

To The Little Maidens.

Little maidens, love your mothers, And be patient with your brothers, Still endeavor to be good, Never noisy, bold or rude; But with modest, easy grace, And a bright and pleasant face, Let the sunshine from your heart Joy and happiness impart.

Thus in doing and to others— Father, mother, sisters, brothers, Trying constantly to please us— You will grow to be like Jesus; Thus will every little maiden Still retain her childhood's Eden As we journey here below, Shedding joys wherever we go.

Why Some Boys Are Not Christians. BY "CLAIRE."

Very strange some think it, that, considering the homes in which they were reared, and the church privileges enjoyed, so many boys of even the covenant wander away from, and, as far as they know, never enter, the fold of Christ. I used to think it strange, and tried in various ways to reconcile that promise of God, to be the God of the family, with the existing state of things, and wondered if Solomon was quite correct in affirming that the proper early training of a child shaped his after life, till my doubts were all removed by unexpected insights into the *modus operandi* of some apparently model Christian homes.

In one such home the boys learned to hate the Christian religion, because all of its ways and restraints were made irksome to them. They were taught to see only the "Thou shalt nots" of the law and led out into none of the alluring paths of loving usefulness that stimulate the door to a higher life, and consequently to an appreciation and love for the system of religion that opens avenues to grand lives and influences. While what I presume was injurious to them was denied them, there was no effort to supply the joys our Christianity affords.

In another home there was an unending number of the "Thou shalt's" of the Bible forced upon the children, and the boys, obeying as long as compelled to obey, always rebelled secretly till old enough to rebel openly. Always laying to the religion of Christ, not to its mismanagement in the hands of their parents, the denials and trials brought into their boyish lives, they learned to turn from it.

In another home the boys always saw in their father a dictatorial tyrant. Yet he was a pillar in the church. He was a good man—honest in business to the fraction of a cent, an authority on all good things, and cared, as he thought, conscientiously for his family; but in his home no voice could be raised against his opinion or will; and so altogether correct was his standard of religion that deviation from it meant, in his mind, exclusion from heaven. So altogether correct was his understanding of the truths of the Bible, that not to believe as he believed was heresy. This man, with none of the sweet spirit of the Master he was trying to serve, crushed the women of his family into submission, and drove the boys into the world as soon as they could care for themselves. Need it be said they are not Christians? Nor will they be, unless they come under influences far different from those of their own home.

These reasons for some boys of Christian families not being Christians may be called rare and extreme in these days. Not in some parts of our country. And the writer does not argue in favor of lax training for boys in religious matters. There is far too much of that, and neglected duty may be considered as a reason why some boys are not Christians; but I do argue for judicious training, for a consideration of the ages, conditions, temperaments, yes, the opinions of your children, and beg for their souls' sake that in your own lives they see not only the severe discipline of Mosaic law, but see reflected the image of the tender, persuasive, patient, consistent, though never indulgent to sin, Christ Jesus, our Lord and Master. I do urge for the sake of justice to our religion, that parents, when obliged to take out of the lives of their boys such things as are injurious, arouse themselves to the duty of supplying some of the attractions afforded by our religion. The trouble just here is—alas, that it must be confessed!—too many parents are still ignorant of the attractive forces of the gospel of Christ.

Out of another home of an entirely different type, the boys went unconverted to the faith of the parents, because the mother was an immense critic. In that mother, really a good woman, and all that a mother could be to the physical needs of her boys, those boys had unbounded confidence. And why should they not accept her verdict upon the worth and unworthiness of the friends about them? And was it strange that, as the imperfections

of her brothers and sisters in Christ were frequently, and not tenderly, laid bare in the presence of those children, they saw less and less in the Christian life that was different from the life out of Christ?

Here let me make a point upon a certain unconverted husband for whom a Christian wife prays daily; has prayed for years; and who, little thinks she herself, mainly keeps the answer to her prayer up in heaven, perhaps. Once when urged to enter the Christian life he said:

"I can't see that you," meaning Christians, "are a much better set than we poor fellows out of the church."

"How do you know? You are not among us to see what we are," was the reply. To which came his reply of:

"No, but my wife is, and she gives me a pretty good idea of you all."

I do not defend the faults of Christians; I blush for them while confessing them, but they are not the things that entice our friends or our boys to Christ.

The covenant is for us and our children, and God stands as ready to-day as on the day of its giving, to take the children of Christian parents into his fold if we do our duty. But God's promises are conditional, and we may be sure, when we see boys from Christian homes going astray, there is a flaw somewhere in that home. Experience, the result of close investigation on this point, warrants this assertion: Time forbids the mention of the many flaws easily to be found in many homes called model by the outside world.

A close study on the other side of the question warrants the assertion that, in spite of the dragging influence of the world, boys brought up in homes where the love of Christ reigns, where quarrelling and selfishness on the part of the parents are unknown and restrained because un-Christlike, and where courtesy and generous affection are exercised because Christlike; where the beauties of Christ's character, not a mortal's imperfections, are held up as a guide for the life, and where the satisfying joys and pleasures so plenty in our system of religion, are dwelt upon, the boys become Christians with very few exceptions. I have known boys to go from under such a home-roof without having publicly professed Christ, but have seen them, because missing, in their new circumstances, the sweet influences of their homes, sooner or later join themselves to God's people, seeing in the religion of Christ the elements that gave charm to their home life. In the light of such homes read Prov. xxii. 6, and believe it, but if you have occasion to try to fit this assertion to some conflicting experience, investigate the home-life of the boy under observation before you doubt Solomon's wisdom.—Interior.

An Infidel Strangely Converted

A Native of Sweden, residing in the south of France, had occasion to go from one port to another in the Baltic Sea. When he came to the place whence he expected to sail, the vessel was gone. On inquiring, he found a fishing-boat going the same way, in which he embarked. After being for some time out at sea, the men observing that he had several trunks and chests on board, concluded he must be very rich, and therefore agreed among themselves to throw him overboard. This he heard them express, which gave him great uneasiness. However, he took occasion to open one of his trunks, which contained some books. Observing this, they remarked among themselves that it was not worth while to throw him into the sea, as they did not want any books, which they supposed was all the trunks contained. They asked him if he were a priest. Hardly knowing what reply to make, he told them he was; at which they seemed much pleased, and said they would have a sermon on the next day, as it was the Sabbath.

This increased the anxiety and distress of his mind, for he knew himself to be as incapable of such an undertaking as it was possible for any one to be, as he knew very little of the Scriptures; neither did he believe in the inspiration of the Bible.

At length they came to a small rocky island, perhaps a quarter of a mile in circumference, where was a company of pirates, who had chosen this little sequestered spot to deposit their treasures. He was taken to a cave, and introduced to an old woman, to whom they remarked that they were to have a sermon preached the next day. She said she was very glad of it, for she had not heard the word of God for a great while. His was a trying case, for preach he must; still he knew nothing about preaching. If he refused, or undertook to preach and did not please, he expected it would be his death. With these thoughts he passed a sleepless night. In the morning his mind was not settled upon anything. To call upon God,

whom he believed to be inaccessible, was altogether vain. He could devise no way whereby he might be saved. He walked to and fro, still shut up in darkness, striving to collect something to say to them, but could not think of even a single sentence.

When the appointed time for the meeting arrived, he entered the cave, where he found the men assembled. There was a seat prepared for him, and a table with a Bible on it. They sat for the space of half an hour in profound silence; and even then, the anguish of his soul was as great as human nature was capable of enduring. At length these words came to his mind:

"Verily, there is a reward for the righteous—verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth." He arose and delivered them; then other words presented themselves, and so on till his understanding became opened—his heart enlarged in a manner astonishing to himself. He spoke upon subjects suited to their condition; the rewards of the righteous—the judgement of the wicked—the necessity of repentance, and the importance of a change of life. The matchless love of God to the children of men had such a powerful effect upon the minds of these wretched beings, that they were melted into tears. Nor was he less astonished at the unbounded goodness of Almighty God in thus interposing to save his spiritual as well as his natural life, and well might he exclaim, "This is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes." Under a deep sense of God's goodness, his heart became filled with such thankfulness that it was out of his power to express.

What marvellous change was thus suddenly brought about by Divine interposition! He who a little before disbelieved in God, was now humbled before Him. And they who were meditating his death were moved to affection.

The next morning they put him in one of their vessels and conveyed him where he desired. From that time he was a changed man. From an infidel he became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Walking in The Light.

By THE REV. WILLIAM A. LAYTON.

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—1 John i. 7.

1. Much is said in the Bible about walking. Thus God frequently employs the physical to illustrate the spiritual, and so we consider our text to day.

God intended man to walk. God made birds to fly, fishes to swim, reptiles to crawl, horses to run, but man to walk. Early in life he instinctively aspires to use his feet. Walking is his natural gait, and any other than this is unbecoming and undignified. So the natural position for a Christian is upon his feet. Infant's creep for lack of strength. In our spiritual infancy we may be justified in feeble efforts, but these are soon to be outgrown. God call us to a strong spiritual manhood. "Stand upon thy feet and show thyself a man." "Walk in my ways," are God's commands.

Walking is a conservator of health. If we walked more there would be fewer invalids. Walk with God, and spiritual infirmity disappears.

2. To assist man in his walking, God has caused the light to shine. As the light of day brightens man's physical pathway, so in the light of the spirit, God would have him journey to heaven.

3. The advantages of light in walking are: Greater safety, healthfulness, and pleasures. "If any man walk in the night he stumbleth." In the dark enemies attack. Growth without light is weakness. Beauty and pleasure are unknown. Light is a guardian, a health-giver, and a revelator. Let the light of God's Spirit and beauty and healthfulness appear on every side.

4. Our possibilities as related to the light. We may neglect to walk therein, and remain in darkness forever. We may "walk in the light as He is in the light."

5. The result of walking in the light. "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His son cleanseth us from all sin." Fellowship is both the outgrowth and test of the light. There are neither backbitings nor bickerings when we walk in the light. If we have not fellowship, then are we in darkness and sin. In fellowship are we clean through the blood.

We constantly absorb and continually reflect the light, and thus brighten the world. The soul was made for the light of the Spirit. As the earth absorbs the light of day, and, moving upon its axis, sends out its beauty from every part, so God would have us absorb the light of the Spirit, and reflect

ing His glory, bless mankind. This was the thought of the Saviour when he exhorted, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"Walk in the light, thy path shall be Peaceful, serene, and bright; For God by grace, shall dwell in thee, And God Himself is light."

Common Duties.

Common duties furnish the only safe and sure plane upon which a man may begin life, whether he believes himself destined to be a God carrier or the president of the United States. If there is any fact attested by the biographies of great men, it is this: That the road to success runs at first always parallel with the pathway of humble duty. All successful men have begun to walk in this path, and have continued in it until they found themselves in the highway of success. Indeed, there is no other way of reaching that highway; for it is nothing else than the confluence of many paths of humble duty.

Common duties are those that lie at hand. People do not go seeking fortunes now-a-days. If they do, they are most likely to end in the penitentiary or the poor-house. Any man who has hands, can put them out and find something to do. If Abraham Lincoln had gone to Washington to seek his fortune as President of the United States, he would never have been President. Instead of that he stayed at home and split rails; and the presidency came seeking him.

We go to school to common duties. A winter at the wood-pile will teach a man more than half the things necessary to make him a good president. Ten years at an honest work is a liberal education. There have been men who were splendid blacksmiths before they became splendid preachers; but they would never have become splendid preachers if they had been poor blacksmiths. We learn all the fundamentals in the school of common duty. No quality that makes a man really great is foreign to the faithful discharge of any duty, however humble.

The rewards of common duties are accumulative. It is in this sense that they prepare a man for the higher responsibilities and honors of life. The rewards which follow humble labor, with the interest accruing from them, constitute capital for realizing greater achievements. First learn to do well what lies at hand, and when you have done this, you will find that other things come to hand. The man who split rails as no other man in his town can split them, is the man whom the world will never suffer to remain always a rail splitter.

Our humble duties, our common duties—if we only appreciated them as we ought! They are the making of every man and every woman. They are not obstacles, not things to be gotten over, and gotten around in the best way we can, while we endeavor to reach greater things. They are the stepping-stones to these greater things. The world does not ask us what we can do; it asks us what we have done. Is it not plain that no one of us has done anything until he has made a beginning? And that no man ever made a beginning but with the first things?—Herald.

Ministerial Tests.

When there is a genuine forgetfulness of self; when the divine theme thoroughly possesses the speaker; when faith in the message is scriptural and profound; and when the Holy Spirit bears attestation to the truth at the time of delivery—then there can be no possible doubt as to the result. "The word of God is," then "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

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