

WHAT AM I IN THE WORLD FOR.

What am I in the world for?
To eat, to drink, and to sleep?
To live the life of a rabbit?
The life of a silly sheep?
Is earth but a pleasant pasture,
Where I am to live and die,
And leave no record behind me,
To tell that my feet passed by?

What am I in the world for?
To be as a wayside flower,
Enjoying my brief existence,
Enjoying the sun and shower?
Or am I a stinging nettle,
A breaker of peace and rest,
Cut down by a stroke of judgment,
Unblessing and so unblessed?

What am I in the world for?
To carry a comrade's load:
To gladden a child in sorrow,
And brighten the dreary road:
To be a star in the midnight,
Outshining amid the gloom:
An evergreen in the churchyard:
A rose on the world's great tomb.

What am I in the world for?
A finger to point to God:
To leave in the sand a footprint,
Telling where faith has trod:
To show what the Saviour wishes:
To show what His grace can do—
This is what I was born for:
Have you been born for it too?

—Word and Work.

BROTHER RUGG'S HEART-DISEASE.

"It's nothing, Mrs. Rugg, nothing to be alarmed about," said the doctor.

"But isn't it his heart?" anxiously inquired the little woman to whose white face her own heart seemed to have forgotten to send any color.

"Oh, no! Or rather the heart is involved a little, but only by way of sympathy. The real trouble is in his—somewhere else." He could not bring himself to say stomach. "What did he eat for dinner?"

"Veal dumplings, and I don't think they were quite as light as usual. But he is so fond of them."

"Yes, it's his stomach, you may depend upon it. Nothing at all alarming."

"Oh, I'm so glad!"

Groaning Brother Rugg, lying prone on the spotless counterpane, heard every word the doctor said. The doctor intended he should. The groaning decreased.

"James, dear," said his wife, smoothing his pillow, "the doctor says you will soon be better. It isn't your heart at all."

"It feels like it," was the feeble response. But the groaning quite stopped. "It feels as if it was the valve of my heart. Sometimes it just flutters, and then seems to stop altogether."

"The heart has several valves," said the doctor dryly, "and every one of yours is as sound as a whistle. Here swallow this. I think it will help you right away. May have a few more twinges—nothing serious. If you could get an hour's sleep you would feel better."

Ten minutes afterward, Brother Rugg was sound asleep, just as the doctor had prognosticated, and then happened something that the doctor had not prognosticated at all. A second attack of that dreadful palpitation came on. He could not catch his breath. He saw his gentle little wife sitting there so calmly by the window with sewing, but he could not cry out, and his limbs were as if chained to the bed. He felt the cold drops gather on his brow. His heart gave one great bound, then all was still. Was this death?

But not for one moment did he lose consciousness—that was the singular part of it. His mental powers seemed keener than ever, even when his heart stopped beating and his useless struggle for breath was at an end. He felt darkness slowly dropping down over him. The form of his wife grew dim, and then was swallowed up altogether in it. But as it disappeared, other forms grew slowly up. One, two, three, four, five—there they stood, one at each corner of the bed and one bending over him. They shone out in their own light, mistily at first, then with sharp clearness.

"Angels, of course," thought Brother Rugg, and through his mind there floated a line or two of an old song:—

"There are angels hovering 'round
To carry my spirit home."

Somehow he did not greet them with quite the gush of enthusiasm and joy that

he had thought would fill his soul when the "angels gathered 'round." He gazed at them curiously, and noticed almost with terror that the one at the side had his hand on his heart. Was his heart-disease—for he knew now it was heart-disease that had killed him in spite of the doctor—going to follow him into heaven?

Suddenly this angel withdrew his hand, saying to the others:—

"It's over now. Take him to the examining room."

The four angels at the corners of the bed laid hold of the prostrate man, swept him instantly off the bed and away. The one at his side flew before the party. Brother Rugg could see nothing but the luminous figures around him, but he felt himself going through limitless distances, away and up. His bearers uttered no word and their gleaming wings made no sound as they swept along through utter, awful stillness.

They came at last to a large room whose walls, furniture, everything, gleamed with the same soft, penetrating light. They hid Brother Rugg down on a long, narrow table, and all gathered about it. Five of them—no, six, for Brother Rugg himself joined them. How it was he did not know, but there he lay on the table, yet there he stood by the side of the table waiting with eager interest to see what next. What could be the matter with the Brother Rugg on the table that they all gazed so intently toward his heart?

Suddenly, with a deft movement, the fifth angel took the heart quite out of the body and laid it before him on the table. It did not hurt—it was hardly a surprise to the Brother Rugg looking on. The angel held a pearly rod in his hand, and with it he now gently lifted one of the little white valves.

"What does it all mean?" whispered Brother Rugg to his neighbor, an angel whose benevolent countenance seemed to invite the question.

"We are commissioned by the King to try the hearts of those who apply for admission into the city," was the soft response. "Hush!"

"This praying valve works pretty well," said the examining angel, moving it up and down. "Ah, here's a little hitch. What's the matter?"

"Can't be anything serious the matter," Brother Rugg spoke right out. "I always had family prayers, and as for the prayer-meetings I used to go whenever I—Ouch!"

For the examiner pushed a little harder, and Brother Rugg felt a sharp twitch of pain in the place where his heart used to be.

"It's connected with something wrong," said the angel. "Ah, there it goes. It has finally yielded. There, that works all right. I think that will pass."

The examiner now selected some instruments of the clearest crystal, and, turning the heart a little to one side, began a careful search for something.

"We always examine the loving valve next," whispered the neighbor angel, and all relapsed into an anxious silence.

"Oh, I hope there won't be any trouble here," exclaimed one, involuntarily, "for he that loveth not, knoweth not God."

"Atrophied! Dried up for lack of use, I fear," said the examiner.

Brother Rugg's blood ran cold in his veins. At least he felt as if it did. He leaned forward, and his eyes almost started from their sockets in his frenzied gaze.

"Surely he loved a little—his wife, his child," said another. "And all love is of God."

The examiner took a large microscope from the case, and another five minutes' search discovered the missing valve. "Ah, here it is," said he. And they drew a great breath of relief.

"It works easily—what there is of it," said he, moving it most delicately with a crystal rod.

Every time it worked back and forth Brother Rugg experienced a most delightful thrill in the cardiac region. It was the same sensation that he had felt years ago on earth when he was first converted. It all came back to him now, how his first affections had gone out to everybody, even the far away heathen; and how he had sung:—

"Oh, that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace."

"I wish it were larger," said he, smiling, half mournful, to his neighbor.

"Ah, that's what makes heaven," was the soft answer. "That, and seeing Jesus."

The examiner now carefully selected some rods and pincers of burnished gold. "For the giving valve," whispered the neighbor into Brother Rugg's ear.

Brother Rugg fairly felt the pallor creeping up to his lips, and the sickness of deadly apprehension came over him.

The angel found the valve without any trouble. Small it was, and oh, so tightly closed. It required all the force he could exert with those strong little pincers to force it open the first time, and as he did so a cry of absolute agony burst from the lips of the pale mortal at his side. The pain was something terrible. The angels did not seem to hear him. They looked at each other with significant nods. "The root of all the trouble!" exclaimed one.

"Yes, you know the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil," replied another.

"And that was the reason of the hitch in the praying valve."

"And the smallness of the loving valve." "What shall we do with him? He can't go in to see the King."

"No, never!"

And the very silences seem to echo it—"Never, never, never!"

"O hear me, hear me!" cried Brother Rugg in agony. "Do let me speak for myself. I did give some. I"—

The angels all turned and looked at him. Oh, such a sad look, worse than sternness!

"What did you give?" said the examiner, slowly.

"I gave ten dollars every year to the minister's salary."

"And what else?"

"I went to the sociables and suppers, and took my wife. That always cost me a dollar."

"And what to foreign missions?"

Brother Rugg was silent. He had given nothing.

"And what to home missions?"

Silence still.

"And the Bible cause? and the deaconess work?"

"Oh, I did give five dollars to that. I remember it well."

"Yes, after Sister Margaret had nursed your wife through typhoid fever—fully fifty dollars' worth of service. And all these years your income has been thousands of dollars every year from your farms and your money in the bank—thousands of dollars saved every year besides all it cost you to live."

"But I had to save for my boy," burst forth from Brother Rugg's pale lips.

"Whose ruin it is going to be," was the inexorable reply. "He is spending it now as fast as he can, while he scoffs at his father's religion. Which would have been better, to have left him nothing but a good education and the example of a godly, consistent father, or to leave him this gold that will corrode his soul and sink him down to ruin?"

"But it cannot be wrong to lay by a little for a rainy day!" Brother Rugg was desperate.

"Lay not up for yourself treasures on earth. All saving for self is covetousness, which is idolatry."

And the room was suddenly filled with phantom forms. Not bright, like the angels, but dark and sad. They filed past Brother Rugg in dreadful procession.

First came a dark-skinned group, who spoke in a foreign tongue, but he understood every word:—

"We are the heathen your money might have taught of Christ. But now we are lost—lost. We found not the light!"

Then a company of men staggered past:—

"We are the drunkards your money might have rescued. But now we are lost—lost. No drunkard shall enter heaven!"

Then weird little children floated by:—

"We were beaten and bruised in city slums. We froze and starved, and your money might have fed and clothed and rescued us."

And then, blinding, dazzling, overwhelming, with thousands of angel attendants, came One—the King Himself! And as Brother Rugg fell in awful terror at his feet the voice seemed to scorch his very soul:—

"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me!"

"Why, Samuel! Samuel! What is the matter? Are you worse?"

It was his wife calling him. The angels were gone, and there he lay a changed man from that hour.

His boy, Charley, thinks father must believe in Christianity, he works so hard and gives so much to spread it. Charley has begun to go to Sunday-school again. Brother Rugg supports a deaconess all the time—sends his cheque for two hundred dollars every anniversary of the day he went to judgment, as he expresses it. His hand is open toward every good cause. He has no money in the Merchants' Bank now, but he has in Heaven's Bank. He will not leave much to Charley when he dies, but he will see the King in his beauty—not in his terror—and he will hear him say: "Come, ye blessed! Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto Me!"—
Lucy Rider Meyer, in The Message.

A DAILY DUTY.

No Christian should allow a day to pass without having a quiet little talk with the Master. Just as you go to your mother, and as the twilight falls, sitting by her knee, tell her all that has occurred during the day, all your hopes, joys, fears, wants, disappointments, tell him. Just as lovingly and interestingly as she listens, will he. Oh, even more so. A mother's love pales beside his; and the love of our heavenly Father is so much greater than the protecting love of our earthly father.

He wants to hear all. He wants you to have that confidence in him, and that nearness to him. He wants to be right in your life, your all and all. Though nothing is hidden from him, yet he loves to have you tell him. He does not want to stand without, almost a stranger in your heart; there he would take up his abode, making your sorrows, joys and pleasure his. The more you commune with him the nearer he will draw to you; but if you allow the world and your own self to stand, an "earth-born cloud" to hide him from your sight, gradually you will find yourself going further away from him till at last he is not in your thoughts at all.

So, dear Christians, you who desire to grow daily in grace, determine that, no matter how busy you are, you will every day have this quiet little talk with your Lord. Remember how he loves you, and then tell him everything. Tell him about your friends and their needs, just what you want for them. In his own great needs the generous soul never forgets the needs of others. Tell him upon whose heart you would have him plentifully pour out his Spirit, and whose wandering feet you would guide into the paths of peace. Tell him, too, you want to see some of those loved ones who are far away. Don't let it stop with loved ones. Tell him about some who maybe care very little for you, that have injured you in some way, perhaps. Remember the desires of their hearts when you are talking to the Lord.

Tell him about your failings; how you are so weak just where you want to be strong. Tell him how earthly you are in all your wishes, and how you find yourself weak and false and trying to appear what you are not. He knows your faults, only he wants you to tell him about them, then he will send you strength to conquer them. He will make you all you want to be.

Tell him all your plans, how ardently you desire their success; tell him the disappointment it would be if they are overthrown. Tell him about your health, your finance, your need of money, maybe, or of some influential friend. Tell him of the situation you want, the education you cannot get, the home you desire, the love you crave, the companion you need. Tell him what you fear; tell him if the clouds seem to be gathering darkly, or if the sun is shining in a clear summer sky. Tell him your temptations, every peculiar little one, sure that his strength will be sufficient for you. Tell him about the work you want to do for him, and what hinders you. Yes, tell him everything, resting assured that he is as near to you as the very nearest, infinitely nearer; and that this daily communion with him will bring him every day more near to you, and you will grow more near to him as you grow in strength.—
Christian at Work.