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I HAVE A SOUL."



LONDON:
RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
Instituted 1799.

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

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“I AM AFRAID I HAVE A SOUL.”



THERE is something very lonely and yet very beautiful in a churchyard walk. When I visit the country, I love to wander in the burying-places of the dead ; there I often obtain instruction from the admonitory lines on the tomb-stones, and am constantly reminded of my own mortality. When I retire from these hallowed

spots, the psalmist's prayer often occurs to me: “ So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.”

Not far from the borders of Devonshire, on the northern side of the county, I once walked into the “ place of the dead.” I found it a retired and lovely spot. In one part of the burial ground, there was a little grave that attracted my special attention. Its length convinced me that it belonged to a young person, although there was no grave-stone to impart any information to a stranger. When I was looking at the spot, a friend came to me. “ Do you know whose body has been put there?” I inquired. “ Yes,” he replied; “ there sleep the remains of a dear little girl, who, in early life, was suddenly called from time into eternity. She was not quite seven years old. She was lovely in person, and equally lovely in disposition. I never look at that grave,” said he, “ without sorrowful feelings. The child, though young, was a disciple of the Saviour, and obtained joy and peace in believing; and by a kind and gentle man-

ner to all around her, proved the genuineness of her principles."

The grave of this young person was indeed a beautiful spot. The impressions it produced on my mind will not soon be erased. There I saw planted the laurel, the arbor vitæ, the weeping willow, the monthly rose, and the heart's ease. These were placed there by the young ladies of the school in which the departed child was once instructed. They loved her in life, and remembered her in death.

The shrubs and flowers which ornamented the youthful grave, all seemed to have a monitory voice. I have no doubt they were placed there for that purpose. Here was the laurel, the emblem of victory; placed there to intimate that the youthful conqueror had overcome every spiritual foe through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here was the arbor vitæ, or tree of life, to remind the spectator that the spirit of the child was then before the throne, partaking of the blessings of that tree which stands in the midst of the paradise of God. Here the weeping willow was planted, as a striking emblem

of sincere sorrow. It was right to place it there, but we ought not to sorrow like those who have no hope, when our pious friends are removed to their resting place above. The monthly rose seemed to point out the frailty of youth and beauty. Here was the heart's-ease, a beautifully simple flower, and an emblem of the present happiness of the departed child. “Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord.”

What does my young reader think of this grave? Not all its beauty can excite a wish to leave the world. Why should we fear to die? Because we are sinners. Are all sinners afraid to die? No; some have been pardoned, and then the sting of death is taken away. Who is it that can pardon sin? The Lord Jesus Christ. Is he willing to pardon all that go to him? Yes; for he kindly says, that he will cast out none that come to him. How can a child go to such a Saviour? By faith and prayer. Will he surely receive a child? Yes; for he has said, “I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me,” Prov. viii. 17.

Is the reader prepared for death? If not, how awful a thing it will be to die! Your friends cannot plant on your grave the shrubs and flowers that decorated the spot where this pious child rests. All they can do is to place the weeping willow over your mouldering body, and to write on your tomb-stone the affecting words, as expressing your own dying language: "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!" Prov. v. 12. Reader, let not such a record be ever suitable for your character.

Perhaps the readers will be glad to hear something more about the child whose grave has been described. I will endeavour to tell them all I know respecting her. Her parents placed her for education with a pious lady, who felt deeply interested about the souls of her young people. It pleased God to bless her instructions to several of her youthful pupils. Little Jane, for that was her name, was much pleased with her new situation. She was a great favourite

with her companions, because she was kind and attentive to them.

After Jane had been at school for a few months, she became very thoughtful, and was very attentive to religious things. Indeed she never appeared weary of receiving religious instruction, and evidently feared sin, and loved holiness. She delighted in reading her Bible and good little books, particularly Janeway's Token for Children.

On one occasion, she was very unwell, and had lain in bed during the whole of the day. Towards evening, her governess took her in her lap, when she suddenly looked up and said, "Oh! I wish I were a horse, or a little bird. No, I do not wish that either, because they could be killed. I wish I were a work-basket or a curl-paper."

"My dear Jane," exclaimed her governess, "why do you wish that?"

"Oh," she replied, quite in an agony; "because I AM AFRAID I HAVE A SOUL! and I am afraid it will go to hell, and be miserable for ever!"

"My dear Jane," said her friend, "you

are much better off than if you had no soul, and were either a little bird or a curl-paper, because your soul can live for ever in happiness and joy ; and, moreover, Jesus said, ‘ Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ Therefore you may now come to him, and he will love you, and bless you, and make you happy now, and happy for ever.”

From the composure and tranquillity of the dear child’s mind after this conversation, it appeared as if the Holy Spirit had applied it to her heart, and with it the blood of sprinkling to her wounded conscience ; for when she and her school-fellows repeated a text before family prayer, she at least four times out of six, repeated, with great emphasis, “ Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Therefore, ever after, this was called little Jane’s text.

From this time, this dear child, as if desiring to be fed with spiritual food, was ever on the watch for an opportunity to converse with her governess. It was her common habit, when she saw her at a

distance, to run towards her, and, taking her by the hand, she would hop along by her side, asking her the most interesting questions; but if at any time she discovered that her friend was engaged, and not well able to attend to her, she never teased her, but, after gently kissing her hand, kindly left her at liberty.

On one occasion, little Jane came up as usual to her governess, but finding her much perplexed at something that had occurred, and sorrowing even to tears, she silently took her hand, kissed it, and walked on quietly by her side till she came to the parlour, which she entered, and sat down in sorrow. The affectionate little comforter took her seat on a footstool that was near, where, still holding her teacher's hand, and resting her gentle head on her knee, she wept with her, which was such an endearing mark of tender sympathy as can never be forgotten.

Nor will a surviving sister ever forget her gentle conduct to her when under correction. The sister, for idleness in school-time, had been sent to her bedroom just before the school was dismissed, to spend her usual play-hour in solitude.

The governess had retired to her own chamber, which was adjoining, to watch the prisoner. No sooner was the school dismissed, than little Jane ran to the door of her sister's room, and, hearing her cry, she said, “ Don't cry, sister. I am here ; I shall not leave you.” At this, the sister stopped crying for a while ; and when she renewed her weeping, little Jane renewed her sympathy and assurance that she would not leave the place. This Christianlike conduct constrained the listening governess to change her decree, and to set the prisoner free for the sake of her kind little sister and friend.

Would that all friends were as sincere, all children as affectionate, and all sisters so truly sympathizing !

After much anxiety, Jane found comfort from her own “ little text.” Her heart melted to think that the great God should remember *little* children. She went to Christ by prayer, and the Good Shepherd mercifully heard her, and kindly said to her, by his word, “ Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee ; go in peace.”

Her thoughts had been much led to the

subject of death by the recent decease of her beloved grandmother, whose life was remarkable for Christian cheerfulness, and whose death was truly triumphant. She was very fond of Jane, and often talked to her about the salvation of her soul.

Jane became truly happy. Her Bible was her constant companion; the sabbath was to her "a delight;" prayer was her greatest privilege. Her daily conduct was increasingly lovely; and she could say of religion: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17.

The time, however, was at hand when Jane was to sicken and die. It pleased God to permit the measles to seize her tender frame, and after considerable sufferings, she sunk into the grave. During her sickness, she was calm and resigned. The tender Shepherd kept her mind in perfect peace, because it was stayed upon him. I am not aware whether she conversed much with her friends; and, indeed, I am not very anxious to know what took place. It is better to have the evidence of a holy life, than a few expressions of

confidence in God in the hour of sickness and death. There was no anxiety about her soul, for she had obtained “a good hope through grace.” She possessed a holy, humble confidence, that when she was absent from the body she should be present with the Lord. It was, however, very affecting to see so sweet a flower suddenly cut down. It was a solemn comment upon the text, 1 Peter i. 24.

In due time after the child's death, the funeral took place. The body was followed to the tomb by many who loved her. All her school-fellows “went to the grave to weep there.” After Jane was committed to the earth, the young people covered her coffin with roses, and planted upon the grave the shrubs and fading flowers before mentioned. There her body slumbers until the morning of the resurrection, “when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.” The Saviour will then come to call his children to his heavenly kingdom, and will “fashion their vile bodies like unto his own glorious body.”

It was a very long time before the

wound occasioned by the death of this lovely child could be healed; and to this day survivors, for their own sakes, wish her yet alive: nevertheless, the assurance which they have of her being present with the Lord, reconciles them to their loss.

There are several solemn lessons that the youthful reader may learn from this account; I hope they will be impressed on every mind.

First. That the soul is immortal. By this we mean that it cannot die; that it is to live for ever. Where is the soul now? It is within my body. My body cannot think; it is the soul therefore that thinks within me. Now notice the difference between a child and a bird, or a little dog, or any other beast, or a tree, or a flower. None of these things can think, because none of them have a soul. All the trees you see in the country will fade away. The sun will one day cease to shine. The moon will withdraw her light. The stars will twinkle no more. All creation shall be destroyed, but then your soul will continue to live.

Dear reader, think on this question,

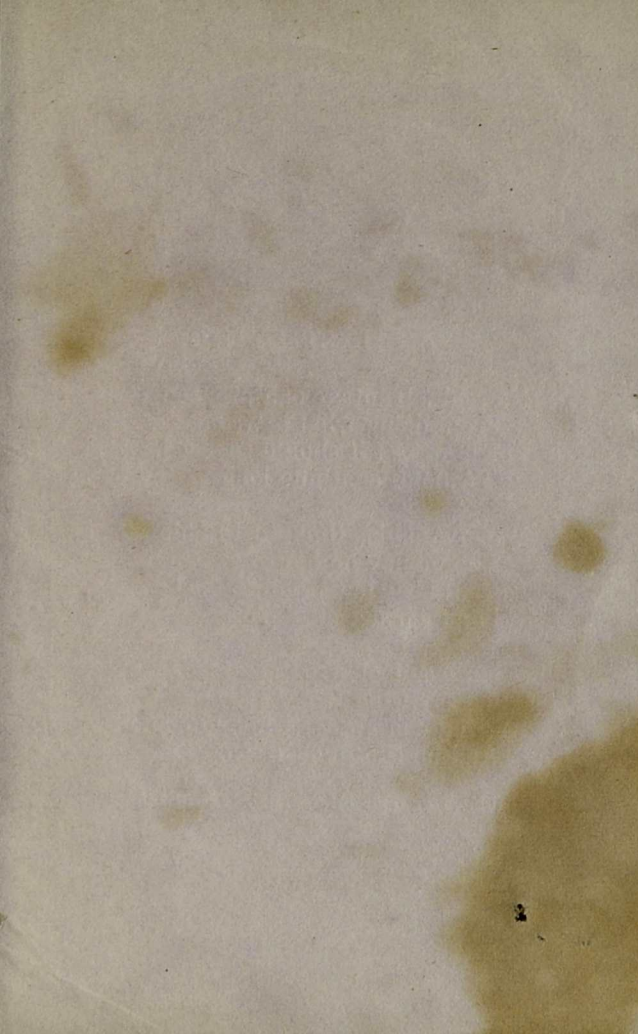
Where will *your* soul be when it leaves the body? *Where?* Shall I tell you? It will either be in heaven or in hell. It will be in heaven, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners; if you pray to him, love him, and trust in him; if you obtain pardon for all your sins, and live a holy life, through the grace which the Saviour alone can give you. Where will the soul be when it leaves the body? *Where?* It will be in hell, if you continue to be a wicked and depraved child; if you live without prayer, neglect your precious Bible, are disobedient to your kind parents, neglect the house of God, love not the Saviour, and do not trust in him.

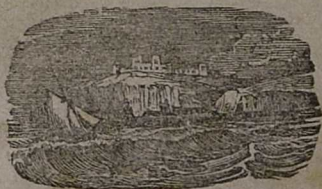
Second. Remember that the young often die very suddenly. Let me then urge you *now* to come to the Saviour, that you may have life. The events of the morrow are altogether uncertain. This day you may die.

Third. The young are taken from the evil to come. This was the case with little Jane. Oh how many trials she has escaped by an early death! All the

ways of the Lord are right, although parents cannot always think so, when bereaved of their little ones. The Chief Shepherd can see all things. He knoweth the end from the beginning. Perhaps he saw that if the dear lamb were spared she might wander from his fold, and therefore he took her into his own keeping in heaven.

Fourth. The death of a child should lead all young persons to serious reflection. Let this be the case with the reader. You have now read an account of the life, the sickness, the death, and funeral of a youthful saint. Reflect on the deep anxiety she felt about her soul, and then think about your own. Do not delay your application to Christ for pardon. He is ready to receive you. If you still neglect this great subject, and die without pardon, you will not only have to say in eternity, "I have a soul that is immortal," but you will sorrowfully add, "and a soul that is lost for ever."





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.

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