

Youths' Department.

CHILDHOOD.

CHILDHOOD, sweet and sunny childhood,
With its careless, thoughtless air,
Like the verdant, tangled wildwood,
Wants the training hand of care.

See it springing all around us—
Glad to know, and quick to learn;
Asking questions that confound us;
Teaching lessons in its turn.

Who loves not its joyous revel,
Leaping lightly on the lawn,
Up the knoll, along the level,
Free and graceful as a fawn?

Let it revel; it is nature
Giving to the little dears
Strength of limb, and healthful feature,
For the toil of coming years.

He who checks a child with terror,
Stops its play and stills its song,
Not alone commits an error,
But a great and moral wrong.

Give it play, and never fear it—
Active life is no defect;
Never, never, break its spirit—
Curb it only to direct.

Would you dam the flowing river,
Thinking it would cease to flow?
Onward it must go forever—
Better teach it where to go.

Childhood is a fountain welling;
Trace its channel in the sand,
And its currents, spreading, swelling,
Will revive the withered land.

Childhood is the vernal season;
Trim and train the tender shoot;
Love is to the coming reason
As the blossom to the fruit.

Tender twigs are bent and folded—
Art to nature beauty lends;
Childhood easily is moulded;
Manhood breaks, but seldom bends.

"I AM MY FATHER'S."

"WILL you not be my little girl?" I said one day to little Nannie Wheeler; "you do not know how much I love you, and how happy I will try to make you, if you will only be my little Nannie." She looked up earnestly in my face with her bright black eyes, and said—

"I'm father's."

"Well, Nannie, I will give you such nice things if you will be my little girl; I will give you a beautiful new dress, and a hood, and such a cunning little maff to keep Jack Frost from finding your fingers, and a little shawl, and new shoes. Now, do be my little girl!" She looked up again in the same touching manner, and said—

"I'm father's."

"Oh, now, Nannie!" I continued more earnestly, "when poor Aunt Carry has no little girl, and father has Augusta and pet Nellie, besides Willie and Tooly. Oh! I will buy you a new doll, very large, with eyes most as bright as yours, lots of candies, and a little rocking-horse; and you shall have so many toys that I will give you a drawer on purpose to keep them in, all for yourself; and such picture-books! Dear Nannie, now do be Aunt Carry's little girl." She again said in her quiet, simple way—

"I'm father's."

Dear little girl, how few would have withstood temptation so strongly set forth! She is only three years old, and yet she could not for any inducement held out, give up her love for her father.

Little children, we have all one Father, even "Our Father who art in heaven." The world with all its allurements is held out to tempt us from his love. Do we turn from it, and with childlike faith and love, answer—"I am my Father's?"

Living friends gather around us, and would fain lead us to forget that there is One whom we must love above all others; do we turn from them, and say with little Nannie—"I am my Father's?"

Comforts and luxuries are brought to us to tempt us on every side; do we take up the cross humbly, and walk in the footsteps of Him who "had not where to lay his head," and answer—"I am my Father's?"

Let us all take a lesson from little Nannie in her unswerving love for her father. Nothing can tempt her from his side; she follows him about like a little lamb and she nestles in his arms, and lays her precious head on his bosom. May the good shepherd watch over her, and keep her, and when at the last great day we shall all stand before the awful tribunal of the judgement-seat, may I hear that dear voice, as unswerving in its trust in a heavenly Parent as now of the earthly, answer—"I am my Father's."—*Children's Magazine.*

Selections.

THE DUTY OF GIVING AWAY A STATED PORTION OF OUR INCOME.

"In urging us to give away a tenth, you are reviving the Levitical law, and that is abolished." The difference between those who hold that it stands, and those who hold that it is abolished, lies perhaps more in word than reality. Those who hold that it stands, would hardly contend that the letter is in force; for that was that the tenth should be given to the tribe of Levi, which, to the letter, we cannot fulfil. And those who hold that it is abolished, surely do not mean that its spirit is abolished. The spirit of that Law is, "Of Thine own have we given unto Thee." This is not abolished; and, blessed be God, never will be! And surely you do not mean that this spirit, and spirit so right and good, in passing from Judaism to Christianity, forsook a more sensitive body, for one grosser and heavier with earth! We need not pause to show that, quite independently of the Levitical tenth, the other requirements of the Mosaic law require more than a second tenth; and that the patriarchs gave their tenth before ever Levi was.

"But we are not now to be brought under rule; for the law is love." I know that some who thus speak, do so upon the best grounds. A good man has a small income and a large family; he has also a warm heart, and his neighbors know it. Though he never adopted any specific proportion, he is conscious, and so is his wife, by daily experience, that he gives away "to his power, yea, and beyond his power." When he hears of fixing a rule, and walking by it, he feels that for him it is unnecessary; and he pleads, "The law is love." Were all like him, most gladly should we leave it here. But many whose heart has never led them into the troubles of over-giving, gladly catch up his words, and, as a simple defence against giving something definite, cry, "The law is love."

To you who use this objection we have only one thing to say: If the law is love, will you keep the law? Then all we contend for, and more than all, is secured. Among laws, none is near so exacting as love. It is "never ending, still beginning." Its great things of yesterday, are little things to-day, will be little things to-morrow. The law of love! It is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." And you invoke the law of love to save your money!

As a matter for personal guidance, the definite meaning of this expression is something like this: "The heart that is right is full of love. Love fulfils all law and secures the right of God and man. Therefore the heart that is right is a law to itself, and needs no other rule. But my heart is right, and is sure to fulfil the law without special rules. Is that safe reasoning? If your heart be so right to-day, may it not wax cold some other day? and would it not be well to have a test by which to try its warmth? Or may there not be some like me, who cannot trust so surely to their heart; but feel that it is a wholesome thing, to have clear rules whereby its dispositions may be often measured?"

Love may be a good reason for going above rules; but it is the worst in the world for staying below them, or without them. It is a law of love which binds a man to provide for the comfort of his family; but surely that is no reason why he should refuse to give his wife a regular allowance for the expenses of house-keeping.

"But you speak of giving a tenth:—that is an arithmetical law; and you will never bring the hearts of Christians under a cold arithmetical law." This is a very tremendous objection. Half the sympathies of an audience are in danger of being lost the moment they hear that our rule is a cold arithmetical law. Arithmetic sounds of school-books, and counting houses, and markets, and hard problems, and dry statistics, and other ungenerous things. Well, it is so, and we cannot deny it; to say that you are bound to give away at the very least a tenth of your all, is to speak the language of arithmetic. But is the principle the less sacred for that? "Remember the seventh day to keep it holy." This is an arithmetical expression! And is there anything unhallowed in the Sabbath because a square seventh is cut off from our time, and is just in that arithmetical proportion to be consecrated to God? Again: it is ordained that a Bishop shall be the husband of but one wife, which is an arithmetical law.

But if our spacious friends who object to narrow arithmetical laws will observe their own givings, it will prove that somehow arithmetic follows them wherever they go. For if you do not give a tenth, but a

ninetieth, even that is an arithmetical proportion, though it might be hard to ascertain it: and, in fact, go down however low you may, if you give anything whatever, at any time whatever, it still bears an arithmetical proportion to the whole! Did we name a tenth as the high standard of Christian benevolence, and confine ourselves to it, we might be taunted with arithmetic; but when we name it only as the lowest point at which any footing can be found, and leave all above free, that arrow flies below us.

"But if you teach men to give a tenth, they will give that and be content, though they ought to give much more." This is an objection of real gravity. Doubtless, did we succeed in producing generally in the churches the state of feeling, that all were bound to give at least a tenth, many would think themselves generous in giving that, when perhaps a third or a half would be only their just proportion. But how do matters stand at present? Multitudes of sincere Christians are royally content, though they give nothing like a tenth; and could we succeed in bringing up the Church generally to that proportion (though far below what we hold to be due of many), the state of things then would present a wonderful improvement on that existing now.

But I question whether adopting the principle of proportion would tend to make men content with the minimum proportion, after they were abundantly prospered. So far as my knowledge of its practical working goes, my impression is the reverse. Is it my pleasure to know many men who, at the outset of life, or early in life, adopted Jacob's resolution to give a tenth. These have all been prosperous men. I do not know one of them but shows that the effect of his early adopting the principle of a tenth, has been to prepare him for a higher proportion when years of plenty set in.

And is it not natural that such should be the effect? There is a great, not to say a tremendous, power over man in that very principle of arithmetical proportion which it is so easy to spurn. What an arbitrary proportion of our time or goods is taken—a proportion for which reason has no more to say than for any other—what is the effect upon the mind? It serves as a practical claim of sovereignty on the part of the Creator. It says, "This is claimed because all might be claimed. He who accept this, owns all, and holds you to account for the rest." It is not probable that year after year one will carefully set apart a fixed proportion for the service of his God, without becoming habituated to feel that he is merely a steward; and that He at whose feet he lays the first-fruits is the Giver of all. Such stated setting apart is a practical keeping of the precept: "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." And whoever thus begins life by keeping a law of proportion, is the most likely of all men to advance his proportion, his Benefactor augments his blessing.—*N. Y. Church Journal.*

GOD'S VOICE TO US IN THIS CRISIS.

In all the crash and crush that is around us, in failing firms and breaking railroads, suspended factories, and darkened homes, there is a clear, plain warning to us that this world is not our rest; that there is not a nest on any branch of it which the storm of misfortune may not shake us from; that there is not a rock in any sea of it which the waves of trouble may not overwhelm; that there is not a refuge within any nook of it which the floods may not sweep over, or the fire destroy.

We have been, alas! too forgetful of all this. With life fresh in us, and prosperity around us, we have lost sight often of the uncertainty of earthly things. We have thought and acted as if everything were fixed, and the issue of all enterprises certain. We have built our nests upon the swinging bough, as if no storms were ever to sweep over us.

The agitations of such times as these were a loud warning to us to beware of such a course. We need but to listen, and as firm after firm suspends, and fortune after fortune crumbles, as dwelling after dwelling feels the pressure of the tempest, and the rush and roar of it go sweeping through the land, God's voice sounds clearly amidst all and above all—"Arise, ye, and depart: for this is not your rest."

The same great truth has, indeed, been long spoken, and by the voice of the same God. Its gentle tones, however, have reached thus far comparatively few ears. It has been drowned to most in the whirl of business and the revelry of careless mirth.

But now that the song of gaiety is silenced, the music of merriment is at an end, and the wheels of business are brought to a dead lock, it comes echoing