

The conversation passed to other matters ; and in about half an hour my new friend entered the room, when we sat down to a homely but cheerful repast.

“I have been engaged in argument for the last twenty minutes with our parish schoolmaster,” he said, — “a shrewd, sensible man, and a prime scholar, but one of the most determined Calvinists I ever knew. Now, there is something, Mr. Lindsay, in abstract Calvinism that dissatisfies and distresses me ; and yet, I must confess, there is so much of good in the working of the system, that I would ill like to see it supplanted by any other. I am convinced, for instance, there is nothing so efficient in teaching the bulk of a people to think as a Calvinistic church.”

“Ah, Robert,” said my aunt, “it does meikle mair nor that. Look round you, my bairn, an’ see if there be a kirk in which puir sinful creatures have mair comfort in their sufferings, or mair hope in their deaths.”

“Dear mother,” said my companion, “I like well enough to dispute with the schoolmaster, but I must have no dispute with you. I know the heart is everything in these matters, and yours is much wiser than mine.”

“There is something in abstract Calvinism,” he continued, “that distresses me. In almost all our researches, we arrive at an ultimate barrier which interposes its wall of darkness between us and the last grand truth in the series, which we had trusted was to prove a master-key to the whole. We dwell in a sort of Goshen : there is light in our immediate neighborhood, and a more than Egyptian darkness all around ; and as every Hebrew must save known that the hedge of cloud which he saw resting on the landscape was a boundary, not to things themselves, but merely to his view of things, — for beyond there