

Our Young Folks.

THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.

Starting forth on life's rough way,
 Father, guide them;
 O! we know not what of harm
 May betide them:
 'Neath the shadow of Thy wing,
 Father, hide them;
 Waking, sleeping, Lord, we pray,
 Go beside them.

When in prayer they cry to Thee,
 Do Thou hear them;
 From the stains of sin and shame
 Do Thou clear them
 Mid the quicksands and the rocks,
 Do Thou steer them;
 In temptation, trial, grief,
 Be Thou near them.

Unto Thee we give them up,
 Lord, receive them.
 In the world we know must be
 Much to grieve them,—
 Many striving oft and strong
 To deceive them;
 Trustful in Thy hands of love
 We must leave them.

—William Cullen Bryant.

LEND A HAND.

A very small boy was crossing Lafayette Square, the most beautiful of Washington's parks, one Sunday morning.

He wore the blue uniform of the District messenger boys, and was lugging with both hands a basket containing some potted palms and roses, which, doubtless, were to decorate a rich dinner-table.

He was a pathetic figure, that little chap, and every one in the park was noticing him. It was such a warm morning for December, and the energy which he might have had, as there had been snow on the ground, became languor and listlessness. He, at last, set the big basket down and looked at it helplessly.

"Tired out, are you, my boy?" came a friendly voice from behind him, and the messenger glanced up at a distinguished looking man.

"Tired out?" the question was repeated.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you to go far?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I am going your way, I can help you a bit," and the gentleman picked up the basket and carried it for some distance, the little chap trudging at his side. As they walked along the small boy grew confidential, told who he was and where he lived, and finally, in a burst of good comradeship, asked his companion where he lived.

"Just across the street from where I met you," was the answer, as the gentleman slipped a coin in the boy's hand, "in that white house opposite Lafayette Park."

For it was the occupant of the White House, the President of the United States, who was carrying the flower-boy's basket.

MARY AND MUFF.

Mary's mamma was invited out to tea. But before she went she dressed little Mary all up neatly, curled her pretty hair and left her in the care of her older sister, Lizzie.

"Don't let her run out and get her feet wet," said mamma, "and don't leave her alone in the house."

"Very well, mamma," said Lizzie.

But after mamma had been gone an hour some of the school girls came to the fence and called "Oh, Lizzie! Lizzie, come out here!"

"You mustn't go," said Mary. "Mamma told you not to leave me alone."

"Well, I won't leave you, only for one minute, little goose!" answered naughty Lizzie. "I just want to see what they called me for."

So Lizzie ran out to the gate, and Mary stood at the window looking out at the group of girls.

Presently Lizzie came running back again. "Oh, Mary!" she said, "they are going over to Tot Scott's to hear her new music-box play! I won't be gone ten minutes! If you'll stay here, and not tell mamma, I'll give you my wax doll!"

"But mamma said not to go away, Lizzie."

"She wouldn't care for such a little ways! I won't stay a minute, dear!"

"Well, I—don't care if you go—only for what mamma said," replied the little girl.

But Lizzie ran off, and Mary was left alone, not only for one minute, but for almost an hour, and the house was so still the little girl grew very much afraid.

"Oh, I wish mamma would come!" she sighed, trying hard not to cry. "There's something under the sofa, too! Oh, it is only my dear old Muffy! Come here, darling old kitty, and keep me company! I am so glad you are here! Now I shall not be so frightened! You'll take care of me, won't you, Muffy darling?"

So when Mary laid down on the sofa, and shut her bright eyes to take a nap, Muff curled right up under the soft little bare arm and went to sleep too. And it so happened that

mamma, who was uneasy about her little girl because she was not well, came home first and found her there.

Just then Lizzie came in, and what do you think mamma had to say to her? Do you think she had been a good girl?

AN INGENUOUS BOY.

A little lad who had become interested in gathering money to send the Gospel to the heathen, hit upon this happy device. He rummaged in the garret and found an old-fashioned powder-horn, which he decided to make into a missionary box. His older brother said he might have the horn, but wondered what he was going to do with it. The large end of the horn had a wooden bottom, and Eddie scraped it smooth, and asked his brother if he would cut some letters on it. "Yes," said his brother, and Eddie gave him these words:—

Once I was the horn of an ox,
 Now I am a missionary box.

Eddie inked the letters, and then as he showed his box to his friends they were all so pleased with his ingenuity that they all put something into it, and he became a large contributor.

DON'T BE TOO POSITIVE.

Boys, don't be too certain. Remember that nothing is easier than to be mistaken; and if you permit yourself to be so very positive in your mistakes a great many times, everybody will lose confidence in what you say. Never make a positive statement unless you know it is as you say. If you have any doubts, or if there is room for any, remove the possibility by examination before speaking, or speak cautiously. Don't be too certain.

"John, where is the hammer?"

"It is in the corn-crib."

"No, it's not there; I have just been looking there."

"Well, I know it is; I saw it there not half an hour ago."

"If you saw it there, it must be there of course; but suppose you go and fetch it."

John goes to the corn-crib, and presently returns with a small axe in his hand.

"Oh, it was the axe I saw; the handle sticking out from a half-bushel measure; I thought it was the hammer."

You said positively that you did see the hammer, not that you thought you saw it. There is a great difference between the two answers. Do not permit yourself to make a positive statement, even about a small matter, unless you are quite sure; for, if you do, you will find the habit growing upon you, and by-and-by you will begin to make loose replies to questions of great importance. Don't be too certain.

A FRESH BEGINNING.

"Bessie!" called Mrs. Downing.

"Y-e-e-s 'um," was the sleepy reply.

"Bessie, get right up and dress yourself as quick as you can; you are such a slow child."

"Oh, dear me!" yawned Bessie, "I wish I could sleep once as long as I wanted to."

But she arose and began dressing slowly, as was her usual way. She could not find her shoe-buttoner very readily owing to a certain careless habit of hers, but as she looked around the room for it she was confronted by these words: "Every day is a fresh beginning." There they shone in letters of gold from the little white silk banner Aunt Madge had sent her a day or two ago. In some mysterious way they found their way directly to her heart.

"Oh, yes," she thought, "so it is. I forgot what Aunt Madge wrote in her letter. Even if I have not been real good as I intended to be since the new year came, I can begin again this morning. And I will."

She had forgotten to say her morning prayer—she remembered to offer it now in a brief but earnest way. As she arose from her knees, her mother called again: "Bessie, are you ever coming down?" There was impatience in the tone, and no wonder, for, as Mrs. Downing had remarked, Bessie was "such a slow child."

But now, with a strong purpose to make a fresh beginning with the help of her Father in heaven, the child replied sweetly:—

"I will be right down, mamma, in just one minute."

She kept her promise. She reached the sitting-room in time for prayers, and her bright "Good-morning" and cheery smile were like rays of sunshine. A look of surprise and gladness came into the faces of father and mother. Baby Ruth toddled up to her for a kiss, and she lifted the darling little one to her lap with a loving gentleness altogether new to her. The hours passed on. Looking about her to see how much she could do for the dear home folks, she found many opportunities for helpfulness. When the day was gone, Mrs. Downing's face was less weary than usual; Mr. Downing's less drawn.

"What a dear little daughter Bessie is, after all!" the latter remarked. "And such a joy and comfort!" added the former.

Up in her little blue-and-white room Bessie was kneeling in her white robe, praying:—

"Thank Thee, dear Jesus, for helping me to make a fresh beginning. It has made such a happy, happy day."

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

May 15
 1892

A SONG OF PRAISE.

{ Psm. ciii.
 1-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.—Psalm ciii. 2

INTRODUCTORY.

Notwithstanding the various conjectures of learned men, there is no substantial reason for doubting the accuracy of the inscription attributing the authorship of this beautiful Psalm to David. A possible conjecture is that it was written by him late in life. This would account for the fullness and fervency of gratitude expressed for the divine mercy in the varied experiences of his eventful life.

I. Praise for Personal Mercies.—The key note of this devout song of praise is "Bless the Lord, O my soul." There is a distinct confession of belief in the divine existence, and that all good comes direct from the hand of the infinitely wise and merciful God. The worshipper here as elsewhere in the Psalms gives expression to his profound conviction that all true worship must be essentially spiritual. This does not mean that outward service is to be neglected as of little significance, but to be real it must be the worship of the soul. This is further borne out by the words that follow: "and all that is within me, bless His holy name." All the faculties of the soul are to be engaged in the exercise of this blessed privilege and incumbent duty of praising God for His mercies. The name of God is to be praised. His name is that by which He makes himself known to us. It is a holy name, and should never be used but with marked reverence, as well as adoration. The psalmist begins with the reflection, "and forget not all His benefits." They are manifold and are constantly bestowed. We are in constant danger of this sin of ingratitude in forgetting the common daily blessings that God so richly bestows. If all within us is to be stirred up, memory of God's constant goodness must not be overlooked. Now David proceeds to enumerate some of those benefits. The first mentioned, as it is first in order, is forgiveness. Till sin is forgiven the other blessings cannot be rightly enjoyed. This blessing, these words would indicate, is continuous: He forgiveth. We need daily forgiveness as well as daily grace. The pardon which God bestows is full and free pardon. He "forgiveth all thine iniquities." Next it is said that God "healeth all thy diseases." Christ is the great physician. He healed the bodies and souls of men, during His earthly ministry, in proof that He came from God to do His work. The cure of disease is God's work still. He alone can bless the means used, the doctor's skill and the medicines prescribed. He cures the root disease of all—sin. "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." From how many dangers, seen and unseen, are we daily delivered. We are appalled when we hear of some terrible accident by which numerous lives are lost, but do we reflect how seldom these occur? There is a constant stream of travel over the world by land and sea, and how small is the percentage of those who meet with accidents. The soul that truly rests in God is crowned "with loving kindness and tender mercies." The soul is satisfied with good things. All that God gives is good, and its bestowment meets the soul's wants. All God's gifts are soul-satisfying. Strength is renewed by the blessings God imparts, and this renewed vigour fits an illustration in the moulting of the eagle, which makes it appear in its new feathers as if young again. These are blessings of which the psalmist can speak from personal experience, but God's righteous government contemplates the well-being of all. "The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed." God's law is against all oppression. It may be severe and long continued, but it ends in disaster to those who practise it. The children of Israel were long in bondage in Egypt, but deliverance came. The curse of slavery continued long, but the Christian nations of the world have emancipated its victims. Another reason for thankfulness is the fact that God has made a revelation of His will to men. "He made known His ways unto Moses." His dealings with the children of Israel were a manifestation of His righteous and merciful purposes.

II. Praise for Forgiveness.—This precious blessing was highly prized by the Psalmist. He had mentioned it already, but he goes back to it and amplifies it in the words that follow: "The Lord is full of compassion and gracious." This is the firm belief of all who have appreciatively received God's benefits, and have studied His ways as revealed. What a blessed thing to know that God is full of compassion and gracious! He is "slow to anger." Our rebellion and ingratitude, the number and magnitude of our sins justly deserve the divine displeasure, and God is angry with the wicked, but He "is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." In this there is every thing to attract, and nothing to repel. "He will not always chide." He never inflicts needless pain. He delights in mercy. Instead of receiving the just punishment of our sins He offers forgiveness to all, and freely bestows His mercy on all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. As a proof of His great, His boundless mercy the psalmist declares that the height of heaven above the earth may give us an idea of the magnitude of God's mercy. So also is the completeness of His forgiving love. As east and west are for ever removed, so does God remove our transgressions from us.

III. Praise for God's Fatherly Love and Care.—Just as a kind earthly father loves, protects, and instructs his child, and bears tenderly with its weaknesses, so the Heavenly Father "pitieth them that fear Him." God pities us because He knows us thoroughly. He "knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Life on earth is brief. Dust soon returns to dust. The figures used in Scripture to denote the brevity of human life are striking and expressive. It is like grass that is speedily consumed, or soon withers under the scorching heat; like a flower of the field which the hot desert wind withers. Its beauty fades and the place it occupied is left empty. In contrast with the evanescent life on earth God's mercy "is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him." God's righteousness descends to their children, generation after generation, that is to those that "keep His covenant, and to those that remember His precepts to do them." Then the psalmist asserts the eternity of God's righteous rule, which extends everywhere, and then calls on all the hosts of heaven, and all creation to join in the universal chorus of praise, and the Psalm ends as it began "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Praise is a delightful exercise in which all ought to join with fervent heart. The angelic worshippers cease not day nor night in their glowing ascriptions of praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne. All nature shows forth the praise of the Great Creator. Surely now we ought to call on our souls and all that is within us to "Bless His holy name."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Let us not forget to thank and praise the Lord daily for all the benefits we receive from His gracious hand.

Let us praise God for His forgiving mercy and compassionate love and care which He continually extends to us.

Let us not forget that these precious benefits are promised to them that fear Him, and "remember His precepts to do them."

While God condemns sin, He reveals Himself to us as ever ready to extend forgiveness to us. He is merciful and gracious, and "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."