

7. The next day he puts his boat to the trial again, and she glides over the water more smoothly and swiftly than before. The jar which he had noticed is gone, and the friction reduced; the beams play more smoothly, and the ⁺alteration which he has made produces a more equable motion in the ⁺shaft, or gives greater effect to the stroke of the paddles upon the water.

8. When at length her motion is such as to satisfy him upon the smooth surface of the river, he turns her course, we will imagine, toward the rapids, to see how she will sustain a greater trial. As he increases her steam, to give her power to overcome the new force with which she has to contend, he watches, with eager interest, her boiler, ⁺inspects the gage and the safety-valves, and, from her movements under the increased pressure of her steam, he receives suggestions for further improvements, or for ⁺precautions which will insure greater safety.

9. These he executes, and thus he perhaps goes on for many days, or even weeks, trying and examining, for the purpose of improvement, every working of that mighty power, to which he knows hundreds of lives are soon to be intrusted. This now is probation—*trial for the sake of improvement*. And what are its ⁺results? Why, after this course has been thoroughly and faithfully pursued, this floating palace receives upon her broad deck, and in her carpeted and curtained cabin, her four or five hundred passengers, who pour along in one long procession of happy groups, over the bridge of planks; father and son, mother and children, young husband and wife, all with ⁺implicit confidence, trusting themselves and their dearest interests to her power.

10. See her as she sails away! How beautiful and yet how powerful are all her motions! That beam glides up and down gently and smoothly in its ⁺grooves, and yet gentle as it seems, hundreds of horses could not hold it still; there is no apparent violence, but every movement is with irresistible power. How graceful is her form, and yet how mighty is the momentum with which she presses on her way!

11. Loaded with life, and herself the very symbol of life and power, she seems something ⁺ethereal, unreal, which, ere we look again, will have vanished away. And though she has within her bosom a furnace glowing with furious fires, and a reservoir of death, the elements of most dreadful ruin and conflagration, of destruction the most complete, and agony the most ⁺unutterable; and though her strength is equal to the united energy of two thousand men, she restrains it all.

12. She was ⁺constructed by genius, and has been *tried* and improved by fidelity and skill; and one man governs and controls

her, stops her and sets her in motion, turns her this way and that, as easily and certainly as the child guides the gentle lamb. She walks over the one hundred and sixty miles of her route, without rest and without ⁺fatigue; and the passengers, who have slept in safety in their berths, with destruction by water without, and by fire within, defended only by a plank from the one, and by a sheet of copper from the other, land at the appointed time in safety.

13. My reader, you have within you susceptibilities and powers, of which you have little present conception; energies, which are hereafter to operate in producing fullness of enjoyment or horrors of suffering, of which you now can form scarcely a conjecture. You are now on *trial*. God wishes you to prepare yourself for safe and happy action. He wishes you to look within, to examine the complicated movements of your hearts, to detect what is wrong, to ⁺modify what needs change, and to ⁺rectify every irregular motion.

14. You go out to try your moral powers upon the stream of active life, and then return to retirement, to improve what is right, and ⁺remedy what is wrong. Renewed opportunities of moral practice are given you, that you may go on from strength to strength, until every part of that complicated moral machinery, of which the human heart consists, will work as it ought to work, and is prepared to ⁺accomplish the mighty purposes for which your powers are designed. You are *on trial*, *on probation* now. You will enter upon *active service* in another world.

ABBOTT.

QUESTIONS.—How does the Bible consider this life? What is a state of probation? What is a steamboat? Who invented it? Was Robert Fulton an American? What is meant by proving a steamboat? What is the use of doing this? Is there any resemblance between man and a steamboat? If this life is our state of probation, what will a future state of existence be? What difference is there between *man's* probation before the fall, and man's probation now?