



2

THE ONLY SON;

OR,

THE HISTORY OF JONAH ROSS

AND

HIS MOTHER.

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THE ONLY SON.

CONVERSATION I.

The Mother and her Babe.

ON a sweet spring morning, Mr. Benton called his son William to the parlour window, and told him to look out. He said to him,

My son, look out of this window, and tell me what you see.

W. I see a great many things, sir. Do you mean the honeysuckle that runs over the garden wall?

Mr. B. No, my boy, there is something else I wish you to take notice of.

W. Perhaps you mean the peach-trees in blossom?

Mr. B. No, it is something else. Look again.

W. I see nothing, sir, except my mother and Charles.

Mr. B. That is just what I wish you to look at. What is your dear mother doing?

W. She is playing with my little brother, and trying to make him step along the garden-walk.

Mr. B. Now sit down by me here in the window; and while we look at them, I will tell you something which I wish you to remember. You see that little baby. You were once a little infant like him. You could neither speak nor walk. You could not use your hands, and were perfectly helpless.

W. Yes, sir, I know that, though I cannot remember it. Nothing is so helpless as a young baby. Little Charles has to be car-

ried about all day long. He cannot feed himself, or get out of his cradle.

Mr. B. Who is it that attends to him?

W. My mother.

Mr. B. Yes, my son. Just so she attended upon you. I wish to teach you how much you owe to your dear mother, and how obedient you ought to be to her. Bad boys treat their mothers ill; but they would not do so, if they thought of the kindness of their mothers to them when they were little children.

W. Oh, father, I never can treat my dear mother unkindly. How could you think such thing!

Mr. B. I hope you never will. You were our first child. I remember how thankful your mother was that the Lord had given her a little son. Her eyes were full of tears.

They were tears of joy. You know the Bible speaks of being a joyful mother of children.* Almost all day long she held you in her arms. Every morning she washed your little hands and face, and your whole body. Then she would dress you in the nicest clothes she could get. You were too little to eat, and all your nourishment you took while you were lying in her arms.

W. Oh, sir, I think I must have given her a great deal of trouble!

Mr. B. You did, indeed. But this is a delight to a mother. She did not think it a trouble. She would be very weary with carrying you about, and then, when she had laid you in the cradle to sleep, she would sing to you, while she was making little

* Ps. cxliii. 9.

caps and frocks for you to wear. Sometimes you would fret and cry for an hour at a time.

W. Was not my mother angry when I cried?

Mr. B. No, my son. You know she is never angry with little Charles. She loved you with all her heart. No one on earth can love like a mother. She used to try every thing to please her little boy. And then, at night, you used to keep her up very late, or wake her up after midnight, or before it was light.

W. How could my dear mother sleep?

Mr. B. She was satisfied with very little sleep. Often she was awake with you half the night. Yet she never complained.

W. I wonder how she could love me, when I gave so much trouble.

Mr. B. I will tell you. The Lord has made mothers love their children. If it was not for this, the poor little things would perish. If you had been left a single day to yourself, you would have died. Little chickens can run about as soon as they see the light. The little calves and lambs can help themselves a good deal, when they are only a few days old. But it is not so with little babies. They must be taken care of. And who would do this but their kind mothers?

W. I do not think anybody would like to take the trouble; for little babies cannot do any thing to pay for it.

Mr. B. True. But when they grow older they can repay their parents by being obedient. This is what I am trying to teach you. This is the kind of payment that your dear mother would like to receive. This

would make her feel satisfied with all the trouble she has had with you. .

W. Mother seems to be pleased with every thing that Charles does. There now, I see her laughing when he puts one little foot before the other in the path.

Mr. B. Yes, and it was just so with you. When you first began to take notice of the candle, or the red curtains, or the other things around you, your mother was delighted. She watched every little change, and would run to tell me. When you learned to know our faces and to smile, we were filled with pleasure. Your mother and I used to put things into your hands, to teach you to hold them. When you began to sit alone, she was overjoyed. Then she watched every motion. Every trifling little thing gave her interest. When you began to be able to

stand up by a chair, she called all the family in to see it. These things would seem foolish to some people, but tender mothers think a great deal of them. I wish you would often think of the love of your dear mother to you, when you were an infant. It was she who taught you to walk. It was she who fed you, who put you to sleep, who played with you, and watched over you. Many a wakeful night she had, when she thought something was the matter with her little son.

W. Oh, sir, let me run to dear mother, and thank her, and tell her how much I love her!

Mr. B. After a while you may go. I remember when you first began to coo, and make a noise like talking. How delighted we all were! Your mother taught you to

speak. The first little words you said, were learned from her. She was very patient, and would say the same words over a hundred times, until you could say something like it.

W. My little brother cannot say a word.

Mr. B. We hope he will soon begin. We feel very anxious about the little babe, just as we used to be about you. Once when you were lying asleep on your mother's lap, and she was looking right in your face, I saw the tears begin to drop down from her eyelashes. "I was thinking," she said, "that if William should grow up to be a wicked boy, it would break my heart."

W. My dear father, you make me feel very sorry. I am ready to weep too. Indeed, I will try not to break my dear mother's heart.

Mr. B. I hope the Lord will enable you to be dutiful and pious. We have prayed to him every day since you were born, that he would make you his child.

W. Oh, now I remember something which I never told anybody. One morning very early, when mother thought I was asleep, I heard a voice, and I looked round and saw her kneeling down by my little brother's cradle. She was praying to God to bless him, and to let him grow up to be a good man.

Mr. B. Yes, my dear boy, and your good mother daily prays so for you too. She could call you, as Lemuel was called by his mother *the son of my vows*. Prov. xxxi. 2. But be sure never to speak a word about this again. You must never tell of any thing which your parents wish to be secret; and your mother



did not mean you to hear this. It is very pleasant for pious people to know that God hears their prayers, and that he will take care of their dear children. And it is dreadful for them to think that these little creatures should ever grow up to be wicked men and women.

W. I think my mother must have loved little Charles very much, when she nursed him all the time he had the whooping-cough.

Mr. B. Ah! my son, you have been more sick than ever little Charles was. When you were about a year old, and were cutting some of your teeth, you were ill for many weeks. We thought you were dying several times, for you had dreadful fits. Your mother did not go to bed for many nights. She would hold you in her arms for hours together, while you screamed with pain. She

B

thought of nothing else, and all the riches in the world would not make her so glad as she was when the doctor said you were getting well again. But perhaps you are tired of this, and would rather listen to a story.

W. I am not tired, sir, but I should like to hear a story too.

Mr. B. I will begin, then, to tell you about Jonah Ross. It will be too long for one time, but we can take several days for it.

There was a very poor woman who lived in Maryland, named Sarah Ross. Her husband was a tanner, but he was a drunkard, and used to spend all the money he earned in buying liquor; so that Mrs. Ross was just as poor as if she had been a widow, and perhaps poorer. She used to get a little money by binding hats for the hatters.

They had one little son, and his name was

Jonah. His mother loved him very much, for he was the only treasure she had. When he was a little baby, Mrs. Ross used to sit up half the night to earn a little money to buy something nice for little Jonah. She had no kind friends to give her a new cap or frock for the child. She had to work for every thing that he had.

For a long time she was too poor to get a cradle. She worked very hard to try to get one, and when she was paid by the hatter on Saturday night, she used to take as much of the money as she could spare, and put it in an old tea-pot which she had hidden in the garret. At last her husband, Peter Ross, found out the place where she kept her money, and stole it all to buy whiskey with.

When Mrs. Ross found that her money was all gone, she burst into tears ; but she

soon became quiet in her mind, for she remembered that she could get the carpenter to make her a plain one out of pine boards, for a very little money. So she saved more money, and contented herself with a rough pine cradle.

But little babies can sleep as sweetly in a pine box as in a mahogany cradle. There little Jonah used to lie, with his cheeks like roses, and his mother rocked him with her foot, while she sat sewing the binding and leather on hats.

Mrs. Ross had a great many things to do. She had to make the fire, to cook the food, and to make all her husband's clothes, and to do every thing about the house.

W. How could she take care of little Jonah?

Mr. B. She did as other poor women have

to do. She let him lie upon a sheep-skin on the floor, while she was washing or ironing. When she had to go out, she carried him under her cloak. When she went to church, she had to take the child along with her. If she went out for a little while, she left him in the cradle, and Argus, the dog, watched him till she came back.

W. Father, shall I tell you what this reminds me of?

Mr. B. Certainly, my son.

W. It puts me in mind of the lesson we had at Sunday-school, about little Moses being left in the bulrushes.

Mr. B. Let me hear how much you remember of that.

W. I will try, sir. Pharoah was so much afraid that the Israelites would grow to be a greater people than the Egyptians, that he

ordered all the little boys that were born to be killed. When little Moses was born, his mother hid him for three months. At last she made an ark or cradle of rushes, and daubed it with slime and pitch to keep out the water. Then she put the baby into it, and laid it among the green flags by the side of the river.

Mr. B. That will do. I see you remember it. Now just think how the poor Hebrew women must have felt when wicked men came to murder their little babes! Do you not think that Moses' mother must have been very anxious about her dear son?

W. Yes, indeed I do. I dare say she trembled every time she heard anybody coming to the house, all the three months she had him hidden. And I am sure my mother would weep bitterly, if she had to

put little Charles in an ark, and leave him by the river.

Mr. B. Yes, my dear boy, and all this shows you how much little boys ought to love their mothers. *Mrs. Ross* was a kind mother. She often suffered herself, to save *Jonah* from suffering. Her bad husband came home one night very drunk. He was ill-natured, and angry at every thing. He was in a passion with the baby because it cried, and took up a stick to beat it. *Mrs. Ross* caught up the child quickly, and tried to run up-stairs with it. The wicked man ran after her, and struck at the child. The mother covered the poor little baby with her arms, so that all the blows came upon her. Her face and eyes were very much bruised, but she did not care for this, so long as the child was safe.

W. Oh, sir, is that the way that drunkards do?

Mr. B. Very often. Drunken husbands are commonly cruel to their wives and children. I will tell you of another thing, which will show you how bad Peter Ross was, and how Mrs. Ross loved her little child. She planted some gourd-seed by the back-door, and when the seed came up the vine ran over the porch, and shaded one of the windows. A great many little green gourds hung on the vine, and looked very pretty. She intended to use these gourds instead of cups and bowls, as people often do. But Peter came home drunk, and said that the gourd-vine made the window dark, and that he would root it up. So he got a mattock or spade, and began to dig it out of the earth. Mrs. Ross was very fond of her vine, and begged and



begged that he would not do it. Then he flew into a dreadful passion, and struck her several times with the handle of the mattock.

W. O what a wicked man! Did it kill her, father?

Mr. B. No, it did not kill her, but she was so much hurt that she could not leave her bed for a week. When Peter became sober, he seemed to be sorry for what he had done, and helped to take care of little Jonah for two or three days. But he soon got into a drunken frolic, and left them by themselves. Poor woman, there she lay in her bed, scarcely able to move, and the child's cradle was so far off that she could not reach it. At last she drew it up to the bedside by a long string which she had to rock it with. Then she took the poor babe into bed with her. At last a neighbour sent her a pint of milk, and

though she was so sick herself, she gave it all to the little boy. As I told you before, a kind mother will starve herself, before she will let her child starve.

W. Did she ever get well?

Mr. B. Yes, she recovered after some time. But long before she was quite well, she used to be up at her work, in order to get time to take care of her dear little child. Some cold nights in winter, she had not a single stick of wood, and Peter sold even the bed blankets, that he might get money to buy liquor. Often she used to wrap up the little boy in a rug, and put all the bed clothes on him, and set the dog to watch, while she went a mile to the hatters, to get a little money for her work. O, my son, you have no idea of the sufferings of many poor mothers; and they suffer more for their be-

loved children than for themselves. Be thankful to God for giving you kind parents, warm clothing, a house to cover you, food to eat, and a soft bed to sleep in.

W. Father, I wish you would tell me the little story you read to mother last week out of a book of travels, about an Indian woman.

Mr. B. I will do so. It was from the travels of a gentleman named Humboldt. A poor heathen woman lived upon the banks of the river Guaviare in South America. In the year 1797, some of the pretended Christians went to war with the Indians. They found this woman preparing some food for her three little children. They took them prisoners, and carried them all away. Every few days she would escape with her children, but her enemies always caught her,

and brought her back. At last the friar, a man who commanded all the rest, ordered her to be cruelly beaten. Then he sent her from her children, away up the river Atabipo. While they were taking her away, she burst the cords which tied her, jumped into the river, and swam to the shore.

W. I wish she could have got away !

Mr. B. They caught her, and beat her in a dreadful manner. The rock on which she was stretched to be beaten is called the *Mother's Rock*. Then they tied her hands behind her, and dragged her a short distance to a house. It was the rainy season, and in that country it rains very hard for many days together. She was eighty miles from the place where her children were, and there were great forests between, without any roads in them. But she loved her children. She

loosened her hands in a very dark night, left the house, and ran away. In four days she came to the place they had taken her from. Some one looked out and saw the poor Indian woman peeping about, and trembling, and trying to get to the house where her children were.

W. Oh, sir! she deserved to have her children! But how did she live in the woods? How did she get along?

Mr. B. She was forced to live upon ants, and had to swim over many streams. And when she got back, instead of giving her children to her, they sent her away up the river Orinoco, where she could never see them. This broke the poor mother's heart, and she pined away, and died of grief.*

* *Researches of Baron Humboldt. See (Phil.) National Gazette, for country, No. 1856.*

W. This is a sad story. How she must have loved her children! I think I ought to love my dear mother more than I do.

Mr. B. That is exactly what I wish to teach you. Now let us go and see her in the garden; and to-morrow you shall hear more about Jonah Ross.

CONVERSATION II.

The Mother's Instructions.

THE next day, as soon as the morning tasks were over, William Benton came to his father, and asked him to tell him more about Mrs. Ross and Jonah.

Mr. B. Have you been thinking, my son, about what I told you yesterday?

W. Yes, sir; I have thought a great deal about it, and sometimes I was ready to weep when I looked at my dear mother, and thought how good she has been to me. I hope I shall never do any thing again to distress her.

Mr. B. May God enable you to keep this good resolution. My desire is that you may be a dutiful, pious boy. I wish you to learn God's holy truth, and to live as it teaches

you; and I can say as the apostle John says, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.**

W. I wish to know more about the Bible, and I am thankful to you and my mother for having taught me to read.

Mr. B. It was your mother, my child, who was your teacher. She was full of joy when you began to speak plainly, and set you to learning your letters. And when you knew them all, you cannot think how much we were delighted. Every day she had your alphabet cards spread out on the floor, and taught you to spell words with them.

W. I can just remember when I began to read in the New Testament.

Mr. B. Yes, you learned to read very soon. And your kind mother was all day

* 3 John 4.

long employed about you. While she was making your little garments, she used to tell you stories out of the Bible, about Moses, and Samuel, and about the blessed Saviour. Every thing that she thought would instruct you, she used to get for you. She bought you many little books, and showed you how to read them. While she was sewing or knitting, you were sitting in your little chair by her side. I suppose she thought more about you than about any thing else upon earth. As soon as you were big enough, she took you to church, and found the place for you in the book, and showed you where the text was. The little prayers which you can say now, were taught you by your dear mother. Every morning, she made you kneel down by her side, and fold your hands, and pray ; and then she prayed with you. Every

night before you went to bed, she knelt down with you, and taught you to pray.

W. I remember that very well.

Mr. B. Do you remember what you have read in the Bible about Samuel?

W. Yes, sir. He was Hannah's son. She promised that her son should be given to the Lord all the days of his life. As soon as he was weaned, she took him up to the tabernacle to appear before the Lord, and to live there all the time. She wished him to be God's child. Then she brought him to Eli the priest, and lent him to the Lord for his life-time. And little Samuel served the Lord, before Eli the priest, and was dressed in a little ephod, or priest's coat. And every year his mother made him a coat, and brought it to him. I suppose she was glad to come and see her son, and to hear that he grew

in favour both with the Lord and also with men. And the Lord called Samuel, and talked with him in the night, and made him a prophet.*

Mr. B. Very well said. Now you see that Hannah was a good mother. She loved little Samuel dearly; and it would have pleased her to have had him always with her at Mount Ephraim. But what she wished more than this, was, that he should be the Lord's child, and learn the Lord's will. It is a great blessing to have a pious mother. Men sometimes remember the good lessons their mothers taught them as long as they live. It is a dreadful thing that is said of Ahaziah: *Ahaziah walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly.*†

* 1 Sam. i. ii.

† 2 Chron. xxii. 3.

W. Oh, sir, I remember very well how my mother used to teach me every thing that I wanted to know. I used to go to her and ask her about what I did not understand. There was one verse she used to say over very often to me, so that I know it by heart.

Mr. B. What verse is that ?

W. *My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.**

Mr. B. Yes, my dear boy, never forget it ! This is the way to make your mother's heart rejoice, to be a wise child ; that is, to fear the Lord, and walk in his ways. This is the reason why she took so much care to teach you to read the Bible, and to commit verses and hymns.

W. Yes, sir, and I remember the first time

* Prov. xxiii. 15.

mother ever took me to the Sunday-school. I have gone ever since.

Mr. B. Now you see the reason why your mother punished you once, when you behaved amiss in church. She was very sorry to do it, and she loved you as much as ever while she was correcting you. But she wished to make you afraid to do wrong, and she learned that out of the Bible, which says: *Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.**

W. I never thought of that before. Now I know I ought to love my parents even when they punish me.

Mr. B. I hope you may never need it. You never will if you remember how much your parents have done for you. You must often think of the care your mother took of

* Prov. xxix. 17.

you when you were a little child. There never was an hour in which she was not doing you some kindness. Her heart was full of love to you, and your heart ought to be full of love to her. If you try ever so hard, you never can do as much for her as she has done for you. She has often sat up all night to watch you, and then worked all day to make something for you to put on. She has often suffered herself, to keep you from suffering. Every good mother does so. Every mother has a thousand cares and anxieties about her child, which the child can never understand. All the time your mother was doing so much for you, you were not doing any thing for her. This was not any fault of yours, for you were so little that you could not repay her. But now that you are growing to be a large boy, you must

remember all this. Never say or do any thing which can give pain to your mother's heart.

W. Indeed, sir, I will endeavour to be an affectionate son. And now will you please to go on about Jonah Ross?

Mr. B. You remember I told you yesterday that Peter Ross was a very bad man. When Jonah was about a year old, his father went to a horse-race. There he met with a great many bad people, and drank a great deal of liquor. It was night before he set off to come home. It was very dark, and he was so drunk that he could not walk straight. There was a creek or stream of water between the place where the race was and Peter's house, and over the creek there was a log on which people walked across. When Peter came to the creek, he tried to

walk over on the log. His head began to turn round, and he fell over upon a great rock that was in the stream, and broke his leg. There he lay for several hours. At last a wagoner, who was driving his horses through the creek, heard a groan, and took out his lantern to see what was the matter. There he found poor Peter Ross, half-dead, and covered with blood. He lifted him into his wagon, and took him home.

When Mrs. Ross saw the wagoner bringing in her husband, all bloody and groaning, she was very much alarmed. She put him into bed, and ran for the doctor. When she came back, he was in a high fever, and did not know any thing. In about a week he died.

W. Was she sorry when her husband died?



Mr. B. Yes, she was sorry. Though he was a bad man, yet she loved him. But what made her most sorry was, that she was afraid he had died without being prepared, and that his soul was lost.

W. But what became of little Jonah?

Mr. B. Little Jonah did not know that he was left fatherless. He was now the only comfort his mother had. Mrs. Ross was now a widow, and had nobody to take care of her. She had to work hard for a living, and the hatter gave her very little for her work. But then she tried to put her trust in the Lord. She remembered what God commanded the Israelites: *Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.** And she hoped that no one would afflict her or little Jonah. She prayed to God every day; and

* Ex. xxii. 22.

it gave her comfort to think that *a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation.** She used to say to herself; "God will be the father of my fatherless child; and He will keep me from all that would injure me, for *the Lord preserveth the stranger, he relieveth the fatherless and the widow.*"†

W. But, sir, I wish to hear about little Jonah.

Mr. B. Little Jonah grew finely, and soon learned to walk and to talk. He used to hold skeins of silk and thread on his little hands for his mother to wind, and was the only companion she had. It was very hard for her to take care of him, for she had no servants, and was afraid to leave him by himself, for fear he should get into the fire.

* Ps. lxxviii. 5.

† Ps. cxlvi. 9.

Whenever she went out, Jonah went with her, and seemed very happy to walk along by her side. She loved this little boy very much, for, as the Bible says, he was *tender and only beloved in the sight* of his mother.* She sat up a great many nights together to buy him a new red great-coat, to wear to church. She wore her old gown and bonnet a year longer than she ought to have done, so that she might spare money enough for his shoes and hat.

W. Did she take him to the Sunday school?

Mr. B. There were no Sunday-schools there. She taught him his letters, and then tried to teach him to read; but, poor woman! she had not much learning herself, and she had no time to spend in teaching him. But

* Prov. iv. 3.

she used to take him with her to church, and when he was about five years old, he used to carry her book for her, and sing with the rest of the congregation. Mrs. Ross was a pious woman, and did her duty in most things, but she was ignorant. She did not know the best ways of bringing up her little boy. She had none of the pretty little books, such as you get from the Sunday-school, and every hour she had to spend in getting something to keep them from starving ; for poor women do not get much for their work.

Yet she knew that she ought to teach the child to serve God. She knew that the Bible was given us to be taught to our families. She read that verse, and thought it was meant for her : *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, but teach them to*

*thy sons, and thy son's sons.** She said to herself: "Now I see that I ought to remember all I have ever learned about religion, and teach it to Jonah."

One day a gentleman knocked at the door, and when she opened it, she saw it was Mr. Grove, the minister. She wiped the dust from a chair for him to sit down in, and hurried to put a clean apron upon Jonah, and then sat down to talk with the minister. Mr. Grove took Jonah upon his knee, and asked how old he was. "I am six years old, sir," said Jonah.—"Can you read, my little man?" said Mr. Grove. "Not yet, sir," said his mother, "but he can spell in two syllables." "Well," said Mr. Grove, "if you will send him over to my house every morning, my daughters will soon teach him

* Deut. iv. 9.

to read." Mrs. Ross thanked the minister, and promised that she would take him over herself.

Then Mr. Grove said: "You have a very great charge in this little boy. If you bring him up aright, he will be a great blessing to you; and if not, he may be a sorrow to your heart. I am glad to see you always at church, and I know you read in the Bible. Now as I am going away, I will give you a little book for Jonah, and I hope he will learn to read in it." So he gave her a book, and when she opened it, she saw it was a New Testament; and in the beginning of it was written: "*Presented to Jonah Ross by S. Grove And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest*



by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 7.

Mrs. Ross made Jonah thank Mr. Grove for his present, and promised that he should bring it over to his house in the morning. Before this, the only friend that Jonah had was his mother, and she was always his best earthly friend. What could this poor little boy have done without his mother? He was more helpless than a lamb. There he is with his new book. There is Argus, the good dog. There is his mother, binding the hats, that she may have money to buy some new clothes for him.

W. Did Jonah know his prayers?

Mr. B. Mrs. Ross taught him to say the Lord's prayer, and some little prayers besides; but then she never showed him what they meant; and I believe she never knelt

down by him, and prayed with him. She did not know how important this was. She was poor, and had to labour very hard ; and I am afraid she thought too much about worldly things.

W. Perhaps she was like Martha, whom we read about in the Bible.

Mr. B. Very true. Martha was a religious woman, but she was careful about many things. Mrs. Ross did every thing which she thought would make her little boy happy, but she forgot that religion was the main thing. She talked to him sometimes about good things, but she did not seem to be in earnest, and Jonah forgot a great deal that she said.

The next morning, she dressed the child in his best clothes, and told him to behave himself very well, and then took him over



to Mr. Grove's house. There they go, Jonah and his mother, and Argus is running behind. Mrs. Ross holds the little boy's hand, and he has his New Testament under his arm. She loves to look at him, for he is a handsome rosy-cheeked fellow, and is dressed very clean. All the riches in the world would not buy this child from her. She would willingly lose her right hand, if she was sure it would make him happy. And she often thinks what a blessing it will be, when he grows up to be a man, and is able to help his mother, and to protect her. And the little boy is happy too; every thing is new to him, every thing amuses him, every thing gives him pleasure. At last they are at the minister's house, and here we shall leave them for the present.

W. I wish very much to know what becomes of Jonah.

Mr. B. I will tell you more, my son, at another time. I wish you now to take notice how much this little boy owes to his mother. If she had died instead of his wicked father, the poor little creature would perhaps have died for want of food. No one but his mother would have taken so much pains with him. And he ought to love her for it through all his life.

Now you have more blessings than Jonah. Your dear mother had more time to attend upon you than Mrs. Ross had. Though we are not rich, yet the Lord has been good to us, and we are not poor. Your mother used to teach you all day long. She knows more than Mrs. Ross knew, and has many good books to put into your hands. She prays

with you every morning and evening, and teaches you how to pray for yourself, and how to understand what you ask for. Now what should you learn from all this?

W. I should learn to love my dear mother, and never to do any thing which displeases her.

Mr. B. Right. And what else should you learn from it?

W. Let me think;—O, sir, I should learn to thank the Lord for giving me a father and mother, and for making us all so happy.

Mr. B. Very true. Always remember this, my child. You now see why we are so careful to have you taught. If we can teach you good things while you are young, we hope that you will not forget them if you grow up. When people are young, it is

easy to put them into the right way,' but when they are old, it is very hard. Do you see that little shoot, yonder ?

W. Yes, sir.

Mr. B. It is a young apple-tree. You can take it in your fingers and bend it any way you choose. You can twist it just as you please, and make it grow this way or that way. Now look at that old apple-tree, full of blossoms, by the gate. Can you bend that so ?

W. Oh, no, sir ! All the men in town could not bend that.

Mr. B. It is just so with children and men. You can bend a child's mind right very easily. You can teach it almost any thing. But if it grows up wrong, it becomes like the old apple-tree. Old men and women can scarcely be taught any thing new. They grow up

wrong, and it is as hard to turn them right as it would be to twist that great knot out of the apple-tree. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.**

W. I suppose, then, that people ought to learn all they can while they are young?

Mr. B. They certainly ought. If you learn what is good, and do what is good, you will make your parents glad. Suppose an angel should come and say to you, that he could tell you how you might make your father glad: would you not wish to hear it?

W. Oh, yes, sir.

Mr. B. Well, God has told you in the Scriptures. *Be wise, that is, be pious,* and your father will be glad. Suppose you knew that something would make your dear mo-

* Prov. xxii. 6.

ther very heavy and sad, would you not try to keep from it ?

W. Oh, yes, sir.

Mr. B. Well, God has told you in the Scriptures how you may make your mother's heart very heavy. *Be foolish*, that is, be *disobedient and wicked*, and you will break your mother's heart.

W. That is dreadful, sir! Where does the Scriptures say so?

Mr. B. In the tenth chapter of Proverbs: *A wise son maketh a glad father ; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.*

CONVERSATION III.

The Mother and her Sick Child.

As soon as William saw his father the next morning, he came to him, with a very sad countenance, to tell him that little Charles was very sick.

Mr. B. I know it, my son, for we have been awake with him almost all night. Your mother is very anxious about him.

W. We should all be very sorry if my little brother were to die.

Mr. B. Ah! my child, none of us would be so much grieved as your dear mother. I have told you already that no one can love like a mother. And it is a great trial to lose little children.

W. I was thinking this morning, sir, how

Abraham must have felt when he lifted up the knife to sacrifice Isaac.*

Mr. B. It was well that poor Sarah did not know of it. I suppose it would have broken her heart.

W. When poor Mrs. Gilly lost her daughter, she was so sorrowful that I almost cried when she came in. The tears ran down over her face, and she looked as if she would never be glad again in her life.

Mr. B. In time of war, poor, unhappy women often see their little ones killed before their eyes. Sometimes they try to save them, and then they are killed themselves by the wicked soldiers. One of the prophets tells about such a war, and says: *The mother was dashed to pieces upon her children.*† I suppose this means, that the mother took

* Gen. xxii.

† Hos. x. 14.

her children in her arms, and tried to save their lives, and that the soldiers killed them all together.

W. When Pharoah had all the little sons of the Hebrew women killed, there must have been crying and mourning in every family.

Mr. B. Yes, and when cruel Herod murdered all the children in Bethlehem that were under two years, there was a dreadful lamentation. Many mothers felt as if their hearts were pierced through. *In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning ; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.**

W. Did not the fathers mourn too ?

Mr. B. Oh, yes, I have no doubt they did, but men are not so tender-hearted as women.

* Matt. ii. 16.

Fathers do not always love their little children as much as mothers. Yet they mourn also when their children die. When David's wicked son Amnon was murdered, *David mourned for his son every day.** And when his little babe, the son of Bathsheba, was ill, he was very sorry. One thing which made him more sorry was, that "the Lord struck the child" because of David's sin. He begged and prayed for the child, and took nothing to eat, and was so much distressed that he went and lay all night upon the earth.† When king Zedekiah was carried away captive to Babylon, he saw his sons killed before his eyes; and I suppose this was the last thing he ever saw, for then they put out his eyes.‡

* 2 Sam. xiii. 37.

† 2 Sam. xii. 16.

‡ 2 Kings xxv. 7.

W. I remember what my mother used to tell me about Elijah. When he lived at a place called Zarephath, with a woman that was a widow, the widow's son died. And I remember how much she was grieved.*

Mr. B. Yes, my son, no one but a mother can tell how great this grief is. Even when a babe is a little unwell, the mother has no peace. She would go anywhere, or do any thing to make the child well. Jeroboam was a wicked man, and perhaps his wife was a wicked woman; yet she loved her son Abijah, and when he was sick, she travelled all the way from Samaria to Shiloh, to ask Ahijah the prophet what should become of the child.† Almost any mother would take the same trouble.

* 1 Kings xvii.

† 1 Kings xiv. 1.

W. When I am sick, I always wish my mother to nurse me.

Mr. B. No one can be so kind and tender to a sick child as its own mother. I hope you will never forget how your dear mother watched over you when you had the scarlet fever. Many of our friends were afraid to come near the house, but your mother never left your bedside.

W. Oh no, sir, I do not forget it. Mother used to sit by me all night, and fan me, and give me drink, and bathe my throat, and head.

Mr. B. She suffered as much as you did. She suffered in her mind, while you were suffering in your body. No one could give you physic but your mother, and she used to sit and rub your poor little parched hands for hours together. She did not care about

losing her food or her sleep, if she could only make you more comfortable. Now would it not be dreadful for you to forget all this, and to treat your kind mother badly ?

W. I could not, I could not, sir. I do not see how any child can ever treat his mother badly.

Mr. B. Yet many children do so. I pray that you may never be so wicked. Think how earnestly your dear mother prayed for your recovery. She was like the Syro-phenician woman in the gospel. She would not be satisfied till her prayer was heard.

W. I know about that woman, sir. She cried unto our Saviour, and said: *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.* Christ did not answer her a word. The second time she asked him, he said the

children's bread must not be given to dogs. But the third time she asked, he cured her daughter.*

Mr. B. The Lord was merciful to her And God shows how merciful he is by telling his people that he loves them more than a mother loves her child. He says: *Can a woman forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion on her own son? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*† Mothers may forget their babes, but God will not forget his children.

I will now go on about Jonah Ross.

We left little Jonah at the minister's house. When his mother went away, he began to cry, and said that he would not stay. After awhile they quieted him, and then he was so much taken up with the pictures, and the

* Matt. xv. 27.

† Isaiah xlix. 15.

handsome books, and the red birds in a cage, that he would not learn his lesson. At last Miss Grove took him up in her lap, and began to teach him. Jonah stayed to dinner, but after dinner he cried so much that they were afraid he was sick ; and Mr. Grove took him by the hand, and led him home.

Jonah was indeed unwell. His face was very red. His hands were hot, and he sobbed all the time. His mother put him to bed, and tried to make something that would do him good. All night he was very restless, and in the morning his fever was high, and he seemed to be really quite ill. Mrs. Ross was afraid to send for the doctor, because she had no money to pay him. She could not do any work, for she was all the time attending upon Jonah. She held him in her arms almost all the next day, for he

screamed whenever he was laid in the bed. After a day or two, Miss Grove called at the door to know why Jonah had not been over to their house. When she came in, there was poor Mrs. Ross sitting with Jonah in her arms. She had no one to help her. There was hardly any fire in the hearth, and the last slice of bread which she had was lying on the table. She burst out crying, as soon as Miss Grove came in.

When she looked at Jonah, she said that he had the measles, and told Mrs. Ross that she must send for a doctor at once. The poor woman said she had no one to send. "Oh," said Miss Grove, "I will call when I go back, and ask him myself." Then Mrs. Ross began to cry more than ever, and told the young lady that she had only half a dollar in the world, and that she could not

afford to send for the doctor. Miss Grove then said, "Do not trouble yourself; the doctor is my uncle, and I am sure I can 'get him to come here without any money." So she went away and sent the doctor.

Poor little Jonah's face was covered with red spots. His eyes looked very red and sore, and he could scarcely see. He coughed a great deal, and complained of his head. His mother was truly sorry. She would have done any thing to help him, but she could not. She said within herself: "Oh, if my son dies, what shall I do, what shall I do?" At last she thought she would take down her Bible, and read in it, and try if it would comfort her. So she laid Jonah upon the bed, and opened the Bible. The place she opened at was where it tells about the woman of Shunem, with whom Elisha lived. This

woman's son began to grow large enough to go out to his father's field, where the men were reaping. He was taken very ill in the harvest-field, and said to his father, *O, my head, my head!* His father told a person to carry the child to his mother. *And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.* Then she went to Carmel, to see the prophet. When Elisha saw her coming, he sent his servant to ask her if all was well. *Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with thy child? And she answered, IT IS WELL.** When Mrs. Ross came to this, she shut up the book, and said to herself: "This seems strange—Her child was dead, and yet she says *It is well!* What does this mean? It must mean that it is

* 2 Kings iv.

well, because God does it. God does all things well. Every thing that God does is right. Now perhaps it is well that Jonah is sick. I will kneel down and pray God to make me contented, and to make all turn out for the best.

So she knelt down, and prayed for Jonah; and all the time she was praying, the tears ran down out of her eyes, and wet the book which was lying before her.

W. Oh, how she loved him! I am sure she loved him more than any thing else in the world!

Mr. B. She did, indeed. And she did right to pray for him. This was bringing him to the Lord. You recollect the man that brought his afflicted son to Christ. Jesus told him that if he believed, his son should be made well; and the poor man *cried out,*

*and said with tears, Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief.**

W. Did Jonah get well ?

Mr. B. Not for a long time. And when he began to sit up, he was so weak, that he could only sit in his kind mother's arms. He could scarcely see, and his eyes could not bear the light; and he had a cough which did not leave him for several months. Mrs. Ross did every thing that she could to help the child. She was never weary of nursing him. She sold her best table to get him things that he wanted, and often almost starved herself, in order to save some food for her sick son. And when he began to walk about, and looked very pale and weak and sorrowful, she used to cheer him up, and tell him stories, and give him such little

* Luke ix. 38.

playthings as she could get. She did every thing she could to comfort him, and no one can comfort a sick child as a mother can. This is the reason why God says: *As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.**

Mrs. Ross was often afraid that Jonah would never get well, for he had a pain in his breast, and the doctor said that people sometimes went into a consumption after the measles. All day long she was thinking of this. This child was all her earthly comfort. She had no husband, and no near relations, and her heart was bound fast to this beloved boy. Mr. Grove's family came over every day, and brought such little things as are good for sick people. Mr. Grove himself used to pray with Jonah, and talk to

* Isaiah lxvi. 13.

him about his soul, but the poor child was almost always too ill to attend to what was said.

At last the doctor said, that Jonah was getting well. He could walk about the yard, and his appetite began to return. Before this, his mother had wept for sorrow; now she wept for joy. She was like old Jacob or Israel, when his sons told him that Joseph was living: *Israel said, It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.**

W. I was afraid, sir, that Jonah was going to die. What did he do when he got well?

Mr. B. It was long before he got quite well. He could not do any thing like work. His cough was very bad, and he was very

* Gen. xlv. 28.

thin and feeble. But then his mother could work ; and while she went for her hats, or to buy some little thing to eat, he would sit in his little chair, with his playthings before him, and the dog Argus would lie at his feet. Mrs. Ross loved her son more than if he had never been sick, and never was sorry that he had given her so much trouble.

W. I think that Jonah ought to have loved his mother a great deal more than he had done before. I do not see how he could ever have got well, if his mother had not been so good to him.

Mr. B. Little boys sometimes forget how many sorrowful days and nights their parents have had with them, in time of sickness. They depend on their parents for every thing. What could a poor little sick boy do, without a mother to take care of him ?

In time of a war, when the mothers are killed, the little children often perish with hunger. This is what the prophet Jeremiah is speaking of, when he says: *The children and the sucklings swoon in the midst of the city.** That is, the war is so dreadful that the little children who are not yet weaned, faint in the streets for hunger. And in another place he says: *The tongue of the sucking-child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them.†*

W. I like to hear what you have been telling me these two or three days, for it makes me love my mother better. Father do you not think it is very pleasant to love any one?

Mr. B. Yes, my son; the good Creator

* Lam. ii. 11.

† Lam. iv. 4.

has made us so that we are happy when we love any thing that ought to be loved. Whenever you are tempted to be displeased with your dear mother, think how often she has carried you in her arms, and watched over you. Remember how much pain and trouble she has had with you, and how cheerfully she has given up her own comfort, to make you comfortable. Do not forget the many times you have been sick, and the love she had for you, when you were a little helpless infant.

W. I will endeavour to think of this.

Mr. B. There are some boys who forget all this, and disobey their mothers. They are wicked children, and generally come to a bad end. You have given your parents so much anxiety when you were little, that you ought now to try to give them all the

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pleasure you can. Mothers are distressed at very little things. I knew a little boy who went out without his mother's leave, and stayed out till late at night. He did not think how anxious she would be. When it got dark, and her son did not return, she was very much alarmed. She was afraid something dreadful had happened to him. Was not this very wrong ?

W. Oh, sir, I know you mean me. I did so last week. I did not think it was distressing to my dear mother. I will ask her forgiveness, and never do so any more.

Mr. B. Very well, my son. Your mother loves you tenderly, and this is the reason why she was anxious about you. If you were to be taken sick again, she would sit by your bed, and watch you, and do every thing in her power to make you well. And

all that she asks you to do in return, is to be affectionate, and dutiful, and to do what is right.

Now we are ready to go into the breakfast-room to prayers, and there we shall see your mother, and hear how little Charles is.

CONVERSATION IV.

The Mother Beloved.

William. Father! I was out in the barn-yard this afternoon, and a great hawk came and flew for a good while round and round, and then he darted down and tried to pick up one of the little chickens.

Mr. B. Did he catch it?

W. No, sir. As soon as the old hen saw him, she made a strange kind of clucking, and all the little chickens came running under her wings.

Mr. B. That is just the way in which good mothers take care of their children. In the year 1822, a poor woman, near Genoa, in Italy, was in the field with three young children. The youngest was a little baby. All

on a sudden, a fierce wolf sprang upon her, and tried to tear the infant out of her arms. She kept it off as well as she could, till she could put the baby in the cradle. Then she hid the other two children behind her, and began to fight with the beast. The wolf bit her several times, but at last she got him by the throat, and held him till her husband came. The wolf was alarmed, and ran away, but none of the children were hurt.

W. What a brave woman! What was her name?

Mr. B. Her name was Marie Pittaluga, and she lived in a place called Oneille.

W. Every day I see more and more of the love of mothers to their children.

Mr. B. I am glad you take notice of this, and I hope you will always remember it.

W. Father, I am afraid you think I do

not love my mother. Indeed I do, and I cannot tell you how much.

Mr. B. I know you do, my dear William, and all I want is that you should continue to do so. Until children begin to think they are big boys, they love their mothers more than anybody in the world. They always like to be near them, and are very affectionate. But afterwards, when they grow larger, and go out with other boys, and get into bad company, and become fond of sports, they are very apt to care less for their parents.

W. I would rather never be a big boy, if I must quit loving my mother.

Mr. B. No, my son, you need not cease to love her. I tell you these things that you may always be as affectionate as you are now. There is danger of losing this affec-

tion. Do you remember to have heard of Tom Turnham?

W. Yes, sir. He ran away from his poor mother, and carried all her money along with him.

Mr. B. Well, when I used to visit Mrs. Turnham, Tom was about as big as you are now. He seemed to be very fond of his mother, and would put his arms round her neck many times, and tell her how much he loved her.

W. How did he come to be such a bad boy?

Mr. B. His mother never taught him any thing good, nor sent him to Sunday-school, nor took him to church. He never learned to read, and used to spend all his Sundays pitching pennies with his wicked playmates.

He went to live in a tavern, and learned to drink, and swear, and now he is in jail.

W. Oh, it makes me sorry to think of it. I am sure I cannot treat my mother so. She is so good and kind to me. She always smiles whenever I go where she is. If I hurt myself, she looks sad, and seems to be as much hurt as I am. If I offend her, it makes me feel distressed for two or three days. Yes, sir, I would rather have a whipping any time, than to make my mother sorry. I am sure I love her. I am sure I could not treat her badly !

Mr. B. As long as you feel thus, you will be an obedient son ; and you will never need correction. The way to tell whether a boy loves his parents, is to see whether he obeys their commands. If he does not, then he does not love them, if he kisses them ever

so much. It is not by talking, but by doing, that we show when we love our parents.

W. There is one of the commandments about that.

Mr. B. Which commandment is that?

W. The fifth. *Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.**

Mr. B. What is meant by *honouring* your parents?

W. It means that I must respect and love them, and always treat them in a respectful and loving way.

Mr. B. When do we treat our parents in a respectful and loving way?

W. When we think of them with respect and affection; when we speak of them with

* Exod. xx. 12.

respect and affection ; when we serve them with respect and affection.

Mr. B. How may we know when a child honours his parents ?

W. He honours his parents when he willingly does what they tell him, and submits to them when they correct him, and is never offended with them.

Mr. B. Who taught you this, my son ?

W. My dear mother taught me, sir.

Mr. B. It is all very good. And now I suppose you are ready to hear some more of the story.

W. Yes, sir, I wish to hear whether Jonah was a good boy.

Mr. B. He was very feeble for a long time. He coughed so hard that many people thought he was going into a consumption, and his eyes were so sore and weak

that he was almost blind for a long time. Mrs. Ross did every thing she could to amuse him. She brought him the prettiest flowers, and got him a squirrel, and a bird, and showed him how to make little baskets out of rushes. Sometimes he was so weak, that he had to lean upon her for an hour at a time. He did not see many people besides his mother, and he loved her a great deal. He used to kiss her cheek, and say, "Mother, when I get to be a big boy, I will work for you, and make you rich."

W. Did he not learn to read ?

Mr. B. For a long time his eyes were so sore that he could not read. When he took the book in his hand, and began to look at the letters, the water would run out of his eyes, and then he would cry. So his mother said that he should not try to read till he got well.

He never went away from home, but always stayed near his mother. He had been sick, and was almost like a little baby. If his mother left him alone, he would cry. He used to sit on a little bench at the door, in the warm days of May, with his cage on a log of wood, and his squirrel on his shoulder. There he would tie up his flowers into bunches, and look at the people that went by. He loved to have his mother sing to him, and thought her voice was the sweetest he ever heard. She took a great deal of pains to please him. His clothes were the best she could get. She prepared all his food for him; and when she put him in his little bed, she would sit by him and sing until he went to sleep.

Sickly children are often very fretful. Jonah was so. He was weak, and often

felt badly, when he could not tell what was the matter. And then, if any thing did not please him, he grew peevish, and murmured, and pouted, and sometimes cried. His mother knew that he was unwell, and therefore she did not correct him for this. But this was one of the ways in which he became a spoiled child. He was a pet, and always had his own way, and every thing was done just to please him. Yet he was generally loving and affectionate, and often after he had been sullen and pouting, he would come and say, "Dear mother, I made you sorry; I will never do so any more." Then he would put his little face by his mother's cheek, and say, "Oh, how much I love you! I am sure I love you better than any thing in the world." This was very pleasing to Mrs. Ross, and she used to sit and think

how glad she should be, when Jonah began to be a healthy child, and what a comfort he would be to her.

When he was nearly eight years old, his cheeks began to be ruddy again, and he became quite fat. His eyes were almost well, and he could go with his mother to church. He used to go to the hatters, to get the hats for his mother to bind, and his dog always went with him. But he had forgotten almost all his lessons. He did not know half his letters, and he never did any thing with his book but to play with it. Mrs. Ross began to be afraid that he would never learn to read; so she told him that he must say a lesson to her every morning. After a while he learned to spell a little, but he did not love his book. Sometimes he would run and hide in the yard to keep from saying

his lesson. Sometimes he would say that it made his head ache to look at the letters. And then he would fret and be angry when his mother made him learn. Mrs. Ross ought to have made him obey her, but she indulged him. She remembered how sickly he had been, and she did not like to cross him. So he became a spoiled child, and did nothing but play from morning till night. He would spend hours in sitting at the gate to see the horses and carriages go by; or in looking for eggs in the hedges, where the hens made their nests.

One morning Mrs. Ross had to go to town to buy some sugar and tea, and she told Jonah that he was big enough now to stay at home by himself, and that he must learn his lesson. She showed him a line for him to learn in the spelling-book, and then went

away. As soon as she was gone, and Jonah found that he was alone, he began to cry like a baby. He cried till he was quite tired. At last he found that he got nothing by crying, so he looked around for something amusing. Argus was looking up in his face, wagging his tail, as if he meant to say, "I wonder what my little master is crying about." Jonah then felt a little mischievous, and took Argus and made him sit down in a small chair; then he tied him in the chair with a handkerchief, and put a stool before him, with the book spread open, as if the dog was reading. Then he took his mother's spectacles, and tied them on the dog's face with a piece of thread. After Jonah had laughed at this a long time, he went out to look for birds'-nests.

When Mrs. Ross came back, and opened



the door, she could not help laughing to see Argus reading with her spectacles. The poor dog was very weary of sitting upright, and she untied him. After a while Jonah came in with a handful of bird's eggs, and a nest. Mrs. Ross was very sorry to see this, for she had told Jonah how cruel it was to rob birds'-nests. "O, my son," said she, "I am distressed to see you so disobedient. Instead of getting your lesson, as I told you to do, you have been running about the fields; and you have been robbing the poor birds of their nests, which I have so often forbidden." Jonah looked very much ashamed, and then began to weep, and came and put his arms around his mother's neck, and said he would be more obedient.

Mrs. Ross then said: "Jonah, I shall be very sorry to punish you, but if you are so

disobedient, I shall be under the necessity of using the rod."

W. Did she whip Jonah?

Mr. B. No, my son. It would have been better for him if she had. She often threatened to do so the next time he disobeyed. And when the next time came, she could not. She thought how much he seemed to love her, and how young he was, and her heart failed her. This was just the way to spoil the child. He soon found out that his mother did not mean to do what she threatened, and this made him worse.

W. Is every good child whipped?

Mr. B. Good children are not whipped. And there are some children who have never been whipped in their lives. Some parents can bring up their children without using the rod much. But generally it is hard to re-

strain a little boy, without making him feel some pain when he does wrong. Mrs. Ross once tried to correct Jonah, but he put his arms round her neck and cried so bitterly, that she could not go on.

W. Does not the Bible say something about this?

Mr. B. Solomon says in the book of Proverbs: *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.** He means that if parents begin to correct their children when they first offend, there is hope of making them better; but that when they spare them because they cry, the children will grow worse.

W. Was not Mrs. Ross afraid that Jonah would grow up to be a wicked man, and that the Lord would destroy him?

* Prov. xix. 18.

Mr. B. She did not think enough about this. She ought to have been afraid. Many children are ruined in soul and body, because they have been neglected when they were young. There is another text in the Bible which speaks about correcting children, and I wish you to remember it. It will show you that if your parents ever correct you, it is for your good: *Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.**

W. But did not the little boy love his mother?

Mr. B. Yes, he loved her very sincerely. But he was not loving her when he disobeyed her. At most times he was very affection-

* Prov. xxiii. 13.

ate. His faults arose more from thoughtlessness, than any thing else. And if his mother had been wise, she might have kept him from many bad ways.

On the day that Jonah was ten years old, Mr. Jay, the grocer, came to the house. He said that he had seen this pretty little boy as he went by, and that he was going to give him some work. He wanted some little paper bags made, to hold sugar, and coffee, and tea, when he sold them to his customers. Then he showed them a great roll of brown paper, and told Mrs. Ross how large the bags must be.

“Oh, mother,” said Jonah, “will Mr. Jay pay me for making the bags?”—“Yes, my child,” said Mrs. Ross, “he would not ask you to make them for nothing.”—“Oh, I am so glad, for then I shall get some money for

my dear mother." And the little boy's eyes sparkled with gladness.

So Mrs. Ross cut the paper into the proper size, and made a pot of paste; all that Jonah had to do, was to fold the papers, and paste the edges, and lay them by the stove to dry. When Mr. Jay came the next time, he gave Jonah a piece of silver. It was the first piece of silver he had ever had, and he was very much delighted. One morning he went to the town, and spent it all in sweet-cakes. But he did not eat one of them himself: he brought them all home to his mother. Poor child! he loved cakes himself, and he did not know any other way of pleasing his mother, for he thought she would like them as well as he did. Mrs. Ross could not help smiling when he came to her with his load of cakes; but she thanked him, and

told him that the next time she would show him what to get.

W. I am glad to see that he loved his mother still. I was afraid he was going to be a very bad boy. Now, sir, I hear them calling us down to tea.

CONVERSATION V.

The Mother Disobeyed.

Mr. B. Do you remember any thing about our Lord Jesus Christ's obedience to his parents?

W. Yes, sir; after his parents thought he was lost, it is said that *he was subject unto them.**

Mr. B. And that means that he honoured Mary his mother, and Joseph his supposed father. He treated them with respect and love. Why should children honour their parents?

W. Because their parents have done them so much good.

Mr. B. Can you give another reason?

* Luke ii.

W. Because God has commanded it.

Mr. B. Is there any good thing promised to obedient children ?

W. Yes, sir : the fifth commandment says, —*that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

Mr. B. What does that mean ?

W. It means that the Lord promises long life and prosperity to obedient children.

Mr. B. Yes, the Lord promises this, so far as shall be for his glory, and their good. For you know it might be more for the good of a man to die, and have eternal life in heaven, than to live long on earth. The apostle Paul calls this the “first commandment with promise.”

W. I know that verse, sir : *Honour thy father and mother, which is the first command-*

*ment with promise ; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.**

Mr. B. Do you not think it is very wicked for a child to disobey his parents ?

W. Yes, sir ; it is very unthankful. I ought to try to do all I can to please my parents, for having been so kind to me.

Mr. B. Disobedience to parents is very displeasing to Almighty God. He often punishes it in this world. Sometimes when people grow old, and have bad children, who grieve their hearts, they remember that they have been disobedient when they were young, and that this is a punishment for it.

I am now about to continue the story of Jonah Ross.

I told you that Mr. Jay came and paid him for the work he had done. Now Mr.

* Ephes. vi. 2.

Jay sold so many groceries, that he wanted a great many of these little paper bags, and he told Jonah that every Saturday evening he must bring all he had made to his store. Jonah worked hard all the week, and made several hundred. When Saturday evening came, he set off to go to the store with his bags. Mr. Jay was very much pleased, and paid him much more than he did before. There was a blacksmith's-shop about half way between the store and Mrs. Ross's house. Jonah often wished to stop and see them work, but he remembered that his mother had forbidden him. She was afraid the hot iron might burn him, or that the horses might kick him, or that he might get into bad company. When Jonah came near the shop this time, and saw the sparks flying, and heard the hammers striking one after

another upon the anvil, and the men and boys talking and laughing, he stopped to think whether he should go in. He said to himself: "What harm will it do for me to go in? mother will never know it; I will go in this once."

This bad thought led him to do evil. He ought to have remembered that God saw him. But he went into the shop-door. He was much amused to see them shoeing a horse, and the blacksmith spoke to him, and gave him a fly-brush, to keep the flies off the horse while he was shoeing him. Jonah was quite proud to be able to help, and when he was going away, the smith gave him a little horse-shoe which he made out of a nail. It was about an inch long. He put it into his pocket, and ran home as fast as he could.

When he got home, his mother asked him why he had stayed so long. He stammered and hesitated, and said he did not know. Then she asked him if he had not stopped at the blacksmith's shop. Jonah's face turned as red as a coal, and he could not speak for some time. At last he said, "No, mother." This was the first day that he had ever told his mother such a lie. It was a wilful, wicked lie. His mother saw something sticking out of the pocket of his round jacket, and said, "What have you there, Jonah?" Jonah looked very much confounded: "It is a bit of iron that I found in the road."—"Oh, my son, my son!" said Mrs. Ross, "how distressed I am to hear you tell such a falsehood! You know you have been to the shop where I told you not to go." Then Jonah burst into tears and

confessed the truth. His mother reproved him, and told him how displeasing it was to God. She said he had committed two sins; he had disobeyed his mother, and he had told a wilful lie. But she did not correct him with the rod, though she had said that she would do so the very next time he disobeyed her.

W. Did it not make him feel very badly, to have told such a falsehood?

Mr. B. No doubt it did. But he soon got over this. The next Saturday evening, when he went to the grocer's, he took his squirrel with him. It ran over his hat, and into his pockets, and was very playful. Just as he was coming out of the store, a little boy met him, and asked him if he would sell the squirrel. Now his mother had given him the squirrel, and she had told him not

to give it away, nor sell it. The foolish boy forgot all this at that moment. He sold his squirrel for ten cents, and then began to return home. All the way home, he was in trouble. He was thinking what he should say to his mother when she asked him about the squirrel. At last he got to the house, and when his mother asked him what had become of it, he said that it had jumped away from him, and ran into the woods. Mrs. Ross was sorry, but she never thought he had told a lie. On Monday morning a man came to the door, and as soon as he had opened it, in sprang the little squirrel *Bunny*. "O," said Mrs. Ross, "I am glad to see the little fellow. Where did you find it, sir?"—"Why, madam, your little boy sold it to my son, last Saturday night, for ten cents; and I thought it was wrong to keep it, because

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the collar is silver, and is worth a great deal more than ten cents."

Mrs. Ross thanked the man, and paid him back the ten cents. After he was gone, she looked for Jonah. There he was under the willow-tree in the yard, biting his lip, and looking very sullen. He thought his mother would surely whip him now. But she did not. She was very angry, and scolded him very much. This did no good. It only made Jonah think that his mother never intended to correct him. So he thought he could do as he pleased.

It was now getting to be warm weather, and the country looked very beautiful. The fields were all green, and the gardens were full of flowers. The birds were singing in the branches, and every thing seemed joyful. One fine Sabbath morning, Mrs. Ross dressed

Jonah in his best clothes, and took him with her to church. There were more people at church than usual, and the seat in which Mrs. Ross sat was crowded. So she told Jonah he might go up and sit with the little boys in the gallery. He went upstairs, and sat down in a place where his mother could not see him. Next to him sat a little boy whom he had seen at the smith's shop; his name was John Jarvis.

Before Mr. Grove had begun to preach, John pulled Jonah by the coat, and asked him to go out by the door. Then John told him that he knew where there were some nice ripe wild strawberries, and asked him if he would go with him and get some. He said they could be back before church was out, and that his mother would never know it. Off they went, into the fields, and picked

strawberries until they were tired of eating them. As Jonah was going by a fence, he saw a speckled tortoise creeping along. He took it up, and tied it in his handkerchief.

All the time he was in the fields, he felt very badly. His conscience told him he was a wicked boy. He wished he had stayed at church, and had not profaned the Sabbath. When the two boys set off to go home, they saw the people coming to the afternoon service. Jonah was frightened, for he did not think he had been gone so long. He was afraid to go home to his mother; and he stayed and stayed at the blacksmith's shop, wondering what story he should tell when his mother asked him where he had been. At last the sun went down, and he thought he could not wait any longer. So he went home, and there was his poor mother, full

of sorrow and fear, because she did not know what had become of her son.

“O, Jonah,” said Mrs. Ross, “where have you been?”—“I have been taking a little walk, ma’am.”—“But where did you go after church.” Jonah said, “I thought I would run home before you; so I came home, and when I found the door was locked, I went to take a little walk, and I got lost.” Then Mrs. Ross looked at his handkerchief, which he held in his hand, and said: “What have you got tied up in your handkerchief?”—“O, it is something a little boy gave me out here by the gate.”—“But your handkerchief is all stained, and so are your fingers, and your mouth. Ah! I see how it is. You have been off in the fields, getting strawberries.”

Then Mrs. Ross tried to show Jonah how

bad he had been. He had neglected the worship of God, and gone out of church. He had disobeyed his mother by going without leave; he had broken the holy Sabbath; he had pained his mother's heart, by staying away so long; and then he had told her several dreadful lies. She talked a long time to him, but he was very sour, and did not promise to do any better.

Mrs. Ross was not wise to let him go so long without any punishment. The fear of the rod might perhaps have kept him out of temptation.

W. Perhaps she loved him so much that she did not like to punish him.

Mr. B. That is not a wise love. If she had felt the right kind of love, she would have chastised him to keep him from evil. Hear what the wise man says: *He that*

*spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.** She acted as if she hated him. The way to make him leave off what was bad, would have been to correct him. Instead of this, she left him to himself. Now the Scriptures say: *The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.†* She ought to have reprov'd him, and if this was not enough, she ought to have chastised him. *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.‡*

She did indeed love him, though she was so unwise. When she thought he was lost, she was alarmed, and ran to the door a hundred times to see if he was coming. And

* Prov. xiii. 24.

† Prov. xxix. 15.

‡ Prov. xxii. 15.

when he got home, she was so glad to see him, that she could not think of using the rod.

W. Was he any better after this ?

Mr. B. No, he rather grew worse. He went again to the blacksmith's shop, and played with John Jarvis, and told his mother another falsehood when he came home. . He ate the green peaches in the garden, though his mother had forbidden it, and then denied it when she questioned him. He disobeyed her in something every day, and when he was thirteen years old, he had become a very bad boy. Mrs. Ross did not seem to know how much worse he had become. Yet *even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.**

W. I feel very sorry to hear that he has become so bad.

* Prov. xx. 11.

Mr. B. Disobedience to parents is one of the first sins of youth. Therefore, *my son, hear the instructions of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.**

* Prov. i. 8.

CONVERSATION VI.

The Mother Neglected.

WILLIAM BENTON thought a great deal about what his father had told him, and wished very much to hear the rest of the story. So he ran out very early in the morning to the garden where Mr. Benton was working.

Mr. Benton. I am sorry, my son, that I have very little that is good to tell you about Jonah Ross. He had become such a bad boy, that the rest of the story is very sad. But I want you to hear how he neglected his kind mother, for I hope it will always make you afraid of being undutiful.

W. I know how wicked it is for us not to love our parents. And I tried to pray to

the Lord last night, that he would keep me from being disobedient, like Jonah Ross.

Mr. B. That was right, and God loves obedient children. Some boys think that it is a very little fault to disobey their parents; but in the Bible this is put in the list of dreadful sins. The apostle Paul gives a list of wicked people: *Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, inventors of evil things, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, covenant-breakers, implacable, unmerciful.**

W. That is a dreadful list, and I see that disobedience is very evil in the sight of God.

Mr. B. And there is another list of bad people; and disobedient children are put in that too: *Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemous, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, fierce, trai-*

* Rom. i. 30.

*tors.** But I have a good deal to tell you about Jonah, and I must begin.

Mrs. Ross often felt sorry that she had not tried to send her son to school. He was now more than thirteen years of age, and he could not read. For two or three years he had done very little work. He used to go upon errands, and carry bundles for Mr. Jay, and sometimes he went into the woods and gathered sticks to light the fires; but he had not begun to learn any trade. He was an idle boy; and idleness leads to vice.

His mother told him that she thought she could send him to school for one quarter, to learn to read; but he refused to go. He was ashamed to let the other boys see how ignorant he was. His poor mother hardly

* 2 Tim. iii. 2.

knew what to do with him. He cared very little now for what she said, and used to spend a great deal of every day in running about the streets, and the fields, and especially at the blacksmith's shop.

When he was small he used to like to go for the hats, which his mother worked at; but now he was tired of this. One morning she sent him to bring her a bundle of hats, and he stayed away all day, and never brought them at last. He was getting so large, that it was too late for Mrs. Ross to begin the use of the rod.

At another time, his mother was quite unwell. She had taken a violent cold, and was afraid to go out in the rain. So she asked Jonah to go out in the yard, and cut a few little sticks, to kindle a fire, for she had not a single bit of wood in the house.

Jonah went out, and began to chop the wood. After he had cut one stick, he began to be tired, and laid the axe down. Just then, John Jarvis went by the gate, and asked him if he did not want to see some monkeys. Jonah had never seen a monkey, and he was glad to get away. He left his wood and his axe, and went off with John to the blacksmith's shop. There he saw a man who was playing upon a barrel-organ. He had two little monkeys with red coats on. They jumped about, and grinned, and chattered, and Jonah thought it was so funny that he stayed there several hours.

W. What did Mrs. Ross do for wood?

Mr. B. She waited a long time, and at last, as she did not hear the sound of the axe, she looked out. Jonah was not to be found. The poor woman then had to go



out, and take the axe, and cut a few sticks for herself.

W. Oh, what a cruel boy!

Mr. B. Mrs. Ross did not care so much about having to cut the wood, as about Jonah's being so disobedient. She thought what a sweet little child he had been, and how much he had loved her. She remembered how affectionate he used to be, and how he had promised to take care of her when he grew larger. Then when she had made a fire, she went to her drawers, and took out a little box. In that box was the first little hat that Jonah ever wore. His mother had made it for him with her own hands. And now, when she looked at it, it put her so much in mind of the time when Jonah was good, that she could not help weeping.

When Jonah returned, he found his mother weeping. "O, mother," said he, "what makes you cry?"—"I was thinking, my son, of the time when you loved your mother but now you neglect me, and leave me without any help."

Jonah ought to have felt sorry, but he felt angry. He said, "Mother, I wish you would not talk that way to me. I don't see any thing to be crying about." This was the most cruel thing he had ever said to his mother. It made her feel as if something had pierced her heart. She loved this bad child, and that was the reason why she had wept. But he had despised her tears, and this made her weep more, as if her heart would break. Jonah took up his hat again, and went out, and shut the door with a great

noise, as if he was very angry. He did not come home again until it was dark.

Mrs. Ross did every thing she could to please her son. She cooked every nice little thing that she thought he liked. She let him always choose what he would have for dinner. Whenever she was able, she got him new clothes, and took great care to keep them from being spoiled. He was a handsome boy, and began to be fond of dress. He had beautiful brown hair, that curled down his neck, and his mother had taken more pains than was needful to make it appear well. Yet for all this, Jonah was sour and discontented. He found fault with the food; nothing upon the table pleased him. He found fault with his clothes, and said they were not like what the other boys had. He found fault with the house, and the fur-

niture, and said it was so mean and old, he was ashamed of it.

W. That was very wicked, because he knew that it was the best his poor mother could get. But how did he get to be so much worse?

Mr. B. One great reason was, that he had fallen into bad company. *Evil communications corrupt good manners.** He had some playmates who were very bad. Almost every day he went to the blacksmith's shop, to see the boys. These were very wicked boys. They cursed and swore, and talked about every thing that was bad. When Jonah first went there, he was shocked and frightened to hear them swear. After a little time, he became used to it, and did not mind

* 1 Cor. xv. 33.

it. Then he began to like it, and thought it sounded very manly.

W. What did they use to do at the shop?

Mr. B. When the boys were at their work, Jonah would help to hold the horses when they were shod, or he would keep off the flies, or bring in coal, or blow the great bellows. All this time he would be listening to their foolish and wicked stories. When they had done their work, and washed the black off their faces, and pulled off their leathern aprons, they were ready for sport. They used to take Jonah into the barn-yard to throw stones at the fowls. Or they played at marbles on the earth-floor of the shop. Sometimes they robbed orchards, or got birds'-nests. But they were always disposed to be mischievous.

W. Did he not think of his poor mother all this time ?

Mr. B. Sometimes he would think of her, but the thought gave him pain ; and he tried to think of something else. One day his mother was coming by the shop, and as she passed she heard a dreadful oath ! It was her son's voice ! Oh, how her heart beat ! She stopped, and looked in. When John Jarvis saw that it was Mrs. Ross, he told Jonah to hide behind the bellows. His guilty conscience made him afraid, and he tried to hide, but he was not quick enough, and his mother saw him. She spoke very gently to him, and told him he must go home with her. He did not like this, but he could not refuse ; so his mother took him by the arm, and led him home. All the way home the tears ran down her cheeks, and she did not

say a word. When they got into the house, she shut the door, and told him to sit down. Then she took off her shawl and bonnet, and sat down by him, and took hold of his hand. He looked very much confused, and bit his lip, and his hand trembled.

His mother said to him : “Jonah, you are now more than fourteen years of age. Thirteen years ago this day your poor father died. You were then a little helpless baby. You had no one but your mother to take care of you. Oh, how many sorrowful hours have I had with you! I have nursed you, and watched you, and taken care of you, day after day, and night after night.

“When you were sick for so many months in this room, I used to weep for fear my son would die. I have held you in my arms all night. And when you got well, I worked

to get your bread for you, and have done every thing for you that I knew how to do, to this very day.

“ But now you care little about me. When you were a little child, you used to say how glad you should be to grow bigger and help your dear mother. Now you have grown bigger, but you do not help me. You grieve my heart every day. All the trouble and want and pain I have suffered is not so bad as to see that you do not love me. I have often told you not to go to that bad shop ; but you disobey me, and go every day. And what is worse than all, I heard you swear ! O, my son, my son, you will break my poor heart !”—And then she wept so much that she could not speak.

W. Did he beg her pardon, sir, and try to comfort her ?

Mr. B. Jonah began to be moved. It made him sorry to see her so much distressed, and he felt a tear coming into his eye. But then, all at once, he thought how the boys at the shop would laugh at him, and say he had got a scolding. So he jumped up out of the chair, and said: "Well, if I give you so much trouble, I will go away, and then you may do what you please." And off he went. This was a cruel, cruel thing to say to his weeping mother. It was a dreadful sin against God, and was recorded in God's book. When he went out, his mother put her hand over her eyes, and said: *A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother!* Mrs. Ross had been that morning to Mr. Jay, the grocer, and he had agreed to take Jonah, to help him in his store. This would have been a good place for him, but he went

away before his mother said any thing to him about it.

W. Where did he go, sir?

Mr. B. He went straight back to Mr. Jarvis' shop. When the boys saw him coming, they all left their work, and came to the door, pointing their fingers at him, and laughing. "Ay," said they, "the old woman has been giving you a whipping—has she!" Jonah was ashamed, and angry, and said, "No, you fools you! Who cares for the old woman?"

W. Why, father, did he call his mother *the old woman*?

Mr. B. Yes, my son, I am sorry to say he did. Wicked boys often give their mothers this disrespectful name. And I have taken notice that no boy who honours his parents ever calls his father *the old man*, or

his mother *the old woman*. Jonah stayed with the boys till it was late at night. He made up his mind that he would not go home. He wished to frighten his mother, by making her think he had gone away entirely. He thought that then she would be afraid to hinder him from doing any thing he pleased. But he did not know where he should sleep that night. He was afraid to stay at Mr. Jarvis', for he was sure his mother would come there to look for him.

After a while he went to the town, which was about a mile off. He walked slowly along the streets, to try if he could see any boy that he knew. It grew later and later, and he saw that the candles were put out in most of the houses. At last he saw a light in Mr. Jay's store-window, and as he did not know where else to go, he went to the

door. He felt a little afraid, too, that his mother would come there. The door was locked, for it was after ten o'clock at night, but when he knocked, Mr. Jay opened it, and let him in. "What brings you here so late at night?" said Mr. Jay. Jonah said, "My mother had to go to Frederick-town to-day, sir, and she told me to come here and ask if you would let me stay all night."—"Oh, yes, certainly," said Mr. Jay, "you can go up in the room over the store, and sleep with William; that is the place you will have to sleep in, when you come to live with me."—"Am I to live with you, sir?" said Jonah.—"Oh, yes, did not you know it? Your good mother has been here to-day, and we agreed that next week you should come here and learn to be a grocer. But come—you must go to bed." So Jonah

went up and got into the bed with William. He did not say his prayers, for he had neglected this for a long time. When boys become disobedient, they do not like to pray. It makes them think of God, and of their sins; and so they give up praying altogether. But it was a long time before he could get to sleep. He could not help thinking how wicked it was for him to treat his dear mother in this way, at the very time she was getting him a good place to live at. He tried to forget this, and went to sleep.

In the morning, Mr. Jay made him stay to breakfast. After breakfast he looked out and saw John Jarvis in the street. John had been searching for him, to tell him that there was to be a horse-race at noon, four miles off. He said that there would be a

great deal of fun, and persuaded Jonah to go along with him.

The boys set off to go, and when they came near the place, they saw hundreds of people collecting together. Jonah was very much delighted. He had never seen so many people together. And then the fine horses and fine carriages pleased him. There were stalls and tables, covered with candy, and cakes, and beer. And there were shows to be seen, with wild beasts, and birds, and pictures. And the music was the finest Jonah had ever heard.

W. Is not a horse-race a very bad place ?

Mr. B. Yes, it is. There is a great deal of drinking and gambling at races. Many wicked people go there, and many boys learn to drink, and bet, and game, and are ruined at them. Jonah pressed in among

the crowd, and saw the race. Then there was fighting and swearing and rioting. He saw hundreds of drunken men, and was almost frightened, but John laughed at him, and told him he must not be a baby. Jonah had no money to buy any thing at the stalls, but John lent him some to try if he could not win some more by gaming. So he went up to a table covered with cloth, where some men were playing dice. John showed him what to do, and he threw the dice, and won half a dollar. He spent this for cakes, and when they were coming away, John bought a bottle of brandy, and said they would drink it as they were going home. They stopped under a tree, by the way-side, and began to drink.

W. I wonder what Mrs. Ross thought all this time.

Mr. B. When Jonah went away in the evening, she thought he would be back before dark. She waited a long time, and when she saw that he did not come she became alarmed. At ten o'clock she was so much concerned about him, that she put on her bonnet, and went to Mr. Jarvis' to inquire after him. The boys said that he had been at the shop, but had gone away late at night. Mrs. Ross returned home, and walked up and down the room, for two or three hours. Every time she heard any noise, she hoped it was Jonah coming back. At last she threw herself upon the bed, and fell asleep.

In the morning she had no peace. She could not eat her breakfast. She went to the town in great haste, and called at Mr. Jay's. When Mr. Jay told her what Jonah had said, she was more distressed than ever,



213



because he had told Mr. Jay such a falsehood. All that day she was in distress. She thought her poor son had gone away, and that she should never see him again. She could not hear any thing of him. Late in the evening, she heard a noise, and saw a number of people coming up to the door. When she looked out, she saw several men bringing somebody in their arms. When they came nearer, she saw that it was Jonah! The poor boy lay in their arms, and seemed to be perfectly helpless.

W. Oh, father! was he dead?

Mr. B. No, he was not dead, but I am sorry to say he was drunk!

W. What, sir! Was Jonah a drunkard?

Mr. B. He never drank any liquor before in his life. But John Jarvis had made him as drunk as he could be, with the brandy

which he had bought. And some men who came by saw him lying under a tree, and brought him home.

W. What did his mother do ?

Mr. B. She was frightened almost out of her reason. She ran out, tearing her hair, and crying, " My son is dead ! My poor son is dead !" They brought in Jonah, and laid him on the bed. His mother soon saw what was the matter, for she remembered how her husband used to be brought home in the same way. She wrung her hands, and cried all that night.

Jonah slept till very late the next day. When he came to himself, he was sick, and kept his bed several hours. He was stupid and sullen, and was very much mortified at what had happened.

Now, my dear William, you see to what

disobedience leads. If this boy had never disobeyed his mother, they both might have lived very happily together. But he neglected her, he treated her unkindly, he forgot all her goodness to him, and now he is brought home drunk.

CONVERSATION VII.

The Mother Forsaken.

AFTER a few days, Mr. Benton called his son William to hear more of the history of Jonah, Ross. William came with his Bible open in his hand, and said:

“ I have been reading a place which I wish you to see.”

Mr. B. What passage is it, my son?

W. It is in the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, and begins at the eighteenth verse.

Mr. B. Let me hear you read it.

W. *If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto*

them : then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place ; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he is a glutton and a drunkard. All the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die.

Mr. B. Well, my son, what do you think of these words ?

W. I think that Jonah Ross was stubborn and rebellious : and perhaps if he had read this passage he might have seen how bad he was.

Mr. B. This law shows us how the Lord hates this sin. They did not stone the rebellious son, unless he was a glutton or a drunkard, and not then, unless the elders or magistrates agreed to it. Poor Jonah could not read, and had received very little instruc-

tion. After he had got over his dreadful drunkenness, he felt very much ashamed. He had often heard that strong drink destroyed his father, and he knew that everybody despised drunkards. But I am afraid he did not think how much he had offended God.

When Mr. Jay found out what a falsehood Jonah had told him, and heard that he had been carried home drunk, he sent word to Mrs. Ross, that he did not want to take him into his store. This made Mrs. Ross very sad, and Jonah was quite uneasy about it. He felt a little sorry when he saw that his poor mother was distressed, and went about the house, as if something was the matter with him. He could not work, and could scarcely eat his meals. He wished that he had not been so foolish and wicked, and

whenever he looked at his mother's sorrowful face, it made him feel worse than if he had been beaten.

Idle people are always unhappy, and he wanted company, because he had nothing to do. One morning he went over to the blacksmith's shop, to see the boys. They laughed at him about his having been so drunk, and he tried to laugh too. But he felt that he had made a fool of himself. Mr. Jarvis had a son named Isaac, who was about four years older than Jonah. He had just come back from Baltimore, and was telling the boys all he had seen. He told them what a large beautiful city it was, and how fine the long rows of houses and handsome shops looked. He talked a great deal about the fountains, and the cathedral, and the two monuments, and the markets. He

said there were hundreds of ships there, and that they were most beautiful. But what pleased him most was the theatre, and he told them all that he had seen there. He said that there was plenty of fun, and that a boy could make as much money as he wanted.

As soon as Jonah heard this, he thought he would like to go to Baltimore. His mother could not hinder him from doing as he pleased then.

W. Would he have gone away from his mother without her consent?

Mr. B. You will see presently. All the time he was going home, he thought about Baltimore. He walked up and down the floor, and thought of the ships, and the fine sights, and the theatre. When he went to bed at night, he could not get this out of his

head. He dreamed about it that night, and it was the first thing that came into his mind in the morning.

Mrs. Ross saw that something was taking up his thoughts all the time, and she thought he was troubled because he had lost his place at Mr. Jay's. She tried to cheer him about it, and told him she was sure after a week or two Mr. Jay would take him into his store, if he would behave himself. Then she showed him some beautiful silk handkerchiefs she had been buying for him, and told him that she knew he would like them all the better, because his mother hemmed and marked them. But Jonah was sulky, and did not seem to care what she did for him. Mrs. Ross was never kinder to him than she was at this time, for she tried if she could

not make him love her, by doing every thing for him that was in her power.

W. Oh, how could he think of leaving such a good mother?

Mr. B. He had given way to the temptations of Satan, and was very stubborn. His mother's kindness did make him feel a little sorry for her, and once or twice he almost made up his mind not to go away. But then he thought how tiresome it was at home, and how fine a thing it would be to live in Baltimore. So he sold a few of his things to get a little money; and worked a day or two for one of the farmers to get a little more; and made ready to go off. Then he went to Isaac Jarvis, and asked all about the road to Baltimore, and what he must do when he got there. And when he had done all this, he packed up his clothes in a bundle,

and hid them, so as to be ready to go the next morning.

That evening Mrs. Ross had been to the town with a watch that had belonged to her husband. She had got the watchmaker to repair it, and put a chain and seals upon it. When she brought it home, she called Jonah, and told him that she had a present for him, and gave him the watch. Jonah took it, and thanked her for it; but it made him feel much worse than before. He could not help thinking how kind his mother was, and what an unthankful thing he was going to do by running away from her.

Early the next morning he got up, and took his bundle and stick, and set off on his journey to Baltimore. Poor Mrs. Ross was fast asleep, and knew nothing about it. Jonah walked on very fast, and tried to

think of every thing pleasant, in order to prevent his being sorry at leaving his mother. At last he came to a turn in the road, and he knew that when he passed this, he should not be able to see his mother's house any longer. He stopped and put down his bundle, and sat down under a tree. Then he folded his arms, and thought he would take a last look at his home.

W. Oh, sir, how badly it must have made him feel, to see the house.

Mr. B. He had such thoughts as these: "There is the house I was born in. There I have lived with mother for more than fourteen years. She has never had anybody to live with her but me, and now she will be left all alone. Poor mother! she will not know what has become of me. And after all, she has been very good and kind."



Then he took out his watch, to see what time in the morning it was, and when he looked at it, and the chain and seals which his mother had bought for him, the tears began to come into his eyes. He was almost ready to go back. But then he began to think of all that the boys had told him about Baltimore, and he jumped up and walked on as fast as he could.

The morning was very fine; the fields were covered with grass and flowers; the birds were singing, and the bees humming, and every thing looked gay. But Jonah felt unhappy. He knew he was doing wrong, and the thought of his mother came into his mind every moment. He tried to think of other things. Sometimes he talked to himself, sometimes he sang, and sometimes he whistled. But he soon got into a part of the

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road where he had never been before, and began to be entertained with new sights. He came to handsome houses, and villages which he had never seen ; and as he trudged along, with his bundle slung upon the end of his stick, he felt as if he had become a man at once.

About the middle of the day, he began to be very weary. He had walked thirteen miles ; and all he had eaten was a little bread and cheese, which he had in his pocket. He looked a long way before him, and saw a tavern sign about half a mile off. He determined to stop there, and get something to eat, and ask the road to Baltimore. When he got to the tavern, he found there several wagoners who were driving large wagons full of wheat to the city. They soon spoke to him, and when they found he

was going the same way, they told him they would all go on in company. Then they went in to dinner, and after dinner they began to drink in the bar-room. Jonah remembered how he had suffered from drinking once before, but these wicked men persuaded him to take a little, and then a little more, until his head was light, and every thing seemed to turn round. But he did not take as much as he had done before, and liked it so well that he thought he would often indulge himself.

They all went on, and were very merry. The wagoners cracked their whips, and joked with one another, and sang songs; and when Jonah was tired of walking, they let him ride in the wagon. So they went along till they came to the place where they were to stay all night. When Jonah went to bed,

he was more fatigued than he had ever been in his life. And he thought so much about his mother, that he could not go to sleep. He knew that she loved him, and that she would be very much distressed, and he was afraid something would happen to him for having forsaken her.

W. What did his mother do when she found Jonah was gone?

Mr. B. She waited a long time for him to come down to breakfast, and when he did not come, she thought that perhaps he was sick, and went up-stairs to see. There was no Jonah there. She came down again, and ate her breakfast very sorrowfully. But he had been away so much lately, that she was not very much alarmed at first. She thought it likely he had got up early to go a fishing. All day long she waited and waited for Jonah

to come back. Night came on, and yet she heard no news of him. Then she was frightened. She was ready to think some accident had happened to him. At last she went up in his little room, and when she looked into his chest, she found nothing there. He had taken all his clothes away. She was then sure that Jonah had forsaken her, and she sat down on the chest and wept. It was a sorrowful night for Mrs. Ross. She had no comfortable sleep, and when the morning came, it made her more sad than she was before.

She put on the tea-kettle, and made the coffee, and spread the cloth. And then when she set on the plates, she put a plate for Jonah as she always did; for she thought "Perhaps the poor boy may come in after

all. Surely he cannot leave his distressed mother in this way."

W. Did Jonah get to Baltimore that day?

Mr. B. He arrived there late at night. When he came into the city, and heard the wheels rattling on the paved streets, and saw the lines of high houses, he was very much surprised. He looked at the long rows of lamps, and there seemed to be no end to them. Every thing was strange, for he had never been in a large town before. He went with the wagoners to a miserable tavern, and slept soundly all night. In the morning, the wagoners left him, and he could scarcely take time to eat his breakfast, he was so anxious to go out and see the sights. He wandered up and down the streets, and wondered at every thing he saw. The houses, the coaches, the great stores, the shop-win-

dows were all new to Jonah. Almost all that day he was in the streets. At night he found, upon looking at his purse, that his money was nearly gone. He had laid out a good deal of it upon trifles, and there was hardly enough left to pay for his lodging at the tavern. Then he began to wonder what he should do. The wagoners had gone, and he did not know a single person in Baltimore. He ought to have thought of this before he left home, but it had never entered the foolish boy's head.

He walked up and down the streets all the next day, to try and find some work, but he did not know whom to ask. Towards night he became very hungry, and began to wish he had stayed at home. He went down to the wharves and looked at the ships, but this gave him no pleasure, for he was afraid

he should starve. His conscience told him he deserved to be unhappy. Jonah had never felt so wretched in his life. He had forsaken his mother, and now he felt as if he was forsaken himself.

W. Why did he not go back again?

Mr. B. He was afraid to go back. He was afraid to see his mother's face again. And besides he was nearly starved, and had no money left to buy any thing as he went along. He strayed about the wharves, and saw hundreds of people, but not one that he knew; and nobody took the least notice of him. But as he was turning round a corner, he heard a voice say, "Jonah Ross! is that you?" Jonah looked round and saw that it was a coloured man, named Elias, who had formerly lived with Mr. Jay. He was as much pleased to see Elias, as if it had

been a king, and he told him that he was in distress, and did not know what to do. "Well, my young master," said Elias, "I suppose you remember the time when you spit in my face, and called me a black baboon. But never mind. You are in distress, and that is enough for old Elias. The Bible says we must do good for evil. If you are not too proud to sleep in my cellar to-night, I'll try what I can do for you in the morning." Jonah was in so much trouble that he was willing to sleep anywhere. So Elias took him into a narrow street, and then down into a dark cellar, where he lived. He was a boot-black, and the back part of the cellar was his bed-room. He gave Jonah a seat, and then brought out a basket filled with oysters. He opened a large plate-full, and cut a loaf of bread, and this was Jonah's

supper. Then he made him a bed in the corner of the room, and told him to lie down and go to sleep.

When he awoke in the morning it was quite late. He never had lodged in such a place before, but he was glad to have any sort of shelter. When Elias came in, he told him that a Mr. Shellac over the way, who kept an oyster-house, wanted a lad to attend upon his customers, and that he would give him half a dollar a week, and his board. Jonah knew that he must starve if he did not get some work, so he consented to go and live with Mr. Shellac. The work was not very hard, but it was very low. When people had done eating oysters, Jonah had to take the plates and wash them. When they knocked upon the tables, he had to run

and see what they wanted, and bring them oysters, or something to drink.

After he had been there two or three days, Mr. Shellac's son proposed that they should go to the theatre. Jonah was delighted. This was what he had been wishing for. They went to the theatre, and got into the gallery, when the play was half over. I shall not stop to tell you every thing he saw and heard there. He fell in with some very wicked young people, and went with them to a tavern, where there was a sailor's ball. There they danced, and sang, and drank, till it was nearly morning, and when morning came, Jonah was again dead drunk.

W. It makes me feel distressed to hear about him; but I should like to know what Mrs. Ross was doing all this time.

Mr. B. She was very lonesome and very

sad. She had no company, and nobody to help her. Every few moments she would sigh, because she was thinking of her son. Sometimes she thought he would perhaps come back, or that some of the neighbours would see him. Then she would feel afraid that he was sick, or dead. She mourned most of all that she had not tried to give him more religious instruction, and blamed herself for her neglect.

W. I never heard of such a wicked boy.

Mr. B. Ah! my dear William, there are many such. Many a poor widow has children who abuse her, and give her just this kind of trouble. I have known of boys who would abuse and curse their poor parents. And Solomon says: *There is a gene-*

*ration that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.**

W. Oh, sir, it distresses me to hear of such children. They are worse than brutes. The young storks carry their parents about on their backs, when they are too old to fly.

Mr. B. So it is said; and it ought to be a lesson to every son and daughter. Now, my son, to avoid all such evil ways, give your heart to the Lord. Pray to him to make you more and more obedient. Think much of the Lord Jesus Christ, and always try to be like him. Love God with all your heart, and you will be sure to love your parents. And then we shall be rejoiced, if we live to be old, and you will be prosperous and happy.

* Prov. xxx. 11.

CONVERSATION VIII.

The Mother Forgotten.

Not long after the last conversation, William went with his mother to spend a few days at the house of an aunt. He enjoyed the visit very much, for he was always happy when his parents were with him. When he returned, he had a great many things to tell his father, and after having talked to him, as little boys do, he asked him this question: "Father, can a mother forget her child?"

Mr. B. It is almost impossible for a mother to forget her child. I suppose it is quite impossible for a mother to forget her child

entirely. But I will tell you what it is possible for a son to do. A son may forget his mother.

W. Did Jonah forget Mrs. Ross?

Mr. B. Yes, he did, and this is what I am going to tell you about. I do not mean that he forgot there was such a person in the world; but he scarcely ever thought of his mother, and when he did, he cared nothing about her.

It was not so when he first went away. Though he had left his mother, yet he often thought about her. But bad companions and bad habits soon made a great change. He kept company with the vilest people, and was ready to get drunk whenever he had a chance. He changed his place several times. Once he lived in a grog-shop. At another time he hired himself out to a man who kept

a clothes-cellar. At the end of two years, he had lived with twelve different people.

W. Two years! he must have made good deal of money in that time.

Mr. B. He received a good deal of money, but he never saved any. As fast as he got it he spent it again. He liked to hear the fellows with whom he went say that he was generous. It was not long before he learned to gamble, and in this way he lost a great deal of his money. Then he would go to taverns and grog-shops, and spend several dollars in a single night. Sometimes he would give four or five dollars for a lottery ticket, and his tickets always drew blanks. Sunday was his day for strolling along the wharves, and into the fields. His chief comrades were sailors and watermen of the worst sort.

It is no wonder that he grew more and more profligate. He never went into a Bible-class nor a church, nor talked with a pious person. One day he went into a shop and saw pasted against the wall a picture of the Prodigal Son. It made him feel very much condemned, for he knew that he was a prodigal; but whenever such thoughts came into his mind, he used to go and drink, until he drove them all away.

He was so careless that he ran in debt, and was unable to pay. He was afraid of being turned out of doors by the woman with whom he boarded, and so he made up his mind to leave Baltimore. Some sailors persuaded him to go to sea, and he went and engaged himself as a common seaman, in a ship which was going to the West Indies. The voyage was short, but it was not a very

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pleasant life for Jonah. He was sick for several days, and then he was laughed at by the men for being so awkward, and such a lubber, as they called it. Sometimes he was nearly rolled overboard, and once he came near being drowned. When he was on shore in Jamaica, he plunged into vice and profligacy. At his return to Baltimore, he determined that he would be a sailor no longer. There was no trade with which he was acquainted, and he lived by such little jobs as he could get along the wharves. He laboured as a porter, or he helped to load vessels, or he rowed boats for the ferrymen. But whatever he was doing he was full of wickedness. He cursed, and swore, and drank, and gamed.

You see the danger of being ignorant, and of disobeying parents. You see the

evils of bad company. Jonah had not the fear of God before his eyes. He could not read, and he had forgotten almost all the good things he had ever learned. He scarcely ever thought about his mother, and never let her know where he was.

W. I should like to hear what Mrs. Ross did all this time.

Mr. B. After a week or two, Mrs. Ross began to think her son had gone away in good earnest, and did not intend to come back. She was very lonely, and nothing seemed to give her any pleasure. Mr. Grove, the minister, often came to see her, and said things which he thought would comfort her. He told her that he had known many young men to act in this manner, and after all to come home again and be good sons. He directed her to read in the Scrip-

tures, and to pray to God, that he would bless her poor boy, and bring him back in safety. "Oh, sir," said she, "I see that this is justly sent upon me for my sins. I ought to have prayed with Jonah, and to have talked more with him about his soul. I have been very worldly, and more careful to make a living for my son, than to teach him the fear of the Lord. I deserve it—I deserve it all!"

Mr. Grove advised her to get a little girl to live with her, to keep her from being so lonely and sad. She did so, and took a little child, named Mary, into the house. Mary helped her in a great many little things, but she could not keep Mrs. Ross from thinking about her lost son. She mourned for him all the day long, and looked thin and pale, so that everybody thought she was losing

her health. But though she suffered so much from his wickedness, yet she never spoke hardly of him. She loved him as much as ever. She used to think that she would be glad, if she knew that Jonah was happy, even if she never saw him again. Sometimes she thought that perhaps Jonah was afraid to come home, and then she would wish she knew how to get a letter to him, to tell him that she forgave him all.

W. Did she ever hear any thing of him ?

Mr. B. She heard a little from Elias, the coloured man, who came to see his old master, Mr. Jay. Elias told her how much distress Jonah had been in, but he did not know what had become of him, after he left the oyster-house. Mrs. Ross sat and wept when she thought about her son's being in want.

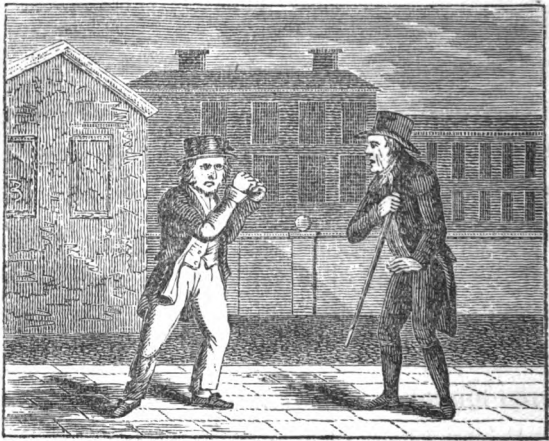
Oh, my dear William, you never can know how strong the love of a mother is. All the evil that Jonah had done did not take away his mother's affection for him.

Jonah was all this time getting worse and worse. He was very poor, because he was idle, and if he had a sum of money in the morning, he was sure to spend it all before night. Once he was walking along the streets of Baltimore, and met a gentleman who looked very hard at him. Jonah stopped and stood a moment, and then he recollected that it was Mr. Grove. This good man had come to the city on purpose to inquire after him, or else I suppose he would scarcely have known him; but he was thinking so much about finding him, that he took very great notice of everybody he met. Jonah was very much altered. He had grown

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be clearly documented and verified. The text continues to describe various methods for ensuring the integrity of the data, including regular audits and cross-checking of entries. It also mentions the need for transparency and accountability in all financial dealings.

The second section focuses on the role of technology in modern record-keeping. It highlights how digital tools can streamline the process, reduce errors, and provide real-time access to information. However, it also cautions against over-reliance on technology and stresses the importance of having a backup plan in case of system failures.

Finally, the document concludes with a series of recommendations for best practices. These include establishing clear policies, training staff on proper procedures, and maintaining a secure environment for all data. The goal is to create a robust system that can withstand any challenges and ensure the long-term success of the organization.



large and fat. His face was very red, and looked as if it had been swelled. He was dressed in a sailor's glazed hat, and pea-jacket. Mr. Grove said to him: "Is not your name Jonah Ross?"—"Yes, that is my name; have you any business with me?"—"Yes, my young friend, I have something to say to you, and I will walk along with you."

Mr. Grove took hold of his arm very kindly, and began to talk to him about his mother. He told him how unhappy she was, and said that she forgave him all, and desired him to come back. He declared that he thought it would break his mother's heart, if he did not return. This ought to have made Jonah resolve to do better, but he had become so corrupted by vice, that it threw him into a rage. He told Mr. Grove that it

was no business of his, and that he had no right to meddle with him; and at last he seemed to give way to the devil so much, that he cursed Mr. Grove, and then cursed his mother.

W. Oh, dreadful, dreadful!

Mr. B. I do not like to tell of this. It is, indeed, dreadful. But when Satan gets possession of a soul, he leads it into dreadful wickedness. The Bible tells of such children who curse their parents, and it pronounces a curse on them. *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.**

Jonah then turned round and left Mr Grove. The good man wept when he saw how profligate he had become. When he

* Prov. xxx. 17.

returned home, he did not go to see Mrs. Ross for a long time. He was afraid that she would ask him whether he had seen her son. When he went at last, she asked him so many questions, that he had to say that he had seen him ; but he did not tell her how Jonah had behaved. Mrs. Ross thought she would go herself to Baltimore, and look for him, but Mr. Grove persuaded her not to do this.

When Jonah left Mr. Grove, he went to a tavern, and asked for something to drink. He was troubled about what he had said, and was afraid some judgment would fall upon him. Whenever he had such feelings, he used to drink until he forgot them, and became quite stupid. He staggered off to the boarding-house where he stayed, and went to bed. In the morning he began to think

again about his having cursed his mother, and felt as unhappy as he did the day before. He was afraid his mother would now come and find him out. He knew that he would not dare to look her in the face. He walked out, and tried to forget it ; but the first person he met was his old companion John Jarvis.

John was a blacksmith, and had come to Baltimore to buy some iron. Jonah tried to get out of his way, but could not. He then asked John to go into his boarding-house, and drink with him. John went in, and began to talk to Jonah about going home. He told him that he ought to pity his poor mother, as she was growing old, and that she would die of grief, if he did not come back. Jonah begged him not to tell any one that he had seen him, and said that he did

not wish to hear him talk about that. So John went away. When he returned he went to Mrs. Ross, and told her that he had seen Jonah, and that he was very fat and large; but he would not tell her where he lived. Indeed, he pretended that he did not know. Mrs. Ross was more and more desirous of going to Baltimore to look after her son, but she had become so weak and sickly, that she thought she would wait until the cold weather was over.

W. Was she sick because her trouble was so great?

Mr. B. This was one great reason. But she was now getting to be an old woman, and was very feeble. This was the very time when she most needed her son's help. She could do very little work, and was so sad, that she looked much older than she

was. You have learned a verse about the way to treat an aged mother.

W. Yes, sir. *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.**

Mr. B. Jonah disobeyed this commandment. His mother was old, but he despised her. Solomon also says: *A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish man despiseth his mother.†* It is the worst kind of foolishness. It is cruel, impious folly. It calls down the curse of God upon the unnatural son.

W. Now, sir, please to go on about Jonah.

Mr. B. Jonah could not get rid of the dreadful thoughts he had about having cursed his mother. The words were constantly coming up in his mind. Sometimes he fan-

* Prov. xxxiii. 22.

† Prov. xv. 20.

cie'd that he heard them whispered in his ear. This was his imagination. His evil conscience made him fearful and superstitious. No people are so superstitious as those who are both ignorant and wicked. If he went to sleep, he dreamed about the horrid curse which he had uttered, and would think he saw his mother dying. He felt sure some dreadful thing would happen to him. In order to keep off all such thoughts, he drank more than he had ever done before, and became a complete drunkard. Still he worked for his living, and was one of the stoutest young boatmen in Baltimore.

After working hard all day, he came home to his boarding-house, which was a wretched place, near the water, and when he came into the sitting-room, he saw an old woman standing by the fire. At first he did not

know who it was; but she knew him. It was his mother. She threw her arms round his neck, and cried aloud, "Oh, my son my son!" said she, "I have found you at last! I forgive you all! Come with me, and go home, and keep your poor mother's heart from breaking."

Jonah scarcely knew what to do. He was ashamed to be found out in this way; and he was determined not to return with his mother. Therefore, as soon as he could get loose, he left her, went out of the door, and never came into the house again.

W. Cruel boy! What did his mother do then?

Mr. B. She waited for him several hours but he had sent for his clothes, and had got into the stage-coach for Philadelphia. Then she went back to Mr. Grove, who had been

so kind as to come with her, and after spending a few more days in Baltimore, she returned home, with a heavy, heavy heart.

Jonah had hardly set off for Philadelphia, before his heart failed him. He felt an awful load on his mind. He felt that he had despised his mother. So he gave himself up more and more to strong drink, and when he got to the end of his journey, he was hardly able to sit up. He went to one of the small boarding-houses in Waterstreet, and intended to go to sea as soon as he could. But that night he was seized with a violent chill, and afterwards a high fever came on, so that he was entirely out of his head. While he was raving, almost all his talk was about his mother. He would cry out and ask what his mother was doing in the room; and then he would say that he

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had killed her. The man of the house found several dollars in Jonah's pocket, so he went for a physician. When the doctor came, he said that the young man had the bilious fever, and that he was very ill. For several days he got worse and worse, and they thought that he would die. Persons who drink ardent spirits are much more likely to die, when they are seized with fevers, than such as are temperate; and Jonah's disease was brought on chiefly by his habits of intoxication.

The master of the house found that the young man was likely to be ill a long time, and said that he could not keep him any longer. He had him taken, therefore, to the alms-house, and there he was put into a long room, with a great many beds, in every one of which there was some sick

man. And here I think it is time to stop. You have heard a great deal to make you afraid of disobedience. Let us go and see your mother.

William had been listening very attentively, and when his father ended, he heaved a long sigh. They went into the porch, where Mrs. Benton was sitting with little Charles. William went up, and kissed them both, and then sat down by his dear mother, feeling very happy that he loved her so affectionately.

CONVERSATION IX.

The Mother Broken-hearted.

It was not long before William came to his father, and begged him to continue the story. He wished more and more to hear what became of Jonah and Mrs. Ross. It made him feel sorry, whenever he thought of his having grown up to be so wicked. Mr. Benton was very willing to go on, for he hoped that it would make his son feel how dreadful a thing it is to be disobedient and unkind to parents.

Mr. Benton. What I have been telling you shows what Solomon means when he says *A foolish son is a grief to his father, and a bitterness to her that bare him.** There is no

* Prov. xvii. 25.

book in the Bible which has so much in it about parents and children as the book of Proverbs ; and I suppose the reason of this is, that it was intended chiefly for the instruction of youth. Jonah Ross had no father to grieve, but he was a bitterness to his poor mother. *He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow ;** and therefore he ought to have been a help to her in her old age. Instead of this, he gave her more distress than any thing else in the world.

W. What did Mrs. Ross do when she came home from Baltimore ?

Mr. B. I cannot tell you how much she was grieved when she found that her son did not care for her. She knew that she loved Jonah, and she hoped that as soon as he saw her again, he would think of old times, and be

* Luke vii. 12.

as affectionate as ever. But she did not know what a change had taken place in the wicked young man. All the time they were coming home, she wept and wrung her hands. She felt forsaken, and as if she had no friend in the world. When she came in sight of her little dwelling, she was more distressed than ever. She thought of all the pleasant hours she had passed in that house, when Jonah was a kind, affectionate little boy.

The place looked as pretty as ever; for the vines covered the door and windows, and the roses were all in bloom, along the little white paling. The birds were singing in the bushes, and the air was full of sweet smells. But all this made her feel so much the worse. She had no son to enjoy it with her, and she never expected to have any comfort there again. When she went into

the door, all was silent, and she threw herself down upon the bed, and cried aloud.

The next morning, she was so much afflicted, that she thought she would go over and see her good friend Mr. Grove. He had asked her to come, and was waiting at the gate, ready to receive her. He took her kindly by the hand, and led her into the parlour, where his daughters were sitting. Mrs. Ross sat down, and covered her face. She could not speak one word, and the tears ran down, like a shower, from her face. Mr. Grove did all he could to comfort her. He read texts out of the Bible, and told her of the goodness and mercy of God. He said that afflictions were all meant for our good; and that even when they lasted a long time, they were afterwards turned into blessings. He showed her how the Lord had promised

to hear prayer, and begged her to cast all her care upon her heavenly Father,

Then he and his daughters sang a hymn, which he thought would suit her case, and afterwards they all knelt down and prayed. They prayed for the poor abandoned boy, and entreated that the Lord would convert him from his wickedness, and bring him back to his mother.

W. Did this make Mrs. Ross feel any better?

Mr. B. It seemed to quiet her troubles for a time; but when she returned to her house, her sorrows came on again. Every thing put her in mind of Jonah. There was his dog Argus. There was the little chair in which he used to sit when he was a child. His fishing-rod was hanging in the porch, and the yard was full of little trees which

he had planted with his own hands. And wherever Mrs. Ross turned her eyes, she saw something to make her think of him.

So it was, day after day. Her knitting would drop out of her hands, when she thought that just in that place she used to be knitting for him.. She would sit at the door, and look up the road for hours, as if she expected every minute to see him coming home. Every thing that he ever said or did when he was a child, seemed to come into her mind. She felt that she was getting weaker and weaker, and then she wept to think that she had no son to take care of her when she was old.

W. Why, sir, she must have felt as sorry as if Jonah had been dead.

Mr. B. My dear William, she felt more so. A pious parent can take much comfort

when a child has died happily. But Mrs. Ross could not help thinking about Jonah's wickedness. It was this that was breaking her heart. She was afraid that he had been forsaken by God, and that some terrible judgment would fall upon him.

W. Was she all alone ?

Mr. B. A few of the good women in the town used to come and see her ; and some of Mr. Grove's family called in every day. The first time Mr. Grove went to see her after her return, he took notice that she was thinner and paler than she had ever been before. She did not say a word about her son, but Mr. Grove could see that she could think of hardly any thing else. He tried to encourage her ; he read to her, prayed with her, and told her of a great many such cases which had turned out well. He spoke about

the prodigal son, and said he hoped that Jonah would repent, like him. But the poor woman shook her head, with a sorrowful smile, and sighed.

When Mr. Grove went again to see her, he perceived that she was still feebler than she was before. Her face was very thin and pale, and it was hard for her to walk across the room. Her sorrow was breaking her heart.

W. Does sorrow make people sick ?

Mr. B. Yes, my son. Many persons have been killed in this way. This is what we mean by breaking any one's heart. The heart of a mother may be broken by a wicked son. That is, she may grieve and mourn, so that her health will fail more and more, till she dies.

W. Oh, sir, it seems to me that a cruel child is almost as bad as a murderer.

Mr. B. In the sight of God, this is very much like murder. No one but a parent knows—

How keener than a serpent's tooth it is

To have a thankless child.

W. I am anxious to hear whether Jonah ever got well. You left off about his being taken to the alms-house, in Philadelphia.

Mr. B. I told you that he was put into one of the wards or rooms of the alms-house. When he began to come to himself a little, he turned his head, and looked around, for he was too weak to arise. He saw that he was in a long room, with rows of beds on both sides of him. He knew that it must be an hospital of some kind, but he could not tell exactly what. He remembered

coming to a boarding-house in Philadelphia, but more than this he could not recollect.

All at once, the same dreadful thoughts came into his mind which had distressed him so much before. He thought of his sin in cursing his mother, and in forsaking her when she had come so far to see him. He shut his eyes, and tried to forget it, but he could not. He lay sick in this way many weeks.

There was an old gentleman who used to come into the alms-house, and see the patients almost every day. He would talk to them, and read to them out of the Bible; and he looked so very gentle and kind, that one day Jonah thought he would speak to him. So he called him to the bedside, and told him he was in great distress. The old gentleman said he was ready to give him

any help that was in his power. Then Jonah began to cry, and said: "Oh, sir! I am afraid nobody can help me. I am the worst wretch that ever lived! I have murdered my poor dear mother, I fear; and there is no way to save me from being lost!"

"Oh, sir," said Jonah, "what shall I do—what shall I do?"

"I will tell you," said Mr. Grayson, "what you must do. You are getting better now, and with the Lord's blessing, you will be well in a week or two. Now you must let me write a letter to your mother, to tell her that you are alive, and where you are, and she will send and have you taken home. Then you can be a dutiful son once more, and rejoice your mother's heart."

Jonah said that he thought it would be better to write to Mr. Grove, the minister.

So old Mr. Grayson sat down by the bedside, and wrote a letter to Mr. Grove.

W. Oh, I am very glad to hear that ; I hope now that poor Mrs. Ross will get well !

Mr. B. Poor woman ! She was sinking more and more every day. One evening, as the sun was going down, she had taken her seat at the door. Her Bible was in her hand, but she was so weak that she could scarcely read in it. As she looked along the road that passed by her house, she saw her good friend Mr. Grove, walking very fast, and coming to see her. When he came, he said that he had a letter which he wished her to read. But first he sat down by her, and tried to prepare her mind for the news. The shock might have been too great for her. The letter was as follows :

“ Philadelphia, June 30.

“ REV. SIR,

“ I write to inform you that a young man with whom you are acquainted, named Jonah Ross, lies sick in this city. Though he has been very ill, he is in a fair way to recover. I am happy to be able to add, that he mourns very much over his past profligacy. He desires me to ask your prayers, and he begs that you would forgive the shameful manner in which he treated you in Baltimore. He desires the forgiveness of his mother, and prays that he may yet see her face.

“ I dare not say that he is truly penitent, but he is certainly much affected with a sense of his guilt. I shall not allow him to suffer for want of any thing; and any message

which his mother or yourself choose to send shall be conveyed to him.

“ I am, with great respect,

“ Your Christian friend,

“ T. GRAYSON.”

As soon as Mrs. Ross read the letter, she started up, and said, “ I will go myself: I will go myself! Oh, sir, my son is alive, and more than that, he loves me! You shall not hinder me, for I must go.” •

Mr. Grove took her by the hand, and tried to make her more calm. He saw that she was too weak to bear such a journey, and he soon made her think so too. For she was so much agitated by reading the letter, that she trembled like a leaf, and had to lie down upon the bed. Mr. Grove told her that their friend, Mr. Jay, was going to

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Philadelphia in a day or two, and that the best way would be to get him to bring Jonah home ; and Mr. Grove promised to do whatever was necessary.

W. Did this make Mrs. Ross well ?

Mr. B. Ah, no ! She was so much weakened by agitation that she had to keep her bed. She also was grieved to hear he was sick. She was constantly saying to herself : “ I am sure they have kept the truth from me. They were afraid to tell me. *The child is not, and I, whither shall I go !*” He is dead, he is dead.” Her friends saw how weak she was, and were afraid that she would never get well. As she could not leave her bed, Mr. Grove’s daughters took turns in staying with her, and nursed her very kindly.

* Gen. xxxvii. 30.

Here Mr. Benton ended the story of the day, and led his son into the garden, that they might work a little before dinner; for he saw that he looked sad.

CONVERSATION X.

The Mother Dying.

MR. BENTON did not need to call his son the next day, to hear the conclusion of the story. William was so much concerned, both for Jonah and his mother, that he came and begged his father to go on. Before Mr. Benton began, William asked him if he ever saw Mrs. Ross and her son.

Mr. B. Yes, my son, but not till the time which I am now going to mention. I happened to be travelling in Maryland, and stopped for the night, at the house of my friend, Mr. Grove. I was sorry to find when I got there, that he had just met with an accident, which confined him to the house. He had fallen from his horse,

and injured his ankle, so that he could not walk. But he was well enough to talk, and we conversed a great deal. Among other things, he mentioned Mrs. Ross, and gave me an account of what I have been telling you. He said the poor woman was very ill, and that he thought she could not live long. "I am very sorry," said he, "that this fall of mine will keep me from going over to see her in the morning. You must take my place, Mr. Benton, and one of my daughters will go with you to visit the broken-hearted woman. We are afraid that she cannot live more than a day or two."

I agreed to do so, and early the next day Miss Grove showed me the way. It was a lovely morning in July. The dew was still on the grass, and the yellow fields, and green pastures were very beautiful. The country

looked rich, and was full of fine farms. We crossed two or three fields, and a bridge over a little brook, and then came in sight of Mrs. Ross's house. It was a small, neat cottage, painted white, with vines running over one side of it. It stood in a little court-yard, which was covered with grass, and had several fruit trees in it. The border all around the yard was planted with flowering shrubs; and in one corner was a spring of water, under the shade of a great willow-tree.

Every thing looked so pleasant, that I almost forgot how much sorrow there had been in the house. But we went into the door, which opened to the sick room. The windows were darkened, and two or three persons were going about very softly. In one corner I could just see a low bed. Miss Grove asked how Mrs. Ross was. "Oh,

my dear Miss," said one of the women, "she is not long for this world; she is getting weaker and weaker, and thinks that she cannot last long."

Miss Grove then went to the bed, and spoke to the sick woman. "My dear Mrs. Ross, here is a pious friend, who has come to talk with you, as my father cannot come this morning." I took her thin cold hand, and said, "My dear friend, I have heard of your afflictions; I hope you have peace of mind under them."—"Thank God, I have," said she; "my flesh fails, and I am going very fast, but I have peace." Then she laid her hand on her breast, and said again, "I have peace here; I believe in Christ; I believe that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned all my sins." Then I said: "You cannot trust too much in Christ. Do you

not rejoice to think that you are going to meet that beloved Saviour?"—"Oh, I do, I do. His mercy is infinite, or he could not save such a sinner as I have been. I desire to depart and be where he is. But oh, sir, how can I go, and leave my"— She could not finish the sentence, but began to sob like a child.

I sat down by her, and said every thing I could to comfort her. Then I asked her if she wished me to offer a prayer. She said: "Oh yes, sir, and pray for my poor lost son—pray that he may be saved—I have never cared enough for his soul—I neglected to teach him—I loved him too fondly—He was my idol—Oh, pray for him." We all knelt down and prayed, and while we entreated the Lord's favour to her son, she cried aloud. We were all very much affected, for we saw

that she was a dying woman, and we knew that it was her son's wickedness which had broken her heart.

Yet she seemed to have no fear of death. He exhorted all around her to prepare for this hour, and begged that we would tell her son, that her last prayers were for him, that she freely forgave him all, and that she loved him till the last. Then she pointed to her Bible, and charged Miss Grove to give it to Jonah, in her name.

While we were sitting by her bed, we heard a carriage drive up to the gate. Mrs. Ross heard the sound, and tried to raise herself up in the bed. Her eyes were fixed upon the door, as if she expected something, and I could see a little flush of red come over her pale cheeks. The door opened, and a

man entered, leading a pale, thin, trembling youth.

W. Oh, it was Jonah!

Mr. B. It was Jonah. He tottered in, and as the room was dark, he could not see distinctly; but his mother cried out, "My son! my son!" and fell back. Poor Jonah shook as a leaf is shaken by the wind. Mr. Jay, who came with him, led him to the side of the bed, and he fell upon his knees, and covered his face. His mother put out her hands, and said with a feeble voice, *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.**

At these words Jonah threw himself upon the side of the bed, and cried aloud. His lamentations were distressing: "I have murdered my mother! I have murdered my

* Gen. xlv. 30.

mother! O mother, can you, can you forgive me?"—"Yes, my son," said the dying woman, "I do forgive you. May the Lord bless you, and make you his!" Then she was silent. After a little time, she closed her eyes, and seemed to be asleep. Her breath became shorter and shorter. She stretched out her feet and hands as far as she could; then she gave a sigh, and breathed out her life.

When Jonah found that his mother was dead, he was like a distracted man. He tore his hair, and wrung his hands. He cried, and prayed, and ran through the room, saying that he was a murderer. He was so weak, that I persuaded him to go and lie down, and after he had rested for an hour or two I talked with him. I thought he seemed truly penitent. He said he ab-

norred himself for his past iniquities, and that if it pleased God to spare his life, he would endeavour to serve Him. The next day, I left that part of the country.

This is the story, and I have no more to tell you ; but I hope you will remember the reason why I have told it. It is that you may learn the great evils of disobedience, and may never cease to honour your parents.

W. I think I shall not forget this. And I am determined that I will never do as Jonah did.

Mr. B. Stop, my dear son. You will never be able to keep that good resolution without the Lord's help. Pray to God, that he would help you to honour and love your parents. Try to avoid the first feelings of disrespect. Never let a discontented or hard thought of your parents come into your

mind. Give your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and love him; then you will be sure to love your father and mother.

W. It makes me sad to think of poor Mrs. Ross. You must have felt very badly, sir, when you saw her dying.

Mr. B. It was a very solemn sight indeed; and I have seen many persons die. But I was glad to think that she had gone to heaven.

W. I will try to pray to the Lord, to make me love him, and to make me obedient.

Mr. B. It will be a great comfort to you, when we are dead and gone, to remember that you have been dutiful and affectionate. When a person loses his father or his mother, he remembers a great many acts of disobedience, which he never thought much of

before. It is then too late to amend. He cannot even go and ask their pardon.

W. I used to think I was very obedient, but since you have talked to me, I see a great many things that I have done wrong. I have been sullen and fretful; and sometimes I have been very slow in doing what my parents told me.

Mr. B. It is always a good sign when little boys begin to see their faults. Now begin to do better. Remember how much you owe your parents. Think how much it grieves them when you do wrong. Read in the Scriptures how God is offended with disobedient children.

W. I wish I knew how I could make my parents happy!

Mr. B. I will tell you. Be dutiful, be diligent, improve your mind, obey every com-

mand that is given you, even if you do not see any reason for it. And above all, love and serve God. That is what will rejoice our hearts. If Satan can tempt you to disobey in little things, he will soon persuade you to disobey in great things. And if he can lead you into disobedience, he will soon be able to lead you into all evil.

It was so with Jonah Ross. At first he loved his mother very much. Then he began to be disobedient in little things. He neglected his lessons, and he went where she had forbidden him to go. Then he learned to tell lies, and to break the Sabbath, and to swear. So the wicked one enticed him on by little and little, till he brought down his mother's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

W. Oh, my dear father, I feel afraid. I hope I shall never be such a wicked boy.

Mr. B. I hope so too. Think always that God is looking at you everywhere, and try to please him, and you will do right.

You see the evils of bad company, from the example of Jonah Ross. As long as he loved to stay at home by his good mother, he was happy and obedient. But when he began to go with bad boys, he became like them. You see also the evils of ignorance. If Jonah had been well taught, and had learned to understand the word of God, he would have escaped many temptations.

And now, my dear son, I shall pray God to teach you by his Holy Spirit, and to make you a holy, happy servant of Christ.

THE END.