

vices of an unlettered exhorter in a barn was the means of arousing his better nature and effecting his conversion. But, unfortunately, dates sadly damage the story, inasmuch as the above hymn, written by Hart, was not published till three years after Toplady's conversion, so that hymn, too, must be stripped of its noted story.

The next to be noticed is in connection with Wesley's popular hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul." One story is to the effect that as the author stood one day at his window, watching the approach of what threatened to be a violent storm, he noticed, as it increased, a little feeble, frightened bird being driven toward him. Quickly he raised the sash, and the pelted, panting creature was thus, as it were, driven to his bosom, and there found rest, and while the storm was still raging, he sat down and wrote of Christ the only refuge. This is all very fine, but there is nothing to sustain the story, while the whole tenor of the hymn is against it. The other story is this: That the two Wesleys, while holding an evening meeting on a common, were attacked by a mob, and, seeking refuge behind a hedge-row near by, they thereby protected themselves as best they could from the missiles thrown at them. As the darkness drew on they left their retreat for a safer one at some distance. This proved to be a spring house, where, in comparative security, they struck a light with a flint-stone, quenched their thirst, bathed hands and face in the sparkling springlet, and, having tidied up their garments, Charles then, with a bit of lead hammered into a pencil, wrote the above hymn. All this, however pleasing, is pure invention, having no historic foundation on which to rest.

The last to be noticed is the notable hymn of Miss Elliot, beginning, "Just as I am," etc., and its story is this: A gay and somewhat worldly-tending young woman was one day on her way to get a ball dress made, when she met her minister. The good man, on inquiry, having ascertained her errand, gently and kindly reasoned with her regarding such frivolities, but she pertly told him to mind his own business, and passed on. Immediately after the ball her conscience condemned her in regard to the unseemly way in which she had treated her pastor, and, hieing to his home, she expressed sincere sorrow for so doing, and earnestly desired him to show her the way of life. He at once pointed her to the Lamb of God and told her she must come to Jesus just as she was. In doubting astonishment she exclaimed, "What! just as I am, and I one of the most sinful creatures in the world?" "Yes," said he, "just as you are." Penitent and somewhat prostrated, she returned home, and, after earnest, humble, heartfelt prayer, she rose from her knees, and then and there, under the influence of those deep emotions which such exercises had been instrumental in producing, she wrote the beautiful hymn which bears her name. Fondly as some may cling to such a story, yet what are the facts of the case? Miss Elliot was born in 1789, and became a confirmed invalid in 1821. Shortly thereafter the saintly Cæsar Malan visited her father's house, and, in conversation with him, she was led to come and consecrate herself to Jesus just as she was, an event which she annually commemorated throughout a long life of debility and suffering. If this, then, was the time of her conversion, it is evident that it took place at least fourteen years before the hymn was written, seeing that it did not appear till 1836. But even in her earlier years the dispositions which she cherished and the character she possessed were the farthest remote from leading her to treat her pastor in the curt and contemptible manner which in the story is attributed to her.

THE Archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the Bishop of London, have issued a circular to all the clergy, urging them to act on the manual of the White Cross. This document is written as by men sure of their ground, and convinced that Christian sentiment alone is able to deal with this matter, and therefore ought to do so. These are solemn declarations of truths not always accepted by society: "We declare that a life of chastity for the unmarried is not only possible, but is commanded by God; that there is no difference between man and woman in the sinfulness of sins of unchastity; that on the man, in his God-given strength of manhood, rests the main responsibility; and that no one known to be living an immoral life ought to be received into Christian society."

Our Young Folks.

THE BEST WISH.

"Oh, what would you like to be, Ben?"
"Twas mamma's softest tone."
"What would you like to be when
You are a man full grown?"

"Oh, I would be a soldier brave,
A soldier brave and true,
And have a crest and plume to wave,
And wear a helmet, too."

"And what would you like to be, Nell,
My little chubby son,
With golden curls upon your head,
And heart bristful of fun?"

"Oh, I would be a coachman large,
With liv'ry coat of blue,
And have two fiery steeds in charge,
And lash a great whip, too."

"Oh, what would you like to be, Nell,
Our only daughter sweet—
The household gem—I pray you tell,
What is your wish complete?"

"Oh, I would like," said little Nell,
With face all in a glow,
"To be a queen, a reigning belle,
Admired by high and low."

"And what would you like to be, John?
Your childhood's fleeing fast;
I rust a prop to lean upon,
When all our vigour's past."

"A sailor boy," said brother John,
"Tis my desire to be,
The foaming waves to ride upon,
Across the boundless sea."

"And what would you like to be, dear?"
Said mother, bending low
To kiss the brow of little Clair,
Who often suffers so.

A hush came on us then and there—
The mother's nestling brood,—
To hear the words of little Clair.
"My wish is to be good!"

Of all the band, dear little Clair
Was best in every way;
Our hearts were touched, more tender were,
To hear his wish that day.

Said mother, "Gather round the hearth,
My little nestling brood,
And breathe the wish of greatest worth,
That each one may be good."

GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READINGS.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D., GALL.

I.—THE GODLY MAN'S PURPOSES.

- I will run in the way of God's Commandments, Psa. cxix. 32.
I will meditate in God's precepts, Psa. cxix. 15.
I will delight in God's commandments, Psa. cxix. 47.
I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills of help, Psa. cxxi. 1, 2.
I will seek the good of Jerusalem, Psa. cxxii. 9.
I will praise God with the whole heart, Psa. cxxxviii. 1.
I will worship and praise God's name, Psa. cxxxviii. 2.
I will walk before God in the land of the living, Psa. cxvi. 9.
I will pay my vows unto the Lord and call on His name, Psa. cxvi. 13, 14.
I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way, Psa. ci. 2.
I will not know a wicked person, Psa. ci. 4.
I will remember the works of the Lord, Psa. lxxvii. 11.
I will go in the strength of the Lord God, Psa. lxxi. 16.
I will bless God while I live, Psa. lxxiii. 4.
I will trust in the covert of God's wings, Psa. lxi. 4.
I will cry unto God that performeth all things for me, Psa. lvii. 2.
I will give thanks in the great congregation, Psa. xxxv. 18.
I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy, Psa. xxxi. 7.
I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever, Psa. xxiii. 6.

DONT LAUGH AT RELIGION.

Never laugh at religion. Never make a jest of sacred things. Never mock those who are serious and in earnest about their souls. The time may come when you will count those happy whom you laughed at—a time when your laughter will be turned into sorrow, and your mockery into heaviness. Whatever else you please to laugh at, don't laugh at religion.

Contempt of holy things is the high road to infidelity. Once let a man begin to make jest and joke of any part of Christianity, and I am never surprised to hear that he has turned out a downright unbeliever.

Have you really made up your mind to this? Have you fairly looked into the gulf which is before you, if you persist in despising religion? Call to mind the words of David: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Psa. ix. 1. The fool, and none but the fool! He has said it, but he has never proved it! Remember, if ever there was a book which has proved true from beginning to end, by every kind of evidence, that book is the Bible. It has defied the attacks of all enemies and fault-finders. "The word of the Lord is indeed tried." Psa. xviii. 30. It has been tried in every way, and the more evidently has it been shown to be the very handiwork of God Himself.

Matthew Henry tells a story of a great statesman in Queen Elizabeth's time, who retired from public life in his latter days and gave himself up to serious thought. His former gay companions came to visit him, and told him he was becoming melancholy. "No," he replied, "I am serious; for all are serious round me. God is serious in observing us, Christ is serious in interceding for us, the Spirit is striving with us, the truths of God are serious, our spiritual enemies are serious in their endeavour to ruin us, and why, then, should not you and I be serious too?" Don't laugh at religion.

SUCH A BOTHER TO GET THEM READY.

"If they could only dress themselves, I should not mind; but what with getting the last of them fairly off, and picking up after they are gone, it seems to take the best part of the day right off."

Exactly. But what if the shoes had been blacked the night before, and the bath-room had been made good use of Saturday, rather than Sunday? What if, when the clothes of the week were laid off, they had been placed carefully to one side, and the Sunday ones laid in their stead? What if the lesson-books had been hunted up and placed by the Sunday caps, ready the night before? What if cold meat had taken the place of breakfast chicken, and the time gained given to hair-brushing and necktie-tying, rather than attention to those things later?

"But they get themselves so dirty if dressed so early."

Teach them for one day in seven to keep out of the dirt.

"Their father don't like to have it all bustle and commotion Saturday night; it's all the day he has, out of the week."

The Lord don't like all bustle and commotion Sunday; it's all the day He has, out of the week.

"But if the children are to be kept dressed up all day, what are we to do with those who are too small to read for themselves?"

You are to read to them, talk to them. You are to set their little minds to think about the thousand and one things they have little inclination for when about their play. The blue sky above them and green fields near them, and God, in His great Fatherhood, round and about them. You are to garnish this, the best day of the week, with the sweetest smiles you have, the kindest words and most loving acts, and to encourage such things in your children. More than any other day of the week, you are to make the Sabbath truly useful and peaceful and enjoyable, so that your children in after years shall look back upon the Sabbath of their childhood as travellers look back upon the green oasis they have passed in the sandy desert. Keep that day as free as possible from the hurry and bustle which belong, by right, to the week; and then hardly noticeable will be the preparations needed in order that your children shall go forth prepared, both in mind and body, for the Sunday school.