



THE
WRONG ROAD

AND OTHER STORIES.



GOLDEN SERIES VOL. IV.





The Wrong Road

and other Stories



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Golden Series"

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The Wrong Road.

I FANCY I can see a group of our merry little friends gathering around me, and

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crying out, "A story! a story! Do tell us a story!" Very well, little ones, I'll try: but what shall it be? Of course it must be a true one. Well, it shall be about a little boy.

I remember, one fine summer's evening, I was going with a friend to stay for a few days at a gentleman's farm-house in the country. We had only been there once before, so were not quite sure of the way; but we were so enjoying the beautiful country lanes, with the birds singing sweetly over our heads, that we did not trouble ourselves as to which was the most direct way; but somehow felt sure we should soon see his house before us; so on we went.

Now you know that sometimes when people think they are going on quite right

they find out afterwards they are all wrong; and so it proved with us, for after walking a long way up the lane, where we expected to find the farm, we looked about but could not see a house anywhere. By this time the evening was fast closing in and we knew not what to do. We needed a friendly word of direction to lead us from the wrong road into the right one, but there was no one there to give it; so we stood still to listen for footsteps. It was now quite dark, and nothing to be seen beyond a few yards all round.

How glad we are at times to get away from the busy town with its bustle and noise, the carts rattling over the stones, and men shouting out the various things they have for sale; but now, as we stood

still in that pretty country lane, how glad we should have been to hear the sound of some one coming.

I said to my friend, "Get on the top of that gate, perhaps you will see a light in a cottage near at hand." He got on the gate and looked all round, but not a sign of any dwelling could be seen.

We were now quite at a loss what to do; to go on seemed useless; we might be going farther and farther away from the place we wanted; to turn back—well, it was a good two-mile walk to the town. While we wondered what would be best to do, my friend said, "Hush! I think I hear something." We listened a minute or two, and then we plainly heard the sound of footsteps. Nearer and nearer they came, till we could see in the dark-

ness a little boy who was coming in our direction.

Now, do you think we turned away from him because we saw he was only a rough little farmer's boy? Oh dear no; we were only too glad to see him, and at once asked him to put us in the right road.

“Oh,” said he, “you took a wrong turn just where the bridge goes over the stream. I am going past that way, and will shew you which is the right road.” So we walked back with him. I cannot remember all we said to him, but he told us he was going home to spend Sunday, and then return to his master's farm on Monday morning. We said, “You look forward to Sunday then: to see your friends?” “Oh, it's only once a month, sir, that I go.” Just then we came to the bridge;

he went one way, and we another, but I shall never forget the little fellow who shewed us the right road.

It seemed to us as if the Lord had sent him our way on purpose to direct us ; had it been any other Saturday but that particular one, we should not have had our little friend to guide us.

I wonder if any of my readers are in need of a friendly voice to say, Stop ! Stop ! do not go in that direction ; it leads away from life and happiness, and only pleases Satan. Turn right round and begin to please Jesus. He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." That means the way to life, to happiness and joy.

I must tell you that following the little boy's directions, we soon found the farm-

house, and as the light streamed through the open door it seemed to give us such a welcome. And once inside we soon saw that our friends had good things in store for us, which were very acceptable, after wandering about in the chilly evening.

Oh, what a welcome we shall get by-and-bye—those of us who are washed in the blood of Jesus! Read, in Luke xv., what a reception the poor prodigal got at his father's house; and if there is joy in heaven now, over one sinner that repenteth, what a happy meeting it will be when we all go to be with Jesus, and be holy and and happy for ever! But, remember, all must leave the wrong road and travel in the right, in order to reach that happy home. Little friend, will *you* be there? You will if you act like the prodigal son

did; he went to his father and confessed how he had sinned against him. And we have to take the place of sinners in the sight of God, then He can bestow blessing upon us. Like the poor wanderer, we have to find our deep need, and look to the only One who can meet us in that need.

Once as prodigals we wandered
In our folly far from Thee,
But Thy grace, o'er sin abounding,
Rescued us from misery.



Saved from the Sea.

It was only last summer that I had the pleasure of visiting the home of my child-

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hood in the south of England, near the Isle of Wight. And on one fine day my dear aged mother accompanied my wife and me, together with our three youngest children, for a nice trip by donkey-chaise to the sea-beach for the day.

How fresh the air felt, as it fanned our cheeks; and the hedge-rows with the honeysuckle, formed a charming exchange for the smoky streets of London.

How one and all did enjoy it! What fun it was for the little ones to lead the donkey, and then to jump up in their turn and have a ride; it really made mother feel quite young again, to hear their prattle, and urging the strong young Neddy to run away from us, while we were picking nosegays by the way.

We gained the beach in good time, and

sat down for our pic-nic. How fresh and clear everything seemed, and, with rather sharpened appetites, we had no difficulty in setting down on the sand to dinner.

It was quite surprising how suddenly the nice things were eaten up; and the lemonade was eagerly sought after, notwithstanding the gambols of the wonderful sea before us. And then what fun to run about on the wet sand, and let the water roll up over our ankles; even my dear mother said it did her good to stand and let the salt water come up once again to her feet; and the boys took off some of their clothes and sat on the sand—I must say, rather timidly—and let the water dash up against them.

I think the rolling waves ran up the beach about forty or fifty feet, and some-

times a much larger one came and splashed us, before we could get out of the way.

My little daughter, only four years old, had kept tight hold of my hand, and shrank back when the water rushed up to us, but by degrees she got used to it, and I really did not observe that she had let go of me, as I was catching some seaweed that was thrown up, and before I had looked around, she ran down the sand and was caught with the receding wave, and tossed over and over. We all heard her cry, as she shrieked out in her fear and terror, and in much less time than it takes to write one of these lines, I had caught her up in my arms.

To spring to the dangerous spot where she was, and take her up, all drenched with water and sand, and before the next

big wave came, was quickly accomplished, and I had brought her safe to land. Oh, the rapture of that moment! The heart-felt joy! Whose, do you think, was the greatest?

We all assembled around her, but she was still fearful and sobbing, and could not be comforted. Oh, the deep joy of her father's heart, in seeing his little one safe, rescued from the terrible waters which would in another moment have sucked her under, past recovery! After this she did not want to let go of my hand; no, she rather wished to lie in my bosom, and hide her face; she had no desire to stray away again from her father's side.

But whilst walking with her, and as she held my hand, she had no fear where we went, even when I walked so near

the sea that the waves came close to our feet—that was confidence in her father's care. She knew full well that I should not lead her into danger. It is strange that we can trust earthly friends so much and yet doubt the love of that One who has said, Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the knowledge of your heavenly Father: how much more value are ye than many sparrows! It is a happy thing to trust Him at all times. None ever yet trusted Him and were disappointed. He is faithful that promised, and His faithfulness endures for ever.

Now one word to all the little lambs of Jesus who may read these lines.

As you are walking through this world, think of the price that Jesus paid for you

when He laid down His life, when His blood was shed on Calvary. Think, oh think, of the love divine that led Him to die for you. Remember that hour when He was alone, "forsaken of God." And all this for you. Oh, let His love fill your heart, and return in overflowing, grateful praise to Him, while you stay by His side, watching His every look, for He has promised to guide you with His eye. If bright bits of seaweed, or other pleasures of this poor world, attract your attention, press on closer to Jesus, tell Him all your troubles, your trials, your joys, make Him acquainted with your every need, and never leave His side.

No words of mine can explain the abiding comfort His presence is to the soul that cleaves to Him; no words of

mine can tell the rest to be gained by taking the yoke of Jesus, even as He said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Oh, let this kind invitation have a place in your affections, that in all your ways—before your friends and companions—they may read something of Jesus in you, and be constrained to say, Surely you have been with Jesus.

J. D.



How High up is your Name written ?

I WONDER if there are any of my readers who are in the habit of cutting their

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2 *How high up is your Name written.*

names in places of prominence they come across?

I remember well how, when a boy, my companion and I used to select the largest trees in the forest for this purpose, and we would cut our names deep down in the bark, often feeling very proud of our work, and that they were written there. As I passed on in life, leaving home, and visiting many important places, I found that men and boys were inclined to make ascents, oftentimes in dangerous places, that they might by cutting their names there, with the date also, leave a memento of their visit.

I might narrate a long list of different spots where *my* initials could be found:— high up on the rock of Gibraltar, cut into the solid rock which would take many

How high up is your Name written. 3

years to efface; down in the catacombs of Civita Vecchia, in the island of Malta, far away from the light of day; away on a remote island of the Archipelago; among the graves of the departed in the silent cemetery of Scutari, Constantinople; on the hills of Therapia, overlooking the Black Sea; and how many more places shall I name, far up on the hills of Italy, away to the summits of Madeira, and many other places too numerous to mention? When I look back I may feel quite sure that MY NAME is written at all these places, yes, and many more; yet in all this there is no ground for rejoicing. There is a place, however, where if your name is written, you have cause for joy and rejoicing. Who can guess where that place is, where God looks to see if 'tis written?

4 *How high up is your Name written.*

Oh no, it is not in the Sunday school register, not in the list of rewards to be given for good attendance and behaviour. If not there, then where would God have my name written? Is it in the Bible my mother gave me for being a good and dutiful child? No, it is not in any of these places (they are all good places in which to have your name written).

Just leave these pages open and turn to your Bibles. In Luke x. 20, we find that Jesus gives His disciples the *true* cause for joy. They had been very pleased that the power of God had been displayed in them, and they had returned with joy to tell Jesus about it. Let us read the words of Jesus in the last part of verse 20, "rather rejoice because YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN." How many of my readers

How high up is your Name written. 5

have pondered over these words of Jesus? They deserve to be treasured up, as all His sayings. Do any think it a light thing? I do not; and I know many more, some only little children, who with hearts bowed in worship and thanksgiving can sing—

“My name from the palms of His hands,
Eternity cannot erase,
Engraved on His heart it remains
In words of indelible grace.”

In that great day when the Books are opened (Rev. xx. 11–15), would it be a light thing for you to be found standing before that great white throne to be judged according to your works? Oh no! you cannot bear the thought—you tremble at all that you have done—and say, “No, ’twill be terrible to stand there, as God

6 *How high up is your Name written.*

says it will only be to hear—not my acquittal—but my sentence, ‘Depart.’ Oh, how shall I escape!” If this be your cry, and you tremble at the thought of God’s holy judgment on *you*, then I have good news to tell you, news that can make you exceedingly happy—give you peace that passeth all understanding.

O for simple words to tell His love, unknown, unsearchable—a love that passeth knowledge. Read the words of the hymn that says,

“The Lord is risen indeed,
And justice asks no more,
Mercy and truth are now agreed,
Which stood opposed before.”

Here is joyful news for you, JESUS IS RISEN triumphant over the grave! All the judgment due to you has been borne in agony

How high up is your Name written. 7

on the cross by the blessed Lord. Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" Oh, what more do you want to satisfy your heart? GOD IS SATISFIED with Jesus! Will you be satisfied with Jesus? Simply trust yourself to His love and go on your way singing—

"The atoning work is done,
The Victim's blood is shed,
And Jesus now is gone,
His people's cause to plead;
He stands in heaven their great high priest,
And bears their names upon His breast."

And as you learn of Him in His word you will rejoice to find that He not only bears His people's names upon His breast, but themselves upon His heart,—ever making intercession for them before God.

If you read the 10th of Luke, you will

8 *How high up is your Name written.*

see in verse 21 that Jesus was thinking of the little ones, as He says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

May all little readers have the joy of knowing their names are written in heaven.

J. D.



A Story of Two Sunday Scholars.

I WANT to tell you about two boys who used to attend a Sunday school in my

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2 *A Story of Two Sunday Scholars.*

neighbourhood. Most of you, doubtless, know that many of the Sunday schools have, in the summer time, what is called a Treat—that is, the children are taken for a day into the country. Sometimes they go in vans, sometimes by rail, or perhaps by water, in a steam-boat.

Well, when the time for the Treat came round, year after year, there was one boy, we will call him Arthur, who was never allowed to go; the other, whom we will call James, generally did go. Often had they been to school together, and sung the same hymns, and at one time were in the same class.

If you had taken a peep into that Sunday school, you might often have seen the teacher stop during the lesson, to say, “James, do sit still;” or perhaps the

teacher would move him from one part of the class to another, for, sad to tell, James rather delighted in pinching the boy next him, or pulling his hair, and in many other ways his teacher often found it difficult to interest, or even keep him quiet.

Not so, however, with Arthur. He was fond of listening to the lesson; and as his teacher noticed the eager, upturned face of the boy, he felt sure that the love of Jesus had won a place in his heart; and yet, strange to say, Arthur was never allowed to go to the Treat. Why was this, do you think? Not because he did not behave well in the school, or because he was away from school too many Sundays in the year. No, nothing of this sort prevented his going: and if you were to guess for a long time, I do not think you would be

4 *A Story of Two Sunday Scholars.*

able to tell the reason—you would have to give it up.

So I must tell you. It was because he had *a bad heart*. I do not mean an evil heart, which every boy and girl has, and from which proceeds every wicked thing, as scripture says ; but I mean that he had a bad heart as regards his health. The doctor said that he must not go into any kind of excitement, or he might die in a moment ; and it was feared that playing with all the rest of the school, or the going and returning, might excite him too much, and cause his death.

When the time came round for the Treat, the teachers used to keep it as secret as possible, but, somehow or other, it was always known by the scholars ; and when the Sunday arrived for giving out

the tickets, Arthur would tell his mother that he wanted to stay at home that afternoon, for he could not bear to see everyone receive a ticket except himself.

The poor boy was greatly pitied by the teachers, and, in order to make up a little for his loss of the Treat, they would give him an interesting book. But I want to tell you something more about these two boys; for *neither* of them went to the Treat the year of which I write.

Arthur was out one day, walking along the road, when he saw four policemen carrying a poor man on a stretcher, who had hurt himself. Arthur noticed the crowd, and, as it passed, he just caught sight of the wounded man's face, which was bleeding very much. It was only a glance he had, but Arthur could not forget

6 *A Story of Two Sunday Scholars.*

it, and when telling his mother afterwards of what he had seen, his feelings were so overcome that he had a bad fit, and, as the doctor had predicted, he died suddenly in his mother's arms, and, I may add, he went to be with Jesus.

Oh, how happy for Arthur, thus peacefully to fall asleep, to leave his weak body and soar away to a better country, and to find himself in the very presence of the Lord whom he had learned to love while here below.

It was only the next day after his death that James was seen playing in the streets, and I fear he had forgotten all that his teacher used to say at the Sunday school, for he had not been there lately. He was quarrelling with another boy, who was bigger and stronger than himself, till

at last they began to fight, and James received a heavy blow which knocked him down, and his head hit against the kerb at the side of the road. He was quickly lifted up, and taken to a chemist's shop, close at hand, but, poor boy! the wound could not be healed,—the doctor may bind up the wound, stop the flow of blood, and give the best restoratives his skill may suggest, but this is all he has power to do. James had such attentions as these, but they proved useless, and he never spoke again!

While thinking of the above story of the two boys, I would like to ask all the boys and girls who read this, Are you like Arthur or James? If God were to send His messenger, *Death*, would you go to be with Jesus, or be sent from His pres-

8 *A Story of Two Sunday Scholars.*

ence for ever? You may be permitted to go to the School treat, but none but those who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus can ever enter heaven, and be with Him for ever.

I believe God has a voice to us, dear reader, when we hear of one or another being taken away suddenly like this, and we ought to ask ourselves the question, If it had been me, am I ready to see Jesus, or should I fear to look in His face?



A Friend in Need.

THROUGH the neighbourhood in which I live runs a little river, as it is called,

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though in reality it is but a channel which supplies us with water for our daily wants. But it has to be brought a long distance from its source ere it reaches the gigantic reservoir, and so it pursues a winding and serpent-like course, watering and beautifying numberless gardens and lawns of the many villas that lie in its way. Sometimes it forms the boundary of a path, and at other points it skirts the humble homesteads of suburban villas. Now and then stealing away under dark arches, flowing lazily under the hard roads tunnelled for its passage, it then again comes into the sunlight, kissing the drooping willows with its bright face as they hang lovingly over its side. Here and there it is close to the roadway, and has therefore to be kept from the busy throng of boys

who live on its margin, and who conclude that a stream cannot exist without the necessary hungry little fishes who are constantly on the watch for the tit-bits in the way of baits which boys somehow know are particularly attractive to their taste. The owners are also aware of what seems to them a conspiracy between boys and fishes, and to defeat one or both of the parties—either the fish to get the baits or the boys to get the fish—have a watchman at certain points, whose duty it is to watch the youthful depredators. But of course there are many points to be guarded, and the man cannot be at all the spots at once.

The very fact that the boys are forbidden to fish in the little river only strengthens the desire to do so. So a company of boys,

intent on breaking the laws, soon find out a way of accomplishing their design. One part, railed off, is a specially attractive point, from the fact that it is crowded with fish—small ones, but still fish—and that is all in all to them. Well, as good generals do when they try to out-manoeuvre an enemy, certain ones are sent out as scouts to discover if the watchman is near, while the others rob the stream of its finny prize. But also, like some generals, they find that they at times are outflanked themselves, a sound caning being the result.

On one such occasion the above scene was being enacted. Some half-a-dozen boys had climbed the railings, and were busy on the other side, intent on catching the fish, when a signal was given, and it

was found that the guardian of the river was close at hand. A hasty rush at the iron railings, which by some were easily climbed, and nimble feet were hurrying away out of reach of that dreaded rod of office. But two little boys, more hasty than prudent, and losing presence of mind, both fell into the river. They could not swim, and added to this the fright of capture, with the consciousness that they were doing wrong, they were helplessly drowning. One who was near the edge was dragged back by the other, who held him tight, and both were struggling in the stream.

On the opposite bank, a servant in one of the villas, on hearing the shouts saw the boys drowning, and with haste ran to the yard and unchained the great New-

foundland dog belonging to her master, and pointed to the boys in the stream. His instinct soon told him how matters stood, and with a few bounds he was in the water, and seizing one boy by the arm drew him to the bank, and from the fact that the other boy was grasping his companion, both were soon drawn out of the water by the crowd that had assembled there.

Thus the noble dog came in at the right moment as a friend in need, for otherwise the boys must have certainly lost their lives.

I don't want to say much about the punishment they received from their parents after their recovery, for their wrongdoing. But it may be a way in which God would speak to their consciences and

hearts. He has His own way in speaking to us, as the poet says:—

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

The boys may in time forget the event, and it may lie hidden as a thing of the past, but memory is faithful, and God often uses it to bring home truth to the conscience and the heart.

The dog only followed its instinct in rescuing the drowning boys, but Jesus followed the love of His heart in dying to save us from death. There is no other way of salvation than that which was opened by the death of Jesus upon the cross. There is none other name given

under heaven whereby we must be saved. Young as you are you need salvation—you need to be washed in the precious blood of Christ. What blessed and glad-some tidings are these which God has been pleased to spread abroad contained in John iii. 16—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

It is a happy thing to have a good start in life, and so I would urge you to begin with Jesus. You will understand what I mean. Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation. Take the Lord as your Saviour, seek Him as your counsellor, and trust Him as your friend.



“ I want to go to Jesus.”

A DEAR mother gives an account of her little boy, whom the kind Shepherd called

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home to be with Himself a few months ago.

The Lord had need of our darling, and we are quite satisfied that his little heart was in heaven with the Lord, whom he dearly loved. He had been getting ready for glory for long, but his friends did not see it, or think he was going till the end came, and then we saw that what we had believed to be his own peculiar childish sweetness, was the loveliness of the Lord spoken through his baby lips.

Last summer, when going to bed one night, he said to his brother, "When I go to heaven, I shall lay my head on Jesus, and sit quite close to His feet; and, P., Jesus has got plenties of things." He was always saying latterly, "Jesus has got plenties of things."

Another night he sat up in his little bed, in the middle of the night, saying, "I do want to go to Jesus; I do want to go to Jesus;" and lay down again. He was always full of going to heaven, but we thought nothing of it.

Last summer M. was walking in some grounds with him, and shewed him a fox's hole. He said immediately, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

His favourite text was, "I am the door; by me if any man shall enter in, he shall be saved." He once asked, "How can Jesus be a door?" Then he said, "'I am' is Jesus; 'the door' is Jesus; and 'shall be saved'—does it mean we shall not be burned when the great fire comes?" This

last, with "Jesus wept," were his favourite texts; he said them every night before going to sleep.

The last two days he said, as his mama and nurse sat by, "Dear kind Jesus, He died to save me." Nurse sang one verse of

"There is a happy land."

When she had finished, he went on—

"Oh, how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is the Saviour-King;
Loud let His praises ring:
Praise, praise, for aye."

The "aye" sounded as if it must end in heaven.

On Thursday he said to nurse, "I shall never forget you, nursie dear, no, not in

heaven. Then he said to himself, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

With all this we never thought he was going, but the dear one took a chill while out with me, with E. and P. They all had dreadful colds; his sister was the worst—so bad, indeed, that I sent for the doctor, who said *the two boys were all right*; but on Saturday our darling took his bed with burning fever; still, it was thought it might end in a cold. On Monday another doctor was sent for, but up to Wednesday he was thought to be no worse. On Thursday, however, we were told there was no hope. At ten o'clock all his brothers and sisters gathered round his bed, and at a quarter-past eleven he was at rest—with Jesus.

There are plenty of little boys and girls who never grow up to to be like their fathers and mothers, but they die, and go to be with Jesus in heaven. Have you ever thought you would like to go to be with Jesus, like this boy you have been reading about? He was ready when Jesus called; are you ready? You often go out; you may take cold, and the doctor may have to say of you, there is no hope, and you may die. Ask yourselves the question, Am I saved? And if not yet, oh, come to Jesus now, while you are young, that if Jesus calls you to leave your father, mother, brothers, and sisters, you too may be able to say, Dear kind Jesus, He died to save me; I go to Him.

T.

I want to go to Jesus.

7

I CAN'T HELP LOVING JESUS.

I loved to read of Jesus,
In childhood's early years,
And always found Him willing
To soothe my childish fears.

I loved to read the Scriptures,
Because I found therein,
That Jesus came from heaven
To put away our sin.

The blessed work of Jesus
For us was so complete,
That I can only wonder,
And worship at His feet.

And so, from early morning,
And through the long, long day
To Jesus up in heaven,
My thoughts will fly away.

I want to go to Jesus.

I cannot but be happy,
And in His love confide,
Because, I know, to save me,
The blessed Jesus died.

There's not a tiny sorrow
But reaches Him above.
He is so good and gracious,
I cannot doubt His love.

Thus I am always singing,
And always wish to be,
I can't help loving Jesus,
He is so good to me.

