

“JESUS SAYS SO.”

SARAH G— was one of several children, living with their parents in a narrow lane in London. Early in the year 1847, Sarah's father had met with a serious accident, and was then in the hospital, where he remained for many weeks a severe sufferer. Sarah and her brothers, deprived of the usual means of support, and their mother being in constant attendance on her husband, were consequently often left in great necessity. More than once have these little ones been known to reach the hour of four or five in the afternoon, before taking any food; but amidst all their privations, no complaint was heard from the lips of Sarah. It was not known until after her death, how silently, yet how powerfully, the Spirit of God was, even at this time, working in her heart.

There was nothing particularly attractive in her appearance; quiet and unobtrusive, she seemed to the outward observer like most other children; but “the

Lord seeth not as man seeth." The Great Shepherd of the sheep had his eye on this little lamb of the fold, and marked her for his own. At home she was gentle and affectionate, obedient to her parents, and during their absence she watched kindly over her little brothers.

Her poor family tasted largely of the cup of sorrow, but poverty and distress, instead of producing impatience and unkindness, seemed to bind each one more closely to the other. They experienced the truth of those words: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith," Prov. 15: 17. "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife," Prov. 17: 1.

The death of her youngest brother appeared to make a strong impression on Sarah's mind; she said she liked to think she had a brother in heaven. Soon after that event, she was admitted into a Sabbath school, and it was her delight in the week to prepare her lessons. "Sunday is such a happy day," she would say; and on that morning she would rise earlier than usual to get ready for school.

A little circumstance, which occurred at this time, marked her tenderness of

conscience. A new bonnet had been promised to her, but not arriving at the time she had hoped, her disappointment was so great that she shed many tears. This was mentioned to a friend, who talked to her about it. Sarah made no remark at the time, but afterwards she said to her mother, “ I did not know before that it was wrong to cry when we were disappointed ; I will try not to do so again ;” and in the evening her father overheard her begging God to forgive her pride and fretting about the bonnet.

Another feature in Sarah’s character may be here noticed : this was her love of truth. “ She has never deceived me,” was her mother’s frequent remark. “ I cannot remember a single instance of untruth, *even in play,*” and perhaps this truthfulness of spirit enabled her the more readily to trust the word of another. “ She promised me,” Sarah would say, and on the promise she would ever rest, in all the sweet dependence of a child. Surely this may speak a word to those professing to be the followers of Him who keepeth his promise for ever—the covenant-keeping God. How lightly are promises often made ! how carelessly and thoughtlessly broken !

Sarah was only permitted to attend the Sabbath school for a few weeks. Her health and strength failed, and soon she was confined to her room, then to her bed, which she scarcely left for several months. But now the work of God within her became more evident. It was a pleasant service to sit by the bed of this young disciple, and read and talk with her of a Saviour's love. She said but little, except in answer to questions, but her bright and happy countenance showed how welcome was the subject. Who that witnessed her simple, child-like faith, would not acknowledge the fruit of the Spirit's teaching? It was the more apparent, as she had but little help from man, and few outward advantages, not even being able to read; but she treasured up in her mind all she heard, and it was as food to her soul, the joy and rejoicing of her heart.

At an early period of her illness, a violent attack of pain and palpitation of the heart made her think she was dying, and she told her mother so, adding, "But I am not afraid, I am so happy." "What makes you so happy?" was asked. "Because I am going to heaven, and when I pray to Jesus, my heart seems lifted up." "But, Sarah, do you think your sins are

“forgiven?” “Yes, mother, I am sure so.” “What makes you so sure?” “Because *Jesus says so.*”

“Jesus says,”—this was ever the ground of her confidence, and proved to all around her the Saviour’s oft-repeated lesson,—“Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.”

Sarah lingered many weeks after this. Her mind was full of peace; as she lay on her sick bed, no shade of fear passed over her, all was sunshine within. This one happy thought filled her mind,—“Jesus loves me, I am going to heaven.”

A friend wishing to find out on what her hopes of happiness rested, and if she had a real sense of sin, said to her, “You talk much of going to heaven, tell me, do you deserve to go there?” “Oh, no,” was her reply, “I do not deserve it.” “Why not?” In a solemn tone, she answered, “Because I have sinned.” It was remarked, “How then can you go there? Heaven is such a holy place, no sin can enter there.” With the brightest smile she quietly replied, “Ah! but Jesus says he will wash away all my sin, and make my soul quite white, and he will carry me there.”

Oh that all would learn of her thus to take Jesus at his word! What an enemy to peace is an unbelieving heart!

None spoke ill of this little girl, even those who knew her least remarked, "she was a good pleasant child," but her grateful affection beamed strongly towards all who showed her any kindness, and one who watched her with interest throughout her illness, will not soon forget the earnest smile of welcome with which she was always greeted, when too ill to speak. Thus she told her thanks.

Once, the 103d Psalm was read to her, with some remarks on David's causes of thankfulness. It was remarked, "You, too, Sarah, have many things to bless God for; for what do you thank him most?" She answered, "Oh, I thank him most for sending Jesus from heaven to save me."

Many were the words of comfort she spoke to her poor sorrowing mother, whose heart at times seemed almost broken at the prospect of losing her. She said, "You will not cry, when I am in heaven, dear mother. I am only going a little while first, and you will soon follow;" and once, on an occasion of deep family distress, she pointed to the surest way for relief, saying, "Mother, why do

you cry so? Does not the Bible say God cares for the sparrows, and are not you better than a sparrow? O mother, pray, do pray, and then you will be so happy.”

So calmly, so peacefully, did this young disciple enter the dark valley, that truly she might have said,

“ There’s nothing terrible in death
To those who go to heaven.”

Resting in her Saviour’s love she feared no evil, his rod and his staff they comforted her; sin was her only dread. Her only fear was that of offending her heavenly Father, and on this point she often did express much anxiety, saying, “ Do tell me if I have done wrong. I do not want to sin; I am so afraid of making God angry. Sometimes my sins look so black, and seem to come between me and God.” Then, as if she still felt secure in the only hiding-place for sinners, she added, “ But Jesus says he will take them all away, and wash me whiter than snow.”

She delighted much in some little books suited to her age and circumstances that were read to her; one entitled, “ The Infant’s Prayer,” and another, “ The White Robes,” were her greatest favorites. In allusion to the last of these, she

often prayed, "O Lord Jesus, hear a poor little girl, do give me that beautiful white dress, without one spot or one stain;" and once when her mother noticed a little hurt on her arm occasioned by her putting on a change of dress, she sweetly said, "Never mind that, dear mother; my next dress will not hurt me."

It was very pleasant to see the affection manifested by her brothers towards their little sick sister, and she repaid their kindness by anxiously entreating them to care for their souls. To her father she said, "I want you to promise me one thing—to meet me in heaven. O father! do love Jesus. I love him, indeed I do; but I want you to love him too. There is only one Jesus, one Saviour; and, father, he is so holy." Then turning to her mother, who was standing by her bed, she added, "You do love Jesus, but, O mother, pray do love him more, and more, and more;" she spoke with such energy, as if to impress her parents with her own feeling, as almost startled them.

In this state of mind Sarah drew near the end of her pilgrimage, and it was not until about three days before her death that even the shadow of a cloud seemed to darken her path. Then, for the first

time, her mind was agitated with doubts as to her Saviour's love for her, and very distressing to those around her were her anxious cries for pardon. “ Father, forgive me, for Jesus Christ's sake,” was her constant petition. She was visited by a minister and by several Christian friends, who used every effort to give her relief, but for some time all in vain ; she seemed unable to lay hold on any promise for her comfort. One of these friends especially felt a deep interest in the dear child, though she had not known her until now. Of her little Sarah asked most earnestly, “ Do you think that Jesus loves me ? ” She was assured that he did. “ Do you know he loves me ? ” she asked ; and then followed the solemn inquiry, “ How do you know it ? ” After reading and talking with her for some time, she begged her friend would “ pray with her to make her a little happy ? ” and afterwards in her own words, she would again plead with God, “ Father, forgive me, for Jesus Christ's sake, and wash me in his blood, and make me a good girl, and take me to heaven.” On one occasion she said, “ I wish I could be a little happy,—I want something, I do not know what I want.” She was answered, “ I think I can tell

you what you want, it is peace, it is to feel that God has pardoned all your sins."

" Yes," she replied, " I think that is it."

At another time, when talking of the joys of heaven, " Yes," she said, " they are singing, Glory, glory, glory," referring to her favorite hymn, beginning,

" Around the throne of God in heaven,
Thousands of children stand."

But, as her friend says, it is not possible to convey her manner, her sweet tone and look. She said, " I wish I could go to heaven now, up through this ceiling, now while I feel a little happy." " But, my dear child, you cannot go to heaven in this way. You must die first; Jesus died; we must all die; it is God's appointed way for us to get to heaven." " Oh! I do not mind my sufferings, but I wish I was there now."

Once she spoke rather impatiently, " I wish I could die, I wish I could die." She was reminded, " Jesus says, ' If you love me, keep my commandments; ' and though you cannot obey God's will now in the same way as if in health, you can still suffer all he appoints." She quickly asked, " Will Jesus be angry if I am not

patient? I will try, then, and pray to him to make me patient.”

Satan for a short season seemed permitted to make trial of her faith and love, and she struggled hard against his attacks. But the dear little one was safe in the arms of her Good Shepherd, and none could pluck her out of his hand. Her anxious prayers were heard and answered, and peace was restored to her soul. Her brightened countenance required not the addition of words to assure her friends of this, and yet they rejoiced to hear her say, “I am quite happy; I know Jesus loves me, and I shall soon see him.”

On the Sabbath, her last day on earth, she was very feeble, only able to utter a single word at a time, but her heart was full of thankfulness towards all who had cared for her, and especially to those who had sought to comfort her in her last distress, begging her mother would “always love them.”

At night, as her parents were watching beside her, she suddenly raised herself, and, throwing her arms alternately round the neck of each, seemed to take a last farewell. She was unable to speak, but to her mother's inquiry, “Tell me once again, my child, are you quite happy?”

she replied by lifting up her hand, and pointing to heaven, while the brightest smile lighted up her countenance. This was her last act of consciousness. She lingered a few hours without any apparent suffering, and then her happy spirit took its flight, and joined the blissful company, that, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, are ever before the throne of God, rejoicing in their Saviour's love.

Sarah died at the age of eleven years, in August, 1848.

Dear reader, before you close this book, ask, “ Am I like Sarah G—? Have I ever prayed to Jesus to wash away all my sins, and make my soul quite white in his precious blood?” And then have you begged him to take you to heaven when you die, that you may be happy with him for ever? If not, do not wait another day, but entreat him now to give you his Holy Spirit to teach you to love him. Remember, it is this kind Saviour who calls you, who says, “ Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not;” and who promises to gather the lambs with his arm, and to carry them in his bosom.