know, and testify that which we have seen,' and here, therefore, the world and the Christian voluntarily separate:—

“ She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;  
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.”

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## No. II.

### *Extract of a Letter to the Writer of the Memoir.*

“ IF you were here, there is a question or two I would ask. You describe Dr. BATEMAN at one time exclaiming, he never could believe the miracles of the Saviour; and at another, after bitter anxiety and fervent prayer, finding all his scruples gone. I want to know whether he



had passed from unbelief to belief by discovering, or having granted to him, some view of the subject, which rendered these miracles credible ; or whether his disbelief was merely a feeling independent of reason, which after prayer subsided, independent of any counter-reason. Another mystery to me is, how he could have *believed enough* to feel certain that he should be punished for disbelief, *yet not have believed* in the miracles of Christ. To be convinced about the one, yet feel doubts about the other, is to me unintelligible."

*Extract from the Reply to the preceding Letter.*

"I cannot but attempt to answer to the best of my power, the questions you have proposed respecting the process by which Dr. BATEMAN'S mind was brought at length to a firm and settled faith. It appears to me, that his disbelief of the miracles was a matter of *feeling* rather than of *reasoning* ; because it did not spring from his own reflections, it was not a deduction from a chain of argument, but was shot suddenly into his mind upon hearing the narrative of the Redeemer's life as related by the Evangelist ; probably it arose in part from the previous habits of his mind. All unbelievers are at times disturbed by fears that they may be mistaken ; and though these fears are seldom strong enough to impel them to a full examination of the grounds on which they stand, they are yet sufficient to make them glad to catch at any plausible difficulty which may strengthen them in their scepticism, and if possible to keep them easy :—the miracles present such a difficulty ; and hence Dr. BATEMAN had been accustomed to rest upon it ; and it was therefore not surprising, that when the subject was presented to his mind



for the *first time* after he had become a believer, his old objections should have recurred, and his new and weak faith, for which he had not learned 'to give a reason,' have been unsettled by them. As his disbelief had not been occasioned, so neither was it removed, by reasoning. The only argument which I remember to have urged to him on the subject was this—that the omniscience of the Saviour, that perfect knowledge, not only of the external circumstances, but of all that was passing in the inmost heart of man, which he displayed in his conversations with the Pharisees and the multitude, as well as with his disciples, *was sufficient to prove his Deity*, that St. John not only asserts positively the same truth, but declares also that 'he made all things, and without him was not any thing made that was made,' and that no one therefore who admits these proofs of the deity of Christ, as Dr. BATEMAN then did, could, with any consistency, doubt his control over 'the works of his own hands,' his power to still the winds and the sea, or to raise a dead person to life, with a word! He acknowledged at once the truth of this argument, yet his doubts did not at all give way to it; an inconsistency which seems sufficient of itself to prove that his disbelief was a matter of feeling, independent of reason. There were seasons when his mind was quite free from it; it came in paroxysms, and while these lasted he used to say, that it would hardly be possible to count the ridiculous doubts which thronged into his mind. The absurdity of these doubts was so obvious in many instances, that his mind detected it at once, yet their palpable fallacy and folly did not lessen their impression on his imagination; he had no power to banish them from his thoughts; and what most of all distressed him at these times, was his utter inability to bring



his mind to bear upon the subject,—he felt as if he could neither think nor argue upon it; his understanding was powerless and passive, and thus he was obliged to submit to that torrent of unbelief and doubt which was poured rapidly through his mind. Prayer, fervent and persevering prayer, is the ‘great weapon of our warfare,’ the appointed means of communication between God and the soul, and through prayer his deliverance from these harassing conflicts was at length gradually accomplished. If the Lord sometimes ‘*waits to be gracious,*’ it is only because he sees it to be for our good; let us still go on in the use of the means which he has appointed, remembering his gracious admonition and promise, ‘O tarry thou the Lord’s leisure!—be strong’ in patience and perseverance, and assuredly in the end ‘he shall comfort thine heart.’ Scarcely does he give us one command without annexing some promise to encourage us to obey it. Frequently, no doubt, ‘we ask and have not,’ but it is ‘because we ask amiss.’ We pray eagerly for the gratification of our own desires, instead of praying in entire submission to the divine will; we forget that all our prayers should be offered in the spirit of that prayer which our Lord himself has taught us; for it was no doubt the spirit rather than the form, which he meant to inculcate—‘Thy will be done,’—‘lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’ God alone knows what is evil for us; he alone can see where our danger lies, and what are our wants, and provide for us the proper guards and remedies. St. Paul himself seems to have fallen into this error, to which we are all so liable, he prayed repeatedly and positively that ‘the thorn in the flesh,’ from which he seems to have suffered so acutely, might be removed: he knew not the merciful and wise reasons



for which it had been sent, he knew not that it was 'lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations' vouchsafed to him, the eminence by which he was distinguished above even the other Apostles; lest, lost in pride and self-conceit, he should, 'after preaching to others, himself have been a castaway.' Let us not, then, too earnestly desire the removal of doubts and fears, of those trials of our faith and patience with which it is, no doubt, necessary that we should be exercised; we are in the hands of a wise and tender parent, whose 'grace' is still 'sufficient' for us, whose language to us in all the dispensations of his providence and his grace is, 'What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,' and who has promised to 'make all things work together for good to them that love him.' Only let us remember that we must not be wanting to ourselves; let us ask with the disciples, 'Lord increase our faith,' for 'without faith, it is impossible to please God;' and we are expressly told, that it is 'not of ourselves, but is the gift of God;' and that it is also all that is necessary for our salvation—'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' But the pride of man's corrupt heart revolts from this simplicity of dependence upon God in Christ, and he would fain, like Naaman, 'do some great thing,' to have part in the merit of his own salvation.

Do you not think that we are in general prone to depend too much upon human authorities in matters of religion? Men, at the very best, are fallible and imperfect—scarcely two of them are to be found who think alike, all have a considerable alloy of error and infirmity, which must, more or less, tinge and discolour the truth



as it passes through their minds; and the greater variety of them we consult, the more likely we are to be perplexed and unsettled by their clashing and divided opinions: surely it is better to go to the word of God itself, and to study it incessantly, with fervent prayer, that he will enable us to understand, to feel, and to apply it. What an inexhaustible treasure of divine instruction is supplied to us in the Psalms of David! His experience is minutely detailed, and he is in all things an example of 'a man after God's own heart;' his deep repentance and humiliation—his abhorrence of sin, because of its offensiveness in the sight of a pure and holy God—his rapturous love and gratitude and admiration—his firm adherence to God in the midst of that contempt and scorn which a serious profession of religion always provokes from the world ('The proud have had me exceedingly in derision, yet have I not shrunked from thy law')—his faith and devotedness—how brightly and powerfully are these and other Christian graces exemplified in his character! Yet, for our comfort and encouragement, we see that they consisted with doubts and unbelief in trying seasons, with at times much deadness and coldness of heart and affections: and here again he affords a striking example for our imitation, for in all the vicissitudes of his spiritual life, his constant and only resource is PRAYER.

Dr. BATEMAN'S speedy deliverance from his doubts and fears seems to have surprised you: we all differ from each other in the features of our character, and our dispensations of grace are as various, because God, with infinite wisdom and tenderness, adjusts and proportions the one to the other; no man's experience, therefore,



can be a rule for another; though the great outlines must be uniform, the detail and the circumstances are infinitely varied; besides, Dr. BATEMAN'S time was short—and as in the natural world God in his providence has ordered that where the summer is short, there vegetation shall be rapid; so here, in the kingdom of his grace, the 'Sun of righteousness' having but a little while to shine, the seeds shot rapidly and the fruit ripened fast.

I have no doubt that you have accounted justly for the effect produced on Dr. BATEMAN'S mind by the perusal of Scott's Essay—'the preparation of the heart is from the Lord'—all the appointments of Providence and of grace are but so many links in that chain which is to connect the soul with God: thus Dr. BATEMAN was withdrawn from the turmoil and bustle of the world, in which he had been so long immersed, and placed in retirement and quiet—the society of unbelieving companions was exchanged for that of believers—all external objects and occupations which might have distracted his attention, were excluded by the state of his sight and health; and his mind, thus shut in upon itself, became gradually 'prepared,' under the influence of these salutary circumstances, for the reception of the truth. Three years before, Scott would have made no impression upon him; not that I mean to depreciate Scott, for I know no author more truly sound and scriptural; but where 'the deaf adder stoppeth her ears,' it is in vain for 'the charmer to charm ever so wisely.'

The Apostle says 'Put off the old man, and put on the new man, which after Christ is created unto holiness,' &c.



and the allusion is apt to mislead us into an idea, that this saving change is to be effected as speedily and as readily as a change of garments. But that this is not his meaning his writings abundantly testify, for renovation of heart and life is spoken of as being progressive: the established habits, especially of the 'old man,' cleave long to the new, and as intellectual habits are of all others perhaps the most difficult to shake off, it seems but natural to expect that those who have once been unbelievers should long continue to be harassed by doubts and unbelief; since old-indulged trains of thought will be constantly recurring to the mind, and leading to their former inferences. But then we all have our peculiar conflicts and trials—'our besetting sins;' we are all assured at our first setting out that 'this is not our rest;' we are no where given to understand that our spiritual life is to be one of indolence, and ease, and unmixed comfort:—it is on the contrary always represented as 'a race,' 'a warfare,' 'a pilgrimage'—every metaphor implies that progress is expected, and that progress cannot be made without labour and exertion and difficulty. The Christian too has not that support which other men derive from the inflation of pride and self-complacency—he is of 'a broken and contrite spirit'—he mourns continually under a sense of his remaining sins and infirmities. But what then? he has 'joys which the world knows not of, which it can neither give nor take away;' he has the exhilarating assurance, 'Blessed are they that,' thus 'mourn, for they shall be comforted;' he has 'exceeding great and precious promises;' he realizes the seeming paradox of the Apostle, 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;' and he would not exchange his sorrows for all that the world can offer him, because he knows that 'these



light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; he reckons that 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed.' Partakers of the same grace, heirs of the same promises and the same glory, Christians have a bond of union far beyond that of any common friendship; and in that I subscribe myself," &c.

THE END.







