

The Home Mission Journal.

A record of Missionary, Sunday School and Temperance work, with a reporter of church and ministerial activities, and general religious literature. Published semi-monthly.

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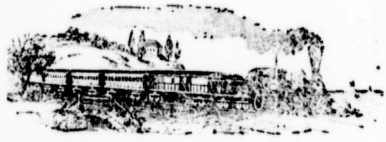
THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL,

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All money letters should be addressed to

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Ra trading with Christ.

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CHAPTER IV.

TO the disconsolate widow Mary Benton and her fatherless boy the future looked very dark. John Benton had left his wife almost nothing to live upon, since all his savings the last year or two of his life had gone in payment of the remnants of indebtedness upon the home in which they lived.

Wearily and with a heavy heart Mary Benton looked around for a little work. But few, however, seemed to care very much for an engineer's widow; and the difficulties of her situation were many. At first she was dazed and bewildered by her sudden grief; but the poor have little time to spend in idle sentiment or morbid brooding over their troubles—the calls of life and the problems of existence are too stern and sharp for that. So Mary Benton speedily dried her tears, and took up bravely the struggle of a lonely life, denied now as she was the wise counsels and tender protection of a devoted husband.

But in her little son Joe, Mary Benton had a constant and genuine source of comfort. Joe was the soul of manliness, and so like his father! His determined, resolute way of speaking and acting vividly recalled that of the brave engineer who had died at his post. And Joe was so thoughtful, so practical, so quick to see the thing that was to be done, and to do it! He kept the fires in the house all burning brightly; brought in all the water needed for the kitchen; chopped the wood; ran errands to the grocery; sifted over the ashes; tidied up the backyard; and before going to bed at night saw that all the windows were fastened, and the doors securely locked and bolted.

But yet the struggle for Mary Benton, even with Joe's help, was a hard and a weary one. She had been one day making a long and unsuccessful search for work, and returning discouraged and forlorn to her lonely home, sank wearily into a chair, and pressing her hands against her face sat there dejectedly in the gathering dusk. Losing consciousness for a while the poor woman began dreaming of the years of happy married life she had enjoyed with honest, affectionate John Benton after he had begun to lead a Christian life. Suddenly she was aroused by a light touch upon her arm, and saw beside her manful little Joe.

"See, mother, here is something to help you!" said Joe, holding up a bright, new dime in his hands: "I earned it myself today, carrying a

valise for a gentleman!"

The mother clasped her boy to her heart, while the hot tears fell upon his upturned cheek. "Dear, dear Joe!" she murmured, "You are trying to take your father's place a bit, aren't you? You are a great comfort to me. Try to be as noble a man as your father was and you will be an honor to his memory!"

Then Joe went on to tell his mother how he had earned the dime. It seemed that a portly gentleman had been hurrying to catch a train, and upon Joe's offering to carry his valise, had accepted his aid; and pleased with the boy's bright and alert appearance had given him a few words of kindly commendation, in addition to the dime he had so well earned.

"Do you know the gentleman's name, Joe?" asked his mother.

"No, mother dear," answered Joe; "but heard someone say that he is a wealthy merchant, and lives somewhere here in the city."

"Did he say anything to you, Joe?"

"Yes, mother! He asked me my name, and inquired whether I went to school week days, and to Sunday school, too?"

"And what did you tell him?"

"I said that I hadn't all the chances to study that I would like to have, since I had to help my mother a good deal; but that I read at odd times all the good books I could get hold of. Then he said, 'keep a stiff upper lip,' and told me not to let myself become discouraged. He told me, too, that he himself had once been a poor boy, but by hard work and constant saving, as well as by trying to deal honestly in trade, he had come now to have a large business."

Neither Joe nor his mother thought anything more of the incident until a few weeks later, when one Sunday the different classes of the Sunday school they attended were called to gether to listen to remarks from a friend of the Superintendent.

"Boys and girls!" said the Superintendent, introducing the visitor, "Some of you are rich and others are poor; and some of you who are rich today may be poor tomorrow, or if poor now may some day gain large wealth. I have thought that it would do you all good to listen for a few minutes to a gentleman whose large store in this city many of you have seen. He will give you some useful hints, drawn from his own experience, as to how real success in life is to be obtained."

Then a portly man mounted the platform, whom Joe instantly recognized as the gentleman whose bag he had carried a short time before. The visitor went on to tell the school how he had started in life as a poor boy, but by dint of steady application and the intelligent use of the opportunities afforded him, he had gradually worked his way up to the ownership of the great store in which once he had served as a cash-boy. His success, under God, he ascribed to the fact that he had tried at every juncture of his career to a what was the right, and not just the paying, thing to do—and while he had tried never to act from motives of mere policy, yet he had proved that honesty was the best policy.

"I have made many mistakes in my life," added the speaker; "but God has helped me all along. Whatever success in life I have attained, is because of God's good grace; and if I am proud of anything today it is of the fact that I am a Christian. And if I were now to give you a motto, it would be in the words of Scripture: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

The members of the school paid close attention while the merchant was speaking; and on the way home Joe and his mother talked together of the subjects the successful business man had so forcibly presented.

"I wonder, mother, whether it is really true what the gentleman said about its *paying* to do right?"

"I haven't a doubt of it, Joe; but to do right just for pay would be a very poor motive for action!"

"Do you think, mother, that a boy who was starting out in life could trust that Bible verse about 'seeking first the kingdom of God' and then good things would be added unto him?"

"Certainly, I do, although the good things may

not be just the ones you feel that you want most—yet they will be blessings all the same! Be sure, my boy, that God puts a difference between him that serveth Him, and him that serveth Him not; and that godliness is profitable for two worlds, and not only for the next, as some people wrongly think."

"Well, mother, I do believe that verse, and will act on it all my life!" cried Joe, earnestly, looking up, with a bright, sunny smile, into his mother's face.

Mary Benton thought that she saw there John Benton's smile and look. And then she bestowed upon Joe a commendation than which none could have been more prized by him:

"Joe, you are your father's boy!"

(To be continued.)

We have been very much interested in the discussion that has been going on by some of our brethren in the Messenger and Visitor of late, upon the Fatherhood of God, or rather, who has a right to claim Him as Father. While there seems to be some divergence of opinion among the disputants, there is also some agreement. For each of them seem to have the idea that all mankind are children of God by creation. To this view we have no objection if it is not carried too far. The genealogy from Christ is traced back to Adam, "which was the Son of God." The reference here surely must be to his creation by the divine Father, and so far as that relation existed in or belonged to Adam it must belong to all his posterity. For fatherhood of ancestry is recognized in the Scriptures frequently; for instance the Messiah is called the son of David, because his humanity was of the lineage of David and many others are called sons of their ancestors. An offspring is the child of a parent. The Apostle Paul says we are the offspring of God, Acts 17: 29. Therefore we are his children by creation. But sin has elevated us from the life of God; and we are now in our created condition, strangers and foreigners; without God and without hope in the world, and I do not believe that our Lord used the term Father as embracing all mankind. His use of that term mostly had reference to himself as being the Son of God; and when he included any others it only included those who were believers in and followers of himself. The pattern language of approach to God, as given in what is called The Lord's Prayer was not given to all men irrespective of their character, for before he put this prayer into the lips of his disciples he took them away from the multitudes, and addressed them by themselves and drew a distinction between them and the hypocrites, and the heathen, and called God their Father, and told them to address Him as such. See Mat. 6: 8, and what he gave to them as a privilege claim in address rightfully belongs to all his followers, because they have the spirit of adoption whereby they cry Abba, Father. But the unsaved sinner has not that spirit, and has not that right in calling upon God. But says the objector to this view, then a sinner has no right to pray at all, because he has not the spirit of prayer. Not so, for our Lord has given him the language he should use also if he deserves mercy at the throne of grace; and would be justified before God. It is given in the publican's prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and when he goes down to his house justified, he is no longer a "stranger nor foreigner," but belongs to the household of faith; and has the right to say "Our Father who art in Heaven, in a sense, and with a joy that he could not say it before. It is evident from the contents of the Lord's prayer that it is not put into the mouths of unregenerate souls; for they have no share in, nor sympathy with what it asks for. But to the renewed soul it is a precious claim to say our Father. We give in another column a very rich article written by Rev. Dr. Messer, upon the words, "Our Father," in which we think our readers will find much comfort. He does not discuss the matter of who has the right to use these words in prayer. He seems to leave that to the individuals own conscience.