

stead of becoming better as you grew older, have you not learned to do many other wicked things? and are not prayer and reading the Bible more wearisome to you than ever?

As the wild beasts would destroy a poor wandering sheep, so "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." He is a cruel enemy to your souls; he would rejoice in their everlasting destruction, and he has many ways of trying to destroy them. He is much stronger and more cunning than you, and you cannot defend yourselves from him. As you grow older, you will be more and more tempted to do wrong, and you will find that "the way of transgressors is hard." You will find that sin brings misery even in this world; and even if you wish to return to God, you will find it much more difficult than it would have been when you were young. Indeed, if you try to return by yourselves, without seeking the help of the Good Shepherd, it will be impossible. After wandering on this "waste howling wilderness," you will at last "stumble on the dark mountains," Jer. xiii. 16, and fall into that "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," Rev. xx. 15.

The reason why sinners are compared to a piece of silver which was lost, may perhaps be, that God considers the soul of every sinner to be of infinite value, Matt. xvi. 26: the soul of the youngest child will live after all the world has been burned up. Your bodies and souls, my youthful readers, belong to God. They are His property, for He made them; and they ought to be continually and entirely employed in serving and glorifying Him. But you have wandered from Him, you are lost. A piece of money that is lost, can be of no use to the person it belongs to; and so neither are you capable of being employed in the service of God, while you have no love to Him, and no wish to please Him. But your being lost, means something

more than this; it means, that unless you are brought back to God, you will be lost, that is, ruined and miserable for ever.

Now, Jesus Christ came "to save that which was lost;" to show lost sinners the way back to God. Observe, the man had ninety-nine sheep beside the one that wandered; the woman had nine pieces of silver beside the one which was lost. So God had multitudes of angels in heaven, who never offended Him; they serve and glorify Him continually. But so great were his love and pity to sinners who had wilfully wandered, and had no desire to return, that Jesus Christ left the praises and services of those holy beings, and came into this miserable world, on purpose to bring sinners back. Nay, he even paid a great price for them, nothing less than his own blood, that they might be his own. As the man and the woman, mentioned in the parable, searched diligently till they found what they had lost, so Jesus Christ is continually seeking your souls. He has given you the Bible to tell you of your danger. He gives you parents, and teachers, and ministers, to warn you what will be the end of your present wanderings, and to describe to you the happiness of those who return to God. Though you have forgotten or slighted many of their kind admonitions already, yet still they continue to instruct you again and again; and they do so, because they know that the Saviour commands them.

Christ is waiting to be gracious to you. He is able to deliver you from Satan; he can give you power to resist temptation. His Spirit will teach you to love God, and hate every thing that is displeasing to him, and because of what the Saviour suffered, God is ready to receive you. "He is not willing that any should perish;" he entreats you to return to him, and if you do, he will rejoice over you. The persons mentioned in the parables, called upon their friends and neigh-