

minority, without openly taking part with him ; nor is it impossible that, in a time of trouble, I might have almost deserved the character given by old John Howie to a rather notable "gentleman sometimes called Burly," who, "although he was by some reckoned none of the most religious," joined himself to the suffering party, and was "always zealous and honest-hearted." And yet my religion was a strangely incongruous thing. It took the form, in my mind, of a mass of indigested theology, with here and there a prominent point developed out of due proportion, from the circumstance that I had thought upon it for myself ; and while, entangled, if I may so speak, amid the recesses and under cover of the general chaotic mass, there harbored no inconsiderable amount of superstition, there rested over it the clouds of a dreary scepticism. I have sometimes, in looking back on the doubts and questionings of this period, thought, and perhaps even spoken, of myself as an infidel. But an infidel I assuredly was not : my belief was at least as real as my incredulity, and had, I am inclined to think, a much deeper seat in my mind. But wavering between the two extremes,—now a believer, and anon a sceptic,—the belief usually exhibiting itself as a strongly-based instinct,—the scepticism as the result of some intellectual process,—I lived on for years in a sort of uneasy see-saw condition, without any middle ground between the two extremes, on which I could at once reason and believe.

That middle ground I now succeeded in finding. It is at once delicate and dangerous to speak of one's own spiritual condition, or of the emotional sentiments on which one's conclusions regarding it are often so doubtfully founded. Egotism in the religious form is perhaps more tolerated than in any other ; but it is not on that account less perilous to the egotist himself. There need be, however, less delicacy in speaking of one's beliefs than of one's feelings ; and I trust I need not hesitate to say, that I was led to see at this time, through the instrumentality of my friend, that my theologic system had previously wanted a central object, to which the heart, as certainly as the intellect, could at-