

God. With his last breath he took his aged wife by the hand, and saying, "Lord, take care of Mary," and so died.—*Youth's Companion.*

### FREE INDEED.

An old negro—a Christian minister—was being sold once at a slave block. The auctioneer said of him:

"What bid did I hear for this man? He is a very good kind of a man; he is a minister."

Somebody said: "Twenty dollars;" (he was very old and not worth much); somebody else, "Twenty-five—thirty—thirty-five—forty."

The aged Christian minister began to tremble; he had expected to be able to buy his own freedom, and he had just seventy dollars, and expected with the seventy dollars to get free. As the bids run up the old man trembles more and more.

"Forty—forty-five—fifty-five—sixty—sixty-five."

The old man cried out, "Seventy!"

He was afraid they would outbid him.

The men around were transfixed. Nobody dared bid, and the auctioneer struck him down to himself—"Done—done!"

But, by reason of sin, we are poorer than that African. We cannot buy our own deliverance. The voices of death are bidding for us; and they bid us in—and they bid us down. But the Lord Jesus Christ comes and says, "I will buy that man; I bid for him my Bethlehem manger; I bid for him my hunger on the mountain; I bid for him my aching head; I bid for him my fainting heart; I bid for him all my wounds." A voice from the throne of God says, "It is enough. Jesus has bought him."

### THE CUT IN THE APPLE TREE.

There was once in a young apple-orchard a fine tree that some boys had carelessly cut with a hatchet. They had not cut the tree down nor yet so badly that it died, but the hatchet had left deep marks on the trunk. These, however, in time seemed to heal up and the bark closed over them, so that they could not be seen. The tree grew almost as well as the others, and bore fruit. Its apples were fine large red-streaked ones that every one liked. When ripe and soft they were very good, and few of them were allowed to go waste. If boys could get some of the "red-streaked" apples

they cared for none others.

For a number of years the tree continued to grow and bear fruit. One summer evening, when it was loaded with ripening apples, there came a very severe storm of wind and rain. The storm was so great and the night so dark that no one dared go out of the house to see what damage was done and how many trees had been blown down.

When morning came the storm had gone, the sun shone brightly, and there was no wind. Two of the little boys in the house near the orchard went out early to see if any trees were blown over. The orchard stood in a valley protected on three sides by the hills, and those hills had been a protection to the trees now as before; but one tree was down. In a moment the boys saw that it was the "red-streaked" apple tree. Though apples had fallen and a few limbs had been broken off from the others, all except the "red-streaked" stood firmly upright.

The boys hurried to the fallen tree and saw that it had broken off near the ground; nothing could be done to save it. They were ready to cry when they found their favourite apple tree so hopelessly broken. Sitting down on the fallen trunk, they looked carefully at the break and saw marks near the heart of the tree of the cuts of an axe or hatchet.

"Look here!" said Johnnie, the elder, to his brother. "Somebody has cut this many years ago."

There were the cuts of the hatchet and plainly seen, and just there the tree had broken off. Had it not been for these cuts made many years before that tree would probably have stood the storm. The injury then done had remained, and only been covered, to prove a weakness when the tree most needed strength.

Some time ago many people were surprised and pained to learn that a man whom all thought good and honest had stolen a great amount of money and wasted it. People wondered how such a good man could be guilty of so great a sin. Though he had been in business many years, they had never heard of him being dishonest in any of his affairs; nor had he. But he had stolen when a boy, and had stolen more than once. As he grew to manhood he became honest, and people forgot all about his boyhood dishonesty. Those who did business with him never heard of it. Like the cuts in the apple tree, those acts of his thieving in his boyhood had left a weak place in the man's character. When a strong temptation came his character broke at that place; it