

SUNDAYS EVENINGS WITH THE CHILDREN.

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FIRST EVENING.

In one of St. John's letters he speaks of some who are called "children of God" (1 John iii. 10), and one of the prophets speaks of some who are "aiong the children" (Jer. iii. 19).

What a glorious title! Better than all that rank or wealth can bestow. Better to be able to look up to the great God of heaven, and call Him "my Father," than to sit on a monarch's throne or to wear a monarch's crown.

Tell me—oh, tell me how I can come to know whether or not I can claim such an honour as this? Beautiful above all the other words of Jesus are these, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 45).

Let me give you one or two marks belonging to God's redeemed family; and may you, dear young friends, be able to feel that they belong to you. May you be able to say with St. John, in another of his golden verses, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John iii. 1).

The first mark I would give you is this: *A child loves his father.* How I have seen little boys and girls watch for their father's return from his work in the country, or from his business in the town! How fondly do they welcome him at the door; and when seated at the fireside how joyfully do they climb upon his knee, and load him with their caresses! I have heard of a child who said, "Father, may I sit upon your knee in heaven?" In the hour of danger especially, how eagerly do children cling to their father, just because they know they are safe in his loving hands! In the Zoological Gardens, in London, a little boy is seen standing by the lion's

iron grating. The lion is roaring, and lashing his sides with his tail, but the child feels not afraid. Why? Because his hand is firmly locked in his father's. You have all heard of the younger voyager in the stormy sea, who remained calm and tranquil when all the others in the same boat were in terror, and who, when asked why he had no fear, replied, "My father's at the helm." Look at one of your favourite Bible pictures. When, long, long ago, the strange burden of wood was laid on the shoulders of Isaac, and he saw Abraham at his side carrying in his hand the fire and a knife, no wonder he was puzzled to know what was going to happen. But we hear his young lips uttering the words, "my father;" and the old man called him, "my son." He would have no fear after that. His father, he knew well, loved him, and he loved his father.

Do you love and trust God in the same way? When at any time you have been tempted to commit sin, is your first feeling, "I have wronged the God and Father who is so kind to me?" And just as a little one who has been naughty toward his earthly parent cannot fall asleep until that parent comes to his pillow, and kisses the offence into forgetfulness, so is your second feeling and prayer this, "O my God and Father, wilt Thou forgive me?"

I go on to give you a SECOND mark. *A child likes to get a letter from his father.* If your father has gone far away to India, or to Australia, how you watch day after day the arrival of the post! At last the letter is handed in; you see the well-known writing, the well-known seal, the very way, perhaps, he used to fold his letters. You cry out in your joy, "Here at last is a letter from father!" How glad you are to open it! How eagerly the little group gather round while its contents are read! How anxious are they to hear everything he has to tell about that distant land—about its people and its language and its customs