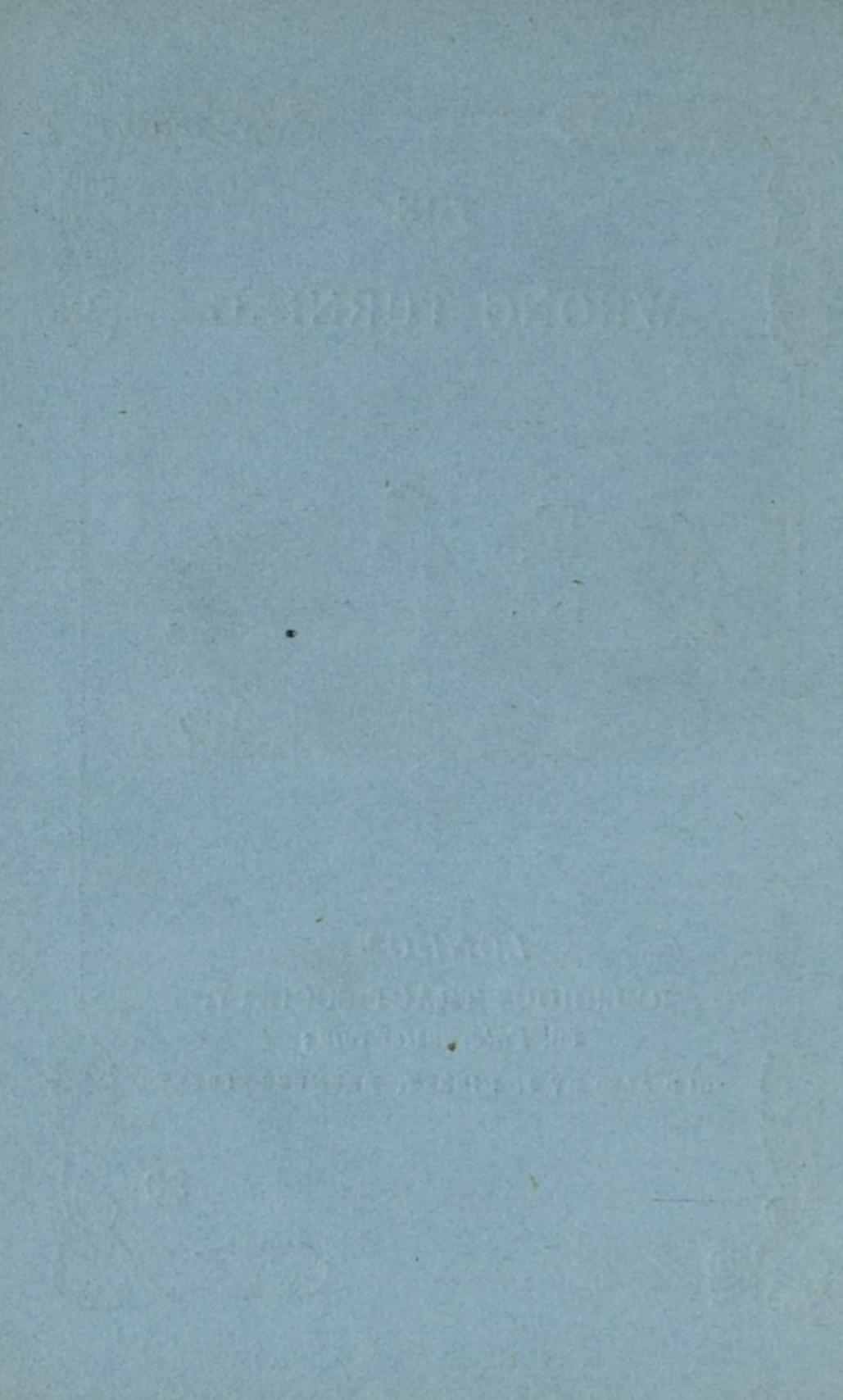


THE
WRONG TURNING.



LONDON:
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
56, Paternoster-row ;
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THE WRONG TURNING.



WHEN I was a boy—but that is a long time ago, for many a crop of corn has been gathered into the garner, and many a fall of snow has covered the hills and the valleys since then: ay! and many a friend and companion has been carried to the cold grave;—but, as I said, when I was a boy, my father sent me on an errand to a farmhouse a few miles in the country. “You

must go," said he, "straight along the turnpike road, till you come to the second milestone, and then, passing the big house with the rookery in the elm-trees, you must take the first turn to the right, which will lead you to farmer Gilbert's house; but mind, whatever you do, be sure that you do not take the *wrong turning*."

Boy-like, I was so pleased with the prospect of a pleasant walk into the country, that I did not attend so carefully as I ought to have done to the directions which my father gave me, so that when I had passed the second milestone, and arrived at the big house with the rookery in the elm-trees, I could not at all remember whether I was to take the first turn to the right hand or to the left. After puzzling for some time, I made up my mind to go to the left. I did so, and thereby took the *wrong turning*.

Well! on I went, as I thought, for farmer Gilbert's, till the lane got very narrow, and the road very dirty. At one part there was a gate across it, and in getting over the gate I did not per-

ceive that the bottom hinge was off it; no sooner had I mounted the gate than it swung on one side, and flung me into the mire, and a fine dirty state I was in. A dog came growling out of a cottage by the road-side; to get rid of the dog I clambered over a hedge, and in my haste almost tore off the skirt of my jacket. With the intention of defending myself from the dog when I should return, I pulled out my pocket-knife to cut a stick; but in doing this I cut my finger, and dropped my knife into the ditch, and could not find it again. After all my misfortunes, no Farmer Gilbert's could I find. Indeed it would have been strange if I had, for every step I had taken, since leaving the turnpike road, had led me further and further from his house. At last, I asked a man, who was working in a field, to tell me the nearest way to Farmer Gilbert's, mentioning at the same time which way I had come. "I do not wonder," said the man, "at your being a little puzzled; why, my lad, you have taken the *wrong turning*."

I soon set off back again, blaming myself for not having paid more attention to the directions of my father. I found no further difficulty in my way to Farmer Gilbert's, and having done my errand, I returned home, heartily repenting the error I had committed in taking the *wrong turning*.

No sooner did my father see me, than he began thus:—"Why, Robert! where have you been? You have been long enough to do the errand twice over; what a pickle your shoes and stockings are in! and the skirt of your jacket is almost off! What have you been about?"

I then told my father the whole of my mishaps, just as they had occurred to me; how the gate had flung me into the mire; how the dog had attacked me; and how I tore my jacket, cut my finger, and lost my pocket-knife; and I acknowledged that all these things had been brought about by my foolishly taking the *wrong turning*.

"Ah! my lad," said my father, "you are not the first, by a great many, who

have smarted by neglecting their father's directions, and by taking the *wrong turning*.

“All of us who live in the world have an errand to perform, and have to find our way to heaven. The path of duty is the road along which we are to go, and the Bible contains the instructions of our heavenly Father, giving us the plainest directions, that we may not be pained and perplexed by losing our road. Those who attend to these directions find their way easily; but those who neglect them get into a thousand troubles. When travelling heaven-ward, it is a terrible thing to take a *wrong turning*!

“As the young are travellers as well as the old, it is necessary that they should be led and guided, according to their ages, until they are able to read and understand the directions given in the Scriptures. When children are old enough to comprehend God's holy word, that word should be their guide continually, and woe be to them if they neglect it; for if, in looking about you in the world, you behold

want, misery, and despair, in almost every case they have been brought about by people taking the *wrong turning*.

“Look at the ragged and wretched sabbath-breaker and undutiful son. He may tell you that misfortune has made him wretched. No such thing! The word of truth told him to ‘Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy; but he has made it a day of riot, intemperance, folly, and sin. The Bible gave him the direction, ‘Honour thy father and thy mother;’ but, instead of doing so, he has disobeyed and dishonoured them, and has brought upon himself the curse of the Almighty, ‘Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother.’ He was plainly directed the way he should go; you see, then, that he has brought all his wretchedness upon himself by taking the *wrong turning*.

“The drunkard knows well that his purple face and feeble body are not the effect of misfortune. He has not walked in the right way. The direction in God’s holy word to him was to

live 'soberly, righteously, and godly;' but he has not attended to it: he has despised the path of righteousness; he has taken the *wrong turning*.

"The thief is just in the same situation. See him locked up in a dreary dungeon, with fetters upon his legs! And what has been the cause of this?—why nothing but his neglect of the directions given him in the blessed Bible. He was told to walk honestly in the way to heaven, and not to 'go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such;' but notwithstanding these plain directions, he went astray: he despised the path of duty and peace, and took the *wrong turning*.

"As it is with the sabbath-breaker, the drunkard, and the thief, so it is with all who will not listen to and obey God's holy word. Every path but that which leadeth to heaven, leadeth to evil, and must therefore be a *wrong turning*.

"When we read that 'the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,' how earnestly

should we pray that God would pardon our sins for the sake of Christ, who died on the cross to save sinners; and that he would in mercy dispose our hearts to submit to his guidance, and keep our feet from taking the *wrong turning*.

“And now, Robert, you see how it is that there is so much want, and misery, and despair to be found in the world; and if you profit aright by the instruction which I have endeavoured to give you, though you have sadly dirtied your shoes, though you have torn your jacket, cut your finger, and lost your pocket-knife, yet you will have reason to look back on this day with thankfulness, because you will be doubly desirous to serve God, to attend to the plain directions of his word, and to be kept by his grace to your life’s end from taking the *wrong turning*.”

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'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
' is religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die.

After death, its joys will be
Lasting as eternity :
Be the living God my friend,
Then my bliss shall never end.