

OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

INTRODUCTION

Christianity is about the truth. It is not about being “nice.” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life...” The Old Testament prophets were not paragons of “niceness,” but they were fearless champions of the truth. Jesus himself was frequently confrontational, constantly correcting religious error, outspoken in his condemnation of sin, and in his rebuke of false teachers and hypocritical religious leaders. The Scriptures make it clear that truth is paramount, and is worth fighting for.

Nonetheless, when the truth is not at stake, Christians are called to be gentle, peaceable, and to seek not only their own welfare, but their neighbors’ as well. As Christ himself taught in Matthew 10:34-36, the truth divides. It is unfortunate enough that this is true in a sinful world where men’s hearts are hardened against the truth and they suppress it in unrighteousness. However, all too often, it seems that at least some Christians are inclined to exercise their confrontational spirit and bring their divisiveness, where they do not belong. Actions can speak louder than words, and a truth that makes men unnecessarily uncharitable and harsh, is neither Biblical nor profitable. As Peter stated it to the Christians of his day,

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:12),

and to the Christian wives in particular,

“Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. (1Peter 3:1-4)

This little book is an object lesson in the application of these texts to a Christian’s life. Mr. Mayhew lived in an age permeated with a Christian culture and when Biblical literacy was wide spread. His problem was not complete ignorance of the truths of the Christian faith. In God’s providence his steadfast resistance to Christianity and his repudiation of its truths were broken down, not by hearing it proclaimed once more, but by witnessing the example of how a Christian life is to be lived. May the example also bear fruit in our lives as we seek to live for our Lord and adorn the profession of his name with good works and charitable actions.

Children, especially, are influenced by example. It was the Mayhew’s children who were first influenced by the godly example of the Herman family. The simple style of this book makes it suitable even for elementary school children. May it be used to call many to live a life that reflects both their love of God and of their neighbor.

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If thou wouldst win the wanderer back,
To walk with thee in wisdom's track,
Oh! Gentle be thy words and tone,
With love's sweet grace around them thrown.
For evil ever render good,
With withering scorn, a kindly mood,
For scandal's blight, a brother's care,
For taunts, for hate, love's earnest prayer.

Chapter One

MR. MAYHEW lived in Stoneleigh, on the crossroads that led from the village to Bald Hill. His farm, naturally one of the most productive in that agricultural town, was improved by his constant care and judicious management until it became a model for the imitation of all the husbandmen within the next five miles. Such sleek cattle as grazed in his pastures, such sheep as fed on his uplands, such wheat and oats as waved on his plains, such apples as drooped from his orchard boughs, were surpassed by no cultivator in the vicinity.

Lazy, inefficient Eli Tufts, who owned the adjoining farm, wondered why his worn-out, neglected soil yielded fewer bushels of potatoes and a less quantity of hay to the acre than his neighbor's, and it occasioned him quite as much perplexity to discover why his half-starved kine would break through the rickety fence into Mr. Mayhew's corn-lot or meadowland. Eli would not take good care of his boundary lines, a fact which his four-footed beasts were not slow to discover; consequently he and Mr. Mayhew were often brought into collision.

"Every one for himself," the thrifty farmer exclaimed, when Mr. Bates, whose white hairs entitled him to consideration, endeavored to persuade him to deal charitably with Eli; "every one for himself," he repeated, "that's my doctrine. I hate slackness, shiftlessness, idleness, and all their kin. I take care of myself, my family, my farm, my cattle, and when I need help, I calculate to pay a reasonable price for all I get; but as for charity, I don't believe in it."

Mr. Bates walked away with a heavy heart. He would gladly have quoted the command of the Great Teacher, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," but Mr. Mayhew ignored the Christian religion and its founder, recognized not God in his works or word, acknowledged no accountability to a Supreme Being, believed in no existence beyond the grave.

"I am as good as your church members," he replied, when the minister went to talk with him because he kept his sawmill in operation on the sabbath. "I pay all my just debts; I give my hired laborers fair wages; I never cheated anybody out of a cent; and if other people did as well, there would be less trouble in this world."

When the minister spoke of duty to God and the holiness of heart which is required by his perfect law, Mr. Mayhew, who was the better reasoner of the two, confused the good man by an array of words designed to prove the Bible a fable, and the doctrines which it teaches to be a fabrication of crafty men. The simple-hearted preacher of righteousness, unused to cope with so skilful an adversary, attempted to portray the beauty of the Christian faith, and the excellence of a life which is in conformity with the will of God; yet here again Mr. Mayhew met him by reference to his own character for morality, integrity, and sobriety.

"My word is as good as my bond," he continued. "I never set the laws of my country at defiance; I never meddle with the business of my neighbors; I don't let my children run neglected in the street; neither do I lounge about tippling shops, wasting my time, or squandering my substance. This is religion enough for me, and I think I shall come out as well as some who have a longer creed."

Had the worthy minister been gifted in language, he would have spoken of positive as well as negative virtues, of love to the whole race, of forbearance to an erring brother, of sympathy to those who sorrow and suffer, duties in the practice of all which Mr. Mayhew was lamentably deficient. The system of belief which the latter avowed was like an Alpine glacier, cold, sterile, desolate, unsuited to the cravings of the human heart, with no adaptation to the wants and weaknesses of our fallen nature. No rill of kindly sympathy flows from its impassive bosom, no glow of love radiates from its icy thrall to cheer the eye and warm the heart. The religion of Jesus Christ, that religion which teaches us to bear, suffer, trust, love, labor, and forgive, with the eye of faith fixed all the while on heaven, is what we need to render life happy to ourselves and blessed to others.

The good people of Stoneleigh, much as they prided themselves upon Mr. Mayhew's skill as a cultivator of the soil, were not a little tried by his disbelief in revealed religion, especially when they saw him plough his fields, spread his hay, or start his sawmill on the sabbath. Besides, as he was a man of much mental power, never slow to defend or promulgate his favorite creed, there was danger that the leaven of infidelity would spread until other hearts were contaminated by the unsafe doctrine. His very morality only increased the evil, his upright life and unblemished character being, on more than one occasion, brought into comparison with the admitted frailty of some

who bore the name of Christian disciples. Strange that mankind are so slow to discriminate, that one stain on the garment of a child of Jesus should be deemed blacker than the uncounted transgressions of scoffers, revilers, and blasphemers.

Chapter Two

In process of time Eli Tufts, on account of mismanagement and improvidence, was obliged to sell his farm, much to the delight of Mr. Mayhew, who longed to be rid of his troublesome neighbor. Deacon Herman was the purchaser, a man of whom little was known besides his name and the fact that he had relinquished business in an commercial town ten miles distant, for a more quiet life in the country.

Either the name or its associations must have been disagreeable to Mr. Mayhew, for he wished Eli Tufts back as soon as he heard it; and then expressed a wish that his wife should neither call on Mrs. Herman nor let the children play with those of the newcomers. Then he walked over his land, to examine the walls and the fences, and wherever he found a break, in imagination he also saw an unruly cow leap through it to make havoc with his springing grain or young apple trees.

"Here, boy," he exclaimed to a lad who was in the adjoining enclosure, and who he inferred might be one of Deacon Herman's children, "tell your father the part of the fence that belongs to him must be thoroughly repaired before he puts his cattle out to pasture. If it isn't done, and I catch a stray beast anywhere on my land, I'll have it driven to the pound forthwith. I am determined to begin straight."

He repented the ungracious manner in which the message was worded, when the boy replied that his father had engaged a man to commence the necessary repairs on the morrow. He regretted his abruptness still more half an hour afterward, upon encountering a stranger with a smiling face and courteous manner, who introduced himself as Deacon Herman, and then alluded to the vicinity of their farms with the hope that a friendly relation might exist between their families.

"I may want to ask favors of you," continued the speaker, after some natural inquiries about soils and crops. "Every one is dependent on others at times, and if I can do any thing to serve you, never hesitate a moment before applying."

"Very smooth, very plausible," Mr. Mayhew remarked to his head laborer, Mr. Fitts, a man who had adopted his employer's sentiments on religious subjects. "It is easy to see that this oily-tongued man will be one of the borrowing kind. I suppose he will want to use my ploughs, hoes, and harrows, the same as if they were his own, and perhaps beg the loan of my ox-sled or hay cart, to save him from buying one."

Notwithstanding Mr. Mayhew's skill in agriculture, he had no taste for gardening. There was a small patch of land fenced off from the orchard, especially devoted to the cultivation of vegetables. Here were usually planted a dozen hills of melons and cucumbers, a few beds of beets and onions, together with several rows of peas and early beans. Three hop-poles stood near the gate, along the southern wall stretched a border of currant bushes, in one corner was a large cherry tree, and, in the opposite corner, a clump of coarse yellow lilies. This patch, by way of convenience, was denominated the garden; but though Mrs. Mayhew often talked about strawberries and grapevines and hinted a desire for flower borders and rose bushes, no

progress had been made towards the accomplishment of her wishes.

On his return one afternoon from pruning some trees in the orchard, Mr. Mayhew was surprised to find his two eldest children, Cyrus and Agnes, at work in this hitherto neglected spot. There was a footpath leading from the garden gate to the orchard, which was usually bordered by a row of beans. A tolerably well-defined bed now extended the greater length of this path, and while Cyrus was busy with a rake and a measuring-line at one end, Agnes was on her knees sowing seeds at the other. Mrs. Mayhew was with her children, evidently much interested in their labor; and all three were much too occupied in their self-imposed task to notice Mr. Mayhew's approach.

"What are you all doing?" he inquired, having reached Agnes stealthily and then covered her eyes with his hand as she bent towards the ground. "I might have run away with the garden gate and not one of you would have seen me."

"O father, we are going to have a flower garden!" exclaimed Agnes, springing up with so much eagerness that her papers of seeds were all scattered on the bed. "Only think how nice it will be! We have got marigold, larkspur, hollyhock, Chinese pink, and I don't know how many other kinds of seeds. Edgar Herman came to show Cyrus how to make a beginning, and he brought them all with him."

Mr. Mayhew's brow darkened. Though he loved his children so much, that he would willingly have given them an acre of land for flowers, he did not wish to think they were indebted to the Herman family for favors of any kind.

"Why did you not tell me you wanted flowers?" he responded, helping Agnes pick up her scattered papers as he spoke. "I would have bought some seeds when I went to the city last week, and Mr. Fitts might have worked here with Cyrus all the afternoon."

"We never thought of it till Carrie Herman invited us into their garden when we came from school last night. It looked so beautifully that it made us want to have one, and then Carrie offered the seeds."

"I don't like to receive favors; they put us under obligations to other people," Mr. Mayhew remarked. "The Hermans will expect twice as much from you in return, and I believe in taking care of ourselves and letting everybody else do the same. You can pay Edgar for the seeds, and then keep square with him for the future."

"We couldn't offer him money, father," interposed Cyrus. "It would be an insult to a boy like Edgar. When he stays at noon, he gives away his dinner half the time; and if any boy in school wants to borrow a pen or pencil, he always gets his without waiting to be asked. He told me the flower seeds came from the garden in the place where he used to live, and they saved more than they wanted themselves on purpose to give some away. That is the way they always do."

"That boy is a regular chip off the old block," laughed his father. "The deacon is as smooth as oil. He has only lived here a month, but some of the people are ready to bow down and worship him. They'll find him out yet."

"What makes you have such a poor opinion of him?" inquired Mrs. Mayhew, who was inclined to be more charitable in her judgment than her husband.

"Because it isn't reasonable that a man should be so benevolent and so much interested for others without some selfish motive at the bottom of it," was the reply. "An hour ago he sent his Irishman, Dennis, over here with half a bushel of those choice potatoes that the farmers are crazy about just now, and asked me to accept them as a present. I am not to be caught with such chaff, and I told Dennis, when I wanted potatoes, I could buy them myself."

"I hope you did not send them back," was the rejoinder.

"Every one," was the reply. "Don't you see the potatoes were only a bait to get something out of me? That boy, Edgar, understands it, and he is playing the same game at school that his father experiments with at home. He don't give away his dinner for nothing."

"He gives it to boys that couldn't pay him back," responded Cyrus, "and there isn't any selfishness at the bottom of it; I know there isn't."

The conversation was now cut short by the return of Edgar Herman with a basket containing strawberry plants, which his mother had sent to Mrs. Mayhew. "Mother wishes there were more," he said, proffering the gift with an easy grace which did not escape the notice of Mr. Mayhew's prejudiced eye; "and there would have been, if father had known when he came from the old garden this morning that any of our neighbors besides Mr. Bates wanted some."

"I am so glad!" exclaimed Agnes, scattering her seeds a second time in her eagerness to look at the plants. "I didn't think when I admired your strawberry bed so much last night that we should have one of our own."

Had the contents of the basket been sent to Mr. Mayhew, he would have declined the favor at once; and he gave his wife a significant look expressive of his wish for her to do so; but her heart had already been won by the gentle tones and pleasing manners of Mrs. Herman, neither did she believe any unworthy motive prompted the bestowal of the gift. Besides, she had a long time been desiring a strawberry bed, and when she had heard her husband's magnificent schemes for reclaiming meadowlands and rendering the wilderness an oasis of fertility, she had wished he had an eye for the smaller as well as the larger details of agriculture.

"I will help you set them out, Cyrus," proceeded Edgar, when the plants had been discussed and admired to the mutual satisfaction of giver and recipient; "I know how, because I worked with father when he made our new bed. There isn't a minute's time to lose, if you mean to have them in the ground before dark, and tomorrow is the sabbath."

Cyrus looked his desire to accept the proposal; but his father interposed.

"There are enough of us to take care of the strawberries without taking Edgar away from his own work. I saw him dropping corn for his father, when I was in the orchard."

"That was all done before I came here, and it is my playtime now," replied the boy. "I had to drop ten rows for Dennis to cover."

"Play, then," responded Mr. Mayhew, smiling in spite of himself at Edgar's frankness. "Boys need play as well as work; if you have dropped ten rows of corn, that is enough for one afternoon."

Chapter Three

Although Mr. Mayhew persisted in avoiding Deacon Herman, the contiguity of their land of necessity brought them into occasional juxtaposition. When they were planting potatoes on opposite sides of the wall, or nurturing their young harvests when the only separation was a rail fence, it was not easy to prevent all intercourse. At such times, Deacon Herman, who never seemed hurried with his work, had leisure for a smile, a kind greeting, or a cordial grasp of the hand, while Mr. Mayhew would pass along with a hasty step and cold good morning. Why he did so perhaps he could not have explained even to his own conscience, had it asked the question; indeed, the only

reason he could give his wife for his desire for non-intercourse was that he did not like his new neighbor, never should like him, and wanted nothing at all to do with him or his family.

He was confirmed in his dislike when Deacon Herman sent Dennis to solicit the loan of a plough for a few hours, giving as an excuse for asking the favor, the information that his own—one that had belonged to Eli Tufts—had gone to the blacksmith's for repairs. Though the agricultural implement thus desired was at that moment lying unused in the tool house, Mr. Mayhew sent Dennis away with the unneighborly reply that he neither lent nor borrowed.

At a later hour of the same day, as Mr. Mayhew was at work on a hill at some distance from his home, though near enough to overlook a portion of his farm, much to his consternation he saw a drove of cattle in his most promising cornfield. That cornfield was his pet; on it he lavished the most devoted care; and for it he hoped to take the premium offered by the County Agricultural Society the coming autumn. The premium had already been his for two consecutive years, and in the determination this season to eclipse all previous successes, he had spared neither expense nor labor to ensure an abundant harvest.

Full of evil forebodings, prominent among which were the destruction of his corn and the consequent loss of his high position in the agricultural ranks, he hurried down the hill, breathing vengeance against the trespassers. He had scarcely started, however, when a man dismounted from a wagon, and ran to the rear of the field, in this manner expelling the intruders, and preventing them from making a circuit of the whole piece. So quietly, yet efficiently, was all this accomplished, that the bars were put up and the man in his carriage again by the time Mr. Mayhew reached the scene.

"You have done me a service for which you ought to have something more than thanks," the farmer called after the retreating wagon.

The vehicle stopped, the rider looked back, and when Mr. Mayhew saw who it was, perhaps he would have preferred to lose the premium, rather than save it by the agency of Deacon Herman.

"I am very glad I happened to be on the spot," was the response. "That corn does my eyes good every time I look at it, for such thrifty growth at this season of the year I never saw surpassed."

Then he dismounted a second time to accompany his neighbor on a tour of inspection to examine the amount of the injury. Providentially there was but little harm done; a few blades were prostrated, and others bitten off, yet a few days' sun and rain would obliterate all traces of the evil.

"If he who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, is a public benefactor," said Deacon Herman when they had been over the field, "I don't know what we can call him who raises two ears of corn in place of one. I shall have to learn the secret of your management."

"It will take something more than management to make your exhausted soil yield corn like mine," responded Mr. Mayhew. "That land was run out ten years ago."

"I shall do the best with it I can," was the rejoinder. "Patience and perseverance, with God's blessing, seldom fail of ultimate success."

While listening to the deserved encomiums bestowed upon his cornfield, Mr. Mayhew wished he had not refused the loan of the plough. He might have offered it then, had he not seen the same implement in the wagon, which led him to conjecture, what was really the truth, that Deacon Herman was now on his return from the blacksmith's shop with the repaired article. After this momentary revulsion of

feeling, he strove to fortify his prejudice by the unjust suspicion that his companion had sinister motives in seeking to gain his goodwill.

"Self is at the bottom of it; the old fox can't blind me, let him be ever so cunning, " he added, when relating the incident to his wife. "I don't want to hear about disinterested benevolence and self-denial for the good of others. Such things are all sham."

Chapter Four

July had now come; consequently, both our farmers were busy in the labor of haymaking. Mr. Mayhew worked on the high-pressure system, men, boys, cattle, horses, all taxed to the utmost, the natural result of which was clamor and confusion. Deacon Herman, in the adjoining field, moved in his wonted quiet manner, and exacted no unreasonable service from either man or beast. At first Mr. Mayhew looked on with contempt for his neighbor's want of worldly wisdom; but, as days passed and large loads of well-cured hay went from the field to the barn, he began to wonder how so much was accomplished without hurry or overwork.

"I begin to think there is something in this deacon's religion," said Mr. Fitts, stopping to take breath, with his scythe in his hand. "At any rate, Silas Elkins says there is."

"Silas is always taken up with new things, so he can't be depended upon," returned Mr. Mayhew, anxious to end the conversation.

"He says the deacon is consistent," pursued Mr. Fitts, determined to talk long enough to rest. "Silas has worked there since the beginning of haying, and every day about the time luncheon was brought into the field for the men, the

deacon would be gone into the house for half an hour or thereabouts. This took place forenoon and afternoon; and Silas, who always likes to see into things, made up his mind to find out what it meant. So yesterday he managed to upset all the sweetened water there was in the jug, just to have an excuse to go up to the house. He kept his eyes open, I tell you, and when he went by the bedroom window, there sat the deacon reading a large-print Bible. It took Silas all aback, because he expected to find him having a better luncheon than the men or drinking something stronger than molasses and water, and he says it surprised him so much that he came pretty near speaking right out."

"I have known people read the Bible, and perhaps pray in their families, and then hurry and drive all before them to make up lost time," interposed Mr. Mayhew.

"That isn't the way there," responded Mr. Fitts. "Silas says when the deacon came out again, he looked so calm and happy, it was enough to do anybody good to see him. He says too, the work is easier than it is in some places because there is no fretting or scolding, but master and men all pull one way, and that is sure to be the right one."

"Just like Silas," rejoined Mr. Mayhew, with a laugh. "He is always full of large stories. Wait till he has lived in his new place a year, and see what he will say then."

Chapter Five

The school which the Herman and Mayhew children attended was nearly two miles distant from their homes, consequently, the walk over a rugged road exposed to the full glare of the sun was far from agreeable. Mr. Mayhew, whose parental affection was one of the strongest traits of his character, often conveyed his children in his wagon,

especially if the weather was hot or stormy. On such occasions he sometimes passed by the little Hermans; but he never invited them to ride. Instead of this, he held the reins of his horse with a firmer grasp, thus to accelerate the speed of his horse.

"Can't you take Susie up, father?" pleaded little Emma, one oppressive morning; "it is too warm for her to walk."

The Herman children were struggling up a long hill, where not a tree afforded them a transient shade. Edgar had the dinner basket in one hand, and in the other an umbrella which he strove to hold over his sisters, thus to secure them from the sun. Carrie, the eldest sister, led Susie, the youngest, while Tommy, a stout boy of eight summers, toiled manfully on alone. Susie looked up when she heard the sound of wheels. Her face was red, her brow wet with perspiration, and then she lagged behind Carrie, perhaps in expectation of a ride.

"Won't you let Susie get in, father?" again urged Emma. "There is room enough, and she looks tired."

"Her father could bring her, if he didn't want her to walk," was the cold reply. "He has got a horse."

Such was the excuse which Mr. Mayhew uttered for withholding neighborly charity; in his heart he added another: "if I do it once, they will expect me to carry them all the time. I get my children to school; let other people do the same by theirs." Perhaps if he had known that Silas Elkins had taken the deacon's horse to go and see his sick mother, he would have been more humane in his conduct.

On his way home, he again encountered the children who had ascended the hill and were now resting in the shadow of a large oak that towered above the road. Susie's bonnet was off, and while Carrie wiped the little girl's face, Edgar fanned her with some twigs of elder which he had twined into a rude fan. With a momentary impulse to take them

into his carriage and convey them over the weary way that still remained to the schoolhouse, Mr. Mayhew partially checked his horse, then, with a smile at his own weakness, he drove on faster than before, mentally inquiring how the weakness and exhaustion of his neighbor's children could be a matter in which he had the least personal interest. It is because many stop to ask similar questions that there is so much sin, sorrow, and suffering in the world. The Good Samaritan never pauses to raise doubts or investigate causes before his hand is outstretched to relieve. The bounds of sympathy should be circumscribed alone by the bounds of the universe embracing all mankind in its wide and generous grasp.

On the afternoon of that same day, Mr. Mayhew watched with much solicitude the dark clouds in the west that presaged a shower. Several tons of his best hay were on the ground, ready to be taken into the barn; but the illness of Mr. Fitts had disarranged his plans and delayed his progress. As the clouds became darker, he looked alternately from the ground to the sky, wishing for another pair of hands, and almost sure the rain would come before it would be possible to secure the hay. To increase his anxiety, John, his remaining helper, did everything in a wrong way, by this means becoming a hindrance rather than a help. After several other blunders too vexatious for ridicule, he pitched the hay upon the cart in such a manner that the first movement of the oxen on an inclined surface precipitated the greater portion onto the road.

Completely disconcerted by this untoward event, Mr. Mayhew blamed the oxen, reprimanded John, and inveighed against the rain, all in a breath. Then he ran hither and thither, giving contrary directions, and hurrying so much that before one purpose was accomplished he left it for another which was in turn abandoned. Meanwhile, the clouds covered the whole horizon, the low mutterings of

distant thunder became audible, and the hay was still exposed to the threatened shower. Mr. Mayhew now stopped a passer-by, a young man who had sometimes labored in his service, and endeavored to obtain an hour's assistance by the promise of abundant compensation. The person addressed, having finished his own work, was selfish enough to prefer his ease to the prospect of getting wet for another.

At this juncture, Deacon Herman, with his cart, oxen, and Dennis appeared at the bars. "My hay is all in," was his brief salutation, "and I thought you might like a little help about yours, as Mr. Fitts is unable to work."

Perhaps if Mr. Mayhew had been allowed time for reflection, he might have repulsed the kind offer, but his eagerness to save his hay overcame his policy of acting independently of others. Deacon Herman had a strong arm and a tact in expending his labor so that without much apparent effort each movement produced a result; accordingly the scattered swaths were soon transferred to the cart. Mr. Mayhew was able to act more efficiently after his prospects began to brighten, and John, no longer perplexed by contradictory orders, raked and loaded with an energy quite at variance with the slowness of the preceding hour. By the time the first raindrops fell, the last load of hay was moving out of the field to follow its predecessors to the barn.

Leaving Dennis to render what further assistance might be needed, Deacon Herman now disappeared from the scene. The rain soon fell in torrents, uncared for by Mr. Mayhew, who, since his hay was safe, had leisure to recollect that his corn was curling up, and his pastures becoming brown and parched. He watched the great drops, and bared his brow to receive their cooling touch as he stood in the barn-door, yet he believed that each came by blind chance, instead of being directed by a loving Father.

The Christian sees God in the raindrop, and each crystal globule is a new token of almighty love, a fresh pledge of continued care. What a barren waste, life must be to the unbeliever!

In consequence of a reminder from his wife, Mr. Mayhew's thoughts turned to his children, who probably were on their way home from school, exposed to the full force of the shower. He hurried to get his carriage in readiness, anxious on account of Emma, his youngest darling, who was so frail and delicate that he always shielded her with special care. A brief exposure not long before had resulted in a violent attack of croup, and the father's heart misgave him at the consciousness of her present unprotected state, in a thin dress, without an umbrella or extra wrappings. Just as he was ready to start, a covered wagon drove into the yard, and, "Here are your children, neighbor!" exclaimed Deacon Herman's cheerful voice.

"All wet though, I suppose," was the father's response; "such a shower as this would drench anybody to the skin in five minutes."

"Not wet a bit," exclaimed Agnes, springing from the wagon with a merry laugh. "We had not started from the schoolhouse when Deacon Herman got there."

"Where is Emma?" next inquired Mr. Mayhew.

"Here, father," responded a birdlike voice, and the little one crept out from the ample folds of a buffalo robe. Her sun-bonnet was pressed on one side, her curls were over her face, but she was dry and comfortable enough to satisfy the apprehensive parent.

"It is such fun to ride so," interposed Agnes, "that I wish it would rain every night when school was done. We have laughed all the way."

"Perhaps the boys may not like it as well as you do," observed the deacon; "or those poor little children that were plodding on in that rain. I wished I had room for them all, they looked so wet and forlorn."

"Where are the boys?" interrogated Mr. Mayhew.

"I have got the two youngest here, somewhere," was the smiling answer; "but Cyrus and Edgar thought it would not hurt them to get wet a little. I don't suppose it will if they change their clothes as soon as they reach home."

"So Edgar walked to let my girls ride, did he?" and Mr. Mayhew's voice was softer than its accustomed tone. Perhaps some unwonted emotion arose in his bosom; but if so, he soon crushed it down, and when his neighbor turned to leave the yard, he spoke of compensating him for the favors received during the day, in the same manner that he would have spoken of discharging a debt at the grocer's.

"Never mention such a thing to me, unless you wish to offend me," was the reply. "I believe we are put into the world to do all the good we can, and it is a duty which I owe to myself thus to discharge the object of my existence."

Though there was nothing in the words or manner to which a reasonable man could demur, Mr. Mayhew fancied they contained an implied reproach. He was not fulfilling the design for which he was created. His conscience told him that truth, though he chose to attribute it to his larger-hearted neighbor. He lived in the narrow sphere of self-interest, never performing a single act without first inquiring how it would affect his welfare, and what bearing it would have on his prosperity. Deacon Herman's practice—a practice as much as the effect of the Christian principles that pervaded his being as the fruit is the natural product of the tree on whose bough it hangs—so diametrically opposed to his own, awoke in his nature first prejudice and afterwards determined ill-will and bitterness. Because his heart had

never been pervaded by that holy love which grasps the whole human race in its sympathies, he disbelieved the existence of this principle in the heart and power of another; so when he witnessed deeds of charity, self-denial, and magnanimity he ascribed them to low and ignoble motives.

Notwithstanding Mr. Mayhew sought an occasion of fault-finding against his neighbor which could justify his dislike, no opportunity of this kind for some time arose. No breach in walls or fences served for a breach between the men; and instead of watering his herds at a spring whose joint ownership had been a constant source of strife between Mr. Mayhew and Eli Tufts, Deacon Herman drove them quarter of a mile further to a never-failing fountain on his own premises. The children also were orderly and well-disposed, content to pick strawberries in their own fields, or gather blueberries or raspberries in their pasture.

In one corner of Mr. Mayhew's orchard grew a summer pear-tree, with its branches overhanging the road. From this tree he seldom obtained much fruit, the boys from Bald Hill who went by it daily on their way to school, usually helping themselves to the greater portion. These same Bald Hill boys bore no enviable reputation. The children of negligent, intemperate parents, they had little moral training, and thought it no harm to fill their pockets with another person's apples and pears, provided they escaped without detection. Mr. Mayhew resorted to the usual methods to keep fruit on his boughs, yet constant watchfulness whenever practicable, threats of vengeance to all offenders, and proffered rewards for information which would convict guilty parties, produced no effect except to make deprecators more wary in their plans. One night as Mr. Mayhew stood under the drooping boughs, little Tommy Herman approached with a timid request for only one pear. The child was rudely repulsed with the injunction to wait until his father's trees, set out the previous spring, bore pears for him to eat. The

next night Tommy came again, with evident reluctance. He lingered at Mr. Mayhew's side, apparently desirous to speak, yet hanging back whenever the latter turned towards him. "Please, sir," he began in a low voice, and then, without uttering another word, he leaned his head against the fence and burst into tears.

"What do you want?" Mr. Mayhew interrogated. "I told you yesterday not to trouble me about pears."

"I didn't come for pears," faltered the boy, with a desperate effort. "Father sent me to tell you," here he paused again, and stood digging the ground with his feet.

"To tell me what?" inquired Mr. Mayhew; "out with it, if it is worth telling. I can't wait here all night."

"I took some pears without leave," sobbed the child, trembling with emotion.

"What did you do that for?" coldly queried the farmer. "They looked so good, and I wanted some," faltered Tommy. "I saw the other boys get some, and I threw up stones, and knocked down three."

"Do you know what I said I would do to any boy that touched my pears?" was the inquiry now propounded.

"Flog him within an inch of his life; Dick Armstrong said so."

Mr. Mayhew smiled at the simplicity of the answer, and then proceeded: "I shall have to punish you. Boys who take other people's property must expect to take the consequences. I rather guess you will think a while before you throw stones at my pear tree again."

Tommy's lip quivered. "I never will, never," he murmured. "I told father so before he sent me here. O Mr. Mayhew, you won't whip me, will you?"

Perhaps Mr. Mayhew would have deemed the confession a partial expiation for the offence, and let Tommy go

unpunished had he not feared the results of such clemency. If one acknowledged transgressor went unchastised, what would become of his pear-tree, and would not the Bald Hill boys steal before his very eyes when undeterred by fear of retribution? He did not believe in the power of moral suasion, or a system of discipline in which love was the controlling element, accordingly, he prepared to administer punishment.

"Don't strike Tommy, father," pleaded little Emma, coming Pocahontas-like between justice and criminal. "He won't do it again. I know he is sorry. Tell father so, Tommy."

"I am sorry," and then Tommy's head went down on the fence again. "Emma won't be willing to play with me anymore," he added; "but if you let me go this time, I will never touch anything of yours again."

Mr. Mayhew's hand slowly relaxed its hold upon the stick; there were tears in his eyes, perhaps caused by memories of his own boyhood, and, without another look at Tommy, he walked away with Emma in his arms.

"I love you now, father," whispered the little girl, pressing her soft hand over his hair and whiskers. Oh, how often such a touch transforms a strong man into a child!

Chapter Six

Notwithstanding this transient ascendancy of merciful impulses, Mr. Mayhew often regretted that he had not inflicted the threatened punishment, upon Tommy as an example for other offenders. Particularly when his apples began to grow ruddy and golden like the autumn skies from which they borrowed their color, and footsteps under the trees bore witness of other visitors besides himself. At

length, when he found a large limb broken from one of his most valuable young trees, determined to prevent future trouble of the same kind, he procured a fierce dog, whose bark he supposed would send terror into any boy's heart, and set him to guard the orchard. For three days he rejoiced in the success of this project; but on the fourth morning the mastiff lay dead under the boughs of the largest Gravenstein, with a partially eaten piece of meat by his side, which showed the cause of his death to be poison. Then a man was employed to watch the premises; but, chancing to see this same trusty guardian help his own boys to some of the choicest fruit, which he had hid in a hollow tree for their especial benefit, this last plan was speedily abandoned.

"I believe I shall cut down every tree in my orchard!" he exclaimed to Deacon Herman. "These Bald Hill boys are enough to provoke anybody. I believe they have got several bushels of my best fruit; and, not satisfied with taking what they want to eat, they strip off hard, unripe apples, and leave them on the ground. If I could lay my hands on the rogues, I'd send them to jail in a minute."

"Patience, neighbor," said the deacon softly. "I don't wonder the sight of such fine-looking fruit as yours proves a temptation. I recollect when I was a boy, I used to long for a taste of the great Bell pears that grew in Major Downer's garden."

"So you uphold stealing, do you?" was the angry retort. "I thought you professed better things."

"You are mistaken if you think I mean to uphold anything that is wrong," was the meek reply. "But I believe in tempering justice with mercy. The Bald Hill boys, according to what I hear about them, don't know a great deal about right and wrong. Perhaps if you and I were to give them a few apples once in a while, and take a little pains to

awaken their better feelings, we might lessen the power of temptation."

"Pay them a premium for not stealing; that's a good one," retorted Mr. Mayhew, scornfully. "You may try it if you like, but I don't think I shall. They have got enough from my orchard now without any help from me; and as to their better feelings, they haven't any to awaken. If I could get my long whip round their legs, that would make the kind of feelings that would do them good."

"But they would steal again as soon as your back was turned," observed the deacon. "I believe there is a better way which can be used in most cases, that of overcoming evil with good. Get boys to desist from stealing fruit out of fear, and they will always be on the lookout for opportunities to escape detection; but teach them to be afraid of doing wrong, and you can trust them alone in an orchard full of apples without danger of losing one."

"There is a field for you to work in then," returned Mr. Mayhew, with a sneer, "a wide field, too, according to my way of thinking. Some of your church members talk about sending the gospel to the heathen. I advise them to try their hand on the Bald Hill boys."

This conversation took place in the morning, and towards night, as Mr. Mayhew was walking by his neighbor's house, he saw Deacon Herman talking with Dick Armstrong, a boy who was reputed to be the worst of the Bald Hill juveniles. If a hen-roost were robbed, or the melons abstracted from a farmer's patch, Dick was the scapegoat on whose shoulders the offence was laid. No one thought to inquire if he had any redeeming qualities, much less did any labor to reclaim him from the path of evil.

Though Mr. Mayhew had no reverence for the Bible, or faith in its power to elevate the moral nature, he was not without hope that Deacon Herman would give Dick a plain

commentary upon the passage, "Thou shalt not steal." He would have been surprised had he known the result of the dialogue. After a little kind conversation, during which Dick's heart was touched by the interest manifested in his welfare, Deacon Herman invited the neglected boy to help himself from a basket of apples, and then gave him half a dozen of the largest to take home to his mother. Dick acknowledged the favor by a surprised stare followed by an awkward bow, perhaps the first he ever attempted to make.

Nor was this all: when school was done, the Bald Hill boys, five or six in number, were stopped on their way home, and, much to their astonishment, treated to some of Deacon Herman's best Golden Porters and ruddy Gillyflowers. "Now my lads," said the good man, when each crunched his apples in mute wonder, "suppose you and I make a bargain. When you want an apple to eat, just come and ask me, and you shall have one as long as mine last; but don't go into people's orchards and help yourselves without leave. That is a mean way of acting, and it isn't the right way, either. You all want to do right, and be good men, by and by; don't you?"

The boys stared; nobody had talked to them in this manner; and, though they were an uncompromising set, with unwashed faces, uncombed hair, and, in some instances, unmended garments, more than one young heart determined to go without apples forever rather than take them from Deacon Herman's orchard. The resolution was in most cases faithfully kept, and the Bald Hill boys, in their daily or nightly depredations confined themselves to Mr. Mayhew's orchard, leaving the adjoining trees untouched.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mayhew, alarmed at the rapid decrease of his fruit, obtained another dog, which soon shared the fate of its predecessor, after which he resigned himself to his lot, striving to be content with watching every boy whom he saw in the vicinity of his fruit trees. Boys never like to feel

themselves the object of suspicion. The first step towards rendering any person trustworthy is to show confidence in his honor. Dick Armstrong did not hesitate to appropriate Mr. Mayhew's apples, although money would not have tempted him to touch Deacon Herman's, especially after the latter employed him to assist in gathering.

"So you have got Dick Armstrong to help you?" queried Mr. Mayhew, when he met his neighbor driving from the orchard with a wagon-load of full barrels; "I wish you joy of him! but I would not trust him to gather my tree behind the barn, which is sour enough to set his teeth on edge."

"Every one speaks ill of poor Dick," was the mild answer, "and I thought a little encouragement would do him good. He is active and industrious, and, with help in the proper direction, may make a useful man. Sometimes boys go to ruin who might have been saved by timely efforts."

After Mr. Mayhew went home, he sat down in an easy chair to meditate. Emma climbed upon his knees, then climbed down again, her father being much too occupied in contemplation to notice her caresses. Was Deacon Herman sincere in his words and acts, or were they merely a gloss to cover up his real nature? Was there such a being as a holy yet a loving God, and did faith in him produce elevation in life and character? If so, what was himself, and what the creed in which he was an avowed believer? These questions were soon banished to cherish in their place the old feelings of opposition to Christianity and those who professed to be its disciples.

"He is a wolf at heart for all that he seems to be so meek," Mr. Mayhew remarked when his wife set before him a nice muskmelon that was the gift of his neighbor. "All the good there is in him is on the outside, depend on it."

Mrs. Mayhew looked at her silver-plated tea urn and wondered whether outside goodness, when it led a man to

deeds of kindness and brotherly love, was not preferable to no goodness at all. She did not give expression to the thought, lest her husband accuse her of favoring hypocrisy, but she directed his attention to another view of the same subject. "Our children have improved since they have been intimate with the Hermans," she ventured to say. "Agnes is less boisterous in her manners, and Cyrus is more obliging than he was a year ago. I notice that he carries the dinner basket and umbrella instead of leaving them for the girls. He and Agnes used to dispute about this very thing until I settled it by having them take turns."

"He is older now, and knows that boys ought to show their sisters such little attentions, that is the reason," observed the father.

"He is less selfish," continued the mother. "He no longer selects the largest apple in the dish, or the softest piece of bread on the table."

"I don't see how that has any connection with the Herman children," replied Mr. Mayhew. "You would never do for a lawyer, Sophia; you jump at conclusions instead of proving them."

"I believe there is a connection, and I am lawyer enough to trace the relations of cause and effect when I see both before my eyes. When Mrs. Herman sent me a tumbler of raspberry jam and a basket of tomatoes, it made me feel so warm-hearted that I wanted to perform some of these little kindnesses which render life more pleasant; and I think it is so with Cyrus. He sees Edgar give away apples, and, at times, his dinner, and is thus led to perceive the charm of a self-sacrificing spirit."

"Cyrus is a noble boy," responded the father, with a throb of parental pride; "I mean to send him to college, and give him a chance to rise in the world."

Only to rise in the world! Such was the extent of the father's aspirations for his son. That boy might become an heir of immortal glory, a king and high priest unto God, clothed with an honor and dignity of which the mind in its present state cannot conceive, and yet this parent's vision was circumscribed by this fleeting life. Poor Cyrus! may the Father above have pity on the child for whom no parental lip breathes a prayer!

Chapter Seven

There was not much indigence in Stoneleigh; consequently, the citizens were not often called to exercise that charity which is more blessed to giver than to recipient. Still, the Savior's words, "*Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good,*" are as true now as when he uttered them centuries ago in the house of Simon the leper. Were it not so, one of the greatest enjoyments to be derived from the possession of great riches—the privilege of ministering to the necessities of others, would be lost to human experience.

Lame Polly Cheever, obliged to keep her bed for years on account of a spinal difficulty, though not actually suffering from want, was a constant appeal to the humane of Stoneleigh; so was Nancy Sands, who was too aged for remunerative labor, yet too self-reliant to take refuge in the almshouse. The latter tenanted a small cottage not far from Mr. Mayhew's; and because she knit stockings for the farmers' wives, and helped them pare apples for drying, and pick geese and turkeys for market, she solaced herself by the pleasing fiction that she earned her own subsistence. Still Nancy did not always have fuel enough to keep her dwelling comfortable, which, like herself, felt the touch of time. Mr. Mayhew owned extensive woodlands just back of her home,

but, though he granted her permission to pick up dry limbs or broken twigs, the little which her weak arms could carry was barely sufficient to steep her tea.

When the autumn days became suggestive of bright fires and cheery warmth within doors, Mr. Mayhew saw Deacon Herman's ox-cart before Nancy's cottage. It was piled up with wood, not refuse sticks, or broken branches which the wind had brought down, but good, well-seasoned maple, with a sprinkling of yellow pine. "*He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.*" The refuse of our substance is an unworthy offering to our Maker, so it is a very meager form of charity to bestow upon his suffering creatures what we cannot use ourselves.

"To pay for all that wood will keep Nancy knitting one while," mused Mr. Mayhew; "or perhaps the pay will come out of town. Mr. Bates is the head selectman, and he thinks Deacon Herman one of the salt of the earth."

But Nancy did not pay for the wood with her knitting-needles, neither was the good town of Stoneleigh responsible for the same. Besides, in consideration of the recipient's sensitiveness, the gift was left at her door in her absence, so that she could only suspect the source from which it came. She was grateful, nevertheless, and, being accustomed to attribute her mercies to the direct interposition of Providence, she looked to God in childlike thankfulness and then implored his blessing to rest upon her unknown benefactor. Many such prayers from the earth's lowly ones have descended in token of the divine approbation.

"I wonder how old Nancy is going to get all that wood sawed and split," said Cyrus Mayhew, when he went by the cottage with Edgar Herman, on his way to school. "She could break up dry limbs, but she can't get these stout sticks to pieces."

"I am going to do it for her; I mean to begin this afternoon," was the reply of his companion.

"Who pays you?" was the next inquiry.

"Nobody; but father says there are a great many ways of doing good, and I thought one way for me to do some would be to attack Nancy's woodpile. It can't keep her warm to have it there, if the sticks are not cut."

"It will take a great while, and be hard work, too," Cyrus responded.

"Yes, but I have got Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and a little time morning and night. There would be more, if I didn't have to take care of the horse, and do errands for mother."

"There will be skating soon," urged Cyrus, "if the weather keeps as cold as it is now. You have never been here in the winter, so you don't know what grand times we have on the ice."

"I know what it is to skate, though," and Edgar's eyes sparkled at the recollection. "Father says," he resumed, "that the way to make noble, self-sacrificing men is to begin in boyhood; so I am trying to begin now. I don't mean to have a skate on my foot till the wood is all done. I dread it, though. I know I shall want to give it up; I always do when I undertake any thing difficult."

Cyrus was very thoughtful in school that day, so much so that Edgar supposed he had found another example as puzzling as the one that he went without his dinner to solve. Instead of a mathematical perplexity, however, the cause of his sober face proved to be a struggle between the promptings of benevolence and his naturally selfish spirit. The former conquered, as was proved by his offer to become Nancy's wood-sawer in company with his young friend.

That afternoon, and for several Wednesdays and Saturdays, the two boys spent all their leisure upon their voluntary task. They had undertaken no easy office, for some of the sticks were large and cross-grained, a difficulty altogether too formidable, Edgar began to think, for Cyrus and himself to overcome. Especially when the skating became excellent, and the other boys bent their steps to the meadow, did he wish that self-denial was less irksome, and doing good more pleasant. If Cyrus had these feelings he did not give them utterance, he being one of those determined spirits who press on, in spite of obstacles and weariness, until the goal is won.

Dick Armstrong came that way, with his skates on his arm, when the lads were at work upon one of the hardest logs—one of some half-dozen, which made even Cyrus think there would be no skating for many days to come.

"Halloo, there boys!" shouted Dick, "don't you want a fresh hand? I'm more used than you are to such work;" and then he plied the saw with a strength and energy which accomplished more in an hour than both lads could have done in the whole afternoon. Mr. Mayhew rode by while Dick was thus at work, and he could but wonder at the spectacle. Nancy did not wonder; she believed God put thoughts of kindness into Dick's heart.

"This will keep the old lady warm a spell," Dick remarked, as he took up his skates; "and, boys, when you come across any more tough logs like these, just let me know."

Dick did not understand what made him so light-hearted that night; but he began to inquire whether there was not something more he could do for Nancy. Kindness is like leaven; it will diffuse itself and permeate all with which it comes in contact. One deed of actual benevolence is the

foster-parent of another; and he who has enjoyed the luxury of an unselfish act will desire its repetition.

Chapter Eight

The winter months wore away with no apparent change in the position of the two neighbors, unless it might be that Mr. Mayhew's prejudices against Deacon Herman deepened instead of being obliterated by time. Where others saw much to admire and imitate, he only discerned an ignoble spirit veiling its true character from a desire for the popular favor; and the very concessions which were dictated by a love for peace were attributed to the same unworthy motive. Mr. Mayhew's ox-sled, heavily loaded with oak timber, through the carelessness of inefficient John, became imbedded in a snowdrift. Night was closing in, the storm was violent, and Deacon Herman weary, yet he left his warm fireside and unfinished supper to volunteer his assistance. When the sled was free again, instead of grateful acknowledgements, Mr. Mayhew endeavored to recompense the service with money. If this had been received the feeling of obligation would have been less oppressive. To Mr. Mayhew there was a sense of degradation coupled with the reception of a favor, and the little kindnesses which are worth more than silver or gold he regarded with scorn.

"It is not so much the act as the feeling that prompted it that I value," said Mrs. Mayhew, when she displayed a plate of honey in the comb, that Mrs. Herman had sent in for the benefit of Agnes, then sick with a cold. "When I receive such tokens it always makes me feel that there is more good in the world, and it makes me feel warmer toward everybody."

"Mine never gets in a glow so quick," responded Mr. Mayhew. "It takes more than a pound of honey or a few smooth words which cost nothing to melt me down."

Poor Mrs. Mayhew wished her husband was more impressible, and, by way of manifesting her appreciation of the many benefits bestowed by her neighbors, she sent Cyrus with a jug of milk, Mrs. Herman's supply from her own dairy being cut off for a season.

When spring came with its appropriate employments, Mr. Mayhew was surprised to see Dick Armstrong among Deacon Herman's corps of laborers. Dick now wore a decent hat and a clean pair of overalls; indeed, the whole aspect of his outer man was essentially improved. He was improved in other respects, as was evinced by his care to avoid the use of low and unbecoming language, and to do his work in the right manner, whether under the supervision of another or not.

"What have you got that fellow for?" inquired Mr. Mayhew, designating Dick by the point of his goad.

"To work on my farm this summer," was the reply. "He came to me two months ago, and told me he wanted a place where he could have steady employment. I wanted to hire, so we made an agreement."

Mr. Mayhew was angry. "I did not think you would bring such a good-for-nothing scamp into the neighborhood. We shall not be able to raise a chicken or gather a single watermelon this summer. It was bad enough when he was at Bald Hill, but he will do ten times as much mischief now."

"I do not think you will be troubled," was the rejoinder. "I confess I felt some anxiety, though not from the causes you mention. I was fearful he might use phrases I do not wish my children to hear; but, though he has worked for me

a week, I have heard but one profane word, and that one was checked before it was fairly out of his mouth."

"You might as well teach the wind not to blow as Dick Armstrong not to swear, or steal either," answered Mr. Mayhew. "But if you felt as you say you did, I can't understand how you came to hire him."

"I pitied him, especially after I saw what a miserable home he has; and I believe there is good in him, though the poor boy has never had much to draw it out. Kindness has a wonderful effect upon such temperaments."

"Deacon Herman," exclaimed Mr. Mayhew, now thoroughly enraged, "you are a hypocrite! You can get more work out of that boy for a little money than you can wring out of a decent youth, so you make believe you will hire him out of charity and good-will. You don't care how much he steals from your neighbors, provided you make a gaining bargain. If you would say so right out, I should have a better opinion of you."

Deacon Herman's cheek flushed. He had already borne much from Mr. Mayhew; had often striven against the rising tide of passion, and choked down the vehement retort which was on its way to his lips; but this time the weakness of human nature conquered. He answered hastily, unguardedly, passionately, and, of course, in a manner little befitting a professed disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus. A quick temper was one of his infirmities, perhaps the besetting sin against which he needed to exercise the most careful vigilance. He was not on his guard now; it might be that in his morning prayer he had not inserted the petition, "Lead us not into temptation," which we should always breathe when we come into the presence of our Father, and so he yielded.

The two men parted in anger. Mr. Mayhew to gloat over this new proof of what he considered outside goodness, and

to be more confirmed in his belief of the hollowness of religion; Deacon Herman to lament the sin into which he had fallen, and to humble himself before the God against whom it was committed. The Christian, though zealously laboring to overcome evil in himself, does not gain the entire victory in this life. The way to the heavenly city is one of struggle and conflict, often watered by the tears of erring yet penitent pilgrims.

Several hours afterward, when the long shadows stretching from the west were heralds of approaching sunset, Deacon Herman sought Mr. Mayhew. The latter was sitting in his piazza, his favorite spot when the toils of the day were ended, with his wife by his side, and little Emma nestling in his arms; Cyrus was there too, engaged in twining a climbing rose around the pillars that supported the roof.

"I come to tell you, neighbor," the visitor began, "that I was wrong in what I said this morning. I have no excuse to make; I don't wish to make any; I simply came to acknowledge my fault and ask your charity."

Mr. Mayhew bent his face toward Emma to conceal his real emotion. All day long he had nursed bitterness in his heart, blended with secret exultation that Deacon Herman, the man whose good deeds had raised him to a high place in public estimation, had shown himself weak and fallible. "It is no worse for me to run my sawmill Sundays than it is for him to show such a temper," he had said to white-headed Mr. Bates. "Show me a man who always does right, and I will give up my infidelity." Now there was a revulsion in his feelings, for he knew that at times it requires a higher degree of self-abnegation to voluntarily confess a wrong act than at other times to refrain from its committal.

"Let it pass, then," he answered, coldly. "It only convinced me of what I believed before, that you are no better than I am, if I don't pretend to have so much religion.

All the difference is, that I act out just what I am, while you try to cover up the bad with this flimsy veil of goodness."

"I make no pretensions to be better, Friend Mayhew," was the meek response; "perhaps I have not naturally half as much good in me; and, because I know myself to be a poor lost sinner, unable to live aright, I do trust in Christ for salvation. I believe my faith is better than yours, inasmuch as it will help me struggle more effectually against the temptations of this life, even if we leave the last great enemy out of the account. We need to lean on something stronger than we are."

Mr. Mayhew was in haste to close the conference. He observed that both his wife and Cyrus listened with eager interest, and he felt a strange reluctance to discuss religious matters in their presence. "Enough has been said," he interposed, in his former cold tone. "You may go your way, and I shall go mine. With such different opinions as we cherish, it is not likely there can ever be much fellowship between us."

Deacon Herman extended his hand at parting, but, though Mr. Mayhew took it, he did not return its warm pressure.

From this time, Mr. Mayhew scarcely treated his neighbor with the outward show of civility. He would gladly have prohibited all intercourse between the families, had not the troubled faces of his wife and children, when his wish was mentioned, caused him to relinquish the idea. On one point, however, he was obstinate. When the time came for Agnes' birthday party, she was forbidden to ask Carrie Herman, a decision that neither tears nor entreaties availed to change. Afterward, when Mrs. Herman invited a few of her friends to tea, though Mrs. Mayhew pleaded for permission to go, the same stubborn will compelled her to remain at home.

Deacon Herman, on the other hand, never lost an opportunity of rendering a neighborly charity, and such occasions are sure to come when one's heart earnestly desires their performance. When his early peas were ready for the table, two weeks before other farmers dreamed of having such a luxury, Edgar was sent with a generous supply to Mr. Mayhew. After this, Mr. Mayhew, being drawn as a juror, was obliged to leave home for a week, and during his absence his children were conveyed to school, and his interests carefully attended to by Deacon Herman.

That autumn his squashes failed to mature, a fact which he mentioned in his neighbor's presence, coupled with regret for the deprivation. "Never mind," was the response, "my squashes have done finely this year; Dennis said he did not know where he could find a place to put them all; so, with your permission, he will take a few to your cellar."

Mr. Mayhew felt a strange sensation in his throat. Could it be that the squashes were choking him? Still he did not reject the gift, for Deacon Herman's manner of conferring the favor made it seem as if he were the person obliged instead of the recipient.

Chapter Nine

Thus one summer and then another, passed, with no visible change in the sentiments of the two men. The daily life of one reflected the love which glowed in his heart; that of the other gave forth no light and warmth, because his own bosom was cold. "Benevolence and good works are only another form of selfishness," said Mr. Mayhew. "My meat is to do the will of my father in heaven," Deacon Herman uttered, not in words but in acts.

For some unexplained reason the character of the Bald Hill boys improved during these two years. They walked quietly home from school, no longer stopping to throw stones at every stray goose that chanced to be in the road, or pelting Emma's kitten till the poor thing was in danger of losing her limbs, if not her life, by their thoughtless cruelty. Mr. Mayhew's cherries ripened, so did his summer pears, but although the boughs of the last-named tree projected over the fence, the mature fruit was seldom touched.

"The boys have got frightened, and concluded to let my trees alone," said Mr. Mayhew, when he heaped his baskets with nice mellow pears. "I suppose the young rogues were afraid of getting caught."

"It isn't that," responded Nancy Sands, who had stopped to rest under the pear-tree; "it's the sabbath-school, more likely. Deacon Herman has got the whole of them into his class, Dick Armstrong, into the bargain, and better-behaved boys in meeting I never wish to see."

"That is the best thing I ever heard of the deacon," returned Mr. Mayhew, with a laugh. "If he makes the Bald Hill boys quit stealing, I'll move him a vote of thanks at the next town-meeting."

Without heeding the irony contained in that last remark, Nancy proceeded, "There is going to be a picnic in Deacon Herman's woods next week, and I suppose the Bald Hill boys will be asked as much as anybody. I don't expect they'll have much to carry, though."

Mr. Mayhew laughed again; it was one of his low, scornful laughs this time, whose import even Nancy's enfeebled mind was able to comprehend. When the Fourth of July celebration took place three years previous, it was necessary to watch the tables lest the Bald Hill boys appropriate an undue portion of the luxuries provided for the occasion. An attempt was made to exclude these

unwelcome guests from the grove, but they crept in through obscure nooks and made their appearance at the festivities with Dick Armstrong for their leader. In consequence of these recollections, the idea of bidding these same youths to a picnic, in Mr. Mayhew's opinion, was preposterous in the extreme.

The picnic soon became the absorbing topic of conversation with the children, Mr. Mayhew's among the number. The father determined to keep his family aloof from the whole matter, especially as he imagined it originated with Deacon Herman and the sabbath school. He withstood Cyrus' and Agnes' pleadings, together with his wife's earnest appeal, but when Emma twined her arms around his neck, the pressure of her soft lips subdued him into compliance.

"Be sure to cook enough, Sophia," he then remarked to Mrs. Mayhew; "the children say Mrs. Mayhew heated her brick oven twice yesterday, and I don't want you to be beaten by her, either in quantity or quality."

He did not know that the larger part of what Mrs. Herman cooked went to the Bald Hill boys, whose parents were too poor or too negligent to make provision for their children. The good woman never thought of making a display, either in the abundance or superior character of her viands. The eventful morning dawned with the promise of a delightful day, and the preparation commenced at an early hour in Mr. Mayhew's home. Cyrus and Agnes helped their mother pack boxes of cake and baskets of cold meat, and while they were doing this, Emma was in a fever of impatience, lest she should not be dressed in season.

At last Mrs. Mayhew went upstairs with Emma, and then Cyrus addressed his father in a beseeching tone, "Won't you go with us to the picnic, father, just to please me? All the other boys' fathers are going, and I don't believe there is a

single man in this part of Stoneleigh who will stay away but you."

Cyrus was a handsome boy, and his father's eye rested on him proudly at that moment. Perhaps parental love would have gained the ascendancy over prejudice, had not Mr. Mayhew seen Dennis go by with a additional supply of boards for the table. This decided him, and he hurried away to the cornfield, to consider his prospects for again obtaining the premium. Cyrus soon followed him thither to make one more plea, "Do go father, it will be twice as pleasant if you are with us. Deacon Herman always goes to such places with his children," and then Cyrus looked up with a tear in his eye. His father had not seen him shed tears since he pleaded to go to the sabbath-school some months previous.

Mr. Mayhew began to secretly relent, but, to hide his emotions, he stripped the husks from an ear of corn. That momentary pause brought back the old self-will, and he replied angrily, "Don't quote Deacon Herman to me; I want nothing to do with him, or the picnic either. I suppose he will have all the Bald Hill boys at his heels, and if he likes such company, he is welcome to it."

Cyrus turned away with a disappointed look, and, half an hour afterward, his father saw him walk toward the oak grove with his mother and sisters.

It was strange what made the farmer so long in examining his corn that morning. Though the ears were filled out with the promise of an abundant harvest, his eyes often wandered from the ripening grain to the adjacent woodland, whither the multitude were thronging. White-headed Mr. Bates rode by in his large market-wagon, with a small army of children in the front part of the vehicle, and an uncounted number of boxes and baskets in the rear.

"You had better go, Mr. Mayhew," said the good man, checking his horse long enough to speak. "Come, leave your corn, and be a boy with the rest of us."

There was no response, and Mr. Bates drove on again.

A murmur of youthful voices was now wafted to the cornfield; and when Mr. Mayhew looked toward the road, he saw the Bald Hill boys, all neatly dressed, and each with a wreath of oak leaves around his palm-leaf hat. Nancy Sands was not far behind, in her well-kept black bonnet and clean calico dress. Nancy advanced slowly, for the way led up-hill, and she had a basket on her arm. When Dick Armstrong saw her, he left the other boys to walk with her and help carry her basket. It would have been easier for him to bear it alone; but the poor woman was sensitive, and wanted people to know that she contributed her mite toward the picnic.

There are some particular days, or it may be hours, whose events are daguerreotyped on the mental retina with peculiar vividness. Those of this day were thus impressed upon Mr. Mayhew; and when he sat down to his solitary dinner, even his hired laborers having gone to the picnic, he felt as if he had lived a great while since sunrise. After the lonely meal was over, he sat down to read the newspaper; but he could not concentrate his thoughts upon its pages, and letting it fall from his grasp, he abandoned himself to sober reflection. What was he toiling for? Why adding acre to acre and laboring to make his farm increase in value and productiveness? Of what avail was it that his flocks and herds multiplied, and abundant harvests waved in his fields? In a few years he would die, and leave all his hard-earned substance—pass away, according to his unsatisfying creed, like the beasts that perish. His children, too, whom he loved so much, must be taken from him by death, or he might be snatched away from their love and caresses. There was nothing to live for, absolutely nothing; and the strong man

clenched his hands at the consciousness of his own weakness. Oh, what a terrible belief that of the infidel must be!

Chapter Ten

Perchance the premonition of coming illness gave rise to Mr. Mayhew's disturbing thoughts for the next morning he awoke languid and unrefreshed. Then long, weary days followed during which he was not able to leave his bed, though his restless spirit chafed against the imprisonment. He knew that he was needed on the farm, for Mr. Fitts, governed by no sense of moral accountability, took advantage of his employer's absence to squander his time and neglect his duties. John naturally followed the example of his superior, and went whistling around the premises with his hands in his pockets, when he should have been gathering the sweet apples, and harvesting the crops of early potatoes.

Besides this, the pasture gate was broken by rough usage, the key of the granary lost, and the peaches began to decay from remaining too long on the bough. In these emergencies, Mrs. Mayhew resorted to Deacon Herman, who mended the broken gate, procured another key in lieu of the missing one, encouraged John to gather the peaches, and then took them to market himself. Upon his convalescence, Mr. Mayhew's fastidious appetite demanded delicacies which could not be obtained in Stoneleigh. Deacon Herman, at the mere mention of the fact, rode to the next town for the desired supply; and, besides these acts of positive kindness, was ever ready with counsel and sympathy to relieve the overburdened hearts of Mrs. Mayhew and Cyrus.

The first time Mr. Mayhew left his room, he found little Emma prostrated by the same disease. The troubled faces bent over her told him that she was very sick, and when he looked at the little wasted face on the pillow, he would scarcely have recognized his darling, so greatly was she changed. From that moment anxiety for his farm was merged in anxiety for his child, and, instead of going to his cornfield and orchard when he gained strength, he remained in Emma's chamber with her form pressed in his arms, or her head pillowed on his bosom. He had many bitter memories while he sat thus, such as the well often have by the sick, or the living by the dead; memories of ungratified wishes, impatience with trivial faults, hasty words regretted as soon as uttered, and he thought if he could only keep Emma, he never again should be irritable, discontented, or unhappy.

The day Emma was pronounced out of danger, Cyrus came from school sick. "Not sick, but tired," he said, as he entered his sister's room and lay down beside her on the bed. "I was so tired this morning that I had to sit down and rest before I got halfway to school."

"Deacon Herman let him ride then," interposed Agnes. "I knew he would when I saw him coming."

"Edgar walked to make room for me," resumed Cyrus. "It made me feel mean to let him do it; and he did the same thing tonight."

"Cyrus has been my great dependence through your sickness," observed Mrs. Mayhew, as the two parents stood by his bed the next day. "He has been worth more than Mr. Fitts and John put together, and I don't wonder he is sick when I think how much he has done."

"He shall have an easier time now," was the response. "We will take a journey as soon as he is well enough, and

that will do us all good. The fine autumn air will give us all new strength."

"Your farm," suggested the wife; "that has been neglected a long time, and the men you need to look after them."

"No matter; the farm is a trifling thing compared with the health and happiness of my family. Cyrus shall have the journey if the corn stays out till the snow comes, or if the potatoes freeze in the ground. Money is not every thing, Sophia."

The sick boy smiled languidly, and soon after murmured something about a better country in his sleep. Those whispered words sent a thrill to the mother's heart, and as she bent over the slumberer to kiss his brow, tears fell upon his cheek.

Cyrus did not take the journey with his father and mother; instead of this he was called to go down alone into the grave. In one short week from the commencement of his illness the noble, loving boy closed his eyes upon earthly cares and loves. Deacon Herman was with him the last hour; this kind friend went with him as far as mortal steps could go, all the while beseeching the Savior to receive the departing spirit. The wretched father, unable to look upon his dying child, shut himself into a dark room, there to writhe in hopeless agony. Oh, if he could have bowed in prayer then!

Out of regard to the prejudices of his wife, Mr. Mayhew allowed his son the rites of Christian burial. "*I am the resurrection and the life,*" uttered the deep, emphatic tones of the minister over the body of the dead boy. To the infidel father there was no meaning in the inspiring message. "O Thou that pitiest us, we come to thee with the burden of our sorrows," pleaded the same tones of supplication. All this was but mockery to the unbelieving parent. How could it be

otherwise, since in his view death was an eternal sleep, a night without the promise of a dawning?

Throughout the services Mr. Mayhew sat cold and tearless, with his eyes fixed upon the pale face in the coffin. Sometimes sorrow renders the sufferer insensible to outward objects, conscious only of the dull, heavy weight that presses on the heart; but, at other times, and, we think, more frequently, it intensifies the perceptions, endowing them with unwonted power and acuteness, so that the flutter of a leaf, or the motion of a hand, is felt and seen. Mr. Mayhew saw the sunbeams that glanced through the partially closed blinds, each ray mocking his anguish by its brightness; saw the gorgeous tints of the maples in his front yard, each hue kindled by the touch of decay; saw the faces of those around him, even to a little child who drew back in fear when lifted up by its mother to come for the first time into the actual presence of death.

The Bald Hill boys stood in the entry, their hats tied round with black ribbon, their countenances grave and thoughtful. Dick Armstrong was nearest the door, and, because he deemed it unmanly to be seen weeping, he leaned his head against the panel. Edgar Herman sobbed aloud, so did Carrie, and then brother and sister crept closely together, as if their sorrow could be lightened by sympathy. Nancy Sands sat in the corner, her staff in her hand, the very staff Cyrus found among the rubbish in the attic, and then carried it to his aged friend.

Though Mr. Mayhew took note of all this he did not weep, neither at that time nor afterward when he gave the last look to his child, not when the coffin was lowered into the grave, and he turned away and left it there. His neighbor's hearts were full of pity, they would gladly have spoken words of comfort, for they knew his grief was heavy, but what could they say to one whose views were wholly circumscribed by this life? They could not point

him to God, "*our refuge and strength, our very present help in trouble,*" neither could they whisper of heaven where there are no tears, no sorrow, no death, the former things having passed away, so they departed to their homes and left him a crushed, heart-stricken man.

Chapter Eleven

The next day the bereaved father went to his cornfield again to resume the burdens of life. How changed every thing was since the day of the picnic; the leaves, the sunlight, the whole aspect of earth and sky. It was a lovely October day, one of those few which make us wonder what heaven can be, since this world is so very beautiful. Mr. Mayhew's heart was in the quiet valley where the pride of his life lay sleeping.

Mr. Fitts sought to divert his mind by pointing to the corn, the ears of which gleamed in the golden light. "You'll get the premium this year, for certain," said the man. "Such a yield as this was never before seen in Stoneleigh."

Instead of thinking about the premium, Mr. Mayhew recollected that Cyrus helped plant the corn, and he hurried out at the gate, hoping in change of place to find relief from his misery. From the corn lot he proceeded to the orchard. On every side were thrifty trees whose boughs drooped nearly to the ground, so heavily were they laden. He passed under a Baldwin where the branches were great wreaths, not of blossoms, but of fruit. Mr. Fitts pointed to a twig ruddy with its crimson burden. "Did you ever see the like of this?" he inquired. "There'll be all of three hundred barrels of No. 1 apples, and at two dollars a barrel, they'll pay for the trouble of gathering."

Contrary to his expectation, the remark produced no answering smile. The father's heart ached too much for prospective gold to chase away the pain. What was his cornfield, his orchard, his farm, aye, the whole world, compared with the child whose loved presence would gladden him no more?

The same day the minister made a call in the home where death had been. The good man dreaded to go there; it was so difficult to approach Mr. Mayhew, that an unskillful hand might rudely touch the chord on which vibrated eternal issues. Mr. Mayhew greeted his guest politely, and then listened with deference while he spoke of the uncertainty of life and the frail tenure by which all earthly things are held. Encouraged by this attention, the minister proceeded to speak of the duty of resignation to the lot which is appointed. His auditor's head began to droop; but when the speaker continued to urge submission, because God meted out the cup of sorrow, and the draught though bitter is presented in love, Mr. Mayhew's defiant spirit burst forth into words.

"It is easy for you to talk," he interposed. "You never lost a child; you never had death come into your home. When you have been through this, you will know better what to say to other people."

Thus saying, the miserable father left the room that he might escape the ill-judging comforter, who tore open his wounds in the attempt to administer healing. Directing his steps toward the garden, he paused under an elm that shaded his backyard. The woodshed was just beyond the elm, and, rising from its roof, was a windmill which Cyrus made just before his last sickness, for his youngest brother. The mill went merrily round in the breeze, while the hand that framed it was still forever.

Leaning against the elm, with his eyes fixed upon the windmill, Mr. Mayhew heard no sound of footsteps, and, ere he was aware, Deacon Herman stood by his side. His first impulse was to escape from the unwelcome intruder, who, he supposed, had come to console him in the stereotyped phrases which are often words of torture to the bleeding heart. Deacon Herman's warm grasp and simple word, "Brother," thrilled his bosom, and he left his hand in that sympathizing pressure. The appellation brother carried him back to his boyhood when a childish voice addressed him by that fond name. No one had called him brother since those distant days, the only lips that ever breathed the word being early sealed by the touch of death.

Subdued by the memory of the old sorrow, together with the added weight of the new, instead of turning away, Mr. Mayhew sat down under the elm. Deacon Herman sat by his side, still retaining his hand, and his own eyes wet with tears.

"I know all about it," he whispered; "I followed my first-born to his grave three years ago, and I can take every bereaved father to my heart with a brother's love."

Not another word was spoken. The two men sat under the elm with grasped hands, and for the first time since his son's death, the floodgates of Mr. Mayhew's soul were opened and he shed cooling tears. Deacon Herman wept with him; and each tear that fell melted away a portion of the ice from his companion's heart.

O my reader! if you would sympathize with those whom God has smitten, never talk in cold, measured phrases of the duty of submission. Jesus, our great Exemplar, did not do so at the grave of Lazarus. The mourner cannot bear such language in the first shock of grief, when the nerves are all quivering, and the heart swollen almost to bursting with its fulness of agony. Rather weep with the stricken one, and

when your tears and his have relieved the surcharged fountains, speak of Him who wept with Martha and Mary by the grave in Bethany, and who is touched anew by every sorrow of his creatures. Tell him the same heart beats with compassion now, the same loving arms outstretched to enfold every afflicted one.

Probably Mr. Mayhew was not aware that his heart was becoming softer, as we feel rather the effects than the process of any mental change. But when Deacon Herman left him, after a half-hour of silent, undemonstrative sympathy, his hand returned the pressure at parting.

When Deacon Herman repeated his visit a few days subsequent, Mr. Mayhew advanced to meet him, and invited him to enter the house. Mrs. Mayhew looked surprised when her husband ushered his visitor into the sitting-room, yet she was still more surprised at the prolonged conversation which followed. The dead Cyrus was the theme; Deacon Herman listening with moist eyes while the father expatiated upon his child's developing character, and touchingly alluded to the present void in his home and heart. Nor was the guest a hearer merely; he too spoke of a love of learning, combined with early promise and laudable desire to excel, and afterward detailed the incidents of that last ride when Cyrus came from school sick and exhausted.

"I have been afflicted," he said, when he rose to go, "until my head has been bowed like a bulrush under the sweeping torrent, and I have never found but one source of comfort in such visitations, which is the presence of the Savior to sustain and soothe. It is not imagination or blind credulity, as perhaps you think, but an actual experience; a love transcending every earthly love, a faith which the whole world cannot rend away. I wish you had it, Friend Mayhew."

"I believe there is such a thing as religion," returned the other, deeply moved. "I believe you have got it, Friend Herman," and an emphasis was laid on the word friend. "Nothing that I have heard you say has produced this change in my opinion; but your life has effected what argument has failed to accomplish. Ever since you came here to live I have watched your conduct in the little everyday things which reveal a man's true character. I have seen you steadfastly pursue a course of right, return good for evil, and, forgetting your own interests, strive to make every one around you happier and better."

"Hush!" interposed the deacon; "you never saw my wicked heart."

"I must speak," pursued Mr. Mayhew; "I cannot relieve my conscience unless I do. I tried to think some selfish purpose actuated you; but I knew no one could persevere in such a course who had not higher principles than mere worldly ones to control his life. I have meant to be a moral man, and have not knowingly transgressed the laws of justice and integrity, but my life is like a winter night, cold, cheerless, chilling; yours like a summer day full of song, blossom, and sunlight. It is your religion that makes the difference."

Deacon Herman bowed his head upon his hands. "Don't speak in praise of me," he replied. "I am weak, frail, erring, but I have a perfect Savior, a glorious hope. The Bible tells us, '*Every man who hath this hope in him purifieth himself as he also is pure.*' I should be an unworthy disciple did I not try to walk in the footsteps of my Master, yet sometimes I follow him as Peter did, afar off."

There was a momentary pause, when the deacon resumed, "If the Bible and the doctrine it teaches are true, Neighbor Mayhew, you have a personal interest in them."

You have duties to your Father God, your brother man, and your own soul, which are still undischarged."

"Don't press me too hard," was the response. "From this time forth I am no longer an infidel; still I am not ready to become a Christian. I wish to look into the matter."

Chapter Twelve

From this day Mr. Mayhew's sawmill was stopped on the sabbath, his fields untilled, his hay unraked, while he and his family were regular worshippers in the sanctuary. Instead of attacking the religion of the cross, he openly avowed his belief in its truths, as fitted to elevate the social, moral, and spiritual condition of man.

"Mere morality is not enough, even if this world alone is considered," he argued on one occasion. "Morality may be wholly a selfish principle, and it only benefits him who practices it, except indirectly; while that high and disinterested love which Christ felt, and which is the controlling power in the hearts of his followers, embraces the whole race in its sympathies. That is the difference between the man of the world and the Christian. One lives for himself, the other for all mankind."

Two years after this, Mr. Mayhew, not satisfied with a speculative faith, which had its seat in the intellect rather than in the heart openly confessed his trust in the Savior, by uniting with his visible church. Dick Armstrong, the formerly reckless Dick, now a steady, reliable young man, took the vows of God upon him at the same time, as did another of the Bald Hill boys. The character of the last-named lads has every much changed. With but one exception, they have become orderly, industrious, well-disposed, and trustworthy; so much so, that no farmer is

afraid to have them on his premises or take them into his service.

"What convinced you of the truth of the Christian religion?" inquired the minister, when Mr. Mayhew was examined for admission into the church. "We know the grace of God can subdue hard hearts; but you were so firm in your infidel belief, that we almost despaired of your conversion."

"The consistent life of a Christian was an argument that I could not resist," was the response. "That went to my heart more than all the reasoning I ever heard. Men are often honest, truthful, patriotic, and high-minded; but they are not patient, loving, forbearing, and forgiving, with self completely forgotten in efforts to benefit others. The Bible attributes this character to Christ; and when I saw these traits in one of his followers, I believed it must be something more than human power which produced such fruit."

A thoughtfulness pervaded the assembly. Perhaps each was mentally inquiring whether he thus glorified God in his daily life.

"What influenced you?" pursued the minister, addressing Dick. "You did not have much religious training in childhood."

"I never knew much about any thing good until Deacon Herman gave me some apples, and asked me to go to the sabbath-school," was the reply. "After a while I went to live with him, and I could not help seeing the difference between him and some men I had worked for. It made me feel better to be with him, kind of peaceful-like. Then I began to think about religion, and to wish I had it. I left off some of my bad ways, but I found out my heart was the seat of the difficulty. Then I went to the Savior—I had learned about

him in sabbath-school—and asked him to give me a new heart. I believe he heard me."

"Brethren," said white-headed Mr. Bates, when the church members were by themselves, "we must live more like Christ. We must follow his example as well as receive his doctrines. Earnest prayer and zealous labor for the unconverted may be blest to their salvation; but to render them in the highest degree effectual, the eloquent lesson of loving, self-sacrificing lives are needed. Overcoming evil with good! That's the way the Savior did, and that's the way for his followers."

Chapter Thirteen

Ten years after Eli Tufts left Stoneleigh he visited his native town. He could scarcely trust his own powers of vision, when, upon accepting an invitation to spend the night at Mr. Mayhew's, he saw the latter kneel down and invoke God's blessing upon his household; still this surprised him less than the conduct of his host the subsequent day, when Deacon Herman's frisky colt leaped into his clover field. Eli spent a week in the vicinity; and, led by curiosity to visit the sabbath-school, he found that the former infidel was the teacher of a class of young men. Dick Armstrong was also a teacher; a good one, too, as was evinced by the interested countenances of his youthful charge. Deacon Herman was superintendent in place of Mr. Bates, who had exchanged his white hairs for a crown of glory. Nancy Sands' seat was vacant, its former occupant having gone to swell the throng of the redeemed who praise God in the upper sanctuary. Eli's face looked very grave as he mused upon the changes which had taken place in the Stoneleigh people.