

DECEPTION;

OR,

THE FIRST OF APRIL.



LONDON:

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,

56, *Paternoster-row* ;

SOLD ALSO BY J. NISBET, BERNERS-STREET.

503

DECEPTION;

OR,

THE FIRST OF APRIL.

"Let not MERCY and TRUTH forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man," Prov. iii. 3.

"Love the TRUTH and PEACE," Zech. viii. 19.

LONDON:

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

Instituted 1799.

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD;
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

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PART I.

THE morning shone bright with all the freshness and beauty of spring, as John Jones and William Price walked together

towards their Sunday school. A heavy spring shower had fallen in the night, and made the pavements nice; even the stones in the streets looked clean. The boys came to a large house, and they stopped to look through the railings. Some of the trees which grew in the fore-court were just putting out leaves, and the opening buds filled the air around them with fragrance; the branches of the elms were covered with long green blossoms, which come before the leaves; the ever-greens looked dull, for their season of beauty is winter.

"Do you hear that bird?" said William.

"I can see it," said John, "perched upon the high branch of that tree."

"I hear robins too," said William.

"I wonder," said John, "what those little yellow birds with black wings are called; do you know?"

"I saw a pair in a cage in market," said William, "and the woman who owned them, told me they were goldfinches." As William said this, a swallow, with outspread wings, darted by him to the ground, and then mounting again into the air, was out of sight in a moment, as if it had

only come to taste the drops that the shower of the night had left upon the grass, and which were sparkling like diamonds as the sunbeams fell upon them.

“Look! look!” said John, “at these two little birds,” pointing to a pair of small brown birds which were on the gravel walk; “I wish I dare throw a stone; how nicely I could knock one of them over!” He spoke aloud, and at that moment his Sunday school teacher was passing; but hearing John, he went up to the railings, saying, “Well, boys, are you on your way to Sunday school?” William answered, “Yes, sir.”

Teacher. It is a delightful morning; how the birds enjoy it! Do you know, John, what kind those are on the walk?

John. I never heard what they are called, sir.

T. Sparrows. Do you remember, John, any passage of Scripture in which sparrows are named?

J. Yes, sir; they are in the lesson which I am to repeat to-day, Matt. x.

T. Repeat the verse.

J. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.”

T. Who was it that said this?

J. Jesus Christ.

T. And what do you think he meant to teach us?

John did not answer this question, for he began now to think that the teacher had heard his wish, and he knew that he deserved reproof.

The question was now repeated to William, who answered: "Jesus taught that our heavenly Father knows even when a sparrow falls on the ground, though it is so common a bird, and can be bought for so small a price."

T. John, why did you not dare to throw a stone, as you wished, at the bird?

J. I was not angry at the sparrow.

T. No, but you indulged a cruel disposition, which would have led you to destroy the life of the bird; and what use would you have made of it, if your wish could have been gratified? I think I can tell you what you would probably have done with it. You would have taken it in your hand, not to examine how curiously it is formed, and how beautifully the feathers are laid on the wings, but merely to swing it about for a short time, and then

would have tossed it into the street as useless. Our heavenly Father gives us the liberty to destroy animals, insects, or birds, when they interfere with our health or comfort; or when they may be made to contribute, in any way, to our real advantage; but he that has humanity will not

Heedlessly set foot upon a worm,
But tread aside, and let the reptile live.

Now, John, you do know that God's law forbids the indulgence of a cruel disposition, and you know that not even a sparrow can fall without his knowledge; and do you not think that he will as certainly punish those who break his law, as the magistrate will those who break human laws.

J. Yes, sir.

T. If, when you felt the wish which I heard you speak, you had remembered, GOD SEES ME, and that a sparrow could not fall without his knowledge; that he has forbidden cruelty, and that he will certainly punish all disobedience to his law, perhaps you would have feared the punishment that God threatens, more than that which man threatens, and have felt sorrow for having desired to disobey

the kind Creator. There is, however, a better reason than that of fearing punishment, which should keep us from evil; do you know, John, what that is?

J. No, sir.

T. The love of God; and if we love the Creator, we shall feel kindly towards all beings that he has created. You remember, William, you repeated to me the explanation which our Saviour gives, of the manner in which the commandments must be kept? By loving God "with all our strength," means as truly and warmly as we have power to do; with all our heart, soul, and mind. They who thus "love the Lord, will hate evil;" this love of God will incline us to love all that he has formed; and thus "love is the fulfilling of the law." Have you ever thought, John, when your teacher was counselling you to love God, what is the reason that you should love him?

J. Because he made me, and is good to me.

T. This is a cause we have for loving him, but there is a greater one than this. A wise man was once asked, "Why men love the light;" he answered, that

this was the question of a blind man ; which meant that none could doubt why the light should be loved, but those who had never seen it. So all who know how glorious and holy God is in his character, and that he is goodness itself, will love him because he is good, as well as because this goodness makes him bestow blessings upon them ; and none but those who do not seek to know God, would question, like the blind man about the light, why he should be loved. Think now, John, of what I have said to you. I know you have learned a great number of passages in the Bible, but if you could repeat every word that is in it, and yet do not learn your duty from it, remembering the words will be of little use. Your knowledge of the Scriptures may be of great benefit to you, if you would endeavour to think of what they teach you ; for there is nothing that you do, or even think, for which there is not a rule in the Bible to show you if it is right or wrong. It is time now for me to leave you ; I hope you will not be late at school.

The teacher went on, and the two boys walked slowly after him. When they

came to the corner of a square, three boys were passing up the street; one of them called out, "Here, you sirs, you have lost something." John had crossed the street, and was just putting his foot upon the kerb-stone, but turning suddenly to look what he had dropped, his foot missed the stone, and he fell upon his face. The boy then called out, "Ah! you April fool," and all three ran up the street laughing loudly. John was not much hurt, but was very angry, and began to threaten what he would do to the boy, the first time he met him. "I forgot," said William, "that it is the first of April."

John. I did not know it, or that fellow should not have made a fool of me; but I am glad now that I do know it, for I shall have some fine fun to-day.

William. I think you have had enough of such fun, for your nose looks hurt.

J. I do feel it a little; is it bruised?

W. It begins to look black and blue.

J. I have a great mind not to go to school; the boys will be all asking how my nose was bruised, and I should not like them to know what a trick was played upon me. You must not tell them.

W. Not unless they ask me.

J. Well, if they do, you may say, as I will, that I fell down.

W. Yes, but if they ask how you came to fall?

J. Why, I shall say that my foot slipped, as I was stepping upon the kerb-stone: this is true, you know.

John had no love for truth, but he knew William had, and he thought by saying, "This is true, you know," he could persuade William to give that answer to the boys, if they asked any question about the manner in which his nose was bruised. William was going to reply, and John, fearing that he was about to say he would not do as he wished him, pointed with his finger over a wall which they were then passing, and said, "Look, look, that house must be on fire." William turned directly to look, and John could scarcely speak "April fool," for laughing at William, who was so soon caught. William felt vexed, and was beginning to say so to John, when a little girl, with her school-book in her hand, passed by them. John said, "You have let your book fall, little girl." The child

turned round, and looked on the pavement in every direction, and the boys were much diverted by her doing so, while she held her book tight in her hand. At last John said, "Ah! you little April fool." The girl looked at her book, hung down her head, and walked away as fast as she could. "I mean," said John, "to make April fools of every one that I meet between here and school."

W. You may make one too many.

J. What do you mean by that?

William was going to answer, when John saw a young lady on the opposite side of the street. He called out, "You have lost your handkerchief, miss." The young lady turned round, and John could not say, "April fool," when he saw that it was one of the teachers of the Sunday school, to which he went. The young lady understood what he intended, and was displeased, but did not say any thing.

W. Now you know what I meant, when I said "You might make one too many." Take care, or you will bring yourself into trouble.

J. What a cowardly fellow you are! I do believe you would be afraid to make

an April fool. Come, I will give you a chance of the next person we meet; but I suppose you will be afraid.

As he said this, he laughed, and William began to feel ashamed of being thought a coward, as John had said he was. This false shame made him really one; for it caused him to fear being laughed at, for doing what he knew to be right. True courage would have enabled him to disregard the sneers of an evil companion. They walked on in silence until, as they were near the school, several girls were crossing the street. "There now," said John, "if you are not afraid." William yielded to the temptation of proving that he was not afraid, and called out, "Run, run, girls; a horse is coming." The girls did not turn to look back, but all ran towards the pavement, and one of them, who held the hand of a little sister, was so intent upon getting her out of danger, that she did not see a lamp-post, which was in her way, and struck her head against it with so much force, that the blood gushed from her nose. William had said, "April fools," when the girls began to run, but

not in time to prevent the ill effects of his deception.

When the child saw the blood streaming over her sister's face, she screamed with terror; and the young lady who had walked before John and William up the street, came out of the school-room, to know what had happened. She was alarmed when she saw the condition Ann More was in; her frock stained with blood, and her hands also, which she held over her face. Ann's sister replied to the question of, "What is the matter?" by sobbing out, that John Jones made her an April fool, and she struck her head against the lamp-post. "I did not make her do it," said John. "But you did, you know you did," said the child. "I did not," replied John, in an angry tone, "for it was Bill Price." The young lady did not attend to this dispute, but led Ann into the school-room, and sent for some water to wash her face. William, when he saw that Ann was hurt, had gone up to her to say how sorry he was. This was right, if he felt so; but it was useless sorrow to poor Ann, and would not relieve the pain she felt. Her school companions

pitied her, and did all they could for her. One of them said, "What a wicked trick that was! whichever of the boys did it, should be served in the very same way, if he had what he deserved." What this girl said, gave Ann a pain that was more severe than the aching of her head; for it caused her to recollect, that when she left her home that morning, she had met a little boy on his way to school, and as he was crossing the large street gutter, she said to him, "Look behind you for what you have dropped." He turned, and stepped into the gutter with such quickness, that the water splashed his clothes, and his feet were quite wet. He was a little child, and began to cry aloud, and she wiped his clothes with her handkerchief, but she could not get the stain of the mud off. The child continued to cry, and she left him, but heard him for some distance. After this, she met several of the school girls with whom she was walking when William called to them, and at that moment she intended to deceive them, and have the enjoyment of calling them April fools. Her conscience brought this to her mind, and gave her

the pain of feeling that she deserved as a punishment the aching head, for which her companions were blaming William.

Ann said she would go home, but the young lady, who was the teacher of her class, told her, she thought in a short time her head would become more easy ; and as she expected one of the teachers would speak on the subject of making April fools, she wished her to try and remain. Ann felt that she knew something of the evil which the teacher would speak of, and her desire to go home was increased ; but she saw how much her teacher wished her to stay, and she consented to do so, at the same time fearing the reproof which she expected to hear. No one was there who knew what she had done, and intended to do ; but this did not make her easy, for conscience reproached her. At the time that Ann and the girls went into the school-room, the teacher, who had talked with William and John about the sparrows, came up to the boys, who were collecting and talking in little parties together ; he saw that something had happened, and asked what it was ; one of the boys told him that Ann More was hurt.

Teacher. In what way.

John Jones. She struck her head against the lamp-post.

The teacher did not ask any more questions, but went into the school-room to know if he could be of any use to Ann. The morning was so bright and pleasant, that the children belonging to the school had come early, and by this time a number were asking what was the matter. No one but John knew that William had caused Ann to hurt herself, for when her sister charged John with it, and he said it was Bill Price, none of the boys were there. Every question William felt, but did not answer; and John always replied, "Ann More hurt her head against the lamp-post." This satisfied the boys, who were most of them planning how to make April fools of each other, or else eager to tell how often they had done so that day. There were but few belonging to this large school who had not practised this trick; some without at all thinking whether or not it was right or wrong. Others did it from the love of deception, and without a fear of the consequences of telling a falsehood; and several who

knew, and did think and feel that it was wrong, were led on by evil example.

William went into the school-room by himself, and sat down, very sad. That morning he had left his bed with a cheerful heart, and repeated (as was his custom) the Lord's prayer; but he had only repeated it, and was satisfied with doing so. If he had really prayed with his heart, that his heavenly Father would grant the petition, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," he would have tried to resist the evil, though John laughed, rather than willingly do what he had prayed to be kept from. And when he found that John was a companion who would entice him to sin, he would have left him, instead of continuing with him, to follow his example. William's mother had heard him repeat his Sunday lesson, part of which was the ten commandments, and the advice which Solomon gives in the fourth chapter of Proverbs, to "get wisdom;" that is, "the wisdom that is from above;" the gift of God, which enables us to keep his commandments. If William had taken this advice, he would not now have suffered

the pain of feeling that he had been disobedient to his heavenly Father.

As he sat thus by himself, and thought of Ann's sufferings, and that it was probable his teacher would question him, and, perhaps, reprove him before all the school, he determined that he would go out at the back door, and go home. But a better thought and feeling changed this intention, and he made up his mind to remain, and tell the truth to all questions that should be asked him; and to hear the advice, and even reproof, of his teacher. This resolution was one that William had cause to be thankful all his life, that he was able to make and keep: a shameful fear would have driven him home, but a true courage made him stay to tell the truth, and hear what he knew would give him pain, but do him good. He became more comfortable when he made this resolution, because he was doing right, and he was ever after encouraged to the exercise of true courage; which is, DARING TO DO RIGHT, by the recollection of the relief which he felt from practising it in this case.

When they had sung a hymn, the

teacher who had talked with John and William as they came to school, said, that before the children repeated their lessons, he wished to ask some questions, to which he hoped he should receive faithful answers. William felt his face grow warm, and a desire rise in his mind that he could hide it when the teacher should question him, which he now expected he would do. John had no fears, because he thought that no one but William knew how he had acted as they came to school. He had learned a long lesson, which he expected would obtain him many tickets, and the approbation of his teachers. He forgot entirely that the young lady was there, whom he had tried to make an April fool in the street; and that his teacher had reproved him for wishing to destroy the life of the sparrow. But what was of greater importance, he had forgotten that the eye of God had been upon him, and that He had power to punish him, even if he escaped the disgrace of his teacher's knowing his bad conduct. When the teacher looked at John, he asked him what was the cause of his nose being bruised.

John. I fell down and struck it, sir.

Teacher. When I left William and you, you were not hurt, and William looked bright and cheerful : now you appear as if you had been fighting, and William looks sad, as if he had been doing wrong, for which he was sorrowful. One of you, I have heard, caused Ann More to hurt herself. I do not ask either of you to tell of the other, but hope that the one who committed the fault, will own it.

William now answered, with a blushing face and sad voice, "I did it, sir."

T. You do well, William, to tell the truth, and I think I can judge from your manner, that you repent having committed this sin. Many of you, no doubt, children, have been practising the evil of trying to make April fools, and wonder to hear me call it committing a sin. You have, perhaps, thought it innocent fun ; but tell me, Samuel Walton, what is the meaning of a lie ?

Samuel. Saying what we know is not true ?

T. James Fulton, can you think of any other way of telling a lie, than by saying what we know is not true ?

James. No, sir.

T. Suppose you were to meet a stranger in the street, and he should ask you which way he must go to the bank, and without answering him, you were to point with your finger in a different direction from that which would lead him to the bank; would not this be a lie?

J. It would not be telling a lie, if I did not speak.

T. No; but it would be making the stranger believe what you knew was not true, and that is a lie. It would be deceiving him: and if he went in the direction to which you pointed, and thus did not find the bank, as he expected, the evil to him would be as great as if you had spoken the lie instead of pointing it. Do you understand this?

J. Yes, sir.

T. Then you know, that a lie is an intention to make another believe what you know to be false; or, perhaps, some of you will understand me better, if I say, that, if you wish to make any one believe what you know is not true, that wish is a lie; even if you do not utter it with your tongue. You may point with your finger,

you may only shake your head, yes, or no, in answer to a question; if you know it is not truth, God, who always sees the heart, sees that you intend to deceive, and that you are committing sin. Now tell me, John Jones, in the portions of Scripture which you have learned as Sunday lessons, do you recollect any which teach that God forbids telling a lie?

John. I do not remember any now, sir.

T. Charles Morton, I think you can.

Charles. I remember you gave me the eleventh and twelfth verses of the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus to learn.

T. Repeat them now.

C. "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another."

T. Do you remember the last sentence of the tenth verse?

C. Yes, "I am the Lord your God."

T. Then follows the command, not to "deal falsely," or "lie one to another:" for what reason do you think the sentence, "I am the Lord your God," was put just before this command?

C. To show that it is God's command.

T. Yes; here you learn, John, that it is a command of God, "Thou shalt not

lie.” In the sixth chapter of Proverbs, seven abominations are named, as being such in the sight of God, and a “lying tongue” is one of them. Can any one of you tell me in what part of the New Testament Christ speaks of the evil of lying?

No one replied to this question, and the teacher said, “I will tell you: in the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John. Jesus was surrounded with persons whose hearts he knew were full of deception. They asked him many questions, and he, knowing what was in their hearts, told them, that because he spake the truth they would not believe his answers: they loved falsehood, and Jesus said to them, ‘Ye are of your father the devil—for he is a liar, and the father of it.’ Now, what can teach more plainly than this passage of Scripture does, the evil nature of a lie; for it shows that the most wicked of all beings is the ‘father of lies?’ Perhaps some of you remember an account in the Acts of the Apostles, of a severe punishment which was inflicted for telling a lie. Henry Sims, try if you can tell me what it was.”

Henry. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie.



T. Whom did they sin against, by the lie which they told?

H. Against God.

T. Did they not sin against men, too?

H. They wanted to deceive Peter.

T. Yes; but did they do any harm to Peter by wanting to deceive him?

H. No, sir.

T. They sold land which was their own,

to do as they pleased with, and did not wrong any one, if they had kept all that they sold it for; but they wanted to be considered very generous, and yet keep what they intended to make others believe they had given in charity. This deception was known to God, and no one else: in their punishment, He shows how great an evil falsehood is, and teaches us that he will punish deception, even when it does not harm any one; as certainly as God punishes evil, so certainly will he reward obedience to his commands. David, in the thirty-fourth Psalm, says, "He that desireth life, and loveth many days, let him keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile." The character of a righteous man, in Proverbs, is, that "he hateth lying;" and we are told that the "lip of truth shall be established," that means, blessed. Do you know, John, of the punishment which those who love falsehood are threatened with after they die?

John. I suppose they will be punished; but I do not know how.

T. In the twenty-first chapter of Revelation it is written, that "they shall

have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." I will now ask a few more questions, that I may know if you have understood me. Samuel, what is a lie?

Samuel. Wishing to make any one believe what you know is not true.

T. When you tried to make an April fool to-day, what did you wish?

S. To make a boy believe that his shoe was untied.

T. Was it untied?

S. No, sir.

T. Then you told him what you knew was not true.

S. But I did not think of telling a lie; boys always say such things on the first of April.

T. Whether you thought of it or not, it was telling a lie; and the fact that boys always do it on the first of April, does not make it truth. You have said yourself, an evil practice being a common one, leads us to think it less of a sin, than if only very wicked persons indulged themselves in it. Now, Samuel, stooping to tie his shoe was very little trouble to the boy whom you deceived, and if he

had not cared at all about it, do you think this would alter the falsehood, and make it truth?

S. It would not be so wicked as a lie that did harm.

T. Why not?

S. Because a lie is one bad thing, and to mean to harm a person is another; both would be worse than one.

T. Then you think that because the boy would not have cared about your deceiving him, this lessens the evil of what you did; but when you did it, was it not with an expectation that he would at least feel foolish and uncomfortable?

S. Yes, sir.

T. And did you not laugh at him?

S. Yes, sir.

T. Then you intended to do him harm; and this was breaking the law of love, which directs us to avoid every thing that gives even uneasiness to another. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii. 10. There is no love for God in telling a lie; and no love for your fellow beings, whom you make sport of by giving pain, or by causing them mortification. Now, William, when you told Ann More

that she was in danger from a horse coming, you only intended to laugh at her; you would not have desired that she should hurt herself as she did, and yet see what pain you have caused, by practising what is called harmless fun. Nothing is, or can be, entirely harmless, when the practice of it in any degree breaks the law of kindness.

William expected when the teacher asked him this question, that now he was to receive a public reproof, and he thought all the boys must be looking at him; but the teacher saw that William felt humbled, and sorrowful, and he knew that sincere sorrow for sin will lead to a desire and endeavour to avoid it.

Ann More heard all that was said, and her guilty conscience and aching head made her feel miserable. Many of the girls had amused themselves on their way to school in the same way that the boys had; but the teacher did not ask them any questions, as he thought that hearing those which he asked the boys, with their answers, and his remarks, would show them the evil of the practice in which he had no doubt some of them had been

busy. He felt almost certain, however, that some were present, both boys and girls, who loved truth too well to forget the sinfulness of falsehood, and who loved God too sincerely to follow an example which would lead them to disobey him.

The teacher now said, "I think, children, all who have heard me, must understand what a lie is, and if so, many of you must know that you have been guilty of telling one, or perhaps several, to-day: your own consciences will accuse you; I need not. We shall not have time now, before service, to read or hear you repeat your lessons; I hope you will feel what I have said to you, and remember, it is not what I say, but what God says in the Bible, that is to teach you the evil of falsehood. I expect you will all come early this afternoon, that we may have time to talk more about this after the lessons are repeated."

The time for commencing Divine service was now near, and the children all took their seats in quietness, and with order. Ann More asked permission to go home, which was given. On her way she met the child whom she had made

splash his clothes in the gutter in the morning, as she was going to school. He was now going home; he had cried so much his teacher was afraid lest he should disturb the service. When he saw Ann, he began to run, and said, "You are the bad girl that put me in the gutter." Ann did not answer him, but felt still more the evil of doing what had caused distress to another, and pain of body and mind to herself. She had to bear the shame, too, of giving a reason for coming home to the family; for though she could say with truth, that she had been hurt by the deception of another, yet she felt shame occasioned by knowing that she deserved what she suffered; and that she was condemning herself, when she blamed William. She was alone the greater part of the morning, and thought of what the teacher had said; she felt sorrow for the part she had acted, and proved that her sorrow was of a right kind, by resolving to go in the afternoon to hear what more the teacher would say.

After service, all the children went quietly home, except John Jones; for, as he was turning the corner of a street,

he met the boy who had made him an April fool. John's nose was swelled, and the pain of it made him feel cross. The boy laughed when he saw him, and John, in anger, ran up to him, and struck him



in the face; the blow was returned, and this shameful fight might have lasted some time, if the teacher of the Sunday school had not been returning home that way. He took hold of John, and kept him back from the boy, and spoke very sternly to them both.

“What right had he to strike me?” said the boy.

“Because you made me fall, and then laughed at me,” said John, “and I will pay you for it, yet!”

The boy was about to reply, when he saw his own Sunday school teacher coming down the street; he then ran off as fast as he could. The teacher who held John, now let him go, and told him he intended to go home with him. John was very unwilling that he should do so, and walked on before him sullenly. The teacher did not speak to him, as he thought it would be useless to do so in the state John was in—angry and sullen. They had not very far to go, before John entered his house, and the teacher followed him. The door opened from the street into a room that was dark from the blackness of the walls, and the furniture of which was all in disorder. A woman sat in an old chair, rocking herself, with the same clothes on that she had worn all the week; a little girl, with soiled frock and uncombed hair, was rolling about on the unswept floor; and a man was leaning in a chair against the

wall, with a pipe in his mouth. When the teacher saw all this, and that there was no appearance of these parents having been to a place of worship, or of having any employment suitable to the sabbath day, (for no book was to be seen,) he felt but small encouragement to tell them what he came for; it was almost hopeless to expect any assistance from them, in turning their child from his evil ways.

The father came forward surprised, when he saw the teacher; he looked at John, and from his bruised nose, concluded directly that he had been fighting. Without waiting to hear the teacher, who began to speak, he became very angry, and called John harsh names, in a loud tone, supposing that would make the teacher believe that he did not encourage John in bad conduct. The teacher told him he did not wish him to prove his displeasure in that way, as it would have no effect to turn John from evil; that he came for the purpose of advising him and his wife how they might perform their duty as parents, and endeavour to prevent their child from going on in the road that leads to destruction.

“To-day,” said he, “John has given several proofs of strong inclination to evil, which, if not checked, may increase with his years, and even at length lead him to the gallows.”

“I told him so,” said the mother, “but he did not mind me.”

“I will whip him until he cannot stand,” said the father, “if he ever fights again.”

“Stop, stop,” said the teacher, “this is not the way to turn him from evil.”

“Get out of my sight,” said the father, without attending to the teacher. John walked out at the door, and shut it hard after him. When he was gone, the teacher said, “I could not speak to you before your child, as my duty now directs me to do. I fear, from all that I see here, you do not set him the example which you should do, as parents who are to give an account to God for the neglect of their duty to their children.”

“I never fight,” said the father.

“That may be,” replied the teacher, “but by indulging such fits of anger as you have since I came in, you set him the example of giving way to passion, and it was passion that caused him to fight.”

“Would you have me know of his fighting, and not scold him for it?” said the father; “that is no way to cure him.”

Teacher. You might show you were displeased in a way that would have more effect; you have driven him now into the street, where he may join bad companions, and, of course, increase his love of evil. You ought to endeavour to keep him as much as possible in the house, and teach him kindly, and like a father, what his duty is to God and to you.

Mother. He learns all that at Sunday school, and we are no scholars.

T. You can read, I suppose?

Father. Yes, that we can; but John can read as well as we can, and we need not teach him.

T. I did not mean that you should teach him to read, but that you should, by your example at home, assist the teacher who instructs him at Sunday school; for, be assured, if he sees that his parents neither love nor fear God, he will be likely to lose at home all that he gains at the school. This is a serious truth for you to think of. I see no Bible, yet you say you can read. You have not been to

a place of worship to-day, nor changed your clothes in regard for the day.

M. As to going to church, how can I, with a child too young to take?

T. If you desired to go, you would be able to manage so that each could go one part of the day, and thus set your children a good example; and when you could not attend a place of worship, you could read your Bible, and there learn all your duties to God, to your children, and to each other.

F. I am sure John learns a deal in the Bible, for he has a great many tickets; and what else does he get them for?

T. He has a good memory, and is quick; and no doubt if he saw the Bible read by his parents, he would know more of its value than he does by only learning to repeat passages from it. You think it strange, perhaps, that I talk so plainly; but I know well the sad consequences of neglecting the Bible, and the commands of God which it contains, and I should be neglecting my duty, if I did not warn you of your danger. You will lose your own souls, if you go on in an idle disregard of your Creator's commands; and you

encourage your child to pursue the path that will lead him to destruction. All I can say, will, I know, have but little effect to convince you. But in your Bible you can learn what I cannot teach you. Read that, I entreat you, that you may know how much you need the forgiveness of your God, and the way in which you may obtain it, through a Saviour's blood; you will then understand, and be enabled to perform your duty as parents, and have reason to hope that God will accept your prayers for your child.

These careless parents seemed to feel a little the earnest manner in which the teacher spoke to them. John came in, and the teacher told him he hoped he would attend school in the afternoon. "That he shall," said his father. John still looked sullen, and the teacher bade them good morning.

At a short distance from this comfortless dwelling, he saw William Price open a door to let a little boy in, and he stopped to ask William if he lived there. William said, "Yes, sir; will you walk in?" "I will," replied the teacher; and William opened a door from the entry into

the room where his parents were. William thought that the teacher had come for the purpose of telling his parents of his behaviour that morning to Ann More; but he was not uneasy at this, for he had told them when he came home all that had happened, and after this felt more comfortable, for his good parents saw that he was sorry for having yielded to temptation, and that he was convinced he was guilty of telling a lie. They talked calmly and seriously of the danger of having an ill-disposed companion; and told him, as the teacher had done, what was in the Bible about the wickedness of deception. They were distressed that their child had broken the commandments of God, when he knew them so well; and William, with feelings of deep sorrow, was ready to promise them that he never again would be guilty of such conduct. His father told him not to make any promises to him, but to pray to his Father in heaven, that he would help him to do what he knew was right, and forgive him for sinning against his law. When the teacher followed William, the room they entered was a

comfortable one, with clean, white-washed walls, and the furniture in it all placed in order; a pleasing-looking woman was sitting with a healthy infant in her arms; a little girl with an alphabet book in her hand was standing beside her; and a man, dressed in a good plain suit of clothes, was just putting a Bible down, in which he had been reading. A table was covered with a clean cloth; a large loaf of bread was on it, with a cold joint of meat, and the pot full of potatoes was boiling over the fire. The comfortable and cheerful appearance of this room, made the teacher certain that the parents of William were quite different from those of John. Their neatness proved industry and carefulness; and the regard of the sabbath showed attention to the commands of their Creator.

“You are just going to dinner,” said the teacher, “I will not now stay.”

“Do not mind our dinner, sir,” said the woman, “it will be time enough; we always have it early on the Lord’s day, that we may one of us go to church, and that William may be in time for school.”

“I should be pleased to have some

talk with you," said the teacher, "but I will call another day; I am glad that I stopped, even for this short time, as I shall now feel more certain of William being benefited by the instructions which I gave him, when I know that he has an example of attention to duties at home. I doubt not he has good advice from you."

"We strive to rear him up in the way he should go," said William's father, "with the hope that when he is old, he will not depart from it; but to-day he has given us trouble, by conduct which deserves to be blamed."

"He has told you of it, then?" said the teacher.

"We always encourage him," replied the father, "to tell when he has done wrong, then we know how to advise him best. He is truly sorry, I believe, and will try to keep from such doings again."

"I think he will," said the teacher, "but he must avoid evil companions, now he knows how they tempt him to do wrong."

"I expect he will," said the father, "but if he does forget what he has been taught to-day, and goes willingly into bad company, I will seek to prevent it."

“I expect he will attend school this afternoon,” said the teacher; and then bade good morning to this truly respectable family, and walked towards his home, feeling how useful a duty it is for Sunday school teachers to visit the families of the children which they instruct.

PART II.

IN the afternoon the children assembled early. Ann More kept her good resolution, and went, though her head still ached. William was one of the first, and John Jones went, but it was because his father went with him, and did not leave him until he saw him in the school-room. John was quite unwilling to go, but his father was resolved to force him, and thus show him, he said, “That he would be minded.” If he had taught John, when he was a young child, his duty to his heavenly Father and his parents, and set him a good example by doing his own duty, it would not now have been needful to force John to obey him.

When all the children were collected, and the teachers in their places, the same teacher who had spoken in the morning, now said that he would offer a prayer to God for the pardon of the evil which had been committed, and ask for a blessing upon the remainder of the day. After the prayer, the teachers each heard their class repeat the lessons which had been given them, and read a chapter in the Bible; when this was done, the teacher told the children that the rest of the afternoon would be spent in talking upon the practice of making April fools. "I shall ask you questions," said he, "and give you time to think before you answer me. Answer without fear; I do not mean to reprove you, but to make you understand what you have been doing, so that you may determine for yourselves whether it was right or wrong, and whether you deserve reproof or not. William, I wish you to repeat the fourth commandment."

William. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any

work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that 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 sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Teacher. Does this commandment teach you any thing more than how you are to keep the sabbath day ?

W. That we may work on week days.

T. Not only that we may, but that we must. "Six days shalt thou labour," is a command to be industrious and diligent. "Do all thy work," means, whatever is our duty to do. Charles, what work have you to do in the week ?

Charles. None, sir ; I go to school every day.

T. Then you have work to do ; your work is to try and learn as much, and as fast as possible ; to be obedient to your teacher, and attend to his instructions : six days God gives you for this work. Do you go to school, too, Samuel ?

Samuel. Only half-days. I learn shoe-making with my father the other half.

T. Then attention at school, and industry at your trade, are your work. Every child has some kind of work to do, and should remember, when inclined to be idle, that God commands them to do their work. Now, tell me, Charles, what are we commanded about the sabbath?

Charles. Not to do any work.

T. Is that the way to keep it holy, to be entirely idle?

C. No; we must only do good things.

T. And may we do bad things on other days, Samuel?

Samuel. No, sir; but on Sundays we must go to church, and to Sunday school, and read the Bible.

T. Then I suppose you think that you have kept holy this sabbath day so far; for you came to the Sunday school, have been to public worship, and have read a chapter in the Bible. Samuel did not answer this question.

Conscience makes you silent, Samuel. Are you not thinking of your deceiving your companion this morning?

S. Your question made me think of it, for I thought that was what you meant.

T. Now tell me what keeping holy

the sabbath day means, besides going to public worship, to school, and reading the Bible?

S. Not doing or thinking any wickedness.

T. I will repeat to you a part of a verse in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, which gives directions for keeping holy the sabbath day, in the way for which a blessing is promised. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." A blessing is made certain to those who thus keep holy the sabbath; for the conclusion of the verse says, "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Now, Samuel, tell me, have you kept this sabbath day holy?

S. No, sir.

T. How have you broken the commandment?

S. By saying what was not true.

T. That was finding your own pleasure

in what you call fun, and “speaking your own minds,” instead of honouring God by obedience to his command. Samuel, tell me, did you not say this morning, that doing two bad things at the same time, was more wicked than one?

S. Yes, sir; when you asked me which was worse—a lie that harmed no body, or one that did.

T. Then if you have broken the sabbath day, by making an April fool on it, and told a lie at the same time, are not these two bad things?

S. Yes, sir; but I meant only fun, I did not intend to be wicked.

T. If you had not known what God commands, you might make such an excuse; but I am sure if you had taken time to think of what you were going to do, you would have felt that it was wrong. You know how often I have advised you all to ask yourselves the question, If I do this, shall I break any one of the commandments? You will always have an answer from your own conscience, which will show you when there is evil in what you are going to do. Henry, do you think, that because, in telling a lie on the

sabbath day, we break two commandments instead of one, there is more sin in a lie told on the sabbath than on a week day?

Henry. I know it is a sin to tell a lie on any day.

T. Yes, a lie is a positive sin. You know that the first of April only comes on Sunday, once in seven years. Now, if it was not a sin in itself to tell a lie, which must be done in making an April fool, unless it is on the sabbath day, then there would only be harm in doing it once in several years. The harm is in the act, or intention to tell a falsehood, and to give pain by doing so. In the morning I told you of what is written in the Bible on this subject, and I hope you have not forgotten it, and that you do understand why I called making April fools committing sin. Remember, that saying what is not true, or intending that another shall believe what is not true, no matter when, where, or how we do it, is a positive sin, and will be punished.

Ann More, who had listened to all that was said, felt the truth of this assurance. Indeed, so did every one who had been engaged in the fun, as they thought it;

for though they had not suffered pain of body, as Ann and John had, they suffered uncomfortable feelings from having done wrong. They did not feel cheerful as they did when they knew they were not guilty of practising the evil of falsehood. John Jones was the only one who was indifferent to what the teacher said. The others felt shame, and some of them sorrow. William was one of these, for his sorrow was so sincere, that it led him to pray earnestly that God would forgive him, and help him to resist temptation.

“It was remarked by a wise man,” said the teacher, “‘that all that a liar gained by his lies, was not to be believed when he told the truth.’ You have heard, perhaps, of the fable of the boy and the wolf; but some of the younger children may not, and I will tell it to them.

“A shepherd’s boy was set to watch a flock of sheep that was near to a large wood, in which there were wolves. The shepherd himself was at work with some other men at a short distance, and the boy was to call to them, if he saw a wolf come out of the woods. He thought it would be fun to make the shepherd and the men

run from their work, and several times he cried out, 'A wolf! a wolf!' for the sake of this fun, when no wolf was near. One day a large wolf came peeping out from the wood, and the boy in great terror screamed, 'A wolf! a wolf!' The shepherd heard him, but said, 'He does not tell the truth; you know how often he has deceived us, and now he expects to do so again.' No one attended to the screams of the boy, and the wolf sprang upon him, and tore him in pieces. This was what he gained by telling falsehoods—not being believed when he told the truth: so it is with every one. I not only mean the falsehood by which an April fool is made, but all kinds of deception. When you have done wrong, and are charged with it, do not increase the evil by denying it. Have courage always to tell the truth, as none but cowards fear to do this. John, I wish you to tell me how many commandments you have broken to-day."

J. If you mean striking the boy that made me fall, I did not break a commandment in that.

T. Did you never hear of any that forbids the indulgence of anger?

J. He deserved it, and much more too.

John spoke in this pert manner to show the boys that he was not afraid of the teacher, and that he thought he had done right.

T. God's commandment forbids all anger, which leads to blows, and often death; and if you had given the blow which fell upon the face of the boy, upon his temple, you would probably have killed him; then, perhaps, you would have felt that you had broken a commandment of God. There is another, also, which you have forgotten; "Honour thy father and thy mother."

J. I did nothing bad to them.

T. Your father had to force you to come here this afternoon; and surely it was disobedience to him which made it necessary to force you to come. I cannot help thinking, also, that in some way William Price was tempted by you to do what he knew was wrong, for you were together when he did it. I should not have named all these proofs of your disobedience to God, if you were not so bold and unwilling to be convinced that you have done wrong. As you are so, I think

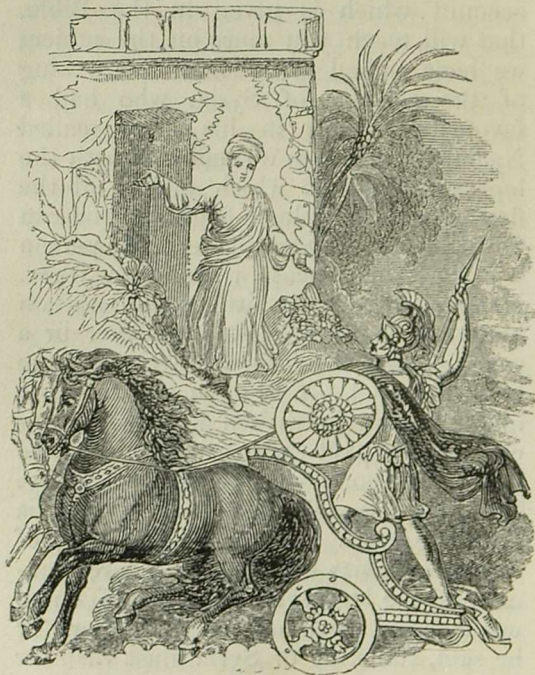
it right to warn you, before all the school, that if you go on indulging your passion in cruelty to animals, and resentment against those who have offended you, disobeying your parents, and disregarding the commandments of the God of truth, you will certainly be punished by him. You may become degraded by a wicked life; and even if you should escape correction from men, you cannot escape what God threatens in the world to come. While I am thus faithful in telling you the consequences of persisting in sin, I will be faithful in assuring you, that if you are, like the prodigal son, willing to repent, and return from the path which has led you far from your heavenly Father, he is ready and willing to pardon and receive you. That beautiful parable was given by our kind Redeemer to teach us this truth, and no returning prodigal will ever be refused mercy.

John seemed to feel a little grave at what was now said to him, and almost as if he would say he was sorry for what he had done; but this good feeling was like the "morning cloud," and "the early dew," which soon pass away. He loved

the ways of sin better than those of true wisdom and peace.

“It is almost time to separate,” said the teacher; “but I have thought of an account which is given in the Bible, that will teach you more on the subject we have talked of. There was a king of the country of Syria, who had a favourite captain in his army, called Naaman; this man was afflicted with the leprosy, a disease which makes all the flesh on the body look frightful, and can never be cured by medicine. The person who has this disease is called a leper. Naaman’s wife had a little girl, to wait on her, that had been taken prisoner in a war between the king of Syria and the king of Israel. This little girl told her mistress that she wished her master was with the prophet that lived in her native land, for he could cure him of the leprosy. The king was told this, and he sent his favourite, with a letter to the king of Israel, to desire that he would cure Naaman of the leprosy. The king of Israel was alarmed when he read this letter; for he said, the king of Syria must wish for an excuse to quarrel, and to go to war with him, by asking him to do what no

man could do. Elisha, the prophet, or man of God, as he was called, heard of the distress of the king of Israel, and sent this message to him about Naaman :



‘Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.’

“Naaman rode in his chariot to the door of Elisha, and waited there, expecting that the prophet would come out to him, and use some art to cure him; but Elisha only sent him word to go and wash seven times in the river Jordan, and he should be cured. Naaman was very angry at hearing this message, and said, ‘Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.’ His servants had more faith in the promise of the prophet than he had, and they persuaded him to do as Elisha had directed him. He at last consented; washed seven times in the river Jordan, and his flesh became as healthy as that of a young child. Joyful for being freed from the distressing disease, Naaman returned to Elisha, and told him that he would ever afterwards worship the God of Elisha. He offered him rich presents, in return for the benefit he had received;

but the prophet was a holy man, and so not a covetous one, and he would not take any of the presents offered to him. He wished Naaman to know that it was God who had healed him, and if Elisha had taken the gifts, Naaman would perhaps think he had paid for the benefit, and forget that he owed thankfulness to God.

“When he found that Elisha would not be persuaded to receive any thing from him, he set out to return to his own country. Elisha had a servant, whose name was Gehazi; this servant coveted the rich things which he knew his master had refused, and he resolved that he would try and get some of them for himself. Instead of resisting this evil disposition, he indulged it, and went directly after Naaman. When Naaman saw Gehazi running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, ‘Is all well?’ Gehazi told him, ‘All is well;’ but said, that two young prophets had come to his master since Naaman left him, and that Elisha had sent him to say he would receive for them some of the silver and garments which he would not accept for his own use. Naaman

very willingly gave Gehazi what he asked; and even more, for he sent two of his own servants to assist in carrying silver and garments, as he thought, to Elisha.

“Gehazi did not take the servants of Naaman into his master’s house, but received the treasure from them, and hid it; no doubt fearing all the time lest he should be discovered, but forgetting that the eye of God was upon him. When he had placed the ill-gotten wealth in safety, he went in and stood before his master, who said to him, ‘Whence comest thou, Gehazi?’ ‘Thy servant went no whither,’ answered Gehazi. ‘Went not mine heart with thee?’” said his master; meaning that the God of truth had given him the power of knowing how Gehazi had been employed. Elisha then told him that the leprosy of Naaman should cleave unto him for ever; and Gehazi went out from his master a leper, white as snow: that means, having this frightful disorder in its worst state.”

The teacher then said, “I observe that little George Johnson has listened attentively to what I have related: how old are you, George?”

George. Going on seven, sir.

Teacher. Was Gehazi, whom I have told you about, good or bad?

G. Bad, sir; because he told a lie.

T. And what happened to him for doing so?

G. His master said he should be sick.

T. But could his master make him so, for telling a lie?

G. No; it was God made him sick.

T. You hear now, that this young child understands what this account of Gehazi teaches; I need not, therefore, add any explanation. What I desire to convince you of, is, that every kind of falsehood is wicked. There is another evil belonging to the practice of making April fools, which I have not mentioned yet. When you have succeeded in making a person believe a falsehood, you call him an "April fool;" you should add—"for believing that I told the truth." Now, in this case, who is really the *fool*? the one who believes that you are speaking truth, or you, who are guilty of the *folly* of telling a falsehood?

You do not answer this question; but I am sure you all know which deserves most the name of fool; but to call ill

names you know is wrong. It is also an unkind feeling which leads you to give any one the pain of being laughed at. John knows how unpleasant it is, for it was that which led him to strike the boy.

John. No, sir; it was because the boy had made me hurt myself.

Teacher. I was near enough to see that he laughed at your swelled nose; if he had not done so, you would not have been as angry as you were. Now, children, perhaps you think I am too strict, and that I have said too much about the wickedness of so trifling a thing as making an April fool; but Christ has said, 'Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire,' Matt. v. 22. If I did not tell you the truth, as I have learned it from the Bible, you might, perhaps, for a little time be inclined to think me more kind; but mercy and truth always must go together, and I should be trying to separate them, if I were to let you go on doing evil, without

endeavouring to convince you that it is not innocent fun. I wish now to show you how you may obtain forgiveness of our kind heavenly Father, for sinning against him. He has said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. 18. 4. Now, William, can you tell me how we are to escape the punishment which this sentence threatens?

William. By being sorry for sin.

T. Suppose that you had stolen something, and were taken before a magistrate, and were to own that you had done so, and said that you were sorry for it; do you think he would suffer you to escape because you were sorry you had stolen?

W. No, sir.

T. And do you think that God should forgive you for breaking his law, only because you are sorry?

W. I must mean not to do it again.

T. But could you be certain you would not? If you had been told when you left home this morning, that you would yield to temptation, and do what you knew was wrong, you would not have believed it: let this show you that you cannot be certain you will not sin.

W. No, sir ; but I would try not.

T. So I hope you will ; but if you understand how God requires his commandments to be kept with the whole heart, you will know that you break some of them every day ; how then can you ask him to forgive you because you are sorry, and the next moment sin again ? You see there must be some other way to obtain pardon, and to have a new spirit in your mind, which will make you really desire not to sin, than by being only sorry, and meaning not to do so any more ; can you tell me of any other way ?

W. We must ask God to pardon us, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, that we might serve him in newness of life.

T. Yes : He is the way that leads to mercy. The history of Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, teaches us how he gave us an example of obedience to God, and how he died to take our place as sinners, and free us from the punishment which sin deserves, and which God threatens, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And the Scripture also says, "Though

your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," Isa. i. 18. This means, that he has provided a way in which we may be cleansed from the stain of sin, and that way is by the "blood of Jesus Christ," which "cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7. A fountain has been opened for the cleansing of sin. Do you know, William, what a fountain is?

W. I know it is water.

T. It is a spring of water; sometimes a source from which water flows is called so. Do you know what the fountain opened for the cleansing of sin means?

W. It means Jesus Christ.

T. Yes; you cannot understand exactly how the grace of God cleanses the heart from the stain of sin, by the blood of Jesus Christ; but God has said that He will do it. Perhaps, some of you, children, have thought that I only intended what I have said for those who have been guilty of folly and falsehood to-day; but there are others you are apt to commit; let conscience tell you whether you have such spots upon your hearts or not. But why, James, should we wish to have clean hearts?

James. Because then we shall be happy when we die.

T. Why shall we be happy?

J. Because we shall go to heaven.

T. What makes heaven a happy place?

J. Because there is no trouble there.

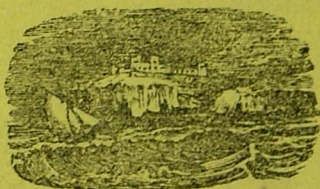
T. And what makes all the trouble which we have here?

J. Wickedness.

T. Then happiness is where sin is not. If this is true, and the Bible says it is so, the less sin we have in this world, the more happy we shall be even here: so that having our hearts cleansed from sin will make us more happy in this world; and we shall be perfectly happy in the world to come, because sin never enters there. No evil passion, no unholy thoughts, no deceitful wishes, which create pain to others: all is love in heaven; love for God, and love of holiness, is the happiness which our Redeemer has promised for us; and the more we have of that in this world, the more real pleasure we shall enjoy. Youth and childhood are seasons when the spirits are glad, and ready to delight in pleasure; and our heavenly Father has surrounded them with enjoyments that are harmless.

Religion does not forbid your being cheerful and playful; you know you always feel most so when you have been doing what you know is right: and, on the contrary, feel either cross or uncomfortable, when you know you have done wrong. If you desire to love God, and obey him, you need not fear any thing. He will take care of you, and bless you. The spring has now come, when you will hear the birds singing glad songs, and see the grass and the flowers bright and beautiful; the weather will be mild and the air sweet; every thing in nature will call upon you to be cheerful, and to praise the great God of nature; and if you obey him, with a heart cleansed by God the Holy Spirit, each one of you will say, that religion's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

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AGAINST LYING.

No real advantage can proceed
From doing what is wrong ;
For if at first it should succeed,
'Twill not continue long.

When Ananias thought to hide
The money he had got,
He and his wife Sapphira died
For their deceitful plot.

Then let us all avoid, and fear
To say what is not true ;
As God can always see and hear,
And he can punish too.