

Our Young Folks.

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD.

They say that God lives very high,
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God; and why?

And if you dig down in the mines,
You never see Him in the gold;
Though from Him all that glory shines.

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across His face,
Like secrets kept, for love untold.

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills through all things made
Through sight and sound of every place.

As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lids her tender pressure,
Half-waking me at night, and said:
"Who kissed you in the dark, dear guesser?"

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

THERE IS NO PAST.

It was a favourite saying with Mother Henson, "There is no past." She was far along in years, with faculties undimmed by age, except that her eye had just lost somewhat of its lustre.

"Grandma," said Julia, her grand-daughter, a rosy girl of twelve, "what do you mean by saying so often, 'There is no past!'"

Grandma Henson paused a moment, and then replied: "When I was a little older than you are now I was overturned in a carriage and had my left arm sprained. In a few weeks it got well, and for forty-five years I forgot all about it. Then the lameness began to come back again, and whenever I take hold of any weight in a certain way the whole panorama—the day, the landscape, the carriage, those who were with me at the time of the accident, everything connected with it comes back to me and is as the present, and I say to myself: 'There is no past; it is all present.'"

"Do you see how your little sister Mary is learning to read? How she is teaching herself? Your Aunt Carrie did just that way. She would take her reader and sit down and read till she came to a strange word, and then spell it out loud and ask what it was. When Mary does just as my little Carrie did, those days all come back again, and I am in the midst of my little children, and I say to myself: 'There is no past; it is all present.'"

"When your father comes home from the office tired and worn, I see his father as he used to come home to me, and live over those happy days and forget for the time how long he has been gone from me. The past seems the present."

Julia grew more and more thoughtful as her grandmother went on, and at last she said: "You've had a great deal of trouble in your life, grandma; does that come back to you also?"

"Sometimes," replied Grandma Henson; "but I see how much good it has done me to have trouble, and so there is no sting in the remembrance of it. It hurts me most to see the consequences of the sins I have committed and the mistakes I have made, but even those I hope may have some good come out of them to me or somebody else. I have wasted many an hour in vain regret over mistakes and errors and sins, but I hope He that has promised to restore the years that the caterpillar hath eaten forgives and restores. He blots out our transgressions, and why should we remember them but only to forsake them? Yet their consequences remain with us through time and to all eternity. There is no past in one sense, it is all present."

Not long after this talk Mother Henson passed beyond the bounds of this life. Julia never forgot this conversation; and the enquiry kept rising to her lips as she engaged in her tasks or was tempted to do something of the propriety of which she was doubtful: "Do I wish to remember this when I am old? Can I carry the consequences of this act through all my life and beyond?"

A LITTLE FOX.

It was in Sunday school among a large number of little children, that I saw one of the "little foxes that spoil the vines," and I thought I should like very much to catch it. Just think of it, children, a sly, cunning little fox running loose right in your midst. I want you to help me capture it. I wonder if you have ever seen it? It often gets in among the large children, and even troubles the grown people, but I think if the small boys and girls will help to take care of it, we can keep it away when they get older.

I will tell you how it acted. It came with a nice-looking boy. Somehow the little fellow did not seem to know that he had any such little fox with him. He didn't think about it. And right here I want to tell you that if you help to catch it you must not look at any other boy or girl, but simply keep watch of yourself.

The boy who had this fox in the first place did not know anything about the lesson, and he did not act as if he wanted to learn. He turned this way and that way, and once or twice tried to put his hat on. The little fox he carried began to bother another boy who was near him, so that the teacher was troubled and the fruit of the lesson seemed to be all eaten up by the fox.

I wondered if there would be anything left to take home. There were a good many other things that it did, but if you watch you will find out all about it for yourselves. Perhaps if I tell you its name you can catch it right away and stop the harm it is doing.

It is thoughtlessness. A long name for a little fox, but you will all know what it means.

Do try and see if you cannot keep it from going with you to any place.

Think about things, and that will put away the little fox and keep it from spoiling the good fruit you may have in your lives.

HELPING THE MINISTER.

Wallace is seven years old. Ever since he was three he had been a Sabbath school boy. He loves Sabbath school, but till lately he has not liked going to Church.

It was so much pleasanter, he thought, to stay at home, as he was sometimes allowed, with mamma, who was an invalid, and listen to her stories from the Bible and *Our Little Ones*.

One day last spring a great change came into Wallace's life; his papa, a machinist, was suddenly killed.

When the next Sabbath came, Wallace asked: "Mayn't I come home after Sabbath school, and stay with you?"

But this lonely, heart-broken mamma had the courage to say: "No, my son. Remember, papa will not be there to-day; and when the minister looks from his pulpit and sees his empty seat it may trouble him. I think he will like to see you in papa's place."

So, that morning, at the close of Sabbath school, the little man went at once upstairs and took the seat his father had occupied from week to week, with rare exceptions, for years back.

After service he hurried home to tell his mother: "I guess I helped him a little; 'cause he came and spoke to me."

Since then, every Sabbath, Wallace feels that he has a place to fill in the Church.

When sometimes the usher brings strangers to that pew, the little boy by the door, standing up, makes his slender figure very small that they may pass in, but never gives up "papa's seat" to anyone.

Not only the pastor but many of us, while our hearts ache with pity, feel confident that such a boy with such a mother will some day take his good father's place in the Church and in the world.

NEATNESS IN GIRLS.

Neatness is a good thing for a girl, and if she does not learn it when she is young, she never will. It takes a great deal more neatness to make a girl look well than it does to make a boy look passable. Not because a boy, to start with, is better looking than a girl, but his clothes are of a different sort, not so many colours in them; and people don't expect a boy to look so pretty as a girl. A girl that is not neatly dressed is called a sloven, and no one likes to look at her. Her face may be pretty, and her eyes bright, but if there is a spot of dirt on her cheek, and her finger's ends are black with ink, and her shoes are not laced or buttoned-up, and her apron is dirty, and her collar is not buttoned, and her skirt is torn, she cannot be liked. Learn to be neat, and when you have learned it, it will almost take care of itself.

A BOY'S MANNER.

"His manner is worth a hundred thousand dollars to him!" That is what one of the chief men of the nation lately said about a boy. "It wouldn't be worth so much to one who meant to be a farmer, or one who had no opportunities, but to a young college student with ambition it is worth at least a hundred thousand."

The boy was a distant relative of the man, and had been brought up by careful parents in a far-off city. Among other things he had been taught to be friendly and to think of other persons before himself. The boy was on a visit in the town where the man lived. They met on the street, and the younger, recognizing the elder, promptly went to his side and spoke to him in his cordial, happy, yet respectful way. Of course the man was pleased, and knew that anybody would have been pleased. The sentence above was the outcome of it. A little later the boy came into the room just as the man was struggling into his overcoat. The boy hurried to him, pulled it up at the collar, and drew down the wrinkled coat beneath. He would have done it for any man, the haughtiest or the poorest.

The boy has not been in society a great deal. He has not learned orthodox selfishness. He positively can't be easy at the table until his neighbours are waited on; a chair is torture if he thinks any one else is less comfortably seated. He wouldn't interrupt to let loose the wittiest or the most timely remark ever thought of. He may learn to do so some day—after he has earned his hundred thousand—but it is doubtful. The expression of his kindness may become conformed to popular usage, modified, refined, but the spirit which prompts the expression will only grow with his years.

Do not misunderstand, boys. You may be truly unselfish and yet not have this boy's prize. You may wish to do things for others and yet feel that you do not know how. The only way to learn is to try; to hesitate for no feeling of bashfulness or awkwardness, but to put into direct and instantaneous practice whatever kind, helpful thoughts occur to you.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Oct. 11,
1891.

CHRIST FORETELLING HIS DEATH.

John xii.
20-36.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.—John xii. 32.

INTRODUCTORY.

After the raising of Lazarus, Jesus with His disciples withdrew a distance from the city, continuing His work of preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and working miracles of healing. He returned to Jerusalem a few days before the Passover and taught the people in the Temple court. To-day's lesson deals with one of His last appearances there before He was betrayed into the hands of His enemies.

I. **The Gentiles Coming to Christ.**—Greece was the great colonizing power of the ancient world. Many of the Greeks had gone eastward and some of them had been favourably impressed by the Jewish faith and were in the habit of going to Jerusalem during the observance of the appointed festivals. At this time several of them had heard of Jesus, and being moved with interest and curiosity they were desirous of seeing Him. They approached Philip, a native of Bethsaida, himself probably of Greek extraction as might be inferred from his name, which was Greek not Jewish. They stated to him their wish to see Jesus. Philip tells Andrew of their purpose and the two disciples inform the Master. The coming of these Greeks was an event of great significance. They may be viewed as representatives of the Gentile world in their need of Christ's saving grace. It is a testimony to Christ's attractive power, an evidence that the kingdom of God was to be of wide and all-embracing dimensions, that the preparatory period of the Jewish dispensation was nearing its end. It was moreover an illustration of Christ's willingness to receive all of whatever nation who sincerely seek Him.

II. **Christ's Reception of the Enquiring Greeks.**—To the Greeks, the disciples and all within hearing, Jesus said: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." Popular expectations of Christ's assumption of worldly power may have been excited by recent events, as for instance, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Many may have supposed that the time had come. So it had, but in a sense far different from their expectations. He was to be exalted to royal dignity, but not on the thrones of this world. He was soon to be enthroned on the right hand of the Father in glory and in the hearts of all His people on the earth, but His was no earthly sovereignty, neither would His followers be invested with courtly rank and splendour. Through the gateway of suffering and death would He enter into His glory. He states with emphasis the general principle that only from death can the greatest results come. From His own death comes the life of all believers. Nature affords a fine illustration of the truth He stated: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." The seed grain has the elements of life and fertility within itself, but it remains unproductive until it is planted in the soil. The original grain perishes but there springs from it some thirty, some sixty and some an hundred-fold. Jesus then makes an application of the general principle. He has just stated. It is expressed in the form of a paradox. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." This present life with all its joys and attractions is only temporary. It is not the highest form of life designed for mankind. Whoever makes it the chief purpose to live for the present makes a shipwreck of life. Its highest blessedness here is lost, and the still greater blessedness of the life beyond is missed. Those who consecrate life to the highest purpose, who may have to make sacrifices for Christ's sake by faith lay hold of Him, enter on eternal life and eternal blessedness. If Jew or Greek or any other nationality whatever desires to see Jesus and to serve Him they must follow Christ, in humiliation and self-sacrifice. Then he shall enjoy fellowship with Christ, and receive the honour that comes from God only.

III. **Christ the Enduring Centre of Attraction.**—The cross with its sufferings is casting its dark shadows over the soul of Jesus. "Now," He says, "is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." Jesus, being possessed of a true body and a reasonable soul, naturally shrank from those sufferings He so clearly foresaw. His will and purpose were entirely subordinate to the will and purpose of the Father, therefore He prays, "Father, glorify Thy name." He was ready to glorify the Father by His death, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the divine law and manifesting the love of God for perishing mankind. In answer to His prayer a voice came from the excellent glory, a voice heard by those present, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." At His baptism, the transfiguration, and now on the eve of His sufferings, the voice from heaven attests His mission and expresses God's approval of His work. The people heard the voice, but they did not understand its meaning. Some thought it was only a noise resembling the sound of thunder, while others imagined that it was an angelic voice speaking to Him. It was for the people's sake, not for Jesus' sake, that the voice was heard. Now the hour of the world's judgment had come. Christ's death was the victory over Satan. His kingdom so potent for evil then received its death-blow, and the final victory assured. Then comes the golden text, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." He explained that this had reference to His death on the Cross. Christ crucified is the most attractive power. Even His enemies feel irresistibly drawn towards Him. Little children as well as learned sages feel the attraction of the crucified One. From the Old Testament Scriptures the people had been led to expect the coming of the Messiah, but they did not appear to be able to reconcile the facts of Christ's life, and especially the death He foretold with their limited and imperfect understanding of the Scriptures, therefore they ask with a tone of suspicion, "Who is this Son of Man?" They had gathered the impression that the Messiah's reign was to be perpetual, but they imagined that it would be an unbroken temporal reign, the same as any of the other worldly kingdoms, differing only in the perpetuity of His rule. The idea of dying and conquering in death had never entered their minds. When He plainly refers to His approaching departure, they exclaim, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest Thou, the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus answers by counselling them to walk in the light while they had the light, to believe in the light, so that they might become the children of the light. So does He counsel us still, while the day of opportunity lasts.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

We have heard much of the wondrous character and the wonderful work of Jesus that we ought to desire to see Him by faith alone.

The disciples guided the Greeks to Jesus, so the disciples now should be prepared to guide enquiring souls to Him.

The most blessed life on earth is that which is consecrated to the self-denying service of Christ and it leads to fullest sympathy and communion with Him.

Christ crucified is the centre of attraction to all people, of every kindred, tongue, or nation. He is the only hope of the world.