

As we thus walked together she would tell me of my faults during the past week, and make me understand how unkind and disobedient I had been towards her at times; and she always ended her admonitions by telling me that God would not love me if I behaved unkindly to my mother. In my childish anxiety to be on the safe side, I used to say: "But, mother, if I don't do it again, will God forgive me for what I have already done wrong?" And the answer she usually gave me was: "If you are sorry for having done wrong, and ask Him to forgive you, He will, just as I, your mother, am willing to forgive you when you say you are sorry, and show a desire to be a better child." Alas! I am afraid, having received this assurance, a sort of maternal absolution, I forgot to be sorry for my misdeeds, and the next week saw very little improvement in me. My mother died very suddenly from heart failure.

About two years after my mother's death, my father married again, and perhaps some who read this story will come to one or other of these conclusions, viz., that he was either a very brave or a very foolish man, when they learn that his second wife was a widow with eight children. There were two of us—a brother six years younger than myself; so that, with my father and stepmother, we were a family of twelve.

In the uphill task of providing for us all, my father took to farming again, and in order to economise his expenses, we boys had to work on the farm when we ought to have been at school.

The parish church was between two and three miles away from our farm, but there was a Congregational chapel near by, and so we, who were young, attended the Sunday School there, and our parents became members of the same chapel. When I was a youth I had a very retentive memory, and excelled those of my class in learning hymns and portions of Scripture.