

# THE PILGRIM BOY,

WITH

LESSONS FROM HIS HISTORY.

THE HISTORY OF  
THE PILGRIM BOY  
A NARRATIVE OF FACTS.

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TO THE  
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# THE PILGRIM BOY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HIS FIRST SCHOOL.

THIS boy was born in the early part of the nineteenth century, in what was then called the backwoods, where the howl of the wolf and the scream of the panther were as common as the snorting of the iron horse is now about New York and Boston. In many places the marks of the Indian's tomahawk were still to be seen on the sugar-maples, and the graves of many who had fallen victims to these cruel instruments of death were still fresh. When friends met, tears flowed as they talked of those loved ones who had been shot or tomahawked at their side by the red men of the forest, or as they related the sufferings they had

endured while in captivity in the wilderness, where they were sometimes called to witness the cruel torture and death of those most dear to them. Hearing these tales of murder and hair-breadth escapes had, no doubt, much to do with bracing the nerves of the pilgrim boy for the struggles of life. Deprived in early infancy of a father's protection, at three years old he was separated from his pious mother, who was left without property; but Providence provided for her boy. An old gentleman and his wife who had property and had no children, took him and treated him with great kindness.

When he was five years old, he commenced going to school to an old Scotch woman, who was a strict seceder and a devoted Christian. She boarded with the man with whom he lived, and morning and evening was this good lady to be seen leading this little boy along the path to her school a mile distant; and all the way she was telling him little stories out of the Bible and about Jesus Christ, warning him to avoid sin and keep out of bad company. The earnestness of her manner, and the deep interest she manifested for him, led him to love her as if she had been his mother. The impression

made on his mind by this good woman never forsook him, and often after she was dead he thought he heard her voice and felt the gentle touch of that hand that led him to his first school. In six months she taught him to read the New Testament. The Testament and the spelling-book were all the books in the school, and all which were then supposed to be necessary for boys who were to be farmers or mechanics.

Let me say to any young friend who reads the history of the pilgrim boy, Are you an *orphan*, without father or mother, houses or lands? do not be discouraged. Perhaps you are the son of a praying father or mother. If so, each prayer of faith they offered up to God for you is so much treasure laid up in heaven, and that pious mother may now be a ministering angel watching over you by night and day. If you have had such parents or teachers, call to mind the many kind words of warning they gave you; think of the prayers you heard them offer to God for you, and that if you turn away from God, and go on in sin, these prayers will for ever sound in your ears in the world of woe; they will aggravate the gnawing of the worm

that never dies, and fan the flames that will never be quenched. The pilgrim boy never forgot the warnings from his pious teacher.

If you are a *poor* boy, resolve to be honest and honorable; make up for your poverty by the dignity and purity of your character. The wise man has said, "A good name is better than precious ointment." While you keep clean hands and an unsullied character God will provide you friends; and to do this, you must always shun the company of bad boys: "Go not in the way of transgressors." If you are seen in their company, you will have to bear part of the disgrace that follows their bad deeds, and in this way will lose the confidence of good men. A poor boy with a bad character is one of the most pitiable objects to be found on earth. Look at that poor ill-clothed boy breaking the Sabbath by idle play, taking the name of God in vain, telling lies, and perhaps stealing. Is he not despised by all that see him? Good people will not let their sons go near him. Select your companions with great care, and if the sons of the wealthy slight you because you are poor, let it only stimulate you to become worthy of the respect and confidence of all.

As a general rule, the rich of one generation are the poor of the next. John Jacob Astor and Stephen Girard were poor boys. Perhaps the children of some who slighted them, have since been their servants, or fed by their charity. Many of the richest men of our cities were once poor boys, but honest industry has made them rich. Another class of poor boys have filled the highest stations in our land. Franklin was a poor boy, and he became the next man to Washington in his day. Henry Clay was a poor boy; many a day he rode to mill on a pony with a sack of corn to get it ground, yet he became one of the greatest statesmen in our land. Go to all our colleges and seminaries, hunt up all the eminent ministers of the gospel, and you will find, on inquiry, that more than one half of them were once poor boys. Let the success that has attended other poor boys stimulate you to noble efforts; set your standard high, aim at great things, resolve to be a great good man, bend all your energies to that end, and God will take care of the rest. He may withhold riches from you for your good; many boys could not bear riches, and you may be one of them; and to save your soul, he may

deprive you of them in love and mercy. Let your motto be, truth, honesty, and candor; read the advice of Solomon in the book of Proverbs to boys, and follow its divine teachings, and it will guide you to honor on earth and glory in heaven.

## CHAPTER II.

HIS SECOND AND THIRD SCHOOLS—CLOSES HIS SCHOOL EDUCATION AT TEN YEARS OLD.

THE pilgrim boy entered his second school before he was six years old. The old lady who first taught him died, and he was sent to an old Scotchman, who daily pulled the ears and thumped the heads of the boys to wake up their ideas; or applied a long rod, well laid on with both hands, to quicken their perceptions in grammar and vulgar fractions. In this school there were more than fifty pupils, from five to thirty years old. The pilgrim boy was one of the youngest, and frequently he was not called on to recite a lesson during the day, though generally he got his head bumped against the wall once or twice each day for his edification. But in consequence of cruelty and neglect, all the small boys were taken away; so he only went one month to that teacher. At the close of three months the old man was dismissed and an Irish sea-captain employed, a fine scholar, but his discipline was nearly the same, with the

addition of the cat-o'-nine-tails, which was often well applied to the backs of disobedient boys, the victim being supported on the back of another boy during the process.

The pilgrim boy was a great favorite with this teacher, and only once fell under his displeasure during three and a half years, and that was for going with a number of boys larger than himself to a creek a mile off to bathe. He was the only one of them that could swim, and they persuaded him to go to teach them. Two of them ventured into deep water and were nearly drowned. They were taken out by the pilgrim boy, supposed to be dead; but after long exertions, were resuscitated. For this act of disobedience all were severely punished. The school-house was eighteen feet square, built of round logs; the spaces between the logs were stopped with small blocks of wood, and daubed over with mortar; the fireplace was made by an offset in one end, built up with poles about four feet high, with large flat stones set up edgeways around the fire. Often when a boy had offended the captain, he would leap out at the fireplace, and the captain after him. If he was overtaken, he was sure

to get a severe whipping ; but if he could keep out of the way till the captain's wrath abated, he would escape much easier.

Under the tuition of this heroic professor, the pilgrim boy closed the theoretical part of his education, in his tenth year. His intellectual furniture consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, and a little geography. He ate one small copy of a Latin grammar to get it out of the way.

As he saw there was no hope of his going to school any more, he determined to study by himself, and as he had to work hard for his living, the only chance he had was to borrow books and read them at night by a hickory-bark light, as he sat on the hearth-stone with his back against the wall.

Every evening you might see him coming in from his day's labor with a bunch of dry bark under his arm, to make a light to read by. In this way he read, in the course of three years, a circulating library of more than three hundred volumes. Of course he had but little ballast to sail across the ocean of life, where the waves are heaving and surging over the quicksands beneath, and dashing against the

rocks above. And he certainly would have been wrecked, but for the fact that what little he had was taken from an old book called the Bible, given expressly for such voyages, which we recommend to all the boys that are on this voyage.

Forty years ago, a good hickory stick was considered an indispensable part of school furniture, and those who rebelled against authority were either whipped in school or at home, or both. Now they often rebel with impunity, and the teacher who resorts to the use of a rod has sometimes suffered for his faithfulness the loss of his life. A case of that kind recently occurred in Kentucky, and within a few days another has been added to the list.

Let us trace the history of some of these disobedient boys. In one school, the writer knew a boy fourteen years old who had to be expelled for his bad conduct. Soon he ran away to avoid parental restraint, and in a few weeks news came that while engaged with a company of bad boys hunting squirrels on Sunday, he climbed a tree after one that was wounded, and when forty feet above ground, the limb on which he was standing broke; he

fell on his head, and broke his neck. He was one of those boys who would not be controlled, but would do as he pleased.

In the history of many individuals whom the writer knew in early life, a bad boy has usually made a bad man, except in cases where the Spirit of God has renewed the heart; so it will be found as a general rule, the world over. You may train a wolf beside a flock of lambs, but he will be a wolf still, unless his nature be changed.

There is another class of teachers to whom the young are much indebted: I mean Sabbath-school teachers. They devote much of their time to the study of God's word for the benefit of children, without compensation. They often hunt them up in the streets, in many cases clothe them at their own expense, and then sometimes have to bear with their waywardness and sin. There are Sabbath-school boys who, when fifteen or sixteen years old, leave the school, thinking they have become too wise to be taught any more. They have graduated as Sabbath-school boys, and entered the street-college, where on Sunday morning you will hear them belching forth vulgar language, and

find them disturbing the people as they enter or return from the house of God.

Such boys who can set at naught the authority and respect due to pious, praying Sabbath-school teachers, who slight the laws of God, and treat his house with contempt, could scarcely be trusted in their neighbor's store, or their father's desk. There is but one hope left in such cases, and the history of the pilgrim boy encourages that hope. The truth that had been so faithfully taught him in early life, like good seed retained its vitality, and by divine culture afterwards yielded fruit, although it had been crusted over with sin. The dews of the Spirit, accompanied by the ploughshare of affliction, softened and prepared the soil. God grant it may be so with all that read this little book.

## CHAPTER III.

## DROWNING THE GROUND-SQUIRREL—CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

ONE morning as the pilgrim boy was on his way to school to the Irish sea-captain, when he was about seven years old, a little incident occurred that had an influence on all his after-life. Up to this time he had been in the habit of killing and torturing little animals for sport. The morning alluded to, he saw a ground-squirrel run into its hole which it had dug by the roadside near a large creek. Instantly he ran to the hole, and stopped it up, and got troughs that lay at the roots of the sugar-maples, and carried what water he supposed would drown the squirrel. He then commenced pouring in the water. He soon heard the squirrel coming up, struggling for life, and commenced talking to himself, and saying, O, my fellow, I will soon have you now.

Before he was aware, a venerable Christian

man came up, and laid his hand on his head. "Well, my boy, what are you doing here?" "Oh, I am drowning a squirrel; don't you hear him struggling now for air? I will soon have him." "My dear boy," said he, "I am sorry to see you so cruel; what harm has that little innocent squirrel done you? Now you see I am a big man, and you are a little boy. If you were down in that hole, and I was here pouring water on you, would you not think I was cruel and wicked? Life is as sweet to that little innocent creature, as it is to you. God made it to be happy; and why will you try to kill it? When I was a little boy," said he, "more than fifty years ago, I was engaged one day drowning a squirrel, just as you are this moment, when a good man came along and said to me nearly the same I have said to you: it so affected me that I never forgot it; and from that day to this, I never killed any innocent creature unnecessarily." The pilgrim boy left the squirrel, but never forgot the lesson. When any little animal came in his way, he thought of the good man's reproof, and always respected him for it. "The words of the wise are as goads." A reproof for cruelty given

to a boy near one hundred years ago, is still handed down for the benefit of others.

My dear boys, when you read this, think how many innocent creatures you have wantonly put to death; and then think what the Bible says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Even a sparrow does not "fall to the ground without our heavenly Father." That little bird God made for some wise purpose, and you killed it for mere sport. When you saw it struggling in death, were you benefited by it? Did it make you any happier? If it did, you have a heart as hard as adamant—a heart that may lead you to shed the blood of a fellow-man. That dying bird should have led you to think of the day when you will lie struggling in death, and that justly too, for sin against God; but that little bird had no sin, it died innocently by your wicked hands:

Twenty years ago, young Prescott, who at the age of nineteen years expiated his crimes on the gallows, was asked, the day before his execution, if he did not delight in killing and torturing animals. "Oh, yes," he replied; "I liked to kill them better than to do any thing else." "Did you ever wish to kill people?"

was the next question asked him. "I don't know that I did; but I wanted to kill cattle, when they did not act to please me." He was hung for murdering the wife of his employer, who testified to his cruelty to cattle. Youthful reader, when you take delight in cruelty to any of God's creatures, think of young Prescott—think of the gallows.

## CHAPTER IV.

HOW HE WAS TAUGHT TO OBSERVE THE  
SABBATH.

WE left the pilgrim boy at the close of the last chapter in his tenth year, with a very small stock of intellectual furniture for entering on the duties of life. But there was one thing which made up in part for this lack of education, the strong religious restraints with which he was bound. The old lady with whom he lived was truly a mother to him, watching over him with unceasing faithfulness day and night. One thing in which she was rigidly strict was, the observance of the Sabbath-day; she kept it sacredly herself, and made her boy, as she called him, keep it too.

Two Sundays in each month she took him to hear preaching, which was held mostly in the woods. The minister stood in what was called a tent, or rostrum, about six feet square, covered with slabs; the floor five feet above the ground, with steps to go up. The clerk,

who lined out the psalm, one line at a time—as the people thought David used to do, when one of Israel's old tunes was sung in the temple—sat in this tent with the minister. In front of the tent there was a seat with the back against the corner posts of the tent, on which the elders sat, facing the people. It was their duty to see that good order was observed, which was very necessary, as most people let their dogs follow them to church, and so many strange ones coming together, their fighting often created great disturbance. The place selected for the tent was in the midst of a grove of large trees; and if a place could be found where there were one hundred feet each way without trees, and large ones with extended branches all around it, it was considered a providential arrangement for that purpose, and generally thanks were returned to God each Sabbath for it by the minister. The seats were made by splitting logs, hewing the flat side, and putting in legs by boring holes with an auger; some of the more wealthy families would make their seats out of a thick plank, and have a back to them. In front of the tent was the communion-table, extending from the

elders' seat about fifty feet, with a seat at each side for communicants.

The people in many cases came ten miles to these places of worship. It was very common for a mother to walk and carry her infant five or six miles, and the father the next oldest one, and all the rest to trot along after. When they reached the preaching-place, all the family sat together; or, as the little folks were much fatigued, they were laid down in the dry leaves to sleep. In the winter season, the preaching was held in private houses.

The pilgrim boy was led, by the good woman whom he now called mother, regularly to one of these places of worship till he was over twelve years old, and sat by her side, with an old Bible, printed in 1718, in which he hunted out the proof-texts, and marked them by turning down a leaf. In those days the minister quoted his proof-texts, chapter and verse, giving the people time to find and mark them. The Bible the boy carried was ten inches long, five inches broad, and three inches thick, covered with deerskin, and bound round with a strong strap, for its preservation. This boy was twelve years old before he saw what was called a

church, or building expressly for the worship of God.

In those old-fashioned times, the first thing the minister did was to read and explain the portion of the Psalm to be sung, so that the people might sing with the understanding, which often took nearly an hour. In those days, "all the people praised God," whether they could sing by rule or not; and as they had but twelve tunes, they were soon learned. Then followed the sermon, which was seldom less than two hours long, and was often divided and subdivided into twenty or more divisions. Then singing and prayer closed the morning service. An interval was then given of forty minutes, to take refreshments; and the people mostly collected at the spring, where long-handled gourds were used to supply the thirsty with water, and if the day was either very hot or very cold, the head of the family brought a pint flask of whiskey, which was then thought necessary to prevent injury from exposure. They then assembled again, and had the same order of services, with the exception of explaining the Psalm, which was omitted in the afternoon. The services began at

ten A. M., and usually closed a little after four P. M., so that most of the people might get home by sunset. A cold dinner was then eaten, as cooking was not permitted on the Sabbath.

After supper, the children were called to repeat the text, and give all the divisions of the subject; and the catechism was gone through before retiring to bed. This closed the exercises of the Sunday on which they had preaching. The whole day was spent in the public and private exercises of God's worship.

The preachers in those old-fashioned times used to hold an examination in some quarter of the congregation every month, which all were expected to attend; and the Christian character of parents was estimated by the knowledge of their children. Every pious household was then a Sunday-school.

The writer has visited a number of prisons, and talked with many convicts, confined for various crimes, but he never found one who in boyhood abstained from play and idleness on the Sabbath, read God's word, and attended preaching and Sabbath-school regularly. All have testified that they set at naught God's command, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep

it holy." Let me entreat you, my dear boys, as you value your own souls, to avoid this first step on the road to ruin. Where do the gallows and penitentiary get their victims, but from the ranks of those who in their boyish days spent their Sundays in fishing and hunting, or hanging about the corners of the streets planning mischief; or what is worse, in groups at the church doors, interrupting the worship of God, insulting their Maker to his face, and bidding defiance to his laws.

The writer knew two boys, the sons of wealthy irreligious men, who lived near a church; and from the age of ten to sixteen they habitually came to the church door to play tricks, and make others laugh. At length they were sent to college; but when they returned home in vacation, they became more bold, and would come into the church and interrupt the whole congregation. The minister reproved them again and again; at last he said, if those young men behaved so again, he would call out their names in public. The next Sunday they both came, took their seats in a conspicuous place, and sat with their hats on, reading newspapers; and as the services

went on, their conduct drew the attention of all in the house. The minister stopped a few moments, with his eyes turned heavenwards, and the tears flowing, and then proclaimed, "J. B—— and J. W——, your doom is written in heaven; you will soon die in disgrace." They immediately left the church. In a few days they left the country. Scarce three months had passed before they committed murder to obtain money. One was hung, and the other put into solitary confinement for life, but he died in less than a year.

Beware of all those who trifle with God's holy day. The pilgrim boy did not like the restraints that were thrown around him. On his way to church, he used to see boys fishing along the creek, and wished he could fish too; but his mother would not let him, and he has often thanked God for it since. Boys who profane the Sabbath, are brought into contact with the vilest characters in the community on that day, and in addition to breaking God's law of the Sabbath, they learn to swear, lie, and steal. In some of our cities, the separation on the Sabbath reminds one of the separation that will take place at the day of judgment. On other

days of the week, the good and bad mingle together in business ; but on the Sabbath they separate from each other. Keep away from all those who slight this sacred day of rest. They are always vulgar and profane ; and hearing their vile, filthy expressions will taint your whole character. Even if you become a Christian afterwards, their vile sayings will remain in your mind while you live, if they do not escape your lips, and show to the world your early associations. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Show me your company, and I will tell you your character, is an old but true maxim.

## CHAPTER V.

THE PARTRIDGE-TRAP AND SUNDAY WHIP-  
PING.

WHEN the pilgrim boy was about ten years old, he began to think there was no use in following so closely the advice of an old woman; and as his acquaintance began to enlarge, he saw boys that did not go to church, who fished on Sunday, and trapped partridges. He soon tried to get loose from the old woman's leading-strings, so that he might go with other boys and enjoy their fun; but he was well aware, from past experience, that it would be no easy matter to escape her piercing black eyes. He sometimes thought the birds carried tales to her, for she appeared to know every thing he did, good or bad.

An opportunity soon offered for him to try his skill in evading her vigilance. One Saturday in the winter of 1813, the snow fell about six inches deep. In the evening he met a neighbor boy of his own age, the son of an irreligious man, who neither regarded the Sabbath

himself, nor taught his sons to regard it. That boy told him that the next day would be a fine day to trap partridges, that there were a great many of them in a thicket in their field, and asked him to go home and make a trap, and be ready to meet him in the morning as soon as he had eaten his breakfast, and they would have fine fun. He replied that he would like very much to do it, but old mammy would make him go to preaching. The other boy said, "I can tell you how to come over an old woman like her. Tell her you are sick; don't eat any breakfast, slip to the cupboard, fill your pockets, and carry it to the barn, and hide it till you are ready to start, and then eat it."

The plan seemed to be a good one, and all the arrangements for meeting next morning were made in a few minutes. The pilgrim boy ran home, and was soon at work on his trap. By the time the trap was done, it was near dark, and the old lady was on the way to the barn to milk her cows. As she passed by him, she said, "Well, what are you making so late in the evening?" He told her there were a great many partridges in Mr. F——'s field, and he wanted to catch her some of them. She

said, "It is too late to-night, and to-morrow is the Lord's day, and we go to church;" and there was a look of her eye that seemed to say, I will watch that trap pretty closely. The pilgrim boy saw there was danger ahead, and to avoid it *told his first lie*, by saying he was making it ready for Monday morning.

The trap, with all its appendages, was ready by dark; but that big lie was not done with. He went to bed, but could not sleep for some hours. Oh what feelings he had! He tried to pray, but could not; a voice seemed to say, "All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone;" and he could not rest till he promised God and his own conscience he never would tell another lie. In the morning he rose early, thought of the feelings of the past night, said his prayers, and went out as usual. But the beautiful snow and the cry of the *bobwhites* overcame all the resolutions of the past night, and he soon set about to invent another lie. God had not taken vengeance on him for the one of the previous evening, and he reasoned, that as he had promised the other boy to meet him, he must now tell a lie either to his old mammy or to the

boy by breaking that promise. His inclination soon settled the question. A lie was a lie, he thought, and he would take the course that would give him the most fun; so he set about planning another lie to deceive his old mammy, and no doubt Satan aided him.

The breakfast was soon ready, as there was no cooking done on Sunday. He said he could not eat; that he was sick; he drank a little tea, moaned a good deal, and tried to look pale; but all the time was scanning closely his old mammy's eyes, which seemed to say, I am not quite sure about your sickness. It was soon time to go to church. He put in his plea of sickness and a hole in his shoe, and finally succeeded in getting leave to stay at home, by promising to read all day, and commit to memory the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm, Rouse's version.

The other boy soon came along, and gave the signal-whistle to start. The old lady was not gone yet. The pilgrim boy, to get away safe, took his psalm-book, and said he would go out to the barn and learn his psalm; but as the other boy was waiting, he left the book in the barn, and pushed on to the thicket with his

trap. While in the act of setting the trap, who comes along but his old mammy. As she was a little later than usual, she came across the field to save distance, very unexpectedly to him. She caught a glimpse of her boy; his name was called aloud. She came to the place, found the trap just set, which she soon demolished, broke off a birch limb four or five feet long, took her boy home with her, shut the door, and applied the birch till the red came very freely. He promised very earnestly never to tell another lie, or trap partridges again on Sunday. He was soon washed and dressed, and on the road to church, with a sermon on the terrors of the law, two miles long, preached to him by the way; and a similar one on the way home, in the presence of some of the good people that went the same road, who fully approved of the whole.

The pilgrim boy never forgot that day's preaching; it was the best sermon he had ever got; he not only felt it on his skin, but in his heart. He knew he had not only grieved that mother, but had offended God; he had told one lie to hide another; and if he had escaped punishment in the commencement of this course

of falsehood and crime, we know not what might have been his end.

Thirty years after that time, the pilgrim boy stood by the dying-bed of that good woman, in the same room where the rod had been so effectually applied, and with tears of gratitude thanked her for that very whipping. If he had succeeded in deceiving her by a falsehood that day, the next time he wanted to stay at home, another lie would have been told; and we have seen how one lie seems to make another necessary in order to escape detection, till the heart becomes hardened in sin, and the result is ruin here, and eternal ruin hereafter.

Avoid lying and Sabbath-breaking. You may deceive your parents, but you cannot deceive an omniscient God, or your own conscience. "Be sure your sin will find you out;" and better for it to find you out, and lead you to repentance here, than to find you out in hell, where there is no repentance. One or the other is certain as the oath and promise of God can make it. Take warning; avoid the first inclination to falsehood, and a liar's doom.

In this conduct of the pilgrim boy, he broke three of God's commandments: he broke the

ninth by telling lies, the fourth by breaking the Sabbath-day, and by disobedience he broke the fifth: "Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

This command of the decalogue stands first in our duties to man. Write it on the tablet of your heart. It was written by God's own finger on a table of stone on mount Sinai, when the mountain quaked, as if warning of the awful consequences that would follow its violation from a sin-avenging God. Look again at the first word: "*Honor*" your father and mother, by obeying *cheerfully* all their commands, except they command you to disobey God; not waiting for the command to be repeated—not saying, I can't do it, or I don't want to do it, or delaying as long as you can, to avoid punishment.

Honor your parents, not only by strict obedience when in their sight, but by your good conduct when out of their sight. See that boy cursing and fighting in the street. Listen to the people as they pass by, saying, "I wonder what kind of parents that boy has; they must raise their boys like heathen; that boy is a candidate

for the penitentiary." Such a boy is bringing dishonor on his parents and disgrace on himself. Especially are the faults of the children of pious parents taken notice of, as more is expected from them. When out of sight of their parents, lest they should be thought religious and be laughed at by wicked boys, they are tempted to say and do many things for which their own conscience bitterly accuses them, and for which they intend to repent in the future. It is an awful truth, that some boys, however well trained, if they are unconverted, feel more ashamed to be seen praying, than to be heard cursing or lying in the presence of the wicked. Let the sons of pious men keep it in mind, that they are the representatives of their parents when out of their sight. The good moral character of the son shows that he has respectable parents, and thus his parents are honored.

Honor your parents by submitting to their judgment, even when you think they may be wrong. Their experience has taught them many things of which you are still ignorant. When the pilgrim boy was very small, he would listen for hours to old people talking, that he might have the benefit of their experience. So

all that you learn from your parents is so much practical capital for you to begin with. I do not mean by this that, because your father always rode on horseback, you should never enter a railroad car; or that if he was an unbeliever, you should be one too. But I mean, that you should give due respect to all the opinions of your parents.

But there is a large class of boys in every community whose fathers are in their graves, and a widowed mother has the responsibility of their training. Do you obey the commands of that mother; or is she weeping and mourning over your disobedience? Have you begun to think you are too large to be directed by that mother; that it is unmanly to be led by her, and time for you to set up for yourself? If you have any such feelings, banish them as you would the thought of murder; they will lead you to slight all her maternal counsels, and mourn in sorrow over your disregard of her. How painful the thought of a self-willed boy, refusing to be controlled by that kind mother who watched over his infant days, soothed him in his little sorrows, and taught his infant lips to pray. What a vile wretch such a boy

is. Wonderful forbearance of God to let him live!

I have seen such boys in the prison, and before the criminal court, and in the solitary cell. Could we expect any thing else of a boy that would not obey his mother? Could we expect him to obey the laws of the land? No; the will that is too stubborn to yield to the entreaties of a tender mother, will soon trample on the laws of the land, and all legal enactments. It has been a peculiarity of all great men, that they revered their mothers. The Saviour in his dying agony said to one of his disciples, "Behold thy mother." Read the lives of the best men that ever lived, and see if you can find one that slighted the advice of his mother. Look at the father of our country, the immortal Washington, and Bonaparte the hero, and hosts of others. They were not too wise to be controlled by a mother.

Or are you, like the pilgrim boy, an orphan, without father or mother, and taken care of by those who act the part of a father or mother to you? If so, you are bound to obey them with the same fidelity as if they were your own parents. In some respects, the obligation is even

greater. Your parents, while living, were bound to take care of you ; but if you are an orphan boy, without any property, and friends are taking care of you upon whom you have no claims beyond those of mere humanity, an increased obligation rests on you to obey them. The law of God requires it, and promises the same rewards or punishments.

But how often do we see some poor penniless boy, taken home by some uncle, or aunt, fed, clothed, and sent to school, breaking away from their necessary restraints, and setting up for himself ; associating with wicked boys ; going to the grog-shop and card-table first, and soon after wallowing in the gutter.

Not long since, a ragged, dirty-looking boy called on a man in the state of Missouri to get work, who asked him if he had parents living to take care of him. The boy said, "No ;" but he had been living with an uncle for some time, who would not let him do as he wished, and he had left him. The man advised him to go back, but in vain. The next morning, Sunday, the man saw him in a fight with another boy, and separated them ; but though he was the aggressor, he swore vengeance on the other

boy if he ever met him again. He went to the river near by, and persuaded boys to go in with him to bathe; he waded out into the current, and sunk to rise no more. He would not be controlled by an uncle; he *did as he pleased*.

Some disobedient boys have lived to be old, but their old age has generally been unhappy. When I was a little boy, I heard people often tell of a man whom I knew well, that dragged his old gray-headed decrepit father out of the house by the hair of his head, kicking him as he went. His sons have often kicked him since, and he has become an outcast, despised by all that knew him. To dishonor your parents and those who have the care of you, is a sin which God will not let go unpunished. You may live to receive your pay back with interest from your own children. The pay will be sure some day.

Under the law of Moses, the disobedient son was to be stoned to death in the presence of the whole congregation, as a warning to other boys. There was no escape from the penalty, or exceptions to the divine rule, under the Jewish law; and the Bible is full of curses against all disobedient children. Read that awful decla-

ration in Prov. 30 : 17, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." In Rom. 1 : 30, they are classed with "backbiters and haters of God." In 2 Tim. 3 : 2, they are classed with proud blasphemers and unholy men. Such is the character of disobedient children, given in God's word, and the punishment to be inflicted.

Do you desire the favor of God and long life? Obey your parents. Do you desire to escape his judgments in this life, and his wrath in the life to come? Obey your parents. Do you desire the favor and respect of all good men in this world? Then obey your parents, or those who have the responsibility of your training, and save yourself disgrace here, or an untimely end, with eternal banishment from God's presence hereafter.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND FALSEHOOD—FISHING TO GET  
CLEAR OF WORK.

It might naturally be supposed that what the pilgrim boy had suffered, with the good instruction he had received, would have cured him of lying. But no; he had a desperately wicked heart; he loved the father of lies more than he loved God, and all he cared for was to gratify his evil desires.

At ten years old, he had to leave school and commence hard labor, of which he was not very fond at that time. When the season came for planting corn, he was set to drop the seed in the furrows. It was easy work, and he was quite delighted with it the first day. In the evening, on his way home from the field, he met the same boy who led him to break the Sabbath and tell his first lie. That boy now proposed that they should go a fishing the next day. The pilgrim boy was anxious to go, but there was corn to plant, and he did not see how he could get off from his work. At last, by

the aid of the other boy, a plan was laid. It was this. The measles were prevailing in the neighborhood, and he was to feign himself sick with that disease, and after all hands were gone out to their work, slip off to the creek with his hook and line. All the plans were laid to the best possible advantage for the day's fishing. After he went to bed, the partridge-trap came to his mind, and made him quite uneasy; but as it was not the Sabbath, he thought he could escape, and it would not do to break his promise with the boy.

When breakfast was ready, he said he was sick, and could not eat; that he had met a boy who had the measles, and had caught them. The old lady, who was one of the main doctors of the neighborhood, said she could soon decide that matter. She entered into a strict examination of all his symptoms, and pronounced it all a fabrication to get clear of work, and said she could soon cure him with a good hickory. She took him in hand at once, and in less than five minutes the symptoms were all gone, except a redness of the skin occasioned by the rod, and he was on his way to the corn-field to work without any breakfast. This cured the

pilgrim boy of lying. Among all the sins he ever committed, none ever gave him so much distress as that one, especially from the fact that he was reminded of it almost every day by those who saw him whipped and heard him tell the lie. It led him to resolve never to tell any more lies, and it brought into his soul the first real convictions for sin he ever felt. He became so alarmed in consequence of it, that he was afraid to be alone at night, lest the devil should come and carry him off alive.

You may not often have told such glaring falsehoods as this boy did; but have you not dissembled to hide your faults? When asked where you have been, and whom you have been in company with, have you not practised deception by holding back part of the truth? Ananias and Sapphira his wife only withheld part of the truth; but they were smitten of God, and died instantly, as a warning to all liars. There is no sin that grows more rapidly than this. If you tell a lie to-day, and gain some indulgence by it, and escape punishment, you will tell another to-morrow much easier, and in a short time the habit will become so strong that you can hardly speak the truth.

Of all mean characters, none are more justly despised than liars. The thief may take your property, but the liar will rob you of your character, and keep a whole community disturbed. Lying will bring disgrace on your parents, your brothers and sisters, and ruin your own soul, if persisted in. Beware, then, of the first lie ; always tell the truth, let it cost you what it may.

Remember George Washington when he was a little boy. His father had bought him a new hatchet, and the next morning he cut down a beautiful pear-tree his father very highly valued. No one saw him do it, and it might readily be supposed some of the servants did it. His father was very much displeased, and called all up to inquire who was guilty, and George replied, "Father, I did it." The fault was cheerfully forgiven, and the father embraced his son with a joyful heart. How many boys there are who would have denied it, and laid the blame on some one else, making the crime a two-fold one. It grieves parents and friends much to know that their boys do wrong ; but to know that they do wrong, and then tell lies about it, grieves them ten times more.

Now, my dear boy, if you have been in the habit of telling lies, when you read this, resolve you will never tell another ; break off at once from a habit that leads to disgrace, and makes you a companion of the devil, who was a liar from the beginning. Some boys get into the habit of lying by relating every thing they see and hear with some addition to it, making a wonderful tale out of some trifle. They think it makes them big to relate some strange thing, and brings them into notice. Beware, then, of boasting or exaggerating ; it will lead you to downright lying. When you have told a lie, and come to reflect about it, has it not given you great distress? The pilgrim boy could not sleep after his lies ; and I have known many a boy that was afraid to lie down at night, after telling lies.

The pain and shame of lying overbalances all the pleasure any one can derive from it. By contracting such a habit, you will get to hate yourself. You will be carrying in your bosom, while on earth, the worm that never dies. You will be always dreading detection and fearing exposure. You will gradually become ashamed to look any one in the face, as

no confirmed liar has a frank, open countenance, but is down-looking. Let your motto be, *truth* under all circumstances. Then you can hold up your head like a man. Men of truth may be respected, though they may have many other failings, but a liar never.

## CHAPTER VII.

## DEATH OF THE MAN WITH WHOM HE LIVED.

ABOUT this time a trying circumstance occurred to the pilgrim boy. It was the death of the old man with whom he lived, about whom nothing has yet been said. He was a very wicked man, and professed to be a deist, but always said he would educate the pilgrim boy for a preacher, and at his death give him half his estate, which was considerable. The old man's custom was to rise early, and eat a lunch as soon as he was dressed. One morning he rose before his usual time, and called for some bread and meat. The pilgrim boy was directed to bring it to him. He took one mouthful, and fell dead without moving a muscle. There was no one present but this boy. It was the first death he had ever witnessed, and it alarmed him terribly to see a wicked, profane man cut down in a moment. The old man had wished himself in hell but a few minutes before, in a fit of passion, and he seemed to be

taken at his word. This increased the alarm of the boy, who cried at the top of his voice to his wife, who was out of the house at the time. In a moment she was at the side of her dead husband, and closed his sightless eyes with her own hands, and with the help of the boy laid his dead body on the bed, before she warned the neighbors.

This unexpected death blasted the hopes of the pilgrim boy, both as to wealth and education. The old man died without a will such as he intended to make. He had made one before he took this boy; but he could neither read nor write, and thought it was destroyed. After his death it came to light, and gave his estate to a distant relation. The boy now saw no hope of rising in the world, except by his own industry. He still lived with the old lady, but had to stop going to school, and work hard for his living. He was set to ploughing before he was eleven years old. His lot seemed to be a hard one. It led him to pray to God for direction, and read his word for a while; and to others he seemed to be a religious boy.

At this time he felt a great desire to become

a preacher, and tried many ways to satisfy himself whether he was a Christian. Sometimes he would go away into the woods alone, and ask God to speak to him in an audible voice, and tell him whether he would be saved or lost. Sometimes he would quit praying, lest, if he should be lost, it should increase his misery. At other times he would conclude to pray on, and do all he could, that if he should be sent to hell, his sufferings might be less. He continued in this state of mind for nearly three years, sometimes deeply impressed about his soul, at other times careless. For a week or two he would pray night and morning, often for a long time, to make up for his neglect at other times. During this period he read all the books he could get, although he had no time except in stormy weather, and at night by fire-light. But with these very limited opportunities, before he was fifteen he had read through a good circulating library that was kept in the neighborhood, and had acquired more general information than most boys in the community where he lived.

But a still greater trial came on him before he was thirteen years old. A fearful epidemic

broke out in that part of the country, and his own kind mother, who had married again, and lived six miles from him, was one of the first victims of it. He heard of her sickness but a few hours before her death; and so great was the panic, he was not allowed to see her, or even attend her funeral, except to look on at a distance. When the funeral services were over, he went into the woods alone, and rolled on the ground in agony. No tongue could express the deep sorrows of that boy's heart, as he beheld the funeral procession move slowly along to the last resting-place of the dead. He was truly an orphan, without father or mother, cast on the charities of a cold world, with no property to depend on; and worse than all, he was an enemy to God. He prayed, and prayed again; night and morning his agonizing cry went up to God, besides many times through the day. Still his way was dark, and he felt as if God was dealing hard by him, as all unrenewed hearts feel when God afflicts them. He felt that God was angry with him; and in order to please him, he read and prayed more. While other boys were at their play, he was at his books. On Sabbath he was always at

church when there was preaching, and constantly at the monthly examinations, and could repeat several catechisms throughout. But with all, he was an enemy to God; he served him through fear, and not from love.

But God's providences are often very mysterious, and the greatest blessings we receive, come in the shape of disappointment. Many men who are now of no use to church or state, had they been left to struggle in poverty in boyhood, and been thrown upon their own resources, might now have been filling high positions. The wealth of their parents proved their ruin. "Come easy, go easy," is an old proverb, and generally true; and when their property is gone, having no character, they have nothing left. The poor boy depends on his own energy, and by it, with God's blessing, builds up his own fortune and character. The death of the pilgrim boy's earthly benefactor was doubtless the means of developing in him a more noble character, and of drawing him from trusting in man, to rely more on God. The death of a praying mother must be regarded as a great calamity, and we have to leave it among the unexplained mysteries of God's

providence in this life. In eternity it will be doubtless explained to our entire satisfaction.

This boy had been taught to call on God in the day of trouble, and when it came, he resorted to prayer for relief. Have you been taught, my dear boy, to pray, and do you still continue this habit; or are you beginning to forget, or wilfully neglect it? If you neglected it last night, it will be easier to omit it to-night, and thus in a short time you will be a prayerless boy; you will lie down at night and rise in the morning like a poor dumb brute, and live as if there was no God. A little boy living without prayer, is like a boat in the midst of the mighty ocean without a rudder or pilot, tossing before the furious waves, soon to sink and rise no more. Beware of the first neglect of prayer.

The prayer of the poor publican was among the best prayers ever offered: "God be merciful to me a sinner." He felt what he said, and God answered him in mercy. And you must look to God to make you feel that you are a sinner, for before you feel this you will never pray aright. But you must not make it an excuse to neglect the duty because you cannot

pray aright, for praying will make you quit sinning, or sinning will make you quit praying. The pilgrim boy often prayed while he was in trouble very earnestly ; and so do many other boys ; but as soon as the trouble is past, they forget to pray till some new danger threatens them. This shows that they have no real love to God in their hearts, and without the heart prayer cannot be acceptable to God.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE PILGRIM BOY BECOMES PROFANE, AND  
LEARNS TO CHEW TOBACCO.

IN the last chapter, we traced his history through severe afflictions, which seemed for a time to be sanctified to his good. He had become prayerful, and even hoped at times that he was a Christian. But alas, he knew not his own wicked heart. Being large of his age, and making close application to reading and study, he was said to be the smartest boy in the neighborhood. He soon began to think so himself, and became puffed up with pride, stepped out of his place, and spoke when he should have held his tongue. Young men began to associate with him, and even to look up to him as a leader; many of them were very profane, and had no fear of God before them.

The pilgrim boy foolishly thought that if he could swear and chew tobacco, he should be a full-grown man, and fit for all classes of society. He soon began, when in the company of the profane, to imitate them. At first he

swore so awkwardly that he was laughed at by those who had long been addicted to this vulgar, God-insulting vice. Yet, when he was alone, especially at night, he would be afraid to lie down in a dark room, lest God should cut him off, and send him to hell. He would then try to pray, and promise God he would swear no more; but when he would meet his profane companions, all his promises were forgotten, and he would even venture a little farther, till by degrees conscience became almost stifled, and he could outswear most of his teachers; but he kept it secret from the mother who had adopted him, and from religious people.

By the time he had learned to swear pretty scientifically, he had also learned to chew tobacco. All this was accomplished in one winter. He was so far schooled in these vices by the spring he was fifteen and a half years old, that he was fit for a ringleader; and he stepped out of his boy's clothes, booted and spurred, as a companion of young men and women. How different the prospects of the pilgrim boy, to the mind of every reflecting man, now from what they were at the close of the last chapter. He began to be pointed at

by wicked men as one of the boys who was raised so strictly, and the Christian character of his good old mother was made to suffer by his wickedness. But was he happy? No; he was at times the most miserable boy in the community. While he appeared to enjoy his wickedness, conscience would sting him like a scorpion, and his agony at times was almost insupportable.

Are you a boy that has had no religious training? Do not judge the inward feelings of those boys that have by their outward conduct. The seeds of truth sown by parental culture, and watered by prayer, often occasion them bitter sorrow for their sins when you know nothing of it. The Spirit of God rouses them to think of death, judgment, and eternity, and echoes back on them the prayers of pious parents, dead or alive. One hour of their bitter sorrow outweighs all the sinful pleasures they had in profaning God's name in your company. I know that wicked boys are glad when they can get the sons of pious parents to join them in their wickedness. But what benefit can you derive from their sins? Will it save your character from disgrace in the sight

of good men? Will it save you from the death that never dies? No, my dear boy, it will be no relief to you if you die in your sins. You have to stand before God as if there was no other being on earth but yourself.

It is also true, that the influence you have exerted on others will have much to do with your final account. That oath you swore has been learned and repeated by some other boy, and he has repeated it to others, and its consequences will run on for ever. It is a fearful thing to teach bad habits to others; it will plant thorns in your dying pillow, and add fuel to the fire that never dies. I knew a boy who learned the habit of profane swearing from his father. I lived near him, and often reprov'd him for his awful profanity. He threatened me with vengeance when he should become a man, because I would not let a nephew of mine associate with him. As he increased in years he became more and more profane, till none but vicious persons would be seen in his company. At the age of twenty, he brought on himself a sickness which ended his days. He had a pious mother, who saw with sorrow her reprobate son declining rapidly. She proposed

to send for some one to pray for him. He broke out with oaths and blasphemies; told her he should soon be in hell, that he felt the fire that would never be quenched. He then turned to his father, cursed him to his face for neglecting to teach him to fear God, and for his profane example. He lingered a few days in awful agony, often wringing his hands and gnashing his teeth, cursing God and every thing around him. At his dying-hour the scene was so awful that one after another left the room, till even his own mother fled from his dying-bed, while he was crying, "O mother, take away these devils; they are dragging me down to hell. O mother, save me;" but he was left to die alone. We could hear his blasphemies outside of the house till his breathing ceased. The house seemed to be surrounded by evil spirits; every face was pale, and every nerve unstrung, of all that were within hearing. Many years have passed since this sad occurrence, and most of those then present are in their graves; but my heart still sickens while calling up the impressions of that awful scene.

Do any boys who read this take God's name in vain? If you do, he says he will not hold

you guiltless. You must abandon such a disgraceful habit, so provoking to God, and hateful in the sight of all good people. If any sight on earth can make angels weep, I think it is that of a boy strutting through the streets with a segar in his mouth, belching forth vulgar oaths, insulting the God who made him, and treating the law written with his own finger with contempt. Such a habit will be the cause of deep and bitter repentance, and may cling to you in future years, to your shame, and to your final condemnation.

Did you ever think that every oath you utter is a prayer to God to damn you? Suppose he should take you at your word, and answer your prayer, how awful it would be in hell, to think for ever that you received just what you prayed for. Beware, then, of this sin. It was the cause of much sorrow to the pilgrim boy. He found by painful experience, that it was much harder to abandon the practice than to contract it; and so will all that have ever learned to take God's name in vain.

## CHAPTER IX

## THE NEXT STEP IN VICE—CARD PLAYING.

THE pilgrim boy having learned to swear and chew tobacco, soon found there were other accomplishments important in his estimation to fit him for the enjoyment of life. About this time a celebrated gambler came into the neighborhood, with the first pack of cards this boy had ever seen; he soon began, with a few other boys and young men, to take lessons in this new science. He applied himself with unceasing energy for six months, during which time he made extraordinary progress, and felt himself fully equipped for all classes of society, except in the want of money. To appear to advantage among some of his companions, and to engage in gambling, required a little means, while all the money he had in the world was one French crown—worth a dollar and ten cents—which he had received for partridges he had caught and sold.

Though these gambling operations had been carried on with the utmost secrecy, sometimes

in the barn, at other times in the woods, and in the spring of the year at the sugar camps, yet the news was carried to the ears of his old mother. For a time a strict watch was kept over him, and the number of psalms he had to commit doubled, to prevent his having time to spare for this new science. Her plan was to fill the mind with God's truth, believing it would ultimately cast out the evil of the heart, through the operations of his Spirit. For some months this process went on, but the inward struggle was a very severe one; the force of truth coming in contact with the inclinations of an unrenewed heart, often made him feel life a burden, and destroyed every enjoyment.

Up to this period, the pilgrim boy was compelled to attend church and all the catechetical examinations regularly, besides daily fireside lectures, which resembled very much the warning that Nathan gave David, "Thou art the man."

How different the training of boys in most cases now. Some parents will go to church and leave their sons behind; and if children go to Sunday-school, they too often, as soon as it is over, seek their amusements. As to learn-

ing the catechism, that is behind the age; and very few ministers are so old-fashioned as to hold monthly examinations and expose parents by their children's ignorance of Bible doctrines! To send children to a schoolmaster who possessed authority to make them learn the Bible and catechism, or be punished with the rod, would be viewed as a relic of the dark ages. In too many cases, teachers dare not, and parents will not control their sons, and thus they grow up without the fear of God or man. From this unrestrained, untaught class of boys the prison and gallows get their victims, and parents their broken hearts.

Dear reader, are you the son of a wealthy man, and do you receive money to gratify your desires? Have you contracted the habit of gambling, attending the circus and theatre? as we may justly class all these together. If so, you have taken the first downward step, filled your mind with false ideas of life, and are on the road to ruin. Few that have contracted such habits, ever become pious; they grow up proud and haughty, despising the poor who toil for their living. But remember, you are made of the same clay, and descended from the same

parents originally. It was God's will, and not your own power, that made the difference. But your father's wealth is no security for the permanency of years, and in thousands of cases while it lasts it opens the way to a class of vices of the most dangerous character.

Go and ask the aged how many of the sons of the wealthy whom they knew in early life, are now rich old men. They will tell you not one of them out of ten is alive, and less than even that proportion of them that do live, are rich; many of them are in deep poverty. They grew up in idleness as you are doing now, and when their money was gone, they were too idle, or their constitutions too much broken down, to work, and they are now the poorest of the poor. Suppose you were to start in company with a poor but industrious boy, to seek a situation as a clerk, or to occupy some important place of trust. No doubt you think your position as the son of a wealthy man would give you a decided advantage over him in getting a place. In this you probably would be very much mistaken; he would get ten to employ him before you would find one, and be entrusted with the keys of his employer's desk when you would not.

Two boys called one morning on a merchant who wanted some one to collect bills. The first one was finely dressed, with a nice cane in his hand, a cigar in his mouth, and a letter of high commendation from his mother. The merchant eyed him closely and declined to employ him, as he saw something like a pack of cards in his pocket. In a short time another boy, bareheaded and barefooted, stood before the same merchant, and asked him if he did not want a boy. He replied that he did. The boy's eye sparkled at the reply. But said the merchant, "I want a recommendation." The poor boy had not thought of that. In a moment the tear stood in his eye. He said, "My poor mother is sick, and I want something to do to earn her bread." The merchant was moved with the boy's tale, and said, "Can you not get some one who knows you to testify to your character?" The boy pulled out of his pocket a well-worn Testament; on the title page was written, "Given as a reward of merit to a good boy, by his Sunday-school teacher." He was employed at once, and is now a rich merchant.

The writer has conversed with many business

men of experience on this point, who say that more than half the boys of wealth became dishonest, and leave in disgrace. The reason is, they have contracted habits of gambling, by which they squander their money; and to keep up a supply, resort to their employer's desk for more, with the hope of winning back their losses. Failing to do this, their dishonesty is soon detected. No doubt they *intended*, when the first was taken, to return it; and in this way relieved their conscience by calling it a short loan, to be paid as soon as the wheel of fortune would favor them, or supplies came in from home. In the mean time, the gratification of other desires has absorbed all they honestly received, and the drawer not being able to speak and claim its own like other creditors, is left unpaid till its gaunt appearance awakens the employer's suspicions, and the boy is sent home in disgrace, to lounge in idleness and squander his intended patrimony.

Among all the vices to which human nature is addicted, perhaps no one is so certain to bring ruin for both time and eternity as this, and no one so fascinating. When a youth is once within the sweep of this mighty whirlpool,

every day gives new impetus to his downward course, and an escape is almost miraculous. Indeed, nothing but the grace of God will save him. Nothing is more dreaded by business men than to have in their employ boys or young men addicted to this vice, and if known, no gambling youth would be employed in any place of trust. Card-playing, like the locomotive, draws a long train after it—theft, drunkenness, licentiousness, highway robbery, murder, the prison, and the gallows; and it generally does its work in a short time.

Let us trace the process. See some fine looking boys standing round looking at others playing cards, it may be for amusement; it looks to them like a pleasant one. The next evening they meet, and propose to try the cards; they take their first lesson. In a short time they become initiated into the art; they begin to play for an orange or an apple at first; some one gains it; this encourages him to risk more at the next meeting, and the others try to win back their losses. Their feelings have now become excited; their little pieces of pocket-money are now staked; the gainer becomes elated—the loser hopes for better success next

time, and perhaps stakes all he has. The next evening he wants more money; a lie must be told to his father or mother to get it: or, if he is a clerk, he borrows it out of the drawer, intending to pay it next day; but alas, the wheel of fortune has turned the wrong way—that is gone too. Another lie must be told at home, or another loan from the drawer follows, till supplies are stopped at home and the loans from the drawer are detected, and the youth is expelled from the establishment.

He now begins to cast about how to get supplies, in the hope he may retrieve his bad luck. He resolves to enter a store by the back way. The money is soon obtained, and in one night gone. Another draft is needed, and this process renewed again and again. At last it becomes known that some man has a large amount of money in his house. At the midnight hour the gambler enters, armed to the teeth; in a few moments the unsuspecting family are weltering in their blood, and their money is gone. Next day the whole community are shocked at the sad intelligence, but no clue as yet to the murderer. He has gone to the card-table, or faro-bank. The large amount of money in his

possession awakens suspicion; the matter is hinted at quietly. Mr. A comes to Mr. B and buys a bill of goods, hands him a twenty-dollar note. "Who did you get that note from, Mr. B? Mr. C, who was murdered, got that note from me last week; I put my name on it, as I had never seen one like it on that bank." Mr. B got it from Mr. D, and thus it is traced back to the murderer. He is arrested. All the circumstances are clear; a jury of his country condemn him to death. In a few weeks he ascends the scaffold, and is launched into eternity. Perhaps he has a father and mother who have spent all they had to save his life, but in vain. They sink in sorrow to the grave; other friends blush to hear his name. My dear boys, this is no fancy sketch, but the statement of a fact known to the writer.

You have seen, from the history of the pilgrim boy, the narrow escape he made from ruin by this vice; and as far as we can see, nothing but the want of money saved him. The mania for gambling had got such complete control of him, that he often sat up all night and played till he lost all his tobacco; and if he had had any money, or could have obtained it, he would

have spent it too. Let me entreat you to shun cards as you would a scorpion; touch not the deadly torpedos, or they will produce a moral paralysis that will deaden the soul to every virtuous emotion, harden the heart to every other vice, and blot out every hope of heaven.

Very recently the writer was sitting alone in a dark room, when it was entered by six men, all intoxicated, noted gamblers, when the following conversation took place among them. "Well, Jack, how much do you make and lose each year?" "Last year a little over \$5,000." "Bob, how much do you handle annually?" "Why, for the last five years, over \$40,000 a year, and I am often without one cent; and I tell you, boys, I have been at it fifteen years, and yet am not worth one dollar in the world to-night; and during the whole time I have not seen one day of happiness. I might as well be in hell, and I care not how soon I die." This led to a general expression of their feelings; all spoke of their misery: their property gone, nothing to depend on but the uncertainties of the card-table and faro-banks, and half of them with families to support. Any vice continued in will bring ruin, but none more certainly than

this, for it brings all others in the train with it. "Go not in the way of transgressors;" "abstain from all appearance of evil," is the advice of the God that made you, and of the Son of God who died to redeem you. May God add his blessing, and save the reader from this soul-destroying vice.

## CHAPTER X.

## UNIVERSALISM—BAD BOOKS.

WE have now traced the pilgrim boy as he advanced step by step, and we find conscience, God's vicegerent, is still at work, and the struggle severe. Often, when alone, he would weep and pray, resolve to break off sin and turn to God; but in a few hours more, he would wish he had never seen a Bible, or that those portions of it that condemn his sins had been left out. At other times, he would try to persuade himself that the Bible was not true. In this, Satan was always ready to suggest doubts and difficulties; he thought more about Melchisedek and the witch of Endor than about Jesus Christ. Up to this time he had never met any one that denied the great evangelical truths of Christianity, nor had he read any books on religious subjects but such as taught those truths.

About this time he met an old schoolmate, some years older than himself, who had recently married into a Universalist family, and was

full of zeal for this new faith. He soon advanced his sentiments, the same that Satan preached in Eden, but new to the pilgrim boy, who listened with deep interest while his friend explained this new religion. His conscience could not assent to it, although he wished it might be true, as it would suit him exactly. He felt the want of some kind of religion, and one that would allow him to sin as much as he pleased would just suit him, if it were only true. They continued a warm discussion, the pilgrim boy bringing up all the scriptures he could to prove the eternal punishment of the wicked, and the other explaining them away. All the time the boy felt a strong desire that his friend should remove all doubt from his mind, and even looked forward with a delightful anticipation to the commission of sins he had always shrunk from before, provided he could be convinced the doctrine was true.

His friend finally proposed to lend him a book on the subject, which he took very cheerfully. It was Ballou's "Treatise on the Atonement of Christ." He read it with great delight. Before he was half through the book, he began to lay plans for the gratification of all the evil

desires of his heart. He felt moral restraint nearly gone, and entered on the commission of sins that would have made him shudder a week before.

As soon as he read the book he returned it, and got Ballou's "Notes on the Parables," and read with delight till he came to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, when all his hopes seemed to be blasted. The reasoning seemed foolish and absurd in the extreme, and he was sadly disappointed; he had hoped the author would make that as plain as he had his other arguments, and that thus he might sin with impunity. He had frequent interviews with his friend, who did all he could to remove his doubts. As a last resort, his friend advised him to advocate the doctrine with the orthodox, and he would soon get to believe it. Willing to do any thing that would allow him to sin with an easy conscience, he followed the advice. For four years he was spouting Universalism on every occasion, and no doubt led some into that soul-destroying error. Still, his conscience was not at ease; a still small voice was whispering, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." When in company with his wicked com-

panions, he could roll sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue ; but when alone, hell would seem to flash up before him with all its horrors, and the pains of a guilty conscience for one hour would overbalance all the sinful pleasures of a week.

For four years the pilgrim boy thus hazarded the consequences of losing his soul. He finally came to the conclusion that he would not indulge in sins that would affect his character in the sight of men, and spent hours in fixing up a hell of his own, until he believed it was just such a place as he wished it to be ; and then he put the awful question to his own soul, whether he would take it as his portion hereafter, with the indulgence of sinful passions during life, or forsake sin and lead a holy life, and enjoy a glorious heaven after death.

For more than a year his mind was exercised on this question, and the scales rose and fell in proportion to the power of the conviction of sin, or the inclination to yield to temptation. There seemed to be two great powers at work in his heart, one striving to lead him deeper into sin, the other crying in his ear,

“Turn ye, turn ye; why will you die?” But blessed be God, the former grew weaker by degrees, while the latter increased in power. The struggle was long and fierce, whether to embrace a flesh-pleasing, or a flesh-crucifying system of religion.

The next danger to which we wish to gain your attention, as drawn from the history of this boy, is the danger of BAD BOOKS. A bad book must, in the nature of things, be written by a bad man or woman, since “a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.” Hence, the time you spend in reading a bad book is so much time spent in company with a bad character, and you cannot come in contact with filth without some of it sticking to you. Your life and conduct will reflect the kind of company you keep, and the books you read. Reading the novel “Jack Sheppard” formed the character of young S——, and prepared him to become a pirate, who was hung at the yard-arm of a man-of-war a few years since. Go to the convict’s cell, and ask what kind of books he has read. He will tell you, in nine cases out of ten, if he has read any, that he has read bad books; tales of crime portrayed in glowing colors,

which roused the evil passions and unholy desires that had lain apparently dormant in the heart.

The reading of bad books has done more during the last twenty years, in our country, to poison the minds of young men, lower the standard of high moral rectitude, and shut the heart against the word and Spirit of God, than almost any other evil in the land. Show me the youth that pores over tales of fiction, and drinks their intoxicating poison, and I will show you a fictitious character, vacillating and unreliable. "Show me your company, and I will tell you your character," is an adage old and true. A family library is an index to family character; the bookcase reflects the moral features. Better not read at all, than read bad books.

Among all the classes of dangerous books, none are more fatal than those that oppose evangelical religion; and the nearer the counterfeit comes to the genuine, it is the harder to detect.

Look again at the pilgrim boy tangled in the meshes of Universalism, with an old barbed arrow of truth in his conscience, holding him

in check at times, while at others he was able to give loose to his feelings altogether. Of all the false systems of religion ever devised by man, none is better suited to gratify depraved human nature. Denying punishment for sin hereafter, it gives the reins to every lust, gratifies every unholy desire, and in the end rewards the meanest and vilest of earth with a seat at the right hand of God.

The man who lent Universalist books to the pilgrim boy, before he embraced that system, had been as moral a young man as could be found in the community; but as soon as he became a Universalist, he threw off all restraint, indulged in sin with greediness, and died before he reached the meridian of life, uncared for by any except his own family. He had instilled into the minds of his children the same poison, and they have walked in his footsteps.

The writer knew many that were Universalists thirty-five years ago, and their history now would be dreadful to relate. The very man who first taught the doctrine in that community said, the day he died, if he had ten thousand worlds, he would give them, could it

undo the evil he had done. He died in agony of soul. His sons embraced the same system, and have long since gone to a drunkard's grave. The first convert he made died a similar death soon after, and his dissipated sons have long been members of an infidel club. Thus the history runs, with few exceptions. Is it possible that a system of religion which produces such results proceeds from a holy God? I warn you, by all the terrors of the worm that never dies, to read no such books; you can no more read them without injury to yourself, than you can take hold of fire without being burned. Enough of evil grows naturally in the heart; you can go to ruin fast enough by simply letting religion alone; the depravity of the unrenewed heart has motive power enough, without the aid of any external force. When you take away the doctrine of future punishment from a religious creed, you take away the last hope of a virtuous life.

I especially entreat you to shun all books that advocate false systems of religion, or in any way attempt to undervalue evangelical piety. Let the Bible be your daily companion, and make yourself familiar with such books as

have been written by the best of men on doctrinal and practical piety, together with biographies of the best men that have lived in this or other ages, and follow them so far as they have followed Christ. There are few who can sit down and read carefully the lives of such men as McCheyne, Summerfield, Alexander, Martyn, Brainard, or Page, without being benefited. While reading their lives, you are brought in contact with pure and holy men, and your tastes and character must be influenced by them.

From the age of sixteen to eighteen, the pilgrim boy's struggle with Universalism continued. He was still trying to satisfy himself that Universalism was true; but his mind had been so deeply imbued with Bible truth in childhood, that thorough unbelief in relation to any of the fundamental truths of Christianity was out of the question. Some years before, when quite small, he had made many promises to God, and to his old mother, that he would be a preacher; and these promises would sometimes rise like so many witnesses to testify against him before God, and almost

drive him to despair. Nothing seemed to have so powerful an effect in restraining him from sin as those broken vows. At the age of seventeen he went to what was called the far West, the central part of Ohio, in company with a very wicked young man, to aid him in clearing land, and to spend some part of his time in hunting deer and bears among the Indians. While there he formed the acquaintance of very godless young men, who spent the Sabbath in hunting. They invited him to join them, but he was frightened at the thought of thus desecrating God's holy day. They laughed at his religious scruples, and told him Sunday had not got so far west yet. He could not withstand the sneers of the wicked, and by the next Sunday had his gun ready, and engaged in the chase. But it was a day of awful forebodings lest some sudden judgment should fall on him; he was afraid to shoot for fear the gun would burst and kill him; he felt that God would be just to consign him to hell for that day's sin, and was astonished that he was permitted to live. The day passed away, and as nothing special occurred, by the return of the next Sabbath his conscience was easier, and in

the course of a few weeks he could hunt on that day with little remorse.

He remained six months in the West, during which time he saw but one professor of religion, and heard no sermon, and conscience had almost ceased to warn. When he returned home, the restraints which he had scarcely felt before, became almost intolerable; the silence of the Sabbath was as melancholy as a funeral, and he longed to be in some part of the land where the restraints of religion would not be felt, and all the appetites and passions could be indulged by public consent.

He still labored to throw off the truths of the Bible that had been imbedded in his memory from his childhood, and to invent a hell of his own which, if it did turn out to be a place of torment, would not be intolerable, and flattered himself that he would gain enough of sinful pleasure to compensate for the loss of heaven. Oh, the trials and forebodings of a guilty conscience under the strivings of the Holy Ghost; how unwilling to yield to the voice of God. Oh, how astonishing his mercy and love to continue to strive with such a rebel.

## CHAPTER XI.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO HIS  
MARRIAGE.

WHEN the pilgrim boy arrived at eighteen, he began to cast about to discover what pursuit he would follow in after life that would provide for his wants, and at the same time give the best chance for sinful gratifications. One day he would determine to go into the army and strive for military renown, and the next day he would plan something else. At that time he lived on the border of a community where there was much dissipation. Two or three nights in each week were spent in balls or at the card-table; and he never felt happy unless he was engaged in something of the kind. At home he was like a caged bird; his old mother so frequently reminded him of the obligations of the moral law, that he often wished Moses had never gone back to have it rewritten after the first tables were broken. He tried to show indifference to the old woman's counsel, but all in vain; he often felt that

life was almost a burden when his sins would rise up before him. For a time he would not go to church for fear the preacher would say something that would increase his distress and mar his pleasures.

At last he resolved to go to sea, with the hope of getting clear of the old woman's lectures and all other religious restraints, and went so far as to set the day for leaving, without telling any one of his intentions. The day came; his whole soul was convulsed; storms and shipwrecks rose to his view; the thoughts of being buried in the sea and being devoured by the monsters of the deep, and he an enemy to God, were too intolerable to bear. He finally resolved to go and ask counsel of God, wicked as he was, what course he should pursue. About noon he went to the woods alone, in a state of mind no pen can describe, to lay his case before Him who sees the end from the beginning.

Some time before this he had met with a young woman who had made a deep impression on his heart: the question rushed to his mind whether it would not be better to remain in the country, and ask her hand in marriage,

young as he was, than to run the risk of a seafaring life. He at once carried the matter to a throne of grace, and soon resolved to abandon all his plans, and make known to her his wishes. In the course of a few months her consent was obtained.

But here another difficulty arose: how was he to support a wife? he was without means, and so was she. But both had been brought up to hard labor, so that difficulty soon vanished. This engagement made him look at life as a reality, and he commenced laboring and saving in earnest.

Notwithstanding his mind was tainted with Universalism, he felt the necessity of praying much over this matter, as the Bible says a good wife is from the Lord. Before he was twenty years old he was married, and felt very sensibly the responsible position he had placed himself in, and at once abandoned all his former evil habits, and confined himself to hard labor. Though we would not recommend marriage generally at so early an age, yet it was doubtless the means of saving him from being a wanderer, and in all probability from dissipation and crime, if not from an untimely grave.

How inscrutable is the providence of God, and his ways past finding out! It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

We have now reviewed the most precarious part of a young man's existence—from early youth to manhood. Those that pass twenty years with a moral character unstained, usually sustain a fair character through life, and very few of those whose moral and religious training is neglected in childhood, pass that period without contracting habits or forming associations that lead to disgrace and ruin. When the comparatively innocent pleasures of boyhood have been changed into habits of sin, these habits choke the seed of truth sown with parental tears, watered by prayer, and often brought home to the heart and conscience by the Spirit of God. We see this youth struggling like the fish on the angler's hook, even taking the anodyne of Universalism to put conscience to sleep, sometimes making a hell to suit himself, and on the eve of resolving to take the chance of it; and nothing saved him but God's blessing on his own truth planted in his mind in childhood.

Now, my dear young friend, if you are or have been the son of pious, praying parents, or

under the instructions of pious ministers or Sabbath-school teachers, you have not arrived at this age without some concern about your soul. You have felt that you were a sinner. Something in you has trembled with fear. You were alarmed for your past sins, and dreading the wrath of God. It was truth, taught you by a praying father or mother, or read and heard in some way, that God's Spirit was bringing home to your heart to lead you from sin to himself. When, like this boy, you have been tempted to tell a lie, has not the awful truth, "All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone," flashed up before you with awful majesty? And when you have taken God's name in vain, has not a voice seemed to say, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain?" When you have spent the Sabbath of God in idleness and sin, have you not heard the same voice say, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy?" It was the voice of God speaking by his Spirit to your soul.

When you have seen one young as you sicken and die, when you have heard the funeral bell toll, or followed the funeral procession to the

grave, and heard the clay fall on the coffin, have not the emotions of your soul been inexpressible? It was the voice of God's Spirit. When you have lain down at night on your bed, have you not tried to imagine where that soul was which had just left the body? Perhaps he had been your companion in sin. Oh, would you not have given half a kingdom to know all that soul knew in a few hours? Have not these terrible thoughts for a time driven sleep from your eyes, and led you to pray and promise God you would cease from sin, and give him your strength and talents, yea, life itself? All these emotions are the work of God's Spirit, using his own truth and the dispensations of his providence towards others as means to lead you to repentance and deliver you from destruction.

If some kind friend were to come and wake you in the night when the house was in flames around you, and tell you to escape speedily, would you not flee in a moment? Could you ever forget that friend? Would not the sound of his voice send a thrill of joy through your heart ever after? Remember, my young friend, that although you heard no audible voice speak-

ing to the outward ear, it was God's Spirit, the only agency that can save you from eternal burning; knocking at the door of your heart, and saying, Escape for your life; escape from the fire that will never be quenched, to which the burning of your body would bear no more proportion than the flash of a meteor to the burning of the universe.

And have you resisted these influences, and thus "grieved the Holy Spirit of God?" What strange ingratitude! The same kind of treatment to one of your companions who had saved your life, would expose you to the contempt of all good men. How much more awful to contemplate the ingratitude of slighting the call of God your Maker.

But are there not great aggravations of this slighting of the Spirit in the case of some? Those who know their Master's will, and do it not, are to be beaten with many stripes. Are you not conscious that what you felt was produced by the Spirit of God? Though like the wind that blows, you could not tell whence it came, or whither it went, yet, from the teaching of the Bible and your own experience, do you not believe it was from the influences of

the Holy Ghost? If so, then are you not guilty of *wilfully slighting the Spirit of God*? Each rejection of the Holy Ghost increases your guilt, and increases the probabilities of your eternal damnation.

But let us now advance a step farther on this fearful subject, and suppose that you have not only felt deeply for an hour, or a day; but some particular providence of God, or some truth of the Bible has followed you from day to day, as they did the pilgrim boy, sometimes making life an intolerable burden. Perhaps it may be the prayers and advice of a mother, now dead or far distant from you, echoed back on your soul by the Spirit, giving you no peace, but crying, "Son, give me thy heart." Or it may be the sermon you heard, or a book or tract you read, or the warning of your Sunday-school teacher that follows you as it never did before. This is what is called the special operation of God's Spirit: all you felt before may have been but the prelude of the coming struggle. But now your wicked heart is in mortal combat with the Spirit of God, and it will have to yield sooner or later, for life or death eternal.

Some years ago the writer became acquaint-

ed with a man eminent for piety, who gave the following account of his conversion: My father died when I was fourteen years old; my mother was left with seven children, of which I was the oldest. She was a devoted Christian, and prayed with us daily. For the first two or three years after the death of my father, I often felt deeply about my soul for a short period, but when about sixteen, I was deeply distressed for some months, and prayed regularly, and even thought sometimes I was a Christian. About this time balls and dancing parties were introduced into the neighborhood, and I was induced by my companions to go. At first I was only a looker-on, but I soon joined the sport, and all my religion was gone, except some fearful pangs of conscience that would occasionally return. The news reached my mother; she warned and entreated, but all in vain. I soon began to be impatient of her reproof, and threatened to leave her if she did not desist; but she told me she would never cease to warn and pray, and that if I did go to destruction, I should wade through her tears and a Saviour's blood. For three or four years she warned and prayed, and I danced and frolic-

icked till I became the ringleader in every vain amusement. About this time preparation was made for a great ball, and I was to be one of the managers of it. The evening came. When I was about to leave, my mother said, "Well, James, remember your mother will spend this night in prayer for you." I felt a little sad, but rode off. The nearer I came to the place the worse I felt. When I entered the room I was greeted with a hearty welcome, but I felt depressed, and my appearance betrayed my feelings. Inquiry was made if I was sick, or what was the matter. I replied, "Nothing." The violin soon struck up a tune; I was to lead off, but my step was heavy. The company soon partook of the same feeling, and one began to say to another, What is the matter? My whole soul became convulsed; my feelings were unutterable; I burst into tears. "I can tell you what is the matter; my mother is praying for her prodigal son at home." I left the house and hastened back. When I came to the door, I heard the voice of prayer; my mother was pleading with God for me. I opened the door suddenly, and fell before her, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." My

burden was gone; she looked angelic; I embraced her, and we rejoiced together. Her Saviour was my Saviour, her God my God, our joys the same.

I have recorded this thrilling fact, supposing it may meet the case of some of my youthful readers. Here was the special operation of God's Spirit making the instructions and prayers of a mother effectual to her son's salvation. Have not many of you had feelings corresponding with the early experience of the one related, and of the pilgrim boy? One thing is certain, that if you have, and still remain an unconverted sinner, you must thus come to Christ or die in your sins.

## CHAPTER XII.

HE COMMENCES FARMING—SEVERE SICKNESS—RESOLUTIONS TO REPENT AND LIVE BETTER.

Soon after his marriage he rented some land, and with one horse and a plough, and less than one hundred dollars' worth of household furniture, started in the world to support himself and wife. Many an hour of deep, anxious solicitude he had, to know how to get through the world. His days of pleasure seemed to be at an end; he had now to face the realities of life. He labored and toiled from sunrise to sunset, daily repeating to himself, "There is no peace to the wicked." His wife was equally industrious, and all went on as well as could be expected for those that were so poor. But the future looked dark and dreary. He often repined at his lot, and even wished he had never been born. But with these feelings he had an abiding conviction for sin; indeed, that was the main cause of his anxiety.

Six months after his marriage he was taken suddenly very ill. The doctor came seven miles every day for three weeks to see him, and soon pronounced the disease incurable, and said he must die. The disease was inflammatory rheumatism; his pain of the most excruciating kind; every feature was distorted with agony, while the agony of soul at the thought of being dragged into the presence of God with all his sins unpardoned, was unspeakably more terrible. He felt that he deserved the deepest hell; that he had shut his heart against the calls of God's word and Spirit a thousand times. The Bible, the sermons, and pastor's counsel, his old mother's warnings, and the religious books he had read, were all arrayed against him as so many witnesses for God, testifying, I have called, but you have refused; I have stretched my hand to you, but you have disregarded. God seemed to be laughing at his calamity, and mocking at his fears. He felt as if he was suspended over hell for some days without hope of escape, a helpless, unpardoned sinner in the hands of an angry God, pursued by the angel of death and his own conscience, saying Amen to the justice of his dam-

nation. All the pleasures of his past sins could not compensate for one hour of his present agony. It seemed as if his past sinful enjoyments had now become his tormentors. He strove to banish them from his sight as they rose up before him in their hideous deformity, but the more he strove the closer they clung to him, and drove their fangs the deeper. In this state of mind he tried to pray; but there seemed to be no God to hear, no Saviour to intercede, no Spirit to comfort his wretched soul. He strove to give his heart to God in the midst of his sufferings, and promised, if God would spare his life and restore him to health, he would consecrate the remainder of his days to his service.

In a few days he began to entertain some hopes of his recovery, and to the astonishment of all who saw him, in a few weeks he was able to walk about and attend a little to business. By his long sickness his crop of grain was mostly lost; the doctor's bill amounted to near all he was worth, and the only means to provide for his family was by engaging as a day-laborer till he could raise another crop.

With returning health he felt a strong inclination to return to his former habits, and to

associate with his old companions. There were no religious people near him. Even during his sickness no one ever offered a prayer at his bedside. No one was near him that feared God to encourage him, and scarcely one who was not in the habit of becoming intoxicated. The Sabbath was disregarded, and swearing was common even among women and children. There was no preaching nearer than five miles, and that only twice in a month. He had no way to go but to walk, and a large creek was to be crossed three times. He had no book but an old Bible, printed in 1718, nearly worn out.

These were his only means of religious instruction, while he was surrounded with barriers in every direction. He strove for resolution to keep the vows his soul had made in anguish, till a friend he met one day handed him an old book, called, "The Afflicted Man's Companion." He read it with deep interest; it called to his mind all the promises he had made in his sickness. When he read the dying sayings of Christians recorded in that book, he resolved, by God's help, to live and die the death of the righteous.

The struggle now began in earnest. A car-

nal heart, backed up by Satanic influence, resisted God's Spirit, and held up Christ as too merciful to punish a sinner eternally. But reason and revelation both said, that punishment such as he suffered in his sickness, would on the same principle be inconsistent with the attributes of a merciful God. If eternal punishment was unjust, temporal punishment must be so too.

The agony of his soul was so great that he often went to the woods and rolled on the ground for hours; he had no religious friend to whom he could reveal the feelings of his heart. His wife and all around him were destitute, as far as he knew, of any feeling on the subject of religion; and if they had known his feelings, it would have exposed him to derision. He strove to surrender himself to Christ, but in vain. A voice seemed to follow him continually, "He that is ashamed of me and my words, of him will I be ashamed before my Father and his holy angels." He felt that a public acknowledgment of Christ and his cause was the only way of relief. But he shrunk from the duty; he wanted to be a secret Christian, to go to the Saviour, like Nicodemus, in the night season.

His distress continued for some months without any abatement. He finally determined to ask a blessing at his table; this seemed to be a hard task before an irreligious wife. The trial was made, and he succeeded. The news soon spread, and he was called on at his neighbors' tables when he was present, but he refused; and that brought to his mind the fearful text just quoted. For some time he would not eat away from home even if he was suffering with hunger, if he expected to be called on to ask a blessing at the table.

But he felt he must go a step farther at home. He resolved and reresolved to commence family prayer. But when the hour came round, his courage would fail. For six months he set every Sunday night to begin. He spent hours in the woods praying to God for strength, but when night came, and the moment drew near, he would tremble like an aspen-leaf, and retire without prayer. Then his conscience would lash him for being ashamed of Christ. This state of mind continued till life became a burden, and he was tempted to terminate his own existence or to banish all thought of his soul from his mind, lead a moral life, and if he

did go to hell, it would be but little worse than his present misery.

But the Spirit of God still strove, and would not give him up. He finally resolved to begin family worship, or die in the attempt. He set the next Sunday night, as he felt more on Sunday than any other day, and there was less danger of any one coming in at night than in the morning. Most of the day was spent in prayer; the dreaded hour arrived. Satan, and an unrenewed heart resisting the Spirit of God and duty; and shame, the offspring of sin, made him tremble. His wife, who was the only one present, was entirely ignorant of the struggle in his heart. When in conversation his voice faltered, she asked him the cause, but he could not reply. The struggle was awful: for a moment he was on the point of resolving never to try to pray in his family. Then a voice seemed to say, Go forward now, or your doom is sealed. He felt it was the turning-point in his eternal destiny, that heaven or hell hung on that moment; two unseen powers seemed each to have the death-grip; the pangs of his soul were beyond the power of language to describe.

The moment of final decision came. There

had been silence a few minutes; he arose, grasped the Bible with a trembling hand, and with a determination to read a chapter and pray, or die in the attempt. He broke the silence by saying, "My dear wife, God has said he will pour out his fury on the families that call not on his name, and I am constrained to begin to-night. Will you join me?" She was silent; he opened the Bible, the struggle was over, his fears all gone, man's extremity was God's opportunity; the precious promise, "My strength shall be made perfect in weakness, my grace is sufficient for you," was realized; the duty was performed, and peace of mind followed. His wife looked alarmed, but remained silent; he told her of his long struggle; she seemed deeply impressed for a long time, but did not give evidence of a change of heart for many years after.

But let us stop, dear reader, and look at the picture of the pilgrim just drawn. Have you not had similar feelings, to some extent? they may not have been so intense; but have you not felt there were two powers at work in your heart, the one calling you to your duty to God, the other holding up prayer before you as a

burden ; the one striving to save you, the other to destroy you ?

There is a turning-point in your eternal destiny. Have you passed it ? If you have passed through all, or most of what is described in his case, and have become careless and indifferent about your soul, you have great reason to fear your doom is sealed for eternal death. God will not give you peace in Jesus Christ till, like the prodigal, you arise and go to your Father ; then he will say, "Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven thee."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ON GRIEVING GOD'S SPIRIT.

THE facts above given suggest many thoughts on the awfully important subject of grieving the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God is the last remedial agent between God and dying men. When he takes his final departure, the atonement and intercession of the Son of God can be of no avail; no power in heaven or on the earth can save the sinner; his doom is irrevocably sealed. Does it not become us, with all the candor of dying men, to seek to understand his operations?

God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" and again, "Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption;" and again, "Quench not the Spirit." And we are plainly told there is "a sin unto death," which is the result of quenching the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the adorable Trinity, sent by the Father and the Son to apply the atonement

of Christ to the heart of the sinner. In his usual operations, he awakēs in the sinner's mind serious thoughts of eternity, by pressing on his heart some of the warning truths of the Bible. Truths that he may have heard often before without being affected, will now make him tremble. Business or pleasure may drive them away for a time, but they will return again and again unbidden.

In the case of those that are saved, the Spirit continues to strive. They are made to feel sin to be such a grievous burden, that they must forsake it, and cast themselves on Christ with their whole heart. The Holy Ghost, by his almighty power, renews the heart, and enables the sinner to give up himself to God. When this is done, the sinner is born again, and becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus;" his distress of mind is removed; he feels joy and peace. As an evidence of the change, the very things he loved most before, he now hates, and the things he once hated, he now loves. He desires Christians for his companions; he loves the ministers of Christ; he loves the house of God; he loves to read the Bible and pray; he shuns the company of the wicked in whose so-

ciety he once delighted, and his constant aim is to become more holy, and more like Christ.

But let us examine more closely some of the various stages of feeling through which the sinner may pass before he is converted, or given over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind ; and we ask you to follow us in this investigation, and see how far your own feelings may be described, and what divine influences you have rejected, and how near the line of everlasting separation between God and your soul you may have come.

The Spirit of God usually begins to move on the hearts of those who have had any thing like correct religious training when they are quite young. Such examples as the pilgrim boy are by no means rare. These convictions of the Spirit are felt by many before they are ten years of age ; from that to fifteen they are often more constant and abiding ; and we have reason to hope that many yield to his invitations, and are truly converted to God in these early periods of life. Between the ages of fifteen and twenty, multitudes have felt his saving influence, and most of those who ever give evidence of being born again, experience the

change before the age of twenty ; and we may safely say that, to those reaching that age still unmoved and far from God, the probabilities of ever gaining a home in heaven are greatly diminished.

And now, my dear young friend, let me ask you the question, Has not a feeling of awful solemnity sometimes passed over your soul, which made you think of death, judgment, and eternity? Have not your sins risen up before you and destroyed for a time all your happiness, and made you desire to be a Christian, and even promise that you would turn to God and lead the life of his servants? You could not tell perhaps whence this feeling came, or whither it went? On hearing a sermon, or kind warning from some friend, on the reading of a religious book, or the death of some one you loved, the same kind of feeling has returned, and your convictions of sin became deeper, and new resolutions were formed. Perhaps you then set some future time, when you resolved that you would make a business of seeking your soul's salvation ; and by this temptation of the adversary you got a present relief, and in a few days all was forgotten again.

But the Spirit may have continued to strive with you. Have you spent anxious days and nights, during revivals of religion, when some special truth was fastened on your mind, which gave you no peace; when you saw others embracing the Saviour and rejoicing in hope, which only increased your distress, as a voice seemed to say, "Son, give me thy heart?" Perhaps you now began to count the cost, and say, If I become a Christian, it will end all my youthful pleasures; and to get rid of these feelings you may have stayed away from the house of God, and gone to dancing parties, or associated with thoughtless sinners, and in this way have banished all your convictions of sin. This is what is called in Scripture, "*grieving* the Spirit of God." But still your day of grace may not be past.

After a while, perhaps, a revival season returns again in the church. The arrows of conviction fly thick around you; many are coming to Christ; your friends are wrestling in prayer to God for you; your sins rise in awful majesty before you; you feel as if hell was yawning beneath you; the Spirit of God says, "Now is the accepted time;" heaven seems open before

you ; the Saviour is ready to embrace you. But another voice says, There is *time enough yet* ; religion will destroy all your pleasures ; live on for a few years as you are. You stop and weigh the consequences, with the full conviction on your mind that there now rests upon you the responsibility of choosing either life or death. You deliberately say to the Spirit of God, "Go thy way," and turn to your sinful pleasures again with more than ordinary greediness. In a few days all your feelings are gone, and like the stubborn oak, whose roots strike deeper with every blast that shakes it, till it becomes immovable, so you may have become more and more immovable by every motion of the Spirit on your heart, till you may now be given up of God.

"There is a sin unto death." There is a time, we know not when ; there is a point, we know not where, which, if you pass unconverted, "there remains no more sacrifice for sin." Your doom is sealed, the door is shut, and all the tears and prayers of the whole church of God on earth could not save you, for the Holy Ghost has taken his final departure.

Those who have thus passed their day of

grace, have usually been brought by the striving of the Spirit to feel that they were rebels against God; that Jesus Christ was able and willing to save them; that the Spirit was ready to renew their hearts; but at that point they wilfully rejected him, and presumptuously turned to their sins, and found relief in indulging them; and they have remained indifferent, hating God and good men ever since. Such, we believe, have passed their day of grace. And if you can now read this fearful description with indifference, it is still additional evidence of the awful fact that such is the case with you; but if you feel now a tender concern for your soul, it is evidence that your day of grace is not past.

I once visited a woman about thirty years of age, with whom I conversed in the presence of her mother. I inquired if she was a member of any church. She answered, "No." I asked if she had not at some time felt concern for her salvation. "Yes," she said, "I think but few have been more anxious on the subject than I was once." I asked at what period of her life this occurred, when she gave me the following account of God's dealings with her: "When I

was about fifteen years old, I felt that I was a great sinner in the sight of God. Often my distress was so great that I could not sleep; and for three years I seldom had peace for a week at a time. I knew that the Holy Spirit was striving with me, and that I ought to yield my heart to his influence; but I thought it would cut off my pleasures in the midst of youth. I tried to banish the thoughts of eternity; but they would still return and interrupt my pleasure. I tried reading novels and romances; they gave me relief for a while, but my distress returned. At last I went to the ballroom—and I have never since had such feelings as before.” “And have you no fears,” said I, “that you have grieved away the Spirit of God for ever?” “Yes,” she replied, “I have no doubt of that, and that I shall be lost.” I proceeded to describe the state and misery of the lost, and appealed to her, by the prayers of her mother and the tears which were then falling from her sunken eyes, by the danger of an eternal separation from pious friends, by the glories of heaven and the agonies of the Son of God, now to make her peace with him and be saved. “All this,” she calmly replied, “has

been tried upon me before. Nothing that you or any other man can say on that subject, can move me now. My doom is fixed."

Another case was that of Mr. B——, who was over seventy years old, and living an ungodly life. I approached him with kindness, and at length he conversed freely. I spoke of the goodness of God to him in his advanced years, and asked if he hoped he had an interest in Christ. He replied, "No." I asked if he received the Bible as the word of God. He answered, "Yes." I said, "The Bible teaches that a man must be born again before he can enter the kingdom of God; do you think you have experienced that change?" "No," said he, "I never have." I saw that he was intelligent, and inquired if no "still small voice" had ever whispered to him, "Son, give me thy heart?" "Yes," said he, "often. I used to feel, but for many years I have not felt as I did when I was young. I then had some very serious times." I asked at what period he had felt most deeply the importance of religion. He replied, "When I was seventeen I began to feel deeply at times, and this continued for two or three years; but I determined to put it off

till I should be settled in life. After I was married, I reflected that the time had come when I had promised to attend to religion; but I had bought this farm, and I thought it would not suit me to become religious till it was paid for, as some time would have to be devoted to attend church, and also some expense. I then resolved to put it off ten years; but when the ten years came round, I thought no more about it. I often try to think, but I cannot keep my mind on the subject one moment." I urged him by all the terrors of dying an enemy of God, to set about the work of repentance. "It is too late," said he, "I believe my doom is sealed; and it is just that it should be so, for the Spirit strove long with me, but I refused." I then turned to his children, young men and young women, who were around him, and entreated them not to put off the subject of religion, or grieve the Spirit of God in their youthful days. The old man added, "Mind *that*. If I had attended to it then, it would have been well with me to-day; but now it is too late."

On conversing with a man in middle life, he informed me that his father was a devoted Christian, that he was faithfully instructed,

and his mind was early impressed with the importance of religion. In his youth, there was a period of six months in which he was in distress, day and night; and a voice within seemed to be continually saying, "Forsake your sins and come unto me, and I will give you peace." "But," he added, "I did not wish to be a Christian then; I thought it would ruin my pleasures. I visited a part of the country where dancing and balls were frequent; in a little time my serious thoughts were gone, and I have never had any since." I asked if he did not fear that God had given him up. "Yes," said he, "I am afraid he has. I go to church and read the Bible, and try to feel, but I cannot." I strove to arouse his fears; but it was in vain. I afterwards learned that he was pursuing his worldly business on the Sabbath.

It is not for me to pronounce that God had said of all these persons, they are "joined to their idols, let them alone," "woe to them when I depart from them;" but the state of all such is unspeakably alarming. If such is your case; if you have wilfully dashed the cup of salvation from your lips, when God by his Spirit was wooing you to himself; if you have per-

sisted in saying, "Go thy way for this time, let me alone that I may have the pleasures of this life," and have quenched the Spirit by resorting to amusements, the novel, the ballroom, or the theatre, God may have given you what you desired—but what have you now of all these pleasures? Can you look back upon them with an approving conscience? Will they bring you consolation in a dying hour? No. You have even now in your own soul, if you would make the confession, the gnawings of the worm that never dies, the burning of the fire that is never quenched. You will have no excuse when you stand before the throne of the eternal Judge. He will say, "I called, but you refused; I stretched out my hand to you, but you did not regard it."

But to the dying sinner with whom the Spirit of God is now striving, let me say, It is the most momentous period of your existence. It is perhaps the turning point between heaven and hell—the songs of angels, or the wailings of the finally lost. O seize the present moment, while the voice of the Spirit is whispering in your ear, "Now is the accepted time." Beware of stifling that voice. Multitudes have

told me the dreadful tale, "I went to scenes of amusement, or turned to the exciting romance, and I have felt no anxiety since."

O awakened sinner, while the Spirit strives it is the seed-time of eternal life, the embryo of a happy immortality. Sit not down to count the loss of sinful pleasures; receive the Saviour into your heart, and you will have pleasures lasting as eternity; pleasures that leave no sting behind; pleasures that will sustain the soul when on your dying pillow, when the last trumpet shall sound, and the congregated world stand before God.

The facts which have been stated show how momentous is *the period of youth* in the life of man. It is the period when habits of good or evil become so fixed, that generally the after-life is shadowed forth by it. The tree has begun to bear evil fruit, and the root itself must be changed before the fruit will be good. How important at this period, when stepping from boyhood into the great arena of active life, so to conduct yourselves that you may obtain the favor of God. Remember that, each day of your life, *what you do and what you are* is writ-

ten on the recording angel's book in characters changeless as eternity.

Few comparatively have ever become eminently pious and useful, except such as have yielded to the Spirit of God in youth. No doubt many become Christians after that period; but in most cases their plans for life are laid, and they continue to pursue them, in many cases unavoidably. Do you desire to be useful? Do you wish to honor God in advancing his cause? Then consecrate all your youthful powers to him. "Son, give me thy heart."

But I can almost hear the youthful reader say, This is all true; but if I become a Christian now, it will destroy my pleasures, and I am not ready for that yet. I will wait a few years longer, and then attend to my eternal interests. Thousands now in hell have reasoned in the same way. No doubt they meant to attend to the subject, just as you now do; but every day they delayed the work of repentance, the wall of separation between God and them rose higher and higher. And so it will be with you, if you continue to grieve the Spirit of God till old age. By such a course your heart is continually growing harder. The same truths that

made you tremble five years ago, are perhaps scarcely felt now. Thus the hardening process goes on, till the day of grace is past.

I had once a Sabbath-scholar, who was punctual in his attendance from the age of ten till he was twenty years old. The last three years of that time he was under deep conviction for sin, and he would express his feelings to me with great candor. He often told me he felt two great powers at work in his heart, especially at communion seasons. One said, Confess Christ now; the other, Wait a few years. At last the agony of his soul was so great, that in order to get rid of those feelings, he quit the Sabbath-school and church. I called to see him and warn him of his danger. He seemed perfectly indifferent. When I referred to past interviews, and the many tears he used to shed when he saw others going to the Lord's table, he replied, "I can now look at that scene without any emotion; and I don't think it would move me to see the Son of God die again." My heart sickened at the answer. He now lives as if there was no God.

There is great reason to fear that some who may read this little book have passed through

all that has been described, and are yet in their sins. If so, I entreat you, by the value of your soul, by the agony of the Saviour on the cross, and by his dying groans, to awake ; beg of him the return of the Holy Ghost, and cast yourself on his mercy as a poor helpless sinner, crying, "Lord, save, or I perish." Never give up till you have "tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come." Till then, and not till then are you prepared to spread your sails and launch forth on the voyage of life. A young man without the grace of God in his heart, is like a frail bark in the midst of the ocean without pilot or rudder. A smooth sea or gentle breeze may waft it safely for a while ; but the probability is that it will be driven by storms on the rocks, or stranded on the sandy shore, and utterly lost. I entreat you, dear youth, to prepare for this voyage of life. You have but one to make. If not piloted by the Spirit of God, your frail bark will founder and perish ; you will never reach the desired haven.

If you are *just entering upon manhood and the cares and responsibilities of life*, whatever is now the standard of your piety, such it will be like-

ly to be while you live. Whatever course you now adopt in your religious duties, that course you will probably continue to pursue. If you have formed the habit of secret prayer, with the regularity of the rising and setting sun, there is reason to hope you will continue it through life. If you have become the head of a family, and like the pious patriarch, erected an altar to God, on which morning and evening incense is offered, you will be likely to continue it; and if it has been and is now neglected, there is great reason to fear that it will never be erected.

I know many flatter themselves, that as they grow in grace and knowledge, they will enter on this and other duties; but the only way to grow in grace is by the performance of duty with reliance on God. You might as well expect to increase your bodily strength without taking food, as to increase spiritual strength without secret and family prayer. As the blacksmith's arm gains strength by swinging the hammer, so will you gain strength in the performance of present duty. I entreat all the professed followers of Christ who become heads of families, to erect the altar of prayer the first

night they lodge in their own house, and inscribe on it, *Punctuality*. Let the morning and evening sacrifice be offered to him who made and preserves you. The Saviour requires it, the honor of the church in the eyes of the world requires it of you, and your own comfort and happiness will be enhanced by it.

The family altar is a quadrant, by which the piety of the church may be measured. The church is composed of families. In this day of hurry and bustle, when all are rushing with locomotive speed for the accomplishment of some worldly scheme, as if life depended on it, we fear this duty is sadly neglected; yea, we know it is. There are thousands of families in our land where the head of the family is a professor of religion, that so far as the family altar is concerned, lie down at night and rise in the morning like the brutes that perish; and it is not only the private members of the church that neglect this duty, but in some cases church officers. In too many cases, almost the only distinction between the church and the world is the communion table—we fear there will be none in eternity.

Are you the head of a family, and a profess-

ed follower of Christ? Remember the patriarchs built an altar to God wherever they went. Go and do likewise; you will never find a time as convenient; if you are diffident, that difficulty, as your family grows up around you, will probably increase. As it was in giving your heart to Christ, the longer you delay, the greater the obstacles. Resolve to do it or die in the attempt, and you will find man's extremity is God's opportunity. The family altar will become a place of sweet communion with God, where he will meet you morning and evening, and give you grace and strength for the duties and trials of each day. Family worship, in connection with secret prayer, will prepare you for keeping up a telegraphic communication between God and your soul. Then your light will shine, not only on your own family, but on others around you. And as your children grow up, your example, by the divine blessing, will make such an impression on their minds, that as they enter the church they will establish altars of prayer, and thus your influence will descend from generation to generation.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## JOINS THE CHURCH—HIS FIRST COMMUNION.

A FEW months after commencing family worship, as above described, he concluded he would go before the session of the church, and tell them his spiritual condition. The day for the meeting of the session came; he was requested to give a full statement of his past and present feelings, which he did. He was then requested to retire, and was soon informed that they had unanimously agreed to receive him to the full privileges of the church. He trembled at the news; he did not feel fit to go to the Lord's table. He was urged to prayerful self-examination, preparatory to coming to the communion table on the next Sabbath. The intervening time was one of deep anxiety and almost unceasing prayer, to know, if possible, how matters stood between God and his own soul.

From what he had been accustomed to hear ministers say to communicants, he expected to have some unmistakable evidence of God's presence while at the Lord's table. He had often

heard them say it was a testing-place, where Christ met his people to bless them, and where they might ask large things of him, expecting they would be granted.

He partook of the Lord's supper the first time under this impression, looking for some sensible manifestation of God's presence; but to his utter astonishment, nothing of the kind was experienced. He came away deeply distressed and disappointed, and returned home that evening under the impression that he had eaten and drunk damnation to his own soul, and committed the "sin against the Holy Ghost." His distress was now greater, if possible, than it had ever been before; the night was spent in deep anguish of soul, and the morning brought no relief.

The next day he returned to the church to attend the continued service, as was usual in that part of the country. His distress was so great he could not give attention to the sermon, which had no bearing on his case. At the close some business was to be done in relation to the interests of the church, and all the male members were requested to remain. After the business was over, he started homewards,

his soul burdened with the deepest distress; life seemed to be an intolerable burden; he desired to die, and know the worst of his case, and was again tempted to destroy himself. He took a narrow footpath along the side of a high hill that led to his house nearer than the public road; it was a way seldom travelled except by hunters. He turned from the path to a dark cave on the hill-side, where no eye but that of God could see him, and there he resolved to remain till he found peace in Christ. He cast himself on the earth with the agonizing cry, "Lord, save, or I perish." Almost instantly a joy unspeakable and full of glory filled his soul, heaven seemed to be let down to earth with all its enrapturing delights, and he felt like the disciples on the mount of Transfiguration. He arose from the earth as if he could almost fly heavenward; he felt unwilling to leave the place, and could not tell how long he remained. But the happiness of that time was more than all the pleasures of his whole past life put together; it was a foretaste of the good word of God and the world to come. Every thing looked beautiful; all nature was changed; the very trees of the forest looked divine; the

voice of the birds resembled the songs of angels chanting heavenly melodies. He reached home before he was aware of it, and all there seemed different from what it had ever been before. God seemed to be in him, and in every thing around him. This state of mind continued unabated for some weeks. He thought and spoke only of Christ and his salvation. Even the toils and labors of the day were performed without the usual fatigue or weariness. He could almost say that

“Not a wave of trouble rollèd  
Across his peaceful breast.”

But alas, the lurking pride of his heart began to show itself. He began to feel as if he was a favorite of heaven. As self-righteousness increased, heavenly-mindedness decreased, and doubts arose. He thought all the joys he had experienced might have been a delusion; that Satan might have transformed himself into an angel of light, and thus deceived him. He began to feel deep anxiety. The spirit of prayer had departed from him in a great measure, and heaven seemed to be sealed against his cries. But he was still unwilling to give up religious duties, and determined that if he did perish, he

would continue to pray. After a few weeks, light dawned again on his soul, and he had hope that he was a child of God. In future years he believed that his heart was changed the night he first worshipped God in the presence of his wife, which was more than six months previous.

He had long prayed for clear evidence that he was a child of God, that his happiness might be complete, and he might be free from the fear of death. God may have given him the desire of his heart for a short time, in order to show him his own weakness, and that his strength was not in himself, but in God, and thus teach him a lesson of humility. I believe that if we were taken to heaven for a day, and permitted to taste its enjoyments, in order to give us unmistakable evidence of our acceptance with God, and then brought back to earth, and left to rest on that evidence alone, unsupported by *daily grace*, we should still fall into doubt and darkness and perplexity. "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be," is a wise arrangement of divine providence. He gives grace enough to prevent despair, and not enough to lead to presumption.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HIS FIRST SUNDAY-SCHOOL EFFORTS.

THE cares of the world began now to press hard upon him. He was very poor in this world's goods, with nothing but his own hands to depend on for a living. A day's labor would only bring twenty-five cents, or a bushel of corn, which was only worth that sum. Many a day he rose while the stars were shining, and went four miles, worked all day, and returned by starlight again, with one bushel of corn. He truly earned his bread by the sweat of his brow; his lot seemed to be a hard one. When he was a little boy, he often prayed Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." But even this he could see no way at this time to realize. He was often tempted to embark in some new enterprise, but was prevented by the dread of failure, or the fear that others might lose something through him, and thus a stain be brought upon his character and upon religion.

By constant industry, in a few years his worldly circumstances began to improve a little. The wet days and the long nights he turned to some account in making shoes, and thus he often worked till midnight, with some useful book spread out before him, storing his mind with knowledge. Theological books were his daily companions, as he believed they were better calculated both to develop the mind and improve the heart than any other kind of reading.

Soon after uniting with the church, he felt that he must do more for Christ's cause in the earth. He saw drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and all kinds of vice around him, and began to cast about what he could do to remove it.

About that time a very pious man, not far from his own age, settled a few miles distant from him, and organized a Sunday-school. As soon as he heard of it, he went to see it, for being the first that was ever established in that region, it attracted much attention. Many of the old-fashioned Christians thought it a desecration of the Sabbath, and denounced it in bitter terms, and few favored it. He thought he would go and see for himself, and judge accordingly. He watched the day's performance

very closely ; and when he saw seventy boys and girls, mostly children of godless parents, learning to read the Bible, he felt it was a good work. At the close of the school, he was requested by the good man who conducted it to lead in prayer, but declined, as he had never prayed in the presence of any one except his wife, and that with great embarrassment.

When the school was dismissed, an acquaintance introduced him to the superintendent, who, after some inquiry about the condition of his neighborhood, urged him to open a Sunday-school there. This man's piety was so far above any he had ever met, that it impressed him deeply. He seemed to breathe the atmosphere of heaven. Before they parted, the pilgrim arranged to get a Sunday-school library, and agreed to meet this good man the same evening at a private house where a prayer-meeting was appointed, and to take part in the exercises, which he did with fear and trembling.

This formed a new era of his life. While he felt humbled with his own defective performances, he felt an approving conscience in striving to do his duty. He had new views, new feelings ; his soul was fired with new zeal,

and he determined to enter the field and labor for souls as one that must give account to God.

The next week he sent for a library of Sunday-school books, and organized a school in his own house, and invited all his neighbors' children to attend it. His house was soon full, and a neighbor who had a larger house kindly offered it. The offer was accepted, and that house was soon full. Soon a large house was built for that school and for other means of education and moral improvement. He now felt that he was doing some good to others, as well as making some progress in the divine life.

In addition to his Sunday-school, he opened his house for a weekly prayer-meeting, which he conducted alone. At these meetings he usually read one of Burder's village sermons.

In the course of a year after this school and prayer-meeting were begun, a deep religious interest was manifest through all the community, especially in the neighborhood where the good man before alluded to had planted his Sabbath-school, the schools being about five miles apart. Through the influence of this good man, ministers came and preached, sometimes in the woods, and sometimes in private houses.

In a few months more than fifty persons gave evidence that they had been "born again;" some of all ages, but mostly those who had attended the Sabbath-schools and prayer-meetings. It was the first revival of religion the pilgrim had ever been in. His Christian character was much strengthened by it, and he increased in both power and knowledge to do good. This revival resulted in the organization of a church, and he was elected and ordained one of its elders.

But now trouble came on him from a very unexpected quarter. In addition to the responsibilities of the office, which he dreaded, his wife was violently opposed to his acceptance of it, on account of loss of time and extra expenses. She had never shown any disposition to encourage him in religious duties, but rather threw obstacles in his way. For the sake of peace at home therefore, he for a time declined acting as an elder. He was urged by his Christian friends for his reasons, but delicacy forbade his giving them. Conscience urged him to do his duty and act, and he finally determined to forsake all and follow Christ, and strive to win her over to him and his cause.

About this time he engaged as a school-teacher in his neighborhood. His school was large. Many of his pupils were young men and women that belonged to his Sunday-school. It required all his energies faithfully to conduct the school, which numbered about sixty. The recess he uniformly employed in committing to memory the passages of Scripture which contained the Sunday-school lesson, together with all the proof-texts. This constant labor of body and mind for a year induced another severe sickness, which again brought him to the brink of the grave.

During this sickness many a touching scene was witnessed at his bedside. Some of his pupils were with him every day, shedding tears of sorrow, and receiving, as was supposed, his dying counsels; and none came or went unwarned.

On one occasion, a married woman came who was one of his Sabbath-scholars, and who had learned to read in his Sabbath-school. As she was standing by his bed, when it was supposed he was within a few hours of eternity, he took her by the hand, and asked her where her soul would be in a few more hours, if she was now

lying as he was, in a dying condition. She wept and trembled, and returned home a mourning penitent, and soon found peace in believing, lived some years a consistent Christian, and died rejoicing in hope of glory.

At another time, when his family and many of his neighbors were gathered around his bed to see him die, God was pleased peculiarly to manifest himself. Heaven with all its glories seemed to be unveiled to him, and he longed to depart and be with Christ. At his bed stood a weeping wife, with three little children, poor and helpless; and by her stood some of his pupils, besides many others, in their sins. Before him heaven seemed to be open with all its glories to receive him; his physical frame nearly a skeleton; the ordinary antecedents of death nearly all past. The tears of his wife and little children stirred all the feelings of his nature. The suspense of his mind was awful, the struggle severe. At last he cried, from the innermost recesses of his heart, "O, Lord, if it is for thy glory, and the good of dying souls, let me live; if not, let me die." It was the will of God that he should live.

Perhaps few have had the same kind of diffi-

culties to encounter as above related ; but all that enter the service of their divine Master have trials to meet. The Christian's life is a constant warfare ; the great archenemy follows him at every step, and often brings trials when they are least expected. He sometimes presents the discharge of religious duties as a great burden, and thus tries to frighten the Christian back to his service ; and if he yields once, the difficulty is but increased. There are heads of families in the church that live without family prayer, for the want of courage to begin. Satan represents the duty as a great burden, and they put it off from time to time, hoping to overcome their diffidence ; whereas, if they would make one determined effort *in reliance on God*, the difficulty would vanish. He would meet them, and help them through. When the Israelites were hemmed in at the Red sea, and at the command of God went forward, the sea was dried up before them. We fear there are many who, out of respect to the opinion of a wife, a husband, a parent, or a child, neglect their duty to God and their own souls ; while if they would obey God, and do their duty, they might win that friend to Christ. The

terms of discipleship are, that we must forsake father and mother, sister and brother, wife or husband, when they come between us and Christ. The Saviour will not forego his claims on us for the accommodation of our unconverted friends. "How knowest thou, O wife, but thou shalt save thy husband; or how knowest thou, O man, but thou shalt save thy wife?" and so of all other relations.

One of the means which God has appointed for keeping piety alive in his children, is to work for Christ. Every Christian should be a laborer in his vineyard, and we live in a day when every one can do something. There are many neglected children untaught at home, whom you might gather into Sunday-schools, and be the means of saving. There are many impenitent sinners around you, to whom you might speak a word or lend a tract, and nothing would be more likely to benefit yourself. God has promised that he that watereth shall be watered. All faithful laborers for Christ meet a gracious reward even in this life, and every soul they save will be a star in their Redeemer's crown.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## HIS LABORS IN PRAYER-MEETINGS—CONVERSION OF HIS WIFE.

ON being raised up from the verge of death, he still gave unceasing attention to his Sabbath-school, and had the pleasure of seeing his scholars increasing rapidly in Bible knowledge; and at every communion some of them made a public profession of their faith in the Redeemer. Some fathers and mothers sat as scholars with their children to study God's word, and embraced Christ with them. In addition to his Sabbath-school labors, he assisted in holding prayer-meetings two or three times each week. He often went, at the close of a hard day's labor, from four to six miles, through rain and snow, to unite with a few Christian friends in these social meetings. Some of the sweetest moments of his life were spent in these social gatherings; it often seemed as if God came down in the midst of them, and almost as if the very atmosphere imparted a divine stimulus to their souls. During one

winter these meetings were held almost every night. It seemed, on some of these occasions, as if the day of Pentecost was about to return. In a few months many precious souls came out on the Lord's side, and publicly professed Christ.

But these constant meetings increased his domestic troubles. His wife viewed all as so much time lost, and called it wild enthusiasm. This pained his heart, and often drove him to tell his sorrows to God. For years, unknown to any but Him who rules the heavens, a part of each night was spent in a lonely grove on the bank of a creek, where the murmurs of the stream mingled with his agonizing groans for the salvation of her soul.

At last the time came when his sorrow was to be turned into joy, when his feeble prayers were to be answered, and ministering angels rejoice. This joy came at the conclusion of a communion Sabbath. He had that day earnestly renewed his request at the sacramental board to the great King for the salvation of his wife. He had not discovered any thing unusual in her till he returned home. When he went to put away his horse, she followed him, and said, with tears, "O my dear husband, I am a great sinner;" and

sinking down at his feet, asked him to pray that God would have mercy upon her. In a few minutes her countenance beamed with joy, and a heavenly peace seemed to fill her soul; and from that day till the day of her death, which occurred two years after, her whole life and conduct were changed. She encouraged her husband in all his labors; the domestic circle was happy, and she became a helpmeet in every good work.

As no minister resided near, the pilgrim felt it his duty to visit the sick, to talk and pray with them, and bury the dead. This gave him many opportunities of doing good. As he believed he had been led to Christ by reading religious books, he bought from his own scanty means all he could, and lent them to his neighbors. The books opened the way for religious conversation, and he thus reached many that neglected all other means. The frequent evidences of usefulness still encouraged him to make farther efforts.

He at length, with much fear and trembling, resolved to visit all the families in his neighborhood, and talk and pray with them, distribute tracts, and loan books. He made it a sub-

ject of much prayer; the struggle was a hard one. But those Scriptures, "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels," seemed to ring in his ears every day. Some inward monitor urged him on, and at last he resolved to attempt it in the strength of God.

The first house he entered, he shook like one who had the ague. It seemed very difficult for him to tell his business, but as soon as he made it known, the burden fell off, and his stammering tongue was loosed; he realized the promise of God, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." All his fears were gone. The visit was well received, and he that watered was watered in return. That day was all spent in going from house to house, and it was as happy a one as he ever enjoyed. He continued from day to day, till he visited all the neighborhood. Christians were roused to duty, and some sinners were awakened to see their need of a Saviour, and to ask an interest in his prayers and for renewed visits.

One incident so encouraged him that he

resolved to devote all his leisure time to this work. In a family he was visiting, after he had conversed with others, he turned to a young man present who was gay and thoughtless, and about to be married. He asked him if he was a professor of religion; he said, "No," in rather a sneering manner. He asked him if he had never felt any concern about his soul. He replied, "Not much." He then urged him in the most importunate manner to attend at once to the interest of that part that never dies; and closed by saying, that he might be in eternity before the light of another day, or on a sick-bed, from which he might never rise.

The young man seemed to feel, and shed tears. He returned home some miles distant, and retired to his bed in usual health; at midnight he awoke very sick, and the exhortation of the evening rushed to his mind. In a day or two he sent for the pilgrim, who lived some miles distant. He was soon at his bedside, found him very sick and deeply distressed about his soul, and in a great measure ignorant of the plan of salvation. His father was one of the most brutal drunkards, and his mother intemperate too. The fever soon fell on his lungs, and all

hope of his recovery was gone. The pilgrim was at his bedside three times each week for the first month; during most of the time his agony of soul was great; but God, for Christ's sake, spoke peace to him. Immediately he began to exhort all that came to see him to flee from the wrath to come, and especially his parents. He entreated them with tears to forsake their sins, and turn to God. The pilgrim added his exhortations and prayers. Both promised to reform, and seek their soul's salvation, that they might meet their son in heaven. He lingered another month, his soul filled with peace, sometimes with ecstasies of joy.

The pilgrim aided in conducting the funeral services, and gave his parting counsels to the family. The result was, that the father became distressed about his soul, and at last yielded to the Saviour; and soon after his wife and two children gave evidence of conversion, all dating their convictions to the warnings and exhortations they had received. This case encouraged him to greater exertions for the souls of others, and had a good effect in removing his timidity in talking to all whom he met.

Another incident impressed him very forc-

bly. There was a very irreligious man whom he esteemed highly in many respects, but whom he never could summon courage to speak to about his soul, though he had many opportunities. One evening he had the best chance he could desire, but his heart failed him, and within a few hours the man was in eternity. He felt guilty of neglecting his duty, and resolved never to spend an hour or travel a mile with any other person alone, without speaking to them of the things of God and the soul.

Some years after, when he was travelling, he fell in with a gay-looking young man, an entire stranger, whom he addressed very seriously on the subject of religion. While he was explaining to him the doctrine of the new birth, the young man replied, "That, sir, is very good theology." The reply seemed rather significant, when the pilgrim said, Perhaps I am addressing a preacher. He replied, "Yes, sir, I am." The pilgrim told him of his promise made some years ago, not to spend an hour or travel a mile with any person, without speaking to him of the soul and eternity, and hoped an apology was not necessary. The young preacher replied, "You have given me a reproof I

shall never forget, and from this day I will adopt the same rule."

Did the subject of this narrative go farther than was his duty? If you are a Christian, think of the debt of gratitude you owe to him who gave peace to your soul. The blessed Jesus must have died if there had been no other sinner on earth but yourself. It is emphatically true, that every redeemed sinner in heaven and on the earth can say, Jesus died for *me*. You were under sentence of death in the prison-house of sin, your feet fast in the stocks, the day of your execution fixed, and all the implements of torture ready, a flaming sword turning every way before you. Jesus Christ, with full knowledge of all that it must cost him, took your fetters upon him, agonized in the garden of Gethsemane, was nailed to the cross, mocked and derided by wicked men, and died a shameful and ignominious death *for you*.

After all this, do not God, angels, and men expect you to live for his glory; yea, does not Jesus command you, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard?" Will you do it? Will you show your gratitude by obeying him? Will you use the talents he has given you to advance

his cause? Or will you hide them in secular duties, or behind the counter, or in some mere worldly occupation, and hide from others all God has made known to you of this wonderful exhibition of love and mercy? Would not this be like robbing Christ of part of his own blood? Is it not a kind of sacrilege, or squandering a portion of divine love and compassion? In view of all that Jesus Christ has done and suffered for you, can you reconcile it with your own conscience to do *nothing* for him or for his cause? If so, beware lest he cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.

I entreat you by his dying love to enter the vineyard in some department at once. If you are not too far advanced in life, and if you have talents and oratorical powers, enter the work of the ministry; but if you cannot do that, you can teach in a Sabbath-school, you can spend your leisure hours, if no more, in visiting families near you, talk and pray with them, give them a tract, or loan them a good book. You will be twice paid for it all; you will be blessed yourself in this life with spiritual comfort and growth, and in heaven undying souls may be stars in your crown of rejoicing.