

**THE REV. MR. LORAIN'S  
FAITH EXAMINED AND  
CHANGED**

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The Rev. Mr. Loraine's Faith Examined and Changed by Jonathan Farr

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**JONATHAN FARR**

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EXAMINED AND CHANGED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S FUNERAL."

*Rev. Henry Ware, jr.*

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## REV. MR. LORAINÉ.

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I FELT a strong desire to know Mr. Loraine's religious opinions. I expressed that desire to him, and he condescended to gratify it. He was a man of great ingenuousness and simplicity ; and one evening, when we were in his study, he gave me a history of the trials of his faith, as he had before given me a history of his conversion. He was at first a Calvinist and Trinitarian ; he was now a Unitarian. His account of the manner in which his views of the Trinity, predestination, and some other doctrines, were changed, was so interesting to me, that I resolved to publish it, hoping that it might do something for the cause of truth and holiness.

Till my loss of property and failure of success as a mariner, said Mr. Loraine, I had thought almost nothing about religion. It may

seem strange to you, Sir; it seems almost incredible to me, when I look back, to think how careless and stupid I had been. I was not wholly destitute of genius, but my genius was employed on other objects. I was not void of curiosity, but I had no curiosity about religion. I seldom read the Bible except as a school-book; and it is very easy for one to read it thus, from day to day, without receiving any religious light, or serious impressions. I studied the New Testament in Greek, but in doing so, I got no more religion than though I had been studying Herodotus or Homer. I got my lessons so well as to escape censure; and sometimes, as to gain applause. I learnt Greek fast; but the events, the doctrines, and the precepts of the gospel passed over my tongue and mind without doing any thing for my heart. So also, while I was in college, I studied moral philosophy, and the evidences of Christianity, and attended lectures on theology; but I heard as though I heard not. My thoughts were all occupied with things temporal; my desires and hopes were earthly. I recollect not that I had any fears or anxieties about death or futurity. I hardly knew that I had a soul: certainly my knowledge of it had



no influence on my practice. When I call these things to mind, as I often do, they fill me with shame, humility, and horror. Oh, how many times have I blessed God, that he reduced me from affluence to poverty; that he disappointed my earthly hopes, and finally brought me to the brink of the grave. Without this severe discipline of Providence, as I then considered it, what should I have been now? Probably I should have been a miserable creature, having no faith nor hope, and living without God in the world.

When I was brought to feel the worth of my soul, and the importance of religion as the means of salvation, I was amazed at my former blindness and folly; astonished that I had been so negligent about all that was most momentous. Nothing seemed now so true, so rational, and so sublime, as the Christian religion.

Immediately after my conversion, I felt an ardent desire to tell all those who feared God what he had done for my soul, and to become a preacher of the gospel myself, that I might exhort and warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I communicated my feelings and wishes to my spiritual guide, and he listened to

them with approbation. It was under his care and direction that I pursued my theological studies till I was licensed to preach. I was furnished with books from his library; books, which I then read with pleasure, and still regard with a sort of veneration, notwithstanding their wrong notions of divine truth. Many of my evenings and leisure hours were spent in Mr. C.'s study. He was a Calvinist in theory; but he seldom meddled with speculative questions, either in the desk or in his pastoral visits. His creed was rigid and exclusive; but himself was candid and liberal. It had no charity in it; but still he was charitable. Education had made him a theoretical, — but neither nature nor grace had made him a practical Calvinist. In the opinion of the world he did not pass for a great scholar. He had less subtilty than soundness of mind. He had more religion in his heart and life than in his head. Those who knew him respected him, and his parish loved him.

I read Calvin, and Henry, and Boston, and Flavel, and many other authors of the same school. I did not like the spirit of Calvin; but he seemed to me to be a great man, and to bring from the Scriptures unanswerable

proofs of his peculiar doctrines, awful as they are ; and I gave them my cordial assent and embrace. The church of Dunstan had ever been Orthodox in their creed ; though not bigoted and intolerant ; and here I preached Calvinism with great earnestness, solemnity, and plainness, thinking it but another name for Christianity. My people had been familiar with these doctrines from their childhood, and they received them from my mouth without any unusual signs of either dissatisfaction or pleasure. After a while I became so doubtful of their salutary effect, that I dwelt upon them with less and less frequency. As a congregation they always manifested considerable attention and seriousness, and from time to time there were additions made to my church. I then knew but little about other denominations of Christians ; and being convinced of the soundness of my own faith, I was not inquisitive about that of others. Situated as I then was, there seemed to be but little need of proving the truth of my own opinions, and still less of confuting the errors of other sects. Thus I went on for some time, till an event occurred, which led to an investigation of my faith, and finally produced many important changes in it.