

OUR
CHILDREN'S PULPIT

AND

Talk with the Little Folks.

Editor:

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OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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The Service.

HYMN.

JESUS, where'er thy people meet,
There they behold Thy mercy-seat ;
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is holy ground.

Shepherd of Israel, now appear,
Renew Thy former mercies here ;
Here to our waiting hearts proclaim
The glory of Thy saving name.

Here may we prove the power of prayer
To strengthen faith and sweeten care ;
Here teach our faint desire to rise,
And bring all heaven before our eyes.

Lord, we are few, but Thou art near ;
Nor short Thine arm, nor deaf Thine ear ;
O rend the heavens, come quickly down,
And make each waiting heart Thine own.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 1 Kings xviii., 41-46 ; Luke ix., 28-36.

PRAYER.

LORD God, Thou hast told us to pray. Thou hast promised to hear prayer. We believe Thy word. We come to pray to Thee. Lord, teach us to pray, for we need to be taught. Give us Thy good Spirit to help us, to stir up right desires, and move us to send them up to Thee in faith. Lord, bless to us this little home service ; bless it to as many as may be using it, as we are doing to-day. Bless the minister who has prepared it for us ; and who tells us that, with Thy help and blessing, he means to prepare more services of the same kind. Help him, O Lord, and prosper his aim. May we find

to-day and at other times that Thou art pleased to speak to us by him. Now are we all here present before Thee, to hear what Thou mayest say to us.

O Gracious God, bless our beloved country. Save our dear Queen and all the royal family. Bless all ranks of the people, "both low and high, rich and poor, together." Bless all the churches of Jesus Christ in the land, and all throughout the world. Hasten the day when there shall be in all homes, as in ours, the Bible and the throne of grace.

Hear us, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

THE MOUNTAIN PRAYER-MEETING.

BEFORE I tell you where to find my text, let me say that I am going to ask you to visit a prayer-meeting with me. We have just been having one ourselves, but you will not object to attend this one also. It is a meeting of a somewhat singular kind, and before we go to it, I will tell you some of the special things that belong to it. First, it is a meeting that was long ago dismissed. Ah! then, you say how can we go to visit it? I answer, by the strange power of mind which God has given us, enabling us to bring up the past, and bring the distant near. There is an account of this meeting which I will presently show you; and, as we read it, we can place the whole scene before our eyes of thought. So, though long past, and though it was held, too, in a far-off land, we can go to it, and that while we are sitting still all the time. Secondly, the prayer-meeting was in the open air. People may pray in the open air. Many people have done so. The Bible tells us of several who prayed under the open sky. Elijah did so, as we learn from our first lesson, up on Mount Carmel. Jesus did so, also, as we read in our second reading, and in other places of the Gospels. It is curious that a great many of the prayers we are told of in Scripture were offered in the open air. Does there not seem something nice and fit in this? For though no roof can keep prayers from going up to heaven, and though, in-

deed, we ought not to think of God as just being *high up there*, and not also *round and near us here*, yet the great heaven may help us to think of that which is not seen. I have known children that prayed in the open air,—boys and girls in the country that would go away by themselves and call on God under some tree or hedge-row, and beside rocks, and in little nooks of quiet dells. There are spots people don't like to pass again, because they bring sin to mind. They seem to hear a voice saying,—You once told a lie here, or, you once spoke a profane word here, or struck an unkind blow. But surely it would be pleasant to pass any place that would seem to say to us,—Here you kneeled once and prayed. There are a great many seeds of different kinds sown in this earth of ours—seeds, good and bad—sown by birds and winds and men. There are a great many seeds of prayer too, and they go to bring fine crops. Carmel was a beautiful mountain, it had spreading, clustered vines and blooming olives. But there never grew on it a plant so fair and wonderful as Elijah's prayer, which, by being told of in the Bible, has spread out branches of instruction that have filled all lands.—But I have a third thing to say about the prayer-meeting we are going to visit. There were only three persons present at it. But the power of a prayer-meeting does not depend on numbers alone, though here many are better no doubt than

few. The grandest prayer-meeting of our days, as to its results and its continuance, was begun by one man, who prayed by himself for the first half of the hour fixed for it, and was at the end of that time joined by another. You remember, too, how Jesus said when He was on earth, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Another thing still I may say about the meeting I am speaking of. It was attended by men only. Prayer-meetings are often now-a-days attended mostly by women. In some countries religion is thought to be a thing good only for women and children. Well, it is good for them, but not for them alone. The strongest men are stronger for being men of prayer. The best works done on earth have been done by praying men.—Yet, again, I have to say, it was a very long meeting which I ask you to visit. It lasted a whole day. It stopped only when the sun set. Now, that as a rule, would be quite out of place. But times come when it is right. See how they prayed in Nineveh after Jonah's preaching. See how David prayed when his little child was ill. Remember how Jesus prayed on the mountain. I like to think, too, that to God prayer never stops. All through the day, aye, and all through the night, too, the voice of prayer, from some place or other, goes up to God. I will tell you still another thing about this meeting we are going to see. I do not know that there was a word spoken at it.

It might be all prayer by gesture. There was, at least, such silent prayer all through the time. You can quite understand how eyes and hands as well as lips and voice can pray. Dumb beasts pray by looks and gestures. Outstretched arms pray. You have seen little pictures and statuettes of the child Samuel, with bent knees and folded hands, and you knew, by looking at him, that he was praying. Now the meeting I am speaking of was conducted in this way. It was prayer by hands. There are among some idolators praying-machines, but this was real prayer. You see there are other ways of saying besides speaking. Faces have often lied as well as tongues. Another thing about our prayer-meeting is this: It was held during the time of a great battle. Now many a prayer has gone up from a battle-field. Armies have knelt to pray before they fought. In the battle we are speaking of there were great warriors engaged; brave hearts were there, and strong arms. But the curious thing is this, that the battle-edge went to and fro, back and forward, just as prayer that day was strong or weak. Ah, young friends, the mightiest things done in this world are often done out of sight. Perhaps I should say they always are. There has been standing forth to-day many a great preacher speaking to thousands. But there have been in sick-rooms, and other solitudes pleaders with God, who have been moving the Hand that touches millions of hearts. Only God can tell where the true power has lain. There is yet one

thing more which brings me right to my text. The prayer-meeting was held on a mountain. I dare say you could now tell me where we read about it. It is in Exodus xvii., 10—13. We will take the 12th verse as our text :—

“But Moses’ hands *were* heavy ; and they took a stone, and put *it* under him, and he sat thereon : and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side ; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.”

You see, now, how all I have said about this prayer-meeting is true about the little company on the hill-top. The meeting was held long ago, and far away—in the open air—attended by no more than three persons, and these three men. It continued all day long. It was silent, so far as we know, all the while it was held. There was a battle going on down in the valley while the meeting was on the hill-top. Take it in a rhymed shape :—

Held long ago, and far away,

Under the open sky,

Three persons present—men were they,—

Silent, continued all the day,

Upon the hill-top high.

While down in the plain that stretched below
The billows of battle surged to and fro.

But let us now ask what lessons this scene teaches. I think it gives us an encouraging and instructive example of believing, united, persevering, prevailing prayer.

(I.) Believing prayer.

The prayer in this case was the lifting up of the rod of God—the staff that Moses had used before in doing wonders. It did not speak to the ear of man ; but it had a voice to God. Like a lightning-rod under a thunder cloud

it said, I am waiting for Thy power to come down. If it could have spoken, here is what it might have said :—

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord : awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. *Art* thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon ?”

“*Art* thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep : that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over ?”

The rod raised by Moses’ hand spoke to the soldiers fighting in the plain also. You know how common it is for men to use banners, pennons, standards, to lead and cheer them. You recollect how Moses lifted up the brazen serpent on a pole, that people who were bitten might look and live. You have seen a picture, I dare say, of the youth in the poem, climbing the mountain, bearing “a banner with this strange device, Excelsior.” The other day people were wondering at an American carrying the flag of his country all through England. Well, all these were lifted up to speak—to say, Look. So the rod of Moses said to Joshua and his men, Look ! there is help in God. Think what He has done for you already. Hope and trust.

Little children, the prayer of faith is a great thing. Faith is sure when it prays that God is close by, is hearing, is able, willing, ready to help. It is a great thing to be thus sure. Yet it is easier for little children often than great philosophers. A young disciple of Christ, when on her death-bed, was heard murmuring sweetly to herself, “He has said it ; He has said it.” So faith speaks.

Here is, secondly, united prayer.

The Apostle James says "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" is very strong. What will the prayers of many be? It is with this as with other powers. You have seen a number of men hauling a rope; see, every one has his hand on it, and when they all pull together, what a force they have. A stone too big for one of you to move, two could easily lift from its place. Prayer together does not quite act like that, but it is something like it.

But see, in our prayer-meeting there was this special thing. There was a union of the weaker helping the strong. Moses was God's great minister. He held the rod he had often held before. But great as he was, he was now weary. But here are two to help him. Well, one of them was soon to show how weak he was, and sin a great sin. The other we know very little about. Yet these two helped Moses. So little children can help people that have great work to do—ministers, teachers, parents, kings.

I do not know why Moses' hands were weary. If it were only a question of his hands, indeed, I think I could. Try you and hold up even a light staff for a long time, and you will soon find how hard it is. But the faith of Moses must have failed, as well as his strength. Perhaps he thought this is the first battle the people have fought, how can they help being beaten? But with God's rod in his hand he should not have thought that. See, we are all so weak, every new trial daunts us. Then Aaron and Hur helped Moses' hands; I think they helped his faith too.

Again, we have, thirdly, persevering prayer.

The three kept holding up the rod of God till the sun was setting. They would not stop praying till the battle was won. There is a grand lesson for us. We must pray on—pray always—pray without giving up, till we gain what we seek, and our work is done. We must pray on till the sun of life is set, and its battle shall be over.

We are apt to get weary in praying when the thing we ask is not given at once. But Christ taught us to go continually to God, so that even if He did not care to hear us, we might weary Him with our cry. In prayer, as in work, we should "try, try again," till God bid us stop. See how often Elijah had to send his servant for an answer to the prayer for rain, which God had promised to hear. Up goes the messenger a first time,—no appearance of cloud; a second—none yet; a third—no appearance still; a fourth—all the same; a fifth—clear heavens as before; a sixth—nothing; go a seventh—ah! now there is the answer—a little cloud, and soon blackened skies and rushing sound of waters. Will seven times praying be perseverance enough? Nay, we may say as Jesus did in another case: "Not till seven times, but till seventy times seven," in many things.

Lastly, see here prevailing prayer.

How does it prevail? Where does its great strength lie? In its own worth? Is it fine, beautiful prayers that are strong? The scene on the mountain will tell us. What worth

was there in a staff held up in the air? None, of course; all the force was in the faith and hope that ran up the rod, as it were, to God. Prayer is strong, simply because God has promised to hear it, and will not break His word.

The scene teaches you also that you must do as well as pray. You must expect God's answer in doing God's will. You must look for it in God's way, and His way is through you as well as to you. He could rain wheat down into a farmer's yard, as he once rained manna; but he sets the farmer to plough and sow, and blesses the springing of the earth. Joshua and Israel must fight, although Moses must pray to win the battle.

Coming down from the mountain the conquerors of the rod met the conquerors of the sword, and agreed to set up a monument to the True Conqueror. It was a curious monument. It was not an obelisk. It was not a heap of stones. It was an altar. But that was right. For whether we pray or fight, we must lean on Jesus, the Lamb of God. If we pray, we do it in Jesus' name. If we war and win we do it by the blood of the Lamb. Here is all we have said, in a verse—

“Pray in faith,
Pray in union,
Pray till death;
Heaven's communion
Will eternal witness be,
Prayer gave pains the victory.”

BIBLE STORY.

MY story to-day will be also about a prayer-meeting. It is a very pretty story; if I can manage to tell it rightly, you will like it. I will try.

There was once a bad king that did not love good men. He liked people that flattered him, and let him have his own way, without saying anything against it. He lived in the days when the apostles of Jesus were preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem, where the king was, and the bad man was very angry with them. The good apostles had a great many enemies in the city, and the king, who was called Herod, thought he would please them as well as himself by persecuting the Apostles. So he got hold of one of

them—one of two that had the name of James—and killed him. He made his soldiers do the cruel, wicked deed; but the king himself was the murderer. After that, seeing that the Jews, who hated Christ's people, were very much pleased, Herod resolved to take the life of another apostle, and he caught Peter, and put him into prison. This time, however, he thought he would do the thing with some show and pomp—he would bring Peter before the people and say to them: “See, this is what I am going to do with this troublesome fellow; I will put him to death, and rid the town of him.” He could not, however, do that well for some days, because it happened that it was the Passover Feast

in Jerusalem, and so the king said : "I must let the feast first be passed. When that is over, I will do for this prisoner ; till then I will keep him safe." So Peter was put under the charge of as many as sixteen soldiers. You may know how they watched him when I tell you that they did not allow him to sleep without two of them being with him—one on each side—and a chain binding him to each of them. That, too, while the rest were at different doors through which it was needful to pass to reach Peter's cell. But doors, and chains, and guards, are of no account when God comes to set free. Now, it happened that Peter's friends having no power with the king, took the cause straight to God. They said : "Let us pray to God ; He saved Daniel ; He raised from the dead our Lord Jesus ; He can save Peter." So they held meetings for prayer, both during the day and at night. One night a number of them were gathered together, praying in the house of a good woman of the name of Mary, when they were startled by a knocking at the gate. A little servant girl called Rose (Rhoda) went to the door to find out who it was. She knew Peter's voice at once, and was so glad that she forgot to open the door, but ran in, saying : "There is Peter at the gate." They would not believe it. They said : "Girl, you are quite mad." Though they had been praying to God to bring Peter out of prison, they would not believe that God had answered them ; they did not expect Him to do it in

this way. Rose answered them that she was quite sure that it was Peter ; she knew his voice too well to make a mistake about it. "Well, then, it must be his angel ; it cannot be himself." The knocking, however, went on like that of a man that could not get in ; so they opened the door, and were full of wonder to see Peter himself there. Peter made a motion to them to be still and let him speak, and then told them the story of his deliverance something in this way.

"I was sleeping," he said, "as usual between two of the soldiers that kept me. My chains were on my hands, and I was fast bound to my keepers. That did not prevent me sleeping soundly, neither did the fear of being killed to-morrow, for our Lord Jesus had given me peace. But as I was sleeping, I suddenly felt some one striking me a gentle blow on the side, which woke me ; and when I looked up, there was a beautiful angel, as he seemed, in the midst of a bright light. I could see the soldiers, quite clearly, sleeping by my side. Then the angel spoke to me, and said : 'Rise up quickly.' I got up, you may be sure, at once ; and as I rose, off from my hands my chains dropped without a touch. Nor did the soldiers wake. I was full of wonder, and did not know what to do. But the angel said : 'Be in no flurry, Peter, but put on all your clothes ; don't forget your girdle and your shoes.' I did as he bade me, and then he said : 'Put your plaid on, and follow me.' This I did also, but felt that I must be in a dream ; it was so strange, though

sweet. Well, as I followed my guide, there were sentries that were set to watch that I did not escape. Whether they were asleep or not, I do not know; only we passed them as if they had been only as many stones, till at last we came to the great outside iron gate. You know what a heavy strong gate it is, with its great bolts. As the angel went near it, it swung open without a hand, and without a creak. Out into the streets we went; and all the time I felt that I must be dreaming. But after we had gone along the street to the end, and were turning into another, my beautiful guide disappeared. I could do nothing but stand still and think for a little. The cool night's breath was in my face. I looked up to the stars, and there they were as I had often seen them on the Lake of Galilee. I looked round, and the houses were solid-looking, and quite familiar. I could doubt no more. I said to myself, it is no dream. God has really sent His angel, and freed me from prison. Herod will not get me to-morrow; and the cruel Jews will be disappointed. Then I recollected you would be here praying for me; and I thought I would come on and

tell you. But I had better not stay with you to-night. Bless the Lord for me; and go tell James, and the other brethren, what God has done for us."

When he had told his strange, joyful story, Peter went away to be more out of the way, and to be by himself more, that he might thank and praise. Meanwhile, the angel was away on some other errand, or away back to heaven to tell that he had set Peter free. And the soldiers slept on, not knowing that when Herod should find next morning that Peter was gone, their lives would answer for it. So it was, however. In the morning what a stir there was, and what questioning of the guard! Poor men, they could say nothing about the matter; and the proud passionate king, angry at losing his prey, never thinking that God was keeping him back from more wickedness, and calling him to repentance, said: "Put them all to death."

A little after that the king himself died of a horrid disease. Worms, that wait usually for the corpse, ate him up while alive, and so he and his pride perished.

CATECHETICAL EXERCISE ON THE SERMON AND STORY.

What kind of meeting were you asked to visit?
Where was it held?
How many were at it?
Name them.
Name several remarkable things about the meeting besides the attendance.
Who led the prayer in the meeting?

What was going on all the time?
What four things about prayer do we see in this meeting?
How was faith shown there?
How was union shown?
How was perseverance shown?
How was it seen that prayer prevails?

Do you remember any prayers in the Bible, besides those named, that were in the open air? Do you know of any sermons that were preached in the open air? Which of the apostles was first martyred? How could James be killed, and yet James be alive to hear of Peter's escape? Why did Herod wish to kill another apostle? Which of them did he lay hold of? Why did he not kill him at once? How many soldiers did the king employ to guard Peter when he was in prison?

What did Peter's friends do to help him? How did God answer their prayers? Tell the story yourselves. What prisoners for Christ were once delivered by an earthquake? What prisoner was once delivered by being hurriedly sent for to tell the meaning of a dream? Do you know any texts about God setting prisoners free? What prison was broken open on the Lord's-day morning long ago?

LOST ON AN AMERICAN PRAIRIE.

"DON'T you say a prayer, dear Hattie?"

"I have been praying," said the elder girl, and she sobbed aloud as she rocked back and forth, her hands clasped, and her head bowed.

"O, Alice, Alice! I am so afraid we shall never get home again."

"I cannot cry any more," said the other, as she laid her head on Hattie's lap. "I am so cold, and I feel so strangely. Please Hattie, say a prayer aloud; God may hear and help us."

Hattie prayed. At first, through sobs and tears, the blessed words of "Our Father" came; but as she went on, the sobs died away, her voice became firmer, her clasped hands were raised to heaven. She paused a little as she finished the familiar prayer. Then she said, with feeling, "We are two little girls, Lord, lost on the prairie; please help us to get home, and we will be so good."

The two girls were lost. The snow

was coming fast and blinded them. Then they felt as if they *must* pray. There was no other help, and they prayed with all their hearts. Only one said the words, but there is no doubt both prayed. The prayer was answered, and they did get home.

I have told you this story because I believe it is true, and will do us good to remember. I was lost on a great Iowa prairie one cold night, and know how it feels. How can it do us good to remember this story?

It will give us an example of asking God for just what we want. The girls did not pray for the heathen, but for themselves. There are times to pray for the heathen, but this was not one of them. They prayed to be taken home. That was what they wanted. Suppose we stop before we pray next time, and think what we want and pray for that. It is delightful to pray, I think.

CHILDREN OF PRAYER.

WE suppose that most of our young readers have praying parents. Often have they lifted heart and voice to God that His blessing might rest upon you. While you have slept they have prayed for you, and while you have been playing, or working, or studying, they have asked God to bless you; so that, sleeping or waking, you have not been forgotten. When you were very young they gave you to God in holy baptism and have ever since earnestly prayed that as you grow older you may take upon yourselves the solemn vows of covenant with God, and promise to be His and His alone.

They have taught you to pray; but you must never forget that there is a great difference between saying prayers and praying. Here is something that will illustrate this:—

"A little boy, three years of age, was taught by his mother to repeat a prayer. This prayer he repeated regularly every night, as he grew older, till he became seventy-three years old. He was proud that he had not omitted his prayer for seventy years. However, at that advanced period grace reached his heart, and he was divinely taught to pray with the spirit. Afterward he often added: 'I am the old man who *said* his prayer for seventy years, and yet all the time never prayed at all.'"

Be careful that your prayers come from the heart—that you mean every word you say. The simple forms of prayer you are taught are very good, provided you think of what they mean; otherwise you may, like this old man, *say* your prayers for many years and never pray at all.

WHY PRAYER IS NOT ANSWERED.

TEACHER," said a bright, earnest-faced boy, "why is it that so many prayers are unanswered? I do not understand. The Bible says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you;' but it seems to me a great many knock and are not admitted."

"Did you never sit by your cheerful parlour fire," said the teacher, "on some dark evening, and hear a loud knocking at the door? Going to answer the summons, have you not sometimes looked out into the darkness,

seeing nothing, but hearing the pattering feet of some mischievous boy, who knocked but did not enter, and therefore ran away? Thus it is often with us. We ask for blessings, but we do not really expect them; we knock, but we do not wish to enter; we fear that Jesus will not hear us, will not admit us, and so we go away."

"Ah, I see," said the earnest-faced boy, his eyes shining with the new light dawning in his soul, "Jesus cannot be expected to answer runaway knocks. I mean to keep knocking until He cannot help opening the door."

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I. As at Church.

Let us praise God with this

HYMN.

ONE there is above all others,
Oh how He loves !
His is love beyond a brother's,
Oh how He loves !
Earthly friends may fail or leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us,
But this Friend will ne'er deceive us,
Oh how He loves !

'Tis eternal life to know Him,
Oh how He loves !
Think, O think how much we owe Him,
Oh how He loves !
With His Spirit He has sought us,
His example bright has taught us,
Every blessing Jesus brought us,
Oh how He loves !

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Prov. viii., 22-32 ; John iii., 11-16.

PRAYER.

GREAT and good Father, who didst love us so as to send Thy Son to save us, teach us to know and believe Thy grace. Do not allow us to put away Thy love from us. We need it. We cannot be happy without it. Let it come into our hearts ; shed it abroad there by Thy Holy Spirit. So shall we be taught to love Thee who first lovedst us. O God, we desire to think often about Thy great love, and to feel it in us and around us, like the light and warmth of the sun. Draw forth more and more our humble

love to Thee, and let us show it by keeping Thy commandments.

O Lord pity those who do not know of Thy love to the world of lost men. Bless all missionaries who have gone to tell them of it. Open all lands for their entrance. Open hearts to receive their message. O that the whole world might soon joy in Thy love through Jesus Christ !

Bless us in this our service to-day. Speak by it to our hearts, and so teach and comfort us, for our Lord's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

The text is in the epistle of Paul to Titus, third chapter and fourth verse : "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared."

IN connection with this text, I am going to preach to-day on a big, long word, like what you find in a dictionary. I am going to speak to you about *philanthropy*—the philanthropy of God. The text says, love of God towards man. But the Greek—you know the New Testament was first written in Greek—uses only one word for "love towards man," and the big word I have used is just that Greek word put into English letters and shape. My subject, then, is the Divine philanthropy—God's love for the race of men. Do you know what is meant by the appearing of this love? It is just its coming into full sight. Did you ever watch the sun rise? Did you notice before he came up to view, how all the east of the sky began to glow, and the clouds to redden? And then the sun leaped up and showed himself. That was the sun's appearing, and God's love has come to sight in the same way. When did it appear? When did this sun of love rise on the earth? It was when Jesus was born to die for men. It was the Son of God's becoming man that brought His love full to view. It had shone like dawn on the world in the old times, but now the "Sun of Righteousness" rose, "with healing on His wings." For "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we

beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." That was the appearing of the Divine philanthropy. Then was it fully manifested and proved. But it was always, as we shall immediately see, in the Divine mind and heart.

Now I have five things to say about this Divine philanthropy, which you will find it easy, I hope, to understand and remember.

First—It is very old.

Second—It is very deep.

Third—It is very wide.

Fourth—It is very high.

Fifth—It is very long.

1. Very Old.

It is now wearing on to nineteen hundred years since, as we have seen, the appearance of this philanthropy rose on the world like a sun. But itself is far older than that. It is as old as the garden of Eden. For no sooner did man fall by sinning against God, than a message of kindness and love was brought to him from heaven. The Son of God Himself brought it. He said to the serpent that deceived Eve, that one of her seed should come and crush him, and so gave hope of deliverance to man. Then, to show His kindness, and to be a sign of what God would do for man, by the sacrifice of Jesus, He took of the skins of animals, slain as offerings, and clothed our first parents. He pitied their unprotectedness in their cold

and their shame, and clad them as with His own hand.

But the Divine love towards man was far older than even that. It sent its look forward, and stretched out its hand to him from the far eternity. The hills are older than man himself; they were made before him; but God's love is older than the hills. The sea is old; and the foundations of the earth, geologists tell us, must have been laid long, long ago; but God's love to man, was before the world's foundation. Wisdom, who is Christ speaking in proverbs, says, as we have been reading, "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth. When the Lord gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth. And my delights were with the sons of men." So God says, elsewhere, by one of the prophets, to His own people, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." God's philanthropy is, therefore, older than creation; it is as old as is the Ancient of days Himself.

2. It is very Deep.

If you ask me how deep it is, I should say, it is as deep as men's wants. It is as deep as hearts are. It is deeper than men's sins. God's love to men is not spent on feeding their bodies, or making them healthy, or giving them homes. I mean it does not stop with these things. He does all that for

beasts and birds—for lions and ravens and storks. But He does far more for men. Some time ago people were busy doing a work of pity and kindness for Paris; sending shipsful and waggon-loads of food to save her starving population, after the siege was over. It was right. It was beautiful. But God has sent bread of life to the earth to save men from starvation of the soul—from famine of the heart. Neither does God content Himself with merely giving men better minds, light for their understanding. He does not think it enough to educate them in knowledge. His love labours to change their hearts. He knows that the worm at the root is sin, and His love strives to deliver them from that. He does not heal by mere surface treatment, but goes to the very depths of the disease, heals the wound from the bottom, and restores the whole life.

There is another thing. Sinners are all fallen, and down in deep places of the pit. But some are further down than others. We speak of depths of iniquity, and the word is true. But herein is God's love for man shown, that no matter how far anyone has fallen, that love seeks after him, and strives to find and raise him. "Out of the depths," said one, "have I cried to Thee, O God." Well, no matter how far and dark the depths are, God will hear such cries.

Graves, too, are deep things. The dungeon of death is deep and dark. God's love is deeper. The dust of His children sleeps in the bosom of that love. By-and-by that love, like a

great spring, will make the buried seed to grow again. Did you ever count how often Jesus says in that sermon of His, which is to be found in John vi., "I will raise it up at the last day?"

This, then, is what we have to say about the deepness of the 'Divine philanthropy. It goes down to the depths of men's souls. It goes down to the depths of human society. It goes down to the depths of the grave.

3. It is very Wide.

You have heard of, some of you have read, a book called the "Wide, Wide World;" well, that is the measure of the wideness of God's love to men. Observe that the word of the text is—love towards man. The whole human family is the object of it. God so loved the world as to give His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Men's love to men is often a narrow thing. They love their own families. They love their own clan. They love their own countrymen. But God's love embraces all. It does not stop at boundaries. It crosses seas. It does not mind colour. It loves men. There was a time, indeed, when it might seem that God's love was narrow. Indeed, there is a text that says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." But that speaks of special kindness. Even when God had His own chosen people in Canaan, He was loving them thus much for the wide world's sake afterwards. And He was not leaving the rest of men without a witness, in that He gave them "rain from heaven, and

fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." Here is how I think of it. God had promised in Eden that His love would rise one day like a sun. But men living away down in deep valleys did not keep their eye on the dawn. It was too faint for them. So God built Zion up on a high hill, where the coming sun could shine on it. And then Zion was to shine in his light, and say to all the world, "The Sun is coming."

Now, dear children, this wide circle of love must include you. You are in the world. God's love is towards you. Its eye looks to you. Its hand is stretched out to you. Its voice speaks to you. Will you refuse it? Will you put it away? Will you say to God, you do not want His love? Or will you let it win your hearts? Will you let it draw you? Will you say:

—Thy love Divine
Has won this foolish heart of mine
Now to be Thine, for ever Thine,
O Lamb of God, I come.

4. It is very High.

The highest thing we know is heaven. Far above the loftiest mountains, shine the stars. But there is the heaven of heavens—a heaven above and beyond the sun and stars of night. Now the measure of the height of God's love is the line that reaches up to the heaven of heavens. For the home of men, loved of God, is to be in heaven. Jesus is there, and when He was going away home to that happy land, He said, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

But there is even more than this. The highest place in heaven is the throne of God. It is the highest seat in the universe. There can be nothing higher. Now the wonderful love of God towards man appears in this, that He means to give him a place on that glorious high throne. Jesus has sat down on His Father's throne. He has all power given him in heaven and in earth. He is above all principalities, and powers, and every high name. And He wears human nature there. Then He promises to every one that, following Him, overcomes sin and the world, that He will grant to him to sit with Himself on His throne. Men are to be nearest to God of all creatures. These are the persons whom the King delights to honour.

5. It is very Long.

Long, you know, applies to space or time. You have a long line, a long road, a long voyage. But you have also a long time, a long day, a long life. It is in this second sense that I use it now. How long, then, will God's love to man last? The answer is—As long as earth and time last. Nay more, it will last for ever. After time has ceased—after the earth and the works thereof are burnt up—it will continue as before. Should all the stars go out, this love will burn still and shine. It will last as long as Christ lives. Now He, even as man, has length of days for ever and ever; and He says, because I live, ye shall live also. And Jesus can never cease to love the sons of men. The memory of His cross will bind Him to them. The joy of His heart will be in

them. His love will fill their immortality.

Thus, then, dear young friends, if we choose to look *back* over all the ages and generations of the world, and through all the histories of men on the earth, back past Rome, and Greece, and Persia, and Assyria—back past Egypt and the days of the patriarchs, and the flood and the fall itself—past even the foundation of the earth, and out into eternity before time, we see the love of God shining towards man afterwards to be created. If we look *round* over all the globe, across seas and deserts, and mountains and plains, over cities and towns and hamlets and lonely cottages, wherever men are to be found, just as everywhere the sun would come to visit each spot with his light and heat, so we can think of God's love looking towards all dwellers on the face of earth. If we search the dark places of the earth, and notice how far down sin drags the soul, till we could hardly bear the sight, or down into our own hearts till we discover what wants and depths of need are there, we should still be able to take cheer from the thought of God's love looking down even there. If, again, we look up, sending our eye through clouds overhead, and past the shining sun and glittering stars, in through the gates of the new Jerusalem, and along its golden streets, we should see God's love towards man shining in glory there. If we look to the throne of God, we should read it in the emerald bow circling it. If we look to the Lamb, we should read it in His face, where the glory of God shines. And if we look along the whole line of eter-

nal years, till we could gaze no further, we should still see the light of God's love making men happy for ever.

This love has been revealed on earth, It has appeared in Jesus. But have you seen it, and have you felt it drawing you towards God? and has it made you love God in some measure in re-

turn? Do you like to think of it? See what happens where it appears. You are saved by mercy. You are washed from sins. You *are made new* by the Holy Spirit. O beautiful love of God to man! As flowers turn to the sun, so may the hearts of the young turn to Thee, and be filled with Thy fulness.

HYMN.

O LOVE how deep, how broad, how high!
It fills the heart with ecstasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form, for mortals' sake.

For us He prayed, for us He taught,
For us His daily works He wrought,
By words and signs, and actions, thus
Still seeking not Himself, but us.

For us to wicked men betrayed,
Scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed,
He bore the shameful cross and death,
For us at length gave up His breath.

To Him whose boundless love has won
Salvation for us through His Son,
To God the Father glory be,
Both now and through eternity.

II. As at School.

NOW, first, let us see what you remember of the Sermon. Try to answer the following questions:

Where do we find the text? Read it.
What big word was given as naming the subject?

For what three words in the text does it stand?

When did God's philanthropy *appear*?

What was its appearing compared to?

What five things were stated to be true of God's love to man?

Name some old things which yet are not nearly so old as God's love?

Can you find a text showing that God's love was before all time?

What three deep things were mentioned; yet not so deep as God's love?

How wide does God's love go?

What text having words of Christ show the wideness of this love?

How high does God's love rise?

What is higher than the mountains?

What is higher than the stars?

What is the highest thing in the universe?

How long does God's love stretch out?

Repeat the heads once more?

Now we will have a little lesson on a little loving Psalm, and then I will set you some Rhymed Pictures and Queries, that you may find out the meaning. The Psalm we take is the xxiii., which a good old minister used to call the Children's Psalm. Let us read it.

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

3. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

See, how this short Psalm divides itself into two parts, verses 1—4, and 5—6. What is the figure used in the first part? Did David know from experience what a shepherd has to do? What strange things happened to him when he was a shepherd? Is he right in thinking that the Lord would be a good Shepherd? Who calls himself the Good Shepherd? Where? Is God able to supply all our wants? Is He willing? Does He know them? Has He promised to supply them? Can you prove your answers by texts? Where has God made green pastures to grow for the spiritual wants of His people? Does He care for their temporal wants as well? What did Christ say about these? What part of the shepherd-picture speaks of feeding, and of rest? What of leading and of watering the sheep? What of healing them? Would 'straight paths' do to explain paths of righteousness? Are God's ways right? What part of the Psalm tells of the Shepherd's care, when the sheep are in trouble? What "instruments" of the Shepherd are named in it? Will this text do to comfort them when they are dying? When the sheep cannot see the shepherd, what does he do to let them know that he is near? Before them will it be, or behind them? Take out four short words good for all trouble.

What figure is there in the second part? When David was a shepherd was he called to a feast? Had he any who would be jealous of him there? Have our souls enemies? Can you name any of them? Can they truly hurt any of God's children? Can you find texts comparing the Gospel to a feast? What two things are spoken of here besides food? Does Christ ever speak of Himself as the food of His people? Where is Christ said to call them to a marriage supper? What text of the Psalm is full of hope? In what house of the Lord will all His people stay at last? &c., &c.

Here is our Psalm in another form.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, no want can be mine,
In pastures of verdure He makes me recline,
Beside the still waters He leadeth me on,
And the day-spring of grace on my spirit hath shone.

"Though darkness and clouds o'er the valley be hung,
In the shadow of death shall His praises be sung;
The light of His word in the gloom shall appear,
And His servant, confiding, no evil will fear.

"Though the wicked stand round me, my table is spread,
He crowneth my cup and anointeth my head,
His love shall surround me while life doth remain,
And to live shall be Christ, but to die shall be gain.

Find six nice Shepherd-texts in other parts of the Bible.



RHYMED PICTURES.

Here are two Rhymed Pictures. Answer the appended questions :—

1

A watcher sitting on the matted ground
With wistful eye looks upwards, and around ;
While in the wind, above this child of woe,
Seven haggard shapes are swinging to and fro.

Who is this watcher? Why is the ground said to be matted? Why does the watcher look upwards? Why around? What are the seven shapes? Why called haggard?

2

Tis night. A host lies wrapt in sleep ;
And eyes are closed that wake to weep,
For trump and lamp are near at hand,
Obedient to the Lord's command.
The trump shall sound ; the lamp shall blaze,
And shouts the slumbering foe amaze.

What host? What trumps? What lamps? How did they not shine at first?

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—A to D.

Take also this beginning of a series of questions on what we may call an Alphabet of Nouns.

ARK.

Name three Arks, and say what was in each of them.

BOW.

1. The bow that's always bent when seen,
But never yet was strung ;
2. The bow that still has conquering been ;
3. The bow that could be sung ;
4. The bow that mournful message sent ;
5. The bow that killed by accident.

CLOUD.

1. The cloud that was both dark and bright,
Gloomy to foes, to friends a light ;

2. The cloud that grew from tiny size
To bulk that darkened all the skies ;
3. The cloud that took the best of men ;
4. The cloud that brings him back again ;
5. The cloud God made to clothe the sea ;
6. The cloud that joins our B and C.

DOOR.

1. An open door which God shut.
2. A shut door which God wishes to have opened.
3. A shut door which an angel opened.
4. A door which, open or shut, an angel could not pass through.
5. Shut doors which were passed through without being opened at all.

III. As at Home.

OUR FATHER'S CARE.

I *WILL not fail thee.* This is what the Lord said to Joshua, who took the place of Moses as the leader of the Israelites. The young man felt his inability to do the work to which God had called him,

and therefore God encouraged him by this precious promise. It is a promise which belongs to everyone who is trying, by God's help, to do right ; and we are never to forget that it is only by His help that we can do right.

No doubt there are some among our young readers who often feel their need of some great help. All ought to feel this, but some feel it more than others. Even the young are severely tried. They have temptations and sorrows, and, alas for them! bereavements. But the words of this little text ought surely to bring comfort to every troubled heart.

We read the other day an interesting incident in the life of Stilling, which is a good illustration of this text. Stilling was a celebrated German writer who died over fifty years ago. In early life he was very poor. He wished to study medicine, but knew not where to go, nor had he any money to take him anywhere. But, young as he was, he had a firm faith in God. He reasoned thus: "God begins nothing without terminating it gloriously. He alone has ordered my present circumstances, and every thing regarding me He will bring about in His own way.

His friends were as poor as himself, and they wondered where he would get the money he needed for his education. After raising all he could for his long journey to Strasburg, where he was to spend the winter, he started on his way, but when he reached Frankfort, which was three days' ride from Strasburg, he had only four shillings left. He said nothing, but he prayed much. While walking the streets he met a merchant belonging to his native place, who said:

"Stilling, what brought you here?"

"I am going to Strasburg to study medicine."

"Where did you get your money to study with?"

"I have a rich Father in heaven."

"How much money have you on hand?"

"Four shillings," said Stilling.

"So!" said the merchant. "Well, I'm one of your Father's stewards," and he handed him seven pounds.

He had not been long in Strasburg when his seven pounds were reduced to seven shillings. One morning his roommate said to him, "Stilling, I believe you did not bring much money with you," and gave him six pounds.

In a few months after this he had no money to pay his college dues. The lecturer's fee must be paid by six o'clock on Thursday evening, or he would be obliged to leave college. Five o'clock came, and still he had no money. Then, while he was in great grief, and praying to God for help, a gentleman came in and gave him eight pounds.

Thus it is that God never fails those who trust in Him. Some of the boys and girls who read this article may be poor, and trying to get an education. Do not get discouraged. Do all you can, and do the best you can, and God will help you. He may not send people with gold or bank-notes just at the very time you need them, but He will find some way to keep His promise, "I will never fail thee."

A simple, loving trust in God, all the way through life, will give you great happiness even in the midst of many cares.

GOD IS LOVE.

MR. SPURGEON says, "God is love" is the motto on the weather-cock of a country friend. We have seen many curious vanes, but never one that struck our attention so much as this—"God is love." Our friend was asked "if he meant to imply that the love of God was as fickle as the wind?" "No," he answered, "I mean, that whichever way the wind blows, God is love; if cold from the north, or biting from the east, still God is love as much as when the warm south or genial west wind refreshes our fields and flocks." Yes, so it is; our God is always love. We saw

our friend the other day, when he had lost his dearly-loved wife, but amidst his heart-ache and crushing loss he still said, "my barn teaches me the truth I put over it in my prosperity, when the desire of my eyes was by my side.—God is love."

Dear children, remember this beautiful motto at all times. Some of you, although young, may be called, like this gentleman, to feel sorrow and bereavement. Perhaps you have lost a dear parent, or brother, or sister, or beloved companion. Remember, when you feel sorrowful, that *God is always love.*

A CHILD'S PRAYER.

Now the day of work is done,
Now the quiet night's begun,
And I lay my tired head
Safe within my little bed,
Saviour, hear me;
Be Thou near me
Till the hours of dark have fled.

I can see from where I lie,
Glittering in the dark-blue sky,
Here and there a little star
Shining out so clear and high.
Saviour, hear me;
Be Thou near me;
Keep me safe beneath thine eye.

If I've grieved Thee through this day,
Let my sin be washed away;
Make me meek and pure and kind,
Give me Thy most holy mind.
Saviour, hear me;
Be Thou near me;
Let me now Thy mercy find.

Thou art loving me above,
And I love Thee for Thy love;
Thou didst leave Thy Throne on high,
And for me came down to die.
Thou wilt hear me,
And be near me;
I am safe while thou art nigh.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. As at Church.

Let us worship God by singing these lines.

HYMN.

CLING to the Mighty One.
Cling in thy grief;
Cling to the Holy One,
He gives relief;
Cling to the Gracious One,
Cling in thy pain;
Cling to the Faithful One,
He will sustain.

Cling to the Blessed One,
Cling in thy youth;
Cling to the Guiding One,
He teaches truth.
Cling to the Lofty One,
Cling through thy life;
Cling to the peaceful One,
He ends all strife.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 2 Kings iv., 27-37; Luke xviii., 1-14.

PRAYER.

O God, we cannot see Thee, not here beside us, nor up in the sky. But we can and do think up to Thee. We cannot hear Thee speak to us as we hear the voices of men. But we feel Thy voice in our hearts. We know Thou hearest prayer. Thou dost sometimes seem slow to answer, but we will, by Thy help, pray and wait.

Hear us now, O Lord, when we ask Thee to hear the cry of all afflicted persons. Hear all who are crying out, What must we do to be saved? Hear

all that are in sore sickness, or pain, or weariness. Hear all that are going down into the dark valley of the shadow of death. Bless all our sick friends. Heal them, if it please Thee, and raise them up. Prepare them for Thy will.

Lord, we are willing to eat crumbs, so far as thoughts of our own worthiness go; but when we think of Thy grace, we feel that we must ask and look for the children's bread. Lord, feed us with the bread of life, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

To-day's text is in these words: "And who is he that will harm you if you be followers of that which is good."—1 PETER iii., 13.

IN his old age, I knew a man of whom it is told when he was a boy that he was taken by his father to a church about seven miles distant from their home, Sabbath after Sabbath. There were nearer churches, but the father thought that they were wrong in their way of observing the Lord's Supper, and he went to a church that, as he thought, kept the right way.

You will wonder, when I tell you that the dispute was about whether it was proper for the minister to take up in his hand the bread and wine before giving thanks or not; they were earnest about it, however, from what they thought it meant. We now think it a matter of no moment.

One winter Sabbath morning the father and boy were seen on their way to church as usual. There had been a fall of snow during the night, and the footpath through the fields, by which the two were travelling, was covered with the soft white mantle, that covered with its smooth purity all below. The people in the farm-houses near saw the two figures toiling along through the snow, and noticed this, that the boy came after his father, and tried to put his steps just where his father's feet had left a boot-mark in the deep frost-dust. I suppose he found it easier somewhat to use the holes in the snow which greater strength than his own had made. Amusing, too, perhaps, and tending to

make him feel big, as able to stride as his father had stepped.

Why do I tell this little story? Because that little boy was following his father, following him in a good path, following him through difficulties. The day was wintry; the roads were heavy; but the way was to God's house, and the father was before him. He was acting out the text.

No, perhaps, you say, he was following a good man, but not that which is good. But I have now to remark that what is said in the Greek is "followers of the good," which may mean of the good person, or the good thing. The meaning is not much affected, in whichever way we understand the phrase, but as the exact expression used here is in other passages used of persons, I think we should so understand it here. This will be the sense if ye be imitators of the good One—the kind heavenly Father, or the gracious Saviour who went about doing good.

In these last words I have shown you what special thought is intended by *good* here. The word does not so much mean, of excellent character generally, as kind, benevolent, helpful. It is the word which we find in the remarkable passage which says, Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some one would even dare to die—where good is more than just. The one does no wrong, the other does good, is a benefactor to

others—generous, considerate, useful. Now, of such goodness, none gives so glorious an example as God. If we speak of the Father, He is every day feeding worlds, and is kind to the unthankful and evil, and makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. If we speak of Christ, then, as we read of Him in the previous chapter, He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; when He was reviled He reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not, and His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree. What a life was His of well-doing. How He did good to all, filling the land with blessing.

Now herein is the example that Christ left us, that we should follow His steps. Herein we are to be imitators of God, as dear children. If Christlike, especially in this, who shall hurt us? Such is the question of the text, which I am now to answer, thus:

First—Scarcely any one.

Second—Yet, perhaps, some one.

Third—But, after all, no one.

1. Scarcely any.

I say scarcely any, for it is clear from what follows that Peter does not mean quite that no one will do them any kind of harm. He only intends that the best way to escape hurt from others is to be ourselves meek and kind. If we are doing good to others, others are not likely to do wrong and violence to us.

First of all, surely the gentle and generous should be spared. What evil have they done that they should be molested? It may be well to hurt the wild beast, but why turn on creatures that serve you?

If you kill the fierce vulture, why should you strike the peaceful dove? Then God has a care over His own children. He promises to throw His shield over them. He keeps them night and day lest any harm them. He gives His angels charge concerning them, and says "they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." "When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him;" and, bad as the world is, to be meek and loving and kind, is some protection in it. Even strong and rough natures find it hard to strike one that does not resist—that smiles upon the uplifted hand to deal the blow. You might safely sit near the hive of the bees, busy coming and going, if you wake not their fear or anger by annoying them. There have been cases among rough and violent men where the conviction that no harm was sought, but good, has been a shield to those who might otherwise have been injured. Thus missionaries have gone into streets and dens of thieves and other criminals, and having proved their wish to do good to all, have come to be as safe in their haunts as at home. Amid the cruel scenes of the late war, when destructive weapons showered death on soldiers' ranks, and passion roused spared no foes, the noble men that ministered to the wounded, were carefully protected beneath the ambulance flag, or red-cross mark. When Cecil, arrested by highwaymen, told frankly that he was a minister of the Gospel, and gave his address, the leader of the gang said: "Yes, sir, I have heard you preach; let

the gentleman's horse go." To have done good—to have it for one's known work to do good—to be engaged in services of kindness, is often a better buckler than seven-fold brass. Even bad governments will often let alone the quiet and peaceable and useful citizens.

I say this to show how Christ-like actions of loving kindness may be a strong defence. But there is more than this, they are yet to be strong conquerors. They have often already won hearts, and won them for Christ. At last they will win the whole world. The world will never be subdued by swords and rifles. But the spirit of Jesus, who was among men as one that serves, will win the day. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

2. Perhaps some.

The Apostle felt that there could not be quite a clear answer of *none* given to his question. For, you see, he immediately adds, "But and if ye," &c. How could he help remembering this? For had he not himself once been cast into prison for the purpose of being killed shortly? And if God did deliver him in a wondrous way, yet he could not forget that it was in his enemies' heart to take his life, and that Herod had just before slain James, the brother of John, with the sword.

For it is a sad thing to know that good men in this world may not only be persecuted, and wronged, and burnt by others, notwithstanding their goodness, but even on account of it. Just because they were better, kinder, more loveable than others, men have been

even put to death in this wicked earth of ours. "They were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the word; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy." Not that their kind deeds were disliked, but their witness against sin was hated. Men could not bear the light that showed their own vileness.

No life could so well show this as the life of our Lord Himself. Read it and think of it, and say what action of Christ's was it that made men kill Him. He opened blind men's eyes; could it be for that? He cleansed poor miserable lepers; could that be cause of offence? He fed hungry thousands; was that a crime? He cured the palsy; did that deserve punishment? He raised the dead; ought He himself to die for that? Yet nothing would satisfy the bad generation He lived among, but cutting Him off from the land of the living. No innocence, no gentleness, no usefulness, will save men from harm in a world like this. Wolves and bears do not spare the harmless lambs. But

3. After all, none.

There is no real hurt. If it were so, then God must either not be watching what bad men do, or He must be careless about their wicked deeds, or He must be too weak to punish them. But none of these things can be supposed. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. He is watching. Nor is He careless about sin. That is what wicked

men say in their hearts. But the Lord will avenge speedily His own elect, though He bear long with them. And who shall stand before Him when He is angry. He touches the hills and they smoke. So God's children cannot be really hurt.

Try this in the case of Christ Himself; He was very cruelly mocked and buffeted, and tortured by men on earth. Is He hurt by it at all now? Has He suffered any real damage? On the contrary, it is all gain. But for His death, so causeless and so cruel, He would not have been on His throne. He would not now be gathering souls around Him in glory. Will it seem that Christ has been really hurt by all that bad men did to him, when He shall sit on the great white throne, and judge all nations? Where will then be the mockery, and the anguish, and the darkness? "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." And as with Christ, so with all that are His. It is not bad men's persecutions that we shall wish to have been without at last, it will rather be their praises. "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Two things show that harm to those who follow what is good, who are Christlike, cannot be real hurt. First, it does not wound deep enough. It reaches not the life. It does not cut off from Christ, or make their happiness to cease. From strife of tongues,

from robbery and loss, from cruel pains they can flee to the refuge; can tell God all in the closet, and lose their pains in the deep sweet sense of His favour. Then, further, the hurt does not last. "Fear not them," said Christ, "that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." There is the bound to all the world's rage. Death stands beside the good man, and at length covers him with his shield. Even Satan himself, as when God turned Job's captivity on earth, is baffled here. He cannot follow the believer into the world of glory. There shall be no more curse there—nor death, nor pain, for the former things have passed away.

Let me gather now these brief practical lessons for your life. You are like ships in the harbour, as yet under your parents' care, but you must go out into the world soon. So learn of Christ

1. That He is lowly in heart.

That is, be yourselves meek and humble. There is safety in this. The great wind rends the big oak, bows the little shrub, kisses the lowly flower. There is strength in it. Mercy conquers where might would fail; and service kills enmity, where swords would enhance it.

2. Learn of Christ to do good.

To do good forget not. Not to yourselves, that lasts not. But to others—to Christ. That will be your best shield against hurt from man. Be able to appeal to your life of well-doing.

3. Then, if you meet with wrongs, rest in God.

Leave your cause with Him. Avenge not yourselves. Do not render evil for evil. Do not strike blow for blow. When men vex you, seek peace in Jesus. In the world, He said, "ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." And finally,

4. Wait for Christ from heaven.

He will then make up for all losses. He will then right all wrongs. He will wipe off all reproaches. He will end all pains. Then "your light affliction which is but for a moment," will be found to have wrought for you a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Saviour, we would follow Thee
Wheresoever Thou wilt call,
Whether dark or bright it be,
Whatsoever may befall.

Through earth's bleak and rugged ways
May we ever hear Thy voice :
Then in danger we shall praise,
And in sorrow shall rejoice.

Never, Lord, from us depart !
Still defend us, keep, and guide,
Till we reach where now Thou art,
There for ever to abide.

II. As at School.

WHAT was the text of to-day's sermon ?

That which is good, or him who is good ;
which did we prefer ?

What is the meaning of good here ?

Quote a text where good has the same meaning.

Where is Jesus spoken of as going about doing good ?

Three answers were given to the questions of the text. Give the first ?

Will you state the reasons why scarcely anyone will hurt the followers of the Good One ?

What was the second answer to the question ?

How was Peter persecuted by Herod, and delivered by God ?

How did the bad world treat the good Jesus ?

What was the third answer ?

What two things about the world's persecutions of good men show that they can do no real hurt ?

Now I will tell you a story out of the Bible. But I will tell it in this way. I will suppose one of the persons referred to in the story telling it in a letter to a friend thus :—

FROM RHODA OF THE SEA COAST, TO
ANNA OF CAPERNAUM.

MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,—You will wonder very much to get a letter from me—me whom you know to have been so long and so grievously tormented by a devil. You recollect, when you came to see my mother last year, how very ill and wretched I was. O how you used to weep to see my misery, torn and tortured as I was by that evil spirit. You remember, too, how my mother and you used to talk about the Great Prophet that had risen, whom you thought to be greater than a prophet, and how you wished that your aunt, as you called her, could take me to Him, for you were quite sure that He could heal me. You said you knew some like me in Capernaum whom He had

cured. Some of the people on our coasts said the same thing to my mother; they had heard Him preach, and once, on a mountain in Galilee, had seen some of His wonderful works. Well, you know, I could not be taken to Him, I was too ill for that; and after you left us to go home, I had still to suffer, and my mother to weep.

But now, O my beloved Anna, Jesus has come to me. Not that I have seen Him, for I have not; but I will see Him some day, and praise Him for casting out of me that wicked tormentor. How did it happen? you say—I will tell you:—

One day I was very very ill; I could not well have been worse without being killed outright. The demon was tearing and twisting, and tossing me about, and forcing me to cry out, and say bad words, and my poor mother was in great distress about me. Just then a neighbour came in, and said to her that Jesus of Nazareth was coming to our parts, and might be looked for this very day. My mother did not lose a moment, but asking our kind neighbour to stay beside me, rushed off to see if it was true. Before she came back again—O how shall I describe it—I suddenly felt as if I was brought out of a horrible cave into the bright day. All my pains and contortions ceased in a moment, and my mind grew calm and clear; and when my mother returned, there was poor I, lying very weak, but as peaceful as a babe upon the bed. How my mother kissed me, and rained tears of joy on me, and blessed the name of Jesus, I shall

never forget. This is what she told me.

She said she had not gone far from the house, when she saw passing along the highway that crosses the country here—you remember it—a company of men, one of them plainly leading the others, and very striking to see. She felt at once that this was Jesus and His disciples. There was no mistaking Him. So she ran after Him, for the company had passed the spot where our field pathway joins the main road. And as she ran she cried: "O Lord, thou Son of David, pity me—pity my poor tortured daughter." But to her surprise, though she knew that her voice must have reached Him, for the disciples looked back, He did not stop, or answer a word. That did not daunt her, however; in her love for poor me she cried out still: "O Lord, Son of David, pity me—pity my child." Then she noticed that the disciples went near to Him, and seemed to be asking Him to hearken to her. She knew they were friendly by the way they looked, but they did not appear to prevail with Him. I have heard since that when they asked Him to send her away, knowing that He would not do that without helping her, He said that He was not sent to any but people of Israel, and you know that mother is a Greek. What do you think He called the Jewish people? Lost sheep. Was not that tender and sweet, though sad also? But I am forgetting my story. Well, my mother still went after them and cried: "Lord, pity me." In a little while, they came to a house, and Jesus,

as if He wanted to be out of sight, went into it. My mother said in her heart, I think He will hear me yet, and pressed in after Him, and threw herself at His feet and said: "O Lord, do help me." But what do you think He said? He spoke of my mother and all the Greeks as being only dogs. He said: "It is not meet to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs. Let the children eat first and there are a great many of them still hungry." He meant, dear Anna, you who are the favoured people of Israel, and you are a favoured people, most of all for His coming to you. My mother says, His word went at first to her heart like a knife, but she thinks He must Himself have helped her to be bold and persevering. Indeed, she says, His tones were so sweet, she could not think He meant to be harsh. So recollecting how little dogs will, at the time of a meal, go about licking up the crumbs, she said: "True, Lord, it is so, it is rightly so, but doggies are allowed to eat crumbs, and I am asking just a crumb." Oh, she has said to me, His look and voice when she said that, were wonderful. He seemed full of joy, and He spoke like one full of love. My mother remembers the very words He used. He said: "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Anna, it was at that moment—we have counted and compared time and distance, and are sure it would be just at that instant—I felt that the bad spirit was leaving me, and lay down so quiet and happy. But think of this great and good Lord

being pleased with my mother, because she would not refuse to be called a dog, and because she would take no denial. How shall I show my love to mother for this? How shall I show my love to Him?

Anna, you are right. This must be the Messiah. This must be the Son of God. I will from this day all my life through trust in Him. And you and I, happy Jewess and happy child of a Syrophenician woman, will hope to be together in His kingdom. Farewell, dear Anna. Mother says we will try to go soon to Capernaum and see you, and, perhaps, we may see and hear Him.

The little folks will understand that the form in which this story is told is a fancy. I thought it might be lawful to suppose it, for the sake of giving a little newness and freshness to what they have often read. No one can tell Bible stories so well as the Bible itself. But another way of telling them may help to lead little people to search the Bible account more closely for themselves. That is my wish as to this beautiful story. Rhoda and Anna are, of course, my fancies. But the rest is in the Gospels. As found there, the narrative suggests these questions—

Where have we a statement that people went from Tyre and Sidon to hear Christ preach?

How many, and which, of the evangelists tell this story?

What difference does there appear to be in the accounts of Matthew and Mark?

What does Mark add to what Matthew tells?

What nation and religion did the woman belong to?

Why did she go after Jesus?

How might she have come to know about Him?

What was her daughter's illness?
Was she slightly or severely afflicted?
Can you give other examples of Christ's power to cast out devils?

What answer did Christ give at first to the woman's cry?

When the disciples spoke to Him about her, what did He say?

Though Jesus Himself was sent as a preacher only to the Jews, did He confine the mission of His apostles to them?

Quote a text that proves the Gospel to be meant for all nations?

When the woman of Canaan fell at Christ's feet asking help, what did He say?

Was she angry at His seemingly harsh word?

What in her answer showed her humility?

What showed her faith?

Repeat Christ's reply to her answer?

In what exact state did the mother find her daughter on her return home?

What lesson as to prayer does the whole story teach us?

What parable teaches a similar lesson?

GOODNESS KEEPS US SAFE.

"YES, mother, I know; but then, you see, my good feelings only last half a jiffy."

So said my little boy to me last evening in answer to my appeal.

"I know it, Henry," said I; "but how long does it take to switch off a locomotive on to the wrong track? Once started on the wrong track, no matter how smoothly and swiftly it may run, it is running to destruction. On the other hand, a moment only, and the switch-tender will have put the locomotive on the right track, and the train will go on safely.

"So with the heart. It takes but a moment to pray sincerely, 'Lord save me.' It takes only a moment to say, 'Keep me from this sin, O Lord.' It takes only a moment to say from the

heart, 'Lord give me Thy Holy Spirit; make me Thy child; do not leave me; let me not leave Thee.'

"On the other hand, it takes but a moment to say: 'Pshaw! what's the use? I don't care.' It takes but a moment to say: 'I'm not going to be laughed at for being a Christian, I know.' It takes but a moment to drive the Spirit of God away, by simply diverting the mind, which may be done in many ways.

"And so the soul may be switched on to the right track, or on to the wrong track in a moment of time, and either run safely to the end of life, by God's grace, or run swiftly and surely to destruction."

Is my soul on the right or wrong track?

A HAPPY ACCOUNT FOR THE GOOD.

LITTLE Hester Maynard was walking slowly up the hill toward the open cottage door. Looking up, she saw a lady in a buff dress standing near the doorway. A brightness came into her eyes and she

hastened on, and ran into the yard somewhat out of breath. She had been to the village store to order and pay for the groceries for the week, to buy also needles, cotton, and ribbon, and to make a call and leave a message. No

little girl in the village loved to do errands as well as Hester Maynard.

"Why, Hettie, you are out of breath!" exclaimed her mother.

"Yes, after I saw you I ran," she said, dropping in the grass near the door-stone. Mrs. Maynard looked down with a smile upon her little daughter.

"I am sure you have done your best, Hettie; you would not be so glad to run to your mother if you had not tried to please her."

Then Hester gave her a list of what she had ordered, with the price of each article; displayed the dry goods purchases, and gave the reply to the message word for word.

"I like to give account to you, mother," she said, drawing near her mother, and resting her tired head against her mother's knee.

"Why, dear, tell me all the reasons," her mother said, after she had kissed the flushed little face.

"O, because I know that when I do not forget anything, and make the right change, and buy just what you want, that you are so glad, and call me a faithful servant."

"A loving heart makes careful hands and a clear head," replied her mother.

"And then I know that you love me so much that I don't feel afraid to tell you if I make a mistake! And I like to tell you that I am sorry. And you are my mother, you tell me what I must do, so you have the best right to all my account giving, haven't you?"

"Hettie, your words make me think of God." Hettie's words often made her mother think of God.

"He says we must give account to Him; and we are not afraid, because we know He loves us, and that makes us try to do our best. He gives us all we have, so He has the best right to our account-giving. He knows all about our hearts, and He is just as merciful as He is wise. He will say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' if we do as He has told us."

"Why, mother," Hester raised her head with a bright thought in her eyes, "then God is sending us on errands all the time! I am His little errand girl, too."

"Yes, dear, He has given us errands to do, and plenty of time to do them, and a book written full to show us how. Every day we can tell Him how we try to do them, and ask Him to help us: so when He calls us we will run to meet Him and give Him our account."

"I like that," the child said, nestling back to her comfortable seat; "I like to be God's little errand girl."

"One of my errands is to take care of you," said her mother.

"And one of mine to honour and obey you," said Hester, quickly. "I think He gives us very pleasant errands to do."

So, being very tired with her walk, the little girl fell asleep, leaning against her mother's knee.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. As at Church.

Let us praise our Lord with this

HYMN.

The Head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now ;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor's brow.

The highest place that heaven affords
Is His, is His by right,
The King of kings and Lord of lords,
And heaven's eternal light.

The joy of all who dwell above,
The joy of all below,
To whom He manifests His love,
And grants His name to know.

The cross He bore is life and health,
Though shame and death to Him ;
His people's hope, His people's wealth,
Their everlasting theme.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah liiii., 6-12 ; Rev. xiv., 11-16.

PRAYER.

O LORD, we are glad to think that Thy Son, Christ Jesus, our Blessed Saviour, is now on the throne of heaven. We rejoice that He suffered and died once, but cannot die again, or feel pain any more. We take Him to be our King and Lord. We would put the crown on His head. We would like to be jewels in His bright crown. Lord, pre-

pare us by Thy Spirit for shining there.

Lord gather many souls to Jesus to-day. May ministers and teachers win many to-day who shall be crowns of joy to them in the day of Christ's appearing.

Lord, make us ready to meet Jesus with gladness when He comes in His great glory. Amen.

SERMON.

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing! Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming."—1 THESS. ii. 19.

THERE are many beautiful crowns mentioned in Scripture. There is one which we all frequently look at, it is made out of yellow grains and ripe fruits. I have seen garlands of that sort woven by men's hands. But this of which I speak was fashioned by God in His goodness. He frames it every year in autumn. It is the crown of the year. For thus one of the Psalms speaks, "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness." There is another, which you may see much oftener. You may probably see it to-night. It is a very large and beautiful crown. It covers millions of heads. It has thousands of sparkling gold-like jewels, any one of which all the diamonds in the world could not buy. It is the crown of night, and the gems set in it are stars. God's power made them, and put them where they shine. I do not think the starry sky is anywhere in Scripture compared to a crown; but the woman mentioned in Rev. xii. 1; the figure of the New Testament Church, had on her head a crown of stars, and the phrase may well be applied to the shining night. There are many kings' and queens' crowns spoken of in Scripture, David's, and Solomon's, and Vashti's, and Esther's, and those of many others. I need not say more about them. But there was once a very special crown, peculiarly made, worn by one who was not a king—which no king, indeed, would have

dared to wear. It was formed of the purest gold. It was fastened to the head-dress of the wearer with strings of blue, the heavenly colour. It had an inscription on it, telling what it was made for. It was worn only by priests. That was the holy crown of Aaron and his sons, placed on their mitred foreheads, and engraved with these words, "Holiness to the Lord."

There was one both king and priest who wears now a glorious crown, of which I shall speak hereafter; but once he had a very strange crown. Those who gained prizes in the games of Greece wore something like it. They got chaplets of green leaves; and some have worn crowns of flowers. In a school, far away, I once saw young prize-takers crowned with such crowns. But this crown, worn by a royal priest, was not of leaves or flowers, but thorns. You know well who wore it, and for whose sake He bore the cruel spikes that pierced Him. We have been singing of Him as the crowned one this morning. I see often in church some crowns of a very different kind. I think you understand already what I am going to say. The crowns I speak of are white and glistening, yet they are not made of silver. They are not made of snow, though they have been likened to it. The hoary head—that is what I mean—is a crown of glory when it is found in the way of righteousness. Ah! so it is, and none but the wearers can tell what

toils, and tears, and teachings, go to the beating out and brightening of those crowns. Shall I tell you of a crown of a very different kind from all of those, yet somewhat near, spoken of by the wise man? There are many such crowns to be seen—there are many of them in all churches. They are worn in many homes. You see them shining when your mothers smile on you. They are your father's crowns, for "a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband," and her children are the priceless jewels of the coronet.

I will now come nearer still to my text's crown, and the specialty of it in a children's sermon, and tell you of a crown which you not only see, but yourselves in some cases are. Will you turn with me, and read about it? (Prov. xvii. 6.) "Children's children are the crown of old men."

There it is. Grandchildren are grand-parents' crown. All of you children hearing me now, take heed that you crown your grandfathers and grandmothers with gold and pearls, and rubies and diamonds, true and precious.

Thus I have mentioned seven crowns: Fruits, Stars, Gold, Thorns, Hoary Locks, Good Women, and Children. You will see how, as I named the crowns, I was coming nearer to my text. There is a crown here. A crown of persons—but of persons not on earth but in heaven—a crown to be worn at and after the judgment-seat. A crown of saved souls.

What I have to say about them may be stated under three heads, with three

words to mark them, beginning with W

1. Who?
2. Where?
3. When?

I. Who? Are not even ye?

Paul says the Thessalonians were his crown, his hope; his crown looked forward to; his joy; his crown that was to shine.

How were they to be his crown? Because they were to show that he was a true king. He had conquered. He had won. So he was. So he had done. He fought a good fight. He had gotten victory. You John, that have struck James, who has not struck back again, but has looked at you with a patient glance of love. Have you conquered? No. There is in your heart what says, No, no. You have been vanquished. And when you go to say to him, Forgive me, I was wrong, you feel that you are both conquerors. Hearts have been won. That is better than winning castles or cities. Now Paul had won hearts.

He had won them strangely. He carried no sword with him, except the sword of the spirit—the word of God. He brought no thunder but the voice of good tidings. He did not kill men, he only killed what was slaying them. He warred with sin on the side of souls.

Children, I want you all to be kings of this stamp. I wish you to fight with evil. You will get a crown by it. See these people out at the diggings washing mud. They are getting golden grains in it. See that man grinding and

polishing a rough stone. He is bringing out a jewel. So you may do.

Thessalonian converts were Paul's crown. Saved souls are ministers' crowns. But to day I wish to say that souls in childhood are specially bright jewels of the crown. Why so? Because a great deal of evil is prevented in them. Because a great deal of good is done by them. Even if children go home to heaven soon, I believe there will be some brightness about them of a special sort in the presence of Him, who said: "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not." This leads me to ask

II. Where?

The answer is, in Christ's presence.

That makes it joyous, because it shows that Christ is pleased with it. How much does it enhance the prize you get at school, when you receive it in the presence of your parents, or brothers, or sisters.

Then only in the presence of Christ can it be known how joyous it is. In the dark, in a dull day, you may know how valuable a jewel is; but you do not see it till the sun shines. Then how it sparkles. So we do not know how saved souls will shine till we see them in the presence of Christ.

But it is clear that, in order to saved souls being the crown of those employed by Jesus to convert them, and in order to that crown shining as the light, the Saviour, and the soul-savers, and the saved, must all know each other. Have no doubt about it. To children that know me, I have said, little friends, if we go to heaven toge-

ther, I will know you, and you shall know me. How could you be my crown else? And we shall both know Jesus, and know Him as not only saving us, but as making us happier, because He used us to save each other. The reaper comes back from the harvest-field bringing his sheaves with him.

III. When?

I am not going to fix the date. I cannot. Some say, perhaps to-morrow. It is a bright faith, if it do not lead to neglect of present duty. Many are unable to share it; but the date does not so much matter. He comes. We shall see Him. And if we love Him, we shall be like Him.

It matters not when, if we are looking for Him, and doing three things which I will express, using the same alliterations as in the announcement of the heads:

If we are watching,

If we are working,

If we are wrestling,

Against sin—for Christ—with God—in fight—in labour—in prayer. Blessed are those servants who, when He cometh, He shall find so doing.

Two things, in conclusion, I wish to say.

1. **Paul's crown in the presence of Jesus, was the kind of crown Jesus wears Himself.**

Christ is Lord of all. He has all power. [He is Lord of all worlds. But we learn from Scripture that His joy is in saved souls.

Take these texts to prove this—

"He shall see of the travail of His

soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities."

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

2. Christ's joy and Paul's may be, in our place, our own.

I will not say what this teaches to me. But to you this word. If you can bring a companion to Christ, you will know him and love him to all eternity. Try this way of making lasting friend-

ships. You can do it by giving. Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness. You can do it by prayer. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. You can do it by work. Would you like to try by being teachers, ministers, missionaries?

Hear what Paul said about his crown in another place; hear it for excitement and comfort,—

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at the last day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Amen.

HYMN.

The pearly gates are open wide,
I see the bright array;
On either side the angels glide,
To keep the shining way.
And little children learn to find
The way by angels trod,
Where Christ's redeemed together walk
The shining way of God.

And soon they walk the golden streets,
Not slighted and alone;
On either side the angels glide,
To lead them to the throne.
And there they'll wear a starry crown,
Who once did toil and plod,
For Christ's redeemed as kings shall tread
The shining way of God.

II. As in Class.

From the remarks on crowns of different kinds made in the introduction, name—

1. A crown that every year is new,
- 2—3. Two crowns of purest gold and blue;
4. A crown devised in mockery cruel;
5. A silvery crown that needs no jewel;
6. A crown that's busy all the day.
7. A pretty crown that's fond of play.

Find in the Bible these six more crowns.

1. A liquid crown.
2. A living crown.
3. A written crown.
4. A rotting crown.

5. A blooming crown.

6. A blessed crown.

If you find the last I think it will make you smile. But when you have smiled at it, think of the blessedness, and of the Lonely One who most may be said to wear it.

What is the crown spoken of in the text?

Who was to wear it?

Where was he to have it?

When was he to get it?

Can any of us get such a crown?

What three little words made the three heads?

The answers to Rhymed Pictures, in our second number, and to the first four questions under the head of "Alphabet of Nouns," will be found in the following passages—

ANSWERS TO RHYMED PICTURES.

2 Sam. xxi. 10.—Judges vii. 16.

ANSWERS to A B C D in the ALPHABET of NOUNS.

ARK.

1. Noah's Ark. Genesis vii. 7—10.
2. Ark of bulrushes. Exodus ii. 3.
3. Ark of the Covenant. Hebrews ix. 4.

BOW.

1. The rainbow. Gen. ix. 14.
2. Revelation vi. 2.
3. 2 Samuel i. 18.
4. 1 Samuel xx. 40.
5. 2 Chronicles xviii. 33.

CLOUD.

1. The pillar cloud. Exodus xiv. 19, 20.
2. The cloud like a man's hand. 1 Kings xviii. 44.

3. The cloud that received Jesus. Acts i. 9.
4. The cloud Jesus comes in. Luke xxi. 27.
5. The sea's garment. Job xxxviii. 9.
6. The rainbow cloud. Genesis ix. 13.

DOOR.

1. The door of the Ark. Genesis vii. 16.
2. The door of the heart. Rev. iii. 20.
3. The door of Christ's sepulchre. Matthew xxviii. 2; or the prison-doors, Acts v. 19.
4. The door of a family in Israel. Exodus xii. 23.
5. The doors of the house where the disciples were assembled. John xx. 19.

RHYMED PICTURES.

3

Kneeling beneath a tree,
Where there was none to see,
He yet was seen;
A stranger knew him well,
And, meeting him, could tell
Where he had been.

4

A river flowing,
With rushes growing;
A little babe in a basket:
A lady standing by,
With a tear in her eye;
Her jewel was there in a casket.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—E and F.


EAR.

- Three ears I've read of, tinged with blood—
1. One wounded kindly, though with pain;
 2. One that was sanctified to God;
 3. One that was cut, and healed again;
 4. Ears I have read of, strange to say,
That never heard, yet warned to save;
 5. Ears, too, that in a day of play
Their treasures to an idol gave.
 6. Find me the texts; and one more seek,
Which makes an ear both hear and speak.

FIELD.

1. A bloody field with memories dark invested;
2. A blazing field which notice loath arrested;
3. A blessed field by sad deceit suggested.
4. A purchased field, pledge of a kingdom given;
5. A wide, wide field, the property of heaven;
6. A field which cattle found, unled, undriven.
7. A field at rest, because by man neglected;
8. A field at rest, because by God protected;
9. A field at rest, waiting the time expected.
10. These fields I wish from you to know,
Who are like things in field that grow.

A LITTLE STORY OF TWO BROTHERS.

 HIS is an old story. I cannot tell you how long ago it happened; but it must have been thousands of years past. It is about two brothers. There never were brothers like them. I will call them by two short names, not quite the names they had, but nearly so in meaning. One, then, we shall say, was Gain, and the other was Vain. When the first was born, his mother said, "Ah! this is the child that is to do the great deed God told me about," and she gave him his name to show that she thought him a grand possession. When his younger brother was born, she did not think any thing of him, except that he was born to die, so she named him as I have said. It was like saying of her first-born, this is grain, and of her second son, this is chaff. She was all mistaken, as will now be seen.

The boys grew up together, and by-and-by, as boys will do, chose different trades. One would be a farmer. He liked to plough, and sow, and reap, and it was a very good choice, as I know. It is a fine thing to turn up the soil, and put seed in it, and see it grow, and then in harvest-time, cut down the yellow corn. The other was fond of animals, and he took to taking care of sheep. That is a fine thing, too. Is it not nice to see the gentle white creatures feeding on the green grass, and in the spring-time to see the lambs dancing about? Well, these two brothers surely might have agreed with each other—one in the ploughed fields, the other in

pastures? The more so it might have been, because the wide world was before them. But, through the fault of Gain, they did not agree.

Gain was a proud fellow. He thought he had no fault. Vain was humble. He often went to God, and said: "O Lord, I am a great sinner." The father and mother of the boys had often told them that once they lived in a beautiful garden, but that they did not do what God, who planted the garden, wished them to do; and that He put them out of it; and that ever since their hope of getting back again, or getting to a better garden, rested on something God had said about a son that should be given them. The mother thought Gain was the one that was to bring them back to the beautiful garden. But, as I said, he did not think there was any fault in the matter. He said he would till his fields, and thank God for sending rain, and ripening the crops, and that was enough. But Vain said: "I am weak, bad, lost, some One must help me;" and he often listened to his father and mother's story, glad to think that a Helper was coming. His parents had told their boys also that the Helper would himself need to suffer and even to die, and that God had told them to show that they looked for the Great Friend and Sufferer by killing lambs, or sheep, or calves, and burning them. That was as much as to say: We deserve to die, but the good Lord has promised to send One to die in our stead; so we do this to let

our hope in Him be seen. It was as much as to say: "Come, Lord, come, and bear our sins, that we may live."

Now, Gain was too proud to do this. And one day he would have quite a trial with his brother whether God would not be better pleased with an offering that did not shed blood. So the two came and put their offerings before God. Gain brought fruits and grain. Vain brought lambs. Well, God would not look at Gain's heaps. But he accepted Vain's gifts. The reason was, that one offered as if he did not need a Saviour; the other offered as a sinner that had no help except in God. The one said: "I am all right." The other said: "I am all wrong. Lord, save me!"

These two brothers have many who are like them. Perhaps some may hear this story who are as differ-

ent as Gain and Vain. But I must tell you what happened afterward. When Gain knew that God would not take his gift, he was very angry. You could have seen his wrath in his face. So he began to cherish thoughts of hate towards his brother. He resolved to kill him, and one day, asking him to go into the fields, he chose a lonely place and fell on him and killed him. He thought he did it secretly, but God saw him and spoke to him, and sent him away out of the country; and we now know that proud, unbelieving Cain was the first murderer and rejector of Christ, and that Abel was Christ's first martyr.

Questions:—

What were the real names of Gain and Vain?

Why were there never any other brothers like them?

Find a text in the New Testament that tells of the two offerings, and what made the one better than the other?

A YOUNG THIEF AND A SISTER'S TEARS.

WHILE walking out one day I saw a boy setting some bricks on their ends one behind the other. After placing a dozen or so in line he knocked the last one forward, and down went the whole line.

"Well," thought I, "those bricks are emblems of children's acts. As the fall of one carried down all the rest, so does the fall of a child into sin and sorrow sink his whole family into a pit of grief."

This thought brought up a scene lately witnessed in a court-room at New

York. A boy, only ten years old, stood before the judge charged with stealing. He pleaded guilty. Just beyond the bar stood a woman and a little girl—his mother and sister—bathed in tears. Seeing their grief, the kind judge called them forward, when the little girl, throwing her arms round her brother's neck and sobbing violently, cried:

"O Johnny, Johnny, what brought you here?"

This loving act seemed to melt the little thief's heart, and he, too, burst into tears. Presently the precious girl with-

drew her arms from her brother's neck, and, kneeling at the Judge's feet, cried in piteous tones,

"O Judge, Judge, let my brother go!"

The Judge was moved to tears, and, believing that the young thief was subdued and penitent, replied,

"Take him with you, my girl."

The mother and sister then seized the sobbing boy with arms of love and gladness, and took him from the courtroom.

Boys and girls, mark in this fact, the

effect of that boy's sin! It wounded two hearts besides his own. Had he gone to jail, the mother's heart might have been broken by grief, as many mothers' hearts have been since children began to be wicked. Keep this truth before you, therefore, when you are tempted. Your sin must affect others besides yourself. If you are wicked, your parents and brothers and sisters suffer pain, and Jesus is grieved. For others' sake, therefore, as well as your own, let sin alone. Sin hurts dreadfully. Let it alone!

PICTURE PUZZLE.

THERE are three damsels who represent three things which are of more value than gold, silver and precious stones. They are real fairies, and are so fond of each other that they never travel except in each other's company. Though they look young, they are in reality very old, for it is known that they visited Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Wherever

they go they chase away gloom, shed light, and make the wretched happy. Millions of children and grown people have received gifts from them, and they never refuse to grant favours to any who desire them enough to ask for them. The one on the right is the chief of these three damsels. What are their names?

THE VALUE OF A GOOD NAME.

TOWELL BUXTON, when quite a little fellow, was sent to Dr. Burney's school. Upon one occasion he was accused by one of the teachers of talking during school hours, for which he was about to be punished. When Dr. Burney came in the boy appealed to him, and stoutly denied the

charge. The teacher as stoutly maintained it; but Dr. Burney stopped him, saying; "I never found the boy telling a lie, and I will not disbelieve him now." There, boys and girls, was a character worth having—strive all to possess it!

A SECRET.

CHILDREN, I am going to tell you a secret.

The way to make yourself pleasing to others is to show that you care for them. The world is pretty much like the Miller of Mansfield, who "cared for nobody, no, not he—because nobody cared for him." And the whole world will serve you so if you give them the same cause. Let people see, then, that you do care for them, by showing

them the small courtesies of life, in which there is no parade, whose voice is too still to tease, and which show themselves by affectionate tones, and kind looks, and little acts of attention, giving others the preference in every little enjoyment, at the table, in the field, walking, sitting and standing. Willing minds and pleasant faces make children happy and respected.

HYMN.

1. "He could not be hid"—for the sinner would haste
Behind him to weep at the Pharisee's feast,
To wipe with her hair, when she washed with her tears
His feet who had loved her, and silenced her fears.
"He could not be hid"—for the blind and the lame,
His love and His power would together proclaim,
The dumb would speak out, and the deaf would recall
The name of that Jesus who healed them all.
2. "He could not be hid"—for around Him would press
The children of sorrow, of pain, and distress;
And faith by the hem of His garment would prove
What virtue there issued from Him who is love.
"He could not be hid"—for the widow of Nain
Would point to her son, now restored her again;
Would say 'twas His love, His compassion and grace,
Gave back that lost son to a mother's embrace.
3. "He could not be hid"—no although He should seek
Seclusion from Israel, and home with the Greek;
Although for a season repose He desire
Aloof by the sea-coasts of Sidon and Tyre.
"He could not be hid"—for a mother's strong prayer
For a dear, tortured daughter rings clear in the air,
Through the fence of His silence, nay harsh-sounding word,
She presses for help, and her pleading is heard.
4. "He could not be hid"—for the multitude fed,
Would tell 'twas His bounty procured for us bread:
No hand could have multiplied thus seven-fold,
But His who provided the manna of old.
"He could not be hid"—for hark! hark! to that shout!
Hosanna! Hosanna! the children cry out;
And oh, blessed for us, though some would have chid,
That Jesus the Saviour can never be hid.

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. As at Church.

Sing to God's praise this

HYMN.

STAND up ! stand up for Jesus !

Ye soldiers of the Cross :
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss ;
From victory to victory
His army shall be led,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up ! stand up for Jesus !

The trumpet-call obey ;
Forth to the mighty conflict
In this His glorious day ;
Ye that are men, now serve Him,]
Against unnumbered foes ;
Let courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose,

Stand up ! stand up for Jesus !

Stand in His strength alone ;
The arm of flesh will fail you—
Ye dare not trust your own :
Put on the Gospel armour,
And, watching unto prayer,
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.

Stand up ! stand up for Jesus !

The strife will not be long ;
This day the noise of battle,
The next, the victor's song :
To Him that overcometh
A crown of life shall be
He with the King of glory
Shall reign eternally.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: I Samuel xvii., 38-54; Ephesians vi., 11-17.


PRAYER.

O LORD, Thy word speaks of a good fight of faith, which all of us ought to fight. Help us, Lord, so to do. Help us to resist evil, and to conquer it. Help us

against Satan, the world, and sin in ourselves. Help us at all times. Help us to-day. May we be helped in our little service now, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

My text to-day is in the second chapter of second Timothy, third verse, "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

 **SOLDIER** is a person whose business is to fight. But fighting is of different kinds.

A man may fight with swords or other weapons that kill the body ; or he may fight with words which, whether bad or good, are often as sharp as arrows ; or he may fight, as Job and Jacob did, by patience and prayer. Christ has had soldiers who have fought in all these ways. With swords—for example, there are Abraham, and Joshua, and David. With words—there are the prophets and apostles, say Elijah and Paul. With patience and prayer—all these I have named, after the pattern of our Lord Himself. The lowest kind of fighting is with weapons that kill—fists, or clubs, or knives, or spears, or bayonets, or guns. The next is with words. I called them sharp arrows—some poisoned, some tipped with healing balm, soothing the wounds they make. The highest way of fighting is the last I named—patience and prayer. That seems doing nothing, but it is better than doing. A soft answer is better than a sharp answer, and oftentimes, silence, if it be suffering, and not sulky silence, is better than both. The people of Paris, during the long siege now past, did not fight; but when history shall do its work, they will be mentioned as in the highest sense good soldiers, because they endured and waited.

Christ has had good soldiers of all these classes. Christ, as the Son of

God, was all through the Old Testament. That was He that stood opposite Joshua with a drawn sword in His hand, the Captain of the Lord's host, and Joshua was His good soldier. Saul was His faithless one; David was otherwise. But Christ, when He came in flesh, never fought thus Himself. Children, I wish you to think of it with reverence—yet to think of it. We do not have much about Christ's boyhood; but if we had more, do you think we would read of His striking anyone—giving blow for blow. Read what is told us about what happened in the garden. He would not let Peter fight to save Him. Then He said: "My kingdom is not of this world." The time was past for the fighting that He had used before. Just as the rainbow says: "The time is past for sweeping the world bare with a flood." Words now—Gospel words—not swords; and most of all suffering and prayer. So fought our Great Captain. So have fought His staff-officers. So fight His good soldiers.

But the qualities of good soldiers appear in all the three degrees. Faithfulness, courage, self-denial, and endurance appear in them all. Good is honourable. Here are two pictures. I have seen the one repeatedly. See, there is a man in a red uniform, passing along the streets. On each side of him is a soldier, with musket and bayonet fixed. The poor man has no weapon, but is walking with downcast

eye. He is a deserter. Yet do not be too hard on him. Perhaps he is a coward. But, perhaps, he was tricked into being a soldier, and is drawn away by thoughts of a mother or sister at home. In any case, he is not an honourable soldier. But see, there is a row of men drawn up in a park. They do not look young, though many of them are not old. They are weather-beaten and battered, some of them with seams across their cheeks. But there is a lady passing along, hanging medals on their necks. These are the Guards that fought in the Crimea. Many, brave as themselves, are beneath the sod far away; and the dead are honoured in the living. If you wish to see a deserter, read "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." If you want to see a row of Guards with medals on their breasts, put there by royal hands, read Heb. xi. There they stand, bronzed, battered, but always brave—Abel, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and the rest.

But, for the purpose of this sermon, I may ask you to go with me to a very different scene, one which many yet alive have actually visited. Let us go and see Paris, as it was when besieged by the Germans. What a spectacle! We come upon the Prussian besiegers first, and then on the besieged French. I will ask you to look at four pictures.

1. The Trench.

What are these men doing? They have spades, and pickaxes, and mattocks, and are making ditches and mounds. I have seen such as you at that sort of work. I have helped them

on the sands at the sea-shore. That was play. This is earnest. These men are working very hard. They are working to get a place for guns and for shelter when balls come. And there are others bringing the guns up, sweating, toiling, and, I fear, some of them swearing. Further off are troops marching, the blood of some of whom will stain the water in these trenches.

2. The Sentinel's Post.

Come to another place. There is a solitary soldier, pacing to and fro, or lying quiet on the ground. The frost is keen. The snow is white on the ground. He is sleepy, but must not sleep. He is standing guard to see if any foe approaches. If he should sleep, and an officer come round to find him sleeping, woe to him. He would perhaps be shot. It is hard, but the army might be lost, otherwise.

3. The Battle-field.

The sentries have given the alarm. The army has turned out—the enemy is at hand. I never saw a battle; but good soldiers now love not their lives. They stand by each other, and say, do or die—sometimes alone—and do what they are bidden. When I say, sometimes alone, I think of two things away from battle. One is in a picture some of you may have seen. It is that of a little boy in a burning ship, waiting at his post, and in the end dying at it, because his father had bid him remain till he should call him—and his father was now dead.

I have heard a story somewhat like that about a boy, son of a brave Indian soldier, and a good soldier, also, of

Jesus Christ. His father, then living in the West-end of London, took his boy with him into the city, and while he was transacting business he left him on London-bridge, bidding him pace to and fro till he should return. He meant to go back in an hour, but forgot, and went home. Enquiries there, as to what had become of the boy, woke up the father's memory. Hastening back to London-bridge, he found the boy faithfully walking to and fro, as he had been bidden.

4. The Hospital.

As we go in, we hear groans and wailing. As we go further, we see what is sadder. Sufferers in pale silence, exhausted, ready to die. There is blood all around us. There is death standing near this couch and that. There is kindness busy, and skill doing its best; but pains, weariness, fear, distress, everywhere.

Now, after this long preface, I must give you my heads. They have been illustrated beforehand, and I will do little more than name them. Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. That includes—

1. HARD WORKING.

Work is not bad ;
Its toil is sad :
But in itself
'Tis more than pelf.
The worker sleeps ;
The idler weeps.
No honest toil
Brings shame or soil,
If ever we
Good soldiers be
Of Christ the King.

We must not shrink from labouring.

Here's the demand ;
With head or hand,
At desk in school,
On office stool ;
By land or sea,
Where'er you be,
Do honest work ;
And never present duty shirk.

But Christ your Master asks
Your help in special tasks ;
To live your life not all in vain ;
To do some good ; to teach, to train ;
To travel on your own right road ;
To bring companions near to Jesus ;
'Tis hard to dig, to march, to bear great load,
Yet he's no friend who would from burdens ease us.

2. HARD WATCHING.

Soldiers watch upon the ground,
Tented camp or fortress round,
Lest the stealthy, eager foe,
Strike a sudden deadly blow,
And his brethren's blood confess
The sentinel's unfaithfulness.

The shepherds nightly watch a field,
Helpless sheep and lambs to shield ;
Lest the wolfish prowler come,
Find the flock's protectors dumb.
And the bleat of captured lamb,
And the wail of startled dam,
Breaking on the sleeping sense,
Rouse too late the due defence.
Then the shepherd on the plain
Perils his own life in vain.

Sailors watch upon the deck,
Lest the ship encounter wreck ;
Where companion ship may shock,
Or 'mid breakers lurk the rock ;
So might perished lives proclaim
The watchman's faithlessness and shame.

3. HARD FIGHTING.

Three foes assail you, children dear,
One subtle, noiseless, foe to fear,

Like roaring, raging lion he ;
 Devouring in his cruelty.
 His name is Satān—serpent, devil ;
 The father of all lies and evil.

The world is adversary too,
 Alluring, frowning, fair, untrue ;
 Bidding you still in present things
 Your portion seek ; hiding its stings :
 Laughing at what the future brings.

But, worst of all, a foe there lurks within—
 Your own bad nature—inborn, rooted sin—
 Your wishes, passions, weaknesses and fears,
 Parents of errors, follies, guilt, and tears.

Here is a picture. A brave soldier
 is assailed by foes. They set on him,
 but he is brave and strong, and defends
 himself stoutly. While he is doing so,
 see a serpent creeping near and trying
 to coil itself round his limb. Yes, but
 he may with strong foot tread it down.
 But see,—see, he grows faint. His cheek
 is pale, his arm droops. What can save
 him now? Only a heavenly helper.
 Blessed be God, the good soldier has
 such a Helper always near.

4. HARD SUFFERING.

Earth is full of shadows,
 Earth is full of trials ;
 O'er the hills and meadows,
 Sorrow pours her vials.

High and humble suffer,
 Suffer soon or late ;
 Or if any differ,
 'Tis a hapless fate.

For the perfect Father
 Cannot spare the rod ;
 The afflicted rather
 Are the loved of God.

Happy he that dureth
 Patient, waiting, meek ;
 Patience crown ensareth,
 Strength awaits the weak.

Pain, 'tis hard to bear it,
 Grief, 'tis sore to feel,
 Crown, 'tis grand to wear it,
 Joy, 'twill sorrows heal.

He who prayed, strong crying,
 In his earthly day,
 Hushes all our sighing,
 Wipes our tears away.

Now will you enlist under the banner
 of our Great Captain, and go to His
 wars, enduring hardness ; hard working,
 as in the trenches ; hard watching, as
 at the sentinel's post ; hard fighting, as
 in the battle ; hard-suffering, if need be,
 as in the hospital? Let me put these
 words, then, into your lips :

I will be a soldier,
 Though the work be hard ;
 Doing still my duty,
 Earning Christ's reward.

I will be a soldier,
 Though the watch be drear ;
 Keeping post unslumbering,
 Till the Lord appear.

I will be a soldier,
 Though the fight be keen ;
 Facing still the foemen,
 Till their flight be seen.

I would be a soldier,
 Though the wounds be sore,
 Bearing without murmur
 Till all pain be o'er.

I will be a soldier,
 Obedient, brave, and true,
 Working, watching, fighting still ;
 If need be, suffering too.

I would be a soldier,
 Proved on battle-ground ;
 Steadfast, valiant, patient :
 Then a conqueror crowned.

II. As in Class.

As we are going to have something about large numbers in our talk to-day, let us take as our opening hymn—

A ROUND the throne of God in heaven
Thousands of children stand,
Children whose sins are all forgiven—
A holy, happy, band.

In flowing robes of spotless white
See every one arrayed,
Dwelling in everlasting light,
And Joys that never fade, &c.

PRAYER.

GOD, Thou seest us; Thou art in this room. Thou seest each heart. Thou hearest what we now say. Thou hearest prayer. We all have wants; we all have sinned. Supply our wants; forgive our sins; make us very happy in our class to-day; and, when we go away from it, may we be saying in our hearts: Surely Jesus was with us to-day; surely the Lord was in this place. Hear us for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

HE COUNTS AND NAMES THE STARS.

Where is our star-text to-day, if you please? In the book of Psalms.

In which Psalm is it? See, I have opened the Bible, without search, exactly at the right place. It is Psalm cxlvii. 4.

"He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names."

There are only two clauses in the verse. Count the number of the words. Fourteen words. Each clause has got seven words.

Is there any one named in the verse? No.

But who is He that is spoken of? God. "He telleth the number of the stars."

IF you called a star by its name would it understand you? But

God can speak to a star, and bid it go out or shine, as He pleases. When God speaks, the very dead answer. Now, suppose we had said to Lazarus: "Come forth," do you think he would have heard us? No. Where was he? He was lying in the grave. But if we had said "Lazarus" as loud as we could speak, would he have heard? No. Refer to John xi. 43—and "Jesus cried, with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth." Was it because He needed to

What is the meaning of telleth? What do you call a man behind a counter in a bank who counts money? He is a cashier, but also called teller, because he counts money. To tell, then, is to count.

What is it that God tells the number of? The stars.

What are stars? Those bright points we see in the sky that we know to be worlds.

What besides does the text say to us about God in regard to the stars? "He calleth them all by their names."

call with a loud voice that Lazarus might hear? Was that why He spoke loud? No. Why did He speak with a loud voice? That the people might hear, and His authority be shown. Was there anything else Jesus did which was not needful, but done for the people's sake. He gave His father thanks that He had heard His prayer. He said: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me." Christ gave thanks to God, though He did not need to say it aloud, because He wanted the people to know when He said:

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me;" that He had prayed to God—that God had answered His prayer. Come now, tell me something that God calls that might seem even less able to hear than a star? A star, of course, is matter; but it is not living matter, and it cannot hear. But tell me anything that is even less than matter. Look at this sentence. "He calleth things that are not." Is not that less than matter—even dead matter? He calleth things that are not to be something. He can speak to nothing, and make something to be. Give me the word for that? Created. Find a text in Hebrews xi. about things being made without anything to make them out of. The 3rd verse. "Through faith we understand that the words were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." They were made out of nothing. Well, when God made the stars, what did He speak to? Nothing. When He made the stars, He said: "Come up, stars!" and they came.

Now we will go back to our text.

Do people know the name of things they are not well acquainted with? No. Then to name the stars is to show good acquaintance with them. God gives to the stars the very names that they should get. In the Bible are a great many names with a meaning. What did God call the first two persons in the world? He called them Adam—both Adam; the same name for husband and wife. What does Adam mean? Red earth; because

they were made out of the dust. What did Adam call his wife first of all? Woman. He called her woman. What is the meaning of the word Eve? Living or life. Well, he called her first of all, woman, and then he called her life. Well, Adam said she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man; but afterwards, when he called her Eve, what was his reason for it? Because she was the mother of all living. Was that because you, and I, and all mankind, was to be descended from Adam and Eve? No. It was because Christ was to descend from her; she was to be the mother of the Seed. Why does he say the mother of all living in that case? Because, after we sinned, we all become dead to God, and could only live through Christ. Now is not this a strange thing? If I were to say there were a number of dead people here, do you think I would say what was not true? I fear not. I should be pleased to think you were all living in the sense that Adam meant. I should be very pleased if you were all living in that sense; but I am afraid we are not all living in that case. We only get life through the woman's seed—through Jesus. This is very solemn and important, therefore I wish you to feel it. I cannot say that this boy is dead, or this girl is dead, but Christ could do that if He were here. He could say this boy is living, he loves Me; this one is dead, he does not love Me; this girl is dead, she does not love Me. Christ could do that. It would be very delightful if I knew that Christ could come into the

room and say : I look all round this room, and there is not a dead soul in it ; they are all Eve's children—they are all living. I want you to think of that, dear children. I want you to say this question to yourselves : Am I dead, or am I living? And the answer comes in this way. If I am Christ's—if Christ has opened my heart and come in, and is there, I am alive ; and if He is not, I am in my soul like Lazarus lying in his grave—I am dead. Well, that is the reason why Adam called his wife Eve—first woman, and then Eve or life, because Christ did promise she should be the mother of Him that should kill the serpent. Adam said to her : "You are to be the mother of the Saviour, who is to come and save men from their sins ; I shall not call you woman merely any more, I will call you life."

We will go back to our text again.

By their names. Do you know that men give names to the stars sometimes? Yes, they do. The astronomers give names to the stars, and I will, by and by, show you one or two and give you their names ; but no man ever living could name all the stars that are, because there are such an enormous multitude of them. I will write two or three words if you will bear them in mind.

Clouds—Nations.

Systems—Families.

There are clouds of stars, and systems of stars—clouds, or great clusters. I have said they are like nations. Systems are suns with planets round about them, and I call them families. Whose family do we belong to—whose

star family? To the sun's family—the solar system. There are a great many other families, besides our sun's family, that belong to the great cluster he is in. I will show you something a little like it. They call these clusters *nebulae*, clouds ; and the reason is, that when you first see them with a telescope they look like a white mist ; you look again with a more powerful telescope, and then you see that they are made up of stars. You see an appearance in the firmament of one or two actual clusters. Now, you could not tell the number even of the clusters in the heavens, and yet every cluster has a number of suns in it. It would be difficult to count them. Every sun has, probably, a family of worlds, yet, who counts them all? God ; and He gives them all a name. Would it not puzzle you to give a name to all these little dots you see on the board? Well, God has ten thousand thousand times more stars than I have dots, and yet He knows them all.

Can you tell me who it was that was promised to have a nation from him that would be as numerous as the stars? It was Abraham. What else were they to be? As numerous as the sands upon the sea-shore in multitude. The next time you go to the sea-shore take up a handful of sand and try to count the grains. If God pleased he could tell you exactly how many grains of sand you had got in your hand. Here is a little girl with my hand upon her head. You would think I was very clever if I could tell you how many hairs she has got, and yet the Bible says the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

You see God takes such care of us that the very number of our hairs is counted. What else does Christ tell us that God does, showing his care? Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father.

Do you think you could count all the sparrows in England? It would take you a long time to count them, and before you had finished there would be a lot more sparrows, and you would have to commence again. Did you hear me tell once a little story about a sparrow that happened to myself, and that made me think of that text. At the house that I lived in formerly, one morning I was going out and I saw a little thing in the corner of one of the steps, and it turned out to be a little sparrow frozen to death. I was very sorry to see it. Perhaps, poor thing, it was very very cold, and it came and thought, here is a little place where I can get some shelter. Perhaps it was sick; and you find that little creatures, when they are going to die, often like to go into some sheltered corner—like to go to some refuge. You and I, when we die, must have some refuge. Christ the great rock—the shadow of the great rock in a weary land. Well, when I come to die, I tell you what I mean to do. I mean to do like that little sparrow; it came and laid itself down in the corner. Well, I mean to do something like that. I mean to go to the shadow of that great rock. When you come to die, do you do that too. But then it would be a pity if you came to die, and said: "I must have a refuge," and you did not

know the road to it. So you must know it now, and go often to it, and you will say: "What a fine shelter this is. I know this will keep me when I come to die." And when you do come to die, there will be no difficulty about the way to it.

I was very sad to look at the dead bird, and really felt sorry, till it came into my mind like music—not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your heavenly Father. There is a little story about birds and me, and some of you have heard it, but some have not; and the bigger ones that have heard it will allow me to tell it again. When I was a boy I lived in the country, and I was often in the fields. One Saturday evening I was out in the fields and what do you think happened to me? I caught a little partridge. It had got its wing a little hurt. It was quite lively, but still it was not able to fly, and when the rest flew away this one fluttered along the ground. I caught it, and being a boy, I thought this very nice. I will take it home and will bring it up, and have a tame partridge, and I was so happy. I went away home and put it into a kind of cage, and then I went to bed, and I began to think about my partridge, and said to myself: "O, it is quite a little partridge—young—and it will need its mother's care. I do not think I will be able to take care of it;" and this kept me from sleeping. Well, I said: "I will get up to-morrow early and will take it away back to the place where I got it, and will put it down, when it will cry out, and its mother will come to it, when it will be better taken care of." Well, I did get up very

early, but do you know when I got up it was very wet; the rain was very heavy. I went to look at the partridge and gave it a little corn. I will wait an hour or two, thought I. But two hours after the poor little thing was dead. Well, now, I was not doing a cruel thing designedly; I did not mean to do any harm; but I will tell you this, I had a very sore heart for a great many days—always thinking of the poor little partridge, taken away from its mother, and dying because I was ignorant, and did not know how to manage it.

One more thing. Look at the third verse, what do you read? "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up

their wounds." Now, tell me whether it is a grander thing to do what the third verse says, or to do what the fourth verse says? The third verse. Ah, yes. Our hearts are greater things than stars. Do you think if a person could come to me and say: "Sir, you have got a number of children here, I will give you as many stars for them, the brightest. Suppose such an absurd thing could be done, do you think I would make a good bargain? No, I would make a very foolish bargain, because every one of you is far more valuable than a star.

Now pray softly and distinctly, saying, with me, the Lord's Prayer.

THE "TEN WORDS."

THE Jews call the Ten Commandments by the name of "The Decalogue," which signifies the "Ten Words." As these precepts cannot be learned in too many ways, we here give *the substance* of them in ten lines, which will help the memory to recollect them in *full*.

1. I am the Lord Thy God—serve only me;

2. Before no image bow thy impious knee;
3. Use not my name in trifles or in jest;
4. Dare not profane My sacred day of rest;
5. Ever to parents due obedience pay;
6. Thy fellow-creature, man, thou shalt not slay;
7. In no licentious conduct bear a part;
8. From stealing keep with care thy hand and heart;
9. All false reports against thy neighbour hate;
10. And ne'er indulge a wish for his estate;



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. As at Church.

Praise God by singing these lines:

HYMN.

With love the Saviour's heart o'erflowed,
Love spoke in every breath;
Supreme it reigned throughout His life
And triumphed in His death.

Behold this new command He gives
To those who bear His name,
That they shall one another love,
As He hath loved them.

In every action, every thought,
Be this great law fulfilled;
Forgotten be each selfish aim,
Each angry passion stilled.

Let all who bear the name of Christ,
While they His sufferings view,
Think of His words, "Each other love,
As I have loved you."

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Jerem. xxxi., 31–34; John xiii., 31–38.

PRAYER.

O LORD God, we have read in Thy book that Thou art love. We bless Thee for the great text. We pray Thee to write the blessed truth deep on our hearts. We praise Thee for the great proof of Thy love in sending Jesus to save us. We ask Thy grace that we may love Thee with all our hearts, and give ourselves quite to Christ. We praise Thee

also for the Holy Spirit who loves us and strives with us to make us good. Keep us from grieving Him. Make us all loving to each other. Teach us to love all men, and to seek their good. Hasten the day when all shall know Thee and love Thee from the least to the greatest. Bless our service to-day for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

My text to-day is in the second chapter of the first Epistle of John, eighth verse, first words, "Again a new commandment."

THE smallest boy and the youngest girl will be able to say that text I am sure. You remember a question that the wise man Solomon put? He says, Is there anything of which it can be said, Lo, this is a new thing; and he goes on to answer his own question: No, he says, there is nothing new. Will you just read my text? First of all you might be apt to say, Well, John does not agree with Solomon, and if he had heard Solomon, he would have said, Yes, Solomon, there is one thing new. But let us see, he says, Again, and "again" means, on the other hand, something added to what he says before; so look back and see what he said before, and when you look back, John seems to eat his own words, for just in the verse before he says, I write no new commandment unto you. Surely he has not lost his senses. He calls a thing not new but old, and then he calls it again not old but "new." That seems a sort of puzzle. Well, I hope to be able to explain that to you before we close. The first thing, then, about the new commandment is this, that it is no new one at all. To say that, of course, would be very bold of me, and very bad; but you see I am only following the Apostle himself, and when I say the new commandment is no new commandment at all, it is just what John himself says. Ah! but you will say, How can that be, how can a thing

be both new and old? In answer to that I will say: Look at your Bibles, mine here is "the comprehensive Bible," containing the Old and New Testaments. Ah! but you say, these make two different books; but it is not so, they make one Bible, so that the Bible is both an old thing and a new thing. There are some people that do not hold by that—the Jews, for example. They say that the New Testament is wrong because they think that the Messiah has yet to come; and there are some people calling themselves Christians that say they don't like the Old Testament, they don't like it much at least; they hold by the New Testament, but they don't understand that old book. Well, they are both wrong. We believe in them both as the same, as two yet the same, differing from each other only as the dim light differs from the bright light. You see it in the gas; now it is small and dim, and then you turn it up, when it gives you a bright light. It is not a new light, and yet it is. That is just the difference of the Old and New Testaments—the difference between the dawn and the day, between the bud and the blossom, between the blossom and the fruit, between the boy and the man; the former will be a different person and yet the same, he will be old and new at twenty years of age; he will be an old boy and a new man. Take another way. Sometimes you will see an advertisement in a paper about a

book, perhaps a children's book, and you say to papa and mamma, Oh ! here is a new edition of that book I like so much. Well, then, it is an old book, but it is to be new at the same time ; the substance of the book is there, but something is added to it ; it is the old matter in the new volume.

I will try to show you how this commandment is old, and yet new. But let us see what the commandment is. John does not tell us in my text. He only calls it a new commandment, the old and yet the new. He does not quite say what it is. But he does elsewhere tell us what it is he says. In another place, writing to a friend, he says, "The new commandment, which is from the beginning, is that we love one another." And in the night in which Christ was betrayed, as our reading in the New Testament has shown us, Christ said the very same thing : "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." That is the commandment that is both new and old—love one another. Christ says it and John says it—love one another. There is a story of John which I shall tell here. It is said, when very old, he was not able to walk to church, and he got them to carry him on his couch or his litter—a little bed which they could move—into the place. He was so feeble that he could not even sit up and speak to the people, and he just lifted up his hands and said : "Little children love one another." That was all he said, and then his hands dropped down again. Now I think if there had been anybody present there that heard John say that,

and never saw him again, that person would have been very apt to say : "Ah ! I have heard John say that before ; I have read it in his letters, but it is a new commandment to me from this day. John, speaking it with his feeble voice—the beautiful old man lifting up his hands, why it makes the commandment seem as if I had never heard it before. It is new to me from the day I have heard the holy old man speak it so."

But this commandment is very old, as it is new. Not only did Christ give it to His disciples from the time He was going to leave them, from the beginning of the Gospel age, but long, long before this. You will find this commandment in the Old Testament ; nay, it is older than the Old Testament. So it is an old commandment. When God made Adam and Eve, that is what he said to them : "Love each other." When Cain and Abel were born, that is what God said to them, though bad Cain broke the word ; he did not love his brother, but hated him ; and the very fact that he tried to hide his hate showed he knew the law. So it is the same law that God gave at Sinai in the ten commandments. There is a thing called shorthand, by means of which you can put words and sentences very rapidly down in a very small space ; so there is a way of shortening God's commandments, and strange as this is, all the ten commandments, and some of them are pretty big and long, as some of you know, you can condense them into one word—you can distil them into one beautiful word—can shorten them till they just come to this—Love. You can

at least put them into two short commandments—Love God, and, Love one another; and Christ said, on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Thus we see it is an old commandment.

I have now to show you why you may call it new, because there are circumstances that make it new in other senses—make it come with new force and meaning. I will put it in this way, so that you may remember the words. This commandment is new—new, first, because it is written with a new hand, and, secondly, because it is read in a new light. The new hand that writes, and the new light that shines, make it new. It is written with a new hand, and read in a new light.

First of all, it is written by a new hand. The old commandment was written at Sinai—it was written by God at Sinai. We may have a sermon soon upon that subject, and see how God wrote upon the tables of stone the ten commandments. So we say the old commandment was written at Sinai; and here is a curious thing which you will find out if you carefully compare the 68th Psalm with the 4th chapter of Ephesians; but this will be for some of the older children. Find out from the 68th Psalm and the 4th chapter of Ephesians, when compared with each other, that God who was in Sinai was the second person of the Godhead—was the Son of God—so that this commandment was written of old in stone by the Son of God. But then the Son of God was not at Sinai as yet made flesh, so as to be like us—to have

flesh, and blood, and bones, as we have, and as He afterwards came to have. He did appear like a man to Abraham, and to Jacob, and to Joshua, perhaps also. He did, on Sinai, so appear to Moses, but this I cannot say. But still if in the form of a man, yet I am quite sure He had not flesh, and blood, and bones, and hands, as He came afterwards to have, because He hadn't yet been born into the world. How He wrote the commandments on the stone I cannot say; I do not know how He did it. He might have said to the lightnings, "Come hither and cut out all these letters;" I don't know about it, I only know that though "written with the finger of God" the commandments were not written with a human hand like ours; and when I say this commandment is new, because written by a new hand, I mean two things.

First: it was a real human hand that we got this commandment from. Now, I do not mean to say that Christ wrote it down on a piece of paper and gave it to His disciples to keep—gave it to them in a written form. Could you prove to me that Christ ever wrote? He wrote with His finger once upon the dust, and He wrote for a loving purpose too. But we cannot say that he wrote this new commandment for His disciples. Well, at least, He spoke it, and it came from Him as a man. We have it now written in the Book, a new commandment from Jesus Christ the true man. Why is it important to say that? Because He that wrote the commandment, He that spake it, Himself obeyed it; He that gave the command-

ment, being God, also did the commandment being man. Ah! that is a wonderful thing about it. He comes now and lives in the world, and takes this law, and binds it upon Himself. He spoke it before, He does it now. Then, secondly, the human hand that writes it, is a pierced hand, a wounded hand. You know quite well what I am speaking about. I am speaking about the cruel nails that went through His hands when He was put upon the accursed tree. Now that pierced hand is the same that gives us this commandment, and tells us to love one another, with all the glory of His love for us shining round about it; so that in dying for us the love seems to beam upon the commandment, —seems to make it come out in a bright and blessed light, so that we never saw the meaning so well before. Some people have written their names in blood for the purpose of showing that they were very earnest. The person that wrote so said, it will show that I am in earnest; the red signature is in my own blood. It seems to me as if the new commandment had been written for us by Christ with a bleeding hand; and how dear that thought should make the commandment to us!

The second thing is this, the commandment is new, because it is read in a new light. The new light in which we read it is Gospel light. John says: "A new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you"—He is new in giving it, and you are new in getting it, because the light is come and the darkness is past. What is the difference in reading it in the old

light of the times before the Gospel, and the new clear light of the times after the Gospel? I will tell you. It is like as if you had read the commandment beside Mount Sinai, when the fire was blazing around it—read it in the gleam of the lightnings that were flashing out of the cloud, and, on the other hand, that you had read it beside the shepherds, when the angels were up there singing so beautifully about the new-born Saviour. That is the difference between the old light and the new. Standing beside Sinai reading it, it seems to say to me, do it lest I burn you up; and reading it in the light that comes from the shining angels, it seems to say, love one another, for Christ has come to help you to keep the word. The new light is the light of Christ's new love. That is the light, the new light in which we read it now. The difference here between the old light and the light that falls from Christ's love is like reading a thing beside a dim glimmering light, and out in the summer sunshine, warm, and golden, and strong—that is the light of Christ's love, so bright and warm. When Christ said to His disciples, love one another, remember He put the commandment in that very light—love one another as I have loved you. That is the new light, the light that comes from Christ's own love. How did He love them? The general answer is, He loved them more than His own life—He gives Himself to die that they might live; but let me name one or two other things that lead to that.

The first is, Christ loved His disciples in spite of all their faults, and they had a good many. He loved them in spite of them all. You may be sure they had more faults than those we read about; but we do read and know about some of them. No man ever had a teacher like the teacher they had, but they were very slow to learn; sometimes they vexed Him much by mistaking His meaning, and sometimes they quarrelled with each other. They were very far wrong when they said to the fathers and mothers who had brought their little ones to Him: "Don't trouble Him with these children." They were quite wrong then. Now Christ knew all their errors, saw all their sins, and yet, though He reprov'd them and spake truth to them, and on the occasion which I have just mentioned was even angry with them, He loved them on to the very end in spite of all their faults, to the very close of His life; and never did His love come out more than when He saw them very sad to hear Him say He was going to leave them; yet all the while He was comforting them, and vexed to see them so downcast, He knew, at the very moment, that every man of them would in a few hours run away and leave Him—and yet He loved them still.

The second thing is, He loved them by serving them. He was their Lord and Master, yet he was always helping them. There is a beautiful scene in which that comes out: He came not to be ministered to but to minister; that is, to serve—not to have servants that were doing everything for Him, but to be

a servant, doing great and good things for those He loved. Well, one night they were all at supper, and what do you think He did? He got up from the table, and took a towel and tied it round His waist as a servant might do, then He took a basin and poured water into it, and then He stooped down and washed the dust from His disciples' feet, one after the other, till He had done it to all—to Judas even—yes, Christ washed his feet. Peter thought the act very strange, and a thing that ought not to be done, it was out of order altogether, and he was not for letting Jesus do it; and he would not have allowed it if Christ had not looked at him and said: You must let me do it or else you cannot be one of mine: and then Peter said unto Him: Not my feet only, Lord, but my hands and my head also. Afterwards Jesus said to them: Do you know why I did that? I did it to you, that you should do it to each other. I wanted to show you how to love and serve each other. So the new commandment comes to us in this new light: As I have loved you.

And then, the last thing is that He died for them. He died for His disciples. Now there is a sense in which no man can die for his brother—not as Christ died. No one can do it as a sacrifice to take away his brother's sin. If he were to try he would only make sins for himself, and he would not help his brother. The best man living could not take away one of the sins of any one of us; could not take away a boy's fault—a single sin. It is only the blood of Christ that cleanses from sin.

But whilst no one can die for others in the same sense in which Christ died, it is true that we may die for each other, and sometimes ought to die for each other; and blessed be God there are a good many people that do; and I am glad to say, so far as heroism is concerned, I will not confine that even to God's children. Man will plunge into the boiling sea to the succour of his brother. Some boys the other day were drowned that way. One boy had gone on to the ice, and the ice sank beneath his feet, and down he went; one of his companions, seeing his danger, went to the edge of the ice and tried to rescue him, when he too went down; and another, seeing his two companions struggling in the water, also tried to help them, when he too went down; and they were all drowned—two of them in trying to help their little companion. Well, it was very brave; and there are men that love the Lord Jesus Christ, and for love of Him and men's souls, will do anything, will go far away out among the heathen that they may bring some people to Christ. You have seen that picture of a beautiful island with a beautiful curved bay in the bosom of the green shore, and there are a number of savage people coming down with arrows and bows, and spears, and other weapons in their hands; there is a man standing there in English dress, and they are shouting at him and striking him. It is the

missionary Williams. He died for others—he died to save those poor heathen. Some of them are up in heaven now and know it—know that he died for them in that sense, though not in Christ's sense. Well, then, there are times when we must love each other so that we might die for each other if that were needful.

So I have said this commandment is written by Christ's human hand, and read in the light of Christ's great love. He loves us sinners though He hates our sins. He loves us to the end, and serves us, and has died for us, that He might bring us to glory.

One thing more, and it is a sort of wish, a sort of hope. I wish I could hope that our text this afternoon about the new commandment would make you feel, dear young friends, some of you at least, that the new commandment has become a little newer to you by reason of what I have said about it. I know what will do that. If the Holy Spirit read it to you in the light of Jesus' love, I know it will be a new commandment to you, fresh, and strong, and sweet all your days. God grant it for His name's sake. But you will remember why it is said to be new though old from the beginning. We have it new from the pierced hand of Jesus, and we read it new in the light of Jesus' great love, who died to save us. May God bless to us these illustrations. Amen.



II. *As at Home.*

SAMUEL'S STORY, AS BY HIMSELF.

TO give a little change to a story that is, perhaps, better known to young children than a good many other Bible stories, I will ask you to suppose Samuel, when an old man, taking a little boy on his knee, and telling him what happened to himself. This might be the way he would give the story :—

"I had a good mother. She gave me my name because she asked God to give her a child to love and watch over, and I was born to her. My name means, 'asked of God.' I am an answer to prayer. You may be sure my mother loved me very much, yet she did not let me live with her after I was three years old. You will wonder at that ; but the reason was that my mother had said to God that if He would give her a boy to be dear to her, she would lend him all his days back to God. So, when I was very young, she brought me to Shiloh. That was the place where the ark of God then dwelt under its tent. God's house was there at that time. The priest, at the time I was brought to Shiloh, was an old man. His name was Eli. He was a good man, but he had sons who did much sin in the sight of the Lord, and their aged father was not firm enough in telling them of it, and rebuking them. I tell you this, because the first time God spoke to me He gave a sad and terrible message about them, which all has come, or will yet come, to pass. I was still a child when this took place. I served at the

house of God, and I was very happy. My mother came to see me once a year along with my father, and she brought me, when she did so, a new coat. You cannot doubt that I was glad to see them, and to get their blessing. I liked the new coat made by my mother's hands. But I liked for other reasons a linen ephod that I wore, for it was a sign of my being a servant of God. I loved the good old Eli, and he loved me much, and kept me near himself night and day. I used to sleep in a room not far from his chamber. So if he wanted me, and called me, I would be ready to hear.

"Now, one night I had gone to my couch as usual, and was laid down to sleep. Eli had gone to his place also ; but the lamp was still burning in the holy tent. It was then that I heard a voice calling me, clearly but gently, by my name. I said, 'Here am I,' and rising up, ran to where the good old priest was, and asked him what he wished me for. He said, 'My son, I did not call ; lie down again.' So I went back to my bed and lay down. But a second time I heard the voice, saying, 'Samuel !' and quite sure I had made no mistake this time, I started up and ran again to Eli, asking why he called me, for I had heard my name distinctly. He said, 'No, my child, I did not call you, I do not need you ; lie down to sleep again.'" I did as he bade me, but ere long the voice spoke again. For the third time I ran to Eli and

said, 'You must have called me; I heard my name once more, and I am sure I could not be mistaken.' Then the old man paused as if he were thinking deeply, and finding something in all this that he had not supposed before. I knew afterwards what he now thought the voice to be. Indeed, his answer showed his thoughts; for he had told me to go and lie down, and if the voice should come again and call my name, I was to say, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant hears.' The voice did come again, and said, 'Samuel! Samuel!' I felt now that some one was near me, that it was God, and I said, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant hears.' He then gave me an awful message how He was going to punish the house of Eli for their wickedness. It was very solemn to hear it, and I felt that it would be very dreadful to tell it to the old priest. However, I could not help telling it. I lay still till the morning, and then got up and opened the doors of the sanctuary. As I was coming back from doing this, Eli called me very tenderly, and when I went to him, he said, 'Now, my son, tell me

all that God said to you last night.' So I told him the very words. I watched his face as I was speaking, and it grew very grave and sad; but when I had finished saying what awful judgments God was to bring upon his house, he only bowed his head, and said meekly, 'It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him, He can do no wrong.' A while after that, when God was pleased to give me many messages for the people, there broke out war between Israel and the Philistines, and Eli's sons would take the ark of God into the battle. The battle went against them; they were killed, and the ark was taken; and when a runner brought the news to Eli, as he sat in the gate, he fell back at mention of the ark, and died.

"Such was the way in which I heard the voice of God first; I have heard it often since. I expect soon to hear it in another way, calling me to His presence above. My child, God calls you by His word. Will you hear Him? Will you be His servant? I never was sorry that I was taught to serve Him when young."

QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE STORY.

1. Can you name a child that well knew God's voice in the Holy Scriptures?

2. Can you name a man who gave his blessing to two boys when he was very old?

3. What was the name of Samuel's mother?

4. Where did she pray the prayer that God answered by giving her Samuel?

5. Who took the ark of God away from Shiloh, and where was its next resting-place?

6. Who took it to Jerusalem?

7. Which of the sons of Aaron was the forefather of Eli?

8. Which of Eli's descendants was the last priest of his house?

9. Do you remember any case in Scripture in which God called persons by their names, speaking out of heaven?

10. Can you name persons besides Samuel who said to God, "Here am I."

11. Do you know what things without life are finely represented in Scripture as saying to God, "Here are we."

12. Where are we told of Samuel's death?

Answers to the foregoing questions will be easily found by consulting 2 Timothy iii. ; Gen. xlviii. ; 1 Sam. i., vi., vii. ; Psalms cxxxii.

(2 Samuel vi., 1 Chronicles xvi.) ; 1 Kings ii. (Genesis xxii., Acts ix.) ; (Genesis xxii., Isaiah vi.) Job xxxviii. ; 1 Samuel xxv.

[From "The Home Preacher" published by W. MacKenzie, 22, Paternoster-row ; written for that work, along with other stories, by the present editor.]

A CHILD'S FAITH.

IN one of the narrow streets near the Marche St. Honoré, resides a poor working family who have lately been labouring under great distress. The wife has been for some time ill, and the husband has just met with an accident which has prevented him from following his usual occupation, so that his family of five children often suffered from hunger. Among the children was a little intelligent girl who every day attended the charity school, but who has been lately obliged to stop at home to attend, as best she could, to her little brothers. She had been taught at school that those in distress ought to address themselves to God, and the idea entered her mind that if she sent a letter to God, relief would follow. She therefore got pen, ink and paper, and wrote the letter asking for health for her parents, and bread for herself and brothers. Thinking that the poor-box which she had seen in the church of Saint Roche was the letter-box of

God, she took an opportunity of stealing quietly out of the room and running off to the church. While looking round to see that no one was near, an elderly lady noticed her movements, and, thinking she was at some mischief, stopped her and inquired what she was doing. After some hesitation she confessed the object of her visit to the church, and showed the letter. The lady took it and promised the child that she would take care that it should reach its destination, asking at the same time to what address the answer must be sent, which the child gave, and returned home with a light heart. On the following morning on opening the door of the room she found a large basket filled with different articles of wearing apparel, sugar, money, etc., the whole packed up with a direction card on which was written "*Réponse du bon Dieu.*" Some hours after, a medical man also came to give advice.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We will begin with this

HYMN.

Go to thy rest in peace,
And soft be thy repose ;
Thy toils are o'er, thy troubles cease,
From earthly cares in sweet release
Thine eyelids gently close.

Go to thy rest, and while
Thy absence we deplore,
One thought our sorrow shall beguile,
For soon with a celestial smile
We meet to part no more.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Gen. xlix., 28-33 ; 1 Thess. iv., 13-18

PRAYER.

GOD, thou hast told us that one day, soon or late, we must die. Thou saidst long ago to our first father Adam, Dust thou art, and thou shalt return to dust ; and we know Thou wilt bring us to the House appointed to all living. O Lord, we do not like the thought of it. We do not like to think of leaving our friends, and the light, and going away into the dark. But O we praise Thee, that now

that Jesus has died, it is not dark to them that trust Him. Thou hast told us that He will be with us, and we need fear no evil. Lord, for this we pray to-day, that we may have Jesus to guide us through the valley of the shadow of death, and so we shall go to Thee.

Lord, have mercy on all that may even now be dying, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

The text-words lie in the middle of the twenty-eighth verse of the twentieth chapter of Numbers,
 "And Aaron died there in the top of the mount."

TAKE up any Bible dictionary, my young friends, giving an account of persons and things that are spoken about in the Scriptures, and you will find the first word in it to be the name of Aaron—at least, all dictionaries that I have had the opportunity of looking at began with Aaron. Do you know the reason of this? Because, you see, dictionaries are arranged according to the alphabet, A of course comes first, and Aa before Ab. So Aaron beginning with two a's, comes first. I do not know of any other word that begins with two a's; if there were one, and the middle letter were earlier in the alphabet than R, that would come before Aaron. As it is, we begin with him, and it is about this Aaron, whose name is first in the Bible dictionary, that I am now to speak to you for a little. We are going to what I may call, although it may not be strictly correct, his death-bed. Why do I say it will not be strictly correct? Because he did not die in his bed—he died "there on the top of the mount;" his bed, where he had to die, was harder even than Jacob's, when he took the stones of the place where he was and made them his pillow; for travellers, who have been to Mount Hor say, that it is about the most rugged, rough, hard mountain they ever saw; one of them says if a painter wished to get wild rocky scenes to paint, that is the place to go to. Well, on the top of that great, rugged mountain,

Aaron lay down to die. But you remember the words of the hymn. I think we may repeat them about Aaron's death-bed with special pleasure. "Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are." There are a good many things about this death-bed that I want to say to you, and therefore I will not pause longer. I will speak of four things, all negatives (I use the hard word that you may try to find what it means), all with *not* in them.

The first thing that I have to say, the first negative to speak about, is this: *Aaron did not die a youth.*

Many persons die when they are mere children. It is sad to think of so many little ones, dropping like buds just when they are opening, into the dust; and yet, even here, sweetness comes, for Christ is gathering them for the better climate. Then, others die when they are young and strong, because the strongest that lives, when Christ sends death to arrest him, cannot resist; and I have seen strong young men droop away slowly, from day to day, till their strength was laid down in the dust; and I have heard of the strong young man, as well as others, that the waves of the sea have swallowed up when the stout ship went down. In the fight with death even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the youths shall utterly fail, unless they are of those that wait on the Lord, and then, no matter whether from the mountain top,

or the great sea waves, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, and go to the land where death comes no more.

But Aaron died a very old man. Do you know how old he was? There is a verse, in a later chapter of this book which tells you. Try to find it. Well, this was his age. He was 123 years old. He was born in the land of Egypt, and was a little older than his brother Moses, and younger than his sister Miriam or Mary. He was born before the cruel Pharaoh ordered that all the boy-babies should be thrown into the river to be drowned or eaten by the crocodiles, and so his father and mother didn't need to hide Aaron as they had to hide Moses. As he grew up he lived in the land of Egypt, till one day God told him to go into the wilderness to meet his brother Moses, who had been away for forty years out of Egypt. When young men leave and go away out to India, China, or elsewhere far off, we sometimes think it is a long time for them to be bound to continue there for five, seven, or ten years. But here was Moses, who had to leave Egypt where he had his home, away for forty years. At the end of these, Aaron was told by God that he was coming back again, and he went and met him, and the two brothers, who had not seen each other for forty years, embraced each other at the mount of God.

Now I will mention three things about Aaron that were evil, and three things that were very grand and good. Three things that we are sorry for, in which he sinned: and three things that are most beautiful to read about and re-

member. We will begin with the three faults. First of all there was his great sin in asking the people to give him gold that he might cast it into the fire and make a molten calf. That was a very great sin; and remember, Aaron himself, that was afterwards to be the high priest, was a ringleader in it. O, how weak poor man is! My dear young friends, never trust yourself; you will fall if you do; put your trust in Christ.

Then there was another time that Aaron did a wrong thing—he spoke sinfully when he spoke against Moses, though he was not foremost in the evil this time. His sister Miriam probably was the first, but Aaron joined her, and he and Miriam murmured against their brother; they grudged to think that God had made him so great, and wanted to bring him down. They suffered sharp rebuke for their sin; but I think Aaron saw his fault sooner than his sister did, for he went to Moses and besought him; and Moses prayed to God, and He healed her.

The last thing that Aaron did very wrongly I will simply name at present, because I must come back to it. He sinned when he was sent along with Moses to speak to the rock that it might give forth water. Both of them so dishonoured God that he said to them: “Neither of you two will cross the Jordan to lay your bodies in the promised land.”

But now for the beautiful things that Aaron did. There were three very noble and fine. The first of them we

had the other day, and you can tell me at once what I refer to. There is Aaron up beside Moses, in the mountain that overlooks the valley where Joshua is fighting, there he is with Hur, helping Moses to fight the battle of faith. We see him at a prayer meeting helping his brother in the good fight of faith till they get the victory.

Then there is another thing that is even more beautiful in Aaron's life, and it is this:—One day, just after he had been consecrated high priest, he saw two of his four sons who had been wicked, had taken ordinary fire instead of sacred fire to burn incense; he saw these two killed by a flash of God's fire just before his eyes—killed in their sin, and he was silent; he didn't say a word against God for it. There is hardly a prettier text in the whole Bible than these words: "And Aaron held his peace." You could scarcely expect him to come so far as Job; but he went thus far, he hadn't a word to say against God, and quietly and in his heart, while he was bowed down with a father's grief, I think he said: "It is the Lord, Thy will be done." Many a mourner has been thankful to God that these words were put into the Bible, when they were not very able to praise God in the middle of their troubles. They have been thankful that there was a great and good man, in the time of deep sorrow, praising God just by holding his peace. There is a third scene in Aaron's life that is very beautiful.

The children of Israel as I am sorry to say they often did, had been vexing the Lord—and He sent a plague upon

them. And, as I think of it, the plague set out to go through the camp—began at one side, as it were, and went along; and here is a man dropping down, stricken with it, and there is another, and the plague was coming on like a poison-mist. Aaron heard about it, and he ran at once and put incense upon his censer, and holy fire upon it, and he came down to where the plague was and stood between the dead and the living—the dead before and the living behind—and, as God would have it, the plague stopped there, because Aaron was there praying to God. Ah, it is a fine thing, that prayer; and it is a specially glorious thing to think that there is a Great High Priest who has incense pure and sweet, which he is offering to God, standing always, standing now, standing here, keeping men from dying—nay, quickening the dead.

II. The second thing I have to say about Aaron and his dying is this: *Aaron did not die a priest.* He went up the hill a priest, and all the people saw him; he had his robes on, and they knew him to be even then and there a priest. There were two sets of robes that Aaron had for wearing. One was of pure, fine linen. He put this on when he took blood in the basin and went into the Holy of Holies, and at some other stated times only, and therefore, we may be sure it was his other set of garments he had on; and, if you read the account carefully, I think you will be able to make up a picture in your own mind. Going up the hill, there he is; the

colour of his garment is blue ; he had on a blue robe down to his feet, and on the hem of the blue robe there was a curious arrangement. All round were the figures of pomegranates, and between them little bells. So on that day, when he was climbing the mountain, if you had been sharp enough of ear, you would have heard him making music as he went along—the little bells tinkling about him, singing, as it were, to cheer Aaron's heart as he went up the mount to die. Ah, many a saint of God has done more than that. There is an old tune that they call *Martyrs* ; it is a wild, plaintive tune, but it is set in some music books to words that I like. It is hard to sing, but I think it is very plaintive and sweet. But here's the verse that I have heard some good old men sing to it :

“ This is the tune the martyrs sang
When they went up to die ;
And when upon the scaffold they
Christ's truth did not deny.”

So you see, more than the tinkling bells upon the robe can be made to sing Christ's people into glory. But I like to think about the sounding of those bells as Aaron went up the Mount to lie down to die. He had on his breast-plate, and the names of the twelve tribes were there ; and on one shoulder he had six tribes' names, and on the other shoulder six other tribes' names, and on his head the mitre ; and if he turned round—(I think he would as he went up the hill, to see the great throng of people down there watching him)—if he turned round, they would see the golden plate upon the

mitre, and some words written on it ; and you know that if you had been near enough to read them, you would have read—Holiness to the Lord. Perhaps the mitre with its inscription was never more fitly worn than it was when Aaron went up the hill to die. Holiness to the Lord ! Yes, for he is going away to leave all sin behind him ; into the Holy of Holies, where Christ the Lord is. But, you say—Didn't Aaron die a priest ? I say No. For before he died, he had to be stripped of his priestly robes, and they were put upon his son ; and the father saw the son wearing the priestly garments before he closed his eyes in death. And I have no doubt he said in his heart—I am glad to think God has raised up another priest when He is taking me away. He knew that the priesthood was not lost to Israel, and that the priest's place was not to be vacant. Now, I want you to remember, that this was but the figure of a great truth. You know it is a common saying that the king never dies. Well, the meaning of that is simply this : That if say our good and much-loved Queen Victoria were to die some day soon—may God grant that the day of her death be very far away, only she being but an earthly queen must die some day, just like all her subjects—well if she were to die the crown would fall at once upon the head of her heir, the Prince of Wales, if living ; or some one, if he whom God lately spared should yet be called away before his mother ; and there would be a proclamation to the effect that, the queen having died, he had succeeded

in her place on the throne. Well, then, that is a very little thing indeed compared with what I am going to say now. Look to the top of Mount Hor, and there you will see Aaron stripped of his garments, and they are put upon his son. This means that there is a Priest coming that will no longer offer sacrifice like Aaron and Eleazar—who will never put His robes of office off. He will be a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Ah, it is a beautiful figure this; Aaron cannot die till the robes are put upon his son,—to say that Christ Jesus will never lay His priestly robes aside. Do you remember what they did to Christ when He was dying? They stripped Him too; they took His mantle off that had no seam, and they took others of His garments; but they did not touch a shred of His priestly robes, because they were worn, not outside on the body, but within on His soul. So He took them with Him when He died, and He wears them now, and will wear them for ever and ever.

III. The third thing I have to say about Aaron, is this. *He did not die at home.*

What kind of a home had he? Well, he hadn't lived in a house, properly so-called, for forty years. Since he had been in Egypt he had lived, like the rest of the people of Israel, in a tent. But all houses, after all, are but tents. We cannot keep them up for ever; and we must leave them some day soon. More than that, this body, that our souls meanwhile live in, is but a tent. Here is a proof of it. You re-

member the text. "If the earthly house of this tabernacle," that is, *tent*, "be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Well, Aaron had only a tent to live in, but he was not allowed by God to die there. I think I know the reason. I have touched on it already. The people would not have understood half so well that the priesthood was to continue if they had merely heard that Aaron had died in his tent, and that Eleazar had succeeded him. But they saw him go up the hill with his robes on, and they didn't see him come down again. And this, I think was arranged that the people should all see it and feel it, and at least to some extent understand its meaning.

Now people like, on the whole, to die at home. It is a very natural thing for people that are ill to say: "Oh, if I could just live to go home and die there." And many a young person away from home has said: "If God would only spare me, and give me strength enough to go where my mother is and die." So you see it is a very natural thing to wish to die at home; but God often appoints otherwise, and, as we shall see shortly, there is no great harm comes through it after all. When Howard was dying in Russia, and some people that were with him said to him: "Wouldn't you like to go home to England to die?" he said: "The road to heaven is just as short from the plains of Russia as it is from the green fields of England." And he was right. Still, let us respect the

feeling in human hearts that says : " Let me die at home."

But there is more than that in regard with Aaron. He was on his way with the rest of the people of Israel to the promised land. He knew that the fathers of earlier days were very fond of thinking about being buried in the promised land. He knew that Abraham's grave was there, and that Jacob, when he died, was carried up and buried there by his own wish, for he said : " There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife ; there they buried Isaac and Rebecca, his wife ; and there I buried Leah," and he wanted to be buried there, and he was. Now Aaron knew that, and had, I have no doubt, a great longing to go to the land and die there, and be buried among the fathers of the people of Israel ; or, at least, somewhere in the soil of the land of promise. But he was not allowed to do so ; and this is the way it came about.

The children of Israel had been wandering in the desert for a long time, and the water that flowed along with them in their journeyings, for some reason or other failed, and the people murmured, and were very angry with Moses ; and he who had borne with them for a great many years, and had been meeker than all the men on the face of the earth, lost his temper. But he did worse than that. God had told him what to do, and he seems for the time to have forgotten what God had done before, and to feel as if it could not be done a second time. He ventured, as it were,

to stand between God and the people, and he went to the stone that he was to speak to, and said to them : " Hear, now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock ;" and, as if he did not believe it would come, he smote it twice in his anger. Now I put it so, because the Bible not only says they rebelled against God, but that they did not believe God. Ah, what a poor, weak thing man is ! Moses, at last, seems to forget that God could do the thing He said, and smites the rock in haste and in unbelief, saying : " Must we fetch you water from this rock ?" Then God said : " You have dishonoured Me in sight of the people ; you shall not bring this people into the land which I have given them."

Now this will teach us a great lesson. Could Aaron's priesthood take us to heaven ? Not a step of the way. Could Moses' law take us to heaven ? Not a step of the way. Who then can take us to heaven ? Our blessed Joshua, whose name is Jesus. They are the same name—Joshua and Jesus. So God brought it about that Aaron should die. Aaron in Hor and Moses in Pisgah, and that Joshua, whose name is by interpretation the Saviour, should lead the people into it. The reason is, no man can go to heaven by keeping God's law for himself ; none can by trusting in any earthly priesthood ; the Lord Jesus Christ alone can lead us thither.

IV. The last thing about Aaron, is *he did not die alone after all*. He did not die at home, but he did not die alone. His brother was with him—his loved and honoured brother—and that was a

great solace to him at the time of his death. And his son was there too ; he stood beside him, clothed with the priest's garments, and there was cheer and joy in them for him also.

But there was more than that. The Great High Priest was there. He whom Aaron prefigured ; He whom Eleazar foreshadowed ; and whom Moses predicted. He was there. And wherever Christ is, even though there be nobody else, there is safety in dying.

There is another thing. There were angels near, we need not doubt, and there were more waiting for Aaron than even the angels. Do you notice that expression : "Aaron shall be gathered to his people?" Well, if that meant that he was to be buried beside them, it was not true, for he was buried in Mount Hor ; and if some day any of you travel in Arabia, you may see Aaron's tomb built on what not unlikely was really nearly the place where he was buried. So, he was not gathered to his people in that sense. What then ? His people were the saints gone above ; Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and the rest. Aaron leaves earth to join their company.—There is another meeting beyond death. There is a verse at the close of the 49th Psalm, which speaks about bad men. It says, they "go to the generation of their fathers ; they shall never see light." They, too, go to their people. Oh may God grant us to be gathered with the white-robed people that stand before the throne !

These, then, are the things we have

said. *Aaron did not die in youth*, but an old man. *He did not die a priest*, for he saw his priesthood carried on before he died ; and he knew it would be carried on in a better sense by one that never dies, after he had died and offered himself once. *He did not die at home* ; but though not at home, *he did not die alone*. God appointed him to have some friends with him when he died, and God Himself was there.

And now one word about your own coming to death, and I have done.

I do not know when you will die ; I do not know where you will die. Men die in such strange ways. Did you notice how one poor man, humble in occupation, and yet brave of heart, died the other day. It was away out at sea. All the rest of the crew that was on the sinking ship are rescued, but he has got jammed between the plates of the vessel, and he cannot be freed, and he must go down with the ship into the yawning waves. I do not know the man's character. I took the narrative simply as it was reported, and the words he said seemed strangely sublime. I hope he was a good man, but cannot tell, and he sank alone. As he was sinking he called out to the others, "Good bye.—God bless you all," and then he went away down into the dark water.

Well, I do not know when you will die, how you will die, or where you will die ; but I know that the Lord will bring you to death ; and I know that only One will make you safe in dying even though you should be at home and in the midst of all your

friends. That would, no doubt, be a fine thing. But your friends will not be able to do a single thing for you that will really help you in dying, unless Christ be there. And though there be none of them, if Christ be there, death itself will only be your servant to open the door of glory.

All, then, that I have said this morning ends in this: Go to the Lord Jesus at once, and engage Him by prayer to stand beside you when you come to

die. Do it to-day. You had better secure your friend at once, go to-day and ask Him. Put it in these words, say, "O Christ Jesus! promise to stand by me when I come to die," and He will lay His right hand on you as He did to John, and will say: "Fear not; I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of Hades and of death." Amen.

II. Our Talk.

ANSWERS TO RHYMED PICTURES IN No. 4.

John i-48; Exodus ii., 6.

ANSWERS TO E. AND F. IN ALPHABET.

EAR.

1. The ear of the servant not wishing to go free. Exodus xxi. 5—or the leper's ear. Lev. xiv. 14.
2. The ear of Aaron. Exodus xxix. 20.
3. The ear of Malchus. Luke xxii. 51.
4. The ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream. Genesis xli. 22, 23.
5. The ears of Israel, resigning their earrings. Exodus xxxii. 3.
6. The ear that blessed Job. Job. xxix. 11.

FIELD.

1. Aceldama. Matthew xxvii. 8.

2. Joab's field. 2 Samuel xiv. 31.
3. The field blessed of the Lord. Gen. xxvii. 27.
4. Machpelah. Genesis xxiii. 20.
5. The world. Matthew xiii. 38.
6. The field of Joshua the Bethshemita. I Sam. vi. 14.
7. The sluggard's field. Prov. xxiv. 30.
8. The field of the Sabbath year. Lev. xxv. 24.
9. Jeremiah's cousin's field. Jer. xxxii. 7; or, graveyards.
10. Children; man. Job xiv. 2; Psalm ciii. 15.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—G. & H.

GIFT.

Every good gift is from above,
But four are special fruits of love.

1. One has a worth that can never be told;

2. One lasts for ages, and never grows old;
3. One all saved men must have and hold;
4. One imparts power and graces manifold.

HORN.

Four horns that stood where lambs were
brought to bleed ;
Four horns whose voice as many angels freed ;
Four that 'mong odours dwelt with gold o'er-
laid ;
Four made by four artificers afraid.
Three horns that met in fight when one beat
two ;

Three that a little boastful foe o'erthrew ;
Three more than were the heads whereon they
grew.
Two horns that held a substitute to die ;
Two with no horn about them made to lie.
One praised in song by lips that had been
dumb,
When the first Christmas was about to
come.

HOW TO CONQUER ANGER.

TWO little sisters—Frances, about seven, and Augusta, about five years old—were as happy as little girls could be, loving their parents dearly. Sometimes, however, as it happens with the best of friends, little differences would arise. On one of these occasions Frances, perceiving how matters were tending, with a

thoughtfulness, decision, and self-command surprising in so small a child, said: "I am getting angry ; I had better go out of the room for a few minutes." She acted immediately upon her resolution, and left the room for a short time. When she returned the storm was hushed, and they went to their play as happy as ever.

NOT KNOWING EVIL.

A GENTLEMAN playfully concealed himself from his little boy while they were walking towards a farm-house belonging to a friend. This house was near several divergent roads. The father, tarrying rather too long in his hiding-place, lost sight of his child ; and not till after great anxiety and considerable searching, did he find him safe in the house to which they were going. On his being

afterwards questioned whether he was not afraid of losing himself on one of the wrong roads, he replied with beautiful simplicity, "I didn't know any wrong road."

Dear children, give your hearts to Jesus while young, and it will save you from the knowledge of many wrong roads where so much sorrow, and suffering, and sin are known.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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Published at the "CHRISTIAN AGE" Office, 59, Old Bailey, London, E. C.

I. Our Service.

HYMN.

WE read, in ancient days,
When Christ was passing by,
How children sang sweet hymns of praise
And waved green branches high.

Now near His glorious seat,
On heaven's celestial hill,
Ten thousand youthful tongues repeat
The same Hosanna still.

To view our happy throng,
We know the Saviour bends;
Accepting still the meanest song
Which from the heart ascends.

United let us bow,
And His great name adore;
Repeat the loud Hosanna now,
And praise Him evermore.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Gen. viii., 6-12; Eph. iv., 17-16.

PRAYER.

GOD, it has pleased Thee to speak to us by Thy Son. It has pleased Thee, by Thy Spirit, to tell holy men to write down for us words that He said, and deeds that He did. May we give good heed to all they have told us. May we hide Christ's words in our hearts, and do them. Help us, O Lord, so to do.

Bless to us what of Thy Word we are to hear explained and enforced to-day. Bless all that this afternoon or evening may be taught in Sabbath-schools. And bless the preaching of the Gospel in all the churches throughout the world, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

The text to-day is the Second Epistle of John.

YOU notice that I do not say *in* the Second Epistle of John, but simply the Second Epistle of John ; for my text is the whole letter. I might show it you in letter form, as we write, and fold, and send letters now-a-days. I once did so to young hearers, having asked some of my juvenile Saturday class to write it out for me. I wished to be able to take my text up in my hand, as I then did. Suppose it done.

When you get a letter, you sometimes exclaim : " O that is from So and So,"—your father, or mother, or sister, or brother, or school-companion, as the case may be ; for you know the handwriting, and do not need to open the envelope to see the signature, to learn who has written you. At other times, perhaps, you wonder who it can be that has sent you this letter ; and before you open it, just to see whether you can guess right, you look at the post-mark, and turn the billet over and over. Then you tear it open, and read it, and know all about it. Some persons writing letters tell who sends them on the outside, by putting their names down in the corner of the envelope. All our letters, of course, tell on the outside to whom they are to be carried, and the writing which tells this we call the address.

Now I have said these things about letters, because I asked the young friends who copied the 2nd of John for me, to put the address on the envelope,

and to put it so that it should tell both from whom the letter came and to whom it was sent. Here it is in full :

" The Elder unto the Elect Lady and her children."

O, you say, that is the first sentence of the letter, at least the beginning of it. So it is. That was the way they addressed letters in the old times. See for this, in the New Testament, the most of the epistles, and Captain Lysias's letter to Governor Felix. You will find it in the 23rd chapter of Acts.

All this prepares you for my saying that my text being John's second letter, my heads will be two—

1. The Envelope.
2. The Enclosure.

1. The Envelope.

Here we ask,

1. Who sends it?
2. To whom is it sent?
1. Who sends it?

The address says the Elder. The title says John. Now some people think that the John meant here was not the Apostle, but another who was an elder in the church. To make it sound better, they say this was John the Presbyter. But not to trouble you with much reasoning about that, I would say that I think any one who reads John's first epistle, and this second, would say they are from the same hand. And it is only doing what Peter also did, when the aged

Apostle calls himself an elder. So we will treat it as coming from John that wrote the Gospel and the Revelation.

Now, to get a letter from the loved Apostle of Jesus, was surely a great thing. I have no doubt there are people in England who have letters beside them that their grandfathers or grandmothers received from Wesley or Whitfield, and many others who keep carefully letters they got from great good missionaries like Henry Martyn, or Carey, or Williams. I may name one living. I was at a meeting one night, and a great many people pressed to get Dr. Moffat to write his name for them, till his hand must have been tired. But the elect lady would be glad to get this letter, for two reasons, mainly: John loved her and her children, and Jesus loved John. Let us see how a chain of love reached and bound the children. Jesus loved John, John loved their good mother, their mother loved them. The chain was shortened however, for Jesus loved them, and some of them, at least, loved Jesus. When you think, besides all I have said, that John was now an old man, that he was going home to Jesus soon, to Jesus on whose bosom he had leaned, how could any letter be nearer being a letter from heaven itself?

This leads me to say it was a letter from heaven. The Holy Spirit sent it. He used John's heart and hand to write it. How could it be John's and the Holy Spirit's also? I will ask Peter to tell you—"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." May I try a very little to show

you how a letter might be John's and yet the Spirit's? Suppose, instead of asking the children of my class to copy the 2nd of John, I had asked them to write a letter for me to some one. I might have told them every word to put down; but I might have also told them the thing I wanted to say, and have left them to put it into their own words, because I wanted that, only keeping them right if their words should not please me. In either way, when I put my name to the letter, it would have been mine, though they wrote it. But if I had used their minds for thoughts as well as words, it would have had more of the children in it, without being less mine. Now, I do not say that was the way the Spirit moved good men, but I have said this to show that the letter might be John's and the Spirit's.

2. To whom was the letter written?

To a good woman and her children. Some think her name is here given, the lady Elect, or Eclecta. But her sister is also called the Elect, and the meaning must be that each lady, whatever was her name, was a pious woman.

But the letter was a family letter. It is true that in the body of the letter only the lady is spoken to, but the address is to the children also. Even without that, I am sure the children would all get a reading of it. You all know what it is for one of a family to get a letter, which yet is family property; so, after the receiver has read it, it goes round the table or the family circle. I think I can see this good matron, after she has finished the perusal of the letter, handing it to her eldest child present, and saying: "Children,

you must all read this;" or, perhaps, she said: "You must all hear this; it is from our beloved friend, the servant and beloved of Jesus." And they would all read it, or hear it read, glad to notice what he said about them. They would be glad, too, to find a message from their cousins to their mother, making the letter still more a family letter. "The children of thy elect sister greet thee."

Now, would you wonder to find that from this letter we can tell a good deal about this family? First, the mother, we may conclude, was a widow. Secondly, there were, at least, three of the family; for some of them are spoken of as known to John as walking in the truth. But some implies one more at least. Probably, in the third place, there were, at least, four children; for John speaks as having met with some of them, and in such a way as to lead us to think that they were near him at the time. He says: "I have found of thy children." Yet he sends a letter to the children, with their mother. Fourthly, it seems as if some of them were on a visit to their cousins—and John, who must have been living in the town, perhaps in the house, had seen them there. Lastly, some of them, at least, were sons—all might be—but some certainly were. Yet what we know of them which is most pleasant, is this: Some of them John knew to be lovers of Jesus—all of them John loved. I think those at home with their mother were the younger children; those at their aunt's, the older.

I have called this a family letter, and have supposed it read round the circle,

or in it. I will now tell you of a curious old family letter that brought good news. The messenger that went to bring it, did not journey by land or sea, and yet brought the letter back from the sea. The messenger got it from a mail that had been long under water, yet it was not damaged. The messenger might have brought more, but only took one, which was as good as twenty. The letter, curious to say, had a green colour, but not from being under the water. When the messenger brought the letter, both were received into the letter-box. The letter was from God—beautiful as He only could make it, and its contents were—peace. A family of eight read it, and rejoiced. You know the letter I speak of; it was a leaf—and the carrier was a dove. Here is a little rhyme about it:

"I ween it was a welcome sight,
That leaf so green and fair;
The costliest gem beside it,
Had been worthless to compare.

"The household passed it hand to hand,
And turned it o'er and o'er,
As fondly as they ne'er had seen
An olive leaf before;

"For it told how down in the valley
Where cultured lands had spread,
From garden and from olive-yard
The wasting flood had fled."

II. The Enclosure.

Here it would not be fitting to-day, even if we had time, to go on to read the letter over and remark on what it says. I will simply notice two things. It has—

1. A present good.

2. A promised better.

1. The present good is what it says. It has good news; it has good wishes; it has good counsels.

1. Good news.

It says, your cousins greet you, and your cousins walk in the truth. Now, to be well in body is much, but to be well in soul is much more. All letters do not bring good news. Some come with sable edges, to tell of death. Without these black-bordered envelopes, some letters bring tidings that wring hearts. Ah! who can tell what lights and shadows are carried in every mail-sack!

2. Good wishes.

These are John's wishes: grace, mercy, and peace; are they not three sweet connected things? Then they are from the highest source—from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father." And they are sent "in truth and love."

3. Good advices.

But I will here let the last words of the greeting suffice—"In truth and love"; for, indeed, the letter is mainly about these two. Let me call them brother and sister—truth the brother, love the sister; and say four things about them:—

1. They are like each other—one sterner, one gentler. Yet look close, and you will see that the stern one has gentleness, and the gentle solemnity.

2. They are always together. Truth without love is only half truth, hence the command, "speak the truth in love." Love without truth is deceitful. It is a passing flash. Wicked people have not love deeply enough rooted. To last, it must go far down and rise high up, like a tree strongly fixed in the ground, and by which we may

climb and be safe. The cross is such a tree; rather, Jesus is such a tree of life.

3. They keep looking at Christ. Truth does, for Jesus is the truth. Love does, for "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

4. They shut the door on Christ's foes. It is a harsh thing to shut the door, but often needful. If a lion or a wolf should come, if a serpent were crawling in, would you not do so? So John says of a lying teacher, 'Do not receive him, for he is false. Do not receive him, for he is cruel.'

Of the promised letter I will speak in another sermon. I close now by saying—

This letter is for you.

It is part of God's book—it speaks to you; and it asks you to take to your hearts the brother and sister I have spoken of. You will do so if you love the Bible, and Christ as the Bible speaks of Him. The book and the blessed One it tells us of are full of truth and love. Then you will also have hope of something better than the Bible, and even than Christ as we know Him here. The Bible is our lamp; but, by-and-by, the Sun will rise and we shall have clear day. Jesus is known here and felt; but by-and-by He will be seen, and we who see Him shall resemble Him. This is what John says in another place: "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Amen.

II. Our Talk.

Let us see what you remember of the Sermon. Answer the following questions:—

Was the text long or short?
How could it have been held in the hand in a way to show the heads of discourse?

What were these heads?

What two questions were put and answered under the first?

What Apostle in a letter calls himself an elder? Can you say where?

What good and great living missionary did we name?

What did we see him do?

Can you remember how Peter was asked to answer the questions, How this letter of John's could be both his and the Holy Spirit's also?

What supposition was made a little to explain that?

What kind of letter did we call this of John's?

How can you make it out that there were at least three children in the family? or, probably, four? and probably some of them on a visit to their cousins when John saw them?

What two words give the sum of the contents of the letter?

What did we call them?

What four things did we say about them?

Now give all the heads thus:

I. { 1.

2.

II. { 1.

2.

{ 1.

2.

3.

{ 1.


2.

3.

4.

Now let us have a

BIBLE STORY.

“ NOCH, my boy,” said Jonas of Hebron to his little lame sickly lad, “let me carry you out in the orchard this fine day, and while we are seated under the fig-tree, I will tell you of a most wonderful sight which I have seen in Jerusalem. You know that when I was last there, at the feast of Pentecost, I had much to tell you about the strange way in which the apostles of Jesus spoke to the multitudes in their own languages; and how the people were stirred; and a great many of them became disciples of the Blessed One of Nazareth. You know how I could not help joining them, and I am sure it was the right thing to do. You know, my dear child, how since that time we have studied the Scriptures, and have seen Jesus plainly there.” The boy looked sweetly up in his father's

face, and said softly, “Yes, father, we have seen Him.” Jonas proceeded: “Well, if I could have doubted my doing right before, I should have doubted no more after what I have seen. I have witnessed the next thing to seeing Jesus Himself. When I got to the city, a few days ago, I found it filled with the new teaching—a great many believing it, and a great many contradicting it. I heard a great deal of the preaching of the apostles, and some friends of theirs, that had been chosen by the Church to help them. I heard particularly of one noble, good man, called Stephen, whom nobody could resist in argument, he spoke with such heavenly power. Well, while I was there, his enemies seized him, and took him before the High Court of the Elders. I went to see the trial, and never shall I forget the scene.

There was the high priest in the midst of the council; and there were a swarm of noisy accusers, with their witnesses, who had all been set on to tell lies; and there was holy Stephen, calm and brave before them all. Enoch, I caught a glimpse of his face, and O how it seemed to shine with holiness and peace. Do you remember your dream about the angel that came to see you? Do you recollect what you told me about his bright face, beaming like light over his white snowy robe? Enoch, I think Stephen's was just like that." "O father," interjected the boy, his own face lighted up, "was it like that? But, you know, father, you did not see it, you only heard my poor words about it." "Yes," answered Jonas, "I think the holy man's face shone as the angels' must shine. But I will go on. After the witnesses had been heard, stating that Stephen said all sorts of bad things against Moses and the temple, the high priest, looking at Stephen, said gravely: 'Are these things so?' Then Stephen began, and O how nobly he spoke! How he showed that he had studied his Bible! He went back to the beginning of our nation's history, and touched on all the great events in it; I think, meaning to show that God was always leading His people forward, and causing them to make progress. He came down as far as the building of the temple by Solomon, intending, as it seemed, to go on and show how all this progress had led to Jesus, and how He was like the ripeness of the grain, crowning its greenness and its growth. But when he said something about God

not dwelling in temples made with hands, meaning to point them to a true temple for the Father of our spirits, the council got restless, and looked fiercely, and gave signs of refusing to hear him any more. Then, as I have heard my father say John the Baptist used to look, he put on a grave, stern countenance, and rebuked them with words that went to their hearts like arrows. Oh, Enoch, they showed their teeth like wolves, as if they could have eaten him up. But he kept calm and fearless, and lifting up his eyes, he said—I have tried to recollect every word: 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.' Oh, what a shout of rage followed these words! The crowd rushed on him, stopping their ears as if not to hear what they called his blasphemy, and carried him away out into the fields. Then the lying witnesses threw off their cloaks and gave them in charge to a young man—a little man with a most eager face—and began to hurl stones at the good man. The people followed their example, and soon I saw—for I could not help following to see the end—soon I saw Stephen fallen on his knees, while blood was streaming down his face, and the stones were flying about him like hail. I pressed as near as I could, and I found that he was praying aloud. I heard him say: 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;' and then as if Jesus had given him more than ever of his own heart, he said quite aloud: 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,' and let his head droop to the earth, as going

to sleep. The stones stopped then, and I ventured quite close to him, and as he died—for he was dying now—I saw such a sweet light come over his features, as if the Lord he saw up in the skies had cast some of His own glory on him. Enoch, I never saw the like. It was surely not of earth, but of heaven.” The father looked down on the upturned face of his child, and his heart gave a great leap, for he thought

he saw something of the same light there. He carried Enoch carefully back into the house, and laid him on the couch; then went away by himself for a little and wept, saying: “I fear I shall soon have to say of my little Enoch what the Bible says of the great prophet: ‘He is not, for God took him.’ But I cannot grudge him to the Great Lord to whom Stephen has gone.”

QUESTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE BIBLE STORY.

About whose martyrdom is this story written?

Where do we read about it in the Bible?

Do you know any other martyrs named in Scripture?

What was Stephen's office?

How many more were chosen to the same office?

Who was the young man that kept the clothes of the witnesses when Stephen was stoned?

Repeat Stephen's two dying prayers?

Repeat a prayer of Jesus like one of them?

RHYMED PICTURES.

ANSWERED ALREADY IN LAST NUMBER.

Part in favour, part in frown,
Three went up, and two came down.
One of these remained the same,

Robed anew the other came.
Ne'er the third to see again,
Mourning crowds received the twain.

ANSWERS TO G. AND H. IN ALPHABET.

GIFT.

James i. 17.

1. Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. ix. 15 (John iii. 16, iv. 10.)
2. Eternal life. Romans vi. 23.
3. Faith. Ephesians ii. 8.
4. The Holy Spirit. Acts viii. 20.

HORN.

1. Horns of the brazen altar. Exodus xxvii. 2; xxxviii. 2.
2. Horns of the golden (apocalyptic) altar. Rev. ix. 13, 14.
3. Horns of the incense altar. Exodus xxv. 10; xxxvii. 25.

4. Horns of prophetic vision. Zech. i. 19, 20.
5. The (prophetic) he-goat's and ram's horns. Daniel viii. 7.
6. The horns overthrown by the little (prophetic) horn. Daniel vii. 8.
7. The scarlet-coloured beast's horn (prophetic)—[ten being three more than seven—horns than heads].
8. The horns of the ram thicket-caught. Gen. xxii. 13.
9. Zedekiah's iron horns. 1 Kings xxii. 11.
10. The HORN of salvation—Jesus. Luke i. 69.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—I. J. K.

IMAGE.

1. What shows express the great Unseen ;
2. What lost by man, restored has been ;
3. A proud king's work by faith defied ;
4. A dim, vague shape by fear descried ;
5. 6, What all have borne ; what saints will bear ;
7. What in a glass we see and share.

JOURNEY.

1. A journey never taken but supposed ;
2. Journeys which with, and like a river wound ;
3. A long succession which in prison closed ;
4. One twice repeated when the lost was found.

Find me these journeys ; and another still (5)
From a king's palace went to Zion's hill.

KEY.

1. A spacious treasure vault which God locked fast,
Making its doors secure without a key.
2. One vaster still through which a Conqueror passed,
And none can shut or open it but He ;
3. One darker, deeper yet, where shall be cast
A foe whose chain shall leave the nations free.
4. The keys of a high palace, given to men—
To set its doors wide open to the poor ;
5. The keys of an old palace fallen ; again
Built up by one who founds it strong and sure ;
6. The key of a grand palace, hid from ken
[sight]
When its false keepers would the truth
immure.

HAVE YOU ASKED HIM TO A SUNDAY SCHOOL

AS Willie N—— sat alone on the door-steps of his new home, with something of sadness in his heart, being separated from all his old playmates by his father's removal to a distant town, he was aroused by the kind voice of a young lady.

"Well, little boy, are you lonely in your new home? To-morrow is your first Sabbath here, and I have come to ask you to join my Sunday-school class. I have a nice class of boys about your age ; they will be good mates for you."

Well pleased with the idea of making friends, he replied : "I never was in Sunday School ; but if mother is willing, I will go."

The mother, Mrs. N——, was ready to consent to anything which would make Willie more contented, but

added : "I never went to Sunday-school, and I don't think I am any the worse for it."

A few kind, friendly words were spoken to the new neighbour by the young lady, and with a silent prayer that God would permit her not only to lead Willie to the Sunday School, but to lead father, mother, and child to the feet of Jesus, she returned home.

One year passed. Willie had never been absent from the class. Earnestly he had listened and taken to his heart the words of his young teacher. He had given his heart to Jesus, and the day had come in which he was to be baptized and received into the fellowship of Christ's church. Mr. and Mrs. N—— had always refused all invitations to attend church, but on this day, they were willing to be present to

witness the solemn services, as Willie had urged it so strongly. The Spirit brought home to their hearts the words of the faithful pastor, and impressed them with the solemnity of the scene

and with the thought of their own need of Jesus. Not long after they gave their hearts to him. Now, a happy, united family, they praise God for his mercies.

A LITTLE GIRL'S ANSWER.

THE King of Prussia, while visiting a village in his land, was welcomed by the school children of the place. After their speaker had made a speech for them, he thanked them. Then taking an orange from a plate, he asked: "To what kingdom does this belong?"

"The vegetable kingdom, sire," replied a little girl.

The king took a gold coin from his pocket, and holding it up asked: "And to what kingdom does this belong?"

"To the mineral kingdom," said the little girl.

"And to what kingdom do I belong, then?" asked the king.

The little girl coloured deeply, for she did not like to say "the animal

kingdom," as he thought she would, lest his majesty should be offended. Just then it flashed into her mind that "God made man in his own image," and looking up with a brightening eye, she said: "To God's kingdom, sire."

The king was deeply moved. A tear stood in his eye. He placed his hand on the child's head, and said, most devoutly: "God grant that I may be accounted worthy of that kingdom."

Thus did the words of a child move the heart of a king. Little children, learn from this that even your words may do both good and harm. A pert word from a child may wound the heart of a mother; a loving one may make it glad. My little children, let your words be kind, true, and right.

SACREDNESS OF FAMILY WORSHIP.

WHAT child in a well-regulated Christian family has not felt that the family prayers were a sweet and precious privilege, and a safeguard, in reference to the perils of this life, as well as the salvation of his own soul? Being recently called to leave my family at a very early hour in the

morning, my boy of thirteen, as soon as breakfast was over, proposed that the family read the Bible as usual; and on my being called away early again, though he had an engagement with a playmate after breakfast, he again took the time seriously to read a portion of the Word of God.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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Published at the "CHRISTIAN AGE" Office, 59, Old Bailey, London, E.C.

I. Our Service.

As the Spring is now waking the earth, we will begin to-day with this

HYMN.

HEAREST thou that gentle music,
Wafted by the balmy breeze,
Echoed by a thousand voices,
Carolling among the trees?

'Tis the sound of joy and gladness,
After winter's dreary reign;
Beauty that has slept in sadness
Wakens into life again.

Nature bursts her icy fetters,
Blooming fresh and fair, and bright;
Making us more deeply debtors
To the Source of life and light.

Hail! ye sweet returning flowers,
Welcome to this barren earth
All arithmeticians' powers
Cannot estimate your worth.

Speak they not of fairer regions,
Where the flowers for ever bloom
Where the happy ransomed legions
Reign in bliss beyond the tomb?

Let us, then, in joyful chorus
Celebrate our Father's praise;
For the glowing scenes before us.
Whisper of his boundless grace.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Joel ii., 21-27; Matt. xiii., 3-9.

PRAYER.

LORD GOD, Thou hast made day and night, winter and summer. Bless, we pray Thee, the springing of the earth at this time. Grant good crops to the farmers, and abundance for man and beast in the land. Thou hast made

one day specially the day of rest, the day that saw the Lord arise. Make it pleasant and good to us now. Give us a happy little service. Bless all children in every place who may be using the WEEKLY PULPIT to-day. We ask all for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

"Hath He said, and shall He not do?"—NUMBERS xxiii. 19.

THE clauses of this verse, that go before, lead us to think of men as very different from God, in respect of doing what they say. Men change their minds; and, alas, what is worse, they lie. But God never fails to keep His word. He cannot lie. He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. There are different ways in which the words and the deeds of men do not answer each other—two, especially, in teaching, and in promising. In teaching, first, you remember what Christ said of the Scribes and Pharisees, that in His day sat in Moses' seat—"They say and do not." These were hypocrites, that did not mean to do what they said. But there are others not so wicked. All teachers,—ministers, parents, and others,—that faithfully speak God's word, fail more or less to do as they say. They come short. There has been only one Teacher that never did. All good men, however, in the main, do what they teach—strive after it at least. Paul, though not perfect, could say: "Brethren, be followers together of me." Others have been conspicuously holy, yet all have to say, when they bid others follow them: "*As I also am of Christ*"—at once stating a fact, and expressing a qualification—the qualification being only "as I follow Jesus, follow me." Then, as to promising, men often promise and do not perform. Sometimes, never meaning to keep their word, they speak. These are liars, deceivers, chil-

dren of Satan. At other times they intend to keep their word, but they are not able, or they become unwilling, or they forget. But God is not man, or the son of man, that any of these things should be true of Him. "Hath He said, and shall He not do?"

My purpose now is to give you some good reasons why this question may be answered, and can be answered only by—"Yes, He will.

1. He is mighty.
2. He is holy.
3. He is wise.
4. He is true.
5. He is mindful.
6. He lives for ever.

First—He is mighty.

He never therefore can promise what He is unable to perform. Sometimes, indeed, He has been thought, even by His own children, to have said something too great for Him to do. Sarah even laughed at a promise He made, it seemed to her so strange a thing. But He reproved her, and said: "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Moses, too, as we learn from this book of Numbers, once thought the God of Israel had gone too far—had promised something that would, at least, be very difficult to do. But God showed him that it could be done, and that with ease. The promise was that all the people of Israel, in the desert, should eat flesh for a whole month. Thereupon, Moses said: "The people among

whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen ; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?" But the answer of God was easy. The Lord said unto Moses : "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." Jesus once described two very hard things. He said : "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Now, these are two hard things—to pass the camel through the needle's eye ; and, what was not so easy, to save a rich man. But though impossible with men, he said it is not so with God. No matter then what God promises, it is not beyond His power. If He promises heaven, He can give it. If He says that all things shall work together for good, He can make them so work. Of His own people, Jesus says : "None shall pluck them out of My hand,"—no one can do it. There are certainly great promises made in the Bible, but they are not beyond God's power. Here, then, is the safe advice : "Trust ye in the Lord for ever : for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."

Secondly—He is holy.

He cannot therefore promise any thing that would be wrong to give. If that were possible, we could not hold Him by His word ; for right is greater than might. Men sometimes do promise what they have no right to give, and

then, though it was bad to say, it would be still worse to do. Not to do in such cases, is better than to do. If two boys had made partners to steal, one of them could break the bond without sin—the sin was in making the bargain. You remember King Herod, how he swore an oath that he would give the dancer that pleased him any thing she liked to ask. I was a rash thing to say, for she might ask that which was wrong to give. And so she did. Would it have been wrong in Herod not to do? Certainly not. He had no right to take John the Baptist's head, and should have said : "I promised any thing, even to the half of my kingdom—that is no part of my kingdom." A good man once engaged to give what was not his, and got a great fright when he found out that he was strangely prevented doing the wrong thing, and thought how he had been fighting against God. Isaac said he would bless Esau, but God had promised the blessing to Jacob, and Esau had flung it away, so Isaac could not give it to Esau, and had no right to try. But God is holy ; He promises nothing that is wrong. He "will give that which is good."

Thirdly—He is wise.

There are cases in which men promise, not what is absolutely wrong to give, but it would be foolish to bestow. I do not mean what would be hurtful to themselves, for that would not release them from promises. "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not," is approved of God. But a parent, for example, may rashly say to a child something which, if he did, he would only

injure the child. He may think it wise and good to-day, but, learning something he did not know before, he may see it to be altogether unwise now. That has often happened in resolves to act in some particular way, to go somewhere, or do something to-morrow. Now, although frequently to change purpose is a sign of feebleness, yet we are too shortsighted and ignorant to be shut out from all change of mind. But God can never need to change His mind from seeing something He did not see before. For He knows all the future. Have you ever thought how wonderful it is to be able to look into to-morrow. We can look at yesterday; we can, in a certain sense, look into the morrow. We can imagine what is promised; but we cannot see the facts. God can. Therefore we may ask: "Hath He said, and shall He not do?"

Now, in connection with both these heads, let me give you a question without answer, and let me ask you to send me replies. Where do we read in the Bible of two persons that both said and did not do, and yet one was to be praised for passing from his word and the other to be blamed?

Fourthly—He is true.

There are four words from which I once preached to children, which are very sublime, "GOD THAT CANNOT LIE." God pays great regard to His word. He honours those who trust it. It was this that pleased Him so much in Abraham. There are texts that say that God can do everything. But of course that means everything that power can do. Being true or false is

nothing in connection with power. But perhaps some of you say: "Yes, we understand that, but surely it is said that God repents." Now, I have two things to say about that. We must often speak of God in language belonging to us. Thus, "it repented Him that He had made man on the earth," is just a strong way of saying that He was displeased with man's sin. It was as if He were disappointed and sorry. But another thing is this, when God repents Him of evil, it is to be borne in mind that He warns in order that the evil may be turned away. If the people before the flood had repented, and God had not sent the deluge, it would only have been doing what Noah's preaching aimed at. So it was in the case of Nineveh. This leads me to say that promises are made to faith. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." God says that to every one; but then to be guided, we must look. He says that believing Him, we may hold Him fast till we do.

Fifthly—He is mindful.

Men, through infirmity, though willing and able, do often forget. This should be guarded against. You should earnestly try in youth not to acquire the habit. Let one who has suffered from it warn you to take yourselves to task for such forgetfulness. Yet probably no one lives who has not at times forgotten, to his grief and pain. Can this be possible with God? You know He cannot forget. He has all the past before Him, as well as the future. Some people have said also that God writes down everything; that

every movement, every thought somehow makes a mark—like impressions in old stones. And it has been said, perhaps these records are the “books” that are to be “opened” in the Judgment-day. Be that as it may, God is pleased to speak as if to make it sure that He should not forget, He did make notes in writing. “I have graven thee,” He says of Zion, “on the palms of my hands, and thy walls are continually before Me.” Nay, He has written with light something that we can see, and has said that He will look on it, and remember what He has said. You have seen the beautiful rain-bow. It is God’s hand-writing. It is God’s witness. Here is what He says about it: “And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.”

One thing alone God forgets. That one thing is forgiven sin. Here are His words: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

Sixthly. He lives for ever.

The truest, ablest, wisest, holiest, most mindful may, from no failure in wisdom, or truth, or memory, yet fail to do as they say. For they may die, and then they can keep no promise on earth. God says of a dying man, “That day his thoughts perish.” “Death,” says the poet, “is the *if* of all to-morrows.” But God cannot die.

Jesus dieth no more, “Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost

that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Now, then, will you trust Him?

He likes to be trusted. He always rewards trust. You become very strong indeed when you hold Him by His word. He cannot bring power to break His word.

Let me remind you of a few sayings which, if you plead them, must become deeds.

1. To all, I will give you rest.

Number these words on your fingers, and weigh them as you do.

I—WILL—GIVE—YOU—REST.

2. To all who have come to Him, I will never leave you.

What, never! When men leave, will He abide by us? He will. Paul said so—“Nevertheless the Lord stood by me. David said, “When father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.” Death comes; will He leave us then? No. This applies to death, as to all other trials, “When thou passeth through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

3. I will raise it up at the last day.

That is a bold word; but all things are possible to Him. He has not forgotten the grave of one of His children. He raised Jesus, and will raise His people by the energizing of that mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself.

II. Our Talk.

I will suppose you in School, and here is a little address from one whom we shall think has come to see us.

WHOM SEEK YE? A Sunday-School Address.

THIS searching question was put by Jesus, and in His name I press it upon you this afternoon. In coming to the Sabbath-school, "whom seek ye?" The true answer, and the one I would like each of you to give, is: "Jesus of Nazareth."

The teachers will allow me to say, to them in passing, that *they* also should come "seeking Jesus"—His teaching, His Spirit, His love; and, in the degree in which they do so, will they thoroughly interest their scholars and be made wise in winning souls.

Mark the relative pronoun in the question. It is not *what*, but *whom* seek ye? It is not a place or a thing you are to seek, but a *Person*—the living and loving Jesus.

Are you sure you will find Him? Let us hear what He says: "They that seek me early shall find me;" "Seek and ye shall find;" and you know that His sayings are true. Besides, you must always remember this—that Jesus is *here*, seeking *you*. On a Sunday morning, long ago, some good women came to the grave of one they loved, and, after the custom of the Jews, they brought sweet spices to anoint Him. But when they came, they found the stone which had been laid at the door of the sepulchre rolled away, and Jesus—for it was He—risen and gone. Ah! it was a blessed thing that He was not there, or

He would not have been here to-day, saying, as He does: "Come unto me."

What will you do with Jesus when you find Him? One thing is certain, you will never *lose* Him. None shall be able to pluck you out of His hands. You can't say that about other things you may get. Men have hunted for gold, and in the terrible shipwreck have had to throw it away to save their lives. But they who find Jesus, "the Pearl of great price," will keep Him for ever.

You must not keep Him to yourselves, however—must not be selfish—but tell of Him to others, that they too may know what a Saviour you have found.

What will Jesus do for you? He will make *you* His, and make you holy—guard and guide you while you go. I have heard our minister preach from a wonderful text, which says: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in and sup with him and he with me." And perhaps the most wonderful thing in that verse is the least part of it: "I will sup with him and he with me." Jesus gets from us, as well as we from Him. We will give Him our love, gratitude, obedience—and He will *sup* on these. He will give us His love, guidance, blessing—and these will satisfy us.

Men have lately admired the heroism of a young American who has braved

many dangers ; gone, as Scripture says, "through fire and through water,"—all for what? To find a *lost man*. What did Jesus do? Left His Father's throne and the glory which He had with Him, and came down to our world to *die* for us, that our immortal souls might be saved.

Will you believe on Him and give your hearts to Him? "Dear children, *to-day* to a Saviour fly." This is the message which I trust the Lord has given me for you this afternoon—"Seek Jesus." May the angel of the Covenant bless you all!

J. P.

Now let us have a little Bible Story, written by a father for his little girl, and called

THE PRINCESS AND THE BABY.

MANY hundreds of years ago, in a country a long way off, there lived a cruel king.

In one part of his land lived a tribe of people whom the king treated very badly, and made them his slaves, and they had to work very hard for him. He sent them into the fields and made them toil all day in the hot sun (for it is very hot in that country) making bricks, and doing all sorts of hard work: and he put cruel task-masters over them, who had long whips; and if these poor slaves stopped a minute to rest, they were beaten and driven on by these men.

But there were so many of these poor people in the land, that the king began to be afraid that there might soon be enough of them to rise up against him, and perhaps make him run away; and so what do you think he did? He gave orders to his soldiers that whenever a baby boy was born among these people, they were to kill him, and throw him into the river. He said he

did not mind about the little girls living, as they could not fight against him, and they might spare them. And so these wicked men watched, and as soon as they found that a baby was born, and saw that it was a little boy, they killed it.

Well, soon after this, one of these poor mothers had a dear little baby boy given to her, and he was so pretty and so good that she made up her mind to save him from the cruel people who wanted to kill him. So, after thinking a good deal about it, and praying to God to help her, I will tell you how she saved him.

She lived near the river, and she made a nice little basket like a boat, soft and snug inside, and when her dear little baby was fast asleep she put him gently in, and covered him up. She then set the boat on the water, and let it float a little way out among the weeds and rushes.

Now, does not this seem a funny thing to do with a little baby? But

this poor woman loved and feared God, and when she put her dear baby boy on the river, she knelt down and asked God to take care of him and keep him safe.

But you will see that she did more than pray to God. This baby had a big sister, and her mother told her to go and stand a little way off and watch what became of her brother.

And what do you think happened?

After a short time some ladies came to walk by the river side, and among them was a princess, the daughter of the king—this cruel king, you know, who wanted to kill all the baby boys.

When the princess came near, and saw the little boat floating on the water, she said: "What is that funny thing on the water? Go and fetch it out." And so one of her maids stepped a little way into the water and drew the boat to the side. As soon as the princess lifted the cover the baby awoke and began to cry. But he looked so pretty and so helpless that the princess said, "Oh, what a dear sweet little baby I have found! I shall take and keep it as my own son." And she looked about to see if she could find some one to take care of it for her.

By this time baby's sister had come near to the ladies, and was looking on. So she said to the princess, "If you please shall I run and fetch a nurse for you." And the princess said, "Oh yes, go and find one quickly!"

The girl was very glad of this, and I need not tell you that she ran straight to her mother and told her all about it. Of course the thankful mother went at

once to the princess as fast as she could.

The princess said to her: "See, I have found this dear baby on the river, and I mean to keep him and make him my son. I want you to take it home and nurse it for me, and I will pay you your wages. Let it have the best food and the best clothes, and I will pay you well for them."

So this good mother got her dear baby boy, and took great care of him, and no one dared do any harm to him because you know he was to be the son of the king's daughter.

The boy grew, and when he became a man, although he might have lived with the princess at the king's palace, he would not do so, but went and lived with his own people, who were treated so badly, and he was afterwards the means, in God's hands, of bringing them out of the power of this cruel king, and of saving them.

Thus we learn how kind our God is to watch over even little babies; and how good to hear the prayer of the poor mother, and to save her child in so strange a way. God will always take care of those who love him and put their trust in Him.

I dare say you can guess the name of this baby who afterwards became so great a man. When the princess drew him out of the water she called him "*Moses*," which means, "drawn out." And the name of the king was Pharaoh. When you are older you can read all about it in the book of Exodus.

Communicated.

EFFIE'S MISTAKE.

EFFIE stood by the window idly playing with the curtain tassel, and looking dreamily out into the street. She soon betrayed the subject of her thoughts by saying :

"Mamma, I think those Lovells, who have lately moved into the great house yonder, must be very rich. I have seen elegant furniture carried in there, and they seem to have plenty of servants."

"Yes, Effie, I have been told they are very wealthy."

"I thought so, mamma, for Clara never has to walk out; I always see her riding in their beautiful carriage, or else upon the back of her Shetland pony. I have to walk everywhere I go, and never can ride except in the horse-cars. It seems too bad, mamma, that she should have so much, and I so little."

"God's gifts are much more evenly distributed than you suppose, my dear; and you have made a great mistake in regard to Clara. I daresay the poor child would be willing to part with her horses, carriages, servants, and indeed all the luxuries which she enjoys, if she could walk and run about as you can."

"Why, mamma, what do you mean? Cannot Clara walk if she chooses?"

"No, my dear; she is a cripple, and has never walked a step since she was two years old. The reason that she rides out so much is because that is the only way she can take the air. In the house she has to be wheeled about in a chair, or carried in the arms of a servant. I fear you have been envying your rich little neighbour. Do you think, now, you would like to change places with her?"

"Oh no, indeed, mamma; I had rather be a great deal poorer than we are, and have the use of my limbs. Oh, dear, how dreadful not to be able to walk a step! I am sure, mamma, I shall always pity Clara now when I see her riding out, instead of envying her."

"I hope, my dear, you will never allow yourself to indulge in the feeling of envy. God has given us our lot in life, and if He denies us some good things, He knows what is best for us, and makes it up to us in other ways. I want my little girl to cultivate such a spirit, that she can say, as St. Paul did, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.'"

CONSCIENCE.

REMEMBER reading, when a very little boy, about a child who was in the habit of going to an upper room or loft where

there was a store of apples. She went from time to time to steal the fruit, but she met with something that greatly troubled her. There happened to have

been placed in that state-room an old oil-painting. It was a large face, the eyes of which, go to what part of the room the little girl might, seemed to follow her; and they appeared to be saying to her, as she stooped down to take up the apples, "Ah! I see you. It is very naughty. You are sure to be found out." This so annoyed the little culprit from time to time, that she was determined to put a stop to the threatening of these two staring eyes; so she procured a small knife, or a pair of scissors, and struck them out.

Ah! but there were still the two large holes in place of them, and she never could look at them without thinking of the eyes, and what they used to say to her. She had put out the eyes, but she had not, nor could she get rid of her conscience. Moreover, the very means she had used for sinning without rebuke only served to discover her guilt; for, when what had befallen the painting came to be found out, it led to such inquiries as at last to reveal the whole truth.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH.

NOW many of our readers love to speak the truth? People may tell the truth, and not really love to do so. Children often speak the truth to their parents and friends when they would rather tell a falsehood; but for fear of being found out and perhaps punished for the falsehood, they speak the truth.

Now, the girl or boy who does this is not to be praised for telling the truth; for they do it from self-interest, and not because they love the truth and love to speak it. The Bible tells about "speaking the truth in the heart." This does not mean that we can speak the truth in our hearts, and lie with our lips;

but it means that it should be in our hearts to speak the truth, or that we should love to speak it. The tongue and lips will obey the heart; and whatever the heart commands them to say, they will utter.

We hope none of our young readers are speaking the truth solely because they are commanded to, or because they may lose their good name if they tell a falsehood; for these are not the best reasons why they should all love to speak the truth, and always tell it because they love to speak it. How many can say: "I always speak the truth because I love, to?"



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We will begin to-day with this

HYMN.

I WOULD be like an angel
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand;
Then, right before my Saviour,
So glorious and so bright,
I'd wake the sweetest music,
And praise Him day and night.

I know I'm weak and sinful,
But Jesus will forgive,
For many little children
Have gone to heaven to live.

Dear Saviour, when I languish,
And lay me down to die,
O ! send a shining angel
To bear me to the sky.

Oh there I'll be an angel,
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand;
And there, before my Saviour,
So glorious and so bright,
I'll wake the heavenly music,
And praise Him day and night.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah vi., 1-8; Luke ix., 28-36.

PRAYER.

LORD God, Thou art ever holy. Thou art Light, and there is no darkness in Thee at all. Thy heaven is a holy place. Holy angels dwell in it. How can sinful creatures like us hope to stay in it?

O blessed Father, Thou hast told us our stained robes can be washed quite pure in the blood of the Lamb. Thy Spirit can make our hearts new and clean. Lord wash us. Lord renew us, and fit us for dwelling at last in glory, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day is in Rev. vii., 13. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?"

THE verse before us has two questions in it. There is *what*, and there is *whence*.

Who are these, and where from? But the two may well be treated as one. You cannot answer one without the other. I will treat them as a single question. What and whence are these?

Observe *these*. Two things are noticeable about them. First, they are clothed in white. That is the dress of angels. That was the colour of Christ's garments when He was transfigured. That is, shall I say, God's dress; for the Psalmist says: "Thou coverest Thyself with light, as with a garment." To be clothed then, with white, as these persons were seen to be, was to be like angels, like Jesus, like God. That is to say, it was to be holy—free from sin and stain.

Again, they had palms, that is palm branches, or rather palm-fronds. These were the emblems of victory. It is worth your while to read about the palm. It is a beautiful, but a singular tree. It grows straight up. You might load it with weights, they say, and it would still struggle to go right up, in spite of its burden. It rises up right towards heaven. There are no branches on its straight stem; only rings of protuberances where leaves had once rooted themselves in the trunk. These circles give good footing for the climber. At the top of the tree are its branches, or fronds—ribs, with feathery leaves on

each side, long and graceful. Under these, delicious fruits grow. The palm loves water. Where you see it there is water near. Three-score and ten palm-trees at Elim showed the Israelites a welcome resting-place. That, perhaps, is the reason why the branch came to be an emblem of victory. The day's journey, it seems to say, is finished; there is rest in the shade and by the fountain. Be that as it may, the *palm* in the hand says, this is a time of joy and rest; we have fought and won the battle.

Now it is of the holy, joyous, victorious company, seen before God's throne, that the questions are asked, what and whence? Guided by the angel's reply, I would answer in four remarks.

1. From the earth.
2. From all nations.
3. From trouble.
4. From the fountain.

I. From the earth.

These are not angels but men. Now, men are fallen, they are sinners. Those white-robed persons were once then like what we read of Joshua, the high priest, "clad with filthy raiment." So they once stood before the angel; now they stand white before the throne.

Some of you have been, I dare say, in a paper factory. There are many such places where you may see rags taken in, sorted, cleaned, brought down

to threads—to pulp; ground, washed, sifted, sized, and dealt with in curious ways, till what was dirty shreds becomes long webs, or measured sheets, of beautiful paper. I have heard of a good man, that was conducted through a paper mill; who after he had seen the whole process, took a bit of rag and a bit of paper into his hand, and said: "We know not yet what we shall be." He was thinking, as every Christian knowing himself may think, how shall I be made holy; and he was cheered to reflect that, as soiled rags may become white paper, sinful souls may become pure. He might have taken other texts. He might have said: "Such were some of you; but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of the Lord." But here is the wonder—that sinners of the earth should shine so.

Another wonder is, that so weak a creature as man should appear a conqueror in heaven. If this company of the white-robed had been a troop of angels, we should not wonder, for angels excel in strength. But poor, weak men, how come they to have palms up in the sky? Well, we shall by-and-by see how they come to conquer—how their very weakness is necessary to their conquering. Here note that the greatest conquerors we read of in the Bible were weak. There is Jacob—against him an Angel, yet he overcomes. There is David—against him a giant, yet he vanquishes. There is a little army against a million of Ethiopians (you will find the story in 2 Chronicles

xiv.)—yet they put the great host to flight. There is one man on mount Carmel against a multitude, four hundred and fifty priests, and a favouring court, yet he fears them not, and foils them all. How came these weak men to conquer? They fought with a weapon called faith. Here are the words some of them used. Here are David's words to the giant: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." Here are Elijah's to the priests: "Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God."

II. From all Nations.

The Gospel is for all the world. Its 'marching orders' put it so. Its triumphs as here seen show it. For when the Gospel conquers men, they are the victors in turn, and the victors are from all nations.

There are a great many people on the face of the earth. There are races of men. There are black, white, and red men. There are Asiatics, Europeans, Africans, and Americans. There are Germans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen. God saves men from among them all.

What does this teach us? First, that all the world over there are sinners. Go where you please in this world there are graves. Machpelah was the first possession Abraham got in the promised land. I once saw a

lonely grave where an early emigrant had been buried in the midst of a prairie farm. So go where you please there is sin, at least wherever man is. The other thing is, that for men of all classes and countries there is salvation. Already we have it proved. Here it is in the story of the text. Your own hymn has it so—

“Who are they whose little feet,
Pacing life's dark journey through,
Now have reached that heavenly seat
They had ever kept in view?”

‘I from Greenland's frozen land;’

‘I from India's sultry plain;’

‘I from Afric's barren sand;’

‘I from islands of the main.’

Since it is so, see how we should be missionary in our spirit, and try to do something to gather people from all lands into the white-robed company.

III. From Trouble.

These are they, it is said, that came out of “great tribulation.” All God's people have trials. Their way is through tribulation. There are many kinds of it. Here are the heads of struggles that will go through them all.

1. It is hard to deny ourselves.

When Eve's desires were awakened towards the forbidden fruit, it was hard to keep from stretching out her hand. When Achan saw the goodly Babylonish garments, he found it hard not to covet. But though it was hard for David to let his foe escape, when he was in his hand, he spared him. It was hard for Jesus, being an hungered, to refrain from supplying Himself with bread, yet He would not go before His Father's will. Now all of us that would be

conquerors must learn to say *No* to ourselves. And every time we do so we gain a victory. Our palm branch is growing.

2. It is hard to wait.

Things do not come round, or let us say, come ripe all at once. Plant a seed in the ground, it will not be ready for harvest to-morrow. Everything grows by little and little. Little children cannot be tall men and women in a day. Now no doubt it is hard to wait—hard for hope put off, and hard for faith tried. “’Tis long in coming,” says hope deferred. “Will it come at all?” says doubting heart. Yet see how waiting is at last rewarded. Noah waited for the drying of the earth. After he could not see the waters—he stayed week after week. At last the olive leaf came to recompense his patience. Israel waited in Egypt many long years; at last came exodus. The world waited for Christ for slow thousands of years; at last came the angels' song. We are waiting long for millennial peace and love; the blest time also, may tarry, yet it will come.

3. It is hard to work.

Adam was not made to be idle. He kept and dressed the garden. But ere he fell, work was not toil. Strength rejoices in work. But tasks are very heavy oftentimes in this world below. Work for Christians is hard—hard for their own small strength, and for the great opposition. There was Jonah; he thought the task hard, and fled. There was Paul, in labours abundant, but feeling them severe, serving God

with tears night and day. And such in measure is the life of all believers.

4. It is hard to bear.

Pain is not a nice thing. Yet the world is full of it. There are pains of body. Some people have them always. There are pains of mind and heart. The world is full of these—full of cares and sorrows. All meet with them. Christ was made perfect—that is, complete as a Saviour—through sufferings. So, in our place as the saved, must we.

4. From the Fountain.

The persons who have come out of great tribulation are also said to have washed their robes and made them white.

The fountain is that which Zachariah speaks of: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." It is the fountain, of which the poet Cowper says:—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath the flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

Christ spoke of it too, when he said to Peter: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

So you see the trouble does not make the robes white. Something else is needed—Christ's blood. But you say: if I should wash anything in blood, it would stain it. So with any thing but

souls, and with any blood but Christ's. To offer sacrifice of ourselves, or of others, would be vain. "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?" The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. But neither could Christ's blood in the natural sense. We are not washed in that; that is not sprinkled upon us. What is it, then, which makes souls pure from the guilt of sin? It is the worth of His suffering unto death, for the sake of which God frees and heals us.

We deserved to die. Jesus died for us. For His sake we are forgiven. Also from His life we learn to be holy. We follow His example. Love draws us on after Him, and the Holy Spirit helps and leads us.

I will conclude by putting the heads into a few lines of rhyme.

"What are these, and whence?

Creatures of the earth,
Fallen from primal innocence,
Sinful even in birth.

"What are these, and whence?

Men from every land;
Not a distant isle, but thence
They come to swell the band.

"What are these, and whence?

All from trouble sore,
Yet, with Jesus their defence,
Conquering more and more.

"What are these, and whence?

Washed in Jesus' blood,
Standing in glad confidence
Before the throne of God."

II. Our Talk.

Here is, first of all, a little hymn right on the text of the sermon. Let us sing it.

Who are they in heaven that stand,
Clothed in white at God's right hand?
In their robes so fair and bright,
They are shining like the light.

Harp of gold and palms they bear;
All are good and happy there;
Much I wonder what their name,
Who they are, and whence they came.

They who now are praising God,
Once the path of sorrow trod;
Now, by Christ their Saviour led,
Crowns of joy are on their head.

They shall never weep again,
Never know a grief or pain;
All is bright and shining day,
God has wiped their tears away.

May I with them also stand,
Robed in white, at God's right hand;
And with joy for ever sing
Praises to my God and King.

Now let us have a few questions to see what you remember of the discourse.

In what book of Scripture was the text? in what chapter? what verse?

How many questions are there in it?

What two things are noticeable about the persons concerning whom the questions are put?

What was their dress?

What had they in their hands?

Can you tell any thing about what sort of tree the palm is?

How many heads of reply to the text question were given?

What was the first?

If these white-robed persons came from earth what must they have been?

How, then, came their robes to be white?

Do you know a process by which mean, torn, soiled things can be made whole and white?

What did weak saints fight with in great battles?

What was the second head?

Name a number of countries and people in the world?

Do you know if Christ has saved some persons out of them all?

Is there a children's hymn about saved little ones coming from many lands?

What lesson does this fact teach us?

What was the third head?

What is the big word in the context for trouble?

Are there various kinds of trouble?

Name four things that run through them that are hard.

Name a person that did not deny herself when she should.

Name one who, when tempted to kill his foe, did not do it.

Give some instances of people having to wait for things a long time.

Name an Apostle that found his work hard, but kept at it.

By what was Jesus made a perfectly qualified Saviour?

What was the last head?

Can you give a text where the fountain is spoken of?

Can you repeat a hymn-verse about it?

Is it body-clothes or soul-clothes that blood makes white?

Can any blood but Christ's make souls white?

ANSWERS TO I. J. K. IN ALPHABET.

IMAGE.

1. Jesus. Hebrews i. 3; Colos. i. 15.
2. God's image in man. Colos. iii. 10.
3. Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. Dan. iii.
4. The image of Eliphaz's vision. Job iv. 16.
5. The image of the first Adam. 1 Cor. xv. 49.
6. The image of the second Adam. 1 Cor. xv. 49.
7. The image of the Lord Jesus. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

JOURNEY.

1. Baal's supposed journey. 1 Kings xviii. 27.
2. Journeyings of Israel in the desert, while the water from the rock followed them. Num. xxxiii. 1.

3. Paul's journeyings. 1 Cor. xi. 26; 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.
4. Journey of Joseph and Mary seeking Jesus. Luke ii. 41—52.
5. Nehemiah's journey. Neh. ii. 6.

KEY.

1. The key of the locked sea. Job xxxviii. 10, 11.
2. The key of Hades. Rev. i. 18.
3. The key of the bottomless pit. Rev. xx. 1.
4. The key of the Gospel kingdom. Matt. xvi. 19.
5. The keys of David's house. Isaiah xxii. 22.
6. The key of knowledge. Luke xi. 52.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—L AND M.

LAMP.

1. Lamps that, unlike the lightning's flash
Before the thunder's noise,
Shone only when, with sudden crash,
Alarm had pealed its voice.
2. A lamp that through the darksome night
Shines on the pilgrim's way;
And, like a star, hangs out its light
Till dawning of the day.
3. A lamp that, following murky fire,
Went through the midst of death,
Foreshowing, after trials dire,
The victory of faith.
4. A flaming lamp, at clarion's blast,
Descending met the gaze,
Earth's streams and springs received, aghast,
A bitter world a-blaze.
5. Lamps, that from opening cavern gleam
With curling smoke o'erhung;
6. Lamps that their purely burning beam
On wreaths of fragrance flung.
7. A lamp that through the world shall shine
In wondering nations' eye;
8. A lamp made for a King divine
Whose light shall never die.

MOON.

Supposing that the sacred page
Should represent the sky;
Then, varying as to look, place, age,
I thus the moon descry.
Find me the verses which relate
The under-noted visions eight.

1. I see her first a regent queen
O'er half the world her sceptre swaying;
2. Next, like red wine her aspect seen
Is half the startled world dismaying.
3. Now lies she like a pavement spread
Beneath a form with glory vested;
4. Now, in her orient place o'erhead,
She stands for lingering hours arrested.
5. Now, gazing museful on her face,
In laud to God a bard is singing,
6. Now, welcoming her nascent grace
The land with joyous peals is ringing.
7. I see her, last, in heaven abiding.
Full-orbed, unchanging, waning never;
8. And yet in heaven her lustre hiding,
Lost in a light that shines for ever.

[What follows is from shorthand notes of an actual conversation in class, where a blackboard is used.]

Now we will have the first of a few talks about *temptation*, as they have been had in class. They grew out of this star text: "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." We will put the talk in three chapters, and call this

Chap. I. In the Garden.

You will please spell this word with me [on the board], Temptation. Well, that is the subject of our talk to-day. Now tell me who was the first tempter that you read of in the world? Satan. Any other name? The Serpent. Yes, Satan then, or the serpent, was the first tempter.

Whom did he first tempt? What did the tail of the serpent bring down from the sky? The stars. What stars first of all? The angels.

Say then, Satan first tempted the angels that fell with him. You said, Eve. And if you were thinking of the first time Satan tempted on the earth, you were quite right in saying so. Now tell me this, What showed Satan's cunning when he came to tempt Eve? Was Adam beside her when he came? No. Do you think he would have come if he had seen the two together? Well, perhaps he might have done so, but when he saw Eve alone, he said to himself: "Here is my opportunity, these two whom I hate are not together just now, and I will manage one more easily than I could manage two." Now can any of you find a proof from

Ecclesiastes, that two in the garden would have been stronger than one? Ecclesiastes, chapter iv. Find the verse for me. Ninth verse. Well what does it say? "Two are better than one." I think Satan knew that, and said to himself: "I will go when I can catch one of them alone." But did he go to the stronger of the two, or the weaker? He went to the weaker—he went to the one that, he thought, would perhaps not have so much power to keep her from falling, and was not so much given to reason; saying, "Let me go when they are separated, and to the weaker too." So he came not to Adam, but to Eve.

Do you remember what he said to her? I want you to see how cunning he is, because he will do the same sort of thing with you. I know it; for he has done it with me many a time, the very same sort of thing. You never knew Satan, when he wanted a person to tell a lie, say to him: "John, tell this lie." No, he does not do that, but he says to him: "You will be obliged to say that to get yourself out of trouble, but it is not so bad after all. Many people say the like. You need not be afraid to say it, it is not a lie—you can understand it to be true in some sense—at least you may say it once; you need not do it again;" and so on, and he gets you to do it in that way.

See how he cunningly tried to do this with the first person he tempted. Turn to Genesis iii., because I want you to see it. Read the first verse. You see he pretended to be a good friend to

Adam and Eve. He didn't say these very words, but they are the spirit of what he said. Addressing Eve, he said, "Woman, fair woman! have I heard rightly? has God not allowed you to take the fruit of all the trees? Dear me! He must be very unkind. He must grudge you getting nice things. Do you think it is true that he has forbidden you to eat of this tree?" Satan did not say: "God is bad in doing that," but he said: "Have you thought of it? have you been taking it into consideration so as to see that it is very unkind of Him not to let you eat of the fruit of all the trees." I know many a boy and girl—I have been very close to some of them—in fact, I have been closer to one of them than I am to this boy [touching one]—who think father and mother are very unkind—they won't let them go to such and such a place. I should not wonder if there have been some thoughts like that in some one here. Well, that is the way in which Satan goes to work. He does not come bluntly up and say: "If you don't do as I tell you, I will do for you." No, he does not come in that way, but he comes as with a nice gloved hand, and says, "Don't you think God has been rather unkind, rather unreasonable?" That is the way he began with Eve—sly, cunning serpent that he was.

Well, now watch you for a week the thoughts that come into your mind and heart about your father and mother, or other people, and just you see whether Satan is not going about still trying the same sort of trick, trying to get you

to think that good people are rather hard, and more unkind than anybody else.

Well, what did Eve say?

The woman said unto the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God said, Ye shall not eat of it."

Was Eve right in that?

Yes, she was. Only some people think that she perhaps made the thing a little stronger than God made it. Some people think that she showed that her heart was beginning to feel that God was hard, because she made His word a little stronger than He had made it.

Now tell me in what respect does Eve make it a little stronger. 'Neither shall ye touch it.'

Had God said that, exactly? No, not as recorded.

Well, some people say that Eve showed in this that she was beginning already to let a little poison of the serpent get into her heart, and so she put God's words harder than He had put them, and added, "Neither shall ye touch it." I am not sure that people who take that view are right; only I state it, and it is a deep and beautiful thought. I think, however, she was reporting what was most likely quite true.

And now let us look at the progress of Satan's temptations.

Did he cover his snare the next time? Did he gloze the bad words the next time? No; he came out bluntly, and said: "I tell you, ye shall not die."

Well, what was that? What do you call that word of his? A lie. Yes, indeed.

Now say what is the first lie you read of in the Bible? Well, it is such a dreadful word, it is such a great lie, I think I must write it and you must read it [on the board].

"Ye shall not surely die." That is it.

If you please, I will give you a learned name for that. That is a proto lie. What is the meaning of the big word?

A first lie; a first false thing; and not only first but a big thing; a worst lie; a root lie, too; it brings out other lies.


Now, that lie is floating about the world to this hour. I feel it, and hear it in some way or other every day. The meaning is this: "Sin won't hurt you." Satan has two great lies; he has been using them a long long time, and that is the first of them. He says: "Don't be afraid to sin, it won't hurt you; it is all nonsense to say that sin will make

you die. You may lie, you may steal, you may swear, you may break the Sabbath; you may do anything you like; there's no harm in it."

He does not say this quite in that blunt way, you know; but still he says sin will not hurt you much. Then this wicked devil, when once you have done wrong—have done the bad thing he wished you to do—changes his note, comes to you, and says: "You are done for now, you are done for now; to hell you must go, there is no help for you; don't you make any difficulty about it, you have settled it; God cannot have mercy upon you, you bad, wicked, low wretch! Do you think God will trouble himself about you?" And so he goes on.

Then comes the Lord Jesus Christ, and he says: "My son, my child, God loves you, for all your faults. It is not as Satan says, God has sent me to save you; and if you will trust Him and Me you may and shall be saved."
(*More of this chapter, D. V., next week.*)

DARE TO DO RIGHT.

 CHILDREN, did you ever know of a person who did right whom sensible people despised? If no one says: "You have done right," in words so we can hear it, the little voice we all carry within our minds will always say: "You did as you ought to."

When Athens was governed by thirty men, called "tyrants," they wanted a very rich man, named Cleon, killed, so that they could have his riches. They wanted the great philosopher,

Socrates, to help them; but he said: "No, he would not engage in so great an ill as to *act unjustly*." You see he did right with thirty rulers over him, and all cruel men too.

Christ was a greater philosopher than Socrates, and He taught us to "do as we would be done by." If we follow that little rule we shall always *dare to do right*. How much more of joy, and less of sorrow there would be if everybody loved these words of the good Saviour.

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin with the following

HYMN.

THERE is a name I love to hear,
I love to speak its worth ;
It sounds like music in mine ear,
The sweetest name on earth.

It tells me of a Saviour's love,
Who died to set me free ;
It tells me of His precious blood,
The sinner's perfect plea.

It tells me what my Father hath
In store for every day ;
And though I tread a darksome path,
Yields sunshine all the way,

It tells of One whose loving heart
Can feel my deepest woe,
Who in my sorrow bears a part
That none can bear below.

It bids my trembling soul rejoice,
It dries each rising tear ;
It tells me, in a " still small voice,"
To trust and never fear.

Jesus ! the name I love so well,
The name I love to hear !
No saint on earth its worth can tell,
No heart conceive how dear.

This name shall shed its fragrance still
Along life's thorny road ;
Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill
That leads me up to God.

And there, with all the blood-bought throng,
From sin and sorrow free,
I'll sing the new eternal song
Of Jesu's love to me.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Hosea xiv. ; Eph. ii. 13—22.

PRAYER.

FATHER in heaven, we plead
with Thee in the name of
which we have sung. Bless
us, and all we love, with what
Thou knowest us to need for His sake.

Give us daily bread for body and soul.
Breathe Thy Spirit on us. Keep us in
Thy love till the Lord come, to Whom
be glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON.

The text to-day will be found in the 21st verse of the epistle of Jude: "But ye, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—We may select as the text-words these three, "Building yourselves up."

AT the door of a shop I have sometimes seen the figure of a boy, dressed nicely, and looking very smart, so boy-like indeed, that I have almost mistaken the image for a really living little fellow. I once turned round, after passing, to see whether it was wax or flesh and blood I saw. Suppose that I could put such a thing side by side with a real boy you would soon find the difference between the movements of life—boys are rarely still—and the silence and fixedness of death. But even if you failed to know the living from the dead the first time—if you should leave the two for a year, and then see them together again, you would distinguish them in a moment. How? The image of wax would have all the while stood still; the living boy would have grown. He would have been "building up himself."

A boy once was much perplexed by being told that he was just as old, or nearly so, as the house he lived in. He thought it strange in that case, that he was so little and the house so big. That was a child's confusion of things that differ. Of course, people cannot be ever so big as houses, or how could they live in them. Yet little as children are, they can do what houses cannot do; they can build up themselves under God; they can grow. It is the same with trees and plants.

What makes the difference? The one has life; the other has none. Take a stone, and put it into a field beside some growing root, and you will soon see the difference. The stone lies still as it is; the bulb grows bigger.

This leads me to say that there is a lower and a higher life. The vegetable can only grow to a certain size. So can our bodies. Young people, sometimes, are very anxious to be taller than they are. "But which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" Not only so, but after a time, when growth has gone as far as it can, it seems to go back. Old people are not usually so tall as when they were young. And, sooner or later, they go down into dust.

But where the Holy Spirit has given life, the growth goes on. The outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed day by day. A godly child may know this, that though when he is twenty, his body will stop growing, his soul need not, and will not. If alive in God, he will grow up unto Him always. It is about this life and growth that I am to speak to you.

Let us go back, however, for a moment to the two things with which we started—the waxen image, and the living boy. The difference is in the life and the want of life. But, now, suppose we should treat both alike in this fashion—lock

them both up in a cupboard, and come back to them a year after (of course no such cruel bad thing could be done, but we may just suppose it). What would be the consequence? We should find the wax not much the worse, but corruption and decay instead of the flesh and bones and blood that were once alive. So to keep up life something is needed. I will mention four things :

1. Food.
2. Air.
3. Heat.
4. Light.

I might have mentioned them in a different order. But the order is suggested in the verse before us, and I have a reason for keeping to it.

1. Food.

People cannot live and grow without food. We know that when God pleases He can keep alive without it. Moses fasted forty days. So did Elijah. So did Jesus. Some people in trances have lived a long time without food. But we speak of God's ordinary way of working, and of health, and, besides, of healthy growth. If any of you ceased to eat you would soon cease to live; and if you for a little grew, it would be not the growth of strength but weakness. Now, here is the *faith* and the soul's feeding.

But what is the food of the soul? It is truth. The Lord's Supper, which you see partaken of sometimes, says it is Christ. "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." But, then, it is not Christ eaten as we eat our meals. Souls cannot eat dishes of meat. You cannot take a cake or an apple into your soul's mouth. When

we feed on Christ, we feed on Him by thought, and thought must have food.

But where are thoughts of Christ to be had? Where is the food we need stored? The answer is, in the Bible. The Holy Spirit was to take of the things that were Christ's, and show them to the disciples. He has done so. And they are here in the Holy Book. Now the Bible in the house will do us no good. There is a story told somewhere about a good minister on his travels turning into a very poor cottage, and asking a draught of water. As it was supplied to him, he looked round with pity on the miserable dwellings, and observing an old copy of the Bible lying on the window-sill, said, "You need not be so poor as you seem to be, with a great treasure in your house." The family took it literally, and began to dig the floor all over to find the treasure. The search was vain; but one day the mother happening to take up the old Bible, read on the fly-leaf this text: "Thy testimonies are better to me than thousands of gold and silver." She said: "Ah, that is the treasure the good man meant." So the family set to reading it. God opened their eyes; they believed; they obeyed, and God blessed them. When the minister passed the same way some years after, he looked in and said: "I see you have found the treasure." Neither will the Bible do merely in the hand. You must read it and think of it. You must make meals of it steadily. If you say when, I would say find out the best time. Manna fell in the morning. Elijah was fed by ravens morning and evening.

Morning and evening are good times for eating God's word. But feed regularly, however you do.

Yet to read, even to remember, even to recite, may do little to make you grow. In idol-feasts they used of old to place great piles of food before the idols. They could not eat; nor if they could have eaten, would it have made them grow. So if your souls are dead, it will be nothing. I have heard people say, My food does me no good. A little, well digested, is better than much that cannot be turned to good. So a text hid in the heart would be better than the whole Bible in the head. So, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

You would think it strange if I were to ask you, have you had your breakfast this morning. But I would ask it—Have you gone to your Bibles? I have read of an apprentice in London who resolved before going to work to store his mind with at least one verse, who at last became like an Apollos—mighty in the Scriptures.

2. Air.

You could still less live without air than food. For a little while you could fast and live; ceasing to breathe but for a few minutes you would die. When persons have escaped death by drowning, after half an hour's being in the water, it is a wonder.

But what resembles breathing in the life of the soul? Prayer does. You recollect what the poet says—

"Prayer is the Christian's vital life,
The Christian's native air."

Unceasing prayer is like the constancy of breathing. A preacher does not hear

the people he speaks to breathing. Neither does he hear them praying. Yet they must be breathing, and they may be praying. The more like soft breathing our praying is the better. Laborious breathing shows a state of disease. Such is the praying of anxious souls. Throw open the windows, you say, when paroxysms of hard breathing come on some one. In his late sore distress, the Prince of Wales fought a dreadful battle for a lack of power to breathe freely. Perhaps a deeper struggle was in his soul. David had such a fight, and afterwards sung in this strain: "I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplications."

The closet is a place of stated prayer. What is this like? It is like a man taking a walk in the fresh air. Amid the bustle of his business he has not got enough of oxygen, so he has a stretch in the open air, under the free sky, amid the healthful breezes.

What is a prayer-meeting? It should be like a social walk on the uplands. The breezes blow freely, and the warmth and fellowship of spirit help us to drink them in. In this view, the text in Zech. viii., 21, might be translated—Let us go and have a walk.

Here are two texts, which show on what our healthy prayer-breathing depends—the grace of the Holy Spirit: "Then said He unto me, prophesy unto the wind; prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." You see the

Spirit is likened to the breath of the wind. And, again, John says of Jesus : " And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost."

3. Heat.

Nothing has heat like the sun. The biggest fire you can kindle can only go a very little way. When the city of Chicago was in flames, the heat was not felt a few miles away. The forest fires, too, dreadful though they were, spent their fierce heat on a small circuit. The sun warms the world. There is nothing hid from the heat thereof. Nor is it this world alone he warms, but many others. Now God's love is like that. The love of human hearts is much—some smaller and greater, like fires in houses. But the warmest is but like a large glowing fire in a grate. God's love is the sun's, compared with theirs.

Now look as to keeping yourselves in the love of God. Food and air are essential to warmth. The fire will not burn without air. Your body would lose all heat without food. Try it. Try the difference of the air outside the house before and after a meal. Do you know, many a person has felt thus in the soul? They have been cold and dead in spirit ; but a text has come and made them quite different. They have found the Word, and eaten it ; and it has been the joy and rejoicing of the soul.

If any one who has had, should lose the sense of God's love, only thus can he recover it. Read, then, think, and pray. But mind this is the use of reading and prayer. It is not to get through a duty,

but to feel God's love. They who read for this end will not miss it.

4. Light.

" Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. The light I mean here is that mercy."

There would have been no light for souls in this world—none of hope, none of joy, none of life—but for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Son of God came down into the garden after the fall, and gave to our first parents a promise of help, it was like saying over the darkness of chaos again : " Let there be light." This mercy-light has shone more or less brightly in the world ever since. It shines very brightly now in the Gospel. Where this is revealed, God's mercy is like the heavens, all over and around us. And it is well with us when we keep looking up to it, for we always need mercy, and cannot do without it.

But the mercy in the text-verse is something to be looked for, rather than merely up to. It is something yet to come. It is like what Paul and his companions in the ship waited for, when, during the night, they cast anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. So we look for mercy in the morning. Christ's appearing will be a great sunburst of mercy. Its light will go down into the very graves ; and when He takes His people home all heaven will be glorious with it. This is what Peter calls, " the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelations of Jesus Christ." When the mercy of full eternal life has come, how shall we feed on the manna of truth, how shall we feast in the halls

of heaven, how shall we breathe in the pure and blessed air of light and warmth of the better land. What a day will then shine around us? It is night here with the best. The marriage supper of the Lamb is, after all, a morning meal. We shall never know what it is to breathe quite freely till we walk with Jesus "high in salvation and the climes of bliss." Then we shall not need to strive to keep ourselves in the love of God. We shall not be able to get away from it. "The Lord God giveth them light, and the Lamb is the glory of the place." The throne must always stand, and the crystal river will never cease to flow.

The verses which have given us our subject to-day do not look much like a children's text, but I hope we have been

able to get some children's food out of them. Here are the advices they leave with us, *Read* God's word, carefully, regularly, prayerfully, gladly. *Pray* constantly, stately, leaning on God's Spirit. *Foy* in the love of God our Father. *Hope* for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For the Grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

II. Our Talk.

Let us continue our conversation about the subject of temptation in the garden.

Such is the way then in which Satan acts; he first tries to get people to sin and then says, there is no help for them. Don't believe him when he says first of all there is no harm in sin. Say: "Satan God speaks truth and you don't. I will believe God rather than you; and He has said, if you do sin you will die." Ah, we know we could not live if we had not heard Christ's word instead of Satan's. So, when Satan says again after we sin: "There is no hope for you, just go your way, you are going to sit with me in the dark bad place;" answer

him: "Satan, that would have been all true if Jesus had'nt come, but it is not true now; not one of us needs to remain with you; there is plenty of room in heaven, and every one is welcome." That was the way with Bunyan's Pilgrim Christian, after he had been in the house called Beautiful, and was travelling through the valley of Humiliation. He was in affliction and his spirits were sunk. So Satan, the cunning tempter, said: "He is in low spirits just now, I will have at him while he is so;" and up came the great dragon with his flaming darts, terrible to see, and spread his great black wings across the road, and said to Christian: "Back

sir, you are one of my subjects, and you are running away; you must go back to the country you came from." Well, Pilgrim Christian answered: "It is quite true I was your subject, but I am no longer yours, for the King has come and bought me." Then Appollyon flew into a great rage, and let fly his darts like hail, and at last Christian got faint, and his sword dropped out of his hand, and Appollyon said: "Now will I make an end of you." But just as he was thinking to do that, Christian put out his hand, and reached his sword, and gave him such a thrust that he spread out his great black wings; and away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

Now who was it that helped Christian; who was it that helped him to get the sword again? The sword, you know, was the Word of God. The meaning of all is: One day Christian was very dull perhaps he had some great trouble and he was very depressed; so up came Satan, who began to whisper in his ear: "You are a lostman, God could not have anything to do with you, such a wicked fellow as you are; you are a swearer, a wild wicked fellow; He will have nothing to do with you. And Christian said in his thoughts. "Oh, I think God will receive me yet. But at last he began to fear that he was too bad, and Satan said: Yes, you will be lost, Christ will have nothing to do with you. Then came into Christian's mind a text of Scripture, here is one that will do it, a sharp sword of scripture for thrusting into Satan, "The Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that thirst come, and whosoever

will, let him take of the water of life freely."

Now I will tell you a fact—it is a real truth—it would do very well for a parable, but it is a truth. It is about the minister of the church to which I belonged when I was a boy, not the minister of my boyhood, because this minister had died, and another had come after him—but the minister of the same church.—I'd almost like to give you a little bit of a view of it, and I will [showing a sketch on the board] since we have happened to come upon it. Well, there was a road that went away west to the village, and a road that went down and east into the country, and a road that went away south. Well, the minister of that church—the church was something like a barn, a long plain building with three porches, one at each end and one in the middle, looking south—was once very ill, and he had a great fear of pain and he said, "Oh, if God should give me great pain when I come to die, I fear I would not be patient; I would cry out and dishonour him by being impatient." Well, he was very dull also at that time, and he said to a friend afterwards: "Ah well, I was so very low down in the valley of humiliation, I could not see a bright word in all the Bible, except one. Then the friend said: And what was that one? "Oh, it was this, 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Well, that was just taking hold of the sword and giving Satan a thrust with it, and saying: "That is God's word, I will cling to it."

Now, since I have come to speak of this good man, I will tell you just one

thing more. Beside this road going south there was a hedge, and further, at a turn, a sloping part of the ground—they call it in Scotland a *brae*, that means a little broken-off steep place. Well the good man preached in his pulpit one day, and he preached on the living God, taking the words from the text "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." But he did not preach on the whole text; just on the words "The living God." Well, he came away out the pulpit, and there was on the west side of the church a building called the Session - House. There was one large apartment below and two smaller ones up at the top. Well, the good man went into the Session House, and then came out, and took his way down this road to the south. You remember he was afraid of pain, lest under it he should say things that God would not be pleased with—lest he should not be patient. Well, coming away down this road, when he reached that part of the road where my finger is pointing to, just where the *brae* was, he laid down upon the bank and died in a moment—God saved him from all pain. He just laid himself down and died. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That was his text for thrusting into the tempter so as to send him away.

We must have another lesson upon this temptation, because I want you to come into the New Testament, and to show you something more about it. We will stop to day with just one little thing more.

Tell me whether there was more than

one tempter in Eden? In the garden of Eden there were two,—first of all, the serpent, and secondly Eve. Well, whom did Eve tempt? She gave to her husband. The serpent deceived Eve with a lie, and she ate of the fruit because she thought it would do her no harm, but there is no proof in the Bible that Adam was deceived. "Oh Eve," you may suppose him to have said, "part of myself, taken out of my side, whom I loved, who was to be my companion, I know you have done wrong; I know you have killed yourself, I know that you have done wrong; that fruit you have taken is poison; but I had rather eat just as you have done than part with you. I cannot let you go away." He ate with his eyes open. Well, it would, perhaps, be difficult for us to say which was farthest in the wrong. Yet does not Adam seem most to blame? Now turn to 1st Timothy and find a text that shows that Adam was not cheated as Eve was,—that he did the bad thing with his eyes open. 1st Timothy, ii. 14. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Satan did not cheat him. He didn't have his eyes filled with dust. Well, do you think on the whole that a person that knows a thing to be wrong, and does it, is more guilty than one that is cheated into doing so? Well, if you were to say that if Adam's was the greater sin, you would say Eve's was the first; but Adam being the stronger, and knowing what he was doing, acted the worse part, for he was not deceived. The woman was deceived; she believed the serpent's lie (which, however, was a

great sin against God's truth), and that there would be no harm in disobeying God; so she sinned, and then she said to Adam: "This is nice fruit." And he said: "Verily, I know it is bad fruit—I know it will poison us—but I will take it."

But one word if we had not fallen in Adam, we should never have had the Lord Jesus Christ to come and love us, and we should have had no Bible such as we have, and no class like this. John Newton has said: "People puzzle their heads a great deal about trying to find out how sin came into the world." "I think," he says, "it is better to say it is here. I don't know what door it came in by, but it is here; and the best thing is to get it out as fast as possible." Suppose there came a serpent into this

room, do you think it would be a wise thing for you or me to say: "Don't touch the serpent. We must find out first of all how it got in here; whether it came in by this door or that door, or through the window"; and meanwhile the serpent is stinging this one and that one. Would not the wisest thing be to get it killed, or cast out first, and then we might begin to say: "How did that creature come in here." And so it is with sin, here is the evil in you and me, let us get rid of it as fast as we can, and when we get to heaven we will ask the Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps, to tell us a little more of how it came in.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all our spirits. Amen.

RHYMED PICTURES.

1.

The flowers were waving in the breeze,
The birds were singing in the trees,
Or flitting to and fro;
The crowds were sitting on the slope;
Above them was the sunny cope,
The spreading plain below.

Aloft one seated on the ground—
A nearer circle ranged around—
Spoke words all wise and good.

Gathered from north, south, east, and west,
Entranced, astonished, and impressed,
Listened the multitude.

2.

To all the winds went forth a cry,
No answer came to bid it cease;
Another rose to heaven on high,
And straightway came light, joy, and peace

WHAT FOR?



GENTLEMAN went into a Sunday-school not long ago, and said to the children,

"There are two questions I want to ask you. One of them you can all answer; the other, I do not know

whether you can or not. Will you try? The question is, "Who made you?"

When the gentleman asked this, the children looked at him and round at each other, as they answered, "God,"

as if they hardly knew how to answer such an easy question, or why he should ask it. The second question was, "What for?" Could you have told him? Do you know why God made you?

The children did not seem to know what to say, so they said nothing. But there was one little boy up in the gallery, whom his mother had taken there because she thought he was not old enough to be down with the rest; but it seems he was really bigger in mind than some of the others, for he gave a good answer to this second

question. I wish you could have heard his little voice saying: "To be good and do good."

Do you not think he was right? If God made us to be good and do good, how sorry He must be to see us, instead of this, "being wrong, and doing wrong."

Now the only help for us is in our Lord Jesus Christ. He can, and will, if we ask Him, help us with His Holy Spirit; He can aid us to grow more and more like Himself.

Then shall we please God; then shall we be what He made us for.

THE BOY AT THE PALACE GATES.

A LITTLE boy, in England, wished very much to see the Queen; so he determined to go at once to her palace and ask to see her. But the sentinel on guard before the gate only laughed at the boy, and pushed him aside with his musket. Still the lad would not give up his purpose, now he had come so far. Not till the soldier threatened to shoot him did he turn and run away. One of the young princes saw him crying, and, on learning the cause, said, with a smile, "I'll take you to the Queen;" and past the guards he walked, into the very presence of his royal mother. With surprise, she asked her son about the lad; and when she heard his story, she laughed, as any kind mother would, and, with some kindly words, sent the delighted boy away with a bright piece of money in his hand.

It is a hard matter for the poor to gain admittance into the presence of an earthly sovereign. But the way into the presence of the Great King is always open, and even the beggar in his rags is welcome. Just as this prince brought the child, who longed to see her, into his mother's presence, so Christ takes us by the hand and leads us into the presence of His heavenly Father. For the dear Son's sake we are made welcome. Without Him we can never be admitted. Never forget, when you pray to God, to ask all blessings for the sake of Jesus, for in no other way will prayer ever be heard and answered. No one who longs to see the King in His beauty but will find the Prince of life ever ready to lead him up to His very throne.

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

Let us praise God with this

HYMN.

OH for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free!
A heart that always feels Thy blood,
So freely shed for me.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne;
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone:

A humble, lowly, contrite heart—
Believing, true, and clean—

Which neither life nor death can part
From Him that dwells within:

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love Divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine!

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
Come quickly from above:
Write Thy new Name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of Love!

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Jerem. xxxi. 31-34; Heb. viii. 7-13.

PRAYER.

OUR Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy
kingdom come, Thy will be
done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give
us this day our daily bread. And forgive
us our trespasses, as we forgive them

that trespass against us. And lead us
not into temptation; But deliver us from
evil: for Thine is the kingdom, The
power, and the glory, For ever and ever.
Amen.

SERMON.

The text is in Exodus xxxiv. 28: "And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments."

WHEN you climb up a high hill, and get quite to the top, you can look all round you on a wide view; you can look back on the plain up from which you have come; you can look to the right and to the left, and can send your eye on straight before you, where, till you reached the summit, all was hid from sight. Now, I wish to lead you in thought up to the hill-top with Moses, and to ask you to look both back and forward. But not to see the things that lie on either side of the hill—the rocks, the sands, the gorges, the desolate plains, that can be seen from Sinai. I want you, rather, in thought, to look back in time on something past, and far on to something in the future.

This was not the first time that Moses had been alone with God in the mount. Once before he had been out of sight for forty days and forty nights, and all that time he was with God. It was then that he got the first set of tables of the law, which he broke at the bottom of the hill when he saw the people dancing round the golden calf. But Moses tells us himself, in the book of Deuteronomy, that, after the great sin of the people in making gods of gold, he "fell down as at the first," and "stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights." This is the time that the text speaks of, when Moses got God's handwriting on the second set of

tables, which he had hewn out to resemble the first. Now, I wish, not only to ask you to look at these tables, and the writing on them, but at the former pair of stony tablets that were broken, and forward at better tables and a better writing. What I am going to tell you I think Moses saw, in his mind, as taught by God; and we now, helped by the full Bible, can see it clearly. The things I have to say you may connect—it will help your memory to do so—with three great names.

1. Adam.

2. Aaron.

3. Jesus.

First—Adam.

What I mean by naming Adam is this. I think that the writing on the first tables, and their being broken through the people's sin and Moses' displeasure, was a bringing to mind of what had happened in Eden, when our first parents did not keep God's word, and He said to them: "I am not your God as I was; you have gone away from me, and broken my law, so the bond between us may be flung away."

God, indeed, did not give Adam a written law, but He put it into his mind that love to God, and love to all, was His will. He tried his love to God in a special way. He said, "See this tree, don't eat of it, or you will die." So, if Adam should eat of that tree against God's word, he would go away from

God to death, and God who is God not of the dead but the living, would not be his God any longer. Now, when God in His goodness came to take the people of Israel into His keeping, He said: "Here is the sort of life you must live with me;" and He wrote the ten commandments for them, putting up stakes on both sides of the way of love, to make fences to keep them in the right road. He put four stakes on the one hand and six on the other. As He put in the first four, He said: "If you go past these you will lose the road, by not loving God." And as He put in the second row of six, He said: "To go past these is also to lose the road." With Adam, He just put up at first one great finger-post at the only place where He could go wrong, writing on it—Not this way.

I said God put the law into Adam's mind. So before He wrote the commandments the first time, He spoke them so as all should hear. He sent them into the minds of all the people. Then He wrote them, that they might be helped to remember them and see how good they were. But, like Adam, they broke them; and Moses, His servant, flung the good tables away, and they were broken. God allowed this, to teach the people that they could not hope to keep Him among them by their own good conduct, any more than Adam. They would break His covenant, and if He was to stay with them it must be on some new footing. This state of things is past. We cannot live by our own right works, for all have sinned.

Come with me, children, and let Sinai tell us what we are, and where we are by nature. Come to the bottom of the mount of God. See these tables of stone,—God made them. God graved these letters on them with His own hand. But look, they are both broken; and see, the cracks run through all the ten words; in this table, through the fourth, third, second, and first; in this other, through five, six, &c. Ah! we have not kept God's law; we have not loved Him with all the heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. So far as law goes, it is all over with us. Look a little further, and you will see how we have done it, and what we have got by it. There are the Israelites dancing and shouting round a calf of gold. That is their god now. They said, "Let us set up for ourselves: Moses, who told us of the awful God, is out of sight." And they did this. They put a calf in the place of Moses and of God, and they got play instead of peace. That is much, dear children, what the world is doing to this hour, dancing, playing—making what it can of it—while all the time, the broken covenant tables lie at the bottom of the mountain, and God is away.

But secondly—Aaron.

Not Aaron making the calf, but Aaron made the Priest of God. I have said Aaron, rather than Moses, because the first tables were in his hands, as well as the second; and because the second set of tables were connected with the whole priestly service of the tabernacle and the temple.

Now, take notice that when God

wrote the commandments a second time, there were several things that showed He was giving them along with a plan of mercy. First, He pardoned the people their great sin, and said to Moses: "I have heard thy prayer for them, come up again to the mount." Then, when Moses asked to see God's glory, and before he took the tables Moses had hewed, showing by that act that this time there was to be a Mediator—one between—he put him into a rift of the rock, and proclaimed his name All Merciful. Then, further, He gave him again all the nice institutions of the law that spoke of mercy—the Passover, the Sabbath, the Feast of weeks, and tents, full of joy—then He renewed His promise of the Land of Canaan, and told the people how to keep themselves from the bad things the Canaanites did; and, after that, it is said that He wrote on the tables the ten commandments. All that showed that God had some other way of keeping His people with Him than simply saying: "Do, and you shall live; but if you don't do, you shall die."

But what shows this most of all, is the thing that was done with the second set of tables. They were put, quite whole, into the ark, and lay there for hundreds of years. Now, the ark, with its lid all corniced round, and sprinkled yearly with blood, was a figure of Christ that was to come. God's bright light rested on it in the tabernacle and temple, and that said: "Christ is where God and sinners meet." This was the way, then, that God was to keep men near him, and be their God,

though they had broken his law; Christ was to put it in his heart, and keep it all, and every one who would follow Christ would get what Christ should get. So you see the second set of law tables were given to Moses in a wrapping of mercy. [This was shown specially on Atonement Day.]

But what I have said about Christ leads me to ask you now to look forward into the time that was long after Aaron's day. In the new age which we connect with the name—

Third—Jesus,

There was to be another writing of the law by the hand of God. But it was not this time to be on tables of stone, but what Paul calls, "Fleshy tables of the heart." For, in the old prophet, as quoted in Hebrews, God thus speaks: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." You see when God forgives us, and shows us how good He is, He brings us to love His law, and to do what it bids, because it is right and good. He takes a pen dipped in love, and as He writes on the heart, its hard stone—for it is hard like stone in its feeling at first,—changes into flesh; and the words of the law grow like letters sown in gardens, into it, till they are like a part of itself. So you see, as it is by Christ that God forgives, He copies the law as it were out of Christ's heart into ours.

Now, dear children, I have asked you to look at the bottom of Sinai, and see the law broken, and into the ark to see it kept; broken by Adam and by us, and kept by Jesus. But I have asked you to look at the writing on the stone tables both broken and whole, that I may get you to put your heart tables into Christ's hand, that he may write the commandments there. Perhaps, you say, you know them all by heart—you can repeat them. It is well; but to have them in your heart is something more. It is to love them, and seek to do them, because you love them and the God who gives them. Who of you are willing, if you have not done it already, to say to Christ to-day: "Lord, here is my heart-table, all full of silly and wrong writing, write Thy law on it!" I have seen a teacher

when he wished to show a pupil the way to spell a word, or do a sum on his slate, bid him make it first quite clean. Christ does not ask us to do that with our hearts. We could not do it. He only wants us to yield the heart-slate up to him, and let Him write. His writing cleans the tablet. It does not cover over the old writing merely—it puts it out. When paper was scarce long ago, and Christian copyists wished to make a new MSS. of the Bible, they sometimes took old parchments already written on, and wrote over the old writing, as you have seen bills printed for the walls on old newspapers; and we have been able to bring up the old writing again. Not so when Christ writes. Who, then, will ask Him; who will say, "Lord, here is my heart—write."

II. Our Talk.

LET us continue our lesson on Temptation. The word showing the thought is contradiction.

What is contradiction? If I said Yes, and you were to say No about anything, what would that be? It would be contradiction. Is contradiction a rude thing always? No. Is it sometimes so? What makes the difference between its being a rude thing and not a rude thing? Tell me what is the difference between a contradiction that is rude and one that is not rude? There are two things that make a difference between what is rude and what is right—

between a rude contradiction and a right contradiction.

If I were to contradict a boy by slapping him on the side of the head, would that be right or rude? It would be rude—rude in manner of contradiction. Well, if I were to say "No, no," very softly, and then were to say it very loudly, which do you think would be rude, the first or the second time? The second time. Well, you see that is the manner, even although the matter be right. Manner and matter make the two differences between the rude and the right contradiction. If the matter

be right, the manner may be wrong ; if the manner were wrong and the matter right it would be inappropriate. For instance, if a boy said to me : " I want to go to church to-morrow and worship God," and I were to say to him : " Oh, no, no, you must not go ; " my manner might be very nice—very soft and nice—but would my matter be right? No, it would not. You require to take care that the matter be right, and then that the manner be right, and then there is no rude contradiction. Here are two opposites—rude, contrary, right. A right thing, rightly spoken, never can be rude ; a right thing, rudely spoken, can never be right. What I want to teach you to-day is this : That the Bible says two things that seem to be contradictory (Gen. xxii. 4). Remember these four words : " God did tempt Abraham." Now, turn to the Epistle of James, chap. i, and there you will find a verse that seems to contradict the other. It is the 13th verse—"God cannot be tempted with evil, neither *tempteth he any man.*" Now show me the contradiction, if you please—something contradictory between Gen. xxii. 1 and James i. 13. One verse says that God tempted Abraham. Was not Abraham a man? Yes, and the other verse says, "He does not tempt any man." Now, how do you explain that? Can any of you explain it? The explanation is this : The word "tempt" has an old meaning ; it is try. That is it. Do you know how they sometimes try the strength of a new bridge? Well, here is the way they try a bridge sometimes. When they have built one, they

get a lot of soldiers, and they do this—tramp, tramp, tramp, all the way across it. Why do they do that? Well, if the bridge can stand the march of soldiers that keep step this sort of way—tramp, tramp, tramp—they know then that it is quite safe.

"God did tempt." Whom did God tempt? Abraham. How did He tempt him? He told him to take his only son Isaac and offer him for a burnt offering. It was a hard trial, as hard as the tramp of soldiers going over a bridge—one, two, three, four, and so on. God did tempt. Give me a word of three letters that will be better than tempt. Try. Is trial a bad thing always? Not at all. It is sometimes very far from it ; it is a very good thing. People sometimes make swords ; they make too many of them I am sorry to say. I do not mean that it is wrong to make the swords, but yet it is a pity that we should need to have swords made. Well, do you know what they sometimes do in trying a sword. They bend it round till the point touches the hilt. They try a sword by bending it. But trial is not a bad thing always, and that is the reason why God sends it. What does He send to us to try us? Take a word beginning with the same letters as trial. Trouble. Why does God send trouble to try us? He says : " Trouble, go to that boy and see if he can be patient ; go to that girl and see if she can be meek." Sometimes God says : " Trouble, Death, go to that child and see if its father and mother will let me have it without being angry." Once in my own house—more than once—death

came. But once he came when we were very sorry to see him; but God said: "Death, go to that house and take away that little boy that his mother and his father greatly love. If they say: 'Oh, death, don't take our boy away,' never you mind; do your duty, O death; put your cold hand upon the boy and take him away." And death did so. Death came in; he came in at the door; he came up the stairs and into the bedroom, and he saw the little boy lying on the bed, and he said to him, (I didn't hear it, but he said it): "Little boy, Jesus sent me down to take you away;" and the little boy in his heart said: "Oh, Death, if Jesus sent you, then it is all right." So Death stood beside the bedside, laid his cold hand on the little boy, and his mother and father were there, and they took the little boy's hands—one held the left and the other held the right hand. And death said: "I must take him." Now, what I have told you this for is, if ever I loved God in my lifetime at one time more than another, it was when he took my little boy away from me. God is love. God is always kind. He does not take away little boys from fathers and mothers without meaning their good. I am sure he sent death to speak to me and to my wife and to my children for their good. So it came to pass one day a friend came unto me to say: "I am very sorry you have lost your dear little boy, I am very sorry for you;" and this friend I loved, and she was very sorry for me. But I said: "I love God better since than I did before." That is the way God tries people by

trouble. I am always disposed to ask all the boys and girls here, that never were sick, to stand up. Do you think I should have any difficulty in counting them? I don't think it. I think there would be very few, if there is anybody here, that never was sick. I should be much obliged to anyone standing up and saying, "I was never sick."

Well, you see, God tries us all. I look round and I see the boys yonder, and I know they were ill at one time; and all the girls, too, that I know, were at one time or other ill. So God tries us all. We will go back, if you please, to Abraham. Tempt is trying and trying to find out what is good in us and to make it better, or to find out what is bad in us and to put it away. Now will you remember that—two purposes of trying. I shall give you them:

1st. To get rid of the bad; to cast out the bad. The first purpose of trial is to cast out the bad; and the second purpose of trial is to make the good better. Well, you might put it in a great many ways. To make the strong, stronger. To make the brave, braver. To make the high, higher.

Now tell me, When God did tempt or try Abraham, whether was it to cast out the bad, or to make the good better? It was to make the good better. Now tell me what the trial was? To offer up his son.

Read the verse in Genesis 22: "*Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*"

What is the first word that shows the sharpness of trial? Suppose it had been a servant, would that have been quite as sorrowful? No *Take now thy son.*

Now there is not a little girl here in this class that I don't love, and if God were to say: "I want one of those little girls, I am going to take her away out of this place," I should be very sorry. I should pray to God that He would not do it. But if I had a little girl of my own here, and God said, "I want your own little girl," would not that be a sharp word to me? Or if God were to say: "I want one of these boys," and I were to say: "O Lord, I love these boys, do not take one away," that would not be so sharp to me as taking away my own little boy. Then if the father of one of these little boys were here, and God was to say to him: "I want one of these little boys in the minister's class; I want your little boy, your own little boy;" would not the father feel more than if God had laid His hand upon another little boy? *Take now thy own son.* What made the trial still further? *Thine only son.* Had Abraham any more sons? Yes, he had Ishmael, but he was not the son of Sarah, his wife. They had only one son. Well, that is the next trial. Now the son's name was *Isaac*, which means "laughter." Was Abraham and his wife very glad when he was born? Yes. All parents are glad when little children are born—all right fathers and right mothers are glad when little girls and little boys come from God into the house and make it glad.

What made Abraham and Sarah so glad that they called their little boy Laughter? What made them so very glad as that? Well, they were old people, and had been a long time in the world without having any little children to make their house glad. Now, young friends, listen to me, there are two things that are true about little children. The first is this: That they are a great deal of trouble, and little children don't think of that sufficiently. Now here is a little boy who is very gentle and good, but yet he has cost his father and mother a great deal of trouble. I cost my father and mother a great deal of trouble. I was once a little boy too, and I cost them a great deal of trouble; and I cost my teacher some trouble; and I gave my minister some trouble.

Now that is true about little children, and they ought to think of it—very troublesome little creatures they are. Well, that is the first thing that is true. But again listen, they give their fathers and mothers much joy.

But do you know, I have known children that gave their parents a great deal of joy when they were little children, and they gave their parents great heart sorrow when they grew up to be big—when they grew up men and women. I have heard some fathers and mothers say that they would rather have put their little boy into the grave than see him grow up to be what he became; or a little girl, they would rather have seen her in her coffin than see, when she grew up, what she became. Ah! my young friends, I cannot look around upon you without feeling this—that perhaps some

of you will lead your fathers and mothers to say: "I wish I had seen them die when they were little children; I wish I had put them in their coffins and then in the grave, rather than see them become bad men and bad women." Now pray God that he may keep you from that. It is a terrible thing to think that some of you may grow up to vex your fathers and mothers, so that they would say: "Oh, I wish I had seen them die; I wish scarlet fever, or something else, had taken them away when they were young."

What was the next part of the trial?
Whom thou lovest.

Well, should not all parents love their children, and shouldn't they love all their children? Do you think it is a nice thing for parents to do, who have more children than one, to like one more than another? Who was it that had a son whom he loved better than his brothers? Jacob.

And what did he give him to show that he loved him more than the others? He gave him a coat. What kind of a coat was it? It was a coat of many colours. Give me another word for it. He gave him a tartan robe, a robe of many colours. Jacob gave his son Joseph a tartan coat to wear because he loved him specially.

Isaac, whom thou lovest.

Well, they called him laughter. Isaac was a son who was promised to be the father of many nations, heir of the world. How was Isaac to be the heir of the world? Were the Jews to fill the whole world? No, it was not that. Well, how was he to be the heir of the world? It is said so. He was to

be the father of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is as far as he was to have a father.

Had Christ an earthly father? No. But still His mother—the mother of the Lord Jesus—was to come from the seed of Isaac.

Well, Abraham said this: "What, kill my son! If I could kill my son I should be killing the world." How would he be killing the world? Because he was to be the father of the Lord Jesus. If Isaac had been killed, and had not risen from the dead again, then the promise would not have come to pass.

What did we say about Peter—about foolish Peter on the top of the hill at the transfiguration of Christ? He said: "Lord, let us take heed and build three tabernacles—one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." Now, would it have been a good thing if they had stopped upon the top of the mountain? No, because Christ would not have died. God's promise would have been broken, and the world would not have been saved.

Turn to Hebrews xi. and find a verse that states the great trial that God put Abraham to—the 17th verse: "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac."

Now look at the next verse without reading it. What was it that helped Abraham to bear this trial—to get through this trial? He said: "If I should kill Isaac, and he must be buried, the promise would not be broken; it will still be kept," because I believe God is able to do—What? To raise him from the dead. Well, was that small faith or great faith?

It was great faith. Abraham stood the trial by saying this : "God will keep His word ; come what may He will keep His word." Oh I wish the world would believe that. I wish I could believe that as I should, that God would keep His word, to smite and to save, come what may. We have not got quite

through Temptation still. We must go to the wilderness next Saturday ; we will go to see what is to be had by Christ's being there. We have seen what he means. In what sense does God not tempt. Does He try them so as to ask them to do wrong? Never.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

THERE is a little story which illustrates the power of love. A kind Christian lady, in one of her visits of charity, found a poor, destitute little orphan girl, and brought her to her own house. The little stranger would at first take no comfort, but sat down weeping in the hall. The children of the house endeavoured to make friends with her and draw her into the parlour, but they could not ; and so they said to their mother : "She will not come and play with us. She will not leave the hall."

"There is a secret," said the lady, "by which you can bring her where you like. It is a secret in four letters. Try if you can find it out."

The eldest sister took the lead, searching eagerly among all her pretty playthings. "I know what it is," cried she ; "it is a d-o-l-l." So she brought her best doll and offered to give it to the child if she would come into the parlour. No, it was a failure.

The next inage said to herself : "*Muff* is spelled with four letters," and brought her a fine muff—a Christmas present ;

but she would not touch the muff, nor even look at it.

Grace, the youngest, could think of nothing worth offering after this, but stood looking on in sorrow, until at length, following an instinct of her own, she sat down beside the little stranger and cried too. Then presently she took her by the hand, and encircling her neck with her own tiny arm, she drew the weeping head softly nearer and nearer, and imprinted a gentle kiss upon her cheek. This decided the battle. There was nothing said, but Grace soon led the way into the parlour, holding her captive by the hand.

"Well, girls," said the mother, "Grace has found out the secret, and the four letters are L-O-V-E. Love is the strongest rope in the world."

Ah, yes, love is a great power ! It draws all things to itself. It drew the Son of God down to earth to die for us, and led Him back to heaven to intercede for us ; and is able to draw Him down again, any day and every day, to dwell with us in our hearts. It will draw down answers to all our prayers.

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

Take, to begin with to-day, this—

HYMN.

'Tis a pleasant thing to see
Brethren in the Lord agree.
Children of a God of love,
Live as they shall live above,
Acting each a Christian part,
One in life, and one in heart.

As the precious ointment shed
Upon Aaron's hallowed head,
Downward through his garments stole,
Spreading odour o'er the whole,
So from our High Priest above
To His Church flows heavenly love.

Gently as the dews distil
Down on Sion's holy hill,
Dropping gladness where they fall,
Brightening and refreshing all ;
Such is Christian union, shed
Through the members from the Head.

Where Divine affection lives,
There the Lord His blessing gives,
There on earth His will is done,
There His heaven is half begun ;
Lord, our great example prove,
Teach us all like Thee to love.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Psalm cxii ; Rom. xii., 3-15.

PRAYER.

GOD, Thou hast made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth. Teach us to love all men as our brethren in Adam's family, and to seek their good. Lord, Thou hast made all that love Christ, of every name, one in Him. The

whole family in heaven and earth is named in Him as Thine. Teach us to love all that are in Christ, as His brethren and body. And though we be little, help us to be useful to all, for Christ's sake. To Him be glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON.

The text is in these words: "And if they were all one number, where were the body?"—1 Cor. xii. 19.

IT is told in Roman history, that on one occasion, there was a great quarrel between the lower and upper classes. The working people got the notion that the wealthy, patrician part of the citizens, were living at their ease at their expense—that they were drones in the hive, eating plenty of honey and making none. At last the feud grew to such a height, that a great many of the common people left the city, and pitched their camp on a hill outside the walls, demanding certain terms before they would come to live again with the nobles in the same state. Various endeavours to win them were made in vain. At length a wise and able man went out to them, and got them to think and yield to an arrangement by telling them a parable. He said: "There was a time when the busy members of the body began to think themselves slaves—that they were toiling continually for the lazy trunk. So they agreed that they would strike work. They resolved especially 'to stop the supplies.' The hand said: 'I will not carry another morsel of food to the mouth.' The teeth said: 'We will not chew it.' And so they would starve and punish the idle stomach. They carried out their plan. But they soon found that their revenge was coming on themselves. The eye grew dim, the hands grew thin, the limbs tottered, and the whole body began to waste away. So they found out that

the stomach, which appeared to do nothing, wrought indeed for them all." The Roman orator applied the parable, of course, to show the working people that others, whose hands might seem idle, were yet useful in the state, and so he managed to heal the rent in the Commonwealth.

It was a skilful and beautiful use that the Roman made of the figure of the human body. Still more beautiful is that made by the Apostle here. How nicely he makes the eye, and ear, and hand, and foot talk. How clearly he shows that the well-being of one is that of all. How finely he proves that the various services of many in one are far better than one without variety; that, indeed, there could be no body at all without diversity of office and place. Many members—one body. Both things are needful. The many, without the unity, would be a chaos, a heap of sand; the one, without the many, a mere log or worm.

Now this truth preaches to families, to nations, to churches, and it says:

1. Let there be no strife.
2. Let there be no envy.
3. Let there be no idleness.

Union—contentment—activity.

1. No strife.

You would think it strange to see a man beating himself, making one hand smite another, or wounding his head, or breast, or foot. You may have seen persons tearing their hair, or striking

their breasts, but you said they were distracted. When Baal's priests cut themselves with knives, you pitied them for the cruel superstition. When you read about the demoniac among the tombs, how he went crying and cutting himself with stones, you say: "What a miserable madman!" "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it."

Now Paul says that we should be in the Church as members of the body—never hurting, but always helping each other. See how your eye, ear, hand, foot, and so forth, work together. Your feet were busy walking to church this morning, but your eye guided them; your ear set a watch for any sound, or made the walk lighter by hearkening to the talk of a companion. If your hands seemed to hang idle for a time, they were busy enough before, getting the others ready. Or suppose you get yourself hurt—cut your finger, we shall say—then all feel, and all are ready to work. If anything is needed, the tongue will ask for it, the foot will run for it, and the hand will apply it, and the blood will begin to heal, and the eye will guide them all. So we should help and feel for each other. It is very beautiful how much the different members of the body will do for each other. How the hand will guard the head—how one organ, not so vital, not so near the seat of life, will take the strain of disease on itself; how all suffer with one, or all rejoice.

Now what brings this about? They have one life. One stream of blood from the heart flows through them all.

They all share in the same sustenance. It is the same with Christians. They have one life. Christ is their one Head. The Spirit is their one life. It is not that we get a cupfull from the well, but the fountain flows into us. One living Spirit. How wrong and unnatural is contention! Is Christ divided? Surely disease has come in when members of Christ's body quarrel. I need not say how earnest Paul is on this point. You have read how in your New Testament lesson. Nor need I remind you how the new commandment, on which we preached some time ago, enforces it. "Love one another," says the Saviour, "as I have loved you."

2. No envy.

There is no envy in the body. I never heard of a finger complaining that it was not an eye, nor a toe that it was not a finger. Now, in Christ's church, there should be as little. One duty is as needful as another. One function is as honourable as another. You can dispense with none of them. The highest cannot say to the humblest: "You are not wanted; there is no room for you." The eye cannot say unto the hand: "I have no need of thee;" nor again the head to the feet: "I have no need of you."

If you were out in the garden some day, or in the field, or wood, what would you think if you should hear the branches and leaves of a tree murmuring about their lot. The branches below say: "We can see nothing; happy those that are at the top." And then those at the top say: "We have no shelter here, and we never get a touch from the hand

of man." You would say to them : You are each in the best place for you, and you all grow together to make a tree."

The opposite of envy is contentment. There are some people who always find something wanting. Now, it is true, there is no perfect lot ; but happy are they who dwell on what is pleasing. Contentment, indeed, may go into sloth ; or rather, sloth may call itself content when it is simply unwilling to rouse itself. Nor will it do to say that true contentment is inconsistent with a desire to rise into a better place. "Covet earnestly," says the Apostle, "the best gifts." But that spirit will show itself by discharging present duty.

It may be admitted that we do not all find our places just as nicely as God sets members in the body. We have choice ourselves, and we often mistake. Yet even our errors may be overruled by God to assign us what work is best for us. When we have asked God's leading, and obtain it ; then our confidence in Him should lead us to more than contentment. Angels, one has well said, would come, if bid by God, either to sweep a street in a city, or to rule an empire from it.

It will happen, even in a Church, that places we desire and think ourselves fit to fill are not assigned us. The cure for murmur is the thought that the body is one, and service anywhere promotes the well-being of all. And as Christ is Head, we may ask Him to make, what seems to us unfit, the occasion for showing His own grace and strength.

3. No idleness.

God has placed various members in the body. All are useful. If the Church be a body, all should make the body stronger. Even little children should be helpful. There are many ways in which you may be serviceable. You can cheer your parents. You can pray for the Church and its work. You can sometimes give or gather moneys to help. If you do this, do it in a right spirit. Think it is for the body and for the Great Head. And if you cannot do anything distinct or great, say, like a little girl I have read of, "what is my task, *to go on and shine.*" Shine in the family. Shine in the world at large.

But now, in order to shine or serve, you must first of all be in the body. You must have a share in its oneness and its life. If one of your fingers were cut off and buried, it could not help your hand. Nor could a companion's finger feel like being in your body. Now we are speaking about Christ's body, and, in order to help in that, you must be in it. How are we brought to be in Christ's body? By His Holy Spirit coming in to us. And how do we receive His spirit? By just trusting His word—by looking up to Him for His great gift—by praying to Him. So shall we live in Him ; and it will not be then our doing and helping as of ourselves, but His using us to do and help as our minds or brains use hand and foot in the body. Oh, to be under the guidance of our Great Lord and Head, and used, as He shall will, by His Spirit to do His work.

II. Our Talk.

LET us see, first of all, what you remember of to-day's sermon. What was the text?

What old story from Roman history was told in the outset?

Can you show how the same parable was used both by the Roman orator of the story, and by Paul, though in different ways?

What were the three lessons stated to be taught us by the oneness, as in a body, of all Christ's people?

1. When people are seen beating their breasts

and tearing their hair, what do you think of them?

What persons calling themselves priests were once seen cutting themselves with knives?

What poor man cut himself with stones?

If you heard the branches and leaves of a tree quarrelling, what might you suppose them to say?

2. What is envy?

What is an opposite grace?

3. Tell some things that children can do to help?

In order to our *helping* in the body, what is first of all necessary?

RHYMED PICTURES.

Three crosses on a little hill;
One in the midst had done no ill—
One on each hand, condemned for sin.
Both to upbraid the third begin;
But one, repenting, turned to pray,
And went to paradise that day.

QUESTIONS.

Who was in the middle? Who were the two mockers? How do we know that one went to paradise?

A little girl stretched on a bed,
The gathered minstrels mourned her dead;
Six persons entered in: one spoke—
And lo! the little girl awoke.

QUESTIONS.

What was the name of the little girl's father? Who were the six persons? Which of the six was the person that spoke?

BIBLE ACROSTIC.

RAINBOW.

1.

R ejoicing, yet trembling, he stands with seven others—

A round them the earth lies all dreary and bare;
I t's true they are saved; but, oh! what of their brothers?

N o voice of glad welcome, no greetings are there—

B elow the wild waves the dead sleep their last sleep.

O h, who shall restrain the fierce rage of the deep?

W ho now from like peril the living shall keep?

2.

R aise upwards thine eyes; see that archway all glorious,

A nd radiant in colours most fair to behold,

I t seems like the park of some monarch victorious,

N ow spanning the heavens in purple and gold

B ehold, in the clouds the bow has been set,

O f His mercy, the sign who loveth man yet—

W ho has not forgotten, and cannot forget.

3.

R emember the promise; this arch is the token,
A lthough the fierce waters may foam in the gale;

I give then a law which can never be broken,
N o more shall the noise of their fury prevail.
B elieve it, and take this its message of peace,
O nwards as years and life's burdens increase,
W hile earth shall remain My love shall not cease.

4.

R efrain, then, from doubtings; o'er mountains and valleys

A fresh gleam of light streameth down from the skies;

I n wilderness places, and dark, crowded alleys,
N ew hopes free the heart, and thanksgivings arise;

B right herald of mercy! dear Saviour, to Thee,

O f all my glad songs, the gladdest shall be,
W ho formed yonder rainbow, He thinks upon me.

B. J. HOLMES.

ANSWERS.

The answers to RHYMED PICTURES, 1 and 2 in No. 11, are to be found in Matt. v. and Psalm iv.

The following are the Answers to ALPHABET OF NOUNS, L and M. The Questions were given in No. 10.

LAMP.

1. The lamps in the pitchers of Gideon's army. Judges vii. 16.
2. The lamp of God's word. 2 Peter i. 19. (Psalm cxix. 105).
3. The lamp of Abraham's vision. Genesis xv. 17.
4. The star which fell on the waters. Rev. viii. 10.
5. Leviathan's breathings. Job. xli. 19.
6. The sanctuary lamps. Exodus xxx. 7.
7. The lamp of salvation. Isaiah lxii. 1.
8. The lamp ordained for Jesus. Ps. cxxxii. 17.

MOON.

1. Ruling the night. Genesis i. 16.
2. Turned into blood. Rev. vi. 12.
3. Under the church's feet. Rev. xii. 1.
4. Standing still in heaven. Joshua x. 13.
5. Looked up to by David. Ps. viii. 3.
6. New. Ps. lxxxi. 3.
7. Not withdrawing herself. Isaiah lx. 20.
8. Not giving light for brightness. Is. lx. 19.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—N and O.

NAME:

A name given to two, the most ancient in story;
Two names on the brow, one of shame, one of glory;

A name by the side, when the garment was gory.

A name that is better than perfume or gold;

A volume of names, all for glory enrolled;

A name that was proved when a treasure was sold.

This last name, when changed, and by multitudes worn;

Three kings' names made known when the kings were unborn;

A name that shall last while the sun brings the morn.

A beautiful name to be seen on a tree;

A name which a bondsman from childhood set free;

A name which is single, yet common to three.

OATH.

Two wicked oaths; one grand; three made to bind;

Three more by God himself;—please try to find.

1. An oath that named a famous spring;

2. An oath that bound a servant true;

3. An oath that snared a foolish king;

4. An oath that bitter tear-drops drew;

5. An angel's oath, announcing sentence;

6. An oath Divine, without repentance.

7. An oath to make the sinner feel

God has no wish that he should perish;

8. An oath that comes sure word to seal

For all who hope in Jesus cherish;

9. An oath which showed two hearts were one,

And for the sire's sake blessed the son.

A LITTLE TRACT FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.**DO YOU LOVE MY JESUS?**

IN a beautiful country house there lived a happy family, consisting of a father, mother, and only child, a little girl about twelve years of age. I say it was a happy family, and it was so, from the same cause that another family was happy that we read of in the Scriptures (Matthew xi. and v). "Now, Jesus, loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." They also were happy, because they felt that Jesus loved them, and that they loved Jesus. All three had given their hearts to the Saviour. It so happened, that a gentleman had come to spend a few days with them, and he was not a Christian. One day all the four were taking a walk, when, in the course of conversation, the father of the little girl made some remark about Christ as a Saviour. His visitor, in reply, endeavoured to cast ridicule upon what he had said. The little girl Lizzie (for that was her name), upon hearing him speak in that manner, burst into tears. He at once guessed the reason of her grief, and the conversation at once ceased. Nothing further was said on that subject during the remainder of the day, none of them being so happy during the evening as they had been in the morning. Next morning, before the visitor had come out of his bedroom, he heard a gentle tap at the door, and presently Lizzie looked in and said: "Do you love my Jesus?" This was all that she said, and then ran

off, without waiting for an answer. And although she saw the gentleman during the day there was nothing said on this subject. On the following morning she did the very same. On the third morning, the gentleman on the watch for her, and when she came he caught hold of her, and said: "My little dear, will you tell me how to love your Jesus?" She remained in the room with him for a short time, and told him, in a simple, child-like manner, the sweet old story of the Saviour's love; how that all the men, and women, and children in the world were guilty sinners in the sight of God, and under sentence of condemnation, that the wicked would be cast into hell; but that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16); and that God was able and willing to save him at once. On the following morning Lizzie's father went into his visitor's bedroom and told him that his little darling girl appeared to be very ill. On entering the room where Lizzie was lying in bed, the first words which the visitor heard were: "Do you love my Jesus now?" and he at once replied: "Yes, dear, I do love Jesus now." "Oh, then," she said, "I am so glad that you love my Jesus." The gentleman had, on the previous night, given his heart to Jesus, and this little Lizzie

had been the means in God's hands of leading a soul to the Saviour. Ere many days had passed away, Lizzie, who had taken scarlet fever, died, and went to be with Jesus, which is far better. The three who were left be-

hind were very sorry at her departure, but they shall meet again. I cannot do better than close by asking you : "Do you love my Jesus?"

W. F.

THE LOST BABY.

(FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES.)

BABY was lost! Up and down, high and low, everywhere about the house and barn, and woodshed, in the garden and down the road by the bridge, the search was carried on with anxious hearts and eager steps. Every nook and corner where even a mouse could hide, was examined over and over again; but no baby. The brook was low; so low that baby might have toddled over it without hardly wetting her feet. There was no danger there, and yet for half a mile either side of the bridge the bed of the little stream was thoroughly scanned, so there could be no doubt left.

Not half an hour before baby had been playing in the yard, cooing and talking to herself, as she nursed her rag doll, and watched the pigeons on the roof of the barn. There were prints of her tiny shoes in the moist soil by the gate, the marks of dirty little fingers upon the white palings—and that was all.

The hot August sun was almost at its setting, and the shadows of the maples were fast lengthening. What if night should come and baby not be found? What if she were wandering further and

further away, while they were seeking her? What if she had been stolen, and was even then calling upon her mother to save her?

"Baby!"

No answer; and the mother's face grew whiter and her limbs weaker.

"I shall never see her again!" she cried, sinking down upon the steps of the porch. "Never, never, never! And I scolded her this morning. Oh, my little lamb!"

"We shall find her yet," said old Mrs. Bailey, soothingly. She got tired and cuddled down to sleep somewhere. Or perhaps she's off with some of the neighbours' children."

Baby's mother shook her head. She knew that was only said to comfort her. All the children in the neighbourhood had been for the last hour engaged in the search. She could see them scouring the field beyond the house, looking behind the stone heaps and among the blackberry bushes that skirted the field.

Baby could not have been stolen. No suspicious looking character had been seen lurking about, and nobody could have got away with her without being seen. There had been no one

near the house all the morning, except old Deacon Pettingill, who left his waggon opposite the gate long enough to look at a yoke of fat steers in the barn-yard.

The sun went down at last, and one by one the neighbours slowly came in from the search, and gathered around the stricken mother in the yard. All had words of comfort, but they sounded false and hollow.

"I can't give her up so," she moaned. "She must be somewhere near. Help me look a little longer—just a little longer."

"I don't believe she's been outside the gate," said one. "We can't find any trace of her anywhere. It seems to me she would have dropped her doll or something, if she'd gone far."

"We've looked everywhere," said one of the boys. "We've poked open every bunch of bushes on both sides of the road, between here and Dunlap's pasture fence; and she couldn't have got any further than that. If she was in the mowing lot we should see her certainly, or in the back pasture, because there ain't any bushes or woods."

"Have you looked in the well?" said old Mrs. Tompkins. "Now it's just as likely as not she's fell in there. The curbin' ain't none too safe."

"She ain't there—we've looked," said one of the boys, quickly noting the spasm of pain that passed over the face of baby's mother at the words.

"There's a team coming!" suddenly shouted one of a little knot of boys outside the gate. "Now we can send down to the village, and raise 'em to help hunt."

"It's Deacon Penningill's horse," said another, who hastily climbed the fence for a better look-out, "and the deacon's driving, too. Something's the matter, he's putting on the licks."

"What's he got on his lap?" asked one woman peering the dusk. "Why, I believe it's baby."

There was a rush to the gate as the deacon stopped his horse with a loud "Whoa "

"Lost anything?" he inquired, as he stepped out over the wheel, with a little bundle in his arms.

"Baby! baby!" and the next moment the little cause of all the trouble and pain was tightly clasped in its mother's arms.

"You see," said the deacon, in answer to the multitudinous inquiries as to how, when, and where he had come across baby, "after I left here, early this afternoon, I thought I heard something under the wagon-seat; but I didn't pay any attention to it, and forgot all about it before I got home. I turned out the mare and run the waggon under the shed, for it began to look like rain. 'Long about five o'clock, Joel he went to take out a bag of rye meal that I brought for Piper's, and all at once, as he was lifting it on to his back, he dropped it and hollered right out: 'Come here, deacon,' says he, 'where on earth did this come from?' I was grindin' a scythe out at the east end of the shed, but I dropped it pretty quick and started. He was holding up the buffalo from the hind end of the wagon; and there, do you believe it, was that cunnin' little cretur' with her rag doll

cuddled up to her, lyin' on some meal bags fast asleep. She must have crawled into the wagon and laid down while I was lookin' at the steers, and the joltin' got her to sleep. I tell you I wasn't long hitchin' up again; and I never drove so but once before in my life, and that was when Hiram broke his leg fallin' off the barn."

So baby was found, and the whole

neighbourhood, as one great heart, brimmed over with joy; while the mother, close to whose breast the little tired head was clasped, poured out her soul in tearful gratitude to Him, who had, through that brief, but bitter lesson, taught her more of the Divine nature of love than she had before learned in all the days of her motherhood.—*British American Presbyterian.*

GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

A GENTLEMAN, walking along one of the streets of Philadelphia, was accosted by a boy who pleaded for a penny. The gentleman was at first inclined to send him away, but something in the boy's looks forbade that, so he asked: "What do you want to do with a penny?"

"Buy bread, sir," was promptly answered. "Have you had nothing to eat to-day?" "Nothing, sir." "Boy, are you telling me the truth?" asked the gentleman, looking him steadily in the face. "Indeed I am, sir." "Have you a father?" questioned the gentleman, now thoroughly interested in the boy. "No, sir; father is dead." "Where is your mother?" "She died last night. Come with me, and I will show you where my mother is."

Taking the hand of the boy, the gentleman followed his guide down a narrow alley, and stopped before a miserable place which the boy called

home. Pushing open a door, he pointed to his dead mother, and said: "There is my mother, sir." "Who was with your mother when she died," asked the gentleman, deeply moved. "Nobody but me, sir." "Did your mother say anything before she died?" "Yes, sir; she said, 'God will take care of you, my son.'"

Sooner than this dying mother had dared to hope, God had honoured her faith by sending to her son one whose heart was touched with tenderest pity for his condition. The gentleman was a Christian, to whom God had intrusted much of this world's goods, and the little orphan was kindly cared for by him.

God in His word is called the helper of the fatherless. He has said that none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate, and it is safe to trust in His promises.

H. H.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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Published at the "CHRISTIAN AGE" Office, 59, Old Bailey, London, E.C.

I. Our Service.

We are going to speak to-day about God's judgment of us. That is by Jesus Christ at last. Let us sing of His coming.

HYMN.

WHEN Jesus came to earth of old,
He came in weakness and in woe;
He wore no form of angel mould,
But took our nature, poor and low.

But when He cometh back once more,
There shall be set the great white throne;
And earth and heaven shall flee before
The face of Him that sits thereon.

O Son of God in glory crowned,
The Judge ordained of quick and dead!
O Son of man, so pitying found,
For all the tears Thy people shed!

Be with us in this darkened place,
This weary, restless, dangerous night;
And teach, O teach us by Thy grace
To struggle onward into light!

And by the love that brought Thee here,
And by the cross, and by the grave,
Give perfect love for conscious fear,
And in the day of judgment save.

And lead us on while here we stray,
And make us love our heavenly home;
Tell from our hearts we love to say,
"Even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come."

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Eccl. xii., 8-14; 2 Cor. v., 1-10.

PRAYER.

O LORD, Thou seest all things.
Thou searchest hearts. Teach
us to have chief regard to
what Thou thinkest of us now. Teach
us to remember that Jesus will judge

us hereafter, and to strive that we may
hear Him say to us: "Well done!"
All our sins forgiven for His name's
sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to day will be : "Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves to you?"—2 COR. xii. 19.

IT is a good rule not to talk much about ourselves. In any case, much talk is dangerous. The poet says : "Who talks much, must talk in vain." But, at least, to talk much about ourselves is likely to lead to trifling, or pride, or vanity. The rule is the better, that we are all much exposed to temptations to speak too often and too long about our own matters.

There are times, however, when it is right and needful to speak about ourselves and our own doings. If, for example, wrong and false things have been said about us, it is lawful, and may be our duty, to tell the truth and put away the lie. Yet, even then, wise men are not always in a hurry to defend themselves. They think who have assailed them—what harm would come from being silent—whether it would not be better to leave the matter in other hands, before they take the pains to excuse themselves. If the interests of the people, or of Christ's truth, however, are to suffer by being silent, they do not hesitate, nor are they held back by what would then be a false modesty.

If you look at them you will see that in this, and some previous chapters, Paul says a great deal about himself. But it was not that he was fond of telling his own deeds. He had more about himself, indeed, that was worth telling than most people. See what he had suffered. Observe what he had seen. But he never told his story for the purpose of awaking people's admira-

tion. He was truly humble, and left his deeds with Him by whose grace he had done them. Why, then, does he say so much about them here? Because some people had been calling in question his claim to be an Apostle. They were hurting his usefulness. They were drawing away members of the churches he had visited, and raising disturbances by speaking evil about him. For his Lord's sake, for the Church's sake, for his work's sake, for truth's sake, he will therefore tell what Jesus has done for him, and enabled him to do. Yet, to show he had been driven to it, he every now and then calls his talk about himself "speaking as a fool," and says : "Ye have compelled me." And, in this question, he will further let them understand, that, though he wished them to know the truth, and did not despise their good opinion, he was not too careful about it. There was another he was far more anxious to please. He says, elsewhere : "It is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment ; He that judgeth me is the Lord." So here, "We speak before God in Christ."

Now, I have thought that I might say something to-day that would be of good use to you if I could just try to press upon you to always mind chiefly what God thinks of you. I do not wish you to be careless about what pleases others, especially those that have a right to guide you—parents, teachers, pastor. But I want you to look higher—to God first and most.

I will name three reasons why you should mind God's judgment about you.

1. It comes nearest. If we speak of circles, that is closest to us.
2. It is highest. If we speak of arches, this is loftiest, up in heaven.
3. It is truest. If we speak of lines, this is the straightest.

First—Nearest.

They say that thunder cannot be heard more than ten or twelve miles away. The great roar of the sea, which deafens you when you stand on the shore, dies away, when you go inland, in soft music. So human judgment may touch you so little, that you can afford to think little about it. Suppose it was all against you, you could hide yourself away out of hearing of it, and forget it.

Even when in the midst of it, it cannot come so close to you as God's judgment. If it were a flattering opinion, it would do little more to warm you than a painted fire. If it were a severe opinion, it would not much more burn you. But God's judgment comes within; speaks in the soul; cannot be run away from; though you may manage to forget it for a time. Human judgments, in any case, cannot come closer to us than through ear and eye—God's are heard without ear, seen without vision.

Suppose a man had a musical instrument in his breast, playing sweet tunes; or, suppose he had a lamp that in darkest hour would shine on his road; or suppose, what is nearer to something we find in Scripture, that he had a well within him. Those who have God's smile have better. Those who have

His frown have fire and darkness, and though God's smile comes in various ways, it comes in the peace of one's conscience. It comes as the light and sweetness of texts. Some texts are like the eye, the look, the face of God. It comes in pleasant providences. Prosperity is not always God's smile. It may be the hiding of His displeasure. But we may learn to distinguish when mercies come to us like smiles—when they are connected with prayer; when they make us think of God; when they come in connection with lessons, and make us humbler, wiser, better.

You must have noticed, I think, how with Jesus His Father's approval was always dearest. He did not seek the applause of the crowd, yet no doubt it was pleasant to him to hear their Hosannas. He did not do anything wrong to please even His disciples, yet their confession and love were sweet. He knew what is the testimony of a guiltless soul, yet even that was illumined by His Father's love. So will it be with us.

If I could take you up in a balloon, over a scene I have known, I could show you the wide grand landscape, the little quiet valley, the home where I was born; but there would be something closer than that to my memory which could not be shown. So human opinion, judgment of friends, our own verdict, are all less close than God's.

See, then, dear children, that you get into the habit of asking, what will God think of it? The world may laugh—what will God say? The world may clap hands—what will God do? Mind

that his judgment goes with you, round you, and into you.

Second—Highest.

If people generally judge you severely, you might in many cases say that you did not need to mind. You would feel otherwise, however, if the opinion came in the shape of an officer to take you to prison. Or if the severe judgment were that of your parents, you would feel they had a right which made it specially ill to bear. That is what I mean here ; God's judgment is that of one with whom we have to do.

It is this which makes conscience so much more a thing to be listened to than companions, or friends, or foes. It speaks in God's name. It passes sentence somehow. It holds a court and tries us, and has its chains to bind, and its rod scourges us. Even if conscience, however, should acquit us, God will Himself review its decision.

The highest judgment of God will prove stronger than all others. You have seen the shore sometimes when the tide was out. You may have seen little brooks and runlets made by digging in the sand, draining some pool higher up with its tiny current. But have you noticed when the tide flowed, how easily it turned all back? Who thinks of lamps when the sun has risen? So is God's judgment stronger than all others. But when I say strong, I mean more than the strength of power. It is the might of righteousness. It is God's proper due that we should be judged by Him. He made us. He keeps us. He surely has a right to tell

us what to do, and ask whether we have done it. We might say to others: "What need you know." But we cannot say so to God.

It is in keeping with this that God's judgment comes last. When men die, they get away from men's judgment. True, it is often then uttered and bound in a book. But that is of little moment. Light, and air, and praises of heaven will not be made less sweet by man's condemnation. The lost world will not be lightened by their praise. Go to the graveyard. "Can flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death." Did you ever know of a dead body hearing its own epitaph chiselled on the stone, or coming up to read it? But when men die, they go to God's judgment. And in the silent clear eternity its voice comes out unmistakable and final.

Three—Truest.

Two things are here meant. God's judgment is what he really thinks, and what he thinks is truth. It is, First, what he really thinks, and this is often different from men's. How hard it is to get exactly what others think of us. They flatter in love or fear. Or they exaggerate or lie in hate. Even to hear the honest thought of our own heart is hard. But God speaks what is seen to him. He will not call evil good, and good evil. He will not say: You love Jesus, when you do not. Will not say, you are the devil's, when you are his own. Will not say, well done, when it is ill-done. Perfect, when he has things against us. Then, secondly, this judgment, according to his mind, is according to truth. All

things seem as they are. This is what makes it all in all. If such a thing could be supposed as God's judgment being mistaken, even the great white throne would not be so awful. But there is no appeal from tribunal with no error. I have read of letters, the real words of which could not be seen in the sunshine. A burning fire, or some chemical preparation, brought out some secret lines. But there is no light which can reveal aught hid from God's sight, or flame that will declare anything beyond the fiery day of the Lord.

Now, dear children, what does God think of you to-day: Is he pleased with you, is he smiling on you? How can you know, you say? Let me give you some tests. When you are afraid to pray, there is something wrong. When you do not like to read the Bible, you may suspect. When you are reluctant to think of God, he has probably something against you. But if you find it a happy thing to go and talk with Him, He is smiling on you.

Will you resolve from this day to think about God's judgment of you? I do not bid you be careless about others' opinion. That is right in its place. It is desirable. It is not possible to care for God, and be careless of all

others. "In favour with God and man." But God is highest. Some one has supposed an eye following us wherever we go, and always looking on. There is such an eye. Will you look up to see how it loves or frowns. Look up, and see this promise shining from it. "I will guide thee with mine eye."

Perhaps you say it is too terrible to think about. God cannot approve of us. He knows innumerable evils about us. We know plenty ourselves, and He knows more. How can we abide the day of His coming? If I could not tell you how, why should I speak of these things? But Jesus can lead us to the Judge of all, without fear of condemnation. He covers with His righteousness our shortcoming and wrongs. He forgives us. Hear what He said to one who had greatly sinned: "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." Here is what He said of another: "Her sins which are many are forgiven." So flee to Jesus; He is to be Judge. And there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Can He condemn those that are in Himself? Can He condemn those whom His Father approves for His sake? Oh, to have our sentence "Accepted in the beloved!"

II. Our Talk.

LET us first of all speak to God in Prayer. "O God, we feel that it is not easy to pray right; it is easy to say words of prayer, but to make our hearts speak to Thee, Lord, it is hard for us; we must have

the help of Thy Spirit. Lord, teach us to pray. Thou askest us now what we wish to have from thee, and this, Lord, is our answer: We wish to have a happy talk-hour, and one that will do our hearts good, and make us love Jesus

better than before; and this we ask for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Here is another star-text—the 27th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, 20th verse: "*And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.*"

In what sort of tone should you say the last clause? In a solemn tone. Who speaks in this verse? It is Luke, the author of the book; the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. Was Paul there as well? Yes, he was. Where were they? Were they on Mount Lebanon, or where? They were on the sea. Do you know the name of the sea they were on? The Mediterranean sea. Do you remember the name of the particular part of that sea in which they were tossed? It was the Adriatic sea; there they were—Paul and his companions. What sea was it that Christ often sailed upon? The sea of Galilee. Was He ever in a ship there in the middle of a storm? Yes. How often do we read of His being out at sea in a storm? Twice. Where was He the first time? He was lying asleep in the boat. Where was He the second time? He was in the mountain praying, and then came walking on the sea. Did his feet go down into the water as He walked on the sea? No. Was it as hard to His feet as the pavement is to ours? Yes, it was. Who was it that tried to walk on the sea? Peter. He thought to himself what a fine thing it will be to be able to walk on the sea, and so he asked Jesus to let him come to Him, and Jesus said:

"Come;" and he got out of the boat and commenced walking on the water to go to Jesus, but when he looked down and saw the water very rough and tumbling he was afraid. What was it that failed him? His faith. Yes, his faith failed, and he began to sink. What did he do then? He cried out to Jesus Christ. What prayer did he offer? He said: "Lord save me, I perish!" And what did Jesus do to him when he cried out so? He stretched out his hand and caught him, and they both went into the ship.

But that was not the first they saw of Jesus walking on the water. What did they think He was at first? They thought He was a spirit and were afraid. Yes, they thought He was a spirit, and they cried out with fear, but He said unto them: "It is I, be not afraid." Then it was that Peter tried to walk on the water to Him. Now tell me, what in Peter's conduct was like himself in that respect? He was hasty. What did he say to Jesus? He said, bid me come to Thee on the water. Now Peter was proud of his faith there, and thought to himself, I should like to walk on the water and show Him my faith; so down he went into the water, and he said to himself, Ah! that is fine, I can walk on water. Then he began to look down, and saw the restless waves, and was afraid so they would not bear him, and let him down; then he cried out; he had brought himself into trouble and flurry. Do you think that Christ would be in a flurry? No, He was quite calm, and stretched out His hand. Peter laid hold of it and was saved, and they went into

the ship. What happened after they went into the ship? The storm stopped, and they were safe at land whither they were going.

"*When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared.*" Now a day is sometimes reckoned twelve, and sometimes twenty-four hours. Do you think that one of these days spoken of would be a day of twenty-four hours, or a day of twelve hours? It would be a day of twelve hours. Would it? Then would it be a very wonderful thing if neither the sun nor stars appeared? No. "Neither sun nor star?" This is the same as neither by day or night could they see any bright light in the heavens—the thick dark clouds kept them all out of sight. They looked up in the morning and could not see the sun; they looked again at midday, and again towards night; but, in consequence of the clouds obscuring the sky, it was not to be seen. At night, it was less strange, they could not see the stars. For how long? For many days. You could find out from the 27th chapter of Acts how long the storm lasted. For many days they saw neither the sun nor the stars. What would make it more difficult for sailors than for shepherds, or travellers by land? Do you think they would have a compass in the ship? No, they would not, for the compass was not invented at that time. They had to steer the ship by the stars. Suppose you were on board ship, and wanted to go north, do you think we could find out how to go north by the stars? Yes, we could find out where the pole star was, and then we should be able to tell which direction was south,

which east, which west; so that the stars were very useful to sailors; and when they were all blotted out they were very much at a loss where to go.

But was the storm such as to allow them to steer the ship? No, it was so violent as to make them say, the wind may drive us where it wills. See the expression that says that they just had to let the ship drive at the mercy of the winds and waves. You will find it in the 15th verse, "*We let her drive and could not bear up into the wind.*" Now there are four other words in the same way that I want you to find—for something to compare them with. They are to be found in the 17th verse, "*And so were driven.*" How were they driven? They were driven, so, that is, hither and thither—this way and that way. Turn to the 4th chapter of John and find an expression similar to that without the word *so*, but with another like it. There are five words. I want you to try and catch this idea and keep it in mind. There are five monosyllables, not further on than the sixth verse. Now, remember, I told you that you would not find the word *so* but a word of similar meaning. You are long in finding it. The verse begins with, "Now Jesus," the words we refer to are "sat thus on the well!" Who sat on the well? It was Jesus, He sat on Jacob's well, Near to what place was it? It was near to a place called Sychar. Was this place in Judea, or Samaria, or Galilee? It was in Samaria. Why did He sit thus on the well? Because He was wearied with His journey.

Now, tell me—you might do it after what I have been saying to you about

its having the same turn of expression with that which is used in the phrase "so were driven"—what is the meaning of sat *thus*? Does it mean that he was particular how he should sit, and where he should sit? No. He did not look with great care to see how he should seat himself; but, being very weary, he just threw himself down as it happened. Suppose a boy was to come in just now, and there was a chair at the door *there*, and before sitting down he was to take it up and look at it very carefully, and examine it all over, would that be the way Jesus *sat* down? But suppose the boy came in very tired, and, seeing the chair there, threw himself down upon it, would that be the way Jesus sat down? That is exactly the way. He sat down *thus* on the well, like a weary man. When a boy, I remember seeing another boy do that, and the other boy was a poor beggar-boy. His mother and he were going through the country begging, and it was quite evident that the boy was ill, and so he did exactly what that text describes. There ran through the house a passage paved with stone from one side to the other; there was a door here and a door there, and the stone passage between the doors. In the middle of the passage was a door that led away into the large kitchen, and the mother and the boy who were begging came into this passage, and the boy was so ill that he just threw himself down upon the stone floor. I think I see him yet, sitting on the stone. He sat *thus* on the floor—that was the mode of it. Well,

I happened to be in the kitchen, and saw him do this, and I came away out past him. Two days afterwards I got sick, and had to go to bed, and then I had to get the doctor, and then it turned out that I had got measles. Afterwards we heard that the poor boy that I saw sitting *thus* had got the measles, and he was just able to go a mile further on, and there he was lying ill in a farm-house. But he had left me measles. I must have breathed air, I suppose, tainted with his breath; and there were seven more of us took ill in turn. See how curiously God sends illness sometimes. But the reason for telling you this was, that in the boy's way of sitting down, there was the very idea as I think that we have in "sat *thus* on the well." So wearied was Jesus that He was not careful to look for a nice place to sit upon. He just sat down at the well's mouth as it came. And so we have the same idea in the case of the ship; it could not help itself, but had just to go as it was driven. Ships sometimes are not able to help themselves, even when not in a storm. What ship was it that was sunk the other day, although she had not been in any storm at all? It was the *Northfleet*. Danger may come at any time when we are not thinking of it. I did not think of getting any illness at the time I have spoken of, only I was sorry for the poor boy lying down so wearied; then there came the disease. So we need to be thinking of God's keeping us night and day, when we go out and come in.

(To be continued.)

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET QUESTIONS, N and O.

NAME.

1. Adam. Genesis v. 2.
2. Mystery. Rev. xvii. 5.—The Father's name. Rev. xxii. 4.
3. The name of the Word of God. Rev. xix. 16.
4. A good name. Prov. xxii. 1; Eccles. vii. 1.
5. The book of life. Rev. xxi. 27.
6. Jacob. Gen. xxv. 33, and xxvii. 36.
7. Israel. Genesis xxxii. 28.
8. Josiah. 1 Kings xiii. 2.—Cyrus. Isa. xlv. 1. Jesus. Matt. i. 21.
9. Christ. Psalm lxxii. 17.
10. The Branch. Zech. vi. 12.
11. The name of Jesus. Acts iii. 6, 16.

12. The name of the Godhead. Matthew xxviii. 19.

OATH.

1. Beer-sheba. Genesis xxvi. 33.
2. Eliezer's. Genesis xxiv. 9.
3. Herod's. Matt. xiv. 7.
4. Peter's. Matt. xxvi. 72-75.
5. Rev. x. 6.
6. Psalm cx. 4.
7. Ezekiel xxxiii. 11.
8. Hebrews vi. 17, 18.
9. The oath between David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. xx. 42; 2 Sam. xxi. 7.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—P and Q.

PILLAR.

Before my fancy's eyes
I see five temples rise;
With various pillars graced,
For strength or beauty placed;
As I describe them, say
Where in the Book are they.

1. Borne from the clay, two stood like twins
'Mid works from quarry, mount and mine;
Where, yearly, for a nation's sins
One entered, seeking peace divine.
2. Crowding to see the maimed make sport
Thousands on brink of ruin stand,
For pillars twain, deemed strong support,
Fall broken by a stronger hand.
3. In temple founded by the Lord
Three pillars towered, by all confessed;
When rose a fourth which grace adored
More wondrous made than all the rest.

4. Numberless, fair, in temple grand,
Like trees in some vast forest grown,
I see blest living pillars stand,
And pray such place may be my own.
5. Immoveable through ages past
Beneath an arched roof of blue
Pillars have stood; yet moved at last
The old shall yield their place to new.

QUEEN.

In couplets rhymed these lines arrange,
Giving each half its own;
There's method in the medley strange:—
The texts may soon be known.

Queen enquiring
Queen refusing
Queen resenting
Queen advising
Queen uprising
Queen requesting
Queen defying
Queen upstanding

shone a star
bad men shiver
saved her race
scared a seer
scorned all fear
lost her place
reigns for ever
came from far.

"I HAVE DOT IT."

A CHRISTIAN mother had taught her little daughter to say this short prayer every night : "O Lord, give me a new heart, for Jesus Christ's sake." She repeated this prayer regularly for some time, until one night she jumped into bed without saying her prayer. On her mother asking the reason why she had done so, she replied : "Because I have dot it." She had got a new heart. Has the reader got one?

CHILD'S MORNING HYMN.

Safely guarded by Thy presence,
By Thy tender love and power,
Holy Father ! Thou hast brought me,
To this peaceful, happy hour.

While the night shades gathered round me,
While "I laid me down and slept,"
'Twas Thy mercy that sustained me,
And my life in being kept.

Thoughts of all this care so tender,
Wakes a morning hymn of praise,
While a song of full thanksgiving,
Here and now to Thee I raise.

Strengthened thus in mind and body,
Help me to begin anew,
In the race of love and duty,
And the *right* each hour pursue.

So, when all life's changing seasons,
Fraught with "weal or woe," are past,
Kept and saved by love eternal,
Praise shall crown the work at last.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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Published at the "CHRISTIAN AGE" Office, 59, Old Bailey, London, E.C.

I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

Lo ! He comes, with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain ;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train :
Halleluiah !
God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold Him
Robed in dreadful majesty ;
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

Now redemption, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear !
All His saints, by man rejected,
Now shall meet Him in the air :
Halleluiah !
See the day of God appear !

Yea, amen, let all adore Thee,
High on Thine eternal throne !
Saviour, take the power and glory ;
Claim the kingdom for Thine own :
O come quickly !
Everlasting God, come down.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Psalm l. 1-6 ; Rev. i. 4-8.

PRAYER.

GOD, we bless Thee that Jesus was once seen on earth, and that even little children looked into His face. We thank Thee, that though now no longer on earth, He yet lives with Thee in heaven. We rejoice

that He pleads above for sinners on earth. May He pray for us, and give us His Spirit to teach us to desire and hope that we may see Him again, and be like Him, and with Him for ever. Amen.

SERMON.

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"—ACTS i. 11.

AN old Latin poet observes it as a mark of man's being of a higher nature than the brutes, that while these, going on all-fours, have eyes that look down to the earth in quest of their food on the ground, or at most, round about on a low level, human beings stand erect, with face toward heaven, and eyes to read the stars. The distinction must not be drawn too sharply, as if four-footed beasts never raised their eyes to the skies, or men never cast their look to the earth. But in a general way, it is the part of a man to gaze up into heaven. Even Nebuchadnezzar, looking round about on the great city he had built, and being so far no better than a beaver in his dam, or a rabbit in his burrow, or a bird in its nest, had eyes whose very pride made them cast their glance aloft; but when a beast's heart was given him, he sought his food amongst the grass, as the oxen did; and only at the end of the days, he lifted up, as he tells us, his eyes to heaven, and his understanding returned to him, and he blessed the Most High God.

The distinction becomes more marked when you think how men, guided by the reason God has given them, have aided their eyes to look into the heavens. The lower animals do, after all, look into the sky; fowls, drinking from the pond, have so looked up as to make some say they seem to do it in thanksgiving; and dogs have bayed the moon, and barked at the gleam of lightning from the

cloud; but they have made no telescope to search the depths of the sky. Man, from an early age, has not only gazed intently on the page above him, but modern discovery has so aided him that he has brought out from hidden recesses wonders unknown before, till what the bare eye can see comes to be thought of as the mere porch of the palace—the beautiful gate of the great temple of creation. In pursuit of studies which the telescope aids, what eager gazes have pried into the heavens, to be rewarded beyond expression if haply some new appearance meet the search, some new star far off in the out fields of space, or some new fire-tongue on the edge of the eclipsed sun.

The gazing of my text into the sky was not that of astronomers, but of simple men, that looked at once not so far as students of the heavenly bodies, and further far. They were no astronomers; yet once such sages were employed scanning the heavens because of one whose course had been through fields of air. A little more than thirty years before the time of the text, Chaldean Magi were nightly watching the heavens to see a new star—not for the star's sake, but the sign it gave them that Jesus had come down to earth; the disciples are watching now because He has gone away. A bright cloud of angels had come near to men because Jesus was born. Jesus was now risen, and ascending, and a bright cloud had taken Him from sight. In both cases,

the skies had never presented such wonderful appearances before. Put both together, and in the coming down of Jesus to be born and die, attended by angels, and in His going up again to live and reign, attended by angels—of whom two are the lingering questioners of the text—you have, almost literally the deep truth of Jacob's ladder; you have Christ's words fulfilled: "Henceforth ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

It was no wonder that the disciples stood for a space unable to take away their gaze from the spot where Jesus left their sight. We long look after a friend leaving us by coach, or rail, or steamer, or when we have accompanied him to some turn or height, we look thoughtfully in the direction he has gone to, often even after our friend is lost to sight. There have been cases, where accident having carried off some beloved one, survivors have not been satisfied till the eye has filled itself with sight of the spot. Even the empty couch, where some dear one breathed the last breath, will long hold the wet eye rivetted. No wonder, then, that when the parting had been so strange and glorious, the gaze of affectionate disciples should still try to identify the spot where the last sight was had of the departing cloud. They had seen a strange thing to-day. As Jesus talked with them, and His hands were held out in blessing, He had slowly risen through the air. He had planted his foot upon the yielding atmosphere as sure as on the troubled water, and

gone away as on a pathway of rock. Rising higher, a white cloud, stooping like a pavement, or opening like a palace, had received Him and hid Him; yet, for some time, its light ascending attracted their look, till it vanished like a little star in the lofty blue. Sorrow, gladness, wonder, all combined to hold them silent and looking up.

Yet, not unfittingly was their gaze interrupted, almost chidden, by the angels' question. I have said angels, for though called men, that is usual. Yet what if these were real men? It would show that not only heaven and earth were joined, but that the grave had been bridged over. Not unkindly did the angels ask, but so as to wake thought. The gaze of the disciples could not bring Jesus back again. But He would come back in due time. And, meanwhile, had He not given them work to do, which standing there would not speed on?

There were, to put the thoughts a little differently, and somewhat more fully, four reasons for giving up their gazing into heaven.

I. Jesus was not lost, but only gone to the Father.

II. In his Divine presence, and by His Spirit, He was to be with them on earth still.

III. By-and-by they were all to follow Him.

IV. In the end He was to come to earth again as He had gone away from it.

1. Not Lost.

You remember what the sons of the prophets insisted on doing after Elijah

was taken up to glory. They seemed to think that to go quite away in the body from earth was impossible. Elisha knew better. So might the disciples well know. Three of them had seen a bright cloud before take persons out of sight. But these had been for centuries before unseen, and yet had stepped down from the sky. Jesus, too, had told them that He was going where He had been before. He was going to the Father. They need not be surprised. Neither should they be sorry. Indeed, He said they would rejoice that He was going if they loved Him. Why, all His sorrows would be ended, and His glory begun. He was going to a brighter world. He was not even going away where men were not—good men that loved Him. The church in heaven was far larger than the church on earth. All the cloud of witnesses were there—Abel and John, Moses and Malachi, David and Isaiah. They were waiting for Him. He was going really to be far more found than lost.

Now the disciples were not to forget this, though they saw Him no more. Happily, we know what it is to believe that our friends are, though out of sight. A very little child, indeed, hardly will. You may have seen an infant, when mamma has left home for a time, refuse all your assurances about her coming back, accepting no evidence but that of the eye. But as we grow up we know better. A friend sails for India; we do not doubt his still continuing to exist; we follow in thought the ship's track, because we believe him

to be there, till the welcome letter comes as sign, and pledge, and proof that it is so. Faith rises with these convictions into the unseen world, believes on Divine testimony that human friends are; as, on its own witnesses it realizes the truth also, that the Invisible God is. "Let not your heart be troubled," said Jesus; "ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

We apply the principle to friends removed by death. We say: "not lost, but gone before;" and we "comfort one another with these words."

2. In another sense He was not leaving them; **He was still to be with them.**

He had said: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."

Now, if the angel voices meant to bring this to their minds, there were two things in it fitted to induce them to go home. Their Master had left them work to do. Let them be glad of this. If they cannot bring Him back again, let them not unfit themselves for service by merely thinking of that. How often has the necessity for work been a comforter! See that mother who has buried her darling boy, she must go about her tasks: it is sad, but not all sad; work will help her. The disciples will meet joy best by going the

way Jesus bade them go. We know it was so as a fact. They had, indeed, a little while to wait; but that only to prepare them for their task, and give them assurance of His promise. That was the other thing. He was not to leave them. He was God as well as man. And the personal Spirit was to come. When He did come, how plain it grew that Jesus was not lost; that, indeed, in one grand sense, He was not away. Home, then, men of Galilee; do as He bade you, and believe He will be found doing as He has said.

They were soon, besides the coming of the Spirit according to His promise, to have other proofs that Christ had not as Divine left them. They had, for forty days back, seen Him strangely come and go, stand by them in a moment, and leave them quite as soon. They are not to expect Him now, for they saw Him rise; yet it will help them to feel that He is not far away, though out of sight. Then they are soon to work miracles in His name. When Peter and John healed the blind man, would He seem far away from them? Then a day was not distant when He would, as it were, show Himself through the windows of the sky, once to take a martyr up—once to change a persecutor into a preacher. After Paul's conversion, it was clear that His human presence was only behind a veil, and that His Divine, in all its gracious power, was still below.

III. **They were soon to follow**, not quite, indeed, as He had gone, yet in reality, even as He had.

They were to go by the same road of

death. In most cases they were to leave earth by the same violent death-path. James was to be killed soon by the sword. Peter, by-and-by, was to be crucified; tradition says, with his head downwards. Others, in various ways, were to be martyred. Paul was beheaded outside the gates of Rome by an executioner's axe. John lingered to preach the old man's sermon, and send it down the ages. Here it is, text, or sermon, or both. "Little children, love one another!"

They were to go, further, angel-borne—through the same paths of air. Their bodies, indeed, were not yet to go. But after what Stephen said: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," who doubts the road? After what Christ said: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom:" who doubts the accompanying guard? Do you remember Bunyan's account of the angels accompanying the pilgrims from the river to the gate of the celestial city? You may have seen it put into a picture. You have a copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress;" you might turn to the close of Part I. and read it. It is very fine. Do you remember, also, how when his servant was in fear, the prayer of Elisha brought out the fact that God's people have angel guards? And the apostle says: "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

They were to go, moreover, to the

same heaven, and to the same heavenly Father. So Jesus had said: "In my Father's house are many mansions, if *it were* not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."

But these words, while proving that the disciples would go to the same heaven, prove also that there would be one difference. They would find in heaven all their Lord found, and His own presence besides. For He promised to receive them to Himself. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain-top, and two glorified men talked with Him, Peter thought the scene so good, that he wished to stay always there, but heaven would be far more and better.

IV. He was to come again to earth.

When the apostles went by death to Jesus, their dust was to be left behind. But that was not to continue; He would not lose one of them. "Of all that the Father hath given me," He had said: "I will lose nothing, but will raise it up at the last day." Do not be afraid that He will forget, or lose knowledge of the spot. He counts your hairs. He knows the leaves, the shower-drops are all individualities to Him, as He paints on each of them a part of the rainbow. He came down before to be Himself born—He comes to give new birth out of the dark grave to all His people.

He will come with a real body Himself—the same, yet not the same. See

this partly proved in what happened between His resurrection and ascension. He showed them His hands, and feet, and side, His wounds, but no blood. He took food, but as one that needed it not, though He would prove Himself real by doing so. In His intercourse with His disciples He appears and vanishes, as no body like ours can. The body He comes with, however, is to be real—a body of glory visible even to the eyes of foes, as the passage from Revelation in our reading proves.

He will come, yet further, as He went, in this respect. A cloud took Him. He will return with clouds. The same passage proves this. He went suddenly also "while He blessed them." He will come "as a thief in the night."

He will come again, as He went, yet otherwise. He will come clothed with awful glory. He will come to the dismay of foes, and of all who would not believe that He could return. Still His coming will be for the joy of all His people—a thing to be looked for and waited for. Little children, I pray you try and learn to look on Christ's coming with desire. He will not be another Jesus in heart than He was in His lowliness, or is now. If He find you lowly, trustful, contrite, He will not spurn you; but, dying in Him, He will take you to Himself, and bring you with Him, to meet your bodies again, and raise with myriads this song of victory,—

"O death where is thy triumph now,
And where, O death, thy sting."

So let me conclude with giving you

two or three thoughts when you look up to the sky. The heavens are, every way, worth watching. In ordinary times—in extraordinary. I have seen whole streets, full of people gazing up by day, to see an eclipse. At night once, all the land watched to see a star shower. When aurora gleams, and lightning flashes, it is grand to see the heavens. But do not stop with outward views. For

1. Jesus went up through the heavens as the High Priest through the veil. If the stars could have been seen we might have been able to tell the very road—to say: "Just between those stars, just past that other behind." The angels know it, and may take us the very same road, and show us the very place where the hosts of heaven poured out to meet them, as they began to say:

"Ope your door, ye heavenly gates,
And let the King of glory in."

2. Jesus is behind these visible

heavens. He is not lost. He is busy. He is looking down—never so intently as when He hears these two prayers: "Lord remember me!" "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

3. Jesus comes again through these heavens.

Yet they will not so much be rent as rolled away. His hand will fold them up like a curtain, and lay them aside. Fire shall consume them. But there will be Jesus, and all that love Him will find Heaven in His smile. They will not miss the sun, nor the green earth. The city built in the new heavens and earth, will have no need of sun or moon, for the Son of God giveth it light. Paul puts all heaven in the words: "Ever with the Lord."

"For ever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be;
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality."

II. Our Talk.

Can you answer the following questions on the sermon now read?

What distinction between the form of man and beasts does an old poet notice?

What king was it that showed the distinction in his own person?

Some of the lower animals look up to the sky at times, but what has man done to gaze on the heavens, that beasts never do?

What was the occasion of the gazing into heaven mentioned in the text?

What astronomers once watched the sky to learn something of Jesus? What did they wish to know, and how did they hope to learn it from the heavens?

What was Jesus doing when He parted from His disciples to go to glory?

What kind of thoughts was the angels' question fitted to raise in the disciples' minds?

Give the first reason stated why the disciples should not continue gazing?

What did the sons of the prophets propose when Elijah was taken to heaven?

What circumstances would make the disciples know better than to think Christ's body could not go away altogether to heaven?

Give illustrations of our believing even on earth that people continue to live, though out of sight?

What was the second reason assigned why the disciples should give up gazing?

Quote the Saviour's promise to be with His disciples?

How could He be both with them, always, and up in glory?

Who, besides, as in Christ's room, was to be with the disciples?

Name two times when Christ looked through the sky?

Give the third reason assigned why the disciples should not stand looking?

Which of the disciples was first martyred?
Which lived longest?

From what words of Christ may we gather
that angels take good souls to glory?

What difference is there between the heaven
Jesus went to, and that to which His disciples
would afterwards go?

What was the last of the four reasons given

why the disciples should cease to stand and
gaze?

Give a text which proves that Jesus will
come again visibly; one to prove that He will
come suddenly.

What three things about Jesus and the
heavens may we profitably think when we look
up to them?

IN A STORM.—Continued from page 138.

WE will go back to our text again.

*"When neither sun nor stars in
many days appeared, and no*

small tempest lay on us." Give me a short
word for tempest? Storm. What makes

a storm on the sea? The wind; a strong
wind blowing; and the wind raises the
waves

they toss the ships about,
sometimes wash over them, and some-

times break them to pieces. How can
the water be so strong as that do you

think? Well, it is wonderful to think
of it; but there will come, when a ship

is at sea, a great wave, and sweep over
her and break away her bulwarks, and

sometimes knock away her masts into
the sea. Little drops of water put into

a great big wave, and driven in a great
wind, come to be very strong. No small

tempest lay upon us,—that is, a storm
of wind rousing the waves. Can any

tell me this—you have all seen waves
on the sea—whether the waves go for-

ward, say as a horse goes? No; they
do not. There is just this part of

water, and then that rising up in suc-
cession, up it gets here and goes down

again, and the next part rises as this
sinks. So we have the water rising up

in successive ridges. The next time
you are in the country on a breezy day,
look you at a wheat field, and you will

see waves going just in that way; but
you know the stalks cannot be going on,
for they are rooted in the ground; it is
one stalk rising up and falling while
another rises, just as the water does in
a storm in the sea.

"No small tempest lay on us." What
happened then? What was the state
of mind they were in? All hope was
taken away. Now I wish we could
realize that. Supposing this house was
to take fire, and we did not know of it,
and it was burning all outside there,
and I were to open the door and see
that the passage was all red flame, we
should not be cut off from all hope—we
should not be quite driven from all
hope—because we should try to get out
of the windows. But supposing these
were so lofty that we could not drop
from them without the certainty of
being killed, and we were here without
any hope of escaping, would not that
be very terrible? Well, that has
happened often and often. Within the
last few years, in a house in the west of
London, some children were sleeping
up in a high room, and the house took
fire. Nobody could reach them, and
they could not reach anybody, and they
just had to wait till the waves of fire
came and burnt them up. What would

remain to us ; what hope would remain to you and me in such a case as that ? We could pray. God would remain to us. He could deliver us if He pleased in any strange way He liked. There was a school about which I read sometime since, where a great many children were assembled, and the most of them were Roman Catholic children, perhaps all. When they were busy with their lessons, lightning came and struck the end of the school-house, and they were all in a state of terrible alarm. The teacher said let us go on our knees and pray, and that quieted the children. It was the right thing to do. Even one that did not think God would stop the lightning might say so, since it calmed the little ones, and made them feel patient and be orderly. Afterwards, they found that there was not much harm done, and they were all saved ; but if they had got into a panic of distress they might have killed each other. Prayer was very useful there, even in quieting the children. But it did more than that. It went up into God's ear. On board the *Northfleet* there were some people praying, but not all ; some, when the ship was going down, did nothing but swear and fight with each other. It is terrible to think of it. Perhaps, however, from amongst the drowning people there were some that went away up to God, to be with Him for ever and ever. Perhaps they loved God. Well, God took them home from all storms and tempests. He took them safely home ; and, though it was through deep water, they went into the "wealthy place."

But the people on board the ship where Paul was, did they perish ? No. Who is it that first could tell them they would all be saved ? Paul. Who told him ? God. By whom ? The angel of God. Well, then, what did they do to save themselves in the end ? They tried to run the ship into a little creek. They saw great rocks before them ; but they said : " We cannot let the ship go on these rocks, or she will go to pieces." Then they saw an opening and beach of sand. " Ah ! if we could just get the ship into that opening." Well they lifted the anchors up, hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and the ship was making very fair for the entrance to the shore, when they got into a place where two seas met, and the new current caught the ship and drove it upon the rocky shore with violence, where it was likely to go to pieces. The people contrived, however, to save themselves, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship ; and it so happened that they all got safe to land. What was the name of the Island ? It was Melita, or Malta. What kind of weather did they have after they landed there ? It was very wet. What happened to Paul when he was standing beside the fire ? A viper came out and seized upon his hand, and the people were frightened at it, and thought he must be a murderer. And then what did Paul do ? He shook it off into the fire, and the people thinking he was bitten, began to say : " Oh ! he is bitten, he will begin to swell and fall down dead." They looked at him again, and he did

not seem to be a bit the worse; and then they changed their minds and said he was a god. What prophecy of Christ's does this literally fulfil? Turn to the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark and 18th verse: "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Now, if anybody were to ask you to give them an instance of this in the very letter, what instance might you give them? The instance of Paul. Did he strictly take the serpent up? No; but the serpent was there, and it did not hurt him. Again, there is the instance of one of the two double signs in the story of Moses. First, when Moses had a rod in his hand, and God told him to cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and he fled from before it; and when God told him to put forth his hand and take it by the tail it became a rod again. That was a double sign that he got from God to tell the children of Israel that Moses was sent to deliver them. Can you tell me what the other double sign was? When Moses put his hand into his bosom, and took it out leprous and white as snow; and when God told him to put it into his bosom again it was turned again as his other flesh. In the 91st Psalm find a promise that might be said to be fulfilled in the case of Paul, not exactly. What Paul did, but the same kind of thing. 13th. verse. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, and the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." What is a dragon? It means a big serpent. Well, in what book of Scripture do we read much

about the dragon, that is said to be the devil? In Revelation. He is there the image—a symbol of the devil. Where do we find the word serpent first used for the devil? In Genesis. Who was to bruise the serpent's head? God gave two predictions. Turn to the 3rd Genesis, and give me a promise in the shape of a threatening. The first promise that was ever spoken in the world about salvation was in the shape of a threatening. Verse 15th—"And it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Who is the "it" there? The seed of the woman. Who is the "thou." The serpent. What part of the seed of the woman was to be hurt? It was to be the heel. Would that be a very deadly hurt? No, but it would be hurt. Would the serpent be able to get at the heel? Yes, but the serpent's head was to be crushed with it. Christ Jesus was to crush the serpent's head when He died upon the cross. Did Christ show that He was stronger than the serpent before that? Yes; during the temptation. He was tempted forty days—nearly six weeks. Two more days would have made six weeks. Did He eat anything all that time? No; He ate nothing at all. Did the devil tempt Him for His hunger? Yes, he asked Him to turn the stones into bread. Would there have been anything wrong in that, do you think? Yes; it would have been breaking away from and distrusting His Father. He said: "I will wait My Father's time; He will provide for Me. I will not try to provide for Myself."

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

Say, what is life ?—A fragile flower,
Blooming and fragrant for an hour ;
Then withered with the scorching heat,
Or prostrate at the mower's feet.

Say, what is life ?—A shuttle sharp,
Twinkling across the parted warp ;
Still, as the woof-threads come and go,
Weaving a web for weal or woe.

Say, what is life ?—A vapour light
Veiling the mountain's crest by night ;
Gone with a breath,—a morning beam
That dissipates the sleeper's dream.

Say, what is life ?—A time to sow
Seeds, whence immortal harvests grow :
Who sow to pleasure, reap in pain ;
Who sow to God, shall glory gain.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Job xiv. 1-15; 1 Pet. i. 17-25.

PRAYER.

GOD, Thou madest us. In Thee we live, and move, and have our being. We praise Thee for life. We praise Thee for the better life that is in Jesus. Help us to be able to say, with Paul, To me, to live is Christ. O may Jesus come into our lives, and make them sweet, and good,

and bright. O that the world were full of people living in Christ, and pleasing Thee, our Father. Help us, living so ourselves, to do something to bring about this happy end. To Thee, O living God, be all the praise, through Jesus. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day is very short, consisting of these words in James iv., 14—"For what is your life?"

YOU know the difference between death and life well. I know, indeed, that to very young children, the dying of any person they had known is a great mystery—a thing that bewilders and puzzles them. How their little brother or sister should be put away into a coffin, and then into the ground, and yet be away up to God in the heaven, perplexes them, both as to the how and the why. But the very youngest can distinguish between living and dead things before them. However like the picture or the photograph may be, they know it is not quite the person it represents. At a show of wax figures, amid all their wonderment, they distinguish between the images and the people who walk about to examine them. A little white stone is not of the same kind to them as a daisy; and the iron bars of a railing are felt to be very different from the tree whose green twigs and leaves shoot out their life between. I need not go further. You know that life and death are very different, and know the living objects from those that never lived, and from those that having lived, have died.

Yet if the question of my text were—What is life? and were put to ask an answer as to what the principle, the real nature, the essence of life is, who could attempt reply? Some, by giving explanation of things that go along with it, or show it, might get near to the reality, at least nearer than some others;

but all the labours of the wisest cannot explain more than its conditions, and appearances, and functions. It is about these, however—not about the principle of life itself—that James questions in my text. And especially about that quality of human life which comes out in his feebleness and brevity. This is what all can easily understand; what thousands of occurrences illustrate.

The apostle answers his question as well as asks it. And we will look at his answer. But some other views of life, either bound up with this, or enhanced by it, I should like to take into our thoughts to-day. I will give them in a form that will make it easy to remember them. What is life? It is :

1. A Gift.
2. A Glimpse.
3. A Grain.
4. A Glory.

1. A Gift.

You did not make yourselves, neither did your life spring up of its own accord. As darkness did not yield light out of its bosom till the Spirit moved through it, and God spoke to it, so life could not of itself come from death. Do you know that great men of knowledge have tried with long labour to find out—and some have striven to prove—that life could begin of its own accord? but now, by confession of the best informed, it appears to have been in vain. Plain people could not suppose any other issue. Life, in-

deed, by God's appointment, comes out of life, but not out of death. Yet if it could be shown that in some cases life began where no life was before it, I should not say that we had got something to explain how life might be without God. I should only say we had been allowed to come near the hidden chambers of God's working.

Your life, dear children, was then given you by God. You recollect the first question in the simple catechism is: Who made you? The beginning is right. The question leads you back to your first being, and to God. He made you, and not ye yourselves. How fine these lines are which we sometimes sing.

"His sovereign power, without our aid,
Formed us of clay, and made us men."

That, however, was as to man's body; only there was the in-sending of the breath of God, making men. From the way in which the narrative is given in Genesis, we may allow ourselves to conceive that when God had built up out of the dust a human form, it lay as a thing dead till God breathed into it, and then it moved, and rose, and beat, and breathed, and looked, and walked, and thought too—a man. In Ezekiel, when the dry bones came together, and flesh and skin grew upon them, the forms still lay along, there was no breath in them, till at the prophet's prayer God's spirit came; then they stood up, an exceeding great army.

If your life, then, was given you at first, do you hold it now in your keeping? There is a sense in which you do keep your lives. You can do

careless or bad things that will cut life short; you can do by duty and care what tends to prolong it. Yet not in your own hand, but in God's hand, your breath is. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. We cannot boast of it, for it is not our own to have at will. God kills, and God makes alive. Acknowledge, then, your dependence. Ask life from God. Seek His protection. Commit your way to Him.

One other thing I name now, to return to it under another head. If life be a gift from God, it is a good thing. All His gifts are good. So is this. Ah! how good, our very instincts tell. How good, death itself proves, which comes on man as the wages of sin. Good it must be, though we may turn it to bad account. It is a little beam from the Father of Lights—a spark from the Living Fire.

2. A Glimpse.

This refers to the shortness of life—very short in multitudes of cases—short in all. A glimpse is a passing view—a transient shining—a light for a moment. And that is just life. "For," says James' own answer to his own question, "It is even as a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." A glance of the eye it is; a gleam of the lightning—bright but brief.

The Scripture abounds in forcible images about life's shortness. I cannot do better than take notice of some of them, "Man cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down." In tropical climates the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat than the grass withereth, and the flower falleth. Or the mower

comes : and the flower is in the oven. Out in the western prairies of America, there was a climbing tree at the window where two visitors slept, and they noticed it covered, morning after morning, with delicate flowers. But they were different every day ; hence their name of morning glories. Have you ever watched the ships crossing your vision, as you lay on the beach—(I have been looking at them while I am writing this) how they silently glided away—appearing, advancing, departing, disappearing. That was life. As I speak thus, as if with you, this room appears to broaden to an ocean, and you are ships, in silent onward motion all. Ah ! what freight are we bearing ? To what port are we steering ? As ships cross, so lives intermingle that yet are going in opposite directions. Or see how things fly in air ? “As the eagle hasteth to his prey” is a figure in Scripture. I never saw that, but I have seen the hawk, and it was fiercely swift. Like an arrow, like a bullet, like a shining meteor, shot the keen bird. Were you ever in a weaving factory ? We can hardly now say weaver's shop, though I can remember, when a boy, standing beside the loom, and wondering to see the shuttle fly from left to right. “My days are swifter says Job : “than a weaver's shuttle.” So, there is another image. Or, once more, on a summer's day, when light winds are blowing, watch the shadows chasing the light over the meadows or the cornfield. That, too, is life. Or look up at the clouds, sailing quickly, changing their shape, springing up, disappearing. All those are figures

taken from Scripture. If you would like to remember them, you might easily keep them, so to speak, *in hand*, by putting five words on five fingers thus :

1. Shoot (plant, thing that grows)
2. Ship.
3. Shaft (arrow).
4. Shuttle
5. Shadow.

In addition, you may think, finally, of the breeze that is carrying the clouds that makes the shadows as it passes ; that is life. For we read that “he remembered they were but flesh—a wind that passeth away and returneth not.”

You children will, perhaps, say two things to me. You think even a little bit of life long ; and if to older people it be but a span, yet surely it cannot be so to you. Yes, it may be more so to you than the oldest present. Then if you think some little time long, you will yet not count it so at last. Look at the date of this year—1873. All through these centuries people have been passing away. Surely life is as a vapour.

What is the lesson ? Use time well while it is with you. Fight hard with all that would rob you of it ; most of all with sloth—lazy, time-devouring giant. A miser as to time is a noble being. Wasted money does yet some good to somebody ; squandered time none. But this brings me to

3. A Grain.

You know that, compared with what they grow to, seeds are small. Some of them are very tiny. You remember what is said in the New Testament about a grain of mustard-seed, and the

tree it springs to. You could take an acorn—a small nut—in your hand, and say: “I am holding an oak between my fingers.” See the farmer casting handfuls of wheat into the ploughed field; these little hard pellets will spring up to plants that, like a mimic forest, will wave over the field. There is hidden life in the seed—the prophecy of a future harvest.

Now our life, though it be short, is like a seed—a little thing with a great future in it. And just as you must look to the keeping of seed-grain, that it may be fit for sowing and yielding harvest, so you must to life. Seeds, carefully kept, will hold their life very long. There have been wheat grains brought from Egypt, ripened by its sun thousands of years ago, enclosed with dead corpses in mummy cases, that being planted in the earth grew up. But ill-kept seeds will not. So life, well kept, will last to immortality—will not go out when the body is buried, but go away into immortality. But it may go, if ill-kept, into rottenness, and death, and darkness. “He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Now the sad thing is, that in the seed of life there is taint already. You have only to let it work, and it will destroy the life of the seed. There is enough evil in your hearts to make life the beginning of destruction. Blessed be God, however, Christ can put new life into it and take out the taint. Just as when the earth was dark He came down and made light by His word, so

He takes the heart, and says: “Let there be light; and let there be fruits of righteousness—let there be the image of God.” This is what you must do with your life. You must let Him graft you into Himself. Then to what a tree of blossom, and beauty, and fruit, never to be barren or blighted any more, will you grow! That was what I meant when I said

Lastly—A Glory.

That is what God meant life to be—what He will make it yet anew in Jesus. And what, now, may any, may all of you be? What may your life grow to? You may have a shining life on earth; a life for which both others and yourselves shall thank God. Look at Paul's. Look at Daniel's. How grand to live a life like theirs! But humbler lives shine as well. I heard a little dew-drop complaining to a star that it could not sparkle like one of the beautiful orbs of night. But the sun rose, and in the morning the sparkle of the dew was pure and beautiful as the light of stars. So any life in Christ will be glorious with His light. Yet chiefly is the glory hereafter. See what you may grow to. “What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun

light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

What a gift now is life, if it can grow to that? What matter though its earthly form be short, if it grow to that? The glimpse passes into the glow of immortality. This is the harvest of the seed you sowed. Rise, little friends, cry for God's Spirit that you may live from the first true lives; that you may love Christ, and go to be with Him; that when you see Him you may be like Him—seeing Him as He is.

One word to those who are getting

on in life—perhaps far on in life. Brethren, what has your life been? I know you will say swift enough, short enough; aye, but what has it sown? What kind of sheaves have your later years reaped from the seed of the earlier; what are you sowing now? If brief time remains, be covetous of using it well. Even at the eleventh hour, a life that has been but a prolonged dying, may be quickened into glory. Even at the last moment "the feeble spark to flames He'll raise." A bruised reed He will not break; smoking flax He will not quench, nor let death quench it, but bring forth judgment to victory.

II. Our Talk.

What was the short text of to-day's sermon?

Name two things—one living, one dead—that you easily distinguish?

What is the difference between a person and his picture?

What answer does James give to his own question?

Repeat the four heads.

What letter do all the four words begin with?

Can life begin of its own accord?

Who made you?

Repeat two lines that tell who made us and of what we were made.

Do these apply to the soul?

How did God give Adam his soul?

How did the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision live?

Who keeps us in life? Can you prove what you answer?

Since life is from God, what kind of gift must it be, good or evil?

What five words give five Scripture figures, all illustrating the shortness of life?

What double letter do they all begin with?

Can you find passages in Scripture where the figures are used?

What lesson, as to the use of life, should we draw from its shortness?

How could you hold a whole oak tree between your fingers?

If a seed be not kept well, what will become of it?

If well kept and sown, what will seeds do?

Have seeds ever been kept for a thousand years?

Is the seed of your life all good as it is, or has it a taint?

What taints it?

Who can take the taint out of it?

What may your life become hereafter?

What little parable was used to show that lowly lives may shine?

What question was put in the close of the sermon to older people?

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET QUESTIONS, P and Q.

PILLAR.

1. Jachin and Boaz. 1 Kings xv. 21 ; 2 Chron. iv. 12—17.
2. Two in Dagon's temple. Judges xvi. 23—30.
3. James, Cephas, and John, with Paul. Gal. ii. 9.
4. Pillars in the temple of God. Rev. iii. 12.
5. Of heaven. Job xxvi. 11.

QUEEN.

1. Queen enquiring came from far—Of Sheba. 1 Kings x. 1.

2. Queen uprising shone a star—Esther. Esther ii. 7.
3. Queen refusing lost her place—Vashti. Esther i. 12, 21.
4. Queen requesting saved her race—Esther. Esther vii. 3. 4.
5. Queen resenting scared a seer—Jezebel. 1 Kings xix. 1—3.
6. Queen defying scorned all fear—Babylon. Rev. xviii. 7.
7. Queen advising, bad men shiver—Queen-mother. Dan. v. 10.
8. Queen upstanding reigns for ever—The church. Psalm xlv. 9.

A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE FIRE.

A CITY MISSION STORY.

ONE afternoon, on a sultry day in the summer of 1864, wearied with domiciliary visitation, the atmosphere of the thickly-populated houses at H——being so oppressive, I turned into a quiet little street, and opening my Bible, read aloud the story of the cleansing of "Naaman the leper" (2 Kings v.). Attracted by such an unusual proceeding, several persons gathered around me, and others stood at the doors or at uplifted windows, and listened to the wonderful ancient story. I next told of sin, of its leprous character, of the blood of cleansing, and in conclusion urged each hearer to—

"Prove the value of the blood
Of Jesus crucified."

I was about to leave the street when a woman of prepossessing appearance, and neatly dressed, came out of a house opposite to where I had been standing, and approached me, saying respectfully :

"Pardon me, sir, but will you come and speak to my brother?"

"Gladly, madam," I replied, and followed my conductress into the house.

"None of your preaching here—a lot of canting hypocrites! None of it here; that's what I say." Such were the words which greeted my ears as I followed my conductress into the room from which the sounds proceeded. There, on a mangle sat a man about forty years of age, clad in a butcher's blouse. There also were his wife and three children, one a little cripple girl about six years old. My entrance put a stop to the loud talk of the man, and sitting down on the mangle beside him, I took from my pocket some books, and gave one with pictures to the little cripple. Then selecting a "British Workman" I read from that paper one of those interesting stories so well suited to benefit working men.

"How pretty," said the little cripple.
"It's beautiful," exclaimed the wife.

"Not much the matter with that," added the man.

Folding up the paper, I replied, "You are welcome to this, my friend," offering it to him, "and I will soon come and read to you again."

For many weeks I regularly called, and each time read other interesting stories. The man was very civil, and the little cripple was delighted to see me. Very soon the wife was induced to attend the Mission Services, and after a year had passed away, in answer to earnest and persevering prayer, one night the husband came to the meeting, and heard the tale of redeeming love. The man was a porter in Newgate Market. "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known" (Rom. iii. 14-17), very truly described his condition.

About this time the wife perceived that he was making great efforts and forming strong resolutions to leave off these wicked habits, and to free himself from his dissolute associates.

In 1865 their eldest daughter (a fine young woman, aged nineteen years) came home from service very ill; she rapidly grew worse, lingered a few weeks, and died.

I was present at her death. The mother supported the dying girl in her arms, the brothers and sisters stood around weeping, the father placed himself at the foot of the bed, and tears streamed down his face as he looked on the heaving chest and heard the quick heavy breathing of his departing child.

Addressing her brother and sisters, the dying girl said: "Be good children to father and mother, and think of Jesus, and love Him, and you will meet me in heaven." Turning to her mother, she continued: "Mother dear, you do love Jesus, and Jesus loves us all, and you will meet me in heaven."

"Then, my child, you are not afraid to die?" asked her mother.

"No, mother, why should I be afraid?" answered the girl. "Jesus has suffered for our sins, and God has said, He will spare all who trust in the blood of Christ, the same as He did the people in Egypt. I am going to heaven, and you will meet me there."

And the mother kissed her child, and the child kissed her mother.

For a few moments nothing was heard but the laboured breathing of the girl, the smothered sobs of the children, and occasionally a half-suppressed groan wrung from the almost broken-hearted father.

"Father?"

"Yes, my child."

"Come to me, let me kiss you."

And they kissed each other.

"Father, will you meet me in heaven?"

He weeps, but answers not.

Again, in voice calm and firm, comes the enquiry, "Father, dear, will you meet me in heaven?"

And the Father falls on his knee and buries his face in the bed-clothes, and bitter sobs and groans convulse his frame.

Again, with increased emphasis, the daughter asks: "Father, will you meet me in heaven?"

"Oh! my child," replies the man,

"God helping me, I will meet you in heaven."

"Then, father, you must give up the drink;" and having said those words, her head dropped back on the mother's arm, and her spirit entered into Paradise.

A few months after the death of his daughter, a circumstance occurred which showed that the Holy Ghost was working mightily in the heart of the man. I missed him from his usual place at the meeting on the Lord's Day evening; on the following Tuesday he was again absent from the Bible class. The next day I called at his house to enquire after him, fearing he was ill. With downcast looks and stammering tongue, he said: "Mr. F—, I am a bad man." I shall never forget his look of horror and penitence as he continued, "On Saturday last I cursed my children; I am a wretch to do such a thing;" and as the tears started in his eyes, again he said: "I cursed my children, I did."

He had returned from the market the worse for drink; then went into the little back yard and laid down on a bench and fell asleep. The children were sent to awake him. When sleepy, muddled, and annoyed at being aroused, the old man showed itself in oaths and curses; but the Holy Spirit was there also, and His convicting power was felt. Horror-stricken at what he had done, the man felt himself to be "vile," and in bitterness of soul cried: "Woe is me! for I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah vi., 5).

Thus brought to feel his state, to see

his condition as guilty and perishing, the infinite and boundless love of God in saving the lost by Jesus Christ met his desperate case, and when by faith he saw the Lord of glory take his place and suffer in his stead, with trembling voice he sang:—

"Oh! 'tis a wondrous sight,
All sights above:
Jesus the curse sustains,
Guilt's bitter cup he drains;
Nothing for us remains,
Nothing but love."

Thus brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, he realized peace and joy in believing.

One evening an elder of a Presbyterian Church visited him to converse with him, and to see the change which grace had wrought. With faltering lips the butcher told of the mercy that had reached him, adding: "I am like one of them things took out of the fire," referring to that Scripture: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zec. iii. 2.)

Henceforth was in him exemplified that which was written by the Apostle: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii., 11—14).

He left off swearing and discontinued his drams. A gentleness of manner

and a kindliness of speech were put on ; love filled his breast, and peace and concord dwelt at home. His wife and family felt the change, and praised the name of the Lord. He became a "living epistle read of all men;" he was a wonder unto many. With him "old things had passed away." Till now he had been unable to read, but he set himself to the task. The cripple girl by this time had learned to read, and she became his instructress. A very touching and pleasing sight was it to see the big strong man, with the little cripple on his knee, learning of her the A B C. "A little child shall lead them" (Isaiah ii., 6.)

About this time he received from his sister, a worthy pious woman, who for years had not ceased to pray for his conversion, a large-print book containing a selection of "The Sayings of Jesus." I well remember on one occasion with what pride and joy he spelled out very slowly to me: "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John v., 24.)

In the spring of 1867, disease of the heart and lungs showed itself, and very soon it became evident to us all that his days on earth were numbered. For nearly a year longer he continued to go to the market at three o'clock in the morning, and did a little work ; but refusing to go to the same excess of riot as formerly, his old companions spake all manner of evil against him, and the

clerks at the "Firm" joined in tormenting him. On one occasion they hid his clothes, got him down, tied his hands and feet, put him into a sack, locked him up in a cellar, and then wrote to his wife, saying: "Your husband, Jack, is locked up. Tell the Parson to come and bail him out." The poor wife came to me in a state of excitement bringing the letter. I immediately started for the city, but I had not proceeded very far before I met poor Jack coming quietly along. On my telling him what we had heard he smiled, and said:—"It was hard to bear, but I thought how much the blessed Jesus had to bear, and I asked Him to help me and to forgive them."

His health now rapidly failed, and he was unable to work. One day, about a week before he died, he went into the city carrying with him the book "The Sayings of Jesus." Arrived at the market he called his mates around him, and several of the clerks, attracted by the proceeding, also drew near. "Gentm'n and Mates," he said; "You know what Jack was, but the blessed Saviour has saved me; the blessed Jesus died on the cross for me, and He has pardoned my sins." Then he read to them "The Sayings of Jesus."

A few days later, after having been at our Bible Class, he went home, and calling his wife, and children, and friends around him, he blessed them in the name of the Lord, and told them he was going to see the blessed Jesus and Susy. Then growing weaker he whispered:—"Jesus, precious Jesus,"—and fell asleep.

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

COME, Holy Spirit, come,
Let Thy bright beams arise,
Dispel the darkness from our minds,
And open all our eyes.

Cheer our desponding hearts,
Thou heavenly Paraclete;
Give us to lie with humble hope
At our Redeemer's feet.

Revive our drooping faith,
Our doubts and fears remove,
And kindle in our breasts the flame
Of never-dying love.

Convince us of our sin,
Then lead to Jesus' blood,
And to our wondering view reveal
The secret love of God.

'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart,
To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life on every part,
And new-create the whole.

Dwell, therefore, in our hearts;
Our minds from bondage free;
Then shall we know and praise and love
The Father, Son, and Thee.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 2 Kings xiii., 14-21; John iv., 19-29.

PRAYER.

THOU, O Father, hast promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee. Jesus, Thy Son, has told us this. We, therefore, ask Thee to give us the Holy Spirit to teach us, to warm our hearts

with love, to guide us, to lead us in the way of life. May He come to us as fire, as breathing wind, as dew, as living water! O Lord, give us life, eternal life, in Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen.

SERMON.

Here is our text to-day: "And He said unto me, son of man, can these bones live?"—Ezekiel xxxviii.

WE are familiar with very wonderful changes on things around us on the earth. We know quite well that a bare tree standing against the wintry sky, with all its branches and twigs stript of every leaf, will yet in spring put on its foliage anew. We know that fields white with snow will become green again, and that a piece of solid ice will melt under heat into flowing water. We can tell that a seed of wheat or barley, buried in the ground, will come up a living plant through the soil, and grow and bear other seeds. We can go to a corner where some caterpillar has crawled, and become dried and stiff, and, pointing to it, say, there is life there, and it will come out by-and-by in the shape of a winged insect. Most of you, I doubt not, have seen the silk-worm spinning its cocoon, and have seen the husky kernel, laid in saw-dust, produce a moth. But you have not seen bones of men come alive again. No wonder, then, that the question of the text should sound a hard one. The putting of it by God to the prophet implies that it would be a strange thing to see dry bones live. Yet the putting of it by God implied that the thing was possible. So the prophet seems to have felt, when he said: "O Lord, Thou knowest."

I have seen graves opened in crowded churchyards—graves where people had been buried long before,—and I have seen, at funerals, little bags filled with the

bones picked out from among the clay—bones of those long dead lowered into the dust again beside the new coffin. If, when these bones turned up one after another among the clods, the bystander were to be asked: "Can these bones live?" there is only one thing that could enable him to answer Yes. He might know from God's word that the dead are to be raised again. The quickening of the dead is too great a thing for anything to assure us of it except God's word. That does assure us of it. "Marvel not at this," said the Lord Jesus Christ, "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth."

But my text does not speak about the real resurrection of men's bodies. It refers to what happened in a vision. God had promised very great and glorious blessings to His people. But at the time He gave those promises by Ezekiel, they were captives and scattered; and it might seem to them hardly possible that such good things should be. So God showed this vision to the prophet—to let his very eyes, as it were, witness the truth beforehand. If, then, when he told the people that God was to heal and restore them, they should say: "We are lost and destroyed; it is too late, we cannot be brought back," he might say to them, "Hear what God showed me;" and telling them the vision, might add: "Is not He, who is able to make dry bones

rise to living men, able to help you?" "Ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves."

The vision, however, and the prophecy were not for the captives of Israel alone. Reading to the end of the chapter we are brought to see that a prospect opens here far beyond the coming back from Babylon. That was but a new sign and pledge of the grand things finally meant in the 36th chapter; nor can any future literal restoration of the Jews to their own land exhaust it. That would require a literal David to be then king. But as the David who is to rule, the one Shepherd that is to feed, is Jesus; the Israel He is to govern, and the flock He is to feed, are redeemed men in all the earth, gathered into one in the bonds of holy, happy love. Indeed, the lesson of the vision is for the church in every age, I think especially in our own.

I will, therefore, endeavour to bring the text to bear upon our own times; first, however, explaining its meaning as it stands in its surroundings here. Taking the question, I will show—

I. How it was then answered.

II. How it may be now applied.

1. Then answered.

Observe, however, in the outset, the exact terms of the question: "Can these bones live?" Now, the bones were scattered and bare, and lying all over the plain, a great multitude. They were not skeletons, but separate bones—as if the unburied slain of some great deadly battle had lain long enough ex-

posed to all the winds to have lost their flesh, and become a mere mass of confused and crumbling bones. Of such wrecks of men the question was put. Not, indeed, that the bones of yet entire and compacted skeletons were any nearer life than they; but the image very vividly sets forth an utterly prostrate state of the people of God when revival was promised them.

Now, the prophet having referred the question back to God Himself, received God's answer by seeing the bones gathered, built up, and revived. The process is beautifully described. First there was a noise, and a stir and movement in the valley—bone sought to bone, and were jointed together, till the skeleton forms were complete; then, as rocks get covered in the course of years with mould and vegetation, these bony shapes became clothed with flesh, with the flesh vested with smooth skin, and lay fair human bodies, but as yet breathless. Then came a second wonder—as they lay stretched thus on the ground, the breezes stirred around, and became to these corpses the breath of life, and they started to their feet, and stood arrayed and alive in the plain, a vast host. The dry bones had come to life.

But what is of chief importance to note is this: God did not give this answer to His own question without the prophet's service. Ezekiel is made to work out the answer. He is told to prophesy twice—first to the bones, and next to the word. Now, as prophecy is speaking for another, it is clear that the word may be used to signify the carrying of God's word to men, or the up-

lifting of man's voice to God. These two things are here in succession. To bring about the resurrection of the dead in the vision-valley, the prophet was commanded—

1. To preach.

2. To pray.

Let us think a little about both.

1.—To preach.

To preach to the bones—to the dead.

But what was the use of preaching to the dead? They could not hear. If you saw me standing in a cemetery—think of any one you know—and crying to the buried there to awake, you would think me mad. So would Ezekiel's preaching have been vain, had it not been that he was doing what God commanded, and bidding the bones hear the Word of God. For that Word can make itself be heard anywhere. The sea has heard it, and flowed or fled. The grave has heard it, and given up its prey. Darkness has heard it, and kindled into light. Nothing has heard it, and has given birth to worlds. So, if bidden, we may preach the Word of God anywhere without doubting its being of use. But Ezekiel had more to encourage him than the general thought of God's power. He had His promise. So he might now preach, quite sure that it would not be in vain. Nor was it. The bones heard the word of the Lord, and stepped towards life.

2.—To pray.

The prophesying now is not to the bones. All that the Word can do for them is done. They are arranged, they are built up, they are in appearance men—but they are dead. The life must

come from the Spirit of God. The breath is not in the Word, bidding the bones hear, but comes from God to complete the work. Teaching and instruction are good, but the Spirit's power and grace must come to make them effectual unto life. Yet see, the breath alone did not give life. It did not breathe over the dry bones. They are moved first, and connected first, and clothed first, with flesh and skin. So both are combined—the word of preaching, the breath by prayer. So men are born again, according to Scripture, by the word of truth, and by the Spirit of the Lord.

II. How it may now be applied.

Two things are to be said here.

We have our valley of vision full of dry bones, and we have the same thing to do with them as Ezekiel had.

1. We have our valley.

Need I say this valley is very wide and vast. The field is the world. You recollect, in one of our Lord's temptations, Jesus was carried to the top of a high mountain. How it was done, we know not, nor need we now ask. Let me carry you, in imagination, to such a height, to see not the glory of the world but its shame and woe. Look east from you; see China, and India, and other lands—millions of the dead. Look south—Africa is full of the dead. Look west—South America. Look at Europe and North America, there are more living men among them, but still, they are mostly dead—very many in the open valley, and very dry.

Or look more closely still. Let us take London; and let us go in thought to the top of St. Paul's. You know

that on a clear day you can see a vast expanse of this wondrous Babel—its maze of streets, its streams of people. But what now if you could see them in their houses as they are spiritually. The most of them would be dead. If the houses where God is were alone to be lighted up, what multitudes of them would be dark. If only those were to be wholly illumined where all within loved God, how few would be quite clear. How would the most have some windows dark.

Or look yet closer. Look at some church; suppose me preaching in one, might not I say: "Here is a little nook of the great valley, are there no dry bones here? Are all present to-day breathing in the spirit of God? If an eye were given me to see souls alive or dead, would I find myself encompassed by the living alone? God knoweth. But this is to be remembered. Dead men here are to be dealt with just as elsewhere. They are to be preached to in faith, and prayed for in love."

Perhaps some one hearing me in the way supposed would be already answering the question. Looking within, he is made to remember our Lord's description—"full of dead men's bones." He says: "I am cut off for my part?" Are you? That was what Israel said. But God said: "I will bring you out of your graves." Hush! let the word of God go into that charnel-heart of yours. Let it stir these bones. It is a living word, and there is a Divine Living Spirit to give it quickening entrance. Close not the door; but let the voice and the breath come in.

But I am going a little before, and touching on what is next to be said. We have the same work to do—preach and pray. Preach the Word of the Lord—the Gospel. Here I do not mean merely pulpit-preaching. For there is tract-preaching; Bible-preaching; talk-preaching. But it is always God's word. And if you ask me what truth the dead world needs, I will give you four words around which preaching must lie; God—Sin—Jesus—Salvation. Not that I mean you are to take them in that order. If I were to prescribe an order, I would say begin with Jesus. So learn about God, about sin, about salvation. But I mean these are the great themes of preaching—repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But however accurate may be our teaching, and however apt men's learning, more is needed. The soul must be made alive. So we are to pray. Here, however, guard against supposing that we are to go as far as we can with preaching, and then to pause and turn to prayer. This was the needful order of the vision; but to us the lesson is, unite them—preach praying. But do both in faith. There is a promise for the preacher: "My word shall not return to me void." There is more than promise, I had almost said, to those who pray: "Before they call, I will answer."

Now, in conclusion, let me ask you to look at things more wonderful than those seen in this vision: First, there is that scene described in our reading from the Old Testament. There dry bones are made to give life. Then,

there is a grave where there once was, not dry bones, but a body dead, yet without a touch of corruption; and now it is empty, because He who lay there is risen. A visit to this grave, in faith, gives higher life. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." See it vacant, and let it have your sins to bury, as in Bunyan's dream it got Christian's burden.

This, further, let me say. I want you all to be prophets. Prophets! you say—yes, prophets. Even if you cannot cry to the bones, you may to the wind. Here, then, is a prayer for you, thinking of the world, and crying for the Spirit: "Come from the four winds; O Breath, and breathe on these slain."

II. Our Talk.

TO-DAY we still go on with our lesson about *Temptation*. Now look at this word that I write on the board. Why, do you think, do I write desert? Because you and I are going in our thoughts into the wilderness. What is the name of the creature with four feet, and great claws on its feet, that is like Satan? A lion. Find a text that compares Satan to a lion. The 1st Epistle of Peter, 8th verse: "He goeth about like a roaring lion." Yes, the lion, you know, ranges about, and lies down out of sight, and waits and lurks for the purpose of catching people. Well, in the desert, Satan was lying in a corner waiting for Christ, and when he saw Him, he said: "Now is my time to fight a battle for the throne of the world. That man is the Son of God; I know prophecies about Him. I have heard David sing about it; Isaiah wrote about it; others pray about it. I know He is come to smite me." Perhaps Satan might have said something like this: "Long time ago now, but I remember it, when I was in Paradise, and when I got Eve and

Adam to eat the fruit, He came then, and He said that one of Eve's children would put his foot on my head and crush me. This is the man. I must fight with Him, I must do my very best to get Him to sin." There were two things that Satan tried. First, He tried in the desert to get Christ to sin. If he had succeeded, would there have been any salvation? No; there would not, because Christ's righteousness would have a stain. Christ would not have been the Perfect one. Well, that is what Satan said inly, I will try and get Him to sin. He failed in that, and we will see by-and-by that he tried another thing, which was to persuade Christ to give up attempting to save people. He tried to frighten Him from going to death. But this time he tried to get Him to sin. How long did he try? Forty days and forty nights. How many instances of temptation have we recorded in detail as we say, that is, in the incidents, in the stories of them? Three. But do these three that are told us, do they make up all the temptations of Christ? Oh, no.

They were not spread over the six weeks at all, but came after. I think this : that all the forty days and nights Satan kept out of sight ; he didn't show himself ; He just kept near to Christ unseen and tried to put bad thoughts into His soul, throwing fiery darts at Him. But did any of them touch Him ? Not one of them. There was nothing in Christ that would take fire from Satan's temptation. He threw them all off, and they didn't hurt Him.

Now suppose that I had here a mirror, and suppose I had gathered a great lot of the ugliest creatures I could get—snails, toads, lizards, and all kinds of dirty, crawling creatures—and I came and held them up here one after another, would they be seen in the mirror ? Yes, they would. But is the mirror made dirty by the reflection ? when the toad and the other creatures are flung away—is there anything left in the mirror ? Nothing. Well, Christ's soul was something like that. Satan held up the ugly, bad thoughts, and Jesus knew what they were, but when Satan took them away, there was not a stain in Christ's soul. Here is another thing. Suppose this room was full of all sorts of dust, and cobwebs, and filth—a vile, dirty, abominable room, and that the shutters were all closed ; then suppose I were to go at morning and open those shutters, would the light come in ? It would. And what would the light show to me ? The dust and dirtiness of the room. But when the light came in and touched the dust and the dirtiness, would the light get soiled itself ? No. Well, this world, when Jesus came into

it, was just like a great room, all full of blackness of every description ; there were all sorts of black, ugly, crawling things in it, and He came into it and walked amongst them ; but He was just like the beam of light ; He shone on them, and they ran away, and were frightened, but He did not get any stain Himself—He just went away back to Heaven as pure as the light.

I wonder if any of you boys have done this—I have done it myself—walked across a field and have there come to a stone lying on the grass, making its bed on the grass, and have put down your hand, lifted up the stone, and found underneath the stone all sorts of insects crawling about. I have seen thus that they loved the darkness, and did not live in the light, for when I lifted up the stone, hurry-scurry, all went out of sight as fast as they could. That is the way bad things do ; they love the darkness rather than the light. The light of Christ comes amongst them, and they hate it. That is the reason why wicked men killed Him. There were the Pharisees and other ugly, vile creatures, that did not love God, and when He came and turned the lamp of His truth upon them, they said : "We cannot bear that man's light, we will rid Him from the earth." So they said to Judas : "If you will betray Him into our hands we will give you so much money—we will give you thirty pieces of silver." And Judas consented, and betrayed his Lord. They succeeded, as they thought ; but, after all, in killing Christ they only made Him stronger, throwing his light wide into

the world. Now we will come to the three temptations that are named. Please turn to the 4th chapter of Matthew. After the forty days and nights are over how did Christ feel in His body? He was hungry. He was an hungered. Give me the name of any other person that fasted forty days and nights? There was Moses. How often? Twice. Moses's fast, I have no doubt, was for that length of time. To say there is another coming that is greater, fighting with Satan, in whose life that period of time will be marked. Was Moses fighting when he was fasting? No. He was receiving gracious words from God—getting two tables from the Lord up in Sinai. Christ was away out in the desert after He was an hungered. I think Satan showed himself then. Perhaps he made himself like a man. I don't know; but he come and spoke to Christ, so that He could hear him with His bodily ear. What did he bid Him do? Command those stones be made bread. But he said something with an if. If you are the Son of God. He wanted Christ to prove himself the Son of God by working a miracle. Could He have wrought the miracle. What did Christ do that proved He could make stones bread if He liked? He turned water into wine. Yes, to turn water into wine shows that He could, if he had liked, turned stones into bread. Tell me the name of the man that said something of God's power to turn stones into people. 3rd. Matt., 8th verse. And John said: "For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Jesus could have done this thing if he had pleased. Tell me why it would not have been right for Him to do it? It would have been obeying Satan. So far, true and good. But there is something a little more than that. What would it have been showing towards his heavenly Father? It would have been showing distrust. How did Christ answer Satan? He quoted the Bible. Tell me what Bunyan, in the Pilgrim's Progress, calls that answering him out of the word of God? Giving him a thrust with the Sword of the Spirit. Please find a text in the 6th chapter of Ephesians which proves that the Bible is the Sword of the Spirit. Verse 17: "And the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." Find also a text telling us what kind of sword it is in the 4th chapter of Hebrews, 12 verse: "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Can any of you tell me the meaning of quick there? Living; that is it. Tell me something that is like a sword which is not made of steel—which is not the word of God; which is a thing made of matter, that can strike, and pierce, and kill? Lightning. Yes; it is like a sword, very sharp. It is rapid and strong, like a thing alive. So is God's word; sharper than any two-edged sword.

'Now what is the second temptation? Christ had given Satan a thrust with the sword of the Spirit, and Satan tried

something else. He took Him up to the pinnacle of the temple, and said: "See the people down there; isn't it a fine opportunity for you to show that you are the Son of God; just cast yourself down amongst them, and you will feel no hurt. How did Satan try to prove that? He said: "Don't be afraid, the angels will come and put their hands beneath your feet and keep you quite safe. Does that show that Satan knew a little about the Bible? I think he knows more about it than many people—Satan knows it pretty well, he has had a great deal to do with it. But did he quote it fairly? He did not. What did he leave out? "In all thy ways." Now it was no part of Christ's ways to go from the pinnacle down to the ground. Did His Father send Him to do that? No. He sent Him to do good. Jesus knew it would not do. He said, If I do that it would be—what? It would be tempting. But would it be tempting a man? No. Whom then? God. It would be provoking God, trying God. It would be like our saying this:—"Oh! my Father, I do not know that Thou

wilt take care of me; I want to put Thee to the trial." But Christ did know that His Father would take care of Him in all His ways. There is a sense in which we may prove God; but not in the spirit of unbelief. Does God bid us sometimes prove Him? Find out from the Book of Malachi, iv. 10: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." That is proving God in the spirit of faith—giving Him opportunity to show Himself faithful in the belief that He will keep His word. We will do the things He bids us do, and we are sure that what He says will come to pass. It is a wrong thing to tempt God in the spirit of unbelief—but if we go and say: "Oh, Lord! I know Thou wilt keep Thy word, and wilt do what Thou hast biddest me do; show me now Thy faithfulness," we do right.

(To be continued.)

RHYMED PICTURES.

The dead man lay in stone-closed cave,
The living came to see the grave;
While dropping tears, and shuddering frame,
The burden of his soul proclaim.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the dead man? Who was the living?

Always in the gloomy night,
Moonless, starless, void of light;

Till the water and the clay
Washed the darkness all away;
Yet not clay, nor yet the spring,
But the fiat of the King.

QUESTIONS.

What was the darkness, and how was it removed?

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—R and S.

ROCK.

1. Stationed in its rifled side,
Worshipped one, with veiled eye,
As in light which love must hide.
Answer to its prayer went by.
2. On its summit fettered strength
Left itself in traitor hands ;
From its summit borne, at length
Hundreds rue the bootless bands.
3. Firm as flint, yet, wave-like, soft
For a nation's help it flowed :
Kept its place, and towered aloft,
Following still a nation's road.
4. On its face lay death ; but nigh
Living and Life-giving stood ;
Rose destroying blaze on high,
Rose, unharmed, in fire the Good.

5. Under white and scorching skies,
In the broad and weary sands
Wide and safe its ehelter lies,
Covert sweet for darched lands.

SIGN.

A sign for rise and fall and contradiction ;
A sign to show removal of affliction ;
A doubled sign to prove a prophet's mission ;
A sign of seven-fold wrath, behold in vision ;
A sign of severance in the air and under ;
A sign of plagues for a perpetual wonder ;
A sign which marked the victim and the traitor ;
A sign in trees to praise the Renovator ;
A sign to rule two valiant men's behaviour ;
A sign to seal the tiding of a Saviour.

WHY LITTLE ANNE WAS HAPPY.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher joined little Anne on the way to church, and taking her hand, she pressed it lovingly in her own.

"You are happy to-day, Anne, are you not?—the sky is so blue, and everything is so fine?"

"Yes," she added; "and it is Jesus' day—the day when He rose from the dead, and *lives* to be our friend, like as He was Peter and John's friend."

"Does that thought make you happy, Anne?"

"I think it does," answered the dear child, "for He is *my* friend. He loves me. I know it here," she said, putting

her hand to her heart. "I love Him. I see Him almost everywhere. Everything seems to shine for Him."

"How long have you felt so, Anne?"

"I hunted after Him a good, great while," she said. "I kept calling Him, and now He has come. I want to be good because I am so happy."

Yes, Anne, I am sure, was happy. There is nothing half so sweet and pleasant in all this beautiful world as having Jesus for your friend, your intimate friend—your companion every day, and all the time. He is so kind, so true, so helping; just what everybody wants.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

To Christ, the Lord, let every tongue
Its noblest tribute bring;
When He's the subject of the song,
Who can refuse to sing?

Survey the beauties of His face,
And on His glories dwell;
Think of the wonders of His grace,
And all His triumphs tell.

Majestic sweetness sits enthron'd
Upon His awful brow;
His head with radiant glories crown'd,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

He saw us plung'd in deep distress,
He flew to our relief;
For us He bore the shameful cross,
And carried all our grief.

His hand a thousand blessings pours
Upon our guilty heads;
His presence gilds our darkest hours,
And guards our sleeping beds.

To Him we owe our life and breath,
And all the joys we have:
He gives us victory over death,
And saves us from the grave.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Exodus xxiv., 9-18; Rev. i., 9-18.

PRAYER.

O FATHER, Thy Word tells us
that Thy glory shines in the
face of Jesus. Remembering
this, we would pray the prayer Thy
servant Moses once prayed to Thee.
O Lord, we beseech Thee, show us

Thy glory. We would see Jesus,
knowing that, seeing Him, we see
Thee. May we see something of His
grace and goodness to-day! We ask
it for His name's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day is a long one, but it is very bright. You find it in Luke ix., 28-31: "And it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. And behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."

IF I should ask you to tell me how many persons met on the mountain-top referred to in the text, you would readily reply that there were six; and speaking of those that were there at first, and so as to be visible, the answer would be correct. But, ere the scene of transfiguration closed, there was a seventh person there, not seen, indeed, but heard; while a bright cloud at once hid and showed His presence. That seventh was the blessed Father, whose voice was heard from the excellent glory, saying: "This is my beloved Son, hear Him."

Returning to the six, see how on the mountain they are arranged into two threes—three that talk, and three that listen; three that shine, and three that gaze; three that wake, and three that sleep; three, we might say, that are of heaven, and three that are of earth; for though Jesus went up the mountain with His disciples, He yet, even more than Moses and Elias, first came down. A distinct line separates the two groups of three—one is, so to say, outside the circle of glory, and only witnesses; the other is shrined in it, and is the object of wonder and awe. Yet the two companies are linked closely together. In what I am now to say I shall speak of them as joined, only I will take advantage of the number three in both

sections to shape my heads. I will describe the meeting here of various threes—sometimes finding the illustration in the disciples, always in the heavenly visitors and in Jesus. There met, then, on the mountain of transfiguration, five various groups of three.

1. **The Sinful, the Sinless, and the Sanctified.**

The first were Peter, and James, and John; the second was Jesus; the third we have in Moses and Elias—all the six coming under one class or another. How they touch on each other we shall soon see.

The three disciples were sinful men. This much we know from the very fact that they were men, "for there is no man who sinneth not." We know, too, from what is recorded of them in the Gospels, that they all erred, and came short. Even after this James and John betrayed ambition and a bad spirit of persecution, and Peter denied his Lord. Yet they were not bad men; they were children of God—they loved their Lord—they were in part sanctified and holy.

Mere men like themselves, and once sinful likewise, were Moses and Elias. But now, by being perfectly sanctified, they are without sin and appear in glory. I do not know how the apostles could know them; but surely it must have been

grand for them to see that the great departed fathers, who once toiled, and suffered, aye, and sinned on earth, were still alive, and had now neither pain nor sin. Beautiful end, this, to good men's fight! They conquer, they win, they triumph, they "appear in glory."

How this is accomplished we learn when we turn to the sinless one in this company. Here is Jesus, the Son of God, holy as God, holy as man, holy in His birth, holy in His life, doing no sin, nor having guile in His mouth; holy in deed, holy in word, holy in heart, too—all shining through and through with holiness. By Him Moses and Elias are in glory. By Him, Peter, and James, and John, shall become like these heavenly two. If you ask how He, the sinless, can take sin away, listen to the conversation. What are Moses, and Elias, and Jesus talking about? About Christ's death—His death at sinners' hands—yet His willing death, in which he bears His people's sins, and sanctifies and saves them. So, by the sinless bearing sin, the sinful become at length the unsinning for ever.

2. Law, Prophecy, and Gospel.

The law was given by Moses, and he is here to say that the law he gave had its meaning in Christ. For when it gave commandments it did so to make the people know their need of Jesus to take away their transgressions of it. It said: here is what you have broken, for the breaking of which you should die; seek a Mediator to help you. And when the law of Moses gave rites, sacrifices, and services, it gave them all to point to Jesus. And now Moses, or the law,

worshipping Jesus as he talks with Him, seems to say: this is the meaning and fulfilling of all that God showed me long ago, in Mount Sinai, in the wilderness.

Then Elijah was a prince and leader of prophets—a reforming prophet, who brought back the erring people to their God. Now, standing beside Jesus, he seems to say: "Here is the Lord, to wait for whom I strove to keep Israel faithful. Here is the still small voice that cries not, nor strives, which I was sent to call men to listen for, though I was bid to shake the land." This we know, for John the Baptist was another Elias; and he was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, to make His paths straight, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. As the fulness of time came nearer, other prophets spoke more plainly of His coming—indeed, preached the Gospel beforehand. But Elijah, the stern preacher and reformer, is here to say: "This is what I wrought for—to make men ready for Jesus."

In Jesus Himself is the Gospel. As far as it could be preached beforehand, He has preached it. What words of grace He has spoken all over Judea! Then He is making the Gospel. From this mountain-top there is a slope down to the cross—from this day Jesus sets out to walk down it. He descends to die; but then, the good news will be fully prepared, and these three sleepers then shall be apostles to publish it to the ends of the earth. So you see on this mountain-top there is a sort of little history of redemption. The law and the prophets foretold Jesus's coming;

now they show Him come, and now heralds wait to carry the news to the world's end. The law shone like the moon reflecting light while the sun was yet afar; the prophet, like the reddening clouds of morn, saying: He approaches; purpling the more, the nearer He comes. Christ Himself is the Sun of Righteousness, rising with healing in His wings.

3. King, Prophet, and Priest.

Jesus is indeed all these in one. But Moses, while prophet, was also king. He was ruler and law-giver in Israel. Elisha was prophet, and on Carmel, by special service, acted as a priest. But here, in Jesus, is the one true priest, while prophet, too, and king. Indeed, He is now on the mountain the approved prophet. The words: "Hear Him," send us back to Moses' prophecy about Him, as a prophet who was to rise like himself, of whom God said: "Him shall ye hear." He is now going forward to do His priestly work, and the king and prophet of the Old Testament are here to cheer him to his great service, speaking of "the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

4. Life, Death, and Immortality.

When we use these words in connection, we mean by life—life in this world; immortality is life hereafter; death lies between. But, you say, how are they met here? The answer is so far very easy. Peter, and James, and John are alive on the earth—so, indeed, is their Lord—and they have all yet to die. Moses and Elias belong to the immortals; they will neither of them die henceforth. But they

are not equally beyond death; Elijah is altogether, but we cannot say that of Moses. As Elijah never suffered death, and will not ever be subject to it, immortality such as the changed and raised saints will enjoy, belongs to him. But though Moses is in glory, he is also, in part, in the grave. For we must not, I think, suppose that God has raised him from the dead to bring him here. The reason is, that Jesus is said to be the first-fruits of them that sleep, and that could hardly be if one of His saints should be raised before Him. There were, indeed, dead persons raised, some by Jesus Himself; but they did not go to heaven, but stayed on earth, and went again into the grave. The very fact that Enoch and Elijah did not die seems to confirm this; for while some must be in heaven as first stalks of the harvest sheaves of immortality, they cannot anticipate their Lord by rising from the dead. They are sent as couriers—outriders of salvation by another road—to say that by the dark valley the conquering king will come. Translation does not take the road of resurrection—only witnesses to it. The escaped from death proclaim the conqueror of it, who will show his victory by rising. While, then, we see in Elijah an example of glorified humanity as it shall be—body and soul united—after the resurrection, we see in Moses the soul glorified, while yet it waits for the rising of the body. Now the state of division between soul and body has something still of death, darkness, and defect in it. It is an enemy of His people which Christ has promised to put an end to. "O death, I will be

thy plagues ! O grave, I will be thy destruction !” “So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Here, then, strange to think, there met those who had to pass through the dark valley—one, who in a sense, was in part still in it, one altogether beyond. But that it could be passed by any in safety—that any could ever have been carried beyond it—that Moses and Elijah could stand where they stood, and that Peter, and James, and John could hope to join them, as they have since done, is all owing to the passing through it of the Lord of glory ; the decease they talked of on the mountain, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

5. Here met Grace, Glory, and God-head.

Grace does not differ in its nature from glory, so far as it is inward. Grace, old people used to say, is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected. Grace is God's Spirit working in us here to make us like Jesus ; glory is when the work is finished, and we are like Him, seeing Him as He is.

Now, if you ask where was grace on the mountain-top, we point to the disciples. We have seen that they are not sinless, but the good work is begun in them ; they may be as little children, perhaps

even as babes in Christ, but they are born again. They love Jesus, and they are learning of Jesus. O, happy are the children of grace ; they shall not be left ; even when they fall, they shall be lifted up. Grace will grow and be crowned at last. “For the Lord God is a sun and shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory.”

Now grace, dear young friends, is free. You do not work it out for yourselves. It is given to us. It is just God's love taking effect on us. Will you not seek it ? It is stored in Christ—He is “full of grace and truth.” And here is your charter of right to go to Him : “Seeing that we have a great High Priest, who is passed through these heavens, let us come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.”

If you would see to what grace comes at last, see it in Elijah and Moses. They appear in glory. No doubt they were clothed in white ; and Moses' face would shine now even brighter than when he had to put a veil on it, because the people could not look on his skin that shone. And what was better, they were holy as the angels—fit to talk with their holy Lord, even when He was transfigured and too bright for His disciples' look. In like manner will all Christ's people shine at last—made holy and blameless, and their very bodies fashioned like His glorious body.

But from even sinless glory and splendour, such as that of these two visitants from heaven, we must rise to

that of Jesus. Moses and Elijah came glorious from heaven. Jesus is glorious on the earth. Their shining was put on them; He shone by His own light. His glory broke from within all through and over His clothes, till the dull coat became lustrous as snow, and His face like lightning. For in Jesus of Nazareth God dwelt, as says John. We beheld His glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. “All the Father in Him shone.” Godhead was there in another sense. The seventh, unseen, but heard in that scene, was God—God the Father—as the voice that spoke proved. No wonder that when the bright cloud which said God is here, came all over them, and Moses and Elijah went away up into it, the disciples feared; feared, perhaps, yet more when they heard the glorious voice Divine. Yet they had heard that voice before, and it would

come sweet to them. At their Lord's baptism once—now a second time they hear the Father say: “This is my beloved Son, hear Him.”

This brings me to the close, and it is this: Will you hear Him? Will you sit at His feet? Will you rest on His grace? Will you take Him, who is God's beloved to be yours? O how God must love those who love His beloved! O how guilty and unsafe must they be who despise, or neglect, or hate Him whom all the holy of heaven talk with, and God delights in for ever.

The Spirit of God was not by any manifest token, except the glory put on Moses and Elias, present at this scene, but He was there as really as when the dove of light showed Him and His love. What remains but that we say: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!

II. Our Talk.

LET us look back at the scene presented in the sermon today, and see what thoughts about it we can gather up.

How many persons met at first, and visibly, on the mount of transfiguration?

What seventh person showed his presence there afterwards?

What voice proved him to be there?

Name three characters that met on the mountain-top.

Show who belonged to each class.

What did Moses and Elias talk about with Jesus?

Name a second group of three things which met on the holy mount.

By whom was the law given?

What kind of prophet was Elijah?

Who in the New Testament is like him?

Which of the three who talked together on the mount brought the Gospel?

What title given to Jesus by Malachi was here referred to?

Name a group of three offices that met on the mount.

Which of the three persons had all the offices in himself?

What prophecy of Moses do the Father's words recall?

Name three more things—stages of life—that met on the holy mount?

Who represent the present life?

Who represent immortality?

How is death represented?
 What two persons were in heaven in their
 bodies before Christ?
 Did they go there by the road of death?
 Is death quite shown to be vanquished,—is
 it quite destroyed before the resurrection-day?
 What prophecy about its being conquered
 will then be brought to pass?
 Name the last three mentioned as meeting
 on the mount?

In what three persons did grace, and as yet
 no more, appear?
 In what two did grace grown to glory
 shine?
 In what two did Godhead shew itself?
 When, besides on the mountain, did the
 Father witness to Christ as His beloved Son?
 On that other occasion how was the presence
 of the Holy Spirit shown?

RHYMED PICTURES.

Up the stairs went he,
 Weeping full sore;
 To the earth bent he,
 Pierced to the core;
 Sobbing and sighing,
 Wailing and crying,
 For one that comes back no more.

One and ten
 Valiant men
 Round another stood;
 Spear and dart
 Through the heart
 Shed a traitor's blood.

Round about, round about,
 Round about still;
 Round about, round about,
 Round about, round about,
 Shout with a will.

TEMPTATION.—Continued from page 169.

TON resuming our Talk on *Temptation*, we will commence the subject this week by considering The Third Temptation of Christ. Satan took Him to the top of the mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms, and said: "*All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" That was a bold and very wicked thing to say. Tell me what else Satan spoke on that occasion. 'All these things are delivered into my hand.' Now there was a certain sense in which that was true,

because sin was in the world, and where sin was Satan had means to work with, and it is true that most men are serving him. But God didn't say that Satan was king of the world. He was a usurper all the while, and his speech was a lie. Though much was his, all had not been delivered into his hand. If Christ had listened to him, would he have given what he had to Christ, do you think? Would Satan have been very careful to keep his word? No. But I will tell you what I think he meant. He said to Christ: "You are

going to be king of the world, but it will be by suffering, by going to die. That is a very dark and dreadful road, Come with me, and I will show you a better way. Give up all idea of dying and come and say you will lead the Jewish people against the Romans." He then tried to tear Him away from the right path—from suffering, and then going to His glory. I read such a beautiful sermon the other day, I will tell you the idea. It says: "Take up the Bible and begin at the beginning, and you will find all through a great deal about the Lamb; and you will find that it begins very low and it comes to be very high. First of all it begins at creation. God made little lambs, the pretty, gentle, bleating, harmless little things. Then God said to Abraham: 'Take thy son and offer him in sacrifice;' and when he was going up Mount Moriah, he said to Isaac his son: 'The Lord will provide for Himself a lamb.' Then by-and-by, in the desert God said to the priests: 'Every morning you must offer a lamb, and every evening.' And so the lamb kept speaking, by its suffering, all through the wilderness. Then came Isaiah, and he began to speak plainly about the Lord Jesus Christ. He said: 'He was brought like a lamb to the slaughter.' Then came the New Testament, and John the Baptist, who said, as Jesus was walking across the road: 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,'—and then they killed Him. John, the Apostle, after that was one day looking away up into the heavens, and he saw up there through the blue sky into the bright heaven

above—there he saw the Lamb, the marks of having been killed upon it; and he saw all the people round about, and they were worshipping Him, saying: 'Worthy is the Lamb.' And he saw another time on the top of the hill, the Lamb standing, and one hundred and forty-four thousand happy people round about singing a song—a new song. And so, says the preacher, there is the Lamb in Christ crowned. Jesus coming to be the Lamb of suffering, rises to be the Lamb reigning. And the very Jesus that is the Lamb, is the Lion too, because He is the Lamb that suffered for us and now is crowned."

Just one glance at the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He was in an agony, and He prayed. How often did He pray? Three times. What did He say? "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Do you remember what He said to His disciples? "Why sleep ye? rise, watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." Now this has been often supposed to be an apology made by Christ for His disciples falling asleep. A good many people think it a kind word Christ said, like this: "Well, you were willing to watch, but your flesh was weak." But I do not think that. I think He was speaking about His own flesh. He said: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation; I have been into temptation just now, I know what a terrible thing it is." And I think Satan was saying to Jesus: "You will never be able to go to that dreadful cross, you had better turn back and give it up. What! are you going to die for those

people that are going to kill you? Go back to heaven and live there happy!" And so Jesus felt it—it is very terrible. Oh, that darkness! "Father, if it be possible, let it pass?" Do you remember what He added? "Not my will." He would not listen to Satan for a moment.

He said: "I do shrink from that terrible blackness; I feel it very much; but not my will, but my Father's be done." So Satan had to go away. My reason for supposing that Satan was there is, Christ said: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

HARRY'S SERMON.

ONE warm Sunday afternoon in June, the pastor was lying on the sofa at home, quite tired after the two sermons of the day. Harry was reading his new library book at the window, and Eddie, a curly-headed little fellow four years old, was running about asking a hundred questions, climbing into dangerous places, and keeping his father in continued uneasiness.

"Where's mother?" he asked Harry at last.

"In the nursery with baby," said Harry. The clergyman sighed—it would not do to send Eddie there. "Couldn't you sit still a little while, Eddie?" he asked. And Eddie tried, and found he couldn't.

How selfish I am! thought Harry. Poor father's head aches, and I might take care of Eddie.

"Eddie," he said, "let's go to church, and I'll be minister and preach you a sermon."

"Well," said Eddie, "I'll be the people."

So Harry led him away, and they went up stairs together. As Eddie climbed the second flight, clinging to

his brother's hand, he said, "Seems to me the minister and people are going up into the steeple." This flight of stairs led up to a fine attic, before whose windows stood an old-fashioned rush-bottomed arm-chair with short rockers.

"This is your pew," said Harry, lifting Eddie into it; "and now you must pay attention to my sermon." He set an old fire-screen in front of him by way of a pulpit, and thus began:

"My text is a very short and easy one, a part of papa's text this afternoon. 'Be Kind.' There are some little texts in the Bible on purpose for little children; and this is one of them. These are the heads of my sermon: Firstly—be kind to papa, and don't make a noise when he has a headache. I don't know that you know what a headache is, but I do. I had one once, and I didn't want any one to speak a word. Secondly—be kind to mamma, and don't make her tell you to do a thing more than once. It is very tiresome to say it is time for you to go to bed, half a dozen times over. Thirdly—be kind to baby."

"You have leaved out be kind to Harry," interrupted Eddie.

"Yes," said Harry, "I didn't mean to mention my own name in my sermon. I was saying—be kind to little Minnie, and let her have your red soldier to play with when she wants it. Fourthly—be kind to Jane, and don't kick and scream when she washes and dresses you."

Here Eddie looked a little ashamed, and said, "She pulled my hair with the comb."

"Besides, if a little boy creeps all over the bed under the bedclothes before he gets out of it, I should think his little yellow curls would have to be

pulled, before his head would look fit to be seen at the breakfast table. And now I have forgotten whether the next head was to be fifthly or sixthly."

"I don't know what fifthly is," said Eddie.

"Oh, that's because you don't know how to count. See here, I'll count them on your fingers for you. One, be kind to papa; two, be kind to mamma; three, be kind to baby; four, be kind to Jane; oh yes, that's it. Now the little finger is five. Fifthly—be kind to kitty. Do what will make her purr, and don't do what will make her cry."

OUR JESSIE.

A MINISTER relates the following interesting incident:—We had a special meeting for the Sunday-school children every Wednesday afternoon. Sometimes the room was crowded, and there was generally good attention. But one thing disheartened me. I could discover no distinct case of conversion.

Many of the children readily said that they would seek the Saviour, and among such was Jessie, but I knew none among them of whom I was confident that, through these afternoon instructions, they had found the Saviour.

When Jessie was eleven years of age, she was no longer able to meet with us. It was then that her friends learned with what eagerness she had heard the glad tidings of salvation.

"Oh," said she, "I understood all

that our pastor said, and I felt it in my heart."

"Her mother observed that she arose from her bed frequently at night, and she said: "Mother, you wonder why I get up."

"Yes."

"It is to pray; and I can almost see the Saviour, it is so bright and beautiful. And I pray sometimes that God will spare me, because He spared Hezekiah when he asked Him; but not unless it is His will. He knows best."

She was evidently leaning upon Christ, reminding me afresh of the solemn words, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PUPPET AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

LORD, that I may learn of Thee,
Give me true simplicity,
Wean my soul, and keep it low,
Willing Thee alone to know.
Let me shun and cast aside
All that feeds my swelling pride,
Not to man, but God submit,
Lay my reasonings at Thy feet :

Of my boasted wisdom spoil'd,
Docile, helpless, as a child,
Seeing only in Thy light,
Walking only in Thy might.
Then infuse Thy teaching grace,
God of truth and righteousness,
Knowledge, love Divine, impart,
Life eternal to my heart.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 2 Kings xx. 12-21 ; Acts xii. 18-25.

PRAYER.

GOD, Thou alone art high ;
Thou art over all. We, on the
earth, are very little before
Thee. But we are very happy in our
littleness when we know it, and trust in
Thee. Thou art kind to the lowly.
Thou dost not like the proud. O Lord,
keep us from being proud, and vain, and

foolish. Even if we had no faults, we
would be bound to remember that all
we had was Thine. O how much more
should we thank Thee for anything right
or nice that we have, seeing that we are
so full of faults. Lord, clothe us with
humility ! Teach us to learn of the meek
and lowly Jesus. Amen.

of man." You would say to them : You are each in the best place for you, and you all grow together to make a tree."

The opposite of envy is contentment. There are some people who always find something wanting. Now, it is true, there is no perfect lot ; but happy are they who dwell on what is pleasing. Contentment, indeed, may go into sloth ; or rather, sloth may call itself content when it is simply unwilling to rouse itself. Nor will it do to say that true contentment is inconsistent with a desire to rise into a better place. "Covet earnestly," says the Apostle, "the best gifts." But that spirit will show itself by discharging present duty.

It may be admitted that we do not all find our places just as nicely as God sets members in the body. We have choice ourselves, and we often mistake. Yet even our errors may be overruled by God to assign us what work is best for us. When we have asked God's leading, and obtain it ; then our confidence in Him should lead us to more than contentment. Angels, one has well said, would come, if bid by God, either to sweep a street in a city, or to rule an empire from it.

It will happen, even in a Church, that places we desire and think ourselves fit to fill are not assigned us. The cure for murmur is the thought that the body is one, and service anywhere promotes the well-being of all. And as Christ is Head, we may ask Him to make, what seems to us unfit, the occasion for showing His own grace and strength.

3. No idleness.

God has placed various members in the body. All are useful. If the Church be a body, all should make the body stronger. Even little children should be helpful. There are many ways in which you may be serviceable. You can cheer your parents. You can pray for the Church and its work. You can sometimes give or gather moneys to help. If you do this, do it in a right spirit. Think it is for the body and for the Great Head. And if you cannot do anything distinct or great, say, like a little girl I have read of, "what is my task, *to go on and shine.*" Shine in the family. Shine in the world at large.

But now, in order to shine or serve, you must first of all be in the body. You must have a share in its oneness and its life. If one of your fingers were cut off and buried, it could not help your hand. Nor could a companion's finger feel like being in your body. Now we are speaking about Christ's body, and, in order to help in that, you must be in it. How are we brought to be in Christ's body? By His Holy Spirit coming in to us. And how do we receive His spirit? By just trusting His word—by looking up to Him for His great gift—by praying to Him. So shall we live in Him ; and it will not be then our doing and helping as of ourselves, but His using us to do and help as our minds or brains use hand and foot in the body. Oh, to be under the guidance of our Great Lord and Head, and used, as He shall will, by His Spirit to do His work.

II. Our Talk.

LET us see, first of all, what you remember of to-day's sermon. What was the text?

What old story from Roman history was told in the outset?

Can you show how the same parable was used both by the Roman orator of the story, and by Paul, though in different ways?

What were the three lessons stated to be taught us by the oneness, as in a body, of all Christ's people?

1. When people are seen beating their breasts

and tearing their hair, what do you think of them?

What persons calling themselves priests were once seen cutting themselves with knives?

What poor man cut himself with stones?

If you heard the branches and leaves of a tree quarrelling, what might you suppose them to say?

2. What is envy?

What is an opposite grace?

3. Tell some things that children can do to help?

In order to our *helping* in the body, what is first of all necessary?

RHYMED PICTURES.

Three crosses on a little hill;
One in the midst had done no ill—
One on each hand, condemned for sin.
Both to upbraid the third begin;
But one, repenting, turned to pray,
And went to paradise that day.

QUESTIONS.

Who was in the middle? Who were the two mockers? How do we know that one went to paradise?

A little girl stretched on a bed,
The gathered minstrels mourned her dead;
Six persons entered in: one spoke—
And lo! the little girl awoke.

QUESTIONS.

What was the name of the little girl's father? Who were the six persons? Which of the six was the person that spoke?

BIBLE ACROSTIC.

RAINBOW.

1.
R ejoicing, yet trembling, he stands with seven others—

A round them the earth lies all dreary and bare;
I t's true they are saved; but, oh! what of their brothers?

N o voice of glad welcome, no greetings are there—

B elow the wild waves the dead sleep their last sleep.

O h, who shall restrain the fierce rage of the deep?

W ho now from like peril the living shall keep?

2.
R aise upwards thine eyes; see that archway all glorious,

A nd radiant in colours most fair to behold,
I t seems like the park of some monarch victorious,

N ow spanning the heavens in purple and gold
B ehold, in the clouds the bow has been set,

O f His mercy, the sign who loveth man yet—
W ho has not forgotten, and cannot forget.

3.
R emember the promise; this arch is the token,
A lthough the fierce waters may foam in the gale;

I give then a law which can never be broken,
N o more shall the noise of their fury prevail.
B elieve it, and take this its message of peace,
O nwards as years and life's burdens increase,
W hile earth shall remain My love shall not cease.

4.
R efrain, then, from doubtings; o'er mountains and valleys

A fresh gleam of light streameth down from the skies;

I n wilderness places, and dark, crowded alleys,
N ew hopes free the heart, and thanksgivings arise;

B right herald of mercy! dear Saviour, to Thee,

O f all my glad songs, the gladdest shall be,
W ho formed yonder rainbow, He thinks upon me.

B. J. HOLMES.

ANSWERS.

The answers to RHYMED PICTURES, 1 and 2 in No. 11, are to be found in Matt. v. and Psalm iv.

The following are the Answers to ALPHABET OF NOUNS, L and M. The Questions were given in No. 10.

LAMP.

1. The lamps in the pitchers of Gideon's army. Judges vii. 16.
2. The lamp of God's word. 2 Peter i. 19. (Psalm cxix. 105).
3. The lamp of Abraham's vision. Genesis xv. 17.
4. The star which fell on the waters. Rev. viii. 10.
5. Leviathan's breathings. Job. xli. 19.
6. The sanctuary lamps. Exodus xxx. 7.
7. The lamp of salvation. Isaiah lxii. 1.
8. The lamp ordained for Jesus. Ps. cxxxii. 17.

MOON.

1. Ruling the night. Genesis i. 16.
2. Turned into blood. Rev. vi. 12.
3. Under the church's feet. Rev. xii. 1.
4. Standing still in heaven. Joshua x. 13.
5. Looked up to by David. Ps. viii. 3.
6. New. Ps. lxxxi. 3.
7. Not withdrawing herself. Isaiah lx. 20.
8. Not giving light for brightness. Is. lx. 19.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—N and O.

NAME.

A name given to two, the most ancient in story ;
Two names on the brow, one of shame, one of glory ;
A name by the side, when the garment was gory.

A name that is better than perfume or gold ;
A volume of names, all for glory enrolled ;
A name that was proved when a treasure was sold.

This last name, when changed, and by multitudes worn ;

Three kings' names made known when the kings were unborn ;

A name that shall last while the sun brings the morn.

A beautiful name to be seen on a tree ;
A name which a bondsman from childhood set free ;
A name which is single, yet common to three.

OATH.

Two wicked oaths ; one grand ; three made to bind ;

Three more by God himself ;—please try to find.

1. An oath that named a famous spring ;
2. An oath that bound a servant true ;
3. An oath that snared a foolish king ;
4. An oath that bitter tear-drops drew ;
5. An angel's oath, announcing sentence ;
6. An oath Divine, without repentance.

7. An oath to make the sinner feel
God has no wish that he should perish ;
8. An oath that comes sure word to seal
For all who hope in Jesus cherish ;
9. An oath which showed two hearts were one,
And for the sire's sake blessed the son.

A LITTLE TRACT FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.

DO YOU LOVE MY JESUS?

IN a beautiful country house there lived a happy family, consisting of a father, mother, and only child, a little girl about twelve years of age. I say it was a happy family, and it was so, from the same cause that another family was happy that we read of in the Scriptures (Matthew xi. and v). "Now, Jesus, loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." They also were happy, because they felt that Jesus loved them, and that they loved Jesus. All three had given their hearts to the Saviour. It so happened, that a gentleman had come to spend a few days with them, and he was not a Christian. One day all the four were taking a walk, when, in the course of conversation, the father of the little girl made some remark about Christ as a Saviour. His visitor, in reply, endeavoured to cast ridicule upon what he had said. The little girl Lizzie (for that was her name), upon hearing him speak in that manner, burst into tears. He at once guessed the reason of her grief, and the conversation at once ceased. Nothing further was said on that subject during the remainder of the day, none of them being so happy during the evening as they had been in the morning. Next morning, before the visitor had come out of his bedroom, he heard a gentle tap at the door, and presently Lizzie looked in and said: "Do you love my Jesus?" This was all that she said, and then ran

off, without waiting for an answer. And although she saw the gentleman during the day there was nothing said on this subject. On the following morning she did the very same. On the third morning, the gentleman on the watch for her, and when she came he caught hold of her, and said: "My little dear, will you tell me how to love your Jesus?" She remained in the room with him for a short time, and told him, in a simple, child-like manner, the sweet old story of the Saviour's love; how that all the men, and women, and children in the world were guilty sinners in the sight of God, and under sentence of condemnation, that the wicked would be cast into hell; but that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16); and that God was able and willing to save him at once. On the following morning Lizzie's father went into his visitor's bedroom and told him that his little darling girl appeared to be very ill. On entering the room where Lizzie was lying in bed, the first words which the visitor heard were: "Do you love my Jesus now?" and he at once replied: "Yes, dear, I do love Jesus now." "Oh, then," she said, "I am so glad that you love my Jesus." The gentleman had, on the previous night, given his heart to Jesus, and this little Lizzie

had been the means in God's hands of leading a soul to the Saviour. Ere many days had passed away, Lizzie, who had taken scarlet fever, died, and went to be with Jesus, which is far better. The three who were left be-

hind were very sorry at her departure, but they shall meet again. I cannot do better than close by asking you : "Do you love my Jesus?"

W. F.

THE LOST BABY.

(FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES.)

BABY was lost ! Up and down, high and low, everywhere about the house and barn, and woodshed, in the garden and down the road by the bridge, the search was carried on with anxious hearts and eager steps. Every nook and corner where even a mouse could hide, was examined over and over again ; but no baby. The brook was low ; so low that baby might have toddled over it without hardly wetting her feet. There was no danger there, and yet for half a mile either side of the bridge the bed of the little stream was thoroughly scanned, so there could be no doubt left.

Not half an hour before baby had been playing in the yard, cooing and talking to herself, as she nursed her rag doll, and watched the pigeons on the roof of the barn. There were prints of her tiny shoes in the moist soil by the gate, the marks of dirty little fingers upon the white palings—and that was all.

The hot August sun was almost at its setting, and the shadows of the maples were fast lengthening. What if night should come and baby not be found ? What if she were wandering further and

further away, while they were seeking her ? What if she had been stolen, and was even then calling upon her mother to save her ?

"Baby !"

No answer ; and the mother's face grew whiter and her limbs weaker.

"I shall never see her again !" she cried, sinking down upon the steps of the porch. "Never, never, never ! And I scolded her this morning. Oh, my little lamb !"

"We shall find her yet," said old Mrs. Bailey, soothingly. She got tired and cuddled down to sleep somewhere. Or perhaps she's off with some of the neighbours' children."

Baby's mother shook her head. She knew that was only said to comfort her. All the children in the neighbourhood had been for the last hour engaged in the search. She could see them scouring the field beyond the house, looking behind the stone heaps and among the blackberry bushes that skirted the field.

Baby could not have been stolen. No suspicious looking character had been seen lurking about, and nobody could have got away with her without being seen. There had been no one

near the house all the morning, except old Deacon Pettingill, who left his waggon opposite the gate long enough to look at a yoke of fat steers in the barn-yard.

The sun went down at last, and one by one the neighbours slowly came in from the search, and gathered around the stricken mother in the yard. All had words of comfort, but they sounded false and hollow.

"I can't give her up so," she moaned. "She must be somewhere near. Help me look a little longer—just a little longer."

"I don't believe she's been outside the gate," said one. "We can't find any trace of her anywhere. It seems to me she would have dropped her doll or something, if she'd gone far."

"We've looked everywhere," said one of the boys. "We've poked open every bunch of bushes on both sides of the road, between here and Dunlap's pasture fence; and she couldn't have got any further than that. If she was in the mowing lot we should see her certainly, or in the back pasture, because there ain't any bushes or woods."

"Have you looked in the well?" said old Mrs. Tompkins. "Now it's just as likely as not she's fell in there. The curbin' ain't none too safe."

"She ain't there—we've looked," said one of the boys, quickly noting the spasm of pain that passed over the face of baby's mother at the words.

"There's a team coming!" suddenly shouted one of a little knot of boys outside the gate. "Now we can send down to the village, and raise 'em to help hunt."

"It's Deacon Penningill's horse," said another, who hastily climbed the fence for a better look-out, "and the deacon's driving, too. Something's the matter, he's putting on the licks."

"What's he got on his lap?" asked one woman peering the dusk. "Why, I believe it's baby."

There was a rush to the gate as the deacon stopped his horse with a loud "Whoa."

"Lost anything?" he inquired, as he stepped out over the wheel, with a little bundle in his arms.

"Baby! baby!" and the next moment the little cause of all the trouble and pain was tightly clasped in its mother's arms.

"You see," said the deacon, in answer to the multitudinous inquiries as to how, when, and where he had come across baby, "after I left here, early this afternoon, I thought I heard something under the wagon-seat; but I didn't pay any attention to it, and forgot all about it before I got home. I turned out the mare and run the waggon under the shed, for it began to look like rain. 'Long about five o'clock, Joel he went to take out a bag of rye meal that I brought for Piper's, and all at once, as he was lifting it on to his back, he dropped it and hollered right out: 'Come here, deacon,' says he, 'where on earth did this come from?' I was grindin' a scythe out at the east end of the shed, but I dropped it pretty quick and started. He was holding up the buffalo from the hind end of the wagon; and there, do you believe it, was that cunnin' little cretur' with her rag doll

cuddled up to her, lyin' on some meal bags fast asleep. She must have crawled into the wagon and laid down while I was lookin' at the steers, and the joltin' got her to sleep. I tell you I wasn't long hitchin' up again; and I never drove so but once before in my life, and that was when Hiram broke his leg fallin' off the barn."

So baby was found, and the whole

neighbourhood, as one great heart, brimmed over with joy; while the mother, close to whose breast the little tired head was clasped, poured out her soul in tearful gratitude to Him, who had, through that brief, but bitter lesson, taught her more of the Divine nature of love than she had before learned in all the days of her motherhood.—*British American Presbyterian.*

GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

A GENTLEMAN, walking along one of the streets of Philadelphia, was accosted by a boy who pleaded for a penny. The gentleman was at first inclined to send him away, but something in the boy's looks forbade that, so he asked: "What do you want to do with a penny?"

"Buy bread, sir," was promptly answered. "Have you had nothing to eat to-day?" "Nothing, sir." "Boy, are you telling me the truth?" asked the gentleman, looking him steadily in the face. "Indeed I am, sir." "Have you a father?" questioned the gentleman, now thoroughly interested in the boy. "No, sir; father is dead." "Where is your mother?" "She died last night. Come with me, and I will show you where my mother is."

Taking the hand of the boy, the gentleman followed his guide down a narrow alley, and stopped before a miserable place which the boy called

home. Pushing open a door, he pointed to his dead mother, and said: "There is my mother, sir." "Who was with your mother when she died," asked the gentleman, deeply moved. "Nobody but me, sir." "Did your mother say anything before she died?" "Yes, sir; she said, 'God will take care of you, my son.'"

Sooner than this dying mother had dared to hope, God had honoured her faith by sending to her son one whose heart was touched with tenderest pity for his condition. The gentleman was a Christian, to whom God had intrusted much of this world's goods, and the little orphan was kindly cared for by him.

God in His word is called the helper of the fatherless. He has said that none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate, and it is safe to trust in His promises.

H. H.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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Published at the "CHRISTIAN AGE" Office, 59, Old Bailey, London, E.C.

I. Our Service.

We are going to speak to-day about God's judgment of us. That is by Jesus Christ at last. Let us sing of His coming.

HYMN.

WHEN Jesus came to earth of old,
He came in weakness and in woe ;
He wore no form of angel mould,
But took our nature, poor and low.

But when He cometh back once more,
There shall be set the great white throne ;
And earth and heaven shall flee before
The face of Him that sits thereon.

O Son of God in glory crowned,
The Judge ordained of quick and dead !
O Son of man, so pitying found,
For all the tears Thy people shed !

Be with us in this darkened place,
This weary, restless, dangerous night ;
And teach, O teach us by Thy grace
To struggle onward into light !

And by the love that brought Thee here,
And by the cross, and by the grave,
Give perfect love for conscious fear,
And in the day of judgment save.

And lead us on while here we stray,
And make us love our heavenly home ;
Tell from our hearts we love to say,
" Even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come."

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Eccl. xii., 8-14 ; 2 Cor. v., 1-10.

PRAYER.

O LORD, Thou seest all things.
Thou searchest hearts. Teach
us to have chief regard to
what Thou thinkest of us now. Teach
us to remember that Jesus will judge

us hereafter, and to strive that we may
hear Him say to us : " Well done !"
All our sins forgiven for His name's
sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to day will be : "Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves to you?"—2 COR. xii. 19.

IT is a good rule not to talk much about ourselves. In any case, much talk is dangerous. The poet says : "Who talks much, must talk in vain." But, at least, to talk much about ourselves is likely to lead to trifling, or pride, or vanity. The rule is the better, that we are all much exposed to temptations to speak too often and too long about our own matters.

There are times, however, when it is right and needful to speak about ourselves and our own doings. If, for example, wrong and false things have been said about us, it is lawful, and may be our duty, to tell the truth and put away the lie. Yet, even then, wise men are not always in a hurry to defend themselves. They think who have assailed them—what harm would come from being silent—whether it would not be better to leave the matter in other hands, before they take the pains to excuse themselves. If the interests of the people, or of Christ's truth, however, are to suffer by being silent, they do not hesitate, nor are they held back by what would then be a false modesty.

If you look at them you will see that in this, and some previous chapters, Paul says a great deal about himself. But it was not that he was fond of telling his own deeds. He had more about himself, indeed, that was worth telling than most people. See what he had suffered. Observe what he had seen. But he never told his story for the purpose of awaking people's admira-

tion. He was truly humble, and left his deeds with Him by whose grace he had done them. Why, then, does he say so much about them here? Because some people had been calling in question his claim to be an Apostle. They were hurting his usefulness. They were drawing away members of the churches he had visited, and raising disturbances by speaking evil about him. For his Lord's sake, for the Church's sake, for his work's sake, for truth's sake, he will therefore tell what Jesus has done for him, and enabled him to do. Yet, to show he had been driven to it, he every now and then calls his talk about himself "speaking as a fool," and says: "Ye have compelled me." And, in this question, he will further let them understand, that, though he wished them to know the truth, and did not despise their good opinion, he was not too careful about it. There was another he was far more anxious to please. He says, elsewhere : "It is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment ; He that judgeth me is the Lord." So here, "We speak before God in Christ."

Now, I have thought that I might say something to-day that would be of good use to you if I could just try to press upon you to always mind chiefly what God thinks of you. I do not wish you to be careless about what pleases others, especially those that have a right to guide you—parents, teachers, pastor. But I want you to look higher—to God first and most.

I will name three reasons why you should mind God's judgment about you.

1. It comes nearest. If we speak of circles, that is closest to us.
2. It is highest. If we speak of arches, this is loftiest, up in heaven.
3. It is truest. If we speak of lines, this is the straightest.

First—Nearest.

They say that thunder cannot be heard more than ten or twelve miles away. The great roar of the sea, which deafens you when you stand on the shore, dies away, when you go inland, in soft music. So human judgment may touch you so little, that you can afford to think little about it. Suppose it was all against you, you could hide yourself away out of hearing of it, and forget it.

Even when in the midst of it, it cannot come so close to you as God's judgment. If it were a flattering opinion, it would do little more to warm you than a painted fire. If it were a severe opinion, it would not much more burn you. But God's judgment comes within; speaks in the soul; cannot be run away from; though you may manage to forget it for a time. Human judgments, in any case, cannot come closer to us than through ear and eye—God's are heard without ear, seen without vision.

Suppose a man had a musical instrument in his breast, playing sweet tunes; or, suppose he had a lamp that in darkest hour would shine on his road; or suppose, what is nearer to something we find in Scripture, that he had a well within him. Those who have God's smile have better. Those who have

His frown have fire and darkness, and though God's smile comes in various ways, it comes in the peace of one's conscience. It comes as the light and sweetness of texts. Some texts are like the eye, the look, the face of God. It comes in pleasant providences. Prosperity is not always God's smile. It may be the hiding of His displeasure. But we may learn to distinguish when mercies come to us like smiles—when they are connected with prayer; when they make us think of God; when they come in connection with lessons, and make us humbler, wiser, better.

You must have noticed, I think, how with Jesus His Father's approval was always dearest. He did not seek the applause of the crowd, yet no doubt it was pleasant to him to hear their Hosannas. He did not do anything wrong to please even His disciples, yet their confession and love were sweet. He knew what is the testimony of a guiltless soul, yet even that was illumined by His Father's love. So will it be with us.

If I could take you up in a balloon, over a scene I have known, I could show you the wide grand landscape, the little quiet valley, the home where I was born; but there would be something closer than that to my memory which could not be shown. So human opinion, judgment of friends, our own verdict, are all less close than God's.

See, then, dear children, that you get into the habit of asking, what will God think of it? The world may laugh—what will God say? The world may clap hands—what will God do? Mind

that his judgment goes with you, round you, and into you.

Second—Highest.

If people generally judge you severely, you might in many cases say that you did not need to mind. You would feel otherwise, however, if the opinion came in the shape of an officer to take you to prison. Or if the severe judgment were that of your parents, you would feel they had a right which made it specially ill to bear. That is what I mean here; God's judgment is that of one with whom we have to do.

It is this which makes conscience so much more a thing to be listened to than companions, or friends, or foes. It speaks in God's name. It passes sentence somehow. It holds a court and tries us, and has its chains to bind, and its rod scourges us. Even if conscience, however, should acquit us, God will Himself review its decision.

The highest judgment of God will prove stronger than all others. You have seen the shore sometimes when the tide was out. You may have seen little brooks and runlets made by digging in the sand, draining some pool higher up with its tiny current. But have you noticed when the tide flowed, how easily it turned all back? Who thinks of lamps when the sun has risen? So is God's judgment stronger than all others. But when I say strong, I mean more than the strength of power. It is the might of righteousness. It is God's proper due that we should be judged by Him. He made us. He keeps us. He surely has a right to tell

us what to do, and ask whether we have done it. We might say to others: "What need you know." But we cannot say so to God.

It is in keeping with this that God's judgment comes last. When men die, they get away from men's judgment. True, it is often then uttered and bound in a book. But that is of little moment. Light, and air, and praises of heaven will not be made less sweet by man's condemnation. The lost world will not be lightened by their praise. Go to the graveyard. "Can flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death." Did you ever know of a dead body hearing its own epitaph chiselled on the stone, or coming up to read it? But when men die, they go to God's judgment. And in the silent clear eternity its voice comes out unmistakable and final.

Three—Truest.

Two things are here meant. God's judgment is what he really thinks, and what he thinks is truth. It is, First, what he really thinks, and this is often different from men's. How hard it is to get exactly what others think of us. They flatter in love or fear. Or they exaggerate or lie in hate. Even to hear the honest thought of our own heart is hard. But God speaks what is seen to him. He will not call evil good, and good evil. He will not say: You love Jesus, when you do not. Will not say, you are the devil's, when you are his own. Will not say, well done, when it is ill-done. Perfect, when he has things against us. Then, secondly, this judgment, according to his mind, is according to truth. All

things seem as they are. This is what makes it all in all. If such a thing could be supposed as God's judgment being mistaken, even the great white throne would not be so awful. But there is no appeal from tribunal with no error. I have read of letters, the real words of which could not be seen in the sunshine. A burning fire, or some chemical preparation, brought out some secret lines. But there is no light which can reveal aught hid from God's sight, or flame that will declare anything beyond the fiery day of the Lord.

Now, dear children, what does God think of you to-day: Is he pleased with you, is he smiling on you? How can you know, you say? Let me give you some tests. When you are afraid to pray, there is something wrong. When you do not like to read the Bible, you may suspect. When you are reluctant to think of God, he has probably something against you. But if you find it a happy thing to go and talk with Him, He is smiling on you.

Will you resolve from this day to think about God's judgment of you? I do not bid you be careless about others' opinion. That is right in its place. It is desirable. It is not possible to care for God, and be careless of all

others. "In favour with God and man." But God is highest. Some one has supposed an eye following us wherever we go, and always looking on. There is such an eye. Will you look up to see how it loves or frowns. Look up, and see this promise shining from it. "I will guide thee with mine eye."

Perhaps you say it is too terrible to think about. God cannot approve of us. He knows innumerable evils about us. We know plenty ourselves, and He knows more. How can we abide the day of His coming? If I could not tell you how, why should I speak of these things? But Jesus can lead us to the Judge of all, without fear of condemnation. He covers with His righteousness our shortcoming and wrongs. He forgives us. Hear what He said to one who had greatly sinned: "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." Here is what He said of another: "Her sins which are many are forgiven." So flee to Jesus; He is to be Judge. And there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Can He condemn those that are in Himself? Can He condemn those whom His Father approves for His sake? Oh, to have our sentence "Accepted in the beloved!"

II. Our Talk.

LET us first of all speak to God in Prayer. "O God, we feel that it is not easy to pray right; it is easy to say words of prayer, but to make our hearts speak to Thee, Lord, it is hard for us; we must have

the help of Thy Spirit. Lord, teach us to pray. Thou askest us now what we wish to have from thee, and this, Lord, is our answer: We wish to have a happy talk-hour, and one that will do our hearts good, and make us love Jesus

better than before; and this we ask for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Here is another star-text—the 27th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, 20th verse: "*And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.*"

In what sort of tone should you say the last clause? In a solemn tone. Who speaks in this verse? It is Luke, the author of the book; the writer of the Acts of the Apostles. Was Paul there as well? Yes, he was. Where were they? Were they on Mount Lebanon, or where? They were on the sea. Do you know the name of the sea they were on? The Mediterranean sea. Do you remember the name of the particular part of that sea in which they were tossed? It was the Adriatic sea; there they were—Paul and his companions. What sea was it that Christ often sailed upon? The sea of Galilee. Was He ever in a ship there in the middle of a storm? Yes. How often do we read of His being out at sea in a storm? Twice. Where was He the first time? He was lying asleep in the boat. Where was He the second time? He was in the mountain praying, and then came walking on the sea. Did his feet go down into the water as He walked on the sea? No. Was it as hard to His feet as the pavement is to ours? Yes, it was. Who was it that tried to walk on the sea? Peter. He thought to himself what a fine thing it will be to be able to walk on the sea, and so he asked Jesus to let him come to Him, and Jesus said:

"Come;" and he got out of the boat and commenced walking on the water to go to Jesus, but when he looked down and saw the water very rough and tumbling he was afraid. What was it that failed him? His faith. Yes, his faith failed, and he began to sink. What did he do then? He cried out to Jesus Christ. What prayer did he offer? He said: "Lord save me, I perish!" And what did Jesus do to him when he cried out so? He stretched out his hand and caught him, and they both went into the ship.

But that was not the first they saw of Jesus walking on the water. What did they think He was at first? They thought He was a spirit and were afraid. Yes, they thought He was a spirit, and they cried out with fear, but He said unto them: "It is I, be not afraid." Then it was that Peter tried to walk on the water to Him. Now tell me, what in Peter's conduct was like himself in that respect? He was hasty. What did he say to Jesus? He said, bid me come to Thee on the water. Now Peter was proud of his faith there, and thought to himself, I should like to walk on the water and show Him my faith; so down he went into the water, and he said to himself, Ah! that is fine, I can walk on water. Then he began to look down, and saw the restless waves, and was afraid so they would not bear him, and let him down; then he cried out; he had brought himself into trouble and flurry. Do you think that Christ would be in a flurry? No, He was quite calm, and stretched out His hand. Peter laid hold of it and was saved, and they went into

the ship. What happened after they went into the ship? The storm stopped, and they were safe at land whither they were going.

"*When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared.*" Now a day is sometimes reckoned twelve, and sometimes twenty-four hours. Do you think that one of these days spoken of would be a day of twenty-four hours, or a day of twelve hours? It would be a day of twelve hours. Would it? Then would it be a very wonderful thing if neither the sun nor stars appeared? No. "Neither sun nor star?" This is the same as neither by day or night could they see any bright light in the heavens—the thick dark clouds kept them all out of sight. They looked up in the morning and could not see the sun; they looked again at midday, and again towards night; but, in consequence of the clouds obscuring the sky, it was not to be seen. At night, it was less strange, they could not see the stars. For how long? For many days. You could find out from the 27th chapter of Acts how long the storm lasted. For many days they saw neither the sun nor the stars. What would make it more difficult for sailors than for shepherds, or travellers by land? Do you think they would have a compass in the ship? No, they would not, for the compass was not invented at that time. They had to steer the ship by the stars. Suppose you were on board ship, and wanted to go north, do you think we could find out how to go north by the stars? Yes, we could find out where the pole star was, and then we should be able to tell which direction was south,

which east, which west; so that the stars were very useful to sailors; and when they were all blotted out they were very much at a loss where to go.

But was the storm such as to allow them to steer the ship? No, it was so violent as to make them say, the wind may drive us where it wills. See the expression that says that they just had to let the ship drive at the mercy of the winds and waves. You will find it in the 15th verse, "*We let her drive and could not bear up into the wind.*" Now there are four other words in the same way that I want you to find—for something to compare them with. They are to be found in the 17th verse, "*And so were driven.*" How were they driven? They were driven, so, that is, hither and thither—this way and that way. Turn to the 4th chapter of John and find an expression similar to that without the word *so*, but with another like it. There are five words. I want you to try and catch this idea and keep it in mind. There are five monosyllables, not further on than the sixth verse. Now, remember, I told you that you would not find the word *so* but a word of similar meaning. You are long in finding it. The verse begins with, "Now Jesus," the words we refer to are "sat thus on the well!" Who sat on the well? It was Jesus, He sat on Jacob's well, Near to what place was it? It was near to a place called Sychar. Was this place in Judea, or Samaria, or Galilee? It was in Samaria. Why did He sit thus on the well? Because He was wearied with His journey.

Now, tell me—you might do it after what I have been saying to you about

its having the same turn of expression with that which is used in the phrase "so were driven"—what is the meaning of *sat thus*? Does it mean that he was particular how he should sit, and where he should sit? No. He did not look with great care to see how he should seat himself; but, being very weary, he just threw himself down as it happened. Suppose a boy was to come in just now, and there was a chair at the door *there*, and before sitting down he was to take it up and look at it very carefully, and examine it all over, would that be the way Jesus *sat* down? But suppose the boy came in very tired, and, seeing the chair there, threw himself down upon it, would that be the way Jesus sat down? That is exactly the way. He sat down *thus* on the well, like a weary man. When a boy, I remember seeing another boy do that, and the other boy was a poor beggar-boy. His mother and he were going through the country begging, and it was quite evident that the boy was ill, and so he did exactly what that text describes. There ran through the house a passage paved with stone from one side to the other; there was a door here and a door there, and the stone passage between the doors. In the middle of the passage was a door that led away into the large kitchen, and the mother and the boy who were begging came into this passage, and the boy was so ill that he just threw himself down upon the stone floor. I think I see him yet, sitting on the stone. He sat *thus* on the floor—that was the mode of it. Well,

I happened to be in the kitchen, and saw him do this, and I came away out past him. Two days afterwards I got sick, and had to go to bed, and then I had to get the doctor, and then it turned out that I had got measles. Afterwards we heard that the poor boy that I saw sitting *thus* had got the measles, and he was just able to go a mile further on, and there he was lying ill in a farm-house. But he had left me measles. I must have breathed air, I suppose, tainted with his breath; and there were seven more of us took ill in turn. See how curiously God sends illness sometimes. But the reason for telling you this was, that in the boy's way of sitting down, there was the very idea as I think that we have in "*sat thus* on the well." So wearied was Jesus that He was not careful to look for a nice place to sit upon. He just sat down at the well's mouth as it came. And so we have the same idea in the case of the ship; it could not help itself, but had just to go as it was driven. Ships sometimes are not able to help themselves, even when not in a storm. What ship was it that was sunk the other day, although she had not been in any storm at all? It was the *Northfleet*. Danger may come at any time when we are not thinking of it. I did not think of getting any illness at the time I have spoken of, only I was sorry for the poor boy lying down so wearied; then there came the disease. So we need to be thinking of God's keeping us night and day, when we go out and come in.

(To be continued.)

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET QUESTIONS, N and O.

NAME.

1. Adam. Genesis v. 2.
2. Mystery. Rev. xvii. 5.—The Father's name.
Rev. xxii. 4.
3. The name of the Word of God. Rev. xix. 16.
4. A good name. Prov. xxii. 1; Eccles. vii. 1.
5. The book of life. Rev. xxi. 27.
6. Jacob. Gen. xxv. 33, and xxvii. 36.
7. Israel. Genesis xxxii. 28.
8. Josiah. 1 Kings xiii. 2.—Cyrus. Isa. xlv.
1. Jesus. Matt. i. 21.
9. Christ. Psalm lxxii. 17.
10. The Branch. Zech. vi. 12.
11. The name of Jesus. Acts iii. 6, 16.

12. The name of the Godhead. Matthew
xxviii. 19.

OATH.

1. Beer-sheba. Genesis xxvi. 33.
2. Eliezer's. Genesis xxiv. 9.
3. Herod's. Matt. xiv. 7.
4. Peter's. Matt. xxvi. 72-75.
5. Rev. x. 6.
6. Psalm cx. 4.
7. Ezekiel xxxiii. 11.
8. Hebrews vi. 17, 18.
9. The oath between David and Jonathan. 1
Sam. xx. 42; 2 Sam. xxi. 7.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—P and Q.

PILLAR.

Before my fancy's eyes
I see five temples rise;
With various pillars graced,
For strength or beauty placed;
As I describe them, say
Where in the BOOK are they.

1. Borne from the clay, two stood like twins
Mid works from quarry, mount and mine;
Where, yearly, for a nation's sins
One entered, seeking peace divine.
2. Crowding to see the maimed make sport
Thousands on brink of ruin stand,
For pillars twain, deemed strong support,
Fall broken by a stronger hand.
3. In temple founded by the Lord
Three pillars towered, by all confessed;
When rose a fourth which grace adored
More wondrous made than all the rest.

4. Numberless, fair, in temple grand,
Like trees in some vast forest grown,
I see blest living pillars stand,
And pray such place may be my own.
5. Immoveable through ages past
Beneath an arched roof of blue
Pillars have stood; yet moved at last
The old shall yield their place to new.

QUEEN.

In couplets rhymed these lines arrange,
Giving each half its own;
There's method in the medley strange:—
The texts may soon be known.

Queen enquiring	shone a star
Queen refusing	bad men shiver
Queen resenting	saved her race
Queen advising	scared a seer
Queen uprising	scorned all fear
Queen requesting	lost her place
Queen defying	reigns for ever
Queen upstanding	came from far.

"I HAVE DOT IT."

A CHRISTIAN mother had taught her little daughter to say this short prayer every night : "O Lord, give me a new heart, for Jesus Christ's sake." She repeated this prayer regularly for some time, until one night she jumped into bed without saying her prayer. On her mother asking the reason why she had done so, she replied : "Because I have dot it." She had got a new heart. Has the reader got one ?

CHILD'S MORNING HYMN.

Safely guarded by Thy presence,
By Thy tender love and power,
Holy Father ! Thou hast brought me,
To this peaceful, happy hour.

While the night shades gathered round me,
While "I laid me down and slept,"
'Twas Thy mercy that sustained me,
And my life in being kept.

Thoughts of all this care so tender,
Wakes a morning hymn of praise,
While a song of full thanksgiving,
Here and now to Thee I raise.

Strengthened thus in mind and body,
Help me to begin anew,
In the race of love and duty,
And the *right* each hour pursue.

So, when all life's changing seasons,
Fraught with "weal or woe," are past,
Kept and saved by love eternal,
Praise shall crown the work at last.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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Published at the "CHRISTIAN AGE" Office, 59, Old Bailey, London, E.C.

I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

Lo ! He comes, with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain ;
Thousand thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train :
Halleluah !
God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold Him
Robed in dreadful majesty ;
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

Now redemption, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear !
All His saints, by man rejected,
Now shall meet Him in the air :
Halleluah !
See the day of God appear !

Yea, amen, let all adore Thee,
High on Thine eternal throne !
Saviour, take the power and glory ;
Claim the kingdom for Thine own :
O come quickly !
Everlasting God, come down.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Psalm l. 1-6 ; Rev. i. 4-3.

PRAYER.

GOD, we bless Thee that Jesus was once seen on earth, and that even little children looked into His face. We thank Thee, that though now no longer on earth, He yet lives with Thee in heaven. We rejoice

that He pleads above for sinners on earth. May He pray for us, and give us His Spirit to teach us to desire and hope that we may see Him again, and be like Him, and with Him for ever. Amen.

SERMON.

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"—ACTS i. 11.

AN old Latin poet observes it as a mark of man's being of a higher nature than the brutes, that while these, going on all-fours, have eyes that look down to the earth in quest of their food on the ground, or at most, round about on a low level, human beings stand erect, with face toward heaven, and eyes to read the stars. The distinction must not be drawn too sharply, as if four-footed beasts never raised their eyes to the skies, or men never cast their look to the earth. But in a general way, it is the part of a man to gaze up into heaven. Even Nebuchadnezzar, looking round about on the great city he had built, and being so far no better than a beaver in his dam, or a rabbit in his burrow, or a bird in its nest, had eyes whose very pride made them cast their glance aloft; but when a beast's heart was given him, he sought his food amongst the grass, as the oxen did; and only at the end of the days, he lifted up, as he tells us, his eyes to heaven, and his understanding returned to him, and he blessed the Most High God.

The distinction becomes more marked when you think how men, guided by the reason God has given them, have aided their eyes to look into the heavens. The lower animals do, after all, look into the sky; fowls, drinking from the pond, have so looked up as to make some say they seem to do it in thanksgiving; and dogs have bayed the moon, and barked at the gleam of lightning from the

cloud; but they have made no telescope to search the depths of the sky. Man, from an early age, has not only gazed intently on the page above him, but modern discovery has so aided him that he has brought out from hidden recesses wonders unknown before, till what the bare eye can see comes to be thought of as the mere porch of the palace—the beautiful gate of the great temple of creation. In pursuit of studies which the telescope aids, what eager gazes have pried into the heavens, to be rewarded beyond expression if haply some new appearance meet the search, some new star far off in the out fields of space, or some new fire-tongue on the edge of the eclipsed sun.

The gazing of my text into the sky was not that of astronomers, but of simple men, that looked at once not so far as students of the heavenly bodies, and further far. They were no astronomers; yet once such sages were employed scanning the heavens because of one whose course had been through fields of air. A little more than thirty years before the time of the text, Chaldean Magi were nightly watching the heavens to see a new star—not for the star's sake, but the sign it gave them that Jesus had come down to earth; the disciples are watching now because He has gone away. A bright cloud of angels had come near to men because Jesus was born. Jesus was now risen, and ascending, and a bright cloud had taken Him from sight. In both cases,

the skies had never presented such wonderful appearances before. Put both together, and in the coming down of Jesus to be born and die, attended by angels, and in His going up again to live and reign, attended by angels—of whom two are the lingering questioners of the text—you have, almost literally the deep truth of Jacob's ladder; you have Christ's words fulfilled: "Henceforth ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

It was no wonder that the disciples stood for a space unable to take away their gaze from the spot where Jesus left their sight. We long look after a friend leaving us by coach, or rail, or steamer, or when we have accompanied him to some turn or height, we look thoughtfully in the direction he has gone to, often even after our friend is lost to sight. There have been cases, where accident having carried off some beloved one, survivors have not been satisfied till the eye has filled itself with sight of the spot. Even the empty couch, where some dear one breathed the last breath, will long hold the wet eye rivetted. No wonder, then, that when the parting had been so strange and glorious, the gaze of affectionate disciples should still try to identify the spot where the last sight was had of the departing cloud. They had seen a strange thing to-day. As Jesus talked with them, and His hands were held out in blessing, He had slowly risen through the air. He had planted his foot upon the yielding atmosphere as sure as on the troubled water, and

gone away as on a pathway of rock. Rising higher, a white cloud, stooping like a pavement, or opening like a palace, had received Him and hid Him; yet, for some time, its light ascending attracted their look, till it vanished like a little star in the lofty blue. Sorrow, gladness, wonder, all combined to hold them silent and looking up.

Yet, not unfittingly was their gaze interrupted, almost chidden, by the angels' question. I have said angels, for though called men, that is usual. Yet what if these were real men? It would show that not only heaven and earth were joined, but that the grave had been bridged over. Not unkindly did the angels ask, but so as to wake thought. The gaze of the disciples could not bring Jesus back again. But He would come back in due time. And, meanwhile, had He not given them work to do, which standing there would not speed on?

There were, to put the thoughts a little differently, and somewhat more fully, four reasons for giving up their gazing into heaven.

I. Jesus was not lost, but only gone to the Father.

II. In his Divine presence, and by His Spirit, He was to be with them on earth still.

III. By-and-by they were all to follow Him.

IV. In the end He was to come to earth again as He had gone away from it.

1. Not Lost.

You remember what the sons of the prophets insisted on doing after Elijah

was taken up to glory. They seemed to think that to go quite away in the body from earth was impossible. Elisha knew better. So might the disciples well know. Three of them had seen a bright cloud before take persons out of sight. But these had been for centuries before unseen, and yet had stepped down from the sky. Jesus, too, had told them that He was going where He had been before. He was going to the Father. They need not be surprised. Neither should they be sorry. Indeed, He said they would rejoice that He was going if they loved Him. Why, all His sorrows would be ended, and His glory begun. He was going to a brighter world. He was not even going away where men were not—good men that loved Him. The church in heaven was far larger than the church on earth. All the cloud of witnesses were there—Abel and John, Moses and Malachi, David and Isaiah. They were waiting for Him. He was going really to be far more found than lost.

Now the disciples were not to forget this, though they saw Him no more. Happily, we know what it is to believe that our friends are, though out of sight. A very little child, indeed, hardly will. You may have seen an infant, when mamma has left home for a time, refuse all your assurances about her coming back, accepting no evidence but that of the eye. But as we grow up we know better. A friend sails for India ; we do not doubt his still continuing to exist ; we follow in thought the ship's track, because we believe him

to be there, till the welcome letter comes as sign, and pledge, and proof that it is so. Faith rises with these convictions into the unseen world, believes on Divine testimony that human friends are ; as, on its own witnesses it realizes the truth also, that the Invisible God is. "Let not your heart be troubled," said Jesus ; "ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

We apply the principle to friends removed by death. We say : "not lost, but gone before ;" and we "comfort one another with these words."

2. In another sense He was not leaving them ; **He was still to be with them.**

He had said : "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."

Now, if the angel voices meant to bring this to their minds, there were two things in it fitted to induce them to go home. Their Master had left them work to do. Let them be glad of this. If they cannot bring Him back again, let them not unfit themselves for service by merely thinking of that. How often has the necessity for work been a comforter ! See that mother who has buried her darling boy, she must go about her tasks : it is sad, but not all sad ; work will help her. The disciples will meet joy best by going the

way Jesus bade them go. We know it was so as a fact. They had, indeed, a little while to wait; but that only to prepare them for their task, and give them assurance of His promise. That was the other thing. He was not to leave them. He was God as well as man. And the personal Spirit was to come. When He did come, how plain it grew that Jesus was not lost; that, indeed, in one grand sense, He was not away. Home, then, men of Galilee; do as He bade you, and believe He will be found doing as He has said.

They were soon, besides the coming of the Spirit according to His promise, to have other proofs that Christ had not as Divine left them. They had, for forty days back, seen Him strangely come and go, stand by them in a moment, and leave them quite as soon. They are not to expect Him now, for they saw Him rise; yet it will help them to feel that He is not far away, though out of sight. Then they are soon to work miracles in His name. When Peter and John healed the blind man, would He seem far away from them? Then a day was not distant when He would, as it were, show Himself through the windows of the sky, once to take a martyr up—once to change a persecutor into a preacher. After Paul's conversion, it was clear that His human presence was only behind a veil, and that His Divine, in all its gracious power, was still below.

III. **They were soon to follow**, not quite, indeed, as He had gone, yet in reality, even as He had.

They were to go by the same road of

death. In most cases they were to leave earth by the same violent death-path. James was to be killed soon by the sword. Peter, by-and-by, was to be crucified; tradition says, with his head downwards. Others, in various ways, were to be martyred. Paul was beheaded outside the gates of Rome by an executioner's axe. John lingered to preach the old man's sermon, and send it down the ages. Here it is, text, or sermon, or both. "Little children, love one another!"

They were to go, further, angel-borne—through the same paths of air. Their bodies, indeed, were not yet to go. But after what Stephen said: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," who doubts the road? After what Christ said: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom:" who doubts the accompanying guard? Do you remember Bunyan's account of the angels accompanying the pilgrims from the river to the gate of the celestial city? You may have seen it put into a picture. You have a copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress;" you might turn to the close of Part I. and read it. It is very fine. Do you remember, also, how when his servant was in fear, the prayer of Elisha brought out the fact that God's people have angel guards? And the apostle says: "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

They were to go, moreover, to the

same heaven, and to the same heavenly Father. So Jesus had said: "In my Father's house are many mansions, if *it were* not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."

But these words, while proving that the disciples would go to the same heaven, prove also that there would be one difference. They would find in heaven all their Lord found, and His own presence besides. For He promised to receive them to Himself. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain-top, and two glorified men talked with Him, Peter thought the scene so good, that he wished to stay always there, but heaven would be far more and better.

IV. **He was to come again to earth.**

When the apostles went by death to Jesus, their dust was to be left behind. But that was not to continue; He would not lose one of them. "Of all that the Father hath given me," He had said: "I will lose nothing, but will raise it up at the last day." Do not be afraid that He will forget, or lose knowledge of the spot. He counts your hairs. He knows the leaves, the shower-drops are all individualities to Him, as He paints on each of them a part of the rainbow. He came down before to be Himself born—He comes to give new birth out of the dark grave to all His people.

He will come with a real body Himself—the same, yet not the same. See

this partly proved in what happened between His resurrection and ascension. He showed them His hands, and feet, and side, His wounds, but no blood. He took food, but as one that needed it not, though He would prove Himself real by doing so. In His intercourse with His disciples He appears and vanishes, as no body like ours can. The body He comes with, however, is to be real—a body of glory visible even to the eyes of foes, as the passage from Revelation in our reading proves.

He will come, yet further, as He went, in this respect. A cloud took Him. He will return with clouds. The same passage proves this. He went suddenly also "while He blessed them." He will come "as a thief in the night."

He will come again, as He went, yet otherwise. He will come clothed with awful glory. He will come to the dismay of foes, and of all who would not believe that He could return. Still His coming will be for the joy of all His people—a thing to be looked for and waited for. Little children, I pray you try and learn to look on Christ's coming with desire. He will not be another Jesus in heart than He was in His lowliness, or is now. If He find you lowly, trustful, contrite, He will not spurn you; but, dying in Him, He will take you to Himself, and bring you with Him, to meet your bodies again, and raise with myriads this song of victory,—

"O death where is thy triumph now,
And where, O death, thy sting."

So let me conclude with giving you

two or three thoughts when you look up to the sky. The heavens are, every way, worth watching. In ordinary times—in extraordinary. I have seen whole streets, full of people gazing up by day, to see an eclipse. At night once, all the land watched to see a star shower. When aurora gleams, and lightning flashes, it is grand to see the heavens. But do not stop with outward views. For

1. Jesus went up through the heavens as the High Priest through the veil. If the stars could have been seen we might have been able to tell the very road — to say: "Just between those stars, just past that other behind." The angels know it, and may take us the very same road, and show us the very place where the hosts of heaven poured out to meet them, as they began to say:

"Ope your door, ye heavenly gates,
And let the King of glory in."

2. Jesus is behind these visible

heavens. He is not lost. He is busy. He is looking down—never so intently as when He hears these two prayers: "Lord remember me!" "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

3. Jesus comes again through these heavens.

Yet they will not so much be rent as rolled away. His hand will fold them up like a curtain, and lay them aside. Fire shall consume them. But there will be Jesus, and all that love Him will find Heaven in His smile. They will not miss the sun, nor the green earth. The city built in the new heavens and earth, will have no need of sun or moon, for the Son of God giveth it light. Paul puts all heaven in the words: "Ever with the Lord."

"For ever with the Lord,

Amen, so let it be;

Life from the dead is in that word,

'Tis immortality."

II. Our Talk.

Can you answer the following questions on the sermon now read?

What distinction between the form of man and beasts does an old poet notice?

What king was it that showed the distinction in his own person?

Some of the lower animals look up to the sky at times, but what has man done to gaze on the heavens, that beasts never do?

What was the occasion of the gazing into heaven mentioned in the text?

What astronomers once watched the sky to learn something of Jesus? What did they wish to know, and how did they hope to learn it from the heavens?

What was Jesus doing when He parted from His disciples to go to glory?

What kind of thoughts was the angels' question fitted to raise in the disciples' minds?

Give the first reason stated why the disciples should not continue gazing?

What did the sons of the prophets propose when Elijah was taken to heaven?

What circumstances would make the disciples know better than to think Christ's body could not go away altogether to heaven?

Give illustrations of our believing even on earth that people continue to live, though out of sight?

What was the second reason assigned why the disciples should give up gazing?

Quote the Saviour's promise to be with His disciples?

How could He be both with them, always, and up in glory?

Who, besides, as in Christ's room, was to be with the disciples?

Name two times when Christ looked through the sky?

Give the third reason assigned why the disciples should not stand looking?

Which of the disciples was first martyred ?
Which lived longest ?

From what words of Christ may we gather
that angels take good souls to glory ?

What difference is there between the heaven
Jesus went to, and that to which His disciples
would afterwards go ?

What was the last of the four reasons given

why the disciples should cease to stand and
gaze ?

Give a text which proves that Jesus will
come again visibly ; one to prove that He will
come suddenly.

What three things about Jesus and the
angels may we profitably think when we look
up to them ?

IN A STORM.—Continued from page 138.

WE will go back to our text again.

*"When neither sun nor stars in
many days appeared, and no
small tempest lay on us."* Give me a short

word for tempest ? Storm. What makes
a storm on the sea ? The wind ; a strong
wind blowing ; and the wind raises the
waves they toss the ships about,
sometimes wash over them, and some-
times break them to pieces. How can
the water be so strong as that do you
think ? Well, it is wonderful to think
of it ; but there will come, when a ship
is at sea, a great wave, and sweep over
her and break away her bulwarks, and
sometimes knock away her masts into
the sea. Little drops of water put into
a great big wave, and driven in a great
wind, come to be very strong. No small
tempest lay upon us,—that is, a storm
of wind rousing the waves. Can any
tell me this—you have all seen waves
on the sea—whether the waves go for-
ward, say as a horse goes ? No ; they
do not. There is just this part of
water, and then that rising up in suc-
cession, up it gets here and goes down
again, and the next part rises as this
sinks. So we have the water rising up
in successive ridges. The next time
you are in the country on a breezy day,
look you at a wheat field, and you will

see waves going just in that way ; but
you know the stalks cannot be going on,
for they are rooted in the ground ; it is
one stalk rising up and falling while
another rises, just as the water does in
a storm in the sea.

"No small tempest lay on us." What
happened then ? What was the state
of mind they were in ? All hope was
taken away. Now I wish we could
realize that. Supposing this house was
to take fire, and we did not know of it,
and it was burning all outside there,
and I were to open the door and see
that the passage was all red flame, we
should not be cut off from all hope—we
should not be quite driven from all
hope—because we should try to get out
of the windows. But supposing these
were so lofty that we could not drop
from them without the certainty of
being killed, and we were here without
any hope of escaping, would not that
be very terrible ? Well, that has
happened often and often. Within the
last few years, in a house in the west of
London, some children were sleeping
up in a high room, and the house took
fire. Nobody could reach them, and
they could not reach anybody, and they
just had to wait till the waves of fire
came and burnt them up. What would

remain to us ; what hope would remain to you and me in such a case as that ? We could pray. God would remain to us. He could deliver us if He pleased in any strange way He liked. There was a school about which I read sometime since, where a great many children were assembled, and the most of them were Roman Catholic children, perhaps all. When they were busy with their lessons, lightning came and struck the end of the school-house, and they were all in a state of terrible alarm. The teacher said let us go on our knees and pray, and that quieted the children. It was the right thing to do. Even one that did not think God would stop the lightning might say so, since it calmed the little ones, and made them feel patient and be orderly. Afterwards, they found that there was not much harm done, and they were all saved ; but if they had got into a panic of distress they might have killed each other. Prayer was very useful there, even in quieting the children. But it did more than that. It went up into God's ear. On board the *Northfleet* there were some people praying, but not all ; some, when the ship was going down, did nothing but swear and fight with each other. It is terrible to think of it. Perhaps, however, from amongst the drowning people there were some that went away up to God, to be with Him for ever and ever. Perhaps they loved God. Well, God took them home from all storms and tempests. He took them safely home ; and, though it was through deep water, they went into the "wealthy place."

But the people on board the ship where Paul was, did they perish ? No. Who is it that first could tell them they would all be saved ? Paul. Who told him ? God. By whom ? The angel of God. Well, then, what did they do to save themselves in the end ? They tried to run the ship into a little creek. They saw great rocks before them ; but they said : "We cannot let the ship go on these rocks, or she will go to pieces." Then they saw an opening and beach of sand. "Ah ! if we could just get the ship into that opening." Well they lifted the anchors up, hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and the ship was making very fair for the entrance to the shore, when they got into a place where two seas met, and the new current caught the ship and drove it upon the rocky shore with violence, where it was likely to go to pieces. The people contrived, however, to save themselves, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship ; and it so happened that they all got safe to land. What was the name of the Island ? It was Melita, or Malta. What kind of weather did they have after they landed there ? It was very wet. What happened to Paul when he was standing beside the fire ? A viper came out and seized upon his hand, and the people were frightened at it, and thought he must be a murderer. And then what did Paul do ? He shook it off into the fire, and the people thinking he was bitten, began to say : "Oh ! he is bitten, he will begin to swell and fall down dead." They looked at him again, and he did

not seem to be a bit the worse ; and then they changed their minds and said he was a god. What prophecy of Christ's does this literally fulfil? Turn to the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark and 18th verse : "They shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Now, if anybody were to ask you to give them an instance of this in the very letter, what instance might you give them? The instance of Paul. Did he strictly take the serpent up? No ; but the serpent was there, and it did not hurt him. Again, there is the instance of one of the two double signs in the story of Moses. First, when Moses had a rod in his hand, and God told him to cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and he fled from before it ; and when God told him to put forth his hand and take it by the tail it became a rod again. That was a double sign that he got from God to tell the children of Israel that Moses was sent to deliver them. Can you tell me what the other double sign was? When Moses put his hand into his bosom, and took it out leprous and white as snow ; and when God told him to put it into his bosom again it was turned again as his other flesh. In the 91st Psalm find a promise that might be said to be fulfilled in the case of Paul, not exactly. What Paul did, but the same kind of thing. 13th. verse. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, and the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet." What is a dragon? It means a big serpent. Well, in what book of Scripture do we read much

about the dragon, that is said to be the devil? In Revelation. He is there the image—a symbol of the devil. Where do we find the word serpent first used for the devil? In Genesis. Who was to bruise the serpent's head? God gave two predictions. Turn to the 3rd Genesis, and give me a promise in the shape of a threatening. The first promise that was ever spoken in the world about salvation was in the shape of a threatening. Verse 15th—"And it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Who is the "it" there? The seed of the woman. Who is the "thou." The serpent. What part of the seed of the woman was to be hurt? It was to be the heel. Would that be a very deadly hurt? No, but it would be hurt. Would the serpent be able to get at the heel? Yes, but the serpent's head was to be crushed with it. Christ Jesus was to crush the serpent's head when He died upon the cross. Did Christ show that He was stronger than the serpent before that? Yes ; during the temptation. He was tempted forty days—nearly six weeks. Two more days would have made six weeks. Did He eat anything all that time? No ; He ate nothing at all. Did the devil tempt Him for His hunger? Yes, he asked Him to turn the stones into bread. Would there have been anything wrong in that, do you think? Yes ; it would have been breaking away from and distrusting His Father. He said : "I will wait My Father's time ; He will provide for Me. I will not try to provide for Myself."

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

Say, what is life?—A fragile flower,
Blooming and fragrant for an hour ;
Then withered with the scorching heat,
Or prostrate at the mower's feet.

Say, what is life?—A shuttle sharp,
Twinkling across the parted warp ;
Still, as the woof-threads come and go,
Weaving a web for weal or woe.

Say, what is life?—A vapour light
Veiling the mountain's crest by night ;
Gone with a breath,—a morning beam
That dissipates the sleeper's dream.

Say, what is life?—A time to sow
Seeds, whence immortal harvests grow ;
Who sow to pleasure, reap in pain ;
Who sow to God, shall glory gain.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Job xiv. 1-15 ; 1 Pet. i. 17-25.

PRAYER.

GOD, Thou madest us. In Thee we live, and move, and have our being. We praise Thee for life. We praise Thee for the better life that is in Jesus. Help us to be able to say, with Paul, To me, to live is Christ. O may Jesus come into our lives, and make them sweet, and good,

and bright. O that the world were full of people living in Christ, and pleasing Thee, our Father. Help us, living so ourselves, to do something to bring about this happy end. To Thee, O living God, be all the praise, through Jesus. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day is very short, consisting of these words in James iv., 14.—“For what is your life?”

YOU know the difference between death and life well. I know, indeed, that to very young children, the dying of any person they had known is a great mystery—a thing that bewilders and puzzles them. How their little brother or sister should be put away into a coffin, and then into the ground, and yet be away up to God in the heaven, perplexes them, both as to the how and the why. But the very youngest can distinguish between living and dead things before them. However like the picture or the photograph may be, they know it is not quite the person it represents. At a show of wax figures, amid all their wonderment, they distinguish between the images and the people who walk about to examine them. A little white stone is not of the same kind to them as a daisy; and the iron bars of a railing are felt to be very different from the tree whose green twigs and leaves shoot out their life between. I need not go further. You know that life and death are very different, and know the living objects from those that never lived, and from those that having lived, have died.

Yet if the question of my text were—What is life? and were put to ask an answer as to what the principle, the real nature, the essence of life is, who could attempt reply? Some, by giving explanation of things that go along with it, or show it, might get near to the reality, at least nearer than some others;

but all the labours of the wisest cannot explain more than its conditions, and appearances, and functions. It is about these, however—not about the principle of life itself—that James questions in my text. And especially about that quality of human life which comes out in his feebleness and brevity. This is what all can easily understand; what thousands of occurrences illustrate.

The apostle answers his question as well as asks it. And we will look at his answer. But some other views of life, either bound up with this, or enhanced by it, I should like to take into our thoughts to-day. I will give them in a form that will make it easy to remember them. What is life? It is :

1. A Gift.
2. A Glimpse.
3. A Grain.
4. A Glory.

1. A Gift.

You did not make yourselves, neither did your life spring up of its own accord. As darkness did not yield light out of its bosom till the Spirit moved through it, and God spoke to it, so life could not of itself come from death. Do you know that great men of knowledge have tried with long labour to find out—and some have striven to prove—that life could begin of its own accord? but now, by confession of the best informed, it appears to have been in vain. Plain people could not suppose any other issue. Life, in-

deed, by God's appointment, comes out of life, but not out of death. Yet if it could be shown that in some cases life began where no life was before it, I should not say that we had got something to explain how life might be without God. I should only say we had been allowed to come near the hidden chambers of God's working.

Your life, dear children, was then given you by God. You recollect the first question in the simple catechism is: Who made you? The beginning is right. The question leads you back to your first being, and to God. He made you, and not ye yourselves. How fine these lines are which we sometimes sing.

"His sovereign power, without our aid,
Formed us of clay, and made us men."

That, however, was as to man's body; only there was the in-sending of the breath of God, making men. From the way in which the narrative is given in Genesis, we may allow ourselves to conceive that when God had built up out of the dust a human form, it lay as a thing dead till God breathed into it, and then it moved, and rose, and beat, and breathed, and looked, and walked, and thought too—a man. In Ezekiel, when the dry bones came together, and flesh and skin grew upon them, the forms still lay along, there was no breath in them, till at the prophet's prayer God's spirit came; then they stood up, an exceeding great army.

If your life, then, was given you at first, do you hold it now in your keeping? There is a sense in which you do keep your lives. You can do

careless or bad things that will cut life short; you can do by duty and care what tends to prolong it. Yet not in your own hand, but in God's hand, your breath is. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. We cannot boast of it, for it is not our own to have at will. God kills, and God makes alive. Acknowledge, then, your dependence. Ask life from God. Seek His protection. Commit your way to Him.

One other thing I name now, to return to it under another head. If life be a gift from God, it is a good thing. All His gifts are good. So is this. Ah! how good, our very instincts tell. How good, death itself proves, which comes on man as the wages of sin. Good it must be, though we may turn it to bad account. It is a little beam from the Father of Lights—a spark from the Living Fire.

2. A Glimpse.

This refers to the shortness of life—very short in multitudes of cases—short in all. A glimpse is a passing view—a transient shining—a light for a moment. And that is just life. "For," says James' own answer to his own question, "It is even as a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away." A glance of the eye it is; a gleam of the lightning—bright but brief.

The Scripture abounds in forcible images about life's shortness. I cannot do better than take notice of some of them, "Man cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down." In tropical climates the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat than the grass withereth, and the flower falleth. Or the mower

comes : and the flower is in the oven. Out in the western prairies of America, there was a climbing tree at the window where two visitors slept, and they noticed it covered, morning after morning, with delicate flowers. But they were different every day ; hence their name of morning glories. Have you ever watched the ships crossing your vision, as you lay on the beach—(I have been looking at them while I am writing this) how they silently glided away—appearing, advancing, departing, disappearing. That was life. As I speak thus, as if with you, this room appears to broaden to an ocean, and you are ships, in silent onward motion all. Ah ! what freight are we bearing ? To what port are we steering ? As ships cross, so lives intermingle that yet are going in opposite directions. Or see how things fly in air ? “As the eagle hasteth to his prey” is a figure in Scripture. I never saw that, but I have seen the hawk, and it was fiercely swift. Like an arrow, like a bullet, like a shining meteor, shot the keen bird. Were you ever in a weaving factory ? We can hardly now say weaver’s shop, though I can remember, when a boy, standing beside the loom, and wondering to see the shuttle fly from left to right. “My days are swifter says Job : “than a weaver’s shuttle.” So, there is another image. Or, once more, on a summer’s day, when light winds are blowing, watch the shadows chasing the light over the meadows or the cornfield. That, too, is life. Or look up at the clouds, sailing quickly, changing their shape, springing up, disappearing. All those are figures

taken from Scripture. If you would like to remember them, you might easily keep them, so to speak, *in hand*, by putting five words on five fingers thus :

1. Shoot (plant, thing that grows)
2. Ship.
3. Shaft (arrow).
4. Shuttle
5. Shadow.

In addition, you may think, finally, of the breeze that is carrying the clouds that makes the shadows as it passes ; that is life. For we read that “he remembered they were but flesh—a wind that passeth away and returneth not.”

You children will, perhaps, say two things to me. You think even a little bit of life long ; and if to older people it be but a span, yet surely it cannot be so to you. Yes, it may be more so to you than the oldest present. Then if you think some little time long, you will yet not count it so at last. Look at the date of this year—1873. All through these centuries people have been passing away. Surely life is as a vapour.

What is the lesson ? Use time well while it is with you. Fight hard with all that would rob you of it ; most of all with sloth—lazy, time-devouring giant. A miser as to time is a noble being. Wasted money does yet some good to somebody ; squandered time none. But this brings me to

3. A Grain.

You know that, compared with what they grow to, seeds are small. Some of them are very tiny. You remember what is said in the New Testament about a grain of mustard-seed, and the

tree it springs to. You could take an acorn—a small nut—in your hand, and say: “I am holding an oak between my fingers.” See the farmer casting handfuls of wheat into the ploughed field; these little hard pellets will spring up to plants that, like a mimic forest, will wave over the field. There is hidden life in the seed—the prophecy of a future harvest.

Now our life, though it be short, is like a seed—a little thing with a great future in it. And just as you must look to the keeping of seed-grain, that it may be fit for sowing and yielding harvest, so you must to life. Seeds, carefully kept, will hold their life very long. There have been wheat grains brought from Egypt, ripened by its sun thousands of years ago, enclosed with dead corpses in mummy cases, that being planted in the earth grew up. But ill-kept seeds will not. So life, well kept, will last to immortality—will not go out when the body is buried, but go away into immortality. But it may go, if ill-kept, into rottenness, and death, and darkness. “He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Now the sad thing is, that in the seed of life there is taint already. You have only to let it work, and it will destroy the life of the seed. There is enough evil in your hearts to make life the beginning of destruction. Blessed be God, however, Christ can put new life into it and take out the taint. Just as when the earth was dark He came down and made light by His word, so

He takes the heart, and says: “Let there be light; and let there be fruits of righteousness—let there be the image of God.” This is what you must do with your life. You must let Him graft you into Himself. Then to what a tree of blossom, and beauty, and fruit, never to be barren or blighted any more, will you grow! That was what I meant when I said

Lastly—A Glory.

That is what God meant life to be—what He will make it yet anew in Jesus. And what, now, may any, may all of you be? What may your life grow to? You may have a shining life on earth; a life for which both others and yourselves shall thank God. Look at Paul's. Look at Daniel's. How grand to live a life like theirs! But humbler lives shine as well. I heard a little dew-drop complaining to a star that it could not sparkle like one of the beautiful orbs of night. But the sun rose, and in the morning the sparkle of the dew was pure and beautiful as the light of stars. So any life in Christ will be glorious with His light. Yet chiefly is the glory hereafter. See what you may grow to. “What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun

light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

What a gift now is life, if it can grow to that? What matter though its earthly form be short, if it grow to that? The glimpse passes into the glow of immortality. This is the harvest of the seed you sowed. Rise, little friends, cry for God's Spirit that you may live from the first true lives; that you may love Christ, and go to be with Him; that when you see Him you may be like Him—seeing Him as He is.

One word to those who are getting

on in life—perhaps far on in life. Brethren, what has your life been? I know you will say swift enough, short enough; aye, but what has it sown? What kind of sheaves have your later years reaped from the seed of the earlier; what are you sowing now? If brief time remains, be covetous of using it well. Even at the eleventh hour, a life that has been but a prolonged dying, may be quickened into glory. Even at the last moment "the feeble spark to flames He'll raise." A bruised reed He will not break; smoking flax He will not quench, nor let death quench it, but bring forth judgment to victory.

II. Our Talk.

What was the short text of to-day's sermon?

Name two things—one living, one dead—that you easily distinguish?

What is the difference between a person and his picture?

What answer does James give to his own question?

Repeat the four heads.

What letter do all the four words begin with?

Can life begin of its own accord?

Who made you?

Repeat two lines that tell who made us and of what we were made.

Do these apply to the soul?

How did God give Adam his soul?

How did the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision live?

Who keeps us in life? Can you prove what you answer?

Since life is from God, what kind of gift must it be, good or evil?

What five words give five Scripture figures, all illustrating the shortness of life?

What double letter do they all begin with?

Can you find passages in Scripture where the figures are used?

What lesson, as to the use of life, should we draw from its shortness?

How could you hold a whole oak tree between your fingers?

If a seed be not kept well, what will become of it?

If well kept and sown, what will seeds do?

Have seeds ever been kept for a thousand years?

Is the seed of your life all good as it is, or has it a taint?

What taints it?

Who can take the taint out of it?

What may your life become hereafter?

What little parable was used to show that lowly lives may shine?

What question was put in the close of the sermon to older people?

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET QUESTIONS, P and Q.

PILLAR.

1. Jachin and Boaz. 1 Kings xv. 21; 2 Chron. iv. 12—17.
2. Two in Dagon's temple. Judges xvi. 23—30.
3. James, Cephas, and John, with Paul. Gal. ii. 9.
4. Pillars in the temple of God. Rev. iii. 12.
5. Of heaven. Job xxvi. 11.

QUEEN.

1. Queen enquiring came from far—Of Sheba. 1 Kings x. 1.

2. Queen uprising shone a star—Esther. Esther ii. 7.
3. Queen refusing lost her place—Vashti. Esther i. 12, 21.
4. Queen requesting saved her race—Esther. Esther vii. 3. 4.
5. Queen resenting scared a seer—Jezebel. 1 Kings xix. 1—3.
6. Queen defying scorned all fear—Babylon. Rev. xviii. 7.
7. Queen advising, bad men shiver—Queen-mother. Dan. v. 10.
8. Queen upstanding reigns for ever—The church. Psalm xlv. 9.

A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE FIRE.

A CITY MISSION STORY.

ONE afternoon, on a sultry day in the summer of 1864, wearied with domiciliary visitation, the atmosphere of the thickly-populated houses at H———being so oppressive, I turned into a quiet little street, and opening my Bible, read aloud the story of the cleansing of "Naaman the leper" (2 Kings v.). Attracted by such an unusual proceeding, several persons gathered around me, and others stood at the doors or at uplifted windows, and listened to the wonderful ancient story. I next told of sin, of its leprous character, of the blood of cleansing, and in conclusion urged each hearer to—

"Prove the value of the blood
Of Jesus crucified."

I was about to leave the street when a woman of prepossessing appearance, and neatly dressed, came out of a house opposite to where I had been standing, and approached me, saying respectfully :

"Pardon me, sir, but will you come and speak to my brother?"

"Gladly, madam," I replied, and followed my conductress into the house.

"None of your preaching here—a lot of canting hypocrites! None of it here; that's what I say." Such were the words which greeted my ears as I followed my conductress into the room from which the sounds proceeded. There, on a mangle sat a man about forty years of age, clad in a butcher's blouse. There also were his wife and three children, one a little cripple girl about six years old. My entrance put a stop to the loud talk of the man, and sitting down on the mangle beside him, I took from my pocket some books, and gave one with pictures to the little cripple. Then selecting a "British Workman" I read from that paper one of those interesting stories so well suited to benefit working men.

"How pretty," said the little cripple.

"It's beautiful," exclaimed the wife.

"Not much the matter with that," added the man.

Folding up the paper, I replied, "You are welcome to this, my friend," offering it to him, "and I will soon come and read to you again."

For many weeks I regularly called, and each time read other interesting stories. The man was very civil, and the little cripple was delighted to see me. Very soon the wife was induced to attend the Mission Services, and after a year had passed away, in answer to earnest and persevering prayer, one night the husband came to the meeting, and heard the tale of redeeming love. The man was a porter in Newgate Market. "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known" (Rom. iii. 14-17), very truly described his condition.

About this time the wife perceived that he was making great efforts and forming strong resolutions to leave off these wicked habits, and to free himself from his dissolute associates.

In 1865 their eldest daughter (a fine young woman, aged nineteen years) came home from service very ill; she rapidly grew worse, lingered a few weeks, and died.

I was present at her death. The mother supported the dying girl in her arms, the brothers and sisters stood around weeping, the father placed himself at the foot of the bed, and tears streamed down his face as he looked on the heaving chest and heard the quick heavy breathing of his departing child.

Addressing her brother and sisters, the dying girl said: "Be good children to father and mother, and think of Jesus, and love Him, and you will meet me in heaven." Turning to her mother, she continued: "Mother dear, you do love Jesus, and Jesus loves us all, and you will meet me in heaven."

"Then, my child, you are not afraid to die?" asked her mother.

"No, mother, why should I be afraid?" answered the girl. "Jesus has suffered for our sins, and God has said, He will spare all who trust in the blood of Christ, the same as He did the people in Egypt. I am going to heaven, and you will meet me there."

And the mother kissed her child, and the child kissed her mother.

For a few moments nothing was heard but the laboured breathing of the girl, the smothered sobs of the children, and occasionally a half-suppressed groan wrung from the almost broken-hearted father.

"Father?"

"Yes, my child."

"Come to me, let me kiss you."

And they kissed each other.

"Father, will you meet me in heaven?"

He weeps, but answers not.

Again, in voice calm and firm, comes the enquiry, "Father, dear, will you meet me in heaven?"

And the Father falls on his knee and buries his face in the bed-clothes, and bitter sobs and groans convulse his frame.

Again, with increased emphasis, the daughter asks: "Father, will you meet me in heaven?"

"Oh! my child," replies the man,

"God helping me, I will meet you in heaven."

"Then, father, you must give up the drink;" and having said those words, her head dropped back on the mother's arm, and her spirit entered into Paradise.

A few months after the death of his daughter, a circumstance occurred which showed that the Holy Ghost was working mightily in the heart of the man. I missed him from his usual place at the meeting on the Lord's Day evening; on the following Tuesday he was again absent from the Bible class. The next day I called at his house to enquire after him, fearing he was ill. With downcast looks and stammering tongue, he said: "Mr. F——, I am a bad man." I shall never forget his look of horror and penitence as he continued, "On Saturday last I cursed my children; I am a wretch to do such a thing;" and as the tears started in his eyes, again he said: "I cursed my children, I did."

He had returned from the market the worse for drink; then went into the little back yard and laid down on a bench and fell asleep. The children were sent to awake him. When sleepy, muddled, and annoyed at being aroused, the old man showed itself in oaths and curses; but the Holy Spirit was there also, and His convicting power was felt. Horror-stricken at what he had done, the man felt himself to be "vile," and in bitterness of soul cried: "Woe is me! for I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah vi., 5).

Thus brought to feel his state, to see

his condition as guilty and perishing, the infinite and boundless love of God in saving the lost by Jesus Christ met his desperate case, and when by faith he saw the Lord of glory take his place and suffer in his stead, with trembling voice he sang:—

"Oh! 'tis a wondrous sight,
All sights above:
Jesus the curse sustains,
Guilt's bitter cup he drains;
Nothing for us remains,
Nothing but love."

Thus brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, he realized peace and joy in believing.

One evening an elder of a Presbyterian Church visited him to converse with him, and to see the change which grace had wrought. With faltering lips the butcher told of the mercy that had reached him, adding: "I am like one of them things took out of the fire," referring to that Scripture: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zec. iii. 2.)

Henceforth was in him exemplified that which was written by the Apostle: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii., 11—14).

He left off swearing and discontinued his drams. A gentleness of manner

and a kindliness of speech were put on ; love filled his breast, and peace and concord dwelt at home. His wife and family felt the change, and praised the name of the Lord. He became a "living epistle read of all men;" he was a wonder unto many. With him "old things had passed away." Till now he had been unable to read, but he set himself to the task. The cripple girl by this time had learned to read, and she became his instructress. A very touching and pleasing sight was it to see the big strong man, with the little cripple on his knee, learning of her the A B C. "A little child shall lead them" (Isaiah ii., 6.)

About this time he received from his sister, a worthy pious woman, who for years had not ceased to pray for his conversion, a large-print book containing a selection of "The Sayings of Jesus." I well remember on one occasion with what pride and joy he spelled out very slowly to me: "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John v., 24.)

In the spring of 1867, disease of the heart and lungs showed itself, and very soon it became evident to us all that his days on earth were numbered. For nearly a year longer he continued to go to the market at three o'clock in the morning, and did a little work ; but refusing to go to the same excess of riot as formerly, his old companions spake all manner of evil against him, and the

clerks at the "Firm" joined in tormenting him. On one occasion they hid his clothes, got him down, tied his hands and feet, put him into a sack, locked him up in a cellar, and then wrote to his wife, saying: "Your husband, Jack, is locked up. Tell the Parson to come and bail him out." The poor wife came to me in a state of excitement bringing the letter. I immediately started for the city, but I had not proceeded very far before I met poor Jack coming quietly along. On my telling him what we had heard he smiled, and said:—"It was hard to bear, but I thought how much the blessed Jesus had to bear, and I asked Him to help me and to forgive them."

His health now rapidly failed, and he was unable to work. One day, about a week before he died, he went into the city carrying with him the book "The Sayings of Jesus." Arrived at the market he called his mates around him, and several of the clerks, attracted by the proceeding, also drew near. "Gentm'n and Mates," he said; "You know what Jack was, but the blessed Saviour has saved me; the blessed Jesus died on the cross for me, and He has pardoned my sins." Then he read to them "The Sayings of Jesus."

A few days later, after having been at our Bible Class, he went home, and calling his wife, and children, and friends around him, he blessed them in the name of the Lord, and told them he was going to see the blessed Jesus and Susy. Then growing weaker he whispered:—"Jesus, precious Jesus,"—and fell asleep.

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

COME, Holy Spirit, come,
Let Thy bright beams arise,
Dispel the darkness from our minds,
And open all our eyes.

Cheer our desponding hearts,
Thou heavenly Paraclete;
Give us to lie with humble hope
At our Redeemer's feet.

Revive our drooping faith,
Our doubts and fears remove,
And kindle in our breasts the flame
Of never-dying love.

Convince us of our sin,
Then lead to Jesus' blood,
And to our wondering view reveal
The secret love of God.

'Tis Thine to cleanse the heart,
To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life on every part,
And new-create the whole.

Dwell, therefore, in our hearts;
Our minds from bondage free;
Then shall we know and praise and love
The Father, Son, and Thee.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 2 Kings xiii., 14-21; John iv., 19-29.

PRAYER.

THOU, O Father, hast promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee. Jesus, Thy Son, has told us this. We, therefore, ask Thee to give us the Holy Spirit to teach us, to warm our hearts

with love, to guide us, to lead us in the way of life. May He come to us as fire, as breathing wind, as dew, as living water! O Lord, give us life, eternal life, in Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen.

SERMON.

Here is our text to-day: "And He said unto me, son of man, can these bones live?"—Ezekiel xxxviii.

WE are familiar with very wonderful changes on things around us on the earth. We know quite well that a bare tree standing against the wintry sky, with all its branches and twigs stript of every leaf, will yet in spring put on its foliage anew. We know that fields white with snow will become green again, and that a piece of solid ice will melt under heat into flowing water. We can tell that a seed of wheat or barley, buried in the ground, will come up a living plant through the soil, and grow and bear other seeds. We can go to a corner where some caterpillar has crawled, and become dried and stiff, and, pointing to it, say, there is life there, and it will come out by-and-by in the shape of a winged insect. Most of you, I doubt not, have seen the silk-worm spinning its cocoon, and have seen the husky kernel, laid in saw-dust, produce a moth. But you have not seen bones of men come alive again. No wonder, then, that the question of the text should sound a hard one. The putting of it by God to the prophet implies that it would be a strange thing to see dry bones live. Yet the putting of it by God implied that the thing was possible. So the prophet seems to have felt, when he said: "O Lord, Thou knowest."

I have seen graves opened in crowded churchyards—graves where people had been buried long before,—and I have seen, at funerals, little bags filled with the

bones picked out from among the clay—bones of those long dead lowered into the dust again beside the new coffin. If, when these bones turned up one after another among the clods, the bystander were to be asked: "Can these bones live?" there is only one thing that could enable him to answer Yes. He might know from God's word that the dead are to be raised again. The quickening of the dead is too great a thing for anything to assure us of it except God's word. That does assure us of it. "Marvel not at this," said the Lord Jesus Christ, "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth."

But my text does not speak about the real resurrection of men's bodies. It refers to what happened in a vision. God had promised very great and glorious blessings to His people. But at the time He gave those promises by Ezekiel, they were captives and scattered; and it might seem to them hardly possible that such good things should be. So God showed this vision to the prophet—to let his very eyes, as it were, witness the truth beforehand. If, then, when he told the people that God was to heal and restore them, they should say: "We are lost and destroyed; it is too late, we cannot be brought back," he might say to them, "Hear what God showed me;" and telling them the vision, might add: "Is not He, who is able to make dry bones

rise to living men, able to help you?" "Ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves."

The vision, however, and the prophecy were not for the captives of Israel alone. Reading to the end of the chapter we are brought to see that a prospect opens here far beyond the coming back from Babylon. That was but a new sign and pledge of the grand things finally meant in the 36th chapter; nor can any future literal restoration of the Jews to their own land exhaust it. That would require a literal David to be then king. But as the David who is to rule, the one Shepherd that is to feed, is Jesus; the Israel He is to govern, and the flock He is to feed, are redeemed men in all the earth, gathered into one in the bonds of holy, happy love. Indeed, the lesson of the vision is for the church in every age, I think especially in our own.

I will, therefore, endeavour to bring the text to bear upon our own times; first, however, explaining its meaning as it stands in its surroundings here. Taking the question, I will show—

- I. How it was then answered.
- II. How it may be now applied.
1. **Then answered.**

Observe, however, in the outset, the exact terms of the question: "Can these bones live?" Now, the bones were scattered and bare, and lying all over the plain, a great multitude. They were not skeletons, but separate bones—as if the unburied slain of some great deadly battle had lain long enough ex-

posed to all the winds to have lost their flesh, and become a mere mass of confused and crumbling bones. Of such wrecks of men the question was put. Not, indeed, that the bones of yet entire and compacted skeletons were any nearer life than they; but the image very vividly sets forth an utterly prostrate state of the people of God when revival was promised them.

Now, the prophet having referred the question back to God Himself, received God's answer by seeing the bones gathered, built up, and revived. The process is beautifully described. First there was a noise, and a stir and movement in the valley—bone sought to bone, and were jointed together, till the skeleton forms were complete; then, as rocks get covered in the course of years with mould and vegetation, these bony shapes became clothed with flesh, with the flesh vested with smooth skin, and lay fair human bodies, but as yet breathless. Then came a second wonder—as they lay stretched thus on the ground, the breezes stirred around, and became to these corpses the breath of life, and they started to their feet, and stood arrayed and alive in the plain, a vast host. The dry bones had come to life.

But what is of chief importance to note is this: God did not give this answer to His own question without the prophet's service. Ezekiel is made to work out the answer. He is told to prophesy twice—first to the bones, and next to the word. Now, as prophecy is speaking for another, it is clear that the word may be used to signify the carrying of God's word to men, or the up-

lifting of man's voice to God. These two things are here in succession. To bring about the resurrection of the dead in the vision-valley, the prophet was commanded—

1. To preach.

2. To pray.

Let us think a little about both.

1.—To preach.

To preach to the bones—to the dead. But what was the use of preaching to the dead? They could not hear. If you saw me standing in a cemetery—think of any one you know—and crying to the buried there to awake, you would think me mad. So would Ezekiel's preaching have been vain, had it not been that he was doing what God commanded, and bidding the bones hear the Word of God. For that Word can make itself be heard anywhere. The sea has heard it, and flowed or fled. The grave has heard it, and given up its prey. Darkness has heard it, and kindled into light. Nothing has heard it, and has given birth to worlds. So, if bidden, we may preach the Word of God anywhere without doubting its being of use. But Ezekiel had more to encourage him than the general thought of God's power. He had His promise. So he might now preach, quite sure that it would not be in vain. Nor was it. The bones heard the word of the Lord, and stepped towards life.

2.—To pray.

The prophesying now is not to the bones. All that the Word can do for them is done. They are arranged, they are built up, they are in appearance men—but they are dead. The life must

come from the Spirit of God. The breath is not in the Word, bidding the bones hear, but comes from God to complete the work. Teaching and instruction are good, but the Spirit's power and grace must come to make them effectual unto life. Yet see, the breath alone did not give life. It did not breathe over the dry bones. They are moved first, and connected first, and clothed first, with flesh and skin. So both are combined—the word of preaching, the breath by prayer. So men are born again, according to Scripture, by the word of truth, and by the Spirit of the Lord.

II. How it may now be applied.

Two things are to be said here.

We have our valley of vision full of dry bones, and we have the same thing to do with them as Ezekiel had.

1. We have our valley.

Need I say this valley is very wide and vast. The field is the world. You recollect, in one of our Lord's temptations, Jesus was carried to the top of a high mountain. How it was done, we know not, nor need we now ask. Let me carry you, in imagination, to such a height, to see not the glory of the world but its shame and woe. Look east from you; see China, and India, and other lands—millions of the dead. Look south—Africa is full of the dead. Look west—South America. Look at Europe and North America, there are more living men among them, but still, they are mostly dead—very many in the open valley, and very dry.

Or look more closely still. Let us take London; and let us go in thought to the top of St. Paul's. You know

that on a clear day you can see a vast expanse of this wondrous Babel—its maze of streets, its streams of people. But what now if you could see them in their houses as they are spiritually. The most of them would be dead. If the houses where God is were alone to be lighted up, what multitudes of them would be dark. If only those were to be wholly illumined where all within loved God, how few would be quite clear. How would the most have some windows dark.

Or look yet closer. Look at some church; suppose me preaching in one, might not I say: "Here is a little nook of the great valley, are there no dry bones here? Are all present to-day breathing in the spirit of God? If an eye were given me to see souls alive or dead, would I find myself encompassed by the living alone? God knoweth. But this is to be remembered. Dead men here are to be dealt with just as elsewhere. They are to be preached to in faith, and prayed for in love."

Perhaps some one hearing me in the way supposed would be already answering the question. Looking within, he is made to remember our Lord's description—"full of dead men's bones." He says: "I am cut off for my part?" Are you? That was what Israel said. But God said: "I will bring you out of your graves." Hush! let the word of God go into that charnel-heart of yours. Let it stir these bones. It is a living word, and there is a Divine Living Spirit to give it quickening entrance. Close not the door; but let the voice and the breath come in.

But I am going a little before, and touching on what is next to be said. We have the same work to do—preach and pray. Preach the Word of the Lord—the Gospel. Here I do not mean merely pulpit-preaching. For there is tract-preaching; Bible-preaching; talk-preaching. But it is always God's word. And if you ask me what truth the dead world needs, I will give you four words around which preaching must lie; God—Sin—Jesus—Salvation. Not that I mean you are to take them in that order. If I were to prescribe an order, I would say begin with Jesus. So learn about God, about sin, about salvation. But I mean these are the great themes of preaching—repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But however accurate may be our teaching, and however apt men's learning, more is needed. The soul must be made alive. So we are to pray. Here, however, guard against supposing that we are to go as far as we can with preaching, and then to pause and turn to prayer. This was the needful order of the vision; but to us the lesson is, unite them—preach praying. But do both in faith. There is a promise for the preacher: "My word shall not return to me void." There is more than promise, I had almost said, to those who pray: "Before they call, I will answer."

Now, in conclusion, let me ask you to look at things more wonderful than those seen in this vision. First, there is that scene described in our reading from the Old Testament. There dry bones are made to give life. Then,

there is a grave where there once was, not dry bones, but a body dead, yet without a touch of corruption; and now it is empty, because He who lay there is risen. A visit to this grave, in faith, gives higher life. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." See it vacant, and let it have your sins to bury, as in Bunyan's dream it got Christian's burden.

This, further, let me say. I want you all to be prophets. Prophets! you say—yes, prophets. Even if you cannot cry to the bones, you may to the wind. Here, then, is a prayer for you, thinking of the world, and crying for the Spirit: "Come from the four winds; O Breath, and breathe on these slain."

II. Our Talk.

TO-DAY we still go on with our lesson about *Temptation*. Now look at this word that I write on the board. Why, do you think, do I write desert? Because you and I are going in our thoughts into the wilderness. What is the name of the creature with four feet, and great claws on its feet, that is like Satan? A lion. Find a text that compares Satan to a lion. The 1st Epistle of Peter, 8th verse: "He goeth about like a roaring lion." Yes, the lion, you know, ranges about, and lies down out of sight, and waits and lurks for the purpose of catching people. Well, in the desert, Satan was lying in a corner waiting for Christ, and when he saw Him, he said: "Now is my time to fight a battle for the throne of the world. That man is the Son of God; I know prophecies about Him. I have heard David sing about it; Isaiah wrote about it; others pray about it. I know He is come to smite me." Perhaps Satan might have said something like this: "Long time ago now, but I remember it, when I was in Paradise, and when I got Eve and

Adam to eat the fruit, He came then, and He said that one of Eve's children would put his foot on my head and crush me. This is the man. I must fight with Him, I must do my very best to get Him to sin." There were two things that Satan tried. First, He tried in the desert to get Christ to sin. If he had succeeded, would there have been any salvation? No; there would not, because Christ's righteousness would have a stain. Christ would not have been the Perfect one. Well, that is what Satan said inly, I will try and get Him to sin. He failed in that, and we will see by-and-by that he tried another thing, which was to persuade Christ to give up attempting to save people. He tried to frighten Him from going to death. But this time he tried to get Him to sin. How long did he try? Forty days and forty nights. How many instances of temptation have we recorded in detail as we say, that is, in the incidents, in the stories of them? Three. But do these three that are told us, do they make up all the temptations of Christ? Oh, no.

They were not spread over the six weeks at all, but came after. I think this : that all the forty days and nights Satan kept out of sight ; he didn't show himself ; He just kept near to Christ unseen and tried to put bad thoughts into His soul, throwing fiery darts at Him. But did any of them touch Him ? Not one of them. There was nothing in Christ that would take fire from Satan's temptation. He threw them all off, and they didn't hurt Him.

Now suppose that I had here a mirror, and suppose I had gathered a great lot of the ugliest creatures I could get—snails, toads, lizards, and all kinds of dirty, crawling creatures—and I came and held them up here one after another, would they be seen in the mirror ? Yes, they would. But is the mirror made dirty by the reflection ? when the toad and the other creatures are flung away—is there anything left in the mirror ? Nothing. Well, Christ's soul was something like that. Satan held up the ugly, bad thoughts, and Jesus knew what they were, but when Satan took them away, there was not a stain in Christ's soul. Here is another thing. Suppose this room was full of all sorts of dust, and cobwebs, and filth—a vile, dirty, abominable room, and that the shutters were all closed ; then suppose I were to go at morning and open those shutters, would the light come in ? It would. And what would the light show to me ? The dust and dirtiness of the room. But when the light came in and touched the dust and the dirtiness, would the light get soiled itself ? No. Well, this world, when Jesus came into

it, was just like a great room, all full of blackness of every description ; there were all sorts of black, ugly, crawling things in it, and He came into it and walked amongst them ; but He was just like the beam of light ; He shone on them, and they ran away, and were frightened, but He did not get any stain Himself—He just went away back to Heaven as pure as the light.

I wonder if any of you boys have done this—I have done it myself—walked across a field and have there come to a stone lying on the grass, making its bed on the grass, and have put down your hand, lifted up the stone, and found underneath the stone all sorts of insects crawling about. I have seen thus that they loved the darkness, and did not live in the light, for when I lifted up the stone, hurry-scurry, all went out of sight as fast as they could. That is the way bad things do ; they love the darkness rather than the light. The light of Christ comes amongst them, and they hate it. That is the reason why wicked men killed Him. There were the Pharisees and other ugly, vile creatures, that did not love God, and when He came and turned the lamp of His truth upon them, they said : “ We cannot bear that man's light, we will rid Him from the earth.” So they said to Judas : “ If you will betray Him into our hands we will give you so much money—we will give you thirty pieces of silver.” And Judas consented, and betrayed his Lord. They succeeded, as they thought ; but, after all, in killing Christ they only made Him stronger, throwing his light wide into

the world. Now we will come to the three temptations that are named. Please turn to the 4th chapter of Matthew. After the forty days and nights are over how did Christ feel in His body? He was hungry. He was an hungered. Give me the name of any other person that fasted forty days and nights? There was Moses. How often? Twice. Moses's fast, I have no doubt, was for that length of time. To say there is another coming that is greater, fighting with Satan, in whose life that period of time will be marked. Was Moses fighting when he was fasting? No. He was receiving gracious words from God—getting two tables from the Lord up in Sinai. Christ was away out in the desert after He was an hungered. I think Satan showed himself then. Perhaps he made himself like a man. I don't know; but he come and spoke to Christ, so that He could hear him with His bodily ear. What did he bid Him do? Command those stones be made bread. But he said something with an if. If you are the Son of God. He wanted Christ to prove himself the Son of God by working a miracle. Could He have wrought the miracle. What did Christ do that proved He could make stones bread if He liked? He turned water into wine. Yes, to turn water into wine shows that He could, if he had liked, turned stones into bread. Tell me the name of the man that said something of God's power to turn stones into people. 3rd. Matt., 8th verse. And John said: "For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Jesus could have done this thing if he had pleased. Tell me why it would not have been right for Him to do it? It would have been obeying Satan. So far, true and good. But there is something a little more than that. What would it have been showing towards his heavenly Father? It would have been showing distrust. How did Christ answer Satan? He quoted the Bible. Tell me what Bunyan, in the Pilgrim's Progress, calls that answering him out of the word of God? Giving him a thrust with the Sword of the Spirit. Please find a text in the 6th chapter of Ephesians which proves that the Bible is the Sword of the Spirit. Verse 17: "And the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." Find also a text telling us what kind of sword it is in the 4th chapter of Hebrews, 12 verse: "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Can any of you tell me the meaning of quick there? Living; that is it. Tell me something that is like a sword which is not made of steel—which is not the word of God; which is a thing made of matter, that can strike, and pierce, and kill? Lightning. Yes; it is like a sword, very sharp. It is rapid and strong, like a thing alive. So is God's word; sharper than any two-edged sword.

'Now what is the second temptation? Christ had given Satan a thrust with the sword of the Spirit, and Satan tried

something else. He took Him up to the pinnacle of the temple, and said : " See the people down there ; isn't it a fine opportunity for you to show that you are the Son of God ; just cast yourself down amongst them, and you will feel no hurt. How did Satan try to prove that ? He said : " Don't be afraid, the angels will come and put their hands beneath your feet and keep you quite safe. Does that show that Satan knew a little about the Bible ? I think he knows more about it than many people—Satan knows it pretty well, he has had a great deal to do with it. But did he quote it fairly ? He did not. What did he leave out ? " In all thy ways." Now it was no part of Christ's ways to go from the pinnacle down to the ground. Did His Father send Him to do that ? No. He sent Him to do good. Jesus knew it would not do. He said, If I do that it would be—what ? It would be tempting. But would it be tempting a man ? No. Whom then ? God. It would be provoking God, trying God. It would be like our saying this :—" Oh ! my Father, I do not know that Thou

wilt take care of me ; I want to put Thee to the trial." But Christ did know that His Father would take care of Him in all His ways. There is a sense in which we may prove God ; but not in the spirit of unbelief. Does God bid us sometimes prove Him ? Find out from the Book of Malachi, iv. 10 : " Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." That is proving God in the spirit of faith—giving Him opportunity to show Himself faithful in the belief that He will keep His word. We will do the things He bids us do, and we are sure that what He says will come to pass. It is a wrong thing to tempt God in the spirit of unbelief—but if we go and say : " Oh, Lord ! I know Thou wilt keep Thy word, and wilt do what Thou hast biddest me do ; show me now Thy faithfulness," we do right.

(To be continued.)

RHYMED PICTURES.

The dead man lay in stone-closed cave,
The living came to see the grave ;
While dropping tears, and shuddering frame,
The burden of his soul proclaim.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the dead man ? Who was the living ?

Always in the gloomy night,
Moonless, starless, void of light ;

Till the water and the clay
Washed the darkness all away ;
Yet not clay, nor yet the spring,
But the fiat of the King.

QUESTIONS.

What was the darkness, and how was it removed ?

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—R and S.

ROCK.

1. Stationed in its rifled side,
Worshipped one, with veiled eye,
As in light which love must hide.
Answer to its prayer went by.
2. On its summit fettered strength
Left itself in traitor hands ;
From its summit borne, at length
Hundreds rue the bootless bands.
3. Firm as flint, yet, wave-like, soft
For a nation's help it flowed :
Kept its place, and towered aloft,
Following still a nation's road.
4. On its face lay death ; but high
Living and Life-giving stood ;
Rose destroying blaze on high,
Rose, unharmed, in fire the Good.

5. Under white and scorching skies,
In the broad and weary sands
Wide and safe its shelter lies,
Covert sweet for darched lands.

SIGN.

A sign for rise and fall and contradiction ;
A sign to show removal of affliction ;
A doubled sign to prove a prophet's mission ;
A sign of seven-fold wrath, behold in vision ;
A sign of severance in the air and under ;
A sign of plagues for a perpetual wonder ;
A sign which marked the victim and the traitor ;
A sign in trees to praise the Renovator ;
A sign to rule two valiant men's behaviour ;
A sign to seal the tiding of a Saviour.

WHY LITTLE ANNE WAS HAPPY.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher joined little Anne on the way to church, and taking her hand, she pressed it lovingly in her own.

"You are happy to-day, Anne, are you not?—the sky is so blue, and everything is so fine?"

"Yes," she added; "and it is Jesus' day—the day when He rose from the dead, and *lives* to be our friend, like as He was Peter and John's friend."

"Does that thought make you happy, Anne?"

"I think it does," answered the dear child, "for He is *my* friend. He loves me. I know it here," she said, putting

her hand to her heart. "I love Him. I see Him almost everywhere. Everything seems to shine for Him."

"How long have you felt so, Anne?"

"I hunted after Him a good, great while," she said. "I kept calling Him, and now He has come. I want to be good because I am so happy."

Yes, Anne, I am sure, was happy. There is nothing half so sweet and pleasant in all this beautiful world as having Jesus for your friend, your intimate friend—your companion every day, and all the time. He is so kind, so true, so helping; just what everybody wants.



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

To Christ, the Lord, let every tongue
Its noblest tribute bring ;
When He's the subject of the song,
Who can refuse to sing?

Survey the beauties of His face,
And on His glories dwell ;
Think of the wonders of His grace,
And all His triumphs tell.

Majestic sweetness sits enthron'd
Upon His awful brow ;
His head with radiant glories crown'd,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

He saw us plung'd in deep distress,
He flew to our relief ;
For us He bore the shameful cross,
And carried all our grief.

His hand a thousand blessings pours
Upon our guilty heads ;
His presence gilds our darkest hours,
And guards our sleeping beds.

To Him we owe our life and breath,
And all the joys we have :
He gives us victory over death,
And saves us from the grave.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Exodus xxiv., 9-18 ; Rev. i., 9-18.

PRAYER.

FATHER, Thy Word tells us
that Thy glory shines in the
face of Jesus. Remembering
this, we would pray the prayer Thy
servant Moses once prayed to Thee.
O Lord, we beseech Thee, show us

Thy glory. We would see Jesus,
knowing that, seeing Him, we see
Thee. May we see something of His
grace and goodness to-day! We ask
it for His name's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day is a long one, but it is very bright. You find it in Luke ix., 28-31: "And it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. And behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."

IF I should ask you to tell me how many persons met on the mountain-top referred to in the text, you would readily reply that there were six; and speaking of those that were there at first, and so as to be visible, the answer would be correct. But, ere the scene of transfiguration closed, there was a seventh person there, not seen, indeed, but heard; while a bright cloud at once hid and showed His presence. That seventh was the blessed Father, whose voice was heard from the excellent glory, saying: "This is my beloved Son, hear Him."

Returning to the six, see how on the mountain they are arranged into two threes—three that talk, and three that listen; three that shine, and three that gaze; three that wake, and three that sleep; three, we might say, that are of heaven, and three that are of earth; for though Jesus went up the mountain with His disciples, He yet, even more than Moses and Elias, first came down. A distinct line separates the two groups of three—one is, so to say, outside the circle of glory, and only witnesses; the other is shrined in it, and is the object of wonder and awe. Yet the two companies are linked closely together. In what I am now to say I shall speak of them as joined, only I will take advantage of the number three in both

sections to shape my heads. I will describe the meeting here of various threes—sometimes finding the illustration in the disciples, always in the heavenly visitors and in Jesus. There met, then, on the mountain of transfiguration, five various groups of three.

1. The Sinful, the Sinless, and the Sanctified.

The first were Peter, and James, and John; the second was Jesus; the third we have in Moses and Elias—all the six coming under one class or another. How they touch on each other we shall soon see.

The three disciples were sinful men. This much we know from the very fact that they were men, "for there is no man who sinneth not." We know, too, from what is recorded of them in the Gospels, that they all erred, and came short. Even after this James and John betrayed ambition and a bad spirit of persecution, and Peter denied his Lord. Yet they were not bad men; they were children of God—they loved their Lord—they were in part sanctified and holy.

Mere men like themselves, and once sinful likewise, were Moses and Elias. But now, by being perfectly sanctified, they are without sin and appear in glory. I do not know how the apostles could know them; but surely it must have been

grand for them to see that the great departed fathers, who once toiled, and suffered, aye, and sinned on earth, were still alive, and had now neither pain nor sin. Beautiful end, this, to good men's fight! They conquer, they win, they triumph, they "appear in glory."

How this is accomplished we learn when we turn to the sinless one in this company. Here is Jesus, the Son of God, holy as God, holy as man, holy in His birth, holy in His life, doing no sin, nor having guile in His mouth; holy in deed, holy in word, holy in heart, too—all shining through and through with holiness. By Him Moses and Elias are in glory. By Him, Peter, and James, and John, shall become like these heavenly two. If you ask how He, the sinless, can take sin away, listen to the conversation. What are Moses, and Elias, and Jesus talking about? About Christ's death—His death at sinners' hands—yet His willing death, in which he bears His people's sins, and sanctifies and saves them. So, by the sinless bearing sin, the sinful become at length the unsinning for ever.

2. Law, Prophecy, and Gospel.

The law was given by Moses, and he is here to say that the law he gave had its meaning in Christ. For when it gave commandments it did so to make the people know their need of Jesus to take away their transgressions of it. It said: here is what you have broken, for the breaking of which you should die; seek a Mediator to help you. And when the law of Moses gave rites, sacrifices, and services, it gave them all to point to Jesus. And now Moses, or the law,

worshipping Jesus as he talks with Him, seems to say: this is the meaning and fulfilling of all that God showed me long ago, in Mount Sinai, in the wilderness.

Then Elijah was a prince and leader of prophets—a reforming prophet, who brought back the erring people to their God. Now, standing beside Jesus, he seems to say: "Here is the Lord, to wait for whom I strove to keep Israel faithful. Here is the still small voice that cries not, nor strives, which I was sent to call men to listen for, though I was bid to shake the land." This we know, for John the Baptist was another Elias; and he was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, to make His paths straight, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. As the fulness of time came nearer, other prophets spoke more plainly of His coming—indeed, preached the Gospel beforehand. But Elijah, the stern preacher and reformer, is here to say: "This is what I wrought for—to make men ready for Jesus."

In Jesus Himself is the Gospel. As far as it could be preached beforehand, He has preached it. What words of grace He has spoken all over Judea! Then He is making the Gospel. From this mountain-top there is a slope down to the cross—from this day Jesus sets out to walk down it. He descends to die; but then, the good news will be fully prepared, and these three sleepers then shall be apostles to publish it to the ends of the earth. So you see on this mountain-top there is a sort of little history of redemption. The law and the prophets foretold Jesus's coming;

now they show Him come, and now heralds wait to carry the news to the world's end. The law shone like the moon reflecting light while the sun was yet afar; the prophet, like the reddening clouds of morn, saying: He approaches; purpling the more, the nearer He comes. Christ Himself is the Sun of Righteousness, rising with healing in His wings.

3. King, Prophet, and Priest.

Jesus is indeed all these in one. But Moses, while prophet, was also king. He was ruler and law-giver in Israel. Elisha was prophet, and on Carmel, by special service, acted as a priest. But here, in Jesus, is the one true priest, while prophet, too, and king. Indeed, He is now on the mountain the approved prophet. The words: "Hear Him," send us back to Moses' prophecy about Him, as a prophet who was to rise like himself, of whom God said: "Him shall ye hear." He is now going forward to do His priestly work, and the king and prophet of the Old Testament are here to cheer him to his great service, speaking of "the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

4. Life, Death, and Immortality.

When we use these words in connection, we mean by life—life in this world; immortality is life hereafter; death lies between. But, you say, how are they met here? The answer is so far very easy. Peter, and James, and John are alive on the earth—so, indeed, is their Lord—and they have all yet to die. Moses and Elias belong to the immortals; they will never of them die henceforth. But they

are not equally beyond death; Elijah is altogether, but we cannot say that of Moses. As Elijah never suffered death, and will not ever be subject to it, immortality such as the changed and raised saints will enjoy, belongs to him. But though Moses is in glory, he is also, in part, in the grave. For we must not, I think, suppose that God has raised him from the dead to bring him here. The reason is, that Jesus is said to be the first-fruits of them that sleep, and that could hardly be if one of His saints should be raised before Him. There were, indeed, dead persons raised, some by Jesus Himself; but they did not go to heaven, but stayed on earth, and went again into the grave. The very fact that Enoch and Elijah did not die seems to confirm this; for while some must be in heaven as first stalks of the harvest sheaves of immortality, they cannot anticipate their Lord by rising from the dead. They are sent as couriers—out-riders of salvation by another road—to say that by the dark valley the conquering king will come. Translation does not take the road of resurrection—only witnesses to it. The escaped from death proclaim the conqueror of it, who will show his victory by rising. While, then, we see in Elijah an example of glorified humanity as it shall be—body and soul united—after the resurrection, we see in Moses the soul glorified, while yet it waits for the rising of the body. Now the state of division between soul and body has something still of death, darkness, and defect in it. It is an enemy of His people which Christ has promised to put an end to. "O death, I will be

thy plagues ! O grave, I will be thy destruction ! " " So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. "

Here, then, strange to think, there met those who had to pass through the dark valley—one, who in a sense, was in part still in it, one altogether beyond. But that it could be passed by any in safety—that any could ever have been carried beyond it—that Moses and Elijah could stand where they stood, and that Peter, and James, and John could hope to join them, as they have since done, is all owing to the passing through it of the Lord of glory ; the decease they talked of on the mountain, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

5. Here met Grace, Glory, and God-head.

Grace does not differ in its nature from glory, so far as it is inward. Grace, old people used to say, is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected. Grace is God's Spirit working in us here to make us like Jesus ; glory is when the work is finished, and we are like Him, seeing Him as He is.

Now, if you ask where was grace on the mountain-top, we point to the disciples. We have seen that they are not sinless, but the good work is begun in them ; they may be as little children, perhaps

even as babes in Christ, but they are born again. They love Jesus, and they are learning of Jesus. O, happy are the children of grace ; they shall not be left ; even when they fall, they shall be lifted up. Grace will grow and be crowned at last. " For the Lord God is a sun and shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory. "

Now grace, dear young friends, is free. You do not work it out for yourselves. It is given to us. It is just God's love taking effect on us. Will you not seek it ? It is stored in Christ—He is " full of grace and truth. " And here is your charter of right to go to Him : " Seeing that we have a great High Priest, who is passed through these heavens, let us come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need. "

If you would see to what grace comes at last, see it in Elijah and Moses. They appear in glory. No doubt they were clothed in white ; and Moses' face would shine now even brighter than when he had to put a veil on it, because the people could not look on his skin that shone. And what was better, they were holy as the angels—fit to talk with their holy Lord, even when He was transfigured and too bright for His disciples' look. In like manner will all Christ's people shine at last—made holy and blameless, and their very bodies fashioned like His glorious body.

But from even sinless glory and splendour, such as that of these two visitants from heaven, we must rise to

that of Jesus. Moses and Elijah came glorious from heaven. Jesus is glorious on the earth. Their shining was put on them; He shone by His own light. His glory broke from within all through and over His clothes, till the dull coat became lustrous as snow, and His face like lightning. For in Jesus of Nazareth God dwelt, as says John. We beheld His glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. “All the Father in Him shone.” Godhead was there in another sense. The seventh, unseen, but heard in that scene, was God—God the Father—as the voice that spoke proved. No wonder that when the bright cloud which said God is here, came all over them, and Moses and Elijah went away up into it, the disciples feared; feared, perhaps, yet more when they heard the glorious voice Divine. Yet they had heard that voice before, and it would

come sweet to them. At their Lord's baptism once—now a second time they hear the Father say: “This is my beloved Son, hear Him.”

This brings me to the close, and it is this: Will you hear Him? Will you sit at His feet? Will you rest on His grace? Will you take Him, who is God's beloved to be yours? O how God must love those who love His beloved! O how guilty and unsafe must they be who despise, or neglect, or hate Him whom all the holy of heaven talk with, and God delights in for ever.

The Spirit of God was not by any manifest token, except the glory put on Moses and Elias, present at this scene, but He was there as really as when the dove of light showed Him and His love. What remains but that we say: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!

II. Our Talk.

LET us look back at the scene presented in the sermon to-day, and see what thoughts about it we can gather up.

How many persons met at first, and visibly, on the mount of transfiguration?

What seventh person showed his presence there afterwards?

What voice proved him to be there?

Name three characters that met on the mountain-top.

Show who belonged to each class.

What did Moses and Elias talk about with Jesus?

Name a second group of three things which met on the holy mount.

By whom was the law given?

What kind of prophet was Elijah?

Who in the New Testament is like him?

Which of the three who talked together on the mount brought the Gospel?

What title given to Jesus by Malachi was here referred to?

Name a group of three offices that met on the mount.

Which of the three persons had all the offices in himself?

What prophecy of Moses do the Father's words recall?

Name three more things—stages of life—that met on the holy mount?

Who represent the present life?

Who represent immortality?

How is death represented?
What two persons were in heaven in their
bodies before Christ?

Did they go there by the road of death?
Is death quite shown to be vanquished,—is
it quite destroyed before the resurrection-day?
What prophecy about its being conquered
will then be brought to pass?

Name the last three mentioned as meeting
on the mount?

In what three persons did grace, and as yet
no more, appear?

In what two did grace grown to glory
shine?

In what two did Godhead shew itself?
When, besides on the mountain, did the
Father witness to Christ as His beloved Son?
On that other occasion how was the presence
of the Holy Spirit shown?

RHYMED PICTURES.

Up the stairs went he,
Weeping full sore;
To the earth bent he,
Pierced to the core;
Sobbing and sighing,
Wailing and crying,
For one that comes back no more.

One and ten
Valiant men
Round another stood;
Spear and dart
Through the heart
Shed a traitor's blood.

Round about, round about,
Round about still;
Round about, round about,
Round about, round about,
Shout with a will.

TEMPTATION.—Continued from page 169.

TEN resuming our Talk on *Temptation*, we will commence the subject this week by considering The Third Temptation of Christ. Satan took Him to the top of the mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms, and said: "*All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.*" That was a bold and very wicked thing to say. Tell me what else Satan spoke on that occasion. 'All these things are delivered into my hand.' Now there was a certain sense in which that was true,

because sin was in the world, and where sin was Satan had means to work with, and it is true that most men are serving him. But God didn't say that Satan was king of the world. He was a usurper all the while, and his speech was a lie. Though much was his, all had not been delivered into his hand. If Christ had listened to him, would he have given what he had to Christ, do you think? Would Satan have been very careful to keep his word? No. But I will tell you what I think he meant. He said to Christ: "You are

going to be king of the world, but it will be by suffering, by going to die. That is a very dark and dreadful road, Come with me, and I will show you a better way. Give up all idea of dying and come and say you will lead the Jewish people against the Romans." He then tried to tear Him away from the right path—from suffering, and then going to His glory. I read such a beautiful sermon the other day, I will tell you the idea. It says: "Take up the Bible and begin at the beginning, and you will find all through a great deal about the Lamb; and you will find that it begins very low and it comes to be very high. First of all it begins at creation. God made little lambs, the pretty, gentle, bleating, harmless little things. Then God said to Abraham: 'Take thy son and offer him in sacrifice;' and when he was going up Mount Moriah, he said to Isaac his son: 'The Lord will provide for Himself a lamb.' Then by-and-by, in the desert God said to the priests: 'Every morning you must offer a lamb, and every evening.' And so the lamb kept speaking, by its suffering, all through the wilderness. Then came Isaiah, and he began to speak plainly about the Lord Jesus Christ. He said: 'He was brought like a lamb to the slaughter.' Then came the New Testament, and John the Baptist, who said, as Jesus was walking across the road: 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,'—and then they killed Him. John, the Apostle, after that was one day looking away up into the heavens, and he saw up there through the sky into the bright heaven

above—there he saw the Lamb, the marks of having been killed upon it; and he saw all the people round about, and they were worshipping Him, saying: 'Worthy is the Lamb.' And he saw another time on the top of the hill, the Lamb standing, and one hundred and forty-four thousand happy people round about singing a song—a new song. And so, says the preacher, there is the Lamb in Christ crowned. Jesus coming to be the Lamb of suffering, rises to be the Lamb reigning. And the very Jesus that is the Lamb, is the Lion too, because He is the Lamb that suffered for us and now is crowned."

Just one glance at the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He was in an agony, and He prayed. How often did He pray? Three times. What did He say? "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Do you remember what He said to His disciples? "Why sleep ye? rise, watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." Now this has been often supposed to be an apology made by Christ for His disciples falling asleep. A good many people think it a kind word Christ said, like this: "Well, you were willing to watch, but your flesh was weak." But I do not think that. I think He was speaking about His own flesh. He said: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation; I have been into temptation just now, I know what a terrible thing it is." And I think Satan was saying to Jesus: "You will never be able to go to that dreadful cross, you had better turn back and give it up. What! are you going to die for those

people that are going to kill you? Go back to heaven and live there happy!" And so Jesus felt it—it is very terrible. Oh, that darkness! "Father, if it be possible, let it pass?" Do you remember what He added? "Not my will." He would not listen to Satan for a moment.

He said: "I do shrink from that terrible blackness; I feel it very much; but not my will, but my Father's be done." So Satan had to go away. My reason for supposing that Satan was there is, Christ said: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

HARRY'S SERMON.

QUENE warm Sunday afternoon in June, the pastor was lying on the sofa at home, quite tired after the two sermons of the day. Harry was reading his new library book at the window, and Eddie, a curly-headed little fellow four years old, was running about asking a hundred questions, climbing into dangerous places, and keeping his father in continued uneasiness.

"Where's mother?" he asked Harry at last.

"In the nursery with baby," said Harry. The clergyman sighed—it would not do to send Eddie there. "Couldn't you sit still a little while, Eddie?" he asked. And Eddie tried, and found he couldn't.

How selfish I am! thought Harry. Poor father's head aches, and I might take care of Eddie.

"Eddie," he said, "let's go to church, and I'll be minister and preach you a sermon."

"Well," said Eddie, "I'll be the people."

So Harry led him away, and they went up stairs together. As Eddie climbed the second flight, clinging to

his brother's hand, he said, "Seems to me the minister and people are going up into the steeple." This flight of stairs led up to a fine attic, before whose windows stood an old-fashioned rush-bottomed arm-chair with short rockers.

"This is your pew," said Harry, lifting Eddie into it; "and now you must pay attention to my sermon." He set an old fire-screen in front of him by way of a pulpit, and thus began:

"My text is a very short and easy one, a part of papa's text this afternoon. 'Be Kind.' There are some little texts in the Bible on purpose for little children; and this is one of them. These are the heads of my sermon: Firstly—be kind to papa, and don't make a noise when he has a headache. I don't know that you know what a headache is, but I do. I had one once, and I didn't want any one to speak a word. Secondly—be kind to mamma, and don't make her tell you to do a thing more than once. It is very tiresome to say it is time for you to go to bed, half a dozen times over. Thirdly—be kind to baby."

"You have leaved out be kind to Harry," interrupted Eddie.

"Yes," said Harry, "I didn't mean to mention my own name in my sermon. I was saying—be kind to little Minnie, and let her have your red soldier to play with when she wants it. Fourthly—be kind to Jane, and don't kick and scream when she washes and dresses you."

Here Eddie looked a little ashamed, and said, "She pulled my hair with the comb."

"Besides, if a little boy creeps all over the bed under the bedclothes before he gets out of it, I should think his little yellow curls would have to be

pulled, before his head would look fit to be seen at the breakfast table. And now I have forgotten whether the next head was to be fifthly or sixthly."

"I don't know what fifthly is," said Eddie.

"Oh, that's because you don't know how to count. See here, I'll count them on your fingers for you. One, be kind to papa; two, be kind to mamma; three, be kind to baby; four, be kind to Jane; oh yes, that's it. Now the little finger is five. Fifthly—be kind to kitty. Do what will make her purr, and don't do what will make her cry."

OUR JESSIE.

A MINISTER relates the following interesting incident:—We had a special meeting for the Sunday-school children every Wednesday afternoon. Sometimes the room was crowded, and there was generally good attention. But one thing disheartened me. I could discover no distinct case of conversion.

Many of the children readily said that they would seek the Saviour, and among such was Jessie, but I knew none among them of whom I was confident that, through these afternoon instructions, they had found the Saviour.

When Jessie was eleven years of age, she was no longer able to meet with us. It was then that her friends learned with what eagerness she had heard the glad tidings of salvation.

"Oh," said she, "I understood all

that our pastor said, and I felt it in my heart."

"Her mother observed that she arose from her bed frequently at night, and she said: "Mother, you wonder why I get up."

"Yes."

"It is to pray; and I can almost see the Saviour, it is so bright and beautiful. And I pray sometimes that God will spare me, because He spared Hezekiah when he asked Him; but not unless it is His will. He knows best."

She was evidently leaning upon Christ, reminding me afresh of the solemn words, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."



OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

We begin to-day with this

HYMN.

LORD, that I may learn of Thee,
Give me true simplicity,
Wean my soul, and keep it low,
Willing Thee alone to know.

Let me shun and cast aside
All that feeds my swelling pride,
Not to man, but God submit,
Lay my reasonings at Thy feet :

Of my boasted wisdom spoil'd,
Docile, helpless, as a child,
Seeing only in Thy light,
Walking only in Thy might.

Then infuse Thy teaching grace,
God of truth and righteousness,
Knowledge, love Divine, impart,
Life eternal to my heart.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 2 Kings xx. 12-21 ; Acts xii. 18-25.

PRAYER.

GOD, Thou alone art high ;
Thou art over all. We, on the
earth, are very little before
Thee. But we are very happy in our
littleness when we know it, and trust in
Thee. Thou art kind to the lowly.
Thou dost not like the proud. O Lord,
keep us from being proud, and vain, and

foolish. Even if we had no faults, we
would be bound to remember that all
we had was Thine. O how much more
should we thank Thee for anything right
or nice that we have, seeing that we are
so full of faults. Lord, clothe us with
humility ! Teach us to learn of the meek
and lowly Jesus. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day will be found in the book of Daniel the prophet, fourth chapter and thirteenth verse, where we read these words: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"

BOLD writers tell us that Babylon was indeed a great city—great in size, in strength, and in grandeur. One Greek historian who visited it, says it was a vast square—each side being fifteen miles in length. It was surrounded by an enormous wall, hundreds of feet high, and so thick, that after taking space for a row of houses at each edge, there was a roadway so broad that a chariot with four horses could be turned round on it. Outside the wall was a deep, broad moat, from the clay dug out of which the bricks were made that the walls were built of. The city had a hundred gates, twenty-five on each side; streets ran from gate to gate—twenty-five in one direction, and twenty-five crossing them, fifty in all, each fifteen miles long and one hundred and fifty-one feet broad. The river Euphrates divided it into two parts, the walls being continued along the banks with quays outside, and gates at the streets. The gates in the walls were of brass. Much of the enclosed space was not built on, but formed gardens, squares for pleasure, and even fields for cultivation. There were many grand buildings in the city, and wonderful structures. There was especially a huge pile, said to be built by Nebuchadnezzar to please his wife, who missed the hills of Media, her native place. This was a sort of artificial mountain—terraces rising one above another, reared on strong arches, and

covered with earth to such depths as to allow the planting of large trees. The whole was beautifully adorned with plants, and shrubs, and fruit-trees of all sorts, and was spoke of as the hanging gardens of Babylon. Travellers who have visited the ruins of this great city, and have conducted excavations among its huge mounds, speak of discoveries that go to confirm the accuracy of the ancient accounts.

Walking, one day, on the walls of this great city, King Nebuchadnezzar felt his breasts swelling with pride to look at it. He had been a great conqueror. He had brought home spoils and captives from many lands. He had laid other great cities in ruins. Tyre was destroyed, and Jerusalem was laid waste by his armies. Nineveh had been destroyed before by his father. Enriched and exalted by his conquests, he set himself to strengthen and beautify great Babylon; as the French Emperor, now no more, lavished great sums on the improvement and adornment of his capital. So casting his eye over it, he began to think what a wonderful city! and it is mine! it is the metropolis of my kingdom, and I am the man whose might and taste have done it all! Now escaped from him, perhaps aloud, the proud question of the text: "Is not this great Babylon?"

The after story tells us how his pride was punished and cured. He had had

a dream which warned him, but he did not mind it. So twelve months after, when his pride broke out, a voice from heaven spoke his doom. His reason left him: he sank to the level of the beasts, went to the fields, and lived among the oxen, till the grand king became a hideous and piteous sight to see. All the while, however, God kept his kingdom for him, and showed him how heavenly might, not his own, had raised and prospered him. So, healed and restored—and, what was better, humbled and instructed—he himself tells us the story of his pride and his fall. And very faithfully and powerfully he tells it. This chapter is a sermon, and one of the best. Happy if its readers shall be ready to join the preacher, when he says in the close: "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

Now, in connection with these words, I am wishful to-day to speak of pride—its sinfulness, hatefulness, danger, and cure. It is a very important subject. For God has resolved to put down pride. There is no place for it in His kingdom—none in heaven. It is a thing He sets Himself against. "God resisteth the proud." "The proud He knoweth afar off."

Nor is it unsuitable to speak of it in a church, or quiet home, and to children. For it is not necessary to be a king, or to win great battles, and build beautiful cities to be proud of one's doings or possessions. Nay, a child may be

as proud as a man. For example, a man may build a fine house, and be boastful of it, and a child of staying in it. Or a person may be proud of his strength and beauty; a boy of his swiftness or skill in sports; a girl of her hair, or eyes, or dress. A man may be proud of his learning, or knowledge, or talents; a boy of his scholarship, his prizes, his place in the class. What is strangest, and what is the worst pride of all, a man may be proud of his religion; of his reputation for knowledge, or zeal, or good works. That was the Pharisee's pride. He trusted in himself that he was righteous, and despised others. Perhaps if I exemplify some of these, connecting them with Scripture names, you may recollect them better.

There is the pride of personal strength—Goliath's.

There is the pride of personal beauty—Absalom's.

There is the pride of great wisdom—Ahiathophel's.

There is the pride of power and grandeur—Nebuchadnezzar's.

There is the pride of state and fame—Herod's.

There is the pride of philosophy—Solomon's.

There is the pride of privilege and sect—Saul's.

But, in a word, there is nothing of which a man may not be vain and proud—proud, even, of his supposed great humility. Pride has walked in rags as well as purple; slept on straw as well as down; sat on dunghills as well as stones; fed on crusts as well as

dainties ; strutted in the fool as well as starched the wise man. It is an odious sin, and has this mark upon it, that by it fell the angels. It is at least written : "Lest, being lifted up by pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

Now, I would have all young people begin to slay pride from the first, I would have them be clothed with humility. And these advices I would give them.

I. Look Inwards.

This is counsel especially for those whose pride is in outward things : riches, strength, beauty, jewels, dress. What is the value of such things when the soul is empty? If men pay homage to them, apart from character, it only shows how foolish the world is. A house beautiful outside—empty and cheerless within ; a fine estate and mansion—a family living in feud and hate. Look in, dear children. Ask, will your mind and heart bear looking at? Paul praises the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

But suppose your pride is rather in something within : your memory, your wit, your cleverness, your knowledge. Still I would have you look in. I would have you observe how a proud soul looks. Faces distorted with passion, foul with weeping, looked at in a mirror, show the odiousness of the feelings cherished. There are mirrors in which souls can be seen. There is the looking-glass of reason. Try how pride looks, when you bring the light of true thought to bear on it. Of what can a creature be justly proud? What has he that he did not receive? Is he

better than others? Who made him to differ? Or, take the mirror of God's Word. See what God says about pride, and remember, that what is offensive to Him must be odious to truth. Ah ! if we could take photographs of souls, how ugly would pride look.

2. Look Upwards.

There are several thoughts here. One may be best set before you by illustration. A proud man is a man with narrow views, he compares himself with others supposed to be beneath him. Let him look higher than himself, and see what illimitable room there is for growing wiser, greater, better. If a person gets to the top of St. Paul's, and looks only at the people in the streets below, he may complacently say : "How high I stand !" But if he could transport the great cathedral to the base of some hill, from whose summit counties can be seen at a glance, how slight would the height appear ! Place the hill again beside Snowdon or Ben Nevis, and this again beside some Alp, or peak of the Andes, or the great Himalayas, how trifling would appear the elevation. Place, yet further, some one on the loftiest mountain summit of the globe, and if he feels disposed to cast a glance of pride on the races grovelling in plains, bid him put his hand on the moon as she sails by ; or pluck a star from its seat, and he will learn how all earthly height is as nothing to the loftiness of heaven. So what has a man to do with pride, who looks at what is above and before him. Sir Isaac Newton felt this when he said : "I am as a child picking a few pebbles

from the beach, while the great ocean of truth lies unexplored before me."

But when I said look upward, I meant further, see God. Speak to God. See how pride looks before Him. Try to pray your pride. If it be a right thing, it will bear telling to God. Try to utter pride in God's presence. You will find then you must get a cloak for it. You must call it by some other name. You must put it in the shape of thankfulness. So the Pharisee did. Pride was in all his gesture, and in his glance, yet he thought he was praying, when he said: "God, I thank thee I am not as other men." Even he could not have said: "God, I have come to tell thee that I am wondrous rich, and famous, and noble, and gifted." He must be well nigh like Satan, that can speak out pride right to the great God.

But further, when I bid you to try how impossible it would be to pray your pride, I wish you to go further, and pray against it. God's Spirit alone can keep this demon out. Pray for His help. Tell God you long to think of yourselves as you ought. You wish to be in your right place. You want to be as little dew-drops, drinking in the light of the sun, and if they sparkle, thinking nothing about it. You want to be as little birds, skimming and resting on the great wide air, and singing forth their joy.

3. Look forward.

There are two things before us all, the thought of which is well fitted to cure pride—death and judgment. Look at the first. The house of mourning, that is the end of all men. Proud of

strength are you? see what it must come to: to the steps of age, helplessness before the touch of death. Of your dwelling? look into that narrow cell opened in the clay, that will be your dwelling soon. Of your mental powers? shadows of death by disease may cloud them in a day. Of riches? whose shall they be when the soul is required? Of beauty? the worms shall feed on it.

But there is beyond this something fitted yet more to cure pride. All we have is to be accounted for. To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. What, then, if you have more wealth than others? you have so much more to use well. If you are stronger, abler, cleverer than others, God expects you to do more good. You have those things which provoke pride only as possessions of which you are stewards, only as increased obligations to duty. Used as such, pride will find no place, but humble occupation will have its recompence. Used otherwise, the elevation of pride is but preparing for fall.

4. Look to Jesus.

Look to His life. Think what He was. Think what works He wrought. Think what wisdom spoke in His words. Think what perfection of holiness was in His character. Did He stand aloof from poor guilty men? No, otherwise He would not have been on earth at all. Meek and lowly in heart was He. Look to the law of His followers, "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Look to His cross. What a wonder of condescension is there. Come near, O my

pride, canst thou look on that same and live? He laid His glory by, He submitted to shame, curses, death, to save lost man. What is there for us but to weep, confess, admire, and worship? There, O my soul, learn thy low estate when He found thee, see how far He stooped in loving lowly condescension to find thee, and be it thy business to exalt His name for ever and ever.

I turn, in closing, for a moment to the great city Babylon again, and show you how Nebuchadnezzar lost his pride when he found God. His greatness, goodness, wonders, dominion, so filled his view, that he had no eye for his own splendours. We are lifted up in faith only in God. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the

earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

There are two other great cities of which I would have you think. This wondrous city, London, metropolis of Britain, how apt are we to be proud of its vastness, its wealth, its command of everything, its court, its parliament, its commerce. Ah! if proud, we need but look closer to hang our heads. Its poverty, its vices, its shams, its meannesses, make its greatness burdensome to think of. O, pray for London!

Another city there is whose foundations are not in earth. It has a wall great and high, and gates to all the winds. It was built by a great conqueror for the house of the kingdom. It hath a river, too, and it is the Paradise of God. Jesus is its founder and foundation. God its maker and builder. It is vast beyond all this. Will you enter, will you be citizens there? Then know this, that pride never crossed its threshold—the meek alone shall enter there.

II. Our Talk.

WHAT do you remember of the sermon of to-day? Let us see. Can you answer the following questions?

What kind of city was Babylon?

Who was the king that was proud of it as his own?

Repeat his proud words.

What other city did a great monarch adorn and feel proud of?

What showed the king of Babylon the folly of his pride?

Did he come to know a greater king than himself?

Must a person be royal, or rich, or great, in order to be proud?

Can you name seven kinds of pride that were named and exemplified?

What was the example given of each?

To cure pride, in how many ways were we directed to look?

The **ANSWERS TO RHYMED PICTURES** will be found in
2 Samuel xviii., and in Joshua vi.

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET OF NOUNS—R and S.

ROCK.

1. Moses in the cleft. Exodus xxxiii. 22.
2. Samson bound. Judges xv. 13.
3. The smitten rock. 1 Cor. x. 4; Exodus xvii. 5, 6.
4. Judges xiii. 20.
5. Isaiah xxxii. 2.

SIGN.

1. The child Jesus. Luke ii. 34.
2. Return of the shadow on the dial. 2 Kings xx. 8.

3. Two signs to be used by Moses. Exodus iv. 8.
4. The angels with the last plagues. Rev. xv. 1.
5. Swarms in Egypt, none in Goshen. Exodus viii. 23.
6. Curses on rebellious Israel. Deut. xxviii. 46.
7. The kiss of Judas. Matt. xxvi. 48.
8. The myrtle for the briar. Isaiah lv. 13.
9. Sign stipulated by Jonathan. 1 Sam. xiv. 10.
10. Sign given by the angels. Luke ii. 12.

AN ALPHABET OF NOUNS—T U V W.

TENT.

1. A visitor, kind guide of three,
Came an illustrious king to see;
The great man forth to meet him went
And brought him welcomed to the tent;
There hallowed talk and sacred feast
Regaled the father and the priest.
2. In sudden terror thousands ran,
The foremost still the happiest man;
The banished found forsaken stores,
And plenty came to hunger's doors;
The poor grew rich, the weak grew strong,
And wail was changed to voice of song.
3. In vain the disobedient tried
With the earth's help his crime to hide;
In vain he hoped the tent would screen
Since the All-searching eye had seen;
Lo, in the vale of trouble dire
The tent becomes a funeral pyre.

URIM.

1. What were we?
2. Where were we?
3. Whose were we?
4. When were we?
5. When were we not?

VEIL.

1. Two blue veils.
2. Two torn veils.
3. Two veils the Jews wear.
4. A laden veil.
5. The veil that is spread over all nations.

WING.

1. Celestial wing that hand terrestrial screened;
2. Celestial wing that foot celestial hid;
3. Small wings that bore a Gospel token gleaned;
4. Great wings outstretched, shadowing the holy lid.

LITTLE TRACTS FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.—No. 2.

MRS. A——," said a neighbour of the lady whom I call by that name, has left 'the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness' and has gone after the one that was lost. Mrs. A——'s neighbour knew his Bible, and could quote it aptly. The occasion was this. The mother I refer to had been at church, and, as wise and good mothers will do, she had taken with her all her children old enough to go there. Ned, as I shall call him, was the younger of two little brothers that were taken to the house of prayer. There were other and older members of the family present, and they had a friend with them. Now, after service was over, during which I believe Ned behaved well, sitting quiet, and looking and listening as well as a very little boy could do, all the family were on their way home. I should say that the father was away on business in some distant town. So Mamma, thinking most of her youngest charge at church, kept him by her side, and, indeed, held his little hand as they took their way along. The older ones were a little before. By-and-by, as little people will do for change, Ned drew his small hand out of his mother's gentle grasp, and trotted on a little ahead. In the meantime, some friend that had been talking with Mrs. A——, stood for a few moments at the parting of the road where their ways home branched off from each other, and when our mother resumed her path, her little boy was out of sight. But she did not feel at all alarmed at that, for she supposed


that he had run on to join his older brothers and sisters. She was not the first mother who thought, when a son was missing, that must be the explanation. There was a blessed mother long ago, who with her husband, was returning home from a place of worship, when her boy for a whole day was out of sight. "But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey. And at night they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and found him not." You know who the mother and her husband were, and who was that "holy child?" To come back to the little story I am telling. When the mother came home, she found all the older members of the family arrived, but Ned was not there. O, what a thrill of fear and sadness went to her heart. In a moment, the safe ones were left, to run in search, or watch at home (and among the safe ones there were younger than Ned, but they were cared for and all right). And away the mother went, accompanied by a young friend who would go to help her "to seek that which was lost." O, the eager trembling steps she took, and the wistful glances she cast round as she went back, not allowing herself to weep, lest her eyes should be dim, or rather too anxious to weep as yet. What a storm of fears and all disquieting thoughts rushed in on her heart. "Somebody has wiled my boy away." "He will wander he knows not where, and get frightened, and die in terror." "He will topple into the river

and be drowned." "I shall never see him again." Fighting with these fears, however, were other thoughts. "The Heavenly Father saw all, knows all, can take care of Ned all alone, He will help." So on the seekers went; and it was not very long before Mamma's eye, which had been scanning every little shape all along the streets, saw a small figure peering through some railings into a vacant field. "That's he," said quick affection, and, happily, so it was. It was Ned, bewildered and out of his reckoning, but not hurt, and hardly knowing how much had happened. Only he was very glad to be found, having been lost. And all the house was happier that day at dinner, because a little boy who had gone astray, like a lost sheep, had been recovered, and was sitting on his chair among the rest.

Now that is a very simple story, not

much in it except great heart-feeling, fears, hopes, joys; but when I heard it (I know the boy) I felt that it had a good many lessons in it. I said to myself, Ned did not mean it, only he thought he could manage for himself—he should have kept by his mother. Then, was there not one who feeds birds, and counts the hairs of our head, looking after the little stray boy, keeping him from getting too frightened, and sending love after him. Ah! that is the thought to keep hold of—Love will seek after its lost ones. So I turned, after hearing Ned's little story, and thinking of some others I had heard or read, more sad than his, but with the same truth of love's search in them, and I let the light of them fall on the great sweet text, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

PAID IN YOUR OWN COIN.

RANDMOTHER, I hate to go away from you; you like me, and nobody else does. Last night George Redin and I had a quarrel; I struck him, and he struck me. Nobody likes me."

Peter Jones said this as he was sitting on his trunk ready to start for home.

"He only paid you in your own coin," said grandmother; "people generally do—a blow for a blow, hate for hate. But how different if your pockets were full of the RIGHT SORT of coin. Because if the great pockets of your heart were full of the COIN OF KINDNESS, the more you paid away, the more you'd

get back, for you are generally paid in your own coin, you know; then, how happy you would be."

"The coin of kindness," repeated Peter, slowly; "that is a good coin; isn't it? I wish my pockets were full of it, grandmother. If I'd be kind to the boys, they'd be kind to me."

"Just so," said grandmother.

Peter's own mother died. After that he was sent to grandmother's, for he had a quarrelsome, fretful temper, and his aunt could not manage him with the other children. His grandmother dealt kindly and patiently with him, and helped him to improve himself. Peter

now had a new mother, and his father had sent for him to come home. Peter did not want to go. He felt sure he should not like his new mother, and that she would not like him.

"That depends upon yourself, Peter," said grandmother, "carry love and kindness in your pocket, and you'll find no difficulty."

The idea struck the boy favourably. He wished he could, he said.

"And the best of it is," said grandmother, "if you once begin paying it out, your pockets will never be empty, for you'll be paid in your own coin. Be kind, and you will be treated kindly; love, and you'll be loved."

"I wish I could," said Peter.

All the way home he more or less thought of it. I do not know about his welcome home, or what his father or new mother said to him. The next morning he arose early, as he was used to at grandmother's, and came down stairs, where, everything being new, he felt very strange and lonely.

"I know I shan't be contented here," he said to himself, "I know I shan't. I'm afraid there's not a bit of love in my pocket."

However, in a little while his new mother came down, when Peter went up to her and said:

"Mother, what can I do to HELP you?"

"My dear boy," she said, kissing him on the forehead, "how thoughtful you are. I thank you for your kind offer; and what can I do to HELP you? for I am afraid you will be lonely here at first, coming from your dear, good grandmother."

What a sweet kiss was that. It made him so happy.

"That's paying me in more than my own coin," thought Peter.

Then he knew he should love his new mother; and from that good hour Peter's pockets began to fill with the beautiful bright coin of kindness, which is the best "small change" in the world. Keep your pockets full of it, and you will never be in want.

THE PRAYER IN THE NIGHT.

ONE dark, stormy night, mother woke up. Hark, who is talking? The wind is blowing. It is not that. Who is talking? Mother did not speak; she kept still to hear what her little girl said. Alice was not fretting; she was not worrying. She was not afraid of the dark or the wind. How do you know? I will tell you what she was saying—saying all to herself in her snug little bed by mother's

bed—"God take care papa, mamma, I. Good God, take care papa, mamma, I. Dear, grand God, take care, papa, mamma, I. God, take care birdies. Dear God up in the sky, I love you, I do, I do;" and with that her little voice died away, and she fell asleep again.

Were they not sweet thoughts for a little child in the dark night? God loves to be in the thoughts of a little child.

OUR CHILDRENS WEEKLY PULPIT AND TALK WITH THE LITTLE FOLKS

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I. Our Service.

Let us begin our service to-day with this familiar

HYMN.

THERE is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers ;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink
To cross this narrow sea,
And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

O could we make our doubts remove—
These gloomy doubts that rise—
And see the Canaan that we love
With unobscured eyes ;

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er ;
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore !

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Deut. xxxi., 1-9 ; 2 Thess. iv. 13 ; v. 10.

PRAYER.

GOD, be gracious to all old persons, and when their strength fails, be thou very near them. Be close beside all dying persons, and say to them, fear not. If thou shouldst spare us to grow old,

may we able to speak of thee as Jacob did, when he praised Thee for redeeming from all evil. And whether in youth or age may our death be peace! We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day is in the book of Deuteronomy, thirty-fourth chapter and fifth verse : "So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord."

YOU have heard people speak of a coroner's inquest,—you have, perhaps, read an account of one in some paper. The coroner is an officer of government, whose duty it is to find out the cause of any sudden death, lest there might have been murder done. So he gets a jury of men to hear, and consider, and give their judgment, after he has examined witnesses, and tried to bring out the truth. If the dead person has died by any violence, the jury say he has been murdered ! But he may also have been killed by accident, and then they say so ; or sudden disease may have taken him away, and then they say he died from natural causes. It is a good law that makes inquest necessary, though sometimes it is painful for relatives to go through this trial of giving evidence. I have known a mother's heart sad, because her little baby, that had died in a moment in his cradle, could not be buried till the coroner should come and examine her about it. But the law is a protection against crime, or helps to discover it.

Did you pay attention to our old Testament reading ? Does it not describe something like an inquest to be held over a dead man found slain in the field ? It is very much worth being studied. It shows how careful God was of human life, and how He

would have the crime of murder brought to light, or at least that society should clear itself of the guilt of it. I think the very solemnity of the proceedings would go far to find out the murderer ; while the rugged scene, the presence of the priests, the striking off of the heifer's head, as if to say, such is the murderer's deserved doom, would send a deep thrill of awe into all hearts. The whole process, as commanded by God, is very impressive and beautiful, and I have given you the chapter that records it as one of the lessons, that you may think of it, and try to put it into a picture of the mind for yourselves.

Now, in our mountain walk this morning, we are to come on a dead body. On the top of Pisgah, the very highest peak of Nebo, the loftiest ridge of the chain of hills called Abarim, we find lying a man who has evidently just died. Who is he ? and how comes it to pass that he is lying lifeless there ? I shall suppose that a coroner is appointed to find out, and what I have to say will be in the form of question and answer, If you were in a class, you would be able, I have no doubt, to give me the replies I want. As it is, you will allow me both to ask and answer.

Here, then, lying at the top of the mountain—a mountain from the summit of which you have a wide view

on both sides of the river Jordan, is the body of a man, still and stiffening. But is he dead? He looks like it, and yet not like it. For, though he does not move, he is not wasted, and pale and unpleasant to look at, as the dead often are; he seems fresh, strong, and as one fallen asleep. Is he dead? Ah! yes; his pulse is gone—his breathing has ceased. There is no room to doubt that "he has died." Call witnesses, if we can find them, to tell us who he is, and what has happened to him.

There are two witnesses, and their names are Old Testament and New Testament. They are near relations; being indeed sons of the same Lord. They will speak to identity and character—that is, as to who this is, and what sort of man he was. Let us examine the older brother first.

Do you recognize this dead body? I do; there is no doubt that it is the body of Moses—the man of God. You call him the man of God: that is a high name. Was he a great character? He was; very few, if any, of the sons of men were greater than he; indeed, I have said, that there would be none like him, till Messiah come. He was a man "whom the Lord knew face to face." Where was he born? In Egypt. Do you know anything of his family relations? Yes; his father's name was Amram; he had a brother called Aaron, and a sister called Miriam—both now dead. How had he left Egypt, which, you say, was the place of his birth? God raised him up to lead the people of his fathers out of slavery into free-

dom, and enabled him to work great wonders of power—the last of which was dividing the sea, so that the nation walked safely through, along its dried bed. Where are this ransomed people now? At the bottom of the hill. You are quite sure that this is the man you speak of? I know him quite well, and have more to say about what has occasioned his death here; but, perhaps, you might hear my younger brother speak as to his character. Well, be it so; call New Testament in.

Have you anything to say as to this Moses of whom your brother speaks? Much; but I will give my evidence in writing. Here it is: "The law was given by Moses." "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words." "Moses was faithful in all his house." "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is in-

visible." "This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

Well, that will do. We know that this is Moses—a great and good man; but how does he lie here? Old Testament must be recalled. When was this Moses last seen alive? Yesterday, climbing up the side of this mountain. Did more than one see him? Yes, the whole camp of Israel. Was there any person with him as he went up the mountain-side? None. Could there be any one following him with a bad purpose? O no; it was well known in the camp that he was going up to Mount Pisgah to see the promised land and die. But had he no enemies in the camp? None. Many of the people had vexed him; and, indeed, had done so lately in such a way that he lost command of himself and used rash words; but all loved him. Ah! let us hear about that vexation you speak of. Well, after a great many years' wandering and dwelling in the wilderness, the people Moses was taking care of were coming near the end of their journeyings; but though they had been supplied with water in a strange way, they had come at last into a place where it was allowed to fail, and they cried out loudly, and complained against Moses brother, for their thirst was

great. God then told Moses to get them water by smiting a great stone. Moses, however, was so troubled and put about that he did so with angry unbelieving words; and God said he would not allow him to go into the promised land—he could only see it far off. Did he see it far off? He came up to this hill-top for that purpose. And, you say, there was none with him. None but God. Was there no one seen skulking about the mountain that might have struck him dead? None, none. Then could he have met with any accident; although, I may say, there is no appearance of that—he has no wounds, no bruise, no mark of hurt? O, no. For I may as well say that God told me to watch the whole proceeding, and I saw him quite alone on the mountain-top. What did he do there? He looked all around him; and I could see that he was very much pleased with what he saw, although a little sorry that he could not see it nearer; and then he lay down where he is lying now. What was his age? O, he was 120 years old. Could he die, think you, from his being so old as that,—from the mere decay of nature—from the fatigue, say, of climbing the hill? No one who saw him climb could say that. He was as strong and lithe as his grandchildren—a grand old man. He could see as clearly as when he fled to Midian, eighty years ago; and you should have seen the stroke he gave that rock when the people vexed him. It was like a giant's. No, no; it was not failure of nature's powers that could account for this death. "His

eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Then have you any account to give of his death, for, you say, you were told to watch him? Yes, I have. I know what caused it. The Lord of life said: 'You must come up higher than Nebo—higher than earthly bodies of flesh and blood can climb;' so He took away the spirit and left this clay. I think we need put no more questions.

Well, then, here is the sum. This dead body is clearly that of Moses, a great, good man, leader of a nation, of noble character, beloved of all, and destined to be held in honour by the world; a legislator, writer, prophet; seen last by thousands going up this mountain, no one with him, but not expected to return. Up here no one meets him. The only person near him is this witness—Old Testament—than whom there is no better or nobler, and he has told us that after looking round with joyous, though pathetic look, he lay down and seemed just to fall asleep. What is the verdict? Here it is: "This is the body of Moses, son of Amram, brother of Aaron, man of God, by whom the law came to Israel; a meek, faithful, great man, with few equals among the human race. And,

I. **He has not died by violence.**
No one has murdered him.

II. **He has not died by accident.**
Stumbling over a precipice, or otherwise casually killed.

III. **He has not died from disease.**
For he walked up the mountain side quite strongly.

IV. **He has not died of decay** or old age. There was not a clearer eye, or a more vigorous eye in the camp. What, then? He

V. "**Died by the Visitation of God.**"

But visitation—what is that? When the lightning strikes, when the unseen plague kills, when the unknown cause is followed by death. Is it then good or evil? Ah! dear young friends, that is just as we are ourselves. When lightning flashes down on the earth, strong and swift as it is, there are some things it cannot touch. It shuns them. Others draw it, and are burned, melted, and destroyed. So it is with death. Sudden death to the bad is sudden doom: sudden death to the righteous is sudden glory. I am glad to find that one meaning of "visitation" in the Bible is merciful. "Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." "Thy visitation,"—that was Christ's visit to Salem, a visit of love, a visit of life. So Moses' death, by the visitation of God, was death by a visit of love and life. We know it, for he came living and clad in glory to the mountain of transfiguration. Yet it was not altogether so, for if Moses had not sinned, he would have died in Canaan; so God's visitation was to show displeasure with sin also. People who die early in life, are not always taken away because they have done something which makes God refuse longer days to them; yet some even of God's people die sooner than they might but for sin (see 1 Cor. xi. 30).

.But now the inquest is over, Moses

may be buried. Who, up on this high mountain, shall put him in his grave? Don't trouble about that. God buries him. After we have seen him lie there dead, let us stand aside and watch. Down come a band of angels, and carry him away to a valley we cannot see; or is it a band of angels? I don't know. It is God—it is His doing—and no human eye can see where Moses is laid. Christ knows the spot well, however; and, when the resurrection comes, He will send His angels to welcome Moses from his mountain grave, as He met his spirit and true self on the height of transfiguration.

Yet, strange it is, Moses was not buried without a battle. Satan would have liked to get hold of his body, so as to make a dead idol of it. He would have liked to get men to go on pilgrimage to it, and say: "Moses is our God." Which would just have been as wrong as for Aaron to say, "Let this calf be god," when Moses was away; nay, worse. But when Satan went up to Michael, and said: Let me have that body, Michael said: 'No, no; the Lord

means otherwise—let Him "rebuken thee." This body is dead, but you cannot get it to keep.' For out of the seed of the dead law of Moses—out of what must be buried out of sight—there was to rise a new life. "The law is given by Moses" that "grace and truth may come by Jesus Christ." God, therefore, will keep it under his own eye. Moses dead, will be buried only where He sees. Moses living will meet Jesus in the mountain of transfiguration, and talk with him about a grander death than his own.

The close of this morning's meditation leads us to these solemn but sweet conclusions:

The old, however old, at last must die;
The great, however great, in dust must lie;
The good, when ripely good, ascend on high.

The lone, however lone, will safely die,
If by God's hand, and underneath His eye,
And anywhere He wills, must safely lie.

When we in turn, must meet the touch of death,
May God stand by us, as we yield our breath,
And show heaven's landscape to the eye of faith.

So come it solitary, swift, or far,
We shall but welcome, as the morning star,
The clouded gleam of life's descending car.

II. Our Talk.

What custom of our country did we allude to in the outet?

Where do we find a law of Moses a little like it?

Whose dead body did we suppose found, and an inquest held on it?

Who were supposed to be called as witnesses?

When the evidence was all given in, what was Moses found not to have died of?

Name the four things—First, second, third, fourth.

What was he said to have died by?

Name, then, the verdict—Fifth.

Who buried Moses?

Who raised a dispute over his dead body?

Where do we find an account of this?

When did Moses appear again on earth?

PASSING THINGS.—No. 1.

FROM the staircase window of my house for years, and latterly from my garden and the threshold of my dwelling, one object to the north was always conspicuous. There, in the morning light and in the falling evening shadows, it stood on its green height, imposing to see. In the middle rose its lofty dome, sometimes seeming as if it wanted to lift itself up higher and scale the skies. To the right and left were towers, with arms of building connecting them with the great centre. Such it stood, and looked, as I have said, for years, till we had come to feel that it was a settled part of our northern view; almost like the polestar and the plough above it. They still shine as calm and bright as if nothing had happened. The palace is gone,

“Like the baseless fabric of a vision.”

and where it once was in our landscape, there is nothing. We cannot see the ruins here.

I will tell you how it went away, as I had opportunity of observing it. Many others have described what happened on the spot; I will speak of what we saw a few miles off. And I will weave with the simple story such reflections as rose at the time, or have come up since then, as I think of it.

I was sitting in my room writing, when one of my family entered to tell me that it was thought the Alexandra Palace was on fire. I hastened to the door to see. There, no doubt, rising from the very top of the dome, was a slender column

of smoke, which, however, though strange, might, we thought, mean nothing serious. Perhaps something was burning that was meant to be burnt. Even as we looked, however, and made guesses, the bottom of the smoke-pillar became red, and we knew that there was flashing from the summit of the roof a tongue of flame. The building was really on fire; but surely, at the very top, and as yet in a small space, they will be able to put it out. Ah! see, lower down the smoke is beginning to spurt out, and there are red gleams through the windows, or openings the flames are making for themselves. The dome is all caught in the fierce heat. It is but a very little longer when a perfect volume of dark smoke is rolling out of and rising over the whole proud cupola, hiding it from sight, except as the fiery sheets flash in and out amidst it. It is sublime and sad to see. But what is that? In the far left, smoke begins to rise over the flanking tower; the fire has run along out of our sight, and is flinging up here its flag of triumph. Yes, yes, the tower, and in a few minutes the whole range of building between it and the dome, are burning fiercely. The right yet stands untouched—not long. The wind blows in that direction, and not able to blow back the fire rushing westward, it now urges it fast on to the east. The right-hand tower smokes and blazes, too. Where now is the palace? We cease to see it. Only resting where it stood, and rising far

into the heavens, is a broad, majestic pillar of rolling vapour, such as I never saw before—broken here and there to our view by fitful gleams of flame thrown out, we knew, from a great furnace into which a vast building had been cast like a coal. That huge smoke-pile, stretching up to the sky, was all we could see now. By-and-by it gets thinner and lighter in colour, and after a while seems to mingle with the grey clouds. The fire is abating ; but it is because fuel fails. The palace is gone ! The great fire-magician has swept it away. They say that a new one will be built, but the old is fled for ever.

Now, as I looked, and as I have since reflected, a good many expressions and texts of Scripture have come up to my mind, and I seem to read them in a new light by the flames which consumed the Alexandra Palace. When we heard of the terrible burning of Chicago, and learned that the upsetting of a lamp began it, we were forced to remember what James says—we were forced now again by what was under our eyes to recall it : “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.” If we could suppose the little cinder or spark that set fire to the palace to be a living thing, and to know what it was going to do, how might we think of it laughing at the towering vanity of the great building. Wait but a little, it might say to itself, and I will show you what I can do, and resist me if you can. Ah ! how bad passions are like fires ; they begin with little feelings, but when they grow strong, who can stop them ? Crush them in the first sparks. But, as

I looked at the fierce speed with which the flames spread and seemed to lick up the building—when I noticed how short a time was enough to make the whole structure disappear like a dream, I could not help remembering what Paul says : “The fashion of this world passeth away.” What a fine show was there an hour ago ? What a nice figure the palace made in the picture before us ? Where is it now ? Passed away. And so God says the heavens and earth shall pass away, wrapt in flames—the very rocks melting in the dread heat, and the whole visible frame-work of this earth-world dissolved. More entirely, too, than the late palace—for there shall not even be ruins left of this great terrestrial palace.” “The earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up, the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and there shall be found no place for them.” It is hard to think of that when one looks up to the sky “which is strong and as a molten looking-glass,” and to the earth, whose hills seem everlasting ; but somehow, as I saw the great fair palace disappear in flame and smoke, it was easier to imagine how the whole world might, at God’s touch, “flee away.” Two more passages come up to mind as I think of what was a few days ago, and now is no more. I remembered, without meaning to call any one wicked, what a vivid figure David uses about bad men’s prosperity, and I felt that one might use its terms here : “I saw it great in power and spreading like a green bay tree ; yet it passed away, and lo, it was not.” And when I see a proud, bad man prosperous and lifted up, I shall

pray that he be not some day as the Alexandra Palace—sought for, and not found. One more Scripture reference was pressed on my thoughts. I said to myself, if a sight like this awes us, though miles away, and haunts us all the day after, no wonder that the destruction of Babylon the Great should be described in words like these: "The merchants of these things which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and

pearls! For in one hour so great riches has come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What city is like unto that great city?" And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."

May we have treasure which will not be lost or lessened when the world is in a blaze.

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET OF NOUNS—T U V W.

TENT.

1. Moses meeting his father-in-law. Ex. xviii. 7.
2. The lepers visiting the forsaken Syrian camp. 2 Kings vii. 8.
3. Achan's offence and punishment. Josh. vii. 21.

URIM.

1. Uncertain—The word means lights, as Thummim means perfections—perhaps Urim consisted of rays of light from the stones in the High Priest's breastplate.
2. In the breastplate of judgment. Exodus xxviii. 30.
3. Levi's. Deut. xxxiii. 8.
4. From the time of Aaron till the captivity.
5. During and some time after the captivity. Neh. vii. 65.

VEIL.

1. The veil of the sanctuary. Exodus xxvi. 31.—The sky. Hebrews vi. 19, 20.
2. The veil of the temple. Matt. xxvii. 51.—Christ's flesh. Heb. x. 30.
3. On their Scriptures, and on their hearts. 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.
4. Ruth's, filled with barley. Ruth iii. 15.
5. Of ignorance and doom. Isaiah xxv. 7.

WING.

1. The wings of the living creatures. Ezekiel i. 8; x. 8.
2. The wings of the Seraphim. Isaiah vi, 2, *last clause but one.*
3. The wings of Noah's dove. Genesis viii. 11.
4. The wings of the Cherubim above the ark. Exodus xxv. 20.

WILLIE'S FAITH.

WILLIE was spending the summer months at his grandpapa's farm in the country. He loved the quaint, old-fashioned house, with its low ceilings, its tiny window-panes, and its odd nooks and corners, which made such wonderful hiding-places. But most of all, he loved to walk in the grand old woods with his papa, who quite often left his business in the city to spend a few days at the old place. One day as they were rambling in the woods, they came to quite a wide brook, over which a plank had been thrown, so that people could cross to the other side.

Willie's papa passed over first, and looking back, he saw that his little boy seemed unwilling to follow him; so stepping back, he took his hand and led him across.

"Were you afraid to trust yourself upon the narrow plank?" asked his papa.

"I was, until you reached out your hand to me, and then I wasn't a bit afraid, papa."

"Did you feel sure that I would take you safely to the other side?"

"Yes, papa, quite sure."

"That feeling of trust in my protecting care is what we call FAITH, Willie. You know you were asking me the other day what is the meaning of the word 'faith,' which occurred so many times in the chapter you were reading."

"If it means *trusting* in people and *believing* what they say, I think I understand it, papa."

"Yes, that is its meaning. I told you just now to take my hand, and I would see you safely over the brook. You believed and trusted me fully; and just so our Father in heaven wishes us to believe and trust in Him. Sometimes we hardly know what to do, or which way to go; but if we give ourselves to Him, trusting in His loving care, and asking Him to help us, He will guide us through all the dangers of this life, and take us at last to His beautiful home in heaven."

 WHOSE I AM.

JESUS, Master, whose I am,
 Purchased Thine alone to be
 By Thy blood, O spotless Lamb?
 Shed so willingly for me:
 Let my heart be all Thine own,
 Let me live to Thee alone.

Other lords have long held sway;
 Now, Thy name alone to bear,
 Thy dear voice alone obey,
 Is my daily, hourly prayer.
 Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
 Nothing else my joy can be.

Jesus, Master, I am Thine?
 Keep me faithful, keep me near;
 Let Thy presence in me shine,
 All my homeward way to cheer.
 Jesus! at Thy feet I fall,
 Oh! be Thou my all-in-all.

OUR CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

I.—Our Service.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Dan. vii. 1-14; Matt. xxv. 31-46.

PRAYER.

LORD Jesus, who didst once come to earth a little child, a weary man, Thy Spirit has told us Thou wilt come again in power and great glory. O teach us to love Thine appearing. Prepare us for Thy second coming. May we never doubt it; may we learn to wait for it; may it bring us salvation. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text is in 2 Peter iii. 4, where we find these words: "Where is the promise of His coming?"

THIS has sometimes happened. A hearer in the church has been much impressed with the service. The preacher has been helped of God to press truth close home on his heart. He has felt eternity brought very near; death has seemed at hand; the claims of Christ high and strong; and the salvation of the soul, the one thing worth thought; he feels that he can shake off these things no longer. But somehow, as he leaves the church, and goes out into the open air to see the sun shining, or the stars twinkling calm and clear above him, and to observe everything firm around him and fair—time, and sense, and sin, too, come back again, and his impressions fade and die. Have you ever felt this?

If so, or if you ever do, you should understand that you are feeling that tendency within you to unbelief and indifference, which, nursed to strength, ends in the scoffer's question, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

This, also, has often happened; perhaps it has happened to some of yourselves. A person has been sick, and, as it appeared to himself and to others, ready to die. How vain, then, have all earthly things appeared! How short life has seemed, and how all-important preparation for eternity! How earnest have prayers been—how has the Bible been prized! But God has mercifully raised up from the gates of death, and restored to health and strength again. Then earth has come

back into the soul ; eternity has seemed far off ; prayer has been restrained ; and preparation for death not immediately needful. There, again, is the same tendency to forget what is not looking us in the face, which, hardened into boldness by long delay, questions Christ coming at all.

This question of scoff and doubt should be closely looked at as to the root it springs from. The men that put it do not wish Christ to come. They want to walk in their sins unjudged. And what they wish to believe they easily persuade themselves must be true. So, observing that suns rise, and seasons come and go, and generations rise and perish as they have done for a long time, they say it will be as it has been. There is no fear. Christ is not coming. And some go even the length of persuading themselves that there is no Christ to come. Nature is enough. Nature is all.

The Apostle shows them, however, that they do not read history sufficiently far back. All things have not continued as they were from the creation. The flood came to break the sameness. The heavens and the earth that once were perished. And what has once been may be again. Nay, though not by the same agency, destruction will come again. Fire will do what water did before—only more terribly and utterly. The heavens and the earth which are now, are kept in store—reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

When Christ went away He promised to come back again. The men in white

raiment, that stood beside the disciples as they watched Jesus ascending, said : "He shall so come as you have seen Him go." All the Apostles in their preaching and writings said much about this hope of Christ's people. Now the scoffer here says : "He is long about it. He is slow to keep His word. There are no signs of His approach. The promise must be forgotten. You will never see Him again." But to these vain words there are three answers suggested by the context. The promise—

1. Though long deferred is not lost.
2. Though long deferred is not long.
3. Though long is not late.

1. Though long, not lost.

It is not lost out of the Bible. Scoffers look for it in the wrong place. It is not in the sky but the Scripture. It lies there still, waiting to be fulfilled ; and we may depend upon it, that if God has changed His mind, if Christ has given up thought of coming back to earth—the words of promise would be withdrawn. Does not He Himself say, speaking about heaven, and going to it : "If it were not so I would have told you." Nor is there anything in the promise that would make it a witness against itself. It has not set a day and failed to keep it. Christ, when questioned the day He went away about times, said they were in the Father's hands. It is simply that He is coming again, He says not when. And, if we make calculations that turn out erroneous, we must not blame the promise. Nay, we should withhold ourselves from calculation, for the day that brings the fulfilment of the

promise is to come suddenly, and our duty is to watch. The word of the Lord shall stand. Our being blind to it will not make it less sure. Scoffing will not blot it out. It is said that the ostrich, hard pressed, will hide her head in the sand, but that does not get rid of the hunters. It is hard to suppose that the ostrich can think that, though men commit the practical folly often.

The promise is not lost out of the mind of God. There are three reasons I may give to show that it cannot be so. (1.) God hates sin. He is making war with it continually. He intends to root it out of the earth. He means to make a new world, where all shall be righteousness. He will not fail, then, to send Christ to judge the world, and cast out of His kingdom all that offends. Then, (2.) God loves Christ, and in the great day of His coming He is to be glorified. That day is to be His day. All wrongs done Him shall then be made right—and all enemies shall then be put down—and He shall shine in the glory of His Father, and His own, with angels' glory round Him. Can the promise of this day fade from the Father's mind? (3.) God loves the Church. He has given it to Christ. He has heard Christ pray: "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given may be with me where I am." He has allowed all His people to fasten their hopes on a day of manifestation and resurrection. Can he ever forget the promise on which so much hangs? He is not ashamed to be called His people's God, because

He has prepared for them a city. How should he be ashamed (to speak with reverence), having built the city, not to bring them to it?

II. **Though long, not long.**

You know full well that things are long or short according, as they are viewed, and according to the things that are called so. A hundred years is a very long time for a man to live, but not long for a nation to rise and grow. Our own nation has lived many hundreds, and I hope is not getting old yet. Five or six children in the same family have, perhaps, gone to church together to-day. The road might seem long to the youngest, and very short to the oldest. So, walking on the ground, or looking down from a little hill-top, a few miles may seem a considerable distance, but if you could rise up to a great height they would seem quite insignificant. This big London of ours would appear a mere spot to one whose eye could take all Europe in.

Now this principle comes in here. The Apostle tells us that long to us is not long to God. A thousand years is but like a day to Him. He fills eternity; and what are hundreds of years to Him? The whole lifetime of a world is nothing to Him that made all worlds, and was before them all. It is only our littleness that makes the time seem long. A thousand years of history may be in the great march of Divine purpose but as one easy step.

There is another side to this great thought. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years. He does not mind the time taken to do His work, so that

it is done. If a day will do it, He will choose a day. And when it pleases Him He can put a thousand years' work into a day. Let Christ's miracles illustrate this. God is making wine every year—making it in the grape ; and His earth, and His sun, and the vine-life He made are all working at it. But when Christ made the servants draw wine from the water-vats, He put a summer's work into a moment. He did the same thing with the barley-loaves. He is making bread continually. The fields, helped by the rains and the sunshine, are busy making it now. But His own yearly work, and man's as well, He put into a moment when He broke a few loaves into thousands of portions. We must not, therefore, tie God down to time, or cry out, How long ! but look to Him and wait.

III. Though long, not late.

Late is out of time, out of season—too far behind to reach the end. Now, nothing, however long put off, is late, that comes at the right time. Ripe time is right time—earlier would be wrong. You know we sometimes have early harvests and late harvests. Now why should a farmer allow this ? Why should he not fix on some day of some month, and always begin harvesting on that date ? Because he knows full well that, if he did so, he would sometimes be cutting the corn when it was green, sometimes letting it be lost from over-ripeness. And, however long he may have in some years to wait, he knows that till there be ripeness, there is no true harvest.

Now it is so with God's seeming

slowness to come—He is waiting for the ripe hour. See how it was with the inheritance of Canaan. God promised to Abraham to give to him and his seed the land of Palestine. What did He do ? He first of all gave Abraham a place of graves in it, and then took his descendants away down to Egypt, and kept them there for hundreds of years. Yet He kept His word, and gave them the land. See how it was with the first coming of Christ. God promised to man a Deliverer, even before He sent Him out of Paradise. Eve thought He would come at once, and when Cain was born, said : " This is he." But thousands of years passed before the star shone that said, " the King is born." But Christmas is now hundreds of years old. So will it be with the promise of salvation to the Jews. So with Christ's second coming.

Three things God wants to ripen.

1. His own long-suffering. He is not willing that any should perish. So He waits, and waits still—warns, and still warns, calls, and calls still. Two persons trying to unravel a tangle, will act very differently. One is hasty : another patient, with reluctance, cuts at last. God patiently tries to bring all right.

2. God wants to ripen His people's patience next. Their graces, faith, submission, endurance, are being tried. And lastly, He wants to ripen the wickedness of His foes. Not that He likes to see wickedness tower up high, but He would prove that He is just. Before He burns the field, all will see that nothing but briars and thorns will grow on it. So mercy is magnified,

and justice cleared, and character perfected.

Now notice that the word here is promise. Is it *promise* to us? Now I do not think that to the young especially we can speak as if what is here written of should make the present life irksome. Can Christ's coming be a good thing to you, with life and this fair world before you? Well, even children have

longed for the appearing of Jesus. And if we knew Christ better than we do, we should all long for it. But this, I hope, you are prepared to say: "It will be good to get rid of sin; it will be good to see more of Jesus, and be like Him." The psalmist was right when he said: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

II.—Our Talk.

HERE is one more "Star-text."

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."—2 PET. i. 19.

Now I must ask you to pay particular attention to these three words—

Night, Lamp, Day,

as our talk will be about them.

1. Night.

The light shines in a dark place. The world is in night. Three things make it dark—

1. Ignorance.
2. Sin.
3. Sorrow.

Are there parts of the world where people are ignorant of God? Yes. What do they make instead? Idols. They worship gods made by themselves. You could take one, and carry it about with you; yet the heathen bow down to these bits of wood and stone. Do you remember what Isaiah, in his 44th chapter, says about the silliness of worshipping a god made by a man?

He describes a man going away down into the forest, and hewing down a tree with his hatchet, and then making an idol out of it; then taking the chips, and putting them into the fire, and roasting his dinner at it. Yet he goes and worships a bit of the tree, part of which he burnt in the fire. You remember the story of a woman in India, with her young husband, who had ordered an idol from the carpenter for their new house. Well, the carpenter was rather a long time in getting it ready; and whilst they were wondering and wearying for it, a missionary came and read a part of that chapter, and the young wife said to herself, "That is a very curious bit of reading to be in that book; it must be a very wise book. Our carpenter is just doing the very thing that book says. I think we might do without his idol." And so, by-and-by, they had their eyes open, and they came to worship the true God.

But we may be in darkness here, although we may know what the Bible

is saying to us about God ; and that brings me to the second thing—Sin. Although I say God made me, and He is Almighty, holy, good, and a great many things of that sort, yet if I sin, it is dark down in my heart. Sorrow, too, makes hearts dark. Suppose some time at night an angel should come down to London, and say to you : “ Come, and I will show you what houses have dark hearts in them. What houses there are where the people do not know God—where they are all distressed with their sins—where they have death, and sorrow, and affliction.” Do you think there would be a great many houses that would be bright? Not a great many; for make the houses dark where there is ignorance—make the houses dark where there is sin, and where there is much sorrow, and there would be comparatively few left. It is the night season with us all—it is the night time.

2. Lamp.

But, secondly, what do we have to give us a little light at night, that helps to cheer and drive away the darkness? We have the stars, but they are not always visible; and sometimes we have the moon, but not all round the month. Now, suppose we had neither the stars nor moon to shine for us, what would we have to help us a little? We might have a lamp. Well, that is what the text says we have in dark places. What is the lamp that burns down here in the dark night to guide our steps? The Bible. Prove that from Psalm cxix. v. 105—“ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

Well, then, that is the lamp. Prove from the same psalm that young people should take very good heed to this lamp—unto its shining—9th verse—“ Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, by taking heed thereto according to thy word.” Did you ever try to go out in a dark night with a lantern? You require to take care how it shines; you might have a lantern and confuse yourself with it. You must hold it so that the light will fall in front of you. You see a coachman driving a carriage on a dark night—does he sit in the light? No; the lamps are so placed that they throw their light on the road before him, so that he can see if he is going all right while he sits away back in the dark. Then suppose a man had a lamp in a dark house. He says: “ I have got a lamp,” there it is; but he never lights the lamp; do you think it would help him much? No. Then he puts a wick into the lamp, but doesn't put any oil; will that help him? No, it would not. Then he puts a little oil; wouldn't that give him a light? It would be a very poor light; but when he puts in more oil the light will get brighter, and he says, “ See what a nice lamp I have got.” Well, suppose this man, having got the nice bright lamp, was to go and put a bushel over it, and cover it up, would it give much light then? No. Who is it that speaks about that? Jesus Christ. “ No man having lighted a candle putteth it under a bushel, but sets it on a stand to give light to all that are in the house.” So that is the way in which we must take

heed. We must keep the lamp well trimmed. What is the lamp that shines all through time? It is the Bible; and to take heed to it is to read it, and to think of what it says to us, and to act according to it, "taking heed to our way according to Thy word"—that is doing what the Bible tells us. If a person does what the Bible tells him, will he fall into the ditch in the darkness? No; but if you don't mind your Bible lamp, you will be going on one day, thinking you are doing very nicely and safely, and you will fall into the ditch because you didn't take heed.

3. Day.

Well, is this Bible-lamp to burn all through the night of Time? It is. God will not take it away all through the night of Time. But will it burn after the day comes? It will not be needed then. I don't know what God will do with His Bible then—I don't suppose it will live in *this* form—made of paper, and printed with ink, and bound with leather; but the light that is in the Bible will be in heaven, for what is the light that is in the Bible? It is the Holy Spirit, or, you may say, it is Jesus Christ revealed there by the Spirit. Now prove that Jesus Christ is the light of heaven from the Rev., xxi. 23: "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Well, that is the day—the coming of Christ. Who is the day-star in that verse? Jesus Christ. What is the day-star?

The sun must be the day-star. Hence we have in our hymn—

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true and only light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night:
Day-spring from on high, be near;
Day-star, in our hearts appear!

Christ Jesus, who is to come and shine over the world in the resurrection. Suppose now, when wicked men are raised up, and Jesus Christ is in the heavens, coming with great glory all round about Him, will it be clear day to them do you think? No, it will not; they will be terribly afraid of the glory. Suppose a man were to go up to heaven, and go in without the day-star of Christ in his heart, would it be a bright and happy place to him? No, it would not; because he has no eye to see its light. He has not the love of Jesus Christ in his heart, and so it is all dark with him. Suppose I had an image of wood in the centre of the hall, and I was to say to it: "Do you see much just now?" and there was no answer. I say: "Oh no, it is dark to that image; bring me a light, and throw it upon the eyes of the image, would it see then?" No, it would not. You see, then, you must not only have a light, but you must have the heart to receive the light, and so it says: "The day-star shall arise in your heart." Well, that will be in heaven, when Christ comes to those that will have Him, and He will shine in their hearts, and when He shines in their hearts all will be glory, and they will not need any sun nor moon.

LITTLE TRACTS FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.—No. 3.

TALKING SMALL.

A LITTLE girl, on her way home from the church one day, said to her mother: "I do wish that the minister would talk small." Jane's minister never preached in a way that little boys and little girls could understand him. Indeed, although there were many children in the church, the preacher never seemed to take any notice of them, unless, indeed, when some of them made a noise. Then, and only then, he showed by his looks that he was aware of their presence; but, when silence was again restored, he went on as before, preaching to the grown-up people. It would have been much better if, at least occasionally, he had said: "Now, boys and girls, I have got something to say to you." Why, not only the children would have been all attention, but the men and women would have been more attentive than before, and many even of them would have profited more by what was addressed to the children than by all the rest of the sermon. My object in these Little Tracts for Little Ones is to "talk small." It is well, however, to remember that there is a great difference between "talking small" and "small talk." I am too much in earnest for the true happiness of the little ones to have either time or inclination for "small talk." At the family dinner-table, father or mother cuts up the roast beef into very small pieces for the little ones, but although the pieces

are, small, they are cut off the same joint from which father and mother take their dinner. So, in addressing the little ones, I would desire to talk small about the good tidings which were announced to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem.

As my chief object in writing these Little Tracts will be to lead Little Ones to Jesus, so that they may be Christians, I will in a very few words show how happy those are who love the Saviour. Some people, grown-up persons as well as children, think that Christians (in this world at least) are not happy. This is a terrible mistake. There was a little girl lying in a dirty, poorly-furnished room, and she was paralysed. She was unable to walk, and she was quite blind. A Christian gentleman calling upon her one day spoke to her about the wretched little room in which she lay, and she replied: "But my Saviour had not where to lay his head" (Matt. viii. 20). He then referred to her lameness, not being able to run about and play, like other children; but she at once said: "I shall follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth" (Rev. xiv. 4). Having spoken to her about her blindness, her cheerful reply was: "I shall see the King in his beauty, and the land that is a very far off" (Isaiah xxxiii. 17). Although she was so sorely afflicted, she was quite happy, because she had given her heart to God and accepted Jesus as her

Saviour. No one but a Christian would be happy under such circumstances. May the language of the reader now be—

"Jesus come into my heart,
I'll open wide the door;
I'll never, never more depart,
Thy mercy I'll adore."

W. FORBES.

NEDDIE'S TEMPTATION.

"**H**I, see what I have done!" exclaimed Mrs. Chalmers, as with a sudden movement she knocked down from the toilet table before which she stood, a box of sugar plums, which, dressing in haste, she had not noticed. "Here, Neddie, come help mother. I am in a great hurry, for Aunt Helen is waiting for me. If you will pick up all these candies and put them safely away in the box, you will be a great help to me."

Little Ned was sitting on the floor, playing with his blocks, but he jumped up at once at his mother's call, and his busy fingers began to pick up the scattered sugar plums very nimbly.

"Put it on the table when it is ready," said Mrs. Chalmers, "and then you and Lillie can go out and play with Milly. When we all come home we will have a nice treat out of that box."

"Aren't you afraid to leave Ned alone with all that candy?" said Aunt Helen, as the two ladies left the room. "He will surely make himself sick with it."

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Chalmers, "Neddie wont eat it unless I give it to him. He is a very honest little boy."

How good those candies did look as the rosy fingers lifted them one by one, and laid them in the pretty box. A sunbeam peeping in at the window

struck across them as they lay on the floor, and the crystallized sugar sparkled like diamonds in the light.

"Wouldn't dey taste good!" whispered Ned. "But I mustn't bite one; oh, no! mudder said I was a welly honest little boy."

But he turned them over and over most longingly, and the more he looked at them the harder did it become to resist the temptation to taste one.

"One little one, dess one little one." murmured Ned, taking one of the prettiest into his chubby hand, and looking at it on every side. "No, des two. One for Lillie, and one for me," and another sparkling candy lay beside that already in his hand.

"Des two, and dere's such a big lot here," he whispered.

But then something else seemed to whisper, "He is a very honest little boy," and, with a great sigh, Neddie dropped the two candies into the box, and shut the cover tightly down upon them. As he sprang up to lay the box upon the table, something lying beneath a chair close by caught his eye. Two more of those beautiful crystal drops! As he bent over them, and saw the delicious creamy substance which filled the centre peeping out from a break in the top of one of them,

the temptation was too great for his resistance.

"Dey dess left deirselves out for me and Lillie," he said, grasping them and thrusting them as deep into his small pocket as they could possibly be pushed down. "I must go find Lillie, and give her one. I'll tell her—"

His hand was on the door, but the guilty little heart stood still. What should he tell Lillie? The naughty fingers might steal the pretty candies, but the little tongue had never yet been stained by a falsehood, and it shrank back from the cherry lips in dismay at the bare thought of such a thing. As the boy stood there, all trembling and bewildered, the door opened from without, and Milly, his nurse, an old coloured woman, who loved him almost as dearly as if he had been her own child, entered the room.

"Neddie! Why, bless ye, honey, what ails ye?" she exclaimed, as she caught sight of his pale face and startled, troubled eyes.

"Oh, Milly! I'm most a tief; a wicked prison tief; and mudder said I was her honest little boy," sobbed Ned, throwing himself into her arms.

"Who said you was a thief, honey? They'd better not let old Molly catch 'em!" said the nurse, thinking that some one had been teasing her darling.

"'Twas me said so," faltered Ned. "I tiefed some candy out of mudder's box. Oh, Milly, dear, what shall I do?"

"Did you eat it, honey?" asked Milly, the truth beginning to dawn upon her.

"No, it's here," said Ned, mournfully thrusting his fat hand into his pocket.

But, alas! the chubby hand came out again, a sticky mass of sugar and cream, the candies having been crushed in his sudden spring into Milly's arms. Such a doleful face as looked up into Milly's then! Its despairing expression went straight to her heart.

"There, there, never mind, honey!" she said, as the blue eyes filled again, and the big tears began to roll slowly down the round cheeks. "I'll put you on a clean dress, and wash out that pocket, and we won't say one word about it."

For one moment the grieved eyes looked doubtfully into the dark face of the loving but foolish old nurse; then the doubtful look changed into one of certainty and determination, and little Ned said very slowly and gravely—

"Den I'd be a badder tief than I was before. I'm dess going to wait for mudder, and tell her all about it;" and slipping down from Milly's knee, he went to the window to watch for his mother.

For an hour the flushed face, with every now and then another tear rolling quietly over it, was pressed against the glass, "waiting for mudder," as he said in answer to all persuasions to go out for a play in the bright sunshine. Lillie, his two-year old sister, could not understand his peculiar mood, for she was used to having her merry brother ready at any time for a romp and frolic; but now, when she coaxed him to come out and play, his only answer

was a few big tears, and a sobbing—"I'm waiting for mudder;" and to all Milly's persuasions he returned the same reply.

At last the carriage drove up the avenue. Mother stepped out, and in another moment he heard her foot upon the stairs. She came into the room, and he turned slowly from the window to meet her.

A little pocket turned inside out, and covered with a mixture of sugar and cream; a tearful, penitent face; and a tremulous voice saying brokenly—"Mudder, I isn't a welly honest boy; I'm dess a naughtytief"—greeted her, as she came in. Mrs. Chalmers caught his meaning more quickly than Milly had done.


"Have you been eating mother's

candy, Neddie?" she asked very gravely.

"No'm, not eating 'em, only squashing 'em in my pocket; but I was going to eat 'em."

And then the story was all told—how he at first struggled with the temptation, and then been overcome; how at the very last he had repented, only to find to his dismay that he could not restore the stolen candy. Mother heard it all, with the tear-stained face laid close upon her breast, and the sticky, chubby hands clasping her own with all their little strength. And then she knelt down, with her penitent boy beside her, and thanked the dear Lord Jesus that, although he had yielded to temptation, she could yet feel that he was his mother's honest little boy.

'T WAS MY MOTHER'S.

 COMPANY of poor children, who had been gathered out of alleys and garrets of the city, were preparing for their departure to new and distant homes.

Just before the time for the starting of the train one of the boys was noticed aside from the others, and apparently very busy with a cast-off garment.

The superintendent stepped up to him and found that he was cutting a small piece out of the patched lining. It proved to be his old jacket, which, having been replaced by a new one, had been thrown away. There was no time to be lost. "Come, John, come!"

said the superintendent, "what are you going to do with that piece of calico?"

"Please, sir," said John, "I am cutting it to take with me. My dear dead mother put the lining into this old jacket for me. This was a piece of her dress, *and it is all I shall have to remember her by.*" And as the poor boy thought of that dear mother's love, and of the sad death-bed scene in the old garret where she died, he covered his face with his hands and sobbed as if his heart would break.

But the train was about leaving, and John thrust the little piece of calico into his bosom "to remember his

mother by," hurried into a car, and was soon far away from the place where he had seen so much sorrow.

Many an eye has moistened as the story of this orphan boy has been told, and many a heart prayed that the God of the fatherless and motherless would be his friend. He loved his mother, and we cannot but believe that he obeyed her and was a faithful child.

Will our little readers, whose parents

are yet spared to them, always try to show their love by cheerful obedience, knowing this is pleasing to the Lord? Will the boys, especially, always be affectionate and kind to their mothers?

Will you keep in mind that if you should some day have to look upon the face of a "dear *dead* mother," no thought would be so bitter as to remember that you had given her pain by your wilfulness or disobedience?

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME."

DURING a communion season, when three hundred communicants were assembled, the pastor, speaking of the great desirableness of early conversions, requested all present, who believed they had been converted after they were sixty years old, to rise. How many do you think arose? There were none!

Then he asked all who believed they had been converted after they were fifty to rise. Only two arose.

Then, how many after they were thirty years old. Thirteen arose.

Then, how many after they were twenty. Twenty-five arose.

Then, how many between the age of ten and twenty. Upon this nearly all arose.

Thus, dear children, you see that if a person lives to be sixty years old, without becoming a Christian, he is very likely to die without a new heart. Just inquire of your parents how many of their acquaintances were converted after they were thirty years old.

Do not wait to be older before coming to the Saviour. Life is uncertain. You see a great many little graves in the cemetery, of children younger than yourselves. It is not strange, then, that the Saviour spoke as He did about children being brought to Him. Some of the disciples seemed to be annoyed because the children were brought to Him. I suppose they thought as some do now-a-days, that they were too young.

The writer of this, on looking back to his childhood days, finds that nearly one-half of his playmates are dead. Also, that about all those who are now Christians gave themselves to the Saviour while young.

I hope, dear children, that you will think often of what the Saviour said about little children coming to Him, and of the danger of waiting till you are older, before going yourselves to Him, for you may not live to be much older; and again, as you grow older, you will find more and more to hinder you from coming to Him.

OUR CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

I.—Our Service.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Psalm xciv. 1-16; John ix.

PRAYER.

LORD, Thou art our Creator; Thou madest us, and not we ourselves. Thou hast told us, and we feel and know it, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We praise Thee for our bodies, with their eyes, and ears, and hands, to see, and hear, and work. We pray Thee to give us health and grace to use all our senses and powers rightly. We thank Thee for our minds and hearts, that think and feel. We pray Thee to keep us in soundness of mind; to teach us to think, and know, and feel rightly. We praise Thee that Thou madest men in Thine own likeness, and that now, when we are fallen and lost, Jesus puts Thy likeness in us again. O Lord, create us anew in Christ Jesus. Make us to know, and love, and be like to Thee more and more, till we come to the world where all are like Thee, and see Thee for ever. These things we ask for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Take as our text these words: "Having eyes, see ye not?"—MARK viii. 18.

THOSE of my young friends who are at school, and are learning English grammar, that they may know the construction of their mother-tongue, and use it properly, will understand what I mean when I speak about *degrees of comparison*. They know that adjectives, such as *wise*, *strong*, *bold*, may be employed as they are, or they may be changed to express higher degrees of their meaning—may become *wiser*, *stronger*, *bolder*; or, to express the highest, may be changed to *wisest*, *strongest*, *boldest*. We call these degrees or steps by big names—"positive," "comparative," "superlative." Now there is a regular way of changing adjectives; and there is an irregular, which is followed in a few cases. If I speak of *many* things, and add others, I then say, not *manier*, but *more*; and if I add as many as possible, I make them *most*. Now you are ready to say to me: What do you mean by talking just now about

grammar? Well, it is fair to ask, and I answer at once. My reason for speaking as I have done is just this. I wish to help your recollection by building my sermon to-day on the frame of an adjective irregularly compared; and I wanted to excite your attention. The adjective—the help of which I am going to take—is good, compared as you know thus, *good, better, best*. These three words are the three beams I am going to build my house on. I am going to speak of eyes both blind and seeing, that are good, better, best.

1. **Good eyes—eyes of the body.**
2. **Better eyes—eyes of the mind.**
3. **Best eyes—eyes of the spirit.**

1. Good Eyes.

The eye of the body is a very beautiful thing. Even in a picture how it lights up the face. See how dead a statue's countenance is for want of coloured eyes. But in a living person, moving, twinkling, beaming, how wonderful the eye is! Anatomists, who have taken the body all to pieces, and examined every part, tell us how marvellously it is made. If we should call the body the house or tent of the soul—and the Bible so speaks of it—then I should say the eye is the window of the house. The soul looks out at it; and the light comes in by it. The light comes in. Our Lord says the light of the body is the eye. The whole person is guided and helped by the eye's power of taking in light. Then the soul looks out at it by means of that light, reaching even to the stars. Besides, just as a person standing near a window will be seen by those outside, so the soul shows

itself through the eyes. Other people can often tell what state the soul is in from the body's eye; whether it is angry, or loving, or sad; at peace, or disturbed and restless. Some people's souls, indeed, can stand far back from the window, and look out, themselves unseen; others cannot help, perhaps because the room is small, or because the window is very clear, being seen distinctly. Souls, too, show themselves through other parts of the face besides the eye, as you may see shadows on a blind, or a hand under the canvas of a tent, but through the eye most. I was going to say, watch your eye-windows; but better it is to say, watch what is within, and you need not mind the windows.

But I meant, under this head, mainly two things—teaching two lessons—one of thankfulness, a second of carefulness.

1. Be thankful for eyes.

I am assuming that you all have eyes. Perhaps I am wrong. Possibly there is a blind hearer present. If so, I am sure he will join me in asking you to be thankful, though you know better than he can, if he was always blind, what you are to be thankful for. For you may be said to live in another world than he does, though you may be sitting side by side. Ye that have eyes, praise the Father of lights, and pity those from whom He has been pleased to withhold the power of seeing. Your pity, too, should be helpful. Do you know any blind person that you could read to, or teach to read with his fingers, or comfort in any other

way? Then lend him, so to say, your eyes. Let him see through you. Remember what Job says: "I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the lame."

2. Use your eyes well.

There are plenty of people, after all, who have eyes that do not really see. The light comes in through the window, no doubt, but they do not look out. The glass is obscured. The blinds are down. They do not observe and discern things. Of course I do not mean that they are altogether like babies, before they begin to notice, as we say, but they do not notice with attention, and intelligence, and profit. You know there is a common saying, keep your eyes open, or look about you. What I am now to recommend is in these sayings, though their application is often in the selfish region. Some one says that the first thing needed to describe any object, or to draw it, is really to see it, and there is great force in this. It is astonishing how much more one man will see in a house, a field, a crowd, than another. Now, I am anxious that when you are young, you should learn to see well. Two things are needful—attention and knowledge. Know what others have seen, and look to see the same, or more. Many of you may be now, or will be one day or other, away on holiday; will you take this advice, and try to see as much as you can? I do not mean as many things, but things as fully as attention will enable you. Attend, examine, enquire, and come back like the bees that you will perhaps see dipping their little beaks

into the cups of flowers, laden with honey.

But now—

2. Better eyes.

These, I have said, are eyes of the mind—eyes that can notice and relish objects which do not come in at the windows of the face. To use the mind's eyes is to think. And thought uses very wonderful eyes. They see much further than the body's eyes. High as the stars are, thoughts can go higher. Thought can go round the world. Thought can go back through the ages. Turn any day you like quite round and try if you can see yesterday. Last Sabbath-day was here a week ago, but you cannot see it now. But you can think easily of both; you can bring them up before the eyes of the mind. My eye sees now what is before me, my thought can see what was there last Lord's day evening. So again thought can go forward into to-morrow, dimly, yet truly. Nay, as one says, it can "wander through eternity."

Beasts and birds have bodily eyes. Some of them are sharper far than yours and mine. Have they thought-eyes? Well, it would be impossible to refuse saying that they can see more than their body's eyes take in. They remember. They feel. They fear. They observe. But to go on a step now, it is only to a very small extent that they can think, in the sense of putting one thing beside another, and comparing them, and making third things in the mind out of the comparison. But man has great and always growing power of doing this. Yet it is the power often

little used. It is known that seeing with the eye of the body is a thing to be learned. Now, many people are like those who have not learned to see. A great many colours are before them, patched on a board, but how they stand related to each other, what are near, what are far, they cannot tell. Or, to take a child's illustration. Here is a box of bricks of different sizes. One child simply tumbles them about. Another goes to work, observes the sizes, lays them one to another, notes how they fit, and at last builds out of them a beautiful mansion, or church, or tower.

Now, having eyes, will you not be at pains to see? You are at school, we shall say. You think you are educated if you are crammed with what enables you to answer questions. No, that is only getting the box of bricks. You must learn to put them together. You must try and be Solomons as well as Davids. David gathered materials—Solomon built the house.

Now, remember that mind's eyes are from God as well as body's eyes, and should be used with earnestness and care. I will immediately tell you something of the highest use, but just now I speak simply of the use. Young friends, try to think. Thinking is hard, but it is good. Here is a tangled skein; thinking is getting the thread disentangled. Here is a mass of dust and gold grains; thinking, is trying to get the gold out of the dust. Here is a pile of loose sheets; thinking is trying to make a book out of them. But always remember that all thinking will come to nothing that does not sub-

mit itself to the love of truth, and look to the fountain of all wisdom. "Each thought of Thine how deep it is." To find out God's thoughts, that is the true end of thinking. "In Thy light we shall see light clearly." There is the right result.

3. Best eyes.

These I called eyes of the spirit. The Bible does make a distinction between soul and spirit, which is different from that which parts animal or blood-life from thought-life. It lies, rather, between thought-life and God-life. Lying also, between mind and spirit, is heart; but the distinction I refer to is not between thought and feeling: Closer to the spirit is conscience, but this love of the spirit is something more than even that. Here is a chain, a ladder like Jacob's, from earth to heaven. Body, mind, heart, conscience, spirit.

The simplest description I can give you of these eyes is, that they are made to see goodness and God. But to see what is good, and to see God, is to love them. They cannot otherwise be seen. Then to see God is to see him as good. It is not to see God to think of Him as Almighty. Or to wonder at Him as all-wise. Or to contemplate Him as just. Or to say: "O Lord, how great is Thy power." There would be no seeing God if that were all. Nor is it sufficient to be able to say: "How marvellous Thy wisdom." That were nothing if there was no more. Nor even to say: "How grand Thy Justice." That is not all. All these serve love. "Yes," says some one, "God is love," and supposes he will escape. „ But justice is

not less strict that it serves love. If justice and love were two masters, you might escape from one to the other; but justice serves love, and will say: "Love is my master."

Now God gave to man at first the eye to see Himself and good, loving it. O, how the eye must have loved that light. Even as the body's eye loves sunshine. Adam liked to see God, more than we like to see the morning. But sin blinded the eye. There is a disease called *gutta-serena*. "So thick a drop serene has quenched these orbs," says Milton of his blindness. Sin was such a drop. And all men now are naturally blind. They cannot see God as good. They see Him as terrible, perhaps—or like themselves—but not as truly, purely good. But God has provided a remedy. He cures the blindness. I do not much care whether you say by giving new eyes or purging the old. The latter is the right way, if giving new eyes meant putting the old soul's being out, and creating another. Opening blind eyes is the Scripture phrase. How does God do it? By the Gospel. By the Spirit. But both of these lead to Christ. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," are the words of Jesus. The Gospel is Christ. The Spirit glorifies Christ.

I will put the connection of the two in another way. God has made an eye-glass for the spiritual eye, that it may see Jesus, and God in Him. That eye-glass is the Word of God; and there is this power about it, in the Spirit's hands, that blind people using it come to see. Use the old blind

eye in the light that is here—which shines from Christ through the Bible—and you will see. If you do not have the eye of the Spirit, use this glass, and ask God's Spirit to enable you to see through it.

To conclude—

1. All the three eyes are best.

To see God's works—to be able to think of them—to see God in them in all—that is the happy possession. To have eyes, to think, to believe, and love God—Oh, how happy!

2. If only one of the three can be had—the first is least, and the last best.

Even to think without seeing would be better than to see without thinking. But to think merely would be poor—unless God were in the thoughts.

3. If two of the three can only be had, the third should be one of the two.

To see and think is undoubtedly better than merely to see. But to see and know God is better than to see and have great thoughts. A humble peasant knowing God is better than a philosopher. Then a blind thinker, knowing God, is far better than a seeing thinker ignorant of God.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now they see Him a little, through a glass darkly. You know what a candle's flame appears to be in the sun. The sun was such, or hardly so much, in the presence of Jesus when Saul saw Him. So will what we now see of God be in heaven. "The sun shall no more be thy light by day." The glory of the heavenly Jerusalem is thus described. Would you like to miss the sight?

II.—Our Talk.

SHINING LIKE THE STARS.

TURN to the Book of David, 12th chapter and 3rd verse. Will any one count the number of words in the verse? How many are there? Twenty-seven words. Now let us say them together, word for word: "*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*" Now we will put stress on the important words. Say the verse with me, and dwell upon the chief terms: "And they that be *wise* shall *shine* as the *brightness* of the *firmament*, and they that *turn many* to *righteousness* as the *stars* for *ever and ever.*" Now, when are these people that are wise, and that turn many to righteousness to shine in this way? Find that out from the previous verse. It is to be after the resurrection. Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. It is to be after the resurrection—in the end of the world they are to shine. When people die, do their souls go out as a candle goes out? No; they live. And, when people's bodies are buried, do we see the last of them? We see the last of them here. Will they all come back again, do you think? Yes. Many of them that sleep shall wake. They will come back again. The next time you go to a cemetery, just look round upon the grave-stones, and say to yourself: "What a crowd of stones, but what a crowd of people if

they were to come up." And they will all come up again.

There was once a profane man that didn't believe the Bible, and, of course, didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead, and he lived in a city where there was a fine Necropolis. This place was built on the sides and top of a lofty rocky height, and on the other side, after you passed a little stream, there was an old grave-yard, with a great many flat stones laid on graves like a pavement. But at the top of the rock, where the new cemetery was, there was a monument of John Knox standing up against the sky. What do you think this man said? He said: "I should like, in the resurrection of the dead, to stand up beside John Knox, and see the people rise up in the old churchyard." That was his profane way of speaking. He will see them rise; but where he is to be, and who will be round about him, I don't know. But the angels will see it, and I think they will say: "We never saw such a grand spectacle as that. We did once see something like it, but on a much smaller scale, when Christ Jesus rose from the dead." Yes, that was very grand, but the beginning of it all was Christ Jesus. He came out of the grave itself with His countenance shining, and there was a great earthquake; "and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints

which slept arose and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." When Christ rose, Death knew that he was conquered. He said : "I am done for, slain, killed. I cannot keep my spoils now, they are only in my custody till Christ comes. He has gone out from me. I tried to hold Him, but I could not."

Find me a text in Acts, chap. 2nd, an expression that warrants me putting the matter as I have done, to show that I was speaking in a Scriptural way. The expression is this : "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." When Death comes to any person, and says : "I have come to take you away ;" did you ever know any one refuse to go? I never knew one. Do you think, if a rich man were to say : "O Death, I will give a hundred thousand pounds if you will go away : " do you think Death would go away? No. A lady, once lay dying—she was not a good woman, but very sinful—and death came upon her unexpected, and she cried out in her agony : "A thousand guineas for another hour of life." But Death, standing there, just laughed at her; he wouldn't give her another hour of life. But when Christ comes, and says to Death : "Give up to me the people whose dust you have got hundreds of years ago," Death says : "I will give them up at once." All the graves will open. Even down in the bottom of the sea, far below where the fishes swim, there are the dead. Well, they will hear Christ's voice, and be

standing all over the sea and earth, because, as Death could not hold Christ Himself, so Death will not hold any of His people. Christ says to him : "I did not give them to you." The oldest that death got, and the youngest—the old and the young—he will have to give all up. Well then, that is the resurrection. They are to rise again out of their graves. But will all rise out of their graves to shine? Some will rise to shame and everlasting contempt. Those that rise to shame and everlasting contempt will not shine. Does shame ever show itself in people's faces. Yes, it does very often ; and I think, when the bodies of the wicked come up, if you see them, you would see that they were ashamed of themselves, and try to hide themselves, and they will say : "Ah ! everybody that looks at us must despise us ; what poor fools—what wicked wretches we have been." Now, prove to me from Revelation that when Christ comes, people try to hide themselves. Revelation, chap. 6th, 16th verse : "And they said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

But let us speak of those that rise to everlasting life.

The wise shall shine, and those that make others wise shall shine—so the margin has it—they that are teachers. Because it is not only those that are wise, but they that strive to make others wise, who, being wise, strive to infuse their wisdom into others, that shall shine as the stars. We will keep by the wise, as those that turn many to

righteousness. How these shall shine. I want you to take the last words of the verse, and put them here, and then we will have the explanation of it. "As the stars for ever and ever." There are four things that I wish you to think of and remember. Is the heaven round the sun clear? Is the sky round the stars? Look out of the window at the sky; is it a bright thing or a dark thing? Now is not the sky itself a bright thing? But is the sky at night, all that you see so beautiful and blue, is it as bright as the stars? No, it is not. Look up at midnight to the sky; what is the brightest thing you see? The stars. The blue heaven is fine; but finer, and much brighter than the blue sky, are the stars. A minister of this neighbourhood, who was very earnest, lately died. Well, he will shine like the stars. Many others that sleep will shine too, but perhaps not so brightly. A boy has not had an opportunity, or been able, to help others, but another boy, one of Christ's children, has got a great lot of others to go to Sunday School, or come to Christ; don't you think that the last boy will be the brightest in the world to come? Yes, he will. They will all be bright, inasmuch as there will be no sin, but some will be brighter than others. Some of those who have been helped to heaven, when they see him who helped them, will say: "Ah, there is the man God sent to bring me to heaven; I love to look at him; I love to see Christ shining on him." Well, that is the idea.

Well, the second thing is this; when

you looked up at the sky and saw the stars shining, were they all the same size? No; some were big and bright, some very little and dim. Will all God's people, do you think—all God's ministers and Sabbath school teachers, and those that have been useful to others—will they all shine with equal brightness? Put it in this way: Do you think that Paul, and a minister that preached and laboured for a year or so and didn't have any blessing connected with his ministry, so as to be able to say: "I led these to Christ"—do you think they will shine equally? No. To shine as the stars for ever and ever will be to shine, with different degrees of light—some small and others large.

Old people used to discuss this question. Will there be degrees of glory? Will one glorious person be more glorious than another? Now what would you say? Will there be degrees of glory, some having more and some less? There will, you may be sure of that.

Now this will be a very useful illustration of it. Suppose I had a number of cups. Here is a large cup; here is one a little smaller; here is a smaller still; and another still smaller; down until I come to a very tiny cup. Suppose I had a great flagon of water, and poured it into this large cup until it was full, and then into the next until that was full, and then into the next, and the next, and so on, till all were full, filling them all up. What would you say they all equally were? You would say they were all equally full. But would you say they were all equally large? Do they all hold an equal amount of

water? No. Very well, then. This large cup is Paul; another is a minister of the Gospel; there is one successful; there is another not so successful; there is a Sabbath school teacher successful; there is another not so successful; there is a child, then perhaps a man, or a boy, but they have all done work for Christ in the world. But are they all equally large do you think? No. Suppose I took a little child, hardly able to walk, and then I put beside it a grown man; I might say they were both equally healthy, but might I say they were equally strong? No, because the one is a grown man and the other only a child. And so it will be in heaven. They will all be equally full, according to their capacity. Suppose these cups of water again. I look at the largest, it is pure as crystal, and the next is pure also. I look into them all, and come to the very last one, to this tiny little cup. But I don't find a single grain of dust in them all. They are not only equally full, but they are equally pure. Well, then, I find of all these saved persons that they have different degrees of power to receive the glory of heaven, but I find them all equally free of sin. Now, if anyone asks you about different degrees of glory, say it will be like a great many vessels, all equally full and all equally pure, but not equally large. Very well. Put these three things together and I think you have a true answer. Souls will all be equally full, all equally pure, but not equally large, or able to take in, like vessels that are equally full but not equally large.

As the stars for ever and ever.

I will give you another idea. Do you think the stars are of any use? Of what use do you think they are? Suppose we could get rid of all the stars; could blot them all out; can you tell me what use of them we should miss? Suppose we had two moons, would not that be as good as all the stars? I think it would not. It might give us more light, but we should miss the stars very much, I am afraid. Tell me some things that the stars are very useful for? Do you remember we had a talk about a voyage in the Mediterranean, during which there came on a tremendous storm, and the stars could not be seen for many days. They guide ships by the stars; now we have the compass; and are not so dependent upon the stars as the ancients used to be, but yet they are serviceable in that way. There is another thing about them. Would you like the sky quite as well without the stars? Would it be as bright do you think? No, it would not. Well, God meant to make us happy by giving us beauty, and this He does. I like to look out of the window, at the proper season, and see the green lawn starred with pretty daisies. There they are. I like to look at the green, with its pretty flowers, like stars in the sky.

Yes, the stars are very useful things. When people go to heaven, and after the resurrection, do you think they will just shine and say: "I am shining. What a beautiful light I am shining in?" Do you think they will do that, or be of use in God's world up in heaven? Ah, there is no doubt they will get ser-

vice to do. I have heard people speak of heaven in this way; they thought it a proper picture of heaven—that it would just be a great round circle of people—boys, girls, men, and women—all very happy and singing songs of glory. Do you think that is heaven? No. That is a part of heaven, no doubt. Do you think there will be any work in heaven? I tell you this, that if I understand the Bible, if any of you think you are going to heaven to be idle, you are mistaken. You will not have the hard, harsh work you have here; you will not have pain, and toil, and weariness in your work there; but you will have work to do. I should like to know what you think of it. Do you think an idle heaven or a working heaven will be the better to go to? The working heaven. Ah! yes. Even here the idle boy is unhappy. It is those that try to work their minds that are happy. And so it is with all kinds of work in the world; it would be a wretched world if there were no work in it. The more you give yourself to healthy, earnest, honest, good work, the happier you will be. I have seen a boy very miserable, sit and fret himself, and saying: "I wish it were so-and-so, I wish this hour would pass." And I have seen that boy's attention taken up by some one coming in and saying: Will you do this for me? and just as he does it everything seems to get into tune again; and instead of wearying for the hour to go, he is surprised to find that it has gone very quickly. I think God has made us so, that in heaven we shall have employ-

ment—shall be doing something with joy and satisfaction. Thus to shine like stars is to be doing some good. If you were to say to a star: "What good are you for?" the star might say to you: "Ah, if you come up here, I will show you whether I am merely blazing and shining." Suppose we go away. As we get nearer the star, it gets much bigger. We get nearer still, and we see that there is a lot of worlds round about this star, and this star is taking care of them. Just as if some person were looking through the window from without, and didn't see you sitting there, but saw me, and were to say: "What is that man doing there, walking about?" At last he looks down and sees you. "Ah! there's a lot of little people round about him, and he is talking to them." Very well, then. In heaven we shall be useful, like the stars—for ever and ever. Do you know the stars sometimes go out that are up in the sky? They do. Some short time ago, astronomers were watching a little point away up in the northern sky. It was a star on fire, and at last it seemed to go out. It is known—at least to those that are watching—that there are some stars seen once that we cannot see now. Will those that shine like the stars go out? Will any person die in heaven? No. Prove that to me in the 21st chapter of Revelations and 4th verse. "And there shall be no more death."

In flocks of sheep it sometimes happens that a wolf comes and takes a lamb or a sheep away. Tell me whose story illustrates that? The story

of David. What happened when he was a shepherd? There came a lion and a bear, and they stole a lamb from the flock, and David went after them and delivered the lamb, and he slew both the lion and the bear. Will no wolf be able to get in to the flock round about Christ up in heaven? Didn't Satan get into Paradise? Yes, he got into the Paradise of Eden; but Jesus has crushed him since that time; and at the last day he will be locked up in the bottomless pit, so that there is no fear of any wolf coming into heaven. There was once a mother that dreamed about a little child she had. And there was near the house a great precipice, very steep and high, and she dreamed that her little child was wandering away from the house and going very near to the edge of this precipice; and she dreamed that she rushed after him, to take the child away from the preci-

pice. She dreamed again, and she was still at home; and there was the little child doing the same thing—wandering away towards the precipice; and she rushed again, in her dream, to save him from falling over. Then she dreamed that she and the little child were up in heaven. She saw the child wandering away towards the wall of heaven, and thought the child might fall over. She was getting up to bring the child back again, when an angel came to her and said: "O, you need not rush after your child here, no one can fall over that wall; God takes care of that." And so it all comes to this: God takes care of us, and if we are in His keeping, we are quite safe. Those that are wise will shine like the stars; not all alike, but still will all shine, and all will be useful and will never go out—will never cease to shine, and serve, and sing in joy.

ALPHABET OF NOUNS.—X, Y, and Z.

XYLON.

(Greek—wood; thing made of wood; a tree.)

Xylon, with *xyla* apprehended,
Upon a *xylon* was suspended.

YOKE.

1. A yoke by thousands held in scorn,
But joyously by thousands borne;
By myriads feared or shunned, as morn
 By birds of night;
But to the weary, sad, forlorn,
 A welcome sight.
2. A heavy yoke which thousands pained;
But when the burdened ones complained,
Imprudent youth their suit disdained,
 With scoff and frown;
When love allegiance would have chained,
 Pride rent a crown.

3. Where rustic toil their aid employed,
Hundreds of yokes, their guard destroyed,
Borne off, left cheerful fields a void
 And stained with gore;
Till later years, in peace enjoyed,
 Brought double store.
4. Beneath the yoke, untried, afield,
See him refuse his strength to wield,
Till prong has pierced, and scourge has wealed,
 'Mid strugglings vain;
There see thy rebel heart revealed,
 Till tamed by pain.

ZEAL.

When was zeal

1. A devourer?
2. A garment?
3. The parent of pride?
4. The child of penitence?

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET QUESTIONS.—U, V, and W.

URIM.

1. Uncertain.—The word means lights, as Thummim means perfections; perhaps Urim consisted of rays of light from the stones in the High Priest's breastplate.
2. In the breastplate of judgment. Ex. xxviii. 30.
3. Levi's. Deut. xxxiii. 8.
4. From the time of Aaron till the captivity.
5. During and some time after the captivity. Neh. vii. 65.

VEIL.

1. The veil of the sanctuary. Exodus xxvi. 31. The sky. Hebrews vi. 19, 20.

2. The veil of the temple. Matt. xxvii. 51.—Christ's flesh. Heb. x. 30.
3. On their scriptures, and on their hearts. 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.
4. Ruth's, filled with barley. Ruth iii. 15.
5. Of ignorance and doom. Isaiah xxv. 7.

WING.

1. The wings of the living creatures. Ezekiel i. 8; x. 8.
2. The wings of the Seraphim. Isaiah vi. 2, *last clause but one.*
3. The wings of Noah's dove. Genesis viii. 11.
4. The wings of the cherubim above the ark. Exodus xxv. 20.

GOD COUNTS.

A LITTLE boy and girl, brother and sister, were playing in the dining-room, where their mother had set a basket of cakes on the tea-table and then had gone out.

"How nice they look!" said Charlie, reaching out his hand to take one.

"Oh, don't do that, Charlie," said his sister Jane; "you know mother told us not to take any of them."

"But mother didn't count them; and she won't know if I just take one," said Charlie.

"But remember, Charlie, that God counts," said his sister, "and He will know."

Charlie put back the cake, and turned away from the temptation, looking very serious. Presently he said, "You are right, sister; God *does* count; for the Bible says, 'He telleth the number of the stars;' and, 'The hairs of your head are all numbered.'"

One day a lady came home from shopping. Her little boy didn't seem to meet her and throw his arms around her neck, as he was in the habit of doing

to show how glad he was to have her come home again. Instead of this, he seemed to be afraid to look his mother in the face, and kept out of her way as much as he could all day. His mother thought it very strange, and wondered what was the matter.

At the close of the day she found out the reason. When she was undressing him to go to bed, he said, "Mother, can God see through the crack in the closet door?"

"Yes," said his mother.

"And can He see when it is all dark there?"

"Yes," she said. "He can see us at all times and in all places."

"Then God saw me," said the little fellow, "and I may as well tell you all about it. When you were gone out, I got into the closet and ate up the cake. I am sorry, very sorry. Please forgive me;" and he laid his head on his mother's lap, and cried bitterly. If this little fellow had remembered to fear, it would have saved him from this sin, and the sorrow which it brought him.

OUR CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

I.—Our Service.

SCRIPTURE READINGS : Gen. xl. ; Acts xvi. 25-40.

PRAYER.

GOD, Thine eye goes down into all deep places, and into all closed places. Thou seest dungeons and prisons as fully as palaces and open fields. We pray Thee on behalf of all prisoners. If any of Thine own children are in prison, as they have often been for love of Thee, cheer them, and send to deliver them.

Bring to right thoughts all that are in prison for their evil deeds. May they learn, like Manasseh, to pray in prison. Pity those that are in gaol condemned to die. May the Gospel find them ere the law takes their life. Bless all that labour for prisoners' good, and give them souls for their reward. Hear us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON.

The text to-day is in a book without a chapter : in the Epistle to Philemon, 10th verse—where we have these words, "My son Onesimus."

IT has been justly thought a happy talent to be able to write a good letter. Some volumes of letters—those of the poet Cowper for example—make very charming reading. As I say this, there rises before my memory the picture of a youth, on a sunny summer's morning, walking along the green banks of a beautiful stream of water, and through a skirting wood, with a volume in his hand covered with green glazed cloth, the perusal of which seems to give him special pleasure. The book is Cowper's Letters, the volume just had from a

newly-started village library, and the youth himself, just about to go to college, is charmed with Cowper's simple details about his translation of the old Greek poems of Homer. That by the way—and for the sake of old recollections, and boys that may read this, who are at school. There are other and yet better things in Cowper's letters. Some people, too, who could not write books, or like to see their letters in a book, have a special skill in writing letters, which their friends like to receive and read—they are so lively, or so graphic, or so quaint, or so full of love.

The best letters are those which are fitted to do good—that come into houses of care, or grief, or perplexity, like good angels. Many a service of love have letters performed, and in this way Christ's people have often been succourers of many. I knew a minister who made a point of writing a letter to every criminal condemned to death of whom he happened to read. Perhaps some of these letters won souls in prison. At all events, souls have been won by letters. And many, many have been comforted and helped. Such epistles as we are now speaking of break on trouble like beams of light, drop into wounded hearts like balm, and are to the weary like honey from the comb. It is worth remarking how many of the books of the New Testament are in the form of letters.

I have been led to say these things because the little book from which my text is taken is one of the most skilful, tender, and beautiful letters that were ever written. For its purpose, it is impossible to conceive anything more admirable. You feel, as soon as you read it, that its object must have been gained. Philemon could not resist it, so kind, so persuasive, so delicate, so powerful it all is. Almost every verse has some touch of sweetness and pathos about it, some subtle fragrance, some scent-like suggestion of a plea, rather than the statement of it, that must have penetrated the heart almost before the words could be read. If I should stay to point these beauties out, we should not reach the text, so we must pass at once to the 10th verse, and to the words

—MY SON ONESIMUS. What I have to say about him may be put in connection—with several answers to the question, Who was He?

1. **A Christian's slave.**
2. **A runaway thief.**
3. **A prisoner's scholar.**

There are other answers I might give, but these will suffice.

1. **A Christian's slave.**

Now, you will say that sounds strangely, how could a Christian hold a fellow-man in slavery? And when you remember, that even among the Jews there was no Hebrew held in slavery proper, and that captives of other nations, who were real slaves, had their rights guarded and cared for by God's law—and when you consider, on the other hand, that the Roman law put the poor slave into the power of his master, to scourge him, sell him, even kill him at will—providing, indeed, for his being killed in certain cases; as when a master was murdered, all his slaves in the house at the time, or within a given distance of the spot where he died, were forthwith slain—you may well say how could Philemon, becoming a disciple of Christ, keep a slave, under a law that even the Jews never allowed? But you can see that the Christians were not yet able to alter the laws, and that they did not need to do the bad things the law allowed them to do. Doubtless they did none of them. Then these things were not made plain as they are now, and it was God's will to put an end to this horrible evil by breathing a new spirit into the world, and teaching new principles

that would destroy all these bad laws. So Philemon was not counted by Paul as no Christian because Onesimus was his slave ; yet, doubtless, he would have been had he been a cruel or unjust master. For the rest, it was quite a different thing to hold slaves, with no power yet to get rid of the law ; and, when duty was not yet plainly proved, from doing the same when the application of Christian principles to this relation has been clearly demonstrated, and when power to change bad laws is in the hands of Christian men. So it was doing right, not an hour too soon, when our country set free the slaves in Jamaica, and when with the sword of war, America cut for ever the shackles of her bondsmen. On this subject, as in connection with others, God winked at times of ignorance, but now commandeth everywhere men to repent.

I could not quite pass this subject. But I pass from it now with expressing gladness that it is no longer needful to explain and discuss it as it once was. Freedom, in the spirit and name of Jesus, has arisen to free the captive everywhere ; and every yoke will be broken, and the oppressed let go free.

2. A runaway thief.

We do not know why Onesimus ran away. Perhaps, being a heathen, he did not like the restraint of his master's house since he had become a Christian. Perhaps, he did not like to hear Philemon talk to him about his soul. Perhaps he did not like the sound of the singing of psalms and hymns in the house. He did not like to go in to prayers. The whole place was dull to him since

that Paul came to Colosse, and changed his master by preaching about one Jesus. I think that very likely he thought all this. Many servants have no better reasons at times for changing their places. Or, perhaps, he wanted to see the world. He had heard people speak of Rome, and what a wonderful place it was, and he would go and see it. I have known boys have no better reason for running away from home, though I have known them suffer sorely for their sin and folly. Or, perhaps, he wanted to be off just to make his theft secure.

For we have called him a thief as well as a runaway. Not because he stole himself. Paul does not even hint that this by itself would have been a moral wrong. He would not otherwise have spoken of wrong as connected only with what Paul could repay. He does, indeed, send Onesimus back, but just because, without Philemon's consent, he would not keep his grateful services. At all events, we call him thief because it appears that he had robbed his master. Verse eighteenth, indeed, seems only to make the supposition. But that is in keeping with the delicacy of the whole letter. No doubt Onesimus stole money from his master. Perhaps he had been trusted by Philemon—was his cashier—and embezzled, and ran off. That is what many do now-a-days ; and human nature has been passing through the same temptations from the first.

I do not know whether any boys or other young persons employed in shops may read this. If there should, I hope

they would just as soon think of putting their fingers into the hot coal fire for the purpose of pulling out the red cinders, as of putting them into the till to take money out. I once saw a man putting his fingers in through the bars of the grate to take hold of the burning coals—it was not a trick or bit of legerdemain he was after either—but then he was mad; and if I saw a boy, or man, or girl, or woman put their hand into the drawer or money-box, to steal, I should say, there's mad George putting his hand into the fire. I hope there is no one reading this that has got stolen money about him, or hid away, like Achan's theft, in the tents. If there could be supposed such a one, I would say to him: "Back with it: it will eat your flesh one day like fire. Nay, it will go further than your flesh, it will burn, as will all sin, into your soul; and even though you should be forgiven, you will feel the scar of it, like many a healed burn-wound, as long as you live."

3. A prisoner's scholar.

It was a strange place you say to keep school in, and to go to school in. It was, but many a person has both taught and been taught there. I have read, as you have, of a prisoner who, without thinking of it, made a text-book for a school, which all the boys and girls of the country since his time have attended. Every child who has read the *Pilgrim's Progress*, has been in that prisoner's school. But there are other ways in which men go to prison to school. The prison itself is a teacher, grim, gloomy, disagreeable, yet a teacher of good lessons. It shows what is the

end of those things, which make prisons to be built. The wages of sin is death. It teaches what a strong thing law is. These walls will not open when you wish them—these great bolts and bars will not snap when you shake them. Neither will God's law yield. Yes, a prison is a sermon in stone. Sometimes, prisons have preached otherwise. For like all sermons, their preaching is much according to the hearer. Sometimes they say to the prisoner, see how little we can hurt you, or even confine you. You go through our narrow windows—nay, through our very walls, away up to heaven. If you should beat your hand or head against us, we could deal with that and laugh at you. But when you sit still, never minding our stone and iron, and send your soul away up through the roof, on wings of faith and love and hope, it is your turn to laugh at us. And the prisoner answers, Yes, yes, it is even so, and begins to sing:

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.

"For, though men keep my outward man
Within their locks and bars,
Yet, by the faith of Christ, I can
Mount higher than the stars."

I am sure that Paul and Silas found it so, when in the dark night, after a weary day, their bodies bruised and sore, their feet fast in the stocks, locked in the inner prison, they yet could soar away on the wings of praise up to heaven and God.

How Onesimus found his way to Paul's school in prison we are not told.

But there is little doubt that it was by some one who was already a learner there that he had been asked to come. Scholars very often bring scholars both to the Sunday and the day-school. But you will wonder how people could come and go so freely to a prisoner as the notion of regular teaching would imply. A verse at the close of the Book of Acts explains this. From this we see that Paul, though a prisoner, having a soldier always beside him, to whom he was chained by the arm, was not in a common gaol, and that by favour of the prefect, he was allowed to preach in the house where he staid without any restraint. He was probably freer to preach, being in bond, than if he had himself been free. And his preaching was attended with power. He had made converts in the very court of Cæsar. He himself, writing to the Philippians, expressly says: "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel. So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places." Among these other places must have been such low haunts and vile dens as a fugitive slave was likely to find his way to in Rome. Some one, perhaps, who had seen Onesimus in his master's house in Colosse, had found him there—perhaps in misery, like the prodigal—and had by kindness won him to come and hear Paul preach. No doubt the apostle recollected him, and used his former knowledge of his case to gain his ear and his heart, and led him thus to acknowledgment of sin and

faith in the Saviour, till the slave was made free with the liberty of Christ, and the fugitive was restored to his Father and his God.

It was then that Onesimus attached himself so warmly to Paul, and proved so amiable and serviceable, that the Apostle was quite knit to him, loved him like a child, and would fain have kept him always as a personal attendant. See how beautifully he puts this wish of his, so as to show his high regard for Philemon, his friend, and for Onesimus his child in the Gospel. "That in thy stead," he says. Philemon might have been best, but in his absence no better than Onesimus, himself so faithful, and reminding him so of the absent master. And thus, if Onesimus fled from Philemon's Christianity, he has, without knowing it, fled to where his master received the faith, to receive it in turn himself. The bondsman is brought to the man in chains, to be at once made free, and bound again.

There is no more wonderful story of the criminal being saved from his sins by means of one who, without crime was treated as a transgressor, except that account of the thief who, while hanging on the cross beside Paul's Lord, saw Divine glory in the Blessed sufferer—saw a King amid his woes—prayed and was heard, becoming a child of Him who, two hours afterwards, received his soul to paradise. The runaway thief converted by the Apostle in chains is yet not so marvellous a monument of gracious power as the dying thief, saved by the power of the

Saviour, on the very cross of curse and shame.

Now, take these closing words—

1. *Reflect how little we know when we are to be most useful.*

When Paul was made prisoner in Jerusalem, I dare say the whole Christian church mourned. They said: "O, what a loss to the cause of Christ to have that faithful preacher and planter of churches silenced." And when they heard how his year's confinement in Cæsarea, had been followed by years of imprisonment in Rome, how would they sigh and weary for his release. But he is doing God's work in circles; he probably could not have entered otherwise. What we have been speaking of to-day is but one of the sheaves which he gathered in the harvest of the Lord, when he could not go into the field without a Roman legionary with him. Who can tell but he won some of his very soldier-guards themselves? So, sometimes, it has happened that useful Christian labourers have been laid down long prisoners on sick beds. But learners have been taught by them there that would not otherwise have learned, and sermons have been preached by them there that could not otherwise have been preached.

2. Perhaps there are among the young and the old, who read this, a great many runaway slaves; my closing word must be to them—

Have you ever reflected that what is wrong in the relation of man to man, where slavery prevails, is right in the relation of men to God? All men are God's slaves by the fact of being His

creatures—slaves not in any degrading sense, but with the meaning of being His property, His own, at His disposal, and bound to obey His will. And all sinners are such bondsmen or boundmen, running away from their Lord and His service. They are tired, they say, of being with this heavenly Master, and want to be their own lords, and act out their own free will. What do they make of it? What did Onesimus make of it? I daresay, after the first fear of being missed, and chased, and caught, had passed away, he began to think this free life is fine. And when he got aboard the boat to carry him to Italy, if the day was fine, he said to himself: "How delightful this is." Yet a hundred fears would keep startling him; and his flight might be half repented ere it was concluded. But now he was in Rome—the desire of his heart to see. Did Rome come up to his expectations? Did he find no thorns there? Ah! he was not long in that great focus of vice, and fraud, and misery, of wealth and woe side by side, till he felt that he was lonely, unbefriended, wretched. It happens so to the transgressor, sooner or later. The sooner the better. "Has it happened to any hearing this? Are you saying to yourselves: "Yes, yes, it is an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the living God; what fruit have I now in those things of which I am ashamed? The end of these things is death." Then come you, and let me send you back to Him whom you have forsaken. I have His commission to send back as many wanderers as are willing to return, with


assurance of welcome. I have his own words calling you back. "Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings," saith the Lord. I need not write a letter to take with you from me or from man—though in as far as prayers are letters to heaven, we will send them. Here is a part of a message from Himself which puts words in your mouths: "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, say unto Him: "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render Thee the calves of our lips."

That's all. Can anything be clearer? Can anything be plainer? Can anything be surer? Can anything be kinder? Then every runaway slave among us that goes a step further in his mad course, does it not only at the risk of destruction before he may be called to stop again, but, in defiance of the message of his Father and his Lord calling him back. O that men were wise—that they understood this—that they would consider their latter end. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

II.—Our Talk.

STORY OF A SEPARATED BROTHER.

CHAP. I.—SOLD FOR A SLAVE.

 ONE day, in the neighbourhood of Shechem, a man belonging to the place was pursuing his road through the open fields, when he observed a youth at some distance whose appearance and behaviour at once riveted his attention. The lad was blooming and fair to look on, seemed about seventeen years of age, or a little over, and was quaintly dressed in a tartan-plaid, the colours of which, gaily variegated, made a very pretty pattern. The wearer of this many-hued garment looked like one disappointed, perplexed, and searching for something he had hoped to find. For he would now stand still for a moment, and look round about him with strained eye; then he would advance

quickly in one direction, and anon stop short, turn back, and go off toward a different quarter—in short, acted as one puzzled and unable to decide what he should do. The Shechemite watched him for a little, and then moved towards him, kindly interested in his seeming perplexity. As he came near he hailed him, and asked whether he was looking for any one; adding, that perhaps he might be able to give him some directions. The youth replied at once that he had come from Hebron, to see his brothers, and take back word to his father whether they were well; that he had hoped to find them in this neighbourhood, but could meet with them nowhere, and did not know whither

next to take his course. "Your brothers," said the other, "how many are there of them?" "They are ten in number," said the stranger; "all my father's sons, though not all children of the same mother—and none of them my full brothers—for my dead mother had just another boy and myself. He is younger than I am, and is at home with my father. Poor little fellow, our mother died when he was born; and you need not wonder we are all fond of him." "O" said the kind questioner, "I know the men you speak of; they were here very lately, and I had some talk with them; but they have now left this place, for one day I heard them say: 'Let us go on to Dothan—there are rich pasture-lands there.' I will gladly put you on the road to find them, as my road lies in that direction." So the two walked along together, till at a spot some little way forward, they parted, and the young stranger, thanking his guide, went on to seek his brethren.

It was not surprising that the man of Shechem should know at once the men that their young brother was now in search of, for ten brothers, all feeding their father's sheep together, must have been an unusual sight; besides, I am sorry to say, some of their number were rather rough and wild, and had often drawn people's attention by their wrong conduct. Indeed, their younger brother, now sent to seek them, had found occasion for reporting to their father their bad behaviour, to the old man's great grief. In all likelihood, he did not do so without speaking first to themselves, and you may be sure, as they did

not care to mend their ways, they bore their young reprovener a grudge. I fear he will hardly be welcome when he arrives among them at Dothan.

Whether he had some misgivings himself, as he pursued his journey, I cannot tell; but no sooner had he appeared in the distance, and his brothers knew him by his coat of colours, than bad thoughts entered into their minds. "See," they cried to each other, "there is our fine dreamer coming." The reason why they gave him this name, I may here explain. Joseph—for as you now know who I am speaking of, I may as well name him out—had received two curious prophetic dreams from God, telling him what would in after days come to pass, and he had told them to his brothers and his father. Now, both dreams seemed to say that Joseph was to be greater one day than all his brethren, nay, than even his father; and though his father knowing that visions had come from God to himself, took note of what Joseph said, he yet rebuked him for his pride, while his brothers quite hated him for what he had said. His dreams were very curious. One was, that his brothers and he were all in the harvest field together, binding sheaves, when this strange thing happened. The sheaf Joseph had just bound, and laid along on the ground, got up, and stood upright, and his brother's sheaves came round about it, bowing down before it as if it were a king. When he told this to his brothers they were very angry, and railed at him, and were filled with spite. They did not like him before,

because his father was fond of him, and shown his special love plainly, but now they quite hated him. The other dream was, that the sun, and moon, and eleven stars of the sky had come and bowed to him, as to a great man. It was when Joseph told this to his father, that his father spoke reprovingly to him, though he did not forget the dream. Well, then, it was in bitter mockery and anger, that the brothers said in Dothan, when they saw Joseph coming: "See this dreamer." It would have been well for them if they had stopped there. But they went on to say: "Here's a good opportunity for getting rid of him. His father is not here to see us. Let us kill him, and throw his body into some pit. It is easy to tell a story to the old man how some wild beast had met him, and torn him in pieces. Let us do it; nobody will know anything about it; and we will see what will become of his fine dreams." They forgot that God would see them—and that dreams from Him could not fall to the ground. So, after hatching this wicked purpose, they resolved to kill Joseph, and would have done it, had not the eldest, kinder than the rest, formed a plan to save him, and take him home to his father again. Reuben said: "No, no, do not let us lay hands on him to slay him—we had better not shed his blood; a deep pit will answer the purpose, and there is one close at hand. Let us just throw him in, and leave him to die, and then we will be able to say that none of us shed his blood." To this suggestion the others yielded. Reuben's plan was,

by-and-by to take Joseph secretly out of the pit, and send him safely home.

The thing had been hardly arranged when Joseph came up, and greeted them with his father's good wishes and enquiries, though his heart failed him a little when he saw how scowling and fierce some of them looked. Their answer, with bitter upbraidings, was to lay hold of him, and drag him away to the pit's mouth. Simeon was among the foremost to put hands on him, and Dan, and Gad, and some others whose bad conduct Joseph had reported to their father, were eager to help. When the poor youth saw what his cruel brothers meant, he began to cry, and pleaded with them to spare him, and let him go away home to his father. "O do not kill me," he said; "do not throw me into that deep pit—do spare me for our father's sake." But they would not hearken; but stripping off his beautiful coat—his father's fond gift—they heaved him into the pit, and left him there. Then, as if they had done a fine deed, they went and sat down to dinner. Happily, the pit was dry, or Joseph might have been drowned in the water that was often deep in such places; but while his cruel brothers were eating and drinking, he was left to starve. However, there was another among them that was not willing he should be allowed to die, and, when opportunity arose, he spoke a word to save him. It happened in this way. As they were dining, a company of Ishmaelites—merchants—came across the country on their way down to Egypt, with bales of goods to sell—

packages of spicery, and balm, and myrrh, such as their own land produced, and which they wished to exchange for money or Egyptian produce. "So," said Judah, as he saw them coming, "what a lucky chance! Here's better than letting Joseph die. That will bring us no gain. What do you think, brothers, of selling him? After all, he is our brother, we had better not be guilty of his death. He will be sufficiently out of the road away down in Egypt, and then we will make some money out of him. Yes, let us sell him to these Midianites." The proposal pleased the rest, and hailing the merchants, as their camels came footing it along with their burdens of merchandise, they asked them if they would buy a young fellow they wanted to sell. Now these traders were ready to buy anything they could sell again with a profit, and they knew that a healthy young slave would bring a good price in the Egyptian market. So when Joseph had been taken out of the pit, and they had seen what sort of a youth he was, they struck a bargain with his cruel brothers, and paid them down twenty good silver pieces. Joseph's cries and appeals were again of no use—the brothers wanted their revenge, and the merchants wanted their profit on a good bargain.

Reuben was not present while this was going on. He had slipped away when the others sat down to dinner, and had taken a round-about road to reach the pit on the other side, where the rest could not see him. When he came up to it—having taken a good

while to make sure his brothers would not be watching—behold the pit was empty. Joseph was gone. His eldest brother's plan had failed. O, how bitterly Reuben upbraided himself for not acting a bolder part. "Have they killed him," he said to himself, "after all?" So he tore his clothes in his grief, and hastening back to his brothers, cried out: "The child is not—our young brother is gone—the pit is empty; what shall I do—what can I say to my father? Alas, alas, where shall I go?" "Stop your wailing," said the rest, "it's all right. See, there's the money we got for him. He's on his road to Egypt by this time; and as for our father, why it is easy to palm a story on him. There's Joseph's fine coat; let us rend it in pieces and smear it with blood, and say we found it. Our father will readily conclude that a lion or bear has torn him, and we will keep each other's counsel, and let Joseph see to his dreams." No sooner said than done; they tore the coat, dipped it in the blood of a kid that they killed for the purpose, and by-and-by showed it to their father, with these heartless words: "See if that is your son's coat or no." The old man knew it too surely, and seeing it all torn and bloody, said: "It is my son's coat: a wild beast has devoured him, and now I will mourn for him till I die." And days and months and years after, he wore sack-cloth and mourning, and would not hearken to his children when they tried to comfort him. They began to see they had gone too far, and to wish they had not acted as they did. But they

would not tell the truth, and held on with the black stains of lies and cruelty on their conscience. The twenty pieces of silver could do nothing to cover them.

Meanwhile the Midianites had reached Egypt, and, going to the slave-market, had met with a high officer of the king's—the captain of the guard in fact—and sold the young Hebrew to him. I do not know how many silver pieces, or what Egyptian merchandise they got for him, but no doubt they took a good profit. And Potiphar, the officer that bought him and brought him

into his house, had soon good cause to be pleased with his bargain. For Joseph was obedient, and faithful, and active; and God was so with him that every thing prospered under his hand. His master soon noticed this, and step by step advanced him in the household till he left everything under his charge, and called it a happy day that brought him such a treasure. Indeed, Potiphar took care of nothing; Joseph managed all, and was well off. Only he was far from home and his father, and was a slave.

ANSWERS TO ALPHABET QUESTIONS.—X, Y, and Z.

XYLON.

Christ, spoken of by himself as "*a green tree*," Luke xxiii. 31, was apprehended by a band bearing *slaves*, Matt. xxvi. 47, and suspended on the *cross*, Acts v. 30.

YOKE.

1. The yoke of Jesus. Matt. xi. 29, 30.
2. The yoke of Solomon's rule. 1 Kings xii. 4.

3. Job's yokes of oxen. Job i. 3, 14, 15; xiii. 12.

4. The yoke of the untried bullock. Jer. xxxi. 18.

ZEAL.

1. John ii. 17; Psalm lxix. 9.
2. Isaiah lix. 17.
3. 2 Kings x. 16.
4. 2 Cor. vii. 11.

TREASURE IN HEAVEN'S BANK.

THE first snow was falling, and Lottie and Louis were watching it from the window with very happy eyes. The mother came and stood beside them, with an arm around each, and thought of another little boy and girl who twenty years ago used to watch the snow-flakes fall. Alas! the snows of a dozen winters had rested upon that brother's grave, and the snows of time had begun to fall on the sister's head.

But the mother's eye was bright, even when she thought of the early blessed dead. Hers was a happy home of love and temporal blessings. "She was not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household were clothed in scarlet"—that is, in warm, suitable garments.

Just then came creeping down the walk two little barefoot girls. One had a thin old shawl thrown over her head and half-bared arms, the other drew her

scant sleeves down as far as she could over her red cold hands.

"Poor little things!" said mother; "I am glad they happened to pass just now. I want you to look at them well, from their poor bare feet to their half-covered heads. Then I think you will like to leave watching the snow for awhile, and help me in some work I am going about."

"We are ready now, mother," said Lottie, jumping down and stealing her hand into her mother's.

The three went up stairs to the cedar closet. Here most of the winter clothes were stored in summer time.

"First we will look over this stocking-bag," said mother.

"Looking over" was always a delightful process with the children. Now mother laid out various little crimson-topped socks and outgrown stockings, and put them into the large clothes-basket on the middle of the floor. Next a box of flannel garments were looked over, and two or three sets of last year's robes were placed with the stockings.

"How you children do grow!" said mother, with a glad smile, as she looked at her chubby pets.

All the morning they spent among the drawers and boxes and presses, until the big basket was heaping full. Mother looked at the pile with great satisfaction.

"Now I mean to turn every article there to the very best account I can."

"Are you going to make a rag carpet, mother?" asked Lottie. "I should

love to sew the rags for you. I helped Aunt Lucy once."

"No; better than that," said mother.

"May be she's going to sell them to the old china man, Lottie," said her little brother. "He brings beautiful things in his basket."

"Better than that, my dears. I am going to lay up treasure in heaven with them."

The children looked up at each other a little puzzled, but Lottie soon suggested,—

"I think you are going to give them to the poor."

"That is just it, Lottie; and our dear Lord says that He will regard all such acts of kindness, be they ever so small, as done to Him; and more than that, He says, 'They shall in nowise lose their reward.' They are treasures laid up in heaven for us. We cannot take with us any of our property when we leave this world, but we may send it on before us by doing good to Christ's poor."

The basket of clothing was well studied over and assorted, and a great many widows' hearts were made to leap for joy at the sight of a parcel made up from it. Many shivering little forms were comforted by the warm garments, and many heartfelt prayers went up to God for the kind givers.

It is better than great stores of gold to have the prayers of the poor in our favour. They can procure for us what money could not buy—the blessing of God.



OUR CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

I.—Our Service.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: DEUT. v. 22—29; 2 PETER, i. 12—21.

PRAYER.

THOU who art the King eternal and invisible, whom no eye hath seen or can see, we praise Thee that Thou hast shown Thyself to us in Jesus Christ, so that we can think better of Thy fatherly love towards us. We praise Thee, that this Thy love shines in Him, as dying for our sins and living to save us. We do not see Him now, but we read about Him when he was on earth, as seen, and touched, and heard by many; and we think back to Him in the days of His flesh, and up to Him now in His glory. He and Thou, O Father, are one. Seeing Him we see Thee. O grant that with thought and love of our heart we may all through life see Him, and Thee in Him, and may at last see Him as He is when He shall appear, and be like Him, and with Him for ever. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day is a somewhat long one. You will find it in 1 John i., 1, 3,—“That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.”

THE Word here is not the word which is spoken or written—but the Word who speaks. It is not the Bible, but Jesus. It is the same Word John speaks about in his Gospel, where we read: In the beginning was the Word. The same, also, of whom he speaks in Revelation, when he says: His name was called the Word of God. Here He is the Word of life—the living Word—the Word that has life, is life, and brings life.

Let me try to give you some idea of

the meaning of the title. You never saw a soul. You feel within you that you have a soul; but you do not feel another's spirit, and you never saw it. But you have seen soul shown in the face, have you not? You have seen eyes that let states of peoples' souls be seen. You have seen them bright with joy, heavy with sorrow, flashing with anger, beaming with love. So, you see, though body is not spirit, it can show it, and prove its presence.

Again: you never saw the thing we

call life. When you have trod upon a beetle, and killed it, you never saw the life going out of it. But you can see life in the countenance. You know the difference between a stone face and that of a living person—between the face of a corpse and that of a living man. So, again, body which is not life can yet show it.

Once more : you never saw thoughts, or heard them. If you were to stand at a little distance from London, you would hear a sound of its traffic. Put a watch to your ear, and you hear its beat. Physicians hear the air in your lungs. But in the busy thoroughfare of your soul thoughts come and go, and make no noise. Lay your ear to the breast of any one, you may hear the heart beat, but no sound of thought. But words can make them be heard. When a man speaks, he sends his thoughts by a telegraphic apparatus of God's making in the air into other people's ears. That is thinking aloud. Words show thoughts.

One other illustration still. Speech shows life as well as lets thoughts be heard. Once the body of a drowned man was taken out of the sea. He seemed dead. But they laid his body before a fire, they rubbed his limbs, they tried to get the chest to heave. At last he breathed, but they did not feel sure. But at length he opened his eyes, and spoke. They were sure now. The dead sat up and began to speak. So words show thought and life.

Now, somewhat in this way, Jesus is the Word of life. In His human nature—His body and His soul—He

shows God's thoughts and God's life. He brings God, who is a spirit, forth and near to us. But there is more than this. He is God. He is life. He is the eternal life, that was with the Father, and was manifested to us. But He is God in our nature—Emmanuel—God with us.

Now, you see that my great subject this morning is Jesus, as declaring the Father and bringing life to us ; as made flesh, and dwelling among us, showing the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. You remember that certain Greeks asked to see Jesus. I cannot bring you to a sight of Him, as Andrew and Peter might do them. But I wish to set Him before your minds. May the Spirit of truth show Him to us.

I. John in this verse tells us a threefold truth about Jesus, by a threefold recollection of Him.

1. **He was real man.**

There was an old set of people called Docetae—appearance men. They held that Jesus was man only in seeming or show. But John says, we saw, heard, touched Him. Twice in the course of His stay on earth His disciples thought Him a phantom, or spirit. On the sea of Galilee they saw Him walking on the waves, and cried out in fear ; but He said : " It is I." Again, after his resurrection, when He stood among them they were frightened ; but He said : " Handle me, and see : a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." This is very wonderful, for that voice could calm a storm and raise the dead ; that eye could pierce hearts and read thoughts ; that hand could make a

barley-cake multiply to the feeding of a multitude. Some of you may have seen a passover-cake. When He broke loaves shaped somewhat like that, they sufficed for thousands.

2. He was near.

He lived among men. He was not a hermit. He did not shut Himself up in a palace, and ask men to come to Him. He had His house alongside of theirs. He went to church among them. He met with them, talked with them. He could not have shown God otherwise; for He is not far from every one of us. He goes out and in with us. For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

3. He was kind.

He did not make people afraid of Him. We do not know what His face was like—we do not know what His voice was like—but men looked on Him. He once called little children; yet that was the voice of God. God once spoke, and Adam and Eve fled. God once spoke, and a trembling nation said: "Do not let us hear it any more." The thunder is called God's voice. You know the story of a little boy, who, being told in a thunder-storm that the thunder was the voice of God, and that he should not be afraid, said: "I know, but I wish God would not speak quite so loud." Now though Jesus brought God's voice near to us, it was winning—it was love. Only bad men need to fear Him.

Real, then near and kind.

II. By a threefold reminiscence. There were three witnesses—ear, eye, hand.

1. The witness of the ear.

What did they hear? Of course, the general answer is, they heard Him speak. But let me break it down, or rather, branch it out. They heard Him read. Turn to Isaiah lxi. Jesus once read aloud that beautiful passage. They heard Him preach, in synagogues, in the Temple, upon the mountain side, from a boat on the lake. They heard Him sing praises. From the upper room, when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. They heard Him pray. They heard Him say: "Father, the hour is come." They heard Him address them by name—heard Him say: "Simon, Phillip, Martha, Mary." They heard Him call to what could hear no other. To winds, to a deaf ear, to the dead. Peace, He said; be opened; arise; come forth. They heard Him cry, sobbing and weeping, on Olivet and in the Garden. They heard His great cry on the cross. They heard Him bless—the last thing they heard was blessing.

2. The witness of the eye.

They saw Himself, and they saw His actions. They saw Him eat and drink. "He took and did eat before them." They saw Him sleep, as we read, in the ship. They saw Him walk—"looking on Jesus as He walked." They saw Him once ride, when the prophecy was fulfilled that said: "Behold thy King cometh." They saw Him work a thousand miracles. They saw Him angry once or twice. They saw Him transfigured. They saw Him weep. They saw Him nailed to the tree. They

saw Him risen, many times. They saw Him go away up into a cloud, and so to heaven. O, how in all they watched His looks! How they treasured them up in their souls!

3. The witness of the hand.

They touched Him in the days of His life. They felt His touch. They did, both for healing and blessing. You remember one who touched Him stealthily, and felt all mightiness and all knowledge meet her. Many touched Him and were made perfectly whole. Then He laid His hands on the sick, and healed them. He laid His hands on little children, and blessed them. They touched Him for worship. They came and held Him by the feet. They kissed Him, giving the common salutation of near friendship. "Thou gavest me no kiss," He said to Simon the Pharisee. But twice we read of His being kissed. Once in love, when the repenting and pardoned sinner covered His feet with kisses, and washed them with tears. Once in treachery, when Judas said: "Hail Master," and gave His enemies the sign agreed on. His foes touched Him to smite Him, to pierce Him. But these are not referred to in this passage. Then His friends touched Him dead. I wonder what were Nicodemus' thoughts as Joseph and he wound Him with spices in the linen. It is a tender, sacred thing to touch the dead, to lay them in the grave. But never was such a burial as Christ's. They touched Him when He was risen again. He bade them handle Him and see that it was Himself. Read that

wonderful story of Thomas, and let all its tenderness fill your heart. "And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." Then saith He to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answered, and said unto Him: "My Lord and my God."

Dear children, have we helped by these statements to make Jesus real, and near, and kind to your soul's look. You can see, you know, with the eye within. Can you think up to Jesus now? Can you suppose Him looking towards you? Can you see love in His face? Can you seem to hear Him come? Can you feel His arms around you? Can you trust Him, and give Him your hearts?

But you will see Him with your eyes. "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." You will first hear Him. When your body is dust in the grave, a voice will wake you. Perhaps it will call you by name. His own children will know it to be their Saviour's voice. Then you will see Him up in the clouds, all light and glory. You will gaze on Him, on His, with desire and delight. Others will try to look away from Him, but your eyes will be riveted on Him. And you will hear Him speak, and say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father!" while to others He will say: "Depart!" You will go near Him. You will get a welcome from his lips.

II.—Our Talk.

STORY OF A SEPARATED BROTHER.

CHAP. II.—RAISED NEXT THE THRONE.

ROADS that lead in the end to a great height often go down first into deep dark hollows. It was so at this time of Joseph's life. For, after being trusted and honoured by his master, he was one day cast suddenly into prison. It was the doing, however, of his master's wife, who was very angry with Joseph because he would not hearken to her when she wished him to do a wrong thing, on which she had set her heart. Joseph said, when she tempted him: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." So all her liking for Joseph turned into hatred, and she made up a false story, and told his master, Potiphar, that he had been a very bad and faithless servant. His master, believing his wife, though her story was all a lie, grew very angry, and cast Joseph into prison; and the poor youth that had been sold for a slave by his brothers, was now in a dungeon for no fault of his. But God let him be cast down in this way that He might lift him up.

Good people carry their character with them wherever they go. Joseph lost his pretty coat of many colours when his brothers sold him, but he did not lose his truth and fear of the God of his fathers. So when he lost his master's favour, he did not lose his own sterling faithfulness. He will do his duty in a prison as well as in a palace. This soon appeared in the gaol into

which he was cast. Perhaps the governor of the prison, who knew well for what slight causes great men cast their slaves into the dungeon, had a notion that this youth had done no evil. Perhaps he knew something of the way in which the thing had been brought about. Be that as it may, he soon saw that Joseph was an active, trustworthy person; and, by-and-by, giving him one thing after another to manage, he came to leave the whole care of the prisoners to his wise arrangements. The keeper of the prison found that he could take his ease, and that everything was better done than he had ever been able to do it himself. The gloomy gaol became under Joseph's management almost a cheerful place; he was so firm and yet so kind, that all the prisoners came to like him and look up to him. Now, surely, here is something very worth noticing and admiring in Joseph. He was quite an innocent man. But instead of sitting down, and fretting and complaining about his wrong, he set himself to see if he could do some good in his new position. Ah, young reader, that is the way of reaching happiness. When the bees in a hive find something not nice on the floor of their little house, that they cannot remove and cast out of doors, they go to work and cover it over with wax. So it is good when things go against us not to waste our time asking how this and that happened,

and murmuring about the result, but just to set about doing what is right in the new circumstances. In this way we shall always make the best of them. Joseph did. For his good character, and kindness, and serviceableness, so won on the prisoners that in any trouble they always wished to see him. The governor was very pleased to have it so, not only because it saved him a deal of care, but because he saw that Joseph was helped by God, and did everything in the best way.

Now, one morning, after a while, this curious thing came about. Two prisoners that had come lately into gaol, and who were in their place rather great men, had each a dream in the same night. There was something in the dreams very remarkable, and they could not get rid of the impression produced by them. When Joseph, therefore, who was in the habit of going round the rooms in the prison, to see all the prisoners, came to where they were kept, he saw that there was something amiss, both were so sad and thoughtful. So he asked them what was wrong. Then they said that they had dreamed during the night strange dreams, and they could not in the gaol get any wise men to tell their meaning. On this Joseph, whom God was leading and teaching, said: "Tell me your dreams. God is the true interpreter." So one of the two, who had been Pharaoh's principal butler, told his dream. He said that in his dream he saw a beautiful three-branched vine, and as he looked at it, a year's processes passed before his eye. The vine budded, and blossomed, and

brought forth grapes, till it was hung with bright clusters. "Then," said the king's butler, "having the king's cup in my hand, I pressed the grapes, and gave the wine into Pharaoh's hand." "That means," said Joseph, "that in just as many days as you saw branches, you will be sent for by the king, and replaced in your situation as chief butler." The other prisoner, hearing this, hastened to tell his dream also. He was Pharaoh's principal baker, and his dream was about bake-meats. He said that in his sleep he thought he had three baskets full of nice cakes, and biscuits, and sweet sorts of bread for the king on his head, but as he was carrying them along, the birds came and pecked at them, and ate of them. "Ah," said Joseph, "that is a sad dream; for in just the same number of days you thought you had baskets on your head, the king will hang you up on a gallows, and the birds will peck at your dead eyes and face." No doubt the baker was very sorry to hear this—so different from his neighbour's interpretation. But as Joseph had said, so it happened, for God had told him what was to come to pass. In three days Pharaoh sent for his butler, and gave him his place again; but gave orders to have the baker hanged on a tree.

Now, when Joseph told the butler what would happen in three days, he said to him: "Think of me when you get back to your place, and speak a good word for me to the king. For I am a Hebrew, stolen away from my own country"—he did not say sold by my brothers—"and here I have done no

wrong. Please ask Pharaoh to see about it, and bring me out of this place." You think that the butler would be sure to remember Joseph for the good news he told him. But no ; he was so taken up with the things in the palace, when he was made chief butler again, that he forgot the prison, and the kind man that had told him what his dream meant.

There was One, however, who did not forget Joseph, and was preparing a great change for him. God knew all things, and had been making Joseph ready for high place and honour. So one night he sent prophetic dreams to the king himself. They were very curious. They were double. The king first thought he was standing by the banks of the Nile—the famous river which makes Egypt so fertile by its overflowing, and leaving all the land spread over with rich mud, ready for receiving the seed, and nursing it to rich harvest—and behold, seven fat kine came up out of the river, and went to graze in a green meadow near. Then came up seven thin, starved cows, and went out into the meadows and ate up the fat ones, and were still as lean and thin as before. The king woke wondering, but falling asleep again, he thought he saw seven ears of corn on one stalk, grow up plump, rich, and beautiful ; and then seven thin, chaffy, starved ears came up, and ate the others. Wondering again, the king awoke, and sent in haste for all the wise men of Egypt to tell him what his strange dreams meant. But they were all puzzled, and said they never before had

heard such dreams, and they did not know what could be the meaning of them. It was then that the butler recollected how ungrateful he had been to Joseph. So he spake out to the king and said : "I am brought to-day in mind of my faults,"—and went on to tell the whole story of his dreaming in the prison, and of the interpretation that Joseph gave, and how it came to pass exactly as he said. "Send for the man at once," said the king. And they did so. As soon, therefore, as Joseph, the poor Hebrew prisoner, could be shaved and trimmed, and properly dressed to appear before the king, he was brought into the court. The king, who was eager to know the meaning of his strange dreams, addressed him at once, and said : "Young man, I am told that you have skill to tell the meaning of dreams. Now I have had two very singular ones, and no one in my court can interpret them. I shall be very glad if you can show me what they mean." "It is not in me," said Joseph ; "but God will give Pharaoh the right answer." Then the king told the two dreams, that came the one after the other, about the cows and about the ears of corn. Whereupon Joseph said : "O king, the two dreams have the same meaning ; God has doubled the vision to show that the thing is settled and sure. The seven fat kine and the seven plump ears are years of plenty ; and the seven lean cows and the seven thin ears are as many years of famine. The one will come now after the other ; Seven plenteous years first in all the land, and then seven years of scarcity.

Now therefore, let the king look out for a wise, good man, and let him buy up all the corn that will not be needed in the abundant years, and store it for the long famine that is to come. So the land will be saved from ruin and the people from dying." The king felt that the advice was good, and with Joseph standing before him, he said, first to his officers aside : " Can we find any man like this ? the spirit of God is in him ; " and then he spoke out to Joseph : " There is no one so discreet and wise

as yourself. I put the whole matter under your hand. Do just as you have said." Then he gave Joseph his ring, to say that he had authority to act in the king's place ; and clothed him in a robe of fine linen, and hung a chain of gold round his neck, and gave him his second-best chariot to ride in ; and so, as he went along, the people cried : " Bow the knee "—and every one knew that Joseph was ruler over all the land, and that only the king himself in the throne was to be greater than he.

RHYMED PICTURES.

What passages of Scripture are alluded to in the following lines ?

Wings of a dove the weary !
Where shall they flee for rest ?
From the earth so waste and dreary,
Back to the ark and nest.

There's a window and hand
Till the seas leave the land.

Wings of a dove resplendent
Ruffled and sooty of old ;
Whence is their light transcendent,
Flashing with silver and gold ?
There was blood for their soil ;
And a sweet holy oil.

Wings of a dove the glorious,
Down from the opened heaven,
Brood o'er the soon-victorious
On to the battle driven ;
May they brood over me
Till the evil all flee !

Here's an evil thing and vain, common among
men ;

One whom God gives store of gain, pounds in
thousands ten.

Yet he cannot eat of all, but another comes ;
Feasts, like ox, in foddered stall, on the
hoarded sums.

Fathers, and mothers, and children small—
Some in the arms, and some by the side.
Frowns from the servants, rebuking them all—
Think ye the Master can infants abide ?
Back they are brought by the Master's call ;
He has no share in the servants' pride.
Never from Him let the children be driven.
Theirs, He has said, is the kingdom of heaven.

One whom God had chosen,
Could not yet be found ;
Though they looked to see Him
All the meeting round ;
Till they searched the luggage
Piled upon the ground.



THE SUFFERING FLOWER.

BY CARL LARSEN.

THE gardener teaches us rightly that plants, in order to be ennobled, must first suffer; with too much sun or too much water the growth becomes too rapid, and, consequently, too weak to bear, at best, other than single and ordinary flowers. They must experience both hunger and thirst, never get more than is actually needed for the bare sustenance of life; the pruning-knife must constantly wound and curtail them, indeed they must bear incessant pain both externally and internally; endure all but death. Their life is precious. Thus must the poor flower suffer, that it may concentrate all its strength—even that of which it is unconscious—exert itself even to the impossible, in order to be able to defy its harsh destiny; and, finally, there comes a triumph. Through this concentration of strength a beauty develops of which itself had never dreamed. It is a double flower, with splendour of colours that rival those of the sun; and thus it is ennobled.

What is true of the plant is true also of man. What is beautiful, noble, great, must be thus brought forth. The development is a labour in the sweat of the brow; it is to go in the school of want. Pleasanter it were not to go in this school, and sit upon its hard benches; but most of those who have graduated here have found themselves well prepared, ennobled, happy; and better is happiness to be than that which has been. Worse is it

to *have been* happy than to *be* unhappy. But, says an objector, the mass of humanity have gone to no other than the school of want, and does the mass thus develop the beautiful, the noble? They develop at least the heavenly quality of patience, and without this virtue what would have become of humanity?

During my school-days I had a teacher, named Biljer, who was one of the mildest and most lovely of men. So great was his influence over his pupils that a word even from him would accomplish what was impossible to Rector Trysen's heaviest threat. He used to say, when we were too unruly or indolent: "You cannot have seen the Suffering Flower to-day." The Suffering Flower was a little girl who went to the charity school, and every morning before the hour of convening, could be seen sitting by a gravestone in the churchyard, studying her lesson, always with eyes intent upon her book. The girl and the book evinced equal marks of bad treatment, for the book was much worn, almost all the leaves being loose, while the little reader was slender and weak, with a face almost bluish white, and feet bare in summer. God knows whether they were not the same in winter also. She always wore a look of suffering, and surely her school-book could have afforded no comfort. We sometimes offered her cake and candy, but she always declined receiving, and we wondered if

some one had commanded her thus, or if she was yielding obedience to a something in her own nature which bade her be all things within herself, and naught through others. We had named her "The Suffering Flower." So, when Bilger mentioned this name, we knew whom he meant : the quiet, industrious girl by the gravestone, sitting there, hungry and barefoot. Then, too, we knew what he meant, we who were so unmanageable and indolent, although we had both food and shoes.

After the space of a year the Suffering Flower disappeared from the church-yard; she had ceased attendance at school; but we who still enjoyed this privilege often met her in the streets, bowed beneath the heaviest burdens, sometimes carrying in her thin arms a child that seemed to us but little smaller than herself. Sometimes, indeed, we saw her in midwinter, flat upon the ground, reaching over to rinse clothes in a stream. She was at service, enslaved by others. The same expression of suffering was always upon her countenance, and, too, the same little pride. One summer day we found her again by the gravestone, nursing in her lap a little girl, well dressed and highly adorned. Again, one of our number offered her candy, which she this time gratefully accepted, but gave it immediately to her little charge.

"Will you never accept anything for yourself?" we asked.

"I don't need anything?" was the reply.

But the child of wealth, with the rosy cheek and fine lace cap, this she thought needed ! There was something, as we listened to her words, that dimmed our eyes, while it touched our hearts, and made them better. Meanwhile her picture became so deeply impressed upon our minds, that notwithstanding the lapse of many years, during which *she*, as we, must have experienced much change, we recognized her when again we met.

Now she was the wife of a poor shoemaker, had been married about ten years, and was the mother of a numerous family; but although poor, her home was like a temple, sacred and consecrated to all a mother's virtues.

She was no longer the suffering plant; her development was complete, and the conditions for this were no longer needed. She had never been what is called handsome; but now she wore a happy, beaming look. Suffice it is to say, she was now a richly coloured, double blossom, and like as the flower so was the fruit. Having learned from the book of experience—lessons of her own childhood—the true system of education, she brought up her children to be good and honest men.

Whether she still lives I know not; but of this I am sure, that if indeed the angel of death has visited her, he has found her smiling, happy and contented—contented in death as in life.



ONE WAY TO BE HAPPY.

"**HUSH !**" whispered Teddie, with his finger on his lips, "papa is sleep."

"Well, what if he is?" said Horrie, puffing, and out of breath; "I am going to have my kite."

"You must not come in now," whispered Teddie through the door crack, holding the door as tightly as possible with his little chubby hand. "I am keeping everybody away: I'll get the kite."

So Horrie stuck his hands in his pockets, and whistled and waited, swinging round this way and that way, first on one foot and then on the other.

"Hush!" whispered Teddie, slipping the kite through the crack. "Your boots squeak, they do."

But away scampered Horrie, clicking his heels at every step; untangling his bobs and fixing his strings, and stumbling over Aunt Susan's rocking-chair, making a clatter every inch of the way.

Hardly had the door-latch clicked behind him, when a merry little voice, laughing in great glee, came nearer and nearer up the lane and in at the bowed-up shutters. "There she comes now," said Teddie to himself, peeping through the lattice. "I'll just go this minute and meet her."

But before he could tip-toe to the door, the big latch in the hall came up with a click, and a bustling, frizzle-headed little girl came bouncing in, just commencing some exclamation, when she spied Teddie on his tip-toes and his finger on his lip.

"My! what's the matter, Teddie?" she said, all earnestness in a minute; "has mamma got that dreadful headache again?"

"No," he said, laughing and pulling her out of the door, and further and further along the porch, and peeping into the tiny lunch-basket that was brimfull of red cherries. "You *did* get them! What a lot! Why no, nobody is sick; only papa came in from his work so tired-looking, and when he sat down on the settee, I got him a pillow, without saying anything, and tucked it up in a bunch in a corner, and in two minutes he was sound, sound asleep; and I've been keeping everybody still so that he could get a good long rest."

"And you never came to get a single cherry. Oh my, but we had lots, and lots, and lots!—and Lucy Watson! she got twice as many as I did; and you could have had some, too, if you had come right on after Lucy and me, up the road, as you said you would."

Teddie looked very sober as she went on: "And now you cannot have any at all, for Mike has picked the very last single one he can, because he's going to Denvers to market, and nobody can get them but Mike; and, beside, mamma will not let you go when there is nobody there like Lucy Watson and me, to see to you."

The tears were pretty nearly in Teddie's eyes, but he tried to keep them back, and still the frizzled, brown head went on bobbing up and down, and every way over the cherry basket,

while the tongue trotted on, too, as fast as possible.

"You see I could not spare you mine; for I must have them for luncheon to-morrow—I might spare you four, maybe, and maybe Lucy might spare you six; that makes"—counting on her fingers—"let me see, why it would be quite a lot! six and four make ten; but I just do think you might have gone to get your own, and"—

"But, sister," broke in Teddie, "I don't want yours a bit; only just to taste. I did want to go, but then you know papa was so tired, and there was nobody to take care about the noise; and you must not speak so loud now; it will just wake him right up, after all."

But, as it happened, papa had been awake several minutes, and had come to the window just in time to see the

little frizzle-head thrown back laughing and shaking at the idea of anybody so little as Teddie staying home from the cherry-tree to take care of anybody so big as papa; in time, too, to see a tear roll down the little brown cheek, as Teddie tip-toed back to the hall door, his heart almost breaking between thinking of the lost cherries, and of being so little that he could do no good to any one so big as papa. But when Teddie peeped softly in the door, and saw papa looking bright and refreshed after his good sleep, and felt the kiss which said, "my little Teddie has done all, all this for me," plainer than any words could, he forgot all about cherries, and about being so very little, and *knew* that to *give* happiness was in truth to *receive* it, and that, though only "little Teddie," he had done papa good.

THE DIFFERENCE.

"ARTHUR, why were you gone so long for water?" asked the teacher of a little boy.

"We spilled it, and had to go back and fill the bucket again," was the prompt reply; but the bright, noble face was a shade less bright, less noble than usual, and the eyes dropped beneath the teacher's gaze.

The teacher crossed the room and stood by another, who had been Arthur's companion.

"Freddy, were you not gone for the water longer than was necessary?"

For an instant Freddy's eyes were

fixed on the floor, and his face wore a troubled look. But it was only for an instant—he looked frankly up to his teacher's face.

"Yes, ma'am," he bravely answered; "we met little Harry Braden, and stopped to play with him, and then we spilled the water and had to go back."

Little friends, what was the difference in the answers of the two boys? Neither of them told anything that was not strictly true. Which one of them do you think the teacher trusted more fully after that? And which was the happier of the two?

OUR CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

I.—Our Service.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: 1 Kings xviii. 30-40.; 1 Cor. iii. 61-5.

PRAYER.

LORD GOD, who didst, by Thy Spirit move on the dark abyss of old, send down Thy Spirit to move dark hearts. May He come as He came on Pentecost, as with sound of strong wind. May He come, as He then came, with tongues of fire. So shall preachers declare Thy truth with power, and many shall believe and turn to Thee. O give Thy Spirit to us, that we may understand, and feel, and act rightly. May He take away all that is bad within us, and make stronger all that is good. This we ask for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON.

Our text to-day will be in Luke xii. 49, where we have these words: "I am come to send fire on the earth."

THE chapter says that these words were spoken by Jesus. But can they be His? Can He, who says of Himself elsewhere, that He was not come "to destroy men's lives, but to save them"—"to seek and to save that which was lost"—speak here of His errand to earth being to cast fire into it? The wonder becomes greater when we read the rest of the verse. "What will I, if it be already kindled?" Take the words as we have them, and it is as if he meant to say: "Would I regret it? Would I put it out? Would I not rather rejoice?"

Read the words more according to our way of putting thoughts, and our Lord's saying is this: "What will I? would it were already kindled? I wish the flame were begun!" So His sending fire is not a thing He cannot help, but a thing He means and aims at. I was travelling by train a short time ago, and I saw a fire blazing on the slope beside the line, which sparks from the passing engine had kindled; and, in a dry summer, the face of many a cutting has been seen charred and blackened, and the very crops in the fields have been set on fire; but the trains did not run

along of purpose to do that. What would you think of a company that made a railway, and ran engines along the line just to scatter sparks, rejoicing to see the flames begin and spread? Yet here Jesus wishes such a result. Look a little further on, and the meaning seems still more strange. For He who in the text says He has come to send fire, says He is come also to send division; or, as another place has it, a sword; and fire and sword are what we describe as wasting a country, when cruel, bloody war sweeps across it. Is Jesus, then, no better than Cæsar, or Alexander, or Nebuchadnezzar, or Napoleon? Is He just one more scourge of an unhappy world?

You see, at once, there must be some explanation of these words that puts all such thoughts away. And there are two things to be remembered. First—and this explains the sword—Christ's word, in itself sweet, good, and life-giving, slays those who will not take it into their hearts. You have heard it said, the sun that melts wax hardens clay. So the Gospel heals the humble and slays the proud. And so great and high a thing is it, that those who receive it, and those who refuse it, cannot but take opposite sides. If light shines into a dark room, too large to be all made bright, there will be a division between the clear and the dark. Christ's friends have such different tastes, joys, purposes, hopes, that the world and they cannot agree; and even brothers on the two sides, like Cain and Abel, will be separated from each other by a great gulf. So, as I have said, that ex-

plains the sword which divides. But as to the fire, there is something different. Fire, in itself, is good. It is life. We cannot do without it, though it is strong for hurt. The proverb says: "Fire is a good servant, but a bad master." Now here Jesus looks first at its good services, and wishes for them, even although, if people will not take its help, it should at length hurt them. He will set fire to the forest, where lions roar, and serpents lurk, and disease breeds, even although some foolish and froward people will not flee to the land of safety and health, to which He invites them. The fire of the text, then, is itself a good fire—it only hurts those that will not take its help.

I am now ready to tell you some things about Christ's good Gospel under this image of fire. First—

1. Fire shines: it gives light.

So Jesus has come to give light to the earth. As I read the 8th of John's Gospel, I think Jesus was one morning in the temple at an early hour, and just as the people looking east over the valley of Jehoshaphat, to the crest of the mount of Olives, saw the sun rising from behind the green hills, and throwing his beams over the city, Jesus said: "I am the light of the world." So Malachi, finishing the Old Testament, spoke of Him as the Sun of Righteousness. If I were to ask you what is the biggest fire you know, you would answer me rightly if you said the sun. He does not look large, because he is so far away. But he is a vast world, all ablaze with flame—clothed with shining fire. And if I asked you what this

great fire does first of all for us, you would say truly, he gives us light. He makes day for us. He brings it with him, sends it before him, and when he leaves us, it goes away too. You are not afraid of his coming. So Jesus comes; as Zacharias said of His coming long ago: "The day-spring from on high hath visited us."

The world was very dark when Jesus came into it. The heathen nations did not know God, and bowed down to wood and stone, the work of their own hands. They did not know truth, and wandered into all false ways. They had no hope, and lived much as the beasts do. The Jews were dark too. They might have had light. God gave them a lamp to shine among them. But they covered it over with all rubbish, and nearly put it out. They did not know the Saviour when He came. He came to give them light. So the prophet sang: "The people that sat in darkness have seen a great light, and to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." Now Christ's light went in various ways to bless men. It went in, and showed them what they were, and what they needed. It went up, and showed them God, loving and seeking after them. It went on, and showed them immortality and heaven. It shone like a fire kindled in some murky, noisome cave, showing the people in it where they were, and where the way of escape lay; where the guiding friend was ready to lead them out into the free air, under the glittering stars, waiting for the coming sun.

My dear young friends, sin holds us in a dark cave—a gloomy prison. But Christ has broken into it. There is the light shining in at the door of escape made for us. There is He, the shining one Himself, the door. He leads us forth to-day and everlasting life. Have you seen Him? Has he shined into your hearts? Has He cast a beam of light there?

2. Fire warms.

When the Psalmist speaks of the sun holding on in his path through the sky, from the east to the west, he says: "Nothing is hidden from his heat." And you know his bright high shining makes warm summer. You know how pleasant a thing warmth is. How you relish the blazing fire in the cold winter's day. You know, too, that without heat there is no life. Death is cold, and cold is death's servant.

Now when Jesus came into the world, it was a cold, dead world. There was little life of God in it, and little love. Jesus brought fire from heaven to kindle life and enflame with love. He showed the sort of fire He brought with Him for men's souls, by the way in which He treated their bodies. Come with me, and I will show you some of the sparks of life and love He cast around Him as He walked the earth. Here comes one meeting Him, all covered with leprosy, cast out from among his neighbours, living all alone, or herding with others like himself. Jesus touches him and he is healed, and goes rejoicing home to mingle with his friends. Here is one, living among tombs, tearing his clothes off,

cutting his flesh with stones, crying out in his woe. Jesus calls him to His feet, and he sits there clothed and in his right mind. Here is one, cold on his bier; they are carrying him out to bury him, while his mother weeps over her only child. Jesus meets them, and at His word the glow of warm life runs through the young man's frame, and flushes his pale face anew. And if you would like to see the spark of life go warm and glowing into souls, I can show you something of that too. There is a woman by the well of Jacob. She is talking with the Saviour; so cold at first is she, that she will not give Him a drink of water because He is a Jew; but soon she calls him Saviour, and tells all the city about Him. Here is a little man up on a tree, curious to see the great prophet and wonder-worker. Jesus speaks to him, and all his heart is won. So Jesus sends on earth the fire of life.

Then, all His law is love. Sin is hate. It breeds quarrels; it freezes hearts; it alienates friends. Jesus warms with love—love to God—love to all. Can we have too much of that fire? Lord send it down on us! Thyself all love, rain sparks of it into our bosoms till we feel all the ice of selfishness melt, and we glow with tenderness and peace.

3. Fire searches.

Things are tried by being put into the fire. Here is a lump of ore. You want to get the metal out of it; you smelt it with fire. Here is a piece of rusted steel. You would have it cleaned and made bright; you can burn the rust

away. You may have heard lines about the first thing supposed—

"Thus artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
By heaping coals of fire upon his head,
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
And loose from dross the silver runs below."

Now, Jesus is prophesied of by Malachi in terms that speak of Him as searching men like fire. "Who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall purge them as gold and silver." This He does by the words He speaks and the spirit He gives.

Two things, dear young friends—Christ's word and spirit—act in this way like fire. They test us. They bring out our character. They divide men into classes. They show where pride is, and where the meek and lowly heart. Then they search the heart itself. They detect base things and approve the true. They show us what is bad in us, and what God Himself has put into our hearts. So, you see, Christ's fire searches society, and searches souls. There is a passage of Paul's writings which sets forth this office of fire. In speaking of the last day, he says: "The day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." And he speaks of materials that cannot be burned—gold, silver, precious stones; and of materials that can—wood, hay, stubble. But we do not need to wait till the Judgment-day to see this effect of God's Word.

Every time it is preached in the church or the class it is shining on hearts, and into them, and showing what they are, like a magnet passing over dust and drawing steel filings, and leaving behind the earthy rubbish.

4. Fire consumes.

This, you see, is the end of what cannot stand the fire. The wood, hay, and stubble perish ; and Christ means that they should.

It is pleasant to think how many bad things Jesus' word has already burned up in the world. You recollect what happened in Ephesus when Paul visited it, and preached the Gospel. There were people there that had curious arts, which they practised, making money out of people's follies. Well, when they believed the Gospel they grew ashamed of this, and they took the books that told them what to do, and made a pile of them, and set them on fire, though they were worth fifty thousand silver pieces. That must have been a strange bonfire. Christ's truth has made many others. It has burned up a great many idols—in Greece and Rome, in the South Seas, in India, and elsewhere—and there are more yet it will turn to ashes. It has burned up a great pile of chains, and shackles, and bonds. The last great flame that rose from this pile was in America, and now there are only some small heaps left. It has burned a great mound of bad customs, such as Suttee in India; killing slaves in Calabar ; slaying and eating men in Australasia; wrecking ships for plunder on stormy coasts ; and others like the like. There is one other bonfire I

almost hope to see. The pile is made up of swords, and guns, and war-ships, and battle flags, and trumpets of alarm, all munitions, in short, and implements of fighting. They are hard to be consumed, but the fire is cast among them, and we know that they must burn, for it is written : "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth ; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariot in the fire."

As I say this, I wonder whether we could make a Gospel-bonfire here to-day; if we could make a heap of bad things belonging to us, and ask Jesus to set fire to them. I am sure of two things, if we could honestly set about it. We would all have something to throw into the heap, and when we had done the pile would be a big one. I think I see you setting about it. There is the fire kindled by the spirit of Jesus, waiting for what you will give it to burn up. Ah ! here comes a boy, saying : "There's my pride, let it blaze." Another says : "There's my passion, let it burn there, and never more burn in my heart." Another child says : "There's my disobedience." Another : "There's my sloth." Yet another : "There's my lying." And another still : "There's my unbelief." Ah ! children, if you go at it so, I must help you ; I have more than one thing of the sort I must throw on the pile. Now heap it up high, cast every bad thing in, and let all burn to ashes !

That, of course, is but fancy. Nor, dear young friends, do we need to join each other to make a blaze of bad things belonging to us. There is enough in each of our hearts to make a

good bonfire by itself. I hope the fire is already kindled with many; may it soon be in us all. Lord, cast in Thy fire of life into us; let it shine in our hearts—enlightening, warning, searching us, till all the dross and foulness is burned away, and we ourselves shine like a palace of precious jewels, that take in light and defy the fire.

I close by asking you, do you think you have received a spark of Christ's fire? If it has gone so far as to make the flax smoke, He will breathe it into flame. Have you felt Christ's word make your heart warm? Do you under-

stand what the disciples meant when they said: "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" Is there anything which Christ's word is burning up in you, not very fast, perhaps, but still burning it? "Our God," says the apostle, "is a consuming fire." Ah, well, let us go reverently near, and pray to Him this prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

II.—Our Talk.

STORY OF A SEPARATED BROTHER.

CHAP. III.—RESTORED TO HIS FAMILY.

THE years of plenty came, as Joseph foretold. The Nile overflowed his banks abundantly, and left the soil, as he retired into his bed again, very rich with loam. The seed sprung up, flourished, ripened, and yielded a hundred-fold. All these years Joseph was busy buying the corn that was not wanted, and storing it in all the cities. He gathered immense quantities. But all was not too much. For the years of famine came also, and never were such scanty harvests reaped in Egypt. Had there been no old corn stored, the people must have starved. But when the dearth came upon them, they cried to the king for bread, and he

sent them to Joseph. Then Joseph opened everywhere the well-filled store-houses, and sold corn to the people as they required it. One year they bought it with money, another with cattle, and after that with their lands; so that in the end all the lands became the king's, and Joseph, when he gave them seed to sow the fields after the famine, made an arrangement that the fifth part of the produce should always be paid to Pharaoh as rent. And that was long a law in Egypt. The people were pleased to have it settled in any way; for they said that Joseph had saved their lives.

The dearth was not confined to Egypt, but spread into other lands. It

was very severe in Canaan, and Jacob's family, among others, felt it. But the news went abroad that there was plenty of corn in Egypt; and Jacob said to his sons: "Why should we starve, when there is food to be had? Get ready, and go down to Egypt, and buy us some corn for bread." So his ten sons—for he would not send Benjamin, his youngest, and Joseph's own brother, with them—set out on this errand. They did not like the idea of going to Egypt, for it put them in mind of their selling their brother to be taken there—we do not like places that put us in mind of sin—but there was no corn elsewhere. So down into that country they came, and to the very city where Joseph lived. There were others, too, from other countries come to buy corn, and all had to make their wishes known to Joseph, who superintended all the selling. So his brothers had to appear before him, and tell their purpose. Now, when Joseph saw them, he knew them, without their knowing him; they had not changed so much as he had done in outward appearance, and he was in the dress of a great man. Observing that they did not recognize him, Joseph thought he would try them a little, and using a rough voice, and professing to be suspicious that they had come to Egypt for some bad end, he called them spies, and put them into prison for three days. In the meantime, he had found out, by questions, that his father was still alive and well, and his youngest son with him. And after the three days were over, he went to them and said: "Now I will put you to proof in this way. Let one

of you remain here as a hostage, and let the rest go home and bring your youngest brother down, and when I see him I shall know that you are true men." So he told his servants to bind Simeon, and he sent the rest away. While he was doing this, Joseph overheard his brothers speaking to each other, and he noticed that it was about their sin against him long ago. They said: "All this is happening to us in Egypt because we were so cruel to Joseph." "Did not I tell you," said Reuben, "not to do it? yet you would not hear me. This is for our brother's blood." Joseph could not stand hearing that, and had to go away from them and weep. However, he did not show who he was as yet, but sent his brothers away home, laden with corn, and with the money they brought to buy it sent back in their sacks. They were much amazed when they found this out, and afraid what might come out of it. When they got home, they told Jacob all that had happened to them, and said, that the next time they should go down to Egypt they must take Benjamin with them, for the man that was the lord of the land would not look at them unless they did so. Very loath was their father to consent to this, and always put it off, saying: "Don't take all my joy from me; Joseph is not, and Simeon you have left behind, and now you want Benjamin also. All these things are against me; how can I bear them?" After a while, however, he grew calmer, and saw that the thing must be, and he sent them away the second time, with Benjamin, and prayed that the

Almighty God might give them favour in the presence of the great man ; that he might let them come all safe home again. But he said : " If my children are taken from me, I will submit to God's will."

A good while after that a great surprise came upon the old man. His sons came back to him, with a new purchase of corn, and Simeon and Benjamin were both with the rest. But that was not all. They eagerly cried out to him : " Father, Joseph is living still, and he it is that we saw before in Egypt, and he is lord over the whole land there." Now, this strange news at first Jacob would not believe ; he could not think that such things should be ; indeed, he grew faint with the feeling that it could only be a delusion. But his sons told him the whole story over, and said : " Come and see the waggons that he has sent to take you and all our households down to stay with him, for he says there are years of famine still to come." At the sight of the waggons Jacob took heart, felt that the news must be true, and said, joyfully : " Yes, yes, I see it now. Joseph is alive. I will go and see him before I die."

It was a very touching story that Jacob's sons had to tell their father about their second visit to Egypt. They got there quite safely, and had no difficulty about the money that they found in their sacks on returning the first time. They told the steward about it, but he said : It was all right, he had had their money ; and would not take it from them again. " God," he said, " the

God of your father must have given you treasure in your sacks." Then he brought Simeon out to them, and to their astonishment said that his master would have them to dine with him to-day. So at noon he came, asked them again about their father, and said, looking to Benjamin : " And this is your youngest brother, I suppose ?" and added, " God be gracious to thee, my son." Still they did not at all know him, but bowed before him, as they did at first, when he seemed rough and angry, believing him to be only the great ruler of the country. After speaking to Benjamin, he went hastily out ; the truth being, as they came to know after, that he could hardly keep from bursting into tears in their presence, and had to go away by himself to weep. Then, after a little, he returned, and they all sat down to dinner. Now, during the dinner, he sent from his own table to every one of them choice portions—only to Benjamin the richest and largest helps of all. And one thing made them all wonder. He had them arranged at their table in the order of their ages, and they marvelled how he could find that out. Still none of them suspected the truth. Next day they all got their corn-sacks filled, and came away, very glad, and not a little surprised. But they were soon astonished more, when, after travelling a little way, they saw the steward of the governor's house posting after them, and heard him, when he came up, charge them with stealing his lord's cup. So they looked into their sacks, one after the other, and behold, besides all their

money again, there, sure enough, was the cup in the sack of Benjamin. They did not know what to think, and went back into the city, prepared to find the great man very angry. They fell before him to the ground, and Judah, speaking for the rest, said: "O my lord, what can we say for ourselves, how can we clear ourselves? we are all in thy hands." All this, however, was just a plan of Joseph's, and he said: "No, no, I will keep the man who had the cup, and the rest of you may go away home in peace." But then Judah, who knew that to leave Benjamin behind would break his father's heart, pleaded that he might be taken in his younger brother's stead, and told so touchingly how he had become surety to his father to bring his youngest-born back, and how he could not bear to bring his father's grey hairs down to the grave in sorrow, that Joseph could hardly hear him to the end without quite breaking down. Then he cried out for all others to leave him, and when his brethren were left with him alone, he went close to them, and said, weeping aloud as he spoke: "Do you not know me? I am Joseph, whom ye sold into Egypt. Don't be grieved about that. God sent me here to save many lives. And there is much of that kind yet to do. The famine is

not over. You must go and bring my father down to me, and all your families." At first his brothers could not speak, they were so astonished; but by-and-by, when he had talked with them, and embraced them, and wept like a child on Benjamin's neck, they grew calm and assured, and they had a long talk together. Then they came home with the wondrous news.

After all this Jacob went down to Egypt, and lived there the rest of his life. He died in Egypt, blessing all his sons that were gathered round his bed, and bidding them bury him in Abraham's grave, in Canaan, which they did with great state. There was such a funeral procession went up from Egypt as had never been seen before. Afterwards Joseph died also; but his body was embalmed, as was the custom then in Egypt, and put into a coffin. Ere he died, however, Joseph had made his people swear that when they came to leave Egypt—for, he said, I know God will take you back into the land of promise—they would carry his bones with them. And Joseph's dust was one of the things that Moses and Israel took with them hundreds of years after; to be buried at last in Shechem, in the ground his father left him on his death-bed.

LITTLE TRACTS FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.—No. 3.

A LITTLE girl on her way to the Sunday-school saw two ragged boys fighting. She spoke to them, and told them that it was very wrong to quarrel. Having

done this, she said that she was on her way to the Sunday-school, and asked them to go with her. Strange to say she managed to get them both to accompany her. Twenty years after this

occurrence, a gentleman was speaking to a large meeting of children. Among other things he told them what this little girl had done twenty years before. The name of the little girl was Mary, the names of the two boys were James and John. He then asked the children if they would like to see James? "O yes," they replied. "Then," he said, pointing to a gentleman on the platform, "that is James, and he is now a minister of the Gospel." He then asked the children if they would like to see John, and of course they all said: "Yes." "I am John," he said, "and I am also a minister." "Now," he continued, "would you like to see Mary?" and the unanimous answer was, "Yes, yes." Pointing to a lady in the hall, he said: "That is Mary with the blue bonnet on, and she is my wife." In this little story we find encouragement for the little ones. Two ragged boys taken by a little girl to a Sunday-school, where they heard about Jesus, and in whom trusting, as their Saviour, they afterwards become preachers of the Gospel. We shall never be able to form any idea of the extent of

the good that resulted from the action of this little girl. It was a very simple thing that she did, and boys and girls would do well to follow her example. These children, however, who love the Saviour themselves, and who have given their hearts to Him, will be the best able to do this kind of work, and they will do it from the right motive, and that is, love to Jesus. They feel that He has done so much for them, in dying for them, that the least they can do is to work for Him, and to "tell saints and sinners round what a precious Saviour they have found." But some little one may read these lines, who has not yet given his heart to Christ. To such a one we would say: "Come to Jesus just now." Do not think of delaying the matter of your soul's salvation to some other time. You do not know that you will live to see another day. Now, this very hour, is the easiest and the best time. May your language now be—

"Jesus come into my heart,
I'll open wide the door,
I'll never, never more depart,
Thy mercy I'll adore."

THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERD BOY.

HERHARDT was a German shepherd boy; and a noble fellow he was, too, although he was very, very poor. One day as he was watching his flock, which was feeding in a valley on the borders of a forest, a hunter came out of the wood and asked:

"How far is it to the nearest village?"

"Six miles, sir," replied the boy, "but the road is only a sheep-track, and very easily missed."

The hunter glanced at the crooked track, and then said:

"My lad, I am hungry, tired, and

thirsty. I have lost my companions, and missed my way. Leave your sheep, and show me the road. I will pay you well."

"I cannot leave my sheep, sir," replied the boy. "They would stray into the forest, and be eaten by the wolves, or stolen by the robbers."

"Well, what of that?" queried the hunter. "They are not *your* sheep. The loss of one or more wouldn't be much to your master, and I'll give you more money than you ever earned in a whole year."

"I cannot go, sir, rejoined Gerhardt very firmly; "my master pays me for my time, and he trusts me with his sheep. If I were to sell my time, which does not belong to me, and the sheep should get lost, it would be just the same as if I stole them."

"Well," said the hunter, "will you trust your sheep with me while you go to the village and get me some food and drink and a guide? I will take good care of them for you."

The boy shook his head. "The sheep do not know your voice, and,—"
Gerhardt stopped speaking.

"And what? Can't you trust me? Do I look like a dishonest man?" asked the hunter, in an angry voice.

"Sir," said the boy slowly, "you tried to make me false to my trust, and

wanted me to break my trust to my master. How do I know you would keep your word to me?"

The hunter laughed, for he felt that the boy had fairly cornered him. He said: "I see, my lad, that you are a good, faithful boy. I will not forget you. Show me the road, and I will try to make it out for myself."

Gerhardt now offered the humble contents of his script to the hungry man, who, coarse as they were, ate them gladly. Presently his attendants came up, and then Gerhardt, to his surprise, found that the hunter was the Grand Duke, who owned all the country round. The duke was so pleased with the boy's honesty, that he sent for him shortly after, and had him educated. In after years Gerhardt became a very rich and powerful man, but he remained honest and true to his dying day.

Honesty, truth, and fidelity are precious jewels in the character of a child. When they spring from piety they are pure diamonds, and make their possessor very beautiful, very happy, very honourable, and very useful. May you, my readers, wear them as Gerhardt did! Then a greater than a duke will befriend you, for the great King will adopt you as His children, and you will become princes and princesses royal in the kingdom of God.

THE BIRDS AND THE PRIMROSE.

TWO birds, heretofore good friends, were gossiping of their haunts, and the flowers they had visited.

"Ah!" said one, "I saw last evening such a beautiful white primrose near the woodbine we have so often visited together."

"Yes," said the other, "beautiful indeed, but you are mistaken in the colour. I think you said white. I saw it this morning, and it was a most delicate pink."

"Indeed," said the first, his ruby throat glistening, and his black eyes sparkling as he jerked out the angry words—"Indeed, I am not so blind as to make an error in colour. The flower was white!"

"And I suppose," said the other, "none but you can tell colours. I know what I say to be the truth. The flower was a delicate pink this very morning."

From words they had nearly come to a downright fight, when a robin red-breast, happening to fly that way, was appealed to as arbitrator in the dispute.

When they had made their statements, he spoke:

"My friends," said he, "I slept under the primrose last night, and its flower was white at first, but pink this morning. Its blossom lasts but a few hours, and changes colour as it dies."

He who thinks himself always right is quite often wrong. The little birds apologized to each other, became good friends again, and agreed not to be too positive in the future.

Now, children, whenever you have any trouble don't go to war, but submit your case to arbitration, and let your arbitrator be God, who knoweth all things, and he will surely give a satisfactory verdict.

BUILDING A CHARACTER.

ALAD, on his way to school, stopped in front of a plot of ground which seemed to be cleared and ready for building, just as a load of material was being deposited upon the spot.

"What are you going to build here, Mr. Gracey?" asked he of the builder who was standing by.

"I am going to put up a building, Thomas."

"What kind of building is it to be, sir?"

"I don't exactly know yet."

"Are you going to build a barn?"

"Don't know yet, Thomas, what it is to be."

"Well, that is queer, Mr. Gracey. How do you know you have brought

the right material if you don't know what you are going to build."

If Mr. Gracey was in earnest with Thomas, he must have been a very foolish builder. And yet there are many young people who are getting ready to build just as Mr. Gracey did.

We are all to be the builders of our own character. And on this character depends our success for time and eternity. In order to do this well, we must have some idea of what we want. What kind of man do you mean to be? Are you gaining information and forming habits which will help you to be what you desire? First mark out your plans, and then do all in your power to gather the right material, and do the work carefully and well.