

The Devil at Work.



CHRISTMAS EVANS, that mighty preacher, once told a story or parable, which I will give you, though I cannot tell it as he did—Once upon a time, the devil flew up from the pit, “seeking whom he might devour,” and he said within himself, “I will have souls to-day; I will deceive, delude, destroy,

and reap my pleasure on man.” So he flew up silently and unseen, through the air, till he came to a little valley sleeping betwixt two hills; and there, in the bosom of

the vale, by the side of a little stream and a little garden, was a small cottage, with trellis work and jasmine; and in the porch sat a fair young girl, knitting. “Ah,” said the devil, “I’ll have *her*; I’ll tempt her away to the great town: she shall be deceived, she shall be ruined;” and then he rejoiced to think, “I shall have her for myself at last.” So he was about to step up to tempt her, when she began to sing.

“Jesus I love Thy charming name,
’Tis music in my ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
That earth and heaven might hear.”

“Ah,” said he, “it’s no use tempting that girl to sin: she has got the love of Christ in her heart.

He then came to a plain, where were fields ploughed ready for the wheat; the horses were resting, for it was dinner time, and the boy looked about him, in attendance on the horses. “Ah,” said the devil, “I’ll have that boy. I will tempt him to steal his master’s goods: he will then be sent to prison, and will get in with a lot of rascals, who will teach him to do worse things than he ever knew before: he will go from bad to worse, until at length he becomes a murderer and is hanged;—oh, that will make up for my failure with the girl this morning.” But the boy had a song too:

“The Lord my shepherd is,
Now shall my wants be well supplied:
Since He is mine and I am his,
What can I want beside?”

“Oh,” says the devil, “this boy doesn’t want anything besides; its no use my tempting him to steal anything; he is quite content with what he has got—what a bad day’s work I am making of it! I had better by half be with old Williams (a good old preacher, who lay a-dying) now; if I can tempt old Williams to deny his God on his dying bed, what a fine thing that will be! it will make all the country round ring with the news.”

So away he flew as quick as his evil wings could

carry him, for he wanted to make up for the loss of the day. He arrived at length at the village. The lights were extinguished in the cottages—the people had gone to bed, except in one upper room, where there was the ray of a rushlight to be seen in the top window. He knew that room. “The old man is not dead yet, or else the light would be out: I will go and catch him when flesh and heart are failing, and induce him to deny his God: he shall even curse God when he is dying; and then, what triumph shall be mine!”

So upstairs he went; and when he got into the room, he found old Mr. Williams still alive, though reduced to a skeleton: his wife and family standing around the bed, taking a last farewell of him. But ere he could thrust a doubt or insinuation into the old man’s heart, old Williams’ eyes glistened, and he put out his hand all gaunt and bony, and said, “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. Thou hast prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” “Ah,” said Satan, “he meant that last line for me—‘in the presence of mine enemies;’” and he slunk away back to his pit, for he never had so ill a day in all his life before.

See how good it is to have the mind pre-occupied: that heart is sure to be well kept from every evil thing which is full of good things. Live near to God; put your trust alone in Him, and you may face a frowning world and bid defiance to death and hell.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

Twenty-fold Blessing.

The moment we are in Christ by faith, twenty things are said of our sins.

First, they are *blotted out*. Isa. xliii. 25.

Second, they are *borne by another*. 1 Peter ii. 24.

Third, they are *cast behind God’s back*. Isaiah xxxviii. 17.

Fourth, they are *cast into the depths of the sea*. Micah vii. 19.

Fifth, they are *washed away with cleansing blood*. 1 John i. 7.

Sixth, they are *covered*. Rom. iv. 7.

Seventh, they are *finished*. Dan. ix. 24.

Eighth, they are *forgiven*. Col. ii. 13.

Ninth, they are *not beheld*. Num. xxiii. 21.

Tenth, they are *not imputed*. Rom. iv. 8.

Eleventh, they are *not remembered*. Heb. viii. 12.

Twelfth, they are *pardoned*. Micah vii. 18.

Thirteenth, they are *passed away*. Zech. iii. 4.

Fourteenth, they are *purged*. Heb. i. 3.

Fifteenth, they are *put away*. Heb. ix. 26.

Sixteenth, they are *remitted*. Acts x. 43.

Seventeenth, they are *removed*. Ps. ciii. 12.

Nineteenth, they are *subdued*. Micah vii. 19.

Twentieth, they are *sought for and not found*. Jer. i. 20.

Twentieth, they are *taken away*. Isa. vi. 7.