

Sermons to Children

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# SERMONS TO CHILDREN.

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BY

F. W. P. GREENWOOD, D. D.,

MINISTER OF KING'S CHAPEL, BOSTON.

NEW EDITION.



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### EDITORIAL NOTE.

THIS little volume, which has been long out of print, is republished at the request of the "Ladies' Commission on Sunday-School Books."

Many parents, in search of some helpful reading for their children, will recognize it as one of the pleasant instructors of their own early years.

JANUARY 1, 1868.



## P R E F A C E .



THE sermons which are contained in this little volume were addressed to the children of my church. As I knew that they were interested in hearing them, I hoped that they and other children might be interested in reading them ; and therefore I have caused them to be printed. I need not say how highly I shall be gratified, if they are read with favor and profit by those for whose use they are published.

In writing this series of discourses, I endeavored to adapt my style to the age and capacity of my audience, by making it as simple as it could be made, consistently with a due degree of solemnity. I resolved also to dispense with the advantage which might be derived from the introduction of illustrative

stories, as I thought that children were already in possession of abundance of that species of instruction, and that I would rather trust to the ideas presented in a plain didactic form, to fix their attention.

My hope is, that this book may be found an available addition to the *Sunday reading* of children, from about seven to twelve years of age, in the family, or in the Sunday school.

As I have referred, in the first sermon, to a Catechism, I have appended it to the volume. It is selected from other Catechisms, not because it claims superiority, but because it has been in use in the church to which I minister, for a term of more than fifty years.

I now humbly ask the blessing of our heavenly Father on this book, and on "little children."

F. W. P. GREENWOOD.

DECEMBER, 1840.



# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
SERMON I.	
GOD CREATED YOU . . . . .	1
SERMON II.	
GOD CREATED YOU TO BE GOOD AND HAPPY . . . . .	11
SERMON III.	
GOD SEES AND KNOWS YOU . . . . .	24
SERMON IV.	
YOU SHOULD PRAY TO GOD . . . . .	34
SERMON V.	
OFFICES AND TITLES OF JESUS CHRIST . . . . .	45
SERMON VI.	
INFANCY OF JESUS . . . . .	56
SERMON VII.	
CHILDHOOD OF JESUS . . . . .	67
SERMON VIII.	
THE NOTICE TAKEN OF CHILDREN BY JESUS . . . . .	79

## SERMON IX.

A NEW-YEAR'S WISH . . . . . 90

## SERMON X.

FAULTS OF CHILDREN . . . . . 100

## SERMON XI.

A SUMMARY . . . . . 111

---

A CATECHISM FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN 123

## SERMON I.



### GOD CREATED YOU.

COME, YE CHILDREN, HEARKEN UNTO ME. I WILL TEACH  
YOU THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

IF my children will look in their Bibles for the Thirty-fourth Psalm, and the eleventh verse, they will find there the words of the text. In the language of Scripture, I call upon you to listen to me, while with affectionate concern for your improvement and happiness, I endeavor to teach you the principles of religion, or, which is the same thing, the fear of the Lord. I mean to do this in some sermons, which I shall write on purpose for you, and which I shall try to make so plain, that you cannot help understanding them if you will only listen. And yet, though I shall try to make them plain, they will have the same things in them which I preach to grown-up people. And these things are very important. Indeed they are the most important things which can be told either to men and women or to children.

My first sermon will be about the first and most important thing to be known, which is, that you, and I, and all people, and all creatures and things, were made by one Being, or Mind, whom we call God. You remember that the first question in your catechism is, "Can you tell me, child, who made you?" And the answer is, "God made me, and all things." The question is a natural one, and the answer is perfectly true. And how do we know that it is true? You may say, Because the Bible tells us so. That is a good reason. The Bible does tell us so very often. The first words in the Bible are, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And afterwards, in that same chapter it is said, "So God created man." And in the fourth commandment it says, "The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." There are a great many other places in which God is spoken of as the Maker of all things, and the Maker of all men. And so you would be right in saying that the Bible tells you, that the answer in the catechism is true. But there is another way of showing its truth. Hearken to me, and I will explain it to you.

There is our church organ, with its rows of gilt pipes and its case of carved oak. Would you not say, that a person who should look at it, and insist that it was not made at all, was ignorant, or stupid, or perverse to a remarkable degree? The work and arrangement which you perceive even on the outside of it convince you that it was made by art. And when you hear the fine music which may be brought out of it, and are shown that this effect is produced by means of wind, which is blown through a multitude of pipes within the case, you are still more convinced that it was made, and did not come there and breathe such rich and regular melody by chance. You know that it must have been made on purpose to produce music. You see that it could not make itself; and that it must have been made by some ingenious workman. Well; but who made the workman? Did he come by chance, or make himself? Consider this matter. Look at any man, or any child. His eyes, and his mouth, and his whole body are as regular, and as much like workmanship, as the outside of that organ, and they are much nicer workmanship. And his voice can

produce much more wonderful music than the organ can; because it can speak of a great many different things; and I dare say, that the voice of a good child is sweeter music to his parents than any they ever heard from the organ. Then, if you were to inquire of learned men, who have examined what is in the inside of the human frame, they would assure you that the workmanship there is much superior to the inside of an organ. They would assure you that even the hand which builds an organ, or plays upon it after it is built, is a much more curious instrument than the organ itself. Its muscles and joints and nerves and blood-vessels are much more ingeniously contrived and put together than the pipes of an organ. Then you see that men must be made, as well as organs.

But who made men? Can a man make himself? No. Every man knows that he did not make himself, and could not make himself. Indeed, there are very few men who know how curious and wonderful the workmanship is which composes the human body. How can a man make a machine, when he is ignorant of the parts which com-

pose it, and of the manner in which they are fitted to each other? Ask the best physicians, and they will tell you, that though by long study and examination, they have gained some knowledge of the human frame, there is a great deal about it which they do not understand. How, then, can men make a human frame, or body, when even the most learned do not know all the parts of it, and all the motions of it?

If an organ gets out of tune, the man who made it, or any man who knows how organs are made, can look into it, and see what pipes are out of order, and then he can go to work and mend them. And this is because he is acquainted with every part of the organ, and can see exactly what he must do to it when it is out of tune. But it very often happens that a little child gets out of order, and is very sick, and pines away, and its father and mother do not know what is the matter with it, and they send for the physician, and he does not know what is the matter, though he is a good physician, and frequently cures people; and no medicine is of any service to the child, and at last it grows cold, and dies, and



its voice, which used to make such sweet music for its father and mother, is hushed, and never sings again on this earth. And so you see, that they who did not know what was the matter with it, and could not cure it, could not have made it. Who, then, did make it? It must have been a Maker who is much wiser than the wisest of men. God made it; and he made us all.

And not only did God make all men, all human beings, but he made all things. God made everything that you behold, and everything that is. Do you not suppose that the great and mighty sun, which gives light and heat to the whole world, must have been made by a Being greater and mightier than the sun? How calmly and softly the moon shines down upon you, on a pleasant summer night, as if it loved to watch over good children, and cover them all around with peace and moonbeams. Do you not think it must have been a great and good Being who placed it in the sky, and gave it all that quiet and gentle light? Then there is the multitude of stars, twinkling over your heads like so many lamps burning up in a grand arch.



But almost every child knows that they are not lamps, but vast worlds, larger than the whole earth, and as large as our sun, which is more than a million times as large as the earth. Every star is a sun; and it seems like a lamp, only because it is so far away from you. So, when you see the twinkling stars, you see mighty suns. There they certainly are, shining gloriously like our own sun, and very probably giving light and heat to thousands of worlds, which are full of creatures like our own earth, but which are so far away that we cannot see them at all. It must be a very powerful Being who made all these suns and worlds. That Being is God.

Now that I am speaking of the stars, I will tell you what has sometimes happened to me, when I have been in grief or trouble, and my heart has felt sad and heavy. If, at such a time, I have looked at the stars, and considered that they are mighty worlds, and that they all stand quietly in their places, and do their duty under the eye of their Maker, I have thought that the same God who made them made me too, and that he must be so wise and good as to know what is best for me,

and to take care of me as well as of them. And after I have thought this so strongly that the stars almost seemed to speak it into my heart, I have been comforted, and my sadness has left me. Perhaps when you are older, and are in any trouble or sorrow, the stars may speak comfortably to you, in the same manner.

But, my children, it is not only these high and stupendous things which require the hand of God to make them. Much smaller things, which we see about us on the earth, could only be fashioned by the same hand. The green grass, and the gray moss, and the sweet and lovely flowers, and the little birds, and the yet smaller insects are made by God; and no one else could make them. In all such things there is something curious for us to learn, and much besides which is past our finding out. Do you think that the most ingenious man on earth could make a butterfly? He might make something to look like a butterfly, but he could not cause it to live and to feel. No; he could no more make a butterfly than he could make a star. For my own part, I would as soon undertake to make

a magnificent starry world, and hang it up, millions of miles away in the sky, as to make a real living butterfly or a beetle or a creeping worm. Therefore, children, you should be careful never to despise those little things as some people very unwisely do. It is much wiser to study and admire them. But if you should not have time or inclination to study them, I do hope that you will never be so silly as to despise them; for you may rest assured, that what God, in his wisdom, has seen fit to make, and nothing but his wisdom and power could make, it does not become you or any one else to treat with contempt.

My children, hearken unto me a moment longer, and then I shall finish this sermon. In explaining to you how you may know that God made you, and all things, I spoke only of your bodies, and did not mention your souls. But if God made your bodies, much more must he have been the Maker of your souls, — those souls which think and remember and feel and are listening to me now, — for those souls are even more wonderfully made than your bodies, or than the stars of the sky. Or, if they are not more wonder-

ful, they are certainly more important to each one of you. But as I shall have occasion, at some other time, to speak to you more about your souls, or that most important part of you which thinks and understands and acts, I will only say now, that the soul of every child is dear to God who made it; and I sincerely believe, that though God is pleased to see the sun and moon and stars shining to his praise, and the grass springing, and the flowers blowing on his own earth, and all creatures enjoying the life which he gave them, he is more pleased to see the soul of a child shining with the light of virtue, and growing up in goodness and usefulness and joy, like a beautiful and healthy plant.

If I find that you understand this sermon, and are interested by it, I shall preach to you some more discourses, which I hope will be pleasant and instructive. And now let us, together, ascribe unto Almighty God, our Creator and heavenly Father, all praise and glory forever.

## SERMON II.



GOD CREATED YOU TO BE GOOD AND HAPPY.

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY  
YOUTH.

MY children will find the text of this my second sermon in that book of the Old Testament which is called Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, and was written by King Solomon. That book has been divided into twelve chapters; and the text is a part of the first verse of the twelfth chapter.

In my first sermon I told you how you could know that God is your Creator. I shall go on to tell you how you may remember your Creator in the days of your childhood and youth. For certainly, as he is your Creator, as he made you so wonderfully, and placed you in this world, and surrounded you with the other wonderful works of his hand, and gave you all that you have, you ought to remember him; that is, you ought to think of him often and seriously, and learn what it

is that he wishes you to do, and sincerely resolve and try to do it. Surely it must be very wrong for any one to forget the great Being who made him. I hope, my children, that you never will forget him, but will take care to remember him, in the days of your youth, and all the days of your life.

In order that you may learn what it is that your Creator wishes you to do, you must consider why it was that he made you. He must have had some purpose in making you ; now, what was that purpose ? For what did God make you ? Did he not place you in a magnificent and beautiful world, and make it very pleasant for you to look upon all the grand and lovely sights which it contains ? Is it not pleasant to exercise your bodily faculties, that is, to see, and hear, and to taste the food which God has provided for you, and to run about and play ? And, is it not pleasant to exercise your mental faculties, that is, to get all the knowledge which is suitable to your age, and to feel that you are growing wiser as you grow older ? And is it not pleasant to exercise your affections, that is, to love your friends, and be loved by them, and to be kind



and grateful and generous? Is not all this pleasant? Then you may be sure that God made you to be happy. And though you may be sometimes sick and in pain, and often unhappy, yet you are sensible that sickness and unhappiness are not your natural and proper state and condition, and therefore that you were not made for the purpose of being sick and unhappy; but that God's chief design in making you was that you should be healthy and happy. But then he did not make you to be happy at all events, and in any way, but only on certain conditions, and in one particular way. Let us see what that way is.

If you are ever so healthy, and are surrounded by everything that might make you comfortable, if at the same time you are in a violent passion, or have disobeyed and justly displeased your parents, or have done anything wrong, you are not comfortable, you are not happy. The sun may shine as brightly as ever, and the flowers smell as sweetly, and the birds sing as gayly, and yet, if you are not good, all this, and much more, will fail to give you pleasure, and you will be unhappy, even in the midst of happiness. On the other hand,

if you have been good, and have nothing on your mind which troubles you, you will enjoy all pleasant things with a double relish, and even bear many unpleasant things with patience. You cannot be really happy without being good; and therefore you may conclude, that though God made you to be happy, he made you to find your greatest happiness in being good.

It needs care to be good, I know; and sometimes it appears to be easier for children, and grown people too, to do wrong than to do right, notwithstanding they would be happy in doing right, and unhappy in doing wrong. But this does not prove that you are not made just as you ought to be, and made to be good and happy. I will call your attention once more to the comparison of the organ. Suppose that a person should go up to it, and, without any skill or attention, strike about on the keys, wherever his hands might happen to fall. Instead of making music, he would make most terrible discord: yet it would not be fair to say, that the organ was built to make discord, would it? Surely not. It was built to make music, because, when it is



played upon properly, it does make music. It is an instrument of music, and not an instrument of discord, even though it may be easier to make discord on it than to make music. Music is pleasant; discord is not pleasant, but painful. We must believe that all the time and skill and expense which were devoted to the building of the organ were devoted to bring forth what should be pleasant, and not what should be painful. The organ may produce discord, and will produce discord if its keys are struck ignorantly and improperly. But not so, if they are touched with knowledge and care. Let the very person who made such discord with its tones take lessons in music, and pay attention to them, and strive to improve himself by practice, and then he will play on it better and better, committing mistakes, most probably, as he goes on, but still playing better and better, every day, till he draws forth music from it which charms himself and every one else.

It is very much the same with yourselves. You were made for goodness, virtue, holiness, which may be called spiritual music, or the music of the soul. Love, hope, fear, joy,

grief, are the musical notes within you. If your will is suffered to strike those notes, in a violent and careless and uninstructed manner, discord and sin will very likely be the consequence. But if you are rightly instructed in your duty, and you pay continual attention to the lessons which you receive, — for if you do not pay this attention yourselves the lessons will be of little service to you, — then your affections will be made to harmonize together more and more, and it will be easy and delightful to you to produce spiritual music, that is, to be good, and this music will be very sweet to the ears of your friends and of listening angels, and of God who made you, and made you to be good and happy.

You have a great many teachers, to instruct you in spiritual music. Some of them are visible; such as your parents and your minister and your schools and your books; and some of them are invisible, such as experience and habit and conscience. But let your teachers be ever so many, and ever so well qualified, if you do not attend to their instructions, and do not try to profit by them, you will never be accomplished in that goodness

which I call spiritual harmony, but you will go on making discord through the whole of your lives. And what sad lives, such lives of discord will be!

I have said, that you must remember your Creator by thinking of him, and trying to please him; and that the way to please him is by being good, which is also the way to be happy yourselves. Now, if it is so very important to be good, it is also important to know what it is to be good, as exactly as we can. A few plain rules will point out to you the best ways for a child to take in order to be good.

The first rule of goodness for you to observe, is, to love and obey your parents. It is true that most children do not need to be told to love their parents, for they cannot help loving them, and it would be strange if they did not love them. You see every day that your parents take care of you, and work for you, and love you, and so you naturally love them. But then most of you do need to be reminded how much you owe to your parents, so that you may love them more thoughtfully, and show your love to them in a right and proper manner.

By saying that your love of your parents should be thoughtful, I mean that you should think of their kindness and their watchfulness, so that your mind may be prepared to show your love on every occasion. You owe to your parents more than you do to any other human beings. You hardly know how much and how often your parents think of you, and how constantly they are endeavoring to provide for your happiness and safety. They are always anxious for the comfort of your body and the improvement of your mind. They not only toil that you may not want, and watch that you may not suffer, but they would rather want themselves than see you want, and would rather suffer themselves than see you suffer. Now you should think of this, and then your love will be thoughtful, and will be ready to show itself in a proper manner. And how will it show itself in a proper manner? By leading you to obedience. The best way to show your parents that you love them is to do the things that they wish you to do, and to do them willingly and cheerfully. You should obey them, not because they are stronger than you, and have

power to oblige you to obey ; but because you love them, and like to show your love by pleasing them. And parents are better pleased by the obedience of their children than by anything else. Of course I do not mean that you should do what is wicked, even in obedience to your parents ; because that would be to disobey God ; but I do not believe that you will be exposed to any such trial ; and you may be assured, that as your parents are wiser than you are, they will know what is right better than yourselves, and will only expect you to do what is really good.

The second rule of goodness is, to speak the truth always. There is a most excellent beauty in truth. No child and no man can be good, without being honest and true. When a child is in the habit of speaking what is false, the beauty of his soul is gone, and there is no knowing how deformed it may grow. The ways of falsehood are crooked and dark and foul 'and dangerous, and if you begin to walk in them, you will soon meet with shame, and soon after with misery. But the ways of truth are straight and open, and

full of sunshine and honor. Shall I tell you what a child is like who loves the truth, and always speaks the truth? He is like a pure fountain of water, which exactly reflects the image of every flower which stands near it, and every bird which flies over it, and which is so clear that one can look down into it and see every little pebble at the bottom. But a child who does not love the truth, nor speak it, is like a fountain which has been sadly disturbed and mixed with impurities; it is turbid and muddy, and no one can see into it, and there is no refreshment in looking at it. I beseech you, my children, to hold fast to the truth, and never be afraid of speaking it, and to shun the crooked paths of deception, and to keep your souls clean and pure, like fountains of healthy and crystal water, into which the flowers and the stars and all men love to look.

The third rule of goodness is, to be just and kind to all persons. To be just to all persons commonly means to deal with them and behave towards them in precisely such a way as they have a right to mark out; to give them everything which is their due, and keep from them nothing which is theirs. To be kind to



all persons is to be ready to oblige all persons as far as you can; and to forgive those who have injured you; and to feel a sincere desire for the happiness of all persons. Justice and kindness ought always to go together; for justice is but a rough virtue without kindness, and kindness is but a weak virtue without justice; and people will despise one who is not just, and dislike one who is not kind. You cannot be completely and consistently kind, unless you are just; and you cannot be largely and nobly just, unless you are kind. Imagine yourselves going along in a road, with Justice and Kindness for your constant travelling companions and guides. Justice always speaks to you plainly, and prevents your injuring anybody or anything that you meet in the way, and sees that you pay exactly all the expenses of your journey; and Kindness softly asks you to pardon those who may injure you, and now and then urges you, with a tender smile on her face, to step a little out of your way to help those who may need your assistance. And Justice never frowns on Kindness; and Kindness never interferes with Justice. I think that if you observe what Jus-

tice and Kindness both say to you in the journey of life, other people will be glad to walk with you, and be sorry to part with you ; and that when you get to the end, you will look back on your course with satisfaction and joy.

I have now explained to you the three rules of being good : which are, to love and obey your parents ; to speak the truth always ; and to be just and kind to all persons. To be good, is to obey and please your Creator, who made you to be good and happy ; and to try to please and obey your Creator is one method of remembering him, and the best way of showing that you do remember him truly. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and then it will be easy and delightful for you to remember and serve him, in the days of your manhood, and of your old age, if it should please him to spare your lives. And, O my children, let me assure you, that it is but of little consequence how long or how short a time you are permitted to live on the earth, if, while you live here, you remember your Creator, and do the things which please him.

I will close this sermon by repeating to you



a hymn, which is on the same subject, that of remembering our Creator in the days of youth. If you are not already acquainted with it, you had better commit it to memory.

“ In the soft season of thy youth,  
In nature’s smiling bloom,  
Ere age arrive, and trembling wait  
Its summons to the tomb ;

“ Remember thy Creator, God ;  
For him thy powers employ ;  
Make him thy fear, thy love, thy hope,  
Thy confidence, thy joy.

“ He shall defend and guide thy course  
Through life’s uncertain sea,  
Till thou art landed on the shore  
Of blessed eternity.

“ Then seek the Lord betimes, and choose  
The path of heavenly truth ;  
The earth affords no lovelier sight  
Than a religious youth.”

## SERMON III.



### GOD SEES AND KNOWS YOU.

THE LORD'S THRONE IS IN HEAVEN; HIS EYES BEHOLD,  
HIS EYELIDS TRY, THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

THE above words are from the fourth verse of the Eleventh Psalm. They mean that God is over all things in his greatness and majesty, and that from the height of his exalted power, or throne, he is not only able to see all men, but to see into their hearts, and examine their thoughts, and try them, whether they are good or evil. The wonderful knowledge of God, by which he beholds all that we do and all that we think, is a subject which children ought to consider, and which I will ask them to consider now.

I told you in my last sermon, that you should remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and I told you in what manner you should remember him. I told you that you must think of him, and try to please him, and that you could only please him by being

good. And I told you what it was to be good. And now I wish to impress upon your minds the important truth, that God certainly knows whether you are good or not. Everything which you do to please God will be noticed by him, if it is ever so little ; and if it is not noticed by any one else, still it is noticed by your Creator ; for he sees all that you do, and hears all that you say, and is acquainted with all that you think. He who made you never loses sight of you ; and as he made your mind as well as your body, he sees what your mind is doing as well as what your body is doing.

It may seem surprising to you, that God should be able to see all the people, the many millions of people, who live on the earth, and know all that they are doing, and all their most secret feelings and thoughts besides. But you must remember that he made all these people, and gave them the power to think, and that he made the world in which they live, and those worlds without number which we call the heavenly bodies ; and then you will perceive that it must be very easy for the Being who did all this to see all his human

creatures, and be acquainted with all their thoughts. You will not be able to comprehend how he knows all men's thoughts, but you will be satisfied that it is not difficult for him to know them, because he formed their minds, and caused them to begin to think,—so that he must know more about men's minds than they do themselves. The knowledge of this truth should make you careful that your thoughts should be correct as well as your actions, and that you should really be good, as well as seem to be good. If you wish to do a bad thing, and cannot do it, or are afraid to do it, still God knows your wish, even though you said nothing and did nothing, and he is displeased with you for that evil wish. And so if you wish to do a good thing, and are not able to do it, he knows that you had a good wish in your heart, and loves you for that good wish. Therefore, if you desire to please God, you must endeavor to have good thoughts in your mind and good purposes in your hearts; for he will surely know whether they are there or not.

You must consider also that God sees you and your thoughts at all times, in the night as

well as in the day. You cannot see without light, but God can, because he is an all-sufficient light to himself. He who made the sun and the stars, and gave them all their light, can surely see without those beams which they have only borrowed from him. He commanded the sun to shine for our use, but not for his own. The Maker of the sun is brighter than the sun; and the darkness is no darkness to him.

The truth that God is everywhere present, and that he always sees us, is expressed so finely by King David, in the One Hundred and Thirty-ninth Psalm, that I will read parts of it to you, and have no doubt that, after what I have said, you will sufficiently understand them, without further explanation. "O Lord," he says, "thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off." And again he says, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in the place of the dead, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell

in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Now listen again to what he says of God's seeing in the darkness. "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, — even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ; but the night shineth as the day ; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

These words which I have repeated to you have been often turned into English poetry, and the meaning of them is so grand that it always makes the poetry good. Perhaps some of you remember this verse : —

" Or should I try to shun thy sight  
    Beneath the sable wings of night,  
One glance from thee, one piercing ray,  
    Would kindle darkness into day."

Children ! when you grow older, many of you will probably read various works, both in poetry and prose ; and you will meet with passages in them which you will call very poetical, very sublime, very true, — and so they may be ; but you will never meet with a passage in all your reading, more poetical, more



sublime, or more true than the portions of the psalm of David which I have just recited to you.

It is certain then, that God sees you always, and knows whether you are good or not. And just so certainly as he sees that you are good, that you remember him, and try to please him, will he love you and make you happy. God has promised to love those who keep his commandments. I could show you many such promises in the Bible. And you perceive that it must be so. When your parents make a rule or law for your behavior, you know them to be desirous that you should keep it, and you know that they will love you if you do keep it. They would not make a law for you, if they did not wish you to observe it. God would not make a law, if he did not wish to have it observed. If you do as he wishes, and observe his laws, he will love you, and make you happy. You will feel that he loves you, just as you feel that your parents love you when you obey them. Are you not happy when you feel that your parents love you? Just so will you be happy when you feel that God loves you. God is your heavenly Parent.

He will lead you, and protect you, and will never suffer any real harm to come to those whom he loves. He will give you sweet sleep when you are weary. He will give you health of body and health of mind. He will make other people love you and do you good. Such things are what are called temporal blessings; and God generally gives them to those whom he loves. But if he should not give you these, you will learn, that if he loves you, you can be happy without them. If you should be ill and unable to sleep, you can think on his love, and that will soothe you. If you should be in grief, the thought of his love will calm you. If you should be poor, you will feel that his love is riches enough; and if other people neglect you, you will be comforted by thinking that God is near you, and will never forget nor forsake you. In short, you will find more and more, as you grow older, that if you continue to remember and obey your Creator, though you will probably have abundance of temporal blessings from him, his love alone will be your greatest happiness; and that if your temporal blessings are taken away, you will still be happy, because the love of God



will be left you. You will learn not to depend for all your happiness on things which may go away, and leave you miserable ; but you will depend on God, who cannot go away from you, and you will be happy in his love, which cannot be taken away from you.

Should you ask the question, What shall I do for God, who is so good to me ; who gives me friends to take care of me, and so many excellent and beautiful things to see and enjoy, and who gives me his love, which is better than all ? Can I not do something for him ? No ; you can do nothing for him in the way of helping him ; because he is all-powerful, and can do everything, and is all-wise, and knows how to do all things right. He does not need your aid in any of his grand operations in the universe. You can only love him, obey him, and be thankful to him. But by doing this, you can, in a certain sense, do something for God. By being good yourselves, you are permitted to do something for God. Yes, even a little child can, in this way of considering the subject, do something for God, because he does what God wishes him to do.

Let us suppose that one of you, after thinking how kind his earthly father had always been to him, should feel full of gratitude, and run and say to him, Father, you are very kind to me, you are always doing me good, — what can I do for you? can I not help you in your business or your profession? His father would probably say to him, No, my child, you cannot help me in that way. You are too young and too weak to be able to do anything for me in the business which I pursue; but in another way you can do something for me, and something which I shall be rejoiced to have you do. You can obey me; you can mind what I say to you; you can love your brothers and sisters, and be kind to them, and help them, so that I may have a peaceful, happy family around me, and that will be doing something for me, a great deal for me.

In a way similar to this, you can do something for your Maker. One of the methods which God has chosen in making his human children happy, is by so placing them together in the world, that they may make each other happy. And when they make each other happy, by doing real and lasting good to each

other, they are doing something for God. If you are kind, and benevolent, and gentle, and accommodating to those who are around you, no matter whether they are rich or poor, of this country or that country, you are doing something for God, for they are all his children, and he desires to see them all dwelling peacefully and happily together.

Yes, my children, though God is so powerful, that he does whatever pleases him in heaven and on earth, and keeps all the stars in their stations, and guides all the planets in their mighty courses, and sends the lightnings, and rules over the minds of men and angels, yet you, by your virtues, by your simple obedience, can do something for him. Think of this; and the thought will encourage and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you from disobedience and sin.

Remember, I say again, that even you can do something for the mighty Creator. You can bring him the offerings of your love and your duty. And if you bring them humbly, he will graciously accept them, and count them as of more value than the sacrifices on a thousand altars.

## SERMON IV.



### YOU SHOULD PRAY TO GOD.

#### PRAY TO THY FATHER.

CHILDREN, I believe that you like to hear me speak to you of the excellent things of religion; and it gives me great pleasure to teach you what I think will be useful to you. I ask you to listen to me again.

It was the wise King Solomon who said, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." It was a greater than Solomon who said, "Pray to thy Father." It was Jesus Christ who spoke those words to his disciples, or scholars, when he was teaching them how they should pray; as you may find by turning to the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, and the sixth verse. By "Father," he meant your heavenly Father, or God; and God is called your Father, because he made you, and takes care of you, and is kind to you, and loves you. I have already

spoken to you about remembering your Creator; I will now speak to you about praying to your Father.

Praying to your Father is speaking to him, and asking of him whatever is needful and good, for yourselves and for others. And it is right that you should speak to him. It is right that a child should speak to his father. Does not a child take pleasure in speaking to his earthly father, asking him for gifts, and thanking him for daily kindness? Why then should you not speak to your heavenly Father, and ask him for his good and perfect gifts, and thank him for the loving-kindness which he shows to you every day and every hour? It is true that you cannot see your heavenly Father; but that is no reason why you should not speak to him. It is not necessary that you should see him. If he sees you, and hears you, then you can speak to him, and ought to speak to him. And does he not hear you? Certainly he does. I told you in my last sermon, that God always sees you, and now I tell you that he always hears you. Who made your ears, and caused you to hear? It was God. And "he who made the ear,

shall he not hear ? ” That is a question which is asked in the Bible ; and every child can answer, yes ; he who could make the ear must certainly be able to hear. He does hear all you say, if it is with ever so low a voice, and in ever so lonely a place. You cannot say a word that he does not hear. And yet more than this, you cannot think a thought that he does not hear ; for he knows what it is, and that is the same as hearing it. He who made all things is everywhere. He who takes care of all things, never sleeps. He sees all, hears all, knows all. So you will perceive that, so far from its being difficult to make God hear you, you cannot help his hearing you. He always hears you.

And now I want to ask, whether it is not proper that your heavenly Father should sometimes hear you speak to him ? Is it right that he should hear you speak to everybody but him, and hear you think of everything but him ? Shall he be near to you all the time ; shall he be watching over you by day while you are waking, and by night while you are sleeping ; shall he guard you from danger, and hold you in life, and surround you with bless-



ings, and be listening to you all the while, and yet not hear you say one word to him with your lips or with your heart? You cannot suppose this to be right.

There is no doubt that God wishes you to speak to him, to pray to him. In the Old Testament and in the New Testament we are told to pray to God; and all the good persons whom we read of there did pray to God. "I cried unto God with my voice," says one of them, "even unto God with my voice, and he gave ear unto me." Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, "they called upon the Lord, and he answered them." Our Saviour Jesus Christ prayed to God, and he has told us to pray to God, who is his Father and our Father. And in many other ways we may learn that God wishes us to pray to him. Have you never, when you have behaved well, and have been very happy, had a feeling in your bosom as if you ought to thank some one, though you could hardly tell whom? That feeling in your bosom is a voice from God, which tells you that you ought to thank him, who is the author of your happiness. Have you never, when you have been in sickness or sorrow,



had a feeling as if you wanted very much to lean upon some one who could help you out of trouble better than any one you knew? That feeling is a voice from God, which tells you that you should lean upon him, and ask him to help you. And when you have done wrong, have you not felt uneasy and unhappy, as if you longed to be forgiven, not only by your parents, but by some one else. That uneasy feeling is a voice from God, which tells you to ask forgiveness of him, that he may pardon you. Children! a great many voices call upon you to speak to God and pray to him. The good old men of old times, and the good children too; and Jesus Christ your Saviour; and the feelings in your bosom, when you are either happy or unhappy, all tell you to pray to God your heavenly Father. You hear these voices, not with your outward ears, but with your soul. They make no noise in the air; but they speak without noise in your heart. When you hear them, you should attend to them. They tell you what is true.

But perhaps you may think, that, as you are children, and not able to speak very well, you are not able to pray to God. But you are

able ; for it is an easy thing to pray to God, if you really think of him when you pray. It is not necessary that you should be nice in your words when you speak to God, if you are only sincere and humble and serious. The simplest and plainest words are the best. If you wanted bread of your earthly father, you could not ask him in a plainer way than by saying, Give me some bread. Now this is the very way in which we are taught by our Lord and Saviour to ask bread of our heavenly Father, "Give us this day our daily bread." What words can be simpler than those ? Our Saviour sets us an example of great simplicity in prayer. Indeed you can pray without using any words aloud. The beauty and reality of prayer is in the feeling rather than in the words. If you have a feeling in your heart, which rises up to God, and thanks him, or asks anything of him, that feeling is a prayer. If in the morning you say in your heart, "Father, I thank thee that I live to see this morning," that is a morning prayer. If in the evening you say in your heart, "Father, keep me this night," that is an evening prayer. If, when you are sick, you say in your heart,

“Father, make me well” ; or when you have done wrong, you say, “Father, forgive me” ; — you have prayed aright, and God hears those silent prayers. And if you continue the habit of praying in your heart to God, you will have more and more thoughts there as you grow older, which will love to seek God. They will spring up fast in your hearts, like sweet flowers in June, and they will fly up to heaven like birds of paradise.

But though silent thoughts of God are real prayers, which God hears as distinctly as if they were uttered aloud in words, yet it is proper that you should utter words, and pray with your lips as well as with your heart. Should you not be very sorry if you could not speak, and could not hear others speak ? Is it not a great pleasure to talk with your friends ? Certainly. Speech is a noble gift. But who gave it to you ? God. How then can you use it better than in speaking to God ? Speak to him then. Pray to your Father in words. Do not speak of everything but of Him who gave you power to speak. You cannot speak of anything so great, so glorious as he is. You cannot speak to any being so good, so kind, so

ready to hear you, as he is. Speak to him, and pray to him, with the words of your mouth, and also with the feelings and meditations of your heart. And the words which you use may either be your own words, or words which are written for you in books of prayer. If the words which are written for you are good, and your mind understands them, and your heart feels them, then you really pray with them, and you make them your own prayer. And if they are words which your beloved parents, and many other excellent people used in praying long ago, they may very well be dear words to you, and you may very well like to use them.

You must not think that you need not pray to God, because God gives you a great many things without your praying for them. It is true that God will give you food, and clothing, and health, whether you pray for them or not. But this only shows that God is good to you, though you may not do your duty to him. Your earthly parents would not let you starve, or go without clothes, even though you should never ask them to give you food and clothing, and never thank them for the gifts. But still

they are pleased to have you ask them for what you want and to have you thank them for what they give you ; and it is right for you to do both. You neglect them, and are rude to them, if you do not do both. And so if there are those who do not pray to their heavenly Father for many things which he yet gives them, they are neglectful of their best friend ; and if they do not thank him for those things, they are very ungrateful to their kindest benefactor.

Then again, you may pray for things which God may not grant to you. But this is not because he does not hear you, or does not love you, but because he is much wiser than you are, and knows that it will be better for you not to have what you ask for. If any dear friend, for instance, should be extremely ill ; if your father, or mother, or brother, or sister should be lying on the bed of sickness, and seem to be near death, you could hardly help asking God, with the words of your mouth or the words of your heart, and most earnestly, too, that your friend might live. This would be right. But God might not see fit to grant your prayer. He would hear you, and love

you ; but in his great wisdom he might know it to be best that your friend should die.

Now, children, listen to what I am going to say to you at the end of this sermon on prayer. The most important things for which you can ask your heavenly Father, are not bread, or clothing, or health, or even life in this world. Goodness is more important ; religion is more important. Innocence, justice, kindness, truth, and honesty, — these are the most important things ; and not only are they the most important, but God will surely give them to you, if you sincerely ask him for them. One reason why so many people are not good, is, that they do not ask for goodness of God ; or if they ask for it with their lips, do not ask for it with the strong feelings of their hearts. Pray to God for goodness, and he will give it to you, if you pray heartily and sincerely. When you are about to do wrong, pray to God to keep you from doing wrong, — say in your heart, “ Father, keep me from doing this wrong,” and you will be kept from doing it. When you are going to be violently angry, say in your heart, “ Father, save me from being angry,” and the peace of God will come down into your bosom like a dove, and the bad fire in



your eyes will be quenched, and the hot color in your cheeks will cool away. When you feel that there is any danger that a good feeling or a virtuous resolution is going to be taken out of your heart, say to your heavenly Father, "Father, let not my virtue be taken out of my heart," and I firmly believe it will not be taken, but will remain. And why? Because God is ready to help his children; and because the thought of God, which you place in your heart by speaking to him, is holy and strong, and will stand in your heart, and guard your virtues, which are your heart's best treasures, and will keep them from being stolen away. The thought of God is the best thought and the strongest thought that you can have; and when it really comes into your heart, all other good thoughts will stay under its protection, and bad thoughts will be driven out.

You are weak; but the thought of God is strong, — strong to guard your innocence and virtue; strong to check your anger and pride and selfishness; strong to help your weakness, and console your sorrows. Pray to God, your Father, that the thought of God may come into your hearts, and keep and comfort and bless them.



## SERMON V.



### OFFICES AND TITLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU  
ALL.

IN my last sermon, I spoke to you, my dear children, on the subject of praying to your heavenly Father. The words of my text were the words of Christ, who said, "Pray to thy Father." The words which I have taken for the text of this sermon were written by one of his apostles, Paul, in an Epistle, or Letter, to the Christian Romans, sixteenth chapter and twenty-fourth verse. It is a form, in which he gives them his blessing. He prays that the grace, or kind favor, of Jesus Christ may be with all his friends. I likewise pray, that the same grace may be with *you* all, my dear children.

If you love Christ, he will love you, and his grace will be with you. You can hardly help loving him, when you know him; because he was so good, so kind, so excellent. The more you know him, the better you will

love him. I wish to help you to know him ; and if I can help you ever so little, I shall be doing you a great service, and I shall be glad.

I have been telling you of God, and of your duty to God, and of praying to God. Now I will tell you of Jesus Christ, who, next to God, is the most deserving of your reverence and your love. No being that ever lived on earth had so much goodness as he had, or loved mankind so well, or did them so much good, as he did. And he has told us more of God than any one else ever has ; and he has told us of heaven ; and he has told us what God will do for us if we are good while we live on earth, and what will become of us if we are not good. And he was able to tell us of all these important and wonderful things, because God greatly loved him, and filled his mind full of divine knowledge, and filled his heart full of divine love. He had his wisdom from God, and his power from God ; and his power was so great, that he did many wonderful works by it, which no man could have done, unless God had been with him.

Before Jesus Christ came into the world, the inhabitants of the world were very ig-

norant, — very ignorant, I mean, of things which were most important to be known. They knew how to make abundance of useful and elegant articles; how to weave garments; how to build houses, and palaces, and temples, and monuments; how to carve statues, and paint pictures; and how to write history and poetry, and many other kinds of learning. All these they knew very well, and some of them they knew better than we do. But they did not know, that is, generally, or with any certainty, who created them, or why they were created, or how they should behave in the best manner while they lived, or whether they should live again after they were dead. It was not of much consequence, was it, that they could make splendid temples, if, instead of the great and good Creator, they worshipped, in their temples, an image without any sense, or a brute animal? It was not of much consequence, was it, what they knew, if they did not know themselves and their own life and the Being who made them? Jesus Christ came to teach them this kind of knowledge, which is called spiritual knowledge, because it concerns the spirit or soul of man. He

came to teach them, that One God was the Maker of the whole world and the Father of all the people in the world. He came to teach them how they should live with each other, and how they should serve and please their heavenly Father. He came to teach them that death was not the end of their existence; that they would surely live again in another world; and that they would be happy or miserable in that world, according as they had conducted themselves in this world. After he had taught these great spiritual truths, and shown in his own life how men ought to live, he was killed by wicked enemies, and then was buried in a tomb. But you know he did not remain dead and lying in the tomb, but was raised again to life by the power of God on the third day after he was crucified; and then, after he had shown himself to his disciples and many other persons, was taken up into heaven where he lives with God for ever and ever. And he does not live there alone. All the souls of good people and good children live with him. If you will love him and mind what he has said, you will live with him too.

What I have now told you concerning Jesus Christ will assist you to understand the meaning of the names by which he is called in the Bible. You remember that in the text of this sermon he is called "our Lord Jesus Christ." I will explain to you the second of these names first, because it is properly his only *name*, the others being his *titles*.

Before Jesus was born an angel told his mother that Jesus should be his name. It was not an uncommon name ; but every name among the Jews was a Hebrew word, which had a particular meaning. Jesus is the same name as Joshua ; Jesus being the Greek way of spelling and pronouncing the Hebrew name Joshua ; just as you find that the same name may be spelt and pronounced differently in French and in English. And the meaning of Joshua, or Jesus, is, *He who shall save*, or *The Saviour*. It was chosen to be the name of the child of Mary, because he was to save his people from their sins. Remember, therefore, that the name *Jesus* means *Saviour*. He is the Saviour of men ; because if they will believe in him, and obey him, he will save them from their sins. When people believe in

Jesus, and obey his commands, and imitate his example, they are saved from their sins, because they leave off their sins, and become good. I pray that the grace of Christ may be with us all, that we may be saved from our sins, — our sins that do us so much harm, — our sins that hurt our souls, — our sins that separate us from God. The greatest danger and the greatest misfortune is sin. Should we not thank God, who sent Jesus Christ into an ignorant and sinful world, that we might be saved from ignorance and sin?

I will next explain to you the meaning of the word Christ. Christ is a Greek word, and means *anointed*. Perhaps you know, that in ancient times, it was the custom, when a person was declared to be a king, or prince, to pour oil upon his head, or anoint him. This was a ceremony which was used in making him a king, and a sign that he was a king. God anointed Jesus to be a king; but he did not anoint him with oil, but with what was more precious, with goodness, with holiness, and with the power of working miracles, such as causing the blind to see, and raising the dead to life. This is what the Apostle Peter means,



when he says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power." His great goodness and his great power showed that he was a king; not a king to command armies, and wear splendid clothes, and live in a fine palace, but a much more glorious king, a spiritual king, that is, a king to govern the spirits, or souls, of men, and to give them rules of virtue, and to make them happy. God anointed Jesus to be such a king; and therefore he is called *Christ*, or *the anointed*. I hope you will remember this. There are many grown people who do not know it; but a child may understand it when it is explained. Christ is the most common title of our Saviour, Jesus; and when we say Jesus Christ, we mean Jesus whom God anointed with goodness, and wisdom, and power, to be the king, or ruler, of the souls of men.

The other title of Jesus which is used in the text is Lord. Lord means master, or one who has authority, whether the authority is greater or less. God is called Lord, because he is the Master of all things, and his dominion is over all. Jesus is called Lord, because he is the Master of Christians, and has authority over



them, and gives them commandments. And you very well know, that men who have authority and dignity are often called lords. But when Christians say, "our Lord," they generally mean Jesus Christ, who is their Master in an especial manner, and whose teachings and laws they mean to hear and obey.

I wish you now to remember carefully, that the words "our Lord Jesus Christ," mean our Master, Jesus, whom God made king, or prince, of our souls. Jesus is the name, and Lord, and Christ, are the two titles. And the name Jesus means a saviour, or one who saves.

There are several other titles by which Jesus is called in the New Testament, but those which I have already explained are enough for your memory at present. And the reason of my explaining to you those, is, that when you hear them, you may be able to think of the important truths which they signify. Whenever you hear the name of "Jesus," think that he came to save men from their sins, by doing all that was possible to make them good and holy. Whenever you hear the title "Christ," think that he was anointed by his heavenly Father with the spiritual oil

of perfect goodness and wonderful power, to be the prince of the souls of men. Whenever you hear the title "Our Lord," think that the same Saviour and Prince is your Master and Teacher, whom you ought to love and reverence and obey, because his lessons are wise, and his laws are kind, and to obey him is the same thing as to be happy in your mind and soul, as long as you live in this world, and forever after in the world to come.

If these are your thoughts when you hear the name or the titles of Jesus, you will always use them yourselves in a serious and proper manner, and never in the very improper and profane manner in which you sometimes hear them used, I am afraid, by children, and even by men, who ought to know better. My children, the names of God, our Father, and of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, are holy names, blessed names; and they never ought to be spoken but in solemnity and love, by children or by men. Is the name of God who made you, God who preserves you every moment, God who can make you die whenever he pleases, a name to be pronounced by you in thoughtless sport or in wretched anger? I

trust that it never will be. I pray that it never may be. And is the name of the kind and holy Jesus, whom God the Father sent to teach men their duty, and save them from their sins, and show them the way to heaven, and who loved men so much that he was willing to die, and did die, rather than not do everything to save them, — and who now lives with God in heaven, and will be our Judge when we die, — is his name a name to be used rudely or profanely? Surely not, you will say. I beseech you then, never so to use it. Never be tempted or provoked so to use it. Let his grace be with you, to keep you from such a sin.

Jesus loves little children, and little children should love him. Though God has exalted him to be greater than angels, he once was a little child himself. Yes, he once was a little child. He has been rocked to sleep, as you have been, in a mother's arms. He has been subject, as you now are, to parental authority. It is very interesting to me, and, I think, it must be so to you, to learn from the Bible, that our gracious and wonderful Saviour was once a little child; and in my next sermons

I intend to speak to you concerning the infancy and childhood of Jesus Christ. And I now pray, that his grace may be with you all, and at all times; in your childhood, to keep you innocent; in your youth and manhood, to make you virtuous and holy; and in the hour of death, to fill your hearts with peace and hope, and to prepare you for his presence, and the presence of his Father.

## SERMON VI.



### INFANCY OF JESUS.

AND THE CHILD GREW, AND WAXED STRONG IN SPIRIT,  
FILLED WITH WISDOM; AND THE GRACE OF GOD WAS  
UPON HIM.

You will find those words, my children, in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke, the fortieth verse. They tell you how wise and how good Jesus Christ was when he was young, and how much he was beloved. They inform you that, as he grew older, he grew wiser, that is, that his soul grew as well as his body.

There is but little said in those histories of our Saviour, which we call the Gospels, of his infancy and early life. Only two of the Gospels say anything of that period. This is because the after part of his life was more important. But still the short accounts which we have of his birth and his tender years are quite interesting. I do not doubt that you have found them interesting, when you have

read them, or have heard them read; and very profitable too, when they have been explained to you by your parents or teachers.

You remember that Jesus was born in a town called Bethlehem. It is also the town where his forefather, King David, was born, and where he lived when he was a boy, and tended his father's flocks of sheep. Bethlehem is situated a few miles to the south of Jerusalem, and on the ridge or top of a hill, looking down on a deep and beautiful valley. In this valley, where young David used to watch the sheep of his father Jesse, there were shepherds "keeping watch over their flocks by night," when suddenly a glorious light shone round about them, and angels of heaven appeared to them, and sang an anthem of sweet music, and told them that the Saviour was born in Bethlehem.

Now I wish you to observe, my children, that the first persons who were told of the birth of the Saviour were not kings, or generals, or what are called great people, but shepherds, poor shepherds, who never thought or dreamed that angels would ever speak to them in this world, or that they would ever be



chosen to be the first visitors of the infant Redeemer. But God saw fit to choose them, and they were the most proper persons to be chosen for this purpose. They were humble; and God always loves the humble, and does not love the proud. They were peaceful. They were peacefully tending their peaceful flocks; and he whom they were chosen to visit was peaceful, and came to make the world peaceful, and was called the Prince of Peace. And the song which the angels sung in the sky that night was a song of peace, — peace on earth and good will toward men. How proper it was, then, that humble and peaceful shepherds should be first told of the birth of the infant Jesus, and should be the first to see him. You may be sure that now, also, God always prefers those who are humble and peaceful and good; and that he will tell them the best things; and that they will be the first to see Jesus Christ in heaven, just as the shepherds were the first to see him on earth.

When the angel told the shepherds to go and see the child Jesus, he gave them a sign by which they might know him. He told them that they would find the babe lying in a



manger, which is the place in a stable from which cattle eat their food. The shepherds might have supposed that Jesus was to be found in some rich chamber, lying in a soft bed ; but the angel told them that he was in a very different place, — in a manger. This was so strange, that the sign could not be mistaken. So they went in haste to the inn at Bethlehem ; and when they came to the part of the inn which was used as a stable, they found the child, just as the angels had said. There was his mother Mary, and Joseph, and there, in a manger, was the blessed child Jesus. So the shepherds were certain that this child was the Saviour ; and though it must have seemed a poor place in which he was lying, yet they were so glad to have found him, that they “ returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.”

Now this is something else which I want you to think of, — the place, I mean, where the infant Saviour was lying. It was a manger. When Joseph and Mary came to lodge at Bethlehem, there was no room for them in the best part of the inn ; and therefore, as they were poor, and could not pay for any

better lodging, they were obliged to go to that part where the beasts of burden were kept; and there Jesus was born, and there his mother put him in a manger, which was the only cradle she could find for him. Not one of you was ever laid in so poor a cradle as this. But do you suppose that God loved Jesus the less, because he was lying on straw? No. Well, then, do you suppose that God loves any child the less, whose parents may be poor, and who may be obliged to sleep in a mean cradle or bed, and wear coarse clothes instead of fine ones? It is not possible, is it, that God should think riches of any consequence, when he suffered his well-beloved Son, Jesus, to be born in poverty, and to be laid in a manger? The glory of the Lord shone as brightly round about the shepherds, and the angels of heaven sung as gladly and sweetly, as if Jesus had been lying on down and silk and gold, instead of on straw. Let the manger of the infant Jesus, then, as it was a sign to the shepherds, be a sign to you also. Let it be a sign to you that God loves poor children just as well as those who are not poor; and that God's angels watch over the mean cradles of poor children,

just as carefully as over the handsome and comfortable cradles of those who are not poor. And let the manger of Jesus be a sign to you, never to despise poor children, and never to look down upon them as if they were beneath you ; for Jesus himself was poor. He was poor when he was a child ; and though he grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man, he never grew to be rich. He was always poor. I say then, let his manger be a sign to you not to despise the poor, and not to be proud of any of those things which money can buy. All that God loves and regards with favor is goodness ; and goodness is something which money cannot buy. Love and respect goodness wherever you see it, whether in a poor child or a rich one. If a child is wicked, avoid him, or reprove him, whether he is rich or poor. But do not avoid him, or behave proudly to him, merely because he is poor. Christ, your Saviour, was poor. Let his manger be a sign to you of all those things of which I have told you.

Forty days after Jesus was born, his parents brought him to the temple at Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord, according to a

Jewish custom ; and while they were there, a good old man by the name of Simeon took the child in his arms, and thanked God, and said that he was now ready to die in peace, because he had seen the Saviour of the world. And an aged prophetess by the name of Anna, who was there, spoke also to the same purpose.

After this, some wise men from a country east of Jerusalem came to Bethlehem, guided by a star, to see the infant Jesus. And when they found him, they paid him great reverence, and offered him costly presents. So you see that although Jesus was born in poverty, there were good and wise people who came to visit him, as well as simple shepherds. Poverty keeps away proud and showy people, but not those who are good and wise.

At this time the king of the Jews was a proud bad man, named Herod. When he heard that a child was born who was to be king of the Jews, he thought that an earthly king like himself was meant, and therefore he was afraid that this child might take away his kingdom from him, and he was resolved to have him killed. So he charged the wise men

of the East to let him know when they had found the child; for he pretended that he wished to pay him reverence likewise. But the wise men went back to their own country, without letting Herod know what he wanted; and Herod was so angry at being thus disappointed, that he ordered all the little children of Bethlehem who were under two years of age to be killed, in order that Jesus might be slain among them. O, what weeping, and wailing, and dreadful misery there was among the distracted mothers of Bethlehem, on that dark day when their little innocent children were torn away from them by the order of that cruel king, and all killed! How much sorrow and woe have been caused in the world by pride and ambition! And yet, after all this bloodshed, Herod did not gain his point; for Joseph was warned of the danger in a dream, and he took the young child Jesus and his mother, by night, and fled with them into a country many miles to the south, called Egypt, where they stayed in safety till Herod died.

You see by this, that the troubles of our Saviour began very early; for while he was a

tender infant, he was forced to wander from his native country. He had enemies who wished to kill him, even when he was in his cradle.

But at last Herod died ; and then Joseph took the child Jesus again and Mary his mother and brought them back to the land of Israel. They did not stay in Bethlehem ; but went on to the northern part of the Holy Land, to a city called Nazareth, which was the city where Joseph and Mary had lived before. This was a quiet place, situated on the slope of a hill, with other hills rising up all around it. Here the holy family rested in peace ; and here the holy child Jesus passed the time of his childhood, among the green and silent hills, without being troubled by bad kings, who had probably now forgotten all about him. It was a fit spot for such a lovely flower, such a pure soul to grow in, — it was so still, so solemn, so beautiful, among those hills, which rose up about Nazareth, and shut it out from the world. The history of Luke tells us no particulars of the growth of the mind and spirit of Jesus, but he gives us the simple fact that he constantly improved.



“And the child Jesus grew,” he says, “and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.” That is, he used his mind, and meditated and studied, and read the Scriptures, and thought much of God and of virtue and of heaven and of doing good; and therefore his mind grew strong and full of wisdom, and the love and favor of his Father, God, were upon him and all round about him, like the pure light and air of the hill country where he lived. How must his mother, as she pressed him to her heart, have rejoiced in such a child! How everybody must have loved him!

My children, you are not called to the same wonderful work of suffering and salvation to which Jesus was called. But you are called to “glory and virtue,” to piety and wisdom, to God and heaven; and that is a high calling. You are only children; but you have minds, and you have souls. Jesus was once a child. Behold him in Nazareth. See how he grew in wisdom and goodness, and how the grace of God was upon him. You can grow in wisdom and goodness; and then the grace of God will be upon you. God will



love you ; men will love you ; angels will love you ; you will be the best of blessings to your parents ; — and, though I am but preaching to children, I know that I speak to the heart of every parent also, when I say, that of all the blessings which a father or a mother can have, the greatest blessing is a virtuous child.

From this early period of our Saviour's life, till he was thirty years old, there is only one event recorded of him ; and this event took place when he was twelve years of age. But I must relate this to you, and make some remarks upon it, in another sermon.

## SERMON VII.



### CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

AND JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM AND STATURE, AND IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MAN.

MY dear children may remember that I took some words very similar to these for the text of my last sermon. I take these words for the text of the present sermon, from the second chapter of Luke, fifty-second verse, because I am going to speak again of the early part of the life of our Saviour, and because I want children to bear in mind especially, that when he was a child, he kept improving in wisdom and goodness.

There are many children who care much more about growing larger and taller, than they do about growing better. I wish that all children might consider that Jesus increased in wisdom, as he increased in stature. I wish that all children would increase every day, as Jesus did, in favor with God and man. They will grow fast enough in stature, or size, with-

out thinking at all about it; and will not grow any faster, if they think about it ever so much. But they will not grow in wisdom, without thinking and taking pains about *that*; and it is only their growth in wisdom which will gain them the favor of God and man.

I have already said, that between the time of the infancy of Jesus and the time of his beginning to teach, when he was thirty years old, we have the account of only one event of his life, which was at the age of twelve. That is to say, we have but one account, and a short one, of the childhood of Jesus. It is recorded in a few verses at the end of the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke. But though the story is short, it is interesting, and contains a great deal for you to think about. Give me your attention, and hear how the story begins.

“Now his parents went to Jerusalem, every year, at the feast of the passover.” This is the first sentence. And why did they go to Jerusalem every year at that time? Because their ancient law-giver Moses had, a long while ago, commanded all Jews to do so; and whatever Moses had commanded was a law to the Jews. It was the law of Moses, that all the men

among the Jews should keep the feast of the passover, and two other great feasts, at the place which the Lord should choose ; and this place was Jerusalem. The feast of the passover was a time of rejoicing which lasted seven days, and which put the Jews in mind of the escape of their forefathers out of the land of Egypt. So you see that the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover, because it was the Jewish law. The law did not oblige women to go, indeed ; but it did not forbid their going ; and therefore they often went, because it was more pleasant for them to go with their fathers and brothers, husbands and sons, than to stay at home alone. How full the city of Jerusalem must have been at the time of the great religious feasts ; and especially at the feast of the passover, or unleavened bread, which was the greatest of all ! And what crowds of people there must have been in the roads, from all parts of the country, travelling to the holy temple !

I suppose that people who lived in the same town, or the same part of the country, joined together at these times, and travelled in company. They would take tents with them, if

they lived at a distance from Jerusalem, and provisions, and beasts of burden to carry whatever was necessary. In short, they would form a caravan ; such as those which now travel from place to place in Eastern countries, about which you have doubtless read. This is a more convenient, and a far safer mode of travelling in those countries, than travelling alone. So many people together can help each other, and defend each other against robbers. I suppose then, that it was with such a caravan, or large company of travellers, that the parents of Jesus went up from Nazareth to Jerusalem, at the time of the story.

And what was that time ? Listen to the next sentence. "And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast." It was when Jesus was twelve years old, that he went up with his parents to the feast of the passover, according to the Jewish custom. But why did he go particularly at that age ? Because it was at the age of twelve that the Jewish children were especially instructed in the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, and that they began to take part in the festivals, and to be considered as strictly

under the Jewish law. According to this custom, therefore, it was, that Jesus went up at this time to the feast of the passover.

The history goes on to say, that, “when they had fulfilled the days,” — that is, when they had finished the religious duties of the seven days of the feast, — “as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.” Jesus was so old and so prudent, that his parents permitted him, it is likely, to go about, without their always going with him; and when they left Jerusalem, they supposed that he would know it, and would join himself to their caravan. So they were not troubled when they set out, although they did not see him. They supposed him to be somewhere in the company of townspeople and friends who made up the caravan, and so they went on toward Nazareth a whole day’s journey. But when evening came, they began to be surprised that he did not appear; for they supposed that now, as the whole company had halted for the night, he would come to their tent. They felt uneasy, and went about anxiously among the tents of their relations and



acquaintance, hoping to find him there. "And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him." Thus two days were spent; for as they had travelled a day's journey from Jerusalem, it took then another day to get back again. But on the next day, or, as the account says, "after three days," they found him.

Do you not think they felt glad when they found him? Indeed they must have felt very glad. You have heard, or perhaps you have known of parents losing their children for a time; and how grieved and distressed they are all that time, looking about everywhere, and fancying all kinds of terrible accidents. And you know how happy they are at last when their children are found. Just so must the parents of Jesus have felt happy, when they found him at Jerusalem.

You know where they found him. Not among idle companions, but "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors," or teachers of the Jewish law and religion, "both hearing them, and asking them questions." He was so much engaged in learning all he could from the wise men of his nation, that he had not



thought of other things ; and probably this was the reason that he had not joined the caravan of Nazareth, when it departed from Jerusalem.

This scene, of the child Jesus in the temple, is sometimes called “ Christ disputing with the doctors.” But I think it is improper to call it so, and gives a wrong idea of his conduct at that time. The Bible does not say that he disputed with the doctors, but that he heard them, and asked them questions. When he was older, indeed, he did dispute with them, and found fault with them ; but now that he was a child, he sat modestly among them, and heard them attentively, and asked them questions, when it was proper to do so. His questions were so wise, and his answers so full of sense, that “ all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”

His parents were amazed also ; and his mother, though she was so glad to find him, could not help telling him how much they had suffered in missing him ; and so she said to him, “ Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.” Jesus, who knew what an important work he had to do for his Heavenly Father,

answered, "Why did ye seek me? Do ye not know that I must be about my Father's business?" We are told that his parents did not fully understand this answer; which is not surprising, for they did not understand what he was going to be.

But now that Jesus knew his parents wished him to return home with them, he was very willing to go; for he was perfectly obedient to them. "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them."

My children, I wish you to observe particularly these last words, — *he "was subject unto them."* Jesus was subject to his parents; that is, he minded all they said, and assisted them all he could, and obeyed them. Obedience to parents — as I have told you in a former sermon — is an important duty and an excellent virtue; and here you have an example of it in Jesus. Remember that Jesus, when he was young, obeyed his parents. He no doubt knew by heart that commandment, which says, "Honor thy father and thy mother." And he not only knew it, but he kept it. Will you not also keep it, my children? Only think how much you do when you obey your good and

careful parents. You not only obey *them*, but you obey God, by keeping one of his commandments ; and you not only do this, but you follow the example of your Saviour, who, when he was a child, was subject unto his parents. And if you are required to work for them, to work with your hands, never be afraid or ashamed to work ; for Jesus, when he was young, labored for his parents ; and you ought not to be ashamed to do what he did. His parents were poor. Joseph was a mechanic — a carpenter. There is no doubt, therefore, that Jesus, as he was subject to his parents, labored for them. You do not suppose that his dignity or his real glory was made less by this labor. I do not. To me, the sight of the child Jesus, obedient to his parents and working for them in that retired village of Nazareth, is as pleasant a sight as that of the same child Jesus conversing with the wisest men in the great city of Jerusalem. A child obedient to his parents, and, if necessary and proper, industriously working for them, is one of the finest sights which can be seen in this world ; — much finer, I think, than that of a child dressed in the finest clothes that can be made, and doing

nothing. I would rather see a dutiful and industrious boy, any time, than the idle son of a governor or of a king.

And now, children, you perceive that this account of the childhood of Jesus, though it is short, is full of instruction for you. It tells you, what I hope you will faithfully remember ; that when he was a child, he was so wise that he could converse with the teachers of Jerusalem, and yet so humble and affectionate, that he was subject to his poor parents at Nazareth.

After this account, we do not hear anything more of the history of our Saviour till he was thirty years of age, when he was baptized by John, and began to teach publicly, and to work miracles. But there is no doubt that he was always as dutiful to his parents as he was in his childhood, and that he always loved them. It is true, that while he was publicly laboring for our salvation, he thought more about that great work of his Father in heaven than about his family ; and it was important that he should. But this work only lasted a year or two ; and even at that time his love for his mother was as strong as ever, as I can show to you by one event. If you will listen to me a

moment longer, I will tell you what this event was.

I have just been telling you about the first time that Jesus went up to the passover at Jerusalem. Well, it was about twenty years after this, that he went up there for the last time. The first time, he went up with his parents and relations, to be instructed in the law, and to take his youthful part in the ceremonies of the feast, and to eat of the paschal lamb, which was one of those ceremonies. The last time, he went up with his disciples, to complete the law, and, like a lamb himself, to be bound and slain by his enemies. Joseph, who was called his father, was now dead, most probably; for we are told nothing of him. And we are not told, in so many words, that his mother went up with him to Jerusalem; but she was there. Yes, his mother was there. When he was hanging on that dreadful cross — and all his disciples but one had left him and fled — his mother did not leave him — she stood right under the cross — she and the beloved disciple — while enemies and soldiers were mocking, and her innocent son was dying. And he — Jesus — in the midst of his cruel

torments, thought of his mother and that disciple. He looked at them. He spoke to them. He said to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son";—and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" He told the disciple to be like a son to his mother; to be affectionate to her; to take care of her. And the disciple obeyed him. From that hour he took her to his own home.

Did not this show that Jesus loved his mother till he died? How beautiful is this affection! How brightly it joins with all the heavenly greatness and goodness of his character. Children, I beseech you, by the love of Christ, and by the beauty of his example, to love your parents, to obey them, to be subject unto them. So will you increase in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.



## SERMON VIII.



### THE NOTICE TAKEN OF CHILDREN BY JESUS.

AND HE TOOK THEM UP IN HIS ARMS, PUT HIS HANDS UPON  
THEM, AND BLESSED THEM.

I HAVE already related to children what is told us in the Sacred History concerning the infancy and childhood of Jesus Christ. When he was about thirty years of age, he began his public ministry, that is, he began to teach men their duty, and inform them of God and heaven, and of all that is most important for men to know ; and he began, also, to do wonderful works, such as curing the sick, and causing blind people to see, and raising the dead to life, in order that men might believe that he was really sent from God. He taught more wisely than any one had ever taught before, because God gave him more wisdom than he had ever given to any one before. God also gave him power to perform the wonderful works which he did ; for no man could have performed such wonderful works, unless God had been with him to help him.



It might easily enough be supposed, that having such great works to do, and having so much wisdom and power from God, he would have no time to attend to little children, or even to think of them, though he was once a little child himself. But you know that he did think of them, and did attend to them. You have the happiness to know, not only that Jesus was once a little child, but that when he became a wise and mighty teacher, he never forgot little children, but loved them, and spoke very kindly of them, and treated them very tenderly. You know that Jesus took little children into his arms, and blessed them. This is told you by the Evangelist Mark, in the words of my text, which you may find in the tenth chapter of his Gospel, sixteenth verse. You may also read an account of the same event in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

But as I am going to relate to you all that Jesus said of children, so far as it is recorded in the Bible, I shall remind you of an event which took place a little while before that which is mentioned in the text. Attend to me, and I will tell you how and when it was.

Our Lord was travelling through the province of Galilee, in the northern part of the Holy Land, and was going on towards Jerusalem, to be present at the feast of the pass-over ; and he knew that his enemies would take him when he arrived there, and put him to death on the cross. His disciples were travelling with him. They knew that their Master was going to a city where he had many violent enemies, and they had heard him say more than once, and very solemnly, that he should be delivered up into the hands of those enemies, who would kill him. This made them quite sorrowful ; but they could hardly believe that one so good, so wise, and so powerful as their Master was, would really be slain ; for they had made up their minds that he would soon appear as a great king and a conquering warrior, and they could not imagine how he could permit himself to be taken and slain. They supposed there was something in this which they could not understand, but which would be made plain by and by. So they threw off their sorrow as well as they could, and talked of the splendid kingdom which they still believed their Master would soon establish

in Jerusalem. Presently they began to dispute among themselves, which should be the greatest in that kingdom, — who should have the highest offices, and make the most show, and be treated with the most respect. This was wrong, — quite wrong, — especially when we consider what an example of peacefulness and humility they had before their eyes in their Master himself. They were good men ; but, like many other men, they had ambition and pride, and it took them a great while to get rid of those faults. And they were too apt to think about honors and riches when they thought about the kingdom of Christ, or, as it was also called, the kingdom of heaven ; and it was a long time before they fully understood, that the kingdom of their Master, or the kingdom of heaven, was a spiritual kingdom.

Jesus heard his disciples disputing as they were walking along, and he knew what they were disputing about, and he was grieved that they should show such unamiable and worldly dispositions ; but he said nothing to them at that time, till they came to Capernaum. This was a city situated near the shore of the Lake, or Sea, of Galilee. When they had arrived

there, and had gone into a house, Jesus asked them, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" The disciples saw that he looked as if he was not well pleased with them, and they held their peace. Then Jesus sat down, and called the twelve disciples, and endeavored to make them understand and feel that the humblest disciple, and not the proudest, would be the first; and that he who should do the most good to his fellow disciples, and wait upon them the most kindly, would be the greatest among them. "If any man," said he, "desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." And that he might show them yet more plainly what he meant, he called a child to him who was in the room, — no doubt a good and modest little child, who never thought he should be noticed by such a company of wise and grave men, — and he set this child in the midst of them, and took him in his arms, and told his disciples, that in order to become really great in his kingdom, they must become like that little child, that is, as humble and kind and artless as that little child. There was no ambition, there was no pride, there was no

jealousy in the bosom of that child, who sat so innocently in the arms of Jesus, and in the midst of that circle of men ; and Jesus taught them in this manner, that they must drive away ambition and pride and jealousy from their own bosoms, before they could be great in his spiritual kingdom. And he told them that he should love all those disciples who were modest and meek and obedient like that child ; and that if any one should despise and hurt such good and childlike disciples, it would be “ better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

You perceive by this example, that Jesus, so far from forgetting children, thought so highly of them, that he commanded his disciples to imitate children, in order to obtain his approbation and love. I hope, my dear children, that you may deserve the notice of your Saviour, by your modesty and simplicity and kindness, and that when you grow up you will not lose those good qualities ; for whether we are children, or whether we are of riper age, it is only those good qualities which will gain for us his favor, and make us great in his kingdom.

The next time that Jesus took particular notice of children was on this same journey, when he had approached nearer to Jerusalem. He had left the Lake of Galilee, and looked on its beautiful waters for the last time, and had crossed over the river Jordan which flows out from that lake, and was travelling through the towns on its eastern border toward the great city. Wherever he went the people would flock about him that they might see him and hear him, for they believed that he was a great prophet. When he came to a certain place, the name of which is not mentioned, a number of young children were brought to him, that he might lay his hands upon them and bless them ; for their parents thought that it would do the children good to have so holy a person as Jesus touch them and pray for them. And here again, I am sorry to say, the disciples were in fault. I suppose they had forgotten, or what is more likely did not take pains enough to understand, what their Master had just been saying to them about little children, and so, as they thought he might be disturbed by having a crowd of children around him, and perhaps were a little



disturbed and put out of temper themselves, they spoke sharply to those who brought them there, and told them probably to take them away again ; which must have caused their mothers and friends to feel disappointed and distressed.

But let the mothers be cheerful, and let the children be glad. Jesus saw all that was done, and he was wiser and kinder than his disciples. He heard the disciples speaking so harshly, and he saw the mothers moving away so mournfully, with their downcast little children in their hands, and he was very much displeased with his disciples indeed. And he said to them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God." Seeing those simple children, who only came that a holy prophet might speak to them and bless them, and seeing those angry-looking men by their side, who had been disputing not long before about high places and offices, reminded him with fresh force how much better the children received or understood his kingdom than the men did, though they did not pretend to understand it at all ; and so he again spoke to them of the kind of kingdom



which he came to set up, and told them that if they did not receive it as simply and affectionately and gently as those children did, they could not belong to it, or have any part in it. "Truly I say unto you," said he, "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." And after he had said this, he called the children close to him, and "took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." What he said when he blessed them, we do not exactly know, for the words of the blessing are not written in the history. But he no doubt prayed that his heavenly Father would take care of them, and keep them in the ways of virtue and innocence and peace, and bring them at last to his arms in the heaven above.

Now, children, does it not make you love your Saviour, when you know how kind he was to children, and how much he thought of them and loved them? Can you not see him, with the eyes of your mind, looking so mildly, and so sweetly, and yet solemnly, too, upon those little children of Judæa, when he took them up in his arms?

“ Sweet were his words, and kind his look,  
 When mothers round him pressed ;—  
 Their infants in his arms he took,  
 And on his bosom blessed.”

If he were now on earth, he would take you in his arms, as he did those “ children who lived by the Jordan,” and would bless you. And if he would love you if he were on earth, do you not suppose that he does love you, now that he is in heaven? How can you help loving such a Saviour?

“ Was not our Lord a little child,  
 Taught by degrees to pray,  
 By father dear and mother mild  
 Instructed day by day?

“ And loved he not of heaven to talk,  
 With children in his sight,  
 To meet them in his daily walk,  
 And to his arms invite?”

How, then, I repeat, can you help loving such a Saviour?

And what shall you do, to make yourselves worthy of his love? Do exactly the same as you ought to do to make yourselves worthy of the love of God, his Father. Be kind, be obedient, be good. And as you grow up, do not let your goodness go away from you. Keep

your simplicity, keep your honesty and truth, keep your gentleness and kindness ; keep all your virtue, and get more and more. Then you will be — that is, your spirits will be — always in the spiritual arms of Jesus.

Indeed, when I see an amiable, peaceful child, who loves and obeys his parents, and is kind and well disposed to every one, — a child who speaks the truth, and dislikes contention and quarrelling, and fears to do that which is wrong, — I think I see such a child resting in the arms of Jesus, and blessed by his sacred words. And if such a child should die, — though its body would be placed in a coffin, and buried in the cold ground, I could not mourn as if that child were forever dead, for I should believe that its spirit had gone to a holier and happier land than the land of Judæa, or any other land below ; and that it was resting in the arms of Jesus by the side of a holier river than the river Jordan or any earthly river. You know the name of the land I mean, — Heaven. No fighting is there, no envying nor discord. Tears are all wiped away, and hardships and sorrows are forgotten.

“ There every pain and care shall cease,  
And perfect love give perfect peace.”

## SERMON IX.



### A NEW YEAR'S WISH.

I HAVE NO GREATER JOY THAN TO HEAR THAT MY CHILDREN WALK IN TRUTH.

THE aged Apostle John, who wrote the epistle or letter from which this text is taken, which is the fourth verse of the third epistle, did not mean by the words "my children" young children, for he was writing to grown-up people; but I, in using the same words, do mean young children, to whom I intend particularly to speak on this first Sunday morning of the year. The Apostle John was so old when he wrote this letter, having lived probably almost a hundred years, that he well might speak of grown-up people as his children; especially if he had taught them a new and true religion, and had nourished them up in it. And well might such people look upon him, with his thin white locks, as their father. But for my own part I can only address as children those who are really such; and I can say, in the words of St. John, that I "have

no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." If you walk in truth, you will walk happily; and therefore I do not know how I can wish you a happy new year, my children, in any better manner, than to wish that you may this year, and every year you live, walk in truth.

You have doubtless some idea of my meaning, when I say that I wish you may walk in truth. But in order that you may have a yet more clear and more distinct idea of it, I will express the same wish under four different forms. I wish that you may love the truth, learn the truth, speak the truth, and live the truth.

1. I wish that you may love the truth. Give your approbation to whatever is candid, honest, and open. Be always better pleased to see things as they are, than as they are not. Do not permit yourselves to be pleased with deceit. Have nothing to do with it, even though it may seem to be favorable to you. It can never do you anything but harm in the end.

I cannot ask you to be displeased with praise, for praise is often honest, and as useful as it is pleasant; but I can and will ask you

to be displeased with flattery, that is, with praise which is not honest nor true. In this sense, love truth more than you love yourselves. Love truth more than you love to be praised ; more than you love ease ; more than you love any earthly advantage. If you love truth more than any selfish indulgence, then you will be valuable yourself, and will feel that you are valuable, and that the love of the truth has made you valuable, and that you can afford to go without praise, and without indulgences, because your own truth-loving soul is worth more than all those things. But if you love praise so much that you will have it at any rate, or love money or things to eat and drink more than you love the truth, then you cannot help feeling mean, because you will feel that you have put your soul on a level with things which please your eyes or your palate, and that in fact you value your soul less than you do those things. A child, or a man either, must feel mean, and must be mean, when he places so little value on his own soul. Therefore love the truth which gives value to the soul, before all those things which please the senses or gratify self-



ishness, and the intense love of which degrades the soul.

Love the truth wherever it is to be seen. Love it in a stranger as well as in a person whom you know. Love it and honor it in one who wears coarse clothes as well as in one who wears fine clothes. And despise falsehood and deceit just as heartily when it is dressed in jewels as when it is covered with rags. Put vanity and fear behind you, come out of the darkness, and stand up in the daylight, and love truth.

2. I wish that you may learn the truth. Indeed if you sincerely love the truth, you will endeavor to learn it, and you will meet with success to all essential purposes. Most of the obstacles which hinder people from learning the truth come from their not loving truth, or from their loving something else more than truth. Learn as much truth as you can, and when you find that you have learned anything which is not true, throw it away. Try to get as much truth as possible by your own exertions ; but do not refuse help. Neither while you are children, nor after you are grown up, will you be able to learn the



needful truth without help. But some are more able and better fitted to help you than others. Your parents, are your best human guides in learning the truth; far better guides, in general, than those who love you not as they do; for much truth comes from love. Follow the guidance of your fathers and mothers, and those whom they choose to be your instructors, rather than the guidance of strangers or your own passions.

If I should ask you in what book you might learn the most truth, you would probably all answer, the Bible; and you would answer right. The Bible is the book of God, and God is truth. It is in the Bible that you come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, who was "full of grace and truth," and taught truth, and died for the truth: for he loved truth better than life.

Make it your great object to learn what is true, and not merely what is agreeable or what seems to suit you. Truth is wisdom, and falsehood is folly; therefore learn wisdom and not folly. What can be more foolish than to spend time in learning folly? They who spend their time in learning to deceive others,—what do

they do? Why, they waste their time, and deceive themselves. How foolish they are! I beseech you to spend your time in learning the truth; for then it will be spent wisely and well.

Seek the aid of your parents and of good people. Read that good book, the Bible, and other books which teach virtue; for virtue is the highest truth. Mind this, particularly, my children, and remember it, that virtue is the highest truth. You will often make mistakes in after life, I suppose, and think you have found the truth when you have not; but you may be sure that you learn the highest truth in learning virtue.

3. I wish that you may speak the truth. Speak the truth which you have loved, and which you have learned. Do not be afraid of speaking it. Be more afraid of speaking a falsehood than of being punished in consequence of speaking the truth. Speak the truth on all occasions when it is proper that you should speak at all. Get a steady habit of telling the truth, and then you will have a character for truth-telling with all who know you; and how delightful it is to find that you are depended

upon, even by your elders, as tellers of the honest truth, and that you have established a character which insures respect. A truth-telling child is more to be respected than a man who does not speak the truth.

Observe too that it is much safer to speak truth than falsehood. Falsehood may pass undetected a few times, but it must be discovered at last ; and then, O what shame must be endured, as well as punishment ! The burning shame of detected falsehood, — save yourselves from it, my young friends, in the only way you can, which is by always speaking the truth.

Truth will be your friend through life, but falsehood can serve you but a little while, and with miserable service too. The Bible says the same. Hear what it says. “ The lip of truth shall be established forever ; but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” You have heard people talk of beautiful lips. Perhaps you have heard some such remark as this : How beautiful that child’s lips are ! they are just like coral ! Now I tell you that the most beautiful lips are the lips which speak the truth, and that they are worth all the coral which ever grew in the sea. I never read any praise of coral lips in

the Bible, but I have read praise of lips which speak the truth, — and the highest praise which can be given, even that they are delightful to God who made them, while false lips, however bright their color may be, are hateful to him. Listen again. “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight.” As you value the confidence of man, your own respect, and the love of your heavenly Father, my children, speak the truth.

4. And, finally, I wish that you may live the truth. That is, I wish that truth may shine out through your whole life, and be seen in all your character and conduct. I certainly wish that you may always speak the truth, but I do not care that you should speak much *about* the truth; because I have known persons who were in the habit of talking frequently and quite in raptures about truth, saying how lovely and excellent it was, and yet who did not seem to me to speak and act more truly themselves than many others who did not say so much about it. Do not be affected. Do not pretend to feel more than you really feel, or to be more than you are. Be polite, and considerate of other people’s feelings, but at the same

time be true. Be true to your faith. Do not say a good thing, and afterwards be afraid to act it. Do not lend yourselves to help out any piece of fraud or low cunning. Be fair and frank in all your dealings and proceedings, but at the same time gentle and kind; for truth and charity agree together like loving sisters; but truth and rudeness do not agree together at all, but whatever truth does rudeness is sure to spoil. Be not rude, but be true; kind and true. Then you will be beloved and respected, and you will be happy. And if you care about being thought handsome, the best way and the only way in your power is to be honest and true. In your face and form you cannot be different from what God made you. But deceit and habits of falsehood will so hurt the handsomest face, that people will think it no longer handsome; while truth will add beauty to the most beautiful. The most celebrated of English poets has said the same thing, in words so simple that you will understand them at once.

“ O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,  
By that sweet ornament which *truth* doth give !”

Bind this sweet ornament about your neck,

my children, and always wear it, and then you need not give yourselves any concern about your beauty ; for you must be beautiful in the eyes of all who know you.

Now I have given you my New-Year's wish, and may God grant that it be fulfilled ! It is that you may walk in truth ; and it was explained to you under four divisions or heads, which I will repeat to you that you may remember them. I wished that you might love the truth, learn the truth, speak the truth, and live the truth. Whether we shall meet together on the first Sunday of the next year, I know not. How long we shall live together in this world, I know not. No one knows. Children die, and men die ; and we cannot tell who will be called to their last account in the present year. But if we walk daily in truth, we have the sure promise of God, that we shall walk together in the heavenly city, in light and glory, and live through the heavenly year, which is immortal and eternal.



## SERMON X.



### FAULTS OF CHILDREN.

EVEN A CHILD IS KNOWN BY HIS DOINGS, WHETHER HIS WORK BE PURE, AND WHETHER IT BE RIGHT.

THIS is a wise saying which concerns children ; and it may be found in the Book of Proverbs, twentieth chapter, eleventh verse. The meaning of it is, that a child, as well as a man, is to be known or distinguished by his character, his habits, his behavior, his talk ; so that you can tell, young as he is, and brief as his residence has been in this world, whether his work, or the amount of what he does, is pure and right, or whether it is impure and wrong.

Some children are obedient to those whom they ought to obey, and some are disobedient ; some are disposed to be calm and quiet, and some to be peevish and fretful ; some are gentle, and some are rude and passionate ; some speak the truth always, and some speak a great deal of falsehood. Now by all these doings a child is known. He is not so widely known as a man is, because he does not act on



so wide a stage as a man does ; but still he is known. He is known by his playmates and schoolmates, and he is known by many grown-up people, the friends and acquaintances of his family, the neighbors and others. He cannot help being known. There are many eyes upon him, which must see what he is doing, how he conducts himself ; and therefore there are many minds which form an opinion concerning his work and his conduct.

It is important that you should be aware of this, my children, and that you should govern yourselves accordingly. It is important that you should be aware, that even at your early time of life people observe you and have their thoughts and feelings about you. You are sometimes too apt to imagine that people are taking notice of your clothes, when in fact they are not ; but you may depend upon it, that many persons who do not care the least whether you are dressed in one way or another, cannot fail to mark your behavior, and are pleased to see you behave well and displeased to see you behave ill. Surely you desire to give pleasure rather than pain. Surely you prefer to be thought agreeable

rather than disagreeable, and good rather than bad. You must esteem it more pleasant to go about with an excellent character among friends, than with a poor character among those who dislike you. I take it for granted, that you would all of you rather be loved than not be loved. But in order to be loved, you must attract and deserve love ; and in order to deserve love, you must be virtuous and amiable ; and in order to be virtuous and amiable, you must avoid those faults to which you are liable, and amend those faults which you may have already contracted. It is therefore a friendly act to warn you kindly of your faults ; and this is what I propose to do in the present sermon.

I am not one of those who think that children have no faults. I love children. I love the freshness, the simplicity, the openness of heart, the tenderness of heart, the comparative innocence, and other fair qualities which are so generally the characteristics of childhood. But I remember what children were when I was a child, and I see what they are now ; and I know that they have faults. Indeed it would be a wonder if they had not. And if I should

tell you, my children, that you had no faults, your own consciences and recollections would contradict me, and tell you that I was mistaken. If I should say to you, my children, you are altogether without spot or stain ; your thoughts and feelings are all exactly right ; in order to do what you ought, you have only to do what you please, and woe to those who check you and your sweet impulses ; you have no sins, no selfishness, and never would have, if your elders would only let you alone ; you are, in short, angels upon earth ; — if I should hold this language to you, you might for a moment, perhaps, be pleased with the flattery, but the next moment you would blush and hang your heads with uneasy consciousness, and wonder how I could be either so ignorant, or so regardless of fact, as to address you in so strange a manner. It is not improbable that some of you might call to mind something which you had done wrong this very day, which would itself prove my lofty praises to be empty and worthless. I think so well of you, that I believe you would prefer honest words from my mouth to flattery ; and it is only because I love you, and wish you to become

better by amending your faults, that I speak to you concerning them.

I shall speak of a few of the faults which appear to me to be most common to children. But in doing this, I do not mean to imply that all of you are chargeable with each of the faults which I shall name. Some of you will probably be blameless of one specified fault and some of another. Your own consciences must tell you of what you are guilty, and of what you are not guilty.

1. The first fault which I shall mention is that of wilfulness. Children are very apt to be wilful ; to set up their own will in opposition to the will of those whose right and whose duty it is to direct and govern them. To be sure, it is quite natural that you should prefer your own will and your own way. But then your will is often unreasonable, and your way dangerous ; and they who are older and wiser than you are know, that if you were always to have your own will and take your own way, the consequences would be highly injurious not only to others but to yourselves. If there is to be order and peace and virtue in a house, all who live in it cannot have each one his

separate will and way ; for the wills and ways would clash together and produce endless confusion. There must be government in that house. The wills of some must occasionally yield and be given up. Now who ought to yield, and give up their wills ? Should the old yield to the young, or the young to the old ? Should the parent yield to the child, or the child to the parent ? Certainly the child should yield ? And why ? Because the parent has more wisdom than the child can have, and knows better than the child can, what is for the child's good.

And remember, too, that it is because your parents love you, that they sometimes oppose your will, and refuse to grant your wishes. It is as unpleasant to them to contradict and deny you, as it can be to you to be contradicted and denied ; but they perform this unpleasant duty, because they love you too well to let you do what they think would hurt you at once, or turn out to your injury in the end. You love liberty, you desire to be free. Very well. Liberty is good. But so is obedience, and so is submission. Liberty is not the only good ; and it is not good at all, when it does

not mind the limits which are set to it, and rebels against wisdom and love, which are its natural and eternal superiors and guides.

Try, my dear children, and try hard, if it be not easy to you, to bring your wills into subjection to the wisdom and love of your parents and instructors. Put forth your true strength, and try to conquer your own wilfulness. The next time that you feel disposed to speak rudely to those who nurture you, or take your own way in opposition to their commands or wishes, think how much longer they have lived than you have, and how much more knowledge they have acquired; think how they clothe and feed and instruct you; think how tenderly they love you and watch over you, and how readily they would risk their lives for your benefit. Think,—and suffer not the rude answer to pass the gates of your lips. Think,—and then cheerfully and gracefully obey.

2. Another fault to which children are liable is a propensity to disturb each other or their elders by teasing them. This propensity to tease is one branch of the love of mischief, that wild and gadding vine with the bitter fruit.



I would not deny to you one moment of sport in its proper season. But sport is sport, and pain is pain ; and that ought to be no sport to you which gives unnecessary pain to others. Who does not know that the peace and enjoyment of a quiet circle may be most seriously troubled by the annoyances of children, who persist in annoying, in spite of all entreaty and rebuke. Who has not marked the unhappiness which children cause to each other at home and abroad, in the house, and the school, and the street, by sneering and jeering and ridiculing each other, by withholding some article of property, by doing some one of the hundred vexing things which are signified by the word "teasing." Be assured that these are all transgressions of the great law of love. You do not like to be vexed yourselves, and therefore you ought not to vex others. Some children can better bear to be teased than others, and it is well that you should learn to bear it, for it is a rough world you live in. But while you should endeavor to bear provocation when it comes, with as calm and strong a spirit as possible, you should resolve not to give provocation, but to be kind and amiable, and considerate of the feelings of every one.



And here I would throw in a word for the brute creation. Avoid teasing not only your fellow-beings but the inferior animals. God made them, and made them for enjoyment. See that you imbitter not their lives, their short lives, which God gave so kindly. Study their habits, for they are curious and interesting. Admire their form and structure, for they are well adapted to their habits and wants. Accept their services, which are many and great. But do not tease them. Do not make them wish, if they can wish, that they had never been born. Show that you deserve your own superiority of rank, by treating them gently and humanely.

3. There is a fault, or I should rather call it a sin, which is to be observed in some children, but from which I hope you are free, for I cannot think of it without indignation, — I mean the habit of tyrannizing over inferiors in age or strength. I believe I state no more than the bare fact, when I say, that many have had their days of childhood almost spoiled for them, by the sufferings of mind and body which have been inflicted on them by some little tyrant of the neighborhood. A grievous

sin is the sin of tyranny, and perhaps as often to be met with among children as among men. Sometimes one will tyrannize over many, and sometimes many will join together to tyrannize over one. But in all cases, tyranny is a grievous and hateful sin, — it causes so much unhappiness! Even children of the softer sex are not free from it. Even little girls will sometimes combine together to treat with rude and cutting neglect some one of their companions, because they have some foolish prejudice against her, and thus, if she has any feeling, make her miserable; and she all the while may be as good a child, and as worthy of notice as any of them. Avoid, I beseech you, the taint of this sin of tyranny. And let those who are free from it themselves frown upon it when they see it in others. Discourage it; talk against it; take the part of those who are oppressed by it. As far as you are able, permit it not to show its hateful form or exercise its hateful power.

And here I will stop; not because I have got through the list of the faults of children, but because those which I have named belong to one class or family of faults, and because I

have already said enough for your attention and your memory. I have spoken to you as your sincere friend, more desirous to improve you than to entertain you. It will do you no harm, but only good, to be reminded seasonably of your imperfections, and to think and reflect on them, so that you may be led to amend them. Go on, my children, from weakness to strength, and from strength to more strength, and may the good Spirit of God our Father go with you and help you.

## SERMON XI.



### A SUMMARY.

MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS WRITE I UNTO YOU,  
THAT YE SIN NOT.

THESE words are from the First Epistle of John, second chapter, first verse. They represent, in a brief form, the object of religious instruction, whether it be addressed to children or to persons in mature life. The purpose of the apostle is the purpose of every Christian teacher. I have written to you, my children, and preached to you from first to last that I might keep you from sin, and help you to be virtuous and worthy; and not merely that I might entertain you for a few moments at a time, with words that should make no lasting impression on your minds and hearts. I have written to you, and spoken to you, "that ye sin not."

And now that I speak to you once more, it is my intention to refresh your memory of what has been formerly said to you, by re-

peating to you the substance of these discourses, which had for their only design your improvement in knowledge and goodness and piety.

1. I taught you in my first discourse that you were not here in the world by chance, without a Maker ; but that just as certainly as a rich musical instrument, for instance a church organ, must have been made, and made by a being having a mind or intellect, so certainly must you have been made, and made by a Being having a mind or intellect. I told you that as an organ could only be made by some one who intended to make it, and knew how to make it, and was acquainted with all its various parts, so you yourselves could only be made by some One who intended to make you, and knew how to make you, and was acquainted with all the various parts which compose the wonderful frame of your bodies and the still more wonderful frame of your souls. That One is God. He made also the earth and the stars and everything we behold. He is before all other beings and above them all. He is God alone. To know him, is to take the first step in religious knowledge ; and you will presently

see how your knowledge of him may keep you from sin, and help you to be good.

2. In my second discourse I exhorted you from the words of Solomon, to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. I set before you the duty of thinking seriously and frequently of the Almighty Being who made you. I told you that you should think for what purpose he made you, and what he wishes you to do while you live. To remember your Creator is to think of him; and to think of him properly is to reflect upon his design and will concerning yourselves. I then proceeded to show you that God created you to be happy, and to find happiness in goodness. These two things cannot be separated. You cannot be happy in any way you choose, but in the way only which he chooses, which is the way of virtue and piety. Although the church organ may produce discord, yet it was not built to produce discord, but music and harmony; and though you may do wrong and commit sin, yet you were not made to do wrong but to do right, to be virtuous and to be happy. Thus you were taught to perceive how the knowledge of God as your Creator tends to preserve



you from sin. As he made you, so did he make you to be happy in obeying him ; and to obey him is to be virtuous and holy. The remainder of this discourse was occupied in expounding to you three particular rules of goodness. The first of these rules was, To love and obey your parents ; the second, To speak the truth always ; and the third, To be just and kind to all persons.

3. As I told you in the first sermon, that God created you, and in the second, that he created you to obey his commandments, and to be happy in this obedience, I explained to you in the third, that he certainly knew whether you obeyed him or not, because he is present everywhere throughout his own universe, and is perfectly acquainted with everything and every being that he has made. To him there is no night, and from his vision there can nothing be hid, — no action, no feeling, no thought. The thought that God sees you always, will naturally tend to prevent you from sinning in his sight ; and will also stimulate you to do good, knowing that he sees you, and seeing, will love you.

4. My fourth sermon was on the duty of

praying to God. Praying to him is speaking to him. You think it right to speak to your earthly father, to ask him for what you need ; it is right also to speak to your heavenly Father, who is God, to ask him for what you need, and to thank him for what he has given you. You can speak to God with your thoughts, as well as with words, because he hears thoughts as well as words. It is right that you should pray to him both with your mind and with your tongue. He wishes you to pray to him, and has promised that he will hear you. And when you pray to him, the most important gifts which you can ask for, are those virtues and good dispositions which will make you his well-beloved children. And when you ask for them, sincerely and heartily, you will receive them. You will be assisted to be virtuous, you will be defended from sin.

5. Those four sermons were on your relations and duties to God. In the fifth discourse, I spoke to you of his Son, Jesus Christ, who, next to God our Father, demands our reverence, gratitude, and love. I spoke to you of the great wisdom and power which Jesus had from God, and of his great love toward

mankind, which led him to live and labor for their good, and at last to die for them. I then explained to you the meaning of the name Jesus, which signifies a *Saviour*, and was chosen to be his name, because he was to save his people from their sins. Secondly, I explained to you the meaning of the name, or title, Christ, which signifies the *anointed*, and was applied to Jesus, because as kings were anointed with oil in testimony of their high office, so Jesus was spiritually anointed by God to be a king, or ruler, over the souls of men. And thirdly, I explained to you the meaning of the word *lord*, which signifies master, or one who has authority, and is applied to Jesus to denote that he is the especial Master and Head of all his disciples, or Christians. The conclusion is, that his teachings and commandments are to be received as the teachings and commandments of God.

6. I spoke to you in the sixth sermon, of the infancy of Jesus; for your Saviour was once a child like yourselves. I spoke to you of the angels who announced his birth with sweet songs in the skies, and of the humble place in which he was born, and of the shep-

herds who came to see him first, and the wise men from the East who came to see him afterwards. And then I told you of his being taken by his parents into Egypt, when they were afraid of the cruel Herod; and of their return, after the death of Herod, to the village of Nazareth, in their own country, where the child Jesus “grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.”

7. And in the seventh sermon I spoke to you of the childhood of Jesus. I told you how his parents took him with them, when he was twelve years old, to the city of Jerusalem, at the Feast of the Passover; and how they missed him when they were on their return to Nazareth; and how, when they went back to Jerusalem, they found him in the great temple there, listening to the learned teachers of religion, and asking them questions, because he wished already to prepare himself for the work of his heavenly Father. And then I told you how he returned with his parents to Nazareth; and how he “was subject to them” there, obeying them in all things, and working for them; and how he “increased in wisdom and

stature, and in favor with God and man." In these accounts you beheld the example which was set by Jesus, when he was a child, to all children; an example of studiousness and diligence, of mildness, and docility, and obedience; an example of qualities and conduct which gained him the love and favor of God and of man. And does not such an example speak to your hearts, and persuade you to imitate it, as far as you possibly can?

8. Having in the two preceding discourses related to you the incidents of the infancy and childhood of Jesus, I told you in the next, which was the eighth in order, what he said of children, and how he treated them, when he had grown up to manhood, and was teaching the people, and doing his wonderful works. I told you how, on one occasion, when his disciples had been disputing with one another about who should be first and greatest among them, he showed them a little child, and assured them that they must be humble and simple as that child was, before they could be really great. And I told you how, on another occasion, when a number of little children were brought to him, that he might lay his hands on them

and bless them, he kindly took them up in his arms, and gave them his holy blessing, though his disciples thought they would trouble him, and wanted to send them away. I thus showed you that Jesus always remembered and loved little children, and that children ought to love him and obey his precepts.

9. My ninth sermon was a New-Year's sermon, expressing a New-Year's wish ; which was, that you might "walk in truth." And this wish was divided into four parts ; the first, that you might love the truth ; the second, that you might learn the truth ; the third, that you might speak the truth ; and the fourth, that you might live the truth. This is a wish that may be repeated at any time ; and every one who loves children, and sincerely wishes them well, may say, in the words of St. John, which were the text of this sermon, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

10. Children have faults. It is proper that they should be told of their faults, in order that they may amend them. With a view to your improvement, therefore, I described in my tenth discourse some of the faults to which



children are liable. I warned you against the fault of wilfulness, or of setting up your own will in opposition to the will of those whom it is your duty to obey. I warned you, secondly, against the disposition to disturb and tease those about you by noisy or mischievous behavior. I warned you, thirdly, against the sin of tyranny; the sin and wickedness of domineering over, or in any way rendering uncomfortable and unhappy, those who are younger, or poorer, or weaker than yourselves. Other faults might have been mentioned; but I left you to reflect seriously upon these, and, if you are not prone to these, to reflect seriously upon the faults you have, of which your consciences will inform you.

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.” You will readily see that I have addressed these ten discourses to you, with the purpose of guarding you against sin, and helping you in the way of goodness and eternal life. Happy shall I be if I have interested you in subjects so important to your welfare now and hereafter. My heart is with you. My prayers are for you. It is difficult for you to tell how anxiously and earnestly

many of your elders, all who love you best and most truly, are regarding your conduct, and the signs of your moral course. You are considered not merely as children, but as those who are soon to be the men and women of society. The old are tottering and passing away; the middle-aged are growing old; the circle of time is steadily rolling round; and very soon, though it may not seem so to you in looking forward, you will leave your schools, and the studies and sports of childhood, and take your part in the business and concerns of the world. Your dispositions, and qualities, and habits, your knowledge and your ignorance, will exert their full influence. Your character will be part of the character of your country. Is it a wonder, then, that you are looked upon with an intense interest? Is it a wonder, that many eyes are seriously and affectionately watching you, to discover, if they can, by your position and progress now, what will be your place and your path hereafter? That you are objects of such regards, cannot make you vain. You will rather be made humble in view of the love which yearns toward you, and of the work you are called upon to perform. I beseech you to

strive with all your might to fulfil the hopes which are formed of you. Improve the time which your Creator gave you for the express purpose of improvement. Store your minds with true knowledge; and bear this in your minds especially, my children, that the chief end of all your studies, an end beyond comparison more important than any other, is, that you may be made good and useful, — good and useful. You can easily remember this truth, for like almost all important truths, it is plain and simple. Remember it, and act upon it. Act upon it faithfully and constantly. Then you will amply repay all that has been paid for you; then you will fill with joy many expecting hearts; then your parents and your friends will bless you; your country will bless you; your Saviour and your God will look down favorably upon you, and will take you to themselves in bliss and glory, when your course on earth is ended.

# A CATECHISM

FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.



## PART I.

*Question.* Can you tell me, child, who made you?

*Answer.* God made me and all things.

*Q.* For what did God make you?

*A.* To be good and happy.

*Q.* What is it to be good?

*A.* To love and obey my parents, to speak the truth always, and to be just and kind to all persons.

*Q.* Can God know whether you be good or not?

*A.* Yes; for though we cannot see God, yet he sees us, wherever we are, by night as well as by day.

*Q.* What will God do for you, if you be good?

*A.* He will love me, and make me happy.

*Q.* Can you do anything for God, who is so good to you?

A. I can only love him, obey him, and be thankful to him; I can do nothing for him.

Q. Can you speak to God?

A. Yes; he has bid us to pray to him for everything which is fit for us, and he is always ready to hear us.

Q. In what manner should you pray to God?

A. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has given us a form of prayer, called the Lord's Prayer.

Q. Repeat the Lord's Prayer.

A. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Q. What will God do to those who are not good?

A. He will punish them.

Q. Is God able to punish those who are not good?

A. Yes; he who made all things can do all

things ; he can take away all our friends, and everything which he has given us ; and he can make us die, whenever he pleases.

*Q.* After you die, shall you live again ?

*A.* Yes ; God will raise us from the dead, and if we be good, we shall die no more.

*Q.* Where shall you live again, if you have been good ?

*A.* If I have been good, I shall go to heaven, where I shall be very happy forever.

*Q.* What shall become of the wicked, when they die ?

*A.* They shall meet with their just punishment.

*Q.* When you do anything which is wrong, should you not be afraid that God, who sees you, will punish you ?

*A.* Yes ; but he has promised to forgive us, if we be sorry for our sins, and endeavor to sin no more.

*Q.* Who has told us, that God will forgive us, if we repent of our sins, and endeavor to sin no more ?

*A.* Many persons by whom God spake, and particularly Jesus Christ.

*Q.* Who was Jesus Christ ?



A. The well-beloved Son of God, whom the Father sent to teach men their duty, and to persuade and encourage them to practise it.

Q. Where do we learn what we know concerning Christ, and what he did, taught, and suffered for the good of men?

A. In the Bible, which we should diligently read and study, for our improvement in knowledge and goodness, in order to fit us for heaven.

Q. Is there any form of words in which Christians express the principal articles of their belief?

A. Yes; the Apostles' Creed, which was composed in the first ages of Christianity, is such a form.

Q. Repeat the Apostles' Creed.

A. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from

thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the holy catholic church ; the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting. Amen.

## PART II.

*Q.* Does the Bible inform us what God himself is ?

*A.* Yes ; it teaches us that he is a being who had no beginning, and that he will have no end ; that he is almighty, perfectly wise, and infinitely good ; that he is everywhere present ; and that he never changes in his nature or disposition.

*Q.* What does God require of us, in order to live and die in his favor ?

*A.* All that God requires of us is comprehended in these two precepts ; Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ; and thy neighbor as thyself.

*Q.* In what manner must we express our love to God ?

A. By a grateful sense of his goodness to us ; by a constant care to do his will ; and by an entire and cheerful submission to all the dispensations of his providence.

Q. How must we express our love to our fellow-men ?

A. By doing to others, as we should think it right in them to do to us in the same circumstances.

Q. By what methods must we cherish our love to God, and increase our confidence in him ?

A. We must frequently consider the benefits he confers upon us. We must also address ourselves to him in prayer, thanking him for the mercies he bestows upon us, confessing our sins before him, and asking of him whatever he knows to be needful and good for us.

Q. How shall we bring ourselves into the best disposition for performing our duty to God and man ?

A. By a proper government of our passions, according to the dictates of reason and conscience ; by living in temperance and chastity ; and never indulging a proud, malicious, or selfish temper.

*Q.* What should we do, when persons affront and injure us ?

*A.* We should not return evil for evil ; and if they repent, we must forgive them, as we hope that God will forgive us our offences against him.

*Q.* In what manner should we treat the inferior animals ?

*A.* We should treat them with tenderness and humanity ; and never torment them or destroy their lives to make ourselves sport ; because they are the creatures of God, and because God has commanded us to be merciful unto them.

*Q.* Has God anywhere delivered distinct directions, concerning the several branches of our duty to him and to our neighbor ?

*A.* Yes, in the Ten Commandments, which he delivered to the children of Israel from Mount Sinai.

*Q.* Which is the first commandment ?

*A.* Thou shalt have no other gods but me.

*Q.* Which is the second commandment ?

*A.* Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath,

or in the water under the earth ; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them ; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate me ; and show mercy unto thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

*Q.* Which is the third commandment ?

*A.* Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.

*Q.* Which is the fourth commandment ?

*A.* Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all that thou hast to do ; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter ; thy man servant, and thy maid servant ; thy cattle, and the stranger who is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

*Q.* Which is the fifth commandment ?

A. Honor thy father and thy mother ; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. Which is the sixth commandment ?

A. Thou shalt do no murder.

Q. Which is the seventh commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. Which is the eighth commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not steal.

Q. Which is the ninth commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. Which is the tenth commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife ; nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

Q. What are those principles which most effectually lead to the observance of these, and all other of God's commandments ?

A. A high reverence of God, and a sincere good-will to our fellow-creatures, joined with a just regard to our own real interest.

Q. What is the best method we can take to guard ourselves from all vice and wickedness ?

A. By being careful not to indulge sinful



thoughts ; and by correcting everything which is amiss in the beginning, before we have become accustomed to it, and have formed a habit which cannot easily be broken ; particularly by avoiding the company of wicked persons, who would soon make us like themselves ; and by being, in a more especial manner, upon our guard against those vices, to which our situation and circumstances make us peculiarly prone.

*Q.* Is any man able to fulfil all the commands of God, so as to live entirely without sin ?

*A.* No. Our merciful God and Father knows that we are not able to do this, and, therefore, does not expect it from us. He only requires that we repent of the sins we commit, and endeavor to live better lives for the future.

*Q.* What should a sense of our frailty and proneness to sin teach us ?

*A.* Humility and watchfulness, and earnestness in our prayers to God, to enable us to resist temptation, and to strengthen and confirm our good dispositions.

*Q.* Did Christ appoint any outward ordinances as means of promoting his religion ?

*A.* He commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and he also commanded them to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him. This rite is called the Lord's Supper.

*Q.* What is the meaning of baptism?

*A.* The washing of water in baptism probably represents the purity of heart and life required from all who become the disciples of Christ.

*Q.* What is the nature and use of the Lord's Supper?

*A.* By eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of Christ, we keep alive the memory of his death and resurrection; we acknowledge ourselves to be Christians; we cherish a grateful sense of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ; and strengthen our resolutions to live as becomes his disciples.

*Q.* Had Christ no particular reward on account of what he did and suffered for the good of men?

*A.* Because he humbled himself to death, God has highly exalted him, and made him head over all things to his Church; and at the end of the world he will come to judge the living and the dead. For this hope which was

set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame of that ignominious death.

*Q.* What do the Scriptures say concerning the day of judgment?

*A.* That Christ will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, when every eye shall see him; that he will separate the wicked from the good; that he will send the wicked into a place of punishment, and take the righteous to a place of happiness, where they shall live forever with himself.

THE END.









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