

New Testament Characters.



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John the Baptist preached, saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

All have sinned and need repentance, which means a change of mind or heart. The youngest child will find that there are many evil thoughts and desires in its heart, which will lead it unto sin and trouble. This will always be the case, where the heart is not changed. It was for this that David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."



Jesus told Nathanael, "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." It is supposed that Nathanael had been praying under a fig tree. Christ can see you now, as well as he saw Nathanael then, for he sees and knows all things. Does he see you praying for the pardon of your sins? Christ also said of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Guile means deceit and evil. Pray that Christ would dwell in your heart, subduing evil tempers and ways.



Zaccheus climbed into a tree, that he might see Jesus. Christ called him down, and went home with him. Zaccheus said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." The love which Christ shewed to him, caused him to do this. ~~if~~ you love the Saviour, you will desire to do his will; remember, it is only by his power, that you can be enabled so to do, and that you can never be happy by doing what is displeasing to him. "We love him, because he first loved us."



Jesus loved Martha and Mary, and they loved him. Martha sought to shew this love, by preparing a great feast for him : Mary sat and listened to his words. Jesus said, that Mary had “chosen that good part, which should not be taken from her.” Do you desire, to mix worldly pursuits and cares with your endeavours to serve Christ, or are you attentive to his word like Mary? The more we can simply attend to his word like her, the more we shall be kept from sin and unbelief.



Peter denied his Lord and Master. Did that make him happy? No—"he went out, and wept bitterly." Sometimes you have done wrong, pray did that make you happy? or, if it gave you pleasure at the time, do you like to think about it now? Beware then of all sin, even what appears to be the least. Do not be like Peter, and think that you are able to resist sin, without the grace of God enabling you to do so. Remember, Peter did not desire to continue doing what was wrong, but he **prayed** for mercy and forgiveness.



“The love of money is the root of all evil.” This led Judas Iscariot into all his evil conduct. He professed to be a follower of Christ, because he hoped thereby to obtain riches and honor, but when he found that Jesus did not seek an earthly kingdom, he betrayed his Lord and Master for a few pieces of money. When you are ready to do what is wrong to obtain some wordly pleasure or advantage, then you are in danger of being led by the same spirit as Judas.



The Bible tells us, that "all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." We also very often see liars get into trouble in this world. Did you ever know a little boy or girl who was happy that told lies. Remember what is said in the 139th Psalm, "There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Beware of lying and false excuses; if you have done wrong, always be ready to confess it; if you tell a lie to hide your fault, you will be led to tell more falsehoods to hide the first, and all will be found out at last.



Stephen was stoned to death by the Jews. His last words were, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." This was following the example of Christ, who, when he was on the cross, said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Christ said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Also, remember, what the apostle Peter said, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, but let none of you suffer as an evil doer."



The apostle Paul before his conversion, persecuted those who believed in Christ. But God was pleased to change his heart, and he afterwards was far more earnest to spread the knowledge of the gospel, than he had been to oppose it. There are some wicked children, who delight to do evil to those among their companions who love Christ. If you have any such among your companions, pray for them, that their hearts may be changed.



Cornelius was a devout man, “ he gave alms to the poor, and he prayed always,” but this was not enough, it was necessary that he should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and love him, and trust in him for salvation. The apostle Peter was sent to declare this to him, and while he listened, God the Holy Spirit was pleased to enable him to believe in the Saviour. Then he became truly happy.



We read, that Lydia used to go on the Sabbath to a place “where prayer was wont to be made.” The apostle Paul came there, and spoke about Christ and salvation by him. The Lord opened her heart, and she was enabled to understand what the apostle said, and to love the Saviour.

Do you go to the house of God on his holy day? There you may hear about the Saviour, and the way to happiness. How much better this is, than to be idling about on Sundays, getting into mischief and trouble.



When persons have done wrong, they feel unhappy if they hear others speaking about it, and wish they would not say any more on the subject. Felix did so, he desired Paul to leave off then, and he would hear him at some future time, but we do not find that he ever did so. Agrippa told Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," but he never really loved Christ. My dear children, when your conscience tells you are doing any thing which you know displeases God, then think of Felix and Agrippa. Pray that you may not be like them.



We read of Timothy, that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures. Now there are two ways of reading the Bible ; some children like it very much, but only for the pretty histories it contains—it is very right to like these, and there is no book which has so many. But Timothy read the Bible that he might be made “ wise unto salvation.” Read the Bible, and pray to God the Holy Spirit to make you also “ wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus,” causing you to love him, and to desire to do his will.



The apostle John lived to a great age; we are told, that when he was very old, he used to be carried into the public assemblies of the Christians, and then he said, "Little children love one another." This is not told us in the Bible, but we may believe it, for it is just the same as he wrote in his epistles. He there says, "Beloved, let us love one another," he also says, that "We love God, because he first loved us; and if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

