

then be thankful to the Great Creator, and, clinging fast to the cross of Christ, trust in the death of the Elder Brother, and so you will be able to say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

THE CHILD-PRISONER.

A few years ago, in a certain county town, I had been in the habit of visiting the prison. On one occasion, it was early Sunday morning—sunlit, beautiful, and still. I entered the dreary house, and taking my place in a still stone passage, along which the cells of the different prisoners opened up, as was my wont, I spread the Bible before me, and began in a loud voice to read, and simply to expound as I did so, I had no human being except a turnkey in sight. The doors of the cells were shut and locked, save a small grating open in the centre of each; and along the passage, through the gratings, my voice, as I spoke, was supposed to travel so as to be heard by every inmate. The echo of my own words ringing through the deep grave-like silence, was in the last degree, dismal. In the cold dreary silence, every human sound seemed to fade and die.

When my brief address was over, and just as I was closing with prayer, I heard from one of the cells a bitter sob. I listened again, and it was repeated. It was a low, long moan of pain. I asked the turnkey what it was, and he informed me that, on the previous evening, a little boy had been committed for some petty crime, and all night long he had been moaning thus in his cell. As the man spoke he took me to the cell door, and, turning a huge key in its lock, flung it open. Through a high narrow grated window streamed in a golden bar of sunlight, falling upon the fair head of a mere child, as he sat on the stone floor, his face raised passionately, and, in all the desolateness of his young heart, sobbing as if it would break. A picture it was of the deepest sadness. All round him besides was chill, shadowy, and almost dark—the bare stone floor—the bare stone walls—the wooden board serving for a bed—the clanking iron locks, and strong iron bars. How grim and desolate must all these have smitten on the heart of the child!

I need not now tell how I strove to comfort him and raise him up. I wish only to add how long and vividly that picture of the child-prisoner remained printed on my thoughts. How like the soul, captive to sin and Satan! Ah, dismal as