

born to rejoice with them, when they found what they had lost: and the Saviour adds, that "likewise joy shall be in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." Observe, that when sinners are brought back to God, they are said to "repent;" that is, they are grieved and ashamed for all their past sins, and they earnestly desire to be kept from sin for the time to come.

Let no one think that they have already wandered too far to return. It was the chief of sinners that Jesus came to seek and to save. He can make even liars learn to love truth; he can teach swearers to fear an oath; and even should you have been so wicked as to mock at good people, and to laugh at religion, yet he can make you to delight in it yourselves. Come to him just as you are; and he will put you among the "sheep of his pasture to-day, if ye will hear his voice." Your past wanderings will then no more be mentioned or remembered against you, because he has borne the punishment which they deserved: and you will wander no more, for he will lead and guide you, and make you "to walk in the paths of righteousness." Again, I would say, come to him *immediately*; for if you do not, there may be "but a step between you and death."

But some of my readers may perhaps be like the scribes and pharisees, imagining that they are "just persons, who need no repentance." They are not liars or swearers; they are very regular in their attendance at their Sunday school, and repeat their lessons correctly; they are in general obedient to their parents, and their friends think them very good children. But if they are proud of these things, and think that they have no sins to repent of, let them remember that they are not approved by God. "God resisteth the proud." If they suppose that by their good conduct they can deserve his favour, they are much mistaken, for he has said, that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh

be justified in his sight." "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God;" and this cannot but be very displeasing to him; because it is the same thing as if they said, that God need not have sent His Son into the world to save sinners, for they can save themselves. Let these parables teach them, that the repentance and conversion of one poor wicked child would be far more pleasing to God, than all the good behaviour which they boast of. They may despise those children who lie, and steal, and take God's name in vain; but if they should at last see some of them, converted by the grace of Christ, entering into the kingdom of heaven, while they themselves are shut out, O how dreadful will it be!

But, before I have done, I would fain try to convince them, that there really is less difference than they suppose, between them and those wicked children whom they despise. I feel anxious to do so, because I know that it is impossible for them to be happy, while they continue to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think.

Let them remember, that "the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart;" and the pride which he sees in their hearts is quite as displeasing to him, as lying or swearing would be. Besides, it is not enough only to behave well; he knows their *reasons* for behaving well; and if these are not good, the best outward conduct can never meet his approbation. They go regularly to the Sunday school; but it is because they love instruction, and are desirous to learn the way to heaven? Is it not rather that they may get praise, and perhaps a reward for regular attendance? They always say their lessons correctly, and even perhaps learn voluntary lessons; but is this because they love the Bible, and desire to have