



OFFERING FIRSTFRUITS.

Be Careful.

BY FLORA M'ELWELL.

Be careful what you sow, boys !
For seed will surely grow, boys !
The dew will fall,
The rain will splash,
The clouds will darken,
And the sunshine flash,
And the boy who sows good seed to-day
Shall reap the crop to-morrow.

Be careful what you sow, girls !
For every seed will grow, girls !
Though it may fall
Where you cannot know,
Yet in summer and in shade
It will surely grow ;
And the girl who sows good seed to-day
Shall reap the crop to-morrow.

Be careful what you sow, boys !
For the weed will surely grow, boys !
If you plant bad seed
By the wayside high,
You must reap the harvest,
By and by,
And the boy who sows wild oats to-day
Must reap wild oats to-morrow.

Then let us sow good seeds now !
And not the briars and weeds now !
That when the harvest
For us shall come,
We may have good sheaves
To carry home,
For the seed we sow in our lives to-day
Shall grow and bear fruit to-morrow.
—Selected.

Offering Firstfruits.

THE ceremony represented in the picture is thus described in Leviticus, 23. 10, 11, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them. When ye be come unto the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest : And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted of you : on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." So should we bring the firstfruits of all our increase and industry to offer it to God, especially, the best and earliest years of our lives, not the mere fag-end of an existence the whole of which is due to him.

New Testament Religion.

THE Rev. Sam Jones was speaking of growing in grace, and of a religion that made men kind, and concluded by saying : "That is what we want—love toward God and love toward man. It is said that the larks of Scotland are the sweetest singing birds on earth. No piece of mechanism that man has ever made has the soft, sweet, glorious music in it that the lark's throat has. When the farmers of Scotland walk out early in the morning, they flush the larks from the grass, and as they rise they sing, and as they sing they circle, and higher and higher they go, circling as they sing, until at last the notes of their voices die out in the sweetest strains that earth ever listened to. Let us begin to circle up and sing as we circle, and go higher and higher, until we flood the throne of God itself, and the strains of our voices melt in sweetest sympathy with the music of the skies."

Training.

THE foundation of all training is the desire for self-improvement, and the results depend wholly on the material we have to work upon. The person who is anxious to become a good nurse is not satisfied with waiting and tending, and giving doses, but studies the patient, and endeavours to make everything contribute to his comfort and speedy recovery.

Good nursing is often more beneficial than medicine ; and as sickness is likely to visit every household, all the members of it should early train themselves to quiet movements, to thoughtful ways, and considerate kindnesses, so that these will come naturally "when pain and anguish rend the brow."

The child or grown person accustomed to noisy stampings and demonstrations cannot easily control these habits, and the efforts to do so is painfully

apparent to the nervous invalid, who prefers rather to be alone than in such company.

Loving service may be made doubly valuable by the manner in which it is performed. The eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, the voice—all need training ; and while we are fitting ourselves to take care of the sick we are also attaining a higher degree of culture, and establishing traits of character that make us more attractive and companionable.

There is a place for everyone to fill ; there is work for everyone to do ; and those who have undergone the discipline of self-training understand the full meaning of the poet Milton, when he said,

"They also serve, who only stand and wait."

And those eager to serve seldom have to wait long.

Using the Bible.

WE all say that the Bible is the Word of God, but do all of us consider what a blessed thing it is to have the real Word of God in our own hands, printed in our own language ? We have been so familiar with the Book from early childhood that we are in danger of forgetting what a priceless possession it is. We need to think many times of its origin and of what it is, that we may learn to prize it as we ought, and get from it the blessings that it brings to us.

The Bible is meant to be used. It is not a charm, as some superstitious people suppose a crucifix or a horse-shoe to be. Merely having a Bible in the house, or owning a personal copy, or even carrying one in the pocket, will not do us any good. Sometimes, when a battle was beginning, soldiers have been known to fling away a pack of cards, and put a Bible or New Testament into their pocket instead. They felt that they would be safer in battle with God's Book on their person than with a pack of cards.

But such superstitious use of the Bible, if that is all we do with it, brings no blessing. A bullet will be just as likely to strike a soldier with a Testament in his pocket as one with cards. Let us get clear of all superstition, even about the Bible. We may have copies of it in every room in our house, and on every shelf and table ; we may carry one in every pocket, and may always have one under our pillow ; but if this is all we do with the Book, we might as well not have it at all.

The Bible blesses us only when we use it. We must open it, and read its pages for ourselves. We must read it, too, as God's word. A heathen convert said : "I kneel down to pray, and I talk to God ; I open and read the Bible, and God talks to me." Mere reading of the Bible will not do us any good. We must read it, listening to God in its words. It is his voice that we hear in the sentences. We must read it, therefore, reverently, lovingly, humbly, as little children, wishing to know what our Father in heaven has to say to us. We must read it, also, ready to accept whatever it says, and to do whatever it commands.

The Bible is meant to rule our life ; it is of no use to us unless we try earnestly and sincerely to live out its lessons. When it tells us that anything is right, we ought instantly to do that thing, or try to get that divine quality into our character. When we read the beatitudes of Jesus, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers," we ought to strive to get all these beautiful attributes into our lives. We ought to seek to be humble, to be meek, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, to be a peacemaker. So of all the Bible : we really learn just so much of it as we honestly try to live.

We ought, therefore, to make daily use of our Bible. Every young person ought to have one of his own. The book can be gotten now for a very little, although it is better not to buy a cheap Bible with poor print and frail binding, but to get a good copy that will last nearly a lifetime. We ought not to grudge paying a good price for a strong and beautiful Bible. But, of whatsoever sort it be, let every young person have his own Bible. Then let him study it every day, poring over its pages, deeply and prayerfully pondering its sacred words. Then let him live it. Every beautiful thing he finds in its pages let him get straightway out of the Book and into his life ; every duty the Bible teaches, let him begin instantly to do ; every quality of moral beauty it commends, let him try to work into his own character ; every comfort it gives, let him accept and receive as a lamp to shine in darkness.

Another time we shall say something to the young people about how to get blessings from the Bible.—*Forward.*