

Taking Root

THE LORD'S GARDEN

The books in this series are collections of devotional stories written for children. The stories are based on true happenings, gleaned from a variety of sources, and rewritten for contemporary readers. Most are culled from books of the nineteenth century, including several by Richard Newton. Modern presentations of these stories were originally published in *The Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth* magazine and are now arranged thematically for the purposes of these volumes. Each story accompanies a passage of Scripture and is intended to illustrate that particular biblical truth. Some stories are shorter, some longer. However, all will capture the attention of children and hopefully their hearts.

Books in the Series:

Vol. 1 — *Taking Root: Devotional Stories about Conversion*

Vol. 2 — *Bearing Fruit: Devotional Stories about Godliness*

Vol. 3 — *Sowing the Seed: Devotional Stories about Sharing
the Gospel*

Taking Root

Devotional Stories about Conversion

Diana Kleyn



REFORMATION HERITAGE BOOKS

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Taking Root

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Introduction

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

—PSALM 80:8–9

Throughout the Bible, God gives pictures, illustrations, and stories in order to help us understand His mighty work of salvation. In this passage from the Psalms, Asaph compares Israel to a vine or a plant. He says that Israel was like a beautiful plant that covered the hills (v. 10). God had brought Israel out of the terrible slavery of Egypt and had driven out the enemies of Canaan. With God helping Israel by warring against the many heathen living in and around Canaan, the people were able to occupy the new land. “Thou preparedst room before it” means that God cleared away the heathen so that Israel could enjoy the blessings of the promised land of Canaan.

Asaph explains that God “didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land” (v. 9). In order for a plant to grow big and strong, it needs to have a healthy root system.

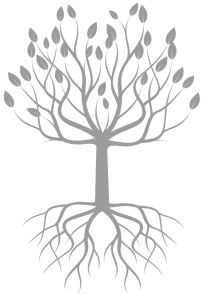
Think of the parable of the sower in the New Testament. Jesus told this story to illustrate what happens when good seed is planted in different kinds of soil. The seed that fell on stony ground soon died because it didn't have enough soil to take deep root. The little plants began to grow quickly, but "when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away" (Matthew 13:6). Good roots are necessary for good plants.

The picture of the plant that Asaph paints for us in Psalm 80 teaches us about what it means to be converted, or born again. Have you ever helped your mom or dad transplant a bush or tree? For one reason or another, the location of the bush is not right, and a change must be made for the benefit of the plant. You carefully dig around the bush, making sure not to damage the roots. A new place is chosen and prepared. Maybe weeds, debris, and rocks are removed. Then the bush is planted in the new location where it can grow healthy and strong in the fresh, rich soil. This picture of a plant taking root is used to teach us the idea of conversion. Just like the Israelites in Egypt, we are born into sin and slavery. That means we belong to the enemy of God, Satan. We cannot prosper under Satan's rule; we will die. That is why we must be brought under the loving care of the perfect Gardener, the Lord Jesus Christ. Using Asaph's illustration in Psalm 80, we can say that God will destroy the weeds before you; He will plant you in good soil. He will cause your roots to grow deep into the soil.

In this way, the stories in this book have to do with plants taking root. They are not tales of actual flowers, leaves, and dirt, but they are about spiritual plants in the

garden of the Lord. God's people are like plants that grow in His garden. When someone's heart is turned from himself and his sinful ways to faith in Jesus and devotion to God, it is like a plant that is taken from the deadly soil in Satan's kingdom and tenderly planted by God in His good soil. Then the plant starts to shoot out roots into the rich new soil so that it can live and take nourishment. There is no way for a plant to have life unless it takes root, and there is no way for a person to have spiritual life unless God turns him or her out of the way of death and into the way of life.

Jesus sacrificed His perfect life so that sinful people who are dead in their sins could have eternal life. So as you read these stories, and even now as you think about the little picture God gives us in Psalm 80 of plants taking root, take the time to ask God about causing your heart to take deep root into the life-giving soil of Jesus.



—1—

A Little Girl's Sin Found Out

Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

—HOSEA 14:2

One Sunday, a minister preached from the text “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). He said many solemn things about this earnest text. One of the things this minister said was, “If you do not find out your sin through the work of the Holy Spirit and bring it to Jesus to get it pardoned and washed away through His blood, you may be sure that your sin will find you out and bring you to the judgment seat of God. Then the Judge of heaven and earth will send you away into everlasting punishment.”

In church that morning sat a little girl named Rachel. Before leaving for church that morning, Rachel had told her mother a lie. As she sat listening to the minister's words, she thought to herself, “Oh, that terrible lie! I must either bring it to Jesus, or it will find me out at the last day and bring me to punishment!” She became very anxious about

her soul's salvation. She could not think of anything else. That night Rachel hardly slept. She tried to pray but did not find any relief. Was God so angry with her that He would not hear her prayer?

The next morning, Rachel made up her mind to go to her minister and talk with him about all she felt and feared. Rachel had to walk several miles in the rain to reach his home. She was warmly received by the pastor and his wife. Then Rachel poured out all her trouble. When she was finished, she said, "Oh, sir, what shall I do with my sin?"

"There is only one thing to do with it, my child," answered the minister, "and that is to lay it on 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'" (John 1:29). Then the minister knelt down with the little girl and asked the blessed Savior to forgive her sin, and comfort her wounded heart, and give her the help of His grace and Holy Spirit to keep her from sinning in this way anymore.

Rachel went home feeling like a weight had been lifted from her heart. She thought about the text the minister had repeated to her several times before she left: "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:5). A love for the Lord Jesus began to bloom in her young heart.



QUESTIONS

- Why couldn't Rachel sleep?
- What was the minister's advice?
- Why did Rachel feel happy?

THINK

- Do you think Rachel asked her mother for forgiveness? Why or why not?
- Does God only forgive the sins we confess? Explain.
- What are some ways of being dishonest without actually telling a lie?

PRAYER

Fill me with love for the truth.
Help me to hate lying and flee from it.