

HOW IT WAS BLOTTED OUT



CHARACTER BUILDING STORIES

For many years I had been a follower of strange gods and a lover of this world and its vanities. I was self-righteous, and thought I had religion enough of my own that was better than the Bible. I did not believe in the devil or hell. I believed that as God had created man He was bound to save Him. I knew I did not serve Him, did not know Him, did not obey Him. Prayer was forgotten, church was neglected, and worldly morality was the tree which brought forth its own deceptive fruit.

But when I shared parental responsibility and our boy was growing up, our mutual love for him made us anxious about his welfare and future career. His mind turned over the little he had learned about God; and his nightly prayers had been taught by us from habit and superstition more than from any conscientious feelings. His questions often puzzled me, and the sweet and earnest manner in which he inquired of his poor sinful father to know more about his Heavenly



Father, and that "happy land, far, far away," of what his nurse had taught him, proved to me that God had given me a great blessing in the child.

A greater distrust in myself, and a greater sense of my inability to assure my boy of the truth contained in the simple little prayers I had learned

from my mother, with my brothers and sisters, gradually began to come over me, and made me oftener reflect. Still, I never went to church; had not even a Bible in the house. What was I to teach my boy—Christ and Him crucified, or the doctrines I had tried to believe?

One of his little friends died, then another, then his uncle. All these deaths made an impression on the boy. He rebelled against it; wanted to know " why God had done it? " It was hard that God should just go and take his friends; he wished He would not do it. I, of course, had to explain the best I could.

One evening he was lying on the bed partly undressed, myself and my wife being seated by the fire. She had been telling me that Tom had not been a good boy that day; she had been telling what he had been doing, and had reproved him for it. All was quiet, when suddenly he broke out in a loud crying and sobbing, which surprised us. I went to him, and asked him what was the matter.

"I don't want it there, father; I don't want it there," said the child.

"What, my child, what is it?"

"Why, father, I don't want the angels to write down in God's Book all the bad things I have done to-day. I don't want it



there; I wish it could be wiped out;" and his distress increased. What could I do? I did not believe, but yet I had been taught the way.

I had to console him, so I said, "Well, you need not cry; you can have it all wiped out in a minute if you want."

"How, father, how?."

"Why, get down on your knees, and ask God, for Christ's sake to wipe it out, and He will do it."

I did not have to speak twice. He jumped out of bed, saying, "Father, won't you come and help me? "

Now came the trial. The boy's distress was so great, and he pleaded so earnestly, that the big man who had never bowed down before God in spirit and in truth got down on his knees alongside of that dear boy, and asked God to wipe away his sins; and perhaps, though my lips did not speak it, my heart included my own sins too. We then got up, and he lay down in his bed again.



In a few moments more he said, "Father, are you sure it is all wiped out?"

Oh! how the acknowledgment grated through my unbelieving heart, as the words came to my mouth.

"Why, yes, my son; the Bible says, if you ask God, from your heart, for Christ's sake, to do it, and if you are really sorry for what you have done, it shall be all blotted out."

A smile of pleasure passed over his face, as he quietly asked, "What did the angel blot it out with? With a sponge?"

Again was my whole soul stirred within me, as I answered, "No, but with the precious blood of Christ. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."



The fountains had at last burst forth. They could not be checked, and my cold heart was melted within me. I felt-like a poor guilty sinner, and, turning away, said, "My dear wife, we must first find God, if we want to show Him to our children. We cannot show them the way unless we know it ourselves."

And in the silent hour of the night I bent in prayer over that dear boy, and prayed, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" My wife, too, united with me, and we prayed jointly for ourselves and our child. And God heard our prayers, and received us, as He always does those who seek Him with a whole heart.

Word Glossary

Console--*comfort*

Morality--*ideas of right or wrong behavior*

Mutual--*shared by two parties/people*

Vanities--*things that are empty, valueless, or vain*