

Other mothers were looking on, with their children, rosy in health, joyful in the fulness of life, but they pressed up to his feet—

"O that thou wouldest lay thy hands on *our* children, and leave the virtue of thy touch upon them."

Then the disciples said, "Trouble not the master needlessly." But Jesus rebuked them, and bade the little children come to him, and he took them up in his arms and blessed them.

"O happy children!" thought Esther, "to rest in his arms and lean on his bosom!" And she, too, pressed forward and knelt before him with her head bowed almost to his feet. The prayer was in her heart, "O that my sins might be forgiven!" but the words died from her lips without sound.

She felt the gentle touch of his dear hand upon her head—she heard him say:

"Damsel, be it unto thee even as thou wilt!" She believed his words. She had seen his power and his goodness. She knew that he was able—she felt that he was willing to forgive her sins. She believed his words. And ever after, among the household or in the night-watches, alone in the garden, or with the maidens by the fountain, she was as though she had drunk of the water of life, and felt it for ever springing up within her. She had obtained forgiveness of sin; and now should she not most carefully guard her lips, and keep her hands and feet, and watch her life, doing whatever her hands found to do with smooth unruffled brow, in cheerfulness and content, as the birds work and the lilies grow?

If she was surprised into ill-humor or impatience, she was grieved, and instantly prayed, "Hide thy face from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit."

And she believed that Jehovah, who manifested himself between the cherubim, heard her, and answered her.

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked die?" saith the Lord God, "and not that *he should return from his way and live?* I will forgive thine iniquity and thy sin I will remember no more."

As it was in the days when our Lord dwelt among men, wearing flesh, so it is now. In him is life, and the life is the light of men. We have only to ask him in ever so low a whisper; we have only to cast ourselves mentally at his feet, without words, and we may believe that he receives us.

You go to him—some of you, my young friends, who read this little