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E. A. H. MORROW, Publisher,
28 Charlotte Street, St. John, N. B.

FEB., 1882.

The

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Devoted to the interests
of Children and their parents

VOL.

II.

No. 10.

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ST. JOHNS

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PUBLISHER'S NOTICE.

A WORD TO SUBSCRIBERS AND AGENTS.

We again ask the earnest, prayerful, continued co-operation of Christian men and women everywhere, to extend the circulation of the *Monthly Advocate*. It is encouraging to notice the interest taken by many of our young friends and others in the Magazine. Through the unwearied exertions of our young friends, chiefly, the *Advocate* has now found its way into many parts of the known world. Its readers may even be found in Palestine. To all who have assisted us in any way, we beg to tender our sincere thanks. We ask our young friends to continue their labors in the interests of the *Advocate*, and we will reward them liberally. Those who raised clubs last year we trust will endeavor to see their friends and ask them to continue another year. We have now ready a large number of Autograph, Photograph and Scrap Albums, Pocket Bibles, Revised New Testaments and Reward Books—all of the latest and most attractive styles—for premiums, varying in prices from 25 cents to \$10 each, which shall be awarded according to the number of renewals or new subscriptions received from our friends. Those who are able to come and see us we invite to do so and select premiums for themselves. Those who cannot visit us, when remitting, will please name what premium is most desired and we will try and comply with their wishes.

Subscribers whose term has expired, who will renew their own subscription and send us 50 cents additional, for one new subscriber, before the end of the present month, shall have a copy sent free to their address, of a valuable household manual advertised on 3rd page cover, entitled: "Practical Guide to Housekeeping in all its Departments."

The *Advocate* is adapted to all classes. "Speaking the truth in love" is the motto inscribed upon its banner. The advancement of the cause of truth and righteousness will ever be its exclusive aim, and "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of goods report," it will be the *monthly advocate* of "these things."

The projectors of the magazine have no desire to reap pecuniary benefit from its publication. Their labor is a labor of love. They wish to circulate wholesome reading among the people. Should more money be received than is required for publishing, it will be used to improve and enlarge the *Advocate*.

The Monthly Advocate.

VOL. II.

FEBRUARY, 1882.

No. 10.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY IN OUR SCHOOLS.

It will be generally admitted that it is important to have our children instructed in Christian morals. The regulations at present in force under the School Law provide for giving instruction in Christian morals, for reading the Bible as a class-book, and for the visits of ministers of all denominations with the privilege of using the school-room after school hours. Thus the law itself acknowledges the importance and duty of instructing our children in Christian morality. Indeed, some have gone as far as to say that inasmuch as the above provision is made, and the giving of Scripture lessons is left with the trustees of each section, the teachers and the ministers, there is no room for complaint, for all is done that can fairly be asked in that direction.

Practically, we all know that little or nothing is being done. The reasons are very evident. *First*: There are so many studies that it seems impossible to add another to the already heavy burden without cruelly oppressing the pupil. *Second*: Instruction in Christian morals does not count in an examination; it will not shew the results; and teachers are not such fools as to waste their time in teaching anything that will not count or shew. *Third*: The permission accorded to ministers to use the school-room after school hours is a mockery. It may read nicely and sound religiously; it is impracticable. Every one that knows anything about teaching will regard it as the height of absurdity to ask children to stay after four o'clock, when, wearied with the day's labour, they expect their relaxation and play. Besides, no minister could possibly visit all the schools which the children of his charge attend, and give them religious instruction after school hours. Neither is to do so a duty obligatory on a minister either by the law of the land or his ordination engagements; nor has the School Law attached any salary to the discharge of such function. *If instruction in religion and Christian morals is to be given at all in connection with our schools, it must be done in school hours and by the teachers, and it must be made to count in the examinations.* Now, just here we are met with a host of objections. For example, we are told there is no time for such lessons. We answer, make time. The fear of God and the love and practice of righteoussness are by far the highest wisdom—the most necessary knowledge. Rather drop grammer and arithmetic than religion and morality. Again, "our teachers cannot be trusted to teach religion and morals." Answer: To say so is a libel on our teachers. There is no class of the community, as a whole, more to be trusted; and if to teach religion and morals were their duty, they would do so conscientiously. Also, to say that you entrust your child to the care of a man or woman, as teachers, in whose religious and moral character you have no confidence, is to confess that

you are indifferent as to the example and powerful influence which the school-room cannot but exert for evil, even if there be no direct teaching opposed to God and morality. Non-religion is irreligion; no morality is immorality; where the positive element of good is wanting, the positive element of evil is present. Yet again: "Our teachers are not competent to teach the Bible and Christian morals." Answer: Then make them fit. Let these subjects be made part of the Normal and Model School studies. No more interesting subject can engage the attention of intelligent, ingenuous youths, and none will be prosecuted with more delight. If the result should be that some, whose opinions and practices are at variance with religion and morality, withdraw from the profession, it will be no loss to our nation and to the cause of righteousness; others will be found to their place. The instructors of youth ought to be men and women who fear God and live uprightly. As a class they are such now, and if their training was improved, and conscience as well as intellect was instructed, the school-room would become a potent instrumentality for the promotion of righteousness and the suppression of immorality and crime. In this direction there is room for improvement, and most respectfully would we suggest to the Minister of Education and to the Legislature of Ontario, if any changes are to be made in the administration of our school system, the introduction of lessons from Scripture into our reading books, beginning with the simplest extracts in the Third Book, giving more difficult passages in the Fourth, and some of the magnificent oracles from Job, Isaiah, and the Apocalypse in the Fifth Book. This is feasible. Also, it may be well to consider how our teachers, while attending the High Schools, Normal and Model Schools, may be instructed in Christian morals and the best methods of teaching the same. "Righteousness exalteth a nation," but how shall the people know without a teacher? Our children are suffering for lack of the highest knowledge. It is in vain to try to roll the responsibility on Churches and Sabbath schools. They reach a small portion of the people, and that feebly. They are not national institutions—not under the control of the nation. The God of nations will hold the nation as such responsible, and in the awful language of the prophet, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve Him shall perish; yea, these nations shall be utterly wasted."—*The Canada Presbyterian.*

TOO MANY SOCIETIES,

"There are too many societies. Attendance upon the half of them would involve too great a tax upon the time and pockets of all but persons of absolute leisure and abundant means. Their multiplication has gone so far as to involve a waste of time and money and business energy. So much of these elements are absorbed in this way as to weaken the large moral, philanthropical and Christian movements of the time. The columns of the newspapers are cumbered with quarterly reports and lists of officers with high sounding titles, such as have no fitness and no proper place in this practical business age."—*Daily Telegraph, St. John.*

ANSWERING OUR OWN PRAYERS.

BY REV. T. L. CUYLER.

We use this expression, not too literally, but simply for want of a better one. The idea we aim at is, that every Christian is bound to do his utmost for the fulfilment of his own prayers. He is never to ask God to give what he is not trying his utmost to obtain; he is never to ask God to make him what he is not faithfully trying to become.

This is our idea. It is partially illustrated by the familiar fable of Hercules and the waggoner. When the overloaded waggon sunk into the mire, instead of labouring to pry out the imbedded vehicle, the waggoner fell to praying Hercules to interpose his brawny arm for his relief. The god of muscle thus appealed to, reminded the luckless teamster that, while he prayed for help, he had better put his own shoulder to the wheel, and help himself.

In one sense this heathen fable illustrates the true relation between the sovereign God and the child of prayer. On our side is complete dependence. On the side of Omnipotence is infinite mercy. From him cometh down every good and every perfect gift. And because we are so dependent upon our heavenly Father, and owe him so much of submission, obedience, and trust, therefore we are to "pray without ceasing." But while we pray we are to *work*: first, as a proof of the sincerity of our desires; and next, in order to obey God, who commands us to become the very men that we ask him to make us by his grace.

Does every child of God do his utmost to secure the answers to his own uttered requests? Most emphatically we reply, No! With even the best men there is a sad disparity between prayer and practice—between the askings of the lips and the actings of the heart—between their *life* and their *liturgy*.

Take, for example, the oft-repeated prayer for *growth in grace*. This is a vital request, and the most formal Christian professor will utter it nearly every day of his life. If he would resist the continual gravitation of inward sin and surrounding worldliness, he must cry as continually for heart-grace. But just imagine the owner of a vast field of weeds kneeling down among "johnswort" and Canada thistles, and praying God to give him from that field a plentiful corn harvest! Not a furrow has been turned. Not a kernel planted. But the insane husbandman implores from heaven a crop, toward the growing of which his sluggish fingers have not been lifted. My Christian brother, you never are guilty of such folly in the management of your secular interests. You never expect cargoes without sending ships seaward; you never count on crops without ploughing, manuring and seeding your acres. No school-girl would expect to see her pet flower grow in the conservatory without water and fresh earth. She sprinkles the azalea leaves until they drip, and feeds the delicate tuberose with new earth as often as its wasting leaves telegraph its hunger. God takes care of her plants; but she takes care of them too, and does not expect him to work miracles for the benefit of lazy people. Her prayer for her flowers is in the brim-

ming pitcher and the virgin earth which her careful hands bring to the greenhouse.

Carry this same principle into your religion. Do you pray with your lips for growth in holiness, growth in heavenly-mindedness, growth in spiritual *stamina*? Then to the work of cleansing the heart-field! Then to the putting up of the tares of covetousness—the jimson-wort of pride—the nettles of selfishness—the briars of deceit—the overgrown burdocks of sloth—and the seed-scattering thistle of unbelief! Pull them by the roots. Give your inward lusts no quarter. Keep no terms with them. Make no compromise with some darling sin to sprout and grow unobserved in some back corner of your soul-garden. Clear out every weed, in order that the seed-corn of godliness may have the full strength of the affections and the energies to make it grow. Watch over that precious seed. Water it with prayers and penitential tears. Strengthen it with Bible truth. And as you pray for the growth of heart-piety, let no indulged lust, no pet sin, harboured in secret places, prove your uttered prayer to be an abomination in the sight of the all-searching God. "If I regard iniquity in my heart" (that is, if I cling to it and cherish it) "God will not hear me." Nor will the Lord of holiness answer with a *Yea* what we are practically answering with a *Nay*.

2. Let us illustrate and apply this principle, in the next place, to parents who are praying for the conversion of their children. No petition is more fitting than this; none could be more acceptable to God. But what hope have you, my friend, for the renewal of your children's hearts, if you pray in one direction with the lips, and quite in the opposite direction with the life? We see constantly the two antagonistic types of parental influence. Both are nominally Christian: only one is really such. The one man pleads at the altar for the sanctification of his household—that his sons may become sons of God, and his daughters may be as polished stones in the temple of Christ. He makes religion prominent in his family; it is visible, legible, and *above board*. The books that are brought home for the children to read, the newspapers that are taken, the amusements that are chosen, the society that is sought, the aims in life that are set before those children, all bear in one direction and in the right direction. God is not asked by that father to convert his offspring to godlessness while he is doing his best to pervert them to sin and worldliness. Nor is God implored to convert them while the parent uses no agencies to effect the longed-for result. No more than the Lord would be asked to restore the sick boy from a typhus fever, and yet no physician called in and no medicine administered. How much worse if the father, having prayed that his child be restored, should fall to giving the poor boy strychnine or prussic acid in large doses!

Yet professed Christians do this very thing often in morals and religion. They pray for their children's recovery to holiness, and then poison them! They pray for a son's purity, and then flash the wine-cup before his eyes. They pray for a daughter's conversion, with a theatre-ticket in their pockets—a "family ticket" for the whole household! They go to church, look devout, and then come home to trifles, to gossip—to entertain Sunday visitors at a sumptuous feast, to talk politics, to do anything, in short, but follow up the teachings of God's minister with

affectionate faithful home instructions. The practical effect of their whole conduct and conversation, both on the Lord's day and *all* the days of the week, is to undo whatever may have been done by the earnest labours of the pulpit. What must such children think of those fluent prayers that they hear every night at the family altar? What of the consistency of those parents who utter such solemn mockeries? Oh! it is better never to pray at all for the conversion of their offspring than to ask God, in solemn tones to *save* them, while you are using your whole influence to harden and destroy them. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou unfaithful servant."

In eternity it will be a terrible thing for many a man to meet his own prayers. Their very language will condemn him; for he knew his duty, but he did it not. Those fervent prayers, which the good man laboured to make effectual, will be "shining ones" in white raiment to conduct their author in to the banqueting-house of the GREAT KING. But the falsehoods uttered at the throne of grace will live again as tormenting scorpions in the day of the Lord's appearing. "Be not rash with thy mouth, nor let thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God," is an injunction that forbids more than irreverence in prayer. It forbids us, by implication, to ask for that which we do not sincerely desire. Above all, it forbids the asking from God those blessings which we are hindering by our neglect, or thwarting by our selfishness and unbelief.

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

Take care of the corners or *fragments* of your time. Bear in mind here, as in all other things, "the power of littles." Many a person who would be ashamed to think of sitting idle for a whole hour, will lose more time than that almost unconsciously, during a day, in small portions. And on the other hand it is astonishing what may be made out of those quarters of hours, which are so often allowed to slip uselessly away. A short trial would convince you of this. Let some simple piece of work, or useful book, be appropriated to those intervals which you know are likely to occur between your regular engagements, when you are alone or in the family, and you will be surprised to see the progress soon made in either.

Be *methodical* in laying out your time, so far as this is in your power. We must not be slaves to method, yet I believe nothing of much value, generally speaking, can be accomplished without it. While ever humbly acknowledging ourselves to be at the disposal of our God, yet let us endeavour, looking forward to each day as it rises, to be able to say with the apostle, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do *this* or *that*." Even in tedious sickness, as has been well observed, it is wonderful how the weariness of long days may be lightened, by having regular times for such variety of employments as an invalid is capable of. Many of you, I know, have regular duties, dependent more on the arrangements of others than your own. Be faithful and diligent in these, but so far as any of you can choose for yourselves, my earnest advice is to plan beforehand, as seems most suitable, your hours for study, work,

or recreation, and keep to them as much as Providence permits. Yet when any higher duty, or providential obstacle alters your arrangements, receive this in a cheerful spirit, as intended for your good in some other way.

Endeavor to do things at the *best time*. A little attention will show you the advantage of this. For example, as I have said before, the morning hours are those when the mind is most clear and active. Give the first and best to God, to prayer and reading of his word; then take such employments as require most attention. Let the times when you are most apt to be tired and dull be given to cheerful family intercourse, needlework, or reading of a lighter kind. Hannah More, that example of useful exertion, suffered much from headaches and other illnesses, and says that in the days when she was fit for nothing else, she could at least look over her papers and *dot the i's*. I was much impressed by this little fact in reading her life, and by the lesson it conveyed. To attempt any special physical or mental effort when illness or fatigue makes us unfit for it, is only to lose our time, and depress our spirits by failure.

Give your real *attention* to whatever you are doing. We have scriptural authority for this: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." You must often have remarked how quickly one person will do the same thing compared with another, and perhaps you may have sometimes said with a sigh, "Oh, if I could but do that as she does!" No doubt there are natural differences of ability, but much is owing to bad habits and want of energy and perseverance in early life. Guard against dawdling hands and a dreamy head; give your mind and heart to the duty of the time, whatever it may be, and your progress will soon be cheering and satisfactory.

Avoid hurry and bustle. While anxious not to waste time, *take* what is required to do everything you undertake quietly and well. There is no more true proverb than that which says, "More haste worse speed." When you have finished any employment, put things quietly away into their proper places before you go to another, and you will avoid much vexatious loss of time and temper in seeking them afterwards. Ask the blessing and help of the Lord upon every duty. This of itself will promote composure as well as energy.

Have respect to the time of others. Be punctual, be considerate, in regard to this. I have often had my patience greatly tried by the manner in which those who seemed not to value time for themselves were robbing me of mine, either by not keeping appointments, or by prolonging needlessly their visits. When things of this kind occur, consider it as part of your daily discipline, and a lesson of patience, but never be the offending party.

"We are like little children strayed from home; and God is now fetching us home; but we are ready to turn into any house, stay and play with everything in our way, and sit down on every green bank, and much ado there is to get us home."—*Baxter.*

A RECEIPT IN FULL.

Do you remember the story of Martin Luther when Satan came to him, as he thought, with a long black roll of his sins, which truly might make a swaddling-band for the round world? To the arch-enemy Luther said, "Yes, I must own to them all. Have you any more?"

So the foul fiend went his way and brought another longer roll, and Martin Luther said, "Yes, yes, I must own them all. Have you any more?" The accuser of the brethren, being expert at the business, soon supplied him with a further length of charges, till there seemed to be no end to it.

Martin waited till no more were forthcoming, and then he cried, "Have you any more?" "Were not these enough?"

Ay, that they were. "But," said Martin Luther, "write at the bottom of the whole account, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'"

Brethren, this was a receipt in full, stamped in such a manner that even Satan could not question the correctness of it. However many or however few, all our sins are gone when the atoning blood comes in. I have an ugly thing in my study; it is a piece of iron, with a sharp point to it at the top, and the bottom is formed of a rounded piece of wood. It is not an ornamental object, especially as it holds impaled upon it a fine selection of bills, which are inclined to get yellow and dusty.

Bills are horrible things, but though I have a file of them they never horrify me in the least, for though they are very many, and some of them are for large amounts, yet there is not one of them but what has Her Majesty's head in the corner, with the name of the creditor to whom I have paid it. I have no fear of these records either day or night; in fact, it is a comfort to keep them now that they are discharged.

When I look at the old file I think of my old sins, pierced through by my Lord, and kept in my penitent memory as a witness to the value of His blood which has set me free from sin's tremendous debt. Here is the receipt for them all—"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Some reader, I dare say, can look at many a file of his transgressions. Are the bills all received? Are your sins all blotted out? Then you can bless the name of the Lord that the plague of your heart is gone. You are not afraid to live or afraid to die; for perfect pardon, irreversible pardon, pardon which makes a sweep of all transgression and sinks it as in a bottomless sea, from which it never can be washed up for ever—pardon, perfect pardon is yours in Jesus Christ. How sweetly this now rings out! Is there any music of silver bell that can equal it? Pardon! Pardon!—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.*

"Go where you will, your soul will find no rest but in Christ's bosom. Inquire for Him, come to Him, and rest you on Christ the Son of God. I sought Him, and I found in Him all I can wish or want."—*Rutherford.*

INNOCENT AMUSEMENTS.

It is not innocent to engage in amusement to gratify the desire for amusement. We may not innocently eat or drink to gratify the desire for food or drink. To eat or drink merely to gratify appetite is innocent enough in a mere animal, but in a moral agent it is sin. A moral agent is bound to have a higher ultimate motive—to eat and drink that he may be strong and healthy for the service of God. God has made eating and drinking pleasant to us; but this pleasure ought not to be our ultimate reason for eating and drinking. So amusements are pleasant, but this does not justify us in seeking amusements to gratify desire. Mere animals may do this innocently, because they are incapable of any higher motive. But moral agents are under a higher law, and are bound to have another and a higher aim than merely to gratify the desire for amusements. Therefore, no amusement is innocent which is engaged in for the pleasure of the amusement, any more than it would be innocent to eat and drink for the pleasure of it. Again, no amusement is innocent that is engaged in because we need amusements. We need food and drink; but this does not justify us in eating and drinking simply because we need it. The law of God does not say, "Seek whatever ye need because ye need it;" but "Do all from love to God and man." Nothing is innocent unless it proceeds from supreme love to God and equal love to man, unless the supreme and ultimate motive be to please and honor God. In other words, to be innocent, any amusement must be engaged in, because it is believed to be at the time, most pleasing to God, and is intended to be a service rendered to Him, as that which, upon the whole, will honor Him more than anything else that we can engage in for the time being. I take this to be self-evident. What then? It follows: 1st. That none but benevolent amusements can be innocent. Fishing and shooting for amusement is not innocent. We may fish and hunt for the same reason that we are allowed to eat and drink—to supply nature with aliment, that we may be strong in the service of God. We may hunt to destroy noxious animals, for the glory of God, and to the interests of His kingdom. But fishing and hunting to gratify a passion for these sports is not innocent. Again, no amusement can be innocent that involves the squandering of precious time, that might be better employed to the glory of God and the good of man. Life is short. Time is precious. We have but one life to live. Much is to be done. The world is in darkness. A world of sinners is to be enlightened, and, if possible, saved. We are required to work while the day lasteth. Our commission and work require dispatch. No time is to be lost. If our hearts are right, our work is pleasant. If rightly performed, it affords the highest enjoyment and is itself the highest amusement. No turning aside for amusement can be innocent that involves any unnecessary loss of time. No man that realizes the greatness of the work to be done and loves to do it can turn aside for any amusement involving an unnecessary waste of time. Again, no amusement can be innocent that involves an unnecessary expenditure of the Lord's money. All our time and all our money are the Lord's. We are the Lord's. We may innocently use both time and money to promote

the Lord's interests and the highest interests of man, which are the Lord's interests. But we may not innocently use either for our own pleasure and gratification. Expensive journeys for our own pleasure and amusement, and not indulged in with a single eye to the glory of God, are not innocent amusements, but sinful. Again, in the light of the above rule of judgment, we see that no form of amusement is lawful for an unconverted sinner. Nothing in him is innocent. While he remains impenitent and unbelieving, does not love God and his neighbor according to God's command, there is for him no innocent employment or amusement; all is sin. And right here I fear that many are acting under a great delusion.

To teach, either directly or by implication, that any amusement of an impenitent sinner or of a backslider is innocent, is to teach a gross and ruinous heresy. Parents should remember this in regard to the amusements of their unconverted children. Sabbath school teachers and superintendents who are planning amusements for their Sabbath schools, preachers who spend their time in planning amusements for the young, who lead their flocks to picnics, in pleasure excursions, and justify various games, should certainly remember that, unless they are in a holy state of heart, and do all this from supreme love to God and a design in the highest degree to glorify God thereby, these ways of spending time are by no means innocent, but highly criminal, and those who teach people to walk in these ways are simply directing the channels in which their depravity shall run. For be it ever remembered that, unless these things are indulged in from supreme love to God and designed to glorify Him; unless they are, in fact, engaged in with a single eye to the glory of God, they are not innocent, but sinful amusements. I must say, again, and, if possible, still more emphatically, that it is not enough that they might be engaged in the best way, for the time being, to honor and please God; but they must be actually engaged in from supreme love to God and with the ultimate design to glorify him. If such, then, is the true doctrine of innocent amusements, let no impenitent sinner and no backslidden Christian suppose for a moment that it is possible for him to engage in any innocent amusement. If it were true that impenitent sinners or backsliders can and do engage in innocent amusements, the very engaging in such amusements, being lawfully right and innocent in them, would involve a change of heart in the unconverted and a return to God in the backslider. For no amusement is lawful unless it be engaged in as a love service rendered to God and with design to please and glorify him. It must not only be a love service; but, in the judgment of the one who renders it, it must be the best service that for the time being he can render to God; a service that will be more pleasing to him and more useful to his kingdom than any other that can be engaged in at the time. Let these facts be borne in mind when the question of engaging in amusements come up for decision. And remember, the question in all such cases is not, "What harm is there in this proposed amusement?" but, "What good can it do?" "Is it the best way in which I can spend my time?" "Will it be more pleasing to God and more to the interest of his kingdom than anything else at present possible to me?" "If not, it is not an innocent amusement, and I cannot engage in it without sin."—*Pres. Finney in Independent.*

HOW SHALL WE SPEND OUR WINTER EVENINGS.

BY THE REV. LEWIS O. THOMPSON.

The world offers so many temptations to the young, that it is a pious effort to give such practical disposal to their spare hours that they shall be shielded from these allurements. We shall be wise if we combine the profitable with what is entertaining, and despise not mirth that is joined to innocence.

An early temptation to which youth is subjected is that of impure literature, bad pictures, and what has been called "yellow covered literature." Pomeroy, the boy murderer, when asked in prison how he felt after devouring a "dime novel," answered, "I felt as if I wanted to kill somebody."

Bad books and pictures have a corrupting influence, and often leave an ineffaceable mark upon the imagination. I was much struck with the remark which I heard the other day, that if we could keep the young men of the land (those less than forty years of age) from places of evil resort, within ninety days every saloon, every gambling den and every place of infamy would have to close from lack of profitable support. The truth may be overstated, but no one not cognizant of the facts has any idea of the variety and power of those temptations to which young men are subjected. He who made the remark had been a commercial traveler, and during that time had been asked a thousand times to "take a drink," but not once to "go to church."

We shall help the very young—those in the school period of life—if we make home so attractive that they shall prefer it to strange places. In a household there need be no end to the programmes that may be formed to combine amusement with instruction. There are games of skill, distinguished from those of chance, that may be played; there are readings, recitations, charades, song and music; there are occasional gatherings of a select circle for the pursuit in common of some agreeable and comprehensible subject; there are all these and more. In any associated work, such as the reading of history, it will be necessary for some one to guide the young in a judicious way. How much might not pastors, superintendents or teachers accomplish in this way for their Sunday-school classes.

Some one may ask, "Is it worth so much pains in order to amuse and instruct our children?" Let him be answered with a counter question: "Is it worth while at all to prevent the ruin of our children? Are they worth saving?"

But even if the young, as they grow up, should escape what is vicious and corrupting, there is danger that men, giving themselves wholly to business, shall read nothing but the periodicals; and women, devoting themselves as exclusively to dress, shall study nothing but the fashion plates and the latest novel. The reading of novels might not be so bad, if we could be assured that it was merely a transition to something better. But the appetite for sensational literature lives by what it feeds upon, and rarely leads to the reading of more elevated works, such as

are moral, historical or professional. Nor is an exclusive diet of periodicals wholesome. We need something besides confections, and foam or froth, for health and strength.

Now, in order to create a taste for the good, pure and beautiful in literature, I know of nothing better to begin with than the reading of history, and nothing more effective, after school days are past, than its associated study. For what is history but the biography, brief it may be, of great men, their achievements and their influence upon mankind; what but the record of human events; what but the transcript of discoveries and inventions; what but the narrative of empires, kingdoms and states in their rise, fall or destiny.

Beginning with history we shall lay the foundation for everything else; we shall be brought into contact with the world's literature; we shall be stimulated by what we discover others to have done in creative art, science and all the realms of thought. Walking along its safe pathway, we shall be warned by the follies of mankind, and be led to admire, and if possible, to imitate all that is noble and heroic in life. And so beginning and thus branching out, there is no end to the profitable lines of study that may tread each upon the heels of the other.

With history finished, although its scope is well nigh exhaustless, we may enter the domain of literature, the sphere of creative or decorative art, the circle of the sciences, the field of philosophy, the region of theology, the realm of law, or the department of criticism.

The method of associated study may be briefly stated. It is desired to read history during several months in the winter. A number of persons of both sexes may form themselves into a club, select some epoch or country for special study, and then meet as often as the interest will warrant for the comparison of results. A leader will be necessary to arrange the topics and guide the glass in its progress. Thus, as many parts might be assigned to members of the class for private study as would fill up the time for the next meeting with recitations or conversations on those topics. If the programme for the evening should be interspersed with song, music, and social intermission, it would break up formality, relieve tedium, add to the interest and strengthen the friendships that already exist.—*Westminster Teacher.*

GOD'S WORK MUST BE DONE.

A missionary in the West Indies having called on the people for a little help in spreading the gospel, a negro with a wooden leg came forward, and putting his hand in one pocket, pulled out some silver, saying, "That's for me, massa;" and another parcel from another pocket, "that's for my wife, massa;" and another still, in all upwards of twelve dollars, "that's for my child, massa." When asked if he were not giving too much, he said "God's work must be done, massa, and I may be dead."

Boys, girls, as well as grown-up people, let us do and let us give what we can. "God's work must be done, and we may be dead."

THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

A SALARIED SUPERINTENDENT.

Some time ago one of the daily papers contained the statement that a certain Sabbath school in New England pays its Superintendant a regular salary, and that he devotes his whole time to the interests of the school, visiting families, looking after absent scholars and other similar employment. The school is a large one numbering about 1000 members, and thus requiring much time and thought in its proper management. This is to some extent a new departure in the right direction which is well worthy of the attention of all those engaged in the religious training of youth. It is of course not practicable, neither is it desirable to have paid officers in any one of the overwhelming majority of Sabbath schools, yet when the scholars are numbered by hundreds in any one, the advantages to be obtained by a properly trained and qualified leader must be apparent to all, while the time required in such a case is more than usually can be given by any one engaged in other daily toil. The above item of news, however, is suggestive, not so much as an example to be copied, as on account of the principles of which it is the exemplification. Sabbath schools for the most part, as at present conducted, are largely deficient in those things necessary to success in other fields of labor. There is but little of system, of wise forethought and of uninterrupted attention to minute details. The teachers, as also the superintendent, too often obtain their positions, not on account of fitness, nor of the time at their disposal for the study of the lesson, or the visitation of their pupils, but simply on account of their tardily expressed willingness to help on the good work. This state of matters should not be, neither can we expect proper results until it is all changed. Our Saviour charged his disciples to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," and if there is any sphere of Christian duty that calls for our best wisdom in planning and executing, most truly it is in the school where young minds are to be indoctrinated in the truths of salvation, and in the duties to which they are soon to be called as active members in the Church. God has given us tact and judgment, and we use them freely in the ordinary affairs of life. The farmer prepares the soil, sows the seed and prays for the Divine blessing in the copious showers, never doubting but that the harvest will assuredly come, which, again, patiently and carefully he gathers into his capacious barns, so, it is the same judgment and common sense, sanctified by Divine grace, that we so much need in our schools in order that the preparation of the young hearts and the sowing of the spiritual seed may produce an abundant harvest. Great progress has been made in this direction during the few years past, associations have been formed, and teachers' meetings held, in which the lessons are carefully studied, plans for the conduct of the school matured, methods of teaching and the general needs discussed, and above all united prayer is offered at the throne of grace. It was such a meeting of the disciples in the upper room at Jerusalem that preceded the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit, and it is upon such united intelligent prayerful effort that the promises are conditioned. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."—J. T.

THE BOOK OF BOOKS.

*What has the Bible done for me ?
Told me, my gracious God, of Thee !
What has it made me feel withi.—
The weight, the power, the guilt of sin.*

*What has it taught me of the love
Which brought my Saviour from above ?
What has it showed me of my loss,
And what I owe to Calvary's Cross ?*

*What has it brought in sorrow's hour
Home to my heart with mighty power ?
What has it, in advancing years,
Taught me of suffering, grief, and tears ?*

*What has it done to calm my mind
When friends long trusted proved unkind ?
What has it done my grief to stay .
When death has borne the loved away ?*

*What has it told of sin forgiven ?
The love of Christ—the hope of heaven ?
What has it made my eyes to see ?
*What has the Bible done for me ?**

The family Bible should be regarded by every house as the ark of the Lord was regarded among the children of Israel. It should be holy unto the Lord ; and we should read it, value it, and look upon it as the especial gift of God to us for the benefit of our souls.

*"Though many a page to lead our feet
In wisdom's ways be given,
The Bible is the Book of books
To guide the soul to heaven."*

Read it at the dawn of day, when you are refreshed with slumber, and the sun shines in the heavens. Read it at eventide, before you commit yourself for the night to the great Shepherd of Israel, who neither sleeps nor slumbers. Read it in company with the followers of Jesus Christ, to strengthen your faith one with another. Read it in the solitude to brighten your hope of immortality. Read it in the day of prosperity, when your heart is thankful. Read it in the season of sorrow, when you require consolation. Read it when tempted to do evil, to fortify your soul against sin. Read it on the Lord's-day, before and after attending the house of God. Read it, in short, at all times and at all seasons, when you have the opportunity ; for the more you know of the word and will of God, and of the grace of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, the happier you will be, and the more anxious to obey Him, honour Him, love Him, and praise Him all the days of your life.

"Men made men in God's school are trained and hardened by discipline, trial, self-denial, opposition. A kite that has its own way, no one pulling the string, soon falls to the ground."—Anon.

"WILL YOU BE THERE?"

Beyond this life of hopes and fears,
Beyond this world of griefs and tears,
There is a region fair.
It knows no change and no decay,
No night, but one unending day.
O say, will you be there?

Its glorious gates are closed to sin;
Nought that defiles can enter in
To mar its beauty rare.
Upon that bright, eternal shore,
Earth's bitter curse is known no more.
O say, will you be there?

No drooping form, no tearful eye,
No hoary head, no weary sigh,
No pain, no grief, no care;
But joys which mortals may not know,
Like a calm river, ever flow.
O say, will you be there?

Our Saviour, once a mortal child,
As mortal man, by man reviled,
There many crowns doth wear;
While thousand thousands swell the strain
Of glory to the Lamb once slain!
O say, will you be there?

Who shall be there? The lowly here
All those who serve the Lord in fear,
The world's proud mockery dare!
Who by the Holy Spirit led,
Rejoice the narrow path to tread;—
These, these shall all be there!

Those who have learnt at Jesus' cross
All earthly gain to count but loss,
So that His love they share,
Who gazing on the Crucified,
By faith can say, "For me He died,"—
These, these shall all be there!

Will you be there? You shall, you must,
If, hating sin, in Christ you trust;]
Who did that place prepare.
Still doth His voice sound sweetly, "Come!
I am the way—I'll lead you home—
With me you will be there!"

"With a childlike trust I give my hand
To the mighty Friend at my side;
And the only thing that to Him I say,
As He takes it, is, 'Hold me fast,'
Suffer me not to lose my way,
And bring me home at last."

THE HOME CIRCLE.

A TRUE STORY OF HOME LIFE.

"It is no use talking, the boy is thoroughly disagreeable. We are glad to have him out of the house; it is a positive relief. Look at the expression of his face as he sits out there upon the rocks."

Thus ended a conversation with Mrs. Palmer upon the merits and demerits of her only son, a bright boy of fifteen. Poor John Henry! he had long ceased to be his father's pride, his mother's joy; but the expression of his countenance, as he sat upon a rock and looked out upon the broad expanse of water, was rather dejected than unamiable. At least, so thought his kind and gentle aunt, who had been accused of undue partiality for the wayward boy. For, alas! John Henry was no saint, having been bred in a household where saints were very rare.

There was a time when Mrs. Palmer took great delight in her handsome boy, and looked joyfully forward to that happy period when he would come to manhood. But the cares of a large family wore upon a disposition never sweet, and Mrs. Palmer had no idea how largely she was herself responsible for the somewhat combustible atmosphere in which she lived.

"For pity's sake, Mary, take small mouthfuls. Sarah make less noise with your knife and fork, or I'll send you from the table. Do, John Henry, sit up straight and look pleasant just for once before your face fairly freezes into its usual surly expression."

These gentle admonitions, and others of a similar character were reiterated day by day, until the children's sensitive spirits were hardened, and nothing short of a downright explosion had any effect upon them.

The girls of the household had inherited from their father, quiet, peace-loving dispositions, and they had resigned themselves to their mother's infirmity, taking it as quite a matter of course. But John Henry had his mother's vigorous energy and ardent temper. Between his mother and himself there was constant friction, until John's failings became an established fact in the household, freely acknowledged and frequently commented upon.

His father attempted to stem the tide and right matters, but the difficulty had assumed large proportions before he recognized it. His sister Helen, two years his senior, dimly realized the situation, but unfortunately did not prove equal to the emergency.

"Helen, my dear," said Aunt Annie, "I do wish you would be more patient with John. No doubt he is often provoking; but if you would take a greater interest in him I am sure he would respond to it. He is a bright, manly fellow, and we always enjoy him when he comes to our house."

"O yes," replied Helen, "John's well enough everywhere but at home. Fortunately he doesn't condescend to spend much of his time with us. I have to bear things with the best grace possible. Is he to be petted and coddled just because he is a boy? I am sure I don't know what is

to become of John, but I can't for the life of me see why a boy must always take things in such a desperate way, or why all their friends should be expected to stand round and play the agreeable to them just for fear that they will go to the bad."

Aunt Annie turned away with a heavy heart, feeling that the angels might sweep over a household, disunited and inharmonious, into which the element of discord had come with the evident intention of making a long stay. On her way home she met John Henry, who greeted her with a pleasant smile and a frank and cordial manner.

"I am glad to see you, my boy," she said as she returned his kindly greeting. "How are you getting along?"

The old, dejected look crept over his face as he replied, "Worse and worse, Aunt Annie; I have about come to the conclusion that it is no use trying to be good. Hang it! if it wasn't for father and you I believe I would clear out altogether."

"That was hardly spoken like my brave and manly nephew," replied Aunt Annie. "No one ever redeems his character by running away, except where one flees from temptation. Make a brave and steady stand for the right, and you will be sure to come off victorious. How your poor mother would feel if you should run away."

"You think so, do you?" said John, with something like a sneer. "Well, let me tell you she wouldn't care a straw. I threatened to run away the last row we had, and she told me to go and welcome, the sooner the better."

"I am sorry to hear you speak so, John," his aunt replied. "You try your mother's patience sorely, and she speaks without thinking. I am sure she loves you dearly, and if anything should happen to you she would be greatly distressed."

"Yes, I think I have heard you say something very like that before," John replied with an incredulous air.

With a hasty "good-bye," John hurried away, leaving his aunt by no means reassured by her conversation with her nephew.

The next morning at breakfast no John Henry made his appearance. The breakfast bell was rung twice with considerable energy.

"Do let the boy sleep, Mary," said Mr. Palmer; "he is probably tired. He did considerable running about for me yesterday."

"That's no reason why he shouldn't get up this morning," Mrs. Palmer replied; "and if he doesn't come soon he'll lose his breakfast."

Eight, nine o'clock came, and no John appeared.

"That boy is enough to try the patience of a saint!" exclaimed his mother. "Here he is late for school. Step up stairs, Helen, and insist upon his getting up."

Helen went up stairs as directed, but her knock at John's door received no response. With a vague sense of impending trouble she opened the door, and was startled to find the room vacant and the bed undisturbed. She hastily called her mother, who looked about the room with a troubled air, but said:

"Ah! this is a new trick; he threatened to run away the other day, and this is to frighten us a little."

Just then Helen spied a note upon the cushion on the bureau. It was

directed to his father, but his mother eagerly opened it. It read as follows :

DEAR FATHER : When you read this I shall be miles away. I shall take the night train for New Bedford, and I shall soon be far off on the ocean, for I am going to sea. I knew you would never give your consent, and so I am going without it. Forgive me, father ! I know it is mean and cowardly, but I can't help it. Everything is against me at home, and I never could do anything to please mother. She will be glad to get rid of me, and I hope things will be pleasanter when I am gone. Give my love to Aunt Annie and the girls, and don't feel bad. I may come back a rich man and then you will all be proud of me. I am sorry I have been such a troublesome boy. I shall remember you all, and I shan't forget to say my prayers.

JOHN HENRY.

P. S.—I should be awful sorry if I thought mother would really care. In fact, I wouldn't go. But she won't ; she said she wouldn't.

Mrs. Palmer read this boyish epistle with a dreadful sinking at heart. Every word was like a knife piercing sharply. She saw, too late, her mistake, and beheld as if in a vision the rock upon which their household happiness had been shipwrecked. With her usual energy she despatched Helen to the store for Mr. Palmer, who rapidly made arrangements to follow his son, and, if possible, bring him home again.

Mr. Palmer returned in a few days ; his journey had proved unavailing ; but a letter came from John ; he had set sail in a whaling vessel, to be gone three years. Mrs. Palmer's strength and energy vanished with the last hope of John's return, and for a few days she was really ill. Bitterly she reproached herself with having driven her boy from home, and fervently she prayed, with lips unused to supplication, that he might be preserved from every danger and returned in safety to his home again. The proud spirit of the woman was broken, and an accusing conscience found its only relief in the hitherto unsought comforts of religion. If John Henry could now have looked into his home he would have doubted the evidences of his own senses. What tears of joy was shed over his first letter home, and tender words and loving were those that reached the lonely boy months afterward.

But, alas ! we yet reap as we sow, and despite the penitent tears the fact remains. John Henry is spending three years in the mixed company of a whaling-cruise. How will he bear the test ? We know not ; but one thing we may be sure—he will bear to the grave scars which he would never have received had the angel of charity and peace sooner taken its abode in the home of his childhood.

A gentleman, visiting a slave mart, was deeply moved by the agony of a slave girl, who had been delicately reared, and feared that she should fall into the hands of a rough master. The gentleman inquired the price, paid it to the slave trader, then placed the bill of sale in her own hands, telling her she was free and could now go home. The slave girl could not realise the change at first, but, running after her redeemer, cried, "He has redeemed me! he has redeemed me! Will you let me be your servant?" How much more should we serve Him who has redeemed us from sin, death, and hell.

THE CHILDREN'S PORTION.

LIFE LESSONS.

People have fancied that we are born with hearts white as snow, and that they are blackened afterwards by evil example. But the Bible teaches us that we are born with evil hearts,—hearts filled with the seeds of corruption as the ground is with weed seeds. How soon we find it to be so! How easy it is for us to do wrong, how hard to do right! Whence spring infant tempers, infant falsehoods, infant disobediences? We trace this to our fallen nature inherited through our parents from Adam and Eve. *They* ate the sour grapes, and our teeth are set on edge. If a bowl of dye be crimson, whatever you draw out of it will be red—if a coat be black, each thread you pull from it will be black. So if our hearts are sinful, whatever issues from them will be more or less sinful. And by-and-bye, we are conscious that we sin—we are quite aware that this or that is contrary to God's law, and yet we do it; and these are *wilful sins*. Had we driven a nail into a wall for every such sin, what a sight that wall would be. But God has remembered them. They are in his book. One stone flung at the Queen would put you in prison—one theft from a shop would blast your character—and one sin is enough to ruin us. But we have hundreds to answer for. If we could recollect them and were sorry for them, they would seem a big load on our backs, pressing us down to the dust. We should be as frightened as Cain was with the blood of his brother upon him. And, indeed, you are afraid sometimes; and sometimes you are unhappy, and sometimes you are ashamed. Here you have three proofs that you have sins to be forgiven, —fear, trouble, shame. And think how these would overwhelm you, if you had to appear before God without any prospect of pardon.

But how can they be forgiven?—It sinners grieve over them? No. If they resolve to do them no more? No. If they fast and afflict themselves? No. If they pray to God? No. By trusting in God's mercy No. How, then? *Simply by taking Jesus for their Saviour!* “Your sins are forgiven for *his name's sake*,” that is for Christ's sake. We frequently employ another's name. We ask for kindness, for help, for a favour, because a beloved relative has deserved it for us. It is said that as a poor beggar was going in to petition the king for his rebel son, in the passage he met the king's lovely child. He took him up in his arms and carried him in before the king, and then besought him to spare his son for that lovely child's sake, and the king was melted. So with Christ's name, it is mighty for us to plead; it can obtain instant and entire absolution for the vilest. For he is God's delight, and he has himself borne our punishment on the cross—the just for the unjust. He shed his precious blood on purpose that God might be able to say to each penitent soul, “I forgive you freely.” We ought to have been on that cross; but he chose to be nailed to it in our stead. He was bruised and slain in our stead. He can bid you and me gaze at that awful scene, and declare to us that a way is opened to us there to God's LOVE. Nay, it was God's

own love which provided that sacrifice on purpose for us to trust in, and be at rest. You are guilty, but Jesus has atoned for your guilt; you deserve hell, but Jesus has endured hell and deserved glory for you. The ship in which you started is wrecked, and you are sinking in it, but Jesus approaches, and offers to rescue you. If you embrace him as your own, if you yield yourself to him, if you ask peace with God for "his name's sake," never doubt but that your sins are forgiven—that all which has caused you fear, trouble, or shame, is blotted out as effectually as if you had not done it. The Hindu crawled for fifty miles in the burning sun across a dusty plain, imploring his gods to accept it for his crimes; when the missionary spoke to him of Jesus' finished work, he burst into tears, and clapping his hands, exclaimed, "Then though I have crawled these fifty miles in vain, I have crawled to the true fountain at last. I might have reached it without crawling an inch, but I would crawl another fifty miles once a month to have heard of this true fountain."

It may be a trifle to you now, whether or not your sins are forgiven; but it is the most important matter in your whole existence, and I beseech you to attend to it while you can. You should realize that until you are forgiven, you are hanging by a thread over a precipice, or fastened by the devil in a dungeon, from which none but Jesus can deliver you. Now, he is knocking at the door, and saying to you, "Shall I do it? Will you resign your case to me? Will you follow me and be mine?" Oh, speedily may we see you led forth by him unfettered, and hear you whispering to yourself with joyful lips, "FORGIVEN! FORGIVEN!"

A COWARD.

"A coward, Tom! That's what *you* are! Why don't you strike him, and not walk away so, and let him call you names? Catch me to take it so quietly! I would let him know who he had to fight. Oh, you are a coward!"

"Was Jesus Christ, our Saviour, a coward, Jack? And what did he do when he was scourged, and struck in the face and even spit upon? Did he strike back? Or when he was reviled, did he do the same? No! we are told that he answered not a word; but when on the cross, in suffering and agony, he prayed God to forgive them. Shall we not try and follow his example? I intend to try as far as I can to be like Jesus, meek and gentle, and forbearing and forgiving. I have not done anything to offend Will, only refused to play truant with him, and advised him to go to school too, when he struck me, and because I did not strike back, he called me names."

What effect, do you think, my little reader, this good boy's conduct and words had upon the other two? I will tell you. Will walked up to Tom, and told him that he was sorry that he had struck, and that he would go to school with him. Jack joined them, and said he had never thought before that Jesus had set an example not to fight; and that he would remember it, and also the good effect of his young companion's words and conduct which had explained it to them; and that he would read his Bible more. Who knows how much more good this may do him?

A little boy, for a trick, pointed with his finger to the wrong road, when a man asked him which way the doctor went. As a result, the man missed the doctor, and his little boy died, because the doctor came too late to take a fish-bone from his throat. At the funeral, the minister said that "boy was killed by a lie, which another boy told with his finger." I suppose the boy did not know the mischief he did. Of course, nobody thinks he meant to kill a little boy when he pointed the wrong way. He only wanted to have a little fun, but it was fun that cost somebody a great deal; and if he ever heard of the results of it, he must have felt guilty of a mean and wicked thing. We ought never to trifle with the truth.

It is a delusion to think that our parents are less in sympathy with us than our companions.

It is a delusion to consider our inclinations and desires as entitled to any more indulgence at the age of sixteen than our parents allowed them to have over us at the age of ten.

It is a delusion to believe that it is manly or womanly to indulge in any practice that is deplored by those who have become its slaves; and so we should see to it that we are not allowing our curiosity or desire to appear manly or womanly to make us become slaves to expensive or filthy habits that cripple us in the race of life.

Well would it be if all Christians lived as they know they ought to live. But seeing that so many of them do not, I think it important to point out to young people that we must not depend too much upon human example. The only all-perfect man who ever trod this earth was Christ. Let us keep *Him* ever before our eyes as our only infallible Pattern.

SOLUTIONS OF BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR JANUARY.

- LIII. I Sam. XII. 12.
LIV. Luke XVIII. 13.
LV. Joshua VI. 25.
-

BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR FEBRUARY.

- LVI. What three persons when in distress of mind asked God to take away their lives?
LVII. Who was the first kingly person to whom God gave a name before birth? and what was the meaning of the name?
LVIII. What is the earliest teaching of a future judgment?
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