

UNDER THE OAK.

BY THE

REV. W. P. BREED, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF

"LESSONS IN FLYING," "GRAPES FROM THE GREAT VINE," &c., &c.

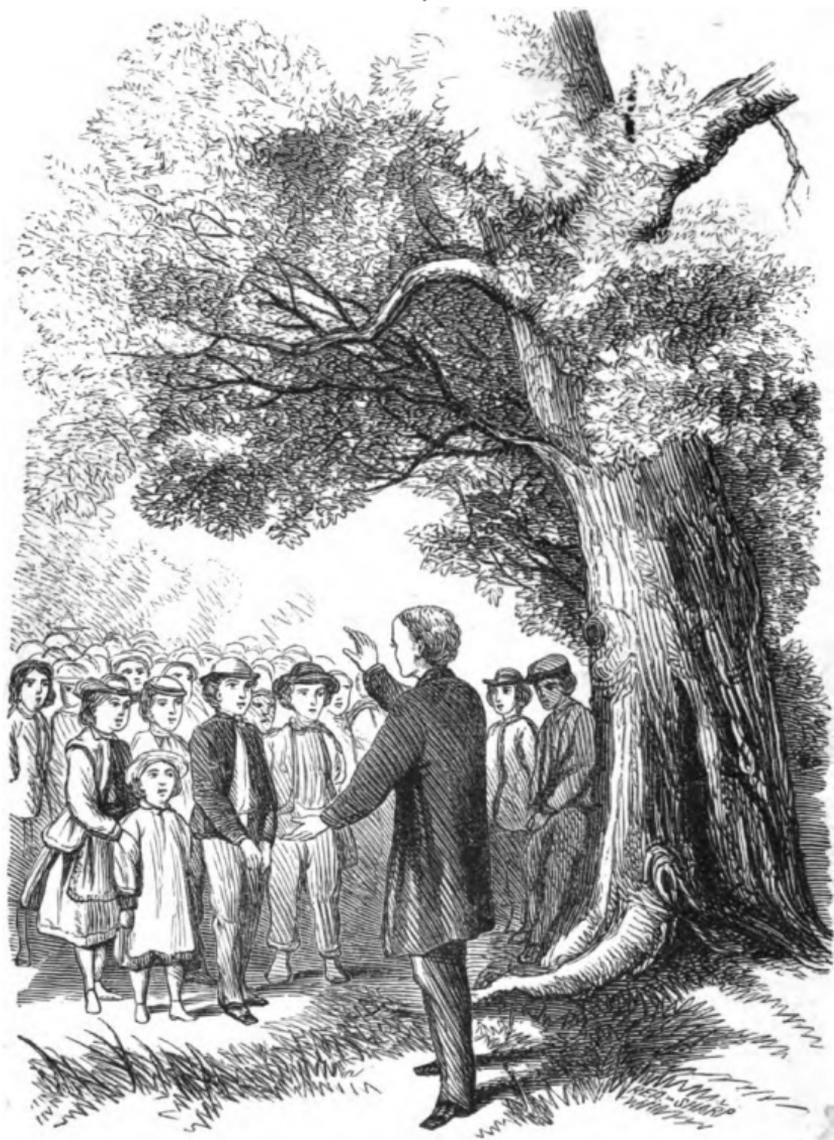


PHILADELPHIA :
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
No. 821 CHESTNUT STREET.



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by
THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District
of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY WESTCOTT & THOMSON.



Under the Oak.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTORY	7
II. THE GREAT PLAGUE.....	19
III. THE NEW CREATURE.....	89
IV. THE DAYSMAN.....	141
V. THE STRONG EMBRACE.....	209
VI. THE GRAND CONCERT.....	265

INTRODUCTORY.

1*

■

In His Temple doth every one Speak of His Glory.

Ps. xxix. 9.

6

UNDER THE OAK.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

HERE we are, children, on this bright Sabbath afternoon, seated under the shade of this beautiful broad-spreading oak. This morning we, with your parents and many others, met for worship in the dining-room of our summer boarding-house, and I promised you that in the afternoon we would have a little children's church together under this tree, and here we are.

Is not this a beautiful church we are in? It makes me think of the one in which Adam and Eve met in Eden, with the sky overhead and the grass underneath and the trees all

around, under which lions and tigers and wolves and lambs lay looking meekly on, while the birds sang among the branches.

Perhaps you have heard of Milton, the poet, who wrote the great poem called "Paradise Lost." He penned some beautiful lines descriptive of Adam and Eve's church.

"Out of the fertile ground God caused to grow
 All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
 And all amid them stood the tree of life,
 High, eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit of vegetable gold:
 Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind
 Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true.
 Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
 Grazing the tender herb were interposed,
 Or palmy hillocks; or the flowery lap
 Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
 Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.

Is not this a beautiful picture? And one of our American poets has sung this song about the same grand house of worship.

"The perfect world, by Adam trod,
 Was the first temple, built by God;
 His fiat laid the corner-stone;
 He spake, and lo! the work was done.

“He hung its starry roof on high,
The broad expanse of azure sky ;
He spread its pavement green and bright,
And curtained it with morning light.

“The mountains in their places stood,
The sea, the sky ; and all was good,
And when its first pure praises rung,
The morning stars together sung.”

So also when Noah came out of the ark with his sons, and his wife and his sons' wives with him, he built an altar under the open sky and with his family there worshipped God, offering on the altar “of every clean beast and of every clean fowl.”

And Abraham, the father of the faithful, had no other church but the broad world, and whenever he came to a halting-place in his journeys he built his altar and gathered his children and servants around and paid his vows to God.

And in selecting a spot for his altar he generally chose the shadow of a great oak as the most fitting place. For in Palestine the oak grows very luxuriantly and very large. Near Hebron, in the southern part of the

Holy Land, there is a majestic tree called, even now, the "Oak of Abraham." I wish some traveller would take a photograph of that tree, that we all might see it. One who halted awhile under its shade, says that it measures twenty-two feet and a half around the lower part. Not far from the ground it separates into three great boughs that reach out their clusters of lesser limbs till they fill a circle of some ninety feet.

"I wonder," said Sallie, "if Abraham ever sat under that tree?"

"Well, I think that is hardly possible, for it is now some thirty-six hundred years since Abraham died, and it is not likely that any tree lasts so long as that."

Thomas.—"Oh, I do like to see a big tree."

Why?

Thomas.—"Well, I don't know, but I do like to."

Well, so do I. Now—look at this tree under which we are sitting. It is a white-oak, and Mr. Smithson told me that it was here when his father was a young man. And he

said his father told him that when he first saw it, it looked very old and as if it were dying. Many of its branches were dead. But those decaying branches fell off and others came out, and now it looks like a young tree.

See what great arms it has, with huge knotty elbows, as if it were bidding defiance to the winds and storms that sometimes howl through its branches. O how many wonderful things this great old tree has seen! Very likely the Indians, scores of years ago, sat where we now sit in its shadow.

Do you know whether God ever called his people trees?

Mary.—“In the first Psalm which I learned to recite in Sabbath-school, God says,

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

Yes, and Isaiah says,—

“That they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

Now, children, I hope you will early learn to notice and admire the beautiful temple in which we worship to-day, and in which we live all the time. Look up at the sky. People in the city will often go in crowds and pay a half dollar each to some Academy or Hall to see a picture a few feet square, in which there is a little bit of landscape and a little patch of sky, while yet they very rarely look above them where God so often paints pictures hundreds of miles square with a wealth of beauty that no artist can ever depict.

Did you ever see any thing more rich than that intense blue yonder? The Italian skies have often been praised and admired for their beauty, but although I never was in Italy, I doubt very much if it ever saw a richer blue than that now above us. Then, those clouds, in great, grand piles rolling so leisurely along, how they seem to enjoy their easy motion as they look down on field, hill and ocean!

Henry.—“They look like angels hovering over the world.”

Yes, or like angel-chariots rolling over the blue vault of the heavens.

Does the Bible ever speak of the clouds?

Sarah.—I think so. Did not God send a pillar of cloud to guide his people out of Egypt toward the promised land?

Yes, and Job writes:

“He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.”

“Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?”

The prophet Nahum says:

“The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.”

Luke in the Acts speaking of the departure of Jesus for heaven from Olivet, says, “A cloud received him out of their sight.”

And John says, in the Revelation, speaking of Jesus when he shall come to judge the world,

“Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him.”

And look at the fields around us. See that

clover field, green all over, yet blushing purple with its many fragrant blossoms, and all alive with bees and butterflies. And on yonder hill-side, see that corn-field with tasseled tops like soldiers' plumes and standing in long, regular rows, like soldiers on parade. And down yonder goes that stream on, on, never resting, and singing as it goes, its merry song.

Surely, we have a beautiful church to worship in to-day, and now let us sing this hymn.

“Our Father in heaven,
We hallow thy name;
May thy kingdom holy
On earth be the same.

“O give to us daily
Our portion of bread;
It is from thy bounty
We all must be fed.

“Forgive our transgressions
And teach us to know
That humble compassion
That pardons each foe:

“Keep us from temptation,
From weakness and sin;
And thine be the glory
For ever, Amen.”

It is now time to pray. You have often noticed that the minister in the pulpit always when about to engage in prayer begins by saying, "Let *us* pray?" Then in some congregations all the people rise up, and in others they all kneel, and in so doing, they virtually say to the minister, "Yes, let us pray."

Suppose now, some of those people after all, do not pray. Suppose some do not listen to what the minister says, but think of something else all the time? Is not this pretending to do one thing, and doing another? Is not this mocking God, and that too in his own house? Must not God be angry with such hypocrisy? I hope, children, that whenever you are in a meeting, or at home kneeling with your father and mother at family-worship, you will be careful to join in the prayer. Make every petition you hear your own—God loves to hear one person pray. But Jesus says :

"Again I say unto you 'That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my

Father which is in heaven.' For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them."

How much more then does God love to see fifty or a hundred or five hundred, all praying in his ear the same prayer at the same time. Now let us all pray.

Now, Children, I wish to tell you about
The Great Plague.

THE GREAT PLAGUE.

2*

17

**“ Sin like a venomous disease,
Infects our vital blood ;
The only balm is sovereign grace,
And the physician, God.”**

II.

THE GREAT PLAGUE.

A GOOD many years ago, in a town in India, a hundred miles north of Calcutta, a man suddenly fell sick. In an hour or two, he was so sick that all saw that he was going to die, and very soon he did die. Then another was taken in the same way and he died. Others took the disease in other families, and it spread through the town. Soon it made its appearance in other towns, and people died by hundreds and thousands, and they died so fast that there were hardly enough people left well to attend to the sick or bury the dead. In Northern India some thirty thousand people died. Still it spread. In Bombay it slew one hundred and fifty thousand persons, men, women and children. It then spread all over Asia. It reached Russia, and appeared in France and

England. Eighteen thousand died in Paris alone and more than twenty thousand in Great Britain. It came to America, and spread all over our country. Very many only lived a few hours after they were first attacked. It carried off the rich and the poor. Many physicians died. The name of this plague was the cholera.

Oh, how people trembled at the name! When it appeared in a city, people by hundreds and thousands packed up a few things and fled before it. And many died while they were flying. They were seized in stage-coaches, in rail-way cars, and on board steamers. It swept away whole families. They would go to bed at night, alive and well, and before morning, one, two or three would be dead in the same house! Multitudes of children were left without father or mother! It was an awful time! I pray God that that fearful plague may never return again to empty so many homes into the grave-yards!

But, children, it is a fearful truth that there is a plague much more dreadful than cholera now raging around us. It is a heart-plague.

It works in the heart and destroys the soul for ever. Let me tell you some things about this plague.

I. "THIS PLAGUE IS EVERYWHERE, ON EVERYBODY."

"By nature all are gone astray,
Their practice is the same ;
There's none that fears his Maker's hand,
There's none that loves his name."

1 Kings viii. 46. "For there is no man that sinneth not."

Psalms xiv. 2, 3. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Ecclesiastes vii. 20. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not."

1 John i. 8, 10. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Thus God says that this Sin-Plague is everywhere and on everybody. Now this is not true of any other disease in all the world.

Many years ago a great pestilence broke out in the Holy Land. In the extreme north, in the middle and in the distant south, along the margin of the river Jordan, and along the shores of the Mediterranean sea, in the plains and on the hill-sides, on the same day, and no doubt at the same hour of the day, men, women and children began suddenly to sicken and die. The physicians could do nothing, or whatever they did was of no avail. As soon as one was seized, they gave up all hope. There was nothing but weeping and wailing, sickening and dying, nothing but funerals all through the land! Hope gave way and all sank down in despair. Children died, and while the mother was wrapping up the body of her child for the tomb, she sickened and died, and while the father was preparing to remove them, he sickened and died, and when the neighbours were engaged in conveying them to the grave, they sickened and died. It was an awful

time! Nearly a thousand people died in the land every hour! More than twenty thousand died every day, and in three days seventy thousand died! (2 Samuel xxiv.)

But this plague was confined in its ravages to Palestine alone. It did not reach to Egypt, nor to Asia Minor, nor to Persia, nor to Europe. It did not slay a single one beyond the bounds of that one little land.

But this plague of which I am writing is found in every country in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. They die of it along the river Ganges, and along the Nile, and along the Danube, and along the Hudson, the Ohio and the Mississippi. They die of it every hour, in Ceylon and Madagascar, and in Great Britain. On every hill-side, in every valley, and on every plain, in all the wide world, men, women and children are everywhere dying of this awful plague.

Did you ever hear of a disease that raged with violence in *every town* of any country in the world?

Some years ago I was driving along in a

carriage with another toward a little city of about eight thousand inhabitants. As we neared the city, my companion took out a bank note, and pointed me to the engraving of a man's face upon it. He knew the man very well, and talked and laughed over some of his peculiarities. Almost the first thing we heard, when we entered the town was, that that man was dead and awaiting his burial. Some twenty others also were sick and dying, and some of them dead. The cholera had come down into that town the very night before, almost in the twinkling of an eye. It was near the Sabbath day, and on that day as we left church, I shook hands with a man who seemed perfectly well, and the next day I was sent for to see him dying! So it was in other families. But while this disease was raging so fearfully in that town, there was many a town around us far and near, in which the disease had not made its appearance at all.

But the plague of which we speak, is not only in every land under the sun, but in every town of every land. It is in the great city

where a million of people live, in Canton, in China and Calcutta, in India, in Paris, London, and St. Petersburg; in New York, Philadelphia and St. Louis, and also in every little village with its handful of people, in all the old settlements of our eastern States, and in all the border-towns of our western frontier. Did you ever hear or read of a disease so extensive in its ravages?

But even this is not all. This pestilence is doing its work of death not only in every town of every land, but in every home of every town!

I don't know why it is that when a terrible epidemic scourges a nation, and enters a town, it kills all the members of some families, and leaves other families wholly untouched.

I know of a little village on the banks of a beautiful river, surrounded by beautiful hills and a most lovely country. In the outskirts of this village is a beautiful mansion, encompassed by lawns, adorned with carefully cultivated shrubbery, and a great variety of flowers. This mansion sits on the top of a

gentle elevation, and from its windows a very lovely landscape meets the eye. In this house of beauty, around which the odour-laden breezes play, there dwelt a wealthy and excellent family. And one day the cholera entered that town, and instead of going into the home of poverty, instead of smiting down the children of squalid uncleanness, instead of laying hold of the wretched drunkard, and the man of profligacy and crime, it went straight to this beautiful mansion and struck down just one, and only one of its members! And I believe in all that town not another creature died of this disease during that visitation!

I say, we cannot fully understand this matter. We are not able to see why God afflicts some families and not others. I have known a family grow up, till the youngest of many children was forty years old, and not one of all the number had died! And then I have known families in which child after child was cut down, and friend after friend, till there was hardly one left in a wide circle of rela-

tives. This is God's work, and we only know that he doeth all things well.

But so it is, and however terrible the pestilence, and though thousands and thousands die, yet in perhaps every case, in every town, there are families that do not lose a single member.

But this Sin-Plague goes into every family in every land! It enters the great castle where for centuries the great have lived, and it goes into the soldier's tent, and the hut of the Esquimaux, and the wigwam of the Indian. It follows the caravan across the deserts of the East, and the emigrant train seeking new homes in our distant west.

Upon the different oceans of the world there are some two hundred thousand vessels always sailing to and fro, and this plague is committing its ravages on every one of them! Is not this Sin-Plague a tremendous pestilence?

But even this is not the very worst! This awful curse seizes *every member of every family*. There have been cases in which an epidemic

has fallen upon and carried to the grave every member of a family here and there, but this spares no member of any household.

Just think what would be the condition of things in the town where you live, if, in some dark hour, an awful disease should fall upon every father and mother, grandparent and relative, and all the children in every family! Who would be left to take care of the sick and to bury the dead?

Many years ago the yellow fever broke out in New York City, and by tens of thousands, the people fled to escape the plague. And multitudes were dying in palace and hovel, in cellars and garrets, in broad beautiful streets, and in lanes and allies, and crowded courts.

But in that city was a man of God who said to himself. "I am placed here by my Maker and I will not fly. I will visit the sick and stand by the dying, and help to bury the dead."

And he did so. During all that awful time, while by day and by night the carts were

rolling along the streets piled up with coffins, and while all around him men were sickening and dying every hour, that faithful man stood at his post heeding every call for help among rich and poor. And God spared his life and health through it all. And around him in the city were thousands of others who stayed in the city and escaped all harm from this destructive plague.

But the Sin-Pestilence spares no man. In the world to-day are some ten hundred millions of human beings, and they all have the plague! Go into king's palaces and look upon the monarch and the queen, princesses and princes; go into courts and look around upon the nobles; go into the mechanic's shop and look upon workmen and apprentices; see that little infant in the cradle, and those red-cheeked, bright-eyed brothers and sisters; see that aged woman sitting in the old arm-chair, and that old man leaning on his staff, and that strong man leading an army, or governing a nation; see that young man full of life, and that young woman full of joy;

go to the ball-room and look at the merry dancers, to the drinking saloon and look at the tipplers; go where blasphemers assemble and hear them denying God and taking his name in vain; and every one of them has this plague.

Look at your own dear mother, she has it, and your loved and honoured father, he has it. You, yourself, have it. It is with you when you go to bed, and at midnight and in the morning. It goes with you to play and to school, and it sits with you at the table.

Is not this a wonderful and terrible disease?

There is even another feature of this disease that we ought to note. It is *always* at work, in every human form from the day of birth till the day of death.

Some diseases work very long on the human frame. Men sometimes suffer of consumption even twenty years. But generally diseases do their work very quickly and either kill the patient or else withdraw; and not unfrequently it not only leaves him entirely, but leaves him more healthy than before.

One day, there was a ring at my door-bell, and a messenger came in asking me to go and see a family who were waiting in bitterness of soul to see a little babe die. Entering the house of sorrow, I was soon by the side of the little sufferer. It lay in its mother's lap, pale and wasted to almost a skeleton, and every breath the little creature drew was accompanied with a piteous moan. The doctor had given it up and we expected it to die while we looked upon it.

The next day I called again, and was surprised to find the little thing still breathing and moaning its life away. He thought it could not survive the day.

Two years after that, when one day I called on that family, a plump, rosy-cheeked girl ran laughing to me, full of life and fun, and who do you think it was? It was that very baby once so sick that we all thought it could not live an hour? It was not only well, but very well and hearty and strong?

But the Sin-Plague never leaves its victim in this world. It is in the heart of the little

babe, and if the child lives to become a man, and reaches the age of eighty or ninety years, this disease clings to him to the very last.

Even if the great Physician, Jesus Christ, comes to him and gives him a new heart, and sprinkles his precious and healing blood upon the soul, and thus makes it certain that he will one day be perfectly pure and holy, yet sin lingers there even to the end of life.

You know what our catechism says, "The souls of believers are at their *death* made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." But up to the time of death the Sin-Plague stays in and troubles and pollutes the spirit.

One of the best men that ever lived, a missionary in India, who spent his life in teaching the heathen about the Saviour, and who died and lies buried in heathen soil, once was so troubled by the remains of this disease upon him that he wrote these words:

"My soul is sometimes tried with the abounding of iniquity, and wounded by infidel thoughts."

Another man of God who was the means of saving a great many souls wrote of his own soul,—

“I have nothing but complaints to make of myself, nothing but the same old story of erring and repenting. I fear I am in a sad way. I attend public worship and think of every subject but the proper one. The thought of my sinful neglect and inattention so shames and distresses me that I am unable to pray. Thus I go on sinning and humbling myself. Shame and remorse prevent secret prayer frequently for two or three days together until I can no longer support it.”

Thus this sin-disease clings to and torments often the best of Christians. One of our great generals was shot through the leg in battle. By-and-by, the wound healed and he went back into the army, but after a little it broke out again, and he had to go home and lie by a long time. Then when he thought he was well again he returned to the field. But soon his wound began to be painful and troublesome, and the surgeon said that he must

go home again. And so that wound troubled him for years.

Just so it is with sin. Sometimes the Christian thinks he is almost cured. It fills his heart with gladness to think of God's word and to pray and to go to the house of God. When he thinks of heaven he longs to be with Christ in the many mansions. His heart aches for poor sinners, and he is ready to do anything to aid in saving a soul. But after a while, he loses all this comfort and sighs in his soul,

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I his, or am I not?

"If I love why am I thus?
Why this dull and lifeless frame?
Hardly, sure, can they be worse,
Who have never heard his name.

"If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mixed with all I do;
You who love the Lord indeed,
Tell me—is it thus with you?

"Yet I mourn my stubborn will,
Find my sin a grief and thrall;

Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all?

“Lord, decide the doubtful case,
Thou who art thy people’s sun:
Shine upon thy work of grace,
If it be indeed begun.

“Let me love thee more and more,
If I love at all I pray;
If I have not loved before,
Help me to begin to-day.”

You know what a wonderful man Paul the apostle was, how strangely he was converted, and how tenderly he loved Jesus and Christians. But even Paul was worried, and his peace of mind embittered by remaining sin. He said in the seventh of Romans,—

“I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.”

Mary.—“I always thought that if Jesus put his blood on the heart, all sin would go right out, and that the heart would be good, all the time.”

Ah, Mary, you have a good Christian mother. Ask her if her heart is good all the

time. No, this Sin-Plague has so poisoned all our souls that we never get entirely well of it until we die.

You have heard about the little boy whose father told him every time he did anything wrong, to go and drive a nail into a certain post. He did so, and by-and-by, the post was almost full of nails. Then his father said,—

“Now, Johnny, when you live for a whole day without doing one of those wrong things, you may take one of those nails out.”

So Johnny made a great effort to do better, and one by one the nails disappeared. By-and-by the last nail was down and Johnny came to his father in great glee saying,

“Father, they are all out again!”

“Is that so, my boy? Let us go and see.”

Sure enough the nails were all gone, but his father said,—

“Johnny, look here! See those holes! When will you be able to get them away and leave the post just as it was before?”

So it is with the soul. As long as we live,

we shall never get the soul as it would have been without sin.

Is not sin a fearful plague?

II. THIS PLAGUE IS ON EVERY PART OF EVERYBODY.

Some diseases affect chiefly the head, and some only the heart, and some the lungs, and some the eyes; but this plague reaches the whole body and the whole soul.

“But,” you say, “I don’t see how sin has anything to do with the body—the body cannot sin.”

Do not be too sure of that. When a hand steals another’s purse does not the hand sin?

“Yes, but then it is the soul that makes it.”

That is true. But look at that man going into that dram shop, to drink a poison that will take away his reason; what is it that drives him to that sin? Is it not a bodily appetite? Thus the body is the source of a great many of the sins men commit.

Then think of all the diseases that afflict men—do you suppose that if man had never

sinned, he would ever have been sick? All the weaknesses, pains and sicknesses of the body are the result of sin.

Paul in 2 Corinthians (iv. 4) says that the *mind* is blinded, and hence it sees things as they are not. It often calls right wrong, and wrong right, evil good and good evil, light darkness and darkness light. The heart is all wrong, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

The affections love things that are hateful. The will chooses what is hurtful. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.

Now, suppose there was a disease made up of all other diseases in the world, and suppose you should see some one attacked by that disease, what an object would that one be to look upon? Consumption, croup, diphtheria, yellow fever, small-pox, every dreadful disease at work at once upon a man? But that man would be in this respect just like every sinner, for all sinners are affected by sin in every part of the body, and in every part of the soul.

III. AND THIS PLAGUE IS VERY INSIDIOUS IN ITS WORKINGS.

“Insidious! Why, I don’t know what insidious means!”

Don’t you? Did you ever read the story of the Trojan horse? The Greeks were warring against a great city, and, at last, after many years they found that all their efforts were in vain, and that unless they could find some new way of taking the city, they must give it up and go home. So they adopted this plan. They built an enormous wooden horse, and pretended that they were building it in honour of one of their gods. When it was completed, they filled it with armed men and then left it, and entering their ships, sailed away. When they were gone, the Trojans came out and walked around the horse and looked at it and wondered at its magnitude.

By-and-by, they thought that if they should move it into the city, the god to whom it had been dedicated would be pleased, and perhaps would bless their city. So they went to work,

and fastened ropes to it, and all the people came out and took hold of the ropes and drew it into the city. But that night, the soldiers within the horse came out and opened the gates, and those who had pretended to sail away came back, and rushing through the open gates, began to kill, and burn, and destroy; and soon the whole city was in ashes.

Now these Greeks were *insidious*, they worked very cunningly. They hid themselves away in that wooden monster, and then when the Trojans were thinking their enemies gone and themselves safe, they were really in greater danger than when their enemies were in arms around them.

So *insidious* means *sitting within*, hiding away, working in the dark and preparing ruin for foes, when they least expect it.

Just so is it with this terrible plague. It lies hidden away in the heart, in the mind, in the will—and it works and works in every power of the mind, and very, very often the one in whom it is doing its most awful work does not know that it is there!

I knew an old and very wicked man who lay on his dying bed. His friends knowing that he must die, and that he was very far from being prepared to go into the presence of his God, brought a venerable minister to see him and talk with him about his soul and his Saviour.

But when this good man asked him,
“Are you prepared to die?” He replied:
“Yes, I am ready.”

“But have you repented of your sins?”

“I have no sins,” he said, “to repent of.”

“Why, I thought” said the man of God,
“that every one knew that he was a sinner,
I am sure that I have committed many
sins.”

“Perhaps you have,” he replied, “but I
have not.”

And that wicked, blaspheming old man died, declaring that this great plague had never reached him, while in truth, it had destroyed him, body and soul!

Is it not very insidious?

A little boy kneels down to say his prayers

and he repeats with his lips, "Our Father which art in heaven," and when he has said "Amen!" he rises up from his knees, and thinks that he has done a very good act. But God, who has been looking down into his heart, has seen that while he was kneeling there with these solemn words on his tongue, his thoughts were busy with his playthings, and without knowing it, he has been mocking God! How insidious is this disease when it makes a child think he is doing well when he is actually committing a great sin?

Christian men and women are often guilty of this same crime. I read a letter from a man once, who wrote:

"I was at Havana, in my room, on my knees at prayer, when suddenly the house began to shake, with an earthquake! I felt that in a moment more I might be in eternity, and then I remembered that though I was saying a prayer, my mind was wandering far away on worldly things. And I thought Oh what if I had been suddenly killed while I was mocking God in prayer!"

Once there lived a great and cruel persecutor. He cast many of the saints into prison. He seized many and tortured them to make them blaspheme. And when they were put to death, he stood by and urged on the murderers. And yet this man said, after he was corrected, that he verily thought that in all this horrid work he was actually pleasing God!

How insidious is this disease when it makes a man think he is serving God by killing God's dear children!

IV. THIS PLAGUE ALSO STUPEFIES THE MIND.

One cold winter day, the wind blowing bitter cold over icy streams and snowy fields, a stage-coach was driving slowly along full of passengers. By-and-by, it was noticed that one of the passengers was falling asleep. They all were very cold, and they knew that it was very dangerous for one to fall asleep, and they shook the man and told him if he allowed sleep to overcome him he would never

wake again. But the man paid no attention to what they said, and was determined to take a nap. The truth was that the poor man was so benumbed with cold that he could not realize the danger he was in. The cold had stupefied him.

There are some diseases that produce a like effect upon the patient. He suffers no pain and all the time seems about half asleep.

This is one of the awful effects of the great plague. Many who are in the greatest danger of death cannot be made to believe that anything ails them. Look at the great mass of mankind; see how merrily, how thoughtlessly they live. Do you suppose they believe that an awful disease is at work on their souls, every hour making their case more hopeless? Have they any idea that when they lie down at night they may wake again only in the world of woe?

But this is not the strangest part of it. In most cases if the physician feels a man's pulse, looks into his eyes, examines his tongue and says, "You, sir, are very ill. There is a ter-

rible disease working within you, and if you are not very careful, and do not use the means of recovery, you may not live a week," in most such cases the man will become alarmed and take the medicine offered him, and attend very carefully to what his physician says.

But it is not always so, it is very often not so with those who are told, and who fully believe that they are under the power of the great Plague.

There are many children in the Sabbath-school, and many people in every congregation, who know perfectly well that they are sinners; that one sin if it remains unforgiven will sink them down to death; that scores, and hundreds, and thousands of sins are on them, and that they may die any hour of the day or night; and yet they are not alarmed. They sing and dance, and laugh and sport. They lie down fearless at night, and they wake up merry and thoughtless in the morning. Now has not the plague stupefied them?

They know that a great day is coming, when Jesus will appear in the clouds of

heaven, and all the holy angels with him to judge the nations. They know that multitudes on that awful day will cry to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. And yet they are not anxious or troubled. They do not ask,

“When thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come
To take thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at thy right hand?”

Now, if you should see a little boy running along the eaves of a high house, where if he make a single mis-step, he will be dashed in pieces upon the pavement, and he without all fear or knowledge of his danger, would you not say that he was stupefied?

So does this awful plague stupefy and benumb the minds and hearts of those in whom it is yet working in its power.

V. THE PLAGUE ALSO STULTIFIES.

You know the Bible always calls sinners foolish and sometimes it calls them fools. It says of the atheist: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." And it calls Christians wise. It says they have been made wise unto salvation. "If thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thyself." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Hence those who know nothing of this fear have not begun to be wise.

Once on our coast a ship was sinking, and all the passengers had been rowed ashore but one, and he would not get into the boat. At last the men rowed back once more to the sinking vessel and called again and again.

"Aboard this time, or you are lost!"

But he still clung to the old wreck, and went down with it into the sea.

"What folly was this!" you say.

Yes, but it is nothing to the folly of those who cling to their sins and will not cast them off, though they are told so often that these

sins are dragging them down deeper and deeper every hour.

But many act more foolishly still. Once a party went into the Catacombs of Rome. These Catacombs are long tunnels dug away into the ground—crossing each other in all directions, and many have been lost in them, and being unable to find their way out, have perished. Well, this party entered, each one with a light, and one of the number strayed from the rest and after a while his torch burned out! Oh, how alarmed he was! He began to picture to himself the horrible death that awaited him, and to think how his friends would mourn for him. His condition was indeed horrible. Think of stumbling in utter darkness, and lying on the ground and starving and dying there all alone!

But in the midst of his horror he saw a torchlight gleaming on the darkness! Oh, how he ran toward it! Oh, how glad he was when he neared one of his companions who was searching for him! Now this companion

gave him another lighted torch and they set out together for the door.

But, now, suppose that this man had again withdrawn from his friend, and gone back into the Catacombs, and then when all alone had deliberately thrown his torch from him and put it out!

Yet, this is just the way many act under the influence of this plague. The state of sin in which we all find ourselves, is just like the Catacombs; a dark, dismal place, with paths winding in every direction. And every one who does not find his way out of the dungeon will die a death much more dreadful than that of starvation. And in this darkness the Spirit of God comes and lights a torch for him. He makes him feel that he is a great and wicked sinner. This troubles him and makes him tremble. He hardly knows what to do. For a time he thinks he will fly to Christ for pardon. But Satan urges him to thrust the matter from his mind, and he tries to put out the light the Holy Spirit has been lighting! He tries not to think of these

things any more. He goes among the gay and thoughtless. He reads vain and trifling books. He avoids the society of the pious, and instead of going to church on the Sabbath day, he goes out on pleasure-excursions; and thus he drives the Holy Spirit from his soul, and all becomes dark, darker than ever. Why I knew a man who suddenly ceased going to church during a revival of religion, because he said if he continued to attend those meetings he should become a Christian! God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." And he sometimes, when men fight against his Spirit, says,—

"He is joined to his idols, let him alone." Then the angels let him alone, and God's Spirit lets him alone, and his friends find it very hard to pray for him with any warmth or interest, and he falls for ever away.

Then here is one who may be a Christian now, if he only will. Then he would at once escape from all danger, and he could pray for others, and try to bring others to Christ. This one might be the means of saving a father,

that one a mother—this one a child, that one a brother or a sister.

There was a young woman whose mother had gone to heaven, but whose father was yet in his sins. She had given her own heart to God, and now she was very anxious that her father should go with her to the communion-table and to heaven. So she resolved that she would speak to him about his soul. But she found it very hard to do so. Day after day passed and she began to fear that she never would find courage to open her lips to her father. At last, one day she said to herself:

“I cannot endure this any longer. I shall die if I do not unburden my heart in my father’s ear.”

So that evening she tried all the evening to say what she wished, but in vain. At length the time came to retire. She took her father’s arm, and as they were going up-stairs, she said, with a trembling voice :

“Father, there is something I wish to say to you.”

“What is it, my child?” replied her father.

“Father,” said she, “I want you to be a Christian.”

He looked at her a moment, and then said: “I will, my child.”

Now, if that young woman had not been a Christian, her poor father might never have been saved.

Yet, this Sin-Plague makes people so foolish, that instead of coming to Christ at once, they put it off, year after year, thinking to get ready for heaven when they have sinned away a whole life-time here on earth.

VI. THEN THIS DISEASE IS FEARFULLY STUBBORN AND UNMANAGEABLE.

There are many diseases that man can cure by God's blessing, but this disease is too stubborn for man. Some try to become better by making resolutions to avoid this sin and give up that, but they are like the poor woman in the Bible, who spent all her living upon physicians, and only grew worse all the time.

In Pilgrim's Progress, you remember poor

Christian's taking the advice of Worldly Wiseman, and going not on toward the gate, but away on one side to the house of Mr. Legality. But by-and-by, he found a mountain hanging over his head and fire coming out of it, at which he was very much frightened, and his burden became heavier than ever. So when men try to cure themselves or to obtain a cure from any of their fellow-sinners, they only grow more and more sinful.

How fearfully stubborn this disease is, you may judge, when nothing will cure it but the blood of Jesus. Now God would never have given his Son to live as a man in toil and sorrow, and then to lie on the ground in Gethsemane, the blood falling in great sweat-drops, then to hang on the cross and die, unless his blood was absolutely necessary to cure a disease in the human soul, that nothing else could cure.

Sometimes a country is in danger and nothing but a bloody war can save it from a terrible overthrow. In such a case an only son comes to his father and mother, and says:

“I must go and help to fight these battles; give me your blessing.”

Then they bless their boy, and send him out, well knowing that he may fall on some bloody field, and that they may never know how or where he died, or how he was buried.

Now you know that no parents would ever give up a faithful and only son for such a service, if it were not in a cause that absolutely demanded the sacrifice of precious lives. But God so loved the sin-sick world that he gave his only-begotten Son to suffer and to die!

And then this disease is cured only by an entire change of nature.

Many diseases require powerful remedies. Sometimes an arm or a leg must be taken off. But then the patient when cured is the same man he was before. But in the case of the Great Plague no medicine, no style of treatment will do the work. Nothing will do but a new creation. He must be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. He must be made to love what he hated, and to hate what he loved. He must come to think differently,

and feel differently, and act like a new creature. Else the plague will kill him, body and soul.

But even this does not at once and entirely cure. Once there was a little child who was taken down with scarlet fever. His cheek was red as fire. His body was covered all over with terrible eruptions. His throat was so sore that he could scarcely swallow, even a little cold water. His mind was so affected that he talked wildly, and thought sometimes that the room was full of strangers, and sometimes that he was flying through the air, and he was afraid he should fall and called on his mother to catch him. Then he thought that his bed was on fire, and he was burning, and he called on his mother to put out the fire. They all thought that he would die. But he began to mend, very, very slowly, and by-and-by, they considered him out of danger. And one day, after a long, sound sleep, he waked up and asked:

“Mother, is it morning?”

“No, my boy, it is afternoon.”

“Why, what makes the room so dark?”

“My child, the room is not dark. The sun is shining into the room.”

Poor boy, he was blind! The disease had left him, but it had destroyed his eyesight.

So it is with this disease. It may be checked in its ravages, but it always leaves some terrible marks on the soul. Paul felt this, when he said,—

“When I would do good, evil is present with me. What I would, that do I not; what I hate that do I.” So all Christians are yet imperfect. “In many things we all offend.” It is only at death that the soul is entirely cured. “The souls of believers *are at their death* made perfect in holiness.”

So fearfully stubborn is the Sin-Plague! This disease is sin. It is the cause of all the distress, and fear, and robbery, and drunkenness, and murder in the world. It is the cause of all strife, and sorrow, and death. It has made God our enemy, and makes man the enemy of man. It makes wicked children cruel to their parents. It builds all our pris-

ons. It is the cause of shipwrecks and conflagrations and earthquakes. It brought death into this world and all our woe!

VII. WHAT IS SIN?

The beloved disciple, John, says:

“All unrighteousness is sin.”

Now the word *right* means *straight*. Righteousness means straightness, unrighteousness is unrightness. An unrighteous person is one that is not straight in his conduct.

Do you know what a straight line is? It is a line that does not turn at any point. It goes straight by the shortest path from one point to another. If it turns aside in the least, it is not a straight line, it is not a “right” line. It possesses *unrightness*.

Now God’s law is a right or straight line, and every one who in his heart and thoughts and words keeps in that line is righteous, but if he turn from it at any one point, he is guilty of unrighteousness, and “all unrighteousness is sin.”

The word commonly used for sinning in

the Bible means to miss, to fail to hit a mark.

Suppose you have a bow and arrow in your hands, and you wish to shoot your arrow into a mark in the fence. You grasp your bow and point your arrow, and draw the string. Now from the point of your arrow to that mark, there is a straight line, and if you can shoot the arrow so that it will keep right in that line, it will go at once into the mark. But if at any point in its course the arrow turn even a little aside, it will miss the mark.

So there is a mark for us to aim at in our lives. Paul says, "I press toward the mark." To this mark there is the line of God's will. He has a line marked out for us all to go in. Now, any body who keeps in that line from the beginning to the end of his life, keeps all his feelings and thoughts, and aims and motives full in that line, will hit the mark, and be pronounced righteous at the judgment day. But if for any instant, at any point, he stray from this line he is guilty of unrighteousness, and this is sin. And this Plague has so affected

us that we all and often go out of this line, so that we are all sinners before God.

Now this sin-disease is not anything put into us. If you throw a firebrand into a house, you set the house on fire. But sin is not a substance thrown into the soul from without. No one could do such a thing but God, and he would not, any more than a loving mother would knowingly give poison to a child. But sin is something that springs up in the soul.

There is a great factory full of wheels and shafts, and belts whirling away and making a great din. Now suppose the power that keeps all this machinery in such motion is still in action, and some of the machinery becomes disordered. Still the whirling goes on, clash and clang, flinging one thing one way, another another, and at length working confusion and destruction through the whole mill.

Thus is it in the soul. It is always active. It cannot stop acting. And it contains a great many wheels, as we may call them; the understanding, the affections, the imagination,

the will, and many others. And the mind keeps all these at work. Now so long as the machinery is sound and nothing broken, all works well, and the whole mind is a musical box giving forth whole streams of harmony, very sweet in the ear of God and the angels. But sin is a disorder among the machinery, which, however, does not make the mind cease working, but does make every thing go wrong. All the mind does is wrong, its thoughts and feelings are all wrong. It is unrighteous and all unrighteousness is sin.

This Sin-Plague then in the heart is a wrong condition of the moral powers, making it deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

VIII. HOW DID MAN BECOME SINFUL?

Let me tell you now a very strange and almost incredible truth. Sin can *begin* only in pure and holy beings.

“Why,” you will say, “this is very strange. I do not see how any one who is pure and holy can possibly do wrong.”

Well, I don't profess to understand it. But can sickness *begin* in any but a healthy being? If the person is well, there is no sickness there. If afterwards sickness is found in the frame, it must have *begun* in that frame when in health.

Just so with the Sin-Plague. It must begin in a perfectly holy being. And so it did.

There was a period when all the beings in the universe were perfectly holy. God was holy and all the angels were holy. But at a certain time angels fell. They became sinful. How, I am sure I cannot tell. But so it was.

Then man was created in the image of God with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness. Every thought in his heart was right. Everything he did was right.

But now look! Angels from God are driving man out of paradise! For what? Why, he has sinned! That once pure and holy pair are now defiled by sin.

Somehow or other the Plague came upon them and into them in that garden, and now they are sinners.

Now God is infinitely perfect, and hence he *cannot* sin. If you had a watch that *could* not go wrong, that could not be made to go wrong, you would have an absolutely perfect watch. But anything, however good it is that *can* go wrong, or can possibly be made to go wrong, is in this sense less perfect than God. It is not perfect in the very highest sense.

Now the angels that yet remain in heaven cannot sin. But this is not because of any absolute perfection in their nature; for as angels, no doubt they were as capable of sinning as their brethren who fell. They are now perfect and unable to sin, because God in his goodness and love has so surrounded and filled them with his own power and holiness that there is no possibility left of their sinning.

Suppose you had a delicate and beautiful china-toy. If you let it fall, it will break all to pieces and be destroyed. But suppose some one make a hole for it deep in a great rock, and you put it in there and then they put a stone into the mouth of the hole and cement it fast

in its place. So long as it remains there and it can't come out of itself and so long as the rock is itself unbroken; that toy of yours *cannot* break.

Well, the angels are now so wrapped around with God that they cannot come out from the circle of his goodness, power and love, and God will not thrust them out, nor will he allow any one else to remove them. Hence they for ever and ever cannot sin.

Man was made perfect and placed in the garden, and yet he was not so perfect that he *could* not sin. For he could sin, and he did sin.

This does not explain how man sinned, and I suppose no man can explain it. How a pure and holy being could do any other than pure and holy acts, how he could think wrong or wish wrong, much less how he could become unholy is a great mystery. So is the resurrection of the dead a great mystery. How God could become man in Christ is a great mystery. We know these truths but we cannot explain them.

About man we may say:

1. He was a creature, and hence he could not be as perfect as his Creator.

A man can make a steam-engine, and a steam engine is a wonderful thing. No one can study it and see how many things it does, without being filled with wonder. But it is not so wonderful as a little flower, for all the great and wise in the world cannot make a flower.

And that steam-engine great and wonderful as it is, is much less so than man himself. No man can make anything equal to himself. So all the creatures of God are and must be infinitely inferior to him, and man is infinitely inferior to God.

2. Then you know man has two different natures, his bodily nature, and his soul. The body gives rise to certain appetites, as hunger and thirst. These appetites are not sinful, but perfectly right so long as we use them right. Every one will become thirsty. This he cannot help. To satisfy his thirst he must have drink. But if instead of taking for

this what God has provided in the crystal spring, he takes the poisons that men make, and becomes drunken and crazy, he sins. And so with our hunger. Instead of satisfying hunger with what God has given us, we may wish for something that our neighbour has, and by thinking of this, we come to break the tenth commandment and "covet" what is another's. And by-and-by, we may covet this so strongly as to be drawn to steal, and thus break the eighth commandment. Thus our bodily appetites, not sinful in themselves, may, if improperly indulged, lead us deeply into sin.

Within the body and strongly connected with it is the mind, and the mind has certain natural desires. One of these is the desire for knowledge. This is far from being wrong. I have known persons who had such a longing for knowledge that they would study almost all night. I knew a family of children who were so poor they could not afford to buy candles; and so they studied their lessons lying down on the floor before the fire. And two

of the boys became lawyers and one a teacher and several of the girls, teachers. Now this was noble.

3. Well, there were our first parents in the garden, with this twofold nature, the animal nature with its appetites, and the mental nature with its desires. And before them in that garden was a tree of knowledge of good and evil, filled with delicious fruit, which they were forbidden to touch. They knew that this fruit would both gratify their taste and increase their knowledge. So there they were, the desires and appetites drawing one way, and the command of God drawing the other.

Now, so long as they let the command of God get the victory over these appetites and desires, they remained innocent. It was not wrong for them to hunger nor to wish to obtain knowledge. And there was even a special virtue in the restraint they laid on themselves out of regard to God's law.

Suppose two boys every day on their way to and from school, were to pass a fine tree

hanging full of ripe peaches. One of the boys does not like peaches and would not give a penny for a cart-load.

The other is exceedingly fond of them, and every time he looks at that tree he cannot help saying to himself:

“Oh, I wish I had some of those peaches!”

Now it would be very wicked in either of those boys to steal that fruit; but do you not think there is greater display of virtue, that is of goodness, in the boy who has to restrain his appetite every day, than in the other who does not care for the peaches at all?

So while Adam and Eve kept down their appetites and desires out of regard for God's word, they were showing more virtue than if no such longings for food and knowledge existed in them.

But they kept looking and looking at that fruit, and thinking how much they would like to taste of it. Then Satan came and told them that they had just as good a right to that fruit as any in the garden. And he told them how good it was and how wise it would

make them. Thus they kept listening to the tempter, till by-and-by they began to believe the wicked one, and disbelieve God who had told them that if they ate, they should surely die.

The moment they began to disbelieve, they sinned. And in their unbelief they put up the hand and took the fruit!

Thus, just so long as their regard for God kept down their appetites and desires, just so long they remained pure and holy. But just as soon as these inward feelings overbalanced their regard for God's law, they sinned.

Thus it was that the Sin-Plague first came upon our race.

IX. THE EFFECTS OF THIS FIRST SIN.

“Blest with joys of innocence,
Adam, our father, stood
Till he debased his soul to sense,
And ate the unlawful food.

“Now we are born a sensual race,
To sinful joys inclined,
Reason has lost its native place,
And flesh enslaves the mind.”

The moment our first parents sinned they became enemies of God and made God their enemy.

It happened with them as it often does with children and with men.

There was a man who was post-master in the little town where he lived. He had to take the letters out of the mail-bag when it came, and put into it those that were to be sent away. Often he would notice large, thick-looking letters that he was sure contained money. Now he was a poor man and Satan used to whisper in his heart to take some of those letters and steal the money in them. For some time he resisted. But the more he thought of it, the more he felt inclined to commit the crime. Meanwhile every now and then the big letters would come along, and as he handled them he would look at them, and think:

“Oh, how many things I could buy with the money in these letters! I do not believe that any one would find it out if I should take one now and then.”

So one day when there were several in the bag he slipped one into his pocket. At first he felt very happy in his treasure, for the letter contained a large sum of money. But it was not long before a change came over his feelings. He thought that everybody that came into the office looked suspiciously at him. He knew that he had made an enemy of his government, and that if it should find him out, he would be shut up in prison and his name be publicly disgraced.

But a few days after another mail came with several money-letters, and he thought:

“Now I have taken one and I might as well take another. The disgrace will be the same if I should be found out, and the punishment very little heavier.”

So he took another. Oh, how Satan laughed at the sin and folly of his victim!

By-and-by, as letter after letter disappeared, suspicion began to be awakened, and he felt that sharp eyes were watching him. So one night he ran away and hid himself in one of our large cities from view. There he was hating

his government, because he knew he had injured it and that its officers were searching for him to bring him to justice.

Just so it was with Adam and Eve. They had disbelieved God and believed Satan, and had broken his command. So they knew that God was angry with them and they dreaded to think of him. And when they heard him coming toward them, they ran away and hid themselves.

Up to this time, God helped them to be good. His Spirit was in them, and showed them the right way and made all their thoughts and feelings right. But now God was offended and withdrew his Spirit and they were left to themselves.

Thus sometimes a boy living at home, enjoys his father's and mother's counsels and guidance and influence. This greatly helps him to do right. But he falls into bad company. He learns to swear and to become drunken, and to do all manner of bad things. His parents rebuke and advise and urge and warn him, but he goes on from bad to worse, until

seeing that his influence on the other children is likely to injure them, and perhaps make them as bad as he is himself, they send him away from their house, and forbid his ever entering their doors again!

Now if he was so wicked under all the good influences of home, how much worse will he be, surrounded all the time by his wicked companions!

So Adam and Eve, even when in the garden, with God for their friend and guide, yielded to the tempter; now how much worse will they be when thus alienated from God, and God from them?

Besides, their hearts, their natures, have now become wicked. When the man had stolen one letter, he had become a thief. Sin was in his soul. So when our first parents had once actually sinned, their souls became sinful. Their thoughts and feelings were sinful.

Their minds must work, must act. This was in their very nature. While God was their friend, he guided those actions and they were all right. But when God in anger left

them to themselves, all those actions became wrong, and on they went in sin, and God drove them out of the garden that was made for the good and not for the wicked.

Before this, they could not die. God promised them life if they obeyed, and said that if they sinned they should surely die. So they were now dead in trespasses and sins, and diseases began to work in their bodies, leading them on, on to death.

Such were the awful effects of sin on themselves. But these effects did not stop here. Adam in the garden was not only the father of the race, but its representative head. He acted for all his children down to the end of time. You know what our Congress is. It is a body of men chosen by those who have the right to make the choice to act for them in making laws. And the laws they make bind us. We have to obey those laws and do what they tell us and avoid what they forbid. And when they act thus in making laws, it is the people who do it by them. We make the laws because we choose them to make them. They

are our representatives. So when the Senate and President make a treaty or an agreement with England or France, they act for us, and we act by them, and we are bound to keep the treaty they make. And those who are born after any treaty or law is made, unless it has been changed or unmade again by those who made it, are just as much bound by it as if they had been alive, and had voted for those men who made it. Thus people, millions and millions of them, are represented by the government even before they are born.

But suppose one is born under a system of laws, and when he becomes old enough to understand the matter, he dislikes some of those laws and wishes them abolished, he is still just as much bound by them as if he approved them, and he must obey them as long as they are in force. So, sometimes parents die and leave a large property to a child who is yet a little baby. Now that baby cannot take care of his property. So, some one is appointed his guardian to manage his property for him. This guardian may sell some

of his lands, and may buy houses with the money, and may make a great many changes in the property, and the owner of the property is bound by all his guardian does. It makes no difference whether he likes what his guardian does or not, he cannot alter anything so long as he is represented by his guardian.

So, sometimes the pupils in a school wish to make a present to a teacher. And they give money, each his share, and this money they give into the hands of say three of their number, and say to them,

“Go spend that money for something for a present to the teacher.”

Well, those boys consult together, and think, on the whole, that the best thing they can buy is a gold watch. They spend the money and procure the watch and give it to the teacher. Now some of the boys may be dissatisfied with what has been done. But this makes no difference. The money is spent and they cannot change the matter.

Now if men may appoint other men to stand for them and represent them and act for

them, surely God may do this without them. And so God did with the first man. He placed him in the garden to act for himself, and for all that should descend from him. If he obeyed then all the race would with him enjoy the reward.

If he sinned then all the race would become exposed to the punishment. Whatever happened to him would happen to all those he represented. His act would secure to them either untold blessing, or untold sorrow.

Just so it is with the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. He stood as the representative of all who should love him. He obeyed all the law of God, and as soon as we believe in him and thus become his children, we have the rewards of his obedience. And he took the punishment of sin; and the moment we believe, we receive the benefit of his suffering, and are no more exposed to punishment for sin. Thus whatever Christ did as our representative, God considers that we did ourselves, and whatever Adam did as our representative God considers that we did ourselves.

So whatever came upon Adam for his sin, comes upon us also. Thus we are all born into the condition into which Adam fell.

But I have showed you how Adam by his sin lost the favour of God. God became his enemy, and he became the enemy of God.

This is just our condition by nature. We are "by nature" that is, by birth "the children of wrath," we are born enemies of God. Then God withdrew his Spirit from Adam and we know that from our earliest days, God's Spirit is not in our hearts making us think right and feel right and do right. By Adam's fall his heart became wicked. So we are born with a corrupt nature.

The child of a mother who has consumption is very apt to have a consumptive nature. The child of Adam, and all his descendants are born with a sinful nature. The great Sin-Plague is in them and on them, and in and on everything about them.

Adam, too, was now exposed to disease and death. Before this he could not be sick and he could not die. But now death stood ready

to take his life away whenever God would allow. And this is just the case with us. A child may be taken sick and die the day it is born. We are all of us liable to sicken any moment. We may die any hour, and sooner or later we must all die.

This is just what the Catechism says:

“All mankind by their fall,”

1. “Lost communion with God.” The Spirit of God no more dwells in them to keep their hearts and thoughts and feelings right.

2. “Are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life.” And these miseries are very, very many. There is headache, and heart-ache everywhere. Tears, and hunger, and poverty, and wretchedness, how they fill our world with woe!

3. “To death itself.” All, all must die.

4. “And to the pains of hell for ever.” For “the soul that sinneth it shall die,” and everybody is in danger of sinking down to hell and will if Christ do not save.

So the Bible says:

“In Adam all die,” and we are all by na-

ture dead in trespasses and sins, and exposed to everlasting death.

A minister of the Gospel, in an excellent little work,* thus writes.

“I once met a man who had been reared in luxury. He and his wife started in life, the possessors of vast wealth. He was dissipated, and she indolent and extravagant. In twenty years from their marriage all their wealth was gone. When I found them they were living in a miserable cabin, with an earthen floor, and neither chair, bed, nor table in the wretched abode, and their children, five in number, untaught, unfed, and almost naked. The father’s drunkenness was the cause of all this misery. Ah! I could not help thinking, here is a good illustration of the fall of man and its bitter consequences. These people had fallen from their first estate, and their children were reaping the bitter fruits of their father’s sin.

* See “Illustrations of the Shorter Catechism, by the Rev. Jonathan Cross.” Published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

“This wretched man’s children seemed to be satisfied with their condition. They were so ignorant and degraded that no idea of a better state seemed to enter their minds, and they never seemed to feel that it was possible to rise any higher among their fellow-creatures, or to reflect at all on the cause of their degradation. What a sad type of human nature is this. ‘The fall brought *mankind* into an estate of sin and misery,’ and we all show by our conduct that we fully approve of what our first parents did. It is only when the truth shines like a lamp into our hearts and understanding that we see our misery and degradation. Sin is the cause of all our misery.”

Now, children, let me show you what is at the very root of our sin and misery. The physician when he is called to see a sick child, feels the pulse, and looks at the tongue to find, if he can, what is the root of the disease, that he may apply the proper remedy. There may be an intense pain in the head, but he does not at once say, “We must apply some-

thing to the head;" for he may know that the cause of the pain does not lie in the head.

Sometimes one is afflicted with a distressing cough. But the doctor does not at once say,

"Now the lungs are diseased and we must try to heal the lungs."

No, for he may see reasons for believing the seat of the trouble is in the stomach, and it is to that point he directs his efforts.

So with this Sin-Plague. We must find the root of the disease, and we do find it in *condemnation* in God's wrath against sin.

God is angry with the wicked every day. And hence he does not dwell in the sinful heart, and therefore it works on without him and under the influence of the evil one.

So Christ, when he comes, first removes the condemnation from us to himself. He takes our sins upon himself, and bears them for us. And "there is therefore now no condemnation."

With the removal of the condemnation, the Spirit enters and changes the heart, and it believes and repents and loves and is saved.

Such now, dear children, is this awful Sin-Plague. It is everywhere, and in everybody, on every part of everybody. It is very insidious in its workings, hid away in the soul, poisoning and destroying when the sufferer knows nothing about what it is doing. It stupefies the mind and makes one feel very safe when in hourly and awful danger. It also stultifies the mind and makes it very foolish. It is fearfully stubborn and unmanageable. This Plague consists in an unrighteousness of the heart, showing itself in wicked thoughts and feelings and motives and conduct. It began on our first parents in the garden when they were holy. It made God their enemy, and then he left them to themselves, and their whole nature became depraved; and all mankind, being represented in Adam, are born in the same condition into which he fell. And the root of the plague as now found in us is the condemnation we are under for sin, and this can only be removed by the Great Physician who "bears our sins in his own body on the tree."

Now, children, the first thing for you to do is to get well yourselves.

“And can no sovereign balm be found,
And is no kind physician nigh,
To ease the pain and heal the wound,
Ere life and hope for ever fly?

“There is a great physician near ;
Look up, O fainting soul, and live ;
See, in his heavenly smiles appear
Such aid as nature cannot give.

“See, in the Saviour’s dying blood,
Life, health and bliss, abundant flow ;
’Tis only this dear sacred flood
Can ease thy pain, and heal thy woe.”

When the Israelites were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness, Moses made a serpent of brass and put it on a pole, and then every one that was bitten had only to look at that serpent and he was immediately cured. So we have only to look to Christ on the cross in faith and penitence and love, and we are instantly and for ever cured. For,

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up ;

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Then, cured yourselves, you must try to induce others to look and be cured. •

One day, a ship was sailing over the ocean, and the people on board saw something far away on the waters. The Captain turned the head of the ship in that direction, and by-and-by they found that it was a wrecked ship. They could see no body on board, but they lowered a boat and sent it to the wreck. There they found a man almost starved to death. So they took him out and carried him to the ship and gave him something to drink to revive him. By-and-by, his lips seemed to be moving. They bent down to hear what he might say, but they could not make out what he was trying to utter. After a while when he was a little more revived they listened again, and now they could make out these words:

“There—is—an—other—man—there!”
That poor man almost dead, just as soon as he could think, began to be anxious about a poor companion in misery, and he was dis-

tressed to think that he might be left alone on that wretched wreck to die! And just as soon as he could speak, he told them of the sufferer, that they might go back and save him!

What an example for us! Oh, children, when you feel that the great physician has healed you of the plague, don't forget the others that are dying of the same terrible disease!

You remember what Joseph in the dungeon said to the chief butler, as the latter was about to be taken again into favour with the king.

“Think of me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me.”

So now, think of your brothers and sisters, perhaps your father and mother, and of your friends and playmates, yet under the power of the plague, and hear their souls saying:

“Think of us when it is well with you, and shew kindness, we pray you, unto us!”
Amen!

THE NEW CREATURE.

87

**“Sinners this solemn truth regard;
Hear, all ye sons of men:
For Christ the Saviour hath declared,
‘Ye must be born again!’**

**“Whate’er might be your birth or blood,
The sinner’s boast is vain;
Thus saith the glorious Son of God,
‘Ye must be born again.’”**

III.

THE NEW CREATURE.

Now, children, we have enjoyed another very pleasant week at this summer watering-place. Every day has been taken up with drives and recreations of various kinds, and having this morning again had service with the older people at the house, we are once more under the oak in this glorious church to hold the children's meeting. And having sung and prayed, I want to tell you about—
A new creature. Let us begin with a story.

Three or four of us were once spending an evening at the house of a lady, who, to entertain us, brought out a little box which she said contained something that was very curious. We looked at the box but could see nothing about it very uncommon. It might

have been a mere casket to keep jewels in or it might contain some little bottles of delicate perfume.

Presently, she took a key and inserting it in a little hole in the box, gave it a few turns, then turning back the cover, what do you think we saw? Why, a bird, very beautiful and no bigger I think than the last joint of a child's little finger! But it was not lying nestled down in the box. As soon as the cover was lifted, it leaped up and standing, I think, on some little twig, it turned its head from side to side, and sang away with all its might, as if it was so glad to get out of its prison and see the light again, that it hardly knew what to do. Its voice was loud, but very sweet. After singing a while it ceased, stood still, and the lady, closing the lid, shut it up in its narrow, hiding-place, and placed the box carefully away beyond the reach of rude fingers that might do it harm.

“Was the bird alive?”

“No, it was a mere piece of exquisitely wrought machinery.”

“Where did the lady get it?”

“She had spent some time in Europe and came across it, I think in the city of Paris, and was so pleased with it that she bought it.”

“How much did she give for it?”

“I do not know, but I suspect that it cost a pretty large sum.”

“Who made it?”

“Some very ingenious artificer.”

“Well, I don’t see how any man *could* make a bird that would sing like a live bird.”

“No, nor do I. But the world is full of things that I do not see how any one could make. It must have cost a great deal of time, and of thought, of money to collect the materials, and of skill to adjust them so as to produce results so wonderful.”

“Oh, how I should like to have one!”

“So should I, but I have seen something a great deal more wonderful and a great deal more beautiful.”

“What was that?”

“Something that cost thousands of times as

much, and was millions of times more beautiful. It was alive and sang more sweetly than all the living birds in the world. It sang every day and would continue to sing for years and years, and at last it would sing its very sweetest song, and then spread its wings and fly away into the skies, and there sing on among the flower-groves of God's paradise for ever and ever in strains that God, and Jesus, and the Holy Ghost and all the hosts of heaven would love to hear!

“Oh, tell us about that wonderful thing!”

Well, if you will turn to the second epistle to the Corinthians, the fifth chapter and the seventeenth verse, you will see its name—“A new creature.”

Sometimes, I suppose, God makes a new star. Astronomers tell us that now and then a star appears in the heavens which they have never seen before. But the new creature of which I am telling you, is not a new star. In the spring God makes multitudes of new flowers, but this new creature is not a flower. It sings, but flowers and stars do not. In the

birds-nests we may often see that beautiful thing, a bird's egg, sometimes of a pure white, sometimes purely green, sometimes singularly dotted and streaked. And out of these eggs, God creates new and beautiful birds. But this we speak of is not a bird, though like the birds it sings also. It is a new human being. A man, a woman, a boy, a girl is made over again, so that they become new creatures.

Suppose a delicate china-toy to fall on the floor and break all to pieces, and then suppose some one to take it up and make it over again so that it should be the same toy it was before, yet a great deal more beautiful. This would be like the new creature we are speaking of.

Suppose a ship to be cast away, and lie for years on the rocks. The sails are stripped to ribbons, and the cordage is all snapped. The waves dash over it, and at every dash tear off some of its planks. Lying there in the sun and storm, the timbers rot and fall to pieces, and you expect it by-and-by to disappear for ever. But an angel comes down and waves

his bright wing over it, and the parts come together, each in its own place. New life enters into the decaying wood. The seams are all closed up. New masts and new cordage appear hung all over with white sails. And now the tide rising lifts the vessel from the rocks and launches it out upon the deep, and away it goes, flapping its wing-like sails, like a milk-white swan swimming on the blue waters. It is a new creature, and in some respects like the one we are now talking about.

You know what a valley is. If there is a hill, with another not far off, the space between them is a valley. Now let us fancy ourselves standing upon the top of a hill looking down into a long, deep valley. It is white as if the snow had been falling upon it, so white that you can hardly look at it in the shining sun. What makes it so white? Why, it is covered all over with bones, human bones! The rain has fallen on them, and the sun for many a day has been shining on them, till now they are bleached to perfect whiteness.

Now look ! There goes a venerable-looking man, walking slowly round those bones, looking at them, and when he has gone all the way around them, he stops and begins to speak. Listen! he says:

“O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!”

And now hark! Hear how those bones begin to shake. They are moving! They are gathering themselves together, side-bones arranging themselves as ribs, arm-bones, bones of the legs, and hands and feet. And now see what a strange sight meets your eye. The valley is covered from end to end, from side to side, with human skeletons, lying in long, orderly rows! What a wonderful sight.

But see! The flesh is now growing on those bones, and the skin is covering them. From skeletons they have all become corpses! There they lie perfect in form and feature, just as you have seen human forms in the coffin, waiting to be buried. But these are not to be buried. For now that venerable man speaks again, and says:

“Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain.”

And now look at those corpses. The eyes open. The lips move, the hands and fingers and feet stir. They are all rising up as men from a slumber, and there they stand a great living army! (Ezek. xxxvii.)

Now these are new creatures, very much like that one Paul speaks of when he says:

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

I. WHAT IS THIS NEW CREATURE?

It is a new human being. Not a new-born babe, for even these little babes have to be made over again, before they go to heaven. A little bird will always fly as soon as his wings grow, and a little child will always sin as soon as he is old enough to sin. The fact that every little bird flies as soon as he can, shows that the disposition to fly is in him, and hence it shows itself just as soon as possible, and the fact that children always sin, as soon

as they are old enough, shows that the disposition to sin is in them, and hence it shows itself just as soon as it can.

This new creature then is a man or woman, or boy or girl, made over again, made into a new creature. They were sinners but they have become Christians. They are new creatures.

Once, notice was given that a meeting would be held in a church, and that an Indian would make an address to the people, and a great crowd assembled, expecting to see a coarse, savage from the woods, with his face covered with ugly paint, feathers in his hair, a blanket over his shoulders, shells and other trinkets on his breast, his rifle in his hand and a tom-a-hawk and scalping knife in his belt. But to the surprise of all, when he arose he was dressed like the other men in the congregation!

“Now,” said he, “you will ask how it is that I look so different from what you expected. I will tell you. Turn to 2 Corinthians, fifth chapter and seventeenth verse and

you will find the reason. 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' When I became a Christian, feathers and paint done away, scalping knife done away: tom-a-hawk done away. This is my tom-a-hawk now, this New Testament. Blanket done away. Behold all things become new!"

Did you ever see a vulture? Well, you need not wish to. They are large, ugly looking birds, with no feathers on the head and neck. They fly very heavily, and when they walk, their wings hang down and drag along the ground, and hence have a very dirty, ragged appearance. They eat rats and mice, and devour the dead bodies of horses, asses and camels, and any other kind of cast off and decaying animal food. Flocks of vultures are said to follow the caravans across the deserts, that they may eat up whatever is dropped on the way.

Now you have seen a pure white dove, with its meek eye and gentle manners, and you

have heard it "coo," as it stepped along in its stately way.

Suppose, then, you should see a vulture turned into a dove, you would say, "There is a new creature."

So the Bible says of man that "he is abominable, filthy, drinking in iniquity like water." It says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Paul describes men as they are before being turned into new creatures, in this way,

"Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Then, he says, to the Corinthian Christians:

"And such were some of you." But he adds, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified." That is, they are made new creatures. The vultures have become doves.

There was once a great and powerful revival of religion. Almost every one in the neighbourhood was thinking about Christ and hell and heaven. But there was one man, a black-

smith, who laughed at religion and at all who cared for it. He was a bitter infidel. He cursed and swore and blasphemed.

One day a man called on the pastor and said:

“Everybody around seems to be thinking seriously but that infidel. Must we give him up? Cannot something be done to save him?”

“I do not know,” the pastor said; “I called on him the other day, and he laughed me to scorn.”

After talking a while about the wretched man, the visitor withdrew, and that night that minister spent in prayer for that infidel man. All night long he prayed and prayed for his soul.

The next evening at the prayer-meeting a man rose and began to speak, and what was the surprise and delight of all, to see in the speaker the infidel blacksmith! He told his story. He said:

“This morning, while at work in my shop, I saw a man ride up on horseback, tie his horse to the fence and come toward me. It

was your minister there. I did not pay any attention to him. Just as I had lifted my hammer to strike the iron on the anvil he came up, and said :

“‘My dear sir, I am dreadfully concerned for your soul.’ He could say no more but bursting into tears, he went away! I stood thunderstruck with my hammer lifted in the air. After a little, I threw it down and went to my house. My Christian wife was alarmed to see me come in at that time of day, and evidently under great distress, and asked :

“‘Are you sick?’

“‘Yes, my soul is sick. I am a wretched sinner. The minister has just called on me, riding two miles in the cold air to tell me that he was troubled for my soul. Wife, what shall I do?’

The poor woman, overjoyed to hear me talk in this way said :

“‘Perhaps you had better go and see the minister.’

“‘I went and now here I am, a truly happy man. My peace flows like a river. My

faithful wife who so long bore with my impiety now rejoices with me. I was blind but now I see."

He sat down overcome with emotion, while tears flowed and sobs were heard through the whole assembly.

Here was one of these new creatures. Old things had passed away, and behold all things had become new!

II. WHO MAKES MEN ANEW?

"And can these mouldering corpses live?
And can these perished bones revive?
That, mighty God, to thee is known;
That wondrous work is all thy own.

"But if thy Spirit deign to breathe,
Life spreads through all the realms of death,
Dry bones obey thy powerful voice;
They move, they waken, they rejoice."

A little girl had a rose-bush which she had watched a long time, and by-and-by, to her great joy, one single flower-bud appeared! Every morning she would run out in the garden to see if it were still opening. In a day or two more, it would be in full bloom. But

a little cousin came to see her, a rough, selfish, reckless boy, who thought it great fun to do just what his mother and cousins wished him not to do. It made the little wretch happy to break another child's toy, and see the child cry over it. Well, when this little barbarian came to see his cousin, she said :

“ Oh, Jim, my rose-bush has got a little bud on it, and pretty soon I shall have a beautiful rose !”

“ Oh, let me see it,” cried Jim.

So they ran out into the yard, and there sure enough was the opening bud. But in an instant Jim snatched it off, and threw it into the air, exclaiming in the coarse language of the streets,

“ How are you, rose-bud ?”

Poor Minnie burst into tears and cried as if her heart would break, and coarse-hearted Jim cried out :

“ Phew, what a baby !”

Minnie picked up the bud, and running to her father, who she thought could do anything, asked :

“Father, can’t you put this bud on again?”

“No, my child, I cannot, and all the men in the world cannot. Men are very wise and very strong to destroy, but they cannot mend a broken rose-bud. But Minnie, I think another bud will come out on your bush, and if not, I will buy you, one of these days, a beautiful nosegay.”

Now, children, if men cannot put a rose-bud back on the bush from which it has been broken, do you suppose they can make a sinful man or child a new creature?

God alone, who made man at first, can make him anew. No man can do it for himself, no other man can do it for him. And you, my young reader, if God has not already made you a new creature, and does not before you die work this change upon you, can never stand at God’s right hand, in the great judgment day!

But what is God? God is a spirit, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Now which person in the god-head does this renewing work?

Not God the Father; he gives and sends the Son. Not God the Son; he obeyed the law for us, and then died for our sins. But God the Holy Ghost, coming from the Father and the Son, does this glorious work. He strives with us, showing us that we are sinners. He makes us think of God and death and heaven. He changes the heart and enables us to believe, repent and love. He teaches us to be holy and fits our souls for heaven.

III. A CREATION.

Do you know the difference between *creating* a thing and *making* a thing? Man makes, but God only creates. Sometimes a boy makes a kite. To do this he gets paper and string, and sticks and paste, and he cuts and shapes the sticks and the paper, and after some time spent in thought and labour, he has a kite. But he only puts together the materials. He could not create the paper and the sticks.

But suppose God would make a world. He would not go to one place and get earth, for

the continents and islands, to another, and get water for the seas and rivers, and to another to get trees or seeds, but he would simply say, "Let there be a world!" and as soon as he had done speaking, there the world would be, with all the mountains, vallies, rivers, forests and flowers! God creates out of nothing, simply by a word!

Now in making the new creature, God acts as a Creator, and when the work is done, there is something new in the world, something that did not exist before.

This new thing is a life. It is created in the soul, and at once it begins to work in that soul.

Suppose you take some flour and mix it with water and bake it; what will you have? Something very dry and very hard that one must be very hungry to be able to eat.

But when you have mixed your flour and water together, take it to the kitchen and get Bridget to put in a little yeast, and when you have stirred it together, set it away in a warm place, and see what will happen. It will at

once begin to move. The little particles of yeast are taking hold of the little particles of flour, and making the whole mass swell to twice its former bulk. Now if this is baked at the right time, you may have a nice, light roll.

So God takes the heart all full of sin. It is hard and cold and dead. By his power he creates something in that heart. You may call it a life. This life will work its way all through the soul, and change the whole character. The soul, will feel differently, think differently, love what it used to dislike, and dislike many things it used to love. Old things will pass away, and all things will become new.

Now man could as easily make a new world, as he could make this new thing in a human heart. We must be born again, "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

**"Sinners, this solemn truth regard;
Hear, all ye sons of men :**

For Christ the Saviour hath declared,
'Ye must be born again.'

"Spirit of life, thy grace impart,
And breathe on sinners slain;
Bear witness, Lord, in every heart
That we are born again."

IV. CREATED NOT REVIVED.

Now I hear you asking in your mind,—

"What does that mean? created not revived. I know what created means, but I don't understand that hard word revived."

Well, let us see if we can't find out. There on the hearth is a pile of ashes. Underneath is a little mite of coal. Now you go and get some dry, pine shavings, or let Johnny take out his knife and whittle off from a dry pine stick some small bits and put them carefully around that little coal. Then let him get down on his knees and blow softly for a while, and perhaps a little smoke will arise. Perhaps, by-and-by, it will blaze. Then keep putting on sticks larger and larger, and by-and-by, you will have as large a fire as you wish.

Now this is a reviving. There *was* fire in the ashes, and you have only made that fire burn up and show itself.

But this is not the way a sinner is made into a Christian. For before one is converted, the heart is a mass of ashes, with no little coal in it. Hence we may put into the heart anything we please, and yet no fire of true religion will burn up in it.

Sabbath-school teachers and Christian parents may pile up ever so much instruction, and the pupil may make ever so many good resolutions; but these alone will never make the child a new creature. Indeed, you may blow upon that pile of heart-ashes the breath of prayer, and still the ashes will not burn; for there is no spark in it to set this fuel on fire. So you see that religion in the heart does not come from a reviving, burning up again of a spark of goodness remain in it, although nearly gone out. For the fire had all gone out. "In Adam all die." Every spark of religion is quenched and destroyed.

But now open your Bible and find the sixth

chapter of Judges. There is a great oak-tree, with a fine large trunk and a great broad top with overhanging branches. On the grass under that tree sits an angel. Before the angel stands a man by the name of Gideon. After talking with the angel a while Gideon goes away and kills a kid, boils some of it, and brings the broth in a vessel and the meat in a basket, together with some cakes. The angel then tells him to lay the meat and the cakes upon a large stone near by, and to pour out the broth upon it. He does so. Then the angel touches those things with the staff in his hand, and see what happens? There rises up fire out of the rock and burns up the cakes and the flesh!

Now do you suppose that the fire that rose out of that rock came from a spark hidden away inside of it? Was this flame a reviving of an almost expired spark? By no means! That fire was created in the rock the moment the angel's rod touched the flesh and the cakes.

Now the heart, before religion enters it, is a rock. The Bible says of men, "They made

their hearts as an adamant stone.” (Zech. vii. 12.) But there is no spark of fire in a stone. But when the Holy Ghost touches the heart with the rod of his gracious power, up springs the flame of religion, and burns in faith and repentance and love! So religion, the new creature in the heart, is a creation, not a reviving.

V. CREATION NOT A REPLACEMENT.

Now here is another long, hard word. What does replacement mean? Let us see, Jennie has a flower-pot with a beautiful monthly rose-bush in it. One morning she goes to it to water it, and to see how it is growing, and the bush is gone! She runs to her mother and tells her, and asks,

“Mother, who took my rose-bush from my flower-pot?”

“I do not know. It is very strange.”

She inquires of all in the house and no one can tell anything about it. She, at length, gives it up, but is very sorry to lose her rose-bush.

The next morning as she passed her flower-pot, she sees her rose-bush standing there as if nothing had happened. Now this is a replacement. It is a putting back of what was taken away.

Now religion in the heart is not a replacement—not a putting back of what sin took away. God made man with a religious life in the heart; but when Adam fell, this life was driven out, and man was left “dead in trespasses and sins.” When religion comes into him, he is alive again; but this life is a new creature, and is not the same as that which sin drove out of the soul. But is a much more beautiful and glorious life.

Suppose you darken all the panes of glass but one in a room. Through that one a beam of white light will come and make a broad, bright spot on the opposite wall. Now suppose that spot of light should be taken away and a part of a rainbow should take its place. Would not that spot on the wall be much more beautiful, with all those splendid colours, than it was before with only pure white light

falling on it? So it is with religion. The religion that Adam had before the fall was a pure white light. Sin destroyed that light. But the Holy Spirit, when he makes one a new creature, puts a beautiful light in the soul like that you read about in Revelation (iv. 3) around the throne of Christ; and this light is a hundred times more precious than that which Adam had and lost.

Suppose you should find a plant growing in the garden. You do not know what it is. It grows like a vine and its leaf is pretty, though you see no flower-buds upon it. You ask your father to go out and look at it, and he says at once :

“Why, my child, that is a poison vine! If you touch it, it will cause sores to come on your hand. If it touches your face, your face will swell, and perhaps your eye-sight will be injured. I have known people to be poisoned all over, simply by the wind blowing on them through such a vine?”

Now, is not a sinner such a vine. “One sinner destroyeth much good?” A bad boy

at school will sometimes teach others to swear, to deceive, to play truant and to steal. He poisons every one he comes near.

But now that vine dies. Its leaves all fall off, and the stem becomes dead and dry.

But now look, it is alive again! Somehow the old life in the plant has come back again, and it is growing, the same poisonous plant it was before!

But suppose that instead of this old life, a new life comes into this dead plant, not the old poison-vine life, but the life of the oleander! Now it grows, and becomes very large. Buds and leaves appear, and in due time it is covered with beautiful crimson, oleander flowers!

What a wonderful change! So it is when one becomes a Christian. A new life is created in him much more glorious than that which was in Adam in Paradise; and even that was very beautiful. If Adam had not sinned, our whole world would have been a beautiful Eden. No wars, no sickness, no death, no crimes, no drunkenness, no murders, no swear-

ing, no lying, no wrong in any form would ever have cursed the world.

But then Adam in Eden, knew nothing of faith in Christ, or of repentance unto life. Adam was not united to Christ, a "member of his body and of his flesh and of his bones." If the life that Adam lost by sin were brought back and replaced in us we should have been just like him.

But when we become Christians, a life like that of Christ is created within us, and it grows and fills all the soul and the body too. It burns in us until we die, and then it goes with us to heaven, and puts us nearer the throne of God than even the angels!

Now I think you understand what is meant by saying that the Holy Spirit, when he makes us Christians, does not replace a lost life, but creates a new one in us. True religion then is a creation not a replacement.

VI. CREATION DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE.

More big words! Well, it is hard to tell about great works without using great words.

Words carry thoughts. When I say "The cars ran off the track," these words convey into your minds the idea, the thought of a train of cars, rushing along on the iron track, then passing off the track and piling up in a confused, crushed mass of ruins, broken timbers, and broken bones. Now when the thought to be carried by a word is a very large thought, some great truth, we cannot always put it into some little familiar word. But if we can explain a big word, we can make it carry a good deal of instruction.

Now, when we say "creation direct and immediate," we mean a work in which God takes right hold of the work without using anything in doing it but simply his own power.

When a man makes a house, he cannot do it directly and immediately; he has to go at it in a round about way, and has to make use of a great many means to do what he wishes. When he makes the foundation, he has to employ men to dig a hole or trench in the ground. Other men must go to the quarry and hew out stone. Others bring them to

the spot. Others lay them in the appointed place. Others make and bring mortar to put between the stones. Then men have to dig clay and make and burn bricks. Others bring trees from the woods and have them sawed up into boards. And so the work goes on. It is not direct, but indirect. It is not immediate; but a great many things, and a great deal of time come between the builder and the building he erects. But God has no need to act in this indirect way. And in creating the new life in the soul, he puts forth his power right upon his work, and does it directly and immediately.

This is always the case in an act of creation. There was a time when all was darkness. God wanted the light to shine. What did he do? Did he tell one set of angels to go in one direction and another in another, and do this and bring that, that he might make light?

Did God use any means or tools to make it? When a blacksmith wishes to make an iron bolt, he uses fire to soften the iron and a

hammer to shapen it. But if God would use any tools, what could he use them on, to make light. He could not use them on the light to sharpen it, for the light does not yet exist. He could not use them on anything else to turn it into light, for light is not made out of any thing else. So with this new life in the heart.⁷ It is not made out of anything, and when it is once made, there it is, and there is need of nothing more. He says, "Let there be light," and there the light is! So he speaks and this new life springs right up in the soul.

But, children, when I say God does not use any instrument or means in creating us anew, I do not mean to say that the reading of the word of God, preaching, praying, and teaching by Sabbath-school teachers and by parents, and prayer-meetings, and many, many other things, have nothing to do with our spiritual creation. Far from it! God uses all these things in many ways in bringing about this great change.

In writing the history of a Christian, we

may divide the work into three chapters. The first would tell all about him before he became a Christian; the second would tell the story of the change, and the third would tell about him after the change.

In the first chapter we should see how God by his Spirit made him think about his soul, showed him his sins, made him wish to escape from death, made him pray and read the Bible, and made him ask others to pray for him. In this way, God generally leads the sinner on from one point to another, until he comes to the point where the change takes place.

Then in the second chapter we should tell how God by his Spirit touched his soul, and by his power made him a new creature.

The next chapter would give an account of the life of this new creature. As soon as the life is created in the soul, it believes, repents, loves, hopes, and resolves to be Christ's forever. Then this new creature grows in grace and learns more and more of religion, and becomes more and more fit for heaven.

Now, in the first chapter and in the third chapter we should see God using his providences, his word and many other instrumentalities. By these he brings the soul to the point of creation; and then after the creation, he brings it up from that point, making it more and more fit for heaven.

But what I wish you to notice is, that in working the change in the soul, God uses nothing but his own power. He says, "Let there be light," and the light flashes into the soul! Thus we are "created anew in Christ Jesus." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away." His condemnation is for ever gone. His sins are passed away. His unbelief, hardness of heart and fears of destruction are wholly gone with them, his dislike of God and his word, his house and his people. Now all things are become new—new thoughts, new feelings, new loves, new dislikes. In the first and third chapters we should see how God uses means and instruments on the soul; but in the second we should see God operating

with his power directly on the soul. God and the soul in the act of creation, are alone together without anything else. This is what I mean by saying that this creation is direct and immediate.

VII. CREATION—INSTANTANEOUS.

What does this word *instantaneous* mean? It means that God does this great work in an instant, in a moment. It does not take God any time at all to do it. He does not do a little one day and a little another, a little one hour and a little another, a little one minute and a little another. He does it all at once. This work is never partly done and partly undone. One is never partly a Christian and partly not a Christian. In a minute he is wholly created anew, just as much as he is years after he becomes a Christian.

When men build a house or a ship, they often employ years in doing it. They can't do it in a minute or in a day. When a boy makes a ball, he gets some India-rubber, and then winds yarn around it. When it is large

enough he finds a piece of leather and covers it. All this takes time, but God begins and ends his work all at once.

There was once a very wicked man who not only hated Christ, but he hated all who loved Christ. He had great power and he would seize men and women and throw them into prison, and do all he could to compel them to blaspheme the name of Christ. One day, he went to the authorities and secured from them permission to go to a distant city and there seize and persecute all he could find who loved and served the Redeemer. On the way, however, a blazing light came down from heaven and made him blind; but at the same time made him a new creature. In one instant, quickly as the lightning flashes, he became a Christian! God did not make him partly a Christian in one moment, and then in another moment finish the work.

And so it is with every Christian. If God should create an oak-tree six feet high, it would be an oak-tree, though it might in a few years grow to be many times larger than

when first made. So a Christian is a new creature in an instant; but he grows wiser and better as long as he lives. But the creation is instantaneous.

VIII. HOW ONE KNOWS THAT HE IS A NEW CREATURE.

Once a man died and was buried. Four days passed away. At length some one came to the family, and they went together to the grave. This friend told those who stood around to roll away the stone from the mouth of the grave. Then he went up, and looking in, he said, with a loud voice:

“Lazarus, come forth!”

Immediately the one who was dead came forth alive, wrapped all around with his winding sheet, and his face covered over with a cloth! Jesus then said:

“Loose him and let him go!”

They did so, and he then went home with his sisters and friends alive and well.

Now how did Lazarus know that he was alive? Did he feel the life go into him?

Certainly not. Nor does the sinner feel the creation of the new life in his soul. But if he does not feel thus, how does he know that he is a new creature?

Why, just as Lazarus knew that he was alive again. He did not feel the life come into him; but when he found thoughts coming and going through his mind, when he felt his heart beating, when they took the napkin off his face and he saw Jesus and Mary, and Martha and his friends all around, smiling through their tears, when he looked up and saw the blue skies over him, and found himself moving along the way back to his home, he knew that he was alive.

Just so it is with one who is made a new creature. He does not feel the creation of the life within him; but he finds out that the work has taken place by what takes place afterwards. He finds himself believing on Christ, sorrowing for his sins, loving the Saviour and his people, loving the Bible and loving to pray. And when he feels these things within him, so different from what used

to be there, he may know that some great change has taken place, and that this change consists in a new creation within him.

“Did you ever see a dark-lantern?”

Well, suppose there was a company of children in a room some evening, and all the light put out. The room is all dark, and no one can see any other. Pretty soon some one enters with a dark lantern in his hand, and says :

“Now, children, I am bringing you a light.”

But you can see neither him nor his light, and you say :

“Why, where is the light?” He replies, “I have it in my hand.”

You think this is very strange and wonder what he means. But, by-and-by, he moves a little slide and out rushes a beam of clear, strong light! Now the way you knew that there was light in that lantern was not by seeing it in the lantern, but by seeing it after it came out. The man knew it was there for he lighted it. You found out that it was there

by seeing the light come forth after it had been lighted.

So with the new life in the heart. We do not feel and know that it is there until it comes out in faith and repentance and love.

Now I seem to hear some one ask :

“Can this new life be in us without our knowing it?”

I answer, certainly it can. For as we do not feel God create it in us, and we only know that it is there by its coming out and showing itself in certain ways, it may be there some time before we are sure that it is there. Other people may be sure from what they see in our conduct that we are new creatures, before we can see and know it ourselves.

There was once a celebrated minister of the Gospel, who had preached many years and had been the means of saving many souls. By-and-by he lay on his bed, very near to death. And his mind was in darkness.

“Oh,” said he, “I never was a Christian. It has been all delusion. I have preached to others, and now I am a cast-away.”

His friends talked and prayed with him, but all to no purpose. They could not make him believe that he was or ever had been a Christian.

“No, no!” said he, “I am lost, I am going down to eternal despair.”

Finding that all they said did him no good, one of the ministers said to him,

“Well, my brother, you say you are going down to hell. Now tell me what you mean to do in that dark world?”

The dying man lifted his head, opened his eyes, and looking around on the company exclaimed:

“Oh, I will go around among the lost and tell them what a Saviour Jesus is!”

Now, that poor man could not see what all his friends saw, that such a feeling as this came out of a heart that had been created anew in Christ Jesus!

So one may be a true Christian, and all who know him may be sure that he is so, while he himself may be sure that he is not.

Suppose God should create a star to-night

in the far off skies. It would begin to shine the moment it was made. Now if you were looking up into the sky, at the very spot where that star was just created, do you think you would see in an instant?

No, this could not be; for it might take the light that began to shine out from that star the moment it was made, a year to get to our earth; and until it got here, you could not see it. So that star would be a whole year shining away in the heavens before you would know that it was in existence!

So it is sometimes with Christians. I have no doubt that many a one is a Christian years before he can or dare say, "I am a new creature in Christ Jesus."

But does not one, when he is born again, begin immediately to believe and repent and live?

No, not always. We have every reason to believe that the Holy Spirit converts many persons in very early infancy. But how can a little infant believe and repent? The heart is renewed, and if the babe dies, he will go

right to heaven. And if he lives, the light within will, by-and-by, begin to shine, so that others can see it; but it may be years before that little Christian will know that he is a new creature.

When one is converted later in life he begins immediately to feel and act like a Christian. But he does not always know that his new feelings came from a new life within him. Satan often says to these new creatures:

“Now you have new views and new feelings, but don't imagine that these came from a new heart. It is only because you are afraid of going to hell, and not because you love Christ, that you feel and act so. It is all a delusion of your deceitful heart. Don't you see that you sin every day? Don't your mind wander when you pray? You know you were angry this morning. An hour ago you said unkind things of a neighbour. You keep sinning and sinning all the time. Do you suppose a Christian with a new heart would do such things?”

Then the poor soul says to itself:

“All this is true. No! I am not a Christian. I must not go to the communion table. Oh, when shall I have a new heart, and love the Saviour as I ought!”

And so people go on for months and years, sometimes, before they dare to allow that what they feel and do comes out of a truly new-created heart. And there are Christian children, and Christian men and women in all our congregations, who stay in the world and away from our communion tables long, long after they are converted, just because they can't see that the feelings within them are those which never come but from a converted heart.

And many, many Christians, after being years in the church, fall into doubts about themselves, and continue long in the dark and weep and mourn and think that they are lost, while God knows that they are new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Thus we know of our creation anew, not by being conscious of the work itself, but by feeling the effects of it in our hearts.

IX. THE NEW CREATURE INDESTRUCTIBLE.

This new creature of God cannot be destroyed. This is what is meant by saying that it is indestructible.

Whatever man makes will perish. Babylon was a mighty city—sixty miles from one of its gates around to the same gate. Its walls were seventy feet thick, and were fortified with many strong towers. But it perished. Many things that God makes will perish. This whole world will one day take fire and burn up. But this new creature will last as long as God lasts. If the blood of Jesus be sprinkled upon the soul, that soul will go to heaven as surely as Jesus is there. He tells us this with his own lips, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

But did not God make the angels holy, and they fell. And did not God make Adam holy, and he fell. Why then, when he makes man holy should not he fall?

Because, children, we are "created anew *in Christ Jesus.*" By this new creation we become a part of Christ. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." He says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Christ's life is in them, and because he lives, all that are created in him must live also.

"Since Christ and we are one,
Why should we doubt or fear?
Since he in heaven has fixed his throne,
He'll fix his members there."

X. OUR DUTY.

Children, you must be created anew. And God the Holy Ghost alone can do the work. Remember this. You are in God's hands, and he can make you a new creature, or he can cast you into hell.

But you will ask,

"What can we do then? We cannot make ourselves over again. God only can do this. What then can we do?"

Let me tell you what you should *not* do.

Do not neglect the means of grace.

Suppose a farmer should refuse to plough or plant, because he is not able to make a grain of wheat grow. This you know all the men in the world cannot do. Men can put seed into the ground, but they have no power to make it grow. God alone can do this. Now if the farmer should say:

“I can’t make my corn grow, so I will not do anything. I will not plough the ground, nor will I put in the seed.”

Would you not think that he was out of his mind?

But if you neglect the Sabbath and the Bible, and meditation and prayer, you refuse to do those things which God has commanded; and how can you expect God to create the new life within you, while you act in this way?

Then do not grieve the Holy Spirit by turning away from him, nor by doing anything you know to be wrong.

Suppose one should fall into the sea, and just as he was sinking in death, a boat should come near and those on board should put out their hands and offer to lift him in. But he

insults those sailors, and mocks them and tries to drive them away from him. Did ever a drowning man do this? And yet many a time has the dying sinner acted so with God.

Once while Paul was preaching to a large company, the greatest man among them began to tremble. The Spirit of God had taken hold of his heart, and made him feel that he was a sinner and in great danger of sinking down to hell. But what did that trembling sinner do? He sent Paul away, saying:

“Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” And where is that man now?

Then, when the Holy Spirit makes you feel that you are a sinner, do not try to hush your anxieties or drive them away.

I have known a man to attend church and have all his soul stirred up with anxiety about his salvation, and then leaving the church, go to the tavern and drink intoxicating drink to drown his feelings and drive away his anxiety! Sometimes one gives up going to meetings, and goes to balls and theatres just to escape

those anxieties which the Holy Spirit has caused within him, to lead him to Jesus.

Once a steamer was wrecked on our coast, and nearly all the passengers were drowned. But one man had a life-preserver which he buckled around him before he leaped into the sea. And now he struggled with all his might to reach the shore. Every moment, almost, a big, angry wave would roll over him, and as he rose to the surface he felt something pressing under his arms and around him, and forgetting in the excitement of the scene what it was, and feeling that it hindered him while trying to swim, he pulled at it and did his utmost to tear it off! By-and-by, he reached the shore almost lifeless from exhaustion, and when he came to look and find what it was that had so annoyed him in the water, he saw that it was his life-preserver! If he had succeeded in removing it, he would, in all probability, have been drowned, as were nearly all the other passengers.

But this is just what you try to do when you seek to free yourself from those anxieties

of mind which the Spirit of God awakens within you.

And do not say, "To-morrow, or at some future time, I will give my heart to Christ, but I cannot now."

Now is the only accepted time. You do not know what will be to-morrow. Before to-morrow, multitudes will die, and you may be among them.

Once, in the city of Baltimore, the people saw, in all public places, hand-bills in large type inviting to a party on board a steamer, which was going a short trip out to sea. On the hand-bills was this announcement;—

"ONLY ONE NIGHT AT SEA."

The steamer went at the appointed hour, filled with the young and gay, and it has not returned yet! Their, "One night at sea" has proved many years at sea.

So, many a poor soul has said to itself, "One week, one year more in sin and then I will repent," and their one week or year, has been long as eternity!

“Hasten, O sinner, to be wise,
And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
The longer wisdom you despise,
The harder is she to be won.
Hasten, O sinner, to be blest,
And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
For fear the curse should thee arrest,
Before to-morrow is begun.”

12 *

THE DAYSMAN.

139

“Neither is there any Daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.” John ix. 33.

140

IV.

THE DAYSMAN. ♪

ANOTHER Sabbath here so soon! How swiftly the time flies! And how quiet it is here under the oak with the green fields around! It seems as if the fields and hills, the trees and flowers were all listening to God! And in yonder clover-field, which last Sabbath was alive with butterflies, you do not see a single one. I do not know why it is, but butterflies, like children, seem to prefer one spot to play in one day, and another, another.

But we are now ready for our Sunday afternoon talk, and I think I will tell you about *The Daysman*, and to introduce the subject, let me tell you a strange story about a great, and good man.

A great many years ago, there lived in the

East, a very great, and very wealthy man. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, and I suppose a thousand oxen and a thousand asses. Of course, to take care of all these flocks and herds, he needed and he had a very great number of servants. He was a very good man, and very much respected. As he said, himself,

“When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; when I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street; the young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained from talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I

caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand."

But one day this great and good man, saw some one running toward him across the fields as hard as he could run. He seemed to be the bringer of some very important news, good or bad. Presently the messenger arrived and proved to be one of the servants that had charge of his oxen, and as soon as he could get breath to speak, he said,—

"Oh, master! the Sabians, wild Arabs, came suddenly upon us, riding on their swift horses, and they killed all the servants but me, and have gone away with all your oxen and asses!"

This was a terrible blow, for it had taken the labour of years to raise those vast herds and now they were all gone in a moment.

So sometimes a man labours and toils for a long, weary time to build him a house to live in, and in some single hour it takes fire and burns down to the ground!

But this was not all. While this servant was speaking, and while this good man was musing in distress upon this strange providence, another man came running toward them as fast as his feet could go. And while he came on, I suppose they said to themselves:

“Now here comes more bad news. Those Arabs must have driven off the camels also with the asses and oxen.”

On comes the man, and when near enough, he exclaims:

“The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped to tell thee!”

Only think of it! Seven thousand sheep burned to ashes by one gush of fire from the skies, and with the sheep, all the servants but one! Every year in our own age, people and cattle are killed by lightning.

Some time ago, a ship was on the ocean in a storm, and on the deck was a vessel of water and a tin cup, chained to a mast. A sailor

took the cup and while he was drinking from it, the lightning struck the mast, ran down, and in an instant he lay dead on the deck. Not unfrequently in a thunder-shower oxen in a field gather under a tree for shelter, when the lightning strikes the tree and kills one or more of the cattle. But think of a vast field capable of holding seven thousand cattle, with all the servants needed to attend them, and out of the clouds comes a sheet of blazing fire and not only kills them all, but burns them all up to ashes! No wonder that the servant that escaped was frightened! No wonder that he ran to his master in breathless haste with the awful tidings.

And no wonder that the master was shocked and stunned with the blow! For, this stroke was direct from heaven. The driving off of his cattle had been by human agency, and although he knew that God permitted it, yet this seemed not so dreadful as when God opened the clouds and poured out the deluge of fire to kill and consume his flocks and his servants. Thus it was with Sodom. The

people in that wicked city rose, one bright morning, and saw the sun shining in splendour on all the face of nature around, when just after, down came a storm of fire and brimstone and burned up the city and people, and over burning Sodom there arose a vast column of smoke mingled with flame as from a huge and terrible furnace—like the bursting forth of the fires of hell!

Now the owner of these flocks was not wicked like the men of Sodom. God himself said of him:

“There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.” But when this calamity came, he must have begun to fear that God was angry with him, and he began to ask his soul,—

“Oh, what have I done! Why is God thus chastising me? Show me my sins, O God, that I may repent.”

But while he was standing with those two servants, lo! another man running toward them! Oh, what news does he bring?

They were not kept long in suspense, for while their thoughts were going forth toward the new-comer, his feet were flying toward them. They soon saw that it was another of the servants, one of those that had charge of the three thousand camels. Oh, what has happened to the camels and their keepers? Has fire from heaven consumed them also?

The messenger answers their thoughts. The Chaldeans, on swift horses, waving their flashing swords in the sunlight, in three great bands had fallen on the servants and killed all but this breathless messenger, and had driven away to the far East, all his camels.

Thus Job, an hour ago one of the richest of men, is now one of the poorest! In one day he lost seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and a vast number of asses.

It must be awful thus to leap in a day from vast wealth into extreme poverty! Many instances occur of men inheriting immense wealth from their parents, losing or squandering it all and dying in extreme poverty and

want. I read of a man in one of our western cities, who had lived in a splendid home, and who had sumptuously entertained the rich and the great at his table, and after all, died in an almshouse with only two or three of all his former friends to attend his poor funeral.

And when, as is not unfrequently the case, one has spent twenty or thirty years of hard labour in earning money and building up a fortune, and then, by fire, or by the treachery of those he trusts, loses it all, the trial is very hard to bear.

But greater calamities than this come upon men, and my young reader, may yet come upon you.

“Oh,” you say, “I do not see how that can be. I have not got either flocks, or herds, or houses, lands or money. How then can I suddenly lose a fortune?”

A young man was dying, his mother wished to pray for him, when he exclaimed:

“Not here! Pray in the other room if you wish to pray. Do not pray here. I am be-

yond praying; my day is gone by. The harvest is past. Mother, I wish you would go into the other room, if you wish to pray! God's time of vengeance has come! I have had my time and lost it! It is all gone! I have loved the world only, and now I must leave it! Oh, fool! fool! What is the world to me!"

And so he died! He lost his soul, and it is possible that you, my young reader, unless you have given or soon give your heart to Christ, may also lose your soul, and your soul is more than ten thousand golden fortunes!

"When the harvest is past and the summer is gone,
And sermons and prayers shall be o'er,
When the beams cease to break, of the sweet Sabbath morn,
And Jesus invites thee no more;
When the rich gales of mercy no longer shall blow,
The Gospel no message declare;
Sinner how *canst* thou bear the deep wailings of wo?
How suffer the night of despair?"

But the worst had not yet come to this great and good man. While the servant was yet telling him about the Chaldeans, another man still was seen hurrying toward them.

What message of woe can he bring! The poor man has no more flocks and herds to loose; hence the coming tidings cannot be of the loss of other property. Perhaps one of the other servants was mistaken. Perhaps all the servants had not been killed by the Sabeans or Chaldeans, and may be several of the survivors got together and armed themselves and recovered a part, perhaps nearly all the flocks; and now this new messenger is coming to assure him that God has tempered his affliction with blessing.

Well, we shall soon know, for the man is in the greatest haste, and he will soon be here. On he comes, and here he is. Well, what tidings! More disasters still? Or have you some good news for us?

Alas! the most shocking story of all! "What is it? Are the Arabs, having driven my flocks away and made me poor as a beggar, now coming to take away my life?"

"Oh, no! worse, far worse than that!"

What can it be! Why you remember this good man had seven sons and three daughters;

and being wealthy, they had little to do but to eat and drink and be merry. And the brothers used to take turns in inviting all the company to their houses. This day it came the turn of the eldest brother, and all the others with their three sisters were assembled eating and drinking with hearts full of merriment, when a low sound was heard coming in from the desert.

“What is that?” asks one of the sisters.

“Oh,” replies the eldest brother, “it is the wind. I suspect we are going to have a shower. Pass me that cup of wine, servant, and sister, go on with the song you were singing.”

The song goes on, till another exclaims.

“If that is the wind, it sounds very strange and low.”

And sure enough, away to the east a vast cloud of dust filled the air. A tornado was rushing on, like a flood of waters. On it came, howling, prostrating everything in the way, and so furiously and so fast, that before those startled children had time to leave the

table, it struck the house, crushed it as in the grasp of a giant's hand, and in a moment all those sons, daughters and servants, were dead among the ruins! Only a single servant who happened to be a little way off escaped; and he is the messenger that now comes with the awful tidings to this afflicted man.

Oh, how awful to die so suddenly, and in the midst of revelry and mirth! So sometimes a young man, half intoxicated is driving his horse furiously along the road, singing and shouting, when all at once the carriage turns over and he is killed.

What a shock to this poor father! He could have borne the loss of his property; but how shall he, how can he bear this awful stroke? Will he not drop down dead upon the ground?

It is a fearful thing to lose friends so suddenly! I heard of a young wife, who had been sent for from a distant city to come and meet her husband in the new home he had provided for her. She went and as she disembarked from the steamer, she found a coffin upon the wharf just ready to be taken on

board another steamer, and in that coffin was the body of her young husband! He had suddenly died. From that hour, that poor bride knew nothing more! She went crazy! And ever after she sat by herself saying nothing and looking, looking, looking upon her lost companion's photograph!

While I am writing this, I know of a father out upon the sea, in a vessel nearing our shores. To-morrow or next day he will be in our city, after an absence of weeks in Europe; and oh, who will meet that poor father when he leaps ashore and asks after his dear family, and tell him the distressing truth.

“Your dear son, your oldest child, your only son, twenty years of age, was last week buried in the ground!”

O God of mercy put thy supporting arm about that fainting father, and hold him to thy heart in that awful moment.

And how about the man who now hears from the messenger that not only his flocks and herds are gone, but that his ten children all lie in one awful pile of death.

Oh, he is wonderfully, wonderfully sustained! He rends his mantle, shaves his head, falls down upon the ground and worships God, saying,

“The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!”

Oh, how powerful the support of religion in the hour of sorrow. Some people think that they only need religion when they come to die, but they also and greatly need it in the hour when the dear ones of their hearts are snatched away by death.

I was once called to see two different families, in each of which lay a little child in his coffin. The one was only an adopted child, but the woman was a woman of sorrow, and this child was her only earthly comfort, and when it was removed it broke her heart. She knew nothing of religion, and had no consolation. She walked the house day and night, wringing her hands, unable to sleep and refusing to eat. I never saw a deeper or more helpless distress.

The other child was not one of adoption

but of birth; but the mother was a Christian woman, and although her heart bled it did not break. She could say,—

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” She knew that her child had gone to the arms of Jesus, and she knew also that some time she would follow and see her cherub there.

People are in the habit of saying,
“Misfortunes never come singly.”

This is both untrue and unkind. They much oftener come singly than otherwise. But sometimes they succeed each other very closely, and when this is the case, the attention of all is arrested, and the event is not easily forgotten.

God deals with men according to his own wise will. I have known large families to live in affluence until the youngest child was thirty-five years old, and not one in all that long period has died. Then I knew a Christian woman who lost one child, then a brother, then another child, and then her husband, and her accumulated sorrow nearly killed

her. But she rallied and was still enabled to say,—

“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Though he slay me yet will I trust him. This light affliction is but for a moment, and will work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Oh, my dear young friends, give your hearts to Jesus, so that when your father dies, and your mother, your brothers and sisters, you may fly to the man who is a “hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest; rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land!” (Isa. xxxii. 2.)

But even this was not the last of the sorrows of this great sufferer. Had he retained his health and strength so as to go around with his few remaining servants, and work in the fields and try to get a few cattle together again, perhaps his grief would gradually have worn off, or at least he could better have borne it. But in the midst of his sorrow and dis-

tress, there came a horrible disease upon him. Satan smote him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. This disease is supposed to have been what they call the "black leprosy," distorting the countenance and making it look grim and fierce, and covering the whole body with ulcers, producing great pain, and inability to sleep or rest. The legs swell, the hair falls out, and the voice becomes hoarse and disgusting in tone.

"But I thought that God loved good people," says some little boy, "and if so why did he make this good man suffer so?"

Well, my child, many an older Christian than you has asked that question. It is a well known fact that many of the best people in the world have been among the greatest sufferers.

Baxter was persecuted. Bunyan was a long time in prison, and while he was there he wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress." You have often heard about the martyrs. It is thought that all the apostles were murdered, and you know what a sufferer Jesus was! "A man

of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But then there is one great difference between the sufferings of the good and those of the wicked. Those of the wicked last for ever and ever, and those of the good soon come to an end, and then they are happy for ever and ever.

It is a great alleviation of our distress to have kind friends around us to cheer and comfort, and to say to us,

"Well, bear patiently what God sends. It will be well with you by-and-by. All the good suffer, and God will make you thankful, one day, for these very afflictions."

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace ;
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face."

But the good man of whom we are writing did not enjoy even this comfort. For when his friends came to see him, they were so

shocked at his calamities and condition, plunged as he was into poverty, his children all slain, and himself covered over with this horrible disease, and sitting in the ashes, that they did not know what to say or to think. They did not seem to understand much about the way in which God deals with his people; and hence they concluded that he must be guilty of some awful sin. They thought God never would punish a good man in this way.

Their suspicions, added to all his sorrows, almost drove the poor man crazy, and he broke out in his distress into some fearful utterances. He wished he was dead. He wished he had never been born. He exclaimed in the anguish of his soul,

“Let the day perish wherein I was born. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it. Why died I not at my birth? Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death but

it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures. For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than my life. I loathe it. I would not live alway. Have pity on me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me."

Then while thinking of all that God had done to him, and how he seemed to have become angry with him, he wished for "a daysman" to come between him and God that he, that is the daysman, "might lay his hand upon them both." You will find these words in Job ix. 33.

"Why," says some one, "that is a strange word, Daysman! What is a daysman?"

The word is a very strange looking and strange sounding word. But it evidently means one who could take hold of God with one hand, and this sufferer with the other, and somehow bring them together. God had

been this man's friend, and had given him all these flocks, and these ten children, and made him very rich and very great. And now God had suddenly snatched them all away, and sent a horrible disease upon him. This looked as if God had suddenly become angry with him for something or other. His friends who had come to weep and mourn with, and comfort him thought that this must be the case. And now the poor man wishes that as God had turned away from him, there was some one who could take him by the hand and lead him to God and then taking God by the hand could say,—

“O God, turn now again and look upon this man, examine his case, and if there is wrong in him, pardon it and be friends with him again.” Such a man would be a daysman.

Here is a child against whom his father is offended, and will not look at nor speak to him. Then the mother who loves both the father and the child, and who is dearly loved by them both, takes the child by the hand

and leads him to his father, and then taking the father by the hand, says,—

“Father, look once more upon your child. Hear what he has to say, and let the difficulty between you be made up again. We can’t any of us be happy while the family is thus divided.” Now this mother would be acting the part of a daysman.

During our terrible civil war, a man was drafted into the army. Having a wife and family, he felt that he could not leave them for then there would be no one to earn bread for them to eat, and clothes for them to wear. So he procured another man to go for him. Then one day he foolishly, and very wickedly, went to the dram shop and there drank till he became intoxicated, and not knowing what he was about, he went and enlisted! After he became sober and realized what he had done, he was in great distress, and as he thought of his poor wife and family he determined to desert. So he ran away from the army, and an officer went after him and arrested him. Then he was tried and condemned to be shot.

The next Saturday was to be the awful day. So on Monday his wife took her babe in her arms and went to President Lincoln's house, and tried to get him to plead for her husband's life. For Mr. Lincoln, you know, was commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy, and he had the right and power to pardon such men.

Well, she found a great crowd there, and she stood, and stood, and every time the clock struck, she would say to herself,—

“Oh, the time is hurrying on when my poor husband is to die! Oh, that I could see the President!”

By-and-by twelve o'clock came, and she had not yet been able to get in. The afternoon rolled wearily away and night came, and the doors were closed and still she had not seen the President.

With an aching heart she went away, and during that night I suppose she slept very little and wept very much, and it would be very strange if she did not many a time kneel down and pray to God to help her.

Tuesday morning found her again in the crowd waiting, and waiting, and waiting; one went in and saw the President, and another, and another; but this poor woman could not get in. Noon came and found her still there in the crowd waiting and waiting. During all that afternoon she waited folding her babe to her bosom, and praying that her turn might soon come, and shuddering to think that when she should be admitted it might be too late! The shadows of the evening began to gather, and after a little, the servant closed the door, and the poor woman had not seen the President. Another day and it might be too late; and her husband would be shot, and she be left a widow and her children orphans.

But "man's extremity is God's opportunity." When the door was closed, and the woman was about to go away, her baby, as if it was aware of the anguish of its mother's heart and of its father's peril, began to cry. The President happened just then to be passing, when he heard the cry. At once he stopped, and asked the porter,—



What a Baby did.



“Is there a woman here with a babe?”

“Yes, sir,” he replied, “she has been here two days, and her husband is condemned to death.”

“Bring her in immediately,” said he.

She entered, and with tears rolling down her cheeks, told the sad tale. At once the President took a pen and wrote a pardon for her husband, and sent her away with a heart so full that she could not speak.

Now this poor woman acted the part of a daysman. She laid one hand on the great tender heart of our noble President, and the other on her husband, and by her simple story, she brought them together, and her husband was saved.

Now, children, let me ask whether you do not need a daysman to come between you and God, and laying one hand on you and the other on God, bring you to him that you may obtain some great blessing?

Perhaps you say :

“Oh, no, my father and mother are alive, and I am in health, and have plenty to eat

and drink. I do not think I need any days-man."

But think a moment, are you not *in danger*? Some years ago I was at Niagara Falls, where a great world of waters rushes tumbling and roaring for miles down hill, and then at length plunges over the edge of a great precipice into an awful gulf. Across an arm of the rapids just above the fall is a narrow bridge. As we stood on that bridge over the boiling waters they pointed us a rock, or log lodged on a rock rising just above the surface of the flood. Some time before, a man had been carried by the current to that little inlet and there he hung. Of course, he could not swim back, and no boat could go to him, for the current is so terrible, that it would sweep anything away.

Oh, what an excitement it caused, when the position of that poor man was known! The telegraph announced it all over the country, and every time the newspaper came, the people opened it with trembling hands to see what had become of that poor man. And

hundreds and hundreds of people gathered from the country around to see that poor creature there and to pray for, and if possible help him to escape!

Now that man wanted a daysman! If some great angel had come down from heaven and standing in the stream, had laid one hand on the bridge and the other on the man, and then lifted him over the raging and foaming waters to the bridge, what a shout would have gone up from that deeply anxious multitude! But no such angel came! And after many awful hours the poor soul was swept down the stream, and shot over the awful precipice into death and eternity!

Now, my child, if you are a true Christian in your very heart, you are in no danger. For Jesus says of all such,—

“I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” Is your dear mother a true Christian? Then she is not in danger. Is your father? Then he is perfectly safe. But if you are not, you are in awful danger.

This we know, because God would not have given his Son to die as Jesus died, and Jesus would not have left his home above to suffer as he did among men, if our souls were not in danger.

You are in danger of perishing. "The wicked shall be turned into hell." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not *perish*." "God is angry with the wicked every day." And think what an angry God can do! Did not God burn up in a moment those seven thousand sheep, and all but one of the servants that watched them?

Do you ask,

"What puts me in such danger?"

I answer:

1. Your sins. Are you not a sinner? The Bible says so. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

But you say,—

"I do not see how I have sinned so badly.

I never robbed anybody. I never set anybody's house on fire. I never took God's name in vain. I never killed anybody."

No, I suppose you have never done any of these things. Yet God knows, and God says you are a sinner. Perhaps you have sinned in not doing something you ought to have done.

Yonder on the ocean is a ship full of people. She is sailing along beautifully over the sea. Night comes, and the Captain says to one man,—

"Now do you stand here at the helm," and to another, "Do you stand yonder at the mast-head, and both of you keep a careful watch; for we are on a dangerous coast and not far from land, and if we run upon the rocks all may be lost."

So the Captain goes down into the cabin and goes to sleep, and so do all the passengers. But after watching a while and guiding the ship the steerman falls asleep, and the man at the mast-head comes down and goes to sleep. And away in the middle of the dark night, an

awful crash is heard ! The ship is among the breakers and dashing against the rocks ! The Captain leaps up from his berth, and the affrighted passengers rush from their beds, and a wild scream is heard from every mouth. Dash ! crash ! goes the ship against the rocks. A big billow lifts the poor ship on high, and then rolling away down, it comes again crushing in the sides and bottom ! The waters rush in. The ship sinks, and all on board, men, women and children, are drowned !

Now those sailor-watchmen did not *do* anything. They did not kill any body. They did not take up a man or child, and cast him overboard. They only did not keep awake. Their great, awful crime was in not doing what they ought to have done.

But you ask, "What is that we ought to have done, and have not done it."

Why, you have not loved the Lord Jesus Christ. There was a little girl six years old, lying on a bed of sickness and of death. Her sister sat beside her reading the Bible. She said :

“Sister, turn to the place where it tells about Jesus blessing little children.”

Her sister did so, and when she had read the passage, the dying girl said:

“How kind! I shall soon go to Jesus. He will soon take me up in his arms and bless me too—no disciple shall keep me away.”

Her sister then asked,—

“Do you love me?” She replied:

“Yes, sister, I love you, but don't be angry with me. I love Jesus better!”

Now can you say to your parents:

“Father, I love you—mother, oh, how I love you; but I love Jesus better!”

For it is a great sin not to love Jesus. He himself said:

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”

Jesus is so lovely! And he has been so kind! And God the Father loves him, and all the angels love him, and all who have gone up to heaven love him, and all good people in the world love him; and if you do not love him, if you have lived so many years without

loving him, you are on that account alone a great sinner.

Then have you not committed a great many other sins?

You remember the awful scenes on Sinai, when the ten commandments were given. Now ask if you have not broken some of those commandments.

There is the fourth commandment.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Now we keep time holy when we spend it in religious worship, public or private, or in works of necessity or mercy for God’s glory. Have you spent all of each of the Sabbaths God has allowed you in this way? You may now be twelve years old. Since you were four years old, eight years have passed away. In each of those eight years there have been fifty-two Sabbaths, in all more than four hundred Sabbaths already gone. Now can you look up toward God and say that you have never broken the Sabbath? Have you not sinned against God’s holy day, at least once every one of these

Sabbaths? Then here alone are four hundred sins! And the truth is that you have sinned against the Sabbath a good deal oftener than this.

Then there is the fifth commandment.

“Honour thy father and mother.” Now think of your life thus far, and say if you have not many a time and in many ways broken this commandment.

Besides, there is the ninth commandment.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” This law forbids any and every violation of truth. The truth you know is a very sacred thing. Ananias and Sapphira were put to death instantly for a single falsehood, and the Bible says,—

“All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Now think if in sport or in earnest you have not more than once broken this law by violating the truth.

Now turn to what Jesus says in Mark, xii. 30–31.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: and thy neighbour as thyself.”

Think over this wonderful law and say if you have not broken it every moment of every day for months and years together!

Now remember that God who cannot break his word has said, “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” Every sin that is ever committed by any creature has been or will be punished. God’s truth and justice demand this.

But suppose you were to be punished for only one sin. What then? Why that sin is committed against the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is committed against God’s holy law. It is committed against him who has given you all the blessings you ever enjoyed. It is committed against him who hurled the sinning angels at once down to hell. The Holy Spirit by the mouth of Jude (i. 6,) says,—
“The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath

reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Now every one of your sins must be punished; and if it is punished in you, if you yourself endure the punishment, you must go down to that dark world of woe, and never come out again. And you *may* die in a day and be lost. Are you not then in danger? Do you not need some mighty daysman to come between you and God, and laying one hand on him and one on you, bring you together and make reconciliation, so that you may be secure against suffering for your sins?

2. These sins of yours show that you have a bad heart. When you go into an orchard and see a tree hanging full of beautiful, delicious peaches, you know that that tree is a peach-tree. That is, you know that there is something in that tree, in its roots, and in its trunk and branches, that produces this kind of fruit. And you know that it cannot produce any other kind of fruit. If you want that tree to produce apples or pears you must change the *nature* of the tree.

So if you commit sin, it is because there is something in you that naturally comes out in sinful thoughts, and words and acts. And that in you which produces sins cannot possibly produce anything else, any more than a fountain of fresh water can produce salt water, any more than a rose-bush can produce strawberries. And that sinful thing in you is your heart. Jesus says:

“For *out of the heart*, proceed evil thoughts, murders, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

Paul says,

“Now the works of the flesh”—that is of our natural hearts—“are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like.”

Now a heart that sends out such things as these must be very vile. If you see a vine covered with poisonous berries, you know that the vine is a poisonous vine in its very nature. And so the heart, that sends out all the wicked

thoughts and acts in all the world, is a very bad heart. So God says over and over again,

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” “Every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart is only evil continually.”

Therefore David prayed,—

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

Now, my child, if your heart has never been changed, it is one of these bad hearts; and I am sure that you will acknowledge that any one who lives as you live, with a wicked heart all the time under the eye of a holy God, who cannot bear sin in any form, is in constant danger. And just as that poor man on the rock in Niagara, needed a daysman to lift him upon the safe bridge, so do you need a greater daysman to lift you out of the danger in which you now are.

But besides being in danger and needing a deliverer, you want to go to heaven.

I know a man who was captain of a ship. A terrible storm once overtook that ship. After

a little while, they had to cut down a mast, and then another, and then the last; and then his ship was broken to pieces, and himself and crew reached the shore in safety. No doubt they were very glad to find themselves on land. But the country around them was a most miserable country. There was scarce a house in which to find shelter, and they were far, far away from home! Oh, how they longed to see their families and friends!

Now, children, we as sinners are like men who have been shipwrecked on a foreign shore. Everything is lost. But when our sins are taken away and our bad hearts changed, we may be very glad, we cannot now be condemned. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." We are out of the wreck and on the safe shore and cannot now be drowned. But is this all we want? We are not yet at home, we shall soon die and then we want to go to the house with many mansions, in the skies where Jesus is, and the angels are, and some of our brothers, and sisters, and mothers

are. But how shall we get there? Will God take us to heaven simply because we have been pardoned, and because he has given us new hearts?

Heaven is given as a reward? But what have we done to be rewarded for? God has forgiven us; are we to be rewarded for that? God has given us new hearts; are we to be rewarded for that?

“Why, I thought,” says a little girl, “that if our hearts were changed, and our sins forgiven, there was nothing more needed!”

Well, very many people think so, but turn to Matthew xxv. 21, and there you read the saved soul's welcome to heaven.

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Ah, there it is—a good and *faithful service* is at the bottom of our reception into heaven. We are pardoned and therefore we cannot be condemned. Our hearts have been changed, and therefore God will not make us dwell for ever with wicked men and wicked spirits. But to fit us for the reward in heaven, we

must have a good and faithful service to show
And who has that? Your mother, perhaps,
is a devoted Christian woman. She prays
every day and every night. She loves Jesus
and all his people. She loves souls and is
always ready to do whatever she can to save
them.

But go, ask her if she renders to God, any
day of her life, a good and faithful service.
Ask her if she does not come short in her
duties every day; if she does not sin against
God every day, and she will tell you that
every day she sins. Hence, although she is
pardoned and has a new heart, if she should
die to-day, she could not say to God,—

“I want to enter heaven, for I have been a
good and faithful servant.”

Hence we all need a daysman who can take
us to God, and somehow secure heaven for us,
as well as forgiveness and a new heart.

II. WHAT KIND OF DAYSMAN WE NEED.

1. First, *he must know just what God re-
quires*, that we may escape from danger.

Years ago a man in one of our cities committed an awful murder, for which he was arrested, tried and sentenced to be hung. He knew nothing about religion, but as he was soon to die, he saw that he ought to begin to make preparation, and asked that a certain minister might be allowed to come to him every day and instruct him. This was granted, and day by day, that minister visited that dying man. He was in a sense his daysman. He told him about his soul and about God.

But now notice, this minister did not believe in Jesus Christ as a Saviour, and so he taught that man that he should die and go to God without faith in Jesus Christ! And so that man went to the gallows and died denying the Lord Jesus Christ!

Oh, what an account that minister will have to give at the judgment seat, for deceiving that poor man to the ruin of his soul! And he lost his soul because his daysman did not understand what God requires, that man may be saved.

Hence I say our daysman, who is to come

between us and God, and lay his hand on us both, ought to know all about God's demands, what he asks of us, and what are the terms on which alone he will save us.

Some think that God takes all men right to heaven, even when they die without any preparation. Others think that if they live as well as they can, and do what good they can, the doors of heaven will fly open to them when they die. Some again think that if they have membership in this church or that, there is need of nothing more.

But we need a daysman who understands all about the laws of God and the terms upon which he will save us, lest when we come at the last day, saying:

“Lord, Lord, open unto us,” he will say in reply, “Depart from me, I never knew you?”

2. Then our daysman *must be a friend of God.*

If he is not, of course God will not listen to him. A man once had a peach-orchard, and when the fruit was ripe he used to take his workmen into the orchard and gather the

peaches to send them to market. But one morning as they went into the orchard, they found ten of the best trees cut down! This malicious, wicked work had been done by four bad boys. They used to go into the orchard at night, and not only steal fruit, but break the limbs of the trees, and greatly injure them. So one night the owner hid himself and watched. By-and-by he heard a few low voices whispering, and soon after he saw the boys climbing one of the trees. Walking cautiously up toward the tree, he seized two of the boys, and breaking off a small branch, he whipped them till they cried for mercy, and then when they had solemnly promised to play the thief no more, he let them go. The other two boys, having heard the noise, ran away like guilty cowards.

The next day those boys met together and vowed vengeance against the man. And one night not long after, when it was very dark, for wicked people are too cowardly to do their evil deeds in the daylight, they crept into the orchard and cut down those trees. The owner

of the trees, knowing the two boys, he had caught in the orchard, had them arrested by the constable and put in jail; and they, being very much alarmed, told of their companions, and one of them was also arrested and shut up with their guilty comrades, but the other ran off and kept himself hid.

Now these wretched boys needed a daysman to go to the injured farmer, and plead for them, that if possible, they might escape being brought to trial and perhaps sent to the penitentiary. Who should this daysman be? Certainly not the other wicked boy! They would not think of sending word to him to come out from his hiding-place, and go to that farmer and ask him to let his guilty companions go. For the man, as soon as this boy came in, would seize him, and instead of letting the others go at his request, would send him to prison with them.

But the mother of one of these boys was a godly woman, greatly respected by all who knew her, and besides that, she was the sister of the man who owned the orchard. Now

she is the one to go to him. He loved his sister, and he would pity her tears and anxieties. And she would promise to do all she could to make her son see the shame and sin of his conduct, and to induce him to come and ask forgiveness, and promise to avoid bad company in the future, and to try to be a better boy.

So with God. We are all great sinners, and God is angry with us, and we need a daysman to go and plead with him for us. But it will not do to send another sinner, for God would take that sinner and condemn him also. Nay, he is already under condemnation. Hence no sinner could do us any good. If then we are to have a daysman between us and God, he must be a friend of God. One who is perfectly holy, one who has no sin in his heart, and who never committed a sin in thought, word, or deed.

3. Besides, our daysman *should be one that loves us also.*

It is true that a man who has no particular love for us may do us great service. There

was one time a great fire burning in our cities. The firemen were nobly at work trying to stop the flames. And in the midst of the excitement a woman's voice was heard shrieking,

"Oh, my child! my child!"

"Where is your child?"

"Oh, up in that room in the cradle!"

A sailor in the crowd heard this, and rushing up the ladder he darted into the burning building, and soon reappeared with the babe in his arms, and gave it into the arms of its mother.

Now that sailor had no particular love for that child. He pitied its mother, and generously and sailor-like exposed his own life to save her child.

But when you are in trouble you always feel much surer of aid from one who deeply loves you than from a stranger, and this is especially the case when your danger is very great, and the work of delivering you requires very great sacrifice.

You know how patiently a mother watches

over a sick child, day after day, night after night for weeks together, refusing to sleep, almost to eat, until sure that her babe is out of danger. You could hardly expect a stranger, however kind, to do as much for the poor little invalid.

If now for the work of reconciling us to God we could find a *brother*, who was fitted in every other respect to be our daysman, we should feel very sure that whatever could be done he would certainly do.

Did you ever hear the story of the two Irish brothers? The younger one left his home in Ireland many years ago, and set sail for America, and his friends at home never heard from him again while he lived. Some time after, the older brother came to this country, and became a clerk in a store. By-and-by he became a Christian, and then felt that he ought to become a preacher of the Gospel. While studying theology in one of our seminaries, he was led to attend a meeting of the Christian Commission, where he heard of the need of men on the battle-field to assist in re-

lieving wounded and dying soldiers. He resolved to offer his services in the work. So after another of our terrible battles he went with others to the work, and spent a whole night in carrying wounded soldiers from the field. At last he thought his work was done, and was about withdrawing, when in the early light of the morning he thought he saw another body lying under a tree. Going toward it he discovered another bleeding, dying soldier. He spoke to him:

“Can I help you?”

“No, I am dying.”

“Are you prepared to die?”

“No, I have been a very wicked sinner.”

“Have you any word to send to your friends?”

“No, I have no friends that know anything of me. They have not heard of me for many years, and I know not if any of them are alive.”

“Where did they live?”

“In Ireland?”

“What is your name?”

The poor soldier put his hand into his side-pocket and taking out a little hymn-book, gave it to him saying :

“There is a book my sister gave me when I left home. My name is in it, written by her hand.”

The man opened the book and there on the fly-leaf read the name of his own brother!

Oh, do you not suppose that that poor fellow, when he found that it was his own brother leaning over him, felt sure that everything possible would now be done for him?

Now here we are with all our sins upon us, helpless, dying in our sins. We want some one to go as daysman to our God, and get him to deliver us from our guilt and danger, and find a place for our poor souls in the skies among the angels. If now we only had a brother who *could* do this, we should be very sure that he certainly would.

This then is just what we need, a *brother* to be our daysman with God.

4. Again our daysman *should be very powerful, as well as loving.*

For he has two hard, great things to do. He is going to put one of his hands on God, and the other on us, and bring us together as friends. But we are under condemnation for past sins, and the just God cannot be friendly with those whom he condemns. Then we have bad hearts and a holy God cannot be friends with those whose hearts are full of impurity and sin. Hence this daysman, must take off from us the condemnation, and he must take out from us the evil heart.

But how is he going to remove our condemnation?

This condemnation says:

“Sins are charged against you in God’s book, and every one of them must be punished.”

Now if those sins are punished they must be punished in somebody. Somebody must suffer just as much as those sins deserve. But what does every sin deserve?

“Every sin deserveth God’s wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come!”

Now this wrath and curse must come on you, or on somebody for you, and if it comes on you, you are lost for ever and ever. But if it comes on any body else that one must be very powerful or it would crush him down to eternal death, and God would not allow anybody, to lose his soul in the place of anybody else.

If one steals and is to be sent to jail for a year, somebody might go to prison for him, and then when the year was over, he might come out alive and well. But if a man commits murder and is to be hung, any one who is hung in his place would never come to life again. But if a man could be found who was strong enough to be hung until he is dead, and then rise up of himself out of the grave again, he might take the murderer's place and die for him.

But just think how strong he must be, who could take not only one of your sins but all of them upon him, and bear God's wrath and curse for them, and after all live and be happy; must he not be stronger and more mighty

than any man, than all men, than any angels, yes, than all angels and men put together?

The angels in heaven that sinned against God, are still suffering the punishment of those sins, and they will suffer the punishment for ever and ever!

Our daysman, therefore, must be wonderfully powerful, as powerful as God himself, so bear the wrath of God for all our sins, and yet live and be happy for ever, after all!

But he has another great, hard work to do. He has got to change that bad heart and make it good! It is now full of wrong thoughts, and he must take them all away and fill it with good thoughts. It does not like to think of God, and he must make it love to think of him and say:

“How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!” It does not love to read the Bible and he must make it love that blessed book. It does not love to pray, and he must make it love to pray. It loves sin, and he must make it hate sin. It does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he must make it feel

that in all the world, there is no object so lovely as the Son of God.

Now who can change the human heart? The lightnings can rend the rocks and melt the iron-rod, but they cannot break or melt the human heart. An angel cannot do it.

Man is often unable even to leave off a bad habit. There is a cup of poison. Now it would seem to be easy for a man to refuse to drink it. But sometimes it is not.

Years ago there was a man in Washington, a member of Congress. He was a man of strong intellect, and respected for many traits in his character. He had a family whom he loved very dearly, precious children and a godly wife. But he was a drunkard! And when he was sober he would say to himself,

“Now I am bringing disgrace and ruin upon my family, I am setting a terrible example before my sons, I am cruelly injuring my poor daughters, I am killing my poor wife, I am becoming a disgrace and dishonour to my country. I am destroying my body and ruining my soul!”

And yet that man could not resist the temptation to go and drink, and drink again and again! One day while he was sitting in a tavern, a gentleman came up to him and said,—

“My dear sir, won't you put your name on my temperance pledge?”

He looked at him a moment, and then rolling up the sleeve of his coat, he said, with fearful energy,

“I would have that hand cut off this moment, if I could sign and keep that pledge!”

But he could not. He was not strong enough! How then can a man, change his own heart!

But our daysman must change our very hearts or else he can never reconcile us to God and make us friends to him.

Where then is that one who can be our daysman? Is there any one able to do what we need; or must we live and die with all our sins upon us and go up to God's judgment-bar as his enemies?

Blessed be God, there is a daysman for us!

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And now “If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS.”

He has power, for he is God. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “My Lord and my God!” exclaimed Thomas. “We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the TRUE GOD and eternal life.”

Now as God, he is able to do anything, to bear sin for us or to make our heart anew.

And with his power, he possesses also the knowledge of all that we need, and all that God requires for our salvation. Being the Son of God, he loves God and God loves him. He often spoke of his Father, and at the last supper, when he knew that the end was near, he looked up to heaven and said,

“Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son that thy Son may also glorify thee.”

And more than once during the life of Jesus, God called down out of the blue heavens,

“This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.” He is, therefore, just the daysman we need, to lay his hand on God and on us, and bring us together.

And then Jesus is man as well as God, the “Son of Man,” as he frequently called himself, as well as the Son of God.

John writes in his Gospel,

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

He was a little babe, then a boy, then a man. He hungered and thirsted, and groaned and wept, and suffered pain and died.

Now being man, he loved men, and he calls those that love him, his brethren. “My brethren,” he said, “are those which hear the word of God.” And he uttered words more precious than even these. For once when they said to him, “Thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee,” he answered,

“Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

How precious a daysman would our own brother be!

Jesus then is just the friend we need.

“One there is above all others,
Well deserves the name of friend ;
His is love *beyond* a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end.”

Thus being both human and divine, he can lay his divine hand on God, and his human hand on us, and bring us together in sweet reconciliation.

III. HOW THIS GLORIOUS DAYSMAN DOES HIS GREAT WORK.

1. *He left heaven and came to earth, and became a man.* “Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.”

2. Then as a man, *he went about doing everything that a man ought to do.* He acted just as if he was bound to do all these things by the law of God. But he was not bound by any law, for he was the great giver of law.

Yet he did it that others who could not keep all the law for themselves might be rewarded for what he did!

Was not this noble and kind? There was once in the Russian army, a private soldier, doing all the work of a soldier, obeying all commands; and, by-and-by, he was promoted to be an officer, and then he was advanced to a higher office. He stayed as a soldier in the army till he knew all about the duties of obeying and commanding.

After this, a man was seen in a little lodging at Saardam, in Holland. He had with him a set of carpenter's tools, and he wore the dress of a common workman. He hired himself out to work in the ship-yards, that he might learn to build ships. He rose early in the morning, and cooked his own breakfast. He worked at rope-making, sail-making, and

in the blacksmith's-shop, and earned wages. He visited the hospitals and learned to be a surgeon.

Now who do you think this man was?

"Oh," you say, "I suppose it was some poor man who was earning money to support his family."

No, it was not. It was Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia! His people were very ignorant and knew nothing about the soldier's profession, and nothing about ship-building; and he became a soldier, and a ship-carpenter, that he might set an example for his young men, and lead them to learn all these things, that Russia might no longer have to depend on other nations for them.

Now everybody says that this was grand and noble!

But what is all this compared with what Jesus did in leaving heaven and living on earth, to do all he did as an example for men and to earn a salvation for them!

3. But this was not all. *He bore the punishment of all our sins.* If we should be pun-

ished we should perish. He could be punished and not perish. And so he went to the garden of Gethsemane, and oh, how he suffered there! "Being in an agony he prayed the more earnestly, and sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Then on the cross, what horrors came upon him! You know how he cried at the end of that great darkness that hung over him for three awful hours.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

"Thus he bore our sins in his own body on the tree." Thus, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

4. But something more remained. *He rose from the dead and ascended up into heaven,* where "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." And how does our great, glorious daysman intercede for us with God?

Did you ever hear of the young Greek, who saved his brother when he was condemned to die?

That brother was brought before the judges

and they heard the evidence against him and condemned him to death. Just then, the other brother rose up in court and asked if he might plead for his brother's life. The judges assented. And now what do you think that young man said? Why, not a single word! He simply stood before the judges and held up the stump of an arm! In a battle for his country he had lost the rest of his arm, and there he stood holding up his mutilated limb. The judges looked and thought of the battle in which that young man had fought so bravely, and bled so freely, and their hearts melted and they pardoned his poor, sinful brother!

Now I suppose that something like this may take place in heaven. Jesus, whom God so dearly loves, who so dearly loves God and all who love God, is there in heaven "a Lamb as it had been slain;" and with one hand he points to us poor, guilty sinners, and with the other, points to his pierced feet, hands and side. And God looks at him, with all the marks of sorrow on him, and then looks at

us whom Jesus loves, and pardons, and saves us. Thus our daysman lays one hand on the great heart of God, and with the other he takes hold of us, and bringing us to God makes us friends with him for ever and ever.

Blessed, ever blessed, daysman! No wonder the saints in heaven sing there day and night,

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God!”

“The great Redeemer’s gone,
To appear before our God,
To sprinkle o’er the flaming throne,
With his atoning blood.

“No fiery vengeance now,
No burning wrath comes down;
If justice calls for sinners’ blood,
The Saviour shows his own.

“Before his Father’s eye,
Our humble suit he moves;
The Father lays his thunder by,
And looks, and smiles, and loves.”

There is now only one thing more that I wish to say to you; and that is, about the way of getting this Son of God for our daysman.

How can this be done? This is the great question. Well, you know what all the ministers say and what the Bible says. It is this. You must believe in him. This is all. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

But you ask,

"What is it to believe?"

The answer is :

"Have faith."

"But what is it to have faith?"

Once a man was reading the Bible, and explaining it to his family. In the portion he read there was something said about faith. His little boy asked,

"Father, what is faith?"

The father took him up and stood him upon the top of a high chest of drawers, and then withdrew a little way, and said :

"Now, jump to me, and I will catch you."

The little fellow started to jump, but drew back. He was afraid to take the leap.

"Ah," said his father, "my boy, you have not faith. Now try again."

So the boy came nearer the edge, and made another effort; but still not daring to jump he drew back, slipped, and came near falling off.

“Still, my boy,” said his father, “you have not faith. Now trust me, I would not let you fall for the world. Jump now with all your might!”

So the little fellow made another effort, and leaped boldly over the distance between him and his father, and right into the father’s arms!

“There,” said he, “now you have faith!”

This is the way we must trust our Saviour. We stand on a great mountain of sin. Those sins will one day take fire and burn like a volcano. We must jump from them. Christ stands at the bottom and tells us to jump. We must look away from our sins, look right in the face of Christ, see the marks of the crucifixion in the hands he holds out to us, the evidence of his love and his atonement, and spring right into his arms! We must cast ourselves just as we are wholly on him.

And if he has died for us, do you think he will fail to catch us when we spring towards him!

Look now into his face and say :

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee :
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure :
Save from its guilt and power.

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling ;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless look to thee for grace ;
Vile, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

Children, the best wish I can utter for you is, that you may make this great daysman your own.

THE STRONG EMBRACE.

207

“For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, our Lord!” (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)



The King who loved the Bible.



V.

THE STRONG EMBRACE.

“Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.”

ONCE more we are here under the oak for another children’s service, this bright Sabbath afternoon! I mean now to tell you about *The Strong Embrace*.

There was once a large mass of quartz rock, and away down in its bosom there lay a beautiful lump of pure gold. That lump of gold had been there for hundreds and hundreds of years.

One day this gold lump said to the rock,—
“I wish you would let me go. I am tired of being held here so long. I want to go out into the world where the sun may shine upon me. Perhaps they would fold me around some beautiful jewel, and then I should be worn

on the neck of some lovely woman, where many faces smile, and where the beautiful lamps shine brightly. Or, they may spread me upon the edges of some beautiful book which people love to read. There is a poor man who cannot get bread for his children to eat, and he cannot bear to see them go hungry to bed, and cry themselves to sleep in their distress, and I might buy bread for them and make them happy."

But the cold, hard-hearted rock, said,

"No, you are mine; I have had you ever since I was made, and I mean to keep you. All the world cannot make me let you go."

But by-and-by, some men came along and looked at the old rock and one of them said:

"I believe there is gold in that rock, let us get it out."

So they went to work and drilled a deep hole in the rock. Then they put in a quantity of powder, and pounded it down. And then they touched it with a coal of fire, and at once there was a flash like lightning, and a noise like a clap of thunder, and lo! the

rock quivered and burst into a hundred pieces, and out leaped the precious gold lump and one of the men picked it up and took it away, and with it bought bread for his children. And the rock found that strong as it was to hold, there was something strong enough to make it let go its hold.

Tell me now if you can think of anything that holds more firmly to its object than does the quartz rock to the gold.

I can tell you, *Love*. If Love puts its arms around an object, it will hold more firmly than did that rock.

There was once a Persian Prince by the name of Kureem Kahn, and there was brought before him a company of wicked men, who had murdered twelve other men under the walls of Shiraz. When their guilt was proved the Prince took a solemn oath on the Koran, the sacred book of the Mahommedans that they should be put to death. Now when a Mahommedan takes an oath on the Koran, he will keep that oath if it costs him his life.

But among those murderers, thus doomed

to die, was a beautiful young man, of good family, whose appearance excited the compassion of all, and oh, how they wished to have him saved from an early, and ignominious death! But the Prince had taken the oath and they knew that he must die.

Now you will wonder when I tell you that there was something that held that young man so tight in its arms, that even the Prince's oath could not get him away, and he did not die.

It was love, a father's love. The father of that young man, hearing that he was to be led forth to death, asked permission to speak with the Prince. Permission was granted, so he went in and fell down before him and said,—

“Kureem Kahn, you have sworn that these guilty men shall die. It is just. They deserve it. But one of them is my son; he has been deluded into crime, and he is just betrothed in marriage. I come to die in his stead. Be merciful, and let an old, worn-out man perish and spare a youth who may long be useful to his tribe. Let him live to taste

the waters and till the ground of his ancestors.”

The Shah was very much moved, and he granted the father's prayer, and the old man went exulting to his fate, while the son begged the Prince to reverse his decision and punish him and spare his aged father.

So love held that young criminal so fast, that the Prince's oath taken upon the Koran could not get him away.

How powerful is love!

Again, there was a father who had fallen into the grasp of intemperance. And oh, how fast it held him! It made him odious to everybody. It threw him into the lowest and most wicked company. It made him spend for strong drink the money his family needed. It made his face red and swollen, and his lips crack with burning inward heat. It threw him down in the streets and covered him with mire and filth. It got him into brawls and quarrels, and into prison. It made him crazy, and sent him home to beat the wife and children that he loved.

And when he was sober he knew all this. He saw what he was doing. He knew that he was bringing ruin on his family, and on himself, body and soul. And when he thought of these things, he would weep and resolve that he would never touch another drop of the maddening poison. But his master, intemperance was too strong for him, and in a few days the sight of the dram-shop would overcome him and in a little while he was drunk and crazy, and cruel as ever. Drunkenness was determined to destroy that man, body and soul. But there was something that held him so firm in its embrace, that even drunkenness had to give up!

His little boy was very sick and just about to die. The father was sober and watching, and weeping by his bed. The boy opened his dying eye, and said,

“Father, I am going to Jesus. I must leave you. Now, father, won’t you promise me one thing?”

“Yes,” sobbed the broken-hearted father.
“Yes, my boy. What is it?”

“Promise me, father, that you will never get drunk any more.”

The wretched man felt that he was in the presence of God and death, and there and then he gave a solemn pledge to his dying child that he would never touch intoxicating drink again. And God helped him to keep his pledge.

So love in a little boy's heart conquered drunkenness!

So powerful is love.

Again, there was a dreadful famine in Germany, and a certain family consisting of father and mother and four children, were reduced almost to starvation.

In those days, children were sometimes sold for slaves. And the father seeing that they must die for want of food, proposed to his wife that one of the children should be sold. The mother said, with a breaking heart,

“Well, if it must be so, let it be.”

So they began to consider which it should be. The oldest was named, but they both agreed that they could not part with their

first-born. The next was named, but the mother said,

“No, he is the very image of his father, I cannot give him up.”

The next was a sweet little girl, and the father said,

“It will kill me to part with her. She is her mother’s second self.”

There was but one other, and they both agreed that it was impossible to part with their youngest one—their precious little Benjamin.

Parental love held on so firmly, that starvation could not compel those parents to let their dear children go!

Now, my dear young reader, tell me if you know of any love that is stronger than that of father and mother.

I do. It is the love of God! I know this, because God himself says so. In Isaiah, xlix. 15, the Holy Spirit writes,

“Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.”

So we see that if God's love once throws its arms around a human soul, it will hold on to that soul more firmly than a mother holds on to her babe, when some one comes to tear it away from her.

He compares himself to the mother-eagle taking care of her young.

“He found him in a desert land, in a waste howling wilderness. He led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord, alone did lead him.”

How great his love for the soul is, and how firmly he clings to them that they may not for ever be torn from him, Jesus tells us.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Sin is all the while trying to tear souls away from God, and bury them in eternal darkness, and to prevent this and keep them

as his own dear children, and when they die take them up into his family in heaven, he gave his dear Son to die on the cross!

Still from this love sin does tear hundreds and thousands, and they are lost for ever.

Is there anything that holds with a firmer grasp than even this love of God? Yes. For God's love is of various kinds, just as yours is. You love a bright day, and a bunch of flowers. You love ice-cream and nice cakes. You love your bird and dog, and cat and pigeons. You love your little brother and father and mother. But the love you have for ice-cream is different from your love of your canary-bird, and your love clings more closely to the bird than to the saucer of cream. And your love for your mother is different from your love of either. You would much sooner give up your bird than you would your mother.

God, too, has different loves. He loves everything he creates. He loves the sun, moon and stars. He loves the rivers, oceans and mountains. He loves the trees and the

grass, and the flowers. He loves the beasts, birds and fishes. And he loves men.

Now don't you suppose God loves birds and beasts, more than he does trees and flowers? And does he not love man more than he loves beasts and birds? Suppose God had a bunch of flowers in one hand and a dear little child in the other, and some dark demon should try to get them both away, would not God hold more firmly to the babe than to the flowers?

Now sin has succeeded in snatching some things away from God's love.

Once there was a great company of angels in heaven. Their robes were white, their faces bright, and their voices sweet. They stood around the throne of God, and heaven was more beautiful because of their presence.

But where are those angels now? Jude tells us. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

Now it was sin that drew those angels away from the love of God and shut them up to his dislike and anger.

Then there were men in this world on whom God in his goodness made the sun to shine and the rain to fall. And God gave ten thousand precious gifts to those who are now shut up in darkness with the wicked angels. And it was sin that tore them away from the arms of God's love.

Jesus tells us about one of these. He was a rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. Now God's love gave this man his riches and robes, and sumptuous fare. But what became of him? Why, he "died and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

It was sin that tore this man away from the arms of God's love.

Now there is a love of God from which nothing ever tears the soul. It is called

"The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If once your precious soul is placed in the arms of this love, it is there for ever! That love has millions of souls now in its arms and they will be yet in those arms when the world is burned up.

A man was travelling across our western prairies. One night he sought out a spot among the tall grass in a little grove of trees, cut down some tree-branches and made a little shed under which he crept and soon fell asleep. He was awaked by the sighing of the winds around him. The breeze increased till it became a gale, and now instead of whispering and sighing, it began to howl, and amidst the howl he seemed to hear wild voices shrieking through the prairie.

All at once a fire sprang up in the prairie-grass, and soon, as he said, "myriads of bright embers were flung wildly into the air, and flames of blazing grass whirled like meteors through the sky. The flame spread into a vast sheet that swept over the prairie, bending forward, illuminating the black waste which it had passed, shedding a red light far away,

while all beyond the blaze was of a pitchy darkness.

“The noise sounded like the roar of a stormy ocean, and the wild, tumultuous billows of the flame were tossed about like a sea of fire.”

And yet in the midst of this encircling sea of fire, the loving embrace of his little green hiding-place held him safe, and no spark scorched his dress or burned his skin.

Such is the embrace this “love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord,” throws around every soul that finds this refuge, and even amid the fires of the judgment, it will keep those souls in perfect peace and safety!

Now what is this mighty love? It is certainly different from all other loves of God, for while angels and men have been torn away from his other loves, nothing ever did, or ever can tear a soul away from this.

It is that love of God that reaches us through the Saviour.

Suppose in a window all the glass-panes are white but one, and that is of a beautiful crim-

son hue. Now the light from the sun without falls on this window and passes through into the room. But while that which comes through the other panes is white, that which enters through this coloured pane is of a beautiful crimson. Hold your hand in it and your hand becomes crimson. Where it falls on carpet or wall, it makes a beautiful crimson spot.

Now the Lord God is a sun. And his light is his love. And this love-light falls on everything and every human being. But some of this light comes to some souls through Jesus Christ, crimsoned all over with the blood of the garden and the cross, and it crimsones the soul all over, and makes that soul look in the view of God, like his own blood-crimsoned Son! This is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

Now God loves his Son above all other beings. He loved him in heaven from all eternity. He loved him in this world before he was crucified. He said from heaven more than once, "This is my beloved Son." And

when that Son was bowed down in anguish and covered with bloody sweat-drops in the garden, and on the cross, oh, how he loved him!

Do you know when a mother loves her babe most? I can tell you. When it lies on the bed rolling up its little eyes in anguish, as if saying, "Oh, mother, can't you help me?"

And no one can know how intense was the love of God for Jesus Christ, when, "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and when raising his eyes to heaven, he said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt!"

Now Jesus puts this blood of his upon the soul that loves him. "Ye are come," he says to them, "unto the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

And the beloved John looks up to him and says, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

And again he writes, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Now all who have Christ's blood on them, God loves for Christ's sake.

Suppose in a family there are two brothers. The younger one is wicked and runs away from home and is gone a long time. By-and-by the older son, who had remained faithfully at home, is travelling through the woods, when he hears a shriek and the clash of swords. He rushes to the spot to find a company of robbers trying to take the life of his younger brother. Drawing his sword he rushes in among them, and receives their strokes upon himself, and drives off the robbers, and, although bleeding from the wounds they gave him, he takes his brother in his arms and brings him home to his father! The younger son now penitent kneels before his father. His father looks at him, covered with blood, not his own, but that of his older brother which dripped upon him as he was borne in those

loving arms away from danger. The father then looks at his elder son, who shows his wounds and pleads for the brother he has rescued. The father's heart is melted by this brotherly love, and for the sake of the older, he forgives the younger.

Now the love in the father's heart for the younger comes to that penitent boy through the older!

Is it not so with Christians and Christ? He is the elder, faithful brother. The Christian is the brother who went astray, but who has been found by the older one and brought back, covered with his blood, to the father. And now God accepts the sufferings of his dear Son, instead of any punishment for our sins. And his love comes down upon us through Jesus Christ, our Lord!

This is the crimson light that falls on men through the Son of God, all dyed with the blood he shed that we might live!

II. NOTHING CAN EVER SEPARATE US FROM THIS LOVE?

From all the other loves of God sin has snatched angels and men. Are you sure that if the "love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord," puts its arms around us, nothing can ever separate us from that love?

Yes, my child, I am as sure of this, as I am that there is a Saviour. And I wish you to turn to the passage where Paul speaks of this love in Romans (viii. 38, 39,) and see what he there says upon this point.

In that precious text I see a beautiful picture. It is this. There sits an angel, with a face as bright as the full, unclouded moon, and beautiful beyond all you can imagine. His robes are whiter than snow. It is this love of Jesus, and its arms are folded close about a human soul. That soul was just sinking into hell, when that love put out its blessed arms and seized it, and now it folds it to its bosom, and the soul clasps its arms around the angel's neck.

In that text in Romans, Paul mentions several things which he says are all unable to tear that soul away.

1. The first of these is *Death*.

Why do you suppose Paul names death first? Perhaps because death is the great separator of human beings.

I have known a man and a woman to live together for sixty or seventy years as man and wife, in tender love. And then death has come and separated them?

Perhaps you, my young reader, can remember a little brother or sister, or even a dear father or mother, that you have not now seen for months, it may be for years; for, one day death came into your home and took that one away. And now you will never see that one again while you live in this world! Yes, death is a great separator of human beings.

But it does not separate from this precious love!

While the Christian is dying this love still holds him in its arms.

A Christian lady, Mrs. Legare, of Charles-

ton, South Carolina, was dying. When the doctor came out of her room, Mr. Legare said to him,—

“Well, doctor, what do you think of the scene in the next room?”

“Indeed, sir,” said the doctor, “I know not what to think of it. It is all a mystery to me. I have seen men rush to the battle-field with all fortitude, not one of whom could face the gradual approach of death without visible horror; but here is a poor, emaciated woman, whose whole nervous system is unstrung by long disease, welcoming the grim messenger with the utmost serenity, composure and joy, though coming in all the horrors of the most gradual approaches imaginable.”

As he went out, a gentleman met him and asked after his patient.

“Just gone, sir,” was his reply.

“Well,” said the gentleman, “Mr. Legare is a philosopher, and I hope he will bear the stroke like one.”

“Philosophy?” said the doctor. “I have

thought as much of philosophy as any man, but the scene within beats philosophy!"

Now surely love held that dying saint in its blessed arms!

At death, and after it, this love clings to both body and soul.

Even the body is still united to Christ, and rests in the grave until the resurrection. All intervening years, loves keep its eye on that sacred dust.

"Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust;
And give these sacred relics room,
To slumber in the silent dust.

"Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear,
Invades thy bounds—no mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
While angels watch his soft repose."

And what of the soul? Oh, the blessed angels bear it instantly to Jesus' bosom! "Absent from the body—present with the Lord."

"The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do *immediately* pass into glory."

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

So death, instead of separating us from the arms of love, only draws those arms more closely around us.

2. The next thing Paul mentions is *Life*.
“Neither death nor life.”

But I seem to see the thought rising in your mind,

“How could life, take a soul out of the arms of God’s love?”

Ah, my young friend, I wish it was a good deal harder to answer that question than it is.

Let me show you two pictures.

First think of a beautiful garden, with streams running through it, vines covered, and trees clothed with fruit, birds singing, and flowers sparkling on every side, and in that garden a man and woman perfectly

happy, and always happy, morning, noon and night.

Now turn and look. See those two making their way out of the gates of that garden, an angel with a fiery sword urging them along, and they, pale with fright, and their eyes red with weeping!

What has separated them from this beautiful garden and from the love of God? Not death. If death had removed them from the garden it would have removed them to God's bosom in heaven.

No, it was life. It was life's temptations and their consent in life.

In the year 1826, there was a weaver by the name of Thomas, who, with his large family went regularly to church and tried to teach his children the way to heaven.

He became very poor and could not obtain food for his family. He was dreadfully distressed, and instead of looking patiently to God in his extremity, he went out one night to a neighbour's field and stole a lamb, and killed it and brought it home to his family.

His wife asked him where he got the lamb. He evaded her inquiry. A part of the lamb was cooked and placed upon the table, and the family gathered around. His wife then called her husband from his loom, and he sat down and began to ask a blessing, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. He could not ask God's blessing upon stolen food. He then sprang up from his table, seized the dish and rushing out of the house hastened with it to the house of the man from whom he had stolen the lamb and told him the whole story.

The neighbour was touched with pity at the sight of the poor trembling man, and at the story he told of his destitution, and the honesty of his confession. So he forgave him, and sent him back with the food to his hungry and wondering household.

Now what was it that plunged this man into distress and temptation, and separated him from his religion and virtue? It was life with its burdens and distresses.

And thus it is that life, with its temptations,

trials and cares, its prosperities and adversities, its hopes and disappointments, tears millions upon millions away from everything that is pure and good, and makes some of them thieves and robbers, some liars, some murderers, some drunkards, some prisoners, and fills the world with wrecks of bodies and characters and souls!

But life, with all that is in it, even though it lasts sixty, seventy or ninety years, never snatches a soul away from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

If prosperity comes to such, it melts the heart, and fills it with gratitude to the giver. If sorrow comes, it drives them to that one who is "a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

For God makes "all things work together for good to them that love God."

3. Then Paul mentions the *angels*. And they could not if they would, and they would not if they could, separate us from this love.

Once a band of angels, sinned against God in heaven, and what became of them? God drove them out of heaven. Now suppose an angel should try to rob Jesus of his crown? How soon he would follow those who sinned, down to perdition!

But there is something that Jesus values more than even his crown, and that is a soul that he loves, and that loves him. What now if an angel should try to carry away one of those precious souls that Jesus had washed in his own blood!

But no angel would do such a thing, if he could ever so easily. For they all love Jesus very dearly.

John writes, "And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

And when Jesus came into our world, they filled the sky with light, and sang in the exultation of their hearts, "on earth peace, good will toward men."

And they love to watch over men, and keep them from harm.

"Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet," (Ps. xci. 9-13.)

These angels also watch over Christians while they are asleep. "The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Ps. xxxiv. 7.)

And as children are feeble and surrounded by dangers, the angels hold most careful watch over them. Hear what Jesus says,—

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. For I say unto you that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

Do you know what this means? I think it means this. In Washington, the President lives, and in various offices in that city, are the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, and the Secretary of State, and others besides. Now these Secretaries help the President to govern the nation. Suppose then a stranger, or private citizen goes to Washington and wishes to see the President. He will often find it impossible to gain access to him. The President is often too much engaged with the great affairs of the nation to have time or opportunity to see ordinary citizens. But if one of the Secretaries enters the President's house, any time of the day or night, and sends in his name, he is sure to be received. Perhaps after a day of hard labour in which he has been worn out, he has retired at midnight to his bed, and at one o'clock in the morning, while he lies in his first sound sleep, the Secretary

of War knocks at the door, and says to the servant :

“Tell the President I wish to see him immediately.”

The President would at once leap from his bed and admit him to an interview. Thus these Secretaries “do always,” whenever they wish it, “behold the face” of the President.

Now it seems to me that Jesus means to say in this passage, “The angels who watch over the little children, whom God loves, can always, when they fly to heaven with some message about them, or to ask what they shall do in particular cases, go right into the presence of God, and see his face and learn from his lips what they wish to know.

Now we may be sure, that since angels are entrusted with the care of believing souls, and know how tender God is of them and their welfare, they are the last beings in the world to attempt to separate those souls from the love of God which is in Christ.

Besides, the angels are constantly employed in helping souls away from sin into the arms

of Jesus' love. "Are they not *all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

And when a soul is converted and saved, the angels are filled with joy.

"I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke xix. 10.)

And when believers die, the angels convey the soul up to heaven.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." (Luke xvi. 22.)

So the angels would not if they could, and they could not if they would, separate a soul from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

4. Paul adds, nor "*Principalities nor Powers.*" What are these?

It means those who are high in authority, and who have great power for good and evil sometimes among men, as in Titus (iii. 1,) and sometimes among evil spirits, as in Ephesians (vi. 12.)

In this passage it means them all. Kings and governments in this world have often tried it. They have imprisoned and tortured Christians to make them deny God, so that God might withdraw his love.

Once a king published a decree that if any man asked anything of any God or man for thirty days, except of the king himself, he should be cast into the lions' den. But how can a believer live thirty days or even one day without praying? And Daniel,

“When he knew that the writing was signed, went into the house, and his window being opened in his chamber, toward Jerusalem, kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did afore-time.”

So this Persian despot could not keep a man from praying!

One time a company of Christians was brought into the presence of a king, who said to them,

“Now give up this religion, or I shall be *compelled* to have you put to death.”

Then one of the men said to the king,

“Sire, look at us and we will teach you to speak royally—*we cannot be compelled to do wrong!*”

At Antioch, in Syria, there lived a man by the name of Romanus. When the persecution began, he exhorted all his fellow-Christians to be constant and faithful. He was brought before the Emperor Galerius and awfully scourged with whips, having bits of lead in the ends of the lashes. Then with knives they covered his face and body with gashes. To all this the martyr said,

“I thank thee, O Captain, that thou hast opened upon my body so many mouths, preaching Christ.” Then he said,

“Give me a little Christian child and hear what he will say.”

The child being brought, he said,

“Tell me, my boy, should we worship one Christ and in Christ one father, or many Gods?”

The little hero replied,

“Certainly, there is but one God, and this

one God is Christ. There cannot be many Gods."

"Young villain," exclaimed the persecutor, "where did you learn this?"

"Of my mother."

"Bring that mother here!"

She was brought, and began to encourage her son to be faithful to Christ. While she was speaking to him, the tormentor struck him on the head with his sword, and in a minute the child was covered with blood. Then the mother said,

"Suffer it, my boy! You shall soon wear on that head a crown of eternal glory."

Then they made a great fire. And first they took the child and killed it, and the mother looking on sang

"All laud and praise with heart and voice,
O Lord, we yield to thee;
To whom the death of all thy saints,
We know most dear to be."

Then they threw Romanus into the fire and burned him to ashes.

Thus this Principality and Power, could

not tear the man or the woman, or even the little child from the "love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But these principalities and powers are often those of the Devil and his angels.

They once stood about the throne of God, with crowns on their heads and harps in their hands, as happy as souls in heaven can be. But they sinned, and now deprived of all their shining beauty, their garments defiled, they curse and blaspheme, and spend their energies in tearing human souls away from God's love.

And in multitudes of instances they are terribly successful. But beyond a certain point they cannot go. God never allows them to rob him of one who is in Christ Jesus.

In the Temptation, Satan tried to lead the Son of God into sin. But Jesus smiled at all his vain attempts, and said that he had broken Satan's power over his children. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven!"

Satan is a terrible monster, going about "seeking whom he may devour." But you may remember that when Pilgrim reached the

top of the hill Difficulty, he saw two lions in the way, foaming and raging, and threatening to devour him. But, though he was terribly afraid, he went on till, by-and-by, he saw that they were chained, and he walked right between them in perfect safety.

So Satan is chained. He sometimes does great harm to God's people. He made David sin most fearfully. He made Peter deny his Lord. He often makes Christians in our day do very strange, and very sinful things. But he can't lead them entirely away from God's love.

Once in an assembly of ministers an old man rose up, and said,

"I was riding along, thinking of my work, when I seemed to hear a voice calling me by name, and saying, 'You are not fit to preach the Gospel.' But I knew immediately where the voice came from, so I turned my head, and said, 'Well, if I am not fit to go to heaven myself, I will help others to go there.'"

Sometimes he terribly distresses God's dearest children. If you turn to Pilgrim's Pro-

gress, you may see Bunyan's account of some of these distresses. He tells us that Christian had gone but a little way along the valley of Humiliation, when he saw a foul fiend coming to meet him, named Apollyon, a hideous monster, with scales over him like a fish, wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, mouth like a lion, with fire and smoke pouring out of it.

This demon accused him of all the sins he had ever committed and called him all manner of vile names. Then he stood right across the way and swore that he would destroy Christian's soul. And a terrible fight they had! But Christian resisted manfully, and at last the demon spread out his horrid wings and flew away.

After this, Pilgrim found himself in the valley of the Shadow of Death. The way was very narrow with a horrid ditch on either side, and near the middle of the valley, the mouth of hell opened right beside his path, breathing out flame and smoke, and all manner of hideous noises. And now, Satan's

angels gathered around him and whispered hideous voices in his ears. He was terribly alarmed. But he kept on, and by-and-by, a light appeared at the other end of the valley and at length he emerged into open day. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

No, children, if you love Jesus, Jesus will love you, and "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!"

5. No, nor *Things Present*.

If we could take angels' wings and fly around the world, and look at every Christian, one after another, we should find each one just now surrounded by things that try his piety. One, who years ago was very poor, is now very wealthy and is tempted to pride and forgetfulness of God. Another is in the midst of deep affliction; one friend has died, and another, and another, and the sufferer is left all alone in a wide, dark world. Another was very rich and is now suffering

in deepest poverty, with little to eat and little to wear, and hardly a place where to lay his head. Another is at sea in a storm, the ship sinking and no hope of escape from a watery grave. Here is a Christian, whose heart is cold, his love of prayer lost, with little comfort in reading the word of God, and little enjoyment of any religious service. Another has even gone astray, and is now wandering far from God and duty.

Now all these believers may be tempted, and may sin, and may bring upon themselves many a stain, and many a reproach upon the cause of Christ. But what does Jesus say about them all? "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it."

Once there was a little lamb, who grew impatient of the restraints upon him. Particularly, he was vexed at having to be driven into the fold so early every evening. So one day he said to himself,—

“I am not going in so early to night. The rest of the flock may, but I mean to hide myself from the old shepherd when he comes, and have plenty of fun out here in the fields, when they are gone.”

So when he saw the shepherd coming he slipped off into the thicket, and there lay hid till the rest were all driven away, and then he came out of his hiding-place, and skipped about and laughed, and had a grand time. But, by-and-by, it began to grow dark, and the clouds came up and the winds blew, and it began to rain, and now the foolish lamb began to tremble! He ran from place to place around the field, and, by-and-by, he saw two fierce-looking eyes glaring at him in the darkness! It was a hungry wolf, seeking for food! The poor lamb, now almost dead with fright, started off and ran with all his might, and cried with a loud piteous cry. The wolf was very near and was just opening his jaws to seize him, when a man leaped over the fence near by and struck the wolf on the head with his crook, and took the trembling lamb

up in his arms. It was the shepherd. He happened to be out that night on some errand and having heard the cry of the lamb, came to the rescue.

Just so it is with all that are under the love of God in Christ. Sooner or later, they are sure to be rescued even from the consequences of their own sin and folly.

6. *Or Things to Come.* That is things to come after death. And what are the things that will happen after the Christian dies?

(1.) The long sleep of the body in the grave is to come. During that sleep the body will be all dissolved. Its parts will be scattered far and wide over the world. Yet every little atom will still be under the eye of God. For these atoms have been in connexion with a ransomed soul, and to that soul they still belong.

Besides, the body itself is redeemed and united to Christ, and its dust is more sacred in his eyes than if those atoms were so many stars.

(2.) Then the Resurrection is to come, when

Jesus will call those wandering atoms back, and construct them into a new, and most beautiful and immortal body.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise;” then,

“The Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.”

“Arrayed in glorious grace,
Shall these vile bodies shine;
And every shape and every face,
Look heavenly and divine.”

(3.) *Then the burning up of the world will come.*

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away, with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

But how *can* the world be burned up, when

so much of its surface is covered with rivers, lakes and oceans.

Ah, God can do anything! And then the wise men tell us that the inside of this world is on fire all the time, and we see these fires belching from the tops of volcanoes.

Besides, they often take a quantity of water and dissolve it into the gases of which it is composed, and one of these gases will make even iron burn almost like powder.

If you ever go to a fire and watch when the first stream from the engine falls into the blazing mass, you will see that for a moment or two the flames are fiercer than ever! The reason is that the intense heat dissolves the water into those gases, and then they take fire and burn.

Now, if God should suddenly break up the earth's crust and make all the waters of the world mingle with those tremendous fires, the same result might follow, and the very water would make the conflagration more fierce.

Further still, in water there is a wonderful

amount of electricity. Now this is the fluid that rushes down in lightning and makes it thunder as you have sometimes heard it. Think then what might happen if all the electricity of the world were set free to rage in furious lightning around the globe!

God has many ways of doing what he wills. But, in the midst of all this, every Christian will be safe in the arms of Jesus' love! Even if they were in the world while it is burning, the fires would not harm them.

Do you not remember that terrible furnace on the plains of Dura? The three Hebrew children walked about the midst of it, just as safe and happy as they had been in their own homes! God's love was around them.

(4.) Then, too, the Judgment is to come.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”

And then all that ever lived shall be there, to be judged of all the deeds done in the body, all the words spoken, and all the thoughts of the mind.

An awful day, indeed, will that be!

“Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of his train.

“Every island, sea, and mountain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away;
All who hate him, must confounded,
Hear the trump proclaim the day,
‘Come to judgment!
Come to judgment! Come away!’”

But this shall neither affright nor harm,
much less separate any soul from the love of
God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

On the contrary, then all the world will see
as they never saw before, how closely this
love holds them to its bosom. For at the
close, God will say,—

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit
the kingdom prepared for you from the foun-
dation of the world.”

(5.) A long eternity is to come.

How long is eternity? Suppose a bird to
carry a grain of sand from our earth and fly
away with it for a million of years, and then,

come back flying another million of years and carry away another grain. And go on removing a grain every two million of years, until it had carried away the whole earth. And then suppose him to begin to bring it back again a grain every two millions of years until it were all brought back again. And suppose him to do all this over and over, and over again a million of times, and at the end of all this inconceivable period of time, eternity would only be just begun! Such is eternity!

But through all this eternity, during which I suppose new worlds might be made and old worlds destroyed, nothing can ever occur to take that precious soul out of those precious arms!

7. The seventh thing Paul mentions is *Height*.

I seem to hear you asking,—

“What *can* this mean? How could height separate us from Christ’s love?”

Height here must mean something very high. Now suppose God should tell a soul

to climb some very high steep and thorny hill. And the soul might say,—

“No, I can’t climb that hill. It is too hard and too dangerous. I will walk over that beautiful meadow, or I will sail along that sweet, smooth stream, but I cannot think of climbing that hill?”

Then God would say:

“Well, if you can’t obey me, I will tell that angel to let go of your soul.”

Disobedience then would separate that soul from that love.

God told Jonah to climb such a hill. He said,—

“Go to Nineveh, and pass up and down all its streets and say and keep saying, ‘Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed! Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed!’”

But Jonah said to himself,—

“No! That hill is too high and steep, and dangerous. I cannot climb that hill! The boys in the streets would run after me and mock me. And the men would come out and they would mock me. And the king would

send officers and they would shut me up in prison, and may be kill me. I can't undertake that work."

So he fled from God, entered a ship, and was thrown into the sea and swallowed by the whale. But after all, he did go! For he was a good man, and God would not let him disobey and lose his soul.

So Paul says, no height, no steep, painful, dangerous duty shall hinder a soul from still resting in the arms of love.

8. Now Paul adds another thing still, and that is *Depth*.

This seems as strange as the other. It may mean the deep things of God.

Some of the doctrines of the Bible are very deep.

There is the doctrine of the Trinity which tells us of three persons in the Godhead, all divine and all equal in power and glory. They are not three Gods, but only one. They are not one person but three. Three in one, one in three.

Now some people find this doctrine so deep

that they will not believe it, so they reject the only living and true God, and while they do this they cannot get into the arms of this love.

Then there is the doctrine of the incarnation, which tells us the second Person in the blessed Trinity took to himself our nature and became man. So here we find two natures in one person. The eternal Son of God dwelling in a human form, as God healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, and yet as man eating and drinking, weeping, bleeding and dying.

But this doctrine is so deep that many reject it, and thus they have no Saviour, and the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, never reaches them.

Then there are deep, very deep things in divine providence.

I once knew a Christian woman, whose husband left her, and in his absence had word sent to her that he was dead. Then she became very poor and her son committed a robbery, and she soon heard that he was in prison.

Then she heard that her husband was alive and went to seek him and found him, married to another woman. Then she returned to find that her daughter had in the meantime been married to a man so wicked that he was soon the means of her daughter's death. Then she heard from her husband that he had been murdered. And yet through all these depths of a strange providence she continued firm in her trust and love of God.

You may have heard of Henry VIII. King of England. His people longed for a reformation in religion. He also threw off his and their allegiance to the Pope, and became a sort of Pope himself. He reformed some things; but at length died, and his son, nine years old, became king.

This young king was a noble youth. He loved the Saviour and a pure religion. He loved the Bible, and once, when in his presence, one of his courtiers, wishing to reach something from a high shelf, put a Bible on the floor and stepped on it for this purpose, as soon as he stepped down again, the young

king ran, and taking up the Blessed Book, put it to his lips and kissed it. All good people were very much encouraged, and looked for the most happy times under this pious king. But when he had reigned a few years, God took him away, and that awful creature, the bloody Mary, came to the throne in his stead !

Now here was one of those deep things in God's providence that no one has been able to understand. England is feeling to this day the calamities of this strange providence. But God's people know that it was all right. It does not make them rebel and lose the love of God.

9. At last when it seems as if Paul could think of nothing else to say, he closes by adding. "*Nor any other creature !*"

Thus that lovely angel holds the soul in its arms, and death cannot get it away, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature !

Now what I want for my children before I

die, what your father and mother, your minister and Sabbath-school teacher want for you too, is to see you in the arms of this love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

How shall this come to pass? Suppose you do as a little Chinese boy did, in one of our missionary stations. Two of them were reading the Bible and came to this passage,

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

“I don’t believe that,” said one of them. “I don’t believe that any body ever loved all the world so much as that.”

“Well, it must be so,” said the other, “for this book says so.”

“Let us go and ask the missionary,” said the other.

So they went, and of course the missionary said,—

“Yes. And he not only loved the world so, but he loved you and that Son of God died for you.”

The little boy was very much surprised,
“What,” said he, with tears in his eyes,
“did God’s Son die for me?”

The little fellow went away and kneeling
down in some quiet place he prayed,

“O Son of God, show me, show my heart
that you have died for me!”

Now, my dear children, won’t you go by
yourselves, and pray with all your heart,
that Jesus would show those hearts that he
loved you enough to shed his precious blood
for you?

If he does, if you come to see and feel
under the teaching of the loving Spirit that
Jesus died for *you*, then this love will throw
its blessed arms around you and hold you to
its bosom so closely, that neither death, nor
life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
nor things present, nor things to come, nor
height, nor depth, nor any other creature
will be able to tear you away!

“Come hither, all ye weary souls,
Ye heavy-laden sinners come;

I'll give you rest from all your toils,
And raise you to my heavenly home.

“Jesus, we come at thy command,
With faith, and hope, and humble zeal;
Resign our spirits to thy hand,
To mould and guide us at thy will.”

THE GRAND CONCERT.

268

“ And they sung as it were a New Song before the throne, and before the four Living Creatures, and the Elders : and no man could learn that Song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were Redeemed from the earth.”
(Rev. xiv. 3.)

VI.

THE GRAND CONCERT.

WELL, Children, this is our fifth and last Sabbath afternoon under "The Oak." Already the season is waning. See those leaves, red as blood, on yonder tree, and there is another with other leaves yellow as gold. And now and then you see a falling leaf showing that fall is very near.

And now as I am going to talk to you about a *Grand Concert*, let us begin by singing this hymn—

"Come, let us join our cheerful songs,
With angels round the throne ;
Ten thousand, thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

"'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,
'To be exalted thus :'
'Worthy the Lamb,' our lips reply,
For he was slain for us.

“ Let all that dwell above the sky,
And air and earth and seas,
Conspire to lift thy glories high,
And speak thine endless praise.”

What now, children, is the finest instrument of music ever made? The flute, the harp, the piano, or the organ? No, but the human voice. What wonders are sometimes wrought by such a voice! When Jenny Lind was singing in this country, vast crowds flocked to listen to her warblings, some of her hearers travelling twenty miles, some thirty and some even fifty.

But I have read of a voice that accomplished wonders much greater than drawing men and women from their homes so many miles away.

There was an English nobleman who had an only daughter, and very dearly did he love her. And she was well worthy of his love. She was endowed with a fine mind, and she enjoyed a finished education. Whatever accomplishments adorned the female character, she possessed in a very high degree. Well,

on a certain occasion, this young lady was led, in the providence of God, to a church where she heard a sermon that shook her very soul, and resulted in her conversion to God!

Now, children, how do you suppose her father received the news of her conversion? I have known a father, to receive a letter from a child telling him that the hopes of heaven through Christ had come into the soul, and to be so overcome with joy that he knew scarcely what to do! He walked the room, and went out into the fields, and praised and blessed God with all his heart! But this young lady's father was filled with grief. It seemed to him that he had lost his child! He knew that as a Christian she would be very different from what she had been. So he did all he could to change her mind. He took her off on long journeys. He gave her money in abundance in hopes she would plunge into extravagance. And among other things, he once invited a large, gay party to his house, meaning to induce her to join in all the gayeties of the occasion. During the

evening they asked her to sing a song. So she sat down to the piano, ran her fingers over the keys, and then began this song,—

“No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hopes, or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone!
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
The inexorable throne!

“No matter what my thoughts employ,
A moment’s misery or joy;
But oh! when both shall end,
Where shall I find my destined place?
Shall I my everlasting days,
With fiends or angels spend?”

And such was the spirit and pathos with which she sang, so full of tenderness and devotion were the tones of her voice, that before she was done, her father was in tears, and ere long he too became a Christian! Only think of the power with which God armed that one sweet voice, enabling it to break into contrition a hard, sinful heart!

Now the music of two voices is sweeter than that of one, for they can sing different parts, and

that of three sweeter than that of two, and that of four than that of three. The rainbow would be very beautiful if it were all of one colour; but having seven different colours all so sweetly blended, it is seven times more beautiful. So the more voices you have, other things being equal, the richer the music.

But I went once to a concert in which more than five hundred voices sang together! And when the big organ thundered, all the base viols and other viols and instruments played, and all those five hundred voices sang. Oh, it was like the sound of many waters—it seemed as if the house shook with the sound—as if almost, the roof would be borne up under the volume and rush of harmonies!

II. ANOTHER GRAND CONCERT.

And the first question you will ask will be,—

1. *Where is the concert to be held?* For if it should be held a great way off, you might say, “I do not believe my mother will let me go.”

Well, children, it is to be held a great, great way off. Well, where? In New York? Oh, much farther off! In London? A great deal farther off than London. In China? very much farther off than China! Well, do tell us where it is to be held? Listen, then, and I will read you the advertisement!

“Behold! A throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald!”

This throne with its shining occupant is the central figure in the Grand Concert.

“And around about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.”

“And in the midst of the throne, (that is between the twenty-four elders and the throne) and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes.” And they sung a new song.” (Rev. fourth and fifth chapters.)

So you see, children, that the concert to which I invite you, is to be held in heaven!

The elders mean, I suppose, the officers of the church, and the living creatures—alive in Christ for evermore, are church members. The king on the throne is Jesus Christ. Thus heaven will be a great musical concert of ransomed people singing around the throne of our Saviour!

Why, do you suppose, is singing so often mentioned in God's word as a chief employment of the inhabitants of heaven? Why is heaven in a great degree one Grand Concert of celestial music?

One reason I suppose is, that when joy fills any human heart to the very brim, that joy naturally overflows in song. "If any is merry let him sing."

Suppose now I wished to set a little girl singing, I might do it in many ways. But suppose I go down street among the great toy-shops, and entering one, piled from floor to ceiling with beautiful toys, I purchase a ten-dollar doll, with beautiful eyes, moving

eye-lids, one that will cry if you pinch it a little, (some babies cry without pinching,) long, golden curls, a beautiful white dress with gay ribbons; and taking it to the little girl, I give it to her and send her into the nursery to play with it. And now listening at the door do you not suppose I should hear singing? I tell you if that little girl does not sing, then it must be because she has no music either in her soul or in her voice!

But in heaven, the soul is always overflowing with joy. "In thy presence is *fulness* of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore!"

Another reason may be this. When a large company are together and every heart is overflowing with some vast joy, each one wishes to express his joy. They do not wish all to be silent but one and let him sing for, or talk to them. And they do not wish to talk to one another, for then one-half must listen and not talk themselves.

Thus once when the news of a great and glorious victory of the national arms reached

the city of New York, the people went rushing together in vast clouds in Wall street, and there they stood, whole acres of them! Well, every one of all those thousands of hearts was filled to overflowing with joy, and each one was aching to express its joy. So not wishing to stand still and hear any one talk, what did they do? Why, they all began to sing! And they sang out with one accord,—

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”

Thus old Wall street, that for scores of years had heard only the clinking of dollars, now heard echoing through all her banks and money-vaults the song of praise to the Triune God!

So in heaven all hearts, being full to overflowing with joy, when they are together, naturally and irresistibly break out into singing!

2. *But how large a Concert will that be?*

Well, it will be the largest concert ever

seen! I told you I had been present at a concert where more than five hundred voices joined in the songs. But in this concert, there will be ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands!

Suppose, in imagination, we build a wall all around the State of Pennsylvania, and turn the whole State into a concert room! Then from the centre of the State we will build seats rising one higher than the other, all the way to the eastern wall; then again from the centre another set in rising rows all the way to the western wall; then again from the centre other rows toward the northern, and others still to the southern wall.

To keep out the hot sun-rays and showers, we will hang over all a silken canopy, red, white, and blue, with plenty of stars intermingled. And now let us fill all those seats with singers and players on instruments, and what a grand concert-hall, and how magnificent a choir we should have! And now should we find some chorister to lead them, and they all should sing together, why they could be

heard almost to Canada and to Ohio, if not across the ocean!

And yet what would even this be to the great choir of heaven! I should like to describe that hall to you if I could. But only one who has been there could do this. I, and perhaps you also, have a father and a brother and a sister there, and they could tell us about that magnificent chamber. But God tells us something of the numbers of the singers to be gathered there.

“After this, I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb.” There are old men and young men, and little children. There are shepherds and kings, those who on earth were beggars, and those who lived in splendid mansions. There are people from India, and from China, from Greenland and Madagascar, from Europe, Africa and America. Patriarchs, Prophets, Priests and Levites, Martyrs and Confessors—a mighty, mighty host! And now when

they sing, how the torrents of harmony will roll away through the arches of heaven !

3. *But how will these singers and players be dressed?*

This the Bible tells us. "One of the Elders" in the vision asked of John—"What are these which are arrayed in *white* robes? and whence came they?" And then he himself answered his own question, and said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and *made them white* in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 13.)

I have seen I suppose fifty, perhaps a hundred, beautiful young girls dressed in white with beautiful ribbons upon their shoulders, and I thought they looked and sung like angels, and was glad they had no feathers on their wings with which to fly away! But what was that to the sight of all those myriads of white-robed singers in the skies?

Then on their heads are crowns of heavenly gold, for we read that they "cast their crowns at the feet" of him who sits upon the throne.

Besides they each carry a branch of palm in one hand. Oh, what a forest of palms! The palm you know is a sign of victory. For this tree will grow and grow in spite of all effort to hinder it. You may hang the heaviest weights upon it and still it will grow. It is also a token of peace. For in war trees are cut down. There used to be groves of palms about Jerusalem, for when the multitude went out to meet Jesus as he came from Bethany, they took in their hands "branches of the palm-trees." (John xii. 13.) But now I believe there is not a single palm-tree near Jerusalem. Where palms grow in abundance, no armies have lately been. And the palm is evergreen, and these singers carry palms to show that their beauty and their joy shall never fade. Again the palm leaves grow as far as possible from the ground, and up toward heaven. For this tree has no branches except at the very top. These may be, in part, the reasons why the saints in heaven are represented as carrying each a palm branch.

4. *Where did these singers learn to sing?* Not in heaven but on earth. Have you any friends in heaven: well, suppose you would go and ask them where they learned to sing that song, and they will tell you that it was on earth. Even the little babies who die and go to heaven carry with them this song in their hearts. Why even the angels cannot sing our song! This we learn from the song itself.

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed us* to God by thy blood.” (Rev. v. 9.) Now angels cannot say that they were ever redeemed to God by the blood of Christ, for they were not. And hence God says, “No one,” (not no *man* as in our translation,) “no *one* could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which *were redeemed from the earth.*” And it is very important for us all to keep in mind that if we do not learn to sing this song while we live here, we never *can* learn it.

“Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to insure the great reward,
And while the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.

“There are no acts of pardon past
In the cold grave to which we haste;
But darkness, death and long despair
Reign in eternal silence there.”

Thus you see children, this world is a great singing-school! The aim of the minister, in preaching the gospel from the pulpit and in praying with and for the people, is to teach them to sing—to sing “the new song,” so that they may take part in the *Grand Concert*. The reason why your superintendent and teachers come to the Sabbath-school from Sabbath to Sabbath, and teach you, and visit you and pray for you is that you may all learn to sing—not merely the hymns in your hymn books, that is only trying your voice, but the new song “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” •

Thus you see what a slander it is upon religion to say that it tends to make the mind

gloomy and the heart sad, when in truth it is the only thing in the world that can give us that abiding joy which overflows in never-ending song. The call comes from the lips of piety ;

“Come we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known :
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.

“The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.

“Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry ;
We’re marching through Immanuel’s ground
To fairer worlds on high.”

5. *When do these singers practise this new song?*

No young lady ever comes to be a finished musician without a great deal of practice, and one who carries a living joy in the heart will often break out into singing.

(1.) Well, the first time this new song is sung is at or after the moment of conversion ;

sometimes the soul breaks out into singing just at the moment it passes from death to life. The song is "Unto Him that loved *us*, and washed *us* from our sins in his own blood." Hence no one can properly sing it who has not been actually washed in the blood of Christ, and no one does sing it until he sees or trusts that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Any one can look and see Jesus hanging on the cross and dying there. But when one sees that Jesus dies for him, sees his own sins resting on Christ in that awful hour, then he knows two things; first, that the sufferings of Christ have for ever delivered him from sorrow; and second, that by his life the Saviour earned for him all the rewards of a perfect obedience, which rewards consist in eternal life and all the joys of heaven. Now when one so much as feebly trusts that such blessings have come to him, how can he help rejoicing and shouting aloud for joy?

I was once sent for to converse with a young woman about her soul, and I found

her full of joy and hope. And as she went on telling me about her sorrows for sin, and how her burden passed away, she said, "Oh, it seemed to me as if my soul sung!" So Christians in their meetings often sing,

"When God revealed his gracious name,
And changed my mournful state,
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,
The grace appeared so great.

"The world beheld the glorious change,
And did thy hand confess;
My tongue broke out in unknown strains,
And sung surprising grace."

While Whitefield and Wesley were preaching in England, many years ago, a noble lady, by the name of Margaret Hastings, was led to listen to the message they proclaimed, and become a Christian. In conversation one day with Lady Huntingdon she made a remark that went right to the heart of her friend. The remark was the following:

"Since I have known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation, I have been happy as an angel."

Thus she had become one of the singers in

the great choir, and her singing began with her conversion.

(2.) They practise also in their assemblies for *worship*, and God often blesses their singing for their own good and the good of others.

I once read a letter written to a minister by one who was an utter stranger to him. It ran thus:

“Reverend and dear Sir, I was brought up in a Christian family, but I wandered far, far away, from every thing that is good. But last Sabbath evening, as I was on my way to a scene of worldly pleasure, I passed your church. The light from within was streaming out upon the pavement, and as I neared the door, I heard the music as its solemn strains went up to God. The temptation to enter was too strong to be resisted, so I went in and there for the first time for many years, I heard again the preaching of the word, and I could not help writing this line to you, a stranger, and telling you of the impression made upon my mind.”

The letter ended without giving the name of the writer, and without saying what was the final result of this interesting providence. But may we not hope that it ended in the recall of a backslider and the conversion of a sinner from the error of his ways?

This reminds me of an incident in the early history of our country. The Indians entered a village by night, destroyed the town and carried away many children into captivity. Among them was a little girl who had been accustomed to hear her mother sing her to sleep, and the song of the mother went down into the heart and memory of the child. Years after, some of our soldiers conquered a party of Indians, drove them from their village and recaptured a company of children, and bringing them to one of the frontier settlements, gave notice far and wide that any whose children had been carried away by Indians might come and identify and take them home. The mother of the little girl, seeing the notice, hastened to the spot, but alas! all the children had grown so much, and had be-

come so changed in appearance by their long Indian life that they could not be recognized nor were they able to recognize their parents. With a heart full of sadness the mother thought she must give up the newly revived hope of ever seeing her child again, whom indeed she had little reason to doubt had died or been killed by her savage captors, when with a true woman's ingenuity she began to sing the old nursery song. Before she had got through with one verse, the eyes of one of the children began to sparkle! She listened awhile and then starting up she ran and threw herself into the arms of her mother!

So, many a child has been saved through the instrumentality of one of the songs of Zion.

A missionary, once labouring in South Africa, was led to go on a tour up the coast to certain guano islands, where many bad men, convicts from the prisons in Scotland, were at work. When he reached the port opposite the islands, he learned that the men were in

a state of riotous mutiny. They had driven off their employers and threatened to kill any man who set foot on the island, and spent their time in drinking, swearing and fighting. The missionary, however, determined to visit them, even at the peril of his life. So he took a Bible and a "Bethel Flag," and induced some sailors to row him over to them. He leaped ashore and walked towards them. Many of them came scowling to meet him, and when near enough, he called out to them ;

"Boys, it is the Sabbath day, and I am a minister of the gospel, come to preach to you. Take this flag and raise it and fix me up a place to stand, and call in your comrades and let us have worship."

The hardened men, hearing themselves thus addressed, took the flag and raised it and soon they were gathered around in a circle to hear the preacher. First, he opened a book and gave out one of the old Scotch psalms, and then said :

"Boys, I cannot raise the tune, but we

must have singing, and I know some of you can begin."

Sure enough one of them started "Dun-dee," or some other old tune and others joined in the song, and before they had gone far, tears began to flow down those sun-burnt cheeks, and they were subdued and became like little children! While they sang they could not help thinking of other and better days, of a pious mother and a godly father and the Sunday services in the old "kirk" at home. The result of all was a great revival!

Oh, if parents would only sing more with their children at family worship and on Sunday evenings, how many seeds of salvation might be sown?

In times of revival of religion, sacred song is often clothed with great power. I remember once when the Spirit of God was moving many hearts, that at the close of service in the church I invited all who felt sufficient concern for their salvation to engage in a brief service in the lecture-room, to assemble there at once and I would meet them.

After some detention in the church, I went there, and as I entered, I saw perhaps thirty persons assembled. Among them was a Christian man who had begun to sing, and they were now all engaged, filling the house with their song, the words of which were,

“ Come humble sinner, in whose breast,
A thousand thoughts revolve;
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,
And make this last resolve.

“ I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
High as a mountain rose;
I know his courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.”

It was a very solemn scene, and I doubt not that song helped to deepen impressions upon the hearts of those inquiring souls.

Many of our hymns are beautiful expressions of Christian feeling, and I wish we could oftener throw into our singing more of the spirit that belongs to them. Even when one cannot sing with the voice he may with the heart. I have seen a Christian woman who had neither voice nor ear, shed tears

while others were singing such hymns as "Alas! and did my Saviour bleed," and "Rock of ages cleft for me."

(3.) These singers also practise this heart-music in the praying closet.

If you, my child, should hear all the sounds in the place where your mother goes for secret prayer, I very much suspect that you would sometimes hear music. Perhaps she always sings a hymn at such times. If not, no doubt she sometimes enjoys such views of that "Chiefest among ten thousand," that one "altogether lovely," as fill her heart with joy. The disciples in the mount of transfiguration saw Jesus as they never saw him before, and God's people, when the door is shut and they are all alone with the Saviour, sometimes are able to get so near to Christ, to feel so profoundly his preciousness, to gain such views of heaven, and to realize so fully the blessings of religion, that I am sure they cannot help singing, at least in their hearts.

A young Christian soldier wrote thus of his visions in secret devotion,—

“Have had happy thoughts of Christ to-day! Oh, what cause have I to love him! O God, I would devote myself to thee for ever!” Again, he wrote,—

“About twelve o’clock at night while reading 2 Cor. v., I had such inward joy and peace and comfort, that I felt strongly inclined to awaken the poor fellows who were stretched asleep on the guard-bed in the adjoining room, to pray with them and to talk with them of the love of Christ.”

Oh, children, I trust you may one day understand this as you do not now!

(4.) They practise also at the communion table.

Jesus and the apostles did this in the upper chamber in Jerusalem. “When they had sung an hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives!” So we at our communion table often sing:

“People of the living God,
 I have sought the world around,
 Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
 Peace and comfort nowhere found:—
 Now to you my spirit turns,
 Turns a fugitive unblest;

Brethren, where *your* altar burns,
Oh, receive *me* into rest."

And then before we separate we often sing that precious hymn :

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

And many a time while the heads are bowed and the bread and wine are in the lips, and the soul thinks of Jesus coming from heaven, toiling and weeping, bleeding and dying, and all that they might live, their spirits within them sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb."

(5.) And they practise this music even in times of sorrow.

This may seem very strange. For the rule is "If any is merry let him sing." But how can one be merry and sorry, both at once?

You remember the story of the prodigal

son. Well, when that youth rested on his father's neck and saw that he was forgiven, do you not think he was very glad? And yet he was very sorry for his sins.

Well, I was once in a house of sorrow. A boy about twelve years old had died. And his mother and father and all the family were in great distress. The mother and father held each other by the hand and looked together on the pale face of their child, and poured out their tears as they thought they should never again hear those lips say, "Father"—"Mother." But they were very glad, for among his last words were these—"Mother, I am going to my Saviour. I love you all very, very much, but I love Jesus better." Oh, how glad they were to think that their child was in heaven, where no sorrow or pain could ever reach him! Their hearts sung with joy, while tears of sorrow rolled down their cheeks! Thus God gives us "songs in the night."

Once there were two men preaching the gospel to a company of people, when, in came

a stern heathen officer and arrested them. He carried them before the magistrate, and there they were whipped with thirty-nine lashes, till their backs bled under the strokes. Then they were taken to the prison, and great doors opened like the jaws of a grim monster to devour them. They were driven in, and on through one part of the prison into a deeper dungeon. There their feet were made fast in the stocks. It was dark enough when they entered but after a while the sun went down, and night came on, and at last midnight drew its black curtains round the prison. And now strange sounds came out of their cell and rolled through the vaults of the dungeon. And what kind of sounds do you think they were? Were those poor men, with their bleeding wounds, crying out for deliverance? Did they exclaim in their anguish, as God's suffering people sometimes have done, "How long, O Lord, how long!" No. But the sounds that waked the prisoners on that dark night were those of joyful song! For "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and

sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them.”

(6.) And strange to say these musicians practise their singing on the dying bed!

“Death,” said a dying sinner—“death is a bitter herb!” Death is the “king of terrors.” In death one parts from friends, and family, and all the scenes of earth, and goes out upon scenes to him entirely new.

And yet some of the sweetest songs ever heard by mortal ears, have come from the dying pillow.

“Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, O quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
O the pain, the *bliss* of dying!
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life!”

Some years ago there died, at Lucknow in Northern India, a Christian convert by the name of Abdool Musseeh. Through God’s blessing upon the labours of Henry Martyn, whose biography I hope you will all one day read, he had been led to Jesus. Being very

near his end, a lady asked him how he was, to whom he answered,—

“Very well, sister, thanks be to God!”
They then sung a hymn which he himself had composed.

“Beloved Saviour, let not me,
In thy fond heart forgotten be;
Of all that decks the field or bower,
Thou art the sweetest, fairest flower.

“Youth’s morn has fled, old age comes on,
But sin distracts my soul alone,
Beloved Saviour, let not me
In thy fond heart forgotten be.”

As they sang, his voice was heard with theirs, and when they reached the end of the hymn, he begged them to sing it again. He tried to join in the repetition, but he was too far gone and soon sank into insensibility, and ere long, his spirit was borne by the angels into Abraham’s bosom! Thus he began to sing the new song above, just as he ceased singing his own song below!

Once a Sabbath-school girl was dying, and looking up into her mother’s face she said,—

“Mother, I am not afraid to die. Jesus is with me and when I die, it will be like falling asleep in his arms.”

Near the end when she could only whisper, she said, “Jesus is with me, but he seems nearer when you are praying or singing his praise.”

Then they sang for her,—

“Jesus can make the dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.”

And it was just as they ceased singing one of these songs of Zion, that little Libbie's spirit soared away to the bright mansions of heaven!

6. *What will be the subject of the sweetest songs of heaven?*

Any child could answer that question. A little girl is lost in the woods. The night comes on. It is very dark. Wolves are roaming around seeking prey. But amidst her terror and anguish, she finds herself in the arms of a neighbour, who with others

have been seeking the lost one, and before long, she is again in the bosom of her family, safe and happy! And now if the joy of her heart should overflow in song, about whom would she like to sing? Certainly about her deliverer.

But when one has been rescued from eternal death, and made an heir of everlasting life by him who sought the lost sheep through the wilderness of sin, and having found it, folded it to his bosom, the tongue will naturally break forth in songs to that great Deliverer.

“Jesus my shepherd is,
’Twas he that loved my soul,
’Twas he that washed me in his blood,
’Twas he that made me whole.
’Twas he that sought the lost,
That found the wandering sheep,
’Twas he that brought me to the fold,
’Tis he that still doth keep.”

I once called with a friend upon a very aged woman, and as we talked together, I learned that she remembered many interesting things about the early history of our country. Said she,—

“When I was a little girl, I lived in Trenton, in New Jersey, and one day the people said, Washington is going to pass through our town on his way to New York, and we want all the little girls in the neighbourhood to be dressed in white, and to stand on the bridge that crosses the creek, and throw flowers before him as he rides along. I was one of those little girls, and with my basket of flowers I stood on the bridge, and saw the father of his country pass by. I was very near him. I touched his hand, and I saw a tear on his cheek! An arch reached from one side of the bridge to the other, on which, in letters made of flowers, were these words, ‘The defender of the mothers will be the protector of the daughters.’ As Washington rode along, they all broke out into singing, and who do you suppose they sang about? Of course they sang of Washington!

“Welcome mighty chief, once more!
Welcome to our happy shore!
Now no mercenary foe,
Aims again the fatal blow—
Aims at *thee* the fatal blow.”

“Virgins fair and matrons grave,
Those thy conquering arm did save,
Build for *thee* triumphal bowers,
Strew ye fair, his way with flowers—
Strew your hero’s way with flowers!”

“Well, children, there is to be another grand triumphant march of a Hero, greater than all earth’s heroes combined!

“And I saw heaven opened and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called FAITHFUL and TRUE. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called, THE WORD OF GOD!” (Rev. xix. 11–13.)

And now this mighty Hero comes riding along among the heavenly hosts, and as he comes the song rolls out from countless voices of angels and ransomed souls,—

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing!”

Thus the chief burden of song at the grand concert will be, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God!

And those singers who go up to the concert from our world, will sing also of their deliverance from the Great Plague. They will remember the terrible leprosy that was on them, and how Jesus by his Spirit touched them and made them clean. And they will sing of the New Creation by which he made them new creatures in Christ Jesus. And they will remember the great Daysman who took God with one hand and them by another and brought them together as friends. And they will sing of the Strong Embrace of love that holds them to the bosom of God so firmly, that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! And such will be the Grand Concert in the skies!

7. But children *you cannot go into a concert without a ticket*, and that ticket must be of the right sort. Should you go to the door of some concert-hall and try to enter without a

ticket you could not go in. If you present a ticket of the wrong kind the door-keeper would not take it. If you should succeed in entering, without any ticket or with a spurious one, you might be followed by an officer and be cast ignominiously out again.

And so is it with the concert of which we now speak. A friend told me that he was once sitting in a railway car, thundering along through the woods in the darkness, when the conductor came around to gather up the tickets. Near my friend was a man who had neither a ticket nor the money to buy one. The conductor taking him for one of those who are in the habit of thus stealing a passage over the road, seized the rope, had the train suddenly stopped, and then taking hold of the intruder dragged him to the door and thrust him out into the darkness! The train moved on, leaving the hapless traveller in the woods by the road-side.

What passage in the word of God does such a scene call to mind?

“And when the king came in to see the

guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

But what kind of a ticket do we need? In other words suppose you should die to night and go up to the gate of heaven, what must you have to show the angel-porter, as a reason why he should admit you? Just a drop of the blood of Jesus on your soul! Then the angel would know that you *had* "come to mount Zion and unto the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." He would know that your sins had been forgiven, and that therefore you had a "title clear to mansions in the skies."

Who can sprinkle this blood on the soul? The Holy Spirit. He changes and purifies the heart. Now, children, go each one of you to him in prayer and ask this blessing, and he will give it you, and then you shall each be a singer in the grand concert in the skies!

As this now is our last meeting under the oak, we will close by singing this well-known hymn about that concert.

“ Around the throne of God in heaven,
Thousands of children stand,
Children whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy happy band,
Singing glory, glory,
Glory be to God on high !”

How are those singers dressed ?

• “ In flowing robes of spotless white,
See every form arrayed,
Dwelling in everlasting light,
And joys that never fade.

“ What brought them to that world above,
That heaven so bright and fair ?
Where all is peace and joy and love,
How came those children there ?

“ Because the Saviour shed his blood,
To wash away their sin,
Bathed in that pure and precious flood,
Behold them white and clean.”

And where did they learn to sing ?

"On *earth* they sought the Saviour's grace,
On *earth* they loved his name;
So now they see his blessed face,
And stand before the Lamb,
"Singing glory, glory,
Glory be to God on high!"

THE END.

