

THE PATH OF A SUNBEAM

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The path of a sunbeam by W. Weldon Champneys

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W. WELDON CHAMPNEYS

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BY

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CAN any one who saw it, ever forget that glorious sight, when the last great Comet passed, in the bright stillness of that summer's evening, in front of the star Arcturus; when, as the sun went lower, the Comet with its long train of light came out more clear and bright, and that large fixed star, instead of being hidden or even dimmed by the Comet's haze, seemed to sparkle more brilliantly through the thin veil of shining mist? Can any one who saw this ever forget the sight? Will any

one who ever really knew him, forget that dear young Christian, **FREDERICK WILLIAM GINGELL**, whose body we laid in the quiet grave yesterday, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself?" Will any of the hundreds, who saw his course of heavenly brightness, ever forget how *he* also shone before us in the light of that Sun of Righteousness, towards which he drew so close, and from which the sweet calm light of his loving, blameless life was all derived?

I would humbly endeavour to fix upon my own memory and on yours such a

recollection of his character, as may help us to recall him; and if,—like some painting upon glass, which, by the help of strong light sets before us once more a picture, though a faint and imperfect one, of that glorious Comet, which has sped its flight into distant regions,—this sketch should assist you to place before your mind again that dear one, who has passed to heaven,—if it should enable any who did not know him to learn something of his touching character,—if, through the blessing of Almighty God, it should stir up any who have begun to walk as he walked, to a closer walk with God,—if it should incline a single one, who knew him and loved him for the goodness which they saw in him, to go to that blessed Saviour in whom it has pleased the Father that

all fulness should dwell; and to ask in earnest prayer for that grace which made him what he was, and has taken him to be where he is;—then shall *I* have reason to bless God; and *he* who is now no more with us on earth would rejoice to think that his death has been made life to others;—his removal from earth the means of drawing some towards heaven.

It was my privilege (and I thank God, who in His good providence gave it to me) to know this dear young Christian *very* intimately. He was the much-loved and valued friend of my own sons, especially of my eldest, and I can truly say that, beyond the circle of my own family, there was no one I loved more dearly. Indeed, it was impossible *not* to love him.

There are some who think that religion

is a gloomy thing ; that it hangs heaven with crape ; that it brings a damp over cheerful spirits ; and that, like that deadly gas in the Grotto del Cane, joy cannot live, but swoons and dies in it. Never was there a greater, or more sad mistake than this. It is not religion, but the want of it, that makes men gloomy. It is true, indeed, that allowance must be made for differences in the temperament of our bodies and for our consequent temper, for temper depends much on our bodily temperament : the character of the matter, and of the peculiar arrangement and proportions of it in our bodies, which we call our "constitution," greatly affect and tinge our minds. The rays of the same sun, passing through the various coloured glass, stain the minster's floor with different colours. And the same