

God Will Understand.

They brought their flowers to the altar,
Blossoms of white and red,
Lilies and violets and roses,
The sweetest of perfume shed,
And none of the rich and mighty
Who lavished their gifts that day
Took heed of a child among them,
Who timidly pressed her way

She crept up close to the altar,
And there 'neath a lily's crown,
With tender, reverent fingers,
She laid her offering down,
And said to a curious question,
As the flower dropped from her hand,
"It is only a little daisy,
But God will understand"

Sweet, childish faith! O teach us
Our little best to give,
Though the works of others are greater
Than the humble life we live,
And to offer our grateful service
Forever with loving hand,
Safe in the blessed assurance
That God will understand

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 12, 1898.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

FEBRUARY 20, 1898.

In the temple Matt 12 1-14

This is one of Christ's discourses. His sermons were largely made up of what Mr Moody calls Likes. Here he sets forth what the kingdom of heaven is like. He draws a comparison between the Gospel and the marriage of a king's son. This mode of address is always popular and is sure to attract the attention of the multitude. Such a feast as that mentioned would certainly be an interesting occasion, two persons united in one. We all may be united to Christ.

THE GUESTS.

Certain persons who are the friends of the wedding party are always invited, and they are called guests. The Jews were first invited to the Gospel feast. But now all are invited. The provision of the Gospel is more abundant than the most bounteous preparation at any nuptial feast that was ever witnessed in this world. The most costly viands ever provided for any marriage feast must necessarily be limited, but the provisions of the Gospel feast are as boundless as the race. There is enough for all, enough for each, and enough for evermore.

EXCUSES.

Verses 4-6. Business engagements are often pleaded as reasons for not accepting the invitations of the Gospel. Young people often excuse themselves on the ground of their youth, whereas some of the most illustrious examples of those who have become Christians are to be found among young people. Think of Joseph, Josiah, Daniel, Timothy, and many others.

THE KING WAS OFFENDED

At this we need not wonder. He is justly offended with the conduct of men at the present day, as he was with the Jews. Are any of my readers in the

class of offenders? Has he not called and you have refused.

HOW THE KING TREATED THOSE WHO DESPISED.

Their privileges were taken away. Will the Gospel be removed from us? People and nations have thus been treated in the past, and how know we but that a similar penalty will be inflicted upon us. We have no reason to think that our punishment will be less severe than that which befel the Jews.

THE CAST-OUT.

Guests were to be properly clothed. One ventured to go among the guests who was without the necessary garment. Here learn how that we must be clothed in the garments of righteousness. No spot of sin must remain upon our character. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The blood of Jesus Christ is the only remedy that can cleanse a sin-polluted soul. Wash away your sins in the fountain opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thus you will be prepared to sit down at the marriage feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem.

METHODISTS AND DANCING.

BY THE REV. MANLY BENSON, D.D.

I have been asked by some of our young people, "Is it right for church members to dance?" meaning by this members of our church. I am not disposed for a moment to think that Christian life should be morose, solemn, and void of sunshine and brightness. I have often said to you, Of all people Christian people should be the happiest. Further, we must have our relaxations from toil, and rest from labour. But the question comes, How should church members, or disciples of Christ, take their recreations? Anything that impairs health, gives weariness of body and lassitude, is not properly amusement or relaxation, but vice.

Dancing does not lighten the load of life, but rather adds to it. The term dancing does not always mean the same thing. We use the same word to represent good and evil. Dancing was originally practised only in religious worship, and as an act of thanksgiving. In the Hebrew dance, maidens and women danced alone. The "time to dance" is not in the ball-room and at the midnight party, but when the heart bounds with love to God. Dancing in the abstract is harmless; but people do not dance in the abstract. From the theatre and opera-house dancing has come to be a part of social enjoyment, and has been introduced into the home. "No sober man dances except perchance a madman or a fool" said the Roman orator Cicero. But he was a poor heathen, we say, and knew no better.

DOES NOT REQUIRE INTELLIGENCE.

It does not require advanced intelligence to dance, but it does to talk interestingly and be a good conversationalist. A young man or woman who has cultivated his or her feet to the neglect of his or her head cannot long impose upon sensible people. Shine by the clearness of your thinking, rather than send out the faint glimmer like the firefly from their extremities! In heathen Rome a woman who made any claim to modesty scorned the dance.

But some one says there is no harm in a "little dance" with just a few friends in our own home. The same argument is urged for the card-table, which leads to gambling, and the drink habit, which is the curse of our land. As Methodists and members of the Methodist Church, as a matter of honour we should forgo the dance. Our rules are clear. Let me read: "The General Rules are to be understood as forbidding neglect of duties of any kind, imprudent conduct, indulging in sinful tempers, or the buying or selling or using of intoxicating liquors as a beverage; dancing, playing at games of chance, encouraging lotteries, attending theatres, horse-races, circuses, dancing-parties, patronizing dancing-schools, or taking such other amusements as are obviously of a misleading or questionable tendency."

Can we, as Methodists, I ask, in all honour dance or attend dancing-parties, and not ask to have our names taken from the church register? Presbyterian Synods, and priests not a few in the Roman Catholic Church, are advising their people against the modern dance. We need more high toned principle crowded into our religious as well as business lives.

At a ball, to be given some time since, it was deemed desirable to secure as manager a beautiful and accomplished young lady. A member of Congress was deputed to ask her services as manager. All his influence was brought to bear

upon her, but in vain. She steadily refused, and declined to even attend the ball. "Will you kindly give me your reason?" said the Congressman. "Certainly, sir," said she. "I am a Christian, and cannot attend without violating what I consider my religious obligations." He replied: "I have heard before of religious principle, but I never saw it exemplified until now. From this hour I shall have a higher respect for Christian character." Let many fashionable professors of religion take note of this.

In my ministry of over thirty years, I have not found the strongest Christian characters, men and women, who bantered the world up higher, come from those who danced or attended dancing parties. Now you will observe I have denounced no one. I am strongly of the opinion that it is not the best way to win the erring from their ways. I wish to counsel the young under my care, and lead such as are willing to be directed in the safe and, as I believe, the happiest way and path of life.

For innocent recreations and amusements there are so many avenues, it seems to me not hard or difficult for us to choose. Reading is one most delightful way of spending a pleasant hour. Music, with her charms to soothe and inspire, is within the reach of all. The lecture, so full (or it ought to be) of information and pleasure, should be prized more than it is by our young people. Travel is open to most of us in this age of steamships and railways. The social visit, when we can have a free and happy interchange of thought and sundry questions of everyday life. Art affords endless enjoyment to not a few. Here are open doors for us all, the entering of which will give us real enjoyment, develop the best that is in us and fit us, not only for the life that now is, but also for the life which is to come.

A little boy over in Hull the other day took hold of what we call a "live wire" and found he could not let go. He cried for help, but not until the blood was oozing from his nose and mouth did help come. More dead than alive he was rescued by some woman passing by, who raised the alarm. The wire was cut and the lad rescued, but none too soon. Take care, young man, young woman, you do not take hold of some habit that, like the "live wire," will not let you free, even when you see your danger. Paul's counsel to the Thessalonians is good for you in this day, also "Abstain from all appearance of evil."—Ottawa Citizen.

A STORY OF STREET LIFE.

Boys and girls who believe that tender and sweet stories are only found between the covers of books of fiction will do well to read the following story, which was lived in the busy, crowded New York streets. We give it as it is told in one of the New York papers:

Little Joe first appeared on the streets of New York two years ago. He was small and slight, with great brown eyes and pinched lips that always wore a smile. Where he came from nobody knew and few cared. His parents, he said, were dead, and he had no friends. It was a hard life. Up at four o'clock in the morning, after sleeping in a dry-goods box or in an alley, he worked steadily till late at night. He was misused at first. Big boys stole his papers or crowded him out of a warm place at night, but he never complained. The tears would well up in his eyes, but were quickly brushed away and a new start bravely made. Such conduct won him friends, and after a while no one dared play tricks upon little Joe. His friends he remembered and his enemies he forgave. Some days he had especially good luck; kind-hearted people pitied the little fellow and bought papers whether they wanted them or not. But he was too generous to save money enough even for a night's lodging. Every boy who "got stuck" knew he was sure to get enough to buy a supper as long as Joe had a penny.

But the hard work and exposure began to tell on his weak constitution. He kept growing thinner and thinner, till there was scarcely an ounce of flesh on his little body. The skin of his face was drawn closer and closer, but the pleasant look never faded away. He was uncomplaining to the last. Two weeks ago he awoke one morning, after working hard selling "extras," to find himself too weak to move. He tried his best to get upon his feet, but it was a vain attempt; the vital force was gone.

"Where is little Joe?" was the universal inquiry. Finally, he was found in a secluded corner, and a good-natured hackman was persuaded to take him to the hospital at Flatbush, where he said he once lived. Every day one of the boys went to see him. On Saturday a newsboy who had abused him at first,

and learned to love him afterward, found him sitting up in his cot, his little blue-veined hand stretched out upon the coverlet.

"I was afraid you wasn't coming, Jerry," he said with some difficulty, "and I wanted to see you once more so much I guess it will be the last time, Jerry, for I feel awful weak to-day. Now, Jerry, when I die I want you to be good for my sake. Tell the boys—"

It was sad news that Jerry brought back to his friends on that day. They feared the end was near, and were waiting for him with anxious hearts. When they saw his tear-stained face they knew that little Joe was dead. Not a word was said. They felt as if they were in the presence of death itself; their hearts were too full to speak.

That night one hundred boys met in front of the City Hall. They felt that they must express their sense of loss in some way, but how they did not know. Finally, in accordance with the suggestion of one of the larger boys, they passed a resolution which read as follows:

"Resolved, That we all liked little Joe, who was the best newsboy in New York. Everybody is sorry he has died."

A collection was taken up to send delegates to the funeral, and the same hackman who bore little Joe to the hospital, again kindly offered the use of his carriage. The burial took place yesterday. On the coffin was a plate, purchased by the boys, whose language was expressive from its very simplicity. This was the inscription:

LITTLE JOE,

Aged 14.

The Best Newsboy in New York.

We all liked him.

There was no service, but each boy sent a flower to be placed upon the coffin of his friend. After all, what did it matter that little Joe was dead? He was only a newsboy.

This is not a fancy sketch. Every word of the above story is true.

WELL WON.

The Victoria Cross of the sea is a famous medal. It was first won by the famous swimmer, Matthew Webb, in 1873. The steamship Russia was running at the rate of fourteen knots an hour, when a seaman named Michael Hynes, who was at work in the rigging, lost his hold and fell into the sea.

The height of the surges and the speed at which the Russia was sliding through the water made rescue hazardous, but Webb went overboard in a twinkling. Before him, when he reached the surface after his dive, was the wet, black hull of the flying steamer, already trailing a long wake to his struggling shape; behind him was a small black object bobbing between the white crests.

Unhesitatingly he turned from safety to danger, and swam back along the frothing line of the steamer's track. The black object was not the head of the sailor, but merely his cap. Webb seized it, and swam up and down in a vain search for the unfortunate owner.

Turning here and there in his reluctance to give up hope, he steadfastly opposed an exalted courage to the intense loneliness and abandonment suggested by the broken leagues of solitary ocean.

Half an hour afterwards he was still pursuing his hopeless quest, when he was espied from a boat which had been lowered by the Russia, and taken on board, a full mile from the point where he had made his plunge.

It is significant of the powers of the matchless swimmer, whose feats subsequently made him known all over the world, that he was quite unexhausted when picked up, although suffering somewhat from the cold.

TO A STRANGE LAND.

Frequently the ships that come from Europe bring little children to friends or relatives, tagged as express packages would be tagged. Only the other day five little children arrived in New York. One little girl of five years came from Russia. She wore a shawl over her head and carried a handkerchief full of playthings. Her father was in this country trying to make a home for her and her mother, but the mother died in Russia, and the little girl was sent to her father here. Her name was Itka. Another one, nine years old, whose name is Ilona, came with a little sister of seven from Russian Poland; and the little girl of nine years, the officers on the steamship said, was a little mother to her sister all the way over. Two more little sisters named Freda and Ganna came from Austria. Both wore tags about their necks with the names and addresses of their relatives to whom they were coming.