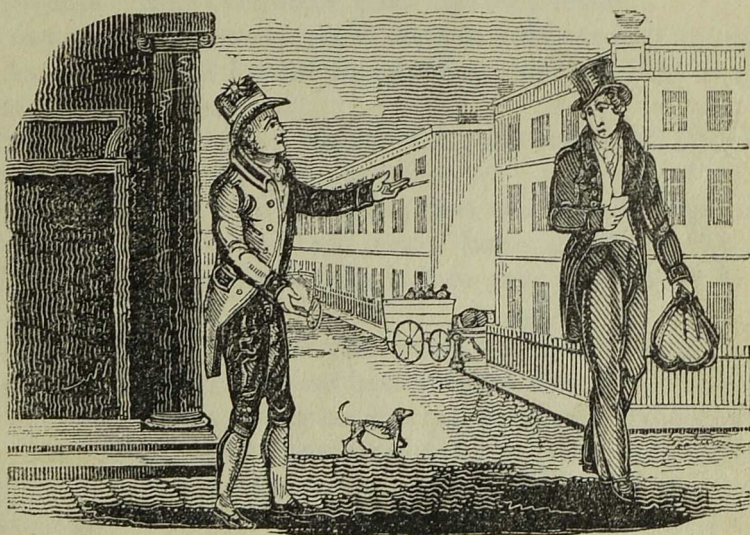


No. 69
OF
HOULSTON'S SERIES
OF
TRACTS.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

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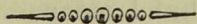
REPORTS

[REVEREND FATHERS]

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WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



“**H**ALLOO, there! *where are you going?*” cried out a servant in livery to a man that he appeared to know.

The man stopped, and replied, “O, Thomas! is it you? I am going on my master’s business, near to St. Paul’s, with a letter.”

Livery-Servant. How can that be, when you were running in an opposite direction?

Man. O! I intended to turn round, before I got much further, into the direct road.

Livery-Servant. Well; but what have you got in that big bundle? that cannot be your master’s letter.

Man. No, Thomas; there are a few things in it belonging to myself, that I want to attend to before I deliver the letter of my master.

Livery-Servant. I thought that you were never allowed to go out without wearing your livery?

Man. That is true, Thomas; but this is only a time by chance, and my master will never know any thing about it, I dare say, unless you take it into your head to be busy enough to tell him.

Livery-Servant. I tell you what, William, if you mean to keep your place, you had better never disobey your master’s orders; always wear his livery; go the nearest way to perform his errands; waste no time in your own affairs when you ought to be attending to his business; and take the advice of any friend kindly who gives himself the trouble to advise you for your good.

Now there seemed so much earnestness, good sense, and integrity in this advice, that I could not but remember it. The more I reflected upon it, the more applicable it appeared to me, not only to the man to whom it was addressed, but to every man that walketh under the canopy of heaven. Yes: I say, to every man that walketh under the canopy of heaven, whether he be learned or ignorant; whether he sweep the public streets, or wear a diadem glittering upon his brow.

If it be applicable to every man, it must, reader, be applicable to you. To you, therefore, I will apply it.

Where are you going then? I ask you, *where are you going?* I am not asking about your worldly affairs, whether you are going to the tinker's, or to the tailor's; to the brewer's, or to the baker's; to the park, or to the post-office. No, no; that is not what I mean. You know, as well as I do, that there is another world into which we shall enter, as soon as we shall leave the one we now live in; and that we shall there be very happy or very miserable. There are, then, but two places to which the children of men are going; these two places are heaven and hell. Now my question is directed to you; and I ask you again, reader, *Where are you going?*

I do not think, even if you are the wickedest fellow that ever blasphemed the name of the Most High, that you dare boldly tell me that you are going to hell: but if your heart be so hardened, that you dare venture to tell me so, I can only reply, “Think, for a moment, of the terrors and pains of hell; and remember that *millions of ages crowding on millions of ages! millions of ages crowding on millions of ages! and again, millions of ages crowding on millions of ages! are but the beginning of eternity!*”

Well, then, I will suppose that you reply to my question by telling me that you are going to heaven, and with all my heart and soul do I wish that what you tell me may be true. I must, however, question you a little further, lest, like the servant-man of whom I spoke, you should be going in an opposite direction.

If you are going to heaven, then are you a servant of God, and, of course, bound to be faithful in his service. Now, are you obeying his commands? Do you believe in him, fear him, and love him with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength? Do you worship him, give him thanks, put your whole trust in him, call upon him, honour his holy name and his word, and serve him truly all the days of your life? Or is it the desire of your soul to do these things, and when you fail in them, through infirmity, do you acknowledge your sin, and pray through the Redeemer for forgiveness and grace to assist you in your infirmities? If you are not doing these things, you are not going straight forward to heaven. Again, do you love your neighbour as yourself, and do unto all men as you would they should do unto you? If you are careless in these things, you are wan-

dering sadly out of your road, and laying up sorrow for your own heart; you are positively going in an opposite direction to heaven. Be not offended, then, if I should remind you of this, by tapping you on the shoulder, and asking you in a serious, yet friendly manner, *Where are you going?*

But if, reader, you are deceiving yourself so far as to think, that, though you are going in an opposite direction to heaven, you can turn round, by and by, and get into the straight road again, let me tell you that more people have been deluded in this way than in any other. The further you go astray, the less disposed will you be to return: a thousand temptations will beset you, and a thousand troubles overtake you. A man gets more thorns and brier points in his hands and feet, ay, and more afflictions in his heart, by wandering a few yards out of his pathway, than he does in walking as many miles along the turnpike-road. Nothing like setting out on a plain path, keeping up a steady pace, and never turning out of the road; this is the way to travel—this is the way to have a prosperous journey. So mind, if you think that you are deceiving your master when you turn out of your way, you are sadly deceiving yourself: my question then is, reader, *Where are you going?*

Or dost thou, stranger, downward stray
Where wrath and terror rise?
Or art thou holding on thy way
A pilgrim to the skies?

But if you are really going to heaven, what sort of a bundle are you carrying with you? Is it composed of what belongs to your Master, or is it a bundle of things belonging to yourself? For let me tell you, if you are carrying a bundle of the good works that you *think* you have done, or a bundle of the bad works that you *know* you have done, it will only hinder you on your journey. No, no, my friend, if you, as a faithful servant of God, are really going to heaven, your bundle of good works will lie in a very small compass, for you will be instructed that there is no good thing in you; and as to your bundle of bad works, that will be so intolerably heavy, that you will be thankful enough to cast it upon Him who has promised to sustain it, even upon “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” Attend then to the business of your Master; obey him, and I dare say he will see you abundantly provided for. If, after this, I should ever meet you carrying a bundle of works, good or bad, I shall

suspect that you are going in an opposite direction to heaven, and attending to your own business and not to that of your Master; and I shall certainly halloo out after you, *Where are you going?*

Notwithstanding what I have said, it may be that you are really journeying straight to heaven, a faithful servant of the Most High God: but if this be the case, you are undoubtedly clad in your Master's livery. Now mind, I am not speaking about the poor, perishing garments that you wear for ornament or use; to look well in the eyes of others, or to defend your body from the cold, and the wind, and the rain: no, no, whether you are dressed in a crimson robe, or in a leathern doublet, matters but very little now, and it will be of still less importance by and by.

It can bring little peace to the young or the old,
Whether sackcloth shall clothe them, or purple and gold;
For, who in his raiment a moment would trust,
When the poor worm that wears it so soon will be dust.

But I am speaking of the dress of the spirit; the livery of the soul, that every faithful servant of God is required to wear. It is not composed of the labour of the loom, nor dyed in gaudy colours; it is neither cut after the fashion of the world, nor decorated with silver and gold. The livery that the faithful servant of God must wear is a complete suit of armour. The servant of the Most High must be armed from heel to head; his feet must be shod with "the preparation of the Gospel," and the "helmet of salvation" must beam from his brows. He will have to stand in many an evil day, so that he must wield "the sword of the Spirit;" his loins must be girt about with "truth," and "the breastplate of righteousness" must encircle his heart. Many a fiery dart will fly about him that "the shield of faith" alone can quench: thus clad in the livery of his Lord must he stand faithful in all things, and, having done all things, he must stand. I grant you that this is rather an unwieldy livery to those who have not proved it; but if you are in the service of God, I need not tell you, that it is the most comfortable livery in which a servant was ever dressed. Are you clad in this livery? if you are not, let the enquiry tingle in your ears, *Where are you going?*

Sometimes the servants of God are seen out of livery it is true; but, then, it is to their sorrow and their shame. Now, do not deceive yourself in thinking, if this be the case with

you, that your Master will never know of it: why He knows every thing!

The secret sins that sudden dart
And yield thee hope and fear;
What time they rise within thy heart
He reads them, then and there.

You may as well depend on his not knowing that the sun shines in the heavens, as hope that any thing you do will remain unknown to him, for the one is as plainly seen by him as the other. The man who does not know this, is ignorant indeed, and stands much in need of instruction. The question should be put to him aloud, like the voice of a trumpet, *Where are you going?*

But if, reader, you are going to heaven, surely you will not take it amiss, when you lose your way, if any one should take the trouble to put you into the right road again; for if you should fall into a passion on this account, it would only prove that you were not heartily disposed to get to the place you professed to be going to. No servant of God can justly plead ignorance of his path, or of what is required of him; for almost every one has a book to himself, wherein is plainly marked down the road he is to travel, and the duties he has to perform for his Master: and even if he have no such book, there are many kind-hearted people who always keep it by them, and whose business it is to read and explain it to all who stand in need of information. This book is the Bible; these people are the sincere ministers of God. Now, reader, if you are neglectful of either the one or the other, I would cry out to you louder than ever, *Where are you going?*

Neither will you, I hope, quarrel with any fellow-servant, who happens to be journeying in the same direction as yourself; but rather be on good terms with him, and render him a kindness if in your power: but, first, be sure to ask him the question, *Where are you going?*

It appears to me, that the oftener we put this question to each other, and to ourselves, the better; for it is wonderful how one man can encourage another. This is the case even in a bad cause. A man of a quarrelsome temper may be contented with wrangling with those around him; but if a companion steps up to him, slaps him on the back, calls him a bold fellow, and tells him not to be put down by the scoundrels around him; off goes his coat directly, and he

is ready to fight with any one, or with every one. Now, if this be the case in a bad cause, surely it will be the same in a good one. On your way to heaven, then, try to encourage those who are going there too. Were you to perceive a weary, weather-beaten traveller, who had sunk down on the way side, without food, without money, and without friend, and who feared that he had mistaken his pathway; why, if you were to go to him, and to say, "Cheer up, my friend, for you are in the right road, and yonder is a house of refreshment, and I will pay for your accommodation; I am going the same way that you are, and shall be glad of your company:" the poor fellow would feel fresh life within him, when, perhaps, without this encouragement, he would faint before you.

Many a wayfaring man has fainted on his way to heaven, for the want of that comfort which his fellow-creatures could have given him; and if, in such cases, there was not a "friend that sticketh closer than a brother," it would go very hard with many on their pilgrimage.

While I ask you, reader, *where are you going?* you must not forget that it is often as plain to another as it is to ourselves whether or not we are going to the place to which we say that we are going. If you meet a lame man, who tells you he is going to run a race,—a blind man, who says he is going to see a show,—and a drunken man, who cries out that he is going to church,—you will not for a moment suppose that what these men say is true; no, not a word of it will you believe. In like manner, then, it will be in vain for you to tell any one that you are going to heaven, while you are indulging in sin, dishonouring God, and doing injury to man. If, reader, you should really be doing these things, I would, if I could, cry out to you with a voice of thunder, *Where are you going?*

The sailor is known by his blue jacket and check trowsers; the soldier by his scarlet dress and the arms that he carries; the miller by his white hat and coat; and the sweep by his black frock and soot-bag: and not less plainly should a Christian be known by the spirit and temper which he manifests. O how unlovely it is in any man, but more than all in a Christian man, to indulge in bitterness of spirit! to breathe out threatenings and persecution! to utter angry, uncharitable, and unjust expressions against his fellow-servant! forgetting the express commands of his Master—"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and

clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Are you known by this spirit and temper of meekness, and forgiveness, and charity? And if you are not, *where are you going?* A rich man will be ashamed to be seen in a bad coat; and a servant of God will be much more ashamed to be seen in a bad temper: it is not only a reproach to him, but a neglect of his Master's commands.

As God is the best of masters, so ought his followers to be the best of servants; and they should be known as such from one end of the world to the other. There is nothing evil which they should not abhor, nothing good which they should not endeavour to practise or obtain. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," these things should be possessed by the servants of God. Are you, reader, striving to obtain them? if so, fear not the question, *Where are you going?*

And be not offended at my putting the question in so earnest and urgent a manner. If you are going the way to heaven, it can do you no harm; and if you are going the opposite road, it may do you some good—for "a word in season how good it is!" In the days of my youth, I had a strong temptation to go abroad with a friend, to whom I was much attached. We had been schoolfellows together for many years, and he pointed out to me the advantages of going with him in glowing colours. I was to obtain thereby a knowledge of the world, and riches were to flow in abundance; but when I came to ask myself, *Where are you going?* I found that I was going where I had no right to go against the consent of my friends. I owed them much for their affection, and rendering them unhappy was not the way to pay them; so that I did not go. Now, had I gone out with my friend, I should, no doubt, have returned with him in the same vessel. Alas! that vessel never reached Old England again. She was not seaworthy when she left Newfoundland, and from that day to this she has never been heard of: so that no doubt she foundered, with my friend on board, amidst the waters of the mighty deep. *Where are you going?* then, was a question very useful to me; and who can tell but what it may prove equally so to

you? therefore I will put it again—Reader! *where are you going?*

Were evil men to put this question frequently to themselves, their evil deeds would be diminished. If the midnight robber, before he set off on his depredations, was to ask himself this question, it might bring to his mind the consequences of his crime: he might see disgrace and punishment, the prison and the gallows, before him; and it might make him tremble, and abandon his wicked designs. If, then, this effect might possibly be produced on the heart of one who lives in open defiance of God and of his laws, surely it will have still more influence with a Christian, who in a moment of temptation is about to go where he ought not to go, or about to do what he ought not to do. If this be in any degree the case with you, pause a moment, and consider *where are you going?*

The question is not one that should be put once a year, or once a month, but rather every day and every hour: for the temptations that surround us seldom give us notice of their approach; they spring upon us unawares, and if we are unprepared to resist them, it is too late, then, to put the question. A Christian man should go through the world as an Indian does through an enemy's country: he expects to find a foe behind every bush, and he is prepared to resist him.—Put the question frequently, *Where are you going?*

When we consider how many have lost their way among the turnings and windings, the highways and by-ways of life; when we call to mind the sorrow and tribulation that have been occasioned by walking in forbidden paths, and wandering astray, unmindful of the bogs and quagmires around us;—it is marvellous that we are not a little more circumspect: yet, instead of this, we frequently go until we are reminded, by the troubles we bring upon ourselves, of the folly of our not oftener putting the question, *Where are you going?*

I well remember once travelling with two friends: we were benighted, and lost our road; yet on we went, laughing at each other, and neglecting to make the proper enquiries when we had the opportunity of doing so. At last we came to a waste ground, where we were completely puzzled among the many pathways we dimly perceived through the darkness. Not knowing which way to direct our steps, we walked in the direction of some lights which we saw at

a distance, and soon came to some mounds of earth and heaps of cinders; among which we groped, up and down, but could not find our way to the lights, which appeared as far off as ever. After much trouble and many falls, we at length got to a turnpike-road, and were then told of our danger, for the heaps of earth and cinders were in the neighbourhood of coal-pits, and holes from which limestone had been dug: among these we had been wandering for some hours in the darkness. We escaped the danger, it is true; but it might have been otherwise: and we could not help acknowledging to ourselves how much wiser we should have acted, if we had asked each other, at an earlier period, *Where are you going?*

None of us can tell in how many instances, temporal and spiritual, the Lord of Glory, the merciful Redeemer of Mankind, has preserved us, in the midst of indiscretion, from dangers which otherwise might have overwhelmed us.

Alas! how frequently we stray,
And waste our mortal breath,
In wandering wide, and take the way
To danger and to death!

How frequently does God above,
Unseen, unheard, unknown,
Preserve us by His power and love,
And guide us to His throne!

But, reader, have you really set your face heavenward, with an earnest desire to prosecute your journey diligently, to “finish your course with joy,” and to “find the end thereof eternal life?” If so, you will do well to remember that you have no business out of the turnpike-road: while you are there, you are safe; and you are not safe any where else. Who is there among us who has not turned out of his pathway, when on a journey, to take a shorter cut across the fields, and thereby lost his road altogether, and been obliged to come back to the very place he set out from? It has been so with me many and many a time; and I dare say, reader, it has been so with you: therefore, again I say, keep to the turnpike-road, and mind also that you look straight before you, for this is an excellent plan in travelling. I grant you that there may be some very beautiful prospects around you; but if your heart is set upon the end of your journey, you will find but little time to stand gaping about you; and, after all, the prospect before you will generally be the most beautiful you can look upon. There may be, it is true,

some very fine fruit on your right hand, and some delightful flowers on your left; but they are not yours, and therefore leave the one and the other to those they belong to. Press forward, and you will then never have any difficulty in replying to the question, *Where are you going?*

I dare say, reader, that you will readily allow what I have said to be right; but whether you will as readily practise it is a matter of some doubt; for too many of us know what is right even when we do that which is wrong.

The advice that I have given to you is, I know, quite as applicable to myself, and I ought as frequently as any one to put the question, *Where are you going?* for it is a question full of meaning, full of importance: and if, while I am pressing it upon you, I am careless of it myself, how fatal may be the effects of my folly! The years of our lives are fast rolling away, and the uncertainty of every thing on which the eye can gaze, or the heart fix its affections, ought to convince us that what is necessary to be done to-day, cannot, without danger, be deferred till to-morrow. Let us not, then, be neglectful of any thing calculated to do us good, nor forget faithfully to ask, *Where are you going?*

It is a question, as I said before, that the wise and the ignorant ought to propose. It is enough to affright the sinner who defies the denunciations of Divine Justice, and to encourage the humble believer who rejoices in God his Saviour. It should be whispered in the closet, and be reverberated by the walls of the sanctuary.

Hitherto, reader, I have put the question to you; it is now time that you should put it to yourself: the answer I must leave with you. But if, looking above for grace and assistance, you obey with gladness the commands of your Master; if you wear his livery continually, do his service cheerfully, and receive the admonitions of his people with thankfulness; the question, *Where are you going?* will be answered with confidence and exultation: and when you call to mind the peace and happiness, the glory and immortality, of another world, you will remember, with unspeakable joy, that *millions of ages crowding on millions of ages, millions of ages crowding on millions of ages, and again, millions of ages crowding on millions of ages, are but the beginning of eternity!*

O. O. O.

FINIS.