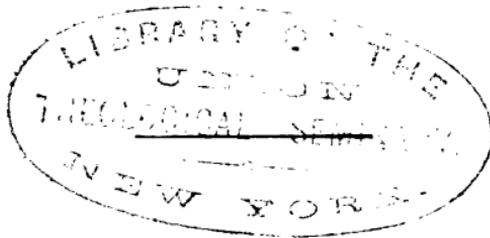


THE
DIAMOND IN THE CAGE;

OR,

HOURS WITH THE CHILDREN.

BY THE
REV. J. E. ROCKWELL, D.D.



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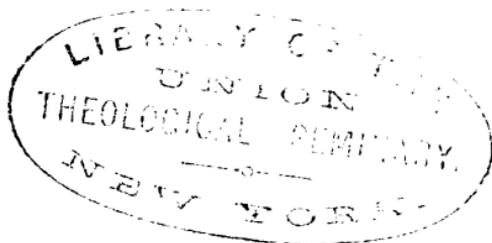
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The Koh-i-noor in its Cage.

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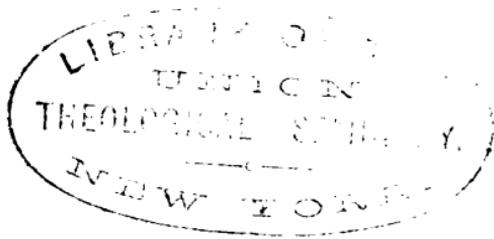
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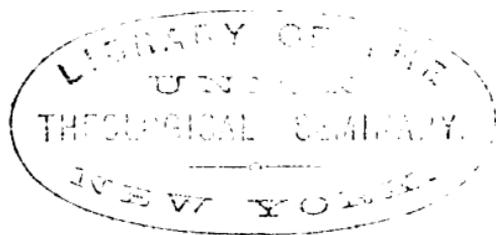
PREFACE.

THIS little volume is the result of many years' labor in behalf of children. The writer has, as a pastor, always endeavored to keep himself in communication with the youth of his flock, by visiting them in the Sabbath-school and holding frequent Sabbath or weekly services with them and adapting his addresses to their capacities and wants. Many of these thoughts and illustrations have thus been used in those pleasant *Hours with the Children* in which he has sought to teach them the value of the soul, and how it may be fitted the most perfectly to reflect the light of Him who made it, and in whose crown it may shine amid the glories of the heavenly world. While he lays no special claim to originality in the lessons which he has here sought to impart, it is due to himself to say that many of the anecdotes which he has introduced are the statements of facts which have occurred in his own pastoral experiences, and which now for the first time see the

light. He commits this work to the press in the hope, and with the earnest prayer, that parents and teachers may find it useful as a help in the work of parental and Sabbath-school instruction, and that on the children for whom it is specially intended the divine blessing may rest, and that the Holy Spirit may make fruitful this effort to impress upon their minds some of the more important doctrines and duties of the gospel.

J. E. R.

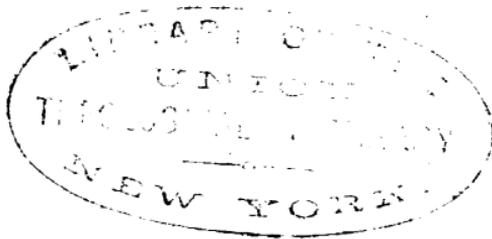
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Talks about the Soul.

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A word often repeated in the Bible. What is the soul? The sailor boy. The Koh-i-noor. The value of the soul; how to estimate it. It will never die. What it can enjoy or suffer. The prison at Philippi. Praises at midnight. The capital of Persia. A miserable courtier. What Christ thought of the soul. The Swiss mother. Christ's love for us; how shown.



THE DIAMOND IN THE CAGE.

I.

TALKS ABOUT THE SOUL.

THE word "soul" is repeated in the Bible almost three hundred times, and all that is said about it shows how precious and valuable it is, and with how much interest God, who best knows its worth, looks upon it.

Our blessed Saviour often spake to his disciples of its value, taught them that there was nothing in the world that could be esteemed of equal price, and that a man ought to be willing to suffer any pain, endure any trial or bear any cross rather than that his soul should perish.

If a man were to inherit as his only fortune a rich and costly gem, we all know with what interest he would look upon it, with

what care he would watch it, with what courage defend himself were any to seek to take it from him. Yet each one of us bears about with him a priceless jewel which worlds cannot equal in value, and which many an enemy is seeking to destroy. We call it *the soul*. You hear of it often. God's word tells you about it, and bids you seek its salvation, and all of its instructions have especial reference to this one great business. It is of this I wish to talk to you now. I will try and make it plain to you, so that the youngest child may understand what I mean.

WHAT IS THE SOUL?

Can you tell me what the soul is? You have never seen it, you have never heard it, you cannot touch it with your hands, you cannot tell its color or shape. Nor did you ever see the wind, nor can you grasp the wind when it sweeps by you. Yet you see what it does, and so you are sure

that there is something which you call the wind. You go out into the forests in the warm days of summer and feel something fanning your cheek, and kissing your forehead, and playing with your hair, and though you cannot see or grasp it, you know that it is the wind. Or you look up and see the tall trees waving their great arms, while the quivering leaves seem to be whispering a sweet song in your ears, and you know that the wind is playing amid the branches. Or you go down by the shore of the green sea, where the waves come rolling in upon the sand, and look far out upon the waters, and see the great ships, with their tall masts and white sails, flying across the ocean as upon the wings of mighty eagles, and you know that the wind is there, filling the canvas and lifting up the waves and covering the deep with sheets of white foam.

Thus you know that there is a wind, because you see and feel what it does. So also we know there is a soul, because we feel and

see what it is doing. It is just in this way that we reason when we say there is a God. We cannot see or hear or touch him, but we see what he has made, and how wonderfully he has suited everything to the purpose it was intended to accomplish, and what infinite power and wisdom he has shown in building up this great world, in setting the sun and moon and stars in their places and keeping them all in order.

If the youngest child that is reading these lines will think over all he does and feels every day, he will find that there are many things going on within him which are not done or felt by his body.

Attend to me and see if I can make it plain to you. Your eyes look out upon the beautiful world and see the sky, and the sun, and the green earth, and the waving trees, and the faces of dear friends. Your hands can feel, and your ears can hear, and your limbs can move and carry you where you please. Yet when your eyes are closed and

your feet are still, and there is no sound that comes to the ear, and the light of day has gone out in darkness, there is something within you that keeps on thinking and feeling. It brings up to you again the faces of friends, it loves and thinks, and remembers and paints a thousand beautiful scenes before you as distinctly as if it were light and your body were again in motion. Sometimes it is joyous, and again it is sad and sorrowful. It thinks and loves, and hates and fears, and hopes and wills, and when you rise up it sets the limbs in motion and makes the whole body its servant. This we call the soul. We cannot see it, we cannot feel it with our hands, we cannot hear it, yet we are sure it exists, because we know what it does.

Did you ever think what it is that you mean when you say "I"? Is it your hands or your feet or your eyes? Or is it the soul? Let us see if we cannot answer this question. Yonder is a brave boy who when a child was dandled upon his mother's knee,

and who played and laughed and sang with loving sisters and brothers, and at school learned his tasks with his class, and sat down on the Sabbath in the house of God; when he passed through the streets all knew him, and when he was absent and friends spoke of him and called him by name, all knew who was meant and how he looked. By and by he leaves his home, and is gone for many a long and weary year; he sails upon the great ocean, and often climbs up the tall masts of his vessel and hangs out upon the spars amid storms and darkness, until his limbs become strong and his face bronzed and dark. He sees many strange countries and people, he wanders over mountains and deserts, he visits the coral islands of the Pacific and the golden sands of Africa, and breathes the spicy air of Ceylon and India. Through all these years of absence his parents and friends have been thinking of him and praying daily for Heaven's blessing to rest upon him.

At length he turns his face homeward, and after many a long and weary week of travel he enters the door from which he passed when a boy to begin his wanderings. Everything around his home is familiar. There is the old oak under which he used to sit when a child, and into whose branches he often climbed; there is the well and the oaken bucket from which he used to drink; the grape vines still hang over the porch, and the rose bushes are as beautiful as when he plucked their flowers in his sunny childhood. He enters the sitting-room and sees an aged matron rocking to and fro in her easy-chair, her eyes dim and her hair frosted with the snows of seventy winters. Over the mantel hangs the picture which was painted for him when he was a child. Not one feature of his bronzed face resembles it. His voice, his hair, his limbs, his hands, are all changed. His dearest friend dreams not who he is. His father enters, and salutes him as a stranger. Yet when he tells his

name, that aged mother rises and clasps him in her arms and calls him her child, and his father folds him to his heart, and he owns himself their son, the same who long years ago left that cottage home while the sunlight of childhood was in his eye and the bloom of youth was on his cheek. Why do we call him the same when every limb and feature is changed? It is because all this while his soul has been acting and thinking, and has remained the same soul. That which feels and loves and hopes and remembers and desires is as fresh and young as when he left his home and became a wanderer from his father's house. Now I think this will teach you that the soul is the most important part of you, because it is what makes up your being. It is yourself. It lives and acts, unwasted and unchanged, even when the body is so altered that not one feature of youth can be recognized.

THE KOH-I-NOOR.

In the city of London there is a great castle, called "The Tower," which in old times was used as a palace and a fortress, in which the kings and queens of England lived, but which is now filled with curiosities and relics illustrating almost every age of English history. Up in one of the strong rooms of this building, constantly guarded by soldiers or policemen, are large cases in which are displayed the crowns and jewels and sceptres which have been used for many hundred years in the coronation of their kings. Among them is a cage made of strong iron bars so closely set together that no one can put his hand between them. Within this cage, on a cushion of rich velvet, lies the largest diamond in England, so brilliant and beautiful that it seems as if a thousand rainbows were sparkling upon its sides. It is so precious that tens of thousands of dollars could not pur-

chase it. It is so wonderful that every visitor to the Tower wishes to see it. Now if you were to hear some one call that *iron cage* the diamond, you would laugh at his simplicity. If he insisted that it was so, you would reason with him, and say that if you were to take away one bar after another and put in new ones until the whole cage was changed, the diamond would be the same, and that if you were to remove the cage entirely the beautiful gem would shine as brightly as ever. Nay, you would add that it would look more brilliant when taken away from its dark chamber and set in the crown of the queen amid the other jewels of her coronation.

Can you not see what I mean by this? Your soul, my dear child, is a jewel which the world cannot equal in value. Your body is only the casket that holds it. Take away limb after limb, shut up the ears, put out the light of the eyes, and the soul is unchanged. It can still feel and love and

desire, and will act and live even when the body dies and moulders back to dust.

Those lungs might cease to breathe, the heart might cease to beat, those little hands might be folded across the breast, the forehead might be cold as marble, the body might be wrapped in a shroud, put away in its coffin and shut up in the dark vault of the grave, and yet the parent that missed his child might write as a father once wrote of his dear dead boy :

“Not there? Where then is he?
 The form I used to see
 Was but the raiment that he used to wear ;
 The grave that now doth press
 Upon that cast-off dress
 Is but his wardrobe locked : he is not there.
 “He lives in all the past,
 He lives, nor to the last
 Of seeing him again will I despair ;
 In dreams I see him now,
 And on his angel brow
 I see it written, ‘Thou shalt see me there.’”

Ah, my dear child, the soul is the most precious part of your nature, the jewel that

you bear about in this frail body, which is but its casket, that must by and by be taken away to be replaced by one that shall be immortal.

THE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

Let us try now and think what the soul is worth. Jesus sought to teach us how valuable it was when he said: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" There is a great deal in this world that men esteem very highly, and for which some seem willing to neglect and destroy the soul. They think more of it than they do of loving and serving God. A young man once came to Christ who was so amiable and moral that Jesus loved him, and when he heard his story said, "One thing thou lackest." Yet when he was told that he must part with his wealth and give it to the poor, he went away sorrowful. He felt that he could not give up his great possessions even to gain

eternal life; and so a great many seem to think that the pursuit of wealth or pleasure or amusement is of much more importance than to seek the salvation of the soul. Now let us remember—

1. *That the soul will never die.*

These bodies must all be changed. These eyes will grow dim and their light be quenched in the night of the grave; these cheeks, in which is now the bloom of health, will grow pale with mortal anguish; these tongues will become silent in death; these active limbs will become weak and palsied. By and by all of these children, though they may grow up to manhood and live to old age, will have to lie down in the darkened chamber, and hear the hushed tread of loving friends around their dying bed, and take their farewell of earth. They will be laid away in the coffin, and be borne in the sad funeral procession to the grave, and be missed evermore from all the places that once knew them. But the soul will not die.

It cannot be buried with the body. It will continue to think and feel as it has felt and thought before. You will live though your bodies are dead and buried.

You know how it is when you fall asleep, and your eyes are closed, and your limbs are quiet. Your minds keep on as active as when you were awake. Sometimes they wander far away and build up strange fancies, and you see a thousand beautiful objects or are scared with frightful scenes that fill you with terror. So when the sleep of death comes the soul will still live and be strong and active. Its lifetime is eternity. There will never come a time when you will cease to think and feel, or when you will be unable to know either joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, happiness or misery.

Now does not this show you the value of the soul and the importance of thinking more of its welfare than of anything else? You prize highly your hands and feet. Were a man to come and say to you, "I

will give you a thousand dollars for your arm," you would not part with it for that sum a hundred times told. If he were to say, "I will give a million of dollars for your eyes," you would say, "Give me eyesight and poverty rather than wealth and blindness." Yet if you were to be severely injured, and the surgeon, when called to see you, should say, "You must either lose a limb or your life," you would answer, "Then take off my limb rather than let me die." You would make this choice because life is more desirable than any part of the body. So Christ says, "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire."

2. *Think what the soul can enjoy or suffer.*

Go with me and visit a PRISON AT PHILIPPI. The walls are very strong and the vaults are deep and damp. Ask the jailer to take his torch and light us along those dreary dungeons. Would you think you could be

happy there? Touch that prisoner who is asleep, and see with what a scowl he awakens and asks you why you have called him back from his dreams to a consciousness of his misery. Pass along, and you see men wakeful and sad or sullen, and sometimes their faces show a look of awful despair. They are wretched prisoners whom the state has placed there to suffer. Oh how sad a sight it is! How much of suffering is around you! How dreadful it must be to be shut up there in those dark and dreary dungeons!

But listen! It is now midnight, and yet you hear two voices singing out distinctly and clearly sweet songs of praise and thanksgiving. The language is Hebrew, yet if I were to translate it you would think it like the doxology you so often hear:

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

What can it be? Perhaps there are some of the attendants of the prison who are

keeping watch and whiling away an hour in mirth and songs. Ask the jailer to lead you to them, and he turns a heavy key and flashes in his light upon a dark cell, and shows you two men whose bodies are bruised and bleeding from a dreadful scourging which they have received. Their feet are confined by two strong boards set up on their edges, and with just room for their ankles to slip in between them. You see how painful is their position and how much they must suffer, and yet they are happy—so happy as to be singing praises at midnight, so happy that when an earthquake comes and shakes open their prison doors they do not care to go out. Now the reason of this is that their souls are so filled with joy and peace that they have forgotten the pains which their bodies feel. It is dark, very dark, in that dungeon, yet the sweet light of heaven is filling their souls with joy and gladness.

Do you not see that our happiness de-

pende not so much on what the body enjoys as what the soul feels, and that it is possible for that to be so full of happiness as to make us forget even the sufferings of the body?

Now let us go away into the CAPITAL OF PERSIA. It has many beautiful palaces, in one of which lives a man who is the favorite minister of the king. He sees him every day, he is consulted by him on all the affairs of the state, he visits him in his own palace, and when he rides through the city men bow to him and say, "There is the king's prime minister." He is very rich, and has a splendid house and beautiful gardens, and his wife and children and many friends are around him and share his splendor. You think such a man ought to be very happy. He has all that heart could wish, and yet he is very sad and miserable. Even his family notice it and wonder at it, and ask why he is not happy. Ah, his soul is wretched, it is the prey of evil passions; envy and malice are eating out his very life. In the gate

of the palace there sits a man who does not seem to care for or notice him, a poor Jew who does not bow to him, and who is the uncle of the queen. He is envious of the man at the gate, he hates him and he desires to destroy him, and when he tells his family how much honor and glory he has attained, he says, "All this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." His wealth and splendor cannot make him happy so long as his soul is wretched. His evil passions would make a hell even of heaven.

You see what all this teaches us, that the state of the soul is what makes our happiness or misery. If it is at rest, there will be peace even though the body suffers. If it is in trouble, there will be sorrow though all else may be joyous and happy.

3. Again we see the value of the soul when we think *what Christ has done to save it.*

THE SWISS MOTHER.

Away off in Switzerland are great rugged mountains that rise up many thousands of feet in tall and rocky cliffs, overhanging deep and dark chasms which it makes the blood chill to look into. Go with me into one of the valleys of this country and you see a crowd of peasants gazing upward toward the awful summit of a great mountain peak, where the winds have their home and the eagle and the vulture build their nest.

Do you see what seems almost like a speck in that distant and lonely peak? It is moving slowly upward. Look through this telescope, and you see it is a woman, a young peasant mother. Now she hesitates, for the path is steep and rough. Ha! she places her foot upon a projecting crag, and the rock breaks beneath her. Surely she is lost. No! she still clings to the wall above her, and is safe. Slowly she picks her way over the rough and dizzy precipices until she

stands upon the summit. There is a sudden movement of joy, for she seems to have found a treasure. She takes it up, and seems to kiss it and fold it to her heart. She places it carefully within her shawl and fastens it close to her bosom. What can it be that she has found? Do you think it to be gold or jewels? Ah, no! no mother would thus expose her life for any earthly reward. There is a shout of joy around you, and the crowd tell you that the young mother has found her child, which an eagle had seized while lying near her when it was swooping down on its great wings in search of a lamb with which to feed its young. She had seen it rise with that little one in its talons and bear it away, and with a shriek of agony had followed it as it flew upward, and in her deep love for her little one had ascended those giddy heights, careless of her own danger, until she had rescued her darling. But see! she begins to descend; she seems to pause and shudder as she looks

down those fearful abysses which lie between her and her home. Oh what frightful risks she is running! Yet slowly and carefully she makes her way down with her precious burden, over rocks and awful ravines, until she reaches the valley all breathless and bruised, her hands and feet bleeding with the wounds which they have received, and at last sinks fainting at your feet as she lays down her smiling babe, saved from the very jaws of death. Oh, she has taught you how much a mother loves and prizes the child which she has borne and nurtured. She was willing to give her own life if need be that she might save her little one from destruction.

Now can you not see the estimate which Christ has put upon the soul. You know the history of what he did and suffered that he might save it. There is not a Sabbath-school child who cannot repeat the story of Him who was once the babe in Bethlehem, the man of sorrows, the suffering and cruci-

fied one who laid down his life that we might not perish. He so loved us that he came from heaven to earth, and took upon himself our nature, and died on the cross that he might give unto us eternal life. And all this shows how he valued the soul and what he was willing to give for its redemption. He laid down his life for his sheep. He left his throne in heaven and came to this world, and met his enemy and ours and rescued us from his hands, and shed his own blood, that he might bear the soul safely back to its blessed home. When he finished his work all heaven rejoiced, and the whole universe learned how much he thought of the soul by what he had suffered and done for it.

And now as we think over what has been said about the soul do we not see—

1st. That every child should seek before all things else to secure its salvation? You have a soul to be saved or lost. Your great danger is that you think there will be time

enough to attend to this work by and by. But when you become men and women you will find many more things keeping you back from Christ than you have now, and then you may never live to be old. Oh, my dear children, seek first the kingdom of God. The soul is too precious to be lost for any earthly pleasure or by any promise of seeking its salvation at some other time.

2d. And then again, when you think over what has been said, do you not see how much you should love the blessed Jesus who has given himself for you? He says to you, Give me thine heart. Will you not answer—

“Here, Lord, I give myself away,
’Tis all that I can do”?



A Great Lesson, and how to Learn it.

3

33

How much the Bible has to say to children. David. One of his lessons. Hearken. The photographic gallery. Emphasis. Two teachers. The fear of the Lord. The railroad switch. The two raindrops. Two kinds of fear. The two sons. Why you should fear God. An important lesson.

II.

A GREAT LESSON, AND HOW TO LEARN IT.

THE Bible often speaks especially to children. Some of the wisest and greatest men, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and whose writings make up the Holy Scriptures, did not think it beneath them to counsel the young.

Suppose you were to cut out of the Bible all that it says to and about children, how many pages would be mutilated and how many precious instructions and promises would disappear! You would not read then as you do now, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," or, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." You could not then read how, when they brought young children to Jesus, he took them in his

arms and blessed them, or how, when he wished to teach his disciples a lesson of humility, he took a little child and set him in the midst of them. A great many beautiful texts would not then be found, and very many interesting narrations would be lost; and yet I fear that children often live and act as if there were nothing said about them in the Bible. Sometimes in church the minister may not address you particularly, perhaps he uses words which you do not understand, or talks upon subjects which do not interest you, but the Bible has a great deal to say to you, and it says it in language whose meaning all can know.

You have all read about David. You know what wonderful deliverances God wrought for him when he was in trouble, and how often he recalled those acts of divine goodness and mercy, especially in the Psalms. Once, when alluding to an event in his own life which was very memorable, because it seemed to show how

able God was to deliver him from all danger, he exhorted all his friends and all who should read his Psalms *to fear the Lord and trust in him alone*. This is a great lesson, which he desires that even children may learn, and so he turns and addresses them particularly, saying, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

Now suppose we divide this verse into two parts, and think of them separately.

If I were to ask you what David tells you to do, you would all answer—

"HEARKEN UNTO ME."

Let us see what is meant by these words.

When a teacher wishes to give to his school some important lesson, he never thinks of beginning until he has first secured the attention of all. He waits until all is quiet and every eye is fixed upon him. You all know what the meaning of his bell is, or what he wishes when

he raps upon his desk. The child who keeps on playing, or whispering to his neighbor, or reading his book, will learn nothing of the lesson which his teacher is trying to explain, or of the truths he is seeking to impart. *The first thing*, then, that you have to do is *to hearken*. The reason why one child is able to repeat all that is told him, while another forgets it, is that the one listens and attends, while the other does not. He who wishes to learn his lesson thoroughly must give to it all his thoughts, and allow nothing to draw them away from it. If I were to go into your school-room and talk to you, I could readily know who would remember what I said by seeing whose eyes were fixed upon me, and who were giving to me their attention.

You have all been, I suppose, in a

PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY.

When you entered the room where they take likenesses by the sunlight, you observed

a square box with a brass tube in one side of it. Within there is a dark chamber, where the artist places a small plate of metal made very smooth and covered with a preparation very sensitive to the light. Every object that is directly before it sends its image in there, and in a few seconds leaves its picture upon the plate. When you sit down for your likeness, the artist tells you to look toward the tube and not to move until he covers it up. If you turn your eyes, or move your head or hands, when the plate is taken out everything is blurred and confused. Perhaps the picture has a dozen eyes, all looking in different directions, or there are three or four heads and twice as many hands, and so all the work has to be done over again until you are able to sit still as long as is needful to complete your likeness.

Now our minds are very much like this photographic machine. In order to make a clear impression upon them the truth has to

remain until the memory has taken it and made of it a complete picture. This is the way you study a lesson, by repeating it over and over without thinking of anything else until you are able to remember it. If you sit down to your task, and, while your eyes are upon your book, are thinking of your play or listening to some story told you by your companion, you will be unable to give even the most indistinct idea of what is contained in your lesson. And so, when you come to the house of God, you must hearken to what is said, or you will learn nothing from the sermon, however good it may be. Hence, David, when he wishes to teach children a great lesson that will be of use to them all their lives, says, "Hearken unto me." He calls your attention to what he is about to say. He asks that you direct your thoughts toward him, that you turn them away, for the time, from your pleasures, and even your studies and business, and listen to what he is to tell you under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

This is the first thing which David would have you do in order to receive instruction.

There is another word in the sentence which is very important. I suppose, when you were learning to read, your teacher told you what *emphasis* meant, and how you were to speak an emphatic word. Now I have been speaking to you as if in the sentence, "Hearken unto me," the emphasis was on the first word, *hearken*, and that the important thing for you to do was to pay attention to what was told you. But suppose you make the last word emphatic, so that you read, Hearken unto *me*. Now it would seem as if there was some one else who was trying to get your attention and claiming to be your instructor.

TWO TEACHERS.

Every child has two teachers; the one is good, the other is evil. The one is the Lord, the other is the great and wicked deceiver. When our first parents were cre-

ated and placed in Eden, the one instructed them how to live so as to be happy in his love, and warned them against sin as the way to misery and death. The other whispered in their ears, "Thou shalt not surely die," when he tempted them to taste of the forbidden fruit. And when they listened to him sin and death came into the world; and ever since that sad hour these two teachers have been seeking, the one to guide men in the path to heaven, and the other in the way through sin to eternal death.

God speaks to each of you as your loving Father and Friend. He tells you only the truth. He has given you the Bible to be your guide. He has made it so plain and simple that you can understand it, and if you will take heed to it you will be holy and happy. He taught his prophets and apostles and other good men what to write, and so guarded and directed their thoughts that they should make no mistakes. His

word, therefore, is a lamp to your feet and a light unto your path. And he says to you, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." He sent his own beloved Son to be the Teacher as well as the Redeemer of men, and when he spake the people wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. He has given to you his ministers to study his word and to tell you about the way of salvation. He has put a monitor within you which we call CONSCIENCE, and which reminds you when you sin against him and break his law; and, above all, he has sent his HOLY SPIRIT to help you to do right, to show you your sins, and to guide to the Saviour and to heaven. Now this is your great Teacher, your heavenly Father and your blessed Saviour, who loves you and who seeks to keep you from evil and to guide your feet in the way of life.

But there is another teacher, whom Jesus calls "the wicked one," and who, he says, was a liar from the beginning. He is always trying to make you sin and forget God. He puts evil thoughts into your mind and wicked desires into your hearts. He uses your passions and appetites and your companions as his aids. He tries to lead you to do what will displease God and ruin your soul. He sets before you his temptations, that you may break God's holy law, and so incur his wrath. When a little boy learns to swear, and to tell falsehoods, and to use language that is immodest, and to do what he knows to be wrong, he is yielding to the instructions of the great deceiver. When a little girl is vain and proud, or is unkind to her brothers and sisters, or does not obey her parents, or prefers the society of those who she knows are wicked, she is listening to the same evil teacher. If children continue to follow his counsels, they will grow more and more sinful, and when they die

will never enter that holy and happy place where Christ is. "Nothing can enter there that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Hence, God says, Hearken unto *me*. He repeats this counsel many times in the Scriptures. He calls men away from all wicked teachers, and bids them hear his words that their souls may live.

Let me ask you which teacher you prefer. The one is your heavenly Father, who loves you, and sent his Son to die for you, and gives his Holy Spirit to guide you. The other is your great enemy, who seeks only your ruin, and who, though he offers you a thousand pleasant things, only uses them as a snare for your soul, and will by and by lead you to destruction. Which guide will you choose? Oh, will you not say, "From this time, my Father, thou art the Guide of my youth"?

THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

If you will take your Bibles and search them diligently you will find a great many passages in which the word "FEAR" occurs, and in a large number of them it is used with reference to the Lord. Sometimes it means a natural caution in avoiding evils and dangers, then again it represents a slavish dread of the results of sin, and very often it refers to a filial reverence for God and his laws. In one place it is used to describe a pious man, in others it is said to be "life," and "wisdom," and "riches," and in others it is spoken of as the sum of our duties. When David would teach children the most valuable lesson he could possibly give them, he says, "I will teach you the fear of the Lord." There were a great many things that he might have told them besides this, for he was a wise man, and had learned much by a long experience as well as by study. Yet it seemed to him

that this was the most important and useful lesson he could give them. Three times in the Scriptures we read, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." To fear the Lord is *the first lesson* we are to learn if we wish to be holy and happy.

It is very important to begin life aright. A little step in the wrong direction may result in very serious consequences, even when that step is made by a child. His whole life may feel its influence.

THE RAILROAD SWITCH.

Did you ever stand in a railroad station where a great many tracks all meet? The ground looks like a large network of iron. Sometimes several trains are standing at the same time within the depôt. Out of a large building beyond there come the great locomotives that have been getting ready to carry these trains along their several roads. When one of them gives the signal for moving, you notice a man standing a little

distance ahead, with his hands upon a large iron rod, which he moves one way or another just before the cars reach him. That rod moves a switch upon the track just an inch or two. Yet that little movement sends these trains, it may be, in entirely opposite directions. A moment ago they were upon the same track, and now one turns to the north and another to the south or east or west. If those engines could think and speak, perhaps one might say, as he came to that little turn, "It cannot be of much consequence whether I go to the right or left. The tracks all lie together, so that it is a very little matter whether I take one road or the other, for all seem to lead the same way," and yet you see it will make a very great difference in the end. In a few moments the trains will separate, and while one perhaps is rushing on toward the Pacific Ocean, the other may be hurrying toward some of the great cities of the East or South. Should some careless traveler who was wish-

ing to go to New York or Boston step into a train without asking whither it was going, he might find himself bound for Chicago or San Francisco when he meant to have returned to his home in the East, and yet all this depends upon the simple movement of a little iron switch only an inch or two to the right or left.

THE TWO RAINDROPS.

There is a spot in one of the Western States which I once had pointed out to me while passing in the cars toward the Mississippi, where the head waters of that great river almost meet with the streams which flow into Lake Michigan. Just in one place they come together, and in rainy seasons seem to mingle. This is the highest point between the two great valleys. It is but a point, yet on one side the land slopes westward and on the other it looks toward the east. Now suppose two raindrops that have been moving about in company in the

same cloud should begin to fall to the earth just over this spot, wishing to keep together in their travels: one of them alights upon a tiny spear of grass that bends its head toward the setting sun, and the other falls by its side upon a little leaf that droops toward the east. By and by other drops come and sit down by their side, and then roll down to the earth and begin to move onward with a slow and gentle motion. In a little while they separate, and one of those little children of the rain-cloud turns toward the waters of the Mississippi, while the other passes on toward the great lakes of the North. Day after day they separate more and more widely. One moves onward with the little stream of which it forms a part until it reaches the great river of the West, and then flows thousands of miles southward, passing through broad and rich valleys, and mingling at last with the warm currents of the Gulf of Mexico.

The other drop passes into the great lakes,

and then falls into the swift current of the Niagara, and is drawn down over rapids and cataracts, and finds its way through the St. Lawrence into the ocean amid the huge icebergs of the North. Those drops will never meet again. Yet when they began their little life on earth they seemed destined to move on lovingly together, and all this great difference in their courses is the result of the direction they took when they first touched the earth. It seemed to be of little consequence when they fell in that spot, where the waters scarcely appeared to move, yet the first motion they made decided their whole future history.

Now, it is with children as with those raindrops in the great prairies of the West. Often they begin life with equally fair prospects of being happy and useful. They sit together in the same school, they engage in the same tasks, they enjoy the same pleasures, yet their paths very soon diverge. They separate never more to meet or min-

gle together. They pursue the most opposite ends in life, just because of some little act done or misstep made when they were young. One becomes a wise and good and useful man, while another turns to a life of dissipation and crime and shame.

Hence, we see how much depends upon making a right beginning, and how needful it is to seek for direction from our heavenly Father, who tells us to ponder the path of our feet, and who bids us "commit our way unto him and he will direct our steps."

Now, if a child asks how he may begin life aright, he finds an answer in the words, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This is the great lesson which David would teach when he says, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me."

TWO KINDS OF FEAR.

If you search the Bible to see what it says about the fear of God, you will find some instances in which it refers to it as

slavish dread merely of the results of sin. It is so in the case of Pharaoh and of Belshazzar; in other cases it means a filial and holy reverence for God and a loving desire to obey his law.

Suppose a father should say to his two sons some pleasant morning, "Here is a piece of work that I wish you to do to-day. I shall be gone till evening, and when I return I shall expect to see it all accomplished." One of the boys goes to his work promptly and cheerfully, saying, perhaps, "This is a hard task, yet my father has bid me do it, and I will obey him because I love him and wish to please him. I know that he loves me and will exact from me nothing that is unreasonable or unnecessary." So he goes to his task cheerful and happy, never complaining because it is difficult, and never murmuring because it takes him away from his playmates and his pleasures. Sometimes when he stops for a moment to rest he cheers himself with a song, or thinks

over how much his father has done for him, and looks forward to the evening hour, when he hopes to see his smile and hear from him kind words of approval and love.

The other son turns away unwillingly and gloomily to his task, saying within himself, "I don't see why my father set me at work to-day: all of the boys are out enjoying themselves. I hear their merry voices, and wish I could join them. I have a good mind to go and spend the day with them. And yet if my task is not done I know my father will punish me. I shall be glad when I am my own master and have no one to play the tyrant over me." So he goes to his work reluctantly and angrily. As the day passes he complains more and more of the hardship, and his brow grows dark and sullen, until the evening comes and his task is finished.

Now, which of these children obeyed his father most perfectly, and which had the right kind of fear? I am sure you will all

reply, "The one who feared to offend and disobey his father because he loved him." Now, this is the kind of fear that David would teach you, and which is the beginning of wisdom.

You should fear God because you love him, and not simply because you know that if you sin you must be punished. God loves you; he calls you his child and bids you call him your Father. Just think how much he has done for you, and how many blessings he is daily bestowing upon you. He gave you being, he has given you those limbs that are so active and strong, those eyes that can see the world which he has made so bright and beautiful and the forms and faces of the friends you love, those ears that can hear the song of birds, the whispering winds and the voices of dear companions. He gave you those minds that can think, and those souls that may be happy for ever if you but fear and love him.

All the blessings of life are his gifts; the

food you eat, the raiment you wear, the air you breathe, the friends you love, the pleasures that you enjoy, all come from his hand. He is always thinking upon you, he preserves you from danger, he watches over you, he carries you out and brings you in safely. Ought you not to love him and fear to offend him? He has given you his word to instruct you, and, above all, he has sent his Son to die for you and save you from eternal misery, and bring you home at length into his presence where is fullness of joy. Should you not fear to disobey him because you love him—because you so love him that you reverence and honor him, and delight in his law—because you wish in all things to please and serve him?

This is the true fear of the Lord. It enters the heart by the aid of the Holy Spirit. When you have learned what it is, and begin to feel it working within you, you will reverence the Lord as your Creator and Ruler. You will think of him as great and all-wise

and holy. You will remember that his eye is ever upon you, and that he abhors everything that is sinful. You will read and study his holy law, and seek to make it the rule of your life, and will daily compare your conduct with it. The more you learn of his holiness and purity, the more you will see your own sinfulness and unworthiness, and find that you cannot hope to be saved by any work or worthiness of your own. Then you will read what God's word tells you of Jesus, who came to save you. You will trust in him as your Redeemer; you will seek the aid of his Holy Spirit to renew your heart and to fit you for his service here and his presence hereafter; you will learn to hate all sin as offensive to your heavenly Father. When tempted to sin you will say, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" When you find that you have yielded to the tempter, you will go and tell your sins to Jesus and seek forgiveness in his blood. You will cheerfully bear every

trial and cross which is laid upon you, because you know that your heavenly Father cannot treat you unwisely or unkindly, and when evils seem to threaten you will hide yourself under the shadow of the Almighty.

AN IMPORTANT LESSON.

Now, is not this great lesson worthy your attention? Surely there is no knowledge so important as this. You might have all the wisdom that the greatest men ever attained. You might know all the books that were ever written. You might be able to converse in every language, and to tell about the sun and moon and stars and earth. You might understand all the mysteries of science, so that your name would everywhere be repeated with respect and honor, and men would come from every part of the world to listen to your instruction, and would pronounce you the wisest man that ever lived. And yet all this knowledge would be noth-

ing compared with the fear of God. It could not be of any avail to you when you came to die. It could not save your soul.

The best knowledge that you can have is found in the gospel. It is the knowledge that your sins are forgiven, and that God loves you, and that Jesus is your Saviour. This will make you wise unto eternal life. It will give you comfort here, and joy and peace for ever.

And now let me ask if you will not seek to learn this great lesson which the Bible would teach you. When you go to the house of God or when you open the word of God, pray for the aid of the blessed Spirit, that you may understand the lessons of the gospel, and so be made wise unto eternal life.

The Commandment with Promise.

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The young midshipman. The little canal-boat driver. The penalty of disobedience. An ungrateful son. The thankless child. I did not obey my parents. The young burglar. How to honor parents. The little heroine. It did not belong to me. Who is the coward?

III.

THE COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE.

A BOOK for young people would hardly be complete that did not contain some words of counsel on the duties which they owe to their parents. When God was giving his law upon Sinai, he set among the ten precepts which he wrote upon tables of stone this commandment :

“HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER,
THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE
LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH
THEE.”

I do not intend to preach you a sermon upon this text, though few subjects are more important, and few lessons more necessary to be enforced upon the minds of the young. But I wish to give some illustrations which

may show how God's richest blessings have rested on those who have honored their parents, and how his displeasure has been shown to those who have neglected this "first commandment with promise." Nothing seems more surely to point to a vicious life and a miserable death than early acts of disrespect and unkindness shown by a child to its parents. And it is true also that Providence has marked with its signal approbation those who have commenced life by honoring their father and their mother.

THE YOUNG MIDSHIPMAN.

A little more than a hundred and twenty years ago a lad, then fourteen years old, stood upon the shores of the Potomac looking out eagerly upon a stately ship-of-war belonging to the British navy, and to which he had just been appointed midshipman. His young ambition had been fired by tales of the sea to which he had listened. By the influence of friends his appointment

had been secured, and his baggage was already on board the vessel which he hoped would soon bear him away to the ocean on whose blue waters he would make his home. But when he came to bid his mother farewell he found her eyes filled with tears, and heard amid her sobs a gentle remonstrance against the life on which he was entering. Although she had once given her consent to his accepting the position offered him, her heart failed her when she saw her oldest boy about to leave her. She had looked to him for support and protection in her widowhood, and now that she saw him about to leave her she felt that the trial was more than she could bear.

The brave youth, when he saw his mother's tears, lost sight of his own ambition and hopes, and determined to yield to her wishes. He loved, honored and obeyed her even though called to renounce the darling project of his young life. His baggage was brought on shore, his commission thrown

up, and he went back to the school which he was about to leave, devoting himself with earnestness and diligence to his studies.

It seemed to many that he had given up a career which might have been attended with honor and renown, and to gratify a mother's wishes had consigned himself to a life of obscurity. When he left school he became a surveyor, and spent several years in all the hardships attending such a profession in a new country. Yet God watched over him, and his providence had higher honors in store for him than to command a British ship, or even the whole navy of England. When war broke out in the colonies he was appointed an officer to defend his country from the attacks of the French and Indians, and when at a later date the American colonies threw off allegiance to the British rule and entered upon the great struggle for their independence, GEORGE WASHINGTON, the youth who would not disobey his mother, was entrusted with the

command of our armies. After the establishment of peace it was he who was placed at the head of the nation. He who had learned to obey was best fitted to govern, and so God distinguished and honored the man who as a youth had honored his parent. Had he persisted in going to sea, he might have risen to some honorable position in the navy, but all the renown he could thus have gained would be worthless compared with that glorious eminence to which he attained, and which secured for him the title of *the Father of his Country*.

THE LITTLE CANAL-BOAT DRIVER.

Upon the banks of one of the streams that empty into the St. Lawrence River there once lived a widow with a little group of children, the oldest of whom was a boy of but thirteen years. Little Willie, who had learned to love and honor his mother, was often concerned at her sad and careworn look. He knew that it was because she was

poor and had great difficulty in providing for her family necessary food and clothing. One day he said to her,

“Mother, I have been thinking that I will go and see if I cannot earn a living for myself; I am sure, if I can get to some city, I shall find something to do, and so can help you to take care of the rest of the children. At any rate, you will have one less to provide for.”

The poor widow looked into his earnest face, and the tears came into her eyes as she thought of the trials which he must encounter, and the dangers which one so young must meet. It was a hard struggle for her to part with him. Yet perhaps it was best that he should go. So at last she consented that he should make the attempt. In the little bundle of clothes which she packed up for him she put a Testament, and as she kissed him and bade him farewell she charged him to read in his Bible daily, and to be careful not to yield to the temptations

that wicked men and youth might set before him.

The brave boy started off on his travels with his mother's blessing and with a full determination to remember her counsels. He had only a little change in his pocket, and was sometimes compelled to beg a meal or a night's lodging. After many a weary day, he came to one of the cities that lie upon the great canal which connects the waters of the lakes with the ocean. He had supposed that in a town so large a boy might readily find something to do. But to his great disappointment he could find no one that wished to employ him. The poor boy's heart almost failed him as he went from store to store and met with the same answer: "We have no place for you." There he was, a stranger in the city, with no one to care for him and no means of living. It is not strange that he was cast down and sorrowful.

One day there passed a canal boat whose captain wanted a driver, and Willie engaged

to work for him on condition that when he found a better place he might leave him. Willie's business was to drive the horses that drew the boat along the canal, and to see that they were properly fed and cared for. This he could do well, for he had been brought up on a farm. His home was on the boat, where he ate and slept. It was a new life for Willie, and it brought him into many temptations which he had never known under his mother's roof. He often met among the canal boys those who were profane and wicked, and who had already become proficient in drinking and gambling, but he recalled his mother's counsels and was able to say No when tempted to sin. It was a hard life for Willie—a very different one from that he would have chosen—but he thought of his mother, and his brave heart kept up courage. What he did was well done. His horses were well fed and cared for, and his employer was pleased with the fidelity and honesty of the lad. It was a new thing to

have a boy whose habits and language were not profane and vicious.

One day the boat drew up at a large city where several hours were to be spent in discharging some cargo. The horses were tied near a wall and were quietly eating their grain, and Willie, who had only to watch them, sat down in the shade to rest and to read the Testament which his mother had given him.

While thus employed he was hailed by a gentleman who was seated in a carriage, and who had stopped just by his horses, whose appearance he seemed to be admiring.

“Hallo, my lad!” said the stranger; “are these your horses?”

“I have the care of them, sir,” replied Willie; “they belong to that canal boat that is unloading by the wharf.”

“And what book are you reading there?”

“The Testament, sir; my mother gave it to me, and told me to read it every day.”

“Well, that is a queer book for a canal

boy, but I suppose you have learned to swear and play cards and drink whisky?"

"No, sir; my mother told me when I left her never to do such things, for they were wicked, and I cannot disobey her."

"Well, my lad, I would like such a boy as you. I am a physician, and want a smart lad to look after my office and care for my horses as well as I see you care for these. Will you come and live with me?"

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply, for Willie was glad of any way of escaping from the society into which he was thrown on the canal.

"Good!" said the doctor; "when can you go with me?"

"At once, sir," was again the prompt answer.

"I am glad of that," said the doctor, "for I need your services. I have a call to make over yonder, and when I have finished will come back this way after you."

As he passed out of sight, Willie went at

once to the captain and announced to him his wish to leave, and asked for his wages, reminding his employer of the agreement that he might give up his situation whenever one more suitable could be found. The captain was reluctant to part with him, and offered to increase his pay if he would remain, for he had found him capable, honest and intelligent, and told him frankly he was the best boy he had ever employed. But Willie respectfully insisted upon leaving, arguing that the society into which he was thrown was not such as any boy would prefer who wished to please and honor his mother. So he received his wages, and packing up his little bundle of clothes bade his captain good-bye and sprang ashore, where he was soon taken up by his new friend as he drove homeward.

Willie was soon at work, and his cheerfulness, honesty and fidelity gave full satisfaction to his employer. When the doctor became fully acquainted with his simple

history, and learned that the reason for his leaving home was to help a widowed mother, he felt that Providence had entrusted the boy to his care, and determined to do what he could to fit him for the work of life. Willie's duties were to take care of his horses and to keep his office in order. All this he attended to carefully, and his leisure moments were employed in reading and studies, which the doctor carefully superintended. Month by month his interest in the boy increased as he witnessed his fidelity to duty and his earnest thirst for knowledge, and knew that his earnings were carefully saved and sent to his widowed mother.

As Willie grew in years and stature the doctor became anxious to put him in some position where he might receive a complete education. One day he met a friend who was a member of Congress, and who complained to him of a great embarrassment into which he had fallen because of his having to nominate a student for one of the

vacancies in the Military Academy at West Point. "I have," said he, "four or five warm political friends, each of whom has a son for whom he is anxious to secure the cadetship, and I cannot nominate either one without giving offence to all the rest." The doctor thought of his young pupil, and replied, "I think I can show you your way out of the difficulty." So he told him the story of Willie, and secured for him the appointment. A few weeks of special study fitted him for examination, and he was admitted a student at the Military Academy.

Here he completed his education, and in due time received a commission in the army as a lieutenant. When war broke out with the Indians, and afterward with Mexico, he was sent with many other brave men to defend his country, and when peace was restored he retired with well won honors to another field of duty until again summoned to his post in the army on the

breaking out of the great war for the Union. He was now a general. The boy who loved and honored his mother had been rewarded by Providence in such a way as to show that God had approved of his acts of filial affection.

One Sabbath during the war I happened to be laboring on behalf of the Christian Commission with a part of the great army that was between Washington and Richmond, having been invited by General —— to preach at his head-quarters. On the little pulpit that had been set up was an old and well-worn Bible, and as I opened it I saw it was full of notes in pencil upon the margins. After service that Bible was taken back into the general's tent, where I was invited to dine. He told me that it had been his companion in all his campaigns in Mexico and during the present war. It was his comfort and his guide. He was a Christian soldier. The dutiful and obedient child had been led by divine grace to give his heart to

God, as well as to devote his life to his country.

If his eye should ever fall upon this simple history, which I heard from a common friend after I had made his acquaintance in the army, he will, I am sure, forgive the introduction of his own example as an illustration of the *COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE*.

THE PENALTY OF DISOBEDIENCE.

Did you ever think that some of the most dreadful punishments that could be inflicted upon criminals were in the Jewish code of laws threatened against those who did not obey their parents? It would seem as if God said to the children, "I have put your fathers and mothers as the representatives of my authority, and contempt and neglect of their commands will be treated and punished as treason against me." Hence he declared, "He that smiteth or he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death." Moreover, he directed, "If a man

have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father or his mother, and that when they have chastened him will not hearken unto them, all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he die." And again God directed his servant to write, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it." These are God's words of warning against disobedience to parents, or to those who have rightful authority over us.

Nor will it do to say that the penalty of this violation of God's law has been relaxed. It is just as certain that filial disrespect and rebellion will be punished now as in the days when God published his laws from Sinai. If you could know the secret history of many a criminal who has died on the scaffold, or expiated his crimes in prison, or made shipwreck of character and fortune, you would find that his unhappy career be-

gan in disobedience and ingratitude to his parents.

THE UNGRATEFUL SON.

Some years ago an Irish gentleman who was an extensive contractor upon some of our large public works was reduced to poverty by the dishonesty and profligacy of an ungrateful son. During his pecuniary embarrassments his wife died, and to add to his misfortune his health gave way and he became blind. Poor, blind, friendless and forsaken, he found a refuge and asylum in the Franklin County poorhouse of Pennsylvania. While an inmate of this refuge his ungrateful son traveled that way. He was informed of his father's situation, and that he wished to see him, yet, although he passed within two hundred yards of the almshouse, he refused to stop and see the kind father he had ruined.

On the very day he thus turned away from that suffering father he was overtaken by a

severe storm while riding in an open carriage toward Gettysburg, and was prostrated with a severe cold, which ended in the loss of his own eyesight. He lay in Gettysburg in a critical condition until his money was exhausted, and then was taken to the almshouse where his father had been brought before him. He was admitted to the almshouse on the very day on which his father was taken away to be buried. He was put into the room where his neglected and heart-broken parent had suffered and died.

So God even in this life visits upon disobedient and ungrateful children their sins, and vindicates his law that requires for the parent the respect and affection of the child.

The annals of poverty and crime are full of illustrations of the results of filial disobedience. By the side of the history of Samuel, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, stands that of the two sons of Eli, who, despite the warnings and remonstrances of their aged

father, made themselves vile and perished in battle, leaving behind them a dishonored name and bitter sorrow and grief for their families. In the same book is recorded the sad history of Absalom, the rebellious son of David, who in his wicked attempt to wrest the kingdom from his father was caught amid the branches of an oak, and slain by the stern warrior who was defending his monarch from the assaults of treason and rebellion. So all along the history of the world do we meet with these same terrible warnings against disobedience to parents.

THE THANKLESS CHILD.

One morning, says Mr. Abbott, a poor woman came into the police court in Boston. Her eyes were red with weeping and she seemed borne down with sorrow. Behind her followed two men, leading her daughter.

“Here, sir,” said a man to the judge, “is a girl who behaves so badly that her mother

cannot live with her, and she must be sent to the house of correction."

"My good woman," said the judge, "what is it that your daughter does that renders it so uncomfortable for you to live with her?"

"Oh, sir," she replied, "it is hard for a mother to accuse her own daughter and be the means of sending her to prison, but she behaves so as to destroy the peace of my life. She has such a temper that she sometimes threatens to kill me, and does everything to make my life wretched."

The unhappy woman could say no more. Her heart seemed bursting with grief, and she wept aloud. The heart of the judge was moved with pity, and the bystanders could hardly refrain from weeping with the afflicted mother. But there stood the hard-hearted girl unmoved. She looked upon the sorrows of the parent in sullen silence. She seemed so hardened in sin as to be insensible to pity or affection, and yet she was

miserable. Her countenance showed that passion and malignity filled her heart, and that the fear of the prison to which she must go filled her with rage.

The judge turned from the afflicted mother, whose sobs filled the room, and asking a few questions of the witnesses, who testified to the daughter's ingratitude and cruelty, ordered her to be led to the house of correction. The officers of justice took her by the arm and carried her to her gloomy cell. Her lonely and sorrowing mother went weeping home to her abode of penury and desolation. Her own daughter was the viper who had stung her bosom. Her own child was the wretch who had filled her heart with sorrow.

"I DID NOT OBEY MY PARENTS!"

These were the words which fell from the lips of a young man only twenty-eight years old who had been condemned for life to the State prison for a crime against the

laws of the country. A Christian man who often visited the jail where he was confined found him there so ill as to be unable to be moved. It was a gloomy-looking place, with the windows made strong by great iron bars fastened across them. Within were small cells built of stone and entered by an iron door, in which was an iron grating through which air and light came. As the visitor looked in he saw the young man lying upon his hard bed, evidently in great suffering and pain. As he kindly asked after his welfare he was answered,

“I shall never be able to go to the State prison, I am so sick. Oh, if I were only ready to die, it would not matter so much!”

“And are you not ready to die?”

“Oh no,” said he; “I am afraid to die.”

“But why are you afraid to die?”

“Because I am such a sinner.”

“There is hope and mercy and salvation for sinners, for the greatest of sinners, through Jesus.”

“I have no hope. You may talk to me about Christ and salvation, but there is none for me, and that makes me afraid to die.”

The visitor talked to him some time about his father, but when he spoke of his mother a single tear stole down his burning cheek.

“Was not your mother a Christian?”

“Oh yes, sir, and a good woman she was. Many and many a time she has warned me of this.”

“Then you have had good religious instruction and kind Christian parents who, no doubt, often prayed for you and taught you to pray?”

“Oh yes, sir.”

“Then why are you here?”

Said the dying man, “I can answer you all in one word: *I did not obey my parents!*”

THE YOUNG BURGLAR.

A poor woman once came to me to ask my aid in getting a pardon for her son, who had been sent to the State prison for bur-

glary. She was a very honest and hard-working woman who had tried to bring up her boy in habits of virtue and industry. But he had shown while very young a disposition to break away from her instructions and restraints, and to mingle with vicious associates. She had warned him and pleaded with him. She showed him his folly and danger, but all in vain. As he grew toward man's estate, he had become more and more addicted to evil practices, and surrounded himself with wicked companions. At length he was tempted to rob a house at night, and, being detected, was convicted and sent to prison. Here he at last began to learn that the companions of fools shall be destroyed, and bitterly mourned over his neglect of a mother's counsels. The young man who had led him on to the act, and had been the means of his ruin, succeeded in escaping punishment. The least guilty in that criminal act was made to suffer for the whole.

I did what I could for the poor woman, and stated to the governor that the young man had been misled by accomplices who were still free. I laid before him the suffering and anguish of mind of the mother, whose son was shut up in prison, and the evidences he was giving of repentance as noticed by the chaplain of the prison. But all was of no avail. I received a letter in reply to mine stating that the governor declined to interfere, and that the law must be fully vindicated; and so the young man who had in his youth turned away from a mother's counsels was left to know the bitter fruits of disobedience to parents. He had sown the wind, and he reaped the whirlwind.

HOW TO HONOR PARENTS.

The simple histories I have given will serve to show the rewards of obedience and the fruits of filial disrespect and irreverence. Rebellion against parental author-

ity is so often followed by serious and dreadful consequences that every child must see the necessity of obedience to parents; and yet it is not alone by strictly adhering to their express commands that a child is to honor them, but by so living as to reflect credit upon them. A child may obey his parents in what they bid him do, and yet be of very little credit or comfort to them.

“THE SON OF THE CALIPH HAROUN AL RASCHID,” says an old parable, “once came to his father to complain of a man who had uttered slanderous words against his mother and to demand vengeance against him. ‘My son,’ replied the caliph, ‘you are going to do a greater wrong against *your* mother than this slanderer: you are going to make him think that your mother has not taught you to pardon.’”

This little parable will explain how one may honor his parents. Every well-behaved, modest and virtuous child does so. His conduct is a reflection of their fidelity

and diligence in instilling into his mind correct principles and aiding him in the formation of virtuous habits. On the other hand, those who give the rein to passion and sin dishonor their parents by inducing the belief that they have never properly instructed or disciplined them. The child who utters a profane word or an impure jest, or who is guilty of falsehood, dishonors his father and mother. The world is disposed to judge of one's early training by his life.

In China this principle is so far recognized that a father is held responsible for the misconduct of his son. It is supposed that he will have such an influence over him as to keep him from wrong doing, and it is natural to suppose that one who has witnessed a virtuous example, who has been instructed in religious truths and taught the fear of God, will grow up wise and good. Here, then, is the way in which parents are to be honored, not simply by a general obe-

dience to their commands, but by kindness, purity, honesty, truth, virtue and all the graces that adorn the life and show the heart to be under the control of the divine law. Parents are either honored or dishonored by their children. Let me give from life a few illustrations of this principle.

THE LITTLE HEROINE.

“Mother’s heart was full already, and I did not wish to make her more sorry.”

These words were uttered by a little girl who came one day limping to her class in the Sabbath-school. She was a mere child, whose plain and scanty but clean dress told of neatness in the midst of poverty. The annual celebration of her school had just passed, and her bright and intelligent face had been missed amid the throng of happy children that were gathered in procession, and afterward in the school-room for refreshments. Her superintendent, in passing around the school, had paused at her class

and asked the reason of her absence from the anniversary.

“I was lame, sir,” said she, “and could not walk in the procession.”

“What made you lame?” he inquired.

“A little girl, sir, pushed me down and hurt me. When I went home my foot pained me very much, but I did not wish to tell mother, for her heart was full already. Little Edward had been sick and was dying, and I could not make her more sorry by telling her how much I suffered. When my little brother was buried I showed her my foot; she sent for the doctor, and he came and said it ought to have been attended to before, and that now it would be difficult to heal it.”

How often have I thought, since this simple incident was brought to my notice, in one of my morning visits to my Sabbath-school, of that child's heroism! Many an act which the world applauds has in it nothing so truly grand. It was the noble

fruit of a child's love for her mother. She came to her home in bitter pain, inflicted by a rude and thoughtless companion, but there she found a deeper grief. Her mother was standing in sorrow over the sick bed of her little boy, watching in agony his dying hours and looking with a breaking heart upon distress which she could not relieve. Standing by her side, the little girl watched with her in silence and sorrow until death had done its work, then suffered on until the grave closed over the dead ere she made known the anguish which she had all the while endured; and all this because her mother's heart was full already! Brave and noble girl! She was a heroine indeed, not of an idle romance, but of a true life. She had begun life aright in loving and honoring her mother.

IT DID NOT BELONG TO ME.

A little bare-footed boy called one morning at the house of a Sabbath-school teacher.

On finding that he was not at home, he turned reluctantly away, as if unwilling to leave without making known his errand. When asked why he wished to see him, he produced a beautiful gold pencil, saying, "I picked this up from the ground after our pic-nic yesterday, and thought Mr. —— might find the owner."

Laying the pencil down, he went away, only saying in reply to a question as to who he was that his name was "Willie." When the teacher came home and was told of the circumstance, he set out to find the boy. There were a good many Willies in the school, and some, like this Willie, had curly heads and bright black eyes. But at length the boy was found, and the pencil was also returned to the owner. It was a large and valuable one, and, had it been sold, might have brought in quite a good sum of money to Willie's family, who were very poor. When the boy was asked why he did not keep the pencil or sell it and use the money,

he replied, "*How could I? It did not belong to me.*"

He had been taught by his parents to be honest, and this was the result of their training. By his conduct he reflected credit upon his parents and honored them by his good deeds. He would not keep what did not belong to him, though finding it in the road. The next Sabbath, just before the close of school, Mr. ——— arose and told the story, and then calling upon Willie to come up, put into his hand a dollar, which had been given him to bestow for finding the pencil. At first he declined even to take the gift, until assured that it was proper and right for him to do so. Taking the dollar, he turned modestly away to his seat, as if unwilling to be noticed for such an act of simple honesty. Willie did no more than what was right in returning that pencil, but in doing so he gave to the whole school a proof of the kind of training he had received at home, and while showing himself to be an

honest boy, he honored the parents who had taught him *never to take or keep what did not belong to him.*

WHO IS THE COWARD?

I was sitting, wrote an American gentleman, in the second story of one of the large boarding-houses at Saratoga springs, thinking of absent friends, when I heard shouts of children beneath me.

“Oh yes, that’s capital! so we will! Come on, now! There is William Hale! Come on, William! We are going to have a ride on the road. Come with us!”

“Yes, if my mother is willing; I will run and ask her,” replied William.

“Oh, oh! so you must run and ask your ma! Great baby! run along and ask your ma! Are you not ashamed? I didn’t ask my mother.” “Nor I!” “Nor I!” added half a dozen voices.

“Be a man, William,” cried the first voice. “Come along with us if you don’t

want to be called a coward as long as you live. Don't you see we are all waiting?"

I leaned forward to catch a view of the children, and saw William standing with one foot advanced and his hand firmly clenched in the midst of the group. He was a fine subject for a painter at that moment. His flushed brow, flashing eye, compressed lip and changing cheek all told how that word *coward* was rankling in his breast.

"Will he prove himself indeed one by yielding to them?" thought I. It was with breathless interest I listened for the answer, for I feared that the evil principle in his heart would be stronger than the good. But no!

"I will not go unless I ask my mother," said the noble boy, his voice trembling with emotion, "and I am no coward, either. I promised her I would not go from the house without permission, and I should be a base coward if I were to tell her a wicked lie."

There was something commanding in his resolute tone. It was the power of a strong soul over the weak, and at once all quietly yielded him the tribute of respect.

I have written a long chapter on the subject of filial duties and sins, because I feel that in our own land and in this age it is important and timely. It was infinite wisdom and goodness that said, "Honor thy father and thy mother." Those words were meant for all times and for all nations. Respect for and obedience to parents prepare one to reverence law and authority, to become a good citizen, a wise ruler and a virtuous man. One cannot dishonor his father and mother without sooner or later meeting the punishment of his sins. He who would begin life aright and in the hope of a useful and happy future must remember and keep the **COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE.**

A Little Lord, but a Useful One.

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The dying mother's legacy. When to say No. Temptation to disobey parents. Bad books. Evil company. Breaking the Sabbath. Sinful pleasure. A case in point. Violating conscience. How to learn to say No. Self-respect. Filial love. Knowing God's law. A tender conscience. Thou, God, seest me. Give the heart to God.

IV.

A LITTLE WORD, BUT A USEFUL ONE.

A FAITHFUL mother gave to her son as her dying legacy this short but important counsel: “*My son, learn to say No.*” She did not intend to teach him that he should be discourteous in his conversation, rude and impertinent to his superiors, or ungentle and disobliging to those who sought his kind offices, but that he should firmly and promptly resist all temptations to sin and all efforts to draw him aside from the path of duty and of safety. Her counsel was but another mode of expressing the sentiment of the wise man, “*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*”

NO! It is a very small word, but what a tide of evil it may be made to resist!

How often, if promptly uttered, would it save the heart from many a bitter memory and from a world of pain and sorrow! How many a child has been drawn away into paths whose end is death because he has not answered *No* to those who would lead him into sin! How many a man shut up in prison for crimes against the laws of his country would be happy and free and virtuous if he had only been able to say *No* when first enticed to commit some act which he knew to be wrong, but which he hoped would never be detected!

The child as soon as he begins to go into the company of children finds some tempter among them who seeks to draw him into sin. Sometimes in a school there will be one of those teachers who impart wicked instruction which tends to corrupt all who listen to them. Satan has his agents, even among the young, who are busy doing his work for him, and who are earnestly trying to mislead all who come under his influence.

Sometimes they will ask their companions to break the Sabbath by going in search of pleasure and amusement, or they will entice them to neglect their duty by playing truant from school, or they will teach them to steal by taking fruit without leave from a neighbor's orchard. So in a thousand ways children are tempted to sin, and when they hesitate at first they are laughed at and ridiculed for trying to be good, until often they yield, even when their consciences tell them they are doing wrong.

As they grow older these temptations become more numerous and serious, and often lead them into sinful ways from which they never return. They are invited to visit the theatre, or to take a drink at the tavern, or to sit down to a game of cards, or to stake a little money at the gaming-table. So they are led on until they become dissipated and vicious and are ruined in health and reputation, and perhaps finish their career in prison; and yet many

who thus make shipwreck began life with fair prospects of usefulness and honor. Their only lack was that firmness of principle which would lead them, when tempted, to say *No!* They never treasured up the words of the wise man, "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not," and so yielded to temptation and were lost.

WHEN TO SAY NO.

Will my young readers listen to a few words of counsel from one who remembers that he once was young, and who knows what are the dangers which surround children from evil and unprincipled companions?

When any one asks you to do *what your parents have forbidden*, even though you may think there is no harm in it, say *No!* Disobedience to parents is always dangerous, first, because it breaks God's wise and good law, and, secondly, because your parents may see reasons for their directions

to you which are of the highest value to your well-being.

A child who begins life by neglecting his parents' commands is entering upon a path that surely leads to ruin. Your parents love you, and will never intentionally forbid what is necessary to your happiness or command what will injure you. They are older and wiser than you, and know what is best for you, and, above all, God has bid you honor them. When, then, any one asks you to do something which they have forbidden, learn to say *No!*

If one shows you a bad book or asks you to read it, say No! Avoid it as you would the pestilence. Every school almost has some boy among its scholars who brings with him wicked books and pictures which are designed to pollute and debase the mind and character.

He shows them to his playmates sometimes during school-hours when the teacher is not looking toward them, or in times

of recess when they are away from under his eye. He is corrupt and bad at heart himself, and his aim is to make you like him. And your only safety lies in avoiding him entirely, and in promptly and firmly refusing to look at what he would show you, or to permit him even to speak to you. If you were to meet one on whom were the marks of some dreadful and contagious disease, like the small-pox or the leprosy, you would instantly avoid him, for fear you might yourself catch the infection. So, when a youth approaches you with books and papers which you know are wicked and vile, turn from him as you would from a leper. His very breath is corrupt, and if you listen to him you will receive a taint which years may not remove.

When one asks you *to go with company that you know to be vicious and profane*, learn to say No! The Bible says that even the companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Children as well as men are judged by their associates. A youth who is often seen in company with one of known immoral character is soon set down as himself immoral. It is natural to suppose that he is like his associate, and that he selects him because he has the same vicious tastes and inclinations, and that if not already depraved he soon will be by contact with his morals and example. It is a suspicious circumstance when a young man is seen hanging around a bar-room, and in close intimacy with the society that gathers there. So, when a child is seen often walking with those who are known to be profane or immodest or vicious, his character suffers, and he is set down by prudent people as an unfit companion for their children. Hence the Bible says, "Enter not into the path of the wicked and go not in the way of evil men." If you would be safe, never mingle with companions who you know are evil and profane.

When one tempts you *to break the Sab-*

bath learn to say *No!* Many a wretched life has commenced in dishonoring God's holy day. He who asks you to go with him in search of pleasure and amusement on the Lord's day tempts you to break God's law not only in a single respect, but to begin a career which may end in ruin to your character and to your soul. He may tell you that it is only for once; or he may ask what harm there is in a little amusement upon the Sabbath; or he may tell you of this or that one who is going also; and he may set before you all the pleasure that you will have,—yet say *No!* to his temptation. If you do not, the day may come when you will look back with sorrow and bitter regret upon the time when you first stepped aside from the path of duty and turned your feet away from keeping the Sabbath holy. The best and the wisest of men will tell you from their own experience that he is most likely to prosper even in this world, and, above all, to have a pure and virtuous character, who

observes most sacredly the day of rest, who consecrates its hours to the worship of God and to the cultivation of his mind and heart.

When you are solicited to engage in some pleasure which may lead to sin, learn to say No!

Many persons have been ruined by amusements which seemed to be harmless, and against which there was no divine command expressly forbidding them. They have acquired in their pursuit a thirst for other things that have destroyed them.

Boys have grown up to be gamblers by simply learning to play cards. Young men have become drunkards by spending their evenings in places where wine was freely used. The beginnings of evil are to be avoided, yet often they seem so harmless that one hardly thinks of questioning their propriety.

A CASE IN POINT.

I once knew a young man who was ruined by a fast horse. When I first became acquainted with him no one in the place seemed to have finer prospects of success in business than he. He was a merchant, owning a well-stocked store, attending personally and energetically to his business and commanding the respect of the whole community. As his means increased he purchased a fine horse, with which he was accustomed to ride out of an afternoon simply for healthful recreation.

On the broad highway by which he usually left the village there were often other young men riding, with whom he occasionally used to try the speed of his horse. All this seemed to be perfectly innocent, and it might have been harmless had it stopped there. But on the road stood a tavern, where the young men would sometimes pause to rest their horses, and where they



The Fast Horse.

would take an occasional glass of wine for acquaintance' sake. All admired this young merchant's horse: he was proud of it himself. One day he was induced to accept a wager as to its speed. The success of the race was the beginning of a series of similar trials of speed which brought him into the society of a wretched set of gamblers and profligates, with whom he soon became intimate. Then his business was neglected and his time spent at taverns and horse-races, and his money was wasted in profligacy and dissipation. His old friends looked on his course with pity and sorrow. But their warnings were of no avail. He disposed of his store, and spent the proceeds in folly and sin.

Rapidly his health gave way, and he sunk down lower and lower, a wretched, lost man, dying, while yet young, a miserable profligate, the victim of his own passions and lusts. Had he learned to say NO! when men whom he knew to be vicious and

wicked tempted him to do what seemed a harmless thing, he might still have been living, a useful and a happy man. But he parleyed with temptation and was lost.

This is but a single example of thousands whose ruin has come through pleasures and amusements that seemed to be innocent, but which became fearful and destructive snares to the soul.

When one *tempts you to do something that your conscience tells you is wrong*, learn to say No!

You know what *conscience* is, and what are its uses. God put it into your minds that it might tell you when you have done wrong, or warn you when you are likely to commit sin. Everybody ought to keep an honest conscience by never disobeying its directions. And every one ought to have an enlightened conscience by becoming acquainted with God's holy law, which is our only true guide and rule of life.

Now, every child has some correct notions

of what is right and wrong, and ought always to obey what his conscience tells him is right. When, therefore, some one asks you to do what you *know* is wicked, say *No!*—say it boldly and promptly. If you yield once, you weaken the power of conscience, and there is no telling where you will end. It is a dreadful thing to do what that monitor tells you is wrong. By and by it ceases to act, and then ruin follows speedily. The path of safety lies in never allowing any parley with sin, or listening to any suggestions of evil, or permitting one to approach you with a temptation to do what you know is wrong. God says to you, “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

HOW TO LEARN TO SAY NO.

Unless your experience has been very different from that of most people, you have already found that sometimes it is not an easy matter to say *No*, even when you are tempted to do what you know is wrong.

Often you will seem to be disobliging to your companions when they put their temptations in the way of a personal favor to them ; or it may make you appear singular to deny them ; or your refusal may raise a laugh at your expense ; or they may ask you what harm there is in what they wish you to do ; or they may urge you so much and so frequently that you are disposed to yield to them in order to get rid of the annoyance of their importunity. It will be no strange thing if you find it difficult to say *No* even when you feel that you ought to do so. I have known men to commit acts which have brought ruin and disgrace upon themselves simply because some bad man urged them to it. They had not the courage to resist evil when sinners enticed them. It often takes all our strength of purpose to withstand temptation, and yet it must be done or ruin will follow. It will be no valid excuse, when one has fallen into crime, to say that others tempted him.

Every one must expect to be tempted. Every child finds wicked companions who would draw him into sin, and to whose solicitations he must learn to say *No*. Let me tell you how to do this.

You may get help in resisting evil by maintaining your *own self-respect*. No one likes to be insulted. There is hardly any injury that a man resents more quickly than any imputation upon his character. Yet when any one asks you to do wrong, he takes it for granted that you are ready to break the laws either of God or man. If a man were to ask you to steal, you would naturally say to him, "What have you ever seen in me that leads you to think I am a thief?" He insults you even by *supposing it possible* that you could be induced to commit an act so mean as theft. Now, it is this feeling of self-respect that should come to your aid whenever you are tempted to sin.

When a boy offers you a bad book or an immoral picture he insults you, and you

ought to resent it and turn from him with indignation. When one asks you to drink what will intoxicate, or to break the Sabbath, or to associate with vile companions, or to do what you know to be wrong, he takes it for granted that you have a low moral nature. It is as if he said that you were ready to sin at the first solicitation, and your own feelings of self-respect should lead you promptly and firmly to say to his temptations, NO!

Again, *your love and respect for your parents* should come in to your aid when sinners would entice you to do evil. You never can fully know the deep and tender interest and the ceaseless anxiety which they feel for you. Their lives are bound up in yours. That father is looking forward to the time when he can lay aside the active duties of his business-life and leave you to take up his work. He has devoted his most earnest labors to your welfare. You bear his name. You surely would not bring dis-

honor upon it by yielding to the tempter and falling into sinful practices.

That mother loves you with a deathless devotion. She has tenderly cared for you in all your helpless years. You have been her pride and joy. Would you repay all her love with ingratitude, and bring down her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? Yet you know there is nothing which gives her so much anxiety as your conduct and character, and that nothing would give her so much pain as to see you yielding to the temptations which wicked associates set before you. Never be ashamed, therefore, to say, when sinners would entice you, "I cannot dishonor my father and mother."

Again, you may learn to say *No!* when tempted to sin, by *becoming acquainted with God's law*. This is the great rule of life. It tells us what is right and what is wrong. "It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path," and he who would be safe from temptation should always be able to meet it with

some text from the Bible. It was thus that our Saviour met the temptations of Satan. His only answer was, "It is written." And so, too, may you be able to resist evil if you lay up in your memory the blessed words of eternal life. Remember that they are God's message to you, and that they are his holy laws, which you are bound to obey. This was the way that the Psalmist took, and which he commends to all who desire to escape from the snares of the tempter. He read and loved and obeyed God's law. He said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." "Depart from me, ye evil-doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God." You will not wander far from the right way if you take God's word for your guide.

Again, if you would learn to say No, *cultivate a tender and lively conscience*. Think where they would lead you who ask you to

sin, and what will be the end of their course. You should always bring every act of life to the standard of God's law. Ask, "Will it help me to love and serve my heavenly Father?" It is never safe to resist the convictions of the monitor within you: it is a sentinel which God has placed there to warn you of danger. Never do what your conscience condemns. Learn to question every act of life in the light of God's law, whether it be right or not, or whether, if apparently innocent, it may unfit you for duty and lead you into sin. Accustom yourself always to inspect all your actions day by day, and to compare them with the word of God. Then, when tempted to sin, listen to the voice of conscience and obey it. Again, if you would learn to resist evil, *you must always remember that God sees you.* His eye is ever upon you. He sees your thoughts, he understands your motives. He keeps accounts of all your actions. He writes down your whole life in his Book of

Remembrance. You can do nothing that he does not know. You can find no place so dark that he cannot see you. You can never hide yourself from him. He is present with you by day and night. When, therefore, you are tempted to sin, when you are disposed to yield to those who would entice you to do what is wrong, think before you act, "Thou, God, seest me." Thus you will learn to say *No!* to evil. *You must ask help of God* when you are tempted to do what is wrong. You are weak and helpless, but God is able to give you strength, and he is ready and willing to hear your prayer when you call upon him. Christ has bid you say, "Lead us not into temptation:" this ought to be your prayer every day when you enter your closet. And then, when sinners entice you, when you find a struggle going on within you whether you shall yield or not, when you find yourself almost giving way and ready to do what your conscience tells you is wrong, you can send up to

heaven, in the very midst of your temptations, the prayer, "Save, Lord, or I perish." God will hear, and help you to resist evil.

And, lastly, if you would learn to say No to all temptations, *you must give your heart to God.* If you love him and his law and his service, sin will become distasteful to you. You will learn to hate and avoid it because you know that it is displeasing to God. A child that loves his father will fear to offend him. He will not break his command, even though assured that he will never know it. So, if you have learned to love your heavenly Father, if your heart has been renewed by his Holy Spirit, you will hate all sin. When tempted to do what is wrong you will be enabled to answer, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Oh, learn, then, this great and useful lesson: **IF SINNERS ENTICE THEE, CONSENT THOU NOT.** Think what an evil and a bitter thing it is to sin against God! Think of the re-

sults of sin, and where it will lead you! When tempted to turn aside from the right way, to violate the laws of God or of man, to go after forbidden and sinful pleasures, or to mingle with those who are vicious and unprincipled, learn to say **NO!**



How they built the Suspension Bridge.

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Niagara. The boy's kite. What a child may do. The kite's soliloquy. The Syrian captive. Children's influence. What two children did. How an education is acquired. How habits are formed. The ropewalk.

V.

HOW THEY BUILT THE SUSPENSION BRIDGE.

THE most of my young readers know that one of the great lines of railroad that unite the East and West crosses the Niagara river a mile or two below the Falls of Niagara, by means of a bridge suspended upon great cables nearly a thousand feet long. These cables are made by joining hundreds of wires into immense strands, which are hung from high and strong towers built upon each shore, and are anchored into the ground by heavy and massive frames of iron. Just where the bridge crosses the river the banks are high and precipitous, and the current is so rapid that if a boat were to attempt to cross it, it would be swept away in a moment. It almost makes one

dizzy to stand upon the shore and look down upon that rush of waters, two hundred and fifty feet below, as they go seething and whirling by. Yet it was over this spot that a bridge was to be thrown that should be strong enough not alone to bear foot passengers and carriages, but heavy trains. When the engineers had built up two great towers, one on each side, and had brought together the wires of which the cables were to be made, the question was, how they could get them across this fearful chasm. The towers stood facing each other, but there was a distance of almost a thousand feet between them which no human being had ever yet passed over. But when all was ready they sent up a boy's kite while the wind was blowing just across the river. Up it went, higher and higher, carrying along the string by which it was held, and running farther and farther away until it reached the opposite shore. There it fell and was caught, and so a single thread hung across that great

chasm. Then a stronger cord was tied to it, which was drawn over by the men on the other side. To this cord was tied a still larger one, which was also drawn over. Then came a single wire, so small that it looked like a spider's web. After that came other wires, which were bound together and made into a small cable; on this was hung a strong iron staging moving on little wheels which had grooves in them, so as to cling to the iron rope above. On this staging the workmen stood, and were moved from one side to the other, drawing with them wire after wire, and binding them firmly together, until four enormous cables hung out between the opposite shores of the river. From these cables they suspended a bridge, timber by timber and brace by brace, until the whole was completed and Canada and New York were united.

Yet the beginning of this great work was
that little string of a boy's kite

If you were standing there and looking at

the bridge hanging out in the air, and should ask how those huge cables were ever carried over the river, you would think it strange if I should say it was done by means of a boy's kite. Yet all this great work depended on first getting some communication with the opposite shore. And that kite was the means by which this was accomplished.

Now, there are many important lessons which may be learned from this little history of the way in which they built the suspension bridge. Let us see if we cannot find out what some of them are.

WHAT A CHILD CAN DO.

It is possible that many a child who hears or reads of all the great work that is going on in the world, of the movements of armies and navies, of the improvements that are making in the arts, of the discoveries in science, and, more than all, the good that is accomplished by Christian men and women, is disposed to say, "What can a little child

like me do?" I am not a rich man, and cannot give large sums for the building of churches and the founding of colleges and hospitals. I am not a learned and eloquent man, and cannot talk to thousands of people on the affairs of the nation or on great moral reforms. I am only a child that nobody cares about or knows except my own family. What good can I do in the world? Suppose we go to that suspension bridge for an answer.

THE KITE'S SOLILOQUY.

If that boy's kite which took the first thread across the Niagara could have thought and spoken when all the great preparations were going on for hanging up those huge cables there, it might have said, "Here I am, a useless little thing! What good can I possibly do in this great world? I am a mere plaything, sailing up in the air when the wind blows, and then coming down to be thrown aside and forgotten. I

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cannot run like the horse, or fly like the eagle, or be of use like the great sails of a ship, or draw the plough like an ox. I am only a little kite. How I wish I could be of some use like other things!"

Now, if the engineer had heard all this, he might have answered, "My little fellow, I'll tell you what you can do, and how you can be of very great service to me. You see that great tower on the other shore where my workmen are standing? Now, I wish to hang up between that tower and this one four great cables, from which I mean to hang a bridge over which the wealth and people of two nations shall be borne. But between us now there runs a mighty river, whose current is so rapid that if we should try to cross it in a boat we should be swallowed up in a moment. What I wish you to do is to take this long string over yonder to my workmen. It is not very heavy or strong, but I have fastened to it a larger cord, which my men will pull over when

you have once put this string in their hands, and with that they will draw across the wires by which the cables are to be built."

Now the little kite began to see that it might be of some use after all. As it flew over that fearful chasm and opened communication between the opposite shores it seemed to say to every child, "You may sometimes do a great and good work if you will only do what you can."

There are many ways in which even children may be useful to others if they are only watchful for opportunities of doing good.

Often, although they may not be able to help others, they *can tell them where help can be found.*

THE SYRIAN CAPTIVE.

Once in Syria there was a little captive girl whose home was in Israel. She had been taken thence during a war by some

rough soldiers, and carried into their own land and sold as a slave. Her master was a great general, who had been very successful in defending his country against his enemies, and who was a great favorite with his king.

But, with all his honors and greatness, he was afflicted with one of the most dreadful and hopeless diseases of the East. He had been smitten with the leprosy, for which there was no known cure.

The little maid felt very sorry for him when she saw how pale he was, how anxious and troubled he looked, and how much he suffered. It was very sad to see that great man thus wasting away under the power of a disease which no human skill could reach. She knew that by and by he would grow weaker and weaker; that his finger-joints would drop off and his flesh would be corrupted; that he would become an object of horror to all his friends and of loathing to himself, until death should come to put an

end to his sufferings. Oh how she pitied him! Yet she could not heal him.

She remembered, however, that in her own land there was a great prophet of God, who had healed the sick and wrought many other wonderful miracles, that had convinced the people that God had sent him to them as his messenger. So one day, as she was busy with her work, she modestly and timidly spoke to her mistress about Elisha the prophet, who, she thought, could cleanse her master of his leprosy. Those words came to the ear of Naaman and of the king also, and the result was that Naaman went to the land of Israel.

By the prophet Elisha he was told how he might be healed, and he returned to his home with his health all restored and his flesh clean and fresh as a child's. Now, can you not see how much good a child even may sometimes do by only a few words fitly spoken? Had this Syrian captive said to herself, "What can one so young as I do for

this poor leper?" and remained silent, Naaman might never have heard of Elisha, and would no doubt have died of his leprosy.

So, too, may a Sabbath-school scholar who has been taught the way of salvation tell some sick and dying soul of Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

Then, again, little children may often do *good by their influence*. If they may not, while they are young, be ministers, or teachers of Sabbath-schools, or active members of the Church, they may do little deeds of kindness and fidelity which shall show a love for Christ, and may also result in great good. Let us see how this can be.

WHAT TWO CHILDREN DID.

Mary and Julia, when on their way to Sabbath-school one bright morning in spring, met little Annie returning home with a basket of cowslips which she had been gathering in the field. They were neatly clad and clean, while she was dressed

in rags, her face unwashed and her hair uncombed. They had come from a bright and comfortable home, while she was returning to a wretched and miserable abode of poverty and want.

It did not take long for the little Sabbath scholars to secure the attention of Annie when they told her where they were going and what they expected to hear and do at the school. And when the poor child was urged to go with them, although she at first hung her head and hesitated because of her poor dress and her miserable shoes, it was no difficult matter to secure her promise to go with them the next Sabbath, especially when they engaged to see that she had a dress fit to go in. It seemed like a new world to Annie when she took her seat amidst a company of bright and happy children, herself clad in a neat dress which had been given her through the agency of Mary and Julia. They had called for her that morning and taken her with them to the school, and in-

roduced her to the superintendent, who had given her a seat in one of the smaller classes. She listened with fixed attention to all the teacher said, and was delighted with the school. She had never before been within the walls of a church, and when she returned to her home had much to tell her mother of all that she had seen and heard.

Sabbath after Sabbath she was found in her place in the class and in the church, while frequent visits from Mary and Julia encouraged her to be diligent and faithful. Her little friends who had first invited her to the Sabbath-school continued to exert over her the influence of their good example and kind advice. It was not long before a change could be seen in that once wretched home. Annie's father was a drunkard, but in his sober moments he loved his child. He listened with evident pleasure to the hymns she sang and the text she repeated from the word of God. One day he ventured into the church. Soon after he took

his seat he heard the minister repeat the words, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;" from which he took occasion to speak of God's great mercy in forgiving and saving even the chief of sinners. At once the poor man's past life seemed to be all spread out before him, and as he listened to the words of truth his convictions deepened. He went home anxious for his soul and trembling in view of his sins. Then his long-neglected Bible was opened. As he read he learned how Christ came to save the lost by giving his own life a ransom for sinners, and at length he found peace in believing.

It was a great change which came over that once wretched family when the man long given up to his appetites was seen with his wife and child, all neatly dressed, sitting together in the house of God. His former wicked companions tried in vain to win him back to their society. With him old things had indeed passed away, and all things had

become new. The old and wretched cottage assumed an appearance of thrift, and was the abode of peace and comfort. Morning and evening the family Bible was brought out and read, and all knelt in prayer to God for his blessing. The table was well provided with the fruits of honest labor, and the garden smiled with sweet flowers which were cultivated in the spare moments of the day. I need hardly add that the little girls who first met that drunkard's child and induced her to attend the Sabbath-school were often the welcome guests of that now happy family. As they looked around them upon the results of their modest effort to do good, they blessed God that he had used them as the instruments in effecting such a change, thus teaching them how,

"Little acts of kindness,
Little deeds of love,
Make this world an Eden,
Like to heaven above."

Here, then, is one lesson from the suspension

bridge worth remembering. A few words of kindness may prove like the thread first thrown over Niagara, drawing after them a train of blessings reaching even to eternity.

HOW AN EDUCATION IS ACQUIRED.

If a child were to be told how much he must learn before he may be said to be educated—how many books were to be read, and how many sciences were to be mastered—he might be disposed to think it a task that he could never accomplish. Perhaps as he goes along with his studies he wonders how the men who have prepared his instruction-books, and who are his teachers, could ever learn so much. One teacher tells him all about the sun and moon and stars, calculates all their movements, and gives their distances from each other, their size and appearance. Another teaches him all the wonders of chemistry and philosophy. Another tells him all that is known of plants and trees, while others write about the mysteries

of the human mind or the wonders of the human frame. Now if any one is disposed to ask how all this is to be studied and known, let him go to Niagara again and see how that great bridge was built. Suppose some workman had stood upon one of those towers and looked across upon the opposite shore, where all the wires and timber and iron bars were collected together which were in time to span that vast chasm, he might have wondered how they could ever be brought over. Yet by and by he sees a kite fluttering in the air, and rising higher and higher, until it stands over his head. And then he sees that some one has caught the string and is drawing it in, and that after it comes a larger cord, and then a wire, and then a bundle of wires—that these form a support for the platform on which the workmen can pass and repass until every cable is in its place and the whole structure completed.

Now, methinks, every reader can tell

what all this teaches. That thread first drawn across the river is the alphabet, and the small cord that followed is the words that are first learned and that help him attain larger ones, and thus to draw into his mind the instructions of the wise and good. Will my young readers bear this in mind? Every lesson they learn, every new truth they acquire, is preparing them to attain other knowledge still more important. Sometimes, when you are disposed to think it hard that you have to learn this or that, remember how the bridge was built, and think that the time will come when you will see the importance of what may now seem to be of little value. You may not like to study grammar. It may be to you a dry and uninteresting thing. But it is the cord that is drawing over to you the whole science of language. You may dislike arithmetic, but it is one of the wires of the great highway of knowledge. You may sometimes weary of your school. But when you do, think

over the *lessons taught by the suspension bridge.*

HOW HABITS ARE FORMED.

You all know what is meant when we say of a person that he has "good or bad habits." When you repeat an act so often that it becomes natural to you, and you sometimes "do it without thinking," you call that a habit. So we say of one man who uses profane words whenever he speaks that he has a habit of swearing. We say of another who frequents the tavern and the ale-house that he has a habit of drinking. We say of a child who is very attentive to his lessons that he has studious habits, or of one who promptly and cheerfully complies with every command or wish of his parents that he has habits of obedience. And these are what make up one's character and reputation with the world, and men respect or despise him according to his habits, whether they be good or bad.

Now the story of the building of the suspension bridge may teach us how habits are formed. Just as the cable was drawn across that chasm wire by wire, so are the little acts of every day making up the character and the sum of life. And as the cable never could have been made to span that fearful chasm unless the kite-string had first opened the communication between the opposite shores, so a habit can never be formed until some act, however insignificant it may be, prepares the way for another act of a similar character. A man never would become a drunkard if he did not drink his first glass. A child would never become a profane swearer if he did not speak the first oath by which God's name was taken in vain. Whenever, therefore, one does what he knows is wrong, even though he may think it a trivial act, he is making a communication between sin and himself which may be followed by the most serious consequences. When a young man is asked to

take a social glass with his friends, it seems like a very little and unimportant thing. It is only a single glass of wine, taken to oblige his companions and because he does not wish to be singular. Yet it is doing for him what that kite did for the engineers of the Niagara bridge. It is opening the way for another social glass, and for an appetite that shall by and by be uncontrollable. As day after day he meets with his companions and drinks deeper and deeper, his habit is becoming more and more fixed and strong. At last it triumphs over every manly principle, and becomes his terrible master and makes him a drunkard. Now the bridge is completed between him and ruin. The first glass made the connection across that chasm; then each successive glass was a fresh wire drawn across and making stronger and firmer the habit which at length it would be almost impossible to break. So it is the repetition of any act that makes at last the sum of a man's character. Even the web

of the spider, so airy and fine as to be scarcely perceptible, may be so multiplied that it shall form a net from whose meshes no insect or reptile can escape.

THE ROPEWALK.

Did you ever see how the spinner in a ropewalk does his work? You have perhaps noticed those long sheds, at one end of which is the spinning-wheel, and then a long, nicely smoothed and hard walk, down which children are so fond of running in sport.

Just look at that man with a large bundle of flax wound around his body. He pulls out a few fine strands, and fastening them to the spindle moves backward down that long walk, twisting up a single thread which would hardly do more than hold a good-sized kite. This he throws up on some pins, and then returning to the spindle, draws out another cord and lays it aside, and then another and another. By and by these

ords are put together and twisted into a rope, which is laid up on some pins until other ropes are made, which are at length joined into a great cable that can stand the strain of the winds and the waves when it is holding a ship by its anchor.

So it is that habits are formed, either for good or evil.

Every day we are drawing out the threads that make up the web of life. Every act is helping to make up our character. And as these acts grow and increase, they become a part of our nature, as difficult to be changed as the form and color of our bodies.

Now think of this lesson which you may learn of that great suspension bridge. It tells you how you may form good or bad habits. It tells you to beware of the first glass if you would not become a drunkard. It says, Beware of bad books, for they will lead you to ruin. It says, Beware of improper words, for they are the strings that

draw after them profanity, vulgarity and vice. It says, Never do what you know is wrong or repeat an act which is wicked, for it helps to bridge over the chasm between your soul and death.

So, if you would learn good habits, that great structure over Niagara is still your teacher. Every time you do what is right, even though it may seem hard and unpleasant, you are making it easier and pleasanter for you to do so again. The prayer that you send up to God for help when you feel that you are weak and ignorant, what is it but that string which first hung over the great chasm at the Falls? It flies from your soul to heaven, and draws to you God's own blessing and aid.

Then, when, under that divine help, you go and do what is duty, however little or simple an act it may be, you are preparing the way for other duties more important, which will grow into habits that shall give you a virtuous and honorable character.

Bear in mind, then, this great lesson. Remember that every act of life is either right or wrong, and that its repetition forms at length habits that are as strong as cables. When, then, you are tempted to sin, even though the act may seem of little consequence, remember how the cable was drawn over Niagara. And when you wish to be wise and virtuous, and think how much of duty is required of you, and how hard it sometimes is to perform it, remember *how they built the suspension bridge*, and that, like that huge cable, a good life is made up of little acts of duty faithfully and constantly performed.

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VI.

LESSONS IN CHARITY.

I COULD hardly feel that these hours with the children were fully improved unless something were said to illustrate the duty, the rewards and the modes of doing good. The world is full of sorrow, ignorance and sin, and all who have the heart to alleviate suffering, to comfort the mourner or to reform the vicious, may find daily opportunities for doing so.

Charity—which is only another word for *love*—is now used to represent the work of benevolence or acts of kindness and mercy. Every child may do something toward giving happiness to others who are in need of aid or sympathy. Christ, who taught us by his own word and example that it is more

blessed to give than to receive, has also said that whosoever shall give even a "cup of cold water to a disciple in his name, shall in no wise lose his reward." Let us take from life a few lessons in charity.

THE WORD IN SEASON.

"Won't you go with me to the Sabbath-school?" The words were uttered by a little girl neatly clad, and addressed to a child of her own age who was swinging upon a garden gate before a house which gave sad proofs of idle and thriftless tenants. It was not much of an effort to put the question to this particular child, and in order to make the inquiry it had only been necessary for Addie to go out of her way about a quarter of a mile. But that act was followed by results which she little dreamed of when she started out that morning to see if she could not get a new scholar for her school. Poor little Jane had never been taught to keep the Sabbath or to fear God. Her father



The Word in Season.

often came home intoxicated, and her mother, though she used when young to attend church, had long neglected it. She made her poverty an excuse, and thought, because she was unable to dress as well as her neighbors, that she had sufficient reason for neglecting the service of Him who looks on the heart, and not on the outward appearance.

But when Jane came running into the house on that pleasant morning and asked if she might go with Addie to the Sabbath-school, the poor mother assented. Bringing out her daughter's little faded hood and adjusting her clothes, she sent her away. Addie brought her little companion into the school-room, and took her to the superintendent, who placed her in the care of a kind teacher, to whom she soon became greatly attached, and under whom she made rapid advances in the knowledge of the Scriptures. One day the teacher called at her house to see her, and obtained from her

mother a promise that she would herself visit the house of God.

The next Sabbath the mother was at church, and it seemed as if the whole sermon was meant for her. When she went home she took down her long-neglected Bible and began to read it. After a while she persuaded her husband to accompany her to church.

It was not long before a great change became manifest in that family. Things went on better in the house. The father brought home all his earnings, and spent his evenings with his wife and children. He had become sober and industrious, and the money that used to be spent at the ale-house now went for the support of his family. Every week added something new to their comfort: it was either a dress for his wife, or a nice bonnet for Jane, or a pair of shoes for her little brother. When the minister saw a new family regularly attending his church, he found them out and

visited them. Then some of the members of the church called to see the family, and the poor wife, so long lonely and forsaken, began to feel as if she had once more found friends. Everything around looked neat and comfortable, and she was not ashamed to have ladies walk into her cozy parlor, where a nice carpet had been laid down out of the wages of her husband, who now began to thrive and prosper. By and by the voice of prayer and praise was heard in that household. And one pleasant Sabbath both the father and mother stood up together and made a public profession of faith in God, and then presented their two children to receive the ordinance of baptism, as the seal of the covenant which God had made with them as his people. It was indeed a wonderful change which had passed over that household. And it could all be traced back to that simple question, which was indeed *a word in season*—"Won't you go with me to the Sabbath-school?"

AN ERRAND OF MERCY.

“I wish father was a rich man! I am sure he knows as much and is ten times better than old Phillips, whose son Harry thinks himself so much above me, because he dresses better than I, and goes to the academy, while I have to attend the public school, and who rides on horseback for pleasure, while I have to go on foot and run errands.”

Charley Morris, who uttered these words, was evidently in a humor for murmuring at his lot as he entered his mother's room in the second story of a very plain house. Something had disturbed him, and, though his home was a very model of neatness, he was disposed to think his lot in life was a hard one. His father was a mechanic, who by honest industry was just able to support his family in comfort, and have a little left to lay by for a rainy day and to give for purposes of charity. Charley was doing

well at the public school. Though just now out of sorts, he was in the main a good boy, attentive to his studies, and giving promise of being a useful and a happy man. His mother heard his exclamation as he entered the room, but made no immediate reply. She was busy with a basket in which she was placing some bundles of sugar and tea, with some choice bits of meat saved from the dinner, and a nice loaf of bread made by her own hands. When she had finished packing it, she gave it to Charley, bidding him take a small bundle of sticks and carry the whole to a poor widow whose house was in the next street.

The boy obeyed, and, turning down an obscure alley filled with miserable tenements, found the place for which he was searching. It was evidently the abode of poverty and want. He had never been in such a place before, and as he mounted the rickety staircase that creaked and trembled under his feet, and looked at the broken

windows filled with rags, through which the snow and storm could yet beat almost without hindrance, he thought of his own comfortable home. He felt a pang of self-reproach that he should have murmured at his own lot, which was so much above that of the inmates of this wretched hovel. Pausing at a door to which he had been directed, he rapped, and heard in response a feeble voice that bade him come in.

On a miserable bed, in a room that was searched by every wind, lay a sick woman emaciated by long suffering. The boy took a hasty glance around the room. Everything looked cheerless and desolate. He recognized in the sufferer a poor widow whom he had sometimes seen at his mother's. She knew him also, and called him by name as he advanced to set upon a trunk that stood by the bed his basket of provisions.

"I have brought you these," said he, "from mother," as he laid down his arm-

ful of wood and brushed off the little pieces of bark that clung to his coat, and then proceeded to kindle a fire in a little stove, on which stood a small kettle of water. As he turned to go when he had completed his errand, the sick woman gave utterance to her thanks in a feeble voice, mingling therewith expressions of gratitude to God and a sweet and calm resignation to his will, that gave evidence of a heart full of peace and joy. Charley listened with wonder, and as he turned away began to think of his own foolish and wicked discontent. As he walked slowly and thoughtfully homeward, he compared his pleasant home, plain and simple though it was, with that wretched and cheerless room ; then he thought of his own health, of his honest and industrious father, whose toil was bringing him substantial comfort, and of that utter dependence on the charity and kindness of her neighbors to which that poor widow was brought, and yet in the midst of which she was cheerful,

uncomplaining and resigned to the will of her heavenly Father. He recalled her gratitude for the little act of kindness of which he had just been the instrument, and compared it with his selfish and improper repinings at the allotments of Providence, and resolved henceforth to cultivate a contented mind. He determined, when tempted to envy the condition of those who were above him in life, to think of how many were in circumstances of poverty and suffering to which he was a stranger. As he entered his home and sat down by his own comfortable and cheerful fireside, it seemed to him like a palace as he thought of those wretched haunts of poverty and want which he had passed. Remembering the children in rags and wretchedness which filled them, he felt that he had never before so well understood the meaning of those words which he had sometimes heard his father read from the Holy Scriptures: "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

THE PRIEST'S CURSE.

A poor Roman Catholic widow woman, residing in one of the obscure streets of New York, where so much of poverty and sorrow is to be found, had been kindly cared for by one of the great charities of the city, and her children clothed and fed and brought into the Sabbath-school, where they had been taught to read and to sing hymns of praise to God. At length one of her children died, and her priest was sent for to bury it. He came and learned that the family had been under Protestant influences, though no effort had been made to draw them away from their own Church. It was enough for the priest that the children had been to a mission-school. Even in that hour of deep sorrow, and to those afflicted ones, he broke forth with exceeding bitterness against the mission-schools of Protestants, and forbade the widow ever again to allow her children to enter one of

those places, adding that if his injunctions were not complied with he would curse her from the altar.

The weeping mother told him, by way of apology, how kind the people against whom he was speaking had been to her—how the missionaries and teachers had often visited her and helped her to live, and shown a practical sympathy with her in all her trials.

But the priest was inexorable, and threatened her with all the pains and penalties of excommunication if she ever again permitted her children to visit any place where heretics taught and worshiped. The poor woman listened to him calmly, and then, looking up through her tears, replied :

“When my husband and I came here strangers, these heretics, as you call them, aided him, though neither you nor your people came near us. When he died you came and exacted money from me to say *masses* for the repose of his soul; but they

brought me help and comfort, without asking any money from me in return. I became poor and in want, and was unable to feed and clothe my children. Protestants came to my aid. They provided me and my children with food and clothing. They helped me to get work. They have been my best friends. You may call them heretics and curse them as such, but their conduct shows that they are sincere Christians. If, for permitting my children to attend their school, where they are taught to read and pray and sing God's praises, you must curse me, then curse on."

I have given this simple incident, which was once told me by the city missionary who had often visited this poor widow, to show what power there is in Christian kindness and love to break off the shackles of superstition and error. These little Roman Catholic children had found friends among those whom they had heard denounced as heretics—friends who manifested the spirit

of Christian love not alone in words, but in deeds of kindness and charity. That love had come into their abode of sorrow and poverty and ministered to their wants; had given them tender sympathy in hours of trial; had sought to do them good and to lead them to Christ; and so they were gradually loosened from the cruel bondage of priestly superstition.

This is the true way to do good. Here is one of the *lessons of charity* that all should learn who wish to reform the vicious, to save the fallen or to unloose the fetters of ignorance and superstition.

We shall never convince those who are in error by denunciation and curses, by assaulting their religion or attacking their prejudices.

The priest's curse was harmless and powerless when it fell upon a heart already softened by the love of the gospel. It appeared to that poor widow in strange contrast with the sweet and holy sympathy

which enlightened Christianity had shed upon her. She learned to look for the true religion not amid priestly mummeries and superstitions, but with those who believed the word and manifested the spirit of the divine Redeemer who went about doing good.

THE TOY PISTOL.

All of Freddie's little savings had just gone to buy a toy pistol. It was too pretty and too much like a real pistol to be resisted. It had a little spring that acted like powder, and a ramrod to press it down, and an arrow which it could shoot out when discharged. Freddie had seen it in the store just round the corner, where preparations were making for the Fourth of July, and taking out from his little tin savings bank all his funds, had made the purchase and brought the pistol home. For a whole day he was busy with his new plaything. Now he would try and see how far he could make his arrows fly in the air, and again how near he could come

to a mark. When he tired of this kind of play, he and his brother Frank, who shared his sports with him, tried their hand at the cat, and finally mounted the pen and fired peas at the pig. This was a new kind of play for the boys, and Freddie, as he saw his pea-bullets striking around the ears and eyes of the pig, felt his interest in his toy reviving. It seemed now more like a real pistol than ever; but even this sport, which the boys forgot might be annoying to a poor brute, at length grew tiresome also. So the pistol was thrown down and soon forgotten in other plays, until the time for supper came, and then they went to bed. The next day was the Sabbath, and Freddie, as usual, took his place in his class.

That morning a collection was taken up which was to be appropriated to a special object in which all the school were interested. They had undertaken to educate a heathen child, to whom they had given the name of their pastor, whom they all loved.

The money, which was to be sent for his support in one of the mission stations through the Board of Foreign Missions, was to be collected that morning. The pastor was present, and made a few remarks on the pleasure and blessing of doing good to others, and asked the school if they did not often find that it was more blessed to give to the needy than to spend their money simply for their own gratification. Freddie, who was listening with attention, thought of his toy pistol, and began to be sorry that he had not saved his money for a higher and nobler purpose. When the plate passed him and he had nothing to lay upon it, he thought again of his toy and wished he had not been so hasty in its purchase. All that day his thoughts would again and again turn upon his plaything, and then to the heathen scholar for whose education he had given nothing that month, while the words of his pastor were sounding in his ears: "How much better is it to give our money for the

good of others than to spend it for our own gratification!"

The next day Freddie found his toy broken and useless. It had fallen on the floor of the hall and been trodden under foot and destroyed. As he thought that for a single day's amusement he had been deprived of the happiness of giving his monthly offering at the Sabbath-school, he wished again that he had thought less of self, and that the money he had expended on a worthless plaything had been given to contribute to the happiness and the good of others. All his money was gone—there was nothing to show for it but this worthless toy.

The lesson was a useful one to the boy. He has now become a man, and has connected himself with the church and is trying to do good. He once told the pastor whose words were such a rebuke to him that he gives stately one-tenth of his income to charitable purposes, and that he has long

since found that *we can best secure our own happiness by trying to do good to others.*

HOME MISSIONS.

We often see posted upon fences and walls large advertisements headed,

“LABORERS WANTED.”

So might the Church put up over every Sabbath-school room,

“MISSIONARIES WANTED.

Who will respond? The service is honorable, and the pay is sure.”

WANTED, little boys who can run into yonder dark lanes and alleys and invite those neglected groups of children to come to the Sabbath-school and learn to read the Bible and to love its truths.

WANTED, little girls to go and speak a word for Jesus to those ignorant and wretched families who never go to the house of God.

HOME MISSIONARIES WANTED to carry

food and clothing to the poor, and drop a kind word in the ear of the outcast and the wretched, to tell the drunkard that there is hope for him if he will repent and turn to God, to whisper in the ear of the fallen, "Go and sin no more."

HOME MISSIONARIES WANTED to imitate the blessed Saviour, who went about doing good, to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, to assist in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, to bring light and hope and comfort to the desolate and sorrowful.

HOME MISSIONARIES WANTED to help in building up Sabbath-schools and churches by going into the lanes and streets of the city, into the highways and hedges, and bearing to all whom they meet the message, "Come, for all things are ready."

WHO WILL ENLIST IN THE WORK? Many warm hearts and busy hands are needed. There is work for all who are willing to labor. The Master says, "Go work to-day

in my vineyard ;” “ What thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might.” The youngest child may do something. None need be idle. On every hand is suffering, ignorance, vice and sorrow.

HOME MISSIONARIES WANTED for the great field now ripening to the harvest. If you cannot be a teacher you can bring in children to fill up the school. If you cannot be a minister, you can invite others to come to the house of God. If you have no money to give, you can give a kind and loving word, a tear of sympathy, and can make known cases of suffering to those who are able to relieve them. Who is ready and willing to work for Jesus? Begin by giving first your own hearts to him, and then go forth to labor in his cause. He has something for you to do if you truly love him and desire to work for him. It is a blessed service to which he calls you. It brings with it even here a rich reward, and when the work of life is ended, it will be

indeed a joy and glory to hear from his lips the words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

"GOING FORTH TO SOW."

OH, may not we apostles be,
 Like the brave twelve of old?
 May we not go forth manfully,
 In Jesus' band enrolled?

Is there not still a work to do?
 Are there no souls to win?
 Ah, yes! the laborers yet are few
 To bring the harvest in.

Full many a goodly ear is dead
 Beneath the ruthless gale,
 And ripening grain, untimely shed,
 Lies withered in the vale.

The evil one, from day to day,
 His ceaseless sickle wields,
 And bears the gathered sheaves away
 From life's neglected fields.

Then rouse we from our slothful sleep,
And gird we to our toil ;
Go forth the golden crop to reap
From the thrice-fruitful soil.

And though with weeping we set out,
Oppressed with anxious care,
We shall return with joyful shout,
And sheaves abundant bear.

The Master's joy shall be our gain,
His joy and ours be one ;
Sweet recompense for toil and pain,
His welcoming "Well done !"



The Hob-i-noor and its Lessons.

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Estimating persons by their dress and modes of living. The governess. False pride. The diamond and its family. True honor. How the diamond became brilliant. One more lesson from the Koh-i-noor. The soul and its destiny.

VII.

THE KOH-I-NOOR AND ITS LESSONS.

IN the earlier pages of this book reference was made to the great diamond of England for the sake of illustrating the value of the soul. I described it as it now appears in the Tower of London, where it is guarded with jealous watchfulness and care by the officers of the government who have the jewel-room in charge. Thousands of visitors to the Tower pause and admire this precious gem, not for its settings, but because of its great beauty and the use to which it has been appropriated as one of the decorations of the British queen. It has a remarkable history, from which we may learn some lessons of practical value which my young readers will do well to remember.

According to an East Indian tradition, this

wonderful stone was obtained from one of the mines of Golconda before the Christian era, and passed from the hands of one sovereign of India to another, until the fourteenth century, when it became the property of Aladdin, the monarch of Delhi. In the year 1739, Nadir Shah, the Persian conqueror, saw it in the turban of the vanquished king, and proposing an exchange of head-dress, bore it away with him and gave to it the name of Koh-i-noor, or "mountain of light." When he was assassinated the diamond fell into the hands of Ahmed Shah, and then of Shah Soojah, who, to obtain his liberty when conquered by Runjeet Sing, gave him this costly and precious jewel. During these last years of its history, England was gradually obtaining power over India, one after another of whose provinces came into her possession. In the year 1849 the Punjaub was annexed to the territory of the East India Company, and as a part of the conditions on which it became theirs, it was



Exchange of Head-dresses.

stipulated that the Koh-i-noor diamond should be surrendered to the queen of England, to whom it was accordingly presented in the year 1850.

So great was the interest excited by the history of this wonderful diamond by the fact that it had now become one of the crown jewels of the British monarch that permission was obtained to exhibit it at the Crystal Palace in London during the holding of the great fair, in 1851. It attracted universal attention, and at the same time was the occasion of an almost universal disappointment. A glass model which was placed near it seemed to possess greater brilliancy and beauty, unless special pains were taken to surround it with vivid lights which should develop its refractive powers. Men of science and skill were consulted with reference to it, who decided that if the stone were to be recut its marvelous beauties might reappear. After all the necessary machinery was prepared the gem was en-

cased in lead, except a single side that was first to be cut. So great was the interest manifested in the work that the Duke of Wellington was himself present to commence the operation, which he did by holding the diamond against a rapidly-revolving wheel covered with diamond dust. Thus a new surface was exposed. The work was then committed to experienced workmen, who continued to subject side after side to the same process, until the gem was seen to glow in a new lustre and glory that fitted it for its proper position among the most brilliant of jewels that ever shone upon the brow of royalty. It is now truly a mountain of light, worthy its place among the proudest decorations of majesty.

This is the history of the Koh-i-noor, mined from Golconda, the object of conflict and strife amid rival kings and conquerors, rescued from its semi-barbarous owners and given to a noble Christian sovereign, for whose service it was fitted by a process that

removed every blemish and made it bright with every ray that makes up a sunbeam, and glorious as though a thousand rainbows were sparkling within it.

Now, were one unfamiliar with its history and value to see in that unpretending casket (that looks like a great iron bird-cage) this precious gem, he might be disposed to pass it by almost unnoticed amid all the other objects of interest with which the regalia-room in the Tower of London is filled. There are many other things there far more showy and brilliant. Yet by and by, when that diamond is taken out and made to adorn the brow of majesty at some great state occasion, the whole world will admire its beauty. Yet it is no less valuable and precious in its iron cage than when adorning the crown of England's sovereign. Hence it teaches us *not to form our estimate of persons simply by their dress or mode of living or the houses they dwell in.*

Many fall into this error, and sometimes

are led by it into serious difficulty and danger. They judge by the outward appearance and circumstances, and they are often deceived. A vile and wicked man sometimes assumes the dress and appearance of a gentleman, and by his pleasant and attractive manners leads the unwary into temptations which may prove their ruin, while a truly wise and virtuous man may be neglected because his dress is homely and his appearance unattractive. The diamond is unappreciated because it is in a homely setting.

THE GOVERNESS.

A young lady in England who had obtained a situation as governess in the family of a nobleman took her seat in the inside of a mail-coach for the purpose of reaching her new home. At one of the stations where the stage stopped to take in passengers she observed a man plainly dressed climbing up to take a seat near the driver outside the coach. When they stopped for dinner she was

greatly offended because this plainly-dressed man entered the dining-room and sat down near her at the table. Calling the attention of the waiter to his presence there, she rudely objected to sitting down at the same table with a poor outside passenger. The old gentleman quietly rose, and saying "if his presence offended the lady he would leave the room," went out and got his dinner elsewhere. Toward the close of the day the stage with its load of passengers drew near a magnificent country-seat which was the home toward which the young lady was journeying. As she approached the splendid gateway of the mansion she observed a number of servants and a carriage, which she presumed had been sent especially for her reception. As the stage stopped she noticed, however, that all their attention seemed to be turned to some person upon the outside, and on stepping out found, to her confusion, that the object of all this interest was the man in plain clothes with

whom she had refused to eat because he was an outside passenger. He was the lord of the manor, and she had insulted the very nobleman in whose family she had been engaged to act as governess. Fortunately for her he was a Christian gentleman, who, instead of summarily dismissing her from his service, kindly showed her the folly and wickedness of judging of persons by their dress and appearance, and taught her henceforth not to slight a diamond because it might have a plain setting or be placed in an iron cage.

FALSE PRIDE.

While we are learning this lesson from the Koh-i-noor which serves as a rebuke of all silly pride of dress and living, let us see if it does not teach something more of the same nature. Suppose that beautiful diamond could think and talk like a human being; perhaps it might reason thus: "I am one of the most splendid gems of earth. I

am admired by thousands of spectators. I sit upon the brow of the sovereigns of England. Yonder emerald is not half so beautiful or attractive, and I do not care to associate with all that common herd of garnets and crystals that lie around in those cases in yonder museum." And so the Koh-i-noor might set itself up in all its foolish pride as a being superior to all other diamonds and gems, and if a piece of black coal were to lie near it, might move itself away, or ask that the ugly thing be taken out of its presence. But by and by a philosopher might say to it, "Your pride is very silly, for that piece of coal that you despise is your own cousin, and you have the same family name, CARBON, and with the simple exception of color, you are alike. You boast of your family as if it were something to be proud of. But let me tell you that you are descended from the same stock with that piece of coal that you think your inferior. Ages ago the leaves of an old

forest and dead branches of trees fell down into the soft mud, and sunk away and were forgotten until they had formed a great mass of peat, such as the Irishman digs out of the bog to burn: *that was the home of your ancestors.* Then that peat after many generations hardened into coal, such as now the miners dig out for the supply of the world with fuel. A part of that family became, by a great chemical process, crystallized, and so changed its name to diamond. Yet it is nothing more than a part of the great carbon family, and if I were to take you and burn you, you would come to the same thing as the bit of peat, and no one could tell the difference. Or if I were to put you in a piece of iron and heat it very hot, you would disappear, and the iron would simply be turned into steel, just as if I had put into it a piece of charcoal. So when you are disposed to boast of your family just remember who were your ancestors and how common is the stock from which you are descended."

Such a plain lesson as this is useful for all who think themselves entitled to special honor *simply* because their family is rich and distinguished. God hath made of one blood all that dwell upon the face of the earth, and the poorest beggar is thus allied to the noblest prince.

It is something indeed for which one should be grateful that his fathers were wise and virtuous and great and good, but unless he is himself wise and good his pride should be turned into sorrow and shame. Many a young man who is giving himself up to habits of idleness and vice and dissipation, and yet thinks he is entitled to respect and attention because he is descended from a distinguished family, would do well to hear some such lesson as this. And many a silly person who thinks to claim attention by constantly talking of her family had better listen to the philosopher's words to the Koh-i-noor.

TRUE HONOR.

If the piece of coal to which we have just alluded had overheard the philosopher's lesson to the diamond, and should have been disposed to insult the brilliant and throw in its face its humble origin and family name, the diamond, when it had recovered from its momentary fit of pride, might answer: "It is true we are both members of the same family, yet while you are black and unsightly because you keep to yourself all the light you receive, I reflect back every ray that comes to me, and so am admired and loved." Here is the lesson from the Koh-i-noor that shows us in what true honor and glory consist.

It is not what a man has, either of wealth or position or learning, that makes him honorable, but the *uses which he makes of his gifts*. The same light falls upon the charcoal and the diamond, yet one is dark and unsightly and dull, while the other is bright and sparkling and beautiful, and the reason

of this difference is, that in the one all the light is absorbed and sinks away into darkness, while in the other the light is all refracted and broken up into a thousand beautiful rays, and sent forth again to cheer and gladden the eyes of all that look upon it. Now, this is just the difference that we see among men. Thousands have wealth, yet only here and there does one consecrate and use that wealth for the good of others, while the rest spend all they have upon themselves. The one is the diamond and the other only the coal. Many have influence in society from their family or education or their peculiar social qualities, yet how few properly use that influence in doing good! The light which they receive is all absorbed for themselves. The world is no better for their being in it, and they pass away unknown and unlamented. Here and there we meet with one whose position in society is exalted and enviable, who devotes all his energies to the work of doing good. His

example is healthful and safe. His knowledge is used to enlighten others. His wealth is given freely for the relief of suffering and poverty and the spread of the Church. His influence is used to establish virtue and truth and purity. All the light he receives is sent back again to enlighten and cheer the world. This is true piety. It is obedience to the commands of Christ: "Freely ye have received, freely give." It is these little acts of kindness, these deeds of love and mercy, these words of sympathy, these constant efforts to do good, or the lack of them, that transforms one into a diamond or degrades him to an unsightly mass of coal. Selfishness shrouds the whole character in darkness, while true benevolence covers it with beauty. The one perverts all the blessings of heaven or hides them in the earth, while the other scatters them like the light of heaven or the perfume of flowers, so that they spread happiness and joy on every hand. The one turns man

into a fiend, the other makes him like to the blessed Saviour.

“That man may last, but never lives,
Who much receives, but nothing gives,
Whom none can love, whom none can thank—
Creation’s blot, creation’s blank.
But he who marks, from day to day,
In generous acts, his radiant way,
Treads the same path his Saviour trod—
The path to glory and to God.”

HOW THE DIAMOND BECAME BRILLIANT.

When the Koh-i-noor was found amid the mines of Golconda its appearance was doubtless like that of all similar stones. Although it had the form of a crystal, it was probably covered with sand and gravel and a brown crust that made it look rough and unsightly. Only those who were familiar with its nature suspected the hidden beauties it contained. Had an ignorant person picked it up, he might have thrown it aside and never dreamed of its value. But when it came into the hands of an intelligent lapidary, or workman in precious stones, he saw

that it was a diamond. Yet to prove its excellence and to bring out its beauties he subjected it to various processes that might have seemed harsh and almost destructive. First he tried it with a file, to rasp away its outer coating and to test its hardness, and then he covered it with some substance that enabled him to hold it firmly, and so, placing one of its sides upon a surface covered with diamond powder, began to grind it away, and patiently toiled at his task until that side was polished and became clear and brilliant. Then he melted the wax and exposed another side, and subjected that to the same operation. And so he worked on for long and weary days and weeks, until the diamond was fit for use and sent back the light it received in a thousand rays of exquisite beauty and glory. Thus it became a brilliant, and fit to be worn in the diadems of monarchs. This long and tedious process required on the part of the artist both skill and patience. Before he could properly and

safely begin his work it was necessary for him to examine the stone with great care, in order to find out in which direction it should be cut. Had he failed here, his whole work afterward would only have resulted in the destruction of the precious gem. And when his task was fairly begun he was obliged to watch closely the process by which its sides were being worn away, so that every angle might be perfect and its refractive powers be most fully developed. This was the *education* of the diamond. It was fitting it to accomplish most perfectly the work for which it was created, by removing every obstacle that would prevent the light from fully entering it and passing through it in such a way as to be divided into all the colors that compose a sunbeam.

And this is what the mind requires in order most fully to do the work for which God made it. As the diamond does not make light, but simply receives and refracts it, so the mind when most fully educated

does not create truth, but only discovers and reflects it. The wisest philosopher that ever lived has only the ability to find out what already exists. The astronomer does not make laws for the universe, but learns by observation and study what laws God, who built the universe, has made. The chemist does not create any new substance: he only learns to separate or combine what God has already made. Education simply prepares the mind to discover and arrange truths already existing. The teacher does for the child what the artist does to the diamond. He studies his capacities and his character. He tries to find out what he is able to do and how his mind most readily can be affected. He teaches him to read, and so clears away the outer coating that keeps out the light of science. Then he teaches him to think, to study, to investigate, to inquire into the reason of things, to search for truths, to find the relations of one truth to another, to examine facts and to ask what

great principles they reveal, to look at all the great phenomena of the universe, and to see what are the laws by which they are developed, to examine his own mind by turning his thoughts inwardly, and to discover what are its powers and its mode of action, to read history and learn the science of government, to study the word of God and find what he is to believe concerning God and what duties God requires of him. And when he is thus trained to think, he is taught to give utterance to his thoughts in such a way as shall most clearly and forcibly give expression to his ideas, and most powerfully influence the minds and hearts of his fellow-men. This is education.

Nor can the process ever be said to be finished. The mind is always learning and gaining new views of truth, and should always be imparting them. As the diamond when polished is ever receiving and refracting the light, so when the child has left his teachers and become a man his mind should

be ever learning and brightening, and ever imparting its thoughts to others.

The processes by which all these great results are to be accomplished may seem tedious and painful, and yet they are necessary steps in the way of education. The child may often grow weary, and wonder why he is made to study hard tasks from day to day, and wish his school-days were over, but his whole future life depends upon the skill and labor with which this process is carried on. The long months and years that were spent by the artist upon the Koh-i-noor were the necessary antecedents of its present brilliancy and glory. But for this grinding process it might have been laid aside and lost, or have found a place in the cabinet of a philosopher, but it would never have adorned the brow of majesty.

ONE MORE LESSON FROM THE KOH-I-NOOR.

The object not only of this chapter, but of this whole book, has been to aid in polish-

ing the diamond, and thus to fit it for the purposes for which it was created. Every process by which a child is taught the worth of the soul and how to improve and strengthen its faculties is a step in that direction. The brightest gem of earth must perish, but the soul shall never die, and hence is of more value than the whole world. Suppose we were to substitute the word *soul* for diamond in what we have said of the history of the Koh-i-noor, should we not have a beautiful counterpart of the story of a sinner saved by grace?

There is a beautiful hymn which tells this story in few words, and which may very properly begin this lesson :

“What is the thing of greatest price
The whole creation round?
That which was lost in Paradise,
That which in Christ is found?

“The soul of man, Jehovah’s breath,
That keeps two worlds at strife;
Hell moves beneath to work its death,
Heaven stoops to give it life.

“God to redeem it did not spare
His well-beloved Son—
Jesus to save it deigned to bear
The sins of all in one.

“And is this treasure borne below
In earthen vessels frail?
Can none its utmost value know
Till flesh and spirit fail?

“Then let us gather round the cross
That knowledge to obtain,
Not by the soul’s eternal loss,
But everlasting gain.”

Had the Koh-i-noor the power of memory and thought, it would doubtless recall, as it sits in its iron cage amid all the splendid regalia of which it forms a part, or when it is taken out to shine upon its sovereign’s brow amid the magnificence of some state occasion, how it was once a poor unnoticed stone amid the deep mines of Golconda, and then, when discovered and fitted for use, how it was held by fierce and bloody tyrants who were building up their thrones by wars and carnage and oppression. It would re-

call the years in which it was tossed about from one conqueror to another, worn now in the crown of a monarch and then upon the turban of a blood-stained warrior, now shining in the court of a barbarian and then amid the horrors of a battle-field, and wonder that in all these changes it was not broken or lost! Then it would think of the hour when it was by a strange but welcome vicissitude of Providence brought into the possession of a wise and virtuous sovereign, made a spectacle for wondering multitudes, subjected to a process which, though for the time painful, removed all its defects, let in upon it the light of heaven and made it to shine with all its beauty and brightness. And if sometimes disposed to wonder why it should be placed in a cage of iron, yet it would rejoice to think of the honor for which it was designed, and of the glory of that day when it would be taken out to shine upon the crown of the sovereign majesty of a great kingdom.

Is not this, in part at least, the history of a sinner saved by grace? There was a time when his soul was in the hands of its enemies. Tossed about by contending lusts and passions, defaced and marred by sin, its glory was dimmed and its beauty despoiled. Satan was his master, and held him in his cruel bondage. Fierce and malignant enemies strove for the supremacy over him. The world, the flesh and the devil held him by turns, and all combined to degrade and defile and destroy him. His own heart was the battle-ground where his soul was the prize at stake, and each new victor into whose hands he fell only made him more wretched and degraded. A strong man armed seemed to hold his palace and his goods in peace.

Yet there came a time when a voice was heard speaking "deliverance to the captive and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound." It was the voice of Jesus, who had died to save him, and who now,

having triumphed over death and hell and spoiled principalities and powers, had appeared to rescue him by his grace, and to cause him at length to shine as the stars for ever and ever. By virtue of a covenant which could never be broken, he was transferred from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God, and thus made a citizen of heaven. Yet a great work was yet to be accomplished ere he could be meet for that glorious inheritance. All the dross and corruption of his nature was to be removed, and he to be polished and purified, and fitted thus for the service of God here and his presence for ever.

And just as the diamond is cut and ground and shaped until it is fitted to refract the light most perfectly, so was the soul of the saved sinner subjected to processes which, though often painful, yet served to develop its graces and to reflect most the image and glory of its Saviour. The Holy Spirit was given to accomplish this great

work. His power renewed the nature, changed the heart and subdued the soul to Christ. And as he began the work, so he will carry it forward until the process shall be complete. He is engaged in educating the soul for its work and its reward. The word of God, the ordinances of the sanctuary and all the means of grace are agents which he is using to polish and refine the soul.

Sometimes the process is wearisome, and sometimes painful. Now the knife has to be used to cut away some excrescence that mars the beauty of the soul, and then the wheel and the stone are tried that wear away what seems like a part of the soul itself, yet which is only some of the old dross remaining that must needs all be purged away. This is the discipline of life. It comes in all the round of duties and cares and trials and sorrows and labors and joys and pains that make up the history of the Christian. Sometimes he may wonder at

the blow that seems aimed at his dearest hopes, sometimes he may shrink from the pressure to which he is subjected, or the furnace-heat through which he is called to pass, or the crosses he must endure. But all is the work of the great artist, who is fitting him to shine at last in the crown of Jesus, who loved him and gave himself for him.

As the diamond is ground and polished until its refraction of the light is most perfect, so the Christian is wrought upon until he is made to receive and reflect the image of his divine Redeemer. Thus he is fitted for service and duty here, and for glory hereafter. And the more he has of the grace and love of Christ in his soul, the more perfect and beautiful is his character. He shines only by a borrowed light, and that light is from above. What is seen in him that is pure and lovely is only the reflection of the glory that is in the face of Jesus. The nearer he lives to Christ, the more fully and clearly does he show

forth his Spirit and make known his grace. And when He who has loved him and redeemed him from sin and death is ready to receive him to himself, he permits the "earthly tabernacle to be dissolved," while the soul is transferred to the court of heaven, there to shine for ever in his presence, "where is fullness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore."



The House we Live in.

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*Growth. Decay and reproduction. Symmetry and beauty.
Injury and repair. Appetite and instinct. Telegraphic des-
patches. Know thyself. Take care of your health. The living
temple. The demolition and reconstruction of the house we live in.*

VIII.

THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN.

THE strong cage in the regalia-room of the Tower of London is the temporary home of the Koh-i-noor, where it is placed to prevent its being injured or lost. It is the house which it occupies until it is taken out to be set amid the crown jewels of the sovereign. Were one bar after another to be removed and replaced by others of the same kind, the diamond would be unchanged, and were all to be taken away, the precious gem would be still as beautiful as ever. So the body is the temporary home of the soul, the house it lives in until death comes to take away the earthly tabernacle.

But there is this difference between the cage of the diamond and the body—that

while the one is a helpless and inanimate thing made up of pieces of iron and brass, and having no connection with the gem that it contains, the other is a living and beautiful mechanism built with infinite skill by God's own hand, capable of performing a thousand functions, connected mysteriously but intimately with the soul itself, obeying all its directions and acting as its servant and friend as well as being its home. Hence, while no one who passes through the Tower thinks of or cares for the cage that contains the Koh-i-noor, the body is worthy our study and our attention, and shows us the wisdom and power and goodness of its Creator. Thousands of wise men have made it the subject of their profoundest investigations, and have written upon it and described its various parts and properties, and have revealed the laws by which it is governed.

Every child ought to know something of the house he lives in, and how to keep it in order and in healthful action. There is

nothing in all the world so curious and wonderful as this. It has, like every building, its solid framework, which we call the bones, and which keep it erect and firm. It has its beautiful covering of muscle and skin, within which are a thousand marvelous things that are necessary to the continuance of health and life. It has its beautiful windows out of which the soul looks, and its wonderful gateways through which the soul hears and smells and tastes and feels and utters its thoughts. It has its beautiful system of pipes, the arteries and veins, that convey the life-blood to every part of the body, and its mysterious telegraphic wires, called nerves, which communicate intelligence to and from the soul to every muscle and fibre.

Now, although I do not propose to write a description of all this, yet I wish to call the attention of my young readers to a few curious things that shall lead them to study for themselves, that they may find out in

their own bodies some of the wonderful works of God.

GROWTH.

If it were thought desirable to have a larger casket or cage for the Koh-i-noor, the old one would have to be thrown aside and a new one built. When a man wishes to enlarge his house, he must do so by making an addition that wholly changes its original shape. He may add a story or a wing, but any one can see how and where the alteration is made. But the body passes through all the changes from infancy to manhood so imperceptibly that no one can tell how the process is carried on. When a child is born it is helpless and weak. It has all the parts of a full-grown man, but they are small. Its hands and feet and eyes and head and limbs are diminutive. It cannot walk or speak or help itself.

As months and years pass away all the parts of its body enlarge and strengthen

until they reach the condition of manhood. Yet those who have watched and tended it most carefully have never seen it grow and cannot tell how the process went on. The food which it has received has been taken up and changed into blood and muscle and nerves and bone, and so the body has been nourished and strengthened and enlarged. Night and day this wonderful phenomenon of growth has been going on, until the child has become a man and the house which the soul inhabits has reached its full stature. Many of the processes which have been concerned in this work have been carried on without any thought or will of the person. We walk and eat and move our bodies when we will to do so, but the heart beats and sends the blood through the whole system, and the lungs heave and take in and send forth the air, and the stomach receives and digests the food we eat, without any effort of our own. All this goes on when we sleep as well as when we are awake. It is one

of the great mysteries of the house we live in.

DECAY AND REPRODUCTION.

If one of the bars of the diamond's cage were to be broken, it would have to be taken out and replaced by another. Or if one of the steel rods of a great engine were to become worn out and useless, the motions of the machine would have to be suspended until the part that had become impaired could be removed and another put in its place. Now, this same work of repair is going on in the body without a moment's pause. When a muscle moves obedient to the will, or the brain is engaged actively in the service of the soul, some fibre dies or becomes useless, and its place must be filled by some other fibre. Thus a constant change is taking place in the body, and yet there is no derangement of any of its parts and no suspension of any of its motions. Just think how often you have your hair cut or

how frequently you pare your nails! Yet you can see no change in one or the other. What is wasted is supplied again by those mysterious processes which are concerned in the growth and life of the body. It is estimated that every part of our system is changed once in seven years. The matter that composed our bodies seven years ago, that entered into our bones and muscles and arteries and organs, has all passed away, and yet we are the same persons and have the same bodies. The substances that then composed the houses we live in have all died and disappeared, and yet we live and breathe and think and act as before.

“ Each moment, lo, we die and are reborn,
The old becomes cadaverous and outworn ;
Beyond the boundary of our very breath
Wide yawns the open sepulchre of death ;
Parts of our living selves give up the ghost,
Corrupt, corrupting, use and function lost ;
Benignant nature with victorious force
Effects deliverance from the loathed corpse
And body of this death ; in ceaseless flow
Funeral processions of dead atoms go,

Thronging life's ways and outward opening gates,
All unattended where no mourner waits."

DR. COLE'S *Microcosm*.

Here is another wonder which no one can fully describe or explain. The chords in this harp of a thousand strings are being continually replaced, yet the instrument is never unstrung, and keeps up its healthful music. The house is ever undergoing repairs, yet the sound of a hammer is never heard, and none can tell how or where the work is done.

SYMMETRY AND BEAUTY.

Most of my young readers have either seen a skeleton or the picture of one. It is not a very pleasant or beautiful sight, although when one gets used to it and begins to examine all its parts, and sees how admirably they are adjusted and how wonderfully they are adapted to the work for which they were designed, he finds new occasion to admire the wisdom of God who made it.

Were you to go into a dissecting-room where physicians and students are engaged in the study of the human body, you would not care to remain long, and might even be sick and faint at the ghastly sight. Yet we all have bodies that would have just this appearance had not our heavenly Father clothed them with skin and covered up all that looks so horrible with a substance that makes the whole body symmetrical and beautiful. As thus completed, there is no machine so wonderful, no object so admirable, as the human frame. Its parts are nicely and perfectly adjusted, the one to the other and each to all. Every organ performs its appropriate function with grace and ease and without any interference with or injury to any other organ. All moves on in harmony, and the whole wonderful framework awakens in the beholder only sensations of pleasure. Thus the casket is made worthy the jewel that it contains, and the house we live in bears the marks of the

same divine Architect that created the soul, and who hath made everything beautiful in its time.

It was such a form that angels assumed when in the infancy of the world it was needful that messengers should come from heaven to earth to make known God's will to man. And when the Son of God came to earth to accomplish the work of redemption, he assumed the form of man and dwelt in such a tabernacle as we inhabit, and so gave to the body the glory of being the dwelling-place of the King of kings. Now that he sits upon his heavenly throne, he still appears in the same body that ascended upward in the sight of the wondering disciples as they stood upon the Mount of Olives when he was parted from them.

INJURY AND REPAIR.

The most perfect machine is liable to accident, and thus to a temporary if not an entire interruption of its motions. If a

spring is broken in a watch, it must be taken out and mended, or another put in its place, and all this while the watch is useless. If the connecting-rod of an engine is bent, even though it be propelling a ship at sea, everything must stop until the damage is repaired. Now, the human body is constantly exposed to danger, and rarely escapes long without some injury. If every function had to cease when repairs were needed, death would soon follow. Hence, God hath so wonderfully formed us that whenever any part is deranged or injured some other part does its work until it is repaired. If a hand is bruised or an arm broken, the other limb is ready to do double duty. If an artery or vein is sundered, the blood finds its way through the system by some other route, and so keeps up a healthful circulation.

But there is something more wonderful than all this in the manner of repairing the body. When a watch is broken it must be

taken to the jeweler to be mended. When the shaft of an engine gives way it must be forged out anew at the hands of the machinist. When the ceiling of a room falls it must be replaced by the plasterer. But God has made this wondrous "house we live in" so curiously that it does its own repairs. When you cut your finger all that you have to do is to bind it up, so as to keep it from farther injury, and then the process of healing goes on. When a bone is broken, Nature summons her workman at once to unite the pieces together, and all goes on silently and healthfully, while the heart and lungs and stomach keep on with their own work as if nothing had happened.

Sometimes these processes of repair are very wonderful. I once was called to visit a young parishioner who by a terrible accident in a mill where she was at work had her scalp torn away. It was a sad and ghastly wound, and she was for many months a great sufferer. Yet hardly had

the physician arrived before Nature began its work of healing. In a few days veins and arteries had shot upward and covered the skull with a beautiful and delicate network of blood-vessels so fine that no artist's pencil could equal them in its tracery, and then in time the wound closed and the skin was drawn up from the forehead and sides of the head to complete the work of repair and to restore what had been taken away.

Thus, too, when the system is disordered and diseased, does Nature carry on the work of restoring it to health. The medicine which is given simply assists it in its work. It does not of itself cure. Sometimes there is lacking in the system some of the materials by which the operations of the body are carried on. When this is supplied, Nature takes it and appropriates it to its special work, and then its functions resume their healthful action. What a wonderful mechanism is this that thus repairs itself! What a mysterious instrument is this that

thus retunes itself! And how infinitely wise and benevolent is He who made these bodies with such amazing facilities for repairing the wastes of accident or disease, so that all the while Nature should keep up its varied operations and every organ continue its needful action!

APPETITE AND INSTINCT.

The little workmen within the house we call the body are constantly engaged in the work of repairing and enlarging and strengthening it. But they can no more do this without materials than the mason can build a wall without brick and mortar. Some of them want air, and so the lungs are constantly busy in supplying them with it. Others want material for making blood, others for repairing the muscles and the nerves and tissues, and hence they must be fed with necessary aliment.

But if this matter of eating and drinking and breathing were left to the reason to de-

cide when it should be attended to, serious evils might result from it, and the processes of Nature might be often suspended for want of materials with which to carry them on. Hence we breathe without thinking about it, and the lungs keep up their work night and day without any act of the mind deciding when they must send in their supplies of air. When materials are needed for the repair of the muscles and blood and tissues a sense of uneasiness is felt which we call hunger or thirst, and then we know that food and water are wanted. These demands of our nature are called appetites, and they are wise provisions made by our heavenly Father for preventing the waste and decay of our bodies by any neglect to supply them with what is needful for their support.

And then, too, it is often necessary that danger to the body should be averted when the mind might possibly be unaware of it, or might not be able to act with sufficient promptness to avert the evil. When a par-

ticle of dust or a chip of stone approaches the eye the lid shuts without our thinking that it ought to be done, and so prevents the mischief which might follow if it had to wait the decision of the reason. When the body totters and is likely to fall the hands are thrust out to take hold of something that is firm, so as to prevent the impending danger. So, too, the arm is raised to ward off a threatened blow. And in all this we do not stop to think or reason, but act by an impulse which is called instinct.

In very young children, and in brute animals, this instinct takes the place of reason. It is not dependent either upon instruction or experience, but acts in such a way as, though untaught and undirected, to assist in the support or preservation of life. This is one of the wonders of the house we live in that should lead us to adore the wisdom and goodness of Him who has made such provisions for keeping in order and preserving from injury these bodies which, though frail

and dying, are yet the abodes of a soul that must live for ever.

TELEGRAPHIC DESPACHES.

I suppose my young readers have suffered more or less pain of various kinds, and perhaps have often asked why a wise and benevolent Being should have made the body capable of experiencing such an amount of suffering as almost every one is made to endure. Now, in answer to this it might be said that pain is the penalty which one has to pay for violating any of the laws which regulate the body. If one eats too much or eats what disagrees with the stomach, he has the headache or the colic. If he checks perspiration too suddenly, and so stops up the pores that are performing a very important part of the process of life, he takes cold and has a fever. If he drinks anything that contains an alcoholic poison, his brain is affected, and he suffers as the result of it. And so in a thousand ways is man punished

for violating the laws of his being just as surely as the criminal is made to suffer for breaking the laws of the State.

And yet pain is also a wise provision of Nature for warning the reason of injuries that are being done to the body, and that, if unchecked, may work out severe if not fatal results. If the hand is burned, the muscles and cords may be so destroyed as never to be able again to do their proper work. If a grain of sand or a chip of stone were to get into the eye, it might so wear away the delicate coverings of that organ as to make it totally blind. If improper food were frequently and steadily to be put into the stomach, it might so interrupt all its functions as to result in death.

Now, suppose there was no such thing as pain, how could reason know when the body was in danger and when it was necessary to guard against it? If there were no suffering resulting from the eating of improper and poisonous food, we might go on supply-

ing our system with it until all the organs that nourish us became deranged and powerless. If fire did not pain as well as burn, we might never know of its ravages until the foot or the hand were destroyed. If a mote in the eye did not cause intense anguish, we might allow it to remain there until blindness ensued. Pain, then, is a kind and wise provision which our heavenly Father has made to *warn us of danger*.

To accomplish this end, God has arranged a system of telegraphic wires all over the body, along which messages are sent whenever any part is threatened with injury. These are called NERVES, and many of them are so fine and delicate as hardly to be seen with the naked eye. They run in every direction and terminate in the brain, which seems to be the office where all despatches are received and sent. When, therefore, you stand with your back to a warm stove, and accidentally touch it with your hand, a telegram goes at once to the brain that the

hand is in danger of being burned. You call the sensation pain, but it is a message which the mind receives, and it promptly sends back orders for the muscles to draw the hand away from the fire. When you feel an unpleasant sensation in a crowded house or a close room, it is a message from the lungs that they are in need of pure air, and unless attention is promptly paid to it suffering and sickness will be the result. When you have pains in the head or stomach it is very likely a telegraphic despatch to the brain that you are eating too much or too fast, or are taking into your system what will injure it and produce disease or death. If you are undergoing so much suffering that you have to call a physician, he asks you questions and makes an examination, in order that he may know what is the nature of those communications that the nerves are conveying to the brain, and thus be able to answer the demand which the body is making for help or relief.

Pain, then, so far from being an evidence that our heavenly Father is unkind, is often a wise and merciful provision which he has made for the prevention of suffering and for the preservation of life. And the nerves, instead of being designed to be sources of torture, are a vast telegraphic system running to every part of the body, ever watchful and active, and flashing to the mind every approach of danger and every advent of joy and pleasure and happiness and health, and carrying back to the whole system the commands of reason, to which prompt obedience must be rendered.

KNOW THYSELF.

Among the lessons which we may learn from what I have said concerning the "house we live in," surely one of the first is that which stands above this sentence. Almost the last thing that a child or a man studies is himself. Yet what other science is so important as this, or what so deeply

interesting and profitable? The body is a little world of itself, with ten thousand curious and wonderful things, and with fixed and definite laws that all ought to understand. It is the most perfect piece of mechanism ever made. It is the most beautiful house ever built, and its occupant not only uses it to live in, but has it for his servant to do his bidding, and is so mysteriously connected with it that none can tell where he dwells or how he makes his wishes known. Every one should therefore seek to know something of his own body, and of its wonderful powers and capacities, and of the laws that regulate it. I cannot better say what I wish to on this subject than by quoting the words of the famous and learned ARBUTHNOT:

“What am I? how produced? for what end?
Whence drew I being? to what period tend?
Am I the abandoned orphan of blind Chance,
Dropped by wild atoms in disordered dance?
Or from an endless chain of causes wrought,
And of unthinking substance born with thought?”

By motion which begins without a cause
Supremely wise without design or laws?
Am I but what I seem, mere flesh and blood?
A branching channel with a mazy flood?
The purple stream that through my vessels glides
Dull and unconscious flows, like common tides;
The pipes through which the circling juices stray
Are not the thinking I, no more than they:
This frame compacted with transcendent skill
Of moving joints obedient to my will,
Nursed from the fruitful glebe, like yonder tree,
Waxes and wastes: I call it mine, not me.
New matter still the mould'ring mass sustains;
The mansion changed, the tenant still remains;
And from the fleeting stream, repaired by food,
Distinct as is the swimmer from the flood.
What am I then? son of a noble birth,
By parent's right I own, as mother, Earth;
But claim superior image by my sire,
Who warmed the unthinking clod with heavenly fire."

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH.

An instrument of music needs to be kept in tune in order to give pleasant and harmonious sounds. If it be neglected and its chords allowed to be unstrung, it makes only painful discords. An engineer is obliged to watch every part of the machine that is

under his care, and see that no pin or crank or wheel is displaced or broken. So is it with the body. It is sometimes called

"A harp of thousand strings
That dies if one be gone."

It needs constant care and attention lest by becoming out of tune its music be discordant. God has made it a perfect machine designed to accomplish all the functions of life, and it needs to be constantly watched and cared for lest its various and complicated mechanism become disordered and impaired. Every one, therefore, should be familiar with the laws of his being, and see that none of them are violated. Good health is a blessing that can be enjoyed only by a strict attention to all the wants of the body.

The limbs and muscles need to be strengthened by exercise. The lungs require a constant supply of pure air. The system demands a regular and proper amount of nourishing food. The pores of the body must be kept open by frequent attention to cleanli-

ness, and require to be guarded against any sudden exposure to cold. The nervous system must be kept from any undue and unnecessary excitement. Hence you should be temperate in your food and drink, moderate in all your enjoyments, and should avoid all stimulating and intoxicating drinks and all sinful indulgence of the appetites and passions.

The body deserves your constant attention. Though it is but the casket of the precious jewel that we call the soul, God has adorned it with wondrous beauty and made it to perform, when in healthful action, a most important work as the friend and servant of the spirit that makes it its home.

Seek, then, to keep the body in health by observing all the laws that govern it, and by abstaining from every act that may disturb its harmony or weaken its power.

Many a man has shattered and destroyed a noble constitution by a life of luxury and intemperance, while others who are natu-

rally feeble have lived long and happily by a careful and strict attention to the laws of health and obedience to the behests of temperance and virtue. Many a man in a calm and serene old age, which has followed a well-regulated life, could make the words his own which the great poet of nature has put into the mouth of one of his heroes :

“Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty,
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood ;
Nor did I with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility.
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frostly but kindly.”

THE LIVING TEMPLE.

I cannot pass unnoticed, amid these lessons concerning the “house we live in,” one fact which makes the body of the Christian especially glorious—that it is not only the home of the soul, but the temple of the Holy Ghost.

The Bible tell us that although God is so great that the heavens cannot contain him,

yet he dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. Paul, when cautioning his brethren against sin, warns them "not to defile the temple of God." Here is a most wonderful truth revealed to us which invests the body with peculiar dignity and glory. When the sinner has been led by divine grace to accept of the offers of mercy, not only is his soul rescued from its enemies and destined to be a jewel in the Saviour's crown, but its earthly tabernacle becomes the dwelling-place of Jehovah. Christ has gone in there to be his guest and the Spirit has taken up his abode within him and made his body a living temple. With what care, then, should we guard it from all defilement! With what jealousy should we watch every thought and passion and appetite lest it should mar the house that God has made his home! There he dwells and is worshiped. Not alone in the magnificent temples that man erects and consecrates to religious services is the Lord present, but in

the bodies of his people he has a shrine and an altar on which daily sacrifices of prayer and praise are offered.

Oh what an honor is this that God confers upon them! How it exalts and ennobles them even though they are frail and dying! And how heartily and entirely should they be consecrated to him! How should every power and faculty be devoted to his service! Life and health and all our blessings are his gift, and they should lead us to hear and obey the word of the apostle: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." If you have never yet received and welcomed Christ to your hearts, let the facts I have presented lead you to listen to His voice who says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

THE DEMOLITION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE
HOUSE WE LIVE IN.

In the lower part of New York there once stood a venerable church which for many years had been the house of worship of the first Presbyterian congregation of that city. When it was decided to build elsewhere that building was disposed of to a number of persons who were desirous of erecting a suitable house of worship in another place. So its stones were all numbered, and then taken down and carried over the river and there relaid, stone by stone and timber by timber, until the old church reappeared as it once stood in the street where it was first built. This was a very ingenious and remarkable piece of work. But there is something more wonderful than all this to take place with these living temples of God. By and by death will come and take them down, and the earthly house of this tabernacle will be dissolved. Not a stone or beam will be left. Every part will moulder

back to dust; nothing that looks like the body we now inhabit will remain. The jewel will shine upon the Saviour's crown, but the cage in which it was once placed will have disappeared. The soul will live and flourish, but the house it lived in will have become mingled with common dust.

Ages will pass away, and then this temple will rise again upon the other side of the dark river, and these bodies will be brought up from the long sleep of death by the mighty power of Him who is the "Resurrection and the Life." This sublime mystery is revealed to us in the gospel, wherein alone life and immortality are brought to light. Christ will watch over even the dust of his mansion, and will raise it up at the last day, and in the glorious city of our God shall his people worship him for ever amid the splendors of that temple whose light is the Lamb.

Thus it is that he robs death of its sting and the grave of its victory.

I cannot close these thoughts upon the house we live in more appropriately than by using the words of a Christian physician and poet from whose work I have already quoted :

“Death spreads no more a black and wrathful cloud,
The smiling infinite of heaven to shroud ;
A harmless mist, instead, divinely bright
With dewy splendors of the morning light,
That scarcely serves the eternal world to hide,
Where loved ones gone before in bliss abide.

“What though your body moulders 'neath the sod?
Its untouched life is hid with Christ in God ;
I heard a voice proclaiming from the skies :
'The dead shall live, with my dead body rise.'
Awake and sing, O ye that dwell in dust !
Because He lives who is your life, ye must ;
His quickening Spirit shall go forth again,
His power o'ershadow and his love impregn.
The slumbering germs dispersed through land and sea,
The buried ovules of identity,
Shall suddenly unfold, and all the earth
Be as a woman in the pangs of birth,
The body born not mortal, like that sown,
But kindred and resemblant to Christ's own ;
Admiring angels shall the sight applaud,
Blazing with all the majesty of God.”

NOTE.—Shortly after I had finished the chapter in this work on “The Commandment with Promise,” I was requested at the close of one of my Sabbath services to unite a couple in marriage. After the ceremony had been duly performed, and the young gentleman and his beautiful bride had gone with me to my study to receive the usual marriage certificate, I was agreeably surprised to find that the husband had, when a boy, been a member of my Sabbath-school, and, though many years had passed away since we had met, had so kindly remembered me as to come down from the city where he lived that I might perform for him the marriage ceremony. He had been prosperous in his business, and, though a young man, had already accumulated a valuable property, and was still engaged in business in the city, with good prospects of success and happiness and honor. It was the *honest boy who had returned to his teacher the gold pencil which he had found after the pic-nic*, and who, when asked why he did not keep it, had said, “*How could I? It did not belong to me!*”

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THE END.