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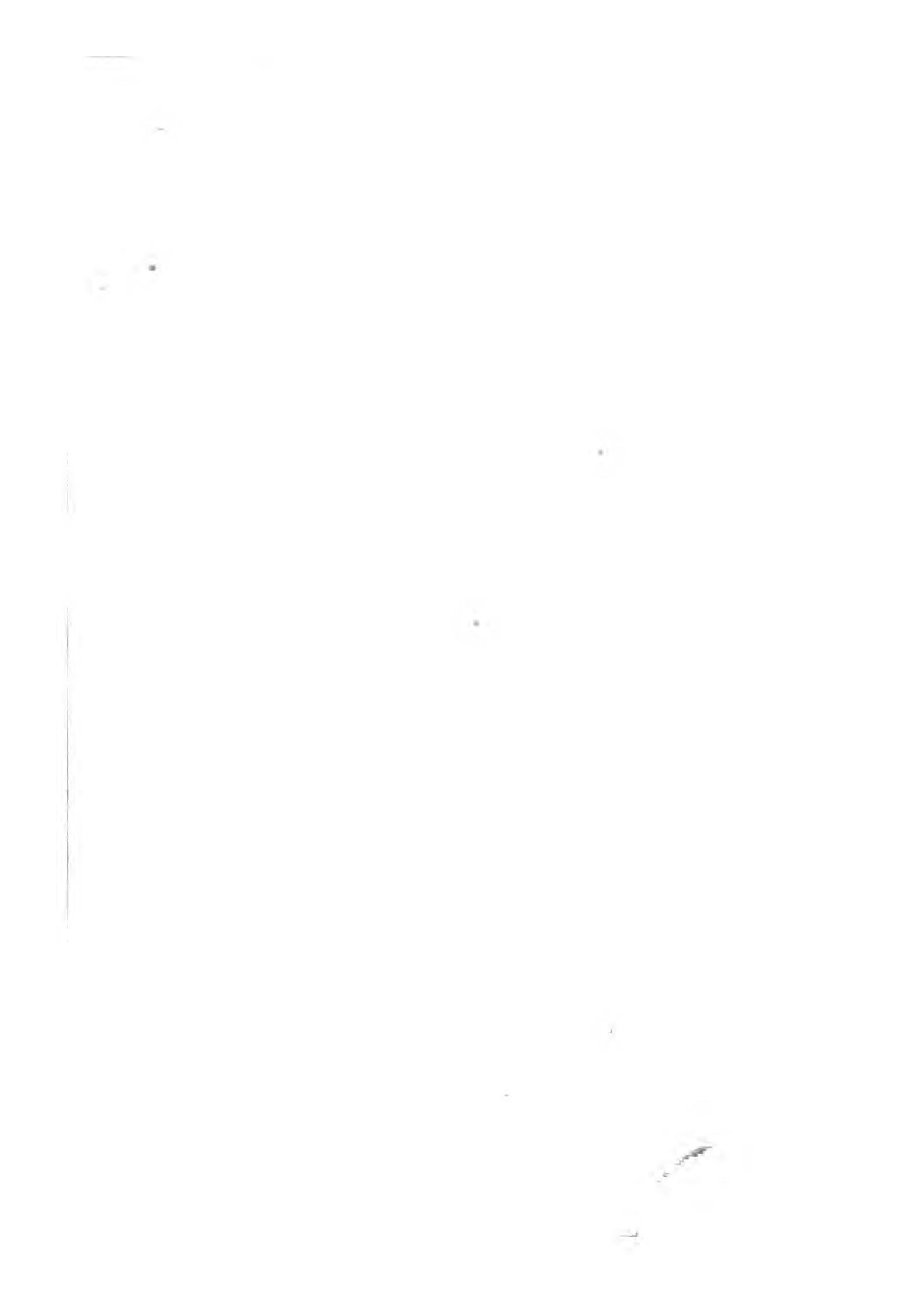
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THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE JUDGE.

“God bless you, my child!” said the judge. “You have a good mother. If I were on trial for my life to-day,” said he, “and innocent of the charge, I would pray God to give me such a witness as this child.”—Page 227.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY;

OR,

Illustrations of the Commandments.

By the

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Author of "The Giants, and How to Fight Them," &c.

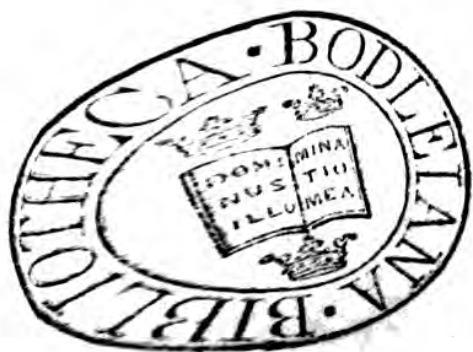


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Contents.

			Page
I. The First Commandment.—Part I.,	9
II. The First Commandment.—Part II.	36
III. The Second Commandment,	...	...	58
IV. The Third Commandment,	...	...	83
V. The Fourth Commandment,	...	...	110
VI. The Fifth Commandment,	...	...	139
VII. The Sixth Commandment,	...	...	169
VIII. The Seventh Commandment,	...	...	196
IX. The Eighth Commandment,	...	...	197
X. The Ninth Commandment,	...	...	223
XI. The Tenth Commandment,	...	...	243



Preface.

A HIGHWAY is a road, or way laid out, and prepared for people to walk in. In a country governed by a king, it is expected of him to have public roads made for the convenience of the people. Such a road, when made, is called "*the king's highway.*"

Now this world is God's country. It belongs to him. He is the owner and King of it. We should expect him, therefore, to have *a highway* prepared for his people to walk in. And he *has* such a way. We read in the Bible—Isaiah xxxv. 8—that there shall be "an highway; it shall be called The way of holiness. The redeemed shall walk in it." This way means the path of obedience to God's commandments. It is

this path which is intended by "The King's Highway." When we repent of our sins, and believe in Jesus as our Saviour, and try to love and serve him, this is the way he wishes us to walk in. Hence he says to us, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Whatever we do from love is always pleasant. And "The King's Highway" is a pleasant way to walk in, because those who walk in it are prompted by love.

May God give grace to all who read this little volume, truly to love that Saviour who died for them, and to show that love by walking in "The King's Highway;" and may he bring us all at last in safety to that blessed home above, to which this Highway leads!

RICHARD NEWTON.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

I.

The First Commandment.

PART I.

“ I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt have no other gods before me.”—EXODUS xx. 2, 3.

I SUPPOSE you have all seen a procession at some time or other? And no doubt you like to see processions. The longest procession that ever was seen took place more than thirty-three hundred years ago. It was formed when the children of Israel went up out of Egypt. There were more than two millions of people in it. That is nearly as many as all the people in London put together. Moses was the leader of this procession. It started from the land of Egypt to go to the land of Canaan. The Israelites, in this procession, had to travel through the wilder-

ness. There were no roads through that wilderness; no milestones or finger-posts to point out the way. Not one person in the procession had ever travelled through that wilderness, or knew anything about the way. The mariners' compass—with its needle always pointing to the north, and enabling people now to travel safely across oceans or deserts, where there are no paths—was not invented then. But God gave the people in that procession something that was very wonderful instead of a compass. It looked like a mass of white smoke. The Bible calls it "a pillar of cloud." In the day-time it looked like a piece of one of those soft, fleecy clouds that we often see floating in the sky. But at night it changed its appearance, and glowed, and brightened, and shone like a flame of fire. It floated low down, and hung right over the ark of the covenant which went before the children of Israel.

Now the procession is in motion. It is formed in regular ranks like a great army of soldiers. They march out from Egypt; they come to the Red Sea. There is no bridge across it. They have no boats. High ranges of mountains shut them in on either side. What are they to do? God commands them to go forward! What, right into the sea? Yes, right into the sea. They obey God; and, the very moment that the

priests, who are at the head of the procession, touch the waters of the sea with their feet, the waves are divided and roll back before them. A broad road is open for them through the midst of the sea. The waters are piled up on each side of them like great walls of glass or ice, and remain so till the procession has passed over.

Now they are all safe through. They begin to travel into the wilderness. They have made three days' journey, and at last a great mountain appears in sight. They move on till they come to it. At the foot of the mountain the procession halts. The people pitch their tents and rest there. That is Mount Sinai. On the top of that mountain God told Moses that he would come down and meet him, and give him a law to show the Israelites, and all other people, what he wanted them to do. God ordered Moses to build a fence round the bottom of the mountain, to keep any of the people from coming up. Then he told him to come up to the top of the mountain, when he should hear a trumpet giving a long, loud sound.

The fence is built, and Moses is ready, waiting for the signal. The top of the mountain is all covered up with dark, black clouds. The lightnings flash out from amidst them. The thunders roll down the sides of the mountain. The moun-

tains shakes and trembles: God has come down upon the top of it; and the sound of the trumpet is heard. It is an angel's trumpet,—the same that shall be heard at the last day, when the graves are opened and the dead come forth. How solemn it must have been to hear that trumpet! Moses hears it. He goes up the mountain. The people all watch him, as he travels up, higher and higher. Now he enters the cloud, and they see him no longer. Moses is on the top of the mount talking with God. There God gave him his great law of the Ten Commandments. God wrote these commandments, with his own finger, on two tables of stone. The first four commandments, which show us what our duty to God is, were on one table; and the remaining six, which show us what our duty to man is, were on the other.

And now the trumpet sounds again. All the people hear it and are afraid. They listen tremblingly. The trumpet ceases. Another sound, more awful than the angel's trumpet, is heard. It is the voice of God. It sounds like thunder. And God spake all these words, saying: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt; out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

This is the *first* commandment. There are two

questions that may be asked about this commandment; one is this: *What is it to have a God?* The other is this: *Why should we have no other gods but the Lord?*

Our sermon to-day will be about the first of these questions. We must have another sermon on the second question.

The question we are now to try and answer is: *What is it to have a God?*

I mean by this a true God, such as the Lord Jesus Christ is to us. This is the answer to the question: *It is to have one who is able to do three things for us; and one who has a right to expect three things from us.*

To have a God is to have one who *can do three things for us.*

The first thing we want our God to be able to do is, ALWAYS TO HELP.

The little child always needs the help of its mother. The blind man always needs the help of some one to guide him. The sick man always needs the help of the physician. We are here in this world like children—like persons who are blind, or sick. We need to be taken care of like children. We need to be guided like the blind, and to be watched and tended like the sick. And who can do this for us? Our parents can help us in some things. Our teachers and friends

can help us in some things, but not in all. They can't be always with us, nor can they always help us when they are with us. At the quiet hour of midnight, when they are fast asleep themselves, what can they do to help us? When we are far away from home, what can they do to help us? We need some one who can *always* help us. Then it must be some one who is present in every place—whose eye never slumbers, and whose arm never grows weary. Is there such a one to be found? Yes, God our Saviour is just such a one. He is with us by night, as well as by day; abroad, as well as at home. His eye is never closed. His arm is always strong. He is always everywhere. The Bible tells us he is "a very present help in every time of trouble." David says, "The Lord is my help, whom then shall I fear?" He didn't fear the lion or the bear that came to steal his sheep, because God helped him to kill them. He didn't fear Goliath, the great Philistine giant, because God helped him to fight and conquer him.

People are needing help in different places at the same time all over the earth; and no one can really be a God who is not able to hear and help all these different persons at once.

The heathen have many gods. They think each god has a particular place to attend to, and that

he can only help people in the place to which he belongs. But this is very foolish. The truth is, the gods of the heathen can't help those who pray to them in one place any more than another. They help nobody. We need a God who can *always help*; and there is only *one* such God.

"Mother, how many gods are there?" asked a little boy one day.

A younger brother, who heard him, said, "Why, one to be sure."

"But how do you know that?" said the one who asked the question.

"Because," said his little brother, "God fills every place, so there is no room for any other."

The first thing we want our God to be able to do is—ALWAYS TO HELP US.

The second thing we want our God to be able to do is—ALWAYS TO SAVE US.

Our bodies are often in danger, as well as our souls; and we want a God who can save them both. When Daniel was thrown into the den of lions he needed a God who could preserve him from their devouring jaws, and he found such a one in the Lord.

When the three Jews were thrown into the blazing furnace, because they wouldn't worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, they needed a God

who could save them from being burned up by the flames; and they found such a one in the Lord our God.

When Jonah was cast into the stormy sea he needed a God who could take care of him and bring him safe to land again. He found such a one in our God, who sent the great fish, like a living ship, to take him on board and carry him ashore.

When the disciples were in their little vessel, tossed by the storm on the sea of Galilee, they needed a God who could control the violence of the storm, and make it obey him. They found such a one in Jesus their Saviour; for when they awoke him, "He arose, and rebuked the winds, and the sea, saying, 'Peace! be still!' and immediately there was a great calm."

And so we are all exposed to sickness, danger, and death continually. We can't preserve ourselves, and our best friends can't preserve us. We need some one who can keep us alive and protect us in all danger. Jesus can do this. He is called "the Saviour of the body." He counts the hairs of our heads. He is about our path and about our bed continually. He is able to save our bodies. The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the people in the world, are in his hands. He can take care of them all. He can save the body.

But the *soul* is more precious than the body. We want a God that can save the soul. We all have many sins that must be pardoned. We have a conscience, a something in our bosoms which troubles us, and makes us feel uneasy on account of sin; and we want to have this conscience quieted and made at peace. We have wicked hearts that must be made new and good, or we never can be happy; and we want a God who can do this for us.

Suppose I break the main-spring of my watch; it runs down; it won't go. I try to mend it, but I can't: I ask one of you to do it. You shake your head and say, "I can't do it." I take it to a shoemaker; he can't do it. I take it to a carpenter, a wheelwright, a blacksmith, a lawyer, a doctor, but none of them can mend it. After a while I take it to a watchmaker; he understands all about it. He puts a new spring in it, and it goes as well as ever.

Now the soul is like a watch; sin has broken the main-spring; it won't go; we want some one to mend it. We want a new heart, or a new main-spring for the watch; but the soul-maker is the only one who can do this. To try to get this done in any other way is like carrying your broken watch for repairs to a shoemaker or a blacksmith.

There was once a man in India, a heathen, who felt that he was a sinner. His conscience troubled him dreadfully about his sins, but he knew not how to get rid of them. He had spent several years in consulting the priests and visiting the different temples, in the hope of getting relief. He did all that he was told to do, but it did him no good. At one temple he was told to take a long journey on his hands and knees. He did it, but was no better. He had washed himself in different fountains; he had fasted, till he was almost worn to a skeleton; he had done many painful things, but without any relief. At last he was told to put pebbles in his shoes and travel to a distant temple, and make an offering to the idol, and he would be relieved. He had been there, and offered his sacrifice, and prayers, but in vain.

Sad and sorrowful, he was returning home, with the pebbles still in his shoes. Wearied with his journey, he halted one day in the shade of a grove, by the wayside, where a company was gathered around a stranger, who was addressing them. It was a missionary preaching the gospel. The poor heathen listened with great interest. The missionary was preaching from these words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." He showed how Jesus was able and will-

ing to save all who came unto him. The heart of the heathen was drawn to Jesus. He took off his shoes and threw away the pebbles, exclaiming, "This is the Saviour I have sought in vain. Thank God, I have found salvation."

This poor man had been carrying his broken watch to tinkers and blacksmiths. They could do nothing with it. At last he found the watch-maker, and all was right.

Jesus says, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. Besides me there is no Saviour." We need a God who can *always save*.

But then there is a *third* thing that we expect God to be able to do for us, and that is, ALWAYS TO MAKE US HAPPY.

When we are in health, and have affectionate parents, and kind friends, and many comforts and enjoyments around us, we do not feel so much our need of God. We are ready to think that we can be happy without Him. But, when sickness comes, and pain is racking our body; when our parents die, and our friends are taken away from us, then it is that we need some one to make us happy.

Yes, and when we come to die ourselves—when we are to leave all that we have known and loved on earth behind us, we need some one to

make us happy then ; and if the God we have is the true God, this is just what he will do. Now, it is easy to find those who can tell us that Jesus does make them happy in health and prosperity. There are many teachers in this school, and many members of this congregation, who are ready to come forward and say, "That is so. He has made *me* happy. He makes me happy always."

But the one who is a God to us must be able to make us happy in sickness and suffering, in death and eternity. Can Jesus do this ? Yes, he can.

"I was called upon," said a minister, "some time ago to visit a man who was suffering from a cancer. It had eaten away a part of his face. It was going on to eat the rest. His appearance was awful. He was suffering dreadfully all the time. I said to him, 'Suppose, my friend, that God should give you your choice, to have your cancer, with all its pain and suffering, and the certainty of soon dying, but being happy with him for ever ; or to have health, and prosperity, and long life in this world, with the risk of losing your soul hereafter ;—which would you prefer ?' 'Ah, sir,' the man instantly exclaimed, 'give me the cancer and the pain, with Jesus and the hope of heaven ; let others take the world, and long life, and prosperity without him.'"

This shows how Jesus can make the sick and suffering happy. I could fill a volume in showing how he makes the dying happy.

I will only mention one or two cases. A dear child, between five and six years old, who had a happy home and fond parents, was on his death-bed. His father asked him which he would choose, to live with his parents and friends here, or die and be with Jesus in heaven. He answered cheerfully, "I would rather die, and be with Jesus in heaven, and *wait there till you come.*"

A Christian was dying after long suffering. These were his last words as his friends stood weeping round his bed :—

"Almost home! almost home! My precious Bible! True every line. I never thought it could have supported me thus, but it does. I never thought I could have enjoyed so much on a dying-bed. I have not one anxious wish. It is heaven already begun. I am as happy as I can be this side of heaven."

Now, He who can do this for his people in sickness, in suffering, and in death, can make them ALWAYS HAPPY.

These are the three things which we expect him, who is our God, to be able to do for us. We expect him to be able ALWAYS TO HELP, ALWAYS TO SAVE, AND ALWAYS TO MAKE US HAPPY.

But then there are three things that he, who is our God, has a right to expect from us.

He has a right to expect OUR HIGHEST LOVE. The gods of the heathen cannot be loved,—no one *could* love them.

The *character* and the *appearance* of those gods are such that it is impossible to love them. Some of those gods are represented as often getting drunk, some as robbers, and others as murderers. Why, if *we* were to do what some of those gods are said to do, we should be put in prison or hung. We should not be fit to live in decent society. Can anybody love such gods ?

And then, think of the *appearance* of some of the heathen gods.

The god Moloch was a frightful-looking monster, with a great red mouth and grinning teeth, to show that he was fond of blood. Could any one love such a god ?

The goddess Kalee, now worshipped by a great portion of the people in India, is a fierce-looking female figure, with instruments of death in her hands, and a string of human skulls hung round her neck as an ornament. Her followers think that they can do nothing to please her better than to murder people whenever they have an opportunity. Can any one love such a god ?

Ganesa, another of the gods of the Hindoos, is represented by a most strange and monstrous figure. He has the head of an elephant, with four arms and hands. He always appears riding on the back of a huge rat. He has the figure of a serpent in a sort of ring round his head, with some sacred letters in it.

And then, I might speak of the great Jugger-naut, of Hanniman, the monkey-god, of Manesa, the snake-god, and many others, all very much of the same character. People may pray to them and make offerings to them, but it is impossible for any one to *love* such gods.

But the true God must be one who can be loved. He is one who has a right to expect, not only our love, but our *highest* love. He expects us to love him, and to love him better than any other person or thing in the world. We must love him more than we love father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or any one that we know. Jesus said when he was on earth that we must love God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and our God, the God of the Bible, *can* be loved in this way. He is pure. He is good. He is holy. "God is love." He expects, and he *deserves* our highest love. It is right to love him better than any one else. But it is neither right nor possible to love any one

else in this way ; and this shows that he is the true God. He has a right to expect our HIGHEST LOVE.

This is the first thing He has a right to expect from us.

The second thing He has a right to expect from us is our UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE.

These are longer words than I like to use, but I think you can all understand them. You know we are taught to pray that God's "will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." This means that *we* should obey God as the angels do in heaven.

A Sunday-school teacher once asked his class *how* the angels obey God. Different answers were given ; but the best was that of a little boy, who said, "They obey *without asking any questions.*" That is true. It was a capital answer.

I have sometimes heard a mother call to her daughter, "Mary, come here immediately!" Mary is playing with her doll, and instead of getting up at once and running to her mother, she goes on dressing her doll, and says, in a very cross tone, "Oh, what do you want?"

"John, I want you to go on an errand," says a father to his son. John is making some tails for his kite. Instead of minding at once what his father tells him, he keeps on with what he is do-

ing, and says, "Won't it do by-and-by, when I have finished making my kite?"

That is not the way in which the angels obey. They do *everything* that God tells them to do; and they do it *at once*, without delaying to ask any questions. This is what I mean by *unquestioning obedience*. God has a right to expect this kind of obedience from us. He expects us to do everything that he commands; and it is proper for us to do this, because we know that everything that God commands is right. Others may command things that are not right, and then we are not to obey. It is right to obey our rulers, but only when their laws are according to the laws of God.

Nebuchadnezzar made a law, that all people should worship the graven image which he had set up, or be cast into the fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego refused to obey, and they did right.

The rulers of Jerusalem forbade the apostles to preach about Jesus. But they went on preaching, and when they were brought to trial they said, "We must obey God rather than man." And they were right. We must not obey even our teachers or parents if they command us to do anything plainly contrary to the will of God.

I knew a Sunday-school boy once who became a Christian when he was about fourteen years old. His father used to keep a grocer's shop, and on Sunday mornings he would open his shop for an hour to supply his customers with goods. The father always called his son in the morning to go down and open the shop. The boy never thought there was anything wrong in it till he became a Christian. Then he thought about God's command to keep the Sabbath holy. He felt that to open the shop and sell things on Sunday was breaking God's command. This thought troubled him very much. He knew not what to do. He was very unwilling to disobey his earthly father, and yet he felt still more unwilling to disobey his heavenly Father. He was afraid his father would turn him out of doors if he refused to open the shop when he told him to do so, and he had no one to offer him another home. He was greatly distressed. But he prayed to God to show him what to do ; and at last he determined to obey God whatever the consequence might be, and trust that God would take care of him. When he had taken this resolution, he waited very anxiously for the end of the week to come. It came at last. Then, late on Saturday night, when the shop was closed and the work all done, just before going to bed, he told his father that he

wanted to be an obedient son, and do all that he told him to do, but he felt that opening the shop and selling goods on the Sabbath was breaking God's commandment, and he hoped he would excuse him from that.

Just as he supposed, his father got very angry, and told him if he was too good to do what he did, he must leave his house and seek another home. He told him he might stay till Monday morning, and then go.

The poor boy was greatly distressed, and knew not where to go. But on Monday morning his father called him to open the shop as usual, and said no more to him about going away. In a short time after his father gave notice to his customers that he wouldn't open his shop any more on Sunday. Then he took to going to church regularly; he soon became a member of the church—and loved that son more than ever.

It may not be always right to obey without questioning all that others command us; but it is always right to obey without questioning everything that God commands. He never does wrong himself, and never commands others to do wrong. Whatever he tells us to do must be right; and therefore he expects from us—UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE.

Then there is a third thing God expects from us—and that is, SINCERE WORSHIP.

Sincere means that which is true, or pure. This word was first used to denote honey that was clear, and had no wax or sediment in it. Think of a glass jar full of clear, transparent honey, without the least dirt or sediment in it. Now, if a person who spoke Latin was describing it, he would say it was honey *sine cera*, that is, honey without wax in it. And this is what we get our English word *sincere* from. It means that which is clear, pure, or free from imperfection.

Now, God expects from us this kind of worship. *Sincere what* does God expect from us? *Worship*. Let us see what this means. *Worship* is a word made up of two other words, namely, *worth* and *ship*, or shape. It means, then, that we should put ourselves in the position, or shape, that is worthy of God; or it means, that we should render to him the service that is worthy of him. And what is the proper shape or position for sinners, such as we are, to put ourselves in before God? David tells us when he says, "O come, let us worship, and fall down, and *kneel* before the Lord our maker." Yes, a position of humble reverence is what we should put ourselves in when we would *worship* God. This is the *shape* or condition *worthy* of God for sinful creatures to appear in.

But the *shape* of a thing denotes its use or ser-

vice. If you see iron put in the shape of a bright sharp blade, you know it is designed to *cut*. If you see it put into a round shape, like a ball, you know it is designed to roll. If you see a pile of wood, broken up into the shape of kindling, you know it is designed to burn. And if you see a man, in the form of a servant, with an apron on and his sleeves rolled up, you know he is designed for work. And so when we appear before God as his worshippers,—in the form or shape worthy of him,—we mean to say that we are ready to offer him our prayers and praises, and that we desire to serve him ; and when we do this honestly and earnestly with all our hearts, that is *sincere worship*. This is the service God requires. He is worthy of it.

And if this is what sincere worship means in reference to God, what would sincere worship of idols mean ? It would mean the service that *they* are worthy of. And what is this ? What do they deserve ? They deserve to be broken in pieces, and thrown to the moles and bats. This is all that they are fit for ; and this is what they must all come to at last. The Bible tells us that “the idols God will utterly abolish.”

Sincere worship is what God expects from us. But is it sincere worship if we trifle or play when those about us are singing God's praise or praying

to him? Is it sincere worship if we kneel down to pray to God ourselves, but don't think about or feel what we are saying? No, this is mocking God, and that is a dreadful thing to do.

“ For God is present everywhere,
And watches all our thoughts and ways;
He marks who humbly join in prayer,
And who sincerely sing his praise.

The triflers, too, his eye can see,
Who only seem to take a part;
They move the lip, and bend the knee,
But do not seek him with the heart.”

Now, my dear children, we have tried to consider the question, What is it to have a God? We have answered this by saying, that it is to have one who is *able to do three things for us*, and *has a right to expect three things from us*.

What are the three things God is able to do for us? He is able ALWAYS TO HELP, ALWAYS TO SAVE, and ALWAYS TO MAKE US HAPPY.

Then *He has a right to expect three things from us*. What are these? He has a right to expect OUR HIGHEST LOVE, OUR UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE, and OUR SINCERE WORSHIP. This is what it is to have a true God.

There are two questions I want to ask before closing. This is one question, What is it to have an idol? The hymn we are going to sing presently tells us,—

“ There are many heathen children
Who yet God's name have known ;
And many other idols
Than those of wood and stone.”

Then there is another hymn which asks—

“ What is an idol? Every heart
Hath idols of its own,
Some are of gold and silver bright,
And some of wood and stone.

Lord, is there aught the world contains
Which I love more than thee?
Then sure, that love, within my heart,
Idolatry must be.”

Some people make money their god. Some make eating and drinking their god. Sometimes a husband will make an idol out of his wife ; or a wife will make an idol out of a husband. Sometimes parents will make idols of their children. Many idols are made out of silk or satin. A beautiful dress, a new bonnet, a pretty ribbon, may be an idol. I wonder if God sees any such idols here this afternoon ?

A little boy once had a pet bird of which he was very fond. He took great delight in playing with it. It would eat out of his hand and perch on his finger. One day the bird died, and the little fellow cried almost as if his heart would break. At night, when his mother took him up stairs, he wanted to go to bed without saying his prayers. When she spoke to him about it he said, “ Mother, I don't want to say my prayers

to-night, for my little birdie's dead, and I *can't* say, 'Thy will be done.'" That little fellow had made an idol of his bird. He loved it more than God. His mother tried to show him how wrong it was to feel so, and taught him to pray to God for grace to say, "Thy will be done."

A lady, who was very fond of playing cards, once said to a distinguished clergyman, "I like the doctrine you preach, sir, very much, and I think I can give up everything but one."

"What is that, madam?" asked the minister.

"Cards, sir."

"You think you could not be happy without them?"

"No, sir, I could not."

"Then, madam, *they are your god*, and to them you must look for salvation." This led her to think seriously on the subject, and she soon became a Christian.

Let us never forget that whatever we love more than God, that is our idol. Oh, what multitudes of idolaters there are in this city! And how many there are in this congregation! Let each of us ask himself the question, Do I love any person or thing more than I love God? If you do, that is your idol.

The other question I would ask is this, *What shall we do with our idols?* There is a verse in

a hymn we sometimes sing which answers this question. It says—

“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,—
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.”

This shows us what we ought to do. If we find that we have idols in our hearts we must tell Jesus about it. We must repent of the sin of having them, and pray for him to help us to put them away, and love him better than anything else. When Jesus was on earth people came to him with all their troubles, and he helped and comforted all who came to him ; and he will help us still if we ask him to do so.

A Christian mother was once showing her little girl, about five years old, a picture representing Jesus holding an infant in his arms, while the mothers were pushing their children towards him. “There, Carrie,” said her mother, “that’s what I would have done with you if I had been there.”

“I wouldn’t *be pushed* to Jesus,” said little Carrie, with beautiful and touching earnestness, “*I’d go to him without pushing.*”

Now this was just right. This is the way in which we ought to go to Jesus. How kind he is ! How tender ! How ready to help and bless ! My dear children, won’t you go to Jesus at once ?

Oh, go "without pushing." Ask him to help you to put away every idol, and "have no other God before him."

HYMN ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

I want to love my Saviour,
And worship him alone ;
And have no earthly idol
Upon my spirit's throne.
I want, with pure devotion,
To serve him all my days ;
And for his countless blessings.
To yield him grateful praise.

It is his hand hath made me ;
His power upholds me still ;
And he will always aid me
To do his holy will.
Dear Saviour, be thou near me,
And guide my feet aright ;
And make my thoughts and actions
Both blameless in thy sight.

There are many heathen children,
Who yet thy name have known ;
And many other idols
Than those of wood and stone.
Oh ! if our *hearts* were opened
That other eyes might see,
How like a heathen temple
Would they be found to be !

And yet, to Him who formed them,
Each secret thought is known—
He sees each separate object
That occupies his throne.
Lord, in thy name appearing,
We come on bended knee:
Oh, teach us how to worship,
No other God but thee!

II.

The First Commandment.

PART II.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”—EXODUS xx. 3.

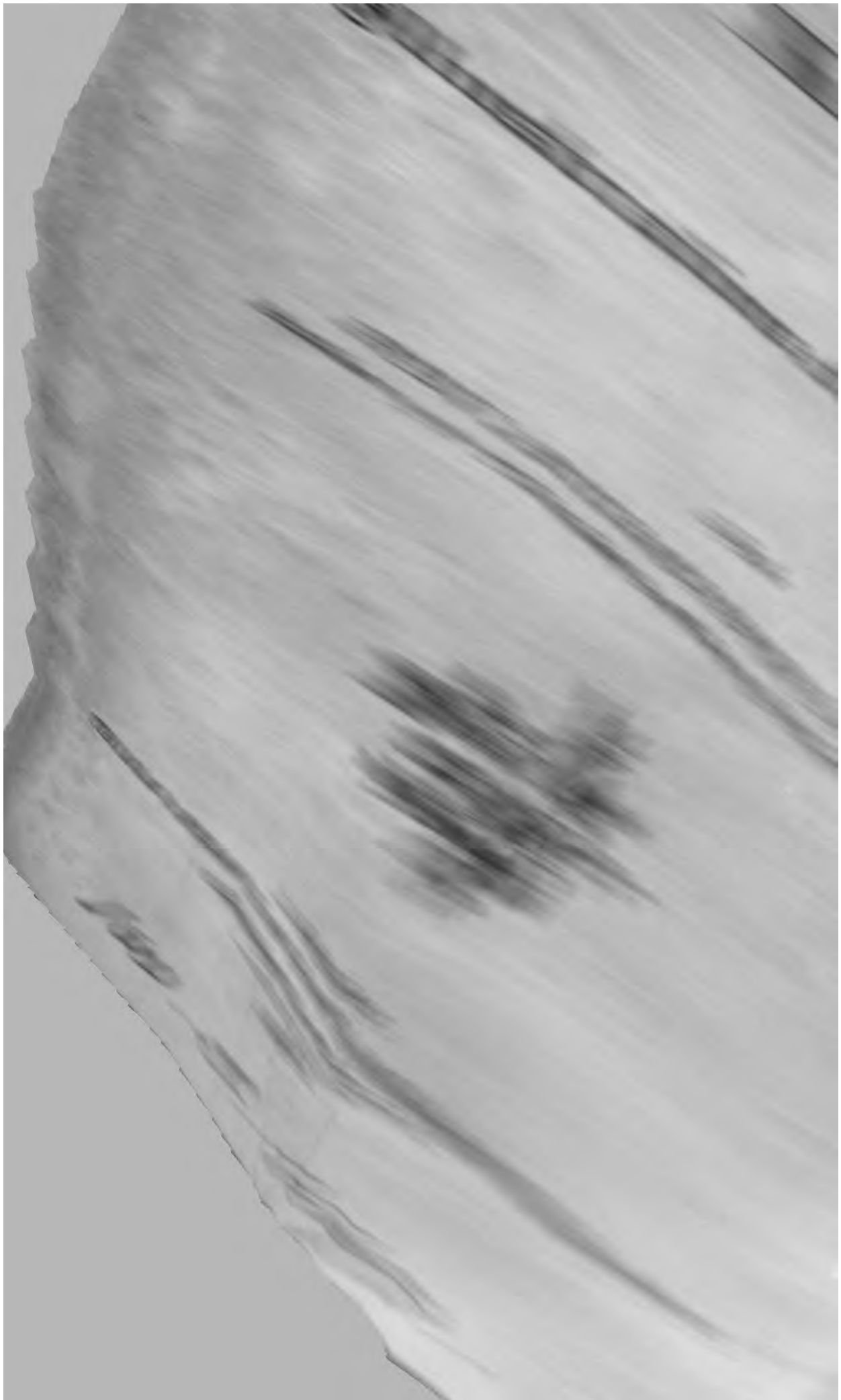
A SHORT time since somebody published a book, the title of which is “*The Reason Why.*” This is a very queer title for a book. But it is a very appropriate one for the book of which I am speaking. This is a very instructive and amusing book. It explains many things about us, and shows “the reason why” they are just as they are. It shows the reason why we breathe the air about us ; why the air is cooler in motion than when still ; why it flies through the doors and windows towards the fireplace in a room. It shows “the reason why,” when we blow soap-bubbles from a pipe, they always form in a round shape, and not in any other ; why they rise up when we first throw them off, and why they fall down afterwards ; why they have such beautiful colours upon them ; why they change their colours in the sunshine, and why they always burst after

a little while. It shows "the reason why" cloudy days are colder than sunny days, while cloudy nights are warmer than clear nights. It shows "the reason why" the dew is always formed in little round drops upon the leaves and grass ; why there is more of it on clear nights than on cloudy nights ; why it is formed by night and not by day, and in some places, but not in others. It shows "the reason why" the fire burns more brightly when blown by a bellows, and why it is sometimes put out by blowing it when it is low ; why poking the fire makes it burn more brightly ; why it sometimes burns with a flame, and sometimes without any. It shows "the reason why" fishes have fins ; why their fins are so much smaller in proportion than the wings of a bird, and why the fishes' tails are so much larger than their fins. It shows "the reason why" a boy's kite rises in the air ; why running with the kite makes it rise higher ; and why the string feels hot while passing rapidly through his hand. It shows "the reason why" the leaves of the trees are green in spring and summer ; and why they turn brown and fall off at the approach of winter. It shows "the reason why" the rain-drops are sometimes large, and at others small ; why it rains more in warm countries than in cold, and in mountainous countries



THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE JUDGE.

"God bless you, my child!" said the judge. "You have a good mother. If I were on trial for my life to-day," said he, "and innocent of the charge, I would pray God to give me such a witness as you are, my child."—Page 227.



than in flat ones ; and why ladies' hair drops out of curl when rain is approaching.

There is some good reason for everything that God has done. There is a reason why the sky is blue and the grass is green. There is a reason why fire always tries to get up higher, while water always tries to get down lower. And it is very important for us to try and find out the reason for things as far as we can.

The great philosopher, Sir Isaac Newton, was looking at an orchard one day, when he saw an apple fall from a tree. He began at once to ask himself the reason why the apple, when loosed from the tree, fell to the ground. Hundreds and thousands of people had seen apples fall from trees before, but nobody ever thought of asking such a question. Sir Isaac Newton not only *asked* the question, but he tried to find out the answer to it ; and he kept on trying till he *did* find it out. Yes, and more than that, too ; for out of that falling apple he made one of the greatest discoveries that was ever made. He found out from it the reason why the world goes round in its orbit, and why it keeps its place securely in the heavens without falling ; though there is nothing under it to keep it up, and no great chain let down from above for it to hang upon.

Now we are to have our second sermon on the first commandment. There were two questions started by this commandment. One of these was, *What is it to have a God?* This we tried to answer in the last sermon. The other is, *Why should we have no other gods than the Lord?* This is the one we are to talk about now. The subject of this sermon, then, is, "*The reason why*" *we should have no other gods than the Lord.*

I wish to speak of *three* reasons. *The first reason is, because it is VERY FOOLISH to do so.*

No one can take God's place, because all things are his. He has everything that exists. All the gold and silver, all the gems, and jewels, and precious things in the world, and in all other worlds, belong to him. He has need of them to supply the wants of his creatures. It is very foolish to have any one else than the Lord for our God, because all things are his, and no one else can supply all our wants.

Did you ever go into a large jeweller's shop? If you look into the glass cases, you find there gold rings, breast-pins, neck-laces, head-dresses, pearls, diamonds, and jewels of various kinds; watches and time-pieces, gold and silver goblets, and cups, and plates, and all sorts of vessels. How very valuable such a shop must be! What a great amount of money it would take to pay for

all those things ! Now, suppose you are going down the street some day past that shop. You see a little fellow who has just been put, for the first time, in jacket and trousers. He fancies himself a very great man. His uncle has given him a new half-crown piece. He never had so much money before in his life. He feels as rich as Cræsus. As you pass along he is standing before the jeweller's window, with his hand in his pocket, holding fast his half-crown, and you hear him say to his little companion :—

“I say, Bob, I've got a new half-crown, and I'm going to buy all the things in this shop !” You look on the little fellow as you smile, and say, “Poor, foolish child, you are not rich enough to buy all the things in that shop.” And yet he would not be half so foolish, to think of doing this with a half-crown, as we are when we think that any one else than the Lord is able to supply all our need.

God is *too great* for any one to take his place. He is the greatest of all beings. An infidel once met a plain countryman on a Sunday. He asked the farmer where he was going. He answered, “I am going to church.”

“What do you go to church for ?” asked the infidel.

“To worship God,” said the farmer.

“Pray, tell me,” said he, thinking to make sport of the man, “whether your God is a little god or a great god.”

“He is both, sir,” answered the farmer. “He is so little that he can dwell in my poor heart ; and at the same time so great that the heavens, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.”

How foolish it is to think of putting anybody in the place of this great God ! How foolish it would be to blot out the sun from the sky, and then try to light up the world with candles ! Yet it would be easier to do this than to put anything in the place of God.

There was a good and learned man once, who was very much perplexed by trying to explain to himself the doctrine of the Trinity. He wanted to understand *how* the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God—while yet there are not *three* Gods, but one God. “The reason why” this is so nobody can tell. God has not told us the reason, and no one can find it out. The Bible requires us to believe this ; but it does not require us to *understand* it. But the good man that I refer to wanted to understand it as well as believe it. He kept thinking about it always, and was very unhappy because he could not understand all about it. One day, while still thinking very earnestly about this matter, he took

a walk along the sea-shore. As he went on he saw a little child playing on the sand. He stopped when he came to the child, and watched its motions. The little thing had scooped out a hole in the sand, about as big as a quart bowl, and, with a tiny shell, it was baling the sea-water into the hole. "What are you doing, my child?" asked the man. The little thing looked up to him with a smile, and said, "I am trying to put the ocean into this hole, sir."

He thought of the immense ocean, miles in depth, and thousands of miles in breadth; then he looked at the very small hole before him, and said to himself. "Poor, foolish child!" But, as he walked on, he thought, "Well, what am I doing but just acting over again the part of this child. My mind is like the little hole the child has dug, while God is thousands of times greater than the ocean; and yet, like the child, I am trying to put the great ocean in the little hole of my mind!

Then he determined not to trouble himself any more about this, but to be satisfied with *believing* what the Bible teaches about God, without trying to *understand* it.

Now, suppose that the bed of the ocean were empty. Suppose that all the water in it were dried up, and that you should meet a person going

to the shore of what used to be the ocean, carrying a tea-cup full of water. You say to him "My friend, what are you going to do with that cup of water?" He says, "Why, I am going to make an ocean out of it. I am going to fill up the bed of the ocean with this water." Wouldn't you think that person very foolish? Certainly. And yet he would not be half so foolish as those who try to put anything else in the place of God. It would be easier to fill the bed of the ocean with a cup of water, than to fill God's place with any one but himself. It is *very foolish* to try to put any one in God's place, because he is so great.

And then, God is *too wise* for any one to take his place. How strange it is, that anybody should ever think of putting dumb and dead idols of wood or stone in the place of God!

I was reading an interesting account the other day of the way in which two little Chinese children were made to see the folly of doing this. Their parents were dead, and they were left to the care of an aunt and grandmother. Their aunt had a wooden idol in the house which they all worshipped. The little boy's name was San, and his sister's name was Kim. They were both placed in a mission school. The teacher of the school wanted to show these children the folly of praying to a dumb idol. One day she gave them

a beautiful flower, like a rose, to smell. They were delighted with its fragrance. Then she held out a fruit to smell which grows in those parts. It had a horrible smell, just as if it were made up of rotten eggs and onions. At the very first snuff they turned away their heads and made all sorts of queer faces. Then she said she did not think their idol could tell the difference between the smell of the flower and the fruit. After this she took a large needle from her pincushion, and asked the children to let her stick it into their arms. They instantly drew back their arms, and said,—

“Oh no, ma'am; it will hurt us and make the blood come.”

Then she said she didn't think it would hurt their idol, or make the blood come, to stick it into him.

As they were going home from school, San told his sister that he was going to try if it was true what their teacher had said. He wanted to find out whether their idol did know anything.

His sister was afraid some dreadful thing would happen to him, and she endeavoured to persuade him to give it up. But San said he was bound to try. So when they reached home they went by themselves into the room where the idol was. He was fastened to a shelf, up against the

wall. They pushed the table under it; then San stood on the table, and held up the flower to the idol; but he took no notice of it. Then he held the nasty-smelling fruit close to his nose; but he never moved his head, or showed the least sign of displeasure.

“Well, Kim,” said San, “it’s very certain he does not know anything about *smelling*. Let’s try if he has any *feeling*.”

Then he hunted about till he found a sharp iron, like a skewer. Poor Kim was dreadfully frightened when she saw her brother go up to the idol with this in his hand. She stood trembling like a leaf. San was a good deal frightened too, but still he resolved to try. He got up on the table again. There stood the idol, with his great fat cheeks sticking out. San grasped the sharp iron firmly in his hand, and struck it right into one of his cheeks. There was no cry, no motion, no blood.

“The teacher’s right,” said San. “He does not know anything.”

Then he saw how foolish it was to put such a stupid block in the place of God. He determined not to worship him any more. He persuaded his aunt and grandmother to do the same; and they all at last became Christians, and had no other gods but the Lord.

You have all heard about that mammoth steamer, the *Great Eastern*. She is larger than Noah's ark was, and can carry ten thousand men, with provisions for six months. Suppose we should go on board of her. We go down into her engine-room, and look at her machinery. There are wheels, and beams, and rods, and shafts, and boilers, and valves, and cylinders. All these are necessary to make the vessel go. The most important person on board that vessel is the engineer. He understands all about the machinery. He knows how to keep everything in order, and make it work. But suppose the owners of the boat, just before she started on her voyage across the ocean, should take the engineer away, and put a *wooden* man in his place. He can neither see, nor hear, nor move, nor speak. Would not that be very foolish ?

But look at your body. That is an engine much more curious than the one in the *Great Eastern*. It has more pieces in it, and they are more wisely joined together. There is a boiler in it, and a furnace. There are pipes, and joints, and hinges, and rods, and tubes, and wheels, and pumps. They are in motion all the time ; they never stop. Every boy and girl, every man and woman, is such an engine. There are hundreds of them in this church ; there are ten hundred millions of

them in the world. There is only one engineer who builds and takes care of them all. God is that engineer. Oh, how wise he must be, and how powerful, to be able to take care of them all at the same time! How *very* foolish to think of putting any one else in *His* place! To put a wooden man in the engineer's place on board the *Great Eastern* would not be half so foolish as to think of putting any one in God's place.

The first reason why we ought not to do this is, because it is so *very foolish*.

The second reason why we ought to have no other gods than the Lord is, because it is VERY INJURIOUS.

To have any other god than the Lord is injurious in *two* ways. One way in which it is so is, that it *leaves us without help*.

Wouldn't it be very injurious to a sick man to leave him in a place where he could get no physician, no medicine, and no nurse? Wouldn't it be very injurious to a hungry man to leave him in a position where he could get no food?

You know that in Switzerland there are what are called glaciers. These are like mountain-rivers frozen down to the very bottom. They have many splits or cracks in them as wide as one of these aisles. Sometimes travellers slip and fall down one of these cracks, seventy, or eighty, or a hundred feet deep. Now, suppose a poor man down at the

bottom of one of those ice-cracks. It would be very injurious to him if the friends he was trusting to get him out had no rope long enough to reach him, or strong enough to pull him up.

Now, these different cases are images of our condition. Sin has made our souls sick, and it is very injurious to have any other god than the Lord, because he is the only one who can be our physician, and provide the medicine and nursing we need to make us well again. Sin has left our souls hungry and starving, and it is very injurious to have any other god than the Lord, because he alone can give us that bread which cometh down from heaven, and which can satisfy the cravings of our hungry souls. Sin has cast us into a pit more dreadful than any to be found among the glaciers of Switzerland. It is very injurious to have any other god than the Lord, because he only is able to lift us out from this pit.

Among the many thousands of false gods worshipped in China, two of the principal are Confucius and Buddha. A Chinese, who had become a Christian, made use of this simple, but interesting fable or allegory, to illustrate the difference between Confucius or Buddha, and Jesus Christ. He said,—

“A man had fallen into a deep, dark pit. He lay on its miry bottom, wounded and bleeding,

groaning piteously, and utterly unable to rise. Confucius, walking by, approached the edge of the pit, and said,—

“‘Poor fellow! I am very sorry for you. Why were you such a fool as to get in there? Let me give you a piece of advice: if you ever get out, don't fall in again.’

“‘I can't get out,’ groaned the unfortunate man.

“A Buddhist priest came by next. He leaned over and gazed a while at the suffering man, and said, ‘Poor fellow! I am very much pained to see you there. I think if you could manage to scramble up two-thirds of the way, or even half, I could reach you, and lift you up the rest.’

“But the man in the pit was entirely helpless. He could not stand upon his feet, or even move a limb.

“Next the Lord Jesus came by. He heard the cries. He went to the very brink of the pit. He reached down his almighty arm. He took hold of the poor man. He brought him up ‘out of the horrible pit and the miry clay.’ He healed his wounds. He set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings, and said unto him, ‘Go, and sin no more.’”

This is one way in which it is injurious to have any other god than the Lord. *It leaves us without help.*

The other way is this : IT EXPOSES US TO MANY TROUBLES.

We are told in the Bible, "Their sorrows shall be greatly multiplied who go after other gods ;" and we read in another place that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." All the cruelties of heathen lands result from their having taken other gods than the Lord. Thousands of widows have been burned on the funeral piles of their husbands ; and multitudes of children have been buried alive, or been thrown to the wild beasts to be devoured ; and all these cruelties have been occasioned by having other gods than the Lord.

Suppose we go to a certain mountain-region in India, inhabited by a tribe of people called Khunds. They have another god than the Lord. They worship a cruel, blood-thirsty goddess. The people think that she loves to prevent their corn from growing, and to do them all the mischief she can. They try to please her that she may send them good crops. They think that she delights in blood ; and what pleases her most is, not the blood of calves or goats, but human blood—the blood of boys and girls. Sometimes they steal children, but more frequently they buy them, because they fancy that their goddess likes those best for whom a price has been paid.

These are their victims. They take care of them, and feed them well till they grow fat. Then, just before the time comes for sowing their fields, they hold a festival and make a sacrifice to their goddess. Multitudes of people come together. A boy or a girl, who has been fattened for the occasion, is brought out and tied to a tree. Dressed in their holiday-clothes, the people dance and sing around the tree. Presently the priest gives a signal; the people rush upon the poor child with sharp knives, and cut off pieces of his quivering flesh, which they bury in their fields to insure a plentiful crop.

How dreadful this is! English missionaries are trying to stop this horrible work. They have opened schools for the reception of the poor children rescued from this cruel fate. In the course of two years *five hundred and forty-seven* children were snatched from this dreadful death. All this misery is caused by having other gods than the Lord. If we could have stood in the field where one of these awful sacrifices took place, and have heard the fearful screams of the poor child who was thus being cut to pieces,—ah! then we should have understood how very injurious it is to have any other god but the Lord.

But it is not only the heathen who break this commandment, and feel the evil of it. All who

are not Christians have some other god than the Lord; and all who do this will be made to feel how very injurious it is. When trouble and sorrow come upon them they will have none to comfort them. When their sins press upon them as a heavy burden, they will have none who can give them pardon, and so lift off that burden. When they come to die they will have no one to lean on as they go through the dark valley. At the judgment seat they will have no one to be their friend. In eternity they will have nothing to make them happy. And there they will be learning for ever and ever how sad a thing it is to have any other god than the Lord. It is *very injurious*.

The third and last reason is, that it is VERY WICKED.

There are two things about this which show how wicked it is. There is *robbery* in it. And it is not robbing our friends, or our relations, or our fellow-creatures, or the angels of heaven. Any of these would be bad enough; but this is worse than all of them put together. It is *robbing God!* Our *affections* belong to God. We ought to love him more than any one else; but if we have some other god than the Lord, we don't love him at all. This is robbing him of our affections.

Our *praises* belong to God. He is worthy to be praised. We ought to praise him continually for all the mercies he bestows upon us. But if we have some other god than the Lord, we don't praise him at all. This is robbing him of the praises which belong to him.

Our *obedience* belongs to God. He expects us to obey him. It is right that we should do so. Is it not right for children to obey their father? But God is our father, and it is right to obey him. Is it not right for servants to obey their master? But God is our master, and it is right to obey him. Is it not right for subjects to obey their king? But God is our king. He is the great and glorious King of angels as well as of men. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." But if we have any other god than the Lord, we do not obey him. We rob him of the obedience which belongs to him as our Father, our Master, our King. Can anything be more wicked than this? The prophet Malachi asks the question with great surprise, "Will a man rob God?" It is dreadful to think of such a thing! and yet there are multitudes of people who do it. We ought to have no other gods but the Lord. It is very wicked to do so. One reason why it is so wicked is, because there is *robbery* in it.

But there is another reason why it is very

wicked. It is so because there is *treason* in it. Perhaps some of you don't know what treason means. In countries that are governed by kings or queens, it is considered treason if a person tries to kill the king or queen; or if he unites with other persons to overturn the government, and try to set up another sovereign, this would be considered as treason. In countries where there are no kings, if persons make war against the government; or if a general who has charge of a fort should deliver it up to the enemies of his country, that act would be regarded as treason.

But every one of us has a heart or soul committed to his care. It belongs to God. No one else has any right to it. His flag should wave over it. His law should be obeyed in it. But if we have any one else than the Lord for our God, we betray the fortress that belongs to God into the hands of his enemies, and unfurl the banner of rebellion over it. This is treason towards God. It is being a *traitor* to him. Treason is the greatest crime that a person can commit against his country. In former times, when a person guilty of treason was caught, he was carried to the place of execution in an open cart. Then he was hung. Then his head was cut off, and his body cut up into four pieces. This was done to show the greatness of his crime.

Treason is the greatest crime against our country, so it is the greatest sin we can commit against our God. Yes, yes, my dear children, it is *very* wicked to have any other gods but the Lord. There is *robbery* in it, and there is *treason* in it.

Thus we have considered three reasons why we should have no other god but the Lord. It is *very foolish*, *very injurious*, and *very wicked* to do so.

I do not stop to ask if any of you are guilty of this great sin. We are all guilty of it till we are converted and become Christians. If Jesus has not changed your hearts, and made you his children, you are all guilty of this great sin. You have some other god than the Lord. You have surrendered the fortress of your heart to the power and authority of the enemy of God. You are in rebellion against him. The banner of rebellion is waving over the fortress of your heart. What will you do? Oh! haul down that flag. Open your heart to Jesus? He wants you to do this. He says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open unto me, I will come in, and sup with him." Jesus wants your heart, and Satan wants it. 'Whose shall it be?

If you want to know to what country a fort or

town belongs, you look to the flag that waves over it. That shows whose it is. And so it is with our hearts. But what are the flags of our hearts? Why, our actions. These show whose we are, and whom we serve. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye *do whatsoever I command you.*" When we do what Jesus wants us to do, we hoist his flag. When we do wrong; when we get angry, or break the Sabbath, or disobey our parents, then we hang out Satan's flag. Shall he be our master? Shall we do his work? Shall he be our god? Oh! let us pray for God to help us tear down Satan's flag, and to keep the flag of Jesus over us. In the language of the hymn we are about to sing, let us say,—

"Lord, in thy name appearing,
We come on bended knee;
Oh! teach us how to worship
No other God but thee!"

HYMN ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

There are no gods but One; yet we
A thousand things may take,
And set them on our spirit's throne,
And thus a god may make.

* That is our god which most we love;
And which, could we possess,
Would make us all the fulness prove
Of earthly happiness.

Pleasure, or dress, or selfish ease,
May be a god to me;
For thousands, Lord, bestow on these
The love they owe to thee !

But how shall these our spirits cheer,
When care or sorrow's nigh ?
How can they bring the Saviour near,
When we are called to die ?

Then rule thou only in my mind !
Thine only let me be !
And, loving all men, let me find
No other god but thee !

III.

The Second Commandment.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”—EXODUS xx. 4-6.

IF you should go to a new school, to which you had never been before, one of the first questions you would ask your teacher would be, *What* must I do, sir? And when your teacher had opened the book you were to study, and marked out your lesson, the next question you would want to ask would be, *How* must I learn it? Am I just to read it over? or, am I to say it in my own words? or, must I commit to memory, and say it word for word, just as it is in the book? *What* you were to learn, and *how* you were to learn it, would be very important questions.

When God brought the Israelites to Mount Sinai, as I told you in the first sermon on the commandments, they were taken, as it were, to a

new school. God was their teacher. He came down upon the top of Mount Sinai, in the midst of thunder and lightning, to teach them. The first lesson they had to learn was about worship. *What* must we worship? was the question. The first commandment answered this. It told them they were to worship the Lord their God, and no one else.

Then the next lesson they had to learn was, *How* must we worship the Lord? The second commandment answers this question. The first commandment points out the *true object* of worship: the second points out the *true manner* of worship. One shows us *whom* we are to worship; the other shows us *how* we are to worship.

The second commandment is our subject this afternoon. It teaches us *how we are to worship God*. Now, there are two questions that we must try to answer in considering this commandment.

The first question is this: *What does this commandment forbid?* The second is: *Why does it forbid this?*

What does this commandment forbid?

It forbids the use of images and pictures in our worship.

Let us see what this commandment says:

It says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any *graven* image." "A *graven* image," of old time, is the same that we should now call a *carved* image. A graver, then, was the same as a carver now. And a carver, we know, is one who carves, or makes images, or figures out of wood. The figure-heads of men, or women, or other objects that we see on the bows of ships and other vessels, are graven, or carved images. And so are the figures that we see, as signs, in front of certain shops. Or the graven image might have been made of stone. Then we should call the maker of it a sculptor; and we should speak of such an image as a statue. A graven image might have been made either of wood or stone.

We often read, too, in the Bible, of *molten* images, though they are not mentioned in the commandment. A molten image was one made out of melted metal, such as iron, or brass, or gold, or silver.

But the commandment speaks of a "*likeness* of any thing," as well as of an image. What does it say about this? "Thou shalt not make unto thee any *likeness* of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."

The likeness here spoken of, means a picture, or painting of anything. In public buildings

you may often see pictures or statues of the queen, or of eminent men.

Is that breaking the second commandment? No. Does anybody ever go there to *worship* these images or likenesses? No. This commandment only forbids us having images, or likenesses, for the purpose of worshipping them. It does not forbid us to have images, or statues, or paintings, just to look at, and admire, for the beauty of their form, or for the wonderful way in which they are made to look like real persons, whom we honour or admire.

There are buildings in most large cities called "National Galleries," or "Exhibitions," or "Academies of Arts." These are full of graven images, and molten images, and the likenesses of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things in the water under the earth. There are many pieces of beautiful sculpture there; statues, or images in plaster, and brass, and marble; and many interesting paintings. But it is not wrong to have them, because they are not put or kept there for people to worship them, but only to look at and admire. And it is only having images or pictures to *worship*, that the commandment forbids. It is not *having* them that is forbidden by the commandment, but making a wrong use of them.

But suppose, now, that some one should say to you that he believed it was wrong to have images or paintings at all, even though they were not worshipped. And suppose this person should try to persuade you to go home and destroy all the images or paintings in your dining-rooms, how could you prove clearly that he was wrong?

Let me show you. The second commandment says, we must not have images or pictures to worship them; but this does not mean that we are not to have them for any other purposes. For in another place in the Bible (Deut. iv. 19), God says we must not *look* upon the sun, and the moon, and the stars to worship them. Now, is it wrong to *look* at the sun, and moon, and stars? Of course not. Why, we cannot help looking at them, unless we pluck our eyes out, or keep them always shut. Oh no; they are glorious objects. It does us good to look at them, and think about them. When you look at a beautiful star in the heavens at night, how often you are ready to take up those simple words and say,—

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are."

David used often to look up to the stars, when he was watching his sheep in the fields of

Bethlehem, and he felt that it did him good. It was this feeling that led him to write the words of that beautiful Psalm (viii. 3, 4), in which he says:—

“When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?” Looking at the heavens made David feel humbled. And so it will help to make anybody feel. People in old time carried this feeling so far, that when they looked upon the sun, and moon, and stars, they worshipped them. God forbade the Israelites to do this. But nobody is so foolish as to suppose that this is intended to forbid people looking at the heavenly bodies for any other purpose. And if you admit this, then you must admit that the commandment which forbids our having images, or paintings, for the purpose of worshipping them, does not forbid our having them for other purposes.

But when the heathen make images of their gods, and then kneel down and worship them, do they break this commandment? Yes. And when the Roman Catholics make crucifixes—images of the Saviour on the cross—or images of the Virgin Mary, or pictures of the saints, and

bow down before them in worship, is this breaking the second commandment? Yes.

Those who pray to the virgin and the saints, think that they will be more ready to hear their prayers than the blessed Saviour himself; but is not this a great mistake?

A Romish priest was once talking to a clever boy, belonging to his parish, who had been attending a Protestant school in the neighbourhood. The priest tried to persuade him to give up his Testament and pray to the virgin to take care of him, and keep him from danger and harm.

“Plase, your riverence,” said the boy, “I rade in the Gospel that when the virgin was on earth, in going home from Jerusalem she lost her son. She couldn’t tell where he had gone, and was three days before she found him. Now, if she couldn’t take better care than that of her own child, who was so near to her, I’m thinking it’s mighty leetle care she’ll take of me, who am so far away from her!”

There was a Scotch nobleman once, who was a Roman Catholic. He was very rich, but lived a retired life, and left the management of his affairs very much in the hands of his steward and other servants. One of his tenants, named Donald, was a pious Protestant. He rented a farm from the nobleman, on which his forefathers

had lived above two hundred years. The lease, by which he held the farm, was on the point of expiring, and the steward refused to allow Donald to renew it, intending to give it to a friend of his own. Poor Donald was greatly distressed at the thought of being turned out from his home. He tried every argument in his power to induce the steward to let him remain on the farm, but in vain. At last he resolved to make the case known to his lordship himself, feeling sure that *he* would grant his request. But when he applied at the castle door he was sent away, the steward having given orders that he was not to be admitted.

Donald was almost in despair. Finally, however, he resolved upon a bold step. He climbed over the garden wall, and, entering a private door, made his way unobserved towards the apartments of the nobleman. As he drew near he heard his lordship's voice engaged in prayer. He waited till he should conclude, and while doing so distinctly heard him pleading earnestly with the Virgin Mary and St. Francis to intercede with the Father and Son in his behalf.

After the voice ceased Donald knocked gently at the door and was admitted. He told the simple tale of his distress. The kind-hearted nobleman was much affected by his statement.

He assured him at once that his lease should be renewed, and himself and family protected from the resentment of the steward. Donald was delighted with the success of his plan. He poured forth his warmest thanks to his generous benefactor, and was about to take his departure, when a feeling of anxiety for his gracious patron took possession of his mind, and he thought he would try and speak a word to him that, by God's blessing, might do him good.

"My lord," said he, "I have been a bold man in venturing into your presence, but you have forgiven me, and saved me and my family from ruin; I would again be a bold man, and speak a word, by your lordship's permission."

"Well, Donald, speak out," said the nobleman.

"My lord," replied Donald, "as I stood waiting at your door, I heard you praying, with great earnestness, to the Virgin Mary and St. Francis; you seemed to be very unhappy. Now, my lord, forgive me, but I cannot help thinking that the Virgin Mary and St. Francis will do you but little good. I should have been a ruined man if I had trusted to your servants; I came direct to your lordship, and you heard me. Now, if you would but leave the Virgin Mary and St. Francis, who, I am convinced, will do no more for you than your steward would for me, and just go directly

to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and pray for what you need, he will hear you, and grant you the desires of your heart; for he has said in his word, ‘Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’”

We are not told what the effect of Donald’s appeal was, but certainly his argument was a good one, and we may hope that it led the nobleman to see the folly of applying to the servants when he might go at once to the Master—the folly of praying to the saints when he had the privilege of praying to Jesus, the Lord of all the saints.

Thus I have tried to answer the first question: What does this commandment forbid? *It forbids the use of images or pictures in our worship.*

We now come to the second question. This is: *Why does the commandment forbid this?*

The reason or cause begins with the word “for” in the commandment. God says, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,” &c., *for (or because)* I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.”

Now, when we come to look at this part of the commandment, we find there are *three* reasons in

it. The first reason why we are not to use images and pictures in our worship is, *because the Lord is a jealous God.*

The Bible speaks to us of God as if he were like ourselves. And the reason of this is, that we could not understand what was said of him if it spoke about him in any other way. For instance, in one place in the Bible God says that "all day long he has stretched out his *hands* to his people." But has God any hands? No. But if you want to invite a child towards you, you stretch out your hands and say, "Come." This is an inviting act. It shows that you want the child to come to you. And so when God wants his people to come to him, he says he stretches out his hands.

In another place in the Bible God speaks of putting his "everlasting arms" about his people. But has God any arms? No. But when a mother puts her arms around her child, she does it to show her love and care for it, and her desire to protect it from harm. And so, when God would show how he loves and cares for his people, and intends to protect them, he speaks of putting his everlasting arms about them.

There is a passage in the Bible which tells us that "the *eyes* of the Lord are in every place." Now, has God any eyes? No. But when we say that our eye is in a certain place or on a certain

thing, we mean to say that we know about that place or thing. For instance, my eye is on that pew. I know who are in it. My eye is on that door; I know if any one comes in or goes out. My eye is on that boy or that girl; I know what he or she is doing. And so when we read that God's eye is "in every place," it means that he knows all that is done in every place.

The Bible sometimes speaks of God as being *angry*. Now, God is never really angry. But he acts in a similar way to that in which men act when they are angry; and there is no other way in which we can understand this than by saying that he is angry. Here, for example, is a little boy who tells a lie. His father hears of it. He is angry, and punishes the boy. So, when God punishes his people for their sins, he acts in the same way in which a man acts when he is angry, and we can only understand it by saying that he is angry.

And just so, in this commandment, the Lord is spoken of as "a jealous God." This means that God feels and acts very much as men do when they are jealous. Now there are two kinds of jealousy. One is a wrong feeling, the other is right.

For instance, here is a little girl four or five years old. She is the only child in the family.

She is loved and petted greatly by her parents. After a while a dear little baby comes into that family. But instead of loving it, the little girl hates it and wishes it was away. She can't bear to think that her parents should love any one but herself. She is jealous of the baby. But this is a wrong sort of jealousy. It is a mean, wicked feeling. God is never jealous in this way.

There is another sort of jealousy. It is a good and right feeling. I wonder if I can show you just what it is. Let me try.

Suppose, for instance, you were the king of a large island. You love your people very much, and they love you. They are all happy and prosperous. And suppose that a wicked, good-for-nothing man should come to your island and try to steal away the affections of your people, and persuade them to make him king instead of you. He wants to take away your kingdom, and rob and ruin your people. Now, you might very well feel uncomfortable about this man. This feeling would be jealousy. It would be a right kind of jealousy. And it would lead you to do two things. You would *watch* him very closely. With the eye of a lynx you would follow him in all his movements. And if you caught him actually trying to draw off the affections of your people

from you, and stir them up to rebellion, oh, then you would, if in your power, punish him how severely!

This is something like the feeling in God which the commandment calls jealousy. God is a great King. All his willing subjects are happy. Satan is the wicked, worthless being who is trying to take his place and overturn his government. One of the ways in which he attempts to do this is by drawing men into idolatry. Where he can't succeed in getting men to practise open idolatry, by giving up the worship of God altogether, he tries to get as near this as he can, by persuading them to use images and pictures in their worship. He knows that this is contrary to God's commandment. He knows it is very displeasing to God. He knows that all who use these images and pictures are doing his (that is, Satan's) work, and helping to make him king instead of God. Hence God is jealous of Satan and his efforts. He watches him narrowly, and all who try to help him. He feels hurt when people lend their influence to Satan, his great enemy and our enemy. And it is right for him to feel so. And he is not only quick to see, but strong to punish all who help Satan in this matter.

The commandment forbids us to use images or

pictures in our worship, *because the Lord is a jealous God.* This is the first reason.

The second reason is, Because if we break God's commandments, others besides ourselves must suffer from it.

God says he visits "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him." This does not mean that the souls of children are lost on account of their fathers' sins; but it means that sin is such a dreadful thing, that if we commit it, it will bring suffering upon others as well as on ourselves in *this life*. This is God's law. No persons can alter it any more than they can make the sun rise in the west and set in the east.

There is a little infant six months old. It has taken convulsion fits. See how wildly its little eyes roll! See how it foams at the mouth! It struggles, and groans, and dies. Poor little thing! How did it come to suffer so? Had it ever committed any sin? No; it was too young for that. Then what occasioned its sufferings? The sin of Adam, committed six thousand years before, was the cause of it. This is very fearful. You ask me to explain it. I cannot do it. No one can explain it. And yet no one can deny it. Some people find fault with this law. But God is wiser than man. He knows best what laws to

make. We see just the same kind of laws in other things, and nobody thinks of finding fault with these.

For instance, suppose I am the owner of a house in the middle of a row of wooden houses. Well, my house is old, and overrun with rats and vermin. I have made up my mind to make a bonfire of it, and burn it down. I kindle a fire in the midst of it, and very soon it is all in a blaze. Now, when the fire has done burning *my* house will it stop? Ah, no; it will spread to the house next door, and then to the next, till the whole row is in flames. God has made it the law of fire to spread. Once kindle a flame, and no one can tell how soon it will stop. This is the law of fire. But have we any right to complain? No. It is a good law; it is the best law that can be made; but it teaches us to be careful how we kindle fires.

Suppose a man takes a keg of gunpowder into the midst of a room full of people. He says he is tired of living, and wants to kill himself. Then he lights a match and thrusts it into the powder. Will it just kill him only without others? No; the dreadful explosion will blow them all up together. It is the law God has made, for gunpowder to explode in that way. But have we any right to complain of this law? No. It is a good law. Powder would be of no use without it. But it

shows us how careful we should be about letting sparks fall into gunpowder.

Suppose you throw a stone into the air ; what will become of it ? It will fall to the ground. That is the law God has made for stones and heavy bodies. It is a very good law. Suppose we were on the top of one of the high mountains in Switzerland. A great many people are climb-up the steep side of the mountain. Now, if we loosen a great mass of rock, and send it rushing down the side of the mountain, will it stop when it gets near the people ? No ; it will go thundering on, crushing and tearing everything before it. But have we any right to complain that God has made it the law of heavy bodies to fall ? No ; but knowing this law, we ought to be very careful how we loosen great rocks, and throw them down from the tops of mountains. And it is just so with sin. Like fire it spreads, and rages, and burns, more than those who kindle it expected. Like powder, it explodes with terrible effect, and injures others than those who dropped the spark into it. Like the rock, loosened from the mountain-top, it is very hard to stop, and will crush all in its path. God has made this to be the law of sin, to show us how dreadful a thing it is, and to make us afraid of breaking his commandments, because it will bring evil on others as well as on ourselves.

This is the second reason why God's law forbids us to use images, or pictures, in our worship. *It brings evil on others as well as on ourselves.*

But there is a third reason why the commandment forbids this, namely, because it will bring blessings on others, as well as ourselves, if we mind it.

We read here that the Lord "showeth mercy to thousands of those who love him and keep his commandments."

Look at good King David. He loved and served God faithfully; and hundreds of years after he was dead and buried, God spared the people of Israel, many a time, when they deserved to be punished, and heaped blessings upon them for the sake of David.

Look at Joseph. You know how God blessed Potiphar and his house, and the keeper of the prison, and Pharaoh upon his throne, and all the land of Egypt, for the sake of Joseph.

In the battle of Sempach, fought between the Austrians and the Swiss, before the use of fire-arms, a brave Swiss soldier, whose name was Arnold Winkelreid, nobly sacrificed his life for the sake of his country. The Swiss army was very small, and that of the Austrians very large. The Austrian front presented such an unbroken ridge of spears that the Swiss soldiers could not

get at their enemies. So Arnold told his comrades to follow him, and he would open for them a way to victory. He then rushed up to the Austrian front, and grasping as many spears as he could reach with his outstretched arms, they were thrust into his body; and as he sunk down to the earth, pierced through by all those spears, the Swiss soldiers pressed into the opening thus made, and gained the victory.

“ ‘ Make way for liberty,’ he cried
Make way for liberty, and died.”

Arnold Winkelreid laid down his life for the sake of securing blessings for his country.

You know that in Holland there are large parts of the country that lie below the level of the sea. The people in those parts build great walls, or banks of earth, to keep the water from overflowing the country. These banks are called dykes. Sometimes these dykes give way, and then the water rushes in and overflows the country, destroying much property and many lives.

One night a little boy, in Holland, was returning home from a village, to which he had been sent by his father, on an errand. As he was walking along he saw a little hole in the dyke, through which the water was beginning to run. The hole was so small that he could just cover it with his hand. He knew that if it was left till morning,

the bank would be washed away, and the sea would rush through, and drown all the village. He was even afraid that, if he left it till he ran to the village and back again, the opening made might be too great to stop, till much damage had been done. So he resolved to stay there and keep his hand over the hole, till somebody came by whom he could send to tell the villagers of their danger. Then he took his stand on the dyke and kept his hand over the place, and waited patiently for somebody to come. But no one came. The shades of evening gathered round; the darkness of night settled upon him; still no one came. Hour after hour rolled slowly away, and there the brave boy stood manfully at his post. In cold and darkness, wet, tired, and shivering, he remained there, stoutly pressing his hand against the dangerous place. All night he remained in that position. At last the morning broke. A clergyman, walking on the dyke, heard a groan, and looked round to see where it came from.

“What are you doing there, my child?” he asked, seeing the boy, and surprised at his strange position.

“I am keeping the water back, sir, and saving the village from being drowned,” said the boy, with lips so benumbed with cold that he could hardly speak. The astonished minister took the

boy's place, and sent him to tell the villagers. They came and stopped the breach. Thus the boy at the dyke was willing to suffer all night for the sake of doing good to his friends and neighbours.

Let me tell you one more story to illustrate this part of the subject before I close. The circumstance I am going to tell you took place about twenty years ago at a village called Ragenbach, in Germany. One afternoon a great number of the village people were assembled in the large room of the inn. There was only one door to the room, and that stood open. The village blacksmith—a good-natured, pious, brave-hearted man—sat near the door, talking pleasantly with some of his neighbours in the room.

All at once a large dog came and stood right in the doorway. He was a great, powerful beast, with fierce, frightful look. His head hung down, his eyes were bloodshot, his great red tongue hung half out of his mouth, and his tail was dropped between his legs. As soon as the keeper of the inn saw him, he turned pale, and exclaimed, "Back! back! The dog is mad!" Then the women screamed, and there was great confusion in the room. There was no way out but by the door in which the dog stood, and no one could pass him without being bitten.

“Stand back, my friends,” cried the brave smith, “till I seize the dog; then hurry out while I hold him. Better for one to perish than for all.”

As he said this, he seized the foaming beast with an iron grasp, and dashed him on the floor. Then a terrible struggle followed. The dog bit furiously on every side in a most frightful manner. His long teeth tore the arms and thighs of the heroic smith, but he would not let go his hold. Unmindful of the great pain it caused, and the horrible death which he knew must follow, with the grasp of a giant he held down the snapping, biting, howling brute, till all his friends had escaped in safety. Then he flung the half-strangled beast from him against the wall, and dripping with blood and venomous foam, he left the room and locked the door. The dog was shot through the window; but what was to become of the brave but unfortunate smith?

The friends whose lives he had saved at the expense of his own stood round him weeping. “Be quiet, my friends,” he said; “don’t weep for me; I’ve only done my duty. When I am dead think of me with love; and now pray for me that God will not let me suffer long, or too much. I know I shall become mad, but I will take care that no harm comes to you through me.”

Then he went to his shop. He took a strong chain. One end of it he rivetted with his own hands round his body, the other end he fastened round the anvil so strongly that no earthly power could loose it. Then he looked round on his friends and said,—

“Now, it’s done. You are all safe. I can’t hurt you. Bring me food while I am well, and keep out of my reach when I am mad! The rest I leave with God.”

Nothing could save the brave smith. Soon madness seized him, and after nine days he died. What a noble fellow! What a real hero that was! He was willing to endure all this for the sake of securing blessings for his friends.

But there is one example better than any of these. Think of Jesus. He suffered for more than thirty years. He suffered in the garden; he suffered on the cross that he might secure rich and everlasting blessings for poor sinners such as we are. When we think of Jesus,—Arnold Winklereid, the boy at the dyke, the smith of Ragenbach, and all other examples, fade away like the stars before the sun.

The third reason why the commandment forbids the worship of images is, because minding it will bring blessings on others, as well as on ourselves.

Now, we have had two questions before us. *What does this commandment forbid ?* and *Why does it forbid it ?* Under the second question we have had three reasons ; the first reason is, *Because God is a jealous God.* The second is, *Because others beside ourselves must suffer if we don't mind.* And the third is, *Because it will bring blessings on others beside ourselves if we do mind.*

And now, my dear children, I want each one of you to ask yourself this question : How can I do the greatest good to myself, to my parents, to my brothers and sisters, to my country, and to the world ? The answer is very short. It is by loving Jesus and keeping his commandments. But you never can do this in your own strength. No. But if you ask Jesus to give you the help of his grace and Spirit, then you will be able to love him and keep his commandments, and thus secure the greatest blessings for yourselves and others !

HYMN ON THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

WHILE angels bow before thee,
And sing thy praise above ;
Lord, teach us to adore thee,
And seek thy pardoning love.
And while our lips are singing
The notes we love to raise,

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Oh, may our hearts be bringing
A tribute to thy praise !

Thou art a God who beareth
No rival near thy throne;
Yet many a creature shareth
The love that is thine own.
A thousand things around us
Our idol gods may be;
And many a tie hath bound us
That binds us not to thee.

But in his name appealing,
Who died that we might live;
Before thy footstool kneeling,
We pray thee to forgive.
Oh, help us now and ever,
Our hearts on thee to place;
And every tie to sever,
That draws us from thy face !



THE BRAVE SMITH.

"Now, it's done. You are all safe. I can't hurt you. Bring me food while I am well, and keep out of my reach when I am mad! The rest I leave with God."—Page 80.



IV.

The Third Commandment.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”—
EXODUS XX. 7.

WHAT do oak-trees come from? Acorns. Yes, we read in our primers, “Tall oaks from little acorns grow.” But if you plant an acorn in the ground to-day, will you find an oak-tree there to-morrow? No; it takes the oak a great many years to grow. And so when the farmer sows his field with wheat, it takes it a good while to grow. It springs up gradually. There is “first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear.” So the river is made up of the drops which the rills roll into it, and the ocean is made up of what the rivers pour into it.

“What are you boys good for?” asked a gentleman one day of some little fellows who were playing at the corner of the street. One of them looked up to him with an air of importance, and said, “We are good to make *men* of, sir.” Yes, the tiny baby in time grows to be a big boy, and

the big boy after a while grows to be a man. And so there is growth in everything. When we look at a tree there are first the roots, then the trunk, then the branches, and then the leaves and fruit. You cannot have the leaves without the branches ; you cannot have the branches without the trunk ; you cannot have the trunk without the roots. Order and connection like this we find in all that God does.

Something of this same kind we see in the commandments. There is a beautiful order in them. You know we have had two commandments already, and if you examine them you will find that these two commandments begin with teaching us how we ought to *feel* towards God. Then this *third* commandment teaches us how we ought to *speak* about God ; then the others are occupied in showing us how we ought to *act* towards him and towards our fellow-creatures.

What are the words of the *third* commandment ? “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

Now, there are *three questions* to be answered in considering this commandment. *The first question is, What is meant by God's name ? The second question is, How is this name taken in*

vain ? The third question is, Why should we not do this ?

Our first question is, What is meant by the name of God ?

If I were speaking to a congregation of grown persons, I should say that God's name means his *titles* and *attributes*. I will say the same to you, and I think you can understand what I mean by his *titles* and *attributes*.

But what is a title or name ? It is the word by which a thing is known. For instance, here is this church in which we are now assembled. What is it called ? St. Paul's church. That is the title or name of it. That is the word by which it is known. You distinguish it from all other churches by that word.

Suppose you had never seen a flower. I bring a large beautiful one to show you. It has a multitude of leaves all growing closely together. Its fragrance is delightful ; you seem as if you would never be tired of smelling it. Its colour is a deep red, or crimson. I write the title of the flower under it—*r-o-s-e*. The flower is a rose. That is its name. Whenever you see that word you will know that it stands for that beautiful, fine-coloured, fragrant flower.

And so every word used in the Bible to stand for God is meant by his name. We find a great

many words of this kind. Among them are these: Lord—God—Almighty—Creator—Maker—Jehovah—Jesus—Preserver—Redeemer—King of kings, and so forth. The commandment means any or all of these when it speaks of the name of God. These are his names or titles.

But there was another word that I said was meant by the name of God besides the word *titles*. What is that? His *attributes*.

An attribute is something that belongs to a person or thing, and forms a part of his character or nature. For instance, did you ever taste the water from the sea? *How* does it taste? Salt. Yes. Hence it is always called *salt* water. It belongs to sea water to be salt. That is a part of its nature. Saltness is an attribute or quality of sea water. I am sure I need not ask you if you ever tasted sugar? Everybody has. And *how* does it taste? Sweet? Yes. It belongs to sugar to be sweet. It is a part of its nature. Sweetness is an attribute or quality of sugar. And so the attributes of God are the things that belong to him, and form part of his nature. Thus *wisdom* belongs to God. That is one of his attributes. *Power* belongs to God. That is another of his attributes; and so goodness, mercy, love, and the like, are all attributes of God. They belong to his nature.

We read in the Bible that once when Moses was on earth, he wanted to see God. God told him that he could not see his face, because it would kill him to do that. But God said he would teach Moses his name, and show him a little of his glory ; about as much as he could bear without hurting him. So he put Moses in a cleft, or hollow place of a rock, on the side of a mountain, and covered him with his hand so that he could just get a peep or glimpse of his glory as he passed by. And while he was going by, this was the way in which God spelled out, or spoke his own name, "I am the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." This is God's name. It is made up, you see, of titles and attributes. The *titles* are Lord and God. The *attributes* are mercy, grace, forgiveness. God's name means his titles and his attributes. What does it mean ? His titles and attributes. This is the first question we were to consider.

And now we come to our second question, How is God's name taken in vain ? This may be done in three ways :—

1. *We take God's name in vain when we use it LIGHTLY, or without thinking.*

When we do anything to the name of a person, it is just the same as doing it to the person him-

self. A great many years ago, when James I. was king of England, some wicked people formed a plot or conspiracy to destroy the king and queen, the royal family, and members of parliament all at once. They intended to do it in this way: they hired the cellar under the parliament house, then they put a great number of barrels of gunpowder in the cellar. These were all covered over with firewood, so as not to be discovered. Then they hired a miserable fellow, whose name was Guy Fawkes, to fix a train to the powder, and at a time appointed to go into the cellar with a dark lantern and matches, and blow up the whole House of Parliament with all who were in it together. Everything was ready for the execution of this horrible plot. The 5th of November was the day fixed upon for the dreadful deed. But in the good providence of God it was discovered in time to prevent it.

The very night before the explosion was to take place, Guy Fawkes was found in the cellar, ready to set fire to the powder the next day. He was taken prisoner, and executed. Ever since that time the boys in England keep the 5th of November as a sort of holiday. I remember, when a boy there, having fine fun on those days. We used to make what is called an effigy, or stuffed figure of a man, and call it Guy Fawkes. Then, in the evening,

we would have a procession, and march round with old Guy at the head of it, hanging from a pole. When we were tired of marching we used to make a great bonfire, and pitch Guy into it ; and while he was burning up we stood round the fire and sung these words,—

“Remember, remember, the fifth of November;
The gunpowder plot shall never be forgot
As long as Old England stands on this spot.”

In treating the name and figure of Guy Fawkes in this way, the boys in England show how they feel towards his person or character.

And so God regards our treatment of his name as if it were our treatment of his person.

Suppose that Jesus should come, personally, into the midst of us, in all the glory of his heavenly state, or just as the disciples saw him on the Mount of Transfiguration ; should we venture to speak to him in the same familiar way in which we speak to our intimate companions ? Certainly not. We could not dare to do it. The majesty of his appearance would overpower us with awe and reverence. If we did anything at all, it would be to fall down before him, and say, each one for himself, with the apostle Thomas, “My Lord and my God !”

Well, we should treat his name as we would treat his person. When we read his name, in the

Bible or elsewhere, or when we use it in singing or prayer, we should think how great and glorious he is, and use it with reverence.

I remember reading about a good man once, who made it a rule always to pause and look up before he spoke the name of—God. But we often hear children, and men and women too, speak of God's holy name as lightly as they would speak of their own name, or the name of a fellow-creature. This is very wrong. It is taking God's name in vain to *use it lightly and without thinking.*

2. *It is taking this name in vain when we use it FALSELY, or speak what is not true in connection with it.*

Suppose we are attending a trial in one of our courts of justice. A person is called up as a witness—that is, he is required to tell what he knows about the case on trial. Of course it is very important that he should speak the truth. In order to make him more careful about what he says, he is put on his oath. I mean by this, the person is required to stand up. Then he lifts his hand towards heaven, and says something like this: "I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that in what I am going to say I will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; so help me God." These are very solemn words for one to use who knows that God will bring him

into judgment for every idle or false word spoken. The person who takes this oath really prays for God to punish him if he do not tell the truth. To say what is not true after taking this oath is to break this commandment. It is taking God's name in vain to use it *falsely*, or to say what is not true in connection with it.

3. *But we break this commandment also when we use God's name PROFANELY.*

This refers to cursing and swearing by this name. You all know what this means. You hear this done continually in the streets.

Wicked men and boys swear awfully by the name of the great and holy God, who made them, and who preserves them continually. How dreadful this is ! It is enough to make the flesh creep upon one's bones, and the blood run cold in one's veins, to hear the shocking way in which sinful men will use the name of that great Being before whom we are told that the angels veil their faces, and in whose presence they bow down in solemn reverence. This is the chief thing to which the commandment refers. To speak *lightly* or *falsely* of God's name is to break this commandment, but it is especially so to speak *profanely* of it.

Thus we have considered the first two questions that were asked. We have seen *what the name of God means*. It means his *titles* or *attributes*.

We have seen, also, *when this name is taken in vain*. It is so taken when we speak *lightly* of it, when we speak *falsely* of it, and when we speak *profanely* of it.

We have now to consider our third question, Why should we NOT take this name in vain ?

To break this commandment is a great sin. Yet it is a very common sin. What a multitude of swearers there are ! The Bible tells us that "because of swearing the land mourneth" (Jer. xxiii. 10). If we love our country, and want to see it prosper, we must be convinced of the great evil of this habit of swearing, and not only keep free from it ourselves, but also try all we can to keep others from it. For this cause I will dwell longer on this last question than on either of the others. I wish to mention *five* reasons why we should not be guilty of taking God's name in vain. Try and remember them.

1. *We should not do it because it is USELESS.*

There are some sins which people commit because they find some use in it. If a poor fellow is hungry, and almost starving, and he steals a loaf of bread to satisfy his hunger and keep him from starving, you can hardly blame him. At any rate, you feel disposed to excuse him. His hunger is some apology. He did wrong to steal ; yet there was some apology for him. He had

an object to gain. There was *use* in what he did.

Or suppose a man is selling a lot of goods. If he tell the truth about them he will only get ten pounds for them ; but if he tell a lie, and stick to it, he may perhaps get twenty pounds for them. That would be a great temptation, with many people, to tell the lie. But it would not make it right. *Nothing* can make it right to tell a lie. And if a man should make a hundred pounds by a single lie, he would gain more, in the long run, by telling the truth. No lie prospers. "Honesty is the best policy." But if a man found he could make fifty or a hundred pounds by telling a lie, he might say there was *some use* in it. But what use is there in swearing ? Who ever made anything by it ? Who ever thinks any better of a man for hearing him swear ? None can think better, but a great many will think worse of him who allows himself to swear.

Good old Bishop Griswold used to say that when men go a fishing they always put some bait on their hooks. But when Satan tempts men to swear, he throws out a hook without any bait on it, and swearers are foolish enough to be caught by it.

The good John Howard was once going out into the street. As he reached the door he heard

some dreadful oaths from several men coming down the street. He immediately buttoned up his pocket, and said to those who stood near him, "I always do this whenever I hear men swear ; for I think that any one who can take God's name in vain can steal or do anything else that is bad."

It used to be thought that swearing, if useful nowhere else, was so, at least, on board ship. Captains and officers used to think that it was impossible to keep men in order, on board of a ship, without swearing at them. But this was a great mistake.

A pious captain was once appointed to the command of a British ship of war. When he went on board, before the ship sailed, he called all the crew to him on deck, and said to them, "My lads, there is one law I wish to make, and which I am very anxious to have kept. It is a favour which I will ask of you, and which, as a British officer, I expect will be granted by a crew of British sailors. What do you say, my lads ? are you willing to grant your new captain one favour ?" "Ay, ay, sir," cried all hands ; "let's know what it is."

"Well, my lads, it's this ; you must allow me to swear the *first* oath in this ship. No one on board must swear an oath before I do ; I am determined to swear the first oath on board. What

say you, my lads ; will you grant me this favour ?” The sailors stood and stared at one another for a moment, quite at a loss what to say. As one of them afterwards said, “They were taken all aback ;” or, as another expressed it, “They were brought up all standing.” But the request was so reasonable, and the captain’s manner so kind and pleasant, that they couldn’t think of refusing. Directly, with a general burst, the crew exclaimed, “Ay, ay, sir.” Then some one proposed, “Three cheers for the captain.” In a minute off went the tarpaulins, and “Hurrah ! hurrah ! hurrah !” went sounding out, right merrily, from the decks of that man-of-war. Swearing was abolished on board that ship. They found it was of no use. And if it is not necessary on shipboard, it is not necessary anywhere. We ought not to take God’s name in vain, *because it is useless.*

We ought not to do it, again, because it is
COWARDLY.

It is a mean thing to do and say behind a person’s back what you would be afraid to do or say before his face. Everybody admits this. But you may ask, What has this to do with swearing ? Can any one swear behind God’s back, or where he will not hear it ? Of course not. God is in every place, seeing and hearing all that is done or said. But swearers don’t think of this. They

don't believe it. They feel as if they were out of sight and hearing of God—as if they were behind his back—or else they would be afraid to swear. This shows that it is cowardly in them. I know that men and boys sometimes feel as if it were a *brave* thing to swear. But it is not. It is a mean, cowardly thing.

You remember what took place when God came down on the top of Mount Sinai, and gave these commandments to Moses. Dark clouds covered all the top of the mountain. An angel's trumpet was heard in the midst of the clouds. It sounded long and loud. The mountain shook and trembled, as if it was afraid. Lightnings flashed and thunders rolled out from those clouds. How awful it must have been! Now, do you suppose that the vilest swearer in the land would have been willing to go and stand at the foot of that mountain, and, while it was trembling under his feet, with the lightnings flashing and the thunders rolling around him, there deliberately curse and swear by the name of God? No. He would have been afraid. Why? Because he would have felt himself to be in the presence of God. Then why is not such a man afraid to swear at other times? Because he does *not* feel that he is in the presence of God. He feels as if God were absent, and he is willing to do behind

his back, as it were, what he would be afraid to do before his face. But this is cowardly.

A gentleman once heard a labouring man swearing dreadfully in the presence of a number of his companions. He told him it was a cowardly thing to swear so, in company with others, when he dared not do it by himself. The man said he wasn't afraid to swear at any time, or in any place. "I'll give you two sovereigns," said the gentleman, "if you will go into the village graveyard at twelve o'clock to-night and swear the same oaths you have just uttered here, when *you are alone with God.*"

"Agreed," said the man. "It's an easy way of earning two sovereigns."

"Well, you come to me to-morrow and say you have done it, and the money is yours."

The time passed on. The hour of midnight came. The man went to the grave-yard. It was a night of pitchy darkness. As he entered the grave-yard not a sound was heard. All was as still as death. Then the gentlemen's words, "*Alone with God,*" came over him with wonderful power. The thought of the wickedness of what he had been doing, and what he had come there to do darted across his mind like the lightning's flash. He trembled at his folly. Afraid to take another step, he fell upon his knees, and, instead of the dread-

ful oaths he came to utter, the earnest cry went up, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The next day he went to the gentleman and thanked him for what he had done, and said he had resolved never to swear another oath as long as he lived.

We ought not to take God's name in vain, *because it is cowardly.*

We ought not to do it, again, because it is VULGAR.

It is contrary to good manners. Really polite people will not do it. The poet Cowper once wrote these lines about swearing. It would be worth while for every boy in our land to commit them to memory—

"It chills my blood to hear the blest Supreme
Lightly appealed to on each trifling theme;
Maintain your rank, vulgarity despise,
To swear is neither brave, polite, nor wise."

True politeness will always lead us to avoid doing anything that will hurt the feelings of others. If you are invited out to tea, and, while sitting at the table, the person who invited you, or any one else of the company, should speak unkindly and disrespectfully of your father or mother, you would feel that it was very impolite. But Jesus is the best friend his people have. He is dearer to them than father or mother, husband or wife. It is, therefore, impolite in the highest degree for any one to speak lightly or

disrespectfully of him in the presence of those who love him.

A southern planter had a favourite negro servant, who was ordered to stand opposite to him and wait at table. His master was a profane person, and often took the name of God in vain. Whenever he did so the negro made a low and solemn bow. On being asked why he did this, he replied that he never heard that great name mentioned but it filled his soul with awe and reverence. His master was a gentleman; and though he did not fear God, yet, out of politeness, he gave up swearing, because he was not willing to hurt the feelings of his servant.

A merchant and shipowner of New York was standing at the entrance of his warehouse conversing with a gentleman on business. A pious sailor, belonging to one of his vessels, came to the warehouse to enter it, but, observing that the door was occupied, modestly stepped aside, not willing to interrupt the conversation.

While waiting there, he heard the name of Jesus profanely used, and, on turning to look, he observed that it was his employer who was speaking. Instantly changing his position, and standing in front of the gentlemen, with his head uncovered and his hat under his arm, he addressed the merchant in this language—

“Sir, will you excuse me if I speak a word to you?” The gentleman, recognising him as one of the crew of his vessel recently arrived, and supposing he might have something to say about the business of the ship, told him to speak on.

“You won’t be offended then, sir, with a poor ignorant sailor if he tells you his feelings?” said he.

“Certainly not,” replied the merchant.

“Well then, sir,” said the honest hearted sailor with much feeling, “will you be so kind as not to take the name of my blessed Jesus in vain? He is a good Saviour. He took my feet out of ‘the horrible pit and miry clay, and established my goings.’ O sir, don’t, if you please, take the name of my Master, the Lord Jesus, in vain! He is your Creator as well as mine, and he has made you and preserves you, and is always doing you good.”

This was said with so much earnestness and feeling, that the gentleman was quite touched. His eyes filled with tears, and he said,—

“My good fellow, God helping me, I will never again take the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour in vain.”

“Thank you, sir,” said the honest tar; and, putting on his hat, he went away to his work.

We ought not to take God’s name in vain, because it is *vulgar*.

Again, we ought not to do it, because it is WICKED.

To do this is to break one of God's commandments. Many a person allows himself to get into the habit of swearing who would be frightened at the thought of robbery or murder. And yet robbery and murder are only sins against our fellow-creatures ; but swearing is a sin directly against God. The wickedness of any act depends a good deal on the character of the person against whom it is committed. But think how great, how glorious God is ! All the kings on the earth, and ten thousand times more, are as nothing compared to Him. Oh, how great the wickedness, how awful the sin of taking His holy name in vain ! Surely, if people only thought a moment about this, they would never do it.

A clergyman and his friend once went to attend a religious convention in a certain city. During their stay there they lived in the house of a physician. He was a very intelligent, gentlemanly man, but very much in the habit of profane swearing. The clergyman was told of the doctor's bad habit before he went there, and had made up his mind to say something to him about it when he heard him make use of an oath. To his surprise and gratification, however, the doctor never swore once, all the time they were there. On the

evening before they went away the clergyman said—

“ Doctor, we are going to leave you to-morrow ; we cannot go away without thanking you most heartily for all your kindness ; and yet, allow me to say there is one thing, my dear sir, in which we have been disappointed.”

“ Disappointed ? ” said the doctor.

“ Yes, sir, but most agreeably.”

“ How so, sir ? ”

“ We were told, my dear sir, that you were very unguarded in your speech, and that we should often hear profane language from you. But, during our whole stay, we have not heard a single profane word used ; and we are agreeably disappointed to find that you have been misrepresented.”

“ No, sir,” replied the doctor, “ I have not been misrepresented. I am sorry to say that I have fallen into the bad habit of using profane language ; but, sir, how could I be so impolite as to swear before religious people, and one of them a clergyman ? ”

The eyes of the minister filled with tears, while he earnestly grasped the doctor’s hand, and exclaimed,—

“ My dear sir, you surprise me. Can it be that an intelligent man like you will pay more

regard to a fellow-creature, a worm of the dust like yourself, than to the great Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth ?”

“Gentlemen,” said the doctor, “I never before saw the folly and wickedness of profane swearing as I see it now. I will never swear again.”

We ought not to take God’s name in vain, because it is *wicked*.

There is only one other reason I will speak of why we ought not to do this, and that is, because it is DANGEROUS.

The commandment says, “God will not hold those *guiltless*” who do it. This means that God will certainly punish them for it. The Bible tells us that God “will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” It tells us again that “for every *idle* word that men speak they must give account at the last day.” And if for every “*idle* word,” much more for every *profane* word.

But God does not always wait till the day of judgment before he punishes men for taking his name in vain. He often punishes them for it now in this life.

A few years ago two soldiers laid a wager to see who could swear the most oaths. After one of them had uttered many shocking ones, he paused a moment, and said he could think of but

one more, which should be his last. But before he had time to speak it, he was struck speechless, and remained so for three hours, when he died. His body, by order of the officers, was made a public spectacle to the other soldiers and the people in the neighbourhood, as a warning against swearing.

Some years ago, a lady and gentleman set off upon ponies to make an excursion, from Margate to Ramsgate. They were accompanied by two boys who belonged to the place, and whose employment was to attend on persons making excursions, and drive the ponies. One boy, named John, was about seventeen years old ; the other, named George, was about thirteen. John was a very wicked, profane boy. When they were about a mile on their way, a violent storm overtook them, accompanied with tremendous peals of thunder and awful flashes of lightning. This obliged the lady and gentleman to stop and seek shelter in a neighbouring cottage. The boys with their ponies went under a shed. John was very angry on account of the delay. He cursed the lightning, and the thunder, and the rain, and the God who sent them. George was frightened, and begged him to stop. Then John called him a coward and a fool ; and, with a dreadful oath, he swore that he would go on in spite of the storm. But, just as he was starting, a terrible flash of lightning

came. It burned his clothes, and struck him dead upon the spot. This produced a great excitement in the neighbourhood. Thousands of people came to look at the spot. A sign was set up at the place, as a warning to all who went by. These were the words upon it: "Reader, prepare for eternity. A boy was struck dead here while in the act of swearing."

I remember, some time since, hearing of a rich man in America, who had a large plantation. He was the most terribly profane man that had ever been known in the neighbourhood. He could hardly speak a word, on any subject, without mingling it with oaths. It was perfectly shocking to hear him speak. At length he was seized with a stroke of something like paralysis. This left him in good health, only he had lost the use of his limbs. And the remarkable thing about it was, that the power of speech was taken away from him, *except that he could still swear*. Profane words were all that he could utter. He used to be carried about his plantation by his servants, in a sort of hand-carriage, and the only words that ever fell from his lips were dreadful oaths and curses. How awful this must have been! What a terrible illustration it affords of that passage of Scripture—Psalm cix. 17–19—in which God says, that because the wicked "*love cursing, it shall come into*

their bones like oil, and they *shall clothe themselves with cursing like a garment.*" Surely this man was so clothed. A dreadful garment it must have been to wear !

I might go on, for a great while, giving you examples of the danger of swearing, but I will only mention one more.

There was a man employed by a farmer, in the neighbourhood of a country town, to work on his farm. His name was James B——. On account of his singular profaneness, he was known through all the neighbourhood as "wicked Jim." One evening he was playing cards with his companions, and frequently lost the game. At last he threw down the cards in great anger, and swore dreadfully at his own eyes, cursing them as being of no use to him. Shortly after he was seen to rub his eyes as though they were painful. Then he went to wash them at the pump. The next morning he was *stone blind*. He has never seen a ray of light since.

These cases show us what the commandment means when it says, "God will not hold them *guiltless*, that take his name in vain." We see from them that we ought not to break this commandment, because it is *dangerous*.

Thus we have had *five* reasons why we should not take God's name in vain. It is *usless* to

do so ; it is *cowardly, vulgar, wicked, and dangerous.*

I have tried to answer the three questions proposed, and to show you, *first, What is meant by the name of God.* It means his *titles and attributes.* *Secondly, How this name is taken in vain.* By using it *lightly, falsely, profanely.* *Thirdly, Why we should not do this.* It is *useless, cowardly, vulgar, wicked, and dangerous.*

My dear children, I spoke, at the beginning of this sermon, about oaks growing out of acorns. Now, if we wanted to prevent any oak-trees from growing, the best plan would be not to put any acorns in the ground, would it not? And so, if you want never to swear big oaths, the best plan is not to make use of *little* ones. There are a great many little oaths that people use without thinking. But these only prepare the way for using other oaths.

There are many persons who are unwilling to swear by the name of God, but who think nothing of swearing "*by George,*" or "*by jingo,*" or by something else. Others are ever ready to exclaim, "*Good gracious,*" or "*Mercy on us,*" and the like. These are the *beginnings* of swearing. They are to profane swearing what acorns are to the oak. When you hear persons using these expressions, you may say to yourself: "There, the acorn

has sprouted. By-and-by it will come to an oak."

Our Saviour said, when on earth, "Let your Yea be yea, and your Nay, nay ; for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil." This means that we should use plain language, without swearing of any kind. And this is what the third commandment requires of us.

Then let us all pray with David—Psalm cxli. 3—"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; and keep the door of my lips ;" or, in the language of our ante-communion service, let us pray, "O Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep *this* law." May God give us all grace to do so for Jesus' sake ! AMEN.

HYMN ON THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

ALMIGHTY God, while we
 Our youthful voices raise,
 And offer up to thee
 The tribute of our praise,
 Oh, may thy love our hearts inflame,
 And teach us to adore thy name !

Thy name, in beauteous lines
 Of light, of life, and love,
 Throughout creation shines,
 Around, beneath, above—
 And all on earth, in air, and sea,
 Pour forth a song of praise to thee !

But in the Saviour's face
We read its fairest lines.
Oh, with what wondrous grace
The name of Jesus shines !
As children in his arms he pressed,
And with his choicest blessing, blessed.

Oh, may we never dare
To act that wicked part ;
Nor offer up a prayer
That comes not from the heart :
Or speak that name, in careless phrase,
That heaven adores and earth obeys !

Dear Saviour, to our hearts
Thy name in mercy show,
The blessings it can give,
Oh, may we early know !
Thus shall we yield it honour due,
And others win to love it, too.

And when before thy throne,
We all at last appear ;
Thy *Name of Love*, alone,
Shall be our safety there.
In it we'll stand before thy face,
Perfect, through thy abounding grace !

V.

The Fourth Commandment.

“Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.”—EXODUS xx. 8-12.

WHAT is the difference between day and night? One is light and the other is dark. What is the difference between summer and winter? One is warm and the other is cold. What is the difference between a bird and a fish? One lives in the air and the other lives in the water. What is the difference between a rose and a lily? One is red and the other is white. What is the difference between sugar and vinegar? One is sweet and the other is sour. Very well. Now, what is the difference between the fourth commandment and any of the rest?

There is *one* word in this commandment which we do not find in any of the others. It is the first word that occurs in it. What is it? The word

—“*Remember.*” If you turn to the first commandment, does it begin, “*Remember* that thou have no other gods before me?” No. There is no “remember” about it. Does the fifth begin, “*Remember* that thou dost honour thy father and thy mother?” Not at all. We do not find this word in any of the others. This is singular. It means something. It shows us that there was one thing in which this commandment differed from all the rest; it was this: the fourth commandment was an *old* commandment; the rest were all new ones.

I do not mean to say that the people did not know that it was wrong to steal and to kill, and to commit such like sins; but I mean to say, that God had not before given the people laws on these subjects, as he did at Mount Sinai. But he *had* given them the law about the Sabbath; and this is the reason why, when we come to this law, we find it beginning, “*Remember* the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

We must *know* a thing before we can remember it. If you go to a new school, the teacher first tells you what the rules of the school are, and then expects you to remember them. He would be a very unreasonable teacher if he expected you to remember them before you knew them. You can't *keep* a thing in your hand till you *get* it there. And it is just so with the

mind. To know a thing is to get it in the mind. To remember it, is to *keep* it there after you have got it. Now, this law, or commandment about the Sabbath, was given to Adam and Eve in Paradise. It had always been known after that. It is the oldest law in the world. It was the first law God ever made for people in this world to mind. And this is the reason why the commandment begins with the word, "Remember."

Now, let us look at this fourth commandment. In order to understand it, there are three questions for us to ask and answer.

The first question is, WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SABBATH-DAY? The second question is, HOW MUST WE KEEP IT HOLY? and the third question is, WHY SHOULD WE DO THIS?

Now, for the *first* question, WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SABBATH-DAY?

The word Sabbath means *rest*. The Sabbath-day means the day of rest. The Bible tells us that God made all things, and that when this world, and everything in it was made and completed, "God looked on all that he had made, and behold it was very good." Then on the seventh day he rested. This doesn't mean that God was *tired*, as you or I should be, if we had been working hard all the week. God never can be tired.

If he had gone on making thousands of worlds, without stopping a moment, he would not have felt in the least tired. When it says that "God rested," it only means that he stopped, or ceased from the work of creating or making worlds. He had made as many as he wanted, and then he stopped. In this way "He rested on the seventh day, and hallowed it," or made it holy. He did this in order to teach Adam and Eve, and all their children, that he wanted them always to stop their work on this day, and keep it holy in the same way.

The Sabbath-day was first kept in Paradise. What a pleasant day Adam and Eve must have had, when the Sabbath-day came in that beautiful garden? They had no church to go to. But every grove, the shade of every tree, was a church. The whole garden was *one great church*. The congregation was small—it was made up of just two people—but it was a very attentive one. They had no printed Bible like ours, and no ordained minister to preach them a sermon. Their Bible was all around them. Every blade of grass, every trembling leaf, every opening, fragrant, beautiful flower, preached a sermon to them. Everything they saw seemed to have a tongue with which to speak to them of the power, and goodness, the wisdom, and the love of God.

They had no organ and no choir to help them, when they wanted to sing the praises of God. But the gentle wind, that made sweet music as it swept through the trees of the garden, was their organ; the warbling birds, as they sang among the branches; the rippling brooks, as they murmured softly through the groves;—these were their choir to hymn “their great Creator’s praise.”

Thus the Sabbath-day was kept in Paradise. How pleasant it must have been to spend a Sabbath there!

And the Sabbath-day was kept after Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise. Enoch kept it when he “walked with God,” upon the earth. Noah kept it in the ark. Abraham and Jacob kept it. The Israelites kept it in the wilderness, before they came to Mount Sinai. And it was remembered and kept by those who loved God in after ages.

The seventh day was kept as the Sabbath till after our Saviour rose from the dead. Then his apostles and followers were directed to keep the first day of the week, instead of the seventh. And this has been observed ever since. This is the day we keep. The first day of the week is our Sabbath. This has been kept for nearly two thousand years. We keep this day in memory of the resurrection of Jesus. The seventh day used

to be observed in memory of the work of creation, which was then finished; but the first day is kept now in memory of the work of redemption, which was finished when Jesus rose from the dead. By the Sabbath-day is meant a day of rest. This is the answer to our first question.

The second question is, HOW MUST WE KEEP THIS DAY HOLY?

Two things are necessary if we would keep the Sabbath properly—one is, *To stop working*; the other is, *To spend it in worshipping God, and thinking and learning about him.*

It is necessary to *stop working* if we would keep the Sabbath. God's command is very positive about this. It says, "Six days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do *no manner of work.*" This is very strong language. And it is very plain, too; nobody can mistake it. But suppose a man stops working himself, is it any harm to let his servants or his children work? Of course it is. Just as much as though he did the work himself. The commandment says, "Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle." And God told the Jews in another place, that he spoke these words on purpose that their *servants* and their *cattle* should

rest, as well as themselves. This shows us how good, and kind, and tender God is, that he thinks about, and takes care even of the very cattle. The Bible tells us that God is "good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." The fourth commandment shows us how true this is.

If this commandment were properly obeyed, what a quiet time there would be all over the world, one day in seven! All shops would be closed. All factories would be stopped. All labour would cease. There would be no railway trains running, no steamers sailing, no engines puffing, no sound of saw or hammer heard; but every person and thing would be at rest. How calm and peaceful everything would be!

But is it not lawful to do some particular kinds of work on Sunday? Certainly. Our Saviour said it was lawful for a man to loose his horse from the stable and lead him away to the pump, or the river, to get a drink of water on the Sabbath. He said it was lawful for a man, if he had an ox or an ass that had fallen into a pit, to pull it out on the Sabbath.

Suppose a vessel is wrecked on the coast, and the passengers, if not relieved, must soon perish; would it not be right for any, who could do so, to go and help them? Of course. Suppose a building takes fire; is it not lawful to try to put

it out? Surely it is. And so it is right for the dairy-maid to milk her cows, and for the physician to visit his patients, and for those who are nursing the sick to do and get all that is necessary for their comfort. It is right to *do good* on the Sabbath-day. Works of mercy and works of necessity may be done, without breaking this commandment. But all other works must be stopped.

Is it enough, however, merely to stop working? Suppose a man stops working, and then lies in bed all day; is that keeping the Sabbath holy? No; surely not. Suppose he stops working, but spends the day in visiting among his friends; is that keeping the Sabbath holy? No. Suppose he stays at home, and reads newspapers; is that keeping the Sabbath? No. If a company of boys go out and romp in the woods, or fly their kites, or play marbles; or if a company of girls get their dolls out, and dress, and undress them, they are not working; but are they keeping the Sabbath? Not at all.

It is not enough to stop working; *we must spend the day in worshipping God, and learning and thinking about him.* Whatever else we do is breaking the Sabbath. When God tells his people, by the prophet Isaiah, how they ought to keep the Sabbath, he says they should "call it a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable;" and

they should "not do their own ways, nor find their own pleasure, nor speak their own words" (Isa. lviii. 13). Here we see how God would have us keep the Sabbath. It is *his* day. It is set apart for him. He intends that we should employ the day—not a part of it, but the *whole* of it—in worshipping him, in reading and talking, in thinking and learning about him. It is God's day, and should be employed in things that have reference to him. This is the way in which we should keep the Sabbath holy ;—*by stopping work, and by worshipping God, and learning and thinking about him.*

And now we come to the third question : WHY SHOULD WE DO THIS ? I will mention *three* reasons. *One of these refers to God ; one refers to ourselves ; and one refers to our country.*

Now, what is there in reference to God which shows us why we ought to keep this commandment ? There is his *example* and *command*.

God's example is a reason why we should keep the Sabbath-day holy. God kept it so himself. "He rested from all his work." He did this to set us an example.

[* But some people think the Sabbath was only

* The portion included in brackets may be omitted in reading the sermon ; but it was thought too important a part of the argument to be left out.

intended for the Jews. How can we show that this is not so? Several things about the Sabbath show it.

The time when it was first kept shows it. It was first kept in the garden of Eden. But were there any Jews in Paradise? No. The Jews sprung from Abraham, and Abraham didn't live till more than 2000 years after Adam was driven out of Paradise.

Then the work from which God rested when he kept the first Sabbath, shows that it was not intended for the Jews only. In what work had God been engaged for the six days before the first Sabbath? Making the world. But was the world made for the Jews only? No; it was made for the Gentiles also; yes, and much more for the Gentiles than for the Jews; for the Gentiles possess a hundred times more of the world than the Jews ever did.

And then, the company in which God put the fourth commandment shows that it was not intended for the Jews only. What company was this? It was the company of the ten commandments. He made it one of the ten. These were written on—*what?* Tables of stone. If a law is written on stone, that shows it is intended to last. If you write anything on the sand by the sea-shore, how long will it last? Till the next

wave rolls over it. That washes it clean out. If you write anything with chalk or lead pencil, it is easily rubbed out. If you write it with ink, in a book, it may soon be destroyed. But write it on stone and it will last. God *did* give the Jews some laws which were for themselves alone. These were written with ink in a book. But the fourth commandment was not put among these. It was intended to last for ever : it was meant for all the world. For this reason it was put in company with the ten commandments, and written on stone.]

God was the first to keep the Sabbath himself. His *example* is a reason for keeping it.

Then his *command* is another reason for keeping it.

Suppose a person should go into the presence of our Queen, when she was sitting on her throne, before all her nobles and princes, and, taking a book containing the laws of the kingdom, should deliberately throw it on the floor, and trample on it,—what would be thought of that person? They would consider that he was insulting the Queen. His conduct would be considered outrageously wicked. And so it would be. He would be taken up and put in prison. Unless it could be proved that he was crazy, he would most likely be hung. But this is only what every

Sabbath-breaker does in the presence of the great King of kings. No person can break the Sabbath without trampling on his laws.

One morning a gentleman was going to church. He was a happy, cheerful Christian, who had a very great respect for the Sabbath. He was a singular man, and would sometimes do and say what children are apt to call very "*funny things.*" As he was going along he met a stranger, driving a heavily loaded waggon through the town. When this gentleman got right opposite to the waggoner, he stopped, turned round, and, lifting up both hands, as if in horror, he exclaimed, as he gazed under the waggon :—

"There, there,—you are *going* over it! You *have gone* right over it!"

The driver was frightened. He drew up his reins in an instant; cried, "Whoa—whoa!" and brought his horses to a stand. Then he looked down under the wheels, expecting to see the mangled remains of some innocent child, or at least some poor dog or pig that had been ground to a jelly. But he saw nothing. So, after gazing all about, he looked up to the gentleman who had so strangely arrested his attention, and anxiously asked :—

"Pray, sir, *what* have I gone over?"

"Over the *fourth commandment,*" was the quick

reply. “ ‘Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.’ ”

The farmer found it hard work to start his waggon again, and it was very dull driving all the rest of that day.

Just so every Sabbath-breaker treats God's commandment. God says, “Remember the Sabbath-day.” But oh, how many people forget it!

A gentleman was going along a country road one Sunday. A person came up to him, and, bowing politely, said,—

“Sir, did you pass three men driving a flock of sheep along this road?”

“Yes, sir,” replied the gentleman; “and I noticed that one of them had a blue jacket on, and that they all had short memories.

“Short memories!” said the stranger; “I don't see how you could tell what sort of memories they had.”

“Certainly, I could,” said the gentleman, “for you know God has said, ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy!’ But those men had all forgotten it. They had short memories.”

Ah! how many people there are with just such memories! It is often very inconvenient to have a short memory in reference to other things; but in reference to God, it is very dangerous to have such a memory—for we read in the Bible these

solemn words, "The wicked shall be turned into hell; and all the people that—*forget*—God!" (Ps. ix. 17).

God had a right to demand all our time if he had chosen; but he claims only one day out of seven. How ungrateful and wicked it is, when people are not willing to give him even that!

One Sunday a gentleman was going to church. On his way he saw a number of boys playing on the common. He wanted very much to show them how wrong it was for them to be so doing; but he knew that if he began to reprove them they wouldn't listen to him. So he walked leisurely up to them, and sat down on the grass. Presently, in a pleasant, familiar tone, he said, "Boys, I want to tell you a story."

Directly they all gathered unsuspectingly around him, and he began as follows:—

"There was once a good man who was noted for his kindness and liberality. At the time of which I speak he was on a journey. As he was pursuing his way along a lonely road, he met a man who represented himself as having suffered a great loss, in consequence of which he was in deep distress. With his usual kindness the good man instantly drew out his purse; and after examining it, he said, 'I have only seven pounds with me; but I think that with one pound I can


get to the end of my journey, and you shall have the rest.' With this he handed the man the six pounds. Wasn't that generous? Wouldn't you have thought that the beggar must have gone off feeling very grateful and contented? Certainly, we should have expected this. But he did no such thing. He was not a beggar at all, but a robber; and seeing that the good man had still one pound in his purse, he knocked him down with a club, and stole his last pound from him."

The boys were very indignant on hearing this. They all cried out against the shameful conduct of the robber. One of them went so far as to say he didn't think anybody could be found quite so wicked as that.

"Now, stop," said the gentleman; "let me tell you, boys, this is just what *you* are doing. God has given you freely six days out of the seven for your own use. He has kept only *one* for himself, to be kept holy, and spent in worshipping him; and yet you are so mean as to rob him even of that!"

The boys hung down their heads. They had not a word to say, but broke up their play and went off.

Thus there is a reason that refers to God, why we should keep the Sabbath-day holy. His



example, and his *command* should lead us to do so.

But there is also a reason that refers to ourselves.

Keeping the Sabbath is *necessary for our health and life.*

Here is my watch. Suppose I should resolve not to wind it up to-night, what would happen to it? It would stop. It is necessary to wind a watch up, if you want it to keep going. Now, our bodies and minds are just like a watch. They need to be wound up continually, or else they will stop going. These are wound up by resting. When we go to bed and sleep at night, we are getting wound up for the next day. You know how often, when night comes, you feel tired, heavy, and good for nothing. If you sit down to read a book, or study a lesson, you very soon fall asleep over it. Just like a watch that is run down, you are ready to stop. But after a good, long sleep, you wake up bright, fresh, strong, and ready for anything. The reason is, you are wound up. But suppose you should resolve not to sleep any more; what would be the consequence? You would go crazy, and die. Some watches need to be wound up every day, and others only once a week. When we buy a watch, or clock, we always ask the maker of it how often it is neces-

sary to be wound up. And we always follow his directions, because we know that, as he made it, he understands all about it. But God is the Maker of our bodies and souls. These are like a watch, or machine, that must be wound up regularly. The Maker knows best how often to wind them up. If we ask him, he says: "Every night, and once a-week besides." God has given us the night and the Sabbath to rest in, and get wound up. They are both necessary. We cannot get on long, or well, without them. Some people think they know better than God. They try to do without resting on the Sabbath, but they always suffer from it.

William Pitt, the great statesman of England, had so much business to attend to, that he resolved to work on Sunday as well as week days; but in a short time it brought on a stroke of apoplexy, and he died.

Lord Castlereagh, another great English statesman, did the same thing. It drove him crazy, and he blew his brains out with a pistol.

A gentleman, who had been engaged as a merchant, in a very extensive business, for twenty years, once said to a friend: "Sir, if it had not been for the Sabbath, I should have been in my grave long ago."

"No doubt of it," said his friend; "don't you

remember Mr. H——, who used to be one of our most successful merchants? He said he could not spare time for the Sabbath. He found it the best day of the week in which to plan new voyages. He always spent his Sabbaths in that way. Well, he has been in the Lunatic Asylum for years, and will probably die there.”

Men who labour six days in the week, and rest one, can do more work, in all kinds of business, and in all parts of the world, and do it better, than those who labour seven. This experiment has been tried over and over again. It was tried once in a large mill. For a number of years the mill had been kept going seven days in the week. Then the owner made a change. He ordered the men to stop the works at eleven o'clock on Saturday night, and not to start them till one o'clock on Monday morning. Thus he allowed his men a full Sabbath every week. The result was, that the very same men actually ground fifty thousand bushels more in a year, than had ever been ground in that establishment in a single year before.

And this is just as true in regard to horses and cattle as it is to men.

A gentleman was travelling on horseback, in Pennsylvania, in America. He stopped at a tavern on Saturday evening. The next morning

the landlord asked him if he wanted to have his horse ready. "Not till to-morrow," said he. "I never travel on the Sabbath, unless in case of absolute necessity. I am on a long journey, and wish to perform it as soon as possible. I have been long accustomed to travel on horseback, and have found, that if I stop on the Sabbath, my horse will travel further during the week than if I do not."

There were two neighbours in the State of New York. They each started on the same day, with a drove of sheep, for a distant market. One started several hours before the other, and travelled every day, without regard to the Sabbath. The other rested every Sabbath. Yet this man arrived at the market first, with his sheep in better condition, and got better prices for them than the other. In giving an account of his journey, he said that on Monday he drove his sheep about seventeen miles; on Tuesday, sixteen; and so on, lessening one each day till Saturday, when he drove them only about eleven miles. But on Monday, after resting the Sabbath, they could travel seventeen miles again; and so on, each week. You see the sheep were wound up, by resting, as well as the man. But his neighbour's sheep, which were not allowed to rest on the Sabbath, ran down before they arrived at the

market, and could not travel more than six or eight miles a-day.

Thus we see that keeping the Sabbath is necessary to our health and life.

It is necessary, also, to our prosperity and happiness.

God designs the Sabbath to be a blessing to those who keep it, and he will make it a blessing to them. Those who neglect it will always suffer from it, in some way or other.

There were once fifteen young men, boarding at a private boarding-house, in the city of New York. They were all engaged in business, with equally fair prospects of success. Six of them paid no regard to the Sabbath. In the course of time all of those six either failed in business, or came to a miserable end. The other nine regarded the Sabbath, and with one exception they all prospered, and rose to prominent positions.

A clergyman, who had been for many years chaplain to the Maryland Penitentiary, took great pains to find out what it was which first led the prisoners to go astray, and, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, he found that Sabbath-breaking was the beginning of their wicked courses.

A young man was going to be hung for murder. As he stood upon the scaffold, he spoke to the great crowd, gathered round, in this manner:—

“ My friends, you have come to see a man *die*. Let me advise you to take warning by me. The beginning of my ruin was Sabbath-breaking. This led me into bad company; from bad company, I went to drinking; from drinking, to robbing orchards and gardens; from this, to house-breaking; and from this, to murder. Thus I have been brought to my present sad condition. Many of you are young: in an especial manner let me warn you to beware of Sabbath-breaking.”

We often find people suffering loss from breaking the Sabbath, but they will surely prosper who keep it.

There was a young farmer once, who had a large quantity of grain in the field, which was cut, and dried, and ready for the barn. From the appearance of the sky, one Sunday morning, he thought there was going to be a change of weather. Fearing that if wet weather should set in, he might lose his harvest, he called his men together, and proposed that they should go to work and gather in the grain. His grandmother, a good, pious woman, who lived with him, tried hard to persuade him not to do it. But he wouldn't listen to her. He and his men went to work with all their might. By the middle of the afternoon they had the grain all in. A thousand sheaves of grain were snugly stowed away in the

barn. By that time it had begun to rain. "Now, grandmother," said the young man, with great glee, as he entered the house, "it's all safe. Let it storm as much as it pleases, my harvest is safe under my roof." Just as he spoke these words, there came a vivid flash of lightning, and a tremendous peal of thunder. It seemed to shake the house to its very foundations. Presently some one exclaimed, "Oh! the lightning has struck the barn!" They all rushed out, and, sure enough, it was even so. The barn was in flames, and the sheaves which the Sabbath-breaker thought so safe, were all burned up before his eyes.

I might go on for a long time telling you about different cases, which show the evil that follows from breaking the Sabbath, and the blessing that follows from keeping it; but I will only mention one more.

There was a boy, once, working in a factory. His name was Willie. He received only five shillings a week; but that was the principal dependence of his poor mother. He was a good boy, and always went with his mother to church on Sunday. His employer was not a Christian man. He had a short memory. He forgot God. On one occasion he was in a hurry to get some work done, and he gave notice to his hands, on Saturday, that he wanted them to work all the

next day. Willie was very much tried to know what to do. He couldn't bear to think of breaking the Sabbath. Yet, if he didn't go to work, he was afraid he should lose his place, and then, what would his poor mother do? At last he resolved to do right, and leave the rest to God. So he went to church, and kept the Sabbath, as God has commanded. The next morning, as he was going into the factory to begin his work, his master met him.

“Where were you yesterday, sir?”

“I went to church, sir,” said Willie.

“Then you may go to church again to-day, for I don't want you here,” was his reply.

Poor Willie felt very miserable. When he thought of his mother he couldn't help crying. But he thought that would do no good; so he wiped away his tears, and set out to seek for a new situation. He called at several places, but the only answer he received was, “We don't want any boys.” At last he called on a gentleman, who asked him why he had left his last place. His ready reply was, “Because I wouldn't work on Sunday, sir.” The gentleman was pleased with this; so he engaged him to work, and promised to give him *ten* shillings a-week. So Willie found that God blessed him for keeping the Sabbath.

Thus, we see, there is a reason that refers to

ourselves why we should keep the Sabbath. *It is necessary to our health and life ; to our prosperity and happiness.*

But there is a reason that refers to our country why we should keep the Sabbath-day holy.

Breaking the Sabbath does great harm to our country. Keeping the Sabbath does great good to it.

You know there is a country in Europe called Holland. The land there is very low. In some places it is lower than the sea. The only way in which they can keep the sea from overflowing it is by building great walls, or banks of earth, which are called dykes. One of the greatest evils that could happen to Holland would be to have those dykes broken down ; for then the sea would rush in, drowning the people, and destroying the country.

In the Bible wickedness is compared to floods of water. The greatest harm that can happen to a country is to have these floods let loose upon it. To protect us from this harm God has given us the Sabbath. It is God's wall of defence around our country. Wherever the Sabbath is properly kept, like the dykes of Holland, it rolls back the floods of wickedness, and prevents them from sweeping in ruin over the land. But every Sabbath-breaker is trying to throw down these protecting walls, and let the sea of wickedness come rushing in upon us.

You know that in France, during the Revolution at the close of the last century, they tried the experiment how they could get on without the Sabbath. They resolved to have no Sabbath. They burned the Bible. They said there was no God, no heaven, no hell.

The result was dreadful. All kinds of wickedness prevailed. The prisons and dungeons were crowded full of prisoners. These prisoners were the best people in the land. They were taken by cart-loads every day and beheaded. The blood of the people was shed like water. That time was called "The Reign of Terror." It was the most dreadful time ever known in the history of the world. They had broken down the Sabbath—God's protecting wall—and wickedness rolled over the land in a flood. Every Sabbath-breaker is helping to do this same thing here. Breaking the Sabbath does great harm to the country.

But keeping the Sabbath does great good to our country.

You know that in the land of Egypt they have no rain. Instead of rain they depend on the overflowing of the river Nile. This river runs all through Egypt. Every year it rises over its banks, and spreads itself gently over all the land. This overflowing of the Nile fertilizes the soil, and makes everything grow. Thus the Nile is the greatest pos-

sible blessing to Egypt. The comfort of the people and their very life depend upon it. This river Nile rises far away up among the mountains of Abyssinia.

Now, suppose that the Governor of Egypt had entire power over the Nile. Suppose that, whenever he chose he could stop or dry up those distant springs, and prevent the river from rising. And suppose he should tell the people that if they did not mind his laws and do what he told them, he would dry up the springs of the river, and not let it rise. Then would it not be a very dangerous thing to disobey that governor? And would it not be very important for the people of Egypt to try and please their governor? Yes. And every man who kept his laws would be doing the greatest good to his country. Well, now, we have no such river as the Nile in this country. For the power to fertilize our land, and make things grow in it, we depend, not upon a river, but on the dews and the rains. And God, our Governor, has entire power over these. He can give them or withhold them just as he pleases. Breaking the Sabbath provokes God to anger. Keeping the Sabbath pleases him, and he promises to send dews, and rains, and peace, and plenty on those who honour his Sabbaths. The Sabbath-keeper does great good to his country, for God blesses the country where the Sabbath is kept.

Now, we have had *three* questions. The *first* was, *What does the Sabbath-day mean?* It means a day of rest. The *second* was, *How may it be kept holy?* By stopping work; by worshipping God—thinking and learning about him. The *third* was, *Why should we keep it holy?*

In answer to this we had *three* reasons. One refers to God—his example and command. Another refers to ourselves—our life and health, our happiness and prosperity. The other refers to our country. Breaking the Sabbath does it great harm; keeping the Sabbath does it great good.

Now, my dear children, I hope, wherever you go, you will be the firm and decided friends of the Sabbath. Some people think they must keep the Sabbath in one place though they may break it in another.

“Johnie,” said a mother to her little boy, who was playing marbles on the front pavement, “you mustn’t play marbles *there*; don’t you know it is Sunday? go into the yard if you want to play.” Johnie stopped a moment and then asked, “But, mother, isn’t it Sunday in the yard as well as on the pavement?”

It is no particular place that makes the Sabbath; it belongs to all places. Some people think there is no harm in doing anything on the Sabbath if others do not see them.

"Here, James," said a God-forgetting man to his son, who attended the Sabbath school, "I want you to carry this parcel to such a place."

"Not to-day, father, if you please, for this is the Sabbath."

"Put it in your pocket," said the father.

"God can see it in my pocket as well as out," answered the little boy.

Whether at church or at home, in the city or the country, among friends or among strangers—oh, be sure that you always "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

HYMN ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

THIS day is the day of the Lord,
And we to his temple repair;
We come, at the call of his word,
To thank him with praise and with prayer.
Oh! may we remember that he,
The God of our spirit, is here;
Our actions he clearly can see,
Our thoughts, ere they're spoken, can hear.

We'll think not of work or of play,
Nor talk of our meat or our drink;
But find all our pleasure to-day,
In thoughts *he* would have us to think.
We'll talk of his works and his ways,
We'll tell o'er the marks of his love;
And learn the first notes of that praise
We would sing with the ransomed above.

And while we thus gladly receive
The blessings this day can impart ;
We'll strive just as freely, to give
To those who are stricken in heart.
Oh ! why should their eyes be in tears,
If *we* can their troubles remove ?
Let us lighten the clouds of their fears,
By the sunshine of kindness and love !

Thus, best shall we hallow the day,
That tells us that Jesus arose ;
We'll welcome its earliest ray,
And keep it in peace till its close.
And then, when these Sabbaths are o'er,
We'll hope at the last to ascend
Where sin shall disturb us no more,
And the Sabbath of God have no end.

VI.

The Fifth Commandment.

“Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”—EXOD. xx. 12.

Do you remember how many tables of stone there were on which the Ten Commandments were written? Two. There is another question I want to ask. I remember when I was a little boy this question was asked me, and I gave a wrong answer to it. One day the minister was catechising the children in the church to which I went, and he asked us this question, “How many commandments were there on each of the tables?” None of the other children answered the question, so I thought I would answer it. I was a little fellow, and had not learned much about the commandments; but I understood enough about division to know that the half of ten is five, and thinking *that* was the most natural division to make, I spoke out, and said, “Five on each, sir.” The good minister shook his head and said, “No; that’s not right.” Then he went on to tell us that the commandments, when written on the two

tables given to Moses, were divided, not according to number, but according to subjects. He told us that these ten commandments all referred to two great subjects. These are, our duty to God and our duty to our neighbour. Our duty to God takes in *four* of the commandments. Our duty to our neighbour takes in six. And so there were four commandments on the first table, and *six* on the second. That was the way in which I learned how many commandments were on each of the tables. I never forgot the lesson I learned that day. It is about thirty-five years ago since this took place. It seems like a long while to look back to; and yet I remember it just as clearly as though it only occurred yesterday.

Now, we have got through with the first table of the commandments. We have considered the four which relate to our duty to God. To-day we begin the second table. The fifth commandment was the first on the second table. With this begins the subject of our duty to our neighbour. What are the words of the fifth commandment?

“Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

Notice, my dear children, how this second table of the commandments begins. God is going to show us our duty to our neighbour. How does

he begin? Not by telling us how kings ought to reign, or soldiers ought to fight, or how merchants ought to conduct their business; but *how boys and girls ought to behave at home!*

This is the most important thing for every young person to consider. God thought it important enough for him to write it, with his own finger, on a table of stone. That shows us how *very* important it is. When you want to do anything well, you must be careful to begin right.

Suppose you are going to raise a tune. Well, you must be careful to start it on the proper key. But if you want to sing "Old Hundred," and start it with the wrong key-note, why, you never could get on with it. You would have to stop. You would be sure to break down, and have to begin again.

And so, if you begin to put up a house, and lay the foundation wrong; or to build a ship, and make a mistake in laying the keel; you'll have to take it all down, and begin again. Oh, it is very important to *begin* right! It is so in *every* thing. And it is so in trying to do our duty to our neighbour.

The fifth commandment shows us how we must begin to do this. We must begin at home. You show me a boy or girl, who is not a good son or daughter, who does not honour father and mother,

and I will show you one who will *not* make a good man or woman. What does the fifth commandment require us to do? To honour our father and mother. This starts *two* questions for us to consider. The first is: HOW ARE WE TO HONOUR OUR FATHER AND MOTHER? The second is: WHY SHOULD WE DO THIS?

You see there are just two words on which these questions hang. One is the word—How? The other is the word—WHY?

If you look into your wardrobe you will see pegs, or hooks, on which things are hung. Just so these two words—*How?* and, *Why?* are the hooks on which this whole sermon will be made to hang. There are *four* things to hang on the first hook; and *two* on the second.

Now we come to the first hook—*How?* How are we to honour our parents? *Four* things are to go on this hook. If we describe these things according to grammar, we may call one of them a *noun*, that is, the name of a *thing*; the other three are *adjectives*, which qualify the noun, or show what sort of a thing it is.

The first thing to go upon this hook—*How?*—is the word, OBEDIENCE.

To honour our parents means to *obey* them. But then, our obedience must be of the right kind, or else it will be no honour to them.

The other day I was coming home from a large city. In the seat before me, in the railway train, sat a plain woman, with two children, a boy and a girl. They were going a long way. I was sorry to see that the children didn't seem to mind much what their mother said. After a while I saw the mother trying to get something out of a basket on another seat. I thought, perhaps, she had some cakes or sweetmeats in it, and that she wanted to give these to the children, to make them mind what she said. But when she got the basket open, she drew out from it, not cakes or sweetmeats, but a *rope*, about a yard long, and as thick as my little finger. It had a knot on each end of it; and she doubled it up, and held it in her hand, and shook it at the children, whenever she told them to do anything. She would say, "John, sit down there," and shake the rope at him. Down John would sit.

"Mary, move over into that other seat."

"John, put down that window, this minute." John obeyed instantly. He knew what would come if he didn't. These children *obeyed* their mother, but did they *honour* her? No. They didn't honour their mother; they honoured the *rope*. That kind of obedience might be called *rope's-end obedience*. It isn't good for much. The motive that leads to it is the fear of punish-

ment. This is a wrong motive. But if we want to have right actions, we must be sure and have right motives. We ought to obey our parents, because it is the will of God that we should do so, and because we love them. These are the proper motives for obedience to our parents. What are these motives? *The will of God, and love to our parents.*

Now, suppose that the woman, I have spoken of, had pursued a different plan. Suppose that, instead of shaking that rope at her children all the while, she had taken her Bible and said to them,—

“My dear children, this is God’s word. In it God speaks to us, and tells us what he wants us to do. Let me read to you what God says about children. Here in Exodus xx. 12, he says—‘Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.’ Now, you see, when I tell you to do anything, or not to do it, it is just the same as if God told you. When you obey me, you obey God. When you disobey me you disobey God—yes, the great, the good, the glorious God, whom all the angels of heaven obey. Only think what a dreadful thing it must be to disobey him!”

Suppose she had spoken to them in this way, and that, instead of scolding, and slapping, and

storming at them continually, she had been kind, and tender, and affectionate, in her treatment of them. Then she would have taught them to obey her from the right motives—because it is the will of God, and because they loved her. Then she would not have needed to use the rope so often.

Now we have got one thing on the hook—*How?* It is the noun—*obedience*. Obedience is necessary if we would honour our parents. But it must be the right kind of obedience. Here we want our adjectives to qualify the noun.

It must be a *READY obedience*. Now we have *two* things on the hook—*How?*

If we want to honour our parents by our obedience, we must not stop to ask questions about what we are told to do, or try to find out the reason for it. It is reason enough that our parents tell us to do a thing.

I was reading, the other day, about two little girls, who had a dear, good mother, whom they loved very much. She was poor, however, and often had to be away from home all day on business. On these occasions the children always looked forward, with great interest, to their mother's return in the evening. That was the happiest hour of the day to them.

One day, when she was absent, they had been

making something nice for her, which they knew would please her very much. This made them unusually anxious for their mother's return that day. The hours rolled slowly away, and it seemed, to the impatient girls, as if the evening never would come. At last they spied their mother coming up the lane. Then they scampered down the garden walk to meet her. But instead of opening her arms to receive them, as usual, they saw her motioning them to go back. When she got nearer, she said, in a stern voice, "Go back, directly, into the house, and don't come near me till I call you."

This was a great disappointment to the poor girls. One of them began to cry as if her heart would break. She couldn't understand it, and thought it very hard for their mother to treat them so. The other told her to wait a little while, for she was sure that mother had some good reason for what she did, which would make it all right when it was explained to them.

Presently, after their mother had changed her dress, and washed herself, she came out of her room, with her usual smile upon her face, and was as kind to them as ever. Then she told her little girls that on her way home she had stopped to visit a poor family. On entering the house she found that one of the children had just died

of the scarlet fever. She had helped to lay out the dead child. They knew that that dreadful disease was catching. It is often carried in a person's clothes, so that others may take it in that way. She was afraid her daughters might take it if they came near her before she had had time to wash and change her clothes. *This was the reason* why she told them to go back and keep away from her. Then the girls saw how right it was to obey their mother *readily*, whether they understood the reason for what they were told to do or not. *Ready* obedience is necessary if we would honour our parents.

But **ABSENT** obedience, as well as present, is necessary.

I mean by this, that we must obey our parents when we are away from them as well as when we are with them. Now, we have *three* things on the hook—*How? Obedience; ready; absent.*

A little boy, about seven years old, was on a visit to a lady who was very fond of him. Although he was a great way from home he behaved very well, and endeavoured to do everything that he thought would have pleased his parents had they been present.

One day at breakfast there was some hot bread upon the table. It was handed to him; but he refused to take it.

“Don’t you like hot bread?” asked the lady of the house.

“Yes, ma’am,” said he, “I’m very fond of it.”

“Then, my dear, why don’t you take some?”

“Because my father has forbidden me to eat hot bread.”

But your father is a great way off, and will never know anything about it. You had better take some for once if you like it. It will do no harm.”

This was very wrong in the lady. She ought to have been ashamed of herself. She was tempting her little visitor to break the fifth commandment. But listen to the little boy’s answer. “No,” said he, “I will not disobey my father although he is not here to see me. *He* might never know it, but *I* should know it, and that would be enough.”

This boy honoured his father by his obedience when absent.

Let me tell you about another boy who honoured his father in this way. A circus had come to the town in which he lived. The great tent was pitched, and the sound of the lively music drew great crowds, especially of the young people, to the ground. Among these a little boy was seen looking about with a great deal of curiosity. “Holloa, Johnie!” said a man who knew him, “going to the circus?”

"No, sir," answered Johnie, "my father does not wish me to go."

"Oh! well, I'll give you money to go, Johnie," said the man.

"My father does not approve of it," answered Johnie.

"Well, go in for once and I'll pay for you."

"No, sir," said Johnie, "my father would give me money if he thought it right; besides, I've got two shillings of my own, and that's twice the price of admission."

"I would go for once, Johnie, if I were you; it's wonderful the way the horses do," said the man. "Your father wouldn't know it."

"I shan't do it," said the boy.

"*Why not?*" asked the man.

"Because," said Johnie, "after I had been there, *I couldn't look my father straight in the face, and I can do that now.*"

Yes, that little fellow honoured his father. Whenever you are tempted to do anything which would prevent you from looking your father or mother "straight in the face," you may depend there is something wrong about it.

But if we would honour our parents as this commandment requires, our obedience must not only be *ready* and *absent* as well as present, it must also be AFFECTIONATE obedience.

This is the fourth word on the hook—How? We have on it—*obedience, ready, absent, affectionate.*

We must obey our parents out of love to them. If we love them as we ought, we shall not only do all that they tell us, but shall try to do everything that we know will please them, whether they tell us to do so or not.

You all remember the story of Washington when he was a boy. He had set his heart on entering the navy and going to sea. His mother had yielded a reluctant consent. She said he might go, but it was evident that she wanted him to stay. A midshipman's commission had been obtained for him. The vessel was about to sail. The servant was at the door with his trunk. He went in to say good-bye to his mother. He found her in tears. He saw the look of deep distress that was in her face, but she said not a word. That was enough for him. He went out and said to his servant, "Take my trunk back again to my room. I will not break my mother's heart to please myself." He gave up his commission and stayed at home.

When his mother heard what he had done, she said, "George, God has promised to bless those who honour their parents, and he will bless you!" How true those words were! God *did* bless

George Washington, and made him a blessing to his country and to the world. Washington gained many victories afterwards, but *this* was the most important victory he ever gained. When he gave up his own will to please his mother he *conquered himself*. And the Bible tells us, that "he who ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city."

Affectionate obedience will lead us to show all possible respect and love for our parents.

You sometimes hear children speak very lightly of their father and mother. They break the fifth commandment when they do so. The Hon. Thomas H. Benton was for many years a United States' senator. When making a speech in New York once, he turned to the ladies present and spoke about his mother in this way : "My mother asked me never to use tobacco, and I have never touched it from that day to this. She asked me never to gamble, and I have never gambled. When I was seven years old she asked me not to drink. I made a resolution of total abstinence. That resolution I have never broken. And now, whatever service I may have been able to render to my country, or whatever honour I may have gained, I owe it to my mother." That was honouring his mother.

We read in ancient history of a certain city

which was besieged, and at length obliged to surrender. There were two brothers in that city who had, in some way or other, obliged the conquering general. In consequence of this he gave them permission to leave the city before it was set on fire, and to take with them as much of their most valuable property as they could carry. Presently the young men appeared at the gates of the city, one of them carrying his father and the other his mother. They regarded them as the most valuable of their possessions. That was honouring their parents indeed !

Affectionate obedience will lead us to take care of our parents, and provide for their comfort in every way we can.

In heathen countries we know it is very common for children to cast off all care of their parents. When they get sick or grow old, their children either forsake them and leave them to perish with hunger, or actually put them to death and so get them out of the way. But they have no Bible to teach them the fifth commandment. They have never heard God's voice saying to them, "Honour thy father and mother." But we have this commandment. And God expects us to take care of our parents, and do all we can to make them comfortable when they are sick, or aged, or poor. It is a great privilege to have a

dear father or mother to shelter and comfort when growing old. I thank God for allowing me this privilege, and I would not give it up for the wealth of the world.

There is a celebrated charity school in London called the "Blue Coat School." It bears this name because the scholars there all wear blue coats with long skirts to them.

I remember reading about one of the boys in this school who was in the habit of saving part of his own meals, and all the bits and scraps he could gather from the table after their meals were over. He used to put them in a box near his bed, and keep them there. This led the other scholars to talk against him very much. At first they thought he was greedy, and kept them there to eat at night when the rest were asleep. Some of them watched him, but he was never seen to eat them.

Once or twice a-week he used to make a bundle of the contents of the box, and go away with it.

Then the boys thought that he meant to sell them, and keep the money. They thought that he was a mean, miserly fellow. They refused to let him play with them. They joked about him, and called him hard names, and persecuted him in many ways. But he bore it all patiently, and

still went on, saving and carrying away all he could honestly get.

At last they complained of him to their teacher. The boy was watched when he took away the next bundle. He was seen to go into an old worn-out building, occupied by some of the poorest people in the city. There he made his way up to the fourth storey of the building, and left his bundle with a poor old couple. On inquiry it was found that these were his parents. They were honest, worthy people, whom age and poverty had reduced to such a condition of want, that their chief dependence was the food thus furnished by their son. He was willing to deprive himself of food, and bear the reproach and persecution of his school-fellows, in order to do what he could for the support of his parents.

When the managers of the school heard of it, they provided relief for the poor boy's parents, and gave him a silver medal for his praiseworthy conduct. Certainly he deserved the medal. That boy kept the fifth commandment. He honoured his father and mother.

One day a minister was hearing the children of his congregation say the Catechism. He asked a little boy to repeat the fifth commandment. He did so very well. "Now, my little man," said the minister, "do you know what it means,

to 'honour your father and mother?' " Instead of trying to explain it, in a low, trembling voice, and with his face all covered with blushes, he said: "Yesterday I showed some strange gentlemen over the mountain. The sharp stones cut my feet, and the gentlemen saw they were bleeding. They gave me some money to buy me shoes. I gave it to my mother, for she had no shoes either, and I thought I could go barefoot better than she could."

How clearly that dear boy understood the commandment! Yes, and how sweetly he practised it!

But what a beautiful example was set us by our Lord Jesus Christ. He is hanging on the cross, outside of the walls of Jerusalem. A little company of women are standing near the cross. The mother of Jesus is among them, and so is his disciple John. The great, rough nails have been driven through his hands and feet. The blood is trickling down from the cruel wounds. His limbs are quivering with the pain. Oh, how dreadful his sufferings must be! Yet he forgets his own pain and agony, to think about, and take care of his mother.

We read in the gospel: "Now, when Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother,

Behold thy son ! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

How wonderful this was ! How beautifully it sets the example of Jesus before us, to teach us how to honour our father and mother !

Now we have done with the first question : *How are we to honour our parents ?*

On the hook—*How ?* we have hung how many words ? Four. What are they ? *Obedience ; ready ; absent ; affectionate.*

The second question is : **WHY SHOULD WE DO THIS ?**

Which word in this question makes the hook, on which the whole question hangs ? **WHY.**

We have *two* words to hang on this hook. They are the words—**BLESSING**—and—**CURSE**.

There is a blessing promised to those who keep this commandment; and a curse denounced upon those who break it. The blessing is spoken of in the commandment itself : the curse is spoken of in other parts of the Bible.

Here we have a *blessing promised to those who keep this commandment.*

God says, "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." It is worth while to notice, that this is the only one of the com-

mandments which has a distinct promise connected with it. Hence, the apostle says (Eph. vi. 2), "Children, obey your parents, which is the first commandment with promise."

But let us see what this promise means. Does it mean that all persons who obey their parents shall live to a great age? No. It cannot mean this, because we know that a great many good and obedient children die while they are quite young. You must remember that God gave these commandments to the Jewish nation just before they went in to take possession of the land of Canaan. They were to occupy that land during their good behaviour. And here God promises, that if they keep his commandments, and especially *this* one, he would let them stay in that land a long, long time. This is one thing that the promise means.

But this promise refers to us as well as to them. The Jews considered long life as one of the greatest of temporal blessings. And the meaning of the promise, in reference to us, is, that God will surely reward those persons who honour their parents, even in this life, with such blessings as he sees to be best for them.

Let me show you what I mean. Gustavus, the king of Sweden, in one of his journeys stopped at the cabin of a poor peasant, and asked for a

drink. An interesting young girl gave him a drink without knowing who he was. She seemed to be in great poverty. The king became very much interested in her, and offered, if she would come to Stockholm, to put her in a better position. The girl said she would not leave her present home. "Why not?" asked the king. "Because," said the girl, "my mother is poor and sickly, and has no one but me to take care of and comfort her; and nothing that any one could offer would tempt me to leave her."

The king entered the cabin to see the girl's mother. There, stretched on a bedstead, whose only covering was a little straw, he beheld an aged woman, weighed down with years and many infirmities. His heart was touched at the sight, and he said, "I am sorry, my poor woman, to find you in so destitute and suffering a state."

"Alas, sir!" said the aged woman, "I should be miserable, were it not for the kindness and attention of that dear, good girl. She labours to support me, and does everything she can for my comfort. May God remember it to her for good," she added, as she wiped away a tear.

The good king could hardly speak. Presently he slipped a purse of gold into the hand of the daughter, and said, "Continue to take care of

Your mother, and I will help you to do it more effectually. Good-bye."

On his return to Stockholm he made arrangements to have a sum of money paid to the poor woman every year, enough to keep her comfortably as long as she lived; and after her death, to be continued to her daughter. This was the way in which God fulfilled the promise of this commandment to that young girl. It was the king who did it; but it was God who put it into his heart to do it. He is the God "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed."

Let me give you another illustration of the same thing.

There was an honest tradesman who lived, and kept a shop, in a small town in France, some distance from Paris. He had a large family; and by patient industry, and attention to business, he had managed to maintain them comfortably, and earn for himself a good reputation. But, at last, owing to the unexpected loss of a large sum of money, he was unable to pay what he owed to the merchants in Paris, from whom he bought his goods. He went to see his creditors. He told them frankly how he was situated, and begged them to allow him a longer time, and let him have some more goods to carry on his business with, and he would pay them as soon as he

could. They believed he was honest, and consented to do so, all except one man. This was the person to whom he owed the most. His wealth was very great, but his heart was very hard. He said: "No, sir, you are going to fail, and I'll make you pay me at once."

An officer was sent immediately to arrest the poor man, and put him in jail. From his cell, in the prison, he wrote home to his wife and family, telling them of his situation. This threw them into great distress. At first they knew not what to do. After talking the matter over a good while, the eldest son of the family, a fine young man, resolved to go to Paris and see this cruel creditor, and try to persuade him to release his father from prison.

He arrived at the house of the merchant, sent in his name, and asked permission to see him. The proud, money-loving man, thought of course the son had come to pay his father's debts. He admitted him into his presence; but as soon as he found out the object of the young man's visit, he flew into a violent passion, and declared he would either have the money or the bones of his father. On hearing this, the young man fell down on his knees, and with uplifted hands, and tears rolling down his cheeks, he addressed the merchant in this manner:—

“Sir,” said he, “if I go home without my father, I shall see my poor mother die with a broken heart. The credit of my father’s shop will be utterly ruined; and we, his children, will be turned out as beggars and vagabonds into the open street. I have this one, the last request to make,—let *me* be sent to jail instead of my father, and keep me there till all that he owes you is paid!”

The merchant walked up and down the room in great agitation. The young man continued his cries and entreaties. At last, quite overcome by the affection and devotion of the noble-minded youth, he took him kindly by the hand, and told him to rise. He then gave him an order for the release of his father. Soon after he took the young man into business with him, gave him his only daughter in marriage, and finally left him the heir of all his property.

What a beautiful illustration this is of that passage of Scripture, which says, “Children, obey your parents, that it *may be well with you!*”

This young man honoured his parents, and God blessed him.

We ought to honour our parents, *because of the blessing promised to those who do so.* This is one thing on the hook—*Why?* It is the *blessing.*

But there is another thing on this hook. It is *the curse.* There is a curse denounced against

those who do not honour their parents. I said this curse is not mentioned in the commandment. We find it in other places. In Deut. xxvii. 16, we read these solemn words: "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother." In Prov. xxx. 17, God speaks in this awful way: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

It is enough to make the flesh creep upon our bones, and the blood run cold in our veins, to read these passages. God's curse hangs over every boy and girl who refuses to keep this fifth commandment. They cannot prosper in their ways.

Let me give you one or two illustrations of the way in which God's curse sometimes comes on those who break this commandment.

"Mother, let me go to the common, and see them fire the cannon," said George to his mother.

"No, my son, I had rather you would not," said his mother. "Accidents so often happen, that I am afraid to allow you to go."

"But other boys go, mother."

"Yes, my son, I know it; but other boys get hurt, too. If you go, Willie will want to go too, and I shall feel anxious about you all the time."

George was the oldest son of his widowed mother, and it was not strange that she feared to have him exposed to danger. But, in spite of his mother's command, he resolved that he *would* go; so, while his mother was busy getting tea, he stole out at the back door, and away he ran to the common, intending to get back before his mother missed him.

Just as he arrived there, the men were loading the cannon for the last time. They wanted to make a very loud noise. To help in doing this they put in turf and other things. Now, all is ready. The match is lighted. It is applied to the touch-hole. Bang! goes the gun, with a tremendous explosion. It has burst. The fragments fly in every direction. George has just reached the ground. He is standing a good way off, yet he is the only one injured. A large piece of the cannon hits him, it cuts him almost in two. In an instant he is dead. Ah! how dreadful for his poor mother! But how still more dreadful for the poor boy!—to be killed in the very act of breaking God's commandment!

Let me give you another illustration.

There was a poor widow who had two sons. The eldest, Charles, was ten years old. He began, soon after his father's death, to go with wicked companions. In spite of his mother's entreaties

and commands, he would go with them. Well, before he was twelve years old, he was taken up for stealing. Then he was taken away from his mother, and put in a reformatory school, or house of refuge, in a distant city.

He had not been there long before he was taken ill. A dangerous fever broke out among the boys. A kind-hearted gentleman gave his mother money to pay the expenses of the journey, and she went to visit her sick boy. When she reached the place she found him very ill. He was too ill to be with the rest of the boys. His mother found him in a room by himself.

There he lay, stretched upon the bed, and looking so pale and thin, that even his mother hardly knew him. It was a sad and sorrowful meeting. She talked with him, and wept over him a long while. Then she took out a little handkerchief and wiped his forehead with it, and told him it belonged to his brother at home.

“O mother!” said Charles, “lay it on my breast: I want it near my heart.” Soon he asked,—

“Does my brother obey you?”

“Sometimes,” she replied.

“Oh, tell him to obey you always, *always!* If I had done so I never should have been here.” And he buried his face in the bed-clothes, and

sobbed, and cried as if his heart would break. Poor Charles died of the fever caught in the place to which he was taken for breaking the fifth commandment.

One more illustration is all I will give you. Some years ago there was an Irish gentleman residing in the western part of Pennsylvania. At one time he was very well off. He had an only son, who was very wild and wicked. He squandered all his father's property, and reduced him to poverty. The old man lost his wife. Then his health failed; and to fill up the cup of his sorrows, he lost his sight. He was left poor, friendless, blind, forsaken. At last he found a shelter in the alms-house of Franklin county.

One day, while the blind old man was living in the alms-house, his wicked and ungrateful son passed through the place. He was told of his father's situation, and that he wanted him to come and see him; but although he passed within two hundred yards of the alms-house, he refused to stop and see the kind father whom he had ruined. Now, mark the result.

The very day he passed the alms-house, on his way to Gettysburg, in an open carriage, he was overtaken by a severe storm, and caught a bad cold. The cold fell upon his eyes. In a little while he lost his sight entirely. He lay ill

at Gettysburg till all his money was spent. Then he was taken to the Franklin county alms-house. On the very day that he was taken in, his father, who had died the day before, was taken out. He was put into the same room, he died upon the same bed, he was buried in the same grave, and then his guilty spirit followed his neglected and broken-hearted father to the judgment seat of Christ. What a fearful illustration this was of the solemn words: "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father, or his mother."

Now, my dear children, we have had two questions asked and answered. *How are we to keep this commandment?* and *WHY should we do it?*

How? and *Why?* are the important words in these questions. They are the two hooks on which the whole sermon hangs. On the first hook—*How?*—we hung four words; one noun, and three adjectives. The noun is *obedience*. The adjectives are, *ready, absent, affectionate*.

On the other hook—*Why?*—we hung two words, namely the *blessing* and the *curse*.

Here we have the whole sermon reduced, as it were, into just *eight* words—*How?*—*Obedience, ready, absent, affectionate*. *Why?* *blessing, curse*. You might almost write them on your finger-nail. These eight words form the bones that make the skeleton of this sermon. It is easy to remember

them ; and then you can hardly help remembering the rest, in connection with them.

My earnest hope is, that you will all resolve, by the help of God, always to keep this commandment. And if you really want that help, there is nothing better for you to do than, every day, to use those two short and appropriate prayers, which we use in church, every Sunday morning, when we repeat the commandments.

This is one : “ Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep THIS law ! ”

And this is the other : “ Lord, have mercy upon us ; and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee ! ” Offer these prayers with all your hearts, and ask God to hear you, for Jesus’ sake. This will be beginning right. And so, by the help of God you will be able to “ Honour your father, and mother ; that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God giveth you. ”

HYMN ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

THOU shalt honour thy father, the guide of thy youth,
And yield him the homage of love and of truth ;
Thou shalt honour thy mother, whose love unto thee,
The greatest of God’s earthly blessings shall be.

How sweet, when we hear this commandment, to say,
“ Lord, if thou wilt help me, I’ll strive to obey ;

I'll bend down the force of my own stubborn will,
And bid every passionate feeling, *Be still!*

My father ! my mother ! How true should I prove !
How well should I serve you ; how faithfully love !
How yield to each wish the regard that is due ;
And do all the things you would have me to do !

The love of a parent—oh ! *who* can repay ?
From life's early dawn to the close of its day,
It shines on each pathway ; it blesses each lot ;
And remembers us still ; though by all else forgot !

If thus earthly parents regard us with love,
Oh, what shall we say of our Father above ?
Lord, make us thy children, in spirit, that we
May be always *just what thou wouldst have us to be!*

VII.

The Sixth Commandment.

“Thou shalt not kill.”—EXOD. xx. 13.

THIS is one of the shortest of the ten commandments. There are only four words in it. The second commandment has ninety-one words in it, and the fourth commandment has ninety-seven. It is wonderful to notice how very short God's laws are. Here is God's great law against killing written out in four short words, or just sixteen letters.

Now, if you go to a lawyer, and ask him to show you one of man's laws against killing, you will find it very different from this. He will go to his book case, and take down one of his law books, and turn to the chapter on killing; and then, if you compare that chapter with Exodus xx. 13, you will see what a wonderful difference there is between God's law and man's law.

I did this very thing, the other day, when I was beginning this sermon. I borrowed the law-book from a friend, and took it to my study. I found that the chapter on killing contained

twenty-four large pages, closely printed, and in small type. I did not attempt to count the number of words in that chapter. It would have taken too much time. It would have been almost like trying to count the grains in a handful of sand from the sea-shore. There were thousands of words ; yes, tens of thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of words in that chapter, which contained man's law about killing, for every single word in this sixth commandment, which contains God's law about killing.

“THOU SHALT NOT KILL.”

This is the commandment we are to consider to-day. It is one of the most important of all the commandments.

But you notice there are no limits put to this law. It would seem, when we first look at it, as if it were unlawful for us ever to kill anything. Can *this* be the meaning of the law ? Certainly not. You know we all eat meat. Every day we have upon our table beef, or mutton, or veal, or chickens, or fish. The oxen, or sheep, or calves from which this meat came were killed before those joints of meat could be obtained for our tables. The butchers killed those cattle. Was it wrong for them to do so ? Not at all. God has given us permission to kill these animals. He created them to furnish food for man.

Again, in some parts of the country hungry wolves and savage bears prowl about. They devour the sheep of the farmer, and do great mischief. The farmer tries all he can to kill these savage beasts. Is it wrong for him to do so? No.

Sometimes we hear of dogs going mad and biting people. Then every one tries to kill them. Is this wrong? No.

A good many years ago King George III. of England sent an army over to this country, to burn our towns, and kill our people, and make our forefathers submit to unjust laws. General Washington raised an army and fought against the English. Was this right? Certainly. It is right to protect our lives and liberties. If any are killed in doing this it is not our fault.

Again, suppose a wicked man knows there is money in a certain house. He resolves to get it. Before he can do this, he will have to kill the people in the house. This he determines to do. He arms himself with a sharp knife. At midnight he enters the house. He creeps softly to the bedside, where the inmates of the house are quietly sleeping. He plunges his knife into their bosoms. He leaves them weltering in their blood. He clutches the gold which he covets in his blood-stained hands, and goes away.

But soon he is found out. He is proved guilty of the murder. He is condemned to be hung. Is it right to put him to death? Certainly. God tells us, over and over again, in the Bible, that "the murderer shall be put to death."

Some people say that these are Old Testament laws, but that the New Testament has set them aside. This is a mistake. It is true that the New Testament breathes a spirit of peace and love in our intercourse with one another; but it says nothing to magistrates about not putting murderers to death. I only remember one place in the New Testament where the duty of a ruler or magistrate, in this respect, is spoken of, and there (Rom. xiii. 4) St. Paul tells us that the ruler "beareth not the *sword* in vain; for he is the minister of God, a *revenger to execute wrath* upon him that doeth evil." It is perfectly plain, from this passage, that the New Testament, as well as the Old, teaches us that it is right for magistrates and rulers to put murderers to death. If we pretend to say that it is not right, we set ourselves up as being wiser, or kinder, or better than God.

Well, then, it is plain that there are some limits to this commandment. When God says, "Thou shalt not kill," he does not mean that we should not kill savage beasts or poisonous reptiles when they come in our way. He does not mean that

we should not defend our lives and liberties when they are assaulted. And he does not mean that magistrates should not put hard-hearted, blood-thirsty murderers to death. These are exceptions to the commandment. In such cases to kill is *not* to break this law.

Now we come to the commandment itself: "Thou shalt not kill."

There is one question to be asked and answered here. WHAT DOES THIS COMMANDMENT FORBID ?

It forbids INJURY TO THE LIVES OF OTHERS, and INJURY TO OUR OWN LIVES.

We may do injury to the lives of others by our *actions* and by our *feelings*.

If a man meets another in the woods, and plunges a dagger into his breast, that he may get his watch and money, does he break this commandment? Yes. But suppose that, instead of getting his money in this way, he makes a poisonous drink, and sells it to the man without telling him what is in it; would this be breaking the commandment? Yes. It is just as bad to kill with poison, as to kill with a dagger. And killing slowly is just as much a breach of this commandment as killing quickly. There are many people in this country who make and sell drinks of this kind. They call them wine, or brandy, or gin, or whisky. These are often made out of the

most poisonous things that can be mentioned. The people who make these liquors call them by wrong names. Then they sell them to people to drink. They do this when they know that they are poisonous. But they are willing to do it for the sake of money. Are not such persons guilty of *killing* in the sight of God? Certainly.

Suppose a man stands at his door, and thoughtlessly fires a pistol into a crowd that is passing by. One person in the crowd is killed. Is the man who fired the pistol guilty of his death? Certainly.

Suppose I am a king. I don't think my country is large enough. I want to have part of my neighbour's country. I raise an army, and march into that country. The king of that country brings his army to oppose mine. A great battle is fought. Twenty thousand men are killed. Who killed those men? I did, of course. Perhaps I never fired a single gun, or shed a single drop of blood with my own hand; yet every drop of blood shed in that battle would rest on my head. Remember this when you read about what are called great heroes and conquerors.

Look at Napoleon Bonaparte! He resolved to invade Russia. There was no necessity for it. But he resolved to do it, to please himself. He raised a great army of near five hundred thousand

men. He marched to Moscow. He took it. The Russians set fire to it. It was burnt down. Winter set in. Napoleon was defeated and driven back. This grand army was destroyed. More than half a million of men were killed in that one campaign. Who killed them? Napoleon Bonaparte. What a grand murderer he was! Think of this when you hear or read of what is called—his glory! Would you like to be in Napoleon's place when he comes to stand before the judgment-seat? No, no; not for ten thousand such kingdoms as France.

This commandment forbids *all actions that would injure the lives of others.*

But, at the same time, it forbids *all feelings that would injure the lives of others.*

Suppose you wanted to prevent any more oak trees from growing, what would be the best way of doing it? To destroy all the acorns. Suppose it should be found out that chickens were a great nuisance, that they gave rise to a dangerous disease, and that it became necessary to prevent them from increasing, what would be the most effectual way of doing it? To break all the eggs that were laid. Yes; do this, and the chickens would soon disappear. Now, just what acorns are to oaks, or what eggs are to chickens, *feelings* are to actions. They are the seed, the eggs, out

of which actions spring. Control the acorns, and you control the oaks. Control the eggs, and you control the chickens. Control the feelings, and you control the actions.

This is just what God's law does. It comes into our hearts, and teaches us to control their feelings. It tells us that "he who hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15).

Who was the first murderer of whom we read in the Bible? Cain. Do you suppose he became a murderer all at once? No; he came to it by degrees, just as the acorn grows into the oak. There was a day when Cain had the first feeling of hatred or anger towards his brother. That feeling was the acorn out of which the oak-tree of murder grew. If, when that feeling first sprung up in his heart, Cain had checked it at once, that would have been like plucking up the acorn as soon as it began to sprout. Then no oak-tree would have grown from it. Cain never would have been a murderer.

Now, *acorn murder* is just as bad in the sight of God, and just as much a breaking of this commandment, as *oak-tree murder*. I mean by this that *heart-murder* is as sinful in God's sight as *hand-murder*. If we indulge angry and hateful feelings in our hearts towards a person, *that* makes us murderers in God's sight. The reason

is, that if we let these feelings stay there and grow, they will soon make us real murderers. Ah ! my dear children, how many heart-murderers there are among us ! How many who have the guilt of murder on their souls, without having the blood of murder on their hands !

Now, suppose you should find out that in one corner of the room in which you sleep there was a nest of young rattlesnakes, and that at any time they might spring out of their nest and bite you ; what would you do ? Search the room, find out the nest, and have the young snakes killed. That would be the only wise and safe course. But let me tell you that in the corner of your heart there may be something worse than a nest of rattlesnakes. Is anger or hatred allowed to dwell there ? If so, that is worse than a rattlesnake. If you do not overcome it, it may spring up suddenly, some time or other, and make you a murderer in a moment.

I remember, when I was a boy at school, a case of this kind occurred. One of the scholars, whose name was James, had a terrible temper. The least thing that displeased him would throw him into a rage, and then he would act in the most violent manner. He never seemed to feel how dreadfully wicked it was, or to be afraid of the consequences that might follow from it.

One day, during recess, he stretched himself on a bench to take a nap. One of the boys thought he would have a little fun with James. He took a feather, and leaned over the bench, and began to tickle him in the ear. James shook his head, and cried, "Quit that." Presently he felt the feather again. "You quit that, I say," he exclaimed very angrily. The boy very thoughtlessly went on with his mischief. Then James sprung from the bench, seized a pair of compasses lying on the desk near him, and threw them at the boy with all his might. They struck him on the side of the head. They entered his brain. He fell down, never spoke again, and was carried home a corpse. How dreadful this was! Here was the young serpent that had been allowed to nestle in this boy's heart springing up suddenly to its full growth, and making a murderer of him. Oh, watch against these young serpents! And if you find them in your heart, take that heart to Jesus, and ask him to give you his grace to resist and overcome them.

Thus we have seen what the commandment forbids in reference to others. It forbids all *actions* and *feelings* that may injure their lives.

But the commandment also forbids **INJURY TO OUR OWN LIVES.**

Almost every day we hear or read about some

people killing themselves. Sometimes they do it by jumping into the river and drowning themselves. Sometimes they do it by hanging, or by shooting, or by taking poison. This is called "committing suicide," or killing one's self. Now, I need hardly tell you that this is breaking the sixth commandment. Everybody knows this. I think there is not much danger of any of you breaking the commandment in *this way*. Very few persons who have been taught in Sunday school, and who know what God's commandments are, are ever found breaking the sixth commandment in *this way*.

But there are other ways in which we may break this commandment, by injuring our own lives, besides blowing out our brains, or jumping into the river, or taking a dose of arsenic. And in these ways a great many people break the sixth commandment, without thinking what they are doing.

I might speak of a number of these ways; but I will only speak of *three*. One of these is connected with *eating*; another with *drinking*; and another with *dress*ing. There is a great deal of killing done in each of these ways.

But perhaps some of you will be ready to say,—
"Dear me, it's very strange to talk about people's killing themselves by *eating*. Why, it's

pretty sure that they'll kill themselves if they *don't* eat." That's true enough. And yet many people kill themselves by *what* they eat, and by *the way* in which they eat.

When we are young we do not know what is safe and proper for us to eat till we are taught. God has made the young of other creatures very different in this respect from the young of our race. Here is a young chicken, just hatched. It runs about at once, looking for something to eat. It is not necessary for the old hen to give it a list of articles which it mustn't eat. If the young chick finds a nice crumb of bread, or a dead fly, or a fat little worm, it doesn't run to its mother and say, "Mother, will it hurt me to eat this?" No, but it snaps it up in a minute, and then looks out for another.

But when we are children, we don't know what is good for us to eat. We need to be taught; and we must mind what is taught us about eating, or else we shall make ourselves sick, and perhaps kill ourselves. I suppose there is never a summer that passes by but what more or less children kill themselves by eating green apples and unripe fruit of different kinds. They are told not to eat these things; but they forget what has been told them, or else they don't mind it. They like the taste of the fruit; they go on eating it; they get

sick; they die. Does God kill those children? No. They kill themselves.

Did you ever hear the fable of the "Conceited Fly?" There was once an old fly that lived in a sugar refinery. She was a wise and prudent fly. When the great boiler was in operation, and clouds of sweet-smelling steam were rising from it, she had noticed that a great many of her friends and neighbours were drawn towards it. But she saw that when they got near to it they suddenly disappeared, and never came back again. She didn't understand what it was that killed them, but she knew it was dangerous, and she kept away from it.

She had a daughter who was very conceited, as young people are apt to be. The old fly never went from home without cautioning her young one not to go near the boiler.

One day, when the old fly was away, the young one went out to take a little turn round, and stretch her wings. The boiler was going. The steam from the boiling juice was rising in clouds. Its sweet smell was very pleasant and attractive. She said to herself, "How silly it is of my mother to be so much afraid of that steam! I'm sure it smells too nice to do one any harm. I'll just go and taste a little of it, and get back before mother comes home."

She flew towards the boiler; the hot, scalding steam struck her before she knew what she was doing, and down she tumbled into the boiler.

How many a child has acted the part of the conceited fly, and has found out, when it was too late, the folly of such a course!

We break this commandment when we eat what we are told is not good for us. And grown people break it too by eating what they have found out disagrees with them. Whatever we find that makes us sick, or disagrees with us, we should regard as poison. If we go on eating those things, we break this commandment by doing so.

But we may break this commandment, also, by *the way in which we eat*, as well as by what we eat. By *eating too fast* we may injure ourselves.

You know the food that we eat is received into the stomach. There it is mixed with juices, and, by a sort of churning motion, it is turned into a white, pulpy substance, something like thickened milk. This is turned into blood, and the blood is sent all over our bodies, to keep the bones, and flesh, and skin in good condition.

But in order to get the food we eat into a proper state to be received into the stomach, God has

given us two rows of teeth. These are like little millstones. They are intended to grind up our food into very fine pieces, before we swallow it and send it down to the stomach. Our food is not fit to go into the stomach until it is well ground and made quite fine. But when we are in a hurry, and eat our meals fast, we don't take time enough to grind up our food, or to chew it well. We swallow it in lumps, and send it down to the stomach in pieces so large that it can't be churned up into the white, pulpy substance out of which the blood is made. The stomach has a world of trouble with these large, unground pieces of food. It doesn't know what to do with them; and pain, and sickness, and suffering, and sometimes even death, are occasioned by not giving the teeth time to do their duty when we eat. Well, then, when you sit down to eat your meals, remember the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Recollect that you break this commandment when you *eat too fast*.

We break it also *when we eat too much*.

If you put too much cargo in a vessel, what will become of it? It will sink. If you put too heavy a burden on a horse, a mule, or camel, what will it do? Fall down, and wait till you take some of it off.

Now, when we eat too much we overload the

stomach. It can't do its work properly. The food we eat lies like lead on the stomach, and great pain and suffering follow. In this way dyspepsia, rush of blood to the head, and many troublesome diseases are caused. Hundreds of persons kill themselves every year by *eating too much*. This is breaking the sixth commandment.

Perhaps some of you are ready to ask, How may we know when we eat too much? When we eat just as much as we can we eat too much. We should always stop while feeling as if we could take a little more. Remember we may break the sixth commandment by *eating too much*.

But DRINKING is another way in which people may kill themselves.

Most of the wines and liquors made or sold in this country have poisonous substances mixed up with them. It is estimated that about thirty thousand people kill themselves with drinking liquors in this country every year.

This church will seat over a thousand people. Only think of as many people as would fill this church full *thirty* times being killed, in one year, by drinking! This is dreadful to think of! Surely we should all try to put a stop to this terrible slaughter. Every one who is in the habit of drinking liquor is helping to encourage thou-

sands to break this command. And those who indulge freely in drinking often kill others as well as themselves.

A young man and his wife were going to attend a Christmas party at the house of a friend, some miles distant. "Henry, my dear husband," said the wife, "won't you promise me not to drink too much at the party to-day?"

"Yes, Millie, I'll promise not to do it. You may trust me."

Then he wrapped the baby-boy in a nice soft blanket, and they started. The horses were soon prancing over the road, and the husband and wife talked pleasantly together as they rode on.

"Now, don't forget your promise," whispered his wife as they entered the house. Poor thing, she little knew the anguish that was before her.

The party passed off pleasantly. The time for returning came. The wife went down from the upper chamber to join her husband. The moment her eye rested on him her heart sank. She saw he had forgotten his promise. He was intoxicated. They rode home in silence. The poor mother pressed her babe closely to her grieved and sorrowing heart. Presently they came to a dark and swollen stream which they had to cross.

As they came near to the stream, he said, "Millie, give me the baby to hold till we cross the creek. I can't trust him with you."

She hesitated. He spoke again in angry tones. Then she resigned her darling babe, closely wrapped in the great blanket, to his arms. Their noble horse bore them safely over the dark waters, and when they reached the opposite bank of the stream, the mother asked for the child. He placed the bundle carefully in her arms; she clasped it to her bosom, and uttered a piercing shriek! No babe was there! It had slipped from the blanket, and the drunken father knew it not. The loud shriek of his wife aroused him. He turned just in time to see the little rosy face rise one moment above the dark waters and then sink for ever. Who can imagine the terrible feelings of that father's heart, to say nothing of the mother's grief? By drinking that miserable father had killed his own, his *only* darling child. O boys, remember the sixth commandment when you are tempted to drink! And, girls, beware of forming a connection for life with one who is in the habit of drinking.

But, then, there is another thing that we spoke of, as leading people to break this commandment, it is DRESSING. Multitudes of people are killed by the way in which they dress themselves.

Wearing *thin shoes* is one of these ways. How many, women especially, you see walking the streets in shoes scarcely thicker than brown paper. In these they will go over the pavements that are being deluged with water ; or, even in the winter-time, when melting snow covers them. These paper-like shoes afford no protection to the feet. The feet get wet ; then a bad cold is taken ; then consumption follows ; and death ensues. Hundreds of persons die every year in this way. Is it right to say that God has taken them out of the world ? Not at all. They take themselves out. They are just as much guilty of suicide, as if they had taken poison or hung themselves up by a rope. The sixth commandment is often broken by a *thin pair of shoes*.

But *tight-lacing* is another way in which people kill themselves. Some persons think that the smaller they can make their waists look the more beautiful they appear. Now, if you consider the body of a *wasp* as the proper model of beauty for the human body, then this would be true. But this is not so. This practice is very wicked, because it is very injurious. Just look for a moment at that part of the body to which this lacing is applied.

Right in the centre is the heart. Near the heart is the liver, and the lower part of the lungs. The heart, you know, is the most important part

of our whole body. It is about as large as a man's fist. Its shape is something like a large pear. It is divided into two parts. The work which the heart has to do is to act the part of a pump. God has given it a wonderful power of opening and closing itself. Its business is to send the blood all over our bodies by a sort of pumping motion. If you put your two fists, one over the other, and open and shut them, you will get an idea of the way in which the heart does its pumping. When it opens it lets the blood in. When it closes it forces it out. This opening and closing is what we call the beating of the heart. You can feel it when you place your hand on your left side. You can even hear it at night when all is still.

Close by the heart is the lower part of the lungs. The lungs are like a pair of bellows. Every time we breathe they are filled up with air, and swell themselves out all around. Now, the heart must have room to open and shut. And the lungs must have room to be filled with air. To give them room, and keep anything from pressing against them, God has built around them a bone fence. We call it the ribs. These are pieces of bone, bent like hoops, and fastened into the back bone of our body. But they are fastened by a sort of gum-elastic hinge, or band, that can stretch,

and shrink, just as may be necessary. Hence, when you draw a long breath, your lungs fill up and your ribs swell out. When you breathe out that air everything falls back again to its former position. In the lower part of the waist these ribs do not meet in front. There is a space between them, so that they can rise and fall as the breathing goes on. But when the waist is tightly laced, these ribs are pressed in upon the heart and lungs ; and neither of them has room to do its work properly. They are crowded, and cramped, and don't know how to get on. If they could only speak for themselves, what a terrible outcry they would make! Then, when one of these tight-laced ladies was sailing smoothly up or down the street, her poor suffering heart and lungs would be screaming dreadfully, and muffled cries of "Murder, murder," would be heard, sounding out from her bosom.

One of the best physicians in the city told me, the other day, that two-thirds of all the deaths among females are caused by thin shoes and tight-lacing.

Thus, my dear young friends, I have tried to answer the one question started at the beginning of this sermon. That question is,—*What does this commandment forbid?* It forbids *injury to the lives of others, and injury to our own lives.*

We may injure the lives of others by our *actions* and by our *feelings*.

We may injure our own lives by drowning, shooting, hanging, or poisoning. But, in addition to this, we may do it by certain things connected with *eating, drinking, and dressing*. In connection with eating, we spoke of eating *wrong things; eating too fast; and eating too much*. In connection with dressing, we spoke of *thin shoes and tight-lacing*.

I intended to have had another question in this sermon. That question was,—*Why does this commandment forbid killing?* Then I should have tried to show you that it forbids killing,—because life is so valuable; because, when once taken away, we cannot restore it; and because of the punishment God has threatened to inflict on those who take it away. But it would have required another sermon to consider these reasons properly. We must let them go, therefore.

Before closing, however, I must say a word or two about this commandment. I suppose there is not one person here, however young, who has not broken it. I don't mean to say that we have all been murderers outright. But we have all had angry feelings towards others, and this has made us murderers in heart. We have all reason, therefore, to repent, before God, for the sin we have

committed in this respect. We should all pray earnestly for pardon for the past, and for grace to help us to do better for the future.

We may all learn a lesson on this subject from a little girl, of whom I was reading lately. Her name was Alice. One evening her mother had company, and her older sister, Sarah, took her up stairs to put her to bed.

As Sarah was undressing Alice, she noticed that she seemed very sad, and that tears were running down her cheeks. She asked her what was the matter; but Alice gave her no answer. "Tell me, child, what ails you," said Sarah. Still Alice said nothing; only she sighed, and seemed greatly troubled. When it was time to kneel down by her little bed and pray, Alice knelt, and bowed her head; but no words came from her lips. Sarah thought this was very strange. Then Alice arose, and crept into her bed, so silent, so sad, so tearful, that Sarah was frightened. She went down stairs and joined the company. There she seized the first opportunity of mentioning it to her mother.

"I will run up directly," said she, "and see what ails the child."

"She is not sick, mother," said her sister, "only it seems as if something were troubling her mind."

Presently the mother escaped from the parlour,

and went up to the chamber of her little one. She trod very softly, lest Alice might have fallen asleep ; but as she drew near she heard low sobs and cries.

“ My child,” said her mother, tenderly, stooping down to her bedside, “ what troubles you? Tell me.”

“ O mother! I am so glad you have come,” cried Alice, uncovering her head, and seizing her mother’s hand; “ I can’t say my prayers, and I can’t go to sleep.”

“ Do tell me what’s the matter with my dear daughter.”

“ O mother! I killed cousin Ruth in *my heart* to-day, I did;” and the tears flowed afresh. “ She got angry, and I wished her dead. *That makes me a murderer.* I can’t ask God’s forgiveness till I’ve made friends with Ruth. He won’t hear me, for my heart has had anger and hatred in it, and not love. O mother!” and the poor child wept as though her heart would break.

Her mother tried to comfort her, but there lay the cold, heavy weight of sin upon her bosom, and she could take no comfort.

“ Oh, if I could only see Ruth, and we could make friends, then I could pray, and go to sleep,” she said, piteously.

“ Mother, can’t I go to Ruth’s house?”

Her mother thought a moment. She felt that to help her child to think and feel rightly on this subject was the most important of all things. "Yes, my child, you shall go," she said.

Ah, if she had been one of those mothers who always send their children to bed in charge of servants, what a golden opportunity she would have lost of doing her child good!

Alice's father was called, who, wrapping his weeping child in a blanket, carried her into the next door house, where her cousin Ruth lived. She was taken to Ruth's bedside. It was a melting scene to witness the confession, the prayer for forgiveness, and the kiss of reconciliation. Then Alice wiped away her tears; and, laying her head on her father's shoulder, she asked to be carried home.

Once more in her own chamber, Alice kneeled down and prayed God to forgive her for the sin of hating Ruth. "Give me love in my heart," she cried earnestly, "because 'God is love;' and because it was love which made Jesus die on the cross for us; and oh, keep me from hating and killing anybody in my heart.

So did little Alice pray. Oh, what a prayer was that! Sin and conscience, love and hatred, had been fighting in her heart. But love gained the victory. Can we not remember feeling to-

wards somebody just as Alice felt towards Ruth? Let us learn from the example of Alice what to do. We should ask the forgiveness of those towards whom we have felt anger or hatred. Then we should ask God's forgiveness, and pray for his grace to take away all these wicked feelings from our hearts, and fill them with love. It is love to God, and love to our fellow-creatures, which makes us the children of God; and it is hatred, and anger, and strife, which make us the children of the devil. Let us remember the words of the hymn,—

“ Whene'er the angry passions rise,
 And tempt our thoughts and tongues to strife,
 To Jesus let us lift our eyes,
 Bright pattern of the Christian life.

His fair example let us trace,
 To teach us what we ought to be;
 Make us, by Thy transforming grace,
 Dear Saviour, daily more like thee.”

HYMN ON THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

OUR hands may not be red with blood,
 Yet we may murderers be;
 For every causeless, angry thought
 Is murder, Lord, with thee.
*Oh, then to Christ the Living Stream,
 We'll come without delay;
 And in the fountain of his blood,
 Wash all our guilt away.*

There's many a deed of murder done.
Where blood has ne'er been spilt ;
For angry thoughts and words are one
With deeds of crimson guilt.
Oh, then to Christ, &c.

Yes! in our hearts we often kill,
And think the deed unknown ;
Forgetting that each secret thought
Is spoken at thy throne.
Oh, then to Christ, &c.

Great God ! we cannot fully tell
How such a thing can be ;
We only feel *how much of sin*
Within us thou must see !
Oh, then to Christ, &c.

VIII.

The Seventh Commandment.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”—EXOD. xx. 14.

I HAVE not written a sermon on this commandment, because it is not so much adapted for children, as for older persons. Many things that it refers to can only be understood by grown-up people. The seventh commandment is intended to preserve us from all impurity of heart and life. It requires us to be modest and virtuous in all our thoughts and feelings, as well as in our actions and our dress. It forbids the use of any indecent language; the reading of books, or looking at pictures, that contain anything immoral or impure. It would lead us all to seek and maintain—

“A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good.
A copy, Lord, of thine.”

IX.

The Eighth Commandment.

“Thou shalt not steal.”—EXOD. xx. 15.

WE read in ancient history of a king, who, when he published his laws, had them written on plates of brass, but set up on pillars so high that the people could not read them. Still, if they did not keep the laws he made, he said he would punish them. This was very unreasonable. It was very wicked. How differently from this God acted in publishing his laws! He first came down upon the top of Mount Sinai, and spoke the words of his laws in a voice like thunder. All the people around the mountain heard distinctly every word he said. Then he wrote his laws on tables of stone, that wouldn't wear out, so that the people might always have a copy of them near at hand, and read, and understand them. And now, we have these laws printed in our Bibles. And these Bibles we have always near us. They are in our churches, in our schools, and in our homes, so that we can turn to them at any time, and find out just what God wants us to do, or not to do.

God's laws are not only easy to get at, but they are very plain when we do get at them. They are very short, and very simple. When we read the laws that men make, they are wrapt up in so many words, and some of them are such strange words, that it is very hard, oftentimes, to find out the meaning of them. What could be shorter, or more simple, than this eighth commandment, which contains God's great law against stealing?

"Thou shalt not steal."

Four little words make it up. There is not a single unnecessary letter in it. It is so plain that anybody can understand it. I suppose the youngest scholar in an infant school can tell what it means.

In speaking about this commandment, the chief thing to be considered is the different ways in which it may be broken.

You know it often happens, when you are going along a road, that you find it dividing itself into two or more roads. These are called branches or forks, of the road. The road, or way we are considering now, that is, the way of breaking the eighth commandment, divides itself into *five* forks, or branches. These represent five different ways in which this commandment may be broken, or five different ways of stealing.

Suppose we call these forks by the first five letters of the alphabet. Then we shall have *fork A*, *fork B*, *fork C*, *fork D*, and *fork E*.

FORK A—*is the way of stealing by FORGETFULNESS.*

Somebody said once that “man is a bundle of habits.” This is true. Some of these habits are good habits, but a great many more are bad ones. Among these bad habits none is so common as a bad memory. This is the habit of forgetting things. People with these bad memories borrow things from their neighbours and friends, and forget to return them. Now, to the persons who lend those things, it is just as bad as if a thief should come into their house and steal them. Umbrellas, and books, and things of that kind, are most likely to suffer in this way. Let me show you how it happens.

Here is Mr. John Smith. He breaks the commandment by going through fork A. For instance, John Smith is going to his shop one day, when he is overtaken by a shower of rain. He stops under an awning at first, but the rain pours on. Presently, he says to himself, “What shall I do? I can’t stay here all day, and yet I don’t want to get wet through. Ah! I see, there is my friend Johnson’s; I’ll just step in there and borrow an umbrella.” He gets the umbrella,

promising to see it safely returned. He carries it home, puts it on the hat-stand in the entry, or in the closet under the stairs, and forgets all about it. There is no mark upon the umbrella to show whose it is. It is never returned; and so Mr. Johnson loses his umbrella. Isn't it all the same to him as if his umbrella had been stolen? Certainly. Mr. John Smith would be offended if any one should call him a *thief*. Yet *practically* he is just as bad. - Perhaps you are ready to say, "Ah! but he didn't *intend* to steal; he only forgot. He merely had a bad memory." Yes, but then he should *not* forget. He has no business to have a bad memory. He could help this if he chose. Do you suppose he ever forgets when breakfast or dinner-time comes? Do you think he has a bad memory when other people borrow umbrellas from him? Oh, no. His memory is excellent then. This shows that people *can* control their memory if they want to do so. Memory is a thing of habit. We can get *into* the habit of forgetting things if we are not careful; and we can get *out* of it if we try properly. If we neglect to try, then we shall break this commandment by going through the fork A, which is the way of forgetfulness.

Take another case. Here are two boys, James and Robert. They both go a good deal through

this fork A. They both have bad memories. James is spending an evening with Robert. Robert shows him his Christmas presents. Among these is a beautiful set of Abbot's Historical Works. The last of the series James has never read. He asks the loan of it, promising to take great care of it, and return it the next time he comes to see Robert. The book is lent; but Robert forgets to put down, on a piece of paper, the name of the book and of the person who borrows it. *Everybody should do this who lends books.* James takes the book home, reads it about half through, gets tired of it, puts it away on one of the upper shelves of the book-case, and *forgets* to return it. The book never gets back to its owner. Robert finds, after a while, that one book is missing out of his set of Abbot's Works; but he can't remember who borrowed it.

Borrowing is just as bad as stealing in such cases. I have had a good-sized library of books stolen from me in this way. What a good thing it would be if all the people who travel over this fork A, would, every once in a while, overhaul their hat-stands, and closets, and book-shelves, to find out what things they have there which do not belong to them, and return these to their proper owners. I should have to put up some new shelves in my library if I could only get

all my lost books back again. The *fork A*, or *forgetfulness*, is one branch of the way in which the eighth commandment is broken.

FORK B, or CUNNING, is another branch of it.

Did you ever see a counterfeit bank note? This is a note which somebody has made to look so much like a good note, that most people are not able to tell the difference. It passes for a good note, though it is not worth a straw. And gold and silver coin are counterfeited in the same manner. The people who make them think themselves very cunning. But they are not a bit better than thieves.

Counterfeiting, or forgery, is a great sin. Formerly forgers and counterfeiters used to be hung; but now they are banished, when caught and proved guilty. And those who *pass* counterfeit money, if they know it, are just as bad as those who make it. Sometimes you hear people say, "Well, we took it for good money, and therefore we have a right to pass it again." But this is not true. If they take it for good money, and pass it away again before they discover that it is bad, then, of course, they are not to blame. But if they find out that it is bad, then they cannot attempt to pass it without breaking the eighth commandment.

But a great many other things may be coun-

terfeited, as well as money. You have all heard of the Yankee pedlar, who made wooden nutmegs, and sold them for real ones. This was counterfeiting; it was stealing, or breaking the eighth commandment by *cunning*. And this is true of every way in which people get up an imitation of something that is real, and valuable, and sell it for the real thing.

You know how men who deal in horses, will take a horse that is diseased, and good for nothing, and manage to hide his faults, or the symptoms of his disease, and then sell him for a good horse. In a day or two the purchaser finds that he is of no use. So jewellery, and such like things, are made of brass, and sold for gold. So medicines are sold, as warranted to cure certain diseases, when those who make them know they have no more power to cure such diseases than so much water; and perhaps not half as much. All these are only so many different ways of stealing, or breaking the eighth commandment. And there are scores of such ways in which people are said to live by their wits.

This fork B takes in all the various tricks and contrivances by which cunning men manage to get money out of people, without giving them anything really valuable in return. They may get rich in this way, and think themselves very

clever, and pride themselves for their cunning; but they are no better than thieves and robbers after all. When God shall come to reckon with them at last, they will find that the real name for what they called *cleverness* was *stealing*. This is the name by which God calls it. Oh, there are great multitudes of people found breaking the eighth commandment along this fork B.

Very many of the shows and exhibitions, the pretended inventions and discoveries of which we hear so much, in our large cities, belong to this branch of our subject. This fork B is the place for them. It takes in all who try to get money by anything that may properly be called a *humbug*, instead of by honest labour.

We pass on now to FORK C. Here we find all those who break the eighth commandment by DECEIT.

Sometimes this deceit leads people to keep back money that belongs to others when they think it won't be discovered.

A very good story in illustration of this is told of the Duke of Buccleuch, a Scotch nobleman. One day the duke had bought a cow in the neighbourhood of Dalkeith, where he lived. The cow was to be sent home the next morning. Early in the morning the duke was taking a walk in a very common dress. As he went along he saw a boy trying, in vain, to drive the cow to his

residence. The cow was very unruly, and the poor boy couldn't get on with her at all. The boy, not knowing the duke, bawled out to him in the broad Scotch accent, "Hie, mun, come here and gie's a han' wi' this beast." The duke walked slowly on, not seeming to notice the boy, who still kept calling for his help. At last, finding he couldn't get on with the cow, he cried out in distress, "Come here, mun, and help us, and as sure as anything I'll gie ye half I get."

The duke went and lent a helping hand.

"And now," said the duke, as they trudged along after the cow, "how much do ye think ye'll get for the job?"

"I dinna ken," said the boy; "but I'm sure o' something, for the folk up at the big house are gude to a' body."

As they came to a lane near the house the duke slipped away from the boy and entered by a different way. Calling a servant, he put a sovereign into his hand, saying, "Give that to the boy who brought the cow."

He then returned to the end of the lane where he had parted from the boy, so as to meet him on his way back. "Well, how much did you get?" asked the duke. "A shilling," said the boy, "and there's half o' it to ye." "But surely you got more than a shilling," said the duke. "No,"

said the boy, "that's a' I got; and d'ye no think it's plenty?" "I do not," said the duke; "there must be some mistake; and as I am acquainted with the duke, if you return I think I'll get you more."

They went back. The duke rang the bell and ordered all the servants to be assembled. "Now," said the duke to the boy, "point me out the person who gave you the shilling." "It was that chap there with the apron," said he, pointing to the butler. The butler fell on his knees, confessed his fault, and begged to be forgiven; but the duke indignantly ordered him to give the boy the sovereign and quit his service immediately. "You have lost," said the duke, "your money, your situation, and your character, by your deceitfulness; learn for the future that honesty is the best policy." The boy now found out who it was that had helped him to drive the cow; and the duke was so pleased with the manliness and honesty of the boy that he sent him to school, and provided for him at his own expense.

This butler was in fork C. He broke the commandment by *deceit*, and trying to keep back from another what belonged to him when he thought he would not be found out.

Merchants and shopkeepers are very much tempted to go through fork C, by representing their goods as better than they are, or by not

telling frankly the imperfections of the goods when they know all about them.

For instance, a lady goes into a shop to buy a dress. She finds one of the colour she wants. If she could be sure the colours would not fade she would take it. She says to the shopkeeper, "Will these colours stand?" "Oh yes, madam, they are the very best colours to wear. They will stand as long as the dress lasts." The lady buys the dress on this assurance, though all the while the shopkeeper knows the colours will not stand at all. In this way he steals the lady's money. That man's place is in fork C.

A countryman placed his son in a silk mercer's shop in a large town. For a time all went well. One day a lady came into the shop to purchase a silk dress, and the young man waited on her. She liked the article. The price was agreed upon, and he began to unfold and measure off the goods. While he was doing this he discovered a flaw in the silk. The lady did not notice it. He might have sold it without saying anything about it. Many a shopkeeper would have done so. But this young man was honest. He understood the meaning of the eighth commandment. He did not belong to fork C. He said to the lady, "Madam, I deem it my duty to tell you that this silk is imperfect; I have just discovered a flaw in

it." Of course the lady didn't take it. She left the shop without buying anything.

The shopkeeper saw what had taken place, and was very angry. He wrote at once to the father of the young man, asking him to come and take his son away; "for," said he, "he will never make a good shopman."

The father, who had great confidence in his son, was very much grieved, and hastened to the city to find out what was the matter. "What do you mean by saying my son will not make a good shopman?" he asked.

"I mean he has no tact," was the answer. "Only a day or two ago he told a lady, who was buying a piece of silk, that the goods were damaged, and I lost the bargain. Now, sir, that is no way to do business. Purchasers must look out for themselves. If they don't see what is wrong about the goods, it would be foolishness for me to point it out."

"And is that all the fault you have to find with my son?" asked the father.

"Yes, sir, he is very well in other respects."

"Then I love my son better than ever, and I thank you for telling me of this matter; but I wouldn't have him another day in your shop for the world."

Now I do not mean to imply that people who

keep shops are more apt to do business in this way than any other people. I know many honourable men among them, who would rather never sell another piece of goods than do as this man wanted his young man to do. But you will find some people in every branch of business who are ready to act in just this way. They call it having business tact, or talent. God calls it *stealing*—breaking the eighth commandment. If we could go along one of our business streets and find out who, among the shopkeepers, act as this silk mercer acted, I wonder how many signs there would be, on the corner of which might be written, Fork C! This class takes in all who break the eighth commandment by *deceit*.

But now we go a few steps further, and take a turn into FORK D. In this branch of the way we find those who break the commandment by EXTORTION.

This word means wringing, or squeezing out.

All those people are found in this fork who are never willing to give a fair price for anything. There is a very large class of this sort of people. If you go a shopping with them you find them always trying to beat down the price of things. No matter whether the price is high or low, they want to get it a *little lower*. They do not consider whether the price asked for a thing is a fair, honest price or not; however low it may be they

are not satisfied unless it is put lower still. If an article worth five shillings is offered them for half-a-crown, they will offer two shillings.

Here is a lady belonging to fork D. She wants some strawberries. There is a poor girl going by with a basketful on her head. She stops the girl at the front door and asks the price of her strawberries.

“Sixpence a basket, ma’am,” says the girl.

“I’ll take six baskets if you’ll let me have them for fourpence.

“Indeed, ma’am, that’ll take away all my profit.”

“Well, I won’t give you a penny more.”

The big tears roll down the cheeks of the poor girl as she measures out the strawberries. She has a poor widowed mother, with a sick little baby brother, at home, who have nothing to depend on but what she makes by selling her berries. The shilling which the rich lady has wrung from her,—might I not say *stolen* from her?—would have been, oh, such a help and comfort to them! And yet this lady will go out, by-and-by, and spend pounds by the dozen on herself for things that she really does not need at all. This is cruel. It is mean. It is wicked. This is what the Bible calls oppressing the poor, or “*grinding the faces of the poor;*” and God

threatens dreadful things against those who do it. That lady little thinks that she is breaking the eighth commandment over the head and heart of that poor girl. But she is; and when God comes to reckon with her she will find it out.

FORK D, in big letters, ought to be written over her door.

But people along this fork break the commandment *by not giving those who work for them as much wages as they deserve; and, by not paying them their wages when due.*

The labour of poor people is all they have in the world. It is their fortune. To take this away from them is the worst kind of stealing. What multitudes of women in all our large cities get their living by making shirts, vests, or pantaloons, and see what they get for their labour.

I find that for making men's thick heavy coats they get seventy-five cents a-piece.* It must take a woman at least two days to make one of these.

For making thick cassimere trousers, full trimmed, they get only thirty-seven and a half cents. A woman would have to work very hard to finish *one* of these in a day.

For making summer pantaloons thy get from ten to fifteen cents a pair.

* A cent is a halfpenny of our money. There are five dollars in £1 sterling.

In a recent report of the Union Benevolent Society of this city, a visitor states that she visited a family, the mother of which was making fine shirts, all but the bosoms, for which she received *one dollar a dozen!* I suppose it would be impossible for any woman to make more than one shirt a-day, if she kept close at it, sewing hard from morning till night. This would give her *eight cents and a half for a hard day's work!* These are simple facts.*

If this is not stealing, what is it? It is the worst kind of stealing,—stealing the health and life of poor destitute women!

But, perhaps, some of you are ready to say, “Well, we are only children, mere boys and girls; we don't hire working men and women, and what is the use of talking to us about these things?”

Yes, I know many of you are but children, only boys and girls now. But do you always expect to be children? Are you going to remain boys and girls for ever? No. By-and-by you will be men and women, fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses; then you will have servants and

* The payment for common needlework is, in many cases, no better in this country. Coarse linen coats, such as are worn by painters and other workmen, are made as low as 10d.; striped shirts for 5d. and 6d.; fine shirt bodies without neck or front 3d. to 3½d.; boy's white shirts, 6d.; men's night shirts, 6d.

working people to hire. And I am preaching to you about these commandments for the future, and not for the present. I want you to be better men and women, better fathers and mothers, better masters and mistresses than those who have gone before you.

Now think of the hundreds and thousands of poor women who are working early and late, using up their fingers, and eyes, and energies, for such a miserable pittance as that just spoken of above. How shameful it is! They are actually digging their graves with their fingers, while others are getting rich by them. Well might one of England's poets write a song about it. It was called "The Song of the Shirt." It described a poor woman at her work in this way,—

“ With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch—stitch—stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,
She sang the 'Song of the Shirt.'

“ Work—work—work!
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work!
Till the eyes are heavy and dim.
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

“ Work—work—work!
 My labour never flags;
 And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
 A crust of bread—and rags.
 That shattered roof—and this naked floor—
 A table—a broken chair—
 And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
 For sometimes falling there.

“ Work—work—work!
 From weary chime to chime;
 Work—work—work!
 As prisoners work for crime.
 Band, and gusset, and seam,
 Seam, and gusset, and band,
 Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed,
 As well as the weary hand.”

Who can help feeling the greatest pity for multitudes of poor women who are suffering all the dreadful evils which this song so touchingly describes?

A great many rich people break this commandment in the way of which we are now speaking. If we should go through the streets in which our wealthy people live, how many we should find on whose elegant marble or brown stone houses we might write, *Fork D*; the meaning of which would be—This man got rich by extortion; that is, by making the poor labour for him, and not giving them the pay that their labour deserved.

And then other people in Fork D break this commandment by not paying the poor their wages as soon as they are due.

For instance, here is a lady who has had a beautiful silk dress made. She is going to a party. She puts it on, and goes into company, and enjoys herself; but the poor dressmaker is not paid. The lady does not intend to cheat her out of the money. She says to herself, "It's only a few shillings. It doesn't make any difference. I'll pay her some other time." It makes no difference to the rich lady; but it makes a *wonderful difference to the poor woman.*

Perhaps it is winter, and her fuel is all gone, and she has to sit shivering in the cold, because the money which the rich lady owes her for making that dress is not paid. Perhaps she is without food, and she and her children have to go hungry to bed, because that rich lady has neglected to pay her what she owes. She groans and cries in her misery. God hears those cries, and writes them in his book against that thoughtless lady. Just hear what the Bible says about this: "Behold, the hire of the labourers, which is of you *kept back*, crieth; and the cries are entered into the ears of the Lord" (James v. 4).

Do you know that God made a law among the Jews about this very thing? You will find it in Deuteronomy xxiv. 15. This law required the Jews always to pay those who had been working for them, *before the sun went down.* How kind

and tender God is, to think about the poor, and take care of them in this way!

When you grow up to be men and women, be sure that you always pay the poor *well* who work for you. Yes, and pay them *at once*. There is an old proverb which says, "He gives *twice* who gives *quickly*." And it is just as true of paying. But don't wait till you grow up. Talk about this matter at home now. Don't live in fork D yourselves; and if you can help it, don't let any of those about you live in it.

People in fork D break this commandment by *extortion*.

FORK E is the only other branch of this subject that we shall speak of. Those who dwell in this fork break the commandment by VIOLENCE and FRAUD.

The word *violence* here takes in all the burglars or housebreakers, the thieves and highway robbers, who are locked up in our prisons or are prowling about our streets. It requires no argument to prove that these people break the commandment; we are all agreed about this. I have no fear that any of you will be found in this fork. It is very seldom, indeed, that those who have been taught in Sabbath schools when young are ever found at last in such company as this.

But the other side of this fork E takes in a

great many of what are called the most wealthy and respectable of our people. They break the eighth commandment by *fraud*, or *cheating*.

Sometimes we hear that a bank is broken. We ask what caused that bank to fail? It turns out that the president and directors of the bank took the money which was put in it, and used it in business, as if it had been their own. Perhaps they didn't intend to keep the money. They meant to put it back again by-and-by. But their business didn't succeed. The money was lost. They never could get it again to put back. And when the poor widows and orphans, whose money had been put in the bank, to be kept safely, came to ask for it, it was *not there*. The bank had failed. The money was lost.

Now, those directors and officials had no more right to take this money, and use it in this way, than they had to go and break open another bank and steal the money locked up in it. Man's law won't punish those men. It calls their conduct only "a breach of trust." God's law calls it *stealing*. Those men break the eighth commandment just as truly as the midnight robber does, who creeps into your house and steals away your money while you are asleep.

Officers of government are often found living in this fork E. Sometimes we read in the news-

papers about some public officer who had money to collect for the government. He disappears suddenly from home. He has gone to America or to Australia. What is the matter? Why, he owes some £5000 or £10,000 to the government, and he can't pay it. But how did he come to owe the government all that money? He took that much money, which belonged to the government, and used it for himself, and now he can't put it back again. Well, what is he called in the newspapers? He is called "*a defaulter!*" A defaulter! That doesn't sound so very ill. It seems to speak of him as if he were not much to blame. It represents him as guilty of only a slight mistake, a trifling *fault*. He is *only* "a defaulter!"

But the real meaning of this word, when applied to such a man, is *thief* or *robber!*

Remember, my dear children, as long as you live, that if éver you have any money left in your charge belonging to another person, you have no more right to use that money as your own than you have to break into your neighbour's house and steal his money.

The people in fork E break this commandment by *violence* and *fraud*.

Thus we have gone through five different forks. Let us see if we can recollect them, and the way in which the commandment is broken in each of

them. FORK A, BY FORGETFULNESS; FORK B, BY CUNNING; FORK C, BY DECEIT? FORK D, BY EXTORTION; FORK E, BY VIOLENCE AND FRAUD.

There is a very important question to be considered in closing this subject. The question is, *How shall we keep out of these forks?*

There are two things for us to do if we would keep out of them. We must resist little *temptations*. This is one thing to do. Everything must have a beginning. I remember reading once about a man who was going to be hung for robbery and murder. On the scaffold he said he began to steal by taking a farthing from his mother's pocket while she was asleep. Many children begin to steal at the sugar-bowl or the cake-basket. To take the *smallest* thing that does not belong to us without permission is stealing.

A little girl was once taken by her mother into a shop. As she stood there she saw a basket of oranges exposed for sale. They looked ripe and juicy. While her mother was engaged in another part of the store, she kept looking at the oranges. They made her mouth water. The thought came into her mind, Oh, I wish I had one of them! This was the beginning of the temptation. She ought to have resisted this, and turned away from them. But she didn't. She kept looking at them. The longer she looked the more she wanted

one. At length, watching an opportunity, when no one saw her, she took an orange, hid it under her apron, and walked away. In a moment her conscience began to trouble her. She felt very uncomfortable. Presently she went quietly to the basket and put the orange back in its place. Still she kept looking at it. She was tempted again to take it, and again she put it back.

As she walked home with her mother she looked and felt very sad. When they were alone she burst into tears, and said, "O mother, I've *cracked* one of the commandments! I didn't break it—indeed I didn't *quite* break it, mother; but I'm sure I cracked it."

This little girl did very right in putting the orange back. She broke the commandment in heart though not in action. But if she had resisted the *beginning* of the temptation, by turning away from the orange the moment she felt a desire for it, she would not even have broken it in heart. We must *resist little temptations* if we would keep out of the different forks in which this commandment is broken.

And then there is another thing to do. *We must pray to God to keep us from temptation.* This is what Jesus has taught us to do every day when, in using the Lord's prayer, we say, "Lead us not into temptation."

There was a good man once named John Bradford. Whenever he saw any one taken to prison or to the gallows, he used to say, "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford." He meant to say, that if God had not kept him from the way of temptation, or given him grace to resist it, he too might have been a thief or a murderer. And this is true of us all. If we would not be found breaking this commandment, we must pray to God to keep us from temptation, or to give us grace to resist it. We can do nothing right without God's help. In everything, then, that we do, and especially in our attempts to keep his commandments, we must always pray for the help of God's grace and Holy Spirit. There is a beautiful Collect in the Prayer-Book, very suitable to use after thinking about God's commandments. It is the Collect for the First Sunday after Trinity. Here it is —

"O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

HYMN ON THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

CHILDREN, can you tell me who
This command of God breaks through?
Only he who picks and steals?
Or the wish to do so feels?

If I should, when all alone,
Something from another take;
Would my sin to God be known?
Would I this commandment break;
Yes, the eye of God can see,
In the dark as in the light;
I should just as guilty be,
As if thousands saw the sight.

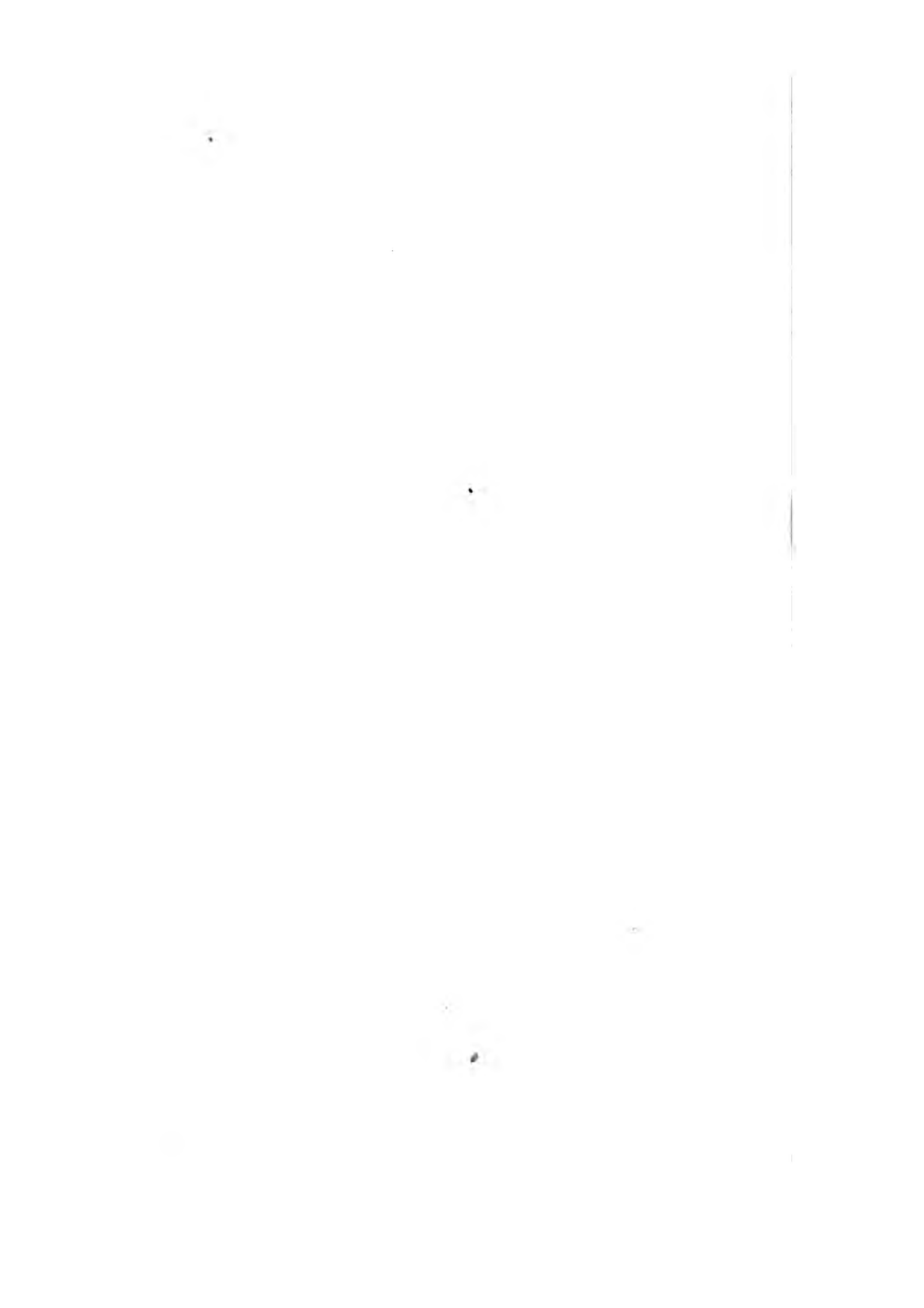
If I should refuse to give
Words and deeds of love to men;
Though I might as others live?
Would I not be stealing then?
Yes, for I to all men owe
Active love for Jesus's sake;
When I do not this bestow,
Then I this commandment break.

Higher yet this sin extends—
For it steals the Spirit's love,
From the very best of Friends:
Robbing e'en the God above!
Save us from *this* sin we pray:—
Help us, Lord, to love thee more;
Teach us to begin to-day,
If we have not loved before!



THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

Yes, the eye of God can see,
In the dark as in the light;
I should just as guilty be,
As if thousands saw the sight.



X.

The Ninth Commandment.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”—
EXODUS xx. 16.

THIS commandment is about bearing witness. At once the question arises, What is to bear witness? As commonly understood, this refers to what takes place in courts of law, where a person is being tried for some offence with which he is charged.

Suppose you are in the market. While you are standing there, two men begin to quarrel. From words they fall to blows. At last one of them draws a dagger and stabs the other. If the wounded man dies, the other will be brought into court, by-and-by, to be tried for his life. Then you, and the rest of the people who saw the fight would be summoned into court as witnesses. This means, that you would have to stand up there and tell all that you knew about the quarrel—everything that you saw and heard. When you were telling this you would be bearing witness. If you gave a correct account, you would

be a true witness; but if you kept back part of what you saw and heard, or told about it differently from the way in which it took place, then you would be bearing false witness. It is a great sin to bear false witness, because before a person begins to speak as a witness, he is obliged to take a solemn oath that he will tell nothing but the truth; and to tell a lie after this is very dreadful. Simple-minded persons and very young children are not allowed to appear as witnesses in court, because they are not supposed to understand how solemn the oath is which they are required to take before they speak as witnesses.

Not very long ago, a little girl, only nine years old, was brought forward as a witness in the trial of a person for stealing. The robbery had been committed in the house of the little girl's father. She had seen it. Her testimony was very important. The lawyer who was defending the thief didn't want this little girl to appear as a witness; he knew that what she had to say would be very much against his side of the question. So when she was brought in, he said to her,—

“Emily, do you know the nature of an oath?”

“I don't know what you mean, sir,” said she.

“*There*, may it please your honour,” said the

lawyer to the judge; "she doesn't understand the nature of an oath. Is not this sufficient evidence that she is not fit for a witness? Her evidence cannot be taken."

"Let us see," said the judge. "Come here, my little girl. Tell me if you have ever taken an oath?"

The red blood rose to her face and neck at the very thought of it, as she answered,—

"No, sir."

"I do not mean a profane oath," said the judge. "Were you ever a witness in court before?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know what book this is?" said the judge, handing her a Bible.

"Yes, sir; it is the Bible."

"Have you ever read that book?"

"Yes, sir; I read it every evening."

"Do you know what the Bible is, my child?"

"It is the word of the great God."

"Now, my little dear, place your hand upon this book."

She put her hand upon it tremblingly. He then repeated to her the form of the oath taken by one who is to be a witness. With her hand upon the Bible, she said, "I do solemnly swear that what I am now about to say, is the truth,

the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God."

"Now, my dear," said the judge, "you have sworn as a witness. Do you know what the result will be if you do not speak the truth?"

"Yes, sir."

"What?"

"I shall be locked up in the prison."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, sir. I cannot go to heaven."

"How do you know that?"

She took the Bible, ran her fingers over the leaves, and turned to the twentieth chapter of Exodus, the sixteenth verse, and read, "'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' I learned that," said she, "before I could read the Bible."

"Has any one told you that you were to be a witness in this case?" asked the judge.

"Yes, sir. After mother heard that I was to be called, she took me to her room, and asked me to tell her the ten commandments; and mother and I knelt down and prayed that I might understand how wicked it was to bear false witness against a neighbour, and that God would help me to tell the truth if I had to go to court to-morrow. And when I went away, mother kissed me, and said to me, 'Remember the ninth commandment,

and remember that whatever you say in court, God hears every word of it.”

“Do you believe this?” asked the judge, while a tear glistened in his eye, and his lip quivered with emotion.

“Yes, sir,” said the child, in a way which showed that she meant what she said.

“God bless you, my child!” said the judge. “You have a good mother. This witness is competent,” he added. “If I were on trial for my life to-day, and innocent of the charge, I would pray God to give me such a witness as this child. Let her be examined.”

This little girl told the truth when she was called upon to speak as a witness in court. But we should feel as if we were in court at all times when we open our lips to speak. This world is like a great court. God is the judge. Whenever we speak, we speak as witnesses about some person or thing. God, the judge, has a great book in which he writes down everything we say. Whenever we say anything that is not true we are bearing false witness. God says, “For every idle word we speak, we must give account in the day of judgment.” And if for every *idle* word, much more for every *false* word.

This commandment requires us, as the Catechism says, “to keep our tongues from evil

speaking, lying, and slandering." Slandering means saying anything that will injure the character of another person. Those who do this break the commandment.

There was a company of ladies once at the house of a clergyman. As he entered the room, he heard them speaking in a low voice of an absent friend. "She's very odd," says one. "Yes, very singular indeed," says another. "Do you know she often does so-and-so," says a third, mentioning certain things to her discredit. The clergyman asked who it was. When told, he said, "Oh yes, she *is* odd; she's *very* odd; she's remarkably singular. Why, would you believe it?" he added in a slow, impressive manner—"*she was never heard to speak ill of any absent friends!*"

A clergyman was once examining the children of an infant school upon the commandments. He put his hand on the head of a little boy, and said, "My little man, can you tell me what the ninth commandment means by 'bearing false witness against your neighbour?'"

The boy hesitated a while, and then said, "It means telling lies, sir."

The minister didn't exactly like this answer, so looking at a little girl, who stood next to him, he asked, "What do *you* say?"

Without waiting a moment, she replied, "It's when nobody does nothing, and somebody goes and tells of it."

"Very good," said the minister.

The little girl's answer was a very funny one, but the little boy's was true. Bearing false witness is telling lies, and telling lies is bearing false witness. We break the ninth commandment every time we tell a lie. We sometimes hear people talk about different kinds of lies. They call some *little* lies, and others *big* lies; some *white* lies, and others *black* lies. But the Bible only speaks of one kind of lies. Every lie that is spoken is big enough and black enough to break the ninth commandment.

This commandment is so plain that it needs very little explanation. In talking about it, then, it will only be necessary to give some reasons why we should not tell a lie or bear false witness. I wish to speak of reasons why we should not break this commandment; and I wish you to remember that whether I speak of breaking this commandment, or of bearing false witness, or of lying, I mean the same thing.

The first reason why we should never bear false witness, or tell a lie, is, because it is a **MEAN** thing.

Who was the first person of whom we know,

that ever told a lie? Satan. Where was this lie told? In the garden of Eden. Satan bore false witness against God. He contradicted God. He told Eve that she would not die if she ate of the forbidden fruit—that it would do her good instead of harm. Satan will be known for ever as the *first liar*. This is the reason why the Bible calls him “the father of lies.”

In this way he got Adam and Eve turned out of Eden, and filled the world with misery, sorrow, and death.

Satan did this out of spite. Adam and Eve had done him no harm; but because he was miserable himself, he couldn't bear to see anybody else happy. So, without being able to do himself any good, he tried to do them the greatest harm that he could.

But every liar or slanderer, every one who bears false witness, is becoming like Satan. To lie is to do Satan's work. This is his mark. Who wants to bear it? It is one of the meanest of all things—it is a shameful, a disgraceful thing to tell a lie. There is no greater offence that can be given to a respectable, honourable person, than to call him a liar; and the reason is, that all such persons know how mean and contemptible a thing it is to tell a lie.

When some miserable wretch is hung on the

gallows, because he is so wicked that he is not fit to live in decent society, wouldn't you be offended if any one should tell you that you were like him? Certainly. But Satan is the meanest and wickedest of all creatures, and there is nothing that helps to make us like him more than lying.

It is said that there is one place in India where, when a person is found guilty of lying, he is taken to a public place, and in the presence of a multitude of people, his mouth is sewed up.

A gentleman once sent his servant to market, with the direction to bring home the *best* thing he could find. He carried home a tongue. He was sent again with the direction to bring home the *worst* thing he could find. Again he brought home a tongue. This was right; for the tongue is the best thing in the world when properly used, or the worst when not so used. The Bible calls it our "*glory*," when used to speak the truth, and to praise God. But when used for lying and swearing, it calls it "*a fire, a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*" A false tongue is a disgraceful thing, but one that speaks the truth is an honour and glory.

Let me give you an example of this.

There was once a little boy named Duncan. The boys used to call him "*True Duncan*," because he would never tell a lie. One day, dur-

ing recess, he was playing with an axe in the school yard, and while he was chopping a stick, the teacher's cat, old Tabby, came along. Duncan let the axe fall right on poor Tabby's back, and killed her.

What to do he knew not. She was the master's pet, and used to sit on a cushion at his side while he was hearing the lessons.

Duncan stood and looked at the dead creature. His face grew red, and the tears stood in his eyes. All the boys came running up, and every one had something to say. One of them was heard whispering to the others thus—

“Now, boys, we'll see whether Duncan can't make up a fib as well as the rest of us.”

“Not he,” said Tom Pooley, who was Duncan's friend. “Not he ; I'll warrant you Duncan will be as true as gold.”

John Jones stepped up, and taking the cat by the tail, said, “Here, boys, I'll just fling her into the lane, and we can tell Mr. Cole that the butcher's dog killed her ; you know he worried her last week.”

Some of them thought that this would do very well. But Duncan looked quite angry. His cheeks swelled, and his face grew redder than before.

“No !” said he ; “no ! Do you think I

would *lie* for such a creature as that? It would be a *lie*—a LIE!” Each time he used the word his voice grew louder.

Then he picked up the poor thing in his arms and carried her into the school-room. The boys followed to see what would happen.

The master looked up, and said, “What is this? my poor Tabby killed? Who could have done me such an injury?”

All were silent for a little while. As soon as Duncan could get his voice, he said—

“Mr. Cole, I am very sorry—but here is the truth. I killed poor Tabby. Indeed, sir, I am *very* sorry. I ought to have been more careful, for I saw her rubbing her side against the log. I am more sorry than I can tell, sir.”

Every one expected to see Mr. Cole get very angry, take down his cane, and give Duncan a sound thrashing. But instead of this he put on a pleasant smile, and said,—

“Duncan, you are a brave boy! I saw and heard all that passed in the yard from my window above. I had rather lose a hundred cats than miss such an example of truth and honour in my school. Your best reward is what you now feel in your own conscience; but I beg you to accept this handsome pen-knife as a token of my approbation.”

Duncan took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes.

The boys couldn't keep silence any longer; and when Tom Pooley cried, "Three cheers for True Duncan," they all joined, and made the school-house ring with a hearty hurrah.

The teacher then said: "My boys, I am glad you know what is right, and that you approve it; though I am afraid some of you could not have done it. Learn from this time that nothing can make a lie necessary. Suppose Duncan had taken your evil advice, and come to me with a lie, it would have been instantly detected, and instead of the honour of truth, he would have had only the shame of falsehood."

We should never bear false witness, or tell a lie, because it is a *mean* thing.

The second reason why we should not do it is, because it is an UNPROFITABLE thing.

People generally expect to make something when they tell a lie. They think it will be profitable to them.

You remember about Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. When Naaman was cured of his leprosy by the prophet, he felt so thankful that he wanted the man of God to take ever so much money from him. But Elisha refused to take anything. Gehazi thought this was very foolish. It seemed

to him like a good opportunity to get some money. So he ran after Naaman, told him a lie, and asked for a talent of silver and two suits of clothes, in the name of his master. He said his master wanted these for two of the sons of the prophets who had just come to see him. A talent of silver was worth about £300. Poor students must have been pretty well off then if they were in the habit of receiving such princely presents. Naaman was so glad to think he was cured of his dreadful leprosy, that he was ready to give away almost anything he was asked for. He made Gehazi take two suits of clothes, and two talents of silver, instead of one. I know not how much the clothing was worth, but the two talents of silver were worth about £600. And when Gehazi had got these treasures carried to his home, and stowed safely away, we may imagine how he rejoiced at the thought of his gains.

“A pretty good day’s work!” he may have said to himself. “They may talk as they please about the *unprofitableness* of lying. I think I’ve done quite a profitable business to-day!”

But wait a little. He goes into the room where his master is. Elisha looks sternly at him, and asks, “Where have you been, Gehazi?”

“Nowhere, sir,” says the miserable man, used

to lying now, but trembling and turning deadly pale. Then Elisha told him what he had done, and gave him a *lecture on lying*, the latter part of which at least he would never forget. It ended in these dreadful words, "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever!" As quick as lightning the fearful disease broke out upon him. "And he went out from the presence of Elisha, a leper, as white as snow."

Poor Gehazi! You have lost your situation, your health, your character, all at once! What do you think of lying now? I am very sure if he could speak to us now, in answer to this question, he would say,—

"I can tell you from my own experience, children, that lying is unprofitable."

And Ananias and Sapphira could tell us something about this matter too if they could speak to us. And what multitudes besides could testify to the same thing!

A shopkeeper has a piece of damaged goods which he wishes to be rid of. A person comes into his shop, and offers to buy it if he will warrant it to be a good article. Now, he thinks he can profit by telling a lie. He says it is of the very best quality, sound, and good. He sells the article. The purchaser finds he is deceived. He

says to himself, "I'll never buy anything at that shop again!" And thus, without any reference to the sin he committed, his lying is unprofitable.

A fashionable lady was one day busy doing something in which she did not wish to be interrupted. She called her servant, and said, "James, I wish to be undisturbed to-day. If anybody calls for me, tell them *I am not at home.*"

How many fashionable ladies and others do this, without reflecting that they are not only breaking the ninth commandment themselves, but teaching their servants to break it also! In the evening this lady found, to her great distress, that one of her particular friends had been taken suddenly ill, and died during the day. She was very anxious to see her, and sent several messengers to bid her come, but these were always told she was not at home. You can imagine how unhappy she must have felt when she understood this.

After all these instances of the unprofitableness of lying, I must give you one story to show the profitableness of telling the truth, before leaving this part of our subject.

It is related of a Persian mother that, on giving her son forty pieces of silver as his portion, she made him swear never to tell a lie, and then

said, "Go, my son ; I consign thee to God : we shall not meet again till the day of judgment."

The youth went away, and the party he travelled with was attacked by robbers. One fellow asked the boy what he had got, and he said, "Forty dinars are sewed up in my garments." The robber laughed, and thought he was only jesting. Another asked him the same question, and received the same answer.

At last the chief called him, and asked him what he had. He said, "I have told two of your people already that I have forty dinars sewed up in my clothes." He ordered the clothes to be ripped open, and found the money.

"And how came you to tell this ?" asked the chief.

"Because," replied the child, "I would not be false to my mother, to whom I promised never to tell a lie."

"Child," said the robber, "art thou so mindful, at thy tender years, of thy duty to thy mother, and am I insensible, at my age, of the duty I owe to God ? Give me thy hand that I may swear repentance on it."

He did so. His followers were all struck with the scene.

"You have been our leader in guilt," said they to the chief, "now be the same in the path of

virtue." They immediately gave back what they had stolen, and began at once to lead an honest life.

We ought not to lie, or bear false witness, because it is *unprofitable*.

The third reason why we ought not to do this is, because it is DANGEROUS.

Lying is like letting water through a bank. When it once begins to run, there is no telling where it will stop.

Here is a large ship. It is made up of a vast number of great pieces of timber, all fastened together. It is very strong. It can cross the ocean, breasting the storms and riding over the angry billows without receiving any harm. But what holds those pieces of timber together, and makes that ship so strong? Why, the bolts of iron or copper which are driven through her timbers.

Now, suppose it were possible all at once to draw every bolt and fastening out of that ship as she sails over the ocean. What would become of her? She would fall to pieces directly, and all her cargo would be lost.

Well, every family, every village, or town is like such a ship. It is made up of a number of persons bound together. And what binds them together? Why, truth or confidence. Truth among people in society is like the bolt in the ship. If nobody told the truth, and people had

no confidence in one another, they could no more live together in families or communities, and do business together, than a number of pieces of timber, without bolts to fasten them together, could make a ship.

Would it not be very dangerous to have a person on board a ship who had a machine for drawing the bolts out, and who was always trying to use it? Certainly it would. Well, *lying* is such a machine in families and societies. Every one who bears false witness in any way is using this machine. He is trying to draw the bolts out of families and societies so that they can't hold together. This is very dangerous.

Let me show you what injury may be done by lying.

There was a large river, across which several dams were built within the distance of a few miles. These dams were built to form as many ponds, and carry on as many mills. But during a severe storm, which greatly swelled the river, the upper dam was carried away. This brought the flood with so much pressure on the second dam, that *that* went too; and so with all the rest, one after another. If the first dam had been strong enough to resist the pressure of the current, none of the others would have given way.

So it is with falsehood and other sins. If we

stop the *first* lie, we stop all the rest. If we are not disobedient the *first* time, we never shall be disobedient. If we do not use the *first* profane word, we never shall use the *second*. It is consenting to the *first* sin that does all the mischief.

Some time since a youth about fifteen years of age, whose name was James, came to the city to reside. He was employed as a clerk in a shop. He was faithful at first, and his employer liked him very much, and treated him with great confidence. One day he stepped into the shop of a young man whose acquaintance he had formed. He was offered a glass of wine. He hesitated, but finally yielded, and drank it. On the following day this young man called in at the shop where James was employed. His employer was not in at the time. James thought he must return the kindness of his young friend on the previous day, and accordingly he treated *him* to a glass of wine. But, in drawing the liquor, he did not close the stop-cock securely, and it was left running a little. As his employer passed through the shop he discovered it.

“Have you been at this barrel, James?” he asked.

The youth hesitated, as if there was a struggle in his breast between right and wrong, but finally replied,—

"*No, sir.*"

Here the first dam was carried away. We shall see how the others followed.

His employer looked as if he doubted it, but said no more.

The next day the young man came in again, and said to the owner of the shop, "Will you sell me a barrel of wine such as James gave me yesterday?" The gentleman gave a searching look at James, who felt almost ready to sink into the earth. He took the first opportunity to see the young man, and asked him to tell his employer that he drew the wine himself. Here was another dam gone. The young man promised to do so if he would treat him to an oyster supper. James agreed. Both parties fulfilled the agreement. But James had no money of his own, and hence he took some from the drawer in the shop to pay for the supper. Here was another dam gone. After the oyster supper he was invited to gamble. At first he declined; but then, thinking he might make as much money as he had taken from his employer, and thus be able to replace it, he yielded. He played and lost. But still, supposing he might win, he continued to take money from the shop, until it was missed. Seeing that he was likely to be detected, he resolved one night that he would take fifty pounds that were in the desk,

and endeavour to win enough to replace all he had taken from his employer.

At midnight he arose. He entered the shop, took the fifty pounds, and went to the gambling-house, where he *lost the whole*. Now he was desperate. What could he do? He did this. Knowing that his employer had money in a certain bank, he forged a check in his name. He hastened to the bank and presented it. It was discovered to be a forgery. He was taken up and sent to the penitentiary. Thus all the dams were swept away. And all this followed from that *first lie*. If James had told the truth then, the first dam would have been protected and all the others saved.

This shows the truth of our third reason. We ought not to bear false witness, or tell a lie, because it is a *dangerous* thing.

Our fourth and best reason is, we ought not to do it because it is a WICKED thing.

There are two things that show us how wicked it is to bear false witness.

What God SAYS of those who do it; and what God DOES with them. These both show us how wicked it is.

Now, look at what God says of those who lie, or bear false witness.

He says in one place, "Ye shall not deal

falsely, neither lie one to another" (Lev. xix. 11). He says in another place, "The Lord *hates* a false witness that speaketh lies" (Prov. vi. 19). Again he says, "He that speaketh lies shall perish" (Prov. xix. 5). He says, "A lying tongue is but for a moment" (Prov. xii. 19). And in another place he says, "Lying lips are an *abomination* unto the Lord" (Prov. xii. 22). How fearfully wicked that must be about which God uses language so strong as this! Who would want to be an *abomination* before Him who is the wisest, and best, and most gracious of all beings? When you are tempted to tell a lie, of any kind, or under any circumstances, think of what God says about lying, and say to yourself, Shall I make myself *hateful* in the sight of God?

What God *says* of lying shows how wicked it is.

But then look at what God *does* with liars!

You know we read in the last two chapters of the New Testament of a glorious vision which the apostle John had of heaven. As it appeared before him, it was more beautiful than anything he had ever seen or thought of. It was like a great city. Its foundations were of precious stones. Its walls were made of jewels. Its gates were made of pearl. Its streets were paved with golden stones, but the gold was like crystal, as transparent as glass. A river of clear water

flowed through the city. On each side of the river the tree of life was growing. He saw the throne of God and of the Lamb within the city. There is no night there. No sorrow—no crying—no sin. He saw the angels going in and out of the city. He saw the redeemed from among men there too. They were clothed in white raiment, and were walking with Jesus beside that beautiful river. Presently he came to the gate of the city. When he looked over the gate he saw some writing. This writing told who they were that should not be allowed to enter into the city. He was very anxious to read that writing, and find out who they were who should never go into that beautiful place. He read the writing. He has told us what it was. This was part of it: "*There shall in no wise enter herein anything that—MAKETH A LIE.*" Think of this. *No admittance for liars.* This is written as with a sun-beam over the gate of heaven. Bear this in mind when you are tempted to tell a lie.

But if liars cannot enter heaven, what becomes of them? If God does not let them go into that glorious city, what does he do with them? There is one dreadful passage of Scripture which tells us. We read, Rev. xxi. 8, "All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." This is fearful indeed!

What God *says* of liars, and what God *docs* with them, both help to prove how wicked a thing it is to lie.

Thus we have had four reasons why we should not bear false witness. Let us see if we can recollect them.

We ought not to do it, in the *first place*, because it is a MEAN thing; *secondly*, because it is an UNPROFITABLE thing; *thirdly*, because it is a DANGEROUS thing; and, *fourthly*, because it is a WICKED thing.

In conclusion, my dear children, let me entreat you to make it a point, on every occasion, to speak the truth. Let this be a settled rule with you—a rule, too, that shall never be broken. Let nothing ever tempt you to tell a lie. God calls himself “the God of truth.” He loves the truth; and while “lying lips are an abomination to him,” those that speak truly are said to be “his delight.”

Speaking the truth is the thing that especially distinguishes him. And this is one of the ways in which we should strive to be like God. What an honour it is for any young person to have it said of him, he *always speaks the truth!* A crown of gold upon the head would not be half so desirable an ornament as a crown of truth.

“Oh! 'tis a lovely thing for youth
To walk betimes in wisdom's way!
To fear a lie, to speak the truth,
That we may trust to all they say.”

If you ever find yourself saying what is not true, repent of it as a great sin. Pray God, for Jesus's sake, to forgive you. And ask him to give you grace to forsake every false way and word—to hate lying, and always to love and speak the truth.

HYMN ON THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

I MUST not let my tongue
A word of falsehood speak,
Which may my humblest neighbour wrong,
And God's commandments break.

Nor must I seek to throw
Suspicion on his deeds ;
For I may not the motive know
From which the act proceeds.

I must not harshly judge
When others go astray,
Or in my spirit bear a grudge,
To prompt the words I say.

For when I look within,
And see the evil there,
I scarcely think another's sin
Can with my own compare.

Then let the law of love
My guide in all things be ;
And may I by its judgment prove
The good and ill I see.

Dear Saviour, let me keep
Thy pattern in my view,
And always strive to think and speak
As thou would'st have me do !

XI.

The Tenth Commandment.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife; nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.”—EXODUS XX. 17.

SUPPOSE that we were emigrants. We leave home, and go to the backwoods of Canada or the United States, and buy a farm. A large part of our farm is covered with forest trees. We want to clear a portion of it, and turn it into fields, where we can raise Indian corn or wheat. We cut down the trees, and split up and haul away the timber. But, after all this, the stumps remain in the ground; and if nothing is done to them, they will soon begin to sprout up again. It is very important for us, as farmers, to get those stumps all removed.

Somebody has invented a machine that is called a “root extractor.” It has great, strong, iron hooks. These are fastened to the roots, and then, by turning a wheel or crank connected with some very powerful machinery, the tough, crooked, gnarled roots are torn out by main force. It

would be a grand thing for us, on our western farm, to have one of these root extractors. Then how nicely we should get our field cleared! We should go to work with one stump after another; and, in a little while, they would be all gone, and we should have no more trouble with them.

My dear children, our hearts are like a field full of trees. This field has to be cleared. The trees here are our sins, the wicked feelings and tempers that belong to us. When we are converted, and our hearts are renewed by the grace of Jesus, then these trees are cut down. But the roots of them remain. Even when we become Christians, we find the roots of our old sins springing up again. And covetousness is the worst of these roots. You remember that St. Paul says, "The *love* of money" (this means coveting, or desiring money) "is the *root of all evil*" (1 Tim. vi. 10). It is very important for us to have these roots removed.

Now, the tenth commandment may well be called God's great "root extractor." If we pray to him for grace to understand and keep it, we shall find that it pulls up sin by the roots from our hearts, and prevents it from growing there. This is what the commandment was intended to do; and this is what it does wherever it is properly kept. It plucks sin up by the roots, and

leaves the ground of our hearts clear for the good seed of God's grace to grow in.

Now let us look at this commandment.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife ; nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.”

The first four words of this commandment contain the substance of what it requires of us.

“Thou shalt not covet.” To covet means to wish for something that belongs to another.

Sometimes we see a company of children standing at the window of a shop. It may be a jeweller's shop. One of them says, “Oh, I wish I had that gold watch!” Another says, “I wish I had that beautiful diamond ring!” A third says, “Ah, but I wish I had that splendid silver cup!

Those children do not think what they are doing. *Wishing* means coveting. The tenth commandment says, “Thou shalt not covet *anything* that is thy neighbour's.” They are breaking this commandment, as they stand there, wishing for, or coveting their neighbour's goods.

Here is a money-changer's office. In the window are vessels full of gold and silver coin, of different kinds. Bundles of bank-notes, too, are lying piled up there. There comes a man along.

Perhaps he is very poor. He stands before that window. He gazes on those shining stores,—those heaps of notes,—and as he gazes, the desire to possess them springs up in his heart, and he whispers to himself, “Oh, how I wish I had that money!”

In indulging that wish he is coveting his neighbour's silver and gold; and thus *he* breaks the commandment. This wishing, or coveting, if it be allowed to remain, will grow up into the desire to *get* that money. If the man cannot get it in a *right* way, he will try to get it in a *wrong* way. It will make him a thief or robber. Here you see how coveting is to stealing, just what the root is to the tree. The tree grows out of the root; and so stealing grows out of coveting. But the tenth commandment forbids us to covet. Hence I say, it is God's *great root extractor*. It pulls up these roots of evil from our hearts.

Whenever we allow ourselves to covet, or to wish for *anything* that belongs to another, we are guilty of the sin of breaking this commandment. It is a very plain commandment. There is no difficulty in understanding what it means. It is not necessary to say anything more for the purpose of explaining it. The most important thing is for us to consider some of the reasons why we should not covet.

There are four reasons to be considered.

*We should not covet,*in the first place, because it*
IS UNSATISFYING.

If we get the things we covet, instead of being satisfied, we shall only want more.

If you put a tub, without any bottom to it, under a pump, and begin to pump the water into it, how long will it take you to fill it? You *never* can fill it. Well, our covetous desires are like a tub without a bottom. And trying to get satisfied, by indulging them, is just like trying to fill a tub with water, when there is no bottom to it.

Suppose here is a fire burning. How soon will it go out, if you keep always putting on wood? It won't go out at all. If you want to make it go out, you must stop putting on wood.

A Christian father once wanted to teach his little son this lesson, so that he would not be likely to forget it. He asked him this question: "Willie, when do you suppose a man will have money enough to satisfy him?"

"When he's got a thousand pounds more than he needs to pay all his expenses."

"No;" answered his father.

"When he's got *five* thousand more than he needs," said Willie.

"No;" said the father again.

"*Ten* thousand."

“No.”

“*Twenty* thousand.”

“No.”

“*Fifty* thousand.”

“No.”

Willie thought he would make one more desperate guess that would be sure to hit the mark. So he cried out,—

“Well, when he’s got a *hundred* thousand pounds.”

But still his father met him with the same short answer, “No.”

“Then I’ll give it up,” said Willie, in despair.

“When he has got—*a little more*—than he now has,” said his father, “and that is—never. If he gets one thousand, he wishes to have *two*. When he gets *two*, he wants *five*—then he wants *ten*—then *twenty*—*fifty*—then a hundred thousand, and so on, till he has grasped the whole world; and then, like Alexander, he would be ready to weep because there were no other worlds for him to possess.

Not long ago a rich farmer died in Chester county, Pennsylvania. When a young man he was quite poor. After a while he managed to buy a few acres of land. From time to time he added more and more to them, till he found himself the owner of the largest farm in the township. Afterwards, as

he was very successful, he managed to buy first one farm, and then another, till seven or eight of the largest farms in the neighbourhood belonged to him. At last he was taken ill. The physician came to see him. He told him his disease could not be cured. He must die in a short time. On hearing this, his reply was,—

“Oh, what a pity! If I could only live fifteen years longer, all Chester county would belong to me!”

“How strange it is,” said a young man one day to Dr. Franklin, “that when men get rich they are just as unsatisfied and anxious to make money as when they were poor.”

There was a little child playing in the room near them. “Johnie, come here,” said Dr. Franklin.

The little fellow came up to him. “Here, my man, is an apple for you,” said he, handing one from a fruit basket on the table. It was so large that the child could hardly grasp it. He then gave it a second, which filled the other hand; and picking out a third, remarkable for its size and beauty, he said, “Here’s another.” The child tried hard to hold this last apple between the other two; but it dropped on the carpet, and rolled away over the floor. On seeing this, he burst into tears.

“See,” said Dr. Franklin, “there is a *little man*

with more riches than he can enjoy, but not satisfied."

Before the time of our Saviour there was a celebrated Grecian king, whose name was Pyrrhus. He had a flourishing kingdom, with everything about him to make him comfortable. But being a great soldier, he was not satisfied without trying to conquer other countries. He was preparing to go to war with the Romans. One day, before they started, a wise man, named Cineas, belonging to his court, said to him, "Sire, the Romans are a brave and warlike people; but if we conquer them, what shall we do next?"

"The Romans once conquered," answered Pyrrhus, "no city will resist us; we shall then be masters of all Italy."

"Having subdued all Italy, what shall we do next?" asked Cineas.

"Then we shall take Sicily," said Pyrrhus.

"Will that put an end to the war?" inquired Cineas.

"By no means," replied Pyrrhus. "Then Lybia and Carthage will soon be ours; and no enemies will be able to stand before us."

"Very true," said Cineas; "and when all these are in our possession, what shall we then do?"

"Then," said the king, smiling, "we shall stay at home and enjoy ourselves."

“Well, sire,” observed the wise man, “and why can't we stay at home and enjoy ourselves *now*, without all this trouble and danger?”

But Pyrrhus would not take the advice of his friend. He went to war. He was finally killed in battle, and never found the enjoyment which he had promised himself.

We should not covet, because it is *unsatisfying*. This is the first reason.

Again, *we should not covet, because it is DISGRACEFUL*. This is the *second* reason.

We read of some places where, when people commit certain sins, they are punished by having the first letter of the word that represents their sin, branded with a red-hot iron upon the cheek, or forehead. Here, for instance, is a man who has been thieving. He is a thief. He has the letter T burnt upon his brow. Wherever he goes he carries the mark of his sin upon him. Every one who sees him knows that he is a *thief*. Would not *that* be a disgraceful thing? Yes. Would you want to keep company with such a person, or have anything to do with him? Certainly not; unless you knew that he had truly repented of his sin, and would never steal again.

But a person who *covets*, is very nearly related to a thief. They are *first cousins* to each other. Nay, the relationship is closer than that. They

are like the same person, or thing, as seen at different times, and under different circumstances.

Let me illustrate this. Here, for instance, is a chicken almost ready to be hatched; and there is a chicken that is already hatched. What is the difference between them? Why, one is *in* the shell, while the other is *out* of it. That is all the difference. There is nothing but the thickness of that thin shell, which separates one of them from the other. A slight tapping,—a very little pecking, on the end of that shell, and it is broken through; and then out comes the chicken, as lively and active as its little brother that came out yesterday.

Now, just such is the relation that exists between a covetous person and a thief. There is nothing but a thin shell that separates them from each other. The covetous person is a thief *in* the shell. The thief is a covetous person *out* of the shell. Let a covetous person see something that he desires *very much*; and let an opportunity of *taking* it be offered, and how very soon, like the chicken ready to be hatched, he will break through the shell, and come out in his true character as a thief.

Now, suppose that God, in his providence, should cause to come out upon the foreheads of people, in lines as of fire, a letter representing the

sin that each one had committed, what would be the difference between the marks on the forehead of a thief and of a covetous person? They would both have the same letter. This same disgraceful, dreadful *T* would be on each. There it would stand, the blazing, burning mark of sin and shame on each; only the thief would have a rather larger, brighter *T*, than that seen on the forehead of the covetous person. Then, surely, if coveting is so closely related to thieving, we should be very careful that we do not covet, because it is *disgraceful*. This is the second reason.

But again, we should not covet, because it is INJURIOUS. This is the *third* reason.

There are several ways in which it is injurious to indulge a covetous spirit.

Sometimes it is injurious to a person's *character*. There was once a nobleman in Italy who was going to be married. Great preparations were made for the wedding feast. Everything necessary for the occasion had been procured, except some fish, of which the Italians are very fond. But the sea had been so rough for many days, that the fishermen in the neighbourhood had been quite unsuccessful. The day before the wedding was to take place, however, a fisherman came along who had a fine large turbot for sale. He knocked at the gate of the nobleman's residence,

and inquired if they wanted any fish. The porter who kept the gate was a very covetous man. He was ready to take advantage of every opportunity to get a little money, whether the way of getting it was right or wrong. He told the fisherman that they wanted a fish very much in his master's house, and as it was for a wedding feast, they would be willing to give a good price for it; but he said he would not let the man in unless he would promise to give him one half of what he might get for it.

The fisherman thought this was so unjust that at first he refused to do it. But finding he could not get in on any other terms, he consented. As he went in, however, he made up his mind to teach the porter a lesson that he would not soon forget.

He was ushered into the presence of the nobleman, who was so delighted to see so fine a fish, that he offered to give the man any price he might ask for it.

"You will think, perhaps, I am naming a strange price," said the fisherman, "when I tell you that a hundred lashes, laid on my bare back, is the price of my fish, and I will not take anything else for it."

The nobleman was greatly surprised. He thought the man was joking, and tried to reason

him out of his strange notion. But finding the fisherman resolute in his demands, he said:—

“Well, well, the poor fellow is certainly crazy. We must have the fish, however. Give him his price, and let him be paid in my presence; but lay it on very lightly.”

As soon as fifty lashes had been given him, he cried: “Hold, hold! I have a partner in this business, and he must have his share of the price of the fish.”

“What!” exclaimed the nobleman, “is it possible that there are two such mad fellows in the world? Who is your partner, and he shall be sent for at once?”

“You need not go very far for him,” said the fisherman; “you will find him at your gate, in the shape of your own porter, who would not let me in until I promised he should receive half of what I got for my turbot.”

“Oh! oh!” said the nobleman; “bring him in instantly. Let him have his share, by all means,—and lay it on soundly.”

The porter received *his* share of the price asked for the fish. Then he was immediately discharged, while the fisherman was amply rewarded. The porter lost his character and his situation. He certainly found covetousness injurious. It injured his character.

Sometimes covetousness is injurious *by causing great trouble to others*, besides the person who is guilty of this sin.

Look at the case of Achan, mentioned in the Bible (Joshua vii.). The children of Israel have just crossed over Jordan. They are about to take the city of Jericho. God charges them to put all the people in the city to death, and not to take any of the spoils of the city to themselves, but to set it all apart for his service. He commands them solemnly to mind this order, and declares that if they do not, it will bring a curse upon them, and be a trouble to the whole nation.

Now the walls of Jericho have fallen down. The city is taken. The people in it are put to death. The Israelites are gathering all the spoil together, according to God's commandment.

There is Achan. He enters a fine-looking house. No one is with him. He finds a wedge of gold, a bag of silver, and a beautiful garment. How tempting they look! He *covets* them. He says to himself,—“How I should like to have these! And why may I not? There is no one here to see. They won't be missed amid all the spoil of this great city. I'll take them.”

He carries them quietly away, digs a hole in his tent, and buries them there. He thinks no

one has seen him. Poor, foolish man ! he forgets that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." God saw it all, and the Bible tells us how he made it known.

The Israelites go on to take another city. They send their army against it. Their army is defeated, and a number of soldiers killed. They come back discouraged. All the people are afraid. Look at Joshua, their brave captain. He has rent his clothes and fallen to the ground ; there he spends the day, weeping and praying before the ark of the Lord. All the elders of Israel are there with him. Their clothes are rent, and their heads covered with ashes. The progress of a large army is stopped, and hundreds of thousands of people are plunged in sorrow and distress. And what has occasioned all this trouble ? The *covetousness of one man !*

You know how his sin was found out, and how he was punished for it. Joshua told Achan that he had *troubled all Israel*. And so he had.

A grain of sand is a small thing. But suppose I open my watch, and drop it in among the works what effect will it have ? It will stop it. Yes and unless it is taken out the watch will be of no use. The different tribes of Israel were like the wheels of a great watch. Achan's one sin was like the grain of sand dropped in among them.

It stopped the watch. It could not be set in motion again until the grain of sand was taken out. The sin of Achan occasioned great trouble to others, as well as himself. In *this* way covetousness is injurious.

And then it is often *injurious, too, as occasioning the death of those who are guilty of it.*

I might mention a great many instances to illustrate this part of our subject, but I shall give you only two.

Some years ago there was a large ship, called the *Kent*, going from England to the East Indies. On her voyage she caught fire. The flames could not be put out. While she was burning, another vessel came in sight and offered to take off her crew and passengers. The sea was very rough, and the only way to get the people off the burning ship was to let them down by ropes from the end of a boom, into the little boats that were tossed about like corks by the rough waves below.

One of the sailors, who knew that the mate had a large quantity of gold in his possession, determined to get it and take it with him. So he broke into the mate's cabin, forced open his desk, and taking a great number of gold pieces, put them in a belt, and fastened it round his waist. His turn came to leave the burning ship. He got out to the end of the boom, slipped down

the rope, and let go, expecting to drop right into the boat that was beneath him. But a sudden movement of the waves carried the boat out of his reach, and he was plunged into the sea. He was an excellent swimmer, and if it had not been for the gold he had coveted, he would have risen like a cork to the surface, and soon been safe in the boat. But the weight of the money round his waist made him sink like lead in the mighty waters. He never rose again to the surface. Ah! as he felt the golden weight dragging him deeper and deeper down into the vast ocean, he must have understood plainly enough *how* injurious covetousness is!

Here is another example of the same kind.

Some years ago there was a man living in a certain town in France, whose covetous feelings had become so strong as to make him a miser of the very worst kind. By oppressing the poor, and taking advantage of them in every possible way, he had become exceedingly rich.

The king wanted to borrow some money from him, but thinking the interest offered for it was not enough, and fearing that perhaps he might never get it back again, he pretended that he had not got as much money as the king wanted. He said he had met with heavy losses, which had left him quite poor. Then he was afraid that his

neighbours, who, he knew, all disliked him very much, might report to the government how rich he was ; and that perhaps somebody would be sent to search his house, and so he might lose some of his much-loved gold. He resolved, therefore, to hide his treasures, so that, if a search was made for them, they could not be found out. For this purpose he had a large cave dug in the cellar of his house. This was walled up and arched over, with a door in the top of it, from which he could go down by a ladder. The door was furnished with a spring-lock, which, on being shut, would fasten of itself. Here he stowed all his bags of gold and silver, with the feeling that now his treasures were perfectly secure.

After a while the miser suddenly disappeared. Inquiries were made for him ; the house was searched, the woods were explored, the ponds were dragged, but no trace of him could be found. The people supposed that he had taken his money and gone to live in some place where he was not known.

Some time after the house in which he had lived was sold. The new owner made some alterations and repairs. While the workmen were engaged in these, they found the trap-door to the miser's cave. They broke it open. They

got a light and went down. The first thing that met their eyes at the foot of the ladder was the ghastly skeleton of the wretched miser, while all around him lay heavy bags of gold and great chests of untold treasure. He had gone down to look at his treasures—to worship his golden god—and while there the door had shut upon him, and fastened him in. No human being could hear the loudest shout he might have raised. There he was left to die a miserable, lingering death, in the midst of the gold he so much coveted. There was gold in bags, gold in chests, gold piled in heaps, gold for a pillow, and gold strewed under him to lie upon; but in the midst of it all he starved to death!

What an illustration of the sad effects of covetousness? “Thou shalt *not* covet!” Why? *Because it is injurious.*

The fourth and best reason why we should not covet is, because it is SINFUL.

It breaks this commandment. And the worst thing you can say of any sin is, that it breaks God’s law. Remember this, whenever you are tempted to covet anything. You break God’s commandment by it. How sinful this is!

But by coveting we break *two* commandments at once. Besides breaking the tenth, we at the same time break the *first* commandment, by com-

mitting this sin. You know the first commandment forbids idolatry. It says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." But the Bible tells us that "covetousness is idolatry" (Col. iii. 5). This means that when people become covetous they put their gold in the place of God. They love it more than they love God; they think of it more than they think of God; they trust to it more than they trust to God. This is making a god of it; and idolatry consists in having some other god than the Lord.

But there is even more than this to be said about covetousness. The covetous man *breaks the whole ten commandments at once.*

Do you ask how I make this out? Easily enough. You know our Saviour said the ten commandments were all embraced in *two*; namely, to love God with all our hearts; and to love our neighbour as ourselves. But the covetous man loves his gold with all his heart. By this he breaks the first four commandments. He loves his gold more than he loves his neighbour. By this he breaks the last six commandments. What a dreadfully wicked thing covetousness is! St. Paul tells us, as was said at the beginning of this sermon, that covetousness, or "the *love of money*, is the root of all evil." This means, that it leads people to commit all kinds of sin. It makes them

unkind, hard-hearted, cruel, and unjust. It leads to violence, bloodshed, and murder.

When the Spaniards conquered Mexico, they killed so many people, that it might almost be said they *waded in blood* to get possession of it. And what was the chief object they had in view? It was to get the gold, which was found there in such wonderful profusion.

When the emperor found he could not protect his city against the fierce invaders, he collected his principal treasures together, and threw them into the lake on which his capital was built. The Spanish general, Cortes, was so much disappointed at finding so little gold, that he ordered a huge gridiron to be made, and then put the emperor on it, and roasted him over a slow fire to make him tell where his treasures were.

The history of the world is full of the horrible things that men have done from a desire to get gold. Let me give just one as a sample.

Some years since a sea-faring man was returning home after a long absence. He had left home as a boy; he was now a full-grown man, and so altered in appearance that he was sure nobody would know him. He had been very successful in business, and was now quite rich. His old parents were very poor, and he was

going back to make them comfortable for the rest of their days.

When he arrived at his native village he made himself known to some of the companions of his boyhood, and told them his object in returning. He found that his parents were keeping a small inn on the outskirts of the village. He resolved to go and take lodgings at their house for the night, as a traveller, but not to make himself known to them till the next day.

He entered into conversation with the old people very freely and familiarly. At supper-time he pressed them to sit up and eat with him. He asked them many questions about their family, and particularly about a son who had gone to sea when a boy, and whom they had long since thought to be dead. But still they never suspected who he was.

The evening passed away very pleasantly. Bed-time came. The old woman showed him to his room. As he bade her good-night, he shook her warmly by the hand, at the same time slipping a purse of gold into it, and telling her to take care of it till the morning.

She showed the gold to her husband. They were greatly surprised. Supposing that their lodger must have a great amount of gold with him, they began to covet it. This cursed root of

all evil often brings forth and ripens its terrible fruit very quickly. It did so now.

They resolved to murder the unsuspecting traveller, and get his gold. At the still hour of midnight they crept softly to his bedside. There he lies, sleeping quietly. The sharpened knife is raised a moment, and plunged into his heart. He groans, and dies. They search his trunk. They clutch his gold. A hole is dug in the cellar, and the body buried out of sight.

Next morning some of the neighbours come in and inquire eagerly for the traveller who had arrived the night before. The old people seem greatly confused, but stammer out that he had risen early and gone away.

“Surely not,” said the neighbours, “for it is your own son, who has just returned from sea, to make the evening of your days happy. He resolved to lodge one night with you as a stranger, and make himself known in the morning.”

Who can describe the horror of those wretched murderers, when they found that they had dyed their hands in the blood of their own long lost child! Oh! how sinful a thing that covetousness must be which could lead to such a dreadful crime!

We have considered four reasons why we should

not covet. *Because it is UNSATISFYING; because it is DISGRACEFUL; because it is INJURIOUS; and because it is SINFUL.*

Now, my dear children, we have concluded our sermons on the commandments. This last one makes an excellent finish to them. You know that when a carpenter drives in a nail, which he wishes shall hold very fast, he takes his hammer, and, if it be a wrought iron nail, he bends down the end of it where it has come through, and drives it again into the wood. This is called *clenching* the nail. This makes it sure. Now it cannot be drawn out.

And just in the same way the tenth commandment is a sort of *clencher* to all the rest. If we keep this commandment properly, we shall be in very little danger of breaking any of the others. It directs our attention to our hearts; and teaches us to keep them right. If we can only keep our hearts right, we shall not have much trouble with anything else. This is the reason why the Bible says, "Keep thine heart with *all diligence*, for out of *it* are the issues of life."

But the very hardest thing we have to do is to keep the heart right. If we attempt to do this in our own strength, we shall succeed about as well as if we should stand at the door of our house, and try to keep the air out, by beating it

with our fists. In spite of all we can do, evil thoughts will creep in, and covetous desires will spring up. Well, what should we do when we find them there? We should be sorry for having them, and ask God to forgive us, and take them all away. What a beautiful Collect that is before the commandments, in the Communion service; and how clearly it shows us the only true way in which we can get rid of our evil thoughts!

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, *cleanse the thoughts of our hearts* by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit; that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

And when we feel our need of the help of God's grace to enable us to keep his commandments, how beautifully we are taught to pray for this grace in the Collect which follows the commandments, in the service just referred to!

“O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.”

If we pray thus, with all our hearts, we shall find these commandments like fences set up on either side of "The King's Highway;" and we shall find that *way* leading us right through the wilderness of this world, to the glory and blessedness of our Father's house above. May it please God to guide us all into this glorious way, and bring us at last to his heavenly rest, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

HYMN ON THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

I MUST not nurse within my soul,
One spark of sin's unhallowed fire;
Or yield my heart to the control
Of aught that speaks a wrong desire.

If others, in the flush of health,
Can richly dress and brightly shine;
I must not envy them their wealth,
Or wish that aught of theirs was mine.

If God should call me to be poor,
Still I'll be thankful for my lot:
For Jesus trod this path before,
And well I know he murmured not!

I must not turn with envious eyes,
On aught that others may possess;
Or wish, whatever God denies,
To make their sum of blessings less.

Is there, then, nought beneath, above,
That I may covet to possess?
Yes, there's the Saviour's boundless love,
With which he waits, my soul to bless!

To me, this treasure, Lord, impart;
Thy pardoning grace, oh! let me prove;
Write thou thy laws upon my heart,
And make me covet all thy love!





