

a community called ...

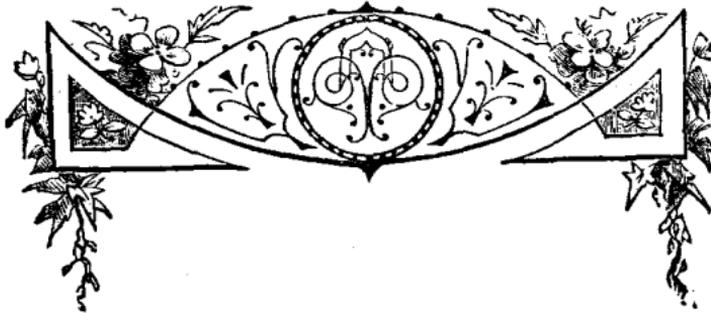
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Revised Series.]

[Number Seven



HAVE I NO FATHER?



I WAS once in an awful storm at sea. We were for many hours tossed about in sight of dangerous rocks ; the steam-engines would work no longer ; the wind raged violently, and around were heard the terrific roar of the breakers, and the dash of the waves, as they broke over the deck.

At this dreary and trying time, while we lay, as might be said, at the mercy of the waves, I found great comfort and support

from an apparently trifling circumstance. It was that the captain's child, a little girl of about twelve years old, was in the cabin with us. He had come two or three times, in the midst of his cares and toils, to see how the child was; and it was well known how cheering is the sight of a captain in such a time of danger. As our situation grew worse, I saw the little girl rising on her elbow and bending her eyes anxiously to the door, as if longing for her father's reappearance. He came at last. He was a large, bluff, sailor-like man, wearing an immense coat, great sea-boots, and an oil-skin cap with flaps hanging down on his neck, all streaming with water. He fell on his knees on the floor beside the low berth of his child, and stretched his arm over her, but did not speak.

After a little while he asked if she were alarmed. "Father," the child answered,

let me be with you, and I shall not be afraid."

"With me!" he cried; "you could not stand it for an instant."

"Father, let me be with you," she repeated.

"My child, you would be more frightened there," he said, kissing her, while the tears were on his rough cheeks.

"No, father, I will not be afraid if you take me with you. O, father, let me be with you!" and she threw her arms round his neck, and clung fast to him. The strong man was overcome; he lifted his child in his arms, and carried her away with him.

How much I felt her departure! As long as the captain's child was near, I felt her to be a sort of pledge for the return and care of the captain. I knew that in the moment of greatest danger the father would run to his child; I was certain that were the vessel

about to be abandoned in the midst of the wild waves I should know of every movement, for the captain would not desert his child. Thus, in the presence of that child I had comforted myself, and when she went I felt abandoned, and, for the first time, fearful. I rose, and managed to get on deck. The sea and sky seemed one. It was a dreadful sight: shuddering, I sank back, and threw myself again on my couch.

Then came the thought: The child is content—she is with *her* father; “and have I no father?” O God, I thank thee! in that moment I could answer, Yes. An unseen father, it is true; and faith is not as sight, and nature is not as grace; but still I knew I had a Father—a Father whose love surpasseth knowledge. The thought calmed my mind. Reader, does it calm yours?

Our storm passed over; the pilot-boat came,
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and we were brought to our desired haven. A heavier storm may be before you who read this narrative, may even now be at hand, the storm which, in time, threatens every sinful human being, as ready to burst upon his soul, if it pass unrepentant and unsaved into eternity.

Wouldst thou, reader, be composed in danger, peaceful in trial, resigned in sorrow? One who has weathered many a storm would say to thee, *Know* that thou hast a Father: pray to be with thy Father—even in the secret of his presence—hid in the hollow of his hand. Then trust in his power, repose in his love. Cling to that Father, and take no other help than that of an Almighty arm. But see that thou look on God as thy Father, as being the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this consists the difference in the relationship which all men naturally bear to God the Father, and that which the

believer bears. The latter is God's child by redemption and adoption. He feels his guilt, and through grace relies on the atoning blood and righteousness of Christ as his only ground of hope. Herein he sees the manifestation of God's love, (1 John iv, 9,) and the pledge of its continuance; for he who hath given his own Son for us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Do you trust in this love? Do you believe that as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him? Do you receive the truth that "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" Ye who do so, trust in that love, repose in it; trust to your Father. This is happiness and this is peace—my Father is with me; I am with my Father; I will trust and not be afraid.

O, cries the trembling soul, the storm is fearful; the sky is hid; we walk in darkness and have no light. "Be still, and know that I am God," saith the Lord; be happy and know that God is thy father. "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." All things are under the dominion of Christ, and all things, yea, even terrible things, shall work together for good for them that love God. Tempest-tossed soul, as the child clung to her father's bosom, so cling thou to thy God; in the moment of thine extremity he will appear to be with thee, or to take thee to be with him.

Unbelieving soul, ask now, Have I no Father? Ask it *now*, lest in the hour of danger and of death thou shouldst have to answer—"No!" "God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. Come, while yet

there is room ; come and prove that God is the Father of all them that believe. Do you ask, “Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God ?” “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice ;” and to obey God is this, is to come to him “in the way” he hath appointed, namely, with true penitence by faith in Jesus Christ, the Mediator and Advocate, the Captain of our salvation ; in whom, to every believer, God is well pleased to be a father and a Friend forever.



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