

FORBIDDEN GROUND.

OUR first parents were placed on probation. Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil they must not eat. One spot on the earth was to them forbidden ground—only one spot. Throughout the lovely Paradise they could linger without danger, in every place except one. They could freely eat the luxurious fruit of an abundant variety of trees, vines, and plants. They could breathe the purest air, drink the crystal water, fresh from the fount of God, inhale the sweetest fragrance, and feast their eyes on the loveliest flowers. There were no temptations hidden behind a thousand trees and flowers, nor perils and dangers in a thousand shapes and places. There was only one spot that was forbidden ground—only one spot. Why did they seek that very place? And when found, why did they not flee away quickly? Oh! why linger so long on forbidden ground?

But they did linger long enough to sin; long enough to bring reproach, and misery, and death, upon themselves; long enough to give an inheritance to us, their offspring, of grief, and sin, and sorrow, and corruption. This inheritance of a sinful nature has cost me many bitter tears. Still I look back to Paradise, lovely Paradise, with feelings of sorrow, as though I had myself been driven out of that place.

And since we, as a race, have been driven out of Paradise, the floodgates of temptation have been opened upon us. How fruitful that one sin was; fruitful in

begetting a thousand other forms of sin; fruitful in opening a thousand doors of temptation.

What a terrible thing sin is! It is still of the same nature as it was from the beginning. Yet how many sins each one of us has committed! What a fearful barrier between us and a holy God! How much we are in perishing need of Jesus, the Saviour from sin! But each sin of ours has opened to us many gates for temptation. And our sins have been numerous. Look at those thousands of doors of temptation round about you. Behind every one appears the form of an evil angel. He has an arrow on his bow. He is ready to send his fiery dart, with terrible power, into your poor, trembling heart. Have you on the whole armor of God? Are you on your watch continually? Will you yield again to the siren voice, and multiply the snares of temptation? Flee to Jesus! Come to Jesus! Lean on Jesus! Watch and pray—fervently, constantly.

The one spot of forbidden ground is now changed into a thousand spots. Wherever I roam, invitations present themselves, to make me linger on forbidden ground. I fear and tremble. I am discouraged. Is there no spot in this world where I can find rest and safety? Is there no ground that I can tread upon, and find shelter from that hail of fiery darts?

A heavenly voice whispers, Yes; come to Jesus. Come with me to Calvary. Behold the Lamb of God. Behold the Man of Sorrows. Come, linger here. This is not forbidden ground. Seat yourself in the shade of the cross. It is cooling here from the burning rays of conviction. See those stripes. See the blood streaming freely. Sin-sick soul, with his stripes we are healed. Look at that holy head bowing in the last anguish of

soul and body. Hear that piercing cry, as dark despair came over Him who never did sin: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was punished for our transgressions. Can you believe it? Do you believe it? Will you give yourself up, as a blood-bought soul to Jesus? Will you be his, and no longer your own? serve him, and no longer fashion and self? Behold, how he loved you! Will you love him again?

Follow Jesus to the grave. See him arise from the dead. Behold that wondering and happy throng of five hundred witnesses who beheld their resurrected Redeemer. Follow his ascension to the throne of the Majesty of Heaven. Now pass, by faith, through the opened door into the heavenly sanctuary. This is not forbidden ground. Here you can linger with impunity. Even the vail of the most holy place is lifted, and there is seen in the temple the ark of the covenant.

Here we will linger. Jesus is there, finishing his heavenly ministration. While mercy lingers, we will linger, too, around the mercy-seat. We will worship, with our faces toward the heavenly Jerusalem, as Daniel worshiped toward the old Jerusalem.

Jesus, dear Saviour, we long for thine appearing. But we desire to get ready. Send, in much mercy, precious rays of light from thy glorious countenance, that we may have light, step by step, till thy glorious appearing. Then there shall be no more forbidden ground. Then we will hail thee, blessed Paradise, without fear of stepping upon even one forbidden spot.

Dear reader, do you tread on forbidden ground?

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