



EVENINGS
IMPROVED.

37131 039 910 260



EVENINGS IMPROVED.

EVENINGS IMPROVED;

OR,

PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "MORNINGS IMPROVED."



LONDON:

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW;

AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD;

AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introduction	7
Jim Dick; or, the Best Revenge	9
The Wolf and the Lamb	13
A Sweet Saying	17
“ I will never forgive ”	21
Do you love Christ.....	25
Little Rosina and her Chicken	29
“ Be thankful ”	33
Robert and his Lesson	37
The Easy Text	41
Josiah : an Example of Early Piety	45
Children of the Heathen	49
The Yoke.....	53
Daily Mercies	57
The Butterfly	61
The Best Gift	65
Are you kind to your Mother !.....	69
Now ! Now !	73
Elizabeth and her Hymn-book.....	77
The Mirror	81

	PAGE
The Little Penitent	85
Happy Sunday	89
The Birds of the Air	93
Ann and the Pincushions	97
The Arabian Martyr	101
Bible Truths	105
The Shipwrecked Sailor	109
The Little Captive Maid	113
Mind what you say	116
Good and Bad Companions	121
The Boy who died in a Coal-pit	125



EVENINGS IMPROVED;

OR,

PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.

“Now, dear father,” said little Sarah, “we have been waiting for your return home. You promised that when you returned from the Sunday school you would tell us another story this evening.”

“What shall I tell you about?”

“Tell us, father,” said her brother John, “something you have read from a book, or what you have seen with your own eyes. We shall like anything: an anecdote, or a tale, or something about missions, or natural history, or a story from the Bible: which you think best.”

After the tea-table was cleared, they drew closer around the cheerful fire. Sarah placed

her chair by her father's side; while John rested against his knees. As their father did not like to disappoint them, he began to give them an account of a black boy who returned good for evil; and then made such remarks as he thought would fix in their minds the lesson he wished to teach.

Another evening brought another story, or some more remarks. Sometimes he sought to impress on their minds a PRECEPT, showing what they ought to do; at others he related a story, in which precept was carried into PRACTICE. As it is hoped that what was said on these occasions may instruct and do good to other children, a number of the stories are printed in a book, to show how EVENINGS may be IMPROVED by the family fire-side.

JIM DICK;
OR, THE BEST REVENGE.



If you would learn how to return good for evil, listen to a short account of Jim Dick, the negro boy. It is given by a gentleman named Southey.

“When I was a little boy,” says he, “there was a black lad, who lived not far from my father’s house, of the name of Jim Dick. Myself and some of my playfellows were

one evening at our sports, when we began to annoy the poor black, by calling him "negro," "blackamoor," and other ill names. The poor fellow seemed very much hurt at our conduct, and soon left us. It was not long after that I agreed with some of my young friends to go a skating; but I found, when the time came, that I had broken my skates, and that I could not go unless Jim Dick lent me his skates. I went to him, and asked him for them. 'Oh yes, you may have them, and welcome,' was his kind answer. When I went to return them, I found Jim sitting by the fire in the kitchen, with his Bible before him, which he had been reading. I told him I had come to bring back the skates he had lent me, and that I was much obliged for the use of them. He looked at me as he took them into his hands, and, with tears in his eyes, he said to me, 'Do not call me blackamoor again.' He spoke the words kindly and meekly, and then left the room. These words went to my heart; I burst into tears, and from that time I resolved I would never again be guilty of abusing a poor black."

This little story may teach two lessons. First, that you should not hurt the feelings

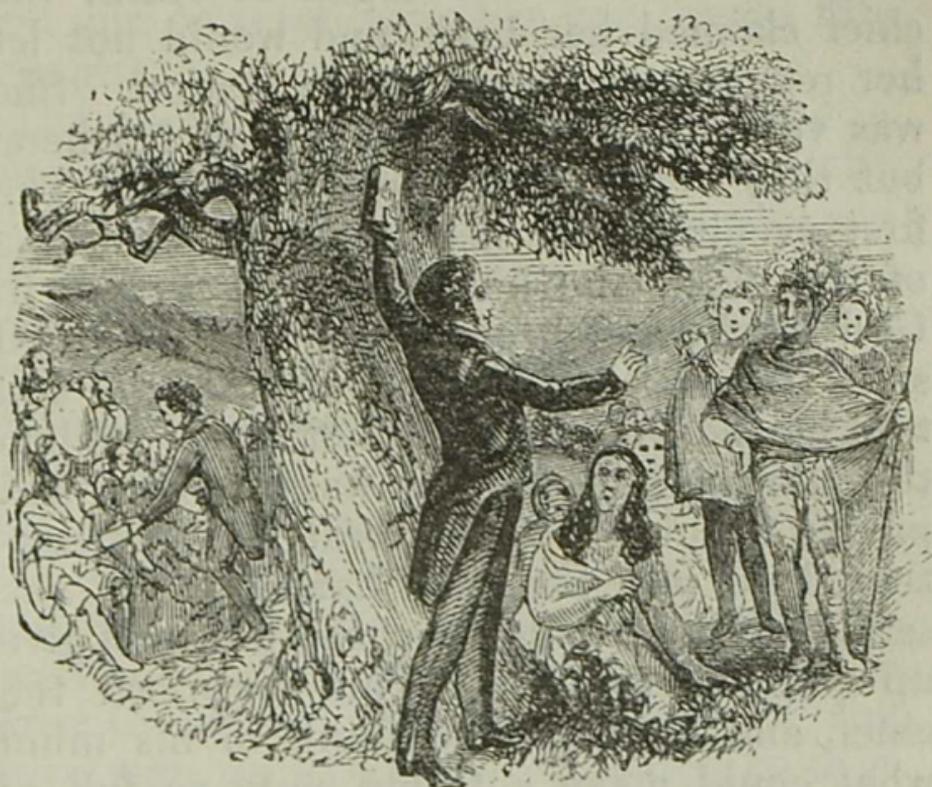
of any one. Do not call insulting names: it is foolish and vulgar. Do not mock the aged: it is unkind and sinful. Do not make sport of the lame, the blind, or any afflicted person: it is cruel and mean. Do not undervalue any for the colour of their skin, or the shape of their bodies, or the poverty of their condition: for we are as God made us, and "he that despiseth the poor reproacheth his Maker," Prov. xiv. 31.

We may learn from Jim Dick to show a meek and forgiving spirit. When he was called ill names by the boys, he did not stop and quarrel, but went away from their company. This was wise and proper. When the skates were taken back, he was found with his Bible before him. It was in that book he had read the words, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit is better than he who taketh a city," Prov. xvi. 32. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," Rom. xii. 21. Jim, no doubt, also knew what the Saviour once said: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you," Matt. v. 44.

Do not, then, be ashamed of learning a little wisdom of poor Jim Dick. Like him, give soft words for hard words, and return kind deeds for evil deeds, and you will find yourself all the happier; but if you give way to an angry temper, it will be like a burning fire in your bosom.

If we admire the conduct of a kind-hearted black, what ought we to think of the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." He was cast out, hated, mocked, and spit upon, and yet he did not resent these cruel insults. He went about doing good, though he knew the people would be ungrateful. When his enemies nailed him to the cross, he prayed for them: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, yet he opened not his mouth." Here was love indeed—to shed his precious blood, that our sins might be forgiven! When you feel angry, think of Jesus Christ, and ask him to give you his Holy Spirit, that, like him, you may forgive all those who call you ill names, or in any way do you harm.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.



A LONG way off from where we live is a country called New Zealand. It is a land where the people worship idols. But the missionaries have gone among these poor heathen, and God has blessed their labours to many.

There was a fierce New Zealand chief who held a little girl as a slave; and as the missionaries wanted a servant, they hired her from her master. She was then put to

school, and carefully taught the gospel of Christ. Just as she began to learn, the chief claimed her back, and would not let her remain any longer at the station. She was very sorry to leave her kind teachers, but they were obliged to let her go. The first evening after her return to the house of the chief, she knelt down in prayer to God as she had been taught, and then said some hymns. The chief was angry, and told her he would not let her pray. When the morning came, she knelt down, and prayed again. He then beat her, and continued to use her very harshly; but she said, though he killed her, she must not give up praying to God. This surprised the chief, and he began to think in his mind what could make a feeble child so full of courage. After some time he thought he would visit the missionaries, and he sent to tell them that he was coming.

The news was heard with the greatest alarm, for they feared he had an evil design. They met to know what they should do. Before they could decide, they were told he had already come with his followers, but not to kill or destroy. He came in peace, and without his club or spear. He

entered the missionary station, leading by the hand his little slave girl, and said, "I want you to teach me what you taught this little girl."

The next day was the Lord's day; and in going into the house of God, great was the delight and wonder of the missionary to see this chief sitting by the side of a converted chief who lived at the station. They were once deadly foes, and tried to kill one another; now they were sitting in peace, waiting to hear the preaching of the gospel. The missionary took for his text, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and *a little child shall lead them,*" Isa. xi. 6. Next morning one of the natives came to him, and said, he feared his sermon had done mischief, "for native man no like to be compared to wild beast." So the missionary went to see the chief, and found him in the school, standing in one of the classes, learning the A, B, C, from the lips of the man whom a short time before he would have murdered. The minister said he was glad to see him there, and hoped he had not said anything in his sermon to hurt his feelings; when he was stopped by the chief, saying, "Oh, no; it is all true; it is all true." He now came to

live at the station, that he might be taught; and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he became a truly converted man.

Now let us attend to two Scripture lessons. The first is, "Ye must be born again," John iii. 7. We have seen that the gospel can tame and subdue those who have been as wild and fierce as beasts of prey. But we must not forget that our hearts also need to be changed. We have the same evil nature as the heathen, and the children of pious parents are as prone to sin, as the children of the heathen. Let us, then, ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit to renew our wicked hearts, that we may be converted.

The second lesson is, "Unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required," Luke xii. 48. We have kind friends, pious teachers, the Bible, and many other mercies, but are they duly improved by us? Surely, if we do not believe in Jesus as our Saviour, and love and obey him, our end will be worse than that of those who never heard his name!

A SWEET SAYING.



“NEVER shall I forget the thrill of pleasure,” says the Rev. S. Kilpin, “which the last words of a dear child made in my mind. It came from his lips as he lay dying on my shoulder. He repeated the words of Christ, ‘Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;’ and added, ‘that is a sweet saying, is it not, uncle?’ And then that moment, he died, to know its sweetness. He came from school in good health; he was gathering strawberries in the morning,

and was dead in my arms at eleven the same night.”

It is indeed a ‘sweet saying;’ and as it has been written in the Bible for the use of the young, every child should learn it by heart, and try to know what it means.

It is a call to children to go to Jesus. Why should they obey it? Because they are sinners; and because Jesus is a Saviour. It is his voice speaking to them, calling them to come to him, that they may be saved, and be made happy. He thus speaks to them, for he loves children. If he had not loved them, he would never have lain in a manger, as a poor little babe, or have died on the cross, that their sins might be forgiven.

On one occasion we are told he was displeased. It was not because the wicked people called him a glutton and a wine-bibber. It was not when they charged him with having a devil. It was not when they cast him out of a city, and took up stones to kill him; nor when they spat on him; nor when they mocked and scourged him; nor when they nailed him to the cross, and derided him in his sufferings. He bore all this like a lamb. But when he saw that his

disciples would hinder little children from coming to him, he was "*much* displeased," and then it was he spoke this SWEET SAYING.

Do you know how children can now go to Jesus? You think if he were on earth it would be easy to go to him. You could ask your parents to take you to him, that his hand might be placed on your head. But it is easier to go to Jesus now he is in heaven, than it was when he lived on earth. How could children who live in England, get to Jesus at Jerusalem? How could the little Hindoos or Africans reach him? or the young in China, or Greenland, or the South Seas? Thousands of miles by land and by water would have to be passed, before you or they could get to him. And then how could the poor get the money, or find the time, that would be needful? No; Jesus is not now at Jerusalem; he is in heaven; and the poorest child can go to him without money, and without walking a mile. We have only to pray, and he will hear us; and, if we pray in faith and love, he will bless us. Children in all parts of the world can now go to him, at the same moment of time. He is still, in his holy word,

repeating the sweet saying, and calling little children to his arms.

There is everything in Jesus to win your heart. He is meek, lowly, and full of love. He can do you all the good you need, and save you from all the evil you fear. If you are a poor child, he can make you rich with the best riches, for he can give you his grace. If you are an ignorant child, he can give you his Holy Spirit, to teach you. If you are an orphan child, he can be better to you than father and mother, and all earthly friends. If you are an afflicted child, he can comfort and bless you. But one thing is certain, you are a sinful child; and if you wish to be saved, you must go to Jesus. He will save you from the love and power of sin, and from its guilt and punishment. He obeyed his Father's law, and died on the cross, that he might save all who believe on him. Go then to Jesus; he will make you happy while you live, happy when you die, and happy for ever. Oh, then, do not forget to praise him for his SWEET SAYING, and to believe on him, love him, and obey him.

“ I WILL NEVER FORGIVE.”



“ I WILL never forgive her, if I live to be a hundred years old !”

“ Do not say so, Jane ; you do not mean what you say.”

“ Yes, I do mean what I say ; I will not forgive her, should I live a hundred years !”

Next door to Jane’s house lived Mary Jones. These little girls were about the same

age, and went to the same school. They soon became great friends, and were seldom seen apart. Mary had a very sad fault—she was not sincere. She would profess great love for persons whom she cared little about; and often she would praise them to their faces, and then speak against them in their absence. Jane often thought Mary spoke too freely of others; but then, she never supposed that she could do so with respect to herself.

One morning, Jane's brother overheard Mary speaking against his sister. It is true Jane was not so tidy in her dress as a careful little girl ought to be; but then, as Mary was her friend, she might have spoken to her kindly, and in private, and ought not to have slandered her behind her back.

No sooner did Jane learn what had been said of her, than she hastened to the house of Mary, and began to reproach her for her unkindness. Mary felt at first ready to deny the charge; but seeing it would be of no use, she put on a bold look, and pertly said, "My tongue is my own; can I not say what I please?"

"Oh, Mary, how could you be so cruel!"

"What have I done that is so bad? If

you were so foolish as to believe all I said, am I to blame? You do not think I was in earnest?"

Jane now saw that Mary was not a sincere friend, and became very angry; and when she returned home, she was heard to say, "I will never forgive her, if I live a hundred years."

Jane's aunt, who heard this hasty speech, spoke kindly to her; she told her how sinful it was to be thus angry, and showed her that it was a fearful thing to use such wicked words as she had just spoken.

When Jane went to her room, to retire to rest at night, she first sat down, as she had been taught, to read a chapter in the Testament, before she knelt down to prayer. But she did not feel happy. She began to repeat the Lord's prayer; and when she came to the words, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us," she paused. It now appeared plain to her, that we can only hope for God to forgive us as we forgive those who offend and injure us. With her present angry feelings she felt she was in effect asking of God *not* to forgive her sins—a dreadful prayer indeed! She then called to

mind the Saviour's words, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." She arose from her knees, and sat down, and tried if she could find some excuse for Mary's conduct, that she might forgive her, but she could find none. What should she do? She ought to forgive her, but how could she? She then thought of the words, "Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." As she considered the love of God in pardoning all our great and numerous sins, and of the love of Jesus in dying on the cross for his enemies, she began to understand her duty. She thought of the treatment which Jesus received, and how he meekly bore it all. And she felt how much she needed to have her sins forgiven. At length, overcome by her feelings, she was able to kneel down again, and from her heart forgive Mary the wrong she had done her, and to pray for her.

The next day she arose in a calm state of mind. When she thought of Mary's unkindness, she felt sad, but not unforgiving, as she had felt the day before.

DO YOU LOVE CHRIST?



OUR Lord Jesus Christ, when on the earth, often put questions to the people who heard him preach. Perhaps this was to fix their attention, and to lead them to think seriously. After he rose from the dead, he asked Peter, "Lovest thou me?" John xxi. 15. He had, no doubt, often put questions

to him before; but never did he ask a more serious and searching one than this, and which so much touched the heart of his disciple. He had denied Christ three times, and now is asked three times, "Lovest thou me?"

If Christ were now to ask you the same question, what answer would you give him? Could you say, "Lord, thou knowest all things—thou knowest that I love thee?"

Jesus does not ask if you *understand* all about him. Even the angels do not fully know his greatness and glory. He does not ask if you can *speak* about him, or are willing to *work* for him. You may do these things, and yet not truly love him. Nor does he now ask what you will give up for him, or whether you are willing to die in his cause. No; he asks for nothing but that which, through grace, every child can do, and which in itself is easy and pleasant. "Do you *love* me?"

We often slight and forget the words of kind friends when they are in health; but we do not so soon forget their last words before they leave this sinful world. This question was among the last words of Jesus, before he arose to heaven. He had died on

the cross for our sins, and had risen from the grave: there were the prints of the nails in his hands, and perhaps the marks of the crown of thorns on his forehead, and on his back the scars of the cruel scourgings: on his side was the wound made by the spear; and now, with these proofs of his love to Peter, on his body, he asked, “*Lovest thou me?*” Jesus says the same to us now. “For you I left my throne in heaven, and dwelt in poverty and sorrow on the earth; I had no home to call my own; I was hungry, and thirsty, and tempted; was spit upon, and scourged, and at length poured out my blood on the cross, that your peace might be made with God, your sins pardoned, and heaven opened to you; and do you not, in return, love me?”

A young man was asked, when on his death-bed, “What would you take for your portion in Christ?” He replied, “Not a million of worlds.” All who love Christ, love him above everything, and above every other being. Children ought to love their parents, friends, and teachers very dearly; they should love their schools, books, and homes; but Jesus is to be loved always, with all the heart, and more than any object in the world.

Many have said with their lips that they love the Saviour; but it must be proved by holy conduct. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," John xiv. 15. This, then, is the proof of your love: do you obey him? If you do not, there is no love to him in your hearts. And consider that he knows all things, and cannot be deceived. We may give him one answer with our lips, but he reads another in our hearts and lives. What does he see in *your* heart? It may be as though these words were plainly engraven there—"Lord, I do not love thee!" and, what is even worse, in some he sees, "Lord, thou knowest I do not wish to love thee!" You would not dare to speak these words; and yet your actions and conduct show how you feel. There is a solemn text which we should often think of: "If any man," or child, "love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed; the Lord is at hand," 1 Cor. xvi. 22. May the young reader be able truly to say—

Lord, I love thee, and adore;
Oh for grace to love thee more!

LITTLE ROSINA AND HER CHICKEN.



LITTLE ROSINA was not an English child ; she was born in the country of Prussia. Her parents were very poor, but they feared God. The father was a humble labourer, and often sadly tried in getting food for his family. He worked hard ; but his hands were not only used to labour—they were often clasped in prayer. This pious father

was thirty years old when he became very ill. It was indeed a time of great affliction to the family, as they now had no money, and no bread, except what was sent them by a kind friend. In this trying season, Rosina was a comfort to her dying father; and she would often sit by the side of his bed, and sing the pretty hymns she had been taught at school.

When the father died, the little girl saw her dear mother weep. She then tried to console her, by repeating texts of Scripture she had learned. "Dear mother," she said, "do not weep; we had better pray and work. When I come out of school, I will weave straw for hats. God will not forsake us."

The widow and her child were not permitted to suffer want. Rosina went to school every day, and when she came home she was very busy in weaving straw to make plait for bonnets. She was too poor to have any playthings; so when she had done work she used to play with a hen, which she had raised from a chicken, and which she fed with crumbs of bread.

One day in harvest time, when the mother was in the fields at work, little Rosina came

home from school. As usual, she sat in the front of the cottage to weave straw. A rude girl, who lived near at hand, asked her to leave her work and play. But Rosina knew that she must not be idle, and said she could not neglect her work. The wicked girl now became very angry, and pulled her from her seat, and, being strong, threw her upon the ground, and sadly hurt her. The next morning the poor little orphan could not raise herself in bed, and was full of pain in her body.

She soon became worse, and then she wished that the minister should be sent for, that he might pray with her, as he had done with her father before he died; for she said to her mother, that she also should die. "My dear child," said her mother, "whom should I then have? You are all my comfort. Indeed, you will not die." The child replied, "Oh, mother, God must be your comfort: trust in him. Do you not know how, in our hymn, we sing about God being our Comforter?" The mother now sent for the minister. When he came, poor Rosina joined in his prayer, and told him how great was her desire to go to heaven. "Dear child," said her weeping mother, "why do

you wish to die? You are yet so young." The afflicted girl replied, "It is better to be in heaven, mother. There I shall be with the Lord Jesus; and you will follow me. Meanwhile I shall praise our God and Saviour with dear father. Do not weep for me."

She now got worse, but she was happy. Though full of pain, she was patient and quiet. And what can make us happy, when we come to die, but to know that, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, our sins are pardoned, and our souls made holy and fit for heaven? If we have faith in him, and love and obey him, we need not fear to die. The day before her death, little Rosina said to her mother, "The minister has so often visited me, and prayed with me, and, mother, you have nothing that you can give him. I wish you to give him my hen when I am dead, and I hope he will take it kindly."

On the next day, some Christian people came to see her. She asked them to sing a favourite hymn; and, as the hymn was almost ended, she softly and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

“ BE THANKFUL.”



“ Now, my young friends,” said Mr. Jones, “ sit quite still, and you shall see something worth looking at. I have pictures that will not only please your eye, but teach your mind, and do good to your hearts.”

Mr. Jones had taken some pains to get up a treat for a number of school children ; and among other things to entertain them was a magic lantern. The room was now dark, except a large circle of light from the lantern ; in which the pictures were

reflected in all their gay colours of crimson, purple, yellow, and green.

“There,” said he, “is an eastern desert. As far as the eye can reach, not a house can be seen, nor a tree, nor a river, nor any other stream. Over it are passing some travellers. The travellers have been three days without water. You see one of them has sunk on the drifting sand to die. Oh, it is a sad thing to die of thirst! Water may be of small value in our eyes; but if those who live where rivers, and fountains, and brooks, and springs abound, knew the real importance of these mercies, they would learn to be thankful even for *water*.”

“Look, there is an African forest. Some of the poor blacks are digging for roots; others are gathering the wild fruit from the trees, to save them from dying of hunger. They have no cornfields, or windmills, or bakers’ shops, in that land: hard, and scanty, and uncertain indeed is their fare. Well would it be for us if we knew our blessings, and were thankful for our daily *bread*.”

“See, here is a scene in the East Indies; and a Hindoo family are going on a long journey to an idol temple, five hundred

miles perhaps away from their home. Many are the dangers they will meet on their road. They may sink and perish for want; or they may be slain by robbers or wild beasts. It is more than likely they will never all again return to their houses; perhaps not one of them. How different is their lot to ours! We need not travel far to learn the way to heaven. When we think of the sorrows of those who worship false gods, well would it be for us if we were more thankful for the *house of God* and the *sabbath school*.

“Again we will change the scene. There, now you may see a cluster of heathens sitting under the shade of a spreading tree. They are reading one of their shastres, or sacred books. I cannot tell you the senseless and wicked things it contains; but this I know, it is not fit to make them wiser, or holier, or happier. The poorest child in a Christian land, who is taught to read the word of God, is in possession of a blessing of more value than all the diamonds, pearls, and rubies in the world. Oh, that we were all more thankful for the *Bible*.

“And now for my last picture. There flows the great river Ganges. On the shores you may see crowds of the wretched heathen.

It is one of their holy days. Some are cutting themselves with knives; others are throwing their infant children into the water to the sharks; others are casting themselves into the stream to be drowned; and others again are bringing their sick friends to the sands, there to meet a slow and miserable end. And all in the vain hope of securing pardon for their sins. How favoured is our state! We know that the blood of Jesus Christ alone can cleanse our sin away; and that 'whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.' Many are our mercies; but the crowning blessing of all is, we have heard of the love and grace of a Saviour: let us, then, above all other blessings, be thankful for our Lord Jesus Christ, the unspeakable gift of God to a ruined world."

When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the least a cheerful heart
That tastes those gifts with joy.

ROBERT AND HIS LESSON.



ONE day Robert's father marked a lesson for his son to learn, and bade him sit down and look at it. "I shall give you an hour, Robert," said he, "and then I hope you will be able to say it." Robert had thought of spending his time with his little sister in play, and did not expect a lesson would be

set him to learn. "All this, father!" said he, with a sullen look. "I have not given you a hard lesson," replied his father. "I know how much you ought to learn, and how much you can learn. Be dutiful, my child, and sit down to your task."

Robert sat down for a short time. He then arose, and said to his father, "If I might learn *so much*—just that bit," at the same time marking the place with his finger. "You are losing your time, Robert. Why do you not try to learn? I do not think I ought to make your lesson shorter. Go again to your seat."

His father now went to look after the men in the hay-field, and in a few minutes, Mary, his eldest sister, came into the room. "Mary, look here: what a long lesson father has set me! I am sure I cannot learn it all." "Why do you call it a long lesson?" replied Mary; "I do not think it is so." "It is long," said Robert, in a peevish and hasty way; "and it is a hard one, too. It is sixteen lines. I have counted it six times over, and every time I have made it sixteen lines." "And, I suppose," added his sister, "you will not make it less if you count it a hundred times. Come, try

to learn it. The words are all plain and simple."

Robert was again left to himself. He now went and looked through the window. "I see the ducks in the pond: they like to get into the water this warm day," said he to himself. "The cows have got into the shade at the old barn; and look, there they are carrying home a load of hay." He then began to mark the window with his fingers. And then he tied some knots in his handkerchief; and as he walked up and down the room, he smacked it like a whip. But all at once he thought of his lesson, and sat down in the corner, curling the leaves of his book into *dog's ears*.

"It is not the hour yet, father!" said Robert, as he saw his parent come into the room. "Yes, Robert, it is. Now come and repeat your lesson." "Let me just look over it once, father," said he. His father waited two or three minutes, and then the little boy stood up in a confused manner. "Just tell me *only* the first word, father." The first word was told him. Robert now got through a line, and then stopped. "What comes next?" he said. Again he was helped, and then again; but,

after trying a little longer, he asked to be allowed to look over it once more. It was now plain he did not know his lesson.

“My dear boy,” said his father, very seriously, as he closed the book, “you know I love you; but I now could weep over my naughty child. You have not tried to learn the lesson. You have wasted your time, hurt yourself, wounded the heart of your father, and sinned against God. If this careless and idle habit grows upon you, you will bring yourself into trouble in this world, and be lost in the world to come. The boy who refuses or delays to obey his parents, and trifles with his duty, is likely to grow up a very wicked man. Come, Robert, kneel down with me, and I will ask God to forgive you this sin for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to give you his grace, that you may not disobey me again.”

From that time, Robert became more fond of his book, and tried to learn his lessons, and to please his father. If Robert goes on, as he has now commenced, he is likely to grow up a wise and useful man.

THE EASY TEXT.



ARE you willing to learn an easy text? One that is short, and that will not burden your memory? One that will do for the days of your youth, and will suit when you are sick or old? Let me then direct you to it.

“THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST,”
Luke xix. 10. Look at it with care. It is

the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each word is only of one syllable, and the longest has not more than five letters. But though it be short and plain, it contains the whole gospel, and is one of the most precious texts in the Bible. Now, do you know what it means?

A little boy and his sister went away from home, though their father had told them not to go away. As they had always lived in town, they were glad when they found themselves in the country. The fields were full of red and white clover, the butterflies were flying about, and the birds were singing on the trees. The children thought it was very pleasant to have their liberty, and they ran about till it began to grow dark; they then felt tired and hungry, and soon wished that they had not left their father's house. They walked a long way, but could not find the right road. Sitting down under a tree, they thought of their nice bed in which they slept in their happy home, and began to weep. You see how sad it is to disobey an earthly father. These children were LOST.

There was a merchant, who put all his goods into a large ship, and went to trade

with them in a distant part of the world. It was a bright day when the ship left the shore, and many other calm and sunny days passed away; but one night the wind blew loud, and the waves rolled high, and tossed the ship about till the morning. At last it struck against a rock in the midst of the sea, and sunk into the deep. The merchant, with all his goods, was LOST.

We pity the little children and the merchant; but the loss referred to in the easy text is greater than the loss of health, or of money, or even of life. It is the loss of the SOUL! and to lose the precious soul is to lose the favour of God, and happiness, and heaven.

We are like the little boy and his sister: we have gone away from our heavenly Father. We think it is very pleasant to have our own way, and to go where we like, and to do as we like. But if we go on in the ways of sin, after a while, death will come; then, like the children when it grew dark, we shall be full of fear, and lie down in sorrow, and that for ever.

Now look again at the easy text. It tells us of Jesus, who is the Son of man as well as the Son of God. He came to seek and

to save the lost; and he came to save us, for we are all lost. If a shepherd were to lose one of his sheep, he might send some one to find it. But if he lost a child that he loved, he would go himself, and seek it. So Jesus did not send an angel; he came himself to save us. He pitied our state, and in his love he came from heaven. He went about to do good; he taught the people, and at last died for them, and for us. He pointed out the way for us to return to God.

He honour'd all his Father's laws,
Which we had disobey'd;
He bore our sins upon the cross,
And our full ransom paid.

Jesus is still seeking the lost; he is now calling to poor sinners to be saved. Every time we read the easy text, it is as though he spoke to us. He speaks to us now. He says, "Come unto me; I can save you. Believe in me, love me, and you shall be happy for ever in my heaven. You shall see my glory, you shall share my joys. Come unto me." When he thus calls, will you turn away your heart from him? or will you answer, "Lord Jesus, save me, or I perish?"

JOSIAH:

AN EXAMPLE OF EARLY PIETY.



THE Bible teaches us by example, as well as by precept. It not only exhorts the young to “remember their Creator in the days of their youth,” but it tells them of those who, in early life, gave their hearts to God. Among the pleasing instances of piety recorded, that of Josiah well deserves the attention of the young.

In Josiah we see the piety of a *youth*. “While he was yet young, he began to seek

after the God of David his father," 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3. Youthful piety is lovely and desirable in itself. It is the way to be useful, happy, and wise. What honour it secures now! and what promises are made to those who possess it! "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me," Prov. viii. 7. God claims the first and best of all we have, and all we are; and he has a right to all.

The firstling of the flock was given,
By Israel, to the God of heaven;
So let us yield to Him the prime
Of our first love and youthful time.

In Josiah we see the piety of a *prince*. Those who live in a palace are often more exposed to sin than those who live in a cottage. At a very early age, Josiah came to the throne of Judah. There was no person greater than himself, to control or call him to an account. The pleasures of the world were at his command; and yet, through the grace of God, he could give up all those that were sinful, that he might "cleave unto the Lord."

In Josiah we see the piety of one who had *ungodly parents* and *bad examples*. His grandfather, Manasseh, had led the people

into all kinds of profane practices; and Amon, his father, lived and died an idolater. Nearly all the priests had become corrupt, and served at the altars of the idols; and the nation in general had forsaken the service of the true God. It is difficult to be pious when all around us are sinful, and when nothing but evil meets our eyes. What should *we* be if the book of God were lost, his house closed, or turned into an idol temple, and there were no pious ministers and teachers to show us the right path? And yet this was the situation of this royal youth. Who, then, taught him, and made him decided for God? It was the Holy Spirit, or he would have been as wicked as any in the land in which he lived.

In Josiah we see the piety of an *orphan*. When he was only eight years old, he lost his father. In eastern countries, and in former times, mothers had very little power; and perhaps the mother of the young orphan was herself an idolater, and would only lead her son astray. But God raised him up a pious friend in Hilkiah, the high priest, who appears to have brought him up in the fear of the Lord. May every orphan who reads the account of Josiah, cry with

all his heart to God, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth," Jer. iii. 4.

Josiah was an example of *active, zealous piety*. In the twelfth year of his reign, he broke down the images that he found in the land. A few years later, he took a journey through his kingdom, to destroy all the altars of idolatry. Then he caused the temple to be repaired. He also restored the observance of the Jewish feasts and sacrifices, and gave nearly forty thousand lambs and kids for passover offerings, besides oxen and calves for burnt offerings. While they were cleansing the temple, the copy of the law of God was found, which he caused to be read in the hearing of all the people. In these ways he showed his deep concern for the honour and worship of God, and thus was he made a great blessing in his own day.

Youthful reader! Are you giving the best part of your life to folly, and spending your active powers of body and mind in the ways of sin? or are you now seeking the Lord? Let it be your fervent prayer, that the Holy Spirit would enlighten your mind, and lead you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to the saving of your soul! "Choose ye THIS DAY whom ye will serve."

CHILDREN OF THE HEATHEN.



ONE sabbath evening, a missionary was walking up and down in the porch before his house, in one of the South Sea islands. The sun was setting behind the waves of the ocean, and the labours of the day were over. In that cool, quiet hour the missionary was lifting up his heart to God, and asking a blessing on his people, his schools,

and himself. All was peaceful and still, except a little rustling in the leaves of a tree, called a mimosa tree. He thought a breeze was springing up, and continued his walk. Again he heard the rustling of the leaves, and then again. He now felt sure that it could not be the wind; so he pushed aside the long leafy branches of the tree, and passed beneath. And what did he find there? Three little boys! Two were fast asleep in each other's arms, but the third was awake. "What are you doing there, my children?" asked the missionary. "We have come to sleep here, teacher," said the boy. "And why do you sleep here? have you no home?" "Oh, yes; but if we sleep here, we are sure to be quite ready when the first school-bell rings in the morning." "Do your parents know about it?" "Mine do; but these little boys have no parents, they are orphans."

Now the nights in the South Sea islands are not cold and damp like ours, but as the kind missionary thought a heavy rain would fall in the night, he roused the sleeping orphans, and led the three little ones into the large porch of his house, where they might rest in safety. His heart was now full of

joy to find that there were some of his scholars who loved their teacher and their school.

Suppose these little islanders could look from their distant homes, into some of our sabbath schools, what would they think of the many late comers who walk carelessly into their places an hour or more after the school has begun? Let us show by our conduct that we know how to take a hint even from the children of the heathen.

Far away from the South Sea islands is a land called South Africa; it is a hot and wild part of the world, and the native people are mostly heathen. Many missionaries have gone to this country, and God has blessed their labours. One day a missionary saw a little black girl go behind a large thick bush. From that time he observed that she went there often, and that she crept behind it as secretly as she could. The missionary said to her, "What do you do so often behind the bush?" "I go to pray, sir," she replied. "To whom do you pray?" "To Christ." "What do you ask Christ for?" "I ask for grace."

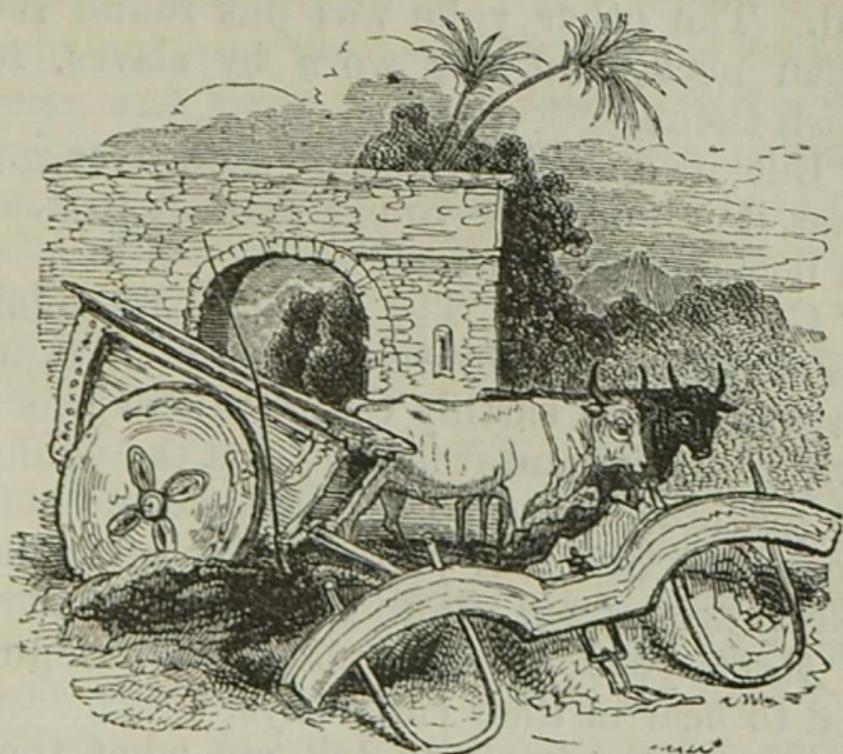
Another African child, who seemed to love

prayer, was asked, "I hear you often pray, what do you ask of God?" "I say, Lord Jesus, here lies a poor sinful child at thy feet; Lord, be merciful to me, and give me grace, and thy Holy Spirit: forgive me all my sins."

Not far distant from the homes of these children is another station of the missionaries. Two young African girls came one day to it, and were asked what they wanted; they said, "We have come to speak of salvation." "Why?" asked the missionary. "Because our hearts are sick." "What makes your hearts sick?" "Our many sins." "And what will you do with such wicked hearts?" "We will take them to the feet of Jesus."

From these accounts, we see the good the gospel has done for heathen children. Let us take care that our greater privileges are not neglected by us: may the Lord give us grace rightly to improve them. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required," Luke xii. 48.

THE YOKE.



“PLEASE, sir,” said George Grant to his teacher, “will you tell me what the word ‘yoke’ means in this lesson I am learning?”

“Read the passage, George.”

George then read, “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth,” Lam. iii. 27.

“The yoke,” said the teacher, “was formerly of two kinds. One was worn by oxen when ploughing in the field. It was

made of a heavy piece of wood, either arched or straight, having iron rings to inclose the head. The other yoke was put round the human neck, and was worn by slaves, to punish them."

"But it does not mean," said George, "that it is good for young persons to bear this heavy piece of wood?"

"Certainly not. The prophet Jeremiah uses the term as a figure of speech, or sign; he speaks of an earthly thing, to teach us a spiritual truth; and it means, that the young may get much good by the labours and sorrows which God may please to lay on them, to keep them from running into evil. There are three yokes, which many have found good to bear in their early days."

"Three, teacher! do tell me what they are."

"First, then, there is the *yoke of obedience*. Young cattle when put to the plough, resist the burden and toil of work, and the yoke is put on their necks to bring them into submission. It is also often the case with young people, that they wish to have their own way, and do as they please; they are like bullocks 'unaccustomed to the yoke.' But this would not be good for them. God has placed

over them parents, masters, and teachers, who are to be obeyed. Their parents know what is best for them. The prodigal son could not bear the restraints of his father's house, and went into the world to be free of them; and he soon became poor and unhappy. How many others have spurned the yoke of obedience in their youth to their own ruin!"

"What is the second yoke, teacher?" asked George.

"The *yoke of affliction*. No young persons like to bear this, and yet it is good for them sometimes. You are now full of health, and think this world a place where you will always be happy: a sick-bed would teach you that it is a scene of trial and suffering. You hope to have a long life: a sudden illness would remind you that you may die when you are young. When God is pleased to bless it to our good, affliction teaches the vain to be humble, the thoughtless to be serious, the prayerless to cry unto God, the hardened to feel their sin and misery; and some are thus led to apply to Jesus in faith, for pardon through his precious blood. So that it is good also to bear this yoke. The third yoke," continued the

teacher, "is the *yoke of early piety*. Can you give me a text of Scripture on this point."

George at once repeated the gracious words of Christ—"Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," Matt. xi. 29, 30.

"Yes, George," added the teacher, "none are so happy as those who, in their early days, listen to these words of our Saviour, and become his youthful disciples. His service is a yoke you will never regret having put on, and which you will never wish to put off. It has been worn by kings and queens, and been esteemed more precious than their crowns. It has been worn by the children of the poor, and has made them contented, useful, and happy. But I must not forget to tell you there is one yoke you should never wear—the *yoke of Satan*; it is, indeed, heavy and disgraceful. Satan has always been a hard and deceitful master; and the wages of his service is death," Rom. vi. 23.

Oh, never forget that while Christ's yoke is easy to the humbled soul, that in all cases "the way of transgressors is hard," (Prov. xiii. 15,) and its end eternal ruin.

DAILY MERCIES.



THOUGH I am only a little child, I must try to think. What shall I think about before I go to bed? My mother told me that I receive many mercies every day I live. I wonder if I can find some of them out? I will try.

When I awoke this morning, I saw the sun shining through the window. How

bright it shone! It made the trees, and flowers, and every thing look very beautiful. Mother says there are many thousand children in the world who cannot see the sun. They are blind. The night and day are all the same to them. But I have eyes, and can see. This is one of my mercies.

As I got out of bed, I felt so strong and well, that I jumped about the room, because I was so happy. I have heard mother say, that some little boys and girls cannot run about, for they are ill, and are kept to their beds. It is very sad to feel pain. I am glad that I have good health. This must be another of my mercies.

What nice warm clothes I wear! I often see poor children in the street without shoes on their feet, and their clothes are thin, ragged, and dirty. Why have I a clean and comfortable dress? It is because God has given me kind parents, and he makes them able to give me good clothes.

When I went down stairs this morning, my breakfast was on the table. We had plenty of bread, butter, sugar, and milk. Mother sometimes says that many poor children, when they awake, have no bread to eat. Their parents have none to give them,

or only a small bit of hard crust. They are too poor to have sugar, butter, and milk. I never thought of this before. I have food every day I live, and three meals a day.

Father read one of the Psalms from the Bible, and then we all knelt down in prayer. It was not a long Psalm, and mother told me to learn the first verse as a morning portion, and I remember it now:—"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." How glad I am that I have a father who loves to pray for me, and who teaches me to kneel down in prayer every day! The minister said, in his sermon last Sunday, that there are many families that never pray. It is a mercy that I have praying parents.

I was in good time at school, and I said my lessons without missing a word. I know how that was; mother helped me to learn them last night. I know my dear mother loves to see me improve, and I should not like to grow up to be a dunce, and to be wicked, as many children are. I have good books, and a kind teacher, and I ought to grow wiser and better.

My aunt took me for a walk in the fields, and we made a pretty nosegay of wild flowers

for little sister. When I got home, mother asked me to read a chapter of the Testament. It was about Jesus raising the widow's son. She then told me how Jesus went about doing good, because his heart was full of love. And then he at last died a very painful death on the cross, for our sins. Mother said I ought to love Jesus, and give him my heart when I am young, and that she hoped I should grow up to love and obey him more and more.

I did not think I could remember so many mercies. If I had not tried, I should not have thought of one. Now I will kneel down, and thank God for my daily mercies, and ask him to forgive my sins for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God has given me more;
For I have food, while others starve,
And beg from door to door.

Are these thy favours, day by day,
To me above the rest?
Then let me love thee more than they,
And strive to serve thee best.

THE BUTTERFLY.



IT was a fine Sunday afternoon in June. There had been a shower of rain in the morning, but now the day was bright and lovely. Henry and Lucy were in the parlour, learning a few verses of the fifth chapter of St. John. As they had lately lost a little sister, by death, their father had given them a portion of Scripture to commit to memory, which teaches about the rising of the body from the dead.

Just as they had finished their lesson, a butterfly flew in at the open window, and rested for a moment on a flower-stand. But it soon passed out again to the garden. The lively little thing was one moment aloft in the air; then it came fluttering down to the ground. Now it was on this side of the hedge, then on the other. It sipped at the rose-tree; it visited the honeysuckle; it lodged on the lily; and then, darting over the field, it was soon out of sight.

“Look at the wings of that pretty butterfly!” said Lucy; “how they are spotted with purple and green! Oh, it is very beautiful!”

“It looks very different now,” added her brother, “to the little caterpillar we saw on the gooseberry bush. What a dull, helpless thing it was then! It crawled along the leaves, holding fast by its short legs, and stretching out its neck as if to feel its way along the boughs.”

“Very true,” said the father of Henry and Lucy; “but more than one change has passed on it since then. After it had lived a short life as a worm, or caterpillar, it wove for itself a shroud and a tomb. It then ceased to eat or move, and seemed

to be quite dead. After it had been in this state for some time, it burst its tomb, and became the pretty butterfly you have just seen. In this state it no more humbly crawls on the ground. It has entered on a new life. It flies abroad in the bright light of summer, and its food is the honey of flowers.

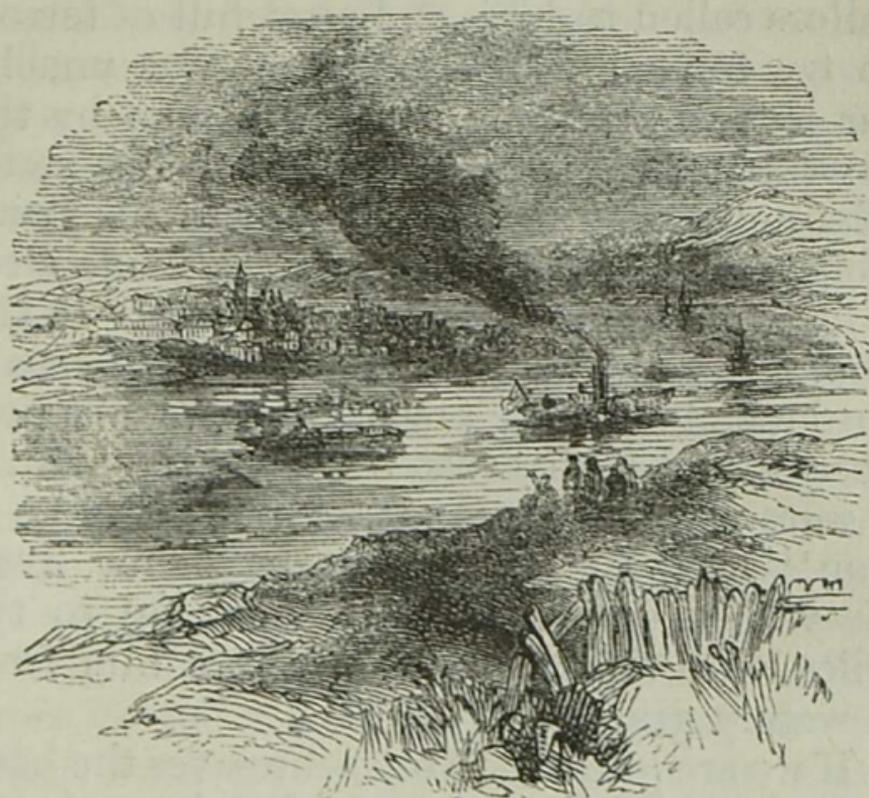
“This little butterfly will serve to illustrate the words you have just learned: “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.’

“My dear children, we are all as worms of the earth; our bodies soon die, and become dust. But the Bible teaches us that a time will come when Jesus shall send his angels, and the trumpet shall sound, and all the dead shall rise again to life. How strange does this now seem to us! But we know it is true, for it is the word of God which declares it; and we are certain it can be done, for the power of God can as easily raise us from the grave as change the caterpillar into the butterfly.

“The body is now called a ‘vile body.’ Sin has made it vile; for sin is the cause of all the disease and sickness which waste it, and bring it down to the grave. But a new life shall be given to it. It shall not then be weak, or sickly, or grow old. There shall be no disease, nor pain, nor sorrow. Neither hunger, nor thirst, nor injury, nor decay, nor death, shall be felt any more. There will be no sin to tempt or pollute it. It shall be pure and happy; it shall be a glorious body, like unto the glorious body of Christ. It shall then rise to dwell with angels, and with its Saviour, for ever and ever.

“This will be the happy state of those who, when on the earth, sought for the mercy of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They loved him, and obeyed him below, and they shall live with him above. But the wicked shall rise to shame and misery, and shall be for ever shut out from the presence of God. May we now trust in Christ, that when our bodies die, our souls may go to heaven; in the great day our bodies shall join them, and we shall be for ever with the Lord.

THE BEST GIFT.



IN the year 1846, a steam boat, called the "Atlantic," was overtaken with a very great storm on the coast of America. It was dashed on the rocks, and became quite a wreck. It must have been a sad sight to see the passengers struggling with the waves, and to hear their cries and shrieks. Some were washed over the side of the ship, and were drowned. In the midst of this distressing scene was a little boy. He was a

passenger, but had no friend on board. The sailors called to him, as he sat full of terror, to try to save himself; but he was unable, for he was a cripple. He was seen by the pilot of the vessel, who pitied his state. The noble man clasped the boy in his arms, plunged into the raging waters, and, after a hard struggle, carried him in safety to the shore. As soon as the little boy could speak, he looked up with tearful eyes to his preserver, and with great feeling said, "Oh, if I were rich, what a present would I give to you!" Surely, while that little boy lives, he will never cease to be grateful to the pilot, who risked his life to save him from a watery grave!

If we are grateful to one who saves the body a little while from death, what love should we feel to Him who rescues the soul from eternal death! What do we owe to Jesus? He saw that we were ready to perish, and to deliver us he came from heaven. He gave his life that we might be saved. He poured out his blood for us; for us he died on the cross. How great was his love! But do we feel as grateful to him as the little boy did to the pilot? Are we ready to say, "If we were rich, what a present would we

give?" Well, Jesus does ask us to give him something; and it is what the poorest can give equally with the rich. He asks us to give him our hearts; that is, our love and confidence. And if we give him these, then shall we give him our life, service, our all. "My son, give me thine heart," Prov. xxiii. 26.

How kindly he thus speaks! "My son;" or, if the reader is a little girl, he says, "My daughter." *Give*,—he is pleased to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; it is that which you owe him. Give, not lend it. He does not wish it to be taken away again. It is not for the season of youth only, or for a part of your life, but all your life; from its earliest dawn to its close. Then it must be an undivided heart; you must love and serve him, and him only. He will not receive one half of your heart, half of your love and duty, or three quarters of it; he must have it *all*. You must give it him willingly and cheerfully; for he "loves a cheerful giver." And you must give it him *now*, while you are young; and not wait till you are old and ready to die.

If a child should ask, Why am I to give my heart to Jesus? many answers could be

made to the question. Give him your heart because he has a right to it. He is its Creator and Lord; for all things were made by him, and belong to him. Give him your heart, for it is the best thing you have to give to him. It is a better gift in his sight than gold and silver, and all the jewels in the world. Give him your heart, for it is very acceptable to him. We like to give to those we love that which we know will please and gratify them. Give him your heart, not that he will be the richer by your gift, but that you may be the better and happier.

How long has Jesus asked you for this best gift? Why have you not given it? Is there any good thing he refuses to give to you? And will you turn away from him, and give it to sin and Satan? What sad ingratitude! Go into your own little room, kneel down, and say, "O Lord, give me thy Holy Spirit, that I may be made willing to give my heart to thee, this very day." Make this your prayer,

Take my poor heart, just as it is,
Set up therein thy throne;
So shall I love thee above all,
And live to thee alone.

ARE YOU KIND TO YOUR
MOTHER?



COME, my little boy; and you, my little girl, what answer can you give to this question?

Who was it that watched over you when you were a helpless baby? Who nursed you, and fondled you, and never grew weary in her love? Who kept you from the cold

by night, and the heat by day? Who guarded you in health, and comforted you when you were ill? Who was it that wept when the fever made your skin feel hot, and your pulse beat quick and hard? Who hung over your little bed when you were fretful, and gave the nice cooling drink to your parched lips? Who sang the pretty hymn to please you as you lay, or knelt down by the side of the bed in prayer? Who was glad when you began to get well? and who carried you into the fresh air to help your recovery? Who taught you how to pray, and gently helped you to learn to read? Who has borne with all your faults, and been kind and patient in all your childish ways? Who loves you still; and who contrives, and works, and prays for you every day you live? Is it not your mother—your own dear mother? Now, then, let me ask you again, ARE YOU KIND TO YOUR MOTHER?

There are many ways in which children show whether they are kind or not. Do you always obey her, and try to please her? When she speaks, are you ready to attend to her voice? or do you neglect what you know she wishes you to do? Do you love

to make her heart feel glad? or, like many rude boys and girls, say, "Oh, it is only my mother, I do not mind her?"

You may perhaps think she is too strict; and because she will not let you have your own way, you are peevish and fretful. Or you are sullen, and make yourself unhappy, and all around you unhappy also. You think you know better than she does; or you answer her in a bold and angry tone of voice. When she is out of sight you do not care to attend to her words, or to do what she wishes you. Are these the ways you show your kindness to your mother?

There are some children whose father is dead—they are orphans; they are in great danger of being unkind to a widowed mother. How sad that it ever should be so! Let them listen to a word of advice. Of all the sorrows she has suffered, the death of your father was the most bitter. The best earthly relief will be the kindness and obedience of her children. When you see her weep, try to soothe her mind. When she sits down sad and heavy, think what little ways you can employ to turn her thoughts. Do not grieve her heart. Show attention to her in all things. Do not take advantage of her

weakness. She may not be able to punish you for bad conduct, like a father; but it would be wicked indeed to neglect her on that account.

Such was the tender regard which an excellent minister, the Rev. Richard Hooker, had for the happiness of his parent, that he used to say, "If I had no other reason and motive for being religious, I would strive to be so for the sake of my aged mother; that I might requite her care of me, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy." We have the best example in our Lord Jesus Christ. Though the Son of God, yet he was "subject to his mother;" and when on the cross, suffering for our sins, he even then did not forget her, but gave her to the care of his most loving disciple, John, that he might take her to his home.

Children, be kind to *your* mother! If you love Jesus, if you would be like him, if you would be saved by him, again I say, Be kind to your mother! Show your love by your looks, by your words, by your temper, by your whole conduct. It is your duty; it is your privilege. It is for your interest, your happiness, and your honour.

NOW! NOW!



A FEW years ago there were three little sisters. They played together in the day, and slept in the same bed at night. As they grew older, they went to the same school, and were taught by the same teachers. They looked very neat, clean, and happy little girls; and if you had seen them, you would have thought that they would live

many years, and even grow to be aged women. But where are they now? They are not in their father's house, nor are they at the school: they are sleeping side by side in the same bedroom, but that bedroom is the grave. They died while they were yet young; and it is as if a voice was heard from their tomb, saying, "Now, now is the time to seek the Lord."

Now is the ACCEPTED time. "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." It is highly pleasing to the Saviour, to give him the days of our youth. If a child were to say, "I have got a pretty flower, but I will not give it you now. When it is faded, and all its beauty is gone, then I will give it to you." Would any one accept such a gift? The answer would be, "If you love me, give it me now, while it is fresh and blooming." And will you not give your heart to Jesus while you are young?

When we devote our youth to God,
 'Tis pleasing in his eyes;
 A flower when offer'd in the bud
 Is no vain sacrifice.

Now is the BEST time. If you wish to

have flowers in your garden, you must plant them in the spring. If you would have a tree to grow in any particular shape or direction, you must bend it when it is a young twig. If you leave it till it is old, it will be much harder to bend. It is like this in religion: if you do not now yield your heart to Christ, it will grow hard in sin. The busy world, with its cares and duties, will fill your thoughts and hands, and lead you away from God.

Now is the PROPER time. A boy who has a trade to learn, does not wait till he grows to be a man before he begins. Or a little girl who has a task to learn, does not let the day pass away, and begin only when the darkness of night comes on. So in the care of the soul, there is nothing gained by delay, and everything may be lost by it. When can you have a better time than the present? The Saviour invites you to come to him; and he has said he will give you, in answer to prayer, his Holy Spirit, that you may be guided to him aright.

Now, for this may be the ONLY time. You may die young. "Die!" says a little girl or boy; "oh, no; to-morrow I am going to play with some young friends, and the next

day I shall be happy, and the next day to that again. I shall grow up to be as old as my grandfather." So have thought many children; but we can show the little white tomb, or the grassy hillock, beneath which their bodies have been laid. We read in the Bible of a little child who ran to visit his father as he reaped in the fields; but when he got there, "he said to his father, My head, my head! And the father said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and died," 2 Kings iv. 18. Do not then say, there is time enough yet; for now is the time to flee from sin, and seek for mercy. This is the bright and happy season to store the mind with the word of God, to give the heart to Jesus, and to prepare for heaven.

Youth is the time, would we be blest
With God's peculiar smile;
The time the most approved and best
To learn his sovereign will.

'Tis the sweet morning of our days,
When reason's dawn appears;
If spent in sacred wisdom's ways,
'Twill crown our future years.

ELIZABETH AND HER HYMN BOOK.



WHAT nice, pretty hymn-books are now printed for the young! Have you one? If you have, do you love to learn the hymns it contains? Some children only value a book for its gay outside, and the pretty pictures that adorn the inside; and yet, it is hoped, you are wiser, and that you find it a pleasure to store up the pious verses that were written to do you good. Let a friend give you this

advice. Learn your little hymns well; you may call them to mind again, when you grow old; they may comfort your heart, and benefit your soul, when your eyes are too weak to read them any more. To encourage you to this, read a short account of Elizabeth and her hymn-book.

Elizabeth was a little child, who had a nice book of pretty hymns, some of which she was taught to repeat even when she could not speak quite plainly. She first got by heart the one which begins—

“How doth the little busy bee,” etc.

She used to put her tiny hands together, and say in her infant speech,

“That I may give for every day,
Some good account at last.”

When she went to play among the flowers in the garden, she would watch the bees, gathering the honey from the pinks and roses; and then she would ask for something to employ herself, saying, “I have seen busy bee at work, and

“I would be busy too,
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

At another time, when some of the family

were looking at the young birds that were flying in and out of a nest, little Elizabeth looked up, and said,

“Birds in their little nests agree,
And 'tis a shameful sight
When children of one family
Fall out, and chide, and fight.”

When she was once asked if the time did not seem long to her while her brothers were gone to school, she replied, “If it begins to seem long I learn a hymn, and that makes it short and pleasant.”

Her favourite book was the “Divine Songs” by Dr. Watts. She carried it in her pocket, and she often went to her friends, and said, “Here is a *very* pretty hymn, may I read it to you?” and then again, “Here is another; do let me read this.”

One day she came from the garden with a rose in her hand, and began to sing

“How fair is the rose! what a beautiful flower!
The glory of April and May.”

Her friends were quite pleased to hear her, because she was only a little child. One of her sisters called her a little rose herself, and told her she must try to be as sweet. After thinking of this a minute, she

replied, "I will be good, and *good is sweet*, is it not?"

Elizabeth grew up to be a young lady, and her love for hymns grew with her age. She used to read the Bible also, for that is the best of all books; and she taught its truths to others. She loved the Saviour, who died to save her soul, and she used to sing the hymn—

" Was it for crimes that I have done
He groan'd upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!"

Elizabeth did not live to be old, she died when yet of early age. When her face grew pale, and she felt very ill, she did not forget her pretty hymns. As she lay in bed, she would find comfort in singing

" When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

Be grateful, then, for hymns. Learn them while you are young. They will teach you in youth, and cheer you in age, and may perhaps support your soul in the hour of death.

THE MIRROR.



THE Bible is represented under different emblems or figures, and one of them is that of a mirror, or looking-glass. As we look into a glass that we may behold ourselves, so we can look into the Bible, and there see a faithful likeness presented. And what is indeed strange, we are there seen, not only as we are, but as we ought to be, and as we ought not to be. Now, take this mirror, and see if you can trace your own likeness.

WHAT EVERY CHILD OUGHT TO BE.

A — Amiable	Phil. iv. 8.
B — Benevolent	Prov. xxii. 9.
C — Contented	Prov. xv. 16.
D — Diligent	Prov. xxii. 29.
E — Eager to obtain knowledge	Prov. ii. 3—5.
F — Forgiving	Eph. iv. 32.
G — Gentle	2 Tim. ii. 24.
H — Honest	Exod. xx. 15.
I — Industrious	Eph. iv. 28.
J — Just	Prov. xi. 1.
K — Kind	Gal. vi. 10.
L — Loving	Eph. v. 2.
M — Meek	Eph. iv. 2.
N — Noticing	Psa. cvii. 43.
O — Obedient	Rom. xiii. 7.
P — Pious	Prov. viii. 17.
Q — Quick	Psa. cxix. 60.
R — Regardful	John x. 4, 5.
S — Sincere	Titus ii. 7.
T — Truthful	Eph. iv. 25.
U — Useful	1 Cor. xv. 58.
V — Virtuous	Eph. iv. 29.
W — Wise	Prov. x. 1.
Y — Yielding to good counsel.	Prov. xix. 20.
Z — Zealous in a good cause.	Titus ii. 14.

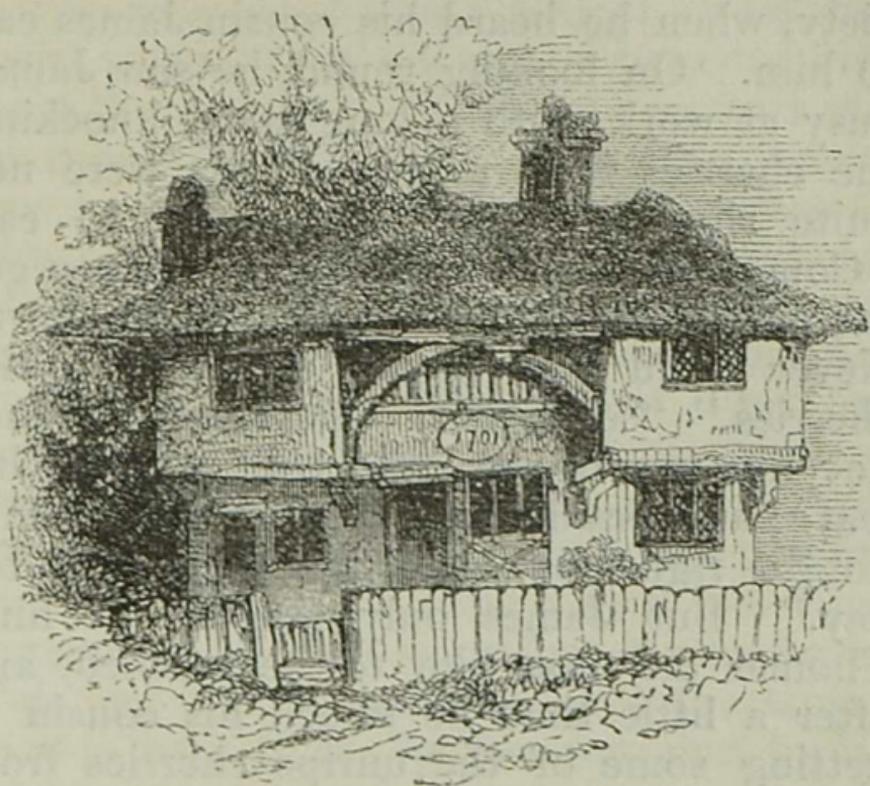
WHAT EVERY CHILD OUGHT NOT TO BE.

- A — Angry Prov. xvi. 32.
 B — Boastful Psa. x. 3.
 C — Covetous Luke xii. 15.
 D — Deceitful Prov. xxiv. 28.
 E — Envious 1 Pet. ii. 1.
 F — Fretful Psa. xxxvii. 8.
 G — Greedy Luke xxi. 34.
 H — Hard-hearted Prov. xxviii. 14.
 I — Idle Prov. vi. 6.
 J — Jealous Luke xv. 25-32.
 K — Knavish Isa. lix. 8.
 L — Lazy Eccl. ix. 10.
 M — Mischievous Prov. xxiv. 8.
 N — Negligent Heb. ii. 3.
 O — Obstinate Isa. xlviii. 4.
 P — Proud Prov. xvi. 18.
 Q — Quarrelsome Titus iii. 2.
 R — Revengeful Rom. xii. 19.
 S — Selfish 1 Cor. xiii. 5.
 T — Thoughtless Psa. x. 4.
 U — Undutiful Prov. xxx. 17.
 V — Vicious Rom. iii. 13.
 W — Weary in well-doing . . Gal. vi. 9.
 Y — Yielding to bad counsel. Psa. i. 1.
 Z — Zealous in a bad cause. Gal. iv. 17, 18.

Do not pass over these texts, but find them out in your Bible. Then turn to James i. 23, 24, and attend to what the apostle there says:—"If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Such conduct is both foolish and sinful.

How often do you look into this mirror? Travellers inform us that at the present day, in the east, small looking-glasses, or mirrors, are female ornaments. The young women are fond of hanging them round their necks; and they do not lay them aside even when they go a distance of three miles in the evening to obtain water: they find much pleasure in looking at their reflected image. Are you as fond of looking into the bright clear mirror of the Bible? It will not deceive or flatter you; nor will it make you proud and vain. It will humble you, for it will show all the defects and blemishes in your life and heart. It will convince you of your sinful state; but then it will also make known to you the Lord Jesus Christ as able and willing to save.

THE LITTLE PENITENT.



THOMAS had been taught to obey his parents in all things; and as they were wise and pious people, they never wished him to do anything that was wrong, or that would hurt him.

It was one Sunday that Thomas's aunt came to see his mother, and brought her

son James with her. He was older than Thomas, and should have set him a good example. In the afternoon, Thomas sat in the garden, reading a little book on early piety, when he heard his cousin James call to him. On looking round, he saw James busy at work, with a long stick, knocking the cherries from a tree. They were not quite ripe, and therefore not fit to eat. "Come and help," cried James; "if you get the ladder, we shall soon have them down. Never mind your book, let us get the cherries." "My father," said Thomas, "does not like me to take the fruit without his leave; and, besides, it is Sunday, and it would not be right for us to climb the trees to-day." But James only laughed at him. Thomas did not like to be mocked, and after a little time he joined his cousin in getting some of the unripe cherries from the tree.

When James had gone, Thomas felt very unhappy. He knew that his cousin had tempted him to sin; and that, instead of yielding, he ought to have thought of the text, "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not," Prov. i. 10; and he should have said, "I cannot do it." He felt that he had dis-

obeyed his parents, and had sinned against God.

Thomas went up stairs to his little bedroom, and began to weep. "How sorry I am," he thought, "that I did not refuse my cousin when he asked me to help him in taking the cherries! But I am very wicked, and cannot feel happy." He then knelt down by the side of the bed, and confessed to his heavenly Father that he had sinned; and he prayed that God would forgive him, for the sake of Jesus Christ; and that he would give him his Holy Spirit, that he might have a new heart, and for the time to come be able to resist all temptation. He then thought of a text his mother had taught him: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," 1 John i. 8, 9.

Just at this time, his mother came into the room, and asked what made him look so sad. He then told her all his fault. He did not try to hide anything. Thomas's mother was very sorry that her son had

done wrong, but she was not angry with him. She hoped that this would be a lesson to him, and that he would never commit such a sin again. Kind and faithful were her words. She said, children should never do anything at any time, which they would be ashamed of if their parents knew it. They ought to remember that God sees them everywhere, and God is greater than their parents. Her little boy, she said, had done right in confessing his sin, and she saw that he was truly sorry for it.

Thomas could hardly believe that his mother would speak so kindly, and so soon forgive him. This only increased his grief, but after a time he dried up his tears. After she had kissed him, she said she would pray that God would forgive him, and that he might not disobey his parents again.

While we think of Thomas, we should remember that we have all sinned, and we should all repent. And we should repent *now*. If we put it off, the heart will grow hard in sin; and we may at last die with our sins unforgiven, and our souls not saved.

HAPPY SUNDAY.



THE Bible teaches us to "call the sabbath a delight," Isa. lviii. 13. Of all the days in the week, we should love it the best. Every day should be a happy day, but Sunday should be the happiest of all. Let us see how the parents of little Mary and James taught them to keep a happy Sunday.

First, they were taught to prepare for it. On Saturday night they put away all their playthings and work, and they thought no

more of them till Monday came. They then got their books ready; and their clean clothes were laid out, so that there might be no hurry or confusion on Sunday morning.

Mary and James got up earlier on Sunday than on any other day of the week. Some children think they may lie much later on that day than on any other day; and their parents have to call them two or three times before they arise from their beds. But those who wish to spend a happy Sunday, must be up betimes.

When Mary and James were dressed, they did not idle away their time. After kneeling in prayer, they came from their rooms. Mary helped her mother to get the breakfast, and James sat in a corner, learning two verses of a hymn.

When it was near school time, they kissed their father and mother, and hastened to meet their teachers with a cheerful smile. They were always among the first scholars in the class; and as they had learned their lessons at home in the week, there was no time lost when they were in the school. They loved their kind teachers, and tried to profit by their instructions.

Mary and James had been taught how

to behave themselves in the house of God. They did not trifle and play, or look about them, or go to sleep; but joined in the sacred service, and listened to the minister. They used to find out the text, that they might repeat it to their mother before going to bed.

On their return from school in the afternoon, they were not allowed to go out to play or talk with rude boys and girls. Sometimes they would tell their parents some of the pious things which their teachers had said; or they read a chapter in the Bible together. After tea they sang a hymn. They were very fond of singing—

“ See the kind Shepherd, Jesus, stands,
With all-engaging charms;
Hark! how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms.”

Or they would sing—

“ Lord, how delightful 'tis to see,
A whole assembly worship thee;
At once they sing, at once they pray,
They hear of heaven, and learn the way.”

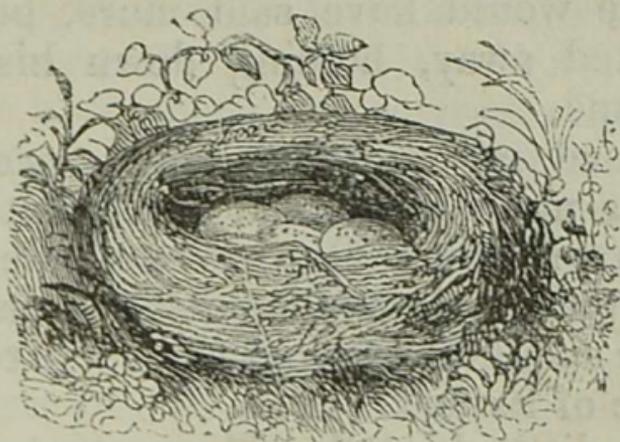
When night came on, the father of Mary and James knelt with his family in prayer. He used to thank God for the mercies of

the day of rest, and, above all, for the great gift of Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world; and to ask that all their sins might be forgiven for his sake. They then went to bed at an early hour, saying that they had spent a **HAPPY SUNDAY!**

“How sweet a sabbath thus to spend,
In hope of one that ne'er shall end!”

Youthful reader, how do you spend the Sunday? Is it to you a dull day? Or do you feel with David, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand?” Do you put on your best looks, as well as your best clothes, on the Lord's day? Are you happy at home; happy in the Sunday school; happy in the house of God? Or are you a sabbath-breaker? If you are, you must be unhappy in this world, and unhappy in the next world, unless you repent. Pray to God, that he may give you his Holy Spirit, teach you to love the holy day, and that every sabbath you spend on earth may fit you for the sabbath in heaven, where the saints shall worship God and the Lamb for ever.

THE BIRDS OF THE AIR.



It was a fine morning in the month of July when my uncle Harlow took me with him in one of his early walks. The birds were chirping in the hedge-rows, or were seen flying above our heads in the air. We had not gone far, when we saw a farmer's boy throw a stone at a sparrow that was hopping in the middle of the road. The stone hit the bird; and it fell stunned to the ground.

I ran and picked up the wounded sparrow, while my uncle went to the boy, and said, "Cruel lad! what pleasure can you find in causing pain to a little harmless bird? Why should you wantonly destroy that life which none but God can give? Let me tell you, that the boy who can kill or torture any creature for sport, has an unfeeling heart,

and is likely to grow up in cruelty and sin." My uncle would have said more, but the lad walked away, holding down his head with shame.

I opened my waistcoat, and placed the bird near my breast: in a few minutes the warmth revived it. Oh, how its little heart beat with alarm on finding itself a captive! but after awhile it allowed my uncle to hold it by one of its feet.

"Poor little bird!" said my uncle; "do not be alarmed, I will not keep you long a prisoner. Come, let me see if your wings are wounded. No; all is right. There now, let me smooth your ruffled feathers, and gently brush away the dirt from your breast; and then, my pretty bird, you shall fly away to your nest.

"Now observe," said my uncle, as he sat on a hillock, smoothing the plumage of the sparrow, "how much wisdom is to be seen in the creation of a little bird. God designed that birds should move in the air; he has therefore furnished them with wings to waft them, and a tail to keep them steady and direct their course.

"Look at the strong, yet light quills; with what nicety are they fixed together,

and in what perfect order! They all point one way, that they may not check its flight.

“Admire the shape of the body; it is like a little boat, sharp before, gradually swelling, and then tapering off behind to the tail, which slightly expands, and serves, like a rudder of a ship, to steer the course of the bird, and to help it to ascend and descend. The whole body is so formed as to present the least resistance to the air through which it has to force its way.

“Look at its beautiful eyes. These eyes, like tiny telescopes, have the power of bringing distant objects nigh: so that when almost out of human sight, they can clearly see a grain of corn lying on the earth, or the little worm as it creeps from beneath a stone. Nor is this all: as some small birds hop among the thickets, the eye is provided with a web, which, like a shield, protects its delicate sight from injury.

“Notice how well suited is the beak to pick corn out of an ear of wheat, and cast aside the husk. To enable it to rise from the earth, and to sail through the air, it is furnished with hollow bones, which are filled with air: this being kept warm by the natural heat of the bird, joined with the power of

swelling its body, enables it to rise, like a balloon, and fly far above our heads."

My uncle then told me how the stomach of a bird is like a grinding-mill, which crushes the seed, and makes it fit for food; and that the different form of the windpipe makes the cawing of the rook, the sweet warble of the nightingale, and the homely twitter of the sparrow. After he had spoken of the power and wisdom of God as seen in this work of his hand, he showed me his goodness in providing for its wants.

"You remember, Henry," said my uncle, "our Saviour once pointed to the birds of the air, to teach us to trust to the watchful care of God, Matt. vi. 26. And are we not of more value than many sparrows? We are not only 'fearfully and wonderfully made,' but we have a soul that never dies; and in love to the precious soul, our Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven to save it from being lost through sin." My uncle, as we walked home, spoke to me about the love of Christ in dying for us on the cross; and I hope I shall ever be thankful for the kind words he said to me in that early morning's walk.

ANN AND THE PINCUSHIONS.



A CLERGYMAN was asked to visit a little girl, who had been ill a long time, and was now near death. Before he went, a friend gave him a short account of her.

“Ann S—— was born at Bognor, in Sussex. Her father was a fisherman. One day when he was at sea with his boat, it was upset, and he was drowned. Several days passed away, and at length his body was cast on

the beach. Ann was now a poor orphan; and her mother went with her to live in another town.

“One day there was a missionary meeting, and little Ann went to it. A missionary rose and said, ‘There was a little heathen boy who one day came to hear the preaching. The text was, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”’ The boy went home, and told his father what he had heard. On the morrow the boy was seen bringing his father to hear the good news of a Saviour. After this, the boy was taken ill, when he sent for the missionary, and said, “I shall soon die; but you have told me of Jesus, and I am not afraid to die. I thank you for telling me of Christ. When you go to England, tell them to send more missionaries to preach to the poor heathen about the Saviour.”’ A little while after this he died. And now,’ said the speaker, ‘will you assist to send more missionaries to the poor dying heathen? My dear children, will *you* assist? There are children among the heathen; will you send the gospel to them?’

“When Ann went home from the meeting, she asked her mother how she could assist. Her mother said, ‘If you make pincushions,

and sell them, perhaps you may be able to do something.' So Ann began to make pincushions; and in a few months she sent ten shillings to buy Bibles for the heathen."

After the clergyman had heard this pleasing account of little Ann, he went to see her. She was very ill, but she was glad to see him. "I am glad, sir, you have come," she said, "for I want to hear of missionaries." "But, my dear," said he, "what makes you so fond of the missionaries?" "Oh!" she said, "Jesus has been so good to me; and I think I love him; and so I want the heathen to love him also." "But why," she was asked, "do you think you love Christ?" "Because," she added, "I love to pray to him, and to speak about him; and he has said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" She then went on to say that she wished to join the happy spirits of children in heaven, and with them to sing the praises of the Saviour. There was a good deal more conversation with Ann, after which the minister prayed with her, and left the house.

When the clergyman went into that part of the country again, he was told that Ann

had died in peace some time before. He then walked into the churchyard, and saw her grave. On a small stone were these words:—

ANN S——, AGED 12.

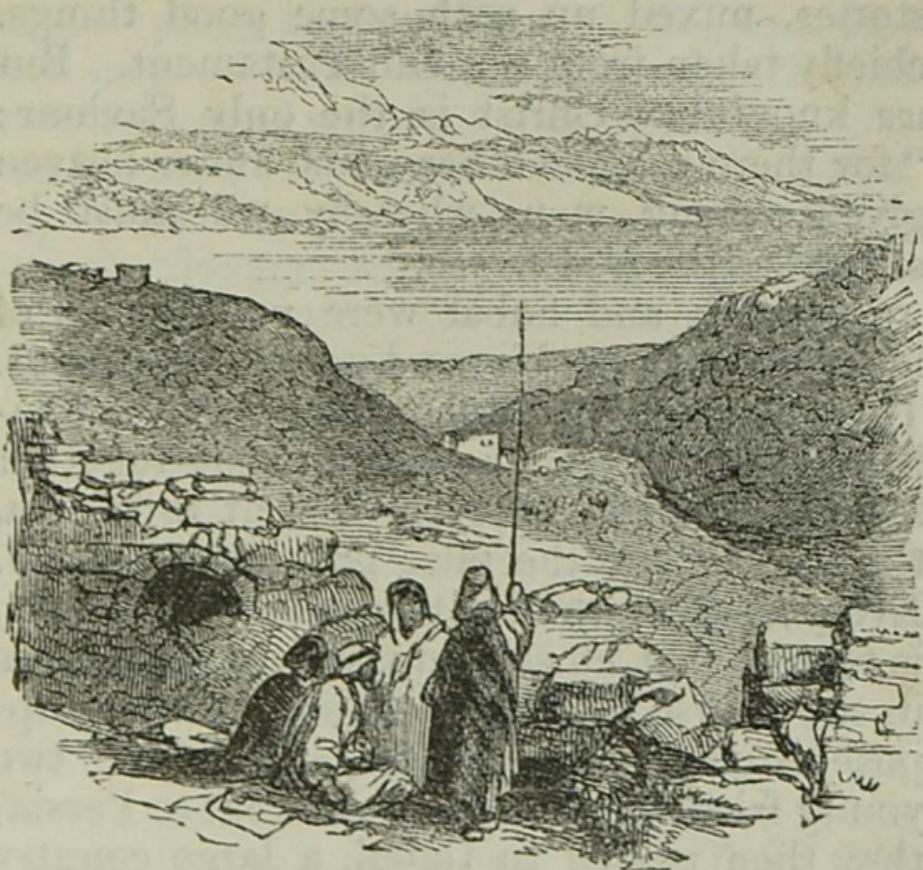
SHE DIED IN PEACE; THANKING GOD
FOR THE GIFT OF HIS SON.

Now, it is not asked, Do you give your money to send the gospel to the heathen? But it is asked, Do you love Christ? Do you seek his grace, and pray to him? He has said, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." Go to Jesus, and say, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" He will hear you, and bless you, if you pray with your heart. Then, while you think of the souls of the heathen, you will show that you do not neglect your own.

They are the truly wise
Who early fear the Lord;
The message of his mercy prize,
And keep his holy word.

All they who early seek,
Shall find the Saviour near;
And, fearing Him—though poor and weak—
Shall know no other fear.

THE ARABIAN MARTYR.



ABOUT one-tenth of the people in the world are the followers of a false prophet, named Mohammed, who lived in Arabia, about twelve hundred years ago. They do not fully believe in the Bible, nor do they depend on Christ as their Lord and Saviour. They have a book of their own, called the Koran, and expect to go to heaven by attending to

what their prophet has taught them therein, though it is full of falsehoods and foolish stories, mixed up with some good things, chiefly taken from the Old Testament. But *we* know that Christ is the only Saviour; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12.

Abdallah and Sabat were young men of high family in Arabia, and very close friends. They were both strict believers in Mohammed. Having agreed to visit together foreign countries, they first went to Mecca, the town where the false prophet was born. Every Arabian who has the means and health, is taught that he should visit this place once in the course of his life, which act they suppose is very pleasing to God. The two young friends left Arabia, and went to Persia; they then passed to Cabul, a large country in the east. Sabat here left his friend, and went on to Tartary.

During the stay of Abdallah at Cabul, he met with a New Testament, which he read, and became convinced of the truth of the Christian religion. Among the Mohammedans, if a man of rank becomes a Christian, he is put to death. Abdallah was afraid

openly to profess his new religion; but finding it was not possible to conceal it, he left the place in disguise, and fled to a distant city. When walking one day in the streets, he was met by his friend Sabat, who had heard of his change of religion. Sabat began severely to upbraid him. Abdallah saw his danger, and threw himself at the feet of his friend. He confessed he was a Christian, imploring him not to betray him, and to let him escape with his life. But he had no pity; he caused him to be seized, and delivered up to the king of Bokhara, a fierce disciple of Mohammed.

Abdallah was sentenced to die, and a herald went through the city of Bokhara, to announce the time of execution. A great crowd attended, with the chief men of the place. Sabat also went, and stood near his former friend. Abdallah was offered his life if he would deny Christ; the executioner standing by him with a sword in his hand. "No," said he, "I cannot deny Christ." Then one of his hands was cut off at the wrist. A physician, by order of the king, offered to heal the wound, if he would give up the Christian religion. He made no answer; but looked up to heaven, like

Stephen, the first martyr, while tears streamed down his cheeks. He then looked at Sabat, but it was a look of kindness and forgiveness. His other hand was then cut off; but he still stood firm. At length he was directed to bow his head, which was cut off at a stroke. The people of Bokkara returned to their homes; and as they considered the firmness and meekness of the martyr, they said one to another, "What new thing is this!"

From this little history, let us be encouraged in sending the Bible to Moham-medan and heathen lands. It was the reading of it, by the blessing of God, that led Abdallah to become a Christian; and it has been blessed in many other instances in leading those who were once dark into the light of truth. May that holy book lead millions more from false prophets and dumb idols, to the only true God, and to Jesus Christ; who has said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. ii. 10. This crown is promised not only to those who die as martyrs in the cause of the gospel, but to all those who believe in Christ, and keep his commands.

BIBLE TRUTHS.



THE Bible is like a mine of jewels ; but we must search out the jewels, and when we have found them we must try to keep them. Bible truths and promises are these jewels, and we must put a high value on them. Jewels are costly and beautiful things, but they are not very useful. They could do no good to a sick and dying man. But the jewels of the Bible are as useful as they are valuable. They will be a better ornament than a diamond necklace ; and enrich you more

than if you had a mine of rubies. Let us call to mind a few Bible truths, which the young should never forget.

1. GOD MADE ME.

This is one of the plainest of all the truths in Scripture. God made man of the dust of the earth, and gave him a living soul. He made the body to be the house of the soul. God made man holy and happy; but man made himself a sinner. He is not now the pure and blessed being he was when he came from the hand of God.

2. CHRIST DIED FOR ME.

This is one of the most precious of Bible truths. God, in his great love, sent his Son to take our place, and to bear the wrath due to our sins. Jesus loved us, and came to die for us on the cross. For us he poured out his blood, and was laid in the grave, that we might be saved. And he is now in heaven, pleading for all who come unto God through faith in him.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST RENEW MY HEART.

The heart or mind of every child is in love with sin; it does not fear God; it is careless about religion; it delights in the things of this world. In this state it is not

fit for heaven. The heart is like a stone. It is hard, cold, heavy, and barren. But the Holy Spirit can soften this stony heart, and bring it to love and fear God.

4. I MUST REPENT, AND BELIEVE IN CHRIST.

God has been kind and merciful to me; but I have done what I ought not to have done, and left undone what I ought to have done. I ought to feel grief and sorrow for all my sins. I must repent. I must also trust in Jesus, believing that he is able to save, willing to save, waiting to save, and has promised to save.

5. I MUST OBEY MY PARENTS.

God has placed them over me. They have fed and clothed me, and they love me. I must respect their persons, listen to their advice, and attend to their wishes. For God is angry with those who disobey their parents.

6. I MUST KEEP HOLY THE LORD'S DAY, READ THE BIBLE, AND PRAY WITH MY HEART.

If I neglect these duties, I shall ruin myself. These are privileges which I possess, and God will punish me if they are not attended to.

7. I MUST PREPARE TO DIE.

I know that it is not only the aged that die; for I have seen little coffins and little graves. I may die before I am so old as father; or I may die while yet in youth. Some die suddenly. Then I should be ready to die. If I love Jesus, and obey him, I need not be afraid.

8. MY SOUL WILL LIVE FOR EVER.

The soul can never die. God will judge it; and it will live in heaven or in hell. If, through the merits of Jesus, it is received into heaven, it will be happy; for there will be no sorrow, nor sin, nor weeping, nor death, in that bright world. It shall be with holy angels, happy spirits, the blessed Saviour, and the glorious God. But if I die in my sins, my state will be full of misery and despair.

These are solemn truths. Thousands of children have never heard them; but I have, and if I do not attend to them I shall never go to heaven. May God enable me to keep them! Amen.

THE SHIPWRECKED SAILOR.



SOME years ago, there was a boy who went to a Sunday school at Bristol, but who was so rude and wicked, that the teachers often told him, if he did not behave better, they must put him out of the school. They were kind to him, hoping he would reform; but as he rather grew worse, they were obliged to turn him out. This boy, after a time,

went to sea as a sailor; and his teacher became a clergyman.

A few years passed, and the clergyman was sitting in his study in a distant country village, when a sailor knocked at his door. On entering the study, he said, "I suppose you have forgotten me, sir?" "Yes, I have, if I ever knew you." "Do you remember a wicked boy, named James Saunders?" asked the sailor. "Oh yes; I have cause to remember him; he gave me much trouble. What do you know of him?" "I am the lad," said he. "Why, James, you have grown so much, and are so altered, I could not have believed it. But what account can you give of yourself?" "A very sad one, sir. When I was put out of the school, I left Bristol, and went as a sailor-boy. After sailing about in different parts of the world, I was shipwrecked, and was cast on a rock. It was dark, and the rock was half covered with the sea; and every moment I expected a watery grave. For the first time since I left the school, sir, you darted into my mind; and I thought of a text you once taught me, 'From the top of the rocks I see him,' Numb. xxiii. 9. I then tried to pray to the Saviour of whom I had heard so

much, and whom I had so slighted. I knelt down up to my waist in water, and cried to him. When the day broke, I saw some pieces of the wreck, on which I reached the shore. Then it was that many precious truths you had taught me from the Bible came fresh into my mind. After a time I was taken on board another vessel, and, after many dangers, got safely home again. And now I have returned, I thought, sir, you would be glad to find that all your care on my behalf was not lost; and I have come to thank you." The clergyman knew that James was a cunning and deceitful lad when at school, and he hardly knew how to believe his story. He thought he would write to the captain of the ship, and make inquiry. From the answer which the captain sent, he was glad to find, that since this young man had sailed with him, his conduct had been correct and worthy of praise.

Many months after this time, the clergyman received a letter from the captain, saying that poor James Saunders, while in a distant part of the world, was seized with a fever; and that, as he lay ill, he sent for the sailors, read to them, while he was able, from the Bible, told them to "cleave to the

Rock of ages that never moves," and to take example by him, who, though one of the greatest of sinners, had yet found mercy through the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He then prayed for them all; after which, he died in peace. This account of the happy end of his former scholar much affected the pious minister.

It is a good thing to have the word of God stored in our minds while we are young. Like seed put into the ground, it may spring up, and bear fruit another day. The text of Scripture learned when a wild boy in the school, came again to mind when James Saunders was on the top of the rock, and the storm was raging around him; and it led him to Jesus. But we should not put off religion till the hour of danger and of death. The Bible should be our guide in health and in youth; and if we give the heart to God in our early days, it will fit us for a useful and happy life on earth, or for an early tomb.

THE LITTLE CAPTIVE MAID.



IN the houses of kings and noblemen, there is often a room called the picture-gallery. Now, the Bible may be compared to the picture-gallery of a king. In it are pictures of all kinds, and all are beautiful.

Let us look into this gallery, and select one of the pictures, which may both please and instruct us. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance

unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." 2 Kings v. 1—3.

What a beautiful picture is here! We see in it a great warrior, a pious prophet, and a little captive maid. If we look at the last, we shall see in her conduct some things which the young will do well to copy.

1. It is certain she was a *modest* little girl. This appears in her manner of giving advice: it was in the form of a wish. It would not have become her station to have boldly gone into the presence of her master, a great Syrian lord, to tell him what he should do. "She said unto her mistress." This was quite right; what she had to say was best spoken to her. When we are gentle and modest in our way of giving advice, it is more likely to be received well, and to be useful; but a bold and pert way in offering counsel is likely to lead to its being refused. However good our motive, we do not obtain

our end. Jesus says, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart."

2. It is clear she was a *benevolent* little girl. She had been stolen from her home and her dear parents, and had been made a poor slave girl. Yet she did not show any anger against her master. She was willing to do good to him who held her in slavery. If, like many children, she had been sullen and unforgiving, Naaman would not have been cured of his disease. But how sweet was the spirit she showed in these words, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria!" How plainly does her conduct teach the lesson, to return good for evil!

3. There is no doubt she was a *truth-telling* little girl. When Naaman heard what his young servant had said, he left his home, and took with him silver, gold, and garments, with horses and chariots, and went a journey of more than a hundred miles; and all upon the mere word of a slave girl. If she had not been in the habit of speaking truth, would he have gone to this expense and trouble? No; but he knew he could rely on what she said, that she loved to tell the truth, and he believed her word.

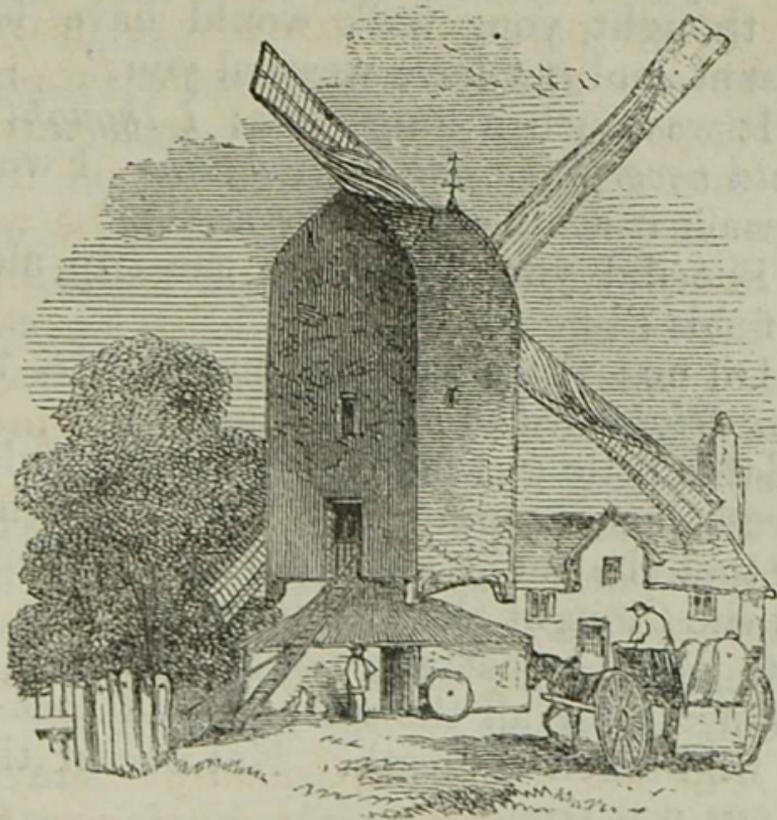
4. It may be hoped she was a *pious* little girl. A heathen land was now her home. She had no parents or teacher to instruct her. Yet she had not forgotten the prophet, and his power to heal. If we were carried away into a land of idols, and cut off from the means of grace, how would it be with us? Should we, like her, be able and willing to speak of our Lord Jesus Christ, a greater prophet than Elisha, and tell of his precious blood, which alone can take away the leprosy of sin?

5. Then she was a *useful* little girl. When all the physicians in Syria failed, she led her master to a cure. She was of more use to him than the king's favour, and all his bags of gold.

6. She was a little *missionary*. May we not call her the first female missionary to a heathen land? She shone like a bright little star in a dark sky.

Here, then, are lessons for all; and in particular may the young, while they read of "the little captive maid from the land of Israel," learn to be modest, kind, truthful, useful, and pious!

MIND WHAT YOU SAY!



SOME children have a very bad habit; they say more than is quite true. They do not intend to speak what is false, and yet they do not speak the truth. They use words which mean more than they really wish to express. Let us give one or two cases.

“Oh, mother,” says a little girl, “I am so tired that *I cannot stir another step*,” as she threw herself into a chair, on her return from a walk.

“Why, my dear,” says her mother, “I had thought your walk would have been pleasant, and not have wearied you.”

“It was such a long walk; *I thought we should never have got home again. I would not walk it again for all the world.*”

“But did you not enjoy the trip along the fields?”

“Oh no; there were so many cows, that *I was frightened to death.*”

If this little girl had used simple words to express her meaning, she would not have said that she could not stir another step,—that she thought she should never have got home again,—that she would not take the walk again for all the world,—and that she was frightened to death. Not one of these sayings was true.

“Come,” says John to Henry, “let us go and get some blackberries; there are *oceans* of fine ripe ones on yonder hedge.”

“Oceans!” said Henry, with a look of surprise.

“Yes, oceans; only you must mind you do not slip into the ditch at the side, or you will be *over your head* in mud.”

Now, though there were very many fine ripe blackberries on the hedge, and there

was much mud in the ditch, yet the words John used were not strictly correct—they were untrue.

Another boy says, “My kite went as high as the *clouds* ;” when, if he had said, “My kite went very high,” it would have been nearer the truth. Again, a little boy says, “I learned my lesson to day in *no* time,” while he meant that he had learned it in a *short* time. Another says, “Oh, I am so thirsty, I could drink the *sea dry* ;” when, no doubt, he would find a pint of its salt water more than enough. A girl, who has been standing in the cold, says, “My hands are as cold as ice ;” or, if she has been walking in the heat of the day, declares, “I am as hot as fire ;” neither of which is the fact.

One way of getting rid of this bad habit, is to learn the meaning and use of words, that you may not employ them in a sense different to what they really express. And then think before you speak, so that you may not say more than you mean.

This way of speaking incorrectly will do no good, and may often do much harm. If people find you speak what is not quite true, they will not trust to your word ; and you

will lose the power to please, and of being useful. But what makes it so bad is, that it is likely to lead to habits of falsehood. Saying things that are not true, though there be no intention to deceive, may soon lead to speaking with the design to deceive.

As you are in great danger, listen to a few hints of advice on this subject.

First, consider that "the devil is the father of lies." Surely you would not wish to grow up and be like him?

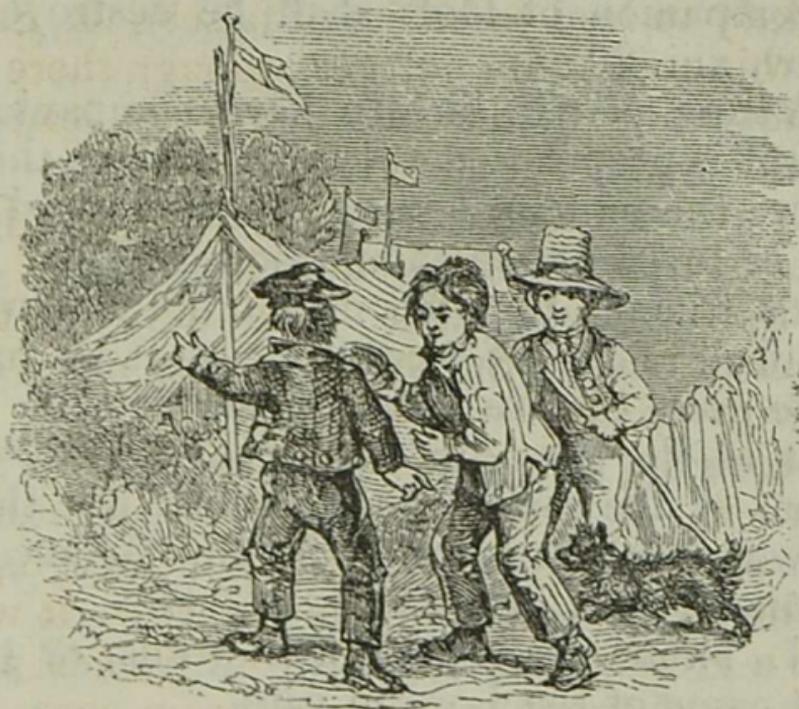
Secondly, one falsehood makes way for another. It is a sin that grows fast, until you scarcely think about the guilt of lying.

Thirdly, if you allow this practice, it will give a great deal of pain to your friends, and bring much trouble and disgrace on yourself.

Lastly, to say what is not true, is to break the law of God, and to bring yourself under its curse.

Look, then, to God, that he may, through the merits of Jesus, forgive you this sin, and all sins, for the time past, and give you grace for the future. "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips."

GOOD AND BAD COMPANIONS.



ONE day, says a Persian poet, I saw a bunch of roses, and in the midst of them grew a tuft of common grass. "How," I cried to the grass, "does a poor plant like you dare to be found in the company of roses?" And I ran to tear away the tuft; when the grass replied, "Spare me! It is true I am not a rose; but *you will perceive, from my perfume, that I have been among the roses.*"

This is a pretty little fable, and it contains a good lesson. It brings to our mind

one of the proverbs of Solomon: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20.

Young people like to have companions, and it is proper that they should have them. If we thought we had no one who cared for us, or loved us, we should be unhappy. We want friends, that we may tell them what we feel, and what we think. But we must take great care in choosing our friends; for just as the grass, in the fable, received the scent of the roses, so we become like those in whose company we are found. What companions, then, should you avoid?

1. Those who speak bad words, or take the name of the Lord in vain.

2. Those who lie or deceive.

3. Those who delight in mischief or cruelty.

4. Those who quarrel and fight.

5. Those who go to fairs, races, theatres, dances, and other places of worldly pleasure.

6. Those who do not obey their parents and teachers.

7. Those who do not keep holy the Lord's day.

8. Those who mock the aged and afflicted.

9. Those who do not read the Bible, and who neglect the house of God.

Such companions would do you harm; they would disgrace you, and perhaps ruin both body and soul. You may be civil to them, and kind; you ought to pray for them, and pity them, and try to do them good; but you must not choose them for friends or companions; no, not one of them, for "one sinner destroyeth much good," Eccles. ix. 18.

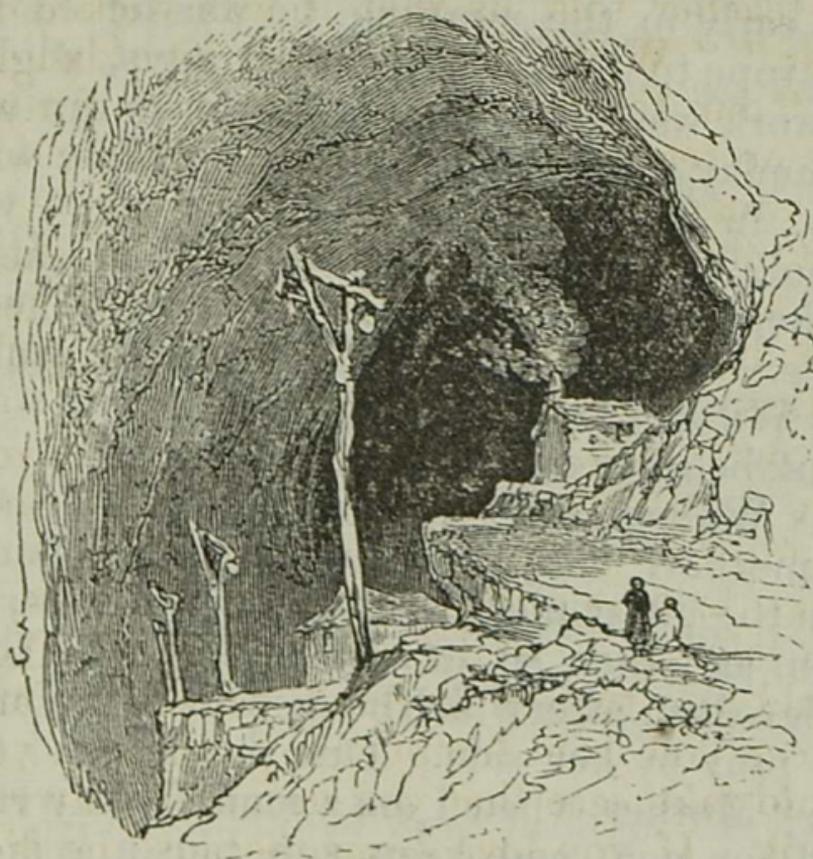
The Bible says, "Blessed is the man (or child) that standeth not in the way of sinners," Psa. i. 1. You may soon learn who are not fit to be your playmates or friends. You know the houses where they live, and the corners where they play, and the evil companions they select, and you must not put yourself in their way.

A gentleman was walking along the streets, and he stopped to look at some boys; and he gazed upon them with pleasure, and thought of the time when he was a boy, and loved a good game at trap-ball as well as the best. The boys were talking in a cluster, when, in a few moments, he saw two come from among the rest, saying, "We will not stay any longer with you." "Why not?"

said the others. "Because you swear; and our teacher told us that it was wicked to swear." "Well," said the other boys, laughing, "our teachers never told us so, for we have no teachers. But if you stop, we will not swear again." "No," said they, "we must not stop with you, for our teachers told us not to keep bad company." These boys did right in leaving those who could speak so wickedly.

Now, remember, it is much easier for you to do wrong than to do right. Our hearts are prone to evil. Going into bad company is like bringing paper near to a candle, it soon takes fire. What should you do? You should pray to God to renew your heart, and to keep you from temptation; and then you should take care that you do not boldly run into it. If you love Jesus, because he died for your sins, you will seek to be like him, and to love all that he loves. You will choose those for your companions on earth, with whom you hope to be found in company for ever.

THE BOY WHO DIED IN A COAL-PIT.



SOME years ago, a boy, named William Thew, worked in a coal-pit. It was a long way down under the ground, where he could not see the sun, nor the green fields, nor enjoy the sweet, fresh air. Those boys who work in the cheerful open day are much more favoured than was poor William the collier-boy. Down in a pit, with only the

light of small lamps, he had to work in digging coals. When he went to his labour very early in the morning, he was let down by a rope to the bottom; and at night, when his work was done, he was drawn up again.

Sunday was a happy day to William; for then, in a neat clean dress, he went to school, to learn to read the Bible. His teachers were glad to see him strive to improve. Indeed, they had reason to hope that William loved to pray, and that he was a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As William grew up he was very kind to his mother. To please her, when he came from the pit at night, he would wash himself clean, and then sit in a chair and read the Bible to her: after which he used to kneel down and pray by her side. One day he said to her, "Mother, when I am a man, I will work hard for you, and keep you like a lady." She, no doubt, was very glad that she had such a kind, steady, and pious son.

The men who work in coal-pits often meet with springs of water; and sometimes the water rushes upon them, and they are in great danger of being drowned. On May 3, 1815, William went as usual to his work. He was engaged with some miners a long

way up the pit, when a sudden burst of water came upon them. They could not get to the shaft, or the opening into the pit, and were forced to flee to a cave up the mine, where the water could not reach them.

The alarm was soon given to the people above, who did all they could to get the water out, but all their efforts were in vain. Nine months passed away, and at last the place was reached where the bodies of William and some more lads were found. They had all been starved or smothered to death.

What must William have felt when he found all hope of escape was cut off, and that he should see his dear mother no more, nor again enter his Sunday-school? He knew that he must die a slow and dreadful death.

When the bodies were brought up from the pit, the mother of William was there. She came to find the bodies of her husband and her son. How sad the sight! How full of grief must have been her heart! After a search, they were found, and taken to her cottage. In one of William's pockets was his candle-box, such as is used by collier boys. Some time passed away, when one day some scratches were noticed on this

candle-box; and what do you suppose they were? These marks were William's last letter to his dear mother! In the darkness of the pit, or perhaps by the light of a lamp, the poor boy had with a nail scratched these words:—

“Fret not, dear mother, for we were singing while we had time, and praising God. Mother, follow God more than ever I did.”

And then on the other side were found some more words, which it is thought his dying father told him to write, as they are signed with his name:—

“If Johnny is saved, be a good lad to God, and thy mother.—John Thew.”

Johnny was one of those that were saved; but the poor widow, while she wept at the loss of her husband and one of her sons, was comforted when she knew that in their last hours they were singing and praising God.

Learn from this account not to put off the care of the soul; for the young may die; they may die suddenly; and they should be ready to die. But if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they live or die, all will be well.

