

ble of acting. The aged grandmother alone preserved all her presence of mind; she prayed an incessantly repeated, "What shall I profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? O Heavenly Father! let thy will, and not ours be done!"

The house was entirely consumed; nothing was saved. . . . The farmer had said, "I have put my breast under my roof."—But above thy roof is the Lord's roof," had said his grandmother.

"Thou teaches us the lesson, that all is in the hands of God, whether in the fields or in the barn; and what we endeavor to preserve from the rain, can be reached in any place by Him who commands both the rain and the thunder.

#### PROFANE SWEARING.

Agesilaus, king of Sparta, being asked, "What things he thought most proper for boys to learn?" answered, "Those which they are to practise when they become men." Were this excellent maxim universally adopted, many things would neither be learned by the young nor practised by the old.

Among the unprofitable lessons of youth, we may notice the sin of profane swearing—a lesson very easily acquired, and soon formed into a habit. That profane and filthy language should be freely used by those unfortunate young persons whose association from birth, has been with the vulgar and the abandoned, is not a matter of so much surprise, though to all correct taste it is sufficiently disgusting. But to hear the language of indecency and blasphemy, from the children of moral and even pious parents—from them who are under the daily influence of moral instruction, is calculated to fill the heart with painful emotions.

The young gentleman whose attention is devoted to the acquisition of polite literature, little thinks how his progress is impeded by his profane oaths and indecent jests; and how the vigour of his mind is impaired by that petulance and passion which seeks to vent itself in cursing and swearing and bitterness; much less does he reflect how his obscurity gains the ears of all but the abandoned boy from whom he has learned the degrading habit, and whose continued companionship effectually serves to harden him in opposition to wholesome reproof, and in defiance of proper restraint. It is related of Dr. Beattie's son, that so careful was he to cultivate intellectual and moral purity, and refinement of imagination, that he would read nothing by which his mental taste might be corrupted, or his imagination defiled, much less would he associate with companions whose conversation and influence tended only to contaminate and deprave.

But the chief evil of profaneness lies in its great sinfulness in the sight of God. We cannot suppose that the Holy Being, in whose eyes the beautiful heavens are said to be unclean, can hear the constant profanation of his glorious name with indifference. He has declared that he will not hold them guiltless that take his name in vain. The commission of this sin, therefore, is a presumptuous and blasphemous contempt of the Divine dignity, authority and power.

When, by cursing and swearing we imprecate God's wrath upon ourselves, or others, we do in effect pray "that God would hasten our everlasting destruction, and that our eternal perdition may not slumber, but be speedily inflicted;" a wish more daring, malicious and abandoned, even than that which rests in the hearts of devils; for they, we are told, *believing* there is further wrath awaiting them at the final judgment, tremble as they apprehend its fearful approach.

As there can be no justification of this shocking practice, so there is no excuse for it. It may be palliated by affirming "that one has formed the habit of swearing, and is not aware when he uses profane language;" then it is a sufficient apology for *continued murder*, "that one has formed the habit of unconsciously killing his fellow beings."

The evil consequences of this sin are not always immediately apparent; yet God having declared that "he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain," there seems to be a peculiar and comprehensive denunciation of Divine wrath against the profane swearer, to be executed in a peculiar and sovereign manner. How many have been struck dead, and otherwise terribly afflicted, when in the very act of belching forth some horrid malediction! But if there were no other punishment of profaneness than the defilement with which it debases and corrupts the whole character, that alone would be a fearful retribution. It disqualifies for the enjoyment of virtuous society upon earth, and educates for the companionship of hell.

Dear youth! guard against the first approaches to this great sin—Give earnest heed to the admonition of the Divine Redeemer—Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King, neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. Let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.—Matt. v. 34-37.

#### THE FOUNDER OF RAGGED SCHOOLS.

John Pounds, the cripple and the collier, yet at the same time one of nature's true nobility, was born in Portsmouth, in 1766. His father was a sawyer, employed in the Royal Dock Yard. At fifteen, young Pounds met with an accident which disabled him for life. During the greater part of his benevolent career he lived in a small weather-boarded tenement in St. Mary's street Portsmouth, where he might be seen every day, seated

on a stool, mending shoes in the midst of his busy little school. One of his arrangements was that of raising singing birds, jays and pitcoats, which he so perfectly domesticated that they lived harmoniously with his cats and guinea pigs. Often, it is said, might a canary bird be seen perched upon one shoulder, and a cat upon the other. During the latter part of his life, however, when the scholars became numerous, he was able to keep fewer of these domestic creatures. Poor as he was, and entirely dependent upon the hard labor of his hands, he nevertheless adopted a little cripple nephew, whom he educated and cared for with truly parental love, and in the end established comfortably in life. It was out of this connection that his attempts and success in the work of education arose.—He thought, in the first instance, that the boys would learn better with a companion. He obtained one, the son of a wretchedly poor mother, then another and another were added; and he found so much pleasure in his employment, and was the means thereby of effecting so much good, that in the end the number of his scholars amounted to fifty, including about a dozen little girls. His humble workshop was about six feet by eighteen, in the midst of which he would sit engaged in that labor by which he won his bread, and attending at the same time to the studies of the little crowd around him. So efficient was John Pounds' mode of education, to say nothing about its being perfectly gratuitous, that the candidates were always numerous; he, however, invariably gave the preference to the poorest children—to the 'little black-guards,' as he called them. He has been known to follow such to the Town Quay, and offer them the bible of a roasted potato if they would come to his school. His attendance on these degraded children was extraordinary. As a teacher, his manners were pleasing and facetious. Many hundred persons now living usefully and creditably in life, owe the whole formation of their character to him. He gave them 'book learning' and taught them also to cook their own victuals and mend their shoes. He was not only frequently their doctor and nurse, but their play fellow; no wonder was it, therefore, that when, on New Year's Day, 1830, he suddenly died, at the age of seventy-two, the children wept and even fainted, on hearing of their loss, and for a long time were overwhelmed with sorrow and consternation. They, indeed, had lost a friend and benefactor. Such was the noble founder of the first ragged school.

#### THE WAY TO BE SAVED.

"When converted persons in the apostles' day *cried* out, 'What shall we do to be saved?' the answer was, *Believe, and you shall be saved.* To believe in Christ and in the remission of sin by his blood, is the first thing that convinced sinners are called to. They are not directed first to assure their souls that they are born again, and then afterward believe; but they are first to believe that the remission of sin is offered to them in the blood of Christ; and that by him they may be justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law. Nor is the object of men to question whether they have faith or not, but actually to believe; and faith in its operation will evidence itself. See Acts 13. 38, 39. Suppose, then, that you do not know that you are born of God, that you have no prevailing, refreshing evidence of it; should this hinder you? Should this discourage you from believing forgiveness, from cloving with the promises, and thereby obtaining in yourselves an interest in forgiveness with God? Not at all; nay, this ought exceedingly to excite and stir you up to your duty herein. For, suppose that you are indeed yet in the state of sin, and are only brought under the power of light and conviction, this is the way for a transition into a state of spiritual life and grace. If you deny the exercise of faith in forgiveness until you are regenerate, you may, and probably you will come short of both forgiveness and regeneration. Here is your foundation, and then your building will go on. "This will open the door to you, and give you an entrance into the kingdom of God. *Christ is the door.* Do not think to climb over the wall. Enter by him, or you will be kept out."—Green.

#### THE FATHER AND HIS THREE SONS.

It is said of a pious man of old, living in the East, having three sons and an immense fortune, that he made the following proposals to his sons, when they were grown to manhood.—"Go," said he, "my sons, from my roof for one month, and return. He that performs, during his absence, the best and noblest deed, shall receive one half of my estate, and the other half shall be divided between the other two brothers." They went, and returned at the stipulated time. The eldest began the story of his most philanthropic. "I was walking along the banks of one of our native streams, and I heard the shrieks of a female. I hastened to the spot from whence the cry proceeded, and lo! it was a mother in the very act of leaping into the flood to save her boy, an only child of four years old, who had unfortunately fallen in, and the waters were choking the avenues of life. Had the mother made the desperate leap, they both must have perished together. I bade her desist, and I plunged into the roaring current. By hard struggling and mighty efforts, I saved the drowning child, and rescued him to the arms of the frantic, but now enraptured mother." "Thou hast order, I done nobly, my son; the pen of immortality shall record that deed, and the mother shall cherish thy memory with tears of gratitude. My second son, what hast thou to say?" "Father," said he, "in my journey, I found an old man lying on his couch, feeble and decrepit; he could not walk nor see up. Two little children were left with him; their parents had gone to a neighbouring town about ten miles dis-