CHEAP REPOSITORY.

*SUNDAY READING.*

THE

# HISTORY

OF THE

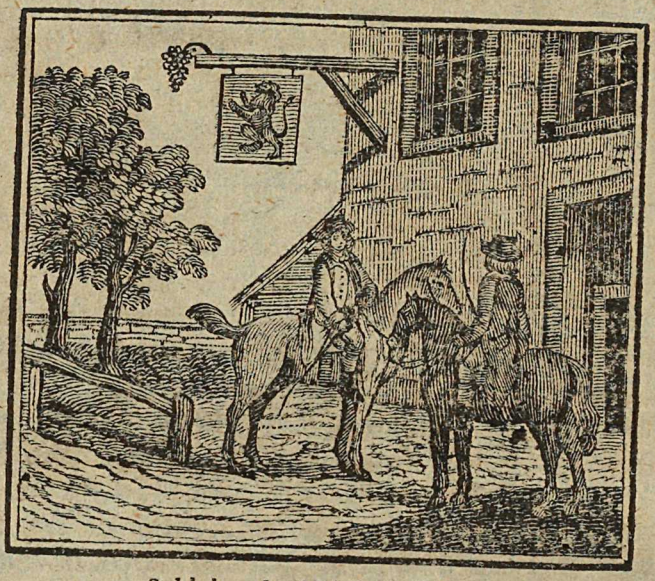
# *TWO WEALTHY FARMERS;*

OR, A

New DIALOGUE, between

*Mr. BRAGWELL* and *Mr. WORTHY.*

PART IV.



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THE

# Two Wealthy Farmers, &c.

IT was mentioned in the laſt part of this Hiſtory, that the chief reaſon which had drawn Mr. Worthy to viſit his friend juſt at the preſent time, was, that Mr. Bragwell had a ſmall Eſtate to ſell by auction. Mr. Worthy, though he did not think he ſhould be a bidder, wiſhed to be preſent, as he had buſineſs to ſettle with one or two perſons who were expected at the Golden Lion on that day, and he had put off his viſit till he had ſeen the ſale advertiſed in the County Paper.

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy ſet out early on the Monday morning on their way to the Golden Lion, a ſmall Inn in a neighbouring market town. As they had time before them, they had agreed to ride ſlowly, that they might converſe on ſome uſeful

ſubject; but here, as uſual, they had two opinions about the ſame thing. Mr. Bragwell's notion of an uſeful ſubject was, ſomething by which money was to be got, and a good bargain ſtruck. Mr. Worthy was no leſs a man of buſineſs than his friend. His ſchemes were wiſe, and his calculations juſt; his reputation for integrity and good ſenſe made him the common judge and umpire in his neighbours' affairs, while no one paid a more exact attention to every tranſaction of his own. But the buſineſs of getting money was not with him the firſt, much leſs was it the whole concern of the day. Every morning when he roſe, he remembered that he had a Maker to worſhip as well as a family to maintain. Religion, however, never made him neglect buſineſs, though it ſometimes led him to poſtpone it. He uſed to ſay, no man had any reaſon to expect God's bleſſing through the day who did not aſk it in the morning. But he had not the leſs ſenſe, ſpirit and activity when he was among men abroad, becauſe he had firſt ſerved God at home.

As theſe two Farmers rode along, Mr. Worthy took occaſion, from the fineneſs of the day, and the beauty of the country through which they paſſed, to turn the diſcourſe to the goodneſs of God and our infinite obligations to him. He knew that the tranſition from thankſgiving to prayer would be natural and eaſy, and he therefore ſlid, by degrees, into that important ſubject: and he obſerved that ſecret prayer was a duty of univerſal obligation, which every man had it in his power to fulfil, and which he ſeriouſly believed was the ground-work of all religious practice, and of all devout affections.



Mr. Bragwell felt conſcious that he was very negligent and irregular in the performance of this duty, he conſidered it as a mere ceremony, or at leaſt as a duty which might give way to the ſlighteſt temptation of drowſineſs at night, or of buſineſs in the morning. As he knew he did not live in the conſcientious performance of this practice, he tried to ward off the ſubject, knowing what a home way his friend had of putting things. At laſt he ſaid, he certainly thought private prayer a good cuſtom, eſpecially for people who have time, and that thoſe who were ſick, or old, or out of buſineſs, could not do better, but that, for his part, he believed much of theſe ſort of things was not expected from men in active life.

*Mr. Worthy.* I ſhould think, Mr. Bragwell, that thoſe who are moſt expoſed to temptation ſtand moſt in need of prayer; now there are few methinks who are more expoſed to temptation than men in buſineſs, for thoſe muſt be in moſt danger, at leaſt from the world, who have moſt to do with it. And if this be true, ought we not to prepare ourſelves in the cloſet for the trials of the market, the field, and the ſhop?

*Bragwell.* For my part, I think example is the whole of Religion, and if the maſter of a family is orderly, and regular, and goes to church, he does every thing which can be required of him, and no one has a right to call him to account for any thing more.

*Worthy.* Give me leave to ſay, Mr. Bragwell,

that highly as I rate a good example, ſtill I muſt ſet a good principle above it. I muſt keep good order indeed, for the ſake of others; but I muſt keep a good conſcience for my own ſake. To God I owe ſecret piety, I muſt therefore pray to him in private.—To my family I owe a Chriſtian example, and for that, among other reaſons, I muſt not fail to go to Church.

*Bragwell.* You are talking, Mr. Worthy, as if I were an enemy to Chriſtianity. Sir, I am no Heathen. Sir, I belong to the Church. I always drink proſperity to the Church. You yourſelf, as ſtrict as you are, in never miſſing it twice a day, are not a warmer friend to the Church than I am.

*Worthy.* That is to ſay, you know its value as an inſtitution, but you do not ſeem to know that a man may be very irreligious under the beſt religious inſtitutions; and that even the moſt excellent of them are but *means* of being religious, and are no more religion itſelf than brick and mortar are prayers and thankſgivings. I ſhall never think, however high their profeſſion, and even however regular their attendance, that thoſe men truly reſpect the Church, who bring home little of that religion which is taught in it into their own families, or their own hearts. Excuſe me, Mr. Bragwell.

*Bragwell.* Mr. Worthy, I am perſuaded that religion is quite a proper thing for the poor; and I don't think that the multitude can ever be kept in order without it, and I am a bit of a politician you know.



*Worthy.* Your opinion is very juſt, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough, ſince it does not go to the root of the evil, for while you value yourſelf on the ſoundneſs of this principle as a politician, I wiſh you to ſee the reaſon of it as a Chriſtian; depend upon it, if Religion be good for the community at large, it is equally good for every family; and what is right for a family is equally right for each individual in it. You have therefore yourſelf brought the moſt unanſwerable argument why you ought to be religious, by aſking how we ſhall keep others in order without Religion. For, believe me, Mr. Bragwell, there is no particular clauſe to except you in the Goſpel. No exceptions in favor of any one claſs of men. The ſame reſtraints which are neceſſary for the people at large are equally neceſſary for men of every order, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, learned and ignorant. May I aſk you, Mr. Bragwell, what is your reaſon for going to Church?

*Bragwell.* Sir, I am ſhocked at your queſtion. How can I avoid doing a thing ſo cuſtomary and ſo creditable? Not go to Church, indeed! What do you take me for, Mr. Worthy? I am afraid you ſuſpect me to be a Papiſt, or a Heathen, or of ſome religion or other that is not what it ſhould be.

*Worthy.* If a foreigner were to hear how violently one ſet of Chriſtians in this country often ſpeak againſt another, how earneſt would he ſuppoſe us all to be in religious matters: and how aſtoniſhed to diſcover that many a man has perhaps little other proof to give of the ſincerity of his own religion,

except the violence with which he hates the religion of another party. It is not *irreligion* which ſuch men hate, but the religion of the man, or the party, whom they are ſet againſt. Well, you have told me why you go to Church; now pray tell me, why do you confeſs there on your bended knees every Sunday, that "you have erred and ſtrayed from God's ways?" "that there is no health in you?" "that you have done what you ought not to do?" "and that you are a miſerable ſinner?"

*Bragwell.* Becauſe it is in the Common Prayer Book, to be ſure, a book which I have heard you yourſelf ſay was written by wiſe and good men.

*Worthy.* But have you no other reaſon?

*Bragwell.* No, I can't ſay I have.

*Worthy.* When you repeat that excellent form of confeſſion, do you really feel that you *are* a miſerable ſinner?

*Bragwell.* No, I can't ſay I do. But that is no objection to my repeating it, becauſe it may ſuit the caſe of many who are ſo. I ſuppoſe the good Doctors who drew it up intended that part for wicked people only, ſuch as drunkards, and thieves, and murderers; for I imagine they could not well contrive to make the ſame prayer quite ſuit an honeſt man and a rogue; and ſo I ſuppoſe they thought it ſafer to make a good man repeat a prayer which ſuited a rogue, than to make a rogue repeat a



prayer which ſuited a good man: and you know it is ſo cuſtomary for every body to repeat the general confeſſion, that it can't hurt the credit of the moſt reſpectable perſons, though every one muſt know they have no particular concern in it.

*Worthy.* Depend upon it, Mr. Bragwell, thoſe good Doctors you ſpeak of, were not quite of your opinion; they really thought that what you call honeſt men were grievous ſinners in a certain ſenſe, and ſtood in need of making that humble confeſſion. Mr. Bragwell, do you believe in the fall of Adam?

*Bragwell.* To be ſure I do, and a ſad thing for Adam it was; why, it is in the Bible, is it not? It is one of the prettieſt chapters in Geneſis. Don't you believe it, Mr. Worthy?

*Worthy.* Yes, truly I do. But I don't believe it *merely* becauſe I read it in Geneſis. I know, indeed, that I am bound to believe every part of the word of God. But I have ſtill an additional reaſon for believing in the fall of the firſt man.

*Bragwell.* Have you, indeed? Now, I can't gueſs what that can be.

*Worthy.* Why, my own obſervation of what is within myſelf teaches me to believe it. It is not only the third chapter of Geneſis which convinces me of the truth of the fall, but alſo the ſinful inclinations which I find in my own heart. This is

one of thoſe leading truths of Chriſtianity of which I can never doubt a moment, firſt, becauſe it is abundantly expreſſed or implied in Scripture; and next, becauſe the conſciouſneſs of the evil nature I carry about with me confirms the doctrine beyond all doubt. Beſides, is it not ſaid in Scripture that by one man ſin entered into the world, and that "all we, like ſheep, have gone aſtray; that by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners," and ſo again in twenty more places that I could tell you of.

*Bragwell.* Well, I never thought of this. But is not this a very melancholy ſort of doctrine, Mr. Worthy?

*Worthy.* It is melancholy, indeed, if we ſtop here. But while we are deploring this ſad truth, let us take comfort from another, that "As in Adam all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive."

*Bragwell.* Yes, I remember I thought thoſe very fine words, when I heard them ſaid over my poor father's grave. But as it was in the Burial of the dead, I did not think of taking it to myſelf, for I was then young and hearty, and in little danger of dying, and I have been ſo buſy ever ſince, that I have hardly had time to think of it.

*Worthy.* And yet the ſervice pronounced at the burial of all who die, is a ſolemn admonition to all who live. It is there ſaid, as indeed the Scripture ſays alſo, "I am the reſurrection and the life, whoſoever *believeth in me* ſhall never die, but I will raiſe him up at the laſt day." Now do you think you *believe in Chriſt*, Mr. Bragwell?



*Bragwell.* To be ſure I do; why, you are always fancying me an Atheiſt.

*Worthy.* In order to believe in Chriſt, we muſt believe firſt in our own guilt and our own unworthineſs, and when we do this we ſhall ſee the uſe of a Savior.

*Bragwell.* Why, all this is a new way of talking. I can't ſay, I ever meddled with ſuch ſubjects before in my life. But now, what do you adviſe a man to do upon your plan of Religion?

*Worthy.* Why, all this leads me back to the ground from which we ſet out, I mean the duty of prayer; for if we believe that we have an evil nature within us, and that we ſtand in need of God's grace to help us, and a Savior to redeem us, we ſhall be led of courſe to pray for what we ſo much need.

*Bragwell.* Well, but don't you think, Mr. Worthy, that you good folks who make ſo much of prayer, have lower notions than we of the wiſdom of the Almighty? you think he wants to be informed of the things you tell him; whereas, I take for granted that he knows them already, and that, being ſo good as he is, he will give me every thing he ſees fit to give me without my aſking it.

*Worthy.* God, indeed, who knows all things, knows what we want before we aſk him, but ſtill has he not ſaid, that "with prayer and ſupplication we muſt make known our requeſts unto him." Prayer is the way in which God hath ſaid that his favour muſt be ſought. It is the channel through which he hath declared it is his ſovereign will and pleaſure that his bleſſings ſhould be conveyed to us. What aſcends up in prayer deſcends again to us in bleſſings. It is like the rain which juſt now fell, and which had been drawn up from the ground in vapours to the clouds before it deſcended from them to the earth in that refreſhing ſhower. Beſides, prayer has a good effect on our own minds: it tends to excite a right diſpoſition towards God in us. But above all, it is the way to get the good things we want. "Aſk," ſays the Scripture, "and ye ſhall receive."

*Bragwell.* Now that is the very thing which I was going to deny. For the truth is, men don't always get what they aſk; I believe if I could get a good crop for aſking it I ſhould pray oftener than I do.

*Worthy.* Sometimes Mr. Worthy, men "aſk and receive not, becauſe they aſk amiſs." They aſk worldly bleſſings perhaps when they ſhould aſk ſpiritual ones. Now the latter, which are the good things I ſpoke of, are always granted to thoſe who pray to God for them, though the former are not. I have obſerved in the caſe of ſome worldly things I have ſought for, that the grant of my prayer would have cauſed the miſery of my life.



*Bragwell.* And yet you continue to pray on, I ſuppoſe?

*Worthy.* Certainly; but then I try to mend as to the object of my prayers. I pray for God's bleſſing and favor, which is better than riches.

*Bragwell.* You ſeem very earneſt on this ſubject.

*Worthy.* To cut the matter ſhort, I aſk then whether prayer is not poſitively commanded in the Goſpel. When this is the caſe, we can never diſpute about the neceſſity or the duty of a thing, as we may when there is no ſuch command. Here however let me juſt add alſo, that a man's prayers may be turned to no ſmall uſe in the way of diſcovering to him whatever is amiſs in his life.

*Bragwell.* How ſo, Mr. Worthy?

*Worthy.* Why, ſuppoſe now, you were to try yourſelf by turning into the ſhape of a prayer every practice in which you allow yourſelf. For inſtance, let the prayer in the morning be a ſort of preparation for the deeds of the day, and the prayer at night a ſort of obſervation on thoſe deeds. You, Mr. Bragwell, I ſuſpect are a little inclined to covetouſneſs, excuſe me, Sir. Now ſuppoſe after you have been during a whole day a little too eager to get rich, ſuppoſe, I ſay, you were to try how it would ſound to beg of God at night on your knees, to give you ſtill more money though you have

tice or the prayer. Now, Mr. Bragwell, I need not aſk you which of the two he that is a real Chriſtian will give up.

Mr. Bragwell began to feel that he had not the beſt of the argument, and was afraid he was making no great figure in the eyes of his friend. Luckily, however, he was relieved from the difficulty into which the neceſſity of making ſome anſwer muſt have brought him, by finding they were come to the end of their little journey: and he never beheld the Bunch of Grapes, which decorated the Sign of the Golden Lion, with more real ſatisfaction.

I refer my readers for the tranſactions at the Golden Lion, and for the ſad Adventures which afterwards befel Mr. Bragwell's family, to the Fifth Part of the Hiſtory of the Two Wealthy Farmers.

Z.

THE END.

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*On the 1ſt of June, 1795, was publiſhed,*
The Shepherd of Saliſbury Plain, Part II.—The Beggarly Boy.—Wild Robert, a Ballad.
*On the 1ſt of July,*
Daniel in the Den of Lions.—The Good Mother's Legacy.—Patient Joe, a Ballad.
*On the 1ſt of Auguſt,*
Hints to all Ranks of People.—The Happy Waterman.—The Riot, a Ballad.—The Plowboy's Dream, a Ballad.
*On the 1ſt of September,*
Tom White, Part II.—Noah's Flood.—Dame Andrews, a Ballad.



already ſo much that you know not what to do with it. Suppoſe you were to pray in the morning, O Lord give me more riches, though thoſe I have are a ſnare and a temptation to me; and aſk him in the ſame ſolemn manner to bleſs all the graſping means you intend to make uſe of in the day, to add to your ſubſtance?

*Bragwell.* Mr. Worthy, I have no patience with you for thinking I could be ſo wicked.

*Worthy.* Hear me out, Mr. Bragwell, you turned your good nephew, Tom Broad, out of doors you know; you owned to me it was an act of injuſtice. Now ſuppoſe on the morning of your doing ſo you had begged of God in a ſolemn act of prayer, to proſper the deed of cruelty and oppreſſion, which you intended to commit. I ſee you are ſhocked at the thought of ſuch a prayer. Well, then, would not prayer have kept you from committing that wicked action? In ſhort, what a life muſt that be, no act of which you dare beg God to proſper and bleſs. If once you can bring yourſelf to believe that it is your bounden duty to pray for God's bleſſing on your day's work, you will certainly grow careful about paſſing ſuch a day as you may ſafely aſk his bleſſing upon. The remark may be carried to ſports, diverſions, company. A man, who once takes up the ſerious uſe of prayer, will ſoon find himſelf obliged to abſtain from ſuch diverſions, occupations, and ſocieties, as he cannot reaſonably deſire that God will bleſs to him; and thus he will ſee himſelf compelled to leave off either the prac-

*On the 1ſt of October.*

Harveſt Home.—Two Farmers, Part I.—Honeſt Miller, a Ballad.

*On the 1ſt of November,*

The Parable of the Vineyard.—The Two Farmers, Part II. —The Sorrows of Yamba, a Ballad.

*On the 1ſt of December,*

The Troubles of Life.—Sorrowful Sam.—Merry Chriſtmas, a Carol.

*On the 1ſt of January, 1796,*

New Thoughts on the New Year.—The Hiſtory of Mary Wood, the Houſemaid.—Robert and Richard, a Ballad.

*On the 1ſt of February,*

The Touchſtone; or, the Way to know a good Chriſtian. —The Apprentice turned Maſter; or, the Two Shoemakers, Part II.—The Story of Sinful Sally. Told by herſelf a Ballad.

*On the 1ſt of March.*

Oneſimus; or, the Run-away Servant converted.—Idle Jack Brown; or, the Two Shoemakers, Part III.—Shopkeeper, Part I.

*On the 1ſt of April,*

Converſion of St. Paul.—Jack Brown in Priſon; or, the Two Shoemakers, Part IV.—Shopkeeper, Part II.

*On the 1ſt of May,*

The General Reſurrection, Part. I.—The Hiſtory of Charles Jones the Footman, written by Himſelf.—The Hackney Coachman; or, the Way to get a good Fare, a Ballad.

*On the 1ſt of June,*

Carrying Religion into the Common Buſineſs of Life.— The Cheapſide Apprentice. — The Election Song, a Ballad.

*On the 1ſt of July,*

Look at Home.—Gameſter.—Turn the Carpet, or, Two Weavers.

*On the 1ſt of Auguſt,*

Grand Aſſizes.—Betty Brown.—Shopkeeper, Part III.

*On the 1ſt of September,*

Two Wealthy Farmers, Part III.—Explanation of Scripture of Baptiſm.—Hymn of Praiſe for the abundant Harveſt of 1796.

*And other Pieces on a ſimilar Plan, on the 1ſt of every Month.*

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