

and a hymn, in which was this verse,—

“ I pray my sins may be forgiven—
In Jesus name I pray,
Who died that we might go to heaven—
The Life, The Truth, The Way.”

Soon after he had learned this hymn perfectly, his friend was obliged to leave the part of the country where his parents lived, and before going, she made James promise her two things;—one was, that he would attend a day-school, which she had chosen for him, regularly—the other, that instead of some words without much meaning, which he had been in the habit of saying before he went to sleep at night, he would repeat his hymn regularly as his evening prayer.

The little fellow promised willingly, with his accustomed gentleness and amiability; but the lady, knowing his former idle, unformed habits, scarcely expected he would keep his word.

Several months passed before she returned; when she did, there was no little James to meet her;—a few weeks previously he was playing with some of his schoolfellows, near the edge of a high and dangerous rock, when, his foot slipping, he fell from the top, and was either instantly killed by the fall, or drowned in the river below. His fond parents never saw their boy alive again.

His brief story, however, does not end here: on inquiry, the lady found that, contrary to her expectations, he had kept both promises most faithfully; he had never missed one day at school, and had taken the greatest pains with his lessons there; and not only had he regularly knelt down every night, and repeated the hymn in prayer,—he had fixed his attention on that one verse, and had begged his mother to learn it too, that she might repeat it along with him.

He would often say to her, “ O mother, you must say, ‘ I pray my sins may be forgiven,’ ” &c.

In short, from all that had passed in the earlier months of their intercourse, and from much more which she now heard—the evident change in the tone of his mind and habits from the little thoughtless boy he had been before, gave his teacher every reason to hope that, notwithstanding his want of knowledge and training, he had been led, by God’s grace, to feel the value of Jesus as his Saviour, and had thus been mercifully, prepared for the sudden termination of his young life.

He had no warning of his early death; no time then, to make ready for it;—on the very morning of the day on which the accident happened, he was as full of life and vigour as any of you—bright and joyous, as was his wont—among the foremost in every sport, beaming with animation and activity; and yet, before that summer day was over, he had entered the eternal world; this world for him had passed away for ever, and he had learned more than earthly love could teach him, of the preciousness of Christ as a Mediator and Redeemer.

And will not you make his prayers yours? You may think you can be God’s children without having sought and found forgiveness in the cross of Christ, but you cannot really be so: you cannot “ grow in grace ” unless you are first forgiven. I have heard of plants which would not grow on the north side of a hill, because the bitter wind blew strong upon them, causing them to wither and die; while the very same species of plant on the other side of the hill would spring up and flourish, under the warm rays of the southern sun.

Even so, dear children, the trees of the Lord’s planting cannot prosper under the breath of his displeasure; they must take root in the soil which lies beneath the shadow of “ a great Rock : ” they must bud, and blossom, and bring forth fruit, under the radiance of the life-giving, loving beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

“ Unto you, therefore, which believe, Christ is precious.”

THE BLESSEDNESS OF RELIGION.— A little Indian girl, who had early chosen God as her portion, could say as she drew near eternity, ‘ I am willing to die, if God sees beet, though I should like to live to do good to my people.’ The day before her death, she appeared very happy, and often requested her adopted mother to sing to her. ‘ I feel,’ said she, in the triumph of hope, ‘ as though I could praise and bless God.’ At another time she said, ‘ I feel happy. It seems as though angels were all around me in the room and Jesus in the middle;’ and again she said, ‘ I feel happy. I am not afraid to die, for I think that Jesus will be my friend.’ Such are the happy fruits of choosing and loving God, in the morning of life.—*The Happy Choice.*