

him in Scotland, I would have set him down for at least an elder; and the young mechanics were gratified.

The man in black was, I found, a Calvinist,—not, however, of the most profound type; the Methodists were wild non-descripts in their theology, more Socinian than aught else, and yet not consistently Socinian neither. A Scottish religious controversy of the present time regards the *nature* and *extent* of the atonement; the two Wesleyans challenged, I found, the very *existence* of the doctrine. There was really no such thing as an atonement, they said; the atonement was a mere *orthodox* view taken by the *Old Connection*. The Calvinist referred to the ordinary evidences to prove it something more; and so the controversy went on, with some share of perverted ingenuity on the one side, and a considerable acquaintance with Scripture doctrine on the other. A tall, respectable-looking man, with the freshness of a country life palpable about him, had come in shortly after the commencement of the discussion, and took evidently some interest in it. He turned from speaker to speaker, and seemed employed in weighing the statements on both sides. At length he struck in, taking part against the Calvinist. “Can it really be held,” he said, “that the all-powerful God—the Being who has no limits to his power—could not forgive sin without an atonement? That would be limiting his illimitable power with a vengeance!” The remark would scarcely have arrested a theologic controversy on the same nice point in Scotland,—certainly not among the class of peasant controversialists so unwisely satirized by Burns, nor yet among the class who, in our own times, have taken so deep an interest in the Church question; but the English Calvinist seemed unfurnished with a reply.

I was curious to see how the metaphysics of our Scotch Calvinism would tell on such an audience; and took up the