

Our Young Folks.

GOD HEARS.

"Mother, will the Saviour hear
Such a little child as I?
He'll not heed my prayer I fear;
All my vain and feeble cry.

"Will he stoop, mamma, to see
While I humbly kneel to Him?
Will He notice little me
When I say my evening hymn?"

"He both hears and sees, my boy,
When you kneel to Him in prayer;
All my darling's grief and joy
He is ever pleased to share.

"Then ne'er think He will not hear
E'en your faintest whisper, love;
He will lend attentive ear;
Every prayer is heard above.

"Never fail in joy or woe,
Jesus' ready aid to crave;
He will loving kindness show,
And my child in mercy save."

MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

Writing in the *Princess* of a mother who, though "no angel," was "a dearer being, all dipt in angel instincts, breathing Paradise," Tennyson exclaims:—

Happy he
With such a mother! Faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall,
He shall not bind his soul with clay.

The poet's thought is illustrated by a little story told by the Rev. Joshua Cooke in an article on the mule-deer, contributed to "The Big Game of North America."

The clergyman's oldest son, a ranchman in Oregon, stands six feet and an inch in his stockings, and is a powerful man, a good shot, a fine hunter, warm-hearted and generous. One day a fellow-ranchman came to his cabin, and said:—

"Mr. Cooke, my old mother is dead. She was a Christian woman, and I don't want to put her in the ground like the cattle we bury. There isn't a minister within thirty miles, your father is a minister, you have taught in our Sabbath school. Would you come and say a word over my mother?"

It was a new experience; the big boy thought a moment, and then said:—

"Whitehead, I never did anything of the kind, but if it was my mother—and I have one whom I worship—I should feel as you do. Your mother shan't be buried like a dog. I'll come."

Afterward he wrote to his father:—

"I recalled the words I had so often heard you pronounce over the dead. All alone I read a passage of Scripture, sang a verse of a hymn, said a short prayer, said the 'dust to dust,' and all was over. It was a tight place, father; all the men and women of the valley were there; but I thought of mother and it carried me through."

A rough young ranchman said to this son one day. "Bates, we notice that you will take part with us in our sports up to a certain point, and then you stop. We wonder why."

"Jerry," he answered, "when I left home I made up my mind to go nowhere and take part in nothing that would displease my mother."

LITTLE JOE'S GIFT.

Grandpa and Grandma Stebbins had the Bible in their home, but they seldom read it. It lay upon an upper shelf, and the dust was often allowed to collect upon it. They were so intent upon gathering together this world's goods that they found little time to think of the world to come. Joe, their little grandson, was a brave little boy and they laid by every cent they could spare in order that they might educate him. It was for Joe that they toiled early and late. When he first went to the district school, how proud the old couple were of the reports of his behaviour! No boy gave less trouble to his teacher, nor was more loved by her.

This teacher was a Christian and she told him about Jesus and the boy's tender heart was touched, and that evening he ran all the way home in his haste to tell grandpa and grandma the story. The aged parents had long been familiar with it, and they listened, not untouched by the boy's enthusiasm.

Joe kept the story in his heart and pondered often of the blessed Jesus who died for sinners.

While Grandpa Stebbins was never idle, yet he had not prospered as many another and his heart hardened as he thought of what he would, but could not, do for his boy. When vacation came, Joe, who was bright and active in word as well as study, said:—

"Grandpa, I am not too young to lend a hand."

So, when grandpa went to the woods with his axe to hew down trees, Joe went down, too, determined to help. The old man was proud enough of the little man who ran by his side, and grandma, as she watched their departing forms from the window, smiled as she resumed her knitting a pair of warm stockings for Joe.

Grandpa never could tell how it happened, but when the

oak at which he was hewing fell, Joe fell too, crushed beneath its trunk. One leg must be taken off, the surgeon said, and the little fellow clung to grandma's neck, striving vainly to smother the sobs that shook his frame.

It was a sad household and Joe, as he lay upon his bed, strove vainly to cheer the hearts of his grand-parents. "Don't cry, grandma," he would say; "I can get around on one leg and there is lots of things a boy with one leg can do."

He made a rule to speak to them every day of Jesus. In his sufferings the dear Lord was very near to him and he thought often and wonderingly of the life and death of the Saviour.

One day his teacher brought him a mission paper and in it was the story of a child who worshipped idols and when told of Jesus wept for joy and said, "Tell father, too," and turning from the wooden image, he bowed his knee to the living Jesus.

Joe's form daily wasted and his dear ones saw that his earthly life was short. "Grandpa," he said one day, "have I cost you much?" The old man hid his face and sobbed. "I want to know, grandpa," Joe continued, "just how much I cost a year."

"Not much, my boy, not much; not more than one hundred dollars."

"Well, grandpa, I am going home soon, and I want you to give that money to some other boys to teach them of Jesus, that they may come to the same home where I am going."

Grandpa sobbed "yes," and the boy, stroking the white hairs of his head, said: "Won't you and grandma come too?"

This is how Joe performed his work for missions, and brought his grandparents into the kingdom.

Soon the wasted form was laid to rest, but the old couple never forgot their promise to little Joe. The Bible was brought down from the shelf, and each year into the mission fund there came the offering of one hundred dollars, bearing the words "Little Joe's Gift."

A DAY VISION.

On a recent beautiful morning I stood with nature's green carpet spread before me. Just at hand I beheld a small plot of flowers, of purple and scarlet, contrasting beautifully with the green and producing an effect unequalled by human skill. Looking a little further, I saw another object, that at once fixed my attention. Two blades of grass crossed each other near their points, and in the crossing sat a dewdrop. As the rays of the sun fell upon it, a sparkling white light struck the eye, more brilliant than gem of bridal ring or royal coronet. Turning my head so as to change the angle of vision, it assumed the colour of the ruby and shone with a red light. Again it changed to emerald, then to yellow, like the topaz. As I continued to gaze at it, the points of a star shot out from all sides of it, giving it the appearance of a red gem of the sky, with a dark centre. Just then a gentle zephyr stirred the grass and it twinkled like a veritable star in the heavens, and I could but admire and adore.

My thought was, if the Great Infinite condescends to bestow such care and show such skill upon a drop of dew, which would perish in an hour, will He not care for me and beautify me with His salvation who am of more value than many drops of dew?

A SWEET STORY.

I was once in Central Park, in New York, and stood watching the children take their donkey rides. A very poor looking but neatly-dressed woman, with a pale little girl who walked with a crutch, was also looking on at the riders. Two nicely-dressed little girls had just dismounted from their long-eared steed, and I saw them glance at the lame child, and whisper eagerly to their father. The gentleman approached the poor woman, and lifting his hat politely, said: "My little girls are anxious to enjoy the pleasure of giving your daughter a ride." The lame child's pale face flushed crimson with surprise and pleasure; and the poor woman look equally delighted. The child was soon in the saddle, and went twice over the course. Meantime her entertainers were whispering together, and when she was taken down the elder sister went up to her, and slyly slipped into her hand a box of candy. I daresay those little girls have forgotten their act of kindness by this time; but I do not believe the child or her mother have forgotten it, or ever will. The pleasures we prepare for ourselves fade and perish. The good and kind actions we do for others last to all eternity.

AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

The subject of health. Good health depends upon good food. It is not what we eat that nourishes the body, but what we digest. To study what we eat and why we eat is important. It was by eating the wrong food that the curse came upon mankind at first. Thousands are miserable with indigestion and dyspepsia from eating the wrong kind of food now. Some eat the same kind of food in hot weather that they do in cold weather, and consequently they suffer and are cast out of the paradise of health. It is always safe to eat Desiccated Wheat, but be sure you get the proper article with the name and trade mark of the Ireland National Food Co. (Ltd.) on the package.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Sept. 17.]

CHRIST AND THE BLIND MAN.

[John 9, 1-41.]

GOLDEN TEXT. One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.—JOHN ix. 25.

INTRODUCTORY.

Though the Pharisees found fault with Jesus because some of His miracles were performed on the Sabbath day, He did not alter His method of working in deference to their prejudices, real or affected. He did what was right without regarding what construction malignant enmity might put upon His actions. It was on a Sabbath day soon after the incident of last lesson occurred that Jesus met the man who was born blind and gave to him the precious blessing of sight.

I. The Blind Man.—Blindness is a much more common affliction in eastern than in western countries. The climate has much to do with the prevalence of this sad malady. The sudden changes of temperature and the consequent great variation of the light's intensity is trying to the eyes, as are also the fierce glare of the sunlight and the fine particles of dust almost continually floating in the air. The man whose case is mentioned in this passage had been born blind. In all the other recorded cases of miraculous restoration of sight this is the only instance given of one who had been blind from his birth. It is said that ophthalmic skill cannot cure this defect. The miracle is therefore all the greater in this instance. Jesus saw the man. He may have been looking intently at him. The appearance of the blind man prompted the disciples to ask: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" It was a common belief among the Jews that special forms of suffering were the immediate punishment of special forms of sin. They therefore concluded that the blindness of this man must be directly traceable to either his own or his parents' sin. Here, however, was a difficulty they could not well get over. The man had been blind from his birth, and they could not understand why punishment should fall upon a man before he could be responsible for his actions. On the other hand, if it was for the sin of his parents, then why should the severity of the punishment fall upon him? It is true that all suffering is caused by sin. It is also true that special sins entail special punishments, but it is not for us in every case to apply the general principle, because we do not know the facts and we might grievously misinterpret God's dealings, as the disciples were in danger of doing in the present instance. In reply to their question Jesus tells the disciples that "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." That means that they were not sinless, absolutely free from sin, for with the sole exception of Jesus Himself no member of the human family is without sin, "for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God." It means that it was not because of any special sin either on the man's part or that of his parents that this sad affliction had befallen him. It had a more gracious and merciful purpose, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." God who brings light out of darkness, order out of confusion, and who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, can overrule the afflictions of men to their highest good, and to His own glory. This miracle that Jesus wrought is a clear instance of this. He adds: "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work." This was a proverbial expression, indicating that every opportunity brings its appropriate duty, which ought to be attended to at the proper time. Day is the time for work. If the work is not done night comes and puts an end to the opportunity. Christ's working day on earth was drawing near to its close. He was intent on doing the will of the Father who sent Him while opportunity offered. Again Jesus appropriately repeats the declaration concerning Himself, "I am the Light of the world." He came to give sight to the blind. He has come to dispel the darkness of ignorance, of sin and of sorrow. He is the true Light, the Sun of Righteousness. In His light only can we see light clearly.

II. The Blind Man Receives His Sight.—Most of the miracles wrought by Christ were accomplished without the use of outward means. His word of power was sufficient. In this case outward means were used, but utterly inadequate to effect so great a change as the giving of sight to a man that had been born blind. Jesus spat on the ground, and the moistened clay was applied to the eyes of the patient. He was then told to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash. In all cases where Christ had exercised His miraculous powers of healing, faith on the part of the recipient was a necessary element. It may have been necessary to anoint the eyes of the man with clay to put him in the expectant frame of mind in which faith might have room for exercise, and the obvious inadequacy of the means used would at once convince spectators of the divine power exercised in the gift of sight. Sending him to wash in the Pool of Siloam was a test of the man's faith and obedience. Having followed Christ's instructions he came back from the Pool seeing. What a blessed change he had experienced! His neighbours and the people generally who knew him at once noticed the change, and expressed their astonishment, and began to dispute over it. Those who knew him best had no doubt as to his identity. Some said: "This is he;" others said: "he is like him." The man himself settles this controversy by declaring: "I am he." This led to animated enquiry and something like official investigation. When the man and his parents were examined and the facts of the case established beyond possibility of doubt, the officials were anxious to find in this cure wrought on the Sabbath day a ground of accusation against Christ, but the facts were against them, so for the present they have to content themselves with turning the cured man out of the synagogue.

III. The Man whose Sight was Restored Finds the Saviour.—Jesus had at first found the man in his misery. He again finds him in his perplexity. He now pointedly puts the question to him: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man may have heard of Jesus and some of the wonderful works He had done, but up to that moment he had no distinct idea of who his benefactor really was. The man on whom this miracle of healing had been wrought was in a candid and open frame of mind. The erroneous aspersions of the Pharisees had not perverted his spiritual vision, so with all candour he asks: "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" This was the first opportunity the man had of looking on the face of Jesus. The voice he may have recognized, but this was the first time he had seen Him. This direct and sincere question is answered with equal directness: "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." This is enough. As the Son of God the man acknowledges Jesus, rests on Him for salvation and worships Him as God. He receives Him as the divine Saviour, who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

All by nature are spiritually blind, and sin only makes the blindness more intense. For this spiritual blindness there is no human cure.

Christ, who is the Light of the world, can cure even the worst case of spiritual blindness.

Those whom Christ enlightens are conscious of the blessed change. Others also are able to see its effects.

Salvation implies a personal application to the Son of God. To every sincere seeker He reveals Himself, "It is He that talketh with thee."