

Our Young Folks.

A LITTLE WORD LOST.

I lost a very little word
Only the other day;
A very naughty little word
I had not meant to say.
If only it were really lost,
I should not mind a bit;
I think I should deserve a prize
For really losing it.

For if no one could ever find
Again that little word,
So that no more from any lips
Could it be ever heard,
I'm sure we all of us would say
That it was something fine
With such completeness to have lost
That naughty word of mine.

But then it wasn't really lost
When from my lips it flew;
My little brother picked it up,
And now he says it too.
Mamma said that the worst would be
I could not get it back;
But the worst of it now seems to me
I'm always on its track.

Mamma is sad; papa looks grieved;
Johnnie has said it twice;
Of course it is no use for me
To tell him it's not nice.
When you lose other things, they're lost;
But lose a naughty word,
An' I for every time 'twas heard before,
Now twenty times 'tis heard.

If it were only really lost I
Oh, then I should be glad
I let it fall so carelessly
The day that I got mad.
Love other things, you never seem
To come upon their track;
But love a naughty little word,
It's always coming back.

CROOKED PEOPLE.

The human form is made for erectness. This is one of the marks of nobility in man, in contrast with the downward bending and looking of other animals. Man is the only creature that bears this erect form. It is a part of the image of God upon him. An old writer says: "God gave to man a face directed upward, and bade him look at the heavens and raise his uplifted countenance toward the stars." The Greek word for "man" meant the upward-looking. The bending of the form and face downward toward the earth has always been the symbol of a soul turned unworthily toward lower things, forgetful of its true home.

There are a great many bent people in the world. Physical bending may be caused by accident or disease, and is no make of spiritual curvature. Many a deformed body is the home of a noble and holy soul. Disease may drag down the erect form until all its beauty is gone, and the inner life meanwhile may be as erect as an angel's.

But there are crooked souls—souls that are bent down. This may be the case even while the body is straight as an arrow. There are men and women whose forms are admired for their erectness, their graceful proportions, yet whose souls are debased, whose characters are sadly misshapen and deformed.

Sin always bends the soul. Many a young man comes out from a holy home in the beauty and strength of youth, wearing the unsullied robes of innocence, with eye clear and uplifted, with hopes that are exalted; but a few years later he appears a debased and ruined man, with soul bent sadly downward. The bending begins in the slight yielding to sin, but the tendency grows until the moral nature is permanently disfigured.

A stage driver had held the lines for many years, and when he grew old his hands were crooked into hooks, and his fingers were so stiffened that they could not be straightened out. There is a similar process that goes on in our souls when we continue to do the same things over and over. One who is trained from childhood to be gentle, kindly, to control the temper, will grow into the beauty of love. But on the other hand, if one gives way from childhood to all ugly tempers, all bitterness and anger, his life will shape itself into these dispositions.

SPIDERS.

Children are nearly always taught to kill spiders as something dangerous. When the truth is, we have very few, if any, poisonous ones. Spiders never make a direct attack on any one, as they are very shy and run as soon as an enemy appears. They are, too, the first insect to appear in the spring.

Our common house and out door spiders are worth studying. There is a small brown one who does not seem to weave a web, but just drops a single line down from some high place. Then there is a large one that has a very keen hearing, for it is almost impossible to get near enough to him to see him. He spins a web in a corner always by choice it seems, and it is as large as a corner-bracket, as closely and finely woven as a lady's tissue veil, of a delicate pearl colour. He sits back in the farthest corner and waits for flies. If he is very hungry he sucks the blood at once, then rolls

the body off the edge of his web; for he is a very clean housekeeper, and you seldom see the dead flies left in his house. If not hungry, he wraps the fly up tightly like a mummy in a cord he spins from his body, and lays him to one side till he has an appetite. We picked one of these flies out once and attempted to unloose him, but failed, for he was so tightly bound up we could not get him out without killing him.

There is another kind of spider that lives in the grass; he is called the ground spider. His nest is beautiful. At its opening a web is spread, and from the centre starts a perfect tunnel which leads to his retreat down deep in the grass. Sometimes it is three inches long and always perfectly round. He seizes his prey and runs down into this tunnel and eats him in retirement. Spiders do not really eat insects, they only suck the juices from their bodies and throw away the rest.

The most interesting of all our native spiders, though, is the one called the geometrical spider, from the beautiful web he stretches. There is another little spider, very small and delicate, that lives in fences. He builds his home in the cracks, and he, too, makes a tunnel, but it is very small compared to the large ground spiders. Then there is a tiny red spider whose habits I could never learn, as he comes and goes so mysteriously. I could not even find out if he had a home. But suppose he must have unless he is the tramp among spiders. For some reason—I don't know what—we children always call him "poison." Whether he is or not I cannot say. But he has walked on my hand without harming me.

There are many pretty stories told about spiders. One is that when Robert Bruce, the Scotch king, was hunted by his enemies, he crept into a cave, and a friendly spider wove a web across its mouth, and his enemies seeing it passed by, because they thought he could not have gone in without breaking the web. A poor prisoner in the Bastille, a gloomy French prison, had nothing to amuse him but a spider and a mouse, and when one is shut up alone even such humble friends are welcome.

You may be sure these little creatures are for some purpose or they would never have been created. After this when you are tempted to crush one's life out, think that its life may be just as much to it as yours to you, for even a spider enjoys living, and has its appointed task.

SETTING AN EXAMPLE.

Polly Jenkins came into my room the other day with a very tired look on her usually bright face. She threw herself into a corner of the sofa with the expression of a person who has very little strength left.

"Why, Polly, dear child, what is the matter?" I exclaimed. "Why are you so doleful on this beautiful day?"

"The truth is, Aunt Marjorie," said Polly, sitting very erect, and speaking as if she had the weight of the world on her little shoulders, "I am all worn out with having to set a good example from morning till night. If I frown or answer any one impatiently, mamma says, 'Polly, you are setting your sister a very bad example.' If I fail in a recitation, Miss Laura keeps me after school to say, 'It doesn't make so much difference, my dear, your having missed your lesson this time, but the example to the others is so unfortunate.' One day not long ago I was late at breakfast, and papa remarked: 'I'm sorry my eldest child forgets that her brothers copy her behaviour. Don't be late again, Polly. I depend on you to set a good example.' And so, Aunt Marjorie," Polly concluded, with a deep sigh, "I am simply worn out. I almost want to be bad, and to shock everybody."

"O, no, you do not, Polly," I said, laughing at her puckered forehead, mournful eyes, and pursed-up mouth, until her set features relaxed, and she laughed, too. "I see plainly where the trouble is in the case; you have fallen into the habit of troubling yourself too important."

"Why, no," she protested, eagerly. "It is not I; it's other people who do that, Aunt Marjorie. You are not a bit kind."

"But you don't quite understand me. The oldest daughter is really a personage in the house, and a personage of great importance. Her manner of speaking and acting influences the rest more than she can imagine; yet much of the pleasing effect is lost when she becomes conscious of herself, and stops to think that she is doing this or that thing with a view to its impression on the family. Perhaps I ought to find fault with the grown people, and not with you, dear. But now for my advice. If I were Polly Jenkins, I would stop trying to set an example; I would not think about that for an hour in the month. What I would do would be this: to try to remember that being is of more consequence than doing; that what we are is always of more importance than what we do. I should say to myself, 'Polly, your business is to be as nearly right as you can for your own sake, and not for that of anybody else in the home or in the school-room.' Depend upon it, dear, you would set a much better example when not planning to do so than when giving your whole mind to it."

Polly thought a little while, and being a very bright little woman, my meaning came to her. She sprang up, hugged me with both arms till she rumbled my hair and my ruching, and then ran away, saying:—

"You are a dear old comforter, Aunt Marjorie Precept."

EVERY testimonial regarding Hood's Sarsaparilla is an honest, unpurchased statement of what this medicine has actually done.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

July 17, 1892. THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Acts ii. 37-47.
GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.—Acts ii. 47.

INTRODUCTORY.

Jesus had ascended to heaven; the promise that the Holy Spirit would be bestowed had been fulfilled; and had been manifested by the presence in the upper room where the Apostles and first Christians were assembled, as a rushing mighty wind and tongues as of flame resting on each one. Then they were endued with power to speak in different languages, which made a profound impression on the multitudes who heard and recognized them. Some were incredulous and spoke mockingly of what they had seen and heard, imputing the strange sounds to the intemperance of those who spoke in foreign tongues. This gave occasion to Peter to preach the first sermon. He repudiated the charge of intoxication. It was the early morning and it was too soon to impute inebriety. He then bore personal testimony to the great facts of the Gospel, and made a personal appeal to his hearers. The effect of that Pentecostal sermon was marvellous.

I. Conviction of Sin.—The presentation of the truth concerning Christ's death and the immediate interest they all had in it came home with piercing effect to the hearts and consciences of many. They were overawed. They felt themselves guilty. The words of the apostle stung them to the quick. The force of conviction impelled them to cry out to "Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren what shall we do?" To this Peter at once answered, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." The first practical step in salvation is repentance of sin. Repentance means a change of mind. It implies that the soul has been awakened to a sense of sin and the consequent danger. There is the anxiety to escape the punishment that sin inevitably entails. True repentance means more than a strong desire to escape from the misery and apprehension that possesses the mind of the awakened sinner. There is the godly sorrow for sin which a view of its enormity brings to the soul. It is not an idle and a vain regret, but is accompanied with the firm resolve to have done with sin. The current of the life is changed. New purposes, new feelings and new desires replace those that formerly held sway over the life. Peter presented Christ as the Saviour from sin, and that repentance should be followed by public profession of faith in Him. He urged them to be baptized in His name. This means that every one who sincerely repents is prepared to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and their purpose to consecrate themselves henceforth to His service. The appeal was addressed to all who heard the words of the apostle. None were exempted. It came to every one of them. And so the Gospel message comes to us. The assurance was given that all who complied with Peter's exhortation would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. It does not necessarily imply that all believers in every age would be able to speak with tongues, but it does imply that all believers shall obtain the enlightening, directing, strengthening and comforting power of the Holy Spirit. Peter adds that the promise of the Holy Spirit is "unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call." The application of the promise is immediate and direct. To those who listened, to those in whom they were most deeply interested, "to your children," and to all generations to the end of time, even to all who hear and obey God's call. The apostle continued to exhort his hearers with many persuasive words. Testifying, bearing witness was the apostolic method of declaring the Gospel, urging them to save themselves from the guilt and the doom resting upon that generation, many of whom had either actively or passively consented to the crucifixion of Jesus. Repentance of sin, and acceptance of Christ as their Saviour would free them from the guilt of sin, and enable them to escape from the punishment that would overtake all the impenitent.

II. The Infant Church.—It is told that "they that gladly received His word were baptized." Their repentance was genuine, their faith sincere, and their acceptance of Christ was full and cordial, and they evidenced their faith in Him by being baptized in His name. So deep was the impression produced by the proclamation of the Gospel made effective by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit that about three thousand were added to the number of Christ's disciples. The adherence of these converts was consistent with their profession. They "steadfastly continued in the apostles' doctrine." They waited regularly and with eager desire on the teaching of the apostles. They longed for fuller instruction in the truth concerning Christ. They were also steadfast in Christian fellowship. The spirit and practice of brotherly love was developed in their midst. They continued steadfastly also in "the breaking of bread," which is the expression used in the early Church for the observance of the Lord's Supper. They thus showed that their communion was of the most exalted kind, and manifested their devotion to Him who was crucified and then raised to the highest glory. The fourth characteristic of the members of the Apostolic Church is that they continued steadfastly in prayers. They felt their nearness to unseen realities and were fervent and frequent in their supplications at the throne of the heavenly grace. In these respects they afford an excellent example, unimpaired by the lapse of time, to the young disciples of Christ in every age. They were steadfast in the very things that would be most conducive to their spiritual advancement, and helpful to the progress of the Gospel. They used the best means for their growth in knowledge, the realization of the Christian spirit, and the development of true Christian piety. A deep religious awe fell on the people, and they were moved by a spirit of reverence. The apostles exercised the miraculous gifts bestowed upon them, and they are here described as wonders and signs. The people wondered because of the manifestation of power, and these wonderful works were signs to them that God was working through the apostles. The Christians in Jerusalem were a united community. They were distinct from the others, "they were together, and had all things common." Professor Lindsay well says: "This verse and others which describe what has been called the communism of the Apostolic Church do not describe a communism established by law, but one based on love. Brotherly love so abounded that the wealthier brethren sold part of their property in order to give money to those that needed it. They felt that they themselves and all that they had belonged to God, to whom also belonged their poor brethren, and that they held what they possessed in trust for God and His saints." The distribution of relief was according to the necessities of the recipients. In the first days of the early Church the Christians were distinguished by the absence of strife and seeking after vain glory. There mode of life is described in verses forty-six and forty-seven of the lesson. The result of the preaching of the Gospel and the consistent lives of those that believed in it, was that the "Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The first result of the preaching of the Gospel is conviction of sin. Belief in Christ as a personal Saviour leads to the profession of faith in His name.

Sincere believers in Christ are anxious to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him.