

**SKETCHES OF THE  
RELIGIOUS  
EXPERIENCE AND  
LABORS OF A LAYMAN**

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Sketches of the Religious Experience and Labors of a Layman by Jeremiah Humphre Taylor

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**JEREMIAH HUMPHRE TAYLOR**

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SKETCHES  
OF THE  
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE  
AND LABORS  
OF  
A LAYMAN.  
WITH AN APPENDIX.

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## SKETCHES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

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### CHAPTER I.

IN the year 1811, I left the "*Plough*," and went to the city of New York, then fourteen years of age. I landed with the character of an honest boy, with only *fifty cents* in my pocket. A place had been provided for me in a store, and I was to serve my employers for six years, at a salary of two hundred dollars per annum, paying all of my own expenses. Fortunately, I found a quiet boarding house, where they had *daily* family worship. St. George's church being the nearest Episcopal church, I went to worship there. The Rector, Dr. Kewley, as the sequel revealed, was supposed to be no more nor less than a Jesuit in disguise. (See page 14.) The assistant minister, Mr. Brady, was a pretty warm-hearted man. I understood that some secret movement of his led to his leaving. At this time (if my memory

serves me,) Francis Dominick and Garrett H. Vanwagenen were wardens, Harry Peters, J. D. L. Walton, Edward Moorewood, Newell Bracket, Isaac Carrow and Robert Wardell, Vestrymen. Occasionally I went with a friend to prayer-meetings connected with the Cedar Street Presbyterian Church. Matters passed on thus, about two years; sometimes my mind was serious, and sometimes far from it. I went to the theatre once, but I witnessed so much profanation on the part of the performers, that I considered it no place for me, and never went thereafter.

St. George's Church was destroyed by fire, and the congregation went to worship in the old French Church, Cedar street. Dr. Kewley went to Europe and did not return (I think,) until after St. George's Church was rebuilt. I had an older brother in New York, (Knowles Taylor, who was a devoted Christian,) and through his influence under the operation of the Holy Spirit, I was aroused to the consideration of eternal things, and began to inquire "what I must do to be saved." One night as I was rolling upon my bed with a heart full of rebellion against



God, I said to this *dear* brother, what right has God to take one and leave another? "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion," was the reply. I knew that this was the word of God, and was silent. I fell asleep. In the morning I awoke, and seemingly was in a new world; at any rate, "old things had passed away, and all things became new." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit." I now could sing—

"His loving-kindness, oh, how free!"

At family worship the same evening, I was called upon to pray. I commenced with the "Lord's Prayer,"—"opened my mouth wide," and according to God's promise, it was "filled." I did not know at this time of any prayer-meeting connected with the "Episcopal Church, except at St. Stephen's, (then under the charge of the Rev. Richard Channing Moore,) which was a considerable distance from my residence. I have reason

to believe that at this period of time there were but two decidedly evangelical "Episcopal Churches" in the city of New York. Wishing to be with *kindred spirits*, I went with my Christian friends to the prayer meeting connected with the Presbyterian Church in Cedar Street. Finding these meetings strengthening and refreshing, I was led to make an effort to establish a prayer meeting connected with St. George's Church. Of course I could receive no encouragement from Dr. Kewley; ("Jesuits" do not like prayer-meetings.) However, my trust was in God. I found two young men, then connected with Trinity Church. *Two or three claim the promise*, and we commenced a prayer meeting in the fourth story of a store in Broadway. The minister of Trinity, finding that some of his communicants were praying without their books, told them it was wrong and wrote some prayers for them. These written prayers did not satisfy. I do not wish to be understood as objecting to a form of prayer, even in a prayer meeting. Our collects are good. Our Church neither prescribes nor forbids either mode of wor-

ship, and I do not wish to abridge the latitude thus allowed. I believe that the church and the word of God fully authorize prayer meetings; and I do rejoice and praise God that so many of our Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons and Laity, now approve of them. Article 19 declares "the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men." (I suppose faithful women are included.) Article 6, of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation, may be referred to. I conclude therefore, that to be faithful, the covenant entered into with God and the church must be *inviolable*. Hence all have a work to do. Faith in Christ calls for action, as evidence of its existence. "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Christ says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." We find, Heb. X. 25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as we see the day approaching." It would seem from this, that we must meet together, also are directed to "exhort one another," else-