

MISCELLANY.

THE CHRISTIAN AND INFIDEL FAMILY.

About three months after I came to New York, there arrived from England a man by the name of William Carver. He entered as a journeyman blacksmith in the same shop where I was at work, in Liberty street, opposite Little Garden street.

At this time (1796) there came into the city a man who was blind; he had once been a preacher of that gospel he was now laboring to destroy. I heard two or three of his lectures. He said that he professed to preach the gospel for three or four years after he was convinced that religion was a cheat and the Bible a compound of lies.

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But we return to William Carver. He was led by one of those hoary-headed incendiaries (who worship the Devil in Tammany Hall at the present day) into this Dungeon of Despair. He drank deep of their cold and cheerless doctrines, and soon came forth a flaming infidel. He now turned his back on the Church, and set his face towards the City of Destruction; and like all free thinkers, who never allow any one to think freely but themselves, and he compelled his wife to follow him.

For several years after this, William and I wrought in the same shop, and our families grew up within three doors of one another. I warned and expostulated with him in vain. One day he brought into the shop an awful of books, magazines, tracts, missionary journals, &c., and among them a fine edition of the Bible, printed in Oxford. He threw them on the hearth and commenced blowing the bellows. "What are you about, William?" said I. "To make a fire of them," says he. By begging, coaxing, and a three dollar bill, I secured the lot, and saved them from the flames.

It is a remarkable coincidence in the order of providence, that my coming in contact with Carver brought me also in close communion with Thomas Paine; Carver, his wife, and Paine being natives of the same town in England; and Paine and I boarding with Carver at the same time. Thus, while we four joined in social converse for hours in the winter evenings, I learned Paine's history from his cradle, and as our intimacy continued more or less, I traced him to his grave. I think also that Providence has lengthened my days that I might tell to generations yet to come what I saw with mine eyes, heard with mine ears, and felt when conversing with this enemy of men.

We return to William. Having now commenced the downward track, he began to neglect his business (some time previous he did business for himself, and was prospering in his zeal for propagating his new principles. In the shop, in the street, and at every corner, you might find him pouring out his new light; and so vulgar and so brutish was the language in which he blasphemed everything which society in general holds sacred, that generations yet to come would be disgusted, shunned his shop and his company, and his worldly circumstances fell into decay. He removed above the shipyard, I think. We did not meet for twenty years. But while I kept store in the meeting-house in Liberty street, in 1828, he came in one morning about ten o'clock, and asked for twenty-five cents with which to buy his breakfast. At first I knew him not. He looked so poor and heart-stricken that I could not refrain to enquire, "What has come to this?" He answered that he had not a cent, a friend, nor a child to help him in the world. I asked for his wife. "Dead," I inquired for his children by name. His sons were killed in Canada; his daughters went on the town. Said I, "William, these three young men behind the counter are my sons; my three daughters, young women, are with their mother. Neither of them ever gave me a note, and were my arms cut off from my shoulder."

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