

YOUTHS COMPANION.

For the Colonial Churchman.

FALSEHOOD AND DECEIT.

"Let each whose tongue to lies is turned,
Who lessons of Deceit has learned,
God's hate and heaviest vengeance dread."

Miche's 5th Psalm.

As little James was reading his evening chapter, he stopped at the 29th verse of the 27th chap. of Genesis—'And he said, art thou my very son Esau? And Jacob said, I am.' 'Mother,' he said to the attentive parent who was listening to him, 'when I was reading to you the 27th verse of 25th chapter, you told me that Jacob's being a plain man, meant that he was honest and true—now, in this verse is he not deceiving his dying father?'

'My dear child—in these verses we find Jacob uttering three falsehoods! I am Esau—when he was his younger brother: I have done as thou bade me—when his mother and not Isaac had instructed him: it is my venison—whereas he had taken it (verse 9) from his father's flock, and not from among the wild animals. It may be said of sins in general, but especially of that detestable sin—Lying—that the end of one is but the beginning of another.' 'Mother,' said the young enquirer, 'I am sorry that Jacob was not this time plain and honest: I will not tell lies or deceive.' 'That would, my dear James, have been a good promise, and a blessed vow, if you had meekly add—the God of truth being my helper.' But James did not respect these words, nor ask God to bless his promise; but feeling strong in his own unaided resolution, he but claimed from his mother the usual task, and hurried to his own little chamber.

Some weeks after this, during the holidays, James obtained permission to amuse himself abroad. He had frequently been forbidden to go in a boat, but that morning a playmate prevailed upon him to row about the harbour. On his return home, his guilty looks and wet clothes, told his secret. 'Well James,' asked his affectionate mother, 'how have you spent this morning?' 'I have been,' he stammered out, 'reading to poor old Henry, and helping my cousins in their garden.'

Now this was true as far as it went, but still he carefully concealed—the whole truth. 'Did you recollect, dear, my commands as to the boats?' was the next question. 'You won't let me go in one,' mildly answered the boy; and at last he led himself on to say, that he had not been boating. His mother, however, was soon grieved by finding out his guilt.

When the time came for the evening chapter, who could have thought that the unhappy looking boy slowly turning over the leaves of his Bible, was the innocent, pleasing reader, of the evening first noticed? His mother bid him turn to the sad but instructive story of Jacob's falsehoods, and to that solemn passage, 21st Revelations, 8 verse—'All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

'Now,' (thus ran the mild reproof) 'when you last read to me, the instructive passage as to Jacob, you resolved, James, never to lie. Had you made that resolution humbly, praying to your heavenly Father, for His blessing on it, that blessing would not have been denied. You disobeyed an order given for your own good, and to cover that fault, when your conscience spoke out against it, you added lying, hypocrisy and ingratitude.—Good night! I have done my duty to you,—pray God that you may have grace to perform yours.'

In his prayers that night, James sought pardon from God and help for the future, and he so laid to heart his sin and that mild rebuke, that now he is a man, confidence is placed in him, and he is well known as the lover of Truth.

Youthful Reader! may you also profit by James's fall, and imitate his repentance. Shun the first approach towards lying or deceit; for be assured it is Satan, the great deceiver, that is whispering poison in your ear. God loves those who are true of heart, Satan detests them—Parents and Instructors of youth, excuse a word in season to you all. Remember that deceit is taught more powerfully and effectually by example, than it is prevented by precept. Check in your children, its first advances. The mightiest rivers spring from the humblest brooks; the late great fire at New

York arose from the igniting of but a little escaped Gas. Who can recollect his first deceitful act; yet that was the fruitful parent of all which may have polluted his future life. 'He who is rash in his talk shall be hated,' Eccles. ix. 18. 'Blessed is the man who hath not slipped with his mouth,' Eccles. xiv. 1.

The passages in the Scriptures which denounce and condemn the sins of Lying and Deceit, are so numerous, and so striking, that they must be deferred.

February, 1836.

SIGMA.

From the Christian Library.

BISHOP WILSON.

In proceeding to repeat the few particulars which have been transmitted to us, relative to the even tenor of Bishop Wilson's daily life, we cannot but express our regret that the simple manners and devotional habits witnessed in his household are so seldom seen in our own days. Before the family entered upon the various occupations of the day, that is at six o'clock every summer morning, and at seven in the winter, the whole household, including the workmen and domestic servants, assembled in the chapel, and prayer was offered up by himself, or by one of the students who were residing with him preparatory to holy orders. In the evening they met again for supplication and thanksgiving.

The Bishop was deeply impressed with the necessity and usefulness of family worship. 'Have you set up an altar in your house?' was a question which he was wont to put to those who were just beginning to keep house. And publicly he took opportunities of recommending family religion as a wholesome preservative against degeneracy and profligacy; asking, 'How should we expect that all sorts of vices should not abound in families where God is not owned nor his grace asked for?' And he declared his belief, that if those who could not read would but assemble their children and servants and offer up the Lord's Prayer, 'it would plant the fear of God in their hearts; and they would be afraid of doing many things which they commit without any concern.'

The day then passed in works of piety and usefulness, till the hour of dinner arrived, at which time he was as remarkable for exercising hospitality toward his clergy and others, as he was at all times for his liberality toward indigent persons. His table was abundantly but plainly furnished; it might be described in the very words of George Herbert:—'His fare is plain and common, but wholesome: what he hath is little, but very good; it consisteth most of mutton, beef, and veal, if he adds any thing for a great day, or a stranger, his garden or orchard supplies it, or his barn and farm-yard: he goes no further for any entertainment, lest he go into the world, esteeming it absurd that he should exceed, who teacheth others temperance. But those which his home produceth he refuseth not, as coming cheap and easy, and arising from the improvement of things which otherwise would be lost. Wherein he admires and imitates the wonderful providence and thrift of the great Householder of the world.' These were precisely the sentiments of Bishop Wilson, and it is very likely that he was led to these views by this very passage, in a book which he admired and valued. He himself describes hospitality as not consisting 'in making great entertainments, but in providing a sober and suitable refreshment for such as are in want, and for such as come to visit us.'

Many persons of note, whom his fame had reached desired to enjoy his conversation, among whom Dr. Pococke, after his return from his travels, went to see the aged Bishop of Man in the year 1750, and sent him his works richly bound, to announce his arrival. The Bishop received him with a graceful welcome, but told him that 'he ought not to approach the poor Bishop of Man with a present, as if he were an eastern prince.'

His temper was composed and calm, and he was never excited to violent or unguarded language. In conversation he was remarkably cheerful and entertaining. He lived in a perpetual sunshine of Happy spirits. He found, as Herbert says, 'that pleasantness of disposition is a key to do good; not only because all men shun the company of perpetual severity, but also for that when they are in company, instructions seasoned with pleasantness both enter sooner and root deeper.'—Country Parson.

Mr. Moore, one of the clergymen of the island, who knew him well, describes him as being 'of admirable simplicity of manners; of a most engaging behaviour, affability, and sweetness of temper. In his private conversation he was agreeable and entertaining; lively and facetious without levity; and always consistent with the dignity of his character; never at a loss for something pertinent and proper to embellish and illustrate his discourse; on these occasions nothing ever proceeded from his mouth but what was good to the use of edifying, and ministered not only grace but pleasure and delight to the hearers.' Mr. Corlet, another of his clergy, writes,* that he recognises in the devotional works of Bishop Wilson, the frequent remarks of his daily conversation. 'Often and often again, did I recollect, as I read, that I had heard from his own lips the very sentiments then before me, and the heavenly smile wherewith he delivered them. But perhaps I tire you; better judge than I have said, and will yet say, more to the purpose, but not one, unless yourself, from a warmer heart, recollecting the blessed man as I saw and heard him?'

As the Bishop was zealous in promoting the religious education of the poor, so he was strongly impressed with the idea that the most important encroachments might be made upon the kingdom of darkness by the constant practice of catechising young persons; and he established it as the general usage in the churches, after the afternoon service, instead of a sermon. He says, that he considers it 'of more use to the souls both of the learned and ignorant, than the very best sermon from the pulpit; and once being applied to for permission to substitute a sermon he on these grounds refused to grant it. In a charge delivered in his eighty-fifth year, he states his opinion, that 'This is a truth not to be questioned, that the plainest sermon from the pulpit will not be understood by nor profit any who has not been well instructed in the principles of Christianity contained in the Church Catechism. So that our preaching is in vain to all such—which, I fear, is often the case of a great part of our hearers.'

The most unlearned know by nature the things contained in the law as soon as they hear it read: but these are the things which they want to be particularly and often made sensible of; namely, the extreme danger a sinner is in while he is under the displeasure of a holy and a just God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell:—how a sinner, made sensible and awakened with the danger he is in, may be restored to God's favour;—of the blessing and comfort of a Redeemer;—what that blessed Redeemer has done and suffered to restore us to the favour of God;—what means of grace he has appointed as absolutely necessary to preserve us in the favour of God and in the way of salvation.

Christians too often want to be set right, and very particularly to be instructed in the nature of repentance, of that repentance to which God has promised mercy and pardon, and of faith which is saving, and accompanied with good works and a holy and Christian life.

These are foundation principles, and such as every pastor of souls is obliged to explain, as he hopes ever to do good by his labors and sermons.

We say to explain, not only in set discourses from the pulpit, but in a plain familiar manner from the desk, where questions may be asked and things explained, so as both old and young may be edified.

Preaching will always be our duty, but of little use to those who understand not the meaning of the words we make use of in our sermons, as God knows too many must be supposed not to do, for want of their being instructed in their younger years.'

The public ministrations of the day being over—prayer, preaching, catechising—how shall we describe the good Bishop's departure from among the village congregation better than in the words of Goldsmith—

The service past, around the pious man
With steady zeal the honest rustics ran;
Ev'n children follow'd with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile.

His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distress'd;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven!

Deserted Village

* Letter to the Rev. P. Moore, dated April 18, 1791, twenty-six years after the Bishop's death.