

Our Young Folks.

A LITTLE SUNBEAM.

A little sunbeam in the sky
Said to itself one day:
"I'm very small, but why should I
Do nothing else but play?
I'll go down to the earth and see
If there is any use for me."

The violet beds were wet with dew,
Which filled each heavy cup;
The little sunbeam darted through,
And raised their blue heads up.
They smiled to see it, and they lent
The morning breeze their sweetest scent.

A mother 'neath a shady tree
Had left her babe asleep;
It woke and cried, but when it spied
The little sunbeam peep
So slyly in, with glance so bright,
It laughed and chuckled with delight.

On, on it went, it might not stay;
Now through a window small
It poured its glad but tiny ray,
And danced upon the wall.
A pale young face looked up to meet
The sunbeam she had watched to greet.

And so it travelled to and fro,
And glanced and danced about;
And not a door was shut, I know,
To keep that sunbeam out;
But ever as it touched the earth,
It woke up happiness and mirth.

For loving words, like sunbeams, will
Dry up a fallen tear,
And loving deeds will often help
A broken heart to cheer.
So loving and so living, you
Will be a little sunbeam too.

GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READINGS.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

THE GODLY MAN'S USE OF TIME.

He boasts not of to-morrow, Prov. xxvii. 1.
He does whatever his hand finds to do, Eccles. ix. 10.
He prizes the present opportunity, 2 Cor. vii. 2.
He conditions his action on God's will, James iv. 13-15.
He works to-day, 1 John ix. 4.
He works as one who is under authority, Matt. xxi. 28.
He works as if salvation is drawing nigh, Rom. xiii. 11.
He works as one who believes that Christ is coming, Rev. xvii. 20.
" desires not to be ashamed before Him, 1 John ii. 28.
" would receive a reward, Rev. xxii. 12.
" sits with Christ on His throne, Rev. iii. 21.
" must give account of the deeds done in the body, 2 Cor. v. 10.
" would glorify God, 1 Cor. x. 31.
He believes that time is short, 1 Cor. vii. 29; Psa. xxxix. 5.
He does God's will serving his own generation, Acts xviii. 36.
He lays down his life with satisfaction, 2 Tim. iv. 7.
He looks forward with sweet assurance, 2 Tim. iv. 8.
His life is a gracious spiritual influence after he has passed away, Rev. xiv. 3.

CHILDREN AND THE DIVINE MYSTERY.

Ben Syra, when a child, begged his preceptor to instruct him in the law of God; but he declined, saying that his scholar was too young to be taught those sacred mysteries. "But, master," said the boy, "I have been in the burial ground and measured the graves, and find some of them shorter than myself; now, if I should die before I have learned the Word of God, what will become of me then, master?"

THE ALMOND BLOSSOM.

"Dear mamma," said a little girl to her mother, as they were walking together in the garden, "why do you have so few of those beautiful double almonds in the garden? You have hardly a bed where there is not a tuft of violets, and they are so much plainer. What can be the reason?"

"My dear child," said the mother, "gather me a bunch of each. Then I will tell you why I prefer the little violets."

The little girl ran off, and soon returned with a fine bunch of the beautiful almonds and a few violets.

"Smell them, my love," said her mother, "and try which is the sweeter."

The child smelled again and again, and could scarcely believe herself that the lovely almond had no scent, while the plain violet had a delightful odour.

"Well, my child, which is the sweetest?"

"Oh, dear mother! it is the little violet."

"Well, now you know, my child, why I prefer the plain violet to the beautiful almond. Beauty without fragrance in flowers, is, in my opinion, something like beauty without gentleness and good temper in little girls. When any of those people who speak without reflection may say to you, 'What

charming blue eyes! What beautiful curls! What a fine complexion!' without knowing whether you have any good qualities, and without thinking of your defects and failings, which everybody is born with, remember, then, my little girl, the almond blossom; and remember, also, when your affectionate mother may not be there to tell you, that beauty without gentleness and good temper is worthless."

AN HONEST CHRISTIAN MAN.

The following supposed incident will serve to illustrate the truth that a truly honest man will not take a larger sum for property than its just value, even if he is offered more.

A certain man named George Smith came one day to a farmer named Daniel Jones, wishing to buy a pair of oxen, and said: "Those red oxen of yours suit me, and I will give you \$120 for them." Daniel Jones replied: "That is \$30 more than they are worth." George Smith looked wonderstruck at this remark. The farmer said: "I know the value of those oxen better than you do. One of them is a little 'breachy,' and the other one cannot bear the heat so well as some oxen, and yet there are good qualities in them; but, all things considered, \$90 is all they are worth, and you may have them for that price." George Smith gladly took the oxen, and said to a man on his way home: "It beats all what a difference there is in the religion of men. Now there is old James Clark, my near neighbour; I have heard him make many a long prayer. If he had owned these beautiful oxen he would have asked me \$130 or more for them, and he would have called them a great bargain at that price, and he would not have said a word about one of the oxen being inclined to be breachy, and the other not very tough in hot weather. I do not know anything about religion myself, but one thing I know, as well as I know where the sun shines on a warm day, and that is, there is a mighty big difference between Daniel Jones' religion and James Clark's religion."

THE GREAT MASTER.

"I am my own master," cried a young man, proudly, when a friend tried to persuade him from an enterprise which he had on hand. "I am my own master!"

"Did you ever consider what a responsible post that is?" asked a friend.

"Responsible—is it?"

"A master must lay out the work he wants done, and see that it is done right. He should try to secure the best ends by the best means. He must keep on the lookout against obstacles and accidents, and watch that everything goes straight or else he will fail."

"Well."

"To be master of yourself you have your conscience to keep clear, your heart to cultivate, your temper to govern, your will to direct, and your judgment to instruct. You are master over a hard lot, and if you don't master them they will master you."

"That is so," said the young man.

"Now, I could undertake no such thing," said his friend; "I should fail sure if I did. Saul wanted to be his own master, and failed. Herod did. Judas did. No man is fit for it. 'One is my Master, even Christ.' I work under God's direction. When He is Master, all goes right."

YESTERDAY.

"Didn't you have a pleasant day?" asked Annie, for something in the sober young face at her side made her suspect that the picnic had been a failure.

"Oh yes, it was pleasant enough; the others seemed to enjoy it, but I couldn't help thinking about yesterday. Maybe if I had gone to the office instead of leaving that long walk for you, you wouldn't have had such a headache to-day."

"Maybe not; I don't know. But your thinking about it to-day didn't help the ache one bit; it only spoiled your picnic. My head is better now, Lou dear, and I want to tell you something that I often have to tell myself. Don't live backward. It isn't right to make our days wear mourning for our dead yesterdays."

"But we can't help being sorry for things," said Lou slowly, and not quite comprehending.

"No; but being sorry for our mistakes, carelessnesses, or even sins, is very different from worrying over them in such a way that we cannot go heartily on to the next thing. I wonder if to-morrow won't have a little thread of pain running through it because of something or somebody neglected to-day while your thoughts were busy with yesterday?"

Lou flushed, for deep down in her secret heart such a worry had already begun. She was fearing that her friend Helen might have been offended by her preoccupation and want of interest in some of the games proposed, for she remembered that Helen had left her to herself for the last hour.

Cousin Annie smiled as she read her answer in the changing face:

"Straighten it out if you can, dear, but when you have done your best, drop it; don't carry it over. When I was a little girl we children used sometimes to try walking across the long yard on two short pieces of board. Standing on one, we threw the other a little distance ahead, and, stepping on that, reached back for the one we had left. It was slow and toilsome travelling even for a childish game, and to think of journeying through life in that fashion is dreadful; but I often see people who remind me of that. Half the time they are

facing backward, unable to take a step cheerily forward because they are busy with the step they took last. There is a verse from one of my favourite poems that you must learn. little Lou:

Yesterday now is a part of forever,
Bound up in a sheaf which God holds tight,
With glad days and sad days and bad days which never
Shall visit us more with their bloom and their blight,
Their fulness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Let them go, since we cannot relieve them—
Cannot undo and cannot atone:
God in his mercy receive and forgive them
Only the new days are our own;
To-day is ours, and to-day alone.

FUSS IS NOT WORK.

You may see this any day and anywhere. As you go along, you see two horses harnessed together before a car. One of them makes a great fuss, as if he had all the world behind him, and was in eager haste to get it just where he wants it to be. He dances and prances, jumps up and down and springs into the collar with all his might, and then falls back from it because all does not give way to him. The other makes no fuss at all. He stops and starts at the signal, wastes no strength in violence, but puts his whole weight into the collar just when it is needed.

The one makes the fuss, the other does the work. What is the difference? The one is restive, the other is docile. The one is in his own will, the other is in the will of his master.

How like some Christians that you and I could name. One is restive, the other docile. The one is in his own will, the other is in the Lord's will. The one stops when he ought to go, and starts when he ought to stand. The other is obedient in his faith, and so quick to hear the voice of the Lord that, like the docile horse which does not require bit or rein, or word, but, catching the conductor's signal, stops at the bell tap, he moves forward at the right moment, and at the right moment stops, whether in word or deed.

The one makes all the fuss, the other does all the work. The way to work wisely and well is to present yourself a living sacrifice unto God, and let His will be your will, and so prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God every day all your life long.

WITHOUT HIM YOU CAN DO NOTHING.

A little boy once said: "How hard it is to do right! I've tried and tried, and there's no use trying any longer."

But one day, after reading his Bible, he said: "Why, I've been trying to change myself all the time, and here I read that only God can change me. I can no more change my heart than a coloured man can make himself white. How foolish I have been not to ask him!"

And he was right. Are you trying to change your own heart? You can never do it. It will get worse and worse until you ask Jesus to give you a new heart.

STUDY UNSELFISHNESS.

A gentleman of some eminence said: "I remember having to advise a man who had fallen into a sad, morose life, and had put himself under my counsel; and I said: 'Suppose you begin by passing the butter at the table.' He needed to be on the outlook, consciously, for little occasions to serve those around him. Take care in the least trifles that you care for others."

"I do not like that man," said a sound observer to me; "I saw him let his wife pick up her own handkerchief." This critic was right in that quick judgment.

"I judge him by the way he treats his dog." This is a wise criticism. And if it is wise in criticism it is wise in life. Train yourself to unselfishness in what the world pleases to call little things.

O DID YOU KNOW IT WAS ME?

A ragged boy stood with his face pressed close to a pane of glass, gazing earnestly at the toys displayed in the window. His hands were loosely clasped behind his back, with the palms turned upwards. A lady noticed the little earnest face as she, too, paused a moment before the tempting show. Then quietly dropping as many cents into the little hands as they could hold, she passed on. The moment the boy felt their touch he turned and caught sight of the pocket-book in the hand of the retreating lady. Running after her, he looked up anxiously in her face, and said, "O, ma'am! did you know it was me?"

Evidently he thought she had mistaken him for some little friend.

"Yes," said the lady, smiling, "I knew it was you;" and the child bounded away with a face radiant with happiness.

This lady is in the habit of dropping small change here and there as she daily walked through the poorer streets of the city.

Many a sad little face has brightened as the money fell into its lap, and a pleasant, smiling face looked down, and, "There, run and buy a stick of candy or a cookie." Think of such a course persevered in year after year. How many a sad child's heart has been warmed by the loving thoughtfulness even more than by the unexpected gift! "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto Me."