Good News

FOR

YOUNG AND OLD.

VOL. IV.

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Good News for the Little Ones.

THE FALL OF JERICHO.

Our New Year's subject leads our thoughts to that good land which God had promised so long before to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He did not give it to them at once, "for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full." A period of between four and five hundred years passed away, most of it in Egypt, where the Israelites grew and multiplied, and became a nation. All this time, the Amorites, who dwelt in Canaan, were filling up the measure of their sin. Are any of my dear young readers still in their sins? Let me say to such, How solemn is your condition! The world, where you have all your pleasures, and for which you alone care, is under sentence of destruction, just as these Amorites and the cities of Canaan were. God bears with the world as he bore with them, and will not smite in his wrath, so long as patience can have any place. But is there nothing between you and coming wrath—you and approaching judgment—but the patience, the long-suffering of God? Nothing else. Hearken, then, dear reader, to the voice of Jesus, and hasten beneath the shelter of his blood. Then, it will not be that the patience of God alone puts off the stroke of judgment, but you will know that the punishment of your sins has been borne by the blessed Lord

Jesus; and that when he comes to judge the world, you will be amongst his companions, and will reign with him—as Israel was to possess the land of Canaan, when its guilty inhabitants were cut off.

We were last month looking together at one of Israel's closing scenes in the wilderness. There were others of deepest interest, such as Balaam's endeavour to curse Israel, which God turned into a blessing: the recounting by Moses of all the Lord's ways with his people, which forms the subject of Deuteronomy: and the death of Moses on the top of Pisgah, from which he viewed the whole land of Canaan, and where he then gently fell asleep, the Lord himself burying his servant, so that his sepulchre was never known by man. How Israel must have felt his loss! And for their own sin, too, to have been the occasion of it! Moses himself failed, and all his entreaties could gain nothing more than a sight from Pisgah of the whole land. His foot was not to tread the plains, or to mount the hills of the promised land. In one sense, it was worse for Moses to sin than it was for others. For the one nearest to God to forget his grace—for the meekest man on earth to be angry—was what could not be passed over. But how gently does the Spirit of God speak afterwards of his sin. "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." And if he was not permitted to enter the earthly Canaan, his spirit we know was received into heavenly glory. In this heavenly glory

it was, that he appeared with Elias at the transfiguration of our Lord on the holy mount. But we must not forget our subject for the month.

Israel had now passed the Jordan. Joshua was their leader instead of Moses, and, acting faithfully on his instructions, they found that the Lord's hand was not shortened. He who had opened the Red Sea for his redeemed ones to pass through, now stayed the waters of the mighty river till his people had all passed over. "As they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap . . . and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho." Thus it was that the Lord Jesus, the true Ark and the true Priest, tasted death for us: yea, stood in those cold waters of death till all their force was exhausted upon him, and a passage was made good for all who believe in him to pass dryshod into the heavenly land. We must not now dwell on this typical meaning of the event; but I could not pass on without suggesting it to the young Christian reader. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

But what was Jericho? It was a strong fortress, the very citadel of the enemy's strength, frowning upon Israel at the very entrance to the land. It was the key to all that lay beyond. How could they pass on, and leave such a place behind them, in possession

of the foe? To have done this would have been certain ruin. But how was it to be reduced? Here we see the Lord and his people on the one side, and the full strength of the enemy on the other. Dear young Christian reader, study the subject now before us, if you would learn how to triumph in all your conflicts with Satan—a worse enemy than either Jericho or its king.

What was the strength of Jericho for such a moment as had now arrived? Just such things as men everywhere trust for defence against their enemies. They had a king, and mighty men of valour, and weapons of war, and strong walls. See those proud battlements, towering to the skies, bristling with arrows, and flashing with the swords of those entrusted with their defence. What can Israel do against such an array as this? Turn to the inspired history, and learn how feeble is the mightiest foe, when the people of God are found obeying his word, and trusting entirely in his strength. Let us consider—

Firstly, Israel's position before the war begins. God had already redeemed them out of Egypt, and brought them through the wilderness; he had led them across the Jordan, and placed them in the land. They were already there. Not by any strength or goodness of theirs, but entirely by the Lord's own power and grace, they were now encamped in the plains of Jericho. Egypt, with its slavery and condemnation, was left far behind. Even the wilderness, with its conflicts and trials, was no longer the place of their sojourn.

They were *in* the land. At Gilgal they kept the passover, and circumcised all the males who had been born since they came out from Egypt. Redeemed, and sanctified to God, and in the land, they ate of its pleasant fruits. The old corn of the land became their food, and the manna ceased. Ah, dear children, our conflicts are not, any more than theirs, to *obtain* the place of blessing; but to stand where God's grace has already set us in Christ, and to act as those who are one with him. Some one may, perhaps, be saying, Yes, but viewing the matter thus, who is sufficient for these things? And well we might say so, if it were by any strength of ours that we were to succeed. Look next, then, at

Secondly.—Israel's Commander. Was not Joshua the Commander? you are ready to ask. No doubt he was the visible leader of Israel's hosts. But there was an unseen Commander, unseen to any but Joshua himself. Joshua had but to hear his words, and repeat his orders to the men. This part of the history is so important and so interesting that you shall have it in the very words of Scripture. "And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho that he lifted up his eyes and looked; and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Neutrality, you see, was impossible; just as now, we must be either *with* Christ, and *for* Christ, or *against* him. Joshua thought the stranger a man like himself when he addressed

him thus. But what an answer he received! "And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground: and Joshua did so." Yes, Joshua knew now who this mysterious stranger was. The one who appeared in the burning bush to Moses is the one who appears to Joshua with a drawn sword, as captain of the Lord's host. This, too, is the secret of the believer's victory now. "Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Young Christian, never forget this. "Without me ye can do nothing." So says our precious Lord and Saviour; while the aged apostle writes: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Consider—

Thirdly.—Israel's marching orders. Jericho was already completely invested, or, as Scripture has it, "strictly shut up, because of the children of Israel; none went out and none came in." So matters stood when Joshua received orders from the One who appeared to him—from the Lord himself—how to proceed. But first, he assures Joshua of success. "See, I have given into thine hands Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour." Then follow instructions for the army, and strange instructions they were. There was nothing said about trenches, or battering-rams, or scaling ladders, or any of the usual

modes by which the siege of a city was then carried on. No; they were to compass the city, all the men of war going round it once. This they were to do for six days. But it was not merely the soldiers who were to compass Jericho; the priests were to bear the ark in solemn procession round the city, and seven priests were to bear before it seven trumpets of rams' horns, and they were to blow with the trumpets. On the seventh day they were to do this seven times. All this they faithfully did, and thus we can contemplate—

Fourthly.—Israel's obedience. How strange it must all have seemed to the men of Jericho. We know from Rahab's words, and from the sacred historian also at the beginning of Josh. v., that the hearts of the Canaanites were melting with fear—the terror of God was upon them. But if this had not been so, how strange it must have been to soldiers, trained to arms, to see a whole army marching with sound of trumpet round the city, the trumpeters just in front of a small chest, covered with curtains and borne on poles by priests, similar in dress and appearance to those who blew the trumpets of rams' horns. And then, when they had gone once round the city, they returned to their tents, and all was quiet for the rest of the day. What could it all mean? And had any Israelite been foolish enough to judge by immediate results, had he been, in short, an unbeliever, how unmeaning it must have appeared to him. Can you not suppose such an one saying, when again in his tent, Of what avail is our march round Jericho to-day?

there is no breach made in the walls, not a single stone is loosed, not a single enemy slain. And when this was continued day after day for six days, could you wonder if the men of Jericho began to think their invaders mad? or if the unbelieving Israelites grew bold enough to ask, What can our commander mean by such a spectacle as this? And yet it needed but to know what that ark was, thus borne in slow and stately procession round the doomed city, to read in each circuit that it made, the sure, the inevitable doom of Jericho and its guilty inhabitants. That ark was Jehovah's throne. He who dwelt between the cherubim, by which the ark was surmounted, was the God of the whole earth. It was by him, as Creator, that all nature had received her laws; and while in general those laws are such that the walls of such a city can only be breached or overthrown by the means generally used; how easy for the Author of nature's laws to suspend them for the time; how easy for him to make the loud, long blast of the rams' horns on the seventh circuit of the seventh day, a mightier force than that of battering-rams, or even of a whole park of artillery. God was there. It was his work. He chose to use such means, that all might see it was not the means, but the one who used them that accomplished the result. Was it Moses's rod that divided the Red Sea? or the touch of the feet of Aaron's sons that made the Jordan stand upon an heap? No; it was God, working by these means, that he might have all the glory. And so here, Israel had but to obey the word of the Lord.

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He was the captain of his own host; and it has his presence, his power, which made the blast of the rams' horns and the shout of the people sufficient to bring down the walls of Jericho.

Fifthly.—Israel's patience demands our notice. It was, indeed, a part of their obedience; but it has a special place in the narrative. "Joshua had commanded the people saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout." What a proving of their patience this was. If they either knew or supposed that the shout was to be the signal of success, how naturally would the wish arise to lift up their voice. But no; day after day they had, in solemn silence, to tread the whole circuit of the city; in silence, only broken by the shrill blast of the rams' horns, passing on before the ark. Suppose the whole company, or some considerable part of them, had become impatient, and shouted before the time, no victory would have followed, for it was God only who could give that; and he would not give it to crown the impatience of his servants. Then, disappointed of the result for which they should have waited, how easy for them to become restless and dissatisfied, and even to have openly rebelled. Thank God it was not thus with them. God was there, and in perfect patience they observed his words, and in due time reaped the result. We are led thus to the issue in—

Sixthly.—Israel's triumph. The seventh day ar-

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rived, "And it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times; only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city. ..... So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets; and it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." It was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in the eyes of all. Seven days of apparently useless ceremony ended in a triumph which no mere force of arms could have won. The Lord himself was there, and it was his arm wrought the victory. But then it was in connection on his people's part with simple faith, unquestioning obedience, and a patience that waited for the signal to give the shout at the appointed moment when the Lord would make it, as he did make it, a shout of victory. "Blessed are all they that wait for him."

QUESTIONS ON "THE FALL OF JERICHO."

1 Can you name a reason for the long interval between God's promise to Abraham, and its fulfilment in Joshua's day?

2 What difference is there, as thus illustrated, between the sinner in his sins and the believer in Jesus?

3 What made it worse for Moses to sin than others?

4 What proof have we of his spirit being received into heaven?

5 Who took Moses' place after his death?

6 What made Jericho of such importance?

7 What had Jericho to trust in?

8 What was Israel's position before the war began?

9 What is the object of our conflicts as Christians?

10 Who was Israel's unseen Commander?

11 What is the secret of the believer's victory?

12 Who were they who had to compasss the city, and what had they to do besides?

13 What was the ark?

14 Why were such means employed of God on this and similar occasions?

15 What was the trial of Israel's patience?

16 How did the marching on the seventh day differ from that on the previous days?

17 When did the people shout?

18 What was the effect?

19 To whom was Israel indebted for the victory?

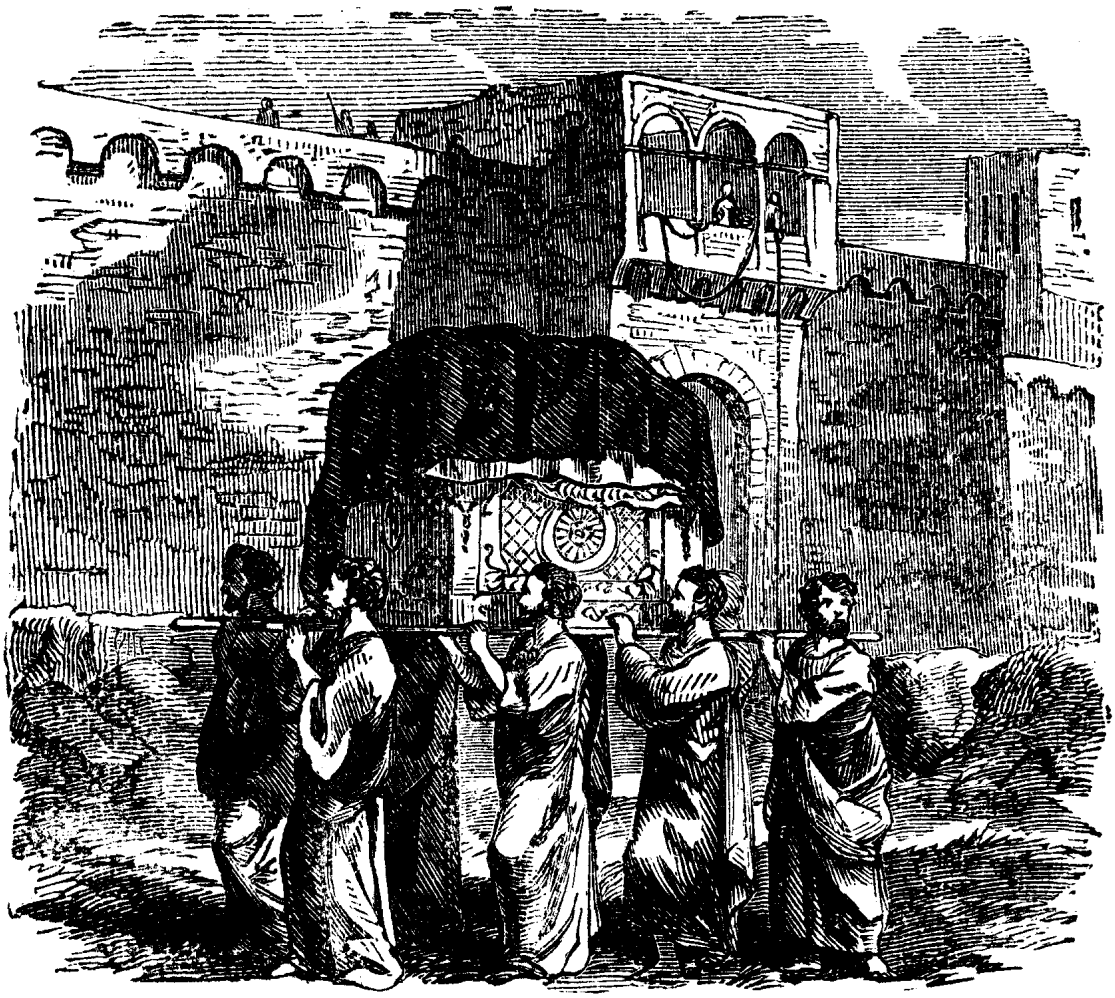
20 With what, the people's part, was it connected?

"YES, DEAR; BUT DO NOT BE ANGRY."

A SWEET little girl, about six years old, who had been for a long time sick, and was shortly afterwards taken to the Lord, seeing her elder sister with a Bible in her hand, asked her to read the account of Jesus blessing little children. When the reading was over, she said, "How kind! I shall soon go to Jesus—he will soon take *me* up in his arms, bless *me* too: no disciple shall keep *me* away." Soon after this, her sister, stooping over and kissing her, whispered, "Annie, do you love me?" Never will that sister forget the look of holy joy which lighted up the face of the dying child, as she answered, "Yes, dear; but do not be angry—I love Jesus better."

"BECAUSE, SIR, I AM GOING HOME."

A LITTLE boy, in Westminster, eight years of age, was bitten by a mad dog. Fatherless, ragged, and poor, he loved the Saviour, and was happy. His pain was intense, yet not a murmur escaped his lips. At the foot of the bed stood the doctor, who, in a whisper, said to the anxious mother, "I fear your son cannot live much longer." Faintly as they were uttered, the poor child caught the words, and instantly said, "I am glad of it; I am glad to hear it, sir." "Why, my little man?" inquired the doctor. With a beautiful smile, the poor boy answered, "Because, sir, I am going home." For some time he conversed with his teacher about the peaceful mansions Christ had gone to prepare for those who love him; and, having affectionately bid his friends good-bye, he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus—went home.



A "LINE OF SCARLET THREAD."

On what a little thing the most serious consequences may depend. But whenever this is the case, it will be found that the little thing is a mere occasion, or instrument, and that the consequences flow from what is unseen. It was not the fruit itself, eaten by our first parents, which brought "death into the world, with all our woe," but the disobedience, the unbelief, the sin, of which the fruit was but the occasion. So in the case of Lot's wife. She might many a time have "looked behind" her in an ordinary journey from Sodom to Zoar; but it was not an ordinary journey she was taking. It was for her life; to "look behind"

was to despise and disobey her deliverer, and to show that her heart was yet in Sodom; and for *thus* looking behind, she was changed into a pillar of salt. We are about to see what was done by a "line of scarlet thread;" it was the salvation of Rahab and her house; but we shall find that this line was a mere signal by which the house was known. It was the faith that bound it there, and the grace which gave Rahab's faith the opportunity of doing so, which formed the real secret of her deliverance.

But who was Rahab? And from what sort of danger had she to be delivered? Dear children, she was a Canaanite, and an inhabitant of Jericho, when Jericho was destroyed by Joshua and the children of Israel. She was not a good woman. She had not lived a moral, reputable life. There might be many in Jericho free from sins of which she was guilty. But their freedom from such sins was no protection from the judgment that overtook the guilty place: and her notorious sins did not prevent her taking the only course by which deliverance could be secured. However wicked you may have been, come to Christ at once, and you will receive a full and free and eternal forgiveness. But if you keep away from Christ, however moral you may be, compared with others, your morality will not serve you as a Saviour instead of Christ. True Christian morality will flow from living faith in Christ; but morality, without Christ and without faith, will cover no one's sins—will secure no one's salvation.

Judgment was coming on the land of Canaan—on the

city of Jericho—and it was at the very door. The hosts were already marshalled which, in a short time, would cross the Jordan, compass the city, and when the walls had fallen down flat, as we have seen, would "utterly destroy all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." Rahab had heard of this coming judgment. Others had heard of it as well, and were afraid: but she had laid it to heart. *She believed that it was coming, and acted accordingly.* Two men came as spies from Joshua, to view the land, and they lodged at Rahab's house. The king heard of it, and sent for them. Had she cared for what the king could give, or feared what the king could do, she would have given them up. But she believed the king's days were numbered, and that the two spies would soon be able to be better friends to her than the king of Jericho, and all his court. So she hid the spies.

Dear children, there is judgment coming on this world, and Scripture itself says, "Behold, the Judge is at the door." But before the judgment comes, Christ comes to you in the gospel, and seeks a place in your confidence, in your affections; and he seeks to be owned by you: to be received and owned, as the spies were received by Rahab. Now if you *believe* that this world will soon be judged, and that Christ will then be a better friend to you than the world can be, you will receive him and confess him, and not care for what people say, or for anything the enemies of Christ can do. But if you do not believe God that judgment is

coming, and that Jesus is the only refuge, you will let him stand and knock, and knock in vain. You will betray him to the world, not caring what becomes of Christ, or his people, or the honour of his name—fearful, as you are, lest you should be laughed at, or mocked by your sinful companions, or lose the pleasures of this world by becoming a Christian. Oh, that it may not be thus with any of you!

Rahab explains to the spies why she welcomed them and hid them, as she did. "She said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you." She recounts some of the wonders the Lord had wrought for his people, and then adds: "And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: *for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath.*" This poor sinful woman had had her eyes opened, not only to see what all could see, that great wonders had been accomplished in Israel's history, but that the secret of them was that Israel's God was God in heaven above and in earth beneath. Precious discovery! She knew God. She so knew him as to receive his people at all present risk to herself, and so as to trust entirely for the future to him and to them. She begs them to swear to her by the Lord, that they will spare and protect her father's house, and save alive her father, mother, brethren, sisters, and all that is theirs. Such was her trust in Israel and in Israel's God.

Now, dear children, have you believed that all things are delivered to Christ by his Father? that he is coming shortly to judge the world, and take possession of it in his Father's name? and have you fled to him for refuge as Rahab took refuge with the spies? How safe she was when she had thus confided herself to them. "And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind *this line of scarlet thread* in the window which thou didst let us down by; and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of this house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him." Happy, happy Rahab! Her house, distinguished by the scarlet thread in the one well-known window, so safe a place amid the wide-spread ruin, that all are safe who are with her there! Dear reader, are you thus safe with Jesus? Are you so certain that you are under the shelter of his blood, that all will be safe who can be got to stand with you there? And are you, like Rahab, seeking to have father and mother, brothers and sisters, with you, under the appointed token, the precious, precious blood of Jesus? O that these questions may reach many and many a heart!

It was not long before the day of doom to Jericho arrived. The Jordan, as you have read, was crossed.

The city was compassed. The trumpets were blown. The people shouted. Flat fell the walls. Onward rushed the hosts of Israel. Not a life was spared, save that of Rahab and those who were with her in the house. The token was discerned. The spies were sent to bring her and hers away from the scene of death. They became part of Israel. Rahab is named among the progenitors of our blessed Lord; and while one apostle ranks her among the bright examples of faith, another quotes her case along with Abraham's, as an instance of faith itself being justified by the works it produces.

FOR PARENTS AND FOR BABES.

ARR is a very little boy, he is only three years old; and before dear aunt C—— came to stay with mamma, he had never been taught of God, who "is love," and who gives him his food and his clothes, and his kind parents, and all that he has. But Aunt C——, on her sofa, where she always lies in so much pain, has tried to tell Arr a little about God, who sends the rain, and makes the flowers grow just outside the window. The other day Arr was poorly, and Aunt C—— gave him a powder in some jelly. The next morning Arr came running in, quite rosy and bright, and saying, "Aunt C——, the jelly has made Arr quite well." "Not the jelly, darling; God has made Arr better—God, who is so kind and good to Arr, who sends the rain down to make the flowers and the grass grow." Some days passed without another word on the subject, when Aunt C——

was so ill, that she said she must send for Dr. T——, and added, "Who is your doctor, Arr?" She thought he would say Mr. T——, as he had heard her speak of sending for him, when he was poorly a few days before. But he replied, "God is Arr's doctor, Aunt C——, God makes Arr well." "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

WHITE ROBES.

WHO are they in heaven that stand,
Clothed in white at God's right hand?
In their robes so fair and bright,
They are shining like the light.
Harps of gold and palms they bear,
All are good and happy there;
Much I wonder what their name,
Who they are, and whence they came.
They who now are praising God,
Once the path of sorrow trod;
Now by Christ their Saviour led,
Crowns of joy are on their head;
They shall never weep again,
Never know a grief or pain:
All is bright and shining day,
God has wiped their tears away.
May I with them also stand,
Robed in white, at God's right hand!
And with joy for ever sing,
Praises to my God and King.

Heavy News.

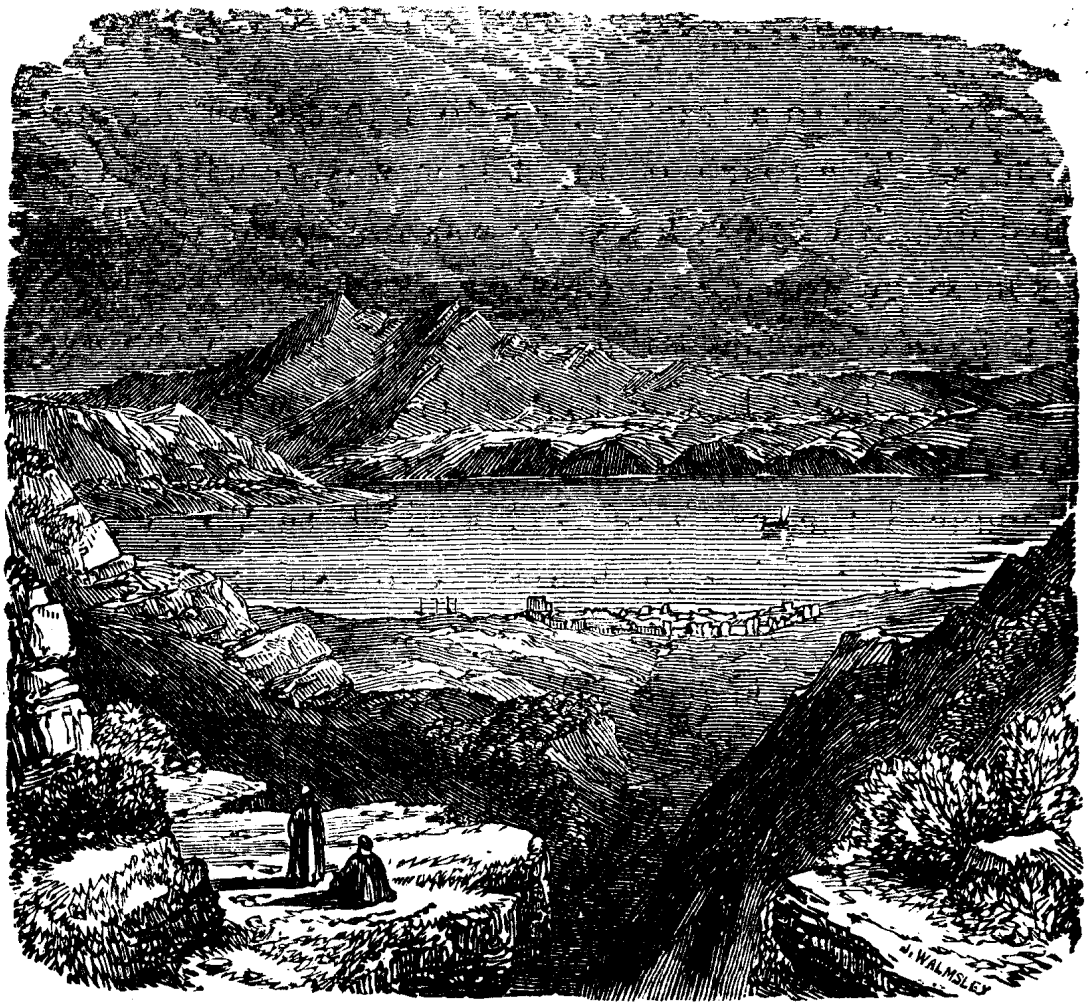
DEAR CHILDREN,—I have just heard such heavy news! Heavy for her Majesty, the Queen; heavy for all the princes and princesses of the Royal family; and heavy for the country, for every English home and English heart. His Royal Highness, Prince Albert, has breathed his last. Oh, what a poor perishing, fading thing this world, with all its glory, is! What worldly person is there, who would not have envied the lot of him whose departure puts a nation into mourning—not as a decent form, but in reality and truth? And yet how short has been his enjoyment of the distinguished place conferred on him by God in his providence. Long enough it has been to make him the beloved and regretted of all hearts; but his removal seems all the earlier and more sudden for that. Much, very much, that has been told of him by one and another, inspires hope that while his outward homage to the word of God has been one of the most marked features of his character, it has not

been outward merely, but that the Saviour, whom that word proclaims, was the real resting-place of his heart. If so, he would not return from that Saviour's bosom for all the earthly glory from which he has been removed, or for that glory ten times told. And oh, to enter that eternal state without Christ, be he prince or beggar who dies thus unprepared, it were better for him that he had never been born. Looking back on a sojourn of forty years on earth, of what consequence whether it be spent in a palace or a cottage, compared with the question whether eternity is to be spent in heaven or hell? Dear children, lay this solemn question to heart. Rest not till you know that eternity for you would be an eternity of joy. And if you do know this, do not fail to remember in your prayers the bereaved royal family. The desolateness of heart occasioned by such a stroke may be all the more complete, because of the mockery that all earthly greatness must be felt to be at such an hour. Pray, pray for her Majesty, and for her children. And may God, in his infinite mercy, overrule this heavy, heavy stroke, to the eternal good of all, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

December 15*th*, 1861.

WHY SHOULD YOU LOVE THE BIBLE?

First, because it tells you of the best friend you have, of the best home you can ever enjoy, of the best company you will ever find, and points out the way not only for you to seek, but to make sure of calling it all your own—yes, your own. It is the Bible that tells you of the Friend of sinners, of that holy, happy world, called heaven, of saints and angels who are there for ever, and for ever blessed; and, what is more than all, it assures you, if you believe in Jesus, that all these blessings, all these favours and glories, are yours. Do you love the Bible? Do you pay attention when it is read to you? or, if you can read it, do you love it better than any other book? or, is it the case that you do not love the Bible, and that you would rather read a foolish book or an idle tale? Well, now think a little, that if such is the case you are not fit to die. If you have no love to the Bible, it is because you have no love to the Saviour, and you have no love to heaven for the sake of its holiness or its company; and then if so, the dreadful consequences will be, that your happiness and pleasure are in such persons and things as are opposed to the great God, his holy Word, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only real friend of poor, sinful, helpless little ones like you. Dear reader, may you feel your want of a Saviour, and then you will truly love the Bible.



THE PEERLESS ONE.

During the reign of Tiberius, the beautiful cities round the Lake of Galilee, near the confines of the Roman empire, were chosen of God as a field for displaying his power and grace in a more wonderful way than ever before in the world's history. Day after day their streets were thronged with multitudes of every condition, listening to a wonderful teacher, so different in doctrine and manner from those they were accusto hear, that it was commonly said of him—"Never man spake like this man." In the market-place, on the beach, in the hut of a fisherman, or the porch of a temple, anywhere and everywhere, from his lips there flowed discourse so holy and so pure, but withal

so sweet snd so attractive, as to impress untold multitudes. The touch of his finger was relief from the most deadly disease, his voice was life to the dead, and his message was life everlasting.

I have often fancied myself standing with the multitude, on the hill side that afternoon, when, looking up to the marble palaces of Capernaum, he solemnly denounced the wrath of God against that city; and then, as if turning in heaviness of spirit from the world that rejected and scorned, while it pressed to hear him, to his heavenly Father, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Then, looking downward on the still lake, and casting an eye first on the miserable slaves who toiled with their burdens up the steep mountain sides, at the will of their haughty Roman masters, and next on the poor sin-laden multitude, who felt so little the weight of their load, with a burst of unutterable compassion, he cries, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Oh, the loveliness of that divine countenance, full of the depth of eternal love; and oh, the melody of those divine words, as they reach the poor sin-burdened soul. My heart leaps, and inwardly whispers, "This is God himself, and in the form of man!"

A TOUCHING INCIDENT.

A LITTLE girl in a family of my acquaintance, a lovely and precious child, lost her mother at an age too early to fix the loved features in her remembrance. She was as frail as beautiful; and as the bud of her heart unfolded, it seemed, as if won by that mother's prayers, to turn instinctively heavenward. The sweet, conscientious, prayer-loving child was the idol of the bereaved family. She would lie upon the lap of the friend who took a mother's care of her, and winding one wasted arm about her neck, would say, "Now, tell me about my mamma," and when the oft-told tale had been repeated, would softly ask, "Take me into the parlour; I want to see my mamma." The request was never refused, and the affectionate child would lie for hours, contentedly gazing on her mother's portrait. But

> "Pale and wan she grew, and weakly,
> Bearing all her pains so meekly;
> That to them she still grew dearer,
> As the trial-hour drew nearer."

That hour came at last, and the weeping neighbours assembled to see the little one die. The dew of death was already on the flower of its life, and its sun was going down. The little chest heaved faintly—spasmodically.

"Do you know me, darling?" sobbed, close in her ear, the voice that was dearest; but it awoke no answer.

All at once, a brightness, as if from the upper world, burst over the child's colourless countenance. The eyelids flashed open; the lips parted; the wan, cuddling hands flew up, in the little one's last impulsive effort, as she looked piercingly into the far above.

"Mother!" she cried, with surprise and transport in her tone—and passed with that breath into the bright world where she and her mother now rest in the bosom of Jesus, and await his descent as "the Resurrection and the life," when their sleeping bodies also shall be raised, and adorned with his beauty for ever.

THE NAME OF JESUS.

"And thou shalt call his name JESUS".—*Matt.* 1, 21.

'TWAS God who gave the precious name
Of *Jesus* to his Son;
Because he knew his gracious work
By him would well be done.

The name of Jesus, *Saviour* means,
And such he is, indeed,
To all who feel the weight of sin,
And peace and pardon need.

His name was Jesus when on earth,
His name is Jesus now;
And God declares that to that name
All heaven and earth shall bow.

And truly happy is the child
Who loves that precious name;
He soon shall him in glory see,
Who once in mercy came.

A. M.

ACHAN;

OR, THE ACCURSED THING.

THE same word stands in Hebrew for "devoted" and "accursed." This, any of you who have Bibles with marginal readings may see for yourselves, in the sixth of Joshua. When Joshua told the people that Jericho and all it contained was to be destroyed, he said, "And the city shall be *accursed*, even it and all that are therein, to the Lord." In the margin, instead of the word *accursed*, you will find the word *devoted*. The whole city was *devoted* to the Lord, that is, entirely given up to him; and his solemn sentence as to all the persons who were in it, except

Rahab and those who were with her, was that they should be slain. They had filled up the measure of their sin, and judgment could no longer be put off. But what of their possessions? These were, equally with the inhabitants, *devoted* to the Lord—given up to him. But while his justice was glorified in the destruction of those guilty people on whom all his patience had been spent in vain, his will, as to their possessions, was that they should be put into his treasury. "But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." You can easily understand, that if an Israelite, from any false tenderness, any private motives, had spared any of the guilty race devoted to destruction, he would have found that the curse, under which they were to have died, fell upon himself. Just so with regard to the goods. To take for themselves what was solemnly given up to the Lord, what was it but to turn the *devoted* into the *accursed* thing? Hence the warning Joshua sounded beforehand in their ears. "And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it." What need there was of such a warning we have now to learn from the sacred narrative itself.

If ever there were circumstances to impress the mind, and restrain from evil, they were those under which the Israelites were found when our narrative

begins. Brought dryshod through the Jordan, which at that season overflowed all its banks; marched in solemn procession day after day round guilty Jericho; witnesses of what followed on the shout they gave at Joshua's command, when, without a blow being struck by them, or a single effort used besides the marching and the shout, the walls fell down flat, and they had nothing to do but, sword in hand, execute God's sentence, upon their foes,—how could they fail to feel that God was there, too near, too strong, too holy, to be trifled with or despised? Amid such

displays of the presence and power of God, crushing his adversaries and crowning with triumph the people of his choice, how was it possible for any one to think of himself, and try to enrich himself by disobeying God? Alas! what is there of which man's heart is not capable? There was one selfish enough, mad enough, hard-hearted enough, to make the moment of Jehovah's solemn triumph the opportunity of gratifying his lust of gold. Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing. May we have grace, with becoming seriousness of heart, to consider how he was tempted and led into sin—how he was detected and exposed,—and how bitter, in the end, he found the consequences of sin to be.

I. Achan's temptation and sin. Of these we have a painfully distinct account from his own lips. When his sin had been brought home to him, and he was forced to confess it in the presence of all, these were his words: "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." O dear children, this has been the history of many a sin besides that of Achan! "I saw—I coveted—I took." Was it not so with the first sin? "When the woman *saw* that the tree was good, and a tree to be *desired*, she *took*." What need we have to pray, "Turn away

mine eyes from beholding vanity;" as well as to remember our Lord's words, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." If thine eye offend thee, means if it cause thee to offend. If thou canst not see without coveting, better not see at all. It does not mean, of course, that we are really to pluck out one eye. Taken literally thus, we could still see with the other, and thus be no safer from the sin. Our Lord means that, at any cost, we must keep away from that which leads us to sin. If there be in one street what tempts you and makes you wish to do wrong, take care and go by another. If the tempting object be in the shop windows, do not look on the windows, but keep your eyes on the pavement or look straight before you. Better miss seeing a hundred pleasant things you might safely behold, than look at one which you know would awaken bad feelings in your heart. The Lord Jesus could pass through the world, and have all its glittering vanities spread out before him, without once feeling a desire for any of them. How was this? True, he was without sin, and thus had not one single motive on which any of these tempting objects could act; but still he was a man, and his freedom from temptation's snares was connected with the path he trod. What was that? "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall

not be moved." If Achan had known Jehovah, and set Jehovah before him, as Jesus did, he would not have *seen* the garment and silver and wedge of gold; or, if he had seen them, the sight would have been harmless. It would have awakened no covetous desire within. May we all, old and young, be so occupied with Jesus, and so look to God, that we may not *see*, or, if obliged to see, that we may not *covet*, what would lead us into sin.

One word more, dear children, before we pass on. Satan may put wicked thoughts into your minds, or these thoughts may arise when you see certain objects. You may think, perhaps, that you can look, and even long to possess, and yet avoid the sin of taking what is not your own. But not only is it a fact that to wish to sin is really sin in the sight of God; not only is this the fact, but there is another. *You may not be able to avoid the act of sin, if you take pleasure in the thought of it.* Sin is the master of those who indulge in it; and it is not for them to say how far they will go, and where they will stop short. Achan little thought that his love of gold and silver would lead him to such an act. Perhaps he little thought of this, even when he began to look at the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold. But as he looked he longed; and he longed so eagerly that he took; and when he had taken the accursed thing he hid it in his tent. Do not be deceived, dear reader. If you look at sin and think of it, till you wish you could commit it and escape its

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consequences, nothing is more likely than that your sinful wishes will be too strong for your fears, and, before you are well aware, the sinful act will have followed the sinful wish. The only safe course is that to which the wise man so earnestly exhorts us: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

II. Achan's detection and exposure. No human eye appears to have witnessed Achan's sin. *Perhaps, when in the act of committing it*, he looked stealthily round to see lest any one should be near. No eye beheld him, no sound betrayed him. In silence and obscurity he finished his work of concealment. In a cavity beneath his tent "the accursed thing" is safely deposited; the tent furniture is all replaced, and everything looks as though it had not been disturbed. But there is an unseen eye—all-seeing, though itself unseen—which has witnessed the transaction throughout. The name, parentage, circumstances of the sinner are all noted; and in due time this deed of darkness is to be brought to light. "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known."

How wonderful are God's ways, whether in judgment or in grace! All Israel suffers before the transgressor is convicted and exposed. All that Achan had done is said to have been done by Israel. The whole congregation is held guilty of Achan's sin. Achan's sin became thus, itself, the punishment of

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Israel's pride and self-sufficiency. Because Jericho had fallen so wondrously, they thought there was no need for all the people to go up to Ai! It was a small place, and but few need go there to subdue it. As though it had been by force of numbers that Jericho fell! As though it had been by the strength of their hands in any wise! Alas! they little thought there was that even then in their midst which would prevent the Lord going with them: and what could they all have done without the Lord? The few that went had to turn their backs before the men of Ai, and six and thirty of them were slain. Joshua was in sad distress, and the hearts of the people melted and became as water. What must Achan have thought when this disaster befel Israel? But Joshua cries to the Lord, and the Lords tells him why Israel has been defeated, and how the transgressor is to be discovered. The tribes pass in review before Joshua, and the tribe of Judah is taken. The families of Judah are called, and that of the Zarhites is taken. The several branches of this family follow, and that of Zabdi is fixed upon. Zabdi brings his household, man by man, until at last the lot falls on the miserable man; "and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah" is "taken." Vainly had he dug in his tent to hide the accursed thing when he had taken it. Concealment is no longer possible. He is obliged to make confession, when confession can be of no avail to avert the punishment of his sin; and thus it is, we have

already learned from the culprit's own lips, how he *saw* and *coveted* and *took* and *hid* what was not his own—what belonged to God, and what became an *accursed* thing indeed to any one who did not treat it as a *devoted* thing, sacred to the Lord alone.

III. Achan's punishment. On this we will not enlarge. "Why hast thou troubled us?" said Joshua: "the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger." Truly "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Judgment is his "strange work;" but if he "will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him." One feature of Achan's punishment is most touching. Think of the anguish it must have been to Carmi, Zabdi, and perhaps Zerah, to have a son who wrought such folly in Israel! And then his own family—his sons and his daughters—were either the witnesses or companions of his awful death!

Dear children, rest not without the certainty that by the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, you are cleansed from all sin, and having this, be Christians indeed. Dread nothing but sin; but do shun this, in its earliest stirrings in the heart, and shun all that tempts you to it, as you would shun the plague. Forget not the sin, detection, and doom of Achan. And may God bless the lesson to all of us. Amen.

QUESTIONS ON "ACHAN; OR, THE ACCURSED THING."

1 What two English words stand for another single word in Hebrew?

2 In what sense was Jericho "devoted" to the Lord?

3 What became of its inhabitants?

4 What had to be done with their possessions?

5 How might the *devoted* be turned into the *accursed* thing?

6 What were Israel's circumstances adapted to?

7 What does it seem as though they must have felt?

8 What sort of wickedness at such a moment seems almost incredible?

9 From what source have we the most distinct account of Achan's temptation and sin?

10 What other sin closely resembled his?

11 Name the points of resemblance?

12 Is the direction to pluck out an offending eye to be taken literally? and if not, why not?

13 For what two reasons could the Lord Jesus pass through the world without wishing for anything it presented to his eye?

14 What two facts show the folly of indulging the thoughts and sight of sin in the hope of avoiding the act itself?

15 What is the only safe course?

16 What proof have we of Israel's pride and self-sufficiency about the time of Achan's sin?

17 How was their pride rebuked?

18 What information did Joshua receive from the Lord?

19 When was Achan obliged to make confession?

20 What became of him?

21 How does the whole history teach us to shun sin?

THE CHILD PROPHET.

In a little town, more than two thousand years ago, there was a little boy who feared God and loved his Word. All the world had long before given itself up to idolatry and to every kind of open wickedness; so much so, that God had given over having any open intercourse with it. But there was one nation he called out from among all the others, to show that he is the one true God; and for this nation he had caused a book to be written, and blessed things to be promised, besides giving them a land more fruitful and pleasant than any of those around. It was a very little nation; all the land in which it dwelt was not much larger than the largest of our English counties; for God generally chooses little things to manifest his power and goodness in any special way. Now God had taken great care of these people, and given them laws, and appointed habits by which they ought to have been shielded from all temptation to idolatry. But, alas! this nation had abused the grace of God, and was, if anything, more wicked than the rest. So completely had it forgotten God, that at the time this little boy was born, there was not a copy of the book God had caused to be written for it, known to exist. There were very, very few men in the whole land that had any fear of God, or love of God.

Now God was going to bring a fearful judgment on this nation, and some one must be found to carry a message and tell them what was coming. There

were, I believe, many learned men, many great men, many rich men, living at the time, but the one that God chose was this little boy. I have often thought that God loved the little boy more than any of them, and so he was chosen to take the message. But when God spoke to him, and told him to go away from his father's cottage, to stand before princes and priests, he was at first very much afraid. "Why, what can I do?" he said. "O Lord, I am only a child, I cannot speak to all these great people." But the Lord did not let him lose the honour of this service; he told the poor child that all these people should not prevail against him, for "I am with thee," saith the Lord, "to deliver thee." From that hour he seems to have been as bold as a lion. He found many difficulties in his way, and many wicked people did all they could against him; but not once did he forsake the Lord, or hold his peace from fear of man.

"Well, and what became of him?" you ask. Listen to his own words, spoken when he was a grey-headed old man, after suffering persecution and sorrow enough to crush the body and break the heart of stouter men. After the utter rejection of his testimony by the people; when his prophecy of woe was fulfilled on his beloved nation; when he had been scorned and scouted by those who should have honoured him; after being twice in prison, once in the stocks, and often in danger of his life; after all this, and in the midst of a heart-rending lament, he tells us, "The Lord is my portion, . . . the Lord

is good unto them that wait for him, . . . *it is good* that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." And again, of the Lord's mercies, he says, "They are new every morning." He could not have said this of the most exciting sinful pleasure.

"AND FELL ASLEEP."

ANNA PACKMAN, a child between seven and eight years old, was taken ill one day at school. She came home and remained very ill. Two days afterwards she spoke of a good man coming into their little school on Sunday, and telling them how kind it was of their teacher to lead them to Jesus, and repeated her text of Scripture, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me," and sung the following hymn:—

"Around the throne of God, in heaven,
Thousands of children stand;
Children whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy, happy band:
Singing, Glory, glory, glory!"

And a little while after she had sung the hymn, a friend asked her, "What did Jesus Christ come into the world for?" She answered, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" and oftentimes when she awoke she would repeat,—"Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more." When

her companions came to see her, she sang a little hymn, as follows :—

"There is a happy land,
Far, far away;
Where saints immortal reign,
Bright, bright as day.
Oh! how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Saviour-King,
Loud let his praises ring,
Praise, praise, for aye.

Come to this happy land,
Come, come away!
Why will ye doubting stand,
Why still delay?
Oh! we shall happy be,
When from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall live with thee,
Blest, blest, for aye.

Bright in that happy land,
Beams every eye;
Kept by a Father's hand,
Love cannot die.
Oh! then to glory run,
Be a crown and kingdom won,
And bright above the sun,
We'll reign for aye."

On the morning of her departure, she bade her father and friends "good-bye," and then looked up and waved her little hands, saying, "Glory, glory, glory!" and fell asleep.

GOD'S WORD FIT FOR EVERYBODY.

It is of all importance, my dear young readers, that you should attach a just value to the revelation of God in the Scriptures. It is painfully present to my mind how little real, downright Scripture study there is, and especially among young Christians. In this day of cheap literature, when there are so many excellent books and tracts in the hands of the very poorest, there is a danger of forgetting the place of the Word itself. God forbid that I should undervalue these blessings: the abundance of them is a cause for deep thankfulness to him; all that I am pressing is, that you do not so use them as to neglect the Bible itself, the source of all the truth you find and enjoy in them. There is such a thing as leaning on the servants of God instead of on himself—of giving glory to the creature rather than the Creator—and God will always sooner or later have sharp dealings with your soul for any such weakness. I know it is natural to the human heart, but then this is enmity to God. It has really the same spring as idolatry. Imitate our blessed Saviour: let the word of God be your continual food and meditation. Meditate on God "in the night watches;" you can only become acquainted with him from his word. Let it be your study by day, your prayer and your song in the night-time (Ps. xlii. 8). Begin at once; do not defer it to some future time. Depend on it you will find your life

on earth not too long for the purpose. If you do it prayerfully and humbly, looking to God for light, you will find it bring rich joy into your soul, and strength to your spirit. Remember that these belong to him, and his word is their proper food. He has redeemed you from sin, he has set you at his own right hand in Christ in the glory: ought you not to seek for a knowledge of his will, as to your conduct towards his enemies, in the world where your Saviour was murdered? There is such a thing as the guiding of God's eye; but how can you expect it, unless you look to him for it? Lay these things to heart, and may God bless them to your soul.

But there is another subject pressing much on me at present, in connection with this. There are many (would to God there were more!) of my young readers who are anxious about sin: they have found that they are unrighteous before God; conscience tells them that, but it tells them too, perhaps, hard things of God. Man got a conscience when he sinned, and conscience always puts a veil between God and the sinner: it never yet said a consoling thing about him. Now I have noticed among people, that in this state they do not go to God with their trouble. This is quite natural, I grant, but then, as I said before, the natural heart is enmity against God. You are in fearful danger, let me tell you—you have sinned against a righteous God, and his righteousness requires your death. Sin once begun, there is no end for it but death. The wages of sin

is death. Vile and unrighteous as you now are, you may become, yes, become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. v. 21). Not only righteous, but the righteousness of God. But how? you say. Why, *in Christ.* God sees your sin, but he yearns over you in Divine compassion. How shall he at once show his love to the sinner and get to himself glory? There is but one way that God himself devised. He gave his only Son up to the wrath due to your sin. God has given the holiest and dearest object of his affections for you; you, whose whole life has been defiance of his authority and rejection of his grace. This holy and righteous One dies, and oh, what a death! The face of God was hidden from him; all the darkness in which God was hidden from you came between him and his only Son. He looked up and all was dark—"My God," he cries, "my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." The moment you believe, you are justified, washed in the blood of Christ, set apart to God, seated at his right hand in heavenly places. Do not take my word for it: read your Bible (Eph. ii. 6), and you will find it all, and far more there.

A word or two to any of you who may still be asleep in sin. Your condition is beyond expression perilous. You are not only under the wrath of God, but you are sleeping with a fiery sword suspended over your head. At any moment it may fall, and you may be hurried unprepared into the presence of

the God whose word you have not kept, whose mercy you have despised, the blood of whose Son you have trampled under foot. Only the other day I heard of a circumstance showing how uncertain is the moment of our departure from this world. A gentleman, to all appearance in perfect health, was addressing a meeting of townspeople in a quiet little place where I was, when he suddenly stopped, gasped out, "I am dying!" sank back into the arms of a friend, and expired. So unexpectedly may any of us be summoned before God. To any of you who may be in a state unfit for a meeting with God, I would say, Read your Bible; there you will find what may well make you tremble at the prospect before you, and the sin in your past life. You will find "there is none righteous; no, not one;" so it is clear you are not: that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," &c.; so that you are exposed to this: that "vengeance belongs to God;" and it is a "fearful thing to fall into his hands:" so that you are in the utmost danger; and that the punishment to which you are exposed is eternal banishment from the presence of God, "destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." Lay these things, I beseech you, to heart. Search the Scriptures, and rest not till you have found everlasting life. Then your end will not be the blackness of darkness for ever, but, wondrous thought! a place with God, "in whose presence is fulness of joy, at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore."

"PEACE BY JESUS CHRIST."

Acts x. 36, 43.

ARE your souls the Saviour seeking?
Peace, peace, be still;
'Tis the Lord himself is speaking—
Peace, peace, be still.
For, before the world's foundation,
God secured a full salvation—
Happy people, chosen nation!
Peace, peace, be still.

'Tis the blood of Christ hath spoken,
Peace, peace, be still;
The destroyer sees the token,
Peace, peace, be still.
On God's word we boldly venture,
All our hopes in Jesus centre,
Into rest our souls can enter—
Peace, peace, be still.

Ye who love the Lord's appearing,
Peace, peace, be still;
Day and night through faith unfearing,
Peace, peace, be still.
Though approaching judgments thunder,
Filling all men's hearts with wonder,
Though earth's ties are rent asunder—
Peace, peace, be still.

Jesus walks upon the ocean—
Peace, peace, be still;
He shall hush its loud commotion—
Peace, peace, be still.
Soon shall end our days of sighing,
Pain and sorrow, death and crying;
Till that hour, on God relying—
Peace, peace, be still.

—*Evangelist's Hymn Book.*

"LOST; OR STRAYED AWAY."

SUCH were the words which, in the dead of night, fell upon my ears as I was once just about retiring to rest. It was last summer, in a very quiet little town, where people retire early and rise soon. After ten o'clock, the streets are so still you may hear the foot-fall of any passer by, even though on the other side of the wide street which passes right through the town. On the night referred to, all under the roof had gone to their rooms and to rest, except my wife and myself, when, just before midnight, we were startled by the sound of the crier's bell. We opened the front door, but though we heard his voice, we could not make out the words. Very soon he rang his bell again, and made some long announcement, which was still too distant for us to catch. Nearer and nearer he came, stopping at every few yards, to repeat his cry ; and, at last, he came near enough for us to hear these words :—

"Lost, or strayed away, a boy and a girl. The boy about eight years old, dressed" so and so, describing his clothes, his jacket, vest, trousers, stockings, shoes and cap, "and answers to the name, H— G—. The girl is his sister, about six years old, dressed" so and so, describing her clothes also, "and answers to the name of L—G— ; any one who may find them and bring them to their parents, will be well rewarded for their trouble."

Dear children, what a tale is this! A dear little boy and girl, lost to their father and mother, their

brothers and sisters; perhaps their own lives already lost, or in the greatest danger of being lost. There was a river into which they might have fallen; there were quarries in the neighbourhood where they might have been dashed to pieces. Bad men or women might have enticed them away, to ruin them body and soul—to make thieves of them, or worse than that. Oh, the agony of the parents and friends! How long that night must have seemed! How distracting the suspense as the bellman went round the town. Can you imagine the struggle between hope and fear? Hope, that some one who had seen something of them might be guided by the bellman's cry to the parents' house; fear, that they should never see their loved ones again, or only see their lifeless bodies brought in to be laid in an early grave. As the last sounds of the crier's bell, as he got away to the outskirts of the town, died away on their ears, no one having brought them any news of their lost boy and girl, oh, how despair must have settled on their minds. Perhaps the father was out seeking his lost children. The mother would doubtless have those around her who would do their best to comfort her. But how fruitless in such a case! "Give me my lost children! Where are my boy and girl? O my dear H—! my dear L—! shall I never see you again?" I do not say that these very words were spoken, but my young readers can well suppose that they, or such words, would burst from the lips of the agonized mother, unless, indeed, the weight of woe was such as to have

overpowered her reason, and made her insensible to everything. Strangers as we were, and only hearing of their loss by the bellman's cry, we were affected by it more than I can tell. Earnestly did we pray to God, before lying down, that he would pity the poor broken-hearted parents, and preserve their boy and girl, and restore them to their embrace. But even then we could not sleep. If drowsiness came on, the sound of the crier's bell seemed again to ring in our ears, and the words, "Lost, or strayed away!" brought fresh before our minds the image of these lost children, and we could but again and again ask the Lord, if they were still alive, that he would take care of them and restore them. Thus we spent the night.

Early in the morning we were down stairs. The friend in whose house we were keeps a school. He had not heard the bellman, and knew nothing till we told him of the lost children. "H— G—!" he said, "why, he is one of my scholars." It was holiday time, so that the boy had not strayed away from school. But you may be sure this new piece of information did not make us feel less interest about the boy and his sister. Our friend went at once to the parents. The children had not been found. The night was over; the day had dawned; the sun had risen, and no news as yet of the missing ones. When, lo and behold! while our friend was there, trying to console the parents, and encourage them to trust in God about this deep affliction, word came that the children were found. They were three miles away,

and had been put to bed and were asleep, but they were safe and well; and the agony of their father and mother was changed to transports of delight, at finding that their loved lost ones were found and would soon again be in their arms. Our friend, you may be sure, was glad to bring us the news, and most heartily did we rejoice; and at our family worship that morning neither parents nor children were forgotten before the Lord.

But why have I taken up your time, dear reader, with all these particulars? It is to ask you if there be not a cry gone forth respecting you. "Lost; or strayed away!" Not, it is true, from your earthly home, and loving father and mother; no, but from a heavenly Father and a heavenly home. Lost to God, to Christ, to heaven, to those who are on their way thither. If earthly parents and earthly friends feel so deeply such a loss as that you have been reading of, oh! what must be the loss of a soul? Never to see a Father's smile, never to receive a Father's embrace; to wander far away from the Father's house, and fall, not into some quarry or stream, and lose this natural life, but to be cast into the pit of woe, and perish everlastingly! My dear young friends, you need not thus be *lost* eternally. "*The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.*" What love! to leave the home that he had on high, and the glory that he had with the Father before the world was, and to come to this place of sin and death to seek the lost. Listen to his voice. Hearken to his call. Run into

his arms; he will not upbraid you with the past. He'll heal your wounds, and wipe your tears, and forgive your sins, and save your souls, and make you fit to be in heaven with himself for ever. Oh, that you may know him indeed! that, instead of his having any longer to cry after you, "Lost; or strayed away," he may have to call on those who love him to rejoice that the dead one is alive, that the lost is found!

THE LITTLE ROBIN.

He is the emblem of friendship and sociability. He clings to our homes all the twelvemonth round. When the other birds migrate to warmer climes he stays behind. When other birds fly off into the field to feast on the wheat and barley, like sly thieves, Robin Red-breast abides in his old quiet haunts. He is quite satisfied with the green lawn and the shady shrubbery, the pink thorn-berries, and the crumbs from the table-cloth. Lift your window any morning from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, and you are nearly certain to hear his rich trill from the pear-tree or the laurel-bush.

I delight in his trustful attachment. I have one which I call my pet; he knows me; when I am digging, he is sure to pop out and begin his chirruping at my elbow. If I look at him, he blinks his bright eye at me so confidingly! Presently he will alight within a foot of my spade and pick up a worm. And when I move to a fresh place, there he is at

my elbow again, saying, "I spy you! what are you going to do next?" I have read lately of a couple of robins which raised their young in a National schoolroom, hopping in and out of a broken pane of glass, whilst the boys and girls were at their classes.

Well, now, let us learn from the robin to be friendly, and to be firm in our friendships. It is grievous to see how prickly and porcupinish some people are. They won't let you approach them. They are stinging-nettles in hats and bonnets. And it is equally grievous to see how fickle other people are. They will do anything for you now, and a week hence they will pass you coldly by. They flit about as they like, careless of other's feelings.

We need not, indeed, be in a hurry to form our friendships, but, when formed, we should never forsake them without sufficient cause. Avoid a changeful, fitful, butterfly disposition. Let everybody reckon on you as reliable. Pray that you may daily be more and more like the blessed Jesus; if you make him the pattern of your life, your friendship will be worth having, for you will do good to all with whom you come in contact.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. iii. 8, 9).

THE KITE;

OR, PRIDE MUST HAVE A FALL.

ONCE on a time a paper kite
Was mounted to a wondrous height,
Where, giddy with its elevation,
It thus expressed self-admiration :—
" See how yon crowds of gazing people
Admire my flight above the steeple !
How would they wonder if they knew
All that a kite like me can do !
Were I but free, I'd take a flight,
And pierce the clouds beyond their sight;
But, ah ! like a poor prisoner bound,
My string confines me near the ground.
I'd brave the eagle's towering wing,
Might I but fly without a string."
It tugged and pulled while thus it spoke
To break the string—at last it broke.
Deprived at once of all its stay,
In vain it tried to soar away;
Unable its own weight to bear,
It fluttered downward through the air;
Unable its own course to guide,
The wind soon plunged it in the tide.
Ah ! foolish kite, thou hast no wing,
How couldst thou fly without a string?
My heart replied, " O Lord, I see
How much this kite resembles me;
Forgetful that by thee I stand,
Impatient of thy ruling hand,

How oft I've wished to break the lines,
Thy wisdom for my lot assigns;
How oft indulged a vain desire
For something more, or something higher;
And but for grace and love Divine,
A fall thus dreadful had been mine."

OLNEY HYMNS.

TWO THREEPENNY PIECES.

THERE is great power in little things, and there is no place where the power of little things can be employed so well as in God's vineyard. What a little thing a threepenny piece is! Now, let me tell you about two threepenny pieces. One was not employed in vineyard work, and it did a great deal of harm. The other was so employed, and it did a great deal of good.

There was once a threepenny piece lying on the floor; an idle boy picked it up, and, although he knew it was not his, he put it in his pocket, and thought it was nice fun to spend it for his own gratification. Not long after this, he stole a shilling, and so went on till he became a confirmed thief. At last, in one of his robberies, he committed murder, and was condemned to death. In his confession, he said that he looked back to his first theft of the threepenny piece as the beginning of his downward course, and the cause of all his misery and crime. There was another threepenny piece: this was not stolen; it was given to a little boy, who

resolved to employ it in vineyard work. He bought some tracts with it, and had them put into a box of things that was sent to a missionary in India. The son of a great chief, in the interior of India, was stopping at the house of the missionary : the wife of the missionary taught the youth to read, and gave him one of the little boy's tracts. The reading of that tract made the young chief a Christian ; he saw by it he was a sinner, and needed a Saviour. And he read it, and found Jesus the Saviour of sinners. When he went back to his mountain-home, he took that tract, and many others with him. He scattered them among the people of his native place. They were read by multitudes ; and in one year from that time fifteen hundred people of that neighbourhood had given up the worship of idols, and were inquiring about the religion of Jesus. And if a little boy with a single threepenny piece, could do so much good, surely nobody can be too young or too poor to work in God's vineyard. There is no other work in the world that can give employment to everybody but the work of God's vineyard.

JESUS, MY STRENGTH.

JESUS, my strength, my hope,
On thee I cast my care ;
With humble confidence look up,
And knowest thou hear'st my prayer.

Give me on thee to wait,
Till I can all things do ;
On thee, almighty to create,
Almighty to renew.

THE AMBASSADORS.

SUPPOSE, dear reader, you had been with Samuel when the Lord sent him to the house of Jesse, to anoint a king from among his sons; and suppose, when the sons were assembled, you had seen the eldest one, Eliab, to be tall, and of a noble countenance and princely bearing, would not you have been ready to say with the prophet, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him"? But you would have been wrong in saying this, just as Samuel was. The Lord had to say to him, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him:

for the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." It is just such a lesson we have now to learn from an earlier part of God's holy word. To understand it, we must remember certain differences between ancient and modern times. There were neither railways nor stages coaches in Joshua's day ; nor were there inns at which travellers could find the food and refreshment they required. When people undertook in those days a long journey, they carried their food with them, as any one would now do in going a long voyage across the sea. The vessels, too, to contain their provisions, were not such as we use now-a-days. They had no bottles of glass or earthenware. If they had wine to carry, or water, they put it in bottles made of skins, and these, you may be sure, would be apt to wear out. It is of such bottles that our Lord speaks, where he says, " No man putteth new wine into old bottles ; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles ; and both are preserved."

Suppose now, dear reader, that you had been a witness of Achan's fearful death, and then of Israel's victory over Ai and its king; suppose you had heard of all the kings of Canaan gathering themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel, and that then you saw a number of men, with old sacks upon their asses, and their wine bottles old, rent, and bound up ; old shoes and clouted upon their feet, old

garments on their bodies, and their bread all dry and mouldy. Suppose you saw these men humbly bowing to Joshua, and telling him how they had come from a far country, would not you have been disposed to believe them? Who could have thought that all these were false appearances, put on to deceive? And yet they were so; and Joshua and the princes of Israel fell into the snare. They judged by the sight of their eyes. They looked on the outward appearance, and they were deceived.

But who were these men, and whence did they come? What was their real errand to Joshua? and why did they pretend to have come so far? You shall hear.

They were inhabitants of Gibeon, and sent by their fellow-countrymen, to turn aside, if possible, the doom which seemed so near. They had heard of the fate of Jericho and Ai, and lest their own should be equally sad, they used this means of escape. Some of their number were sent by the rest, as though they had been ambassadors from some very distant place. Presenting themselves in the manner which has been described, they said to Joshua and the elders of Israel, "We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us." But the Israelites had their doubts. "Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?" "We are thy servants," was their lowly reply to Joshua, who asks them who they are and whence they came. "From a very far country thy servants

are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God: for we have heard of the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan." They say nothing of the passage of the Jordan, or the fall of Jericho. They pretend to have been too far off to have heard of these things as yet. They go on to explain how the elders and all the inhabitants of their country had said to them—"Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make a league with us." Then they display the proofs of their having come so far. "This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold it is dry, and it is mouldy: and these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new, and behold they be rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey." Their artifice succeeds. Joshua and his companions are satisfied. Who would not have been? Ah! dear reader, Joshua and the princes of Israel would not have been deceived if they had not leaned to their own understanding. "The men took of their victuals, *and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.*" They trusted in their own *strength* when they first went up against Ai, and their sad discomfiture was the result. They trusted their own *wisdom* in the case before us, and they soon found that they

had been deceived. "And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them." So soon did they discover the deception that had been practised upon them.

And what could be done? They had eaten of the Gibeonites' bread; they had entered into a league with them, and confirmed it by an oath. They had sworn to their own hurt, and must not change. The Gibeonites had to be spared. They are reduced to utter servitude, and Israel takes possession of their cities; but their lives are spared.

There is no reason to doubt that the Gibeonites need not have used any deception. With their convictions as to Israel, and Israel's God, if they had unreservedly cast themselves on his mercy and that of his people, they would not have been denied. They had thus to submit themselves in the end. "And now, behold, we are in thine hand; as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do."

Dear reader, have you ever thus submitted yourself to God, in reference to a worse destruction than that of which these Gibeonites were afraid? *They were afraid.* "Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, *therefore*

we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing." And their lives were saved. Have you ever been afraid for yours? If you are not converted, pardoned, saved, you have cause to fear. It is not the destruction of your natural life, it is not the death of the body which threatens you, No, it is the loss of your soul. It is the second death. Will you not lay to heart what awaits you, should you live and die as you are? You, at all events, need assume no disguise, need practice no deception. None could be of any avail for you. Be not deceived; God is not mocked. It is with him you have to do. Go to him at once. Tell him you are ruined and undone. Plead guilty before him, and sue for mercy. You may tell him that it is in the name of his own Son Jesus Christ, and encouraged by his own word, that you thus fall down before him. But submit to him without reserve. Take the place with God that these Gibeonites finally took with Joshua. "And now, behold, we are in thine hand; as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do." There is no doubt what God will do. He will forgive your sins. He will save your soul. He will make you his child. Not a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, but his own beloved child. Oh, cast yourself on his mercy in the name of Jesus, without another day's—without another hour's—without another moment's delay. God grant you may! Amen.

QUESTIONS ON "THE AMBASSADORS."

1 What two facts, as to the Lord himself and man, are illustrated by Samuel's conduct in Jesse's house? and where is the passage of Scripture which affirms them?

2 Can you state (as briefly as possible) some differences between ancient and modern modes of travelling?

3 What sort of bottles were in use in ancient times?

4 In what passage does our Lord refer to these?

5 What did the Gibeonites want Joshua and his fellow-rulers to believe?

6 What means did they use to bring them to this conclusion?

7 What was their motive for trying thus to deceive the Israelites?

8 How is their success to be accounted for?

9 What place was given to the Gibeonites by those who spared their lives?

10 Was there any real need for them to use deception?

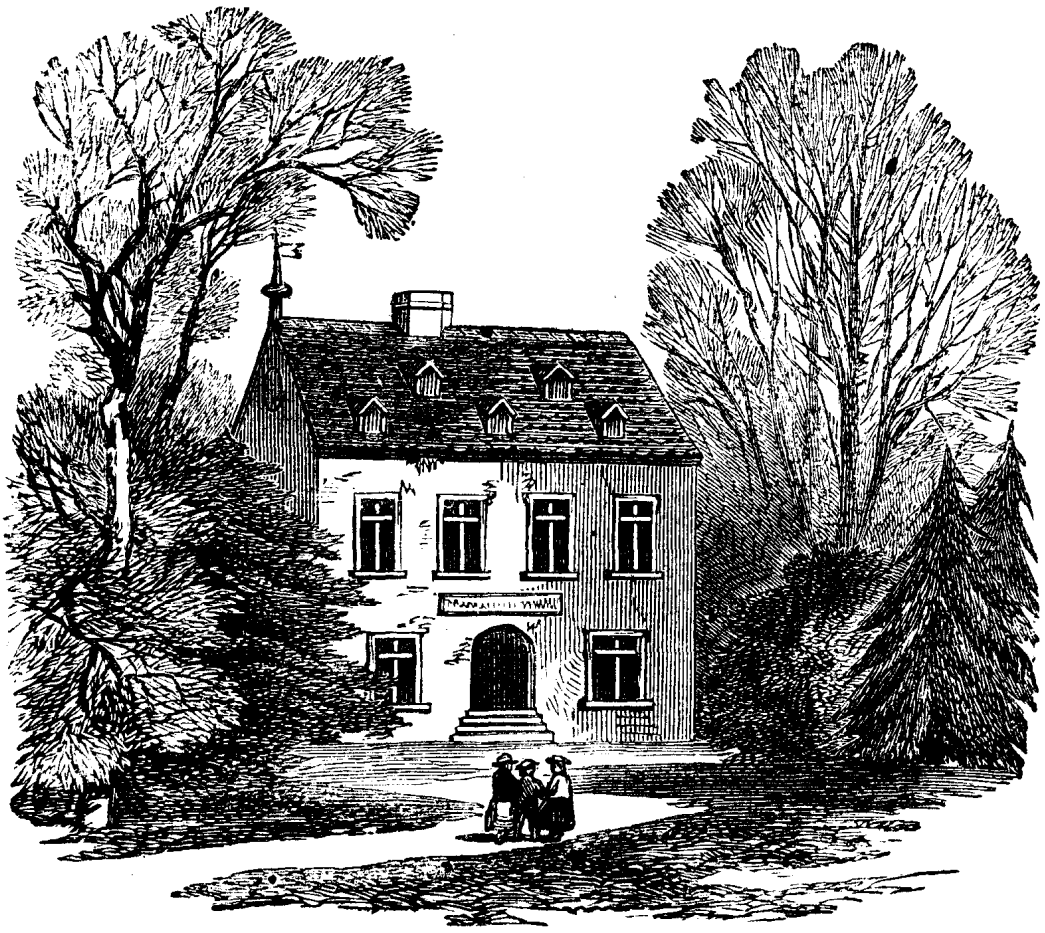
11 In what case may we conclude their lives would just as surely have been spared?

12 If you are not yet converted, what is it that you have cause to fear?

13 What is the position before God that you ought at once to take?

14 What would be the sure result?

Dear young reader, it will be a solemn thing for you to have answered these questions, if, when Christ appears, or when you stand before the great white throne, it is found that you have lived on in sin, instead of submitting thus to God. Oh! submit to him without delay!



GLAD TIDINGS FROM A FAR COUNTRY.

"WHERE are you going?" said Jonathan, addressing two little girls. "We are going to the infant school," answered Lina and Bertha. "Oh! I will go with you," said Jonathan, who was six years old, and had Jewish parents. "Come along, then," replied the girls. And Jonathan walked between them to the infant school, where he was welcomed kindly; but when he saw so many children, all strangers to him, he felt shy, and would not go from the side of Lina and Bertha.

Shortly afterwards, when the children were all assembled, the governess prayed very earnestly to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and when she

told them how when on earth he had called little children to himself and blessed them (Mark x. 16), it appeared to Jonathan like a dream ; he seemed to be in another world, and to be hearing a new language ; and could not take his eyes off the governess. He would gladly have heard more of the precious Lord Jesus, but the lesson was over, and the teacher took the children into the garden, where they spent some time in singing and play.

When Jonathan got home, his mother asked him where he had been. "O mother," said he, "I have been to the infant-school, and I wish you would let me go there every day." His mother was very much astonished, and said, "My child! why do you wish to go there ?"

"Oh! they sing there, and tell good news," answered he ; "I went with Lina and Bertha, and I should like to go every day." His mother was silent a moment ; but when she said, "Well, you may go," Jonathan kissed and thanked her. From this day a new life commenced within him ; and, as a flower opens in the sunshine, so the heart of Jonathan unfolded beneath the beams of faith and love. The dead prayers which he heard at home could not satisfy the desire he felt to learn more of the Friend of little children, who came down from heaven to earth, "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10), and "who gave himself for us" (Gal. i. 4) that we might have life. Jonathan *thirsted* for that "water" which we can only have through Jesus

Christ, who giveth it to all who come to him. One day the children were assembled round their teacher, their eyes filled with tears, fixed upon her, in still and mournful attention. And now, dear reader, how do you think their hearts, minds, eyes, and ears are engaged? In imagination they are on Calvary, and are contemplating the crucified Lord Jesus. "Dear children," said the governess (in conclusion of the lesson), "the Lord Jesus suffered all this for *us*, that we might have life and dwell with God in heaven." A solemn pause followed these words, but when the teacher said, "Let us pray, and give thanks to him," the children answered as with one voice, "Yes, yes! that we will." Oh! what a blessed moment; streams of grace flowed from heaven through the cross, and there was "joy in heaven" (Luke xv. 7). Jonathan went home, his face shining with happiness, and when he saw his mother, he cried out joyfully, "Mamma! the Saviour died for us, for *you*, for *me*, for my *father* and all; for *every one*." When the mother heard these words from the lips of her only child, she was amazed, and the crimson colour mounted to her face. After the first moment of her embarrassment, she said, "*What* do you say, Jonathan? Never let me hear these words again." But the child, who was filled with deep, earnest joy, only understood her *question*, he did not hear her last words, and replied, "The Saviour died for you, and for me, for my father, and for every one." "Who told you so?" asked his mother, hastily.

"The governess," replied Jonathan. "*Never you say those words again, because it is not true*, and these *things are not for us;* do you hear what I say to you?" Jonathan stood like one struck by a flash of lightning, but only for one moment; then he went back to school, weeping and sobbing. "Why do you weep, my dear child?" inquired the governess. "Oh," Jonathan answered, "my mother tells me that it is not true that the Saviour died for us, and that such things are not for us;" and as he repeated these words, tears fill his eyes again.

"My dear child," said the teacher, "you know that God opens the ears of those who know not the love of God; pray for your mother, dear child, and do steadfastly believe that the Lord and Saviour died for *you* and your parents." "Is it true? is it true?" asked Jonathan again. "Yes, my dear child, *all* that I told you about Jesus is *indeed true*," declared the governess, and then she put her hands upon his head, and prayed to God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he would bless the boy, and give the knowledge of himself to his parents. Jonathan was quieted; the teacher pressed him to her heart, kissed him, and sent him back to his parents; but she went to her chamber, and prayed for that Jewish family. She never saw the boy again, for his father ordered him to go no more to the infant school. When the boy heard this command, he did not dispute it, but two great tears rolled down his cheeks. Now commenced a hard time for Jonathan, so that

he often wished to be taken to heaven. He was seen at his father's door looking towards the school, and listening, if perchance any word of comfort might reach his ear and heart; with a look of sadness he often watched Lina and Bertha, as they passed to school, and felt as if some one urged him to go with the little girls; but no! he must stay at home in obedience to his father's command, From this time his countenanee, which had unfolded itself like a flower in fresh water, looked like one that thirsted and sickened for the want of this refreshment.

It was "Christmas Eve," which, among Christians in Germany, is much more noticed than in Eng-

land ; the children of the school were gathered round their governess, and in the middle of the room stood a large Christmas tree, filled with all sorts of good things, and lighted with more than a hundred wax candles. The children were singing hymns of praise to God. At the same time a little boy was quietly walking through the streets of the city, amidst frost and a cold north wind, which did not drive him back, though he wore neither hat nor cloak ; he had only one object—to give one look into the infant school ; nothing more. It was Jonathan : he mounted carefully upon the trunk of a tree, which was lying before the window, and thence he could look into the school. The boy is happy, his cheeks glow, his eyes are lighted with joy ; he hears the voice of Lina singing those words which an angel proclaimed from heaven, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people : for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 10, 11). When Jonathan heard these words, he felt great joy and happiness. Then the children sang the German hymn, "From heaven above he came," etc., and after the last "Hallelujah," Jonathan went home unobserved as he came, but in a different state of mind. He went away to school after this, and passed through the University, the darkness of which was never broken upon by the word of God. The impressions of his childhood gradually passed away, but he retained an undefined desire for the "lost paradise," as he called it. The pleasures of the

world yielded him no amusement, and the transient joys of his friends could not satisfy him. His only enjoyment was to take a walk in the forest which was near his residence, where he saw no face of man, and could commune with his own thoughts.

Jonathan studied medicine, and was soon known as a diligent scholar and a young man of great learning, which gave him satisfaction. One day he accompanied an elder doctor to visit the patients in an hospital: he noticed several of the physicians passing, with apparent unconcern, the bed of a woman who seemed to be very near her end; the doctor looked at her for a moment, felt her pulse, and saying, "I think you will be better very soon," left the poor sick one. She said nothing, but looked after him with a deep expression which spoke more than words could convey. This look met Jonathan's eye, and went so directly to his heart, that his conscience was greatly troubled; a few minutes after the doctor left the hospital, and Jonathan went back to the woman; she was quiet, although in great pain, and had folded her hands in prayer. "Dear friend," said he to her, "my conscience bids me speak the truth to you before it is too late; it seems to me that you have only a little while to live, therefore, if you have anything to arrange before you leave this world, make haste; if I can do anything for you, I am willing to help you as much as I can." The dying woman looked at him with gentleness and love; and said, "Dear sir, I thank you, you are very kind; I feel I am near my end, and rejoice that I am

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going home, going to leave this world, and to be for ever with Christ. But if you wish to do me a friendly service, get the book which you will find under my pillow, and read to me a little." Jonathan got it; it was a New Testament. "What would you like to hear?" he asked the woman. "Read the xvii. of John, please." With deep interest and feeling he did so, and it was as if he had never heard such words before; he looked at the patient, her soft eye was fixed on him with an expression of thankfulness, and heavenly joy was in her face. "Dear sir," she said, "I thank you, you have done me a great service; when I arrive at home I will tell my Saviour: may he bless you! and now I am going to rest in my heavenly home, I give you this book as a token of gratitude; remember this conversation, and may the Saviour bless each word of it to your heart." She gave him the Testament, and he left her and returned home; he closed the door of his room, and read from his book, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Psalm xlii. 2).* This seemed to be the very language of his heart. "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," saith Christ, and he made true his word. In the dead of the night a light shone from Jonathan's chamber into the dark street; deeper and deeper he searches into the Bible, that holy Word of God. Jesus brings light out of darkness; the Holy Ghost

* It would seem that in Germany, as in Scotland, the Psalms are bound up with the New Testament.

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is taking a slow but certain way to accomplish a great work.

It is the Lord's-day ; many people are going into a small chapel in Germany. A solemn pause followed the first hymn, and from the midst of the people arose a dark complexioned young man ; with deep feeling he uttered the words, "Let us pray." When his prayer was over, he read a part of the xix. of John, and on coming to the 30th verse, "It is finished," tears ran down his cheeks, and, with an earnest expression, he repeated the words, "It is finished! Yes, it is finished, through grace and love, praised be God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." It was Jonathan, who is now carrying the "Good Tidings" from a far country into the gloomy deserts of Africa.

FOR A DYING CHILD WHO LOVES JESUS.

WHAT ! going to be with Jesus !
Lord, going to be with thee !
A little child so happy,
Thy glorious face to see !

More happy than the children,
Once blest of thee below,
For from thy sunny presence
I'll never have to go.

Among the holy angels,
Oh ! am I there to stand,
In white and shining raiment,
In a place at God's right hand ?

My happy home in heaven !
So glorious and so fair !
Lord Jesus, come, release me,
And take me quickly there.

MARIA;
OR, PASSAGES FROM THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

PART I.—HER INFANCY.

THE papers, of which this is the first, have appeared in print before. Some few of my readers may have seen them, but to nine out of ten they will be quite new. Maria, the subject of these papers, was the daughter of a very eminent and devoted minister of Christ, in America. It may be thought that her remarks are very mature for one so young; but she was the eldest child of the family, and received, therefore, a large share of attention from both her parents. Her father, in particular, devoted much time to her instruction; and she united to an eager, inquiring mind, a great love of reading; so that it was no wonder if she expressed herself in a way beyond her years.

Maria's interest in the subject of religion commenced at a very early age; I do not know, nor does any one know how early. When she was between two and three years old, she would sit on a little stool at her father's feet, with the tears rolling down her cheeks, while he talked to her of the sinfulness of her heart, and the impossibility of her ever being happy until it was changed. She had been sick for some time, and had been rocked to sleep in the cradle, but was now so far recovered that her mother thought it proper for her to sleep upstairs. Suppos-

ing the child might make some objection to this, she began to talk to her, as she lay in the cradle, about being good, telling her that this was the only way to be happy. Maria suddenly asked, in the quick way in which she commonly spoke, "Mamma, how can I be good?"

Her mother told her she must have a new heart.

"How can I have a good heart? I will take out my naughty heart," said she, untying her frock, "and stamp on it, and beat it; will that make it good?"

Her father, coming in at this moment, heard the question. "No, my daughter," said he; "you cannot make your heart good."

"You, then, papa. Did not papa make his new heart? Did not mamma make hers? Did not Phœbe make hers?"

"No; no one but God can make new hearts, and if you want one, you must ask him." After some more conversation of this sort, her mother carried her up to bed. When she was about leaving her, she said, "Has my little daughter anything to say to her mother?" hoping Maria would ask her to pray; but, instead of this, she clasped her hands, and looking up to heaven with a look of the greatest seriousness and earnestness, she said,

"Please, great papa, up in heaven, take away the naughty heart out of my bosom."

For two or three months after this there was so remarkable a change in Maria's disposition, she was so

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much more gentle and yielding, that her parents almost began to hope that the infantile petition had been heard.

When Maria was nearly three years old, she refused to say, "Please, mother," on one occasion, when she had been directed to do so. Her mother reasoned with her for some time; but finding it ineffectual, she told Maria to go into the closet. There she remained for half an hour, without giving any signs of willingness to obey. Her mother said to the servant, loud enough for Maria to hear, "You may cover up the fire, Nancy, it is time to go to bed." The little girl thought she was going to spend the night in the closet. "Oh dear," said she, in a piteous tone, "I wish I *could* say, Please, mother."

Just then her father came in, and heard how matters stood. He took Maria from the closet, put on her cloak and bonnet, opened the street door, and led her out on the steps. "There," said he, "Maria may go away; we do not want any little girls here who do not mind their mothers." The child stood for a moment confounded, then burst into tears, and sobbed out, "Please, mother."

Another time she came sobbing to her father, and told him she was afraid heaven was not so happy a place as it was supposed to be.

"Why, my dear, what makes you think so?"

"Because, papa, if it is, what made the angels sin? They were happy, and they knew they were happy; did not they, papa? Then, why should they sin?"

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As she grew up, she proposed at different times all the objections which have been urged by cavillers and objectors against religion ; thus proving, as her father observed, that " they have their origin in the heart, not in the head."

Maria was very unwilling to be convinced that she did not love God, and often wept because her father seemed to doubt this affection. She observed one day, that " she wished she could die, and then her father would see her fly right up to heaven, like a little angel, and he would know that she loved God." However, this wore off ; and, for a year previous to the commencement of our history, she manifested no particular interest in the subject of religion, and had quite forgotten her former conversations relating to it. It will be seen that at this period her impressions were revived.

THE SON OF MAN.

THE parents of little Dickie are very poor in this world's goods ; they live in a small, clean house, in a little court, where they have just a peep of the bright blue sky and of some green trees. Dickie is their youngest child ; brighter and happier, I think, than any little boy of three years old that I ever saw. His suffering father has often prayed that Jesus would take the babe in his arms and bless him ; and the child, with an intelligence far beyond his age,

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listens to what is said, and tries to understand the things of God. A few weeks ago, he said to his mother, "This Christmas-day, mamma?" "Yes," she replied, "this is Christmas-day, Dickie." "Why this called Christmas-day, mamma?" "Because," she said, "Jesus was born into this world once as a little baby like you, and then he grew up to be a man; so people keep Christmas-day to remember about Jesus being born." "Jesus a man, mamma?" "Yes, he was a man once, but before he was a man he was a little baby." "Oh, mamma, Jesus a *man!* I'm so glad Jesus was a *man;* I always thought Jesus was the sky. Is Jesus a man now, mamma?" "Yes, he is a man up in heaven now." "Jesus a man, and walks with Polly now; Jesus a man; die on the cross for me;—oh, I'm so glad Jesus is a *man*, mamma," said the little child, referring to an infant sister whom he had never seen, but of whom he had often heard that she was now in heaven. And all through the day did Dickie seem to rejoice in the nearness which the thought of "a *man* in heaven" seemed to give to the name which had always had a charm for him—the name of Jesus; for, although unknown to his parents, his indefinite idea was, that "Jesus was the sky." O mothers, bring Jesus near to your little children, in all the beauty and sympathy of "the man on earth," and "the man in heaven." Those who witnessed the delight of that sweet child on discovering the manhood of Jesus, feel sure that there is a like yearning in many an

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infant's heart, and that *the man Christ Jesus* needs to be more fully and simply presented to many an infant mind.

And let it never be forgotten that "the man Christ Jesus" is also "God over all, blessed for ever." He is greater than "the sky," for he made the sky and earth and seas and all things, and upholds all things by the word of his power. Dear children, the Maker and the Lord of all became a little babe, grew up to be a man, and, as such, died upon the cross for our salvation. He is now risen from the dead, and sits as a man, the risen man, the glorified man, at God's right hand in heaven. May you know him and trust him and love him, indeed.

THE KINDNESS OF GOD.

'Twas kind of God to say,
"I'll give my only Son,
That he may die to wash away
The evil man has done."

'Tis kind of God to say,
"By virtue of that blood,
The vilest, guiltiest sinner may
Have perfect peace with God."

'Tis kind of God to say,
"Come, whosoever will,
No longer wandering from me stray;
There's room, there's mercy, still."

Oh yes; 'tis kind indeed!
To him in faith now fly—
The gracious ear of Jesus bends
To hear the contrite cry.

A. M.

"THY MOTHER SHALL BE GLAD, AND SHE THAT BARE THEE SHALL REJOICE."

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I do indeed most sincerely rejoice at your recovery from so severe an attack of your complaint as that which you describe. May a gracious God protect you under the shadow of his wing, and spare your valuable health, for all our sakes; may you daily enjoy more of a sense of the Divine presence, as you advance in your pilgrimage; may you be favoured with a cheerful prospect and always be supported by the trust, that he who hath begun the good work in you will perfect it in his own time. Your occasional doubts and fears arise from too much considering faith and repentance as the grounds, rather than the evidences of salvation. The truth is, that a weak faith makes the soul as secure, though not so happy, as a strong one; and an imperfect repentance, as we deem it, may be sincere, and, therefore, a work of grace. Our salvation is not because we do so well, but because He whom we trust "hath done all things well." The believing sinner is never more happy and secure than when, at the same moment, he beholds and feels his own vileness, and also his Saviour's excellence.

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me,"

is the burthen of his song. You look at yourself too much, and at the infinite price paid for you, too

little. For conviction, it is true, you must look to your own heart; but for comfort, at your own Saviour. Thus the wounded Israelities were to look only at the brazen serpent for recovery. The graces of the Spirit, such as love, patience, goodness, faith, etc., are good things for others to judge us by; but it is Christ, as received, believed in, rested upon, loved, and followed, that will speak peace to ourselves. By looking unto him we shall grow holy; and the more holy we grow, the more we shall mourn over sin, and be sensible how very short we come of what we yet desire to be. Hence will flow thankful obedience, devotedness of heart, patience in tribulation, and quiet waiting for the glory of God. Thus salvation is by faith alone, and thus, saving faith works by love. Embrace this principle freely, fully, and impartially, and you will enjoy a truly scriptural peace, assurance, and comfort.—*An extract from a letter written by Legh Richmond to his mother.*

TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

A PRISONER was standing before the highest court in his country, on trial for his life. His crime was faithfulness to God, and fearlessness in publishing the good news of life for dead sinners. The men who had hurried him before the court were moved to hatred by envy, and the witnesses against him were villains, who had been hired to swear falsely

against him. The judges were harsh, despotic men, who were not in the habit of showing mercy, and they, too, were thirsting for his blood. All this he knew; he knew that when he moved from the judgment-hall it would be to the place of execution, there to suffer a painful and cruel death. But this was a source of joy to him; he calmly listened to the false witnesses, and, when allowed to reply, he answered by preaching Christ to the judges. As they turned to look on him, they were struck with the splendour of his countenance; God had opened heaven itself above him, and the glories of the celestial region, and of the Son of man standing at God's right hand, were streaming upon him, as he gave his last testimony to the long-suffering of God. He spoke to their consciences so powerfully, that they were filled with rage against him; they "were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth;" and without so much as the form of a condemnation, they hurried him out of the city, and put him to death. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

BLESSED is the man that heareth me. (Prov. viii. 34). Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live (John v. 25).

RESCUE OF A LITTLE BOY.

AN American minister was walking on a Sunday morning to his Sunday-school, and as he turned the corner of a little narrow street, a short way to his school, he saw a parcel of little boys, Arabs of the street, engaged playing at marbles. They saw him as he came, and as they saw him, the greater part of them got up their marbles, and in a moment were off like a shot before he could catch them. One little boy did not happen to see the minister at first, and before he could get his marbles, or muster his strength to make off, the minister had him.

Then came the grand question, What was to be said? what was to be done? There were confronted, face to face, the minister of Christ and the little ignorant, dark, benighted child. Now, many a one would have said, "Oh! you little Sabbath-breaker, you deserve to be punished;" or others, "You are found out in your bad way; you had better come along with me."

The American minister was not a man of that kind. He was one of those who knew that kindness, tenderness, and affection were the ways to get at the heart; and he said to the little boy, "Have you found all your marbles?" "No, sir," said the child, "there is one I have not found." "Then," said the minister, "I will try and help you to find it;" so they stooped down and searched, and they found the marble at last.

"Are you fond of playing marbles, my boy?" was the next question. "Yes, sir, I am." "So used I to be," said the minister; "and I think I could beat you myself if we were to have a game, only I never play on a Sunday."

The poor little boy's countenance expanded. He looked with confidence at the kind man who spoke to him, and he thought, "I have found, not an enemy, but a friend."

"If you will come with me, my boy," said the minister, "I will bring you to a place where you will see something better than playing marbles, and hear something you will like to hear." He was told it was to the Sunday-school; and, after a little hesitation, he said he would go, but that he was so dirty he was not fit to go. "Then," said the minister, "here is a pump at which you can wash your face and hands." "But I cannot pump and wash," said the boy. The minister pumped, and the boy washed, and he gave him his handkerchief to dry himself with, which the boy took, after hesitating on the ground that it was so clean.

He then took the minister's hand, and they proceeded to the Sunday-shool, When they got near it, the busy hum of voices through the windows startled him, and he was afraid to go in, saying that the boys would laugh at him, and make fun of him. "Another time I will go, sir, but not now."

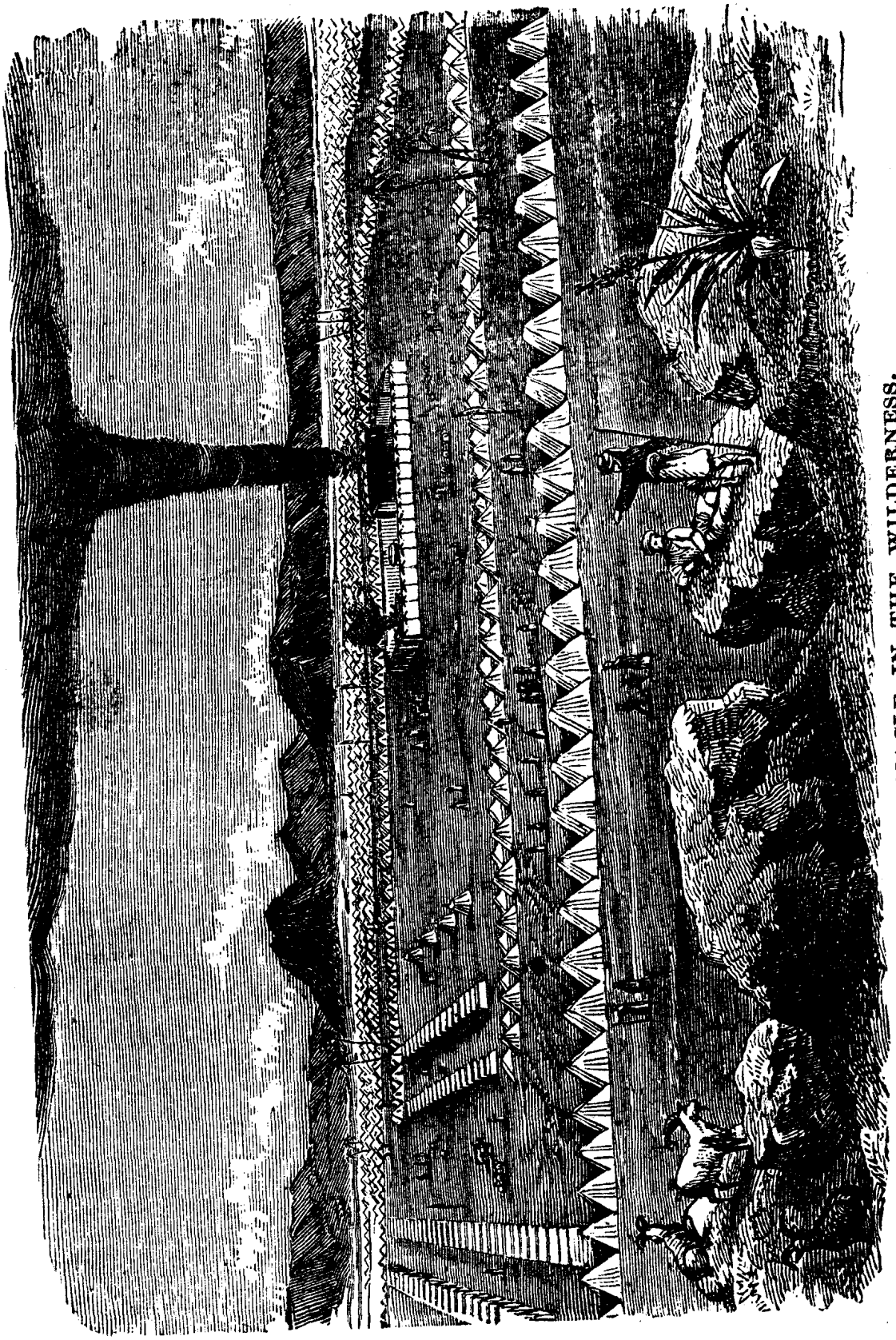
Here was the crisis of the boy's life.

"I promise you," said the minister, "that if you

come in they shall not laugh at you, or turn you to jest. Take my hand, and come." He did so, and the minister brought him to one of the most experienced teachers in the school, and told him the story. The boy was treated kindly.

He came regularly afterwards, and learned to read and study the Scriptures. His father and mother were poor, drunken, profligate people, and were glad that the boy should be noticed, so they did not object. By-and-by he became one of the sharpest boys in the school, was afterwards apprenticed, and after some time the minister lost sight of him, and never saw his face for twenty years.

One day, as he passed through the streets of Philadelphia, he saw a gentlemanly-looking man, who stopped him, and said, "Sir, do you know me?" "No, I do not." "Ah! do you not remember, twenty years ago, finding a little boy in the street playing at marbles, speaking to him kindly, pumping for him while he washed, and bringing him to your Sunday-school? Sir, I am that boy. The world has since gone well with me; I have prospered in business, and, through the blessing of God, possess a considerable fortune. All that I am, and all that I have, I owe, under God, to your kindness, your wise kindness, your aggressive kindness, in laying hold of me by the shoulder that day, and treating me kindly and tenderly; not rebuking me, but dealing gently with me; holding me by the hand, and treating me as what I was, a poor ignorant, worthless creature."



THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

CALEB;

OR,

THE MAN WHO WHOLLY FOLLOWED THE LORD.

THOUGH our subject this month leads us back into the wilderness, it has its connections with the land. It was in the land that Caleb received God's answer to the faith which had been exercised in the wilderness. It was in the wilderness that he earned the character of which repeated mention is made in Scripture, as the one who "wholly followed the Lord God of Israel."

The first mention of Caleb is in the thirteenth of Numbers, as one of the twelve, for every tribe a man, sent to search out the land of Canaan. Within little more than a year after their departure out of Egypt, the Israelites had reached Kadesh-barnea, on the confines of the land of promise. From one account that Scripture gives of what there took place, it would seem as if the thought of sending spies to search out the land had originated with the people themselves. From the other account it is quite clear, however, that the Lord allowed, and even sanctioned it; for it was at his command that Moses acted in sending them out. They were to see the land, what it was, good or bad; and the people that dwelt there, whether they were strong or weak, few or many; they were to be of good courage, and to bring of the fruit of the land. Such was the errand on which they were sent.

What an opportunity for faith! If these men really believed God's word, that Canaan was the land he had

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promised to their fathers, how sure they must have been that it was a good land. Surveying it in the light of *his* choice, and of *his* promise, how lovely must its hills and valleys have appeared; its plains, how fruitful and well watered; its cities and its villages, how interesting and attractive! Fenced cities there were, it is true; and men of giant stature were their defenders; but what were these to the God of Israel? or what to the people who were led on by him to victory and rest? God had promised them this goodly land, and would he not bring them in? Thus would faith have reasoned—thus did it reason—for two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, were men of faith. But their companions, alas! were of a different stamp. That the land was fruitful, they could not, in the first instance, deny. They had brought of the fruit of it, a single cluster of grapes, so large as to be borne between two of them on a staff. There can be little doubt as to who the two were who thus bore in triumph the fruits of the Lord's goodly land. The beginning of their report is very good. They say to Moses, "We came into the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." They proceed, however, to speak of the people being strong, and the cities walled and very great; "and moreover," said they, "we saw the children of Anak there." This seems greatly to have discouraged the people, and stirred up among them a spirit of discontent; for we read that "Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up

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at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." This was not the language of a vain self-confidence, as though they were able *of themselves* to take possession of the land. No, it was because Caleb trusted God, and believed his word, and knew that he was in the midst of his people, that he spake with such holy confidence of success. But Caleb's faith brings out the unbelief of his companions. "The men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." Nor is this all; having begun by denying God's ability to bring his people in, they go on to speak ill of the land itself. True, they contradict themselves; but what does unbelief care for consistency? "They brought up an evil report of the land . . . saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

You may suppose, dear reader, the effect of these words on such a people as the children of Israel were. The whole congregation lifted up their voice and wept; they murmured against Moses and Aaron, talked of God having brought them to perish in the land, of its being better for them to have died either in Egypt or in the wilderness, and went so far in their rebellion as to cry, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." That was a solemn moment for Israel.

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Moses and Aaron fall on their faces before the Lord, while Joshua and Caleb still further plead with the people. Having "rent their clothes, they spake with all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not." Such were the courageous words of these faithful two.

But all they could say was unavailing. The people were about to stone them, when the glory of the Lord appeared, and he was about to consume them in a moment. Moses intercedes. The Lord spares them, at his request; but the sentence goes forth, "Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it." How bright and blessed a testimony to be borne by the Lord to this honoured servant of his. He had another spirit, and followed the Lord fully. He, with his

companion Joshua, should be the only exception to this fearful sentence, by which all who were above twenty years old on leaving Egypt were to fall in the wilderness. "Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness; and your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness."

Such were the Lord's words, and so it came to pass. For forty years the nation wandered in the desert, till all died who had thus distrusted and disobeyed God. Caleb and Joshua wandered with them; but they did not fall in the wilderness. The one, as we have seen, became the head of the nation at the death of Moses, and led them through the Jordan into the land. And do we not hear of the other again? Is Scripture silent as to what became of Caleb? No; when Jericho and Ai, and their kings, and a number besides, thirty-one in all, had fallen before the sword of the Lord and of Joshua; when Joshua is peacefully dividing their territories among the victorious tribes of Israel, we read of the children of Judah coming to Joshua in Gilgal. "And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea. Forty years old was I, when

Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the

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wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said." Only think, dear reader, of this hoary veteran. At forty years of age, when all his companions but one bring a discouraging report, he maintains that in the Lord's strength they are well able to enter in. What are fenced cities and sons of Anak to the Lord! For forty years he wanders with his brethren; and now, at eighty-five, when the Lord has fulfilled his word, and brought them in; when thirty-one kings are slain, and the tribes are dividing their possessions; Caleb, as strong for war as at Kadesh-barnea five-and-forty years before, asks no place as an inheritance which has been already conquered. No; he would make still further conquests, and prove the power of God to give him victory over those very sons of Anak, whom in the Lord's name he had so lightly esteemed. He asks for their mountain and fortress as his inheritance, never doubting that the Lord will give him possession. "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said."

No wonder that we read, "And Joshua blessed him,

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and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for his inheritance." And did he gain possession? Oh yes; according to his faith it was done unto him. "And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak." And thus shall it be done to him whom the Lord delighteth to honour. Caleb honoured the Lord by trusting him, when all besides, but one, distrusted him; he honoured the Lord by making everything of him, and of his good land, and nothing whatever of the gigantic sons of Anak; and the Lord honoured him, by giving him, after five-and-forty years, to drive out those very adversaries, and take Hebron, their stronghold, for his portion in the land.

Dear readers, it is to a heavenly, not an earthly Canaan, that we are called. It is not to a land flowing with milk and honey, where grapes of Eshcol are to be gathered, and all earthly comforts to be enjoyed for the present transitory life, but to "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." But the faith which hears this call, and by which we are kept for this inheritance, is a faith that overcomes the world. If we have "*our good things*" here, we renounce the heavenly inheritance. We cannot have both Christ in heaven as our treasure, our portion, and have the world as our portion too. Do the world's frowns, and all the trials and difficulties which are inseparable from a heavenward path, seem to us like "tall sons of

Anak" that cannot be overcome? Then we are not like Caleb. Where is our faith? What thoughts we must have of Christ and heaven, if we are not willing, in God's strength, to suffer for their sake. Dear reader, may some aged Jephunneh have joy in you, as a young Caleb who wholly follows the Lord! as one who thinks heaven and Christ worth suffering for, even if it should be the loss of all things. May you have faith in God, like Caleb's, and trust him to bring you through all that would resist or intercept, and keep you by his power unto eternal salvation.

QUESTIONS ON "CALEB."

1 Where was Caleb's faith exercised?

2 Where was it answered?

3 Of what twelve men was Caleb one?

4 With whom does the thought of sending them seem to have originated?

5 From what passage would you gather this? (Give the words as well as the place.)

6 Under whose sanction did Moses act in sending them out?

7 If they had been men of faith, of what would their faith have assured them?

8 Who among them were men of faith?

9 Who do you suppose were the two who bore on a staff the cluster of grapes?

10 What had Caleb to do which shows that the words of his companions had stirred up discontent among the people?

11 What were Caleb's words on this occasion?

12 Why did Caleb speak thus?

13 What was the progress in evil made by the ten wicked spies?

14 How far did the people go in their rebellion?

15 While Moses and Aaron were on their faces before the Lord, how were Joshua and Caleb employed?

16 What was the effect on the people?

17 What was the Lord about to do?

18 How was it he spared the people?

19 What was the punishment they received for their rebellion?

20 How was Joshua's faithfulness rewarded?

21 What proof did Caleb give of unabated faith and courage, when they had been several years in Canaan?

22 Can you produce a passage in the early part of 1 Samuel, which is verified in the Lord *honouring* Caleb, who had *honoured* him?

23 What place did Caleb receive for an inheritance?

24 Who were they that he drove thence?

25 To what are we called?

26 By what are we kept for the heavenly inheritance?

27 What are they that may seem like the tall sons of Anak in the way?

28 How are they to be overcome?

MARIA;

OR,

PASSAGES FROM THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

PART II.—CASTLES IN THE AIR.

LITTLE Maria sat on her stool one day, looking very intently into the fire, but not as if she saw it. Her eyes were fixed, and there was a half-smile on her countenance, as if her thoughts were pleasantly occupied.

"Maria, what are you thinking about?" said her father, at last.

"Oh, papa," said the little girl, "I was thinking about,—what if I were a fairy!"

"Well, and what if you were a fairy?" said her father.

"Why, then, how nice it would be, papa! If I wanted to go anywhere, I should only have to wish, and then I should be there; and if I wanted a beautiful house, or a garden, or books, or anything in the world, I should only have to stamp on the ground, and it would come right up. And I have just thought of another thing; I could always do just what I liked; and if mamma wanted me to go up stairs for her when I was reading, I could *wish*, and the things she wanted would come. Oh, how funny it would be," continued she, bursting into a laugh, "to see the things come tumbling down stairs!"

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Her father smiled too. "This last is a very important consideration to be sure," said he.

"Oh, it would be so nice! Don't you wish I was a fairy, papa?"

"No, my dear."

"You don't, papa! Well, I do not see why. You know, you could have everything you wanted, too. I would build you a fine house, a great deal better than this; and you should have as many books as you want to study, and horses, and carriages to ride in, and everything else. *Now*, don't you wish so, papa?"

"No, my dear."

"How strange! Will you tell me why, papa?"

"One reason is, that I do not think all these fine things would make us any happier."

"Not any happier with everything we wanted, papa! You grow stranger and stranger."

"I do not suppose I can make you understand this; but if you live a few years longer, you will learn that our happiness is very little affected by such things."

"Why, papa, it seems to me that this is *all* which makes some people happier than others."

"Then rich people are always happy, and poor ones always unhappy. Is it so?"

"No, papa. I think—I am sure—it is not. You know that little girl that was burnt so dreadfully, and was very poor besides. I am sure she seemed a great deal happier than Mr. C. does, with all his money."

"These two cases, then, seem to be exceptions to your rule."

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"Oh, papa, it will not do for a rule at all; for now I think of a great many more just like them; so I give up, papa, about money making people happy. And yet," resumed she, after a pause, "I can't help thinking it would make *me* happy; there are so many things I want."

"Will money buy everything you want?"

"No, papa; but if I was a fairy, you know, I could have everything, whether it could be bought or not: could not I?"

"As I am not so well acquainted with the powers of fairies as you seem to be, I will not undertake to answer that question."

"Oh, papa, now you are laughing at me; but I am not so foolish as to suppose there are such things as fairies—only *if* there were, and *if* I were one."

"Two very important *ifs*. But suppose, now, you were trying to fill up a pit, and it grew larger just as fast as you poured into it, would it ever be full?"

"No, papa," said Maria, wondering much at what she thought a very irrelevant question.

"Well, my dear, to attempt to satisfy a person's desires is just like this: for they increase as fast as they are gratified, and a person is just as far from being satisfied as he was at the beginning."

"I don't see how that can be."

"How is it in your own case, Maria? You thought a month ago that you should be perfectly happy if

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you had as many books as your cousin Sarah; your uncle made you a present of all Miss ——'s Stories for Children; and now I want to know if you were as happy as you expected to be."

"I was at first, papa."

"I know that, my dear; I have not forgotten how you capered about, and shook the house, in your joy; but, after a while, were you perfectly satisfied?"

"No, papa; I remember I began to wish I had books enough to fill my little red library. And, papa, I do believe, now I think of it, that it is always so; for when uncle gave me a quarter of a dollar last July, I began to want more, though, till then, I had not thought anything about it. I thought, if I had a whole dollar, I should be satisfied; but afterwards I had a dollar for having my tooth out, and was not any more satisfied."

"Well, now, you have only to put thousands of dollars in the place of one, and you will understand how a rich man may be as dissatisfied with his condition as a poor one."

"Papa," resumed Maria, after a pause, "If I believed you ever so much, I do not think it would keep me from wishing such things; I want to be a fairy as much now as I did before."

Her father smiled. "So I suppose, my dear."

"Then, papa, are there no people happy?"

"None that are perfectly happy in this world; but some are much happier than others."

"I suppose you mean Christians, papa?"

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"Yes; but, even among those who are Christians, some are happier than others."

"What is the reason, if being rich or poor does not make any difference?"

"Some persons are *disposed* to be contented in any circumstances; they are always cheerful and good-natured, and make everybody around them happy. Others have a peevish, discontented disposition, which would make them unhappy, if they were masters of the world. You have seen examples of both these kinds of persons."

"Have I, papa? Who are they, I wonder? Oh, I know: cousin Sarah is one that is always happy."

"Well, it is no matter who the other is. I have one thing more to tell you, and that is, that any place or situation looks pleasanter at a distance than near. I could tell you a story in proof of this."

"Oh, papa, please do tell it me."

"Well, my dear, there was once a little girl, who had the promise of going with her father and mother to spend a few days in the country. She was much delighted with the plan, and for several days talked of nothing else. She had read a story about two little lambs, called Peace and Inexperience, and she thought she should see some lambs just like them. So impatient was she, that she could hardly keep from crying, when she found that they were to set off an hour later than she supposed. When they arrived at the place they were going to visit, her father lifted her from the chaise, but hardly had her feet touched

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the ground, when she espied two or three dirty sheep in a pasture a little way off, and exclaiming, 'Oh, there's my Peace and Inexperience,' she darted off in pursuit of them. Her father determined to let her go on, and went into the house; but in less than half an hour the little girl came back covered with mud, and with a sorrowful countenance.

"'Well, my dear,' said her father, 'is the country as pleasant as you expected?'"

"'Oh, papa,' was the reply, 'it is as different as can be. I thought the lambs would be pretty little white creatures, that would come when I called them, and eat out of my hand; but, instead of that, they are great black ugly things; and, when I tried to catch them, they waddled off; and the more I called them, the faster they ran. Then, instead of the pretty green grass, it is all just like a swamp, and I slipped down ever so many times, and lost my shoes, and muddied my frock. I am sure I do not want to come to the country again.'"

Maria had listened, blushing and smiling, to this story; and, at its conclusion, she said,—

"Oh, papa, I know who you mean; but the reason I was so disappointed was, that all the books I had read told about their *snowy fleeces*, and their playing and frisking about; so I thought it must be true."

"You will find out, one of these days, that everything in books is not true. And now, my dear, it is bed-time. Good night."

"Good night, papa."

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WHAT LACK I YET?

An inhabitant of the Province of Dalecarlia in Sweden worked for a rich lord in the neighbourhood of Stockholm. Having occasion to walk some distance together, the lord conversed with the labourer, and asked him if he knew that this and that belonged to his estate. The Dalecarlian answered, "No," to each question—but every time, from the mouth of the lord, he heard the words, "It belongs to me." "Yes, *all*," added the lord at last, "all that you can see from this spot is mine." The Dalecarlian stood still a moment; stuck his spade into the ground, took off his cap, and, then, pointing to the sky above, said in a solemn voice, "Here I can see heaven. *Is that also thine?*"

Now dear children, let me ask you the same question. Is Heaven *yours?* Can *you* say, "Heaven is *my* home?" If so, happy are you, and bright is the prospect before you; but if not, oh! take heed to your steps, for you are hastening on to everlasting destruction. You may be the children of wealthy parents, and be possessed of every luxury and comfort that this world can afford; but if you still lack the "one thing needful," it is all as *nought.* Jesus himself said to his disciples, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

On the other hand, you may be the children of those who are poor in this world; but if you possess Christ, you are rich indeed; for, having him, you possess *all*

things. The poorest man on earth who can truly say, "Jesus is *mine*," is in reality far happier than the most powerful monarch of the world, who has nations and armies at his command, but is still without Christ. Solomon was the greatest, the wisest, and the richest man that ever lived; but what does he say of all his greatness, his wisdom, and his riches? That it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. And so it is with all earthly happiness; it is but for a moment, and then passes away for ever. The only *true* and lasting happiness is in the knowledge of sin forgiven, and the possession of eternal life. Jesus died upon the cross *for you*, and by shedding his blood, has for ever atoned for sin; and if you really believe this in your heart you are saved; for God says in his word, that "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life;" and again, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Oh, dear children, let me entreat you to go to Jesus *at once;* take your place before him as lost sinners, and cry to him for mercy. He has promised that he will not cast out *any* that come to him. Do not put off seeking your salvation, for you know not how short a time may be allowed you; therefore, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Then, when you know Jesus as your Saviour, you will be able to look up to God as your *Father*, and to call heaven your *Home*.

THE LITTLE MISSIONARIES.

I AM going to tell you a story about three little girls, Eliza, Mary, and Maggie.

These girls lived part of the year in the city, and part in the country. They liked much better to be in the country than in town, and became very anxious to help, when their mamma told nurse to pack up their clothes. I don't wonder they liked going to the country, for their home was a very pretty one. There were beautiful hills on every side; and, besides, they always came at the season of the year when everything looked best —when the trees have just unfolded their fresh and beautiful leaves, and the grass is so green, and the little lambs are running about on the hills, looking so playful that little Maggie used to think she would like to have one for a companion, and often tried to catch one, but they were too nimble for her, and she never succeeded. Another reason why these girls liked the country was, that all the people in the cottages seemed glad to see them; and it is very pleasant to see smiling faces. Their papa and mamma used to give them books to give to the children in the cottages; and this is the part of the story which I wish particularly to tell you.

In a little cottage, about two miles from the house where my young friends lived, there lived two little girls. I don't know what were their names; but they were always neat and clean; and they used to come to

the door, and smile, and curtsey, when they saw the carriage coming with Eliza, Mary, and Maggie, who never failed to throw them a book with a pretty story.

The next summer my friends went to the country as usual, and the first time they drove past the cottage, they looked eagerly for the children, but none appeared. Their papa and mamma seeing their disappointment, kindly stopped to inquire about the little girls, who they thought would come running out the moment they heard the carriage stop; but alas! they did not come; though, after a little while, a woman, whom they knew to be the mother, came out leading one child.

The mother was weeping, for her other little girl had died in the winter; and yet, smiling through her tears, she told them that one of the little books which they had given, had been the means of leading her little girl to heaven. She said that it had taught her she was a sinner, and that Jesus is the only Saviour; and the Holy Spirit had revealed that Jesus was her Saviour, and died for her sins. The little girl, she went on to say, died quite happily, with the book clasped in her hand. I dare say some of my readers think they would like to be missionaries, and go over the sea and teach the heathen children. At present, at any rate, you cannot do that, but here is a way of being missionaries that must be in the power of a great many. I am sure many of you have kind fathers and mothers, who would allow you to have little books to give away. But if you expect your books to do any

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good, don't forget to pray for God's blessing on every one you give away. If you "ask" this blessing, "you shall receive" it; don't doubt that. And if you are to seek in this way to bring other children to Jesus, see that you give your own heart first.

Think how sad it would be if children brought by means of your books to join the holy, happy band around the throne of God in heaven, should look there for you who gave them the book, and should look in vain.—*Extracted.*

PLAYING AT KEEPING SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Not long since, in one of the schools in New York, a teacher found Mary, a German girl twelve years old, in tears. "Why, what's the matter, Mary?"

Little Mary burst into tears again. As soon as she could answer, she said,

"My little sister Rosa is dead."

"Why, I did not know you had a little sister," said the teacher.

"Oh, yes, ma'am; she was a very little girl, only six years old."

"I hope she has gone to heaven," said the teacher.

"Oh, yes," said Mary; "we know she has."

"Mary, what makes you say that Rosa has gone to heaven?"

"Oh, teacher, if you had seen her you would have thought so too."

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"Why, what did she do?"

"Oh, the last day she lived, she sung just as long as her breath lasted."

"What did she sing?"

"It was, 'I think when I read that sweet story of old,'" replied Mary; "and 'There is a happy land.' And then she prayed in German for father and mother, and next she prayed for us all."

"What did little Rosa pray about?" said the teacher.

"Oh, it was something about Jesus Christ; about his precious blood, about his righteousness."

"What Sunday-school did little Rosa go to?" for the teacher knew she had never come there.

"Oh, she never went to any Sunday-school."

"What day-school, then, did she learn these little hymns in?"

"She never went to any day-school, ma'am."

"Why, where did she learn these things, then?"

"Oh, the little girls who live up-stairs in our house used to go to Sunday-school, and they would come down into the back yard, and 'play' at Sunday-school!"

Thus had little Rosa learned the truths, which the Holy Spirit had blessed to her soul.

"Oh, do not be discouraged,
For Jesus is your friend."

[*Extracted.*]

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OUR HEAVENLY HOME.

HEAVENLY Zion built above;
Heavenly resting-place I love;
Heavenly home, God's glory there;
Heavenly glory, oh, how fair!
Jehovah-Jesus, thou its light,
Heavenly Lamb, above all bright;
Jehovah-Jesus, none like thee,
Heavenly joy thy face to see.

Heavenly city, all of gold—
Heavenly gold, its fame untold;
Heavenly light, as jasper bright—
Heavenly jasper, clear and white;
Heavenly wall, so great and high;
Heavenly gates there meet the eye—
Heavenly gates, each gate one pearl:
Heavenly hand that formed them all.

Heavenly angel at each gate,
Heavenly messengers there wait;
Heavenly record, God is true;
Heavenly rest for faithful few;
Heavenly wall, of jasper made,
Heavenly stones in it are laid—
Heavenly stones! most precious these;
Heavenly colours! how they please!

Heavenly street of gold so pure,
Heavenly way for feet as pure;
Heavenly river on it goes;
Heavenly throne from whence it flows!

Heavenly trees of life they see,
Heavenly fruit on every tree;
Heavenly morn, how bright it shines!
Heavenly day that ne'er declines.

Jehovah-Jesus, quickly come;
Heavenly Lamb, come take us home;
Jehovah-Jesus, thee we love;
Heavenly sight thyself above!
Heavenly Bride, thy blood-bought one,
Heavenly beauty now her own;
Heavenly throne she shares with thee,
Heavenly joy, oh, give it me!

A DOXOLOGY.

Glory, my Father, be to thee,
Who loved me ere the world was made,*
Who sent thy Son to die for me—
On him my every sin was laid.

Glory, my Saviour, be to thee,
Who hast redeemed me by thy blood,
Who bore such suffering, all for me,
To reconcile me to my God.

Glory, my Teacher, be to thee,
Who teachest me the blessed Word,
Grant that I may so learn of thee
As still to abide in Christ my Lord.

Eternal Trinity, to thee
Be glory, praise, and power divine;
Thou Three-in-One, and One-in-Three,
For evermore thou wilt be mine.

* Eph. i. 4.

THE TWO SAILOR BOYS;

OR,

"ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU."

How wild is the storm, how dark is the night,
The boldest of spirits it well may affright;
Behold, those poor sailors are tossed to and fro,
They're driven before it, and where will they go?

Amongst that rough crew are two sailor boys,
The waves that dash o'er them they deem but as toys;
Now, hark at the thunder; what lightnings do play,
One moment is night, the next bright as day.

The lightning's terrific; oh, how it appals!
As it gleams on one boy, his countenance falls;
He says to the other, while pallid with fear,
"I no more shall see my own mother dear."

"Oh, do not say so, Charlie boy, but be brave,
I know there's a God, who is able to save;
Besides, at the Bethel there's prayer held to-night,
They'll remember us boys, and all will be right.

"For mother, I know, and aunt will be there,
And mother has told me that God answers prayer;
And so, my dear Charlie, we shall not be lost,
Although at this time we're awfully toss'd!"

Thus speaks the poor boy, when crash goes the mast,
The ship gives a lurch, they think 'tis the last;
When Willie calls out, "Charlie boy, don't you fear,
There's a God who can save, I *feel* he is near."

And that God does now prove he's the hearer of prayer;
The ship goes to pieces, each heart quakes with fear!
But the two sailor boys, for whom prayer has been made
Are brought to the arms of those who had prayed.

A. Z.

[The incident above described occurred off the coast of Northumberland.]

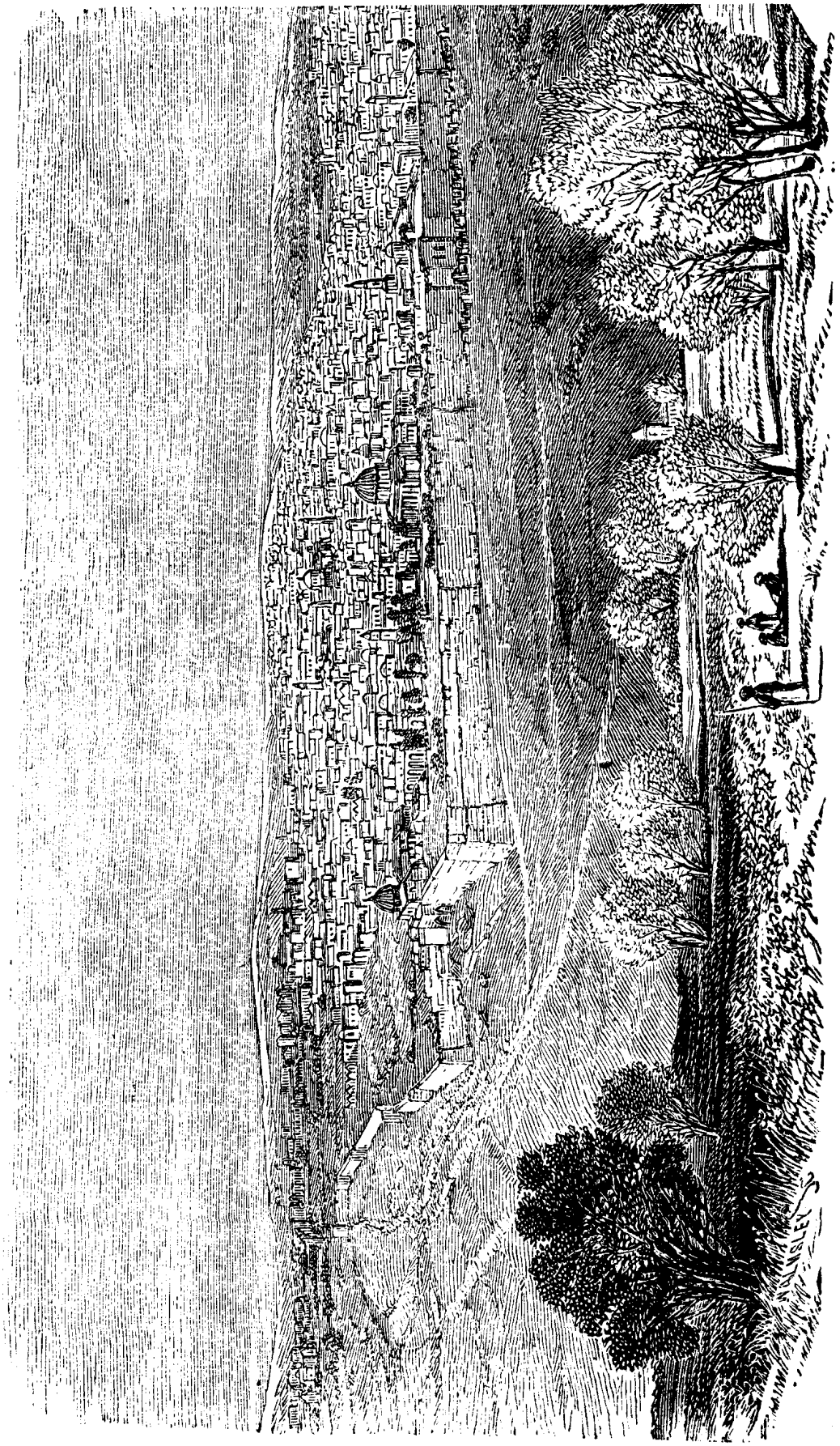
"GOD IS LOVE."

Suggested by my little girl's writing out the above words as her "favourite verse."

Oh! quickly spoken, quickly traced,
Too quickly from the thought effaced!
Three little words—so short and few,
You learn them almost at the view:
But, can you tell the depth divine
That lies within this little line?
That *there* the hidden well-springs lie,
Of heaven's eternal treasury?

Oh! seek my loved one, for the grace,
To *feel* the truth which here you trace;
'Tis God's own word, and he alone
Can make its meaning truly known;
But since he tells you HE IS LOVE,
You need but ask, and you shall prove
The deep bright joy of knowing him,
Which turns all other brightness dim:
A joy which, though begun on earth,
Will need eternity to tell its worth.

M. A. T.

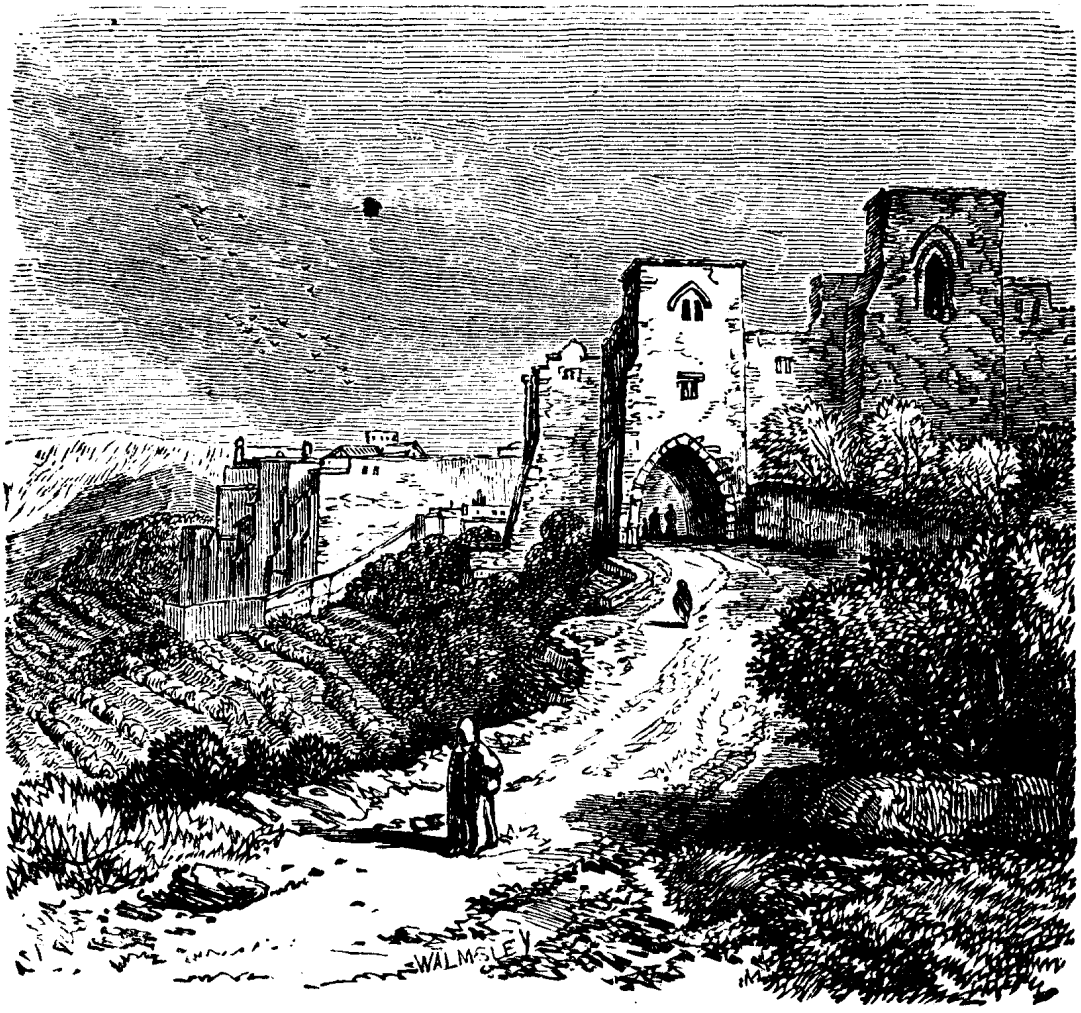


MODERN JERUSALEM

GILGAL AND BOCHIM.

WHAT associations of thought and memory there may be with the names of certain places! To readers of English history, there needs no explanation of what is designed in any passing allusion to Runnymede or Waterloo. The signing of Magna Charta at the one, and the triumphant issue at the other of the war which had so long desolated Europe, are so well known, that the name of the place stands in either case for the event which transpired there. If we turn to Scripture, such names as Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Calvary, instantly link themselves with hallowed memories of him who was born at the first, whose agony was in the second, and whose cross was erected on the third. Nor are such associations wanting with Old Testament names. Where is there a diligent reader of the Bible to whom Babel does not suggest the thought of *confusion?* Bethel, *of the house of God?* and Goshen, *of the plenty that abounded there?* The two names which stand at the head of this article may not be so instantly suggestive; but their associations will be found, on enquiry, to be such as to entitle them to rank with those before alluded to.

Gilgal was the place of Israel's first encampment in the land of Canaan. There they set up the twelve stones, taken out of Jordan, to be witnesses to their offspring of the wonders God had wrought in bringing them dry-shod through the mighty river. There were all the men of Israel circumcised who had been born in the wilderness. It was from this fact, indeed, that



ENTRANCE TO BETHLEHEM.

the place derived its name. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal (that is, *rolling*) unto this day." The people were now thoroughly separated to God, according to his own ordinance, and the glorious position into which his power had brought them. It was at Gilgal they kept the passover, and on the morrow ate of the old corn of the land which the Lord had given them. It was from Gilgal they went forth to the capture of Jericho, and thither they returned each evening in the week they spent in compassing the city. From Gilgal, the place of separation to God, they went forth on that memorable occasion of which

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we read, "There was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel:" and unto Gilgal they returned after the victories of that day, and of every day. "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp at Gilgal." These words occur a great many times, and give a significance to Gilgal which the name itself would never have suggested. *The place of complete and abiding separation to God is the place of abiding victory and strength.* O that my young Christian readers may remember this! Death to all that we are naturally, as "in the flesh," is the path of life, the secret of strength, and the pledge of certain triumph over our spiritual foes. With us, Christians, "circumcision" is not that "which is outward in the flesh," but "that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." "We are the circumcision," says Paul, meaning himself and his fellow-believers in Christ, "which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Such, only in outward doings, were Joshua and Israel, throughout the days of Joshua in the land. The camp was at Gilgal till the war with the Canaanites had put Israel in possession of the land; then Shiloh, where the Lord's tabernacle was set up, became the place of their peaceful assembling together.

There are two passages which show in the most impressive manner the effect of Israel being thus kept in the place of separation to God. "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give

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unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. They failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." (Joshua xxi. 43–45.) This is the first passage.

Before quoting the second, I would remark that we must not suppose all the Canaanites had been destroyed. Great numbers had, and enough of the land had been taken possession of for the nation to settle down quietly, if it would. But they ought not to have settled down; and in the other passage, too long to quote in full, Joshua is reminding them, on the one hand, of what the Lord had done for them, and, on the other, urging them to continue in the path to which victory is secure. "I am old and stricken in age; and ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you: for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you." He tells them how he has divided unto them by lot the nations that remain, and adds, "And the Lord your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight." "Be ye therefore very courageous, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." He warns them against idolatry, and says, "But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto

this day." He warns them solemnly against any alliances with those that remained, and says, "And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." (Joshua xxiii.)

Dear young Christian reader, do you wish, at the close of your earthly course, to have the unclouded witness of the Lord's faithfulness to every word he has spoken? Are you asking how you may be like Paul, who, in the last letter he is known to have written, exclaims, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day"? Do you long to be like this faithful soldier of Christ Jesus? and are you asking how it can ever be? *Let Gilgal suggest the answer.* Already have you taken shelter from God's righteous judgment under the blood of Christ, your Passover sacrificed for you. Already are you alive from the dead, through him who was delivered for your offences, and raised again for your justification. God has thus shown himself to be *for* you, as he was *for* Israel, in bringing them through the Red Sea. Already have you crossed the Jordan, and are associated with Christ, not as risen only, but as ascended. "Quickened toge-

ther, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is only as thus one with Christ, that you are exhorted to leave all of Egypt behind you, as at Gilgal. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is to be truly circumcised in heart. Be, in practice, what you are in Christ. Be content with nothing less. Allow yourselves in nothing less. Give no quarter to the flesh. Never seek to please yourselves. Never desire or attempt to do your own will. Be what you profess to be—Christians. It is thus that God will be with you; thus will you succeed in your conflicts, and make progress in the ways of God. Not that you will thus either have, or desire to have, any ground for self-satisfaction. No; Christ will be your only foundation and your only stay; but in the end, instead of looking back with useless regret on a life wasted on self, and the world, and sin, and your soul just saved, as it were by fire, you will have an enjoyment of Christ as the one by whose love and loveliness you have been drawn onwards in the path, at the close of which you see him waiting to receive you. Doubtless we shall all see enough to regret in the review of our pilgrimage; but we read of no regrets in what Paul was inspired to write in his departing words. Joshua, too, and Caleb, speak only of the Lord's faithfulness, of which they had such full and ample experience; and what God did for these three he can do for us. Oh for faith! Oh for a single eye! Oh for entire devotedness! May we

learn the lesson of Gilgal, and prove the strength, and reap the victories of which that lesson is the secret.

How different a place was Bochim. "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore, I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you." So you see the angel-Jehovah had been at Gilgal. Not that his presence had been shown there in any public victory over the enemy, or deliverance of Israel, as at the Red Sea, Jordan, or Jericho. No; it was secretly that the Lord had been at Gilgal, but his presence there, with the people who were so thoroughly separated to him, was what gave them success elsewhere. And now he has left Gilgal, and makes himself known at Bochim; but how changed his voice! The people were no longer the circumcised ones of Gilgal, dead to Egypt, and given up to the Lord, who had brought them into his good land. Alas! no; "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel." But that generation had passed away, and their offspring had sinned

against the Lord, as he himself, in an angelic form, declared at Bochim. And what was the effect of the angel's words? "And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim"—that is *weepers;* "and they sacrificed there unto the Lord." It is not that the Lord forsakes his people. He even deigns to accept their sacrifices—their worship; but Gilgal is exchanged for Bochim. Sorrow for sin and its sad consequences takes the place of the Lord's outstretched arm, giving strength and victory to the people who were dead to self and sin, and entirely given up to serve and glorify the Lord. The whole book of Judges takes its tone and character from Bochim instead of from Gilgal. It records the unfaithfulness of Israel, the chastenings they received, the Lord's pity for them when they were broken and sore afflicted, and his various interferences, by one judge and another, to deliver them. How different from the career of all but unbroken victory, of which the book of Joshua is the record.

Dear young Christian reader, Gilgal and Bochim are both before thee. The Lord grant thee to be true to thy heavenly calling, dead to everything but Christ, and so by the Holy Ghost occupied with him, that he may be magnified in thy body, whether it be by life or by death. A life of sinning and repenting, falls and restorations, may, through God's infinite grace and the value of Christ's precious blood, have heaven at

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the end of it. But it is our blessed privilege to live a heavenly life on earth, to exert a heavenly influence on those around us, and—as the overcomers in Rev. ii. and iii.—inherit the rich results through all eternity of Christ's strength being made perfect in our weakness.

QUESTIONS ON "GILGAL AND BOCHIM."

1 Can you state, very briefly, a few of the chief events which occurred at Gilgal?

2 What had taken place on that day of which we are told "there was no day like that"? and where have we the account?

3 What is the place of abiding victory and strength?

4 How long was the camp at Gilgal?

5 Where did the people afterwards peacefully assemble?

6 How far had the conquest of the land proceeded when Joshua began to speak to the people of his being old and stricken in age?

7 Who was it that undertook to expel the remaining inhabitants of the land? and in what terms?

8 What striking proof had then been given of the faithfulness of God?

9 What great example have we in the New Testament of Christian faithfulness? and where have we his dying testimony?

10 In what character are we exhorted in the New Testament to leave all of Egypt behind us, like Israel at Gilgal?

11 With what did the angel-Jehovah threaten Israel at Bochim?

12 Why was the place called Bochim?

13 What, in contrast with merely getting to heaven, is the privilege of the Christian?

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PETER AND HIS FLOWERS.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—MATT. xxv. 40.

LET me introduce you, dear children, into a small room which bears evident marks of poverty. On a miserable bed lies a woman, pale and emaciated, and standing by her side is a boy, her only child. "Oh, mother," exclaims the boy, "what can I give you to refresh you? the cupboard is empty." The mother looking upward, answers, "The Lord has refreshed my soul: let us pray, my dear." The boy knelt by the bed-side weeping; but the mother poured out her heart in faith to God, the "husband of the widow, and the father of the fatherless;" she had been ill four weeks, and for several days there had been neither food nor money in the house. Which of you, my dear young friends, knows how sweet it is for the Lord to add his "Amen" to the prayer which the Spirit dictates to your heart? The poor widow had learned from the word of God, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." (John xiv. 13.) Peter, who had joined in spirit in his mother's prayer, rose from his knees, kissed her, and cried out, "Oh, mother, I have thought of something;" so saying, he left the room, and ran into a small garden behind the house, where many flowers were blooming, and filling the air with their sweet perfume. He quickly gathered the most beautiful, and having made a few nosegays, arranged them carefully in a basket. The roses, lilies, and other

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flowers smelled deliciously, and he fancied he could hear them saying to him, "Look at us; we toil not, neither do we spin; yet your Heavenly Father careth, for us." He understood their language, and felt comforted. "God be with you, dear mother," he said, "I shall soon be back." "Where are you going, my dear child?" inquired his mother. "Oh, mother," Peter replied confusedly, "let me go, I want to go somewhere;" and taking the basket of flowers on his head, he set out for the next town. His path lay through a forest, and the boy, who had not been out of the village during his mother's illness, felt much refreshed. It was a lovely morning in the beginning of May, the deep blue sky shone through the freshly clothed branches of the trees, which were glittering with thousands of dewdrops; and the flowers, in their brightest colours, sprang up in the sunshine. Silence was around him, broken only by the morning chimes from the neighbouring villages, or the whispers of the gentle wind in the branches of the trees. But he heard nothing, for he was talking to the Lord. The blooming flowers and waving branches only made him sorrowful. "Oh," said he, "if my poor mother were with me; but she is ill, and who knows whether the Lord is going to take her from me. But my dear Saviour knows that I am a poor helpless boy, and he *will* leave my dear mother with me; he *will not* take her away. Oh, dear Saviour! thou friend of the little ones, spare her to me; but thy will be done." A clear stream rippled through the other end of the

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forest, and the boy sat down on the bank, and watered his flowers with the fresh cool water. Now and then some birds came to drink, and Peter was delighted when he observed their tameness, and thought how God cared for all his creatures. As he looked at the glittering water a beetle whirled around him, buzzing from flower to flower, and at last settled in the opening cup of a water-lily which grew in the middle of the stream; but the flower was frequently overflowed with water, and the beetle was drawn under also. Poor thing! how it trembles; is there no help for it? Yes! Peter who has watched it all, rises and rescues the beetle from a watery grave; he let it crawl up and down his hand until its wings were dry; when it rested for a moment, and then flew buzzing away. Peter looked after it and cried, "If *I* have had power to help that beetle, how much more can my rich God help me." Thoughtfully he arose, took the basket on his head and went towards the town. The place was very quiet, for few of the shops were opened, and Peter walked happily through the streets, repeatedly crying out, "Buy flowers! nice flowers! buy, buy!" As he passed a large house, a lady was just opening the shutters of a window on the ground floor; she seemed to have heard him, for she called him, and looked at the flowers in his basket. "What do you charge for the lot?" inquired she. "It is my little daughter's birthday, and your flowers are very welcome." "Give me what you please," answered Peter with a look of childish confidence. "You seem to be poor," said the

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lady. "Yes, I am, and my mother is very ill, but——" At the same moment the door of the room opened, and a little girl looked in, saying, "Good morning, dear mother." "You are up very early, this morning, Matilda," replied the lady; and while she was speaking, she covered the basket of flowers. "Yes, mother, and I have already wished good morning to my birds and flowers;" answered the little girl. She stood in the half-opened door, and looked wonderingly at Peter; and he returned her look of interest, as he had never before seen a child so lovely. The mother gave the boy a large piece of money; he looked up inquiringly at her, with tears in his eyes, "Take it, my child," said she kindly, "and give it to your mother." "Thank you," answered he, "may God bless you;" and he ran joyfully towards his mother's cottage, where his arrival caused happiness and thanksgiving, similar to that which the prophet brought when he blessed the widow's cruse of oil. (1 Kings xvii. 8–16.)

Little Matilda did not forget the poor boy, whose grateful look touched her young heart, and she considered how she might do him more good. At last she went to her mother, and cried out joyfully, "Now I know what I can do; my grandfather gave me a sovereign on my birthday, and with that money we can buy a new suit for the poor boy, for he looked very ill clad." Her mother smiled, and said, "If you think the same, Matilda, in a week's time, we will go and buy the clothes." But she was very glad to hear this from her child, and cried to the Lord to preserve to her a

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heart for the need of the poor. At the end of a week Matilda came again, and said, "Mother, shall we go to a tailor, and buy some clothes for that poor boy?" Her mother went with her to purchase the clothes; and two days after, when the sun was shining brightly they took a walk to the village where Peter and his mother lived, Matilda carrying the parcel. They were rejoiced to find the poor woman much better; she was up, and endeavouring to work. "Ah!" she cried, "are you the good lady who gave that money to my child?" "Yes," cried Peter, "she is, she is." "Oh, then, let me thank you, and your beloved child; since you helped us in our need, it has gone better with us every day. Peter brought home bread and meat, and it has been blessed by God like the oil-cruse of the widow of Sarepta; for it is not all eaten yet, and when it is we hope the Lord will again help us." "Here Peter," said Matilda, "is a new dress, for that which you have on is very old." He was so astonished that he could not speak; he wished to express his thanks, but could not, and when at last he found the right answer, the little girl and her mother were gone. But they knew that his thanks were not due to them so much as to God who had given them the inclination to assist him; and that the Lord regards a service done to one of his poor ones, as done to himself.

It was some time before these two families heard anything more of each other, as Matilda and her mother passed the whole summer at a country seat, very far from the village where Peter lived. A few days after

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their return to their town residence, a beautiful autumn morning tempted them out of doors, and they walked towards the village where they left Peter and his mother. The leaves began to assume their red and yellow tints, and many had already fallen, and strewed their path through the forest. When they arrived at the village, the bell was tolling from the small church tower, and they soon met a funeral procession. "Whom are you burying?" asked the mother, of a man who passed her. "It is Peter S——" answered the man; "the only child of a pious widow; three days ago he departed to a better home." Both mother and child shed many tears as they followed the body of Peter to the grave. The minister spoke solemnly and affectionately to his little friends who stood around, showing the only way of salvation, through faith in the Lord Jesus, who is the "Resurrection and the Life" (John xi. 25); and he prayed earnestly that God would bless the "little ones," and lead them now by his Spirit to that blessed Saviour, that they might dwell with him for ever. And as Peter's body was lowered into the grave, his little friends sang and strewed flowers on the coffin.

Death has been here, and called away
A brother from our side;
The tomb contains but lifeless clay,
He lives through Christ who died.

His spirit now can praise the Lord,
With all the saints above;
His body waits the quickening word,
To reach the home of love.

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MARIA;

OR,

PASSAGES FROM THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

PART III.—A DECEIVED HEART.

"PAPA," said Maria suddenly, one day, after she had been thinking some time; "Papa, what does *heart* mean?"

"You know, dear, that your heart, as the word is used in Scripture, is not anything that you can see."

"Oh, yes, papa, I know that; but I want to know what it *is* like."

"You know there is something within you which loves and hates; this something is your heart. When God said, 'My son, give me thine heart,' he meant 'Love me.'"

"Papa, it seems as if I wanted to love God, but I don't know how."

"You know how to love me, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, papa."

"But I never told you how to love me."

"Oh, but that is very different."

"Different—how?"

"Why, papa, I see you, and know all about you, and you love me."

"Do you love nobody that you have never seen, Maria?"

"I don't know, papa; yes, to be sure, I love grand-

papa, and uncle George, and aunt Caroline. But then I have heard you talk about them, papa, and I know that *you* love them; and they have sent me presents."

"So I have talked to you about God; and you know that I love him; and he has made you more presents than everyone else in the world. Besides, you love people sometimes who have never given you anything, and whom none of us have ever seen. Don't you remember Little Henry and his Bearer?"

"Yes, papa, I love Henry, I am sure."

"You see, then, it is possible to love the characters of people whom you have never seen. Now, the character of God is infinitely lovely; he deserves to be loved more than all other things together. And if you love those who have been kind to you, only think what God has done for you. He gave you parents to take care of you, when you could not take care of yourself; he has given you food and clothing, and health and friends. He has watched over you by night and by day; and when you are sick, he made you well. And now, when he comes to you, after all this, and says, 'My daughter, give me thine heart;' you say, 'No, I can't; I don't know how; I can love my father and mother, and brothers and sisters; but I can't love God, who gave them all to me.'"

Maria, bursting into tears, replied, "Oh, papa, I will, I do love him."

"Perhaps you think so now, Maria."

"Oh, I shall always love him; I know I shall." Her father smiled.

"Papa, you cannot see into my heart; how do you know that I do not love God?"

"Suppose you should come to me every day, and say, 'Dear papa, how I love you!' and then go away, and disobey me,—could I believe you?"

"No, papa."

"Well, dear, how can I believe that you love God, when I see you every day doing those things that he forbids?"

Maria could not reply to this, and so the conversation closed. She was obliged to confess to herself that her father had spoken the truth, but still she thought it no evidence that she did not love God. "I never thought," said she to herself, "that when I am cross with George, or anything like that, I am sinning against God; at least, it never seemed as if he minded anything about it, and I did not think about his being so good either; but now I remember it, I shall never do so again, and then papa will *see* that I love God."

Maria was surprised to find how much more difficult it was to be good than she had imagined. It seemed to her that she committed even more faults than usual, now that she was particularly anxious to do well; but this was because she watched herself more narrowly than before. She was not discouraged, however, during the first two or three days; if she failed one day, she began again the next; but at length she began to be impatient, and grew tired of such constant watchfulness. At length, when her resolution was quite forgotten, and she had unconsciously relapsed

into all her former habits, she was again led to reflection by her father's account of the sufferings and death of Christ. She listened with eager attention, and then, with a countenance full of horror and indignation, began to express her hatred of the Jews, and her pity for the Saviour.

"Papa, how long ago did Christ live?"

"About eighteen hundred years, my dear."

"Oh, papa, don't you wish you had been alive then? I am sure I wish I had. I would have given him my house and my bed, and everything I had, and then he would not have said, 'The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.' How I do wish I had lived then! and we would have kept those ugly, cruel Jews from killing him. Oh, how I hate them; don't you, papa?"

"I do not dare to say what I would have done, Maria; if we had lived when Christ did, we should probably have treated him as the Jews did."

"Papa, you don't think that I should have helped to crucify Christ?"

"How can I disbelieve the Bible, Maria? and it tells us that all hearts are alike."

"Oh, papa, I never, never——."

"Maria, these same 'ugly, cruel Jews' thought about themselves just as you do about yourself. They said, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets;' and yet you see they did what was infinitely worse."

A pause.

"But, papa, I don't see what this has to do with me; I have never done any such things."

"My dear, you have had no opportunity to show your hatred and contempt of Christ in the way the Jews did; but have you not done it just as plainly in other ways? You say how you should have loved the Saviour if you had lived then—why do you not love him now? You say you would have given him everything you had; but what sacrifice have you ever made for him? You wish you had been one of his disciples, but you disobey him every day. When I see you governing your temper, becoming gentle, amiable, and submissive, and doing all in your power to please Christ, I shall be more ready to believe that, if you had lived when he was on earth, you would have left all and followed him."

Maria was much distressed, and wept violently. She could not think her heart was so bad as her father represented it; and yet she dared not say so while her conduct was no better. She remembered her former conversation with her father, and the transient efforts to which it had given rise, and wondered how it happened that she had forgotten them. However, she determined to "try again," and to begin the next morning—for Maria, like some older people, never dated her plans of reformation from the *present* moment—to do everything which she thought would please Christ. For the present, she dismissed the matter, somewhat comforted by her good resolutions, and went to play at making houses with her brother George. So transient are the impressions of childhood!

RESURRECTION.

AN ALLEGORY.

ONE very hot day a weary caterpillar was toiling slowly along in search of food; the ground was parched, and full of cracks and hard mounds, and, as he mounted one after another, he was often in danger of falling into or over what appeared to him terrible gulfs and precipices. He was moreover very hungry, not having tasted a morsel of anything green for many hours. The plant on which he subsisted was scarce, and the drought had withered up the last leaf of the one he had lived on from his birth. Soon the noontide sun began to beat fiercely on his poor naked body; for he was not, like many more fortunate beings of his kind, protected by a thick coat of hair. At length, worn out and full of despair, he stopped under the shade of a small flowering shrub to rest awhile; here he could not help bemoaning his hard fate. "Ah," he exclaimed, "surely I am the most unhappy of beings: food has failed me; my life is but a life of toil and misery. I creep like a snail on the ground, with the chance every moment of being devoured by some bird or reptile, if I die not first of starvation." As the poor caterpillar thus bewailed himself, a bright creature who was feasting on the nectar of the flowers overhead, and who had listened to his sad accents, suddenly alighted on the ground close by him. There she began to spread out her beautiful wings, so that the sun might bring out all their gorgeous colouring, trying in every way in her power to attract his

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attention. "Ah," said he, at length catching her beaming eye fixed full on him, "wherefore do you come? is it to cause me to feel my misery more keenly? Do you spread forth those exquisite wings, and show off your light, aërial frame, only to remind me I am a *clod of the earth*, unable to lift myself from the ground? Happy being! destined but to soar in yonder sky, or to hover amidst flowers that never bloom for me; go! ah, go! and leave a poor wretch, whose misery death will soon end."

"Ah, my friend," began with silvery accents the being whom he addressed, "listen to me. Once I too crept on the ground, a poor worm like you. Nay! why look so amazed? I tell you the simple truth; and before a few more setting suns, you also will be soaring on brighter wings than mine, sipping honey from summer's sweetest flowers, and tasting autumn's richest fruits. Yon blue sky will then be your loved resort. But listen: Ere that can be, you must for a season be shut up in a dark, narrow prison, and your present wretched body must undergo an entire change. But how little will that affect you in the anticipation of what is to follow! Believe me, friend, it *will* be so; take courage, and be of good heart; it will not be long ere we meet up there, where you see thousands of happy creatures sporting in the sunbeams." Then fixing her large beaming eye for a moment on the poor creature to whom she spake, she spread her wings and quickly vanished out of his sight.

For awhile the poor caterpillar remained motionless,

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bewildered at the wondrous news he had heard. *Could* it be true? He hardly knew how to believe it; yet the bare idea of its being probable inspired him with such joy that it seemed to infuse new life into his languid frame, more especially when the butterfly's statement was corroborated by a sober bee, who was working close by, and who added that he had himself often been an eye witness of the fact. The caterpillar, feeling he could no longer doubt the good news, started afresh on his journey like a new creature. He found the same trials and difficulties as before, but his thoughts were no longer occupied by them, for his eyes were above, anticipating the time when he would be soaring in the bright blue sky, or hovering among the most beautiful flowers. Now no longer did he look upon himself as a clod of the earth, but as a being destined to a wondrous after-existence.

I do not scruple, my dear young friends, to put the fact you have been reading of, and which you have yourselves doubtless witnessed, before you, as a simple and beautiful type of resurrection. In the book of Proverbs you will find that the Holy Ghost has not disdained to bring before us, as examples of exceeding wisdom, some of the smallest, and to our thoughts, the most despicable of creatures. The "ants," the "conies," the "locusts," and the "spider." What! you will exclaim, did God the Holy Ghost instruct the wisest of men to write about a spider? Yes; and also caused him to connect that despicable creature with all that is greatest in this

world. "Her hands take hold in kings' palaces." My dear reader, man talks of *small* things and *great* things, and despises small things; but it is not so with God. God is *so great* that nothing is small with him. He chooses "*base* things, things that are *despised*, and things that *are not*, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh may glory in His presence." (1 Cor. i. 23, 24.) He takes a little humble child, and sets him in the midst of the proud men around, and says, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child shall be the *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 4.) Well, and he turns our eyes to the ants, a people not strong, preparing their meat against the coming winter; to the conies, hiding their feebleness on the rocks; to the locusts, without a king, going forth by bands; the spider, &c. (Prov. xxx. 24–28.) And surely, without grieving his blessed Spirit, we may point out another small and despised creature, as affording in its first and second stages of existence, a vivid type—first, of our present state in bodies of sin and death, in which "we groan being burdened;" secondly, of the state of the body whilst waiting for the voice that shall call it forth, a body of glory and immortality; thirdly, of the eternal state in the glory above, for ever with Jesus, and like Jesus. The thought of death is terrible to many a young heart; and therefore it is that I love to make plain and simple to you the bright and beautiful truth of resurrection, so that it may lift up your thoughts from the grave, where (each in his

narrow resting-place) many of those you loved dearly are now lying; that so, in connection with them, you may think of the time, rapidly coming, when, if they loved Jesus, they will hear his voice in their graves, and will come forth to meet him, with bodies bright and glorious as his own, with faces *just* the *same*, only reflecting the glory of the face of Jesus Christ. This is very blessed for those that are in their graves when the Lord comes; but there is something yet more blessed for those who are alive at that moment; and that is, being caught up in the air, changed, and made glorious without having to die at all. (1 Thess. iv. 17.) If you are a believer, my dear reader, think what it would be some day, or night, suddenly to hear the trumpet sound, and in the twinkling of an eye to find yourself changed, and caught up as one of that bright and glorious body of saints who form the Church *up there*, to meet all who are gone before; those you have known and loved, and those you have loved to read of in the word of God; not *one* will be missing of all who have ever known Jesus, and got eternal life through faith in his precious blood. My dear children, are you *now* amongst that blessed company? If you are not, when the Lord comes you will not have your part in the first resurrection, but in the second, when the wicked will be also raised, *small* and *great*, to stand before the great white throne, to be judged according to their works, and then to be cast body and soul into the lake of fire and brimstone. Oh, what a contrast to the joy, glory, and blessedness of the saved!

The coming of the Lord is drawing near. If you are not conscious of being his, believe in him at once, and he will save you. Believe in him *now;* for "*now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation."

JESUS ONCE A CHILD.

And was my Saviour once a child—
A little child like me?
And was he humble, meek, and mild,
As little ones should be?

Oh, why did not the Son of God
Come as an angel bright?
And why not leave his fair abode,
To come with power and might?

Because he came not then to reign
As Sovereign here below;
He came to save our souls from sin,
Whence all our sorrows flow.

And did the Son of God most high
Consent a man to be?
And did that blessed Saviour die
Upon the cross for me?

And did my Saviour freely give,
His life for sinful men?
What! did he die that we might live?
Oh, how he loved us then!

Accept, O dear redeeming Lord,
An infant's humble praise:
Teach me to love thy holy word,
And serve thee all my days.

From "The Children's Friend."

THE RANSOMED PRISONER.

I AM about to tell you a true story, my dear children, which I hope will, with the Lord's blessing, do you good.

About five years ago, a person was travelling in a railway carriage, from Bridgewater to Wellington, when, on reaching Durston station, there stepped into the carriage a policeman, having a man in his custody. The poor handcuffed prisoner looked very unhappy, as you may suppose. But his face was so open and honest, that the passengers who looked at him felt convinced

that he was not a man who was familiar with crime. He did not look like one who was in the habit of doing those very wicked things that some people commit. One of the passengers, a horse-dealer, said to him,

"Well, my good fellow, have you been kicking over the traces?" by which the horse-dealer meant, "Have you been transgressing the laws of the land?"

This question, followed by one or two more, brought out the following facts as to the prisoner. He was a labouring man, in the employ of a farmer in Somerset. On the previous night the farmer's men had had their harvest-supper; after which they all drank as much cider as they liked. This poor man took too much, grew quarrelsome, "And," said he, "they tell me I struck somebody; but I did not know it, for I must have been too drunk. I was had before the magistrate, fined 5s., and costs 28s., making 33s. I was unable to pay it, and asked to be allowed to pay it by instalments; but they said that unless I could pay 25s. at once, and the rest in so many days, I must go to gaol for six weeks, and to Taunton gaol I am now going. I have left a wife and several children at home, and I suppose they must go to the workhouse."

See, my dear children, the sorrow and misery which sin brings ever in its track. This poor foolish man drank to excess, and then, in his drunkenness, injured another; thus getting himself into grievous trouble, and not himself only, but his poor helpless family. How shocking to the dear little children, to see their father taken away to prison, while they were left with

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aching hearts, not only to mourn the distressing separation, and their father's disgrace, but also to feel the want of all those things with which their father's labour supplied them.

Every passenger in the carriage seemed to feel for the poor man. They talked together about it, and at last the kind-hearted horse-dealer said, "We are only a mile or two from Taunton; if anything is to be done, it must be done at once. Policeman, can you set this man at liberty, if his fine and costs are paid?"

"Yes," said the policeman.

"Well, then," continued the generous horse-dealer, "here's a sovereign towards it, if my fellow-passengers will make up the rest."

The prisoner, on seeing there was a chance of being set at liberty, appeared to melt; and over his browned cheeks the tears stole, one after another, while he tried to wipe them away with his chained hands. Each passenger contributed a part, and when all was put together, it was found to be enough to meet the demands of the law upon the prisoner. *His ransom was paid down;* the policeman took out his key, and set him at liberty; and the poor man, as the fetters fell from his hands, burst into tears and sobbed like a child. The manacles were but just removed when the train reached Taunton; but instead of walking out a captive and a criminal, to suffer the penalties of the law he had broken, he stepped on to the platform a FREE MAN, and doubtless within a few hours returned home to his gladdened and astonished wife and little ones.

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Was not this delightful? Would you not have liked to be there, to see the poor prisoner set free, and afterwards to see his dear little children, as he walked into the house, gather round him in delighted surprise to welcome him home once more?

But does not this little narrative teach us something? Does not the position this poor prisoner was in faintly resemble that of every sinner—of every son and daughter of Adam? Are we not all by nature sinners, and therefore all our lifetime subject to bondage?

Yes, dear children, all are by nature under condemnation; and Satan, like the policeman, has men in his power, while they, bound hand and foot under the dominion of sin, have no strength to deliver themselves. Time, like the railway train, is hurrying on with all. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Oh, what a solemn thing to reach the end of this life's journey, only to be shut up for ever in that dreadful prison where the rich man in the parable cried in vain for one drop of water to cool his tongue, tormented in the flame! Would you not pity any one in such a condition? Well, my dear child, young as you are, if you have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, YOU are in this very condition. Yes, young as you may be, the Word of God declares you are a sinner. A sinner is under the dominion of sin, and in the power of Satan. But, ah! there is deliverance for you. Yes, the ever-blessed Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, has PAID DOWN THE RANSOM IN HIS OWN

BLOOD. We are all transgressors—all under deserved sentence of condemnation; all, but for him, must have come at last to be shut up under everlasting darkness. But "he bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." God has said so, and "he that believeth hath everlasting life." Yes, dear children, the RANSOM HAS BEEN PAID DOWN in blood, even the precious blood of God's dear Son.

Now, if when the passengers in the carriage paid the ransomed money to the policeman, the prisoner had *refused to believe* that he was free, had insisted on keeping the chains on his hands, and on going to the dreary prison, would you not have said that he was mad? Well, dear children, God himself declares that the ransom is paid down, that all "is finished," and that "all that believe are justified from all things." But he has also declared that "he that believeth not is condemned already." How solemn, to be condemned, after all, for "making God a liar!" But I trust that not a few of those who read these pages have believed, and know that their ransom has been paid, because God says so. And oh how thankful must they feel to him who paid their ransom in his own blood! and how earnestly should they seek to "please him in all things!" But if there is one little reader who has not yet believed, may he or she have grace to do so now. "We are only a mile or two from Taunton," said the generous horse-dealer; "if anything is to be done, IT MUST BE DONE AT ONCE." And you, dear little

reader, how near may you be to the end of your life's journey! "If anything is to be done, it must be done at once." "Behold, NOW is the accepted time: behold, NOW is the day of salvation." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"I AM THINE."

YES, dear Jesus, I am thine;
Oh, what grace! what power divine!
Purchased by thy precious blood:
Thus I'm made "a child of God."

Nought shall take away from me
That blest bond of unity,
Which I hold with Christ the Lord,
Since I'm made "a child of God."

Oh that blessed, happy thought,
To know that Jesus Christ has taught
This heart of mine to lisp and say,
"Lord Jesus, come without delay."

Then be it so; dear Jesus, come,
And take thy waiting people home,
That they may there for ever be
Thrice happy, dearest Lord, with thee.

THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES.

John vi. 9.

To you, my young readers, this miracle speaks a word of sweet encouragement, if you are engaged in any work or labour of love in winning souls for Christ.

It was a lad—a little child, as the original word signifies—who had the five barley loaves and two small fishes. It was this slender provision, brought to Jesus by a little boy, that the Lord blessed and caused to supply the wants of that great multitude. You may only be able at present to do a very little for the cause of Christ, to contribute perhaps a treasured-up sixpence, or to place a tract in the hand of some poor neighbour, or to read out of the Bible to a blind or aged listener; but Jesus can and will so bless your labours, if love to him constrain you, and a desire to save perishing sinners be your motive, that your small means or efforts may be instrumental in conveying the bread of

life to many perishing souls. Your tract might lead to the conversion of one who, like Bunyan or Newton, may become a preacher of righteousness, a messenger of the Gospel to thousands.

This miracle also teaches how rich and abundant a provision God has made, in the gospel of his dear Son, for those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. It yet reminds us that every fragment of that spiritual food is so precious in his sight, that nothing may be wasted, nothing lost. How apt we are, with our abundance, to undervalue the privileges and opportunities by which we are surrounded. Many a poor famishing idolater would rejoice over one text, one Gospel promise—the crumbs under the table would be a feast to him.

We are, perhaps, at times surprised to see with what avidity some poor awakened sinner seizes upon a Scripture passage, as so full of comfort and encouragement, when to us it imparted no such meaning. The prodigal son, perishing with hunger, thought of the bread in his father's house, of which the hired servants had enough and to spare. The elder son, dwelling in that house of plenty, complained to the father, "Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." Oh, let not the fulness and richness of our supply beget in us a habit of wastefulness! Around us are the famishing, the perishing; if to us the word of God has lost, from familiarity with its holy truths, aught of its preciousness and sweetness—if the privilege of holding communion in prayer with our heavenly Father awakens not feelings of love, increasing our desires after holiness—let us go and read and pray in the cottage of some poor neighbour, or by the sick bed of a child of God, and learn, in ministering to them, how precious and all-satisfying is the food which Jesus supplies; for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.

THE VINTAGE.

Most of our young readers are in all probability fond of that delicious fruit, the grape; but very likely you have never been into a vineyard, and, if so, you would like to hear something about the places where the grapes grow. I dare say you know there are many vineyards in France and Switzerland; but there are none in England. If you have ever been on a hop-ground, you may form some idea of what they are like; for the vines are planted in long rows, like hops. Sometimes the vineyards are on the sides of the mountains, and it is a very pretty sight to see the long rows of vines rising one above another, and the clustering bunches of purple and white grapes peeping out from the green leaves. If you were to pay a visit to these countries in the month of October, you would find everybody busy and gay—the little boys and girls dancing and singing with glee, and the young men with their hats and waistcoats gaily decorated with

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flowers and ribbons. But perhaps you ask, "Why are they all so happy?" I will tell you: it is because the vintage time has come, when all the ripe juicy fruit is gathered. Oh, how you would like to be there then! you would see a great many people—men, women, and children—all occupied in gathering grapes. Would you like to know how it is done? I will try and explain it to you. Each person is supplied with a basket, and goes from vine to vine (always keeping to one row) gathering grapes, until his basket is full; then a man with a tub, which he carries on his back, comes to receive the fruit, and to carry it to the roadside, where it is put into large casks. There another man is occupied in pressing the grapes with a long stick. After that, these grapes are taken to the winepress (for you know the juice of grapes is made into wine); there they are placed in a very large round tub, and again pressed until all the juice is squeezed out, which is then called "muse." I will not tell you of the process of wine-making, as I think you will like to hear more of the vintage. At twelve o'clock the merry groups of workers are ready for their dinner, which they bring with them, and partake of under the shade of some large tree. In the evening, when all the grapes are gathered, the young men, still decorated with flowers, go through the villages, dancing, singing, and playing music, to express their joy at the return of the vintage.

In the holy Scripture there are many allusions to the vine: I should like to refer you to some. In the Old Testament God speaks of the children of Israel (who

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you know were his people at that time) under the figure of a vine. He says, he had planted them a noble vine, wholly a right seed (Jer. ii. 21); and in Isaiah v. there is a beautiful and touching allusion to the vintage. If God compares his people to a vine, what he *expects* from them is *fruit*. Does my little reader wonder what this can mean? If you will turn to the New Testament you will find in the 5th of Galatians, "For the *fruit* of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." When God sees this blessed fruit in his children, it is what gives *him* joy. Do you think at the vintage time there would be such gladness as I have been describing to you if there were *no* fruit? It could not be; and it is just so when the people of God do not manifest his ways; and remember, dear children, what I am saying applies to you as much as to grown-up people. There are many among you who have professed to know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, and to have your sins washed away in his precious blood. My heart rejoices at it; but I do ask such, earnestly and affectionately, what sort of *fruit* are you bringing forth? Is it such as to give joy and gladness to the heart of the Lord? The Lord grant that it may never be said of you, what he said of Israel, that he looked for grapes, but they brought forth *wild* grapes.

There are two references to the vine in the New Testament which I cannot pass over. In the 15th of John, the Lord Jesus, speaking of himself, says, "I am

the *true vine.*" This could be said of none beside; it was only true of him that he always did that which was well-pleasing to his Father, and his fruit was ever perfect. In this same chapter God's people are spoken of as "branches" in the true vine. Dear child, are *you* a branch in this living vine? Do *you* belong to Jesus?

The last Scripture to which I will refer you is a very solemn one. I have been telling you of a vintage time when all is joy and gladness; but in the verses I am going to point out to you, God speaks of a vintage—not a time of gathering of grapes, but of fearful judgments, which will one day fall on those who do not know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. In Rev. xiv. 18, we read, "And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." It is a fearfully solemn thing, dear children, to be numbered amongst those who are here called the *vine of the earth.* Thanks be unto God, he is a God of *love;* he does not *wish* people to be punished. We read in his holy Word, "God *so loved* the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Will you not, dear little one, believe this love? Jesus himself invites you to come to him. Listen

to his own sweet words: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mark x. 14–16.) Come, then, to this precious Saviour; believe his love. Then when God's judgments are upon the earth, *you* will have nothing to fear; for you will be safe and happy in the fold of Jesus.

E. H.

JESUS IS MINE.

"PAPA," said a child, "is not the day after to-morrow Friday?" "Yes, my child." "Papa," said he, "is not that the day of prayer?" "Yes, my boy." "Papa, won't you have me prayed for? I have been trying to find Jesus and cannot—I want Jesus." The Friday meeting came—an immense gathering of people, and there was such a blessing poured forth that the father on that occasion entirely forgot his promise to the child; and at the close of the meeting, the people rose and sung—

"Now I have found a Friend,
Jesus is mine."

The little fellow was at the end of the crowd, but he perforated his way through, and flung himself into his father's arms, looked up into his face with a countenance of joy, and said, "Papa, I have got Jesus now —Jesus is mine; I have Jesus—Jesus is mine."

That is now just two years ago, and that little boy is now six years old; but oh, how sweet to remember his young love to Jesus!

THE UNEXPECTED MESSAGE.

HAVE my young readers never witnessed the effect of an unexpected message? Perhaps you were all seated as usual at table; your parents, brothers, sisters, visitors, all in their places. The meal had begun; father was carving; mother was attending to the wants and comforts of those around her; and you seemed, and were, a happy, loving circle. The pleasant remark, the sunny smile, the cheerful laugh, all told how free you were from any burden on your spirits; when, all unexpected, some one entered and whispered to your father, or gave a note to your mother. What could it be? The colour forsakes their cheeks; the brow contracts; the voice falters; some broken words of apology are gasped out, but utterance is almost choked; and, under some appalling weight of sorrow, mother faints away, father leaves the room, and the whole circle are plunged from the height of cheerful enjoyment into the depths of anguish and distress. "What *was* the message? What *did* that note say?" Never mind. Sorrow is sacred, and it is not for us to pry into its retreats, to penetrate its deep, heavy shades. It may be the death of some one near and dear; or the ruin, worse than death, of some loved one absent from the circle. We'll not inquire further what it is; but, dear reader, if it has been your lot to witness such a scene, the day on which you passed through it is a marked one in the history of your life.

You have not forgotten it, and you never will. To memory's latest hour, that day, and the effects of that unexpected message, are imprinted on your recollection in characters that nothing can erase.

In the case we are now to consider, there was no time for such effects to be produced; and the bearer of the message was the only person present to witness what took place.

But, first, let me remind my young friends of what has repeatedly been named to them, the difference between Old and New Testament times. Through the greater part of Old Testament times, God was dwelling in the midst of his earthly nation, Israel, governing them as their King, and dealing with the nations around according to the way they treated his people Israel. Even within the nation itself, the law then was, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" but the Lord Jesus, in quoting these very words, adds, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." It is needful to remember this total change of dispensation in looking back on scenes which the Old Testament describes.

We saw, last month, how at the beginning of the book of Judges the angel Jehovah came up from Gilgal, where the reproach of Egypt was rolled off from the people, to Bochim, the place of weepers. In this book, accordingly, we do not find the Lord leading on his hosts to victory, as in Joshua; but pitying them and raising up judges to deliver them,

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when they had by their sins brought themselves into misery, and into bondage to the nations around. Had Israel been faithful—had they kept the place of true separation to God, of which Gilgal was the expression —they would have been masters of all the surrounding nations. But, alas! they sinned against the Lord; and the Lord suffered first one enemy, and then another, to oppress them. These oppressors were wicked men, enemies of God as well as of his people; and when his people humbled themselves, were sorry for their sins, and cried to him for deliverance, he sent them deliverance, by raising up some one to smite and to destroy their oppressors.

One of the first of these oppressors was Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, whom Israel served eight years. Out of his hand the Lord delivered them by means of Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. For forty years after this the land had rest. But then Othniel died, "and the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord." This again brought upon them the chastenings of his hand, and the one whom he this time used as his rod was Eglon, the king of Moab. He had the children of Ammon, and Amalek, as his allies, and for eighteen years Israel was in bondage to this powerful foe. At the close of that dreary period, the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, and the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud, a Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent a present to their tyrannical master. Most likely they were not aware of his

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intentions when he set out on their errand. He had an errand from God as well as from them. To us, in New Testament times, such an errand seems strange; but Scripture expressly says that "the Lord raised them up a deliverer;" and we must not forget God's right to punish his enemies, and deliver his people, by the means that to him seem best.

Ehud prepares beforehand a dagger with two edges, and about eighteen inches long. This he concealed about his person, when he brought the present to Eglon, who, it is stated, "was a very fat man." The present seems to have been borne by others, and Ehud was the one who spoke to the king on its being offered to him. Picture now the monarch, exulting in the thought of how completely he had prostrated the Israelites, who thus owned their allegiance to him, not merely by paying the tribute that he imposed, but by sending him this valuable present by the hands of Ehud. But see, Ehud returns. "I have a secret errand unto thee, O king." "Keep silence," says the monarch to his attendants. They retire. It is in a summer parlour that the king sits. Unwieldy, and a burden to himself perhaps, he is so fat, there he sits to hear on what secret errand the ambassador has returned. What a moment! Ehud said, "I have a message from God unto thee." The king rises up, Ehud puts forth his left hand, takes his dagger from his right thigh, thrusts it into the king's belly, goes through the porch, shuts the doors of the parlour, and locks them behind him. The servants come, and,

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finding the doors locked inside, conclude that their master has covered his feet and is asleep. They tarry till they are ashamed, and then, on opening the doors, they find "their lord fallen down dead on the earth." Meanwhile, Ehud has had time to escape. He blows a trumpet, proclaims the death of Eglon, and gathers the children of Israel around him. They take possession of the fords of Jordan, before the Moabites can get there; and having gained this advantage, ten thousand of the Moabites are slain, Israel is delivered, Moab is subdued, and the land enjoys rest for eighty years.

"I have a message from God unto thee." That was a message of judgment: a solemn, fearful message indeed. Without time to *explain* on the one side, or to *hear* on the other, what the message was, the dagger was thrust into the monarch's side, and his life was taken in a moment. The dagger was the message! In one sense, God sends no such messages now His word authorizes no man to take another's life, except indeed that to the magistrate is entrusted the power of life and death, "and he beareth not the sword in vain." God thus provides, that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." But while the word of God in the Gospel tells of his love, and bids us love one another, we must not forget that as the God of providence he rules over all things. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground without him; and thus every event, whether pleasing or painful, may be regarded as a message from God. In this sense there may still be

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messages of judgment. The storm that upsets the pleasure-boat with its Sunday water-party, bears on its wings the text, "I have a message from God unto thee." Who is it that is thus addressed? Perhaps a Sunday-scholar, for whom his teacher has anxiously waited at the hour for commencing class. Perhaps some youth, whose parents have warned and pleaded and implored, but all in vain; and now, the relentless storm, winged with its "message from God," plunges the youth under the equally relentless wave, and he is ushered, like Eglon, into the presence of the God he has defied. The ball which, on some battle-field in America, or elsewhere, pierces the vitals of some profligate, who, after breaking his parents' hearts, in a fit of desperation entered the ranks, is surely like Ehud's dagger, and might be labelled with the words, "I have a message from God unto thee."

But God's great message now is a message of mercy. This paper comes to you, my reader, with the words, "I have a message from God unto thee." Mark the individuality of this message, "unto thee." Thee, who hast in thy hands this forty-second number of Good News. Perhaps thou hast read all the forty-one preceding numbers; and, besides this, searched out the passages in God's Word to answer the questions, and heard the good news from the lips of numberless messengers of God who have proclaimed it to thee. And art thou still unconverted? still far from God, a stranger to Christ, destitute of peace, a slave to Satan, and exposed to a worse death than that

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by which Eglon, king of Moab, fell? Dear reader, "I have a message from God unto thee!" What is it? That there is still love in the Father's heart to welcome thee, if as a lost prodigal, perishing with hunger, thou art willing to return to a Father's bosom and to a Father's home. There is still redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins. There is still an open door into mansions of endless rest. May God speed this message to thy heart! The world is a poor, worthless portion. You may try it, but it will never satisfy you. You may try to lift its cup of pleasure to your lips, but they who have drained it before you speak only of bitterness and anguish as its dregs. Believe them, and believe God's word, and do not repeat the experiment for yourselves. Believe the message of mercy, of grace, of love, of heavenly peace and purest joys—the message now once more beneath your eye. It is from God. It is to thee. Despise it not. Neglect it not. Put not the book aside until thou canst say, "I have heard God's message of mercy, and I believe it. He tells me God is love, and I believe it. He tells me he has given his Son, and I believe it. He tells me Christ has died, and I believe it. He tells me that though he could not be unjust, even to forgive and save me, he has set forth Christ a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. He tells me this, and I believe it. I believe him. He is just in justifying me notwithstanding my crimson guilt, my mountain load of sins. All praise to his glorious name. He

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tells me he has raised up Christ from the dead, and I believe it. He tells me that by him all who believe are justified, and I believe, and so I am justified. Oh, to love him! Oh, to serve him! Oh, for grace to confess his name, to do his will, to seek his glory! He says he 'll give me this, and I believe him. He says his grace is sufficient for me, and I believe it. His strength shall be made perfect in my weakness; for he says so, and I believe his word." Oh that thou, dear reader, whosoever thou art, mayest be enabled thus to receive God's message to thee by this paper. It is no new message, though it may be new to thee. And yet it is ever new; for the heart that believes it never wearies of having it repeated again and again, but finds fresh springs of joy, fresh wonders of love, in this blessed, glorious message, every time it is read or heard. Believe it, dear reader, and be saved; believe it, and be happy; believe it, and be holy. God grant you may, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

QUESTIONS ON "THE UNEXPECTED MESSAGE."

1. Can you name one great difference between Old and New Testament times, which our Saviour himself points out?
2. What would have been the position of the Israelites had they been faithful?
3. What was the actual course of events?

4. When did God interpose on behalf of his people?
5. How did he deliver them?
6. Can you name one of their first oppressors, and one of their earliest deliverers?
7. How much longer was Israel's second period of bondage than their first?
8. Who was their oppressor during this longer period?
9. Who was their deliverer, and what bodily peculiarity was there about him?
10. What was the instrument Ehud prepared?
11. On what occasion did he get the opportunity of using it?
12. What were Ehud's first words on returning to the king?
13. What were his next words?
14. Where were they spoken?
15. When Ehud had slain the king, and made his escape, what were his next steps?
16. How was the victory over the Moabites obtained?
17. What was the nature of Ehud's message to Eglon?
18. In what character does God rule over all things?
19. What are the two instances supposed of a message of judgment from God in this character?
20. What is God's great message now?

Will all my readers ponder solemnly before God this inquiry: *Have I received God's message of mercy? If not, can I any longer refuse to receive it? Can I again turn my back on Christ, the only Saviour of sinners?*

MARIA;

OR,

PASSAGES FROM THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

PART IV.—FRUITLESS EFFORTS.

THE next day Maria rose with her head full of her resolution, and with sanguine hopes that she should be successful in observing it. During the former part of the day nothing occurred to disturb her temper, and she rejoiced in having spent, as she thought, half the day without a blot. In the afternoon she was sitting by the fire reading a story, when her mother requested her to go into the next room, and bring her a porringer of milk for the baby. Maria had just reached the most interesting part of the story; she was very unwilling to lay down the book, and she walked slowly along, reading all the way, till her mother told her to put down the book, as she could not do two things at once. Then she threw down the book, and ran for the milk in such a hurry that she spilt part of it by the way. "Gently, gently, my daughter," said her mother; but Maria flew to take up her book again. When she went to her place, however, she found that George had taken the little chair in which she had been sitting, and was dragging it round the room in triumph.

"That's my chair, George; let me have it," said she impatiently. The child paid no attention to her, but went on dragging the chair, and calling it his "bonny."

Her mother was beginning to ask if another chair would not answer as well; but Maria had already pulled it from him, and the little boy began to cry.

"Maria!" said her mother reprovingly.

"It is my chair."

"I know it, my dear; but could you not have taken another? It would have gratified your brother, and he would not have wanted it long."

"I do not like the other chairs; they are so high."

"But are we never to do anything we do not like? If you had not wanted it, you would have felt no difficulty in giving it up. Besides, your brother would have surrendered the chair, if you had spoken gently and affectionately, and offered something else in its stead."

"I *don't believe he would; he is always getting my* things."

"I hoped, Maria, that you would have acknowledged your fault; but since you thus persevere in justifying yourself, I wish you to go to your room, and remain there till you are in a more proper state of mind."

This was a sad conclusion to Maria's day. The first fifteen minutes she spent in crying, partly from disappointment respecting the book she was reading, partly on account of the failure of her resolution, and partly from anger. Then she thought over all the circumstances of her fault, and endeavoured to make them appear as favourable for herself as possible. At first she said she would not go down at all that night; thus intending to punish herself, in order that her mother might be alarmed at her staying so long in the cold. Recollecting, however, that in this case her father would be informed of her misconduct, she endeavoured

to assume a cheerful countenance, though without feeling sincere contrition and humility. On descending to the parlour, she found her mother occupied with her household cares. Her father had not come in, and when he did, no allusion was made to Maria's fault. He was exhausted with the cares and labours of the day, and did not talk with his children as usual. They were sent to bed at an early hour, but Maria did not lay her head upon her pillow with the same sweet feeling of self-approval. Notwithstanding the excuses with which she endeavoured to satisfy her conscience, she could not but be sensible that her conduct had been very different from that which the meek and lowly Jesus would approve. But then it was the first trial, and it was so provoking to be interrupted when she was reading, and always to have to give up to George. Next day she would try again, and not be angry, let George do what he would.

Perhaps, if temptation had presented itself in the mode in which Maria expected it, she would have kept this resolution; but it came in a form for which she was not prepared. Her father promised, if nothing unexpected should occur to prevent him, to take Maria and her brother a ride in the afternoon. This was a pleasure which she had been long anticipating, and the prospect of being gratified put her in good humour. Every one knows how easy it is to do well in such circumstances. Maria performed all that was required of her to her mother's satisfaction, was ready to oblige every one, caressed William, allowed him to play with her doll,

and refrained from a passionate exclamation which rose to her lips, when she saw one of its arms dislocated by the rough treatment of the little boy.

Elated by this victory, and pleased with herself and everybody else, Maria was dancing about the room in the gladness of her heart, and was expecting her father's summons, with her bonnet on half an hour before the time, when he was suddenly called away to visit a person supposed to be dying. He went immediately, of course, saying to Maria that he was sorry to disappoint her, but would take her some other day. Maria's disappointment now was proportioned to her previous elation. Bursting into tears the moment her father had left the house, she declared that it was always so; she never expected anything in her life but she was disappointed, and that she did not believe she should ever ride now.

After listening to her impatient murmurs for some time, her mother asked her if she recollected against whom her complaints were directed, and who it was that ordered all events. Maria well knew, but found it no easier to submit; her will was opposed to the will of God, and her heart rose in rebellion against him. Imperfectly conscious as she was of these feelings, they excited alarm in her, and she endeavoured to hush them; but it was in vain. Even when she had, by a strong effort, succeeded in quieting her rebellious murmurings for a few moments, fancy painted in strong colours the pleasure she might have enjoyed, and again her disappointed and vexation burst forth. It

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may be supposed that Maria would be convinced by these feelings of the truth of her father's assertion, that she did not love God. But this was not the case. So ingenious is the human heart in finding excuses for its guilt, that Maria persuaded herself that no one could be expected to be patient under so severe a disappointment, and that if she was vexed for a little while, it was nothing, so long as she loved God all the rest of the time.

We cannot describe each of Maria's efforts, and its result, particularly. As in the former case, they were gradually relinquished and forgotten. They were not, however, altogether useless; for she began, after a time, reluctantly to admit the conviction that there was no love to God in her heart. At first she had mistaken the selfish love and gratitude which any person may feel in return for benefits, for sincere affection. She was pleased with herself, too, on account of her good resolutions, and imagined that God was pleased with her. In these circumstances it was not difficult for her to be deceived in regard to her feelings towards him.

But when her attempts at reformation failed, the impatience and dissatisfaction which she felt with herself extended to God also. Thoughts of him became unpleasant, and she banished them as fast as possible. Thus, with her *self*-complacency, her complacency towards God disappeared.

Yet it was by slow degrees that Maria became sensible of this. As her feelings were ardent and

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easily excited, she was generally much affected, and wept abundantly when listening to her father's conversation; and it was easy to mistake these natural emotions for love and gratitude. And if she found it difficult to believe that she did not love God, much less would she be convinced that she hated him. Her father laboured much to convince her of the enmity of her heart, and of the necessity to be born again.

THE SINNER'S WAY TO GOD.

JESUS, my all, to heaven is gone,
He whom my hopes are fixed upon;
His track I see, and I'll pursue
The narrow path till him I view.

This is the way I long had sought,
And mourned because I found it not;
My guilt a burden long had been,
Because I could not cease from sin.

The more I strove against its power,
I sinned and stumbled yet the more;
Till, late, I heard the Saviour say,
"Come hither, soul, I AM THE WAY."

Lo, glad I come, and thou, blest Lamb,
Dost take me to thee as I am;
Nothing but sin I thee can give,
Nothing but love do I receive.

Now will I tell to sinners round
What a dear Saviour I have found;
I'll point to the redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God.

LITTLE MARIAN IN HER STUDY.

THE MIGHTY MAN OF VALOUR.

I WONDER if any of my young readers are, from the above title, expecting to hear about some giant-champion, such as Goliath of Gath, or David, who slew Goliath with his own sword. The one to whom this title was given was certainly not like the Philistine; and, in many respects, he was unlike David also. In one particular his case resembles David's. They are both introduced to us in the Bible history when they are young. Do think of this, my young friends: with scarcely an exception, all those of whom the Lord made much use, or on

whom he bestowed signal honours, became acquainted with him in early life. Youth is to after-life what our whole life-time here is to eternity. It is the seed-time, and according to the nature of the seed we sow is the harvest we may expect to reap. God grant to all my young friends to sow diligently to the Spirit, that of the Spirit, whether in this world or the next, they may reap life everlasting.

Ehud's victory over the Moabites was followed by eighty years of rest for Israel, when their sins brought further chastisements upon them by means of Jabin, king of Canaan, and Sisera, the captain of his host. From these oppressors they were delivered by the hands of a woman. More women than one, indeed, were at that time used of God.

If Jael, the wife of Heber, smote the oppressor and slew him, it was by Deborah, the prophetess, that Barak and his host were roused to the pursuit. This victory became the occasion of one of the Songs of Scripture. Would it not be a pleasant exercise to find out and read all the Scripture Songs? I do not by this mean the book of Psalms, but the separate Songs—so called in God's holy word.

Forty years of rest to the land followed the triumph of Deborah and Barak, when, again, "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." Midian was in this instance the Lord's rod for his people; "And he delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years." It would seem to have been specially by their immense numbers that the

Midianites proved such a scourge to Israel. "And so it was, when Israel had sown that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the East, even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza; and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle, and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude: for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it."

You are not likely, dear reader, to feel the full force of the comparison here employed. But in the East, where the Bible was written, a plague of grasshoppers is too fatal an occurrence for any one not to understand what a destruction is here intended. The grasshopper is the same as the locust, and the descriptions given by travellers of the ruin effected by a flight of locusts are truly awful. "When they take the field, they always follow a leader, whose motions they invariably observe. On some occasions they appear in such large flocks as to darken the air, forming many compact bodies, or swarms, of several hundred yards square. In whatever country they settle, they devour all the vegetables, grain, and, in fine, all the produce of the earth, eating the very bark off the trees, thus destroying at once the hopes of the husbandman and all the labours of agriculture." What could more fitly represent the inroads of immense troops of men, whose object was not so

much to take life, as to steal for themselves the produce of the land? Can we wonder that it should be said, "And Israel was greatly impoverished, because of the Midianites?" What are they to do? So few against so many, to what refuge can they resort? "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." And thus it is still, dear reader; we may forget the Lord, and wander from him in forbidden paths. When troubles arise, and anxieties press, and death stares us in the face, and there seems no way of escape, we are obliged to turn to him from whom we have so deeply revolted. You cannot always throw off restraint and pursue an independent course.

But Israel has bitter lessons to learn. The prayers of the people are not answered by instant deliverance as in former cases. The Lord sends a prophet, who reminds them of Jehovah's mercies to them, and of their rebellion against him; but his last words on Jehovah's behalf are, "But ye have not obeyed my voice." How heavy must they have been to every heart that had been lifted up to God.

It is just here that we are introduced to a rural scene, indicating the miserable bondage to which Israel had been brought down. The scene is laid at Abi-ezer. Joash resides there, and his son is threshing wheat by the wine-press, *to hide it from the Midianites.* To have both to thresh their corn and eat their bread by stealth, this was a degradation indeed. And yet it is to that young man, Gideon, the

son of Joash, and when in the very act of thus stealthily beating out the corn, that the angel of the Lord appears. And with what salutation does the heavenly visitant greet the young man? "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Who else would have seen a "mighty man of valour" in a young man thus employed? But the Lord seeth not as man seeth. "When I am weak, then am I strong," is the true secret of all moral might, of all spiritual strength.

What was Gideon's reply to the angel? It shows that many a thought about God and his people had passed through his mind, while humbly pursuing his daily toil. "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." This was not the language of unbelief or indifference. Young as was the speaker, he had heard how Jehovah had shewn himself on Israel's behalf when in the greatest straits, and if Jehovah be still with them, how is it that they are in such a woful plight?

"And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" "*This thy might*"—what does this mean? That the very sense Gideon had of what was becoming the Lord's presence with his people was his might, for it cast him entirely

on the Lord. A weak, empty vessel, like this exercised young man, was just the instrument by whom God would work for Israel's deliverance.

Gideon is alarmed, however, and pleads his poverty and meanness. "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." The Lord's reply might well assure him of victory. "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Gideon, encouraged by such words, seeks a sign that shall leave him no doubt as to who it is that has spoken them. The angel at his request tarries till he goes for a present and returns. He brings food, which the angel bids him place upon the rock; this Gideon does, and the angel touches the provisions with the end of his staff, when fire rises up out of the rock and consumes the whole, the angel departing out of his sight. This discovery to the young man of the Lord's presence—of the glory of the one with whom he had been in such intimate converse—begets a concern, an anxiety, in his mind altogether unknown before. "When Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord (or the angel Jehovah), Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." Before the Lord could use Gideon as his servant and instrument he brings him thus to a discovery of his own state in the Lord's own presence. How can we meet enemies, or face dangers, or overcome difficulties, if we have not first been in the presence of God, and learnt there what we are our-

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selves? Self-knowledge, such as is only found in the presence of God, is indispensable if we are to be used of him to others.

But Gideon was not left to his consternation and distress. "The Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee, fear not; thou shalt not die." Precious assurance! Peace with God—nothing in heaven or earth to fear—death itself harmless against him. Dear reader, hast thou not this assurance, if thou hast confessed with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believed in thine heart that God raised him from the dead?

And now, mark the results. First, Gideon builds an altar to Jehovah; but, before his worship can be accepted there, he has, in obedience to Jehovah, to throw down the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove that his father had for idolatrous uses. Gideon fears to do this by day, and so does it by night. His father, whom he had feared, becomes his protector against the citizens who would have put Gideon to death. But his father said, "Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning; if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because he hath cast down his altar." Baal, alas! was the cause of Israel's misery. It had long been manifest that he could not deliver Israel: now he is proved unable to defend himself, and thus the Lord shields his youthful servant from the rage of his enemies.

It is immediately after this that the Midianites and Amalekites are gathered together, and Gideon, actu-

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ated by the Spirit of God, blows a trumpet, and an army is gathered around him, with which to engage these innumerable foes. What followed we must leave for a future number. Oh that this rapid sketch of Israel's state, and Gideon's early life, may be blest to all my young readers!

QUESTIONS ON THE "MIGHTY MAN OF VALOUR."

1. What is an almost universal feature of those who are greatly used and honoured of God?
2. Who were Israel's deliverers from the chastisement that followed on the eighty years of rest the land had through Ehud's victory?
3. Name the next instrument of punishing Israel for their sins.
4. How long, and in what special way, did Israel suffer from their hands?
5. To what are these oppressors of Israel compared?
6. What was Israel's experience when they cried to the Lord?
7. Why was Gideon thrashing wheat by the winepress instead of in the barn?
8. How could one so seemingly feeble and afraid be called a "mighty man of valour"?
9. What does Gideon plead in answer to the Lord's sending him to save Israel?
10. How does he detain the angel in order to satisfy himself who he is?
11. What followed upon this? and with what effect upon Gideon's mind?
12. How was he relieved?

13. What proof was he first called upon to give of his confidence in the Lord who had appeared to him?
14. Who defended him against the men of the city?
15. What great change immediately followed?

HYMN FOR A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

THOUGH I am but a little child,
I love the house of prayer;
On little children Jesus smiled,
And loves to see them there.

And when, without those happy walls,
I tread life's thorny way,
Whene'er my God or duty calls,
I'll cheerfully obey.

Whatever path he bids me tread,
This shall my beacon be—
Though clouds may gather overhead,
My Saviour died for me.

His gentle, patient, loving face
On earth I cannot see;
But I can, at the throne of grace,
Seek him who died for me.

And when my pilgrimage is done,
And life's last day is o'er,
The crown of life will then be won,
And sorrow be no more.

For in his kingdom, face to face,
My Saviour I shall see;
And in his glorious visage trace
Jesus, who died for me.

FAITH AND MISTRUST.

(A CHILD'S DREAM.)

ONE summer evening, being very much fatigued, I lay down in a shady grove, and was soon fast asleep. During my slumber, I thought I saw a beautiful and densely-populated valley, with a high mountain overhanging it. There was an enormous rock, which was slowly but surely rolling down the hill-side, and which must one day reach the valley, and break in pieces every person and thing in it, unless they made their escape. None of the inhabitants seemed to think or care about the impending danger, but busied themselves with daily labours and occupations, as though there were nothing to fear. Many believed that it would never fall, at least till they had been laid in the grave, when life and sense would be no more. But indifference or scepticism, more or less, ruled the hearts

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of all. At length my eyes were arrested by the appearance of a shining stranger, holding a scroll in his hand, called "The Word of Truth." And his mission was to warn the inhabitants of the valley to flee from the approaching danger. He pointed to a far distant shining light, and then showed upon a chart the way by which to attain it. "The light arose," he said, "in a beautiful country, more beautiful than mortal eyes had ever seen, where all was joy, peace, and rest. The road to this happy land was rough and wearisome; but one who had trodden each step of the road himself, and had experienced all its difficulties and dangers was ever ready to cheer and support the travellers till they reached their journey's end." The recital of this wondrous story, produced various impressions on the minds of those who listened; the majority did not believe the things spoken by the stranger, while some, though they credited them, could not be prevailed on to leave their homes and their friends, so that it was but a small number that decided to escape from the doomed valley. To each of those the stranger gave a scroll, which contained every direction of the road that they could possibly require; and it also served the two-fold purpose of a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path.

Now, in my dream, I noticed particularly two young maidens, who decided upon leaving the accursed valley. Their names were Faith and Mistrust. The countenances of these girls were very dissimilar. Faith had a calm, joyous, patient look; but that of Mistrust

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was sad, suspicious, and full of fear. The maidens commenced their journey together. Faith kept her eyes steadily fixed on the shining light, as she was directed in the scroll, and consequently did not see the roughness and dangers of the way; but it was only at these that Mistrust was ever looking, and often did she fear her companion had been deceived. Their road ascended high mountains, and wound round through perplexing labyrinths, or howling wildernesses, but to the eye of Faith the path was ever plain. She consulted her chart when in difficulty, and found therein directions for every step of the way, so that she proceeded with a light and joyous heart. Not so Mistrust: she was filled with doubts and fears, lest they were on the wrong road, and at length she even despaired of ever reaching that happy land, and in her heart she longed to return to her native valley. These fears she sought to impart to her companion, and she so far succeeded, that sometimes a cloud passed over Faith's radiant face, and for a moment its bright smile was gone; but more than this she failed to accomplish. At length, on ascending a high mountain, Mistrust stopped short at the sight of so many more difficulties, although to Faith the shining light seemed nearer and brighter than ever it had done before. Now the scroll had forbidden any one standing still upon the road, so Faith continued on her journey, and left Mistrust deliberating as to what she must do. The latter continued all the journey, following at a distance after Faith; and sometimes she still

would try to call her back, or press upon her her own dark forebodings ; but Faith turned a deaf ear, and from henceforth hastened on with a firmer and a quicker step than when in the company of Mistrust. At length, Faith came nearer and nearer to the happy land, and the day approached on which she was to enter and change her character of Faith for that of sight. She arrives on the banks of a dark, sullen river, the last barrier between her and heaven ; but knowing what was written on the scroll, that when "she passed through the rivers they would not overflow," she plunged into the water, and was supported through it by an unseen hand. On reaching the opposite side, her form was completely altered ; she was now so fair and beautiful that my eyes were ravished with the sight ; and I saw her led away to praise and worship *Him* whose own blood had purchased all this happiness. At this point I awoke from my dream, and I saw no more the bright vision of Faith ; but had witnessed enough to make me dislike and shun Mistrust, and to believe and encourage Faith, in my inmost heart.

24*th March*, 1862.

"In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed ; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man."—Job xxxiii. 15–17.

TRUST IN GOD.

One day a party sailed down the harbour in a boat. The weather was fine when they started; in the afternoon a black cloud arose, the thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed, occasioning great alarm among the ladies. One lady was more frightened than the rest; her little daughter nestled towards her; taking her hand, and looking up into her mother's face with a look of pity and surprise, "Mother," said she, "God is in the thunder; can't we trust him when he speaks loud as well as when he speaks easy?"

"Yes, my child," replied the rebuked mother, with a tear in her eye. "And pray, Mary, that I may have the perfect trust of a little child."

How precious was little Mary's faith!

And it pleased God, because he loves to be trusted. His children trust him, and he would have any child to be his child; and therefore he sent his Son, Jesus

Christ, to show you the temper and spirit which is dear to his heart. And when Jesus came, what did he say? He said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Why, what are little children born for, if they are not born for God? Their mothers do not always expect to keep them, and if they grow up like his dear Son, lowly-minded, forgiving, patient, loving, and obedient, their early piety glorifies God; it honours and pleases him, and they answer the purpose they were made for.—(*Extracted.*)

LITTLE HANNAH'S TROUBLE.

"OH, I wish, how I do wish I could find a bird's nest or two!" cried Jamie Haynes. "Hannah, if you see one about the garden, come and tell me, will you?"

"Yes, I will," replied little Hannah; then, recollecting some of her brother's mischievous pranks, she added, earnestly, "But you won't hurt the birdies, will you, Jamie? What do you want to do with them?"

"Oh, that's none of your business," said Jamie rudely; "you must tell me if you see one, though—you promised!"

"Oh, dear! I wish I hadn't promised," sighed little Hannah, as Jamie ran off; "I'm so afraid he will hurt the birdies. But I mean to try not to see any;

I hope I shall not!" And in this hope little Hannah rested. But the very next day, as she was playing at ball in the garden, her ball bounded off into some bushes, and, as Hannah was searching for it, she came upon a nest of little fledglings.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear me!" sighed Hannah once more. "Poor little wee birdies, I wish I hadn't seen you! now I must go and tell Jamie, because I promised, and perhaps he will kill the birds!" And tears filled the eyes of the tender-hearted child. Replacing the branches, she slowly walked back to the house, thinking whether it would be very wrong not to keep her promise this one time; but she knew that if Jamie should ask her she must tell the truth, and then it would be worse, for he would be vexed with her.

"I wish mamma were at home," she said to herself; "what shall I do?" Just then a sweet verse came into her mind, that she had learned a few days before, which tells us, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. Hannah felt comforted.

"Then our heavenly Father cares for the birdies; I can go and tell him about it," she murmured. With a brightening face she went up to the nursery; no one was there, and shutting the door, the child kneeled down and prayed:—"Heavenly Father! I have found some poor little birdies, and I must tell Jamie; please, God, give Jamie a kind heart, so that he will not hurt God's little birds. Amen."

No one was in the room, I said; but Jamie was in the closet, getting some twine, and he heard his dear

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little sister's prayer. Jamie felt very strangely, for, although he had been as carefully taught as Hannah, he did not often feel that God was so near, and that he might pray to him at any time. He felt sorry, too, that he had been so naughty and cruel; indeed Jamie's heart was much softened. He kept quite still in the closet, until he heard Hannah leave the room, running down stairs, as he knew, to find him; then he followed her.

"Jamie," said Hannah, when she saw him, "I have found a bird's nest; do you want me to show it to you?"

"Yes," replied Jamie, hardly knowing what to say.

So Hannah led the way, and showed James where the nest was. She leaned over his shoulder, as he sat for some time looking at it, and gathering courage from his quiet manner, said, at length, "What did you want to see them for, Jamie?"

"I did not want the little birds," said Jamie; "I wanted the eggs to put on a string. But I don't want them now, Hannah," he added, his face growing red as he spoke. "I shan't hurt the birds' nests again, ever!"

Little Hannah looked up in surprise, delighted at these words; and deep in a grateful little heart she treasured the remembrance of her answered prayer! Let us all copy little Hannah, and remember, whenever we have anything to trouble us, to take it to God, and he will hear any prayer offered in the name and for the sake of our precious Saviour.—(*Extracted.*)

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A TRUE STORY.

My dear little friends, would you like to take a peep into a Swiss home? Perhaps you reply, "Yes; but I cannot do so, for Switzerland is a long way off, and I live in England." You cannot do so with the eyes of your body; however, if I describe one to you, you will be able to imagine a little what it is like.

First, then, I must tell you that the houses of many towns in Switzerland are different from those in England; they are very large, and divided into a great many sets of apartments, each of which is occupied by a separate family; in some houses there are five or six families, in others more, according to the size of the house; in some of those occupied by the poor, there are even ten or twenty families. The one to which I am going to introduce you is of moderate size, in a narrow street, and occupied by poor families. We will enter together; the street door is open, the staircase is of stone, we will not stay to examine it, but continue our way until we arrive at a back-room on the third floor; this room is not very large, there is no carpet upon the floor; the furniture consists of a French bedstead without curtains, an oaken table, and two or three chairs; there is no open fireplace as you have in England, but a large stove in which wood is burnt for firing.

Now I will tell you what passed in this room not many months ago. It was Saturday evening. A woman who appeared very ill was lying on the bed, and by her

side was standing a little boy, twelve years of age; the father of the little boy, the poor woman's husband, had gone an errand to a village a few miles distant, and as it was now getting late, both mother and son began to feel uneasy that he did not return. There were two other children, a little girl seven years of age, and a little boy of five, but they had been some time in bed in the next room, and were now sleeping soundly. At length the eldest child, overcome with fatigue, lay down also, and fell asleep, but the poor mother continued awake listening to every sound, and hoping every minute that her husband would come. Hour after hour passed away, and still he did not arrive. What an unspeakable privilege it is to know the love of God, to be able to trust him when we feel anxious and troubled; then, though the heart may have to pass through much suffering, there is at the same time strong consolation in believing that "All things work together for good to them that love God." The poor woman I am telling you about did not thus know God as her resource in trouble, and therefore she had nothing to sustain her in her anxiety. Now what do you think had become of the poor man? When he left the village to which he had gone, it was already getting dark; his friends had tried to persuade him to stay all night, but he had replied, "No, my wife is ill, and if I stay she will be anxious; I will therefore take the shortest way, and get home as quickly as I can." The way that he took passed near the railway, and at one part it was necessary to go near a high bridge; on

arriving there, the poor man took a wrong turning, and, instead of going along the road as he thought, dreadful to relate, he was suddenly precipitated from the height of the bridge into the depth below, and must have been killed on the spot. The next morning his body was discovered there by some workmen. I cannot tell you what was the state of his soul, or whether he was prepared for such a solemn change. Does not such an event prove to us the importance of being at all times ready? You can imagine the distress of the woman when, after such a night as she had passed, the fearful news was brought to her that her husband was a corpse, that she was a widow, and her poor little children fatherless. Oh! what need she had of those consolations which God alone can give; but as I said to you she did not yet know God, and therefore the blow was so great to her, that her health became rapidly worse, and soon it grew evident that ere long she too would be in the grave. At that time a Christian lady often visited her, and tried to arouse her to the importance of that solemn change which was awaiting her; for you know, dear children, the Word of God tells us, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment." Those who have received the Lord Jesus as their Saviour need not fear the judgment, because he has already borne it for them on the cross; but for those who have not had their sins washed away in the precious blood of Christ, it is a fearful thing to think of appearing before God.

One day, more especially, the lady I have mentioned

spoke to the poor woman about the necessity of being born again, that is to say, of receiving Christ as her Saviour, and believing God's love; also of the change which is experienced when thus able to rest in God; how happy the heart can be even in suffering; and that when death comes there is no fear, because Jesus has promised always to be with those who trust in him. Then the lady said, "Do you know what it is to have passed through this change, and to be happy because God loves you?" The poor woman reflected a little, and then said,

"No, madam, I do not; I am not thus happy."

The lady left her, asking God to reveal himself to the poor woman's heart. For some days she continued much in the same state; once or twice she remarked to her sister,

"I have not experienced this change."

At length the day came when she was to pass through the dark valley of death, and on that day God spoke peace to her heart; she did not say much, but appeared happy, and said to her sister,

"Yes, I know it now; I die in peace;" and soon after she departed, just a month after her husband had been taken from her; and the three little children I mentioned to you were now orphans. You would like to know what became of them, and perhaps another time I may tell you. Now I want to ask you one question. Do you know what it is to have experienced the change about which the lady spoke to the poor woman? You know by nature we are all sin-

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ners, we have evil hearts opposed to God, and if we die in this state we must be separated from God for ever. But God does not wish us to die thus. He has so loved us as to give Jesus to die for us; and in believing what the Bible tells us about this love, we receive a new nature, by which we are enabled to love God. Oh, how precious to think that God loves us! Then we love him because he first loved us; and then, when we love God, we cannot help trying to please him. Those who love God have still an evil nature, which is always ready to do what is wrong, and it is often very difficult to overcome temptation. For instance, a little child who loves the Lord may be tempted to be idle and disobedient; but then that little child knows that Jesus is grieved when children do wrong, and therefore he asks for strength to overcome the temptation, and the Lord Jesus is always ready to help and strengthen those who seek his assistance to do what is right. The heart can only be really happy as it thus knows *him* as its Saviour, happy in this life, and happy for eternity; while those who choose to walk in the ways of sin never know real joy in this world; and then, how dreadful to think of an eternity in that place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Oh, truly it may be said, those who choose such a portion wrong their own souls!

H. H.

"WHOSO findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."—PROV. viii. 35, 36.

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THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

A GENTLEMAN was once walking out in the country, when he saw a little cheerful girl playing in a field among the flowers. She was all alone, but she seemed to have no fear as she sat and sung, and wove the buttercups and daisies into chains. "Whose little girl are you?" said the gentleman, addressing her. "*Mother's*," she answered, with a happy look. "And where do you live?" inquired the gentleman. "At *home*, sir," she replied, and again brightly smiled.

Ah! thought the kind man, as he walked on, those are two beautiful words for a child, "mother," and "home." But I know two words sweeter still, and happy are they who can use them as simply and joyfully as that little child. These better words are "*Father*," and "*Heaven*."

Yes, dear children, these are two great questions for all of us: "Whose child are you?" and "Where is your home?" There is one answer, and only one, which, if you can give it, will make you happy indeed. How many of the readers of GOOD NEWS can truly say, "God is my Father, and my home is heaven?" May God grant, dear children, that none of you may any longer refuse the offers of the Saviour's love; but at once come to that blessed Jesus who has said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." And thus be assured that God is your loving, unchangeable Father, and heaven your destined, eternal, happy home.

ELIZA;
OR, THE SWISS CRIPPLE.

PART I.

DEAR CHILDREN,—I am about to tell you a story of a poor neglected child, who, unlike most of the young readers of GOOD NEWS, never knew the fostering care of kind parents. This little girl's name was Eliza. She was not an English girl, but was born in Switzerland, and lived there; a land far away over the sea, noted for its mountains and its lakes, and its beautiful scenery. But, beautiful as it is, the following story proves too plainly that sin is there, as well as in every other land, and that the beauties of natural scenery cannot remove it; that *hearts* are as evil amid the brightest scenes as in the most uninteresting. Poor Eliza was a cripple, deformed from her birth; and as her mother died while she was yet an infant, and her unhappy father was given to drinking and dissolute habits, she grew on, neglected, uncared for, and subjected to unkind treatment; the result of which was that she became morose, dishonest, and even cruel in her habits; all of which was expressed in her countenance. Weak and sickly, too, she was of little service to any one; so that in all respects her position was a most hopeless one. There was no one to take compassion on the poor cripple; and as her miserable father could not attend to her, she was at last placed with a family by whom she was received, not

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out of pity for her condition, much less from the love of God, but merely in consideration of a small sum of money. By these people she was sent out to beg, and all day long was compelled to sit by the roadside, to crave of passers-by some little pittance, which she was required to carry home in the evening. Home, did I say? She had no home! Disliked by those among whom she lived, she was ill-treated, half fed, and ill-clad; nor was there anything about her, either in person or character, to win their pity or regard. She returned their ill-usage with hatred, and wanted but the power to be as cruel as they. Often, as she sat by the roadside, hungry and thirsty, she saw happy children pass by, led by the loving hand of father or mother, well fed and clothed, and smiling cheerfully; or she heard the merry shout of school-boys hastening home; yet the sense of her own desolation, instead of softening her heart, did but harden it the more in evil. From morning, till the shades of evening fell, she sat on a certain stone by the roadside, which she had selected as her post; and there, with no kind friend to speak a word of consolation or instruction, no book to lead her thoughts to better things, she sat, and nourished her morose and bitter feelings, till, as time rolled on, her hatred towards those who treated her so cruelly gave birth to a burning desire of revenge, which she only sought opportunity to gratify. Of this desire she made no secret, and of course brought down punishment on her own head, which only added fuel to the fire in her sinful heart. Cruelty had made her

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cruel, so that she could take pleasure in injuring or destroying helpless dumb animals. Hunger had taught her to steal; and contempt, derision, and blows had made her ill-tempered and forbidding in her manner towards every one. *Hateful and hating*, where should she find a friend? Only in the "Friend of sinners," for surely no other *could* love one so detestable in character and disposition. Oh, my dear young readers, what a truly *wonderful* thing is the *love of God!* But this young sinner had no GOOD NEWS to tell her about the love of Jesus; no Bible, no friend. And so she grew on worse and worse, till she was about fourteen years of age. At this time she became very ill, and one day was unable to leave her chamber as usual, to take her accustomed place by the roadside. Yet no one took the trouble to come up-stairs to inquire into the cause, and she was allowed to lie there unattended and uncared for till the next day. All that long and weary night her pain, increased by the bitterness of her feelings towards her cruel foster-parents, kept her sleepless. She tossed to and fro upon her bed of straw, meditating revenge. Conscience whispered, but she closed her ear. The evening star shined down upon her through the casement, as if it would draw her thoughts heavenward; but she hid her face in the straw, for she feared to look upon it, it seemed so like the eye of God piercing the dark recesses of her sinful heart, and exposing even to herself the terrible wickedness she meditated. Often when smarting beneath the taunts and blows of her brutal

foster-parents, she had threatened to avenge herself upon them by setting fire to the house ! and now, as she tossed to and fro upon her bed of pain, this wicked thought recurred to her again and again, until it took entire possession of her mind. Morning dawned at last, but the sweet fresh light of early dawn brought no better purpose to her hardened heart. Sin had the dominion ; and when another day had passed away, and she had been left to shift for herself, unattended by any one in the house, her exasperation reached its highest pitch, and, exerting all her remaining strength, she rose from her bed and executed the wicked threat she had so often uttered.

The house was fired !

Having accomplished her wicked purpose, she went down stairs, and opening the door of the room in which her foster-parents were sleeping, she said, in tones of bitter mockery, "See ! I have done what I have threatened to do more than once !" And, as she spoke, the crackling of burning wood added terrible confirmation to her words.

How shocking, dear children, to think that a girl so young should have become so wicked ! Does it not teach us the fearful power of sin, and the dreadful consequences of nourishing angry feelings in the heart ?

The people of the house, pale and terror-stricken, rushed up-stairs to try and extinguish the flames, but to no purpose ; and soon the alarm-bell was heard, tolling heavily through the dark night, rousing the

slumbering neighbours from their warm beds to come and help. And the flames rose higher and higher, and the dark sky reddened, and frightened faces gazed upon the terrible flames, roaring in their might from every door and window; and people ran hither and thither, some to fetch water, others to save what they could from the devouring element. But the wicked girl who had done all the mischief sat quietly on a trunk in the road at a little distance, and seemed to feel a malignant gratification in the fearful scene! That night this bad girl was sent to prison, and shortly afterwards was condemned to the house of correction for a period of some years; but so lost was she to any sense of shame, that instead of being shocked at her position, she was even glad when she saw the tower in which she was to be confined. Nor when she entered the cold stone cell, with its bare walls, its grated window, and massive iron door, did she feel any dread, or manifest any sorrow for what she had done; but, in sullen indifference to everything, quietly lay down upon the straw pallet, and fell asleep. Oh, what fearful havoc sin can make even in the hearts of the young! Is it not a hateful thing, when thus seen in its true colours?

But I must tell you more about Eliza next month, if the Lord will.

THE CAKE OF BARLEY BREAD.

THE first effect of Gideon's proclamation to Abi-ezer and the neighbouring districts was, that a considerable army assembled under his command. But Gideon knew full well that no army he could muster would be a match for the Midianites and their allies. He knew that Jehovah was his only refuge; it was at his command he was going to the conflict; but would Jehovah indeed be with him? His faith was weak. He ought to have been satisfied, no doubt, with what he had already heard and seen; but fears will spring up, his heart will misgive him, and what is he to do? To go to the battle with such uncertainties would be madness; but how is he to get rid of them? *He takes*

them to the Lord. He does not pretend to strong faith, while conscious of such doubts and fears; but weak in faith as he is, he knows enough of the Lord to feel sure that he will give him such further signs that it is he, Jehovah himself, who has sent him, as shall remove every doubt, and make him valiant indeed. Nor was he mistaken. It seemed a bold thing to ask, that, if the Lord would indeed be with him, the fleece of wool might alone be wet, with the dew and the ground dry all around. But so it was. "He rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water." Surely this will satisfy him! No. "And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: Let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew." And was this request granted? Indeed it was. "And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."

Dear young Christian reader, see to it that you are open and honest both with God and man. If questioned by some older Christian, or conversing with such, do not pretend to know more than you do. It will only prevent your learning what your friend would teach you. Never be ashamed to confess ignorance. Avoid a pretentious spirit. If you have not courage, or faith, for any undertaking, do not pretend to either. Confess to God your want of faith, and ask Him to strengthen

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it. I do not mean by this that you are to seek such signs as Gideon asked. But be as simple in your prayers. Ask God, in the name of Jesus, for everything you need, and ask expecting to receive.

When God had so lovingly done all that Gideon asked of him, he and his army rose up early, as though they would proceed to the conflict; but if God had so strengthened Gideon's faith, he was now about to put it to the proof. Gideon had been trying God—whether God had really spoken to him, and whether he would be with him—and now God tries Gideon. "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands." Why was this? Should we not all think in such a case the more the better? Ah! it was "lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." Dear reader, there is no danger greater than that of self-sufficiency and self-exaltation. Perhaps you have longed for the conversion of your parents, or brothers, or friends; and, oh, how fervent have been your prayers, how bright your hopes of a speedy answer! But the answer has not come, your friends are still far from God, and you wonder why it is. Perhaps it is because you are not sufficiently humbled—emptied of self. Perhaps God sees that if you had the desire of your heart you would take the glory to yourself, and say, Mine own hand hath done it. This would fully account for the delay.

If you turn to Deut. xx., you will find that long before this the Lord had made it an ordinance in Israel,

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that, when the nation went to war, proclamation should be made for any who had just married a wife, or planted a vineyard, or were fearful and faint-hearted, to go home, lest they should make their brethren faint-hearted. Gideon makes this proclamation, and how many, do you think, went home? Out of an army of two-and-thirty thousand, twenty-two thousand returned, leaving but ten thousand with their commander. But there were still too many, and the Lord bade Gideon bring them down to the water, and try them there. It was a strange mode of trial. All who lapped of the water, as a dog lappeth, were to be placed by themselves; and all who bowed down upon their knees to drink, were to be set in another company by themselves. Which was the largest? There were but three hundred who lapped. Nine thousand seven hundred knelt down to drink. What must Gideon have thought? He knew that all this was going on to reduce the number of his army; and as one hundred after another, and one thousand after another, knelt down at the water, how severely must his faith have been tried! Can we doubt that there was a meaning in the test that was applied? What was the difference between the two companies? This, that the one were so bent on the errand they were upon, that they would not stop to kneel down and refresh themselves by a good draught: they merely cooled their lips in passing. The others forgot their mission in the opportunity to refresh themselves fully. It was by the three hundred who were so intent on fighting the battles of the Lord that they un-

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consciously forgot themselves, that the Lord said He would deliver Israel. The Lord grant us more of their single-mindedness for him.

And now comes the dream about the barley cake. This was not a sign that Gideon asked of the Lord, but one that the Lord graciously gave His servant without being asked. The Lord had thoroughly emptied His servant of all confidence in self, and of all confidence in his army. His army indeed was gone: but the Lord, knowing His servant's weakness, said to him in the night, "Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine heart be strengthened to go down unto the host." He was first to go by himself, or, if afraid, with his servant, and he would hear what would strengthen him to go down with his little company of three hundred. A blustering, self-confident man would have said,—"Afraid! Not I indeed! I'll go alone, and not put it in my servant's power to say he went with his master because his master was afraid." Would no boy—no youth—among my readers, have felt and spoken thus? Gideon did not. He was afraid, and he owned it by taking his servant Phurah with him. O for the simplicity of this man of God! Well, as they approached the hostile camp, there they were, Midianites, Amalekites, and all the children of the east, and they "lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without

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number, as the sand by the sea-side for multitude." Was this a sight to strengthen Gideon's faith? You shall hear. "When Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent; and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along." Just like a dream, you are ready to say. In dreams the greatest things are brought about by the most unlikely means. Only to think of a barley cake upsetting a tent! Such was the dream that one Midianite told to another—Gideon and Phurah listening all the while outside! But was the dream all they heard? No, the Midianite to whom it is related interprets it. "This is nothing else," he says, "save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host." What was the effect on Gideon? "And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise: for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." He adores God, who had so mercifully strengthened his faith; and he calls on his three hundred men at once to follow him to the host. He divides them into three companies, gives each man a pitcher, and a lighted lamp or torch, puts the war-cry into their lips, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and bids them do as they see their leader do. Thus, in the dead of night, while

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thick darkness reigned around, these three companies blew the trumpets, brake the pitchers, held the flaming torches towards their foes, or waved them in the air, and cried aloud, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Then it was the host ran, and cried, and fled. "The Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host." The men of Israel gathered together to pursue them; two princes of the Midianites were slain; and the whole mighty host scattered like chaff before the wind. Thus it is when the Lord works. The instruments may be the feeblest possible, but this only the more displays the power of the One who uses them for his own glory, the deliverance of his people, and the discomfiture of his foes.

Is there a thing too hard for thee,
  Almighty Lord of all,
Whose threatening look dries up the sea,
  And makes the mountains fall?

Who, who shall in thy presence stand,
  And match Omnipotence?
Ungrasp the hold of thy right hand,
  Or pluck thy people thence?

Sworn to destroy, let earth assail,
  Nearer to save thou art!
Stronger than all the powers of hell,
  And greater than my heart.

There are deeply interesting details in Gideon's history, beyond those with which we have now been

occupied. I hope my young friends will carefully read the whole account in Scripture. The questions that follow will not be confined to what has been before us, but will extend to the close of Gideon's life.

QUESTIONS ON "THE CAKE OF BARLEY BREAD."

1. On what points was the faith of Gideon weak?
2. Of what did his faith assure him?
3. What practical lesson may we learn from this part of Gideon's history?
4. What followed on this strengthening of Gideon's faith?
5. Can you name one of the greatest dangers to which we are exposed?
6. Why had Gideon's army to be reduced?
7. By what means was it, in the first place, reduced?
8. In the second testing of the people, which company was the smallest?
9. How do they seem to have been the fittest for the conflict?
10. What sort of a person would have disdained to take his servant with him, as Gideon was permitted to do?
11. What was it that the Midianite dreamed had been overturned? and by what means?
12. Of whom did the other Midianite interpret this?
13. What did Gideon infer from the conversation?

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14. To whom did his heart then turn? and by what act did he indicate that it did so?
15. How did he arrange his forces?
16. What were their weapons, and their war-cry?
17. What was the effect of their onset?
18. Who aided in the pursuit?
19. What were the names of the Midianitish princes who were slain?
20. To whom did Gideon send to cut off the retreat of the enemy?
21. When they had complied with his invitation, and began to chide him for not inviting them before, what was Gideon's reply? and what did it mean?
22. What was the state of Gideon and his three hundred followers when they passed over Jordan?
23. To whom did he apply for succour during the pursuit?
24. How many of the combined foes of Israel had been slain?
25. How many remained together, under the two kings?
26. What were the names of the two, and what became of them?
27. How did Gideon recompense those who had refused him aid?
28. What did Gideon refuse?
29. How did he lead Israel into idolatry?
30. What was Israel's behaviour to the Lord and to Gideon's kindred after his death?

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CHARLEY'S BIBLE.

My little Bible!—mother's gift,
You're very dear indeed;
I love between your purple lids
My Saviour's words to read;
And long before I could do so,
I now remember well
The pretty stories out of it
Dear father used to tell.

How Jesus, once a baby, sat
Upon his mother's knee,
Before he cured the lame and blind,
Or walked upon the sea.
And he would speak of Bethany,
Where two sweet sisters lived,
And of the trembling woman who
A cure from Christ received.

Then, though I was a little boy,
Oh how I wished that he
Who did so sweetly talk to them,
Would show himself to me!
It made me long to read his book,
So o'er the page I bent;
And till I could make out the words,
I never was content.

May I its meaning every day
Still better understand,
Until God fits me by his grace
To dwell at his right hand.
And I will try to send his word
Where it has not been given;
For it will be a pleasant thing
To send such news from heaven.

From "Child's Treasury.

CROWNS IN THE PROMISED LAND.

A YOUNG man who had attended one of the meetings, went home about one in the morning to sleep with his brother, and said to him, as he got to his bed, "Did you ever hear of crowns in the promised land?" "Don't wake me," said his brother. "Well, I never heard anything like it before; they are singing at the meeting about crowns in the promised land, and, do you know, I think I shall have a crown there? Come to-morrow and hear about it yourself." Both those brothers were converted.

ELIZA;
OR, THE SWISS CRIPPLE.

PART II.—THE LOST ONE FOUND.

It was not that Eliza was worse by nature than we are, dear children, that she had come to such disgrace so young in years. In her case the sin in the heart was unchecked by the kindly influence which parents, teachers, friends, or circumstances so often have; and it was thus allowed to show itself in its real deformity, —brought to the surface, indeed, by the neglect and cruelty to which she had been subjected.

There she lay, the young incendiary, malignant hatred in her heart, sin upon her soul, and a criminal, suffering the punishment of the outraged laws of her country, friendless and destitute! A few days after her imprisonment, the female warder, on entering her cell one morning, found her in a state of high fever, and crying aloud for water to quench her burning thirst. Her sullen silence was now broken by the exclamation, "Oh, how glad I am to see you come at last! I am burning with thirst, and have had no water all night. Oh, give me water, water, or I shall die!" Water was brought, of which she drank greedily; but the fever ran on until she became delirious. In this state the crime she had committed seemed constantly present to her memory, and often she would cry out in horror, that she saw the blazing house and all the scene of that terrible night re-enacted before her eyes. At such

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times her remorse was painful to witness, and her cries for water were redoubled. It was a fearful scene; for God was dealing with her conscience. And now, dear children, mark the wonderful grace of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The crime she had committed, while it surely brought with it deserved punishment,—for God hath said, "Whatsoever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap,"—was nevertheless by GRACE made instrumental in bringing her under the sound of that WORD which she had never heard, or, if heard, had rejected. The female warder who attended on Eliza was a CHRISTIAN. O let us, who know His name, bless God that there are *Christians*, dear children of God, members of the heavenly family, scattered up and down the world, everywhere, and often found, like the seeds of some sweet flower from a far off and brighter clime, scattered by the wind, which "bloweth where it listeth," and springing up in most unlikely and ungenial places. Yes, blessed be God, there was a Christian warder in that place of human crime and punishment. The name of this dear sister in Christ was Martha. To Eliza her attentions were unremitting; and often, when the conscience-stricken girl spoke of her crime, and cried out that the fire of the blazing house was burning up her soul, dear Martha breathed the gentle, blessed name of Jesus in her frensied ear to put the fire out! And when she cried for water, Martha, while satisfying her wants, whispered in her ear, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come

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buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Or again, "Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that *I* (Christ) shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John iv.)

When the delirium had subsided, Eliza still spoke of her crime, and the recollection of the burning house still haunted her memory and her dreams. Martha seized the opportunity to speak of sin, and of the precious blood which cleanseth from it. She told the trembling prisoner of the Saviour's life of love on earth, and His death of wondrous grace on the cross. She showed her, from the Word of God, how He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree," and how God Himself hath said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." She spoke of MERCY to one who had never known its meaning; and, as the dwarfed and darkened mind opened to the truth, and the kindness and pity of "God our Saviour" began to be comprehended, the morose and bitter waters of Eliza's disposition changed to sweetness, and a ray from heaven entered a desolate heart! One morning, Martha, on entering the prisoner's cell, found her sitting up, with clasped hands, and eyes closed in silent prayer. The flush of fever had passed away; and with it also the expression of dread and malice. Instead of that, the pale face was lighted by the smile of peace, and its whole expression was one of grateful love. On beholding her attitude, and the marked

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alteration in her countenance, Martha's heart was filled with hope; nor was she disappointed. Her labour of love had been crowned with success. Eliza was a new creature in Christ Jesus. She had passed a remarkable night. The Lord is pleased sometimes to use extraordinary means to bring the darkened heart to Himself. "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and *sealeth their instruction.*" (Job xxxiii. 15, 16.) Thus had it been with Eliza. Dear Martha's "instruction" had been "sealed" to her by "a vision of the night." She thought, as she lay upon her bed of pain, that a sense of burning thirst came over her, and her heart seemed to be on fire; when He, of whose love and tenderness Martha had been speaking, entered that dark cell, and looked kindly upon her. She gazed in awe upon His wounded hands, and feet, and side; and, as she gazed, she thought He pointed to the vessel of water at her side, and then repeated those words Martha had been quoting to her from the 4th chapter of John. Encouraged by His gracious words and manner, she exclaimed, "Lord, give me that living water," and awoke. She then sat up, and "called upon the name of the Lord," continuing in earnest supplication till Martha came, and found her as has been described.

From that time Eliza bore little resemblance indeed to the wretched criminal who but a little while before had entered that cell. She became a living witness to

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the power of the grace of God; and, during the short remainder of her life on earth, occupied herself in seeking to set before others that blessed Gospel which had proved to her "the power of God unto salvation." When able at intervals to leave her bed, she went with Martha to visit the bed-side of other prisoners who were ill, to speak a word to them of Jesus and the love of God. Her last hours were full of peace. As she was departing, Martha said to her,

"You long to be with Jesus?"

"Yes," answered Eliza, "and soon I hope to be with Him for ever. Oh, when I think upon Him—how kind, how gracious, how merciful He was to me—when I think how He loves, can I wish to stay longer in this sinful world? But I feel the hour has come, and that soon, very soon, I shall depart and be with Christ."

And so it was. The same evening she fell asleep in Jesus, rejoicing in the Lord.

May the Lord bless this little narrative to you, dear readers of GOOD NEWS. In it you see the terrible power of sin. In it you see also that "the Gospel is the POWER OF GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth." Terrible as the power of sin may be, the power of GOD is greater. The case of Eliza shows us that the vilest sinner may have forgiveness, and that the glorious grace of God takes up the chief of sinners, and makes them shine in "the beauty of holiness" to the praise of that grace for ever.

THE LITTLE SWEEP.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher, knowing that all the boys in his class were constantly occupied during the week, feared much that prayer was sometimes neglected. He insisted one Sunday on the importance of prayer. At the close he asked a little boy of ten years of age, who led a very uncomfortable life in the service of a master sweep, "And do you ever pray?" "Oh, yes! Monsieur." "And when do you do it? You go out early in the morning, do you not?" "Yes, Monsieur, and we are only half awake when we leave the house. I think about God, but cannot say that I pray then." "When then?" "You see, Monsieur, our master orders us to mount the chimney quickly, but does not forbid us to rest a little when we are at the top. Then I sit upon the top of the chimney and pray." "And what do you say?" "Oh, Monsieur, very little! I know no grand words with which to speak to God. Most frequently I only repeat a verse that I have learned at school." The scholar repeated with fervour, "'God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

MARIA;

OR,

PASSAGES FROM THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

PART V.—FURTHER EFFORTS.

AFTER the conversation in which Maria's father sought to convince her that she really hated God, Maria did not take as much pleasure as she had taken in thinking of God. She could not see why his holiness and justice were so essential to his glory, or why a Being less strict would not be entitled to as much love and reverence. But she did not think any worse of herself. It seemed to her that God had become less lovely, instead of her having just learned that she did not love Him. Of the desperate wickedness of her heart she as yet knew nothing, but was soon to learn it by painful experience.

One day her father on returning home found Maria in tears. "What is the matter, my dear?" inquired he. Maria sobbed more violently than before, but did not reply.

Her mother said that Maria had been angry with George, and had taken from him one of her books with so much violence as to hurt him. Her father looked much concerned, but did not speak for some time, during which Maria, who dreaded nothing so much as her father's displeasure, was overwhelmed with shame and distress. At length he said:

"Maria, when you committed a similar fault last

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week, I told you that, as you were a reasonable being, I preferred governing you by reason to restraining you by fear. I explained to you the effects of giving way to your temper, and told you how much more difficult it would be to acquire self-control some years hence than now. I think you promised me then to make an effort to govern yourself, was it not so?"

"Yes, papa," sobbed Maria; "I meant to try, and I thought when you talked to me so kindly that I should never be angry again all my life. I did try a little while, but I forgot it again, and—and—"

"But, my dear child, how can I place any confidence in your promises? you have so often broken them."

"I know it, papa, I cannot tell what is the reason. If I am ever so sure of not doing wrong again, the very next day I forget it all, and do the same things."

"I can tell you the reason, Maria; it is that wicked heart of yours, about which I have told you so often."

"I don't see that I can help myself then, papa."

"You must first feel that you are to blame, that it is your own fault you cannot do better; and then as a lost sinner you will come to Christ and be saved. Your efforts have not succeeded, because they have been made in your own strength; and while you depend on yourself you never will succeed."

"Papa, do you suppose that if I tried as hard as I could I couldn't keep from being angry myself?"

(*Smiling.*) "I thought, my dear, you had already tried as hard as you could!"

(*Blushing.*) "Well, papa,—you know—but—"

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"But you think you could do a little more yet if you should try your utmost. Well, dear, I *do* think that you cannot keep from any sin without God's help."

"Not for one day, papa?"

"Not for one moment."

"Oh, papa, you know I might shut myself up in a room alone, and not speak or move the whole day."

"That would be nothing to the purpose; you would still sin."

"How, papa?"

"The word of God as much forbids sinful thoughts and feelings as words and actions, and you would have abundant opportunity for these in your retirement. But, setting aside thoughts and feelings for the present, you will not be able to spend a day without committing some outward fault, unless you have the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Maria's pride took fire at this remark. She felt sure that she was not quite so bad as that. She would certainly be good for one day, and she had been before now. She did not say this to her father, for she was afraid he would say something about self-conceit; but he read it in her countenance.

"I see," said he, "that you do not believe me. Well, dear, try for yourself. The depravity of the heart is a truth which each one must learn for himself, and it is learned only by repeated vain efforts, under the teaching of the Spirit of God."

As to Maria, she had not forgotten her previous

failures ; but, with the self-deception often practised by the unrenewed heart, she flattered herself that she could still do more. Her pride was mortified at the idea of acknowledging her dependence, and she determined to try her utmost for one day at least.

The next morning Maria slept later than usual, and the domestic who came to wake her found some difficulty in doing it. She was a good-natured girl ; but this morning, being in haste, and finding it impossible to wake Maria by speaking, she took hold of her and shook her somewhat roughly. This, it must be confessed, is not very pleasant, and Maria did not relish it at all.

"Let me alone!" said she, peevishly ; "I shan't get up half so soon for your shaking me so."

"Your father and mother are up, and breakfast is almost ready," said the girl.

The mention of her father fortunately reminded Maria of her resolution, and roused her effectually. Somewhat ashamed, she rose silently, and endeavoured to recall what she had said, and ascertain whether she had broken her resolution. On the whole, she concluded that it might "go for nothing," particularly as she had been half asleep when she spoke. So, with a determination to be doubly watchful, she went down to breakfast. After breakfast and prayers were over, Maria, as usual, sat down by her mother to sew for an hour. She was not fond of needlework, and the hours alotted to this employment were usually regarded with great disgust, unless when her mother

rendered them less tedious by relating a story. This morning there could be no story and no conversation, for her mother had letters to write. To make amends for this privation, Maria foolishly indulged herself in thinking how "nice" it would be if she had no work to do, and could read story-books all day long; or, if she were a nobleman's daughter, and had servants to wait upon her, and a carriage to ride in, and a beautiful palace and garden of her own. Maria did not consider that these vain and foolish imaginations only rendered her real situation more disagreeable to her.

She was so engrossed by them that her work was nearly half finished before she perceived that she was sewing on the wrong side.

"Oh, dear, what a shame!" she exclaimed. "Mamma, I shall have to pick out all I have done."

Her mother looked, said she was very sorry, but told Maria she should not speak so impatiently; she had no one to blame but herself. The best thing she could do now was to be cheerful and good-tempered about it.

But Maria did not feel at all disposed to be cheerful or good-tempered. She began discontentedly to undo the work of the morning, saying it would take the whole forenoon, and she should not be able to read a word. She did not forget her resolution this time; the recollection had sufficient force to restrain her from any further utterance of her feelings, but not to prevent her indulging them. She twitched the thread, and pulled the work in every direction; however, at

last, making a virtue of necessity, she applied herself in earnest, and the task was completed. She could not quite decide whether the day was lost; "to be sure she felt impatient for a moment, and who would not?" but she soon got over it.

When her mother had finished writing, she cut an orange in two pieces, directing Maria to take one and give the other to George. One of the pieces was a little larger than the other, and Maria, saying to herself, "I am the largest child, and so ought to have the largest piece," took this and gave the other to George. She acted from the selfish impulse of the moment, but the next moment her conscience reproved her; she looked up to see if her mother had observed it; she had evidently done so, though she said nothing, and Maria felt mortified and vexed.

"I may as well give up trying for to-day," thought she. "How foolish I was, just for a little piece of orange! To be sure it is nothing *very* bad, but"—the recollection of the morning occurring to her—"I believe the day is spoiled, I will try again to-morrow."

Maria felt as some children do when they have made a blot in their writing-books—"Oh, it's no matter how the rest of this page is written, we will hurry it off, and do the next better." So, as she had "given up trying," she seemed to feel herself at liberty to do just as she pleased.

It would occupy too much time to detail each of Maria's trials and the result—they all issued in complete failure; never was she able, with unalloyed

satisfaction, to recall the events of the day. Either she had spoken disrespectfully to her mother, or impatiently to George, or she had been disobliging, selfish, or in some other way had yielded to temptation. One reason why she was so frequently disappointed may be found, perhaps, in the fact that she never continued her efforts more than two or three days together. By this time she generally became uneasy, and relapsed into her usual habits of inattention and carelessness.

At these repeated failures, she was, however, surprised and vexed. What could it mean? Sometimes she found an answer to this question in the peculiar circumstances of her transgression, which seemed to offer some palliation. At others she bestowed on herself all manner of harsh epithets, for her carelessness and folly. At the same time if any one else had applied to her the same titles, she would have been highly offended. Neither was she disposed to acknowledge her dependence and need of Divine strength. On the contrary, she only became more determined to conquer at each repetition of her attempts, for her pride was enlisted in the contest, and pride is marvellously persevering.

Poor Maria thought she had never met with half so many temptations and difficulties as now, when she was trying to be good. It seemed as if everybody and everything were conspiring against her. In this she was, perhaps, correct; since, if she was to be taught experimentally the sinfulness of her heart, temptations

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might be necessary to develope it. Many have, doubtless, succeeded in effecting an outward reformation on the same principles of pride and self-righteousness with which Maria commenced her efforts; but how much better to be taught by disappointment our need of a new life, and of strength from above, than to build on a self-righteous foundation, and perish at the last.

Maria had by this time so much experience of her inability to do right, that her understanding and conscience were convinced of her need of Divine assistance. But, as we have observed, this conviction did not produce humility, or in the least affect her heart, which was still proud and unreconciled to God. She regarded herself as rather unfortunate than guilty; as one who was making the greatest efforts to do right, but was prevented by her wicked heart,—a something in her view quite distinct from herself.

However, as she now felt willing in words to acknowledge her dependence, she supposed that this was all her father had desired. "Papa was right," thought she, "in saying I could not be good without God's strength: but now I am convinced of this I will pray to Him every day."

She felt as if there was something very meritorious in making this acknowledgment, and as if God would be under obligations to her for praying to him. Of course, she supposed that her prayer would be answered immediately, and that all difficulties would now vanish before her.

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"WHAT SORT OF EYES?"

ARCHIE had wondered with what sort of eyes people could see Jesus, and asked his teacher on the subject, when the following conversation took place :—

Teacher. Who were you named after?

Archie. My uncle Archibald.

T. How do you know you have such an uncle? you never saw him.

A. Oh, I know it—I know it—because he *sends* me things.

T. How do you know that *he* sends them?

A. Oh, I know that, because he *writes* me ; and his letters all say, "From your affectionate uncle Archie."

The teacher, at this point, gave Archie an unsatisfied, uncertain look.

A. Oh, I *know*, because folks have seen him there, and they told me ; and if I grow up a good boy, he has promised to take me, and do for me. Oh, I'm just as *sure* as if I had seen him.

And he looked as sure as sure could be.

T. You never saw him with your two bright blue eyes?

A shake of the head.

T. But you *believe* in him just as fully as if you had?

A nod of assent.

T. Well, that is seeing him with the eye of faith. *That* is the way we see Jesus Christ. He *sends* us far more things, and far better, than your uncle Archie sends you. All uncle Archie sends you—yea, all he

has—has been sent by the Lord Jesus Christ. He, too, has *written* to us, in the gospels and epistles. And then we have also the accounts given by those who have *seen* him, and bear witness to what he did and suffered for us, and to God's raising him from the dead, and taking him up to heaven. And Jesus Christ has *surely promised* to all who believe in him that he will shortly receive them to himself, to live with him always. Believers are just as sure of all this as if they had seen him with their bodily eyes. May you, dear Archie, thus see Jesus Christ by the eye of faith.

[*Extracted, with additions.*]

A CHILD'S FAITH.

"How sweet it is, my child,
To live by simple faith;
Just to believe that God will do
Exactly as he saith."

"Does faith mean to believe
That God will surely do
Exactly what he says, Mamma?
Just as I know that you

Will give me what I ask;
Because you love me well,
And listen patiently to hear
Whatever I may tell?"

"Yes, you may trust in God,
Just as you trust in me;
Believe, dear child, he loves you well,
And will your Father be.

"To pray in faith, my child,
Is humbly to believe
That what you ask in Jesu's name,
You surely shall receive.

"Go with your simple wants,
And tell him all you need;
Go, put your trust in Christ alone;
Such faith is sweet indeed.

From the "Child's Companion.

HUMILITY.

THE bird that soars on highest wing,
Builds on the *ground* her lowly nest;
And she that doth most *sweetly* sing,
Sings in the *shade* when all things rest.
In lark and nightingale we see
What honour hath humility.

When Mary chose the *better* part,
She meekly sat at Jesu's feet;
And Lydia's gently opened heart
Was made for God's own temple meet;
Fairest and best adorned is she
Whose clothing is humility.

The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown,
In *humble* adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down
Then most, when most his soul ascends.
Nearest the throne must ever be
The footstool of humility.

SAMSON'S BIRTH.

How often we find in the Old Testament that when a man was to be signally used of God, there was something remarkable attending his birth. Such cases as that of Isaac, of Moses, of Samuel, will at once occur to your remembrance; and one object, doubtless, of their birth or infancy being so distinguished, was to show that it was God himself who interposed, and that they were but instruments in his hand.

Samson's birth is another instance of the kind. Again and again had Israel's sins brought the nation into trouble and bondage after the days of Gideon; and now we are told that "the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord de-

livered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." Perhaps it was not the whole nation that was under the yoke of these enemies, but some portions of it bordering on the region where the Philistines dwelt. In that neighbourhood lived a man called Manoah. He and his wife seem to have been rather advanced in life, but had no family, when, one day, an angel appeared to the latter, and announced that she would have a son, who was to be a Nazarite to God from his very birth, and he should begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. She at once tells her husband; and it is very striking, the language in which she expresses to him her wonder and her fear: "A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible; but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name." Dear reader, had some heavenly stranger, some inhabitant of the unseen world, appeared thus to you, are you so happy in God, so assured of his favour, so at rest in his love, that you would not have been afraid? Or would you, like Manoah's wife, have described his countenance as "very terrible?" What is it makes us afraid of God, or of any messenger immediately from him? Alas! dear reader, it is sin; and God's great object in the Gospel, which is his good news to sinners, is to deliver us both from sin itself and all its consequences, by making himself known to us, in Jesus, as our Friend, as the One who has loved us, and at the cost of his own Son's precious life, redeemed us to himself. When we

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know God thus we cease to be afraid of him. We can look up to him as our Father. We can go freely into his presence, and tell him both of our sins, our sorrows, and our fears. What a blessing to know him thus! It was not by this full revelation of God in Christ, that Old Testament saints were brought to know him, but by a particular revelation to each. We have such a revelation in the narrative before us.

When Manoah had heard his wife's account, he entreated the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born." He is not yet aware who it was that had appeared to his wife; he only supposes him to have been "a man of God;" but he is anxious that he should be sent again, still further to instruct them, and he seeks this by earnest prayer to God. God granted Manoah his request. The heavenly visitant again appeared to the woman as she sat in the field. Her husband not being with her, she went for him at once; and, not having been present on the former occasion, he has repeated to him the instructions which had before been given. Manoah begs the angel to tarry till he has made ready a kid. The answer is such as to disclose the fact, that it is not to a mere man of God, no, nor to a mere angel of the Lord, but to the angel Jehovah, the Lord himself, that Manoah is speaking. "Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou offer a burnt-offering, thou

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must offer it unto the Lord." What was this, but gently to intimate that he was himself the Lord? Manoah presses him for his name, that when his sayings come to pass, they may do him honour; but the answer is, "Why asketh thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" Manoah takes his kid, with a meat-offering, and offers it upon a rock unto the Lord; and we are told that "the angel did wonderously, and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass when the flame went up towards heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on, and fell on their faces to the ground."

But while such was the overpowering effect, on both Manoah and his wife, of this wonderful display of Jehovah's presence, they do not both view it in the same light. "Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God." But she knew better. "His wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would he, as at this time, have told us such things as these." Poor desponding one! if such should read these pages, what an answer have we here to the dark, despairing thoughts which press upon thy heart. Thou lookest on God as thine enemy, viewing him only through the medium of thy sins; and the more conscious thou art of the necessity for having to do with him, the more afraid art thou that he will slay thee—that he will

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punish thee with that eternal death which thy sins have deserved. But listen to Manoah's wife. If it were God's pleasure to destroy, would he have been at such infinite pains to save us? Would he have so shown his willingness to receive us, if only we come in the name of Jesus, that true burnt-offering and meat-offering? Would he have *showed* us all these things, or *told* us such things, if his purpose had been to destroy us? We have seen how he showed himself to Manoah and his wife; but since then he has been revealed—fully, openly revealed—in Jesus, the Son of his love; and was this to destroy us? Would he have showed us the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, if it had not been to win our heart's confidence thus to Jesus and to himself, and to save us eternally? Would he have *told* us such things? He had told Manoah and his wife that they should have a son, and that he should begin to deliver Israel; but he has told us of his own Son, and of that eternal life he came to bestow, and of that death upon the cross by which he made atonement for our sins. Would he have said, Come unto me, if he had been resolved on bidding us depart into eternal woe? Would he have said, Look unto me, if he had determined we should never see his face with joy? O that my dear young readers might believe in the love of God towards them! O that they might believe in Jesus, in whose life and death that love has been so gloriously displayed!

Samson's birth followed quickly on these events, and we are told, "the child grew, and the Lord blessed

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him." May this be true of each reader of GOOD NEWS. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich; and he addeth no sorrow with it."

QUESTIONS ON "SAMSON'S BIRTH."

1. What do we often find in the Old Testament as to those who were remarkably used of God?
2. Why was this?
3. What was the name of Samson's father?
4. What was foretold as to Samson himself?
5. How does Manoah's wife describe the appearance of the heavenly visitant?
6. What makes us afraid of God?
7. When do we cease to be afraid of him?
8. What did Manoah request of God?
9. To whom did Manoah find he had been speaking?
10. What was the effect of this on Manoah?
11. What were his wife's arguments against his fears?
12. What has God *showed* to us? and what has he *told* us?

MARIA;

OR,

PASSAGES FROM THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

PART VI.—UNANSWERED PRAYERS; A WICKED HEART.

THE morning after Maria's conversation with her father, she prayed, as she thought, with great fervency, and then descended to the sitting-room with full expectations of success. In the course of it, she was surprised to find that her difficulties had not diminished. Indeed, as she had expected that the grace of God would enable her to overcome all difficulties at once, without any effort on her part, she felt even more dissatisfaction on the review of the day than she had for some time past. The next day it was the same, and at the close of it, when she took her accustomed seat by her father, she could not conceal her disappointment and vexation. Bursting into tears, she began—"Papa, you said the reason I did not succeed in trying to be good was that I depended on myself; so to-day and yesterday I prayed to God to help me, and I have been worse than I was before."

Her father could with difficulty repress a smile at this bitter complaint, that a single prayer, proceeding, too, from a selfish and unhumbled heart, had not effected a conquest which would certainly need a new life, and which, with that, would probably require months of prayerful effort. There were so many

errors, so much misunderstanding and self-ignorance, implied in her remark, that he hardly knew how to reply. Thinking it best, however, to say nothing at that time of the *character* of her prayers, he replied,—

"It is true, my dear, that I accounted for your failure in this way; but I did not tell you, did I, that one prayer, or even two, would put all your difficulties to flight, and change your temper at once?"

"No, papa, you did not say so; but I thought, of course, God would hear me as soon as I prayed."

"But it is not necessary to suppose that, even when prayer is offered aright, and when God intends to answer it, he does so immediately and at once: he bestows a little grace at a time, and often not until after many weeks or months of prayer."

Maria was surprised, but not discouraged. She thought it would not be difficult to pray for ever so long a time, if she might receive an answer at last.

"After all, papa," said she, "I do not see why I should have been worse than usual to-day."

"I do not think it certain that you have been so; you were expecting such great things, that the disappointment might make you imagine it, or perhaps you expected that God's help would render it unnecessary for you to make any effort."

"But did not you tell me, papa, that I could do nothing of myself, and that I must have God's help?"

"Yes; but God's enabling you to govern yourself is very different from his doing it instead of you, while you sit still."

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"Then, papa, must I try just as hard as if I did not pray?"

"Certainly; praying will do you no good without trying. But I have something else to tell you about your prayers; but it is late now; we will wait till to-morrow. Good night, my dear."

Maria, quite encouraged, bid her father good night, and went upstairs with a lightened heart. She prayed for a new heart, not expecting an immediate answer, but regarding her prayer as one link of a chain of performances that were to obtain for her what she desired. She even tried to form some calculation as to the length of time which she would probably be obliged to wait for an answer to her petitions.

"I told you last evening, Maria, that you must not expect one act of prayer, nor even continued prayer, without effort, to prevail. I will now tell you something else about your prayers, which perhaps will surprise you. But first, did you not feel, after having prayed, as if you were better than before, and as if God was under some obligation to hear you?"

After a moment's thought, Maria answered, "I don't know but I did, papa."

"I thought so, from what you said last night. You seemed to suppose that God would be cruel and unjust, if he refused to help you. Now, I must tell you that God is not only not obliged to answer you, but that he has reason to be displeased with you on account of your prayers."

Maria looked at her father, to see if she understood him aright.

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"Suppose, Maria, a poor person should come to you for food or clothing; would you expect him to demand it as a right, or to entreat it as a favour?"

"As a favour, papa, of course."

"Well, now, suppose further, that this beggar was a person who had injured you very much; suppose that you had frequently assisted him before, that he had abused all your benefits, and then endeavoured to prejudice others against you, what would you think in that case?"

"I should think he was very impudent to come again, and should send him away fast enough."

"At least you see that you would be under no *obligation* to relieve him?"

"No, indeed, papa."

"Well, my dear, your case with regard to God is just that of this poor beggar. He has been bestowing blessings upon you all your life long, which you have abused, and for which you have felt no gratitude. Even if you had had any claim to his favour, you would have forfeited it by this conduct. And yet you presume to accuse God of injustice, because he does not immediately grant you what you ask."

Maria was struck by these remarks. After remaining silent for some time, she said,—

"Papa, I believe I see why God is not obliged to hear me, but I do not see why he should be displeased with me for praying."

"You thought, however, it seems, that you should find reason enough to be displeased with the beggar,

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in the case I supposed. However, that is not the reason of God's displeasure, for he has invited us to come to him at all times; he is never weary of answering our *sincere* petitions. But, to return to the beggar. Suppose that you possessed the power of reading the heart, and that all the time he was talking, you could see that his heart was full of enmity to you; that he was prompted merely by selfishness to come and ask favours for which he felt no gratitude; if, in short, you saw that he was not sincere in one word that he uttered, you would be displeased and disgusted."

Maria's countenance expressed her assent, and her father continued,—

"Or suppose I should perceive that all your expressions of love to me were insincere, and that, while you were professing a great deal of affection for me, you felt none, would you not expect that, instead of being pleased, I should be disgusted, just in proportion to the vehemence of your protestations?"

"Yes, papa; but I do not see how this applies to my prayers. I am sure I am sincere in them."

"In one sense, Maria, you are sincere. You sincerely wish to be saved from punishment, but this is mere selfishness. The beggar was sincere in desiring that you would assist him; but, as his sincerity was the result of selfishness, it was no recommendation."

This seemed so clear that Maria could make no reply; yet she did not feel satisfied. If she was not sincere now, when she thought herself so how could

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she ever be sure of having right feelings? Mortified and distressed by such reflections, Maria retired to bed with a half-determination not to try any longer.

One day Maria came to her father with an objection which seemed to have great weight in her mind, and which she probably supposed he would find some difficulty in answering. "Papa," said she, "I don't see how I can help being wicked: I didn't make my own heart."

"Do you remember, Maria, what I told you the heart means?"

"I believe, papa, you said it was the affections."

"Very well, my dear. Then to say that God made your heart, is the same as to say that he gave you the power of loving or hating certain objects. You understand this. But there is nothing sinful in this power of loving or hating, is there? The exercise of it would be holy or sinful, according to the character of the object on which it was exerted."

"I do not understand you, papa."

"If you love sin, and hate holiness, that is exerting the power to love and hate in a sinful manner. This is to have a sinful heart. But God is no more to blame for this than you would be if you gave a man fire to warm himself, and he should choose to throw himself into it, and be burned to death."

"Then, papa, how came my heart wicked?"

"Why, my dear, you chose to place your affections upon sinful objects, instead of giving them to God; if you had chosen to give them to him, they would have

been holy affections; that is, you would have had a holy heart."

"Still, papa, why should I have chosen one thing more than another? It could not have been merely by chance that I did not love God."

"Very true, Maria; the faculty of choosing is called the will: now your will, and the will of every human being, is depraved, or inclined to sin, and therefore chooses it in preference to holiness."

"Well, then, papa, God must have created my will depraved."

"My dear child, I do not suppose that it is possible to explain this subject so that you will be satisfied; for no unconverted sinner ever was satisfied. It is true that we have a sinful nature, in consequence of our connection with Adam. Our hearts are, from the beginning, disposed to sin, and our wills are opposed to God. We do not understand how this can be, and it is useless to try to comprehend it; it is enough for us to know that it is a fact, and that it forms no excuse for us."

"I'm sure I should think it was an excuse!"

"Well, let us see how it would apply in all cases. Here is a man to be tried for a murder; he confesses the crime, but says to the judge, 'You certainly would not condemn me for what I could not help; it was my wicked heart which made me do this.' Should we not tell him that this was the very thing he was punished for, because he had a heart which had disposed him to commit this crime? If a wicked heart is to be received

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as an excuse for sin, there ought to be no punishments in the world, for everybody could plead that apology."

"I know that seems absurd, papa, but yet, somehow or other ——"

"Well, Maria, on this point I have a condition to make with you. Whenever you are ready to admit that this is an excuse in cases of injury offered to yourself, I will allow that it is a great one in your favour. So, if George should pull down your baby-house, or break your doll, I shall expect that, instead of being angry with him, you will say, 'O, poor fellow! he could not help it, he has such a bad heart.'"

Maria could not help smiling at the absurdity of this; but though her understanding and conscience yielded, her heart did not. She looked uneasy and dissatisfied.

"I see, my dear," said her father, "that you are not satisfied, and I did not expect that you would be, because the difficulty lies not in the subject, but in yourself. All the arguments in the world will be of no use while your heart remains the same. Only be reconciled to God, through Jesus Christ, and the difficulty will vanish."

"I wish I could; but my heart won't let me."

"The same excuse again. Why, my dear, your heart is yourself, while you talk as if it were something quite distinct from yourself, over which you have no control. To say that your *heart* won't submit to God or trust in his blessed Son, is to say *you* won't, which is your guilt, not your excuse."

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Maria sighed—her father also sighed. *She* thought the terms of salvation were so hard that they could not be complied with :—*he* sighed to see how powerless is argument where the heart is concerned.

NOTE.—Dear reader,—Do not suppose that you must necessarily pass through all the stages of Maria's experience. Christ is ready at once to be your Saviour, as he was to be Maria's. But Maria had not submitted to take her place as a lost sinner, needing a Saviour; she was, at least, for helping to save herself. All this must be given up, and then we are glad to find in Jesus, and in his all-atoning blood and his almighty grace, everything we need. May you thus believe in him at once, and be at once and for ever saved.

ONE BY ONE.

ONE by one the sands are flowing,
One by one the moments fall;
Some are coming, some are going;
Do not strive to keep them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go to each;
Let no future dreams elate thee;
Learn thou first what those can teach.

One by one (bright gifts from Heaven),
Joys are sent thee here below;
Take them readily when given,
Ready, too, to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee—
Do not fear an armed band;
One will fade as others greet thee;
Shadows pass through all the land.

Do not look at life's long sorrow,
See how small each moment's pain;
God will help thee for to-morrow—
Every day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly
Has its task to do or bear;
Luminous the crown and holy,
If you set each gem with care.

Do not linger with regretting,
Or for passion's hour despond;
Nor, the daily toil forgetting,
Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token,
Reaching heaven, but, one by one,
Take them, lest the chain be broken
Ere the pilgrimage be done.

ARE YOU READY?

THE sun was shining brightly; the sea was calm, and deeply tinted with the azure hue of the almost cloudless sky above; the air soft and mild, and everything betokened a lovely summer's day. It was a day annually kept as a public holiday by the inhabitants of the small town in which the circumstance occurred that I am about to relate. This day had doubtless been looked forward to by many with great eagerness and delight, when the long-talked-of excursion was to be made, and the numerous plans carried out which had been formed for spending the day in the pleasantest and most agreeable manner possible. The shops

were closed; the streets thronged with gaily-dressed people; flags were hoisted; bands of music paraded the town, and everything wore the aspect of gaiety.

But what was to be the end of all this gaiety and pleasure-seeking? Alas! for the pleasures of this world—how vain and fleeting are they! they last but for a moment, and then vanish as smoke!

Between five and six o'clock in the evening two men went out in a sailing-boat; they had proceeded about two miles from the land when a slight breeze sprang up, and the cap of one of the men was blown into the water. In order to pick it up it was necessary to turn the boat; and in doing so, through some mismanagement, it capsized, and both men were plunged into the sea. A small fishing-boat at some distance, seeing what had happened, gave the signal of distress, and instantly boats were put off from the shore to their assistance. All this time the two men were struggling in the water. At first they both contrived to hold on to the bottom of the boat; but one being at last carried to some distance by the waves, was unable to regain the boat, and rapidly sank to rise no more. His companion, after being washed off the boat six times, succeeded in maintaining his hold until another boat arrived, only just in time to rescue him, for he said afterwards that his hands were slipping off, and that he felt sure he could not hold on many minutes longer. The poor man was brought on shore in a state of insensibility, and it was some time ere hopes of his recovery could be entertained—the doctor himself

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saying that if he had remained in the water *one minute* longer he must have died.

Oh! what a gloom was now cast over the town, which a few hours before had been the scene of so much mirth and joy. As the bystanders watched the boat from the shore, smoothly gliding over the surface of the sea, little did they think that in less than an hour from that time one of the two men it contained would be no more, and the other on the very brink of destruction! and still less, perhaps, did that man think as he stepped gaily into the boat, that ere another hour had flown he would be ushered into eternity.

Oh! my dear young friends, let me ask you this one solemn question, *Are you* ready, should *you* be called away at a moment's notice? Oh! if not, let this little incident be to you as a solemn voice, saying, "Be *ye* also ready." *Now* is the day of grace; *now* is the time of mercy; but this day, this time will not last for ever; it is quickly passing away, and there is a day of judgment coming, and then it will be *too late!* When that poor man found himself struggling in the water, he had neither time nor power then to think of his soul's salvation. And, oh! how fearful is the doom of all those who perish unsaved—nothing but everlasting misery awaits them! Let me entreat you to take this warning—listen to the word of God, "*To-day*, if ye will hearken to my voice, harden not your hearts." "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation." "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near."

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It is remarkable that the man who was drowned was an excellent swimmer, whilst the one who was saved could not swim at all. The former was said to be the best swimmer in the neighbourhood, and noted amongst his companions for his extraordinary feats in swimming, and skilful management of a boat. But of what avail was all his skill and prowess in the hour of danger, when he most needed it? *It did not save him.* Just before he sank he was seen trying to swim; but it was no use; he had no power; and in a few moments the waters closed over him, and his body has never been seen since! Now, dear reader, mark this! —all this poor man's efforts to save himself were useless; and just so it is with *you; all* you can do, or try to do, to save yourself is utterly useless; *your* works (be they ever so good in the sight of men), *your* prayers, *your* tears, *your* repentance, are of no avail in God's sight for the salvation of your soul. No! Jesus Christ has done *all* for you, and the salvation of your soul is now a finished work; and when you seek to add anything of your own to it, you are only endeavouring to rob Christ of the glory which belongs to him, and him *alone.*

But how was the other man saved? By clinging to the boat. And why did he cling to the boat? Because he felt himself drowning. The sea was raging around him—he could not swim, and he felt he could do nothing to save himself; the boat was his only safety.

Now, dear reader, whoever you may be, young or old, if you are still careless as to the salvation of your

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soul, let me tell you in love that you are just in as helpless a condition as was this drowning man. You are going on from day to day, having your thoughts, your affections, your hopes, centred in a world which lies under a curse, under the power of the wicked one, and upon which judgment must be poured out sooner or later. The word of God tells us that we are by nature "*dead* in trespasses and sins," "the children of wrath." How, then, can we save ourselves? Would it be any use for a *dead* man to try to help himself? Of course not. Neither can *you* do *one single thing* to save yourself. But what a mercy it is to know that God does not require *you* to *do* anything—all has been done for you; Jesus has accomplished everything for you; and when he was upon the cross he uttered those precious words, "It is finished," showing that nothing more was needed, but that the work of redemption was for ever completed.

Now, just as the drowning man clung to the boat, so must you cling to Jesus. He is the only Saviour, the only refuge from the wrath of God. By giving up his life, and shedding his blood upon the cross, he has for ever made a perfect atonement for your sins; and now he only requires you to believe this, and to receive his message of mercy into your heart: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." If that man had not

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felt that he was drowning, he would not have clung so firmly to the boat; and it is because you do not feel your utterly *lost* condition as a sinner that you do not cling to Jesus. Oh! go to him at once; make no delay; cast yourself upon him in your sins, just as you are. He is ever ready to receive *all* who come to him. His own word is, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Now, these are God's own words. Will you turn a deaf ear to them, and refuse his gracious invitations? Oh! despise not his warnings; and when you have read this little paper, do not throw it aside carelessly, and forget all about it, but think over it, and remember it is God's message to your soul, and you do not know that you will ever have another. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Think of those solemn words spoken by Jesus Christ himself, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

2 Kings v. 14.

"BECAUSE GOD SAYS SO."

A CHRISTIAN having given his child, a boy of about nine years of age, a neat little book, entitled "The Cleansing Blood," the following conversation ensued between them:—

Father. Whose blood is called "the cleansing blood"?

Boy. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

F. Why is the blood of Jesus Christ called *cleansing* blood?

B. Because it cleanses us from all our sins.

F. Why does the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanse us from all our sins?

After some consideration, the reply was, "Because he bore our sins on his own body on the tree."

F. Whose sins does the blood of Christ cleanse away?

B. The sins of those who believe in him.

F. Has it cleansed *you* from *your* sins?

B. Yes.

F. Are you *quite* sure of that?

B. (thoughtfully), Yes, I am.

F. What makes you quite *sure* of it?

Now, dear children, mark the reply. Some grown-up Christians would have answered, "Because I feel happy;" others, "Because I *think* I can trust him." Some, looking at their own experience, have been known to answer, "Well, because I have reason to hope that I have been born again." But this little boy's answer—clearly, simply, emphatically, and deliberately given—was,

"BECAUSE GOD SAYS SO," laying much stress upon the word "*God.*"

The importance of this reply cannot be overrated. In preaching the Gospel, some time afterwards, this conversation was repeated, in order to explain to the people what was meant by "believing God." And one poor sinner found peace at once. Being asked, the next day, whether his sins were gone, he replied, with a happy smile, that they were. "How?" said the preacher. "The blood of Jesus Christ has washed them all away," replied the man. "How do you know that?" was the inquiry. "Well," said the poor man, "I'll be like the little boy—'Because GOD says so!'" Two others, who had long been anxious about their salvation, but had been looking within for some ground of hope—something that would justify them in their own eyes in thinking they were saved, instead of looking at Christ, and God's gracious message concerning him—got settled peace in the same way. Their

faith and hope are now in *God*, instead of in themselves, their frames, and feelings, and experiences.

Some dear young reader of GOOD NEWS may be anxious to know what is meant by *believing*. It is *taking God at his word about Jesus*. When the Philippian jailer "sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him THE WORD OF THE LORD." Now when this trembling sinner *heard the Word of the Lord*, what did he do? Why he simply *believed it*, and so "rejoiced, *believing in God*, with all his house." He did not wait to ask what is meant by believing; he did not look into himself to see whether any change had taken place in his own heart; he did not wait to *feel something*; but he heard the message from GOD concerning Jesus, and just believed it at once, *because God* had said it; therefore he could rejoice then and there. Now, my dear young reader, can *you* say, as in the sight of God, "My sins are gone"? If not, may the Lord give you grace to say so *at once*. "I am quite sure that *my* sins are cleansed away by the precious blood of Christ, BECAUSE GOD SAYS SO." What does God say about it? He says, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin." Believe him, because it is HIM. "God is love." He gave his own dear Son to die for sinners, to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Jesus *has* done it. God says so. Will you not believe HIM?

A COWARD.

"A COWARD, Tom! That's what *you* are! Why don't you strike him, and not walk away so, and let him call you names? Catch me to take it so quietly! I would let him know who he had to fight. Oh, you are a coward!"

"Was Jesus Christ, our Saviour, a coward, Jack? And what did he do when he was scourged, and struck in the face, and even spit upon? Did he strike back? Or, when he was reviled, did he do the same? No! we are told that he answered not a word; but when on the cross, in suffering and agony, he prayed God to forgive them! Shall we not try and follow his example? I intend to try as far as I can to be like Jesus, meek and gentle, and forbearing and forgiving. I have not done anything to offend Will, only refused to play truant with him, and advised him to go to school too, when he struck me, and because I did not strike him back, he called me names."

What effect, do you think, my little reader, this good boy's conduct and words had upon the other two? I will tell you. Will walked up to Tom, and told him that he was sorry that he had struck him, and that he would go to school with him. Jack joined them, and said he had never thought before that Jesus had set an example not to fight; and that he would remember it, and also the good effect of his young companion's words and conduct, which had explained it to them; and that he would read his Bible more. Who knows how much more good this may do him?

THE SLIGHTED WARNING.

A SERVANT of Christ, residing at a watering-place, and calling one day to visit one of his hearers, saw a young lady in the parlour, who had come for the use of the water, on account of her health. Observing her unusually pensive, he took the liberty to inquire the reason. She answered, "Sir, I will think no more of it, it was only a dream, and I will not be so childish as to be alarmed at a dream; but, sir," said she, "I will tell you my dream, and then I will think no more of it." She then repeated as follows:—

"I dreamt I was at a ball, where I intended to go to-night. Soon after I was in the room, I was taken very ill, and they gave me a smelling-bottle, and then I was brought home into this room; and I was put into that elbow-chair (pointing to it), and fainted and died! I then thought I was carried to a place where there were angels and holy people in abundance, singing hymns and praises to God;—that I found

myself very unhappy there, and desired to go from thence. My conductor said if I did, I should never come there again! He then violently whirled me about, and I fell down! down! down! through blackness, and flame, and sulphur; the dread of which awoke me."

The minister endeavoured by every possible argument to dissuade the young lady from going to the ball that night; but in vain! She answered, "I will go. I will not be so foolish as to mind a dream!" She did go: and soon after she came into the ball-room she was taken ill, and, *as she dreamt*, a smelling-bottle was given her. She was carried home into the room, and put into that very elbow-chair represented in the dream; she fainted, and died! Awful warning! and awful event! Oh, that it may deeply penetrate the hearts of any who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." She was warned by a dream; but such are now warned by a reality—*even her mournful death.*

The late Mr. M'Cheyne, hearing from a friend that she had said "she was determined to keep by the world," penned the following lines on her melancholy decision:—

THE FATAL DECISION.

She has chosen the world and its paltry crowd;
She has chosen the world and an endless shroud!
She has chosen the world with its misnamed pleasures;
She has chosen the world before heaven's own treasures!

She hath launched her boat on life's giddy sea,
And her all is afloat for eternity;
But Bethlehem's star is not in her view,
And her aim is far from the harbour true.

When the storm descends from an angry sky,
Ah, where from the winds shall the vessel fly,—
When stars are concealed and rudder gone,
And heaven is sealed to the wandering one?

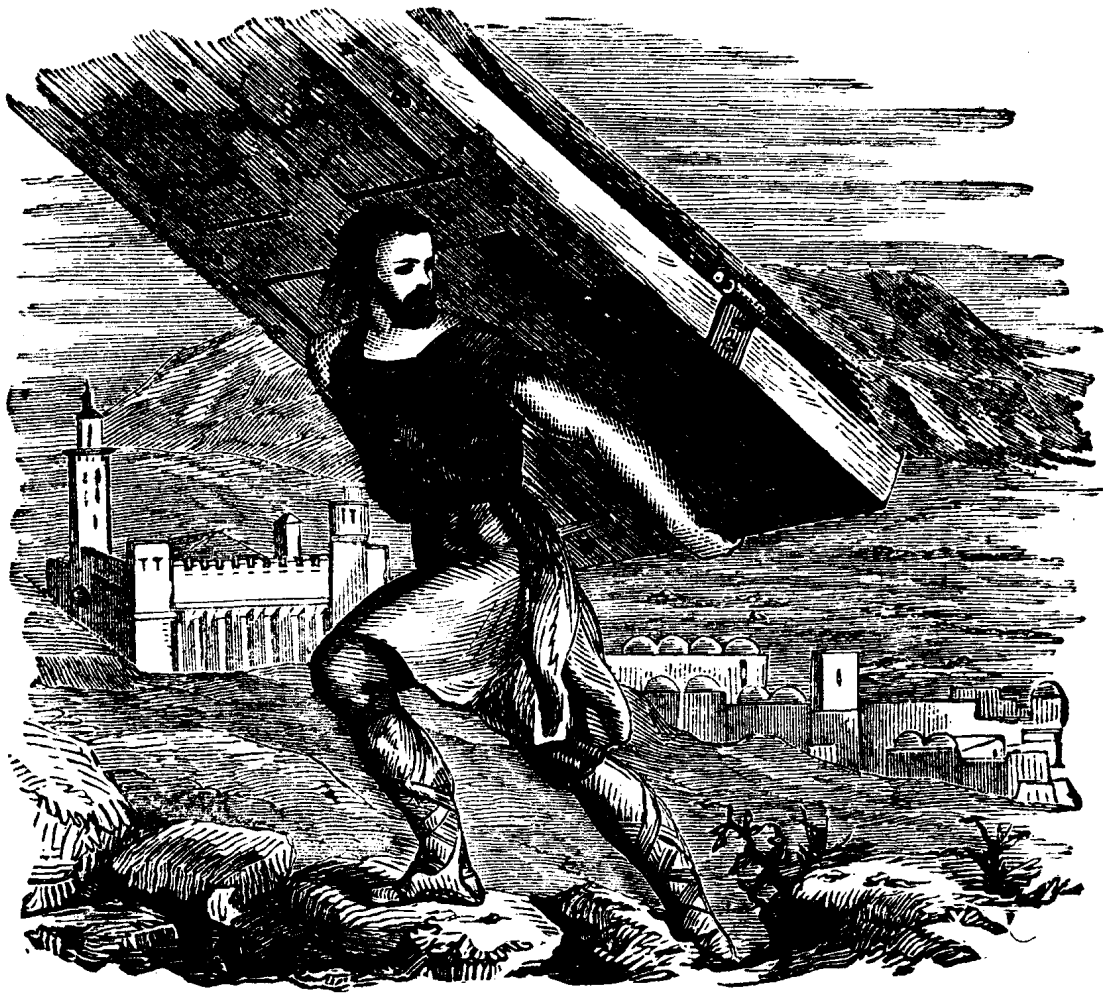
The whirlpool gapes for the gallant prize,
And with all her hopes to the deep she hies;
But who may tell of the place of woe
Where the wicked dwell, where the worldlings go?

For the human heart can ne'er conceive
What joys are the lot of them who believe;
Nor can justly think of the cup of death
Which all must drink who despise the faith.

Away, then, oh fly from the joys of earth!
Her smile is a lie, there's a sting in her mirth!—
Come, leave the dreams of this transient night,
And bask in the beams of an endless light.

THE RESTING-PLACE.

THOU Holy One of God!
The Father rests in thee,
And in the savour of that blood
Which speaks to him for me:
The curse is gone—thro' thee I'm blest,
God rests in thee—in thee I rest.



THE FALL OF GAZA.

We have the distinct warrant of God's word for regarding Samson as a believer—a man of faith. His name is amongst those mentioned by the Apostle where he asks, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Not a few of the

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wonders here enumerated were fulfilled in Samson's history.

You have been warned, again and again, against supposing that every man of faith is to be looked up to as an example in everything. Far from it. Noah was a man of faith, but yet was overcome with wine. Lot was a "righteous" man, but still settled in Sodom, and narrowly escaped from it with his life. Samson, too, was undoubtedly a man of faith, and did not, at last, escape with his life; but he slew more in his death than in his life. That God should tell us such a man was a believer is surely an encouragement to any one, however guilty, to turn to God and believe on Jesus. But let it not encourage us to sin. That would indeed be a sad abuse of God's word, and of his mercy. May God keep all the readers of "Good News" from such a fearful course.

Samson was a Nazarite from his birth. The Nazarites were peculiarly separate to God. When sin had once entered, and overspread the world, separation to God became the only path of blessing. It was because of this Abraham was called of God, and Israel kept apart from all the nations of the earth. Then, within the nation of Israel, the Levites were separated to the service of God, and the sons of Aaron to be his priests. The Levites were one whole tribe, and the priests one whole family of that tribe. But, besides these, there were Nazarites, who might be of any tribe, who were, either of their own accord, or by God's appointment, peculiarly separated to God. If you read the sixth of

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Numbers, you will find that, for the time any one vowed a vow of a Nazarite, he was to drink no wine or strong drink, and there was no razor to come on his head. Even if his father or mother died, he was not to touch their bodies, or defile himself, because the consecration of his God was upon his head. All the days of his separation he was holy unto the Lord.

Need I say that it is not in these outward things that true separation to God now consists? "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is by these that believers are now separated to God; but then these have their practical effects, and it is in the effects that the separation is seen. The outward privations of the Nazarite are thus a lesson to us to abstain from everything that is inconsistent with the holiness of God; and it is just in proportion as we thus live and walk that we shall find God with us, to strengthen us for anything he may give us to do.

Samson was a Nazarite from his birth. This was the secret of his strength. It was not size of bone or strength of muscle that made him the strongest man: it was God who gave him this wondrous strength so long as he kept his Nazarite vow. Nor did he give it him all at once, so as to make him independent of God. When the young lion roared against him, the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid. This became the occasion of his famous riddle, and of the revenge he was enabled to take on the Philistines for deceitfully

finding it out. Then, as a recompense for further treachery on their part, he caught three hundred foxes, and, by their means, set the standing corn of the Philistines on fire. The Israelites themselves take part with the Philistines against Samson, and bind him with new cords to deliver him into their hands. But when he came to Lehi, and the Philistines shouted against him, "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands." It was then that with the jawbone of an ass he slew a thousand men. After this, and after having thrown away the jawbone, he was so sore athirst, that, no water being nigh, he had to call on the Lord to rescue him from death. "Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" Thus had the strong man to own his weakness before God. But out of weakness he was made strong. "God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived." This was life out of death indeed. What had been death to a thousand of the enemy, became thus life to the fainting one who had wielded it to their destruction.

Samson's history closes at Gaza. It had been the scene of one of his mightiest triumphs, when, the gates of the city having been closed upon him to ensure his captivity, he took gates, and posts, and bar, and

everything belonging to them, and carried them up to the top of the hill. Of what use was it contending with such a man? Of none, so long as he was true to his Nazarite vow. This Samson himself well knew; but, deceived by a woman, he betrayed what was a secret between the Lord and himself, and she used it for his destruction. Another had similarly wrung from him, by her entreaties, the knowledge of his riddle, and had betrayed it to her Philistine friends. And yet, unwarned by this deception, and by the evident treachery of the one who was practising upon him, he suffered Delilah to weary him out "It came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death, that he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb; if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man." How sad that he should thus reveal to an enemy the secret of his strength! The Philistines were not slow to use it against him. Delilah said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him."

Dear young Christian reader, be warned by Samson's case. Let who will solicit thee to forsake the Lord, to do what thou knowest to be contrary to his word, be firm and absolute in thy refusal. Thy tempter may

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not know what is at stake. But thou knowest right well, that to yield is to forfeit peace of conscience, liberty in prayer, boldness in confessing Christ, and, it may be, to bring open disgrace on his name. Samson never thought, when he put off Delilah with one pretence and another, that it would end in his disgrace, captivity, and death. And so with thousands who have begun to tamper with temptation. They thought they could go so far and stop; but when they have gone thus far, they find themselves under a power that draws them onward, while the very will to resist seems paralyzed, and they become a prey to sins of which they would once have deemed themselves incapable. It is in the path of obedience to God that his strength is made perfect in our weakness. May our dear young Christian friends be warned in time, and have grace to heed the warning voice.

To Samson, the consequences of his folly were most disastrous. "The Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house." What a picture of a soul betrayed by his own folly, and become the dupe of Satan. His eyes put out, and toiling, in darkness, as Satan's victim, led captive by him at his will. They even propose to bring him forth, at a great festival they make to Dagon, their god, and have him show his strength for their amusement. "And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called

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for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made them sport." Thus low may a man of faith sink, if he dally with temptation, and betray to the enemy the secret of his strength. But oh! the grace of our God. The Philistines little thought how the day would end. They had sport of another kind before the sun went down. The world gains nothing, in reality, by leading God's people into captivity. God's people lose much—lose everything—by complying with the world's ways. But the world only secures thereby a heavier doom. Samson had, doubtless, humbled himself for his folly before the Lord. In the darkness of his prison-house, he had confessed his sin; and with the growth of his hair, which never should have been shaved, his strength returns. Of what worth to him was his life in this world, to grind the enemy's mill, and make sport for them to the praise of their god? He prefers to die; but he looks to God that his death may be more of a deliverance for Israel from the Philistines than his life had been. Led by the lad who held him by the hand to the pillars on which the vast hall rested, where the lords of the Philistines and others were congregated by thousands, "Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." How little did the gay multitude above, assembled there to look down and see their blind and humbled foe make sport for them, imagine

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what was passing between him and his God! How would their faces have paled, and their knees smote each other, had they known the destruction that was at hand. "And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

The lessons of Samson's history are for our Christian readers. May they be written on all our hearts. Better to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, and in his strength refuse all solicitation to evil, than by any dalliance with it lose the light and strength of the Lord's gracious presence, and become a tool of Satan, even though God in his grace should grant, as he did to Samson, recovery and victory in the end. But to any of you who are not yet Christians, we would once more say, Be warned in time. Flee at once to Jesus as your Saviour. Otherwise, you may be as near destruction as were the Philistines in the hall of their idolatrous mirth. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Now, there is a place of refuge, a covert from the storm. Jesus invites you to

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himself. Fall at his feet; believe in him; trust his precious blood; confide in his love; and you will find him

"Through time, and to eternal days
Your never-failing Friend."

QUESTIONS ON "THE FALL OF GAZA."

1. Where does Scripture testify to Samson as a man of faith?
2. When was it that separation to God became the only path of blessing?
3. Name the things prohibited to a Nazarite.
4. What lesson to us do these prohibitions afford?
5. What was Samson's riddle?
6. What was its solution?
7. How did the Philistines find it out?
8. How did Samson give them the promised change of garments?
9. By what danger was he threatened when he had slain the 1000 men?
10. Who was Samson's betrayer at last?
11. What did Samson himself discover when his head had been shorn?
12. What lesson may we learn from all this?
13. What are the results, in gain and loss, of God's people being led astray by the world?
14. How was it that Samson's strength had begun to return?
15. How many were involved in the overthrow at Gaza?
16. Where is the place of safety for us?

THE BLIND BOY.

A LETTER TO A CLASS OF SUNDAY SCHOLARS.

My Dear Young Friends,

Thomas H——, the subject of this letter, was born about eleven years ago. He was quite blind, and for some time was in the Asylum for the Blind at Bristol. At that time he was utterly careless about the things of God, and so he continued till March last, when he spent the day with some Christian friends who were at a watering-place. They saw that Thomas's health was failing, and sent for his mother,

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who took him down to them; but he became worse, and was taken home. Now it was he began to feel he was a sinner, and that he must shortly appear before a holy God. These thoughts troubled him exceedingly; and many and bitter were the tears he shed. Satan, too, was very busy, telling him it was too late. Oh, it was a sad time for the little blind boy; but many prayers were offered for him, which were heard and answered. In spite of all Satan's whisperings, he had great confidence in prayer; and what should you think he wished his kind friends to pray for? It was this—"Just ask the Lord to give me a little strength that I may go to chapel in the morning." His wish was complied with, and he felt composed. The morning came, but he was so weak and ill that his mother thought it impossible; but Tom thought differently, and said, "Mother, I must go; it will do me good." He was dressed and carried there, being much too weak to walk. He had not walked for some time. Should you not like to have seen him, dear children? A poor blind boy, so weak and ill, and yet so thirsting for the living God that he must be taken up out of his bed to be carried to a prayer meeting. Don't you think it was a more beautiful sight than any that were to be seen last Monday or Tuesday?* Yes, even the angels must have admired it. Thomas was taken home refreshed both in mind and body. He said he felt it good to be there; but still he was not satisfied;

* This refers to a public spectacle at the town to which this letter was addressed.

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he felt he was not clothed in that "best robe" in which the saved sinner appears before God; and once more he desired those around him to pray for him. This was about five o'clock in the evening. He had been in deep thought all day. After prayer, and reading the Word, he lay very quiet, and at a quarter past six Jesus himself drew nigh, and did for this poor child what you had so beautifully set before you some time ago. First, he showed him that he had *cleansed* him; then, that he had *clothed* him; and then, that he was about to *crown* him.* This was joy to the poor child, who said, "I have never felt anything like this before. I have but one wish now—to be for ever with the Lord, who has washed me in his own precious blood. I have no fear of dying, or going to hell; my fears are gone, and now I want to depart and to be with Jesus." In this state of mind he continued; and whatever he desired it was "Just ask the Lord." If in violent pain, "Just ask the Lord to give me a little ease;" or, if he needed sleep, "Just ask the Lord to give me a short sleep;" and soon after his friends would hear him say, "Bless his dear name, that prayer is answered." On Tuesday morning last he had convulsions, but was soon relieved, and became sweetly calm and composed—so much so that they thought he would linger some time. His mother was sitting by him, and heard him exclaim, "What?" She looked, and he was gone; his spirit had fled; and she

* See Zech. iii., where the sinner is *cleansed* and *clothed* (verse 4) and *crowned* (verse 5).

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believes that his eyes, which had never seen the light of day, were at that moment opened to see the glories that awaited him. Yes, he now knows, in its blessed fulness, "what it is to be there." May you also know it, dear children. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

THOUGHTS OF PEACE.

Some thoughts of peace enjoyed by a young Christian in her departing hour. She had greatly dreaded death.

"THIS is a calm, sweet dying bed,
No fear, no dread have I;
Jesus sustains my languid head,
Jesus himself is nigh!

"No darkness in the vale for me,
He passed its gloomy shade;
Jesus, the Lord, *my* light I see,
How *can* I be afraid?

"Oh, do not weep, but praise his grace,
That grace which made me whole;
God's glory shines in Jesu's face,
Its ray lights up my soul.

"At home we'll meet, and that ere long,
And never parted be;
No sigh of grief to mar our song
When we our Saviour see.

"I've done with earth, I'm near my home,
Keep close to Jesu's side;
Think of his word, that he will come,
By faith in him abide."

Her lips conveyed one other word
(She nears her heavenly home;
She now speaks only to the Lord),
"Jesus, *my* Lord, I come!"

A. Z.

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TWO SCENES IN RARATONGA.

Psalm lxxiv. 20; Matthew xix. 26; Romans i. 16; 1 Tim. i. 15; 2 Cor. v. 17.

In an isle of wondrous fairness, in the glitt'ring southern seas,
Where, nobly grand and beautiful, wave tall majestic trees;
Where scented breezes gently rock, flowers gorgeous as the day,
And radiant birds pour music forth, from every graceful spray;
I saw, beside a glancing stream, deep in the forest's shade,
A scene which, from my memory, can never, never fade—
A scene of blood and ruth, alas! for in that land abode
A wild and savage people—dark men who knew not God.
I saw a dark-eyed Indian child, sit 'neath a stately tree,
I heard his joyous voice ring out, in tones of sportive glee.
Free nursling of the pathless woods, his footsteps watched by none,
His playmates winds and waves and flowers, what feared he, though alone?
A rustling in the tangled boughs—a gleam—a shriek—a groan—
And, with the gushing life-blood forth, had that young spirit gone.

A chief, whose dark eye rolled, like fire beneath his
tow'ring crest,
With gory scalps, and blood-stained knives, and horrid
trophies drest,
Had marked the fair boy where he played, had bounded
on his prey:
The frame, still warm and quivering, I saw him bear
away.
Afar, I followed on his trail—I saw the banquet spread—
I saw the horrid feast commence—then, breathless
turned and fled.

* * * *

Scarce two short years had rolled away, again my foot-
steps strayed,
By memory's mournful interest led, to that sad blood-
stained glade.
I reached it—that tall tree rose, still beside the same
clear flood
Which had run red, that fatal day, with childhood's
guiltless blood.
My heart stood still with strong amaze, but not as erst
with fear;
What mighty power had been at work? what wondrous
change was here?
A child of some ten summers sat, beneath the selfsame
tree,
Her soft eye fixed upon a book, laid open on her knee,
And reading in her own wild tongue, in low and thrilling
tone,
The words and deeds of love and grace, of God's incarnate
Son;

While at her feet—oh, can it be?—yes, yes! 'tis he! 'tis he!
The chief of those fierce cannibals—murd'rer of infancy,
Still wearing his wild forest garb, though vanished from his side
The tokens dread of death and blood, the Indian warrior's pride;
That fiercely flashing eye, filled now, with holy look and meek,
While gentle tears rolled slowly down, his now unpainted cheek.
Upon that heathen's darkened soul had shone a glorious light—
Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, had risen with healing might,
And he whose hand a thousand times had reeked with human blood,
Sat lowly at a child's young feet, learning from her of God!

A. L.

Dear young readers, this is a TRUE incident; oh!

Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?

Oh! cannot *you* do something to help to bring the poor heathen, still living in darkness and the shadow of death, to the knowledge of that precious Saviour who has saved you, and washed you from your sins in his own precious blood?

MARIA;

OR,

PASSAGES FROM THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF A LITTLE GIRL.

PART VII.—MEN THINK GOD LIKE THEMSELVES; SLAVERY TO SIN.

"PAPA," said Maria one day, "what strange gods the Greeks had; they seemed to be just like men!"

"They were like very wicked men. But when did you learn anything about them?"

"Oh, papa, the other day at Mrs. C.'s, I found a volume of Homer's Iliad, and I read a good deal of it."

"Well, what do you think of their gods?"

"I do not like them at all, papa. They did not seem to have any idea of justice at all; one would take sides with one party, and another with the opposite, and then they would quarrel and try to cheat each other; and they ate and drank too. I don't see but they were just like men, only stronger."

"Yes, such a heaven as theirs would be a perfect hell, for all sorts of evil passions were at work there. It is said that the character of a people may be known by the character of their gods."

"Can it? Do you think that is true, papa?"

"Yes, in general it is. In those parts of the world which are destitute of the Bible, men imagine gods like themselves—subject to the same infirmities and

passions as mortals, and superior to them only in strength or cunning."

"But, papa, do you suppose that, if we had never seen the Bible, we should imagine God to be like ourselves?"

"Certainly we should; and not only so, many people who have seen the Bible, and read it all their lives, do now imagine God to be like themselves."

"Oh, papa: what! any born in this country think God is like a man?"

"Not in every respect: nobody here supposes that God has a body, and eats, drinks, and sleeps like a man, or that he is not infinitely superior to man in wisdom and power. It is in his moral attributes, which constitute his greatest glory, that they think God resembles them."

Maria reflected for a moment. "Well, papa, I can't find out what you mean; I am not conscious of ever having thought God was like me."

"I think I shall convince you that you and all other sinners are guilty of this error. Only remember, I do not say that you ever had this thought distinctly pass through your mind, 'God is like me,' or any such thing. I mean to say that you act in such a manner as to show that you take it for granted that God will feel and act pretty much as you would do in similar circumstances."

"Oh, papa, you can prove anything if you set out in that way."

"Set out in that way! What way can be more

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reasonable? It is the way we always use in judging of another person's opinions and belief. If a man were told that his house was on fire, and should use no means to preserve it, we should conclude that he did not believe the information, or that he wished his house to burn down. And this conclusion would be as certain as if we could look into the man's heart and see. Don't you see that it would be so?"

"Yes, papa, I suppose it would."

"Well, let us go on to the proof. You know that men are changeable in their opinions and feelings. One hour they admire, the next they condemn; they are easily irritated, and as easily appeased. Now, men evidently suppose that God resembles them in this repect, and that his feelings towards them vary with every variation in their conduct. When they are pleased with themselves, they imagine that he is pleased with them; and when conscience accuses them of having neglected their duty, they suppose that he frowns upon them."

"But it is not so, papa?" said Maria, surprised.

"Does God regard us with the same feelings when our characters are changed?"

"Not when our *characters* are changed; that is, when, by faith in Christ, we are turned from the love and practice of sin, to find our delight in holiness and God. Because God is unchangeable, he then regards us with complacency, though he had before viewed us with displeasure. But I refer to those occasional and short-lived changes which often take place in a man's

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conduct and feelings. You, for instance, are sometimes amiable and obliging; at other times, you are vexed and discontented. Now, have you not supposed that God regarded you with different feelings at these different times?"

"Yes, papa, certainly."

"Well, my dear, you are entirely mistaken. As God sees your heart, he does not need to wait for the development of your character; he sees at once all you have done, and all you will do, and all that you would do, in any circumstances. Of course, as his judgment of you depends upon the state of your heart, and not on your outward behaviour, it never changes."

"Yes, I see, papa; but it seems very strange."

"That only shows how accustomed you have become to wrong thoughts of God. Again, when we feel displeased, we always show it immediately, therefore we expect God to do the same; and, when we see men going on in sin for a long time unpunished, we conclude that he is not displeased. Many thus encourage themselves in sin, and imagine that, because they never have felt God's vengeance, they never shall. So the Jews did, as God tells them, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself!'"

"I never knew what that verse meant before."

"You know, too, we often make virtues compensate for defects, both in us and others; that is, we set off our good qualities against our bad ones, and excuse the latter by the former. In this, too, we suppose

that God resembles ourselves, and, therefore, we hope to bribe him to overlook our faults by our imaginary virtues. We acknowledge that we do some things wrong, to be sure; we get angry now and then, perhaps, and we love ourselves supremely; but we do not steal, nor lie, nor swear; so, in consideration of these *virtues*, we expect to be pardoned for the other sins. But God requires *perfect* obedience, and it will not do to plead exemption from one fault as an excuse for another. Well, have I not proved that men think God like themselves?"

"Yes, papa."

"And now I will tell you how you may find out your own character. If you love God because he is just, pure, and holy, as he is described in the Bible, then you love holiness and purity, and shall possess it. But, if you would rather that God would indulge you in sin, let you live as you please, and then take you to heaven—a God without justice or truth—then you have no love to holiness, but you are a slave to sin."

"Papa, it does not seem to me that I should like such gods as the Greeks had; but yet I cannot see why God would not be just as glorious if he were more merciful."

"*More* merciful, Maria! What would you have? Can he be more than infinitely merciful? God is love! Can he be more? No, my dear child, what you wish is, not that he should be *more* merciful, but *less* just; in fact, that he should be like some weak foolish parents that you have seen, who love their children *too*

well to restrain them, and so let them do as they please, and go on to ruin. Or, you would wish him to act as a king would do, who should treat all his subjects alike—traitors, robbers, murderers, no matter what, all must be treated alike, while his faithful subjects would be in constant dread of losing their property and lives. Under such a king, traitors and rebels would be best off, for they only would be safe, while the good would become their prey. This is what you would like, is it?"

"Oh no, papa."

"Why, that would just be the result, if sinners were admitted into heaven unchanged, and that is what you mean by God being more merciful. Heaven would thus become hell, happiness would be banished from the universe, and, while sinners would still be as miserable as they now will be, their only *consolation* would be that of destroying the happiness of their fellow-creatures. My dear Maria, God *cannot* be less holy than he is. Did he spare his own Son when he stood in the sinner's place? If you have any, the least, hope that you will be admitted into heaven with your heart unchanged, look at the cross of Christ, and despair.

"I believe, Maria," her father continued, "I once related to you the story of a lawgiver who had decreed that a certain offence should be punished by putting out the eyes of the offender. His own son was the first criminal, and the father put out one of his own eyes, and one of his son's. What do you think of his conduct?"

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"Oh, papa, I admire him very much; I remember the story."

"Suppose that he had simply pardoned his son, without inflicting punishment on any one, would you not have admired him as much then?"

"No, indeed, papa; there would be nothing to admire then."

"Nothing to admire! why he would have been just such a person as you like; it would have shown that he loved his son too well to punish him."

Maria looked confused, and did not seem to know what to say.

"You see that what you admire in this man was not simply his love for his son, which prompted him to wish to pardon him, for then you would have admired him as much in the second case which I suppose. It was the union of *inflexible justice* with *paternal tenderness* which awakened your admiration. Now, just tell me why you should not admire such perfections in God?"

Maria could not tell.

"Besides, God has given a much greater proof of his love to sinners than this father did to the son, even setting aside the infinite difference between the Creator and his creatures. The father only took half of his son's punishment, and you love and reverence him for that; but Christ takes all our punishment, and God offers to pardon us freely, and then you wish that he were a little more merciful! I don't know which is most wonderful—such infinite amazing goodness on his part, or such awful ingratitude on ours!"

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Her father left the room hastily, quite overcome by his feelings; and Maria sat thinking over the conversation, with a mixed feeling of shame and half-repentance on the one hand, and of pride and reluctance to submit on the other.

One day about this time Maria commenced a conversation with her father by asking him the meaning of Jer. xiii. 23: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also learn to do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

"It is a strong mode of expressing the power of long-continued habit," replied her father. "You know something of this yourself in little things. Don't you recollect how much difficulty you had in breaking yourself of the foolish habit you had some years ago of sucking your thumb?"

"Yes, papa, I remember it well enough. Though I was ashamed, and wanted to cure myself of it, I could not; and I don't believe I ever should, if you had not made me wear a glove."

"Well, my dear, if in such trifles habit is so hard to be overcome, just think how much greater the difficulty must be in the case of the sinner. He *never* had any inclination to good, but only to evil; and, if he found this inclination too strong to be resisted at first, how shall he overcome it when the force of habit has made it still stronger? How shall one who has all his life been accustomed to regard God, his Son, and his will, with feelings of aversion, begin to love them? How shall one who has always worshipped and loved himself supremely,

begin to worship and love his Creator? How shall one who has lived for years with a heart full of pride and selfishness, and envy, and revenge, become lowly and benevolent, gentle and patient, kind and forgiving?"

"How, indeed!" thought Maria, as she applied every word to herself. "I see there is no hope for me." Then hard thoughts of God, and of his will, began to rise in her mind. Why had he created her with such a heart, or why created her at all? Why did he require what her utmost efforts could not enable her to perform? She scarcely dared again propose these objections to her father; but at length she ventured to say that, if sinners were so unable to change their hearts, she could not see how they were to blame.

Her father sighed. "They are to blame; because their very inability, consisting simply in unwillingness, constitutes their guilt. They have all the faculties that are exercised when any one receives Christ, and there is nothing wanting but a disposition. And if the want of disposition constitutes an excuse, then there is not only no such thing as guilt in the universe, but the more a man sins, the less guilty he is. Why will you offer to your Creator an excuse which you would blush to present to a fellow-creature, and which you know would not be received at any human tribunal?"

It was now Maria's turn to sigh.

"I know what you think, my dear," resumed her father; "you think that you are a poor unfortunate creature to be punished for having a wicked heart, which you cannot help, and for not fulfilling a require-

ment which it is impossible you should fulfil. It seems to you that you have been doing everything you possibly could to obtain salvation, and as if it would be very unjust and cruel in God to leave you to perish, after all your prayers, and tears, and efforts. Is it not so?"

Maria hesitated.

"I do not mean that you have just these thoughts distinctly arranged, but you have such feelings."

"Yes, papa, it does seem to me that I am trying to do all I can to be saved."

"Well, my dear, all I can say to you is, that before you can *ever be* saved, you must feel that you have never done anything towards your salvation, but everything to prevent it; that it would be perfectly just in God to leave you to perish; and, in short, that God is all right, and you all wrong; for—

"'Christ will sooner abdicate his own,
Than stoop from heaven to give the proud a throne.'"

A WORD OF ADVICE.

"DON'T be ashamed, my boy, if you have a patch on your elbow. It is no mark of disgrace. It speaks well for your industrious mother. Better have a dozen patches on your clothes, than let one profane or vulgar word escape from your lips. Only believe in Jesus, and follow him. He will never be ashamed of you because you are poor. You know who it was that said, 'The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'"

CHILDREN AND THE FLOWERS.

Flowers, sweet and lowly flowers,
Gems on earth so bright and gay,
Is there nothing you can teach us,
Nothing you to us can say?

"List, and ye shall hear our voices
Speaking to you from the sod;
List, for we would lead you gently
Upwards from the earth to God.

"Children, as ye gaze upon us,
Think of him who, when below,
Told you well to mark the flowers,
How without a care they grow.

"Children, know that like the flowers
You may quickly fade away;
Life is short—improve the hours—
You may only have to-day.

"We were once but seeds, dear children;
We were placed on earth, and died;
You may die, but trust in Jesus,
Fear not, but in him abide.

"We proclaim the resurrection,
How the dead in Christ shall rise;
Incorruptible, immortal,
They will reign above the skies.

"Farewell, children, and remember,
When our forms shall meet your view,
That the Lord who clothes each flower,
Will much more provide for you."

A SWARM OF BEES IN A NEW HIVE.

FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES.

Be quiet—more ready to hear than to speak:
Be active—true riches unceasingly seek.
Be patient—whatever God pleases endure:
Be humble—and so shall your path be secure.
Be prayerful—make known your requests unto God:
Be watchful—for Satan is ever abroad.
Be hopeful—and never give way to despair:
Be loving—and show whose disciple you are.
Be gentle—and prove that your wisdom 's divine:
Be merciful—always to pity incline.
Be gracious—more willing to give than receive:
Be just—as you would not have others deceive.
Be upright—and thus your profession adorn:
Be kind—and treat no fellow-creature with scorn.
Be simple—from sophistry ever abstain:
Be diligent—if you would substance obtain.
Be circumspect—think how your conduct is eyed:
Be meek—and beware of presumption and pride.
Be lowly in heart—for the Saviour was so;
Be long-suff'ring—like him, when he sojourned below.
Be not unbelieving—but trust and adore,
And God's grace *be* with you henceforth, evermore!

THE HAPPY CHOICE.

It was barley harvest at Bethlehem. The reapers were at work. The sharp sickles were wielded by youthful hands, and the binding up of the sheaves followed quickly the cutting of the corn. What a cheerful time is harvest! Abroad among the reapers, or at home preparing for their reception at the close of their daily toil, how suited is the occasion to wake up *emotions of delight! and if the heart only knows the* blessed Source and Giver of all our mercies, how impossible to avoid praising him for his goodness. There were such hearts at Bethlehem, at the beginning of barley harvest, above three thousand years ago.

But see, what is it that has taken place? The whole city seems in trouble. Mothers stand with their babes at their cottage doors, and groups are gathered here and there, talking with hushed voices and in tender tones, or silently dropping a tear, and pointing out to each other, when they have passed, two females, whose entrance into the city has thus moved the hearts of all. One is aged, and the other not yet past her youthful prime. But the weeds worn by both tell the tale of woe. "Is this Naomi?" is the exclamation on all hands. Naomi means pleasantness: but the aged and desolate one replies, "Call me not Naomi; call me Mara (signifying bitterness), for the Almighty hath dealt bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

Naomi's early days seem to have been spent at Bethlehem. There she became the wife of Elimelech, and the mother of two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Prosperity may have smiled on both husband and wife until their marriage, and for a little while afterwards; but the names given to their sons would indicate that some dark cloud of adversity had shrouded them, ere even the first was born. Mahlon means *sick*, and Chilion *a pining;* and we are not surprised that the lads should receive such names, when we read that "there was a famine in the land." Ah, dear reader, if you have never known the want of food, you can little conceive what famine is. There are thousands in

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England now who are bitterly tasting what it means. There are tens of thousands, a short time ago as well off as the generality of my young readers and their friends, who are now having a bare subsistence supplied by the hand of charity. Will not my Christian readers pray for these afflicted ones? Shall we not deny ourselves to aid in furnishing them with the necessaries of life? Oh! that God may overrule their present distress to lead numbers to Jesus, the Friend of the destitute, the Helper of the helpless, the Saviour of all who are willing he should be such to them!

England is not to us what the land of promise was to one of Israel's race. If any of the sufferers in Lancashire could obtain employment and wages in some other county, or even in some other land, there is no Scripture principle to forbid it. But Canaan was Jehovah's land, and the gift of his love to his earthly people. Had they been obedient, there would always have been abundance in that pleasant land, flowing with milk and honey. But even when visited for their sins with scarcity, their place was to remain in the land, and repent, and cry to the Lord. It was still the Lord's land, and by his gift theirs; and better far remain in it, and wait on the Lord, than at once forsake him and the inheritance of their fathers.

Elimelech could not trust God to keep him alive in famine, and so he went to sojourn in the country of Moab. There he died. His sons grew up and married there. Far from Shiloh and the tabernacle, and all its solemn services; far from the Lord, from his land, and

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from his people, Naomi is left among idolaters, and her sons marry into Moabitish families. But it is as though God's chastening hand pursued them. "Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband." Stripped thus of all she held dear on earth, Naomi's thoughts turned back to the land of her fathers, and she arose, with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab. "She had heard there how the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread," and, accompanied at the beginning by both her widowed daughters-in-law, she sets out for her native land.

"But there was only one younger person in her company on entering Bethlehem. How was this?" Ah! dear reader, this is a question which brings us to the very point of our narrative. The two widows Orpah and Ruth, set out with their widowed mother: but the journey was hers, and on arriving at the borders of the two countries, "Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me." What exquisite tenderness you often find produced by the presence of death! In what softened, gentle tones the bereaved ones speak to each other! How touching these words of Naomi to Orpah and Ruth: "Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice and wept." Nature must have its gush of grief at such a moment as had now arrived. It seems to them impossible to say farewell to their

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aged kinswoman. "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people," is the joint utterance of their affections. They cannot bear to part. Naomi reasons with them, expostulates, pleads; closing with the words, "Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me." This aggravates their grief. "And they lifted up their voice and wept again."

Do they, after this fresh outburst, resume their journey, and go forward to the land of Israel? Alas! no. A crisis had arrived—a moment of decision. Is it too much to say that on the decision of that moment the present and eternal state of those two sisters-in-law, in all probability, hinged? It was not merely a question between the land of Israel and the land of Moab—their own mothers or their widowed mother-in-law. Had this been all, they might have decided either way without affecting their eternal prospects. But there was a deeper question. Unfaithful as the exiles had been in voluntarily exchanging the land of Israel for the land of Moab, they had carried with them to the latter the knowledge of Jehovah, and the question now for these young women to decide was between the true God, the God of Israel, and the idols of Moab. Down to this point they had journeyed together, spoken together, wept together, and had together clung, in their affection to Naomi, their mother. But now they were about to separate. "And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her."

My dear young friends, what an unspeakably solemn moment is that in which the subject of the soul, eternity, God, Christ, his person, his work, the value of his blood, the power of his resurrection, his sufficiency as a Saviour, his readiness to receive you, having been distinctly brought before you, your attention having been awakened, your feelings moved, your affections deeply touched, the question has to be met —the vital, solemn, all-important question of Christ or the world! heaven or hell!

When Orpah had departed, Naomi uses the fact of her return as a new argument with Ruth. "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law." This is the first mention of what was the real point on which the question hinged. Orpah had gone back, not to her people only, but to her gods. Would not Ruth go after her? What a moment! With the defection of her sister before her eyes, the endless destiny of this young woman appears still to tremble in the balance. Thank God, it is but for a moment. Not even for one moment is there any wavering on Ruth's part. "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, AND THY GOD MY GOD; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Thanks to the God of all grace, who inspired this young woman with

this blessed resolve. May it be, as to the vital part of it, the instant, solemn, unalterable resolve, through grace, of every one who reads these words.

That I am not overstating the import of Ruth's resolve, is evident from the words of Boaz in the next chapter. He speaks to her of "the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings," says he, "thou art come to trust." This was the meaning of her words "thy God" shall be "my God." From the lips either of her departed husband and father, or of her widowed mother-in-law, she had heard of the Lord God of Israel. Perhaps she had read of his wondrous works, his glorious titles, his mysterious name, his holy law. In one way or other, she had learned that it was to him, and not to the senseless idols of her country, that she owed her life, and breath, and all things. And who can say that she had not also heard of Israel's hope—of the promised Seed—of the Prophet and Deliverer, to whose coming the godly in Israel were always looking forward? At all events, when she had put her trust under the shadow of Jehovah's wings, on her was bestowed the rare blessedness of being in the direct line from which, according to the flesh, he sprang. Not only was she great-grandmother to "the man after God's heart," but she was thus a progenitor of David's Son and Lord; and she has the honour of being one of the four women mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord at the beginning of the New Testament.

And now, dear reader, is Ruth's choice to be yours

from the day this meets your eye? It is not as God of Israel, but as God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would encourage you to trust in him, and own him as your God. The privileges of this Moabitish damsel were as nothing compared with yours. A great part of the Old Testament was not written in her day, and she had no New Testament to tell her of Bethlehem and its manger, of Calvary and its cross. Little did she suppose, as she entered Bethlehem by the side of the stricken and downcast mother, that she would herself be the mother of him whom unnumbered millions will adore eternally as their Saviour—Son of God, as well as Son of man. Bethlehem is associated inseparably with the mystery of the Incarnation. The echoes of the angels' song will never die away, "Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, good will to men." Are you, my reader, to bear a part in this song, as it swells through heaven and earth, when time shall be no more? or are you throughout eternity to bewail your folly and unbelief in those dread words, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved"?

I may at this moment be addressing some whose case somewhat resembles that of the two Moabitish damsels. When religious awakenings are so common, it is likely enough that some dear companion of yours, some bosom friend, some near relation, has been led to Jesus, and enabled, through grace, to say with Ruth, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." You have not been brought to this point yet.

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What a line your friend has crossed, leaving you behind! Perhaps a brother, or a sister, has thus been converted and made happy in Jesus. You have sat together at the same table, trod together the same paths, read the same books, and in everything been the sharers of each other's joys. Ah! you have had to weep together, too! You have watched by the same bed of sickness, received together that last fond look, that last farewell, which seemed to leave you desolate indeed, with nothing upon earth but one another; and together, locked in an agonizing embrace, you have stood by the open grave of a parent whose form you might not again behold, whose voice you might not again hear. How the events of that day are imprinted on both your minds! The empty chair, the deserted chamber, the fresh burst of grief! And then the opened Bible, the chapter that neither of you could read, the attempt to pray, when no utterance could be found for aught but sobs, and sighs, and groans. Perhaps it was that evening that your sister's heart was drawn to the Saviour, that she trusted her soul to his blessed hands, and confided in his all-atoning blood. Perhaps it was not till afterwards. And, for some time, you seemed as deeply impressed as she was. You read together, you knelt together; you attended the same meetings, sat under the same ministry, and bade fair to embrace the same Saviour, and be fitted for the same home in the Father's house with him.

And is it not so? Alas, no. And are you the Orpah, who has turned again to her people and her

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gods? The tears of bereaved affection are not the tears of a contrite heart, broken on account of sin. The yearnings and meltings of natural sympathy are not the passing from death unto life. The one may assume a hopeful appearance for a time: but the world resumes its hold; sin begins again to look pleasant and inviting; what has only been endured as a duty, or as an indispensable means of safety, becomes a yoke too heavy to wear; and the heart shows, alas! its preference for anything to Christ. Not so with your companion. She has come to Jesus. He has welcomed her as he does all who come to him, and as he would yet welcome you. But, oh! think of the contrast between her and you. She has God for her God; your god is the world, or its prince, a more fearful idolatry than that of the Moabitess of old. She is a child of God; you are yet among the children of wrath. Her sins are forgiven; yours are yet recorded against you. She can say truly, "Jesus is mine;" you are yet Christless in the world. She is on her way to heaven; you are on the broad road that leads down to death. May God awaken you. May his love attract you. May Jesus become precious to you. May your sins become loathsome to your heart, as having wounded and crucified the Saviour. Constrained by his love, may you from the hour of reading this be able from your heart to say, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

QUESTIONS ON "THE HAPPY CHOICE."

1. What was it moved the whole city of Bethlehem above three thousand years ago?
2. What may we fairly suppose as to Naomi and her husband soon after their marriage?
3. From what may this conclusion be drawn?
4. Why did Elimelech leave Bethlehem for the land of Moab?
5. What was there wrong in this?
6. When did Naomi begin to think of returning?
7. Who accompanied her at her setting out?
8. On what question did one companion desert her?
9. What is the question which it is so solemn for any of us to face?
10. Why did not Ruth return to Moab?
11. What special honour did God confer on Ruth?
12. What is it that is now inseparably connected with Bethlehem?
13. In what way do hopeful appearances, with many young persons, disappear?

Will all my young readers ask themselves this question also, and answer it under the eye of God? "*Is Ruth's case, or Orpah's, to be my own?*"

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

(Read 2 Tim. iii. 14-17.)

THOSE of you, dear children, who have been brought up to the perusal of the Holy Scriptures, know something about Timothy, that godly and devoted young man whom the apostle Paul loved so much, and who so greatly assisted him in his service to the Lord Jesus Christ. Timothy was of a gentle and humble spirit, full of love to the Lord and of service to his saints; and a blessed example for any young Christian to set before him, and to follow, even as he followed Christ. We learn from the 2nd Epistle of Paul to him (i. 5)

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that he was blessed with great advantages from his birth; for he had both a grandmother and mother who had "unfeigned faith," that is, real true-hearted confidence in God. So that we are sure that he was constantly remembered in their prayers, and that as soon as it was possible, some of the sweet and simple words of the truth of God were sought to be instilled into his mind, as the means of instructing him, through the teaching of the Spirit of God, in the way of salvation. He was thus brought up from his infancy in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and was early instructed in the Scriptures; for we read of him, "that *from a child* thou hast known the holy Scriptures." What a privilege you have too, dear children, in these days, when there are so many opportunities of knowing the Scriptures; many of you having dear parents and friends who are continually seeking to instruct you in them; many of you being also sent to Sunday Schools, where teachers diligently labour to lead you into the way of truth; and some of you attending day schools kept by those who care for your souls, as well as for your minds and bodies. Oh, then, while you are young and possess such advantages, may you seek to profit by the instruction of your kind friends and teachers, and above all things may you read and learn "the holy Scriptures," which are able to make you (as they did Timothy) "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

But do not suppose that it is merely necessary for you to obtain a knowledge of the words of Scripture;

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for if you could repeat by heart the whole of the Bible from beginning to end, and had not "faith which is in Christ Jesus," you would still not be "wise unto salvation." He that has faith not only learns but *believes* what God says, and puts his trust in him. Now God tells us that "*all* we have sinned," the young as well as the old; that "there is none righteous, no, *not one*," not even a little child; but that "*whosoever*," be he young or old, "shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Jesus, the holy and the just One, has died for us, the unholy and the unjust, and shed his precious blood on the cross, in order that sin might be put away, and that sinners who believe in his name might be saved, and blessed in him for ever. Have you, then (I ask each young reader), believed on Jesus Christ to the saving of your soul, and thus become "wise unto salvation"? If you have, you have eternal life, and shall never perish, for none is able to pluck you out of the Father's hand, who is greater than all. (John x. 28, 29.) But if, instead of being a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are still, though a child, at enmity against God, oh! do not, I pray you, trust in your knowledge of the words of Scripture, but seek to know HIM, even Jesus, of whom the whole volume of Scripture testifies, and whom to know is life everlasting.

We all know that after a little babe is born into the world, it requires a great deal to be done for it before it becomes a man; and so it is with a new-born child of God. He wants food, and God has given the pure

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"milk of the Word" for the nourishment of the soul, and that he "may grow thereby." (1 Pet. ii. 2.) He also wants instruction in the truth and ways of God, and therefore "all Scripture" is given, that, being taught therein by "the Spirit of Truth," he may have "the Word of Christ" dwelling in him richly, and thus be "throughly furnished unto all good works." We do not know what our blessed portion is in Christ, unless we are taught in the Scriptures of truth; nor do we know what is pleasing to God, nor what wonderful events are coming to pass, except as the mind of the Lord is made known to us through his Word. We see, then, how important it is for the Christian to search the Scriptures, and search in them continually. And how suitable has God made them for us; and how many beautiful and instructive histories, narratives, and parables has he caused to be written for our learning. I therefore hope that all young Christian readers of the "Good News" will read in the Scriptures daily, for their present blessing and guidance in the ways of the Lord; and if it should please him, as they grow older, to make use of them as his servants, to preach the Gospel, or to lead others more perfectly into the way of truth, they will find how happy and useful it will be to have obtained, like Timothy, a knowledge of "ALL SCRIPTURE," which "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." T.

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"HE REDEEMED ME!"

THE tears of a slave girl, just going to be put up for sale, drew the notice of a gentleman, as he passed through the auction-mart of a Southern slave state. The other slaves of the same group, standing in the line for sale like herself, did not seem to care about it, while each knock of the hammer made her shake. The kind man stopped to ask her why she alone wept, and was told that the others were used to such things, and might be glad of a chance from the hard, harsh homes they came from, but that she had been brought up with much care by a good owner; and she was terrified to think who might buy her.

"Her price?" the stranger asked. He thought a little when he heard the great ransom, but paid it down. Yet no joy came to the poor slave's face when he told her she was free. She had been born a slave, and knew not what freedom meant. Her tears fell fast on the signed parchment, which her deliverer brought to prove it to her; she only looked at him with fear. At last he got ready to go his way; and as he told her what she must do when he was gone, it did dawn on her what freedom was. With the first breath, "I will follow him," she said; "I will follow him; I will serve him all my days;" and to every reason against it, she only cried, "He redeemed me! he redeemed me! he redeemed me!"

When strangers used to visit that master's house, and noticed, as all did, the loving, constant services of

the glad-hearted girl, and asked her why she was so eager with unbidden service, night by night, and day by day, she had but one answer, and she loved to give it, "He redeemed me! he redeemed me! he redeemed me!"

"And so," said the servant of Christ, who spent a night on his journey in a Highland glen, and told this story in a meeting, where every heart was thrilled,—"so let it be with you. Serve Jesus as sinners bought back with blood; and when men take notice of the joy that is in your looks, the love that is in your tone, the *freedom* of your service, have one answer to give, "HE REDEEMED ME!"

THE POWER OF THE WORD.

"It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." —Isaiah liii. 11.

NEVER can I forget poor George ——. I seem even now to see him, seated on a low stool in the wide chimney corner of the lowly thatched cottage in which he dwelt. I had heard that he was sick unto death, and also that he was "without God and without hope in the world." He was but eighteen, and one of the most profane youths in that place. Whilst following the plough from day to day, his language had been so bad as to make him noted. Such was poor George, until he was suddenly arrested in his career by disease of the throat, attended with great prostration of strength. In this state, no longer able to follow the

plough, he sat trying to keep himself warm by the embers of the peat fire; and thus I found him the first time we met. He sat, leaning his head on his hand, his looks sad, his eye dull, and his mind wrapt in thick moral darkness. He sat in the "shadow of death." He just knew that he had a soul, but was as ignorant as a heathen of anything connected with his state before God. At first, the attempt made to awaken in him any thought or anxiety about his soul appeared hopeless; but at length I found that giving him a text to learn roused his attention, and when he repeated it, it was explained to him. Gradually he became so interested that he began to look for our visits; and what was said to him of the way of salvation, by faith in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, was listened to with fixed attention. There was also alarm at the thought of death, and of being called to stand before the judgment seat with all his sins in array against him. Why was it then that this poor youth did not receive with joy the glad tidings of salvation? For the same reason that thousands do not,—they do not think that the *work of Christ is enough* without their adding something to it; they hope by their *own prayers* or repentance to put themselves into a better state to receive it. Thus it was with poor George, and had he died in this state he must have perished for ever. But God had other thoughts and purposes concerning him.

One day, having started to go a considerable distance, an accidental circumstance caused me to turn back;

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and, finding it would be too late to start again, I determined to go instead and read to poor George. If the Lord has a purpose to accomplish, how wonderfully does he turn the steps of his children and lead them where he will. On entering the cottage, I found George looking more dull than usual. "Alas!" I mentally exclaimed, "how hopeless a case is this!" feeling as though I could not again repeat the message of love that had reached his ear so often (as it seemed) without effect. After having greeted him, I sat down, and opening the Word at the 55th of Isaiah, read it through, and then, with one or two remarks, I rose and left the cottage.

Not long after this, being on the eve of leaving that neighbourhood, I went for the last time to bid poor George adieu. It was one of the closing days of autumn, and the wind blew in chilling gusts, bringing down the few remaining leaves of the trees, the bright green foliage of which had but a few weeks before rejoiced my eyes. As they fell one by one in my path, with the lines of death stamped on all their beauty, my heart sank at the thought, "Thus, too, poor George is passing away. As the grass that withereth, and the flower thereof that fadeth, so will it soon be with him as to the body; but the immortal spirit! where, oh where, will that be?" The anguish of my heart found vent in an earnest cry to the throne of grace that this brand might even now be snatched from the burning. On entering the cottage, there he sat in the accustomed place; but, oh, how changed! The dull, heavy look was gone;

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the true light had shined into his heart, and it beamed over his whole aspect, and brightened his eye with the expression of that peace "which passeth all understanding." "Well, George," I said, "we are about to part for ever in this world; would that we were sure of meeting in a little while in the home above. I may go soon, but your disease may take you into the presence of God this *very night.* And oh, I repeat once again, for the last time, 'Are you ready to appear there?'" To my surprise, he answered quickly, "Yes, quite ready." "What, do you feel at rest about your sins?" "Yes, *quite.*" "For what reason?" "Because of Christ." "Do you, then, believe you are washed in His blood?" "Yes!" (Oh, the joy of that moment—what words can express it?) "But, tell me," I said, for unbelief still suggested a doubt as to the *reality* of the change; "tell me, what has made you so happy?" He answered, "It was all through that last chapter you read." He then, in his simple language, told me that the words, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without price," had, by the power of the Spirit, been used to show him how God expected him to come, and take *freely* all the blessings needed by a poor sin-sick soul. He said, "Before I heard that chapter, I was wanting to give God a *better heart, more prayers,* and to be in a very different way; but I saw then that he expected nothing, except for me to come and take it all from him without money; and that moment I knew I was

saved." Here his poor mother began to weep for joy and I knelt down in thanksgiving that this poor prodigal had been brought home, truly without money or price of *his own*, but at what a cost!—even the precious blood of the *Father's own Son*, an eternal monument of the love that gave that Son to die for poor prodigals.

I could now say farewell almost joyfully, with the thought of our meeting above. "An heir of God, a joint heir with Christ," I mentally exclaimed as I turned, on leaving the cottage, to take a last look at his youthful and florid countenance, and caught the last glance of his eye, now beaming with that expression of joy and peace never to be seen save in the countenances of those who, "being *justified by faith*, have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ." Not long afterwards, I heard that he had entered into rest. His sufferings towards the close had been severe, and it was with great difficulty that he could speak, or swallow a drop of water. The one who visited him sent me the few words he had been able to utter, and precious were they to my heart. He said, "Christ was with him, and was precious, precious to him. He longed to depart; the sting of death was gone; he was only waiting and *longing* to be called." There were works, also, testifying to the reality of the change within; for "By their fruits ye shall know them." In all the poverty of his circumstances, under the privation of those comforts absolutely needful to the sick and dying, and when in the extremity of bodily

suffering, his mother testified that he was "patient as a lamb." He also manifested great anxiety about the souls of his relations, speaking to them as he was able. He was especially distressed about an absent sister, living where he feared she was exposed to temptation. He begged that his *Sunday boots* might be sold, and the money used in bringing her home. For a short time he had a sharp conflict, and doubts and fears filled his soul; but soon all was peaceful assurance; and during the last fortnight of his life he enjoyed much of his Saviour's love and presence. "Truly," the one who gathered up his last words remarked, "this is a brand plucked from the fire! A few months ago, one of the most profane and godless of youths; now a washed, a sanctified, a justified one in the paradise of God." With the apostle Paul, he could say, "Of sinners the chief; howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy," &c. (1 Tim. i. 15, 16.)

Dear reader, this simple record is put before you as a testimony to the power of the Word. Have you been made "wise unto salvation" by that Word? Then take it, and read it to the sick and dying. God speaks to them in it. They have no time to lose in listening to the *words of man.* They want that which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," that which shall not return to God void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he sends it. Take it in faith, nothing wavering, and the answer of faith shall surely be yours. L. B.

"LET GO THE TWIG."

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter was very welcome, and I desire, from my heart, to bless God for any gleams of comfort which he has imparted to your burdened and troubled spirit. I think I know well what you mean both by "the hardness of heart," of which you complain, and the sensations of which you say, "Sometimes I have felt as though my heart would break; and only those who have gone through it can know how miserable it is to feel that there is a fountain open where you may freely partake, but that something is keeping you back." Do not think me unkind when I advise you to remember that there is no merit in these unhappy feelings; nay, more, that their continuance arises from unbelief; and that, therefore, they are not only bitter and painful feelings, but really *sinful* in their nature. What God desires is, that we should believe he speaks the truth to us, when he declares that we have been the objects of his love; that his love to us has been such that he spared not his own Son; and that such is his delight in what Jesus has done and suffered, that through his blood—the blood of Jesus—he now makes us welcome to free forgiveness, to eternal life, to the joy of calling him "Father," and of casting ourselves into his arms of eternal mercy and love. Your feelings are like those of a child who has grieved his father, and who knows that he has given his father good cause for

being grieved. All that the father wishes is, that the child should own his fault, and be at once reconciled and forgiven, and there he waits to receive and caress the child. But the child's heart is not yet brought down to this. He *weeps* and *sobs*, and becomes more and more excited and distracted; but still he lingers on the other side of the room, or somewhere at a distance from his father. Can it please the father's heart to witness the sobs and struggles of his child? And how do they at last come to a close? By the child casting himself into his father's arms, and sobbing out on his father's bosom, "Father, I *have* done wrong, and have been very much to blame indeed!" What a calm follows upon this! It is not that the reconciled and forgiven child is less sorry for having grieved his father than he was when sobbing and struggling, away from his father's bosom. No, he is now more deeply sorry than before; but the struggle—the anguish—is past, and he only wonders that he could so long have kept away from his father's arms. My dear friend, God is that Father. He reveals himself as such in Jesus. He tells you in his word, that as soon as the prodigal's face and steps were turned homewards, "when he was yet a great way off, the father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." And was the father in the parable *kinder* or *more gracious* than "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?" You know that the parable was spoken by Jesus himself, on purpose to show us *what his Father is*, and with what welcome he receives each

returning sinner. Doubt, then, not a moment longer. Believe God's own account of himself.

"Take the blessing from above,
And wonder at his boundless love."

I wish I could relate to you, as it was once told to me, an account of a lady in Scotland, and of the way in which her doubts and anguish were removed. It was during a revival, in which several known to this lady had been brought to Christ. Among the rest a particular friend of hers had been converted. Feeling some measure of concern herself, she went to a servant of Christ who was labouring in the place, and told him she was unhappy. He replied, that he was glad to hear it. Astonished at this, and somewhat offended also, she told the minister what efforts she had made to obtain salvation, how she had read and prayed, but still seemed as far from peace as ever. He told her, that it was not by anything she could do, but by what Christ had long since done and finished on the cross, that she was to be saved. All seemed dark and mysterious to her, and she left ; resolving, however, to call on her friend, who had recently been converted. She did so, and asked her what she had done to obtain the peace of which she spoke. "Done! I have done nothing! It is by what Christ has done that I have found peace with God." The lady replied, that this was what the minister had just been telling her, but that she could not understand it. She went home with her distress greatly increased ; and, shutting up herself in her room, she fell on her knees, resolving

that she would never rise till her soul found rest and peace. How long her agony continued I could not say; but nature became quite exhausted, and she sunk to slumber. While thus asleep, she dreamed that she was falling over a frightful precipice, but caught hold of a single twig, which overhung the abyss beneath. By this she hung, crying aloud for help, when a voice from below, which she knew to be the voice of Jesus, bade her let go the twig, and he would receive and save her. "Lord, save me!" she cried; but the voice again answered, "Let go the twig." She felt as though she dare not leave hold, but continued crying, "Lord, save me!" At last, the One below, whose voice she heard, but whom she did not see, said, in the most tender, solemn tones, "*I cannot save you, unless you let go the twig!*" Self-desperate, she let it go, fell into the arms of Jesus, and the joy of finding herself there awoke her. The lesson taught her by her dream was not lost upon her. She perceived that Jesus was worthy of all her trust, and that not only did she need no twig of self-dependance, but that it was holding to the twig that kept her away from Christ. She let all go, and found Jesus all-sufficient.

Hoping to hear from you soon, that you also have relinquished every other hope, and fallen into the arms of him whose arms were extended on the cross for you,

I remain, yours prayerfully,

* * *

From "Peace in Believing."

NOTHING TO DO?

A word for those who have ceased from all doings of their own in order to be saved—who have "let go the twig," and are asking, Is there nothing they can do to show their gratitude and love to Jesus, and to their Father in heaven.

"NOTHING to do?" Oh, pause, and look around
At those oppressed with want, and sorrow too!
Look at the wrongs, the sufferings, that abound,
Ere yet thou say'st there's nought for thee to do.

"Nothing to do?" Are there no hearts that ache,
No careworn breasts that heave an anguished sigh,
No burthens that thy hands may lighter make,
No bitter tears thy sympathy might dry?

Are there no hungry that thy hand may feed,
No sick to aid, no naked to be clad?
Are there no blind whose footsteps thou mightst lead,
No mourning heart that thou couldst make less sad?

"Nothing to do?" Hast thou no store of gold,
No wealth of time that thou shouldst well employ,
No hidden talent that thou shouldst unfold;
No gift that thou shouldst use for others' joy?

"Nothing to do?" Oh, look without, within!
Be to thy Master and his service true;
Look on the world, its troubles, and its sin,
And own that thou hast much indeed to do!

DEPENDENCE.

O LORD, my foolish heart
  Would lead me oft astray,
But thou my faithful Shepherd art,
  O keep me day by day.

And, Lord, my tongue is apt
  To speak some foolish word,
Unless by thee I 'm daily taught,
  And thou fresh grace afford.

Mine ears will oft attend
  To vain and foolish talk,
Unless I 'm hearkening to my Friend,
  And with him daily walk.

My feet are apt to tread
  In paths that lead from thee;
But if by thee I 'm daily led,
  In safety I shall be.

Mine eyes will oft delight
  In things that foster pride,
But if thou fill my soul with light,
  I humble shall abide.

Lord Jesus, I would long
  More like thee here to be,
Till I shall join that ransomed throng,
  And there thy glory see.

And there I 'll sing thy love
  Which saved my soul from hell;
I 'll cast my crown with those above,
  And of thy mercy tell.

W. CLIFTON DEL
HOBBS.S

THE EARLY CALL.

WHO is there amongst my young readers that has not become familiar with the woodcut upon the opposite page. It represents our present theme. There is the aged priest, as his garments and breastplate tell. He sits, with one hand holding a roll, which may well be supposed to be "the book of the law of the Lord," and before him stands a child, with uplifted hand, speaking earnestly to the venerable man, who seems to listen with the kindest and deepest attention. That priest is Eli. The child is Samuel. What may be the occasion and subject of their converse we have now to learn.

Israel was at that time in a sad state. Eli, the high priest, was one who really loved the Lord, but his sons were very wicked men, and though he mildly reproved them, he still suffered them to go on in their wickedness, until men, on their account, "abhorred the offering of the Lord." God was about to punish both the people and their rulers : but before he lifted his hand to smite, he prepared one who should be both a witness for him, and an instrument of deliverance to the people. That witness—that instrument—was the child Samuel.

Long had the heart of Samuel's mother felt the sad state of Israel. What could she, a woman, do to bring about a change? Alas ! what could man do? Nothing. God must interpose. His arm alone could bring deliverance. But he had promised a deliverer. The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's

head. A prophet like unto Moses would God raise up. A king had been described—one from among the people—who should not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left. These intimations were well known to Hannah, and she spread them before the Lord. She was childless: but all power belonged to God, and might not she yet be the mother of this Seed, this Prophet, this King? Year after year, she cried to God. Such was her concern that we are told "she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore." And God heard her prayer. He gave her a son. Not *the* promised Seed, but one of his types and forerunners. Not *that* Prophet, but yet a prophet unto the Lord. Not the King whom God had chosen, but the one who had to anoint for king "the man after God's heart"—the head of that royal line which terminates in him who is "the Root and the Offspring of David." What a change for Hannah! From the moment Eli told her her prayer was heard, "her countenance was no more sad." She called her son Samuel, which means "asked of God." As soon as he is weaned she presents him to the Lord at Shiloh. It was not for herself she had asked him of God, and she yields him up at once. "Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord." She sings with holy triumph of what the Lord had done, and of what he would yet accomplish. "He shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." Such was the birth of Samuel.

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The child's place at Shiloh seems to have been to wait on the aged Eli. "The word of the Lord," we are told, "was precious in those days; there was no open vision." Think of that, dear reader, in this day of Bibles and Testaments, when the word of the Lord is within every one's reach, and you can scarcely meet with man, woman, or child, who either has not, or has not had, a copy of God's word. There were but the five books of Moses, and perhaps Joshua, then; and for some time there had been no one sent of God to speak in his name to the people. Moses and Joshua had been long dead; others who had been raised up as judges and deliverers, had passed away; and while the priests and the sanctuary were in so sad a state, there was no one able to speak for God—no open vision.

One night, when the aged Eli was laid down, and Samuel also, the lamp still burning, however, in the holy place, Samuel heard a voice calling him by his name. He thought it was Eli, and ran to him at once, saying, "Here am I; for thou calledst me." Eli assured him that he had not called, and bade him lie down again. Again the voice is heard, "Samuel! Samuel!" and again the child goes to Eli. "Here am I; for thou *didst* call me." He is sure this time, or thinks he is, that it was his aged friend and guardian who had called out for him. Once more he is bid lie down again, and again the mysterious voice calls, "Samuel! Samuel!" The venerable priest begins to perceive how the matter stands. He advises Samuel, the next time he hears the voice, to answer "Speak,

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Lord; for thy servant heareth." The child lies down, and as at other times the sounds are heard, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel answered, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." And now Samuel receives, by the same voice, a solemn message from God to deliver to Eli. It is the Lord who has been calling him; and God's call has made Samuel a prophet of the Lord.

We call things and persons by certain names, by which they are already known, and which sometimes are given them because of what they are. One youth calling another a liar, or a coward, does not make him so; and it is well for all my young readers to remember this. Neither does the praise of partial friends, who may give you good names, make you entitled to them. Many a one has been made *dux* in the class without really deserving that title, as his own conscience tells him. But when God calls a man, he *makes* him what he *calls* him. This call of Samuel was to make him a prophet; and he was a prophet from that time to the end of his life. The Lord's call made a Saul of Tarsus an apostle, and how he seems to delight in speaking of himself as "called an apostle." See Rom. i. 1, and many other passages. Remember, dear reader, that when God calls a man, or even a child, he makes him what he calls him.

Have you yet heard the Lord's call? I do not mean his call to be a prophet or an apostle, but his call to be a Christian, a saint, a believer in the Lord Jesus. Paul, writing to the Christians at Rome, speaks not only of himself as a called apostle, but of them as

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"called saints." "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints." (Rom. i. 7.) You have the same expression in 1 Cor. i. 2; and, further on in that chapter, we have a great deal about this call of God. We read of "them which are called" (verse 24); and in verse 26, "For ye see your calling, brethren." Saul of Tarsus was, by the Lord's call, made a Christian and an apostle at the same time; and Samuel was made a prophet and a saint that night at Shiloh. He did not distinguish the Lord's voice from that of Eli; and when he had shown this by waking up twice and going to Eli, as though he had called him, we are told: "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." That night he began to know the Lord, and thus became a saint: the word of the Lord was revealed unto him, and thus he became a prophet.

My dear reader, do you "yet know the Lord"? You have heard of him from the lips of parents, teachers, friends. So had Samuel from the lips of Eli. Besides, his home was the Lord's sanctuary. He was a sanctuary child; and yet he knew not the Lord. Ah! you may hear of the Lord Jesus, and read of him, and live among those who love him and worship him, and yet know not the Lord. How sad this is! Is it your case? Oh that, if it be, this last number of GOOD NEWS for this year may be to you the Lord's own voice, as though he were calling you by name, "John!" "Thomas!" "Mary!" "Hannah!" Is he not singling you out—making you feel just as though you heard

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your name pronounced? It may be none of these, and not Saul or Samuel either; but the Lord knows what it is. There is one name we all alike bear, young and old, rich and poor. What name is that, are you asking? Sinner! Can you doubt? May God give you to answer to the name of SINNER. Do you ask, What can God have to say to me as a sinner? Can he utter anything but my sentence of eternal woe? Listen! Say to him, "Speak, Lord, a poor sinner hears!" Now listen again. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Listen again. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." Hearken once more. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

May you, in *these* words, or in *such* words, hear the call of God, as if addressed to you by name; and may you henceforth live and behave as those whom God has called to be his own dear children. God grant it, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

QUESTIONS ON "THE EARLY CALL."

1. What was Eli's sin?
2. What seems to have been Hannah's desire and hope?
3. What had she instead of its fulfilment?
4. What did she do with that which she had asked of God?

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5. What great difference was there between Eli's day and ours?
6. How often had Samuel been called before Eli understood what was taking place?
7. Why do we apply certain names to things and persons?
8. How does God's calling of anything, or any one, differ from this?
9. What were the two effects of God's call on Samuel?
10. What two effects had the Lord's call on Saul of Tarsus?
11. How is Samuel's state before God called him described?
12. What is the name, common to us all, under which God addresses those whom he calls?
13. Of what does God speak to us as sinners?

TRUE OBEDIENCE.

A BOY was tempted by some of his companions to pluck some ripe cherries from a tree which his father had forbidden him to touch.

"You need not be afraid," said they, "for if your father should find out that you had taken them, he is so kind, that he will not hurt you."

"That is the very reason," replied the boy, "why I should not touch them. It is true my father may not hurt me; yet my disobedience, I know, would hurt my father; and that would be worse to me than anything else."

Was not this an excellent reason?

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REST AND PEACE;

OR, THE CONVERSION OF A JEWISH LADY.

It is Christmas Eve. Mrs. N—— is in her drawing-room, alone, resting for a moment in the midst of her preparations for the morrow. Her Bible lies open before her, and her mind is entirely taken up with one of its weighty sayings, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." She found this saying true in her own case. Thoughts filled her mind of that love which brought Jesus to this world of sin and death; and she recollected that the next day would be the one on which the world celebrates his birth. She was musing on these themes, with the 2nd of Luke before her, when she heard a knock. Inviting the one outside to enter, the door opened, and Mrs. N—— found that her visitor was a young lady, the daughter of a rich Jew in the neighbourhood.

These ladies had never seen each other before, but the younger one had no reason to complain of her reception. She explained the object of her visit at such an untimely hour, and received from Mrs. N—— the information she had called to seek of her respecting a poor family living in the same town.

Her inquiries all answered, and this business thus at an end, the Jewish girl still lingered with Mrs. N——. It seemed as though she had some weight on her spirits, something she wished to say, but for the utterance of which she could find no words. Mrs. N—— did not fail to notice this, and quoted to her visitor some verses

of Scripture, which soon led to an earnest conversation about eternal things.

"You seek peace, dear Miss ——," said Mrs. N ——; "You seek rest to your soul. Oh that I could lead you to the One in whom my soul has found rest and peace! that I could guide you to that blessed Lord and Saviour who has loved us even unto death!"

On this the young lady arose, her countenance flushed, and she said with warmth, "Don't speak to me of subjects for ever forbidden to me."

"Well," said the lady, "I will not further press the conversation; but allow me to give you a little book, and if you do really at any time seek rest and peace, read this little book." So saying, she handed a New Testament to the young lady, who left with the words, "I thank you, Mrs. N——. This is the happiest hour I have spent for many years. I thank you, Mrs. N——, I thank you."

Years elapsed—three years—and the young Jewess had become a lady of quality, welcomed in the highest circles, and an object of admiration to many, and of envy to not a few. Beautiful, amiable, and admired, was not her heart satisfied? Alas! is it in such things to give rest and peace? The little book given her by Mrs. N—— lay on the top of a bookcase, covered with dust. There it lay, unheeded and unread for years. Shall the treasure never be found—the seed never bring forth fruit? God is faithful, and answers prayer.

Three years more had passed, when Rebecca, the young lady, suddenly felt a desire to procure some pre-

sents for the poor for Christmas. She called at a shop and bought some wool. Opening the parcel when she had returned, her eye fell on some verses printed on the paper in which the wool was wrapped. She read them over and over again. She seemed riveted to the spot. "Where can I have read or heard such words before?" she says to herself. Soon she recollects her visit six years before to Mrs. N——. "Ah, it was there. Did not Mrs. N—— tell me of a Friend who could give me peace and rest? Yes, it was from her I heard of these things; but my soul has neither peace nor rest. God knows I have not—He knows it."

Her soul was now awakened, and she was in great ear. Remembering the book given her by the minister's wife, she got it down, and began anxiously to turn over its pages. But her eyes were holden, and she could not see. That night was to her a long and terrible one: no peace, no rest, but anxiety and dread of the dark, mysterious future. What was to become of her when the present short, feverish life had passed away?

Morning has arrived; and long before people generally are astir, and before the blinds are drawn up at the minister's house, a knock is heard at the door, which is answered by Mrs. N—— herself. She is not a little surprised to find at the door a lady whom she must have seen somewhere before, but whom she has all but forgotton. The lady is invited in; and soon she and Mrs. N—— are seated in the same room in which they had met and conversed six years before.

The visitor began : " Madam, six years have passed since you told me of a Friend who can give rest and peace. Seldom since then have I had the least desire for such a blessing ; but "—and here she stopped ; her tears and sobs told, better than the completion of the sentence could, what was her errand that morning to Mrs. N——.

" But, now," said Mrs. N——, " your heart longs for it ?"

" Yes," replied Rebecca, " my heart is full ; but I feel myself so poor, so miserable, and heavy laden. I need now such a Friend as the One you told me of. Here is the book you once gave me, but I do not understand it. Please tell me, is there any help for me?"

It was Mrs. N——'s turn now to weep. Clasping her hands with emotion, she replied, " Blessed be God ! Yes, my dear Miss ——, there is help for you, indeed, There is one who has long been seeking you, in order to save your soul. He knows all your need." She opened the Testament, and read and spoke of Jesus, and his birth at Bethlehem, his life of sorrow and of love, his death upon Calvary, and how he rose from the dead and ascended on high. " Oh, come to him," said she to her friend ; " he knows your need, and his arms are open for you, to receive, to welcome you, and to save your soul."

A long pause followed these words : a fearful conflict was passing in Rebecca's mind. On the one hand, anguish, misery, desolation of heart, and Jesus the only One to rescue and to save ; on the other,

pride, unbelief, and Satan, unwilling to forego his victim or unloose his grasp. At last Rebecca fell on the neck of Mrs. N——, crying aloud, "Lord Jesus! have mercy upon me!"

Blessed word! That cry was heard in heaven. There was joy in heaven, and joy in the little room in the house of Mr. N——, Mrs. N—— and the Jewish lady bowed together in prayer to the long despised Nazarene. Her anguish was very great; but though sorrow may endure for a night, joy cometh with the morning; and on the morning of Christmas Day, Rebecca was enabled to rejoice in Jesus, in whom she now found both rest and peace. It was on the day kept in celebration of the birth of Jesus, that this daughter of Abraham became conscious of having become a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

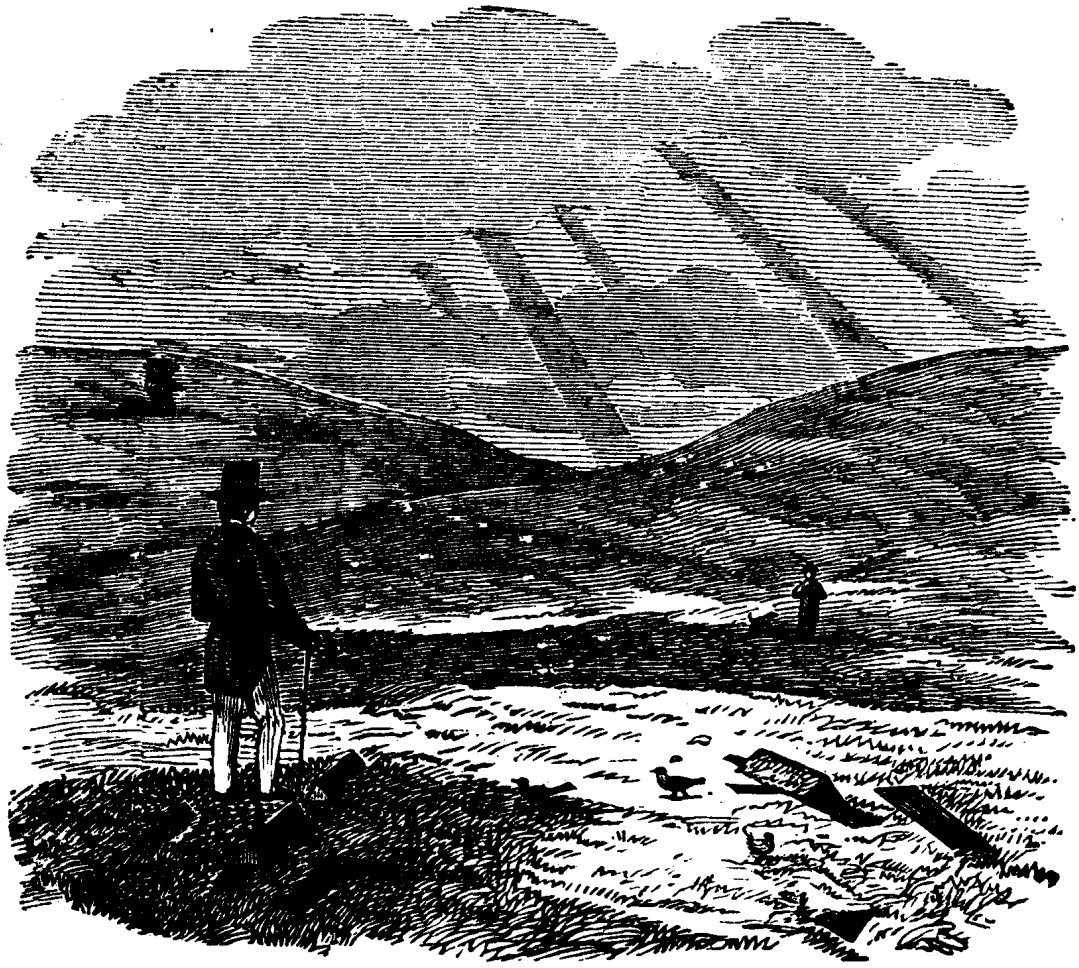
"I AM VERY HAPPY."

BY A CHILD.

Oh! I am very happy,
For Jesus died for me;
I love him for his kindness
In dying on the tree.

Oh, yes! I'm very happy,
For Christ has pardoned me;
How great his loving-kindness
In dying on the tree.

But once I was not happy,
I had a naughty heart;
But Jesus looked upon me,
And bore for me the smart.



THE WHEATEAR TRAP.

"THE wheatear trap! What can that be?" says my young friend, who, when GOOD NEWS is brought home, always looks first at the index to see what are the titles of the pieces for the new month. "I should think," she says to herself, "it must be something about the gleaners; for I have seen some of them carry lots of wheatears that they have picked up in the corn-fields, after harvest, in their aprons. But her little brother, who asks mamma for the book-knife that he may hunt out the pictures, can see that it is not such a trap we are going to speak about. No, my dear children; the wheatear we want to tell you

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of is a little bird, which spends about half the year in this country, and then leaves soon after wheat harvest. He is very shy, and seems to think there may be danger in everything he sees moving. I first learned this about him when rambling on the Sussex downs, where I saw several traps like the one in the picture. The shepherd who made them, as you may see, had cut out two pieces of turf, with a spade, for each trap. One piece was longer and narrower than the other; this he laid aside, and placed the short and broader piece upside-down over the narrow trench left by the longer piece of turf. Between it and the level ground he laid a stick of wood threaded with a horse-hair noose. The clouds were being carried along by the autumn breeze, and their shadows, chasing each other across the country, alarmed the poor little wheatears, and made them look about for a place to hide in; and so some of them chose the little trench, and, as they ran in, got their necks in the horse-hair.

Now, let whoever is reading this out loud, ask the following question, and wait a little for the answer.

Do you know who the poor little wheatear in the trap is like; and if so, who is it?

"A poor sinner in his sins" is what we would say; for "he who has the power of death, that is the devil," well knows that "the wages of sin is death;" just as the man who made the trap did it so strongly that no wheatear, once taken, could set himself free. Now in Isaiah xlix. 24, this question is asked, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive

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delivered?" and these words apply to the wheatear more fully than we have yet explained; for neither can he make his own escape, nor has any one else a right to take him from the trap without leaving a penny in his place; so that if three of you, having only a farthing each, were to set about liberating a wheatear, your kind desire to do so would be a little like God's mercy in saving us; but it would not, like that grace, reign through righteousness, for the unhappy bird would be the shepherd's lawful captive until the full penny was paid. But is not Jesus just the Saviour who supplied all this for us? He is mightier far than Satan, whose prey we were; for "by the sacrifice of himself" he made an end of sin, which is Satan's only means for our destruction. The blood he shed on Calvary has fully satisfied God as the ransom price for our guilty souls; for he raised again, for our justification, him who died for our sins.

And now, before we bid you "good-bye," we will give you a little verse to learn. It was originally written for a dear little boy when he was three years old, and who at that early age was very fond of asking questions, and hearing about the kindness of God. His name was Mortimer, and you may spell it with the first letters of each line of the verse. We call such verses acrostics, as perhaps you do not all know.

And may God, by his Holy Spirit, enable you with the heart, as by his blessing the little we have told you of the wheatear may help you with the understanding, thus to address him, each one for himself:—

M ake me thy little lamb,
O Jesus, Son of God;
R eveal thy precious name,
T he virtue of thy blood.
I am so full of sin,
M ake me as white as snow;
E nter my heart within,
R elease me from the foe.

T. J.

GOD KNOWS BEST.

"It does not rain one drop, mamma; only look out of the window," shouted little Nellie Arnold, as she rushed into her mother's room early one morning. "The clouds are bright, and I am so very happy, for we will have such a splendid time at aunt Annie's! Oh, mamma," she continued, eagerly, "I prayed God, last night, to make it clear, and now I am going to see how good I can be all day long. Won't that be the best way to show him how thankful I am?"

"Yes, my darling," answered Mrs. Arnold; "Jesus loves to see little children trying to do right; but do not forget to ask his aid, for you can never be good, darling, in your own strength."

Just at that moment, Nellie's little brother entered the room, and the little girl, kissing him, exclaimed, "I do not see how I ever could have been unkind to dear little Willie; at any rate, after my good resolutions, I shall be kind to him all the day long."

"Do not be too confident, my daughter," replied Mrs. Arnold; "it is easy to be pleasant and kind when

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everything goes well—when nothing vexes us. I love to see you happy, but my darling must learn to be watchful as well."

"Oh, yes, I know all that, mamma," said Nellie, eagerly; "but just wait, and see if I will not be good to-day."

How slowly the hours passed to the excited little girl. It seemed as though ten o'clock, the time appointed for her visit, would never come. After having told her four times within ten minutes what o'clock it was, Mrs. Arnold proposed that she should play in the garden with her little brother till the hour arrived. Delighted with this proposition, Nellie ran out to play, and for some time the garden rung with the children's merry laughter. At last little footsteps were again heard through the hall, and before long Nellie entered her mother's room, and exclaimed, "Oh, mamma, please look at the clouds, and tell me do you think it is going to rain?" Mrs. Arnold glanced from the window, and replied, "It does look very much like it, my dear; but it may not, after all."

"Oh, mamma, if it should, I would have to play all alone with Willie; and you know I hate to play with him—he is so cross, and never will do what I want him to. If it should rain"—and the child's lip quivered—"if it should, what should I do?"

"I trust my little daughter would bear the disappointment patiently, knowing God sent it, and remembering her good resolutions."

Nellie made no answer, but gazed with anxious

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countenance upon the clouds, which grew darker and darker every moment, till at last the rain-drops commenced falling; and then, no longer controlling her feelings, the child burst into tears, exclaiming, "It's too bad! we won't be able to go at all to-day, and I do want to see cousin Clara so much. It's too bad! —oh, mamma!"

"Why did my little daughter pray God to make it clear to-day?" asked Mrs. Arnold.

"Because," answered Nellie, "I knew if it were, I should be so happy at aunt Annie's, for cousin Clara will be there, and the pony, and—but don't you think it may clear? Would it, if I should pray God very hard?"

Mrs. Arnold took the anxious little one upon her knee, and without seeming to notice the eager question, kissing the tear-stained cheeks, began as follows: "Once, when you were a baby, Nellie, I was seated with you in my arms before a table on which was a lighted candle. Your eyes were enchanted with the brightness, and your little hands tried to grasp the flame. Can my daughter tell me why she wished to have it in her hand?"

"Because, mamma," replied the child, "because I thought it would please me very much."

"And does my little girl suppose I gave it to her as she wished?" asked Mrs. Arnold.

"Oh, no, mamma!" replied Nellie, "you loved me too much to let me burn myself."

"But was it not too bad for me to refuse anything

which you thought would give you so much pleasure?" asked Mrs. Arnold.

"Why, no, mamma; you knew better than I did what was best for me," replied Nellie.

"But I know some one," continued her mother, "who knows far better than ever I can what is best for my little girl, and that One loves her better than any earthly friend ever can."

"It is God, mamma," answered Nellie.

"Then should you ever say that what he does is too bad, even though you cannot understand his reasons for disappointing you?" asked Mrs. Arnold. "It is right for my darling to pray," she continued; "God loves to hear little children; but, when begging him to grant some longed-for pleasure, do not forget to say, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' ever remembering that God knows best."

Nellie was silent for a few moments, and then, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, said, "I do not think it will clear, mamma, and I am very sorry, for it is hard always to feel that God knows best; but I know what to do, dear mamma," and the child smiled through her tears. "I will ask the Lord Jesus to forgive me, and help me to be good to-day, and to keep me from feeling so very, very sorry.

Mrs. Arnold kissed the earnest little one, and said, "The Lord Jesus will help you, darling; and if this disappointment brings you nearer to him, my little daughter will thank God hereafter for this rainy day."

Little reader, will you not choose for your motto,

"God knows best;" and, like little Nellie, first bring yourself, and then all your sorrows, no matter how small, to Jesus? Then, if you love and follow him while on earth, he will bear you in his bosom as little folded lambs in heaven.—*New York Observer.*

ABBEOKUTA.

THIS hard word is the name of a mission settlement in Africa, where a number of native Christians have been happily meeting together for years past. The King of Dahomey, a savage, bloodthirsty man, famous for his delight in slaughter, as if for its own sake, has lately butchered a number of his prisoners of war, among whom was one native Christian, a convert at another mission station in that region. This man he crucified: and he has promised his soldiers to lead them into Abbeokuta for another feast of blood during the month of November. Christians in England have been pleading with God for our brethren in Africa; and a friend has sent us the following acrostic to interest our youthful readers on behalf of our sable brethren in their deep affliction:—

A s when the visage wears a grave impress,
B egetting this inquiry—What's amiss?
B e whatsoe'er it may, in silence waits
E ach other topic of the day, while one relates
O f cause for anxious grief; so now would we
K eep vigil with our friends across the sea,
U nbosom at the throne of grace above
T he burden of our prayer; and God, whose name is love,
A bove our fears, and better than our hopes, himself will prove.

T. J.

AN INFANT'S PRAYER.

A LITTLE child, being very weakly in body, was ordered a fresh egg every morning. On one occasion, the supply of country eggs being exhausted, his mother said to him at the breakfast table, "There is no egg for Georgy this morning." The little child paused, and looking up, said, "Lord, Georgy, negg, negg. Amen." The mother, in astonishment, said, "Well, we shall surely have an egg to-day, no matter where it comes from."

No more was thought of the matter until the mother, in the course of the day, called at the butcher's to purchase some meat, not imagining for a moment that the prayer of her infant boy would be so markedly answered. The butcher said to her, "Ma'am, would you be offended if I were to send up a lovely fresh egg for the baby? It is just laid, and I thought, as he is delicate, he might like it." Now, he had never done aught like this before, nor has he ever done it since; neither was he aware of the fact that the child really needed the egg. The Lord, I believe, made him think of it, in order that the infant's prayer might be answered, and the unbelief of older hearts be rebuked.

Oh for a more artless, childlike confidence in him, who is the hearer, the answerer, and the lover of believing prayer!

A THRILLING MOMENT.

MR. DOOLITTLE, a minister of Christ, was accustomed to catechise his hearers, and especially the young people of his congregation, every Lord's-day. One evening, after having received an answer, in the words of the Assembly's Catechism, to the question, "What is effectual calling?" and having explained it, he proposed that the question should be answered by changing the words *us* and *our* into *me* and *my*. Upon this proposal, a solemn silence followed; many felt its vast importance, but none had courage to answer. At length, a young man rose up, and with every mark of a

broken and contrite heart, by divine grace was enabled to say, "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing *me* of *my* sin and misery, enlightening *my* mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing *my* will, he did persuade and enable *me* to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to *me* in the Gospel." The scene was truly affecting. The proposal of that question had commanded unusual solemnity. The rising up of the young man had created the deepest interest, and the answer being accompanied by every proof of sincerity and modesty, the congregation was bathed in tears. This young man had been led to Christ by God's blessing on the catechising, and Mr. D.'s testimony of him is, "From being an ignorant and wicked youth, he had become an intelligent confessor of Christ to God's glory and my much comfort."

"COME UNTO ME!"

[Read Prov. i. 22, and Rev. xxii. 17.]

Ye *simple ones*, whom sin beguiles,
Why from your Saviour will ye flee?
Leave Satan's false, delusive smiles,
Be led by love, and come to me.

Ye *scorners* who my mercy spurn,
And still refuse to bow the knee,
For you my pure affections burn;
Scorn not my love, but come to me.

Ye *foolish* souls, who knowledge hate,
Oh, when will ye your folly see?
Receive my words ere 'tis too late,
Be wise to-day, and come to me.

Come, *sinners all*, of every age,
Of ev'ry station and degree;
The grave, the gay, the fool, the sage,
All, all are welcome—come to me.

I am of bliss the source and sum,
My springs of life are full and free;
Ho! every one that thirsteth, come,
Whoever will, O COME TO ME!