



The Exact Truth

Isabella Alden

The Exact Truth



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Isabella “Pansy” Alden

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THE EXACT TRUTH.

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NOVEMBER

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised
for our iniquities.

Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I
find no fault in this man.

For the transgression of my people was He stricken.

The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first
fruits of them that slept.



November 1, 18—

My name is Zephene Hammond. I know it is a queer name. The way I came to have it is this: mother has a brother named Zephaniah—horrid ugly name, I think, if it is in the Bible—and mother loves him better than anybody else, except father, and Murray, and me, and a few others, and she wanted to name me for him. But of course a girl could not be named “Zephaniah,” so they made a name—Zephene. I think it is pretty. You can’t make an

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ugly-sounding word out of it. The girls call me “Zeph” for short, but that is pretty, too.

Well, today, the first of November, is my birthday, and I am thirteen. Among my presents was this blank book from Miss Elizabeth Clarkson, my Sunday-school teacher; she has gone to Europe to stay a year. She gave us girls each something to remember her by. Mine was this book. It is a diary, and I am to write in it at least once a month during the year; as much oftener as I please, but certainly once each month. I am to place the Golden Texts at the beginning of each month, and to keep them in mind in my writing, and put down whatever thoughts I have about them. I promised to do it, but I am rather sorry, because I don't have any thoughts about the Sunday-school lessons, ever. I always forget to study them until I am on my way to church. That is the exact truth, anyhow. I wonder why Miss Clarkson asked me to be careful about that? I always tell the truth. Let me see if I have written anything so far which isn't just exactly true.

Well, I do not suppose that I consider Uncle Zeph's name “horrid.” It does not frighten me in the least, nor fill me with any kind of horror. I suppose I mean that I do not think it a pretty sounding name; but how stupid it would be to choose one's words so very carefully!

I don't know how to keep a diary. I told Miss Clarkson I did not; and she said it was time for me to learn. She told me to write of things which it would be interesting to me to be able to recall

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years afterwards. There are no such in my life. I live in the dullest, stupidest, hatefulest spot on the face of the globe.

Oh, dear! I suppose that is not the “exact truth.” I mean, I live in a little village where nothing very interesting happens; though father is always saying—I mean, he often says that people who keep their eyes open see interesting things where others see only dullness. It is real poky to be caught up so every second about the exact truth; I mean it is quite inconvenient.

There is nothing in the Golden Texts this month for me to write about. They are all away above me. I mean, they are about Jesus Christ, and I could not be expected to find any place in my life for them to fit; but they are written out; I will keep them in mind if I can.

November 3

Dr. Parton took the first Golden Text this morning to preach about. It seems wonderful and terrible that Jesus should have had to suffer on the cross because people are wicked. I do not understand it.

Dr. Parton repeated that verse:

“My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear
While hanging on the accursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.”

Grandmother used to sing that hymn; I never liked it. I do not see

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how the wicked things I do could have had anything to do with his sufferings hundreds of years before I was born. I suppose I am not old enough to understand; but I am a year older than Lizzie Price, and she is a member of the Church. Well, I am sure I have thought about that Golden Text, and what good has it done me?

November 11

We have had the greatest time in school! Some of the scholars were determined that Charlie Westfield should not be invited to the class party. A few of them do not like him very well; I guess because he always has his lessons better than they do, and never gets into any scrapes; then he is poor, and does not dress very well, and—well, they have turned against him. They almost quarreled about it, and said if he was invited they should not come, and they would break the whole thing up, and I don't know what all. I stood out for quite a while and said I thought it was silly to make such a time over one boy, and mean to leave him out when all the others were invited. But at last I joined with the others, and said we would better drop his name. It seemed the only way not to have a real fuss. But we had a "real fuss" after all; Professor Barney heard of it and called us all to his room.

"Now," he said, "I want this matter investigated." Then he looked around the room and caught sight of me. "Miss Zephene," he said, "we will begin with you. What fault have you to find with Charlie Westfield?"

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“I have no fault at all to find,” I said, speaking up promptly, and I meant to tell him how at first I had thought it foolish, and then had fallen in with the others, to save a fuss; but I stopped suddenly and my face grew red. I could feel the red come into it. Whom should I think of that minute but that horrid old Pilate washing his ugly hands and saying: “I find no fault in this man.” I said he was horrid last Sunday in the class. I said a half-way decent person would have stood up with all his might for a man in whom he found no fault; that I was sure I should have done so; and there I was saying I had no fault to find with Charlie, and voting against him ! I never felt so ashamed in my life! For a minute I did not know what to say; I began again: “I have no fault to find with Charlie Westfield; I am sorry I voted against him; I think he ought to be invited; I will do all I can to help him have a pleasant time.”

It was horrid! I mean it was very embarrassing, but the end of it was they asked Charlie. The Golden Text helped me to be ashamed of myself, anyhow. I don't want to be like Pilate, of all persons!

November 29

I promised to put the exact truth into this book, so I shall have to tell that I said I thought it was cruel to let Renie Wilson die on Thanksgiving Day. I said I would rather have a friend die on any other day in the year than that. I guess I said a good many wicked things about it—all to myself, of course.

But mother sent me over to the Wilsons' with a calla that was just beginning to bloom—the first calla of the season; and Mrs. Wilson called me in to see Renie. I did not want to go, but I thought I had to. Renie looked lovely. She had a white rosebud in her tiny hand. Mrs. Wilson put the calla bud into a vase and set it on the white casket.

“A lovely first fruit,” she said to me, and smiled. I don't see how she could. Then she said: “I am very glad, Zephene, that my Renie went to Heaven on Thanksgiving Day. She had suffered so much, and she wanted so much to spend Thanksgiving in Heaven. She said God was good to call her today; and I felt that I could echo her words, for I did not want my darling to endure another day of pain. Tell your mother, from me, Zephene, that God is good, and thank her for this lovely bud. I rest my heart upon his Word: ‘Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.’ My Renie is sleeping sweetly, and he will not forget to waken her.”

I do not understand anybody. How can Mrs. Wilson feel so, when her one little girl is gone? But the Golden Text helped somebody, if it does not me. I think it must be good to have help when your friends are dead. I wish I was good, but I'm not; and I am afraid I never shall be. That is the exact truth.

DECEMBER

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to
enter into his glory?

And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,
and receive you unto myself.



December 8

Bible verses are real queer things; they come to you sometimes when you are doing things that don't fit what they are about at all, and yet they seem to fit into what you are doing. I don't believe anybody but me understands that sentence, but so long as I do, I suppose it will answer. I studied our last lesson quite a little. It was such a strange story I became interested in it; but I declared that there was not a thing in it to fit my life.

And yet, only today I fitted a piece of it in. Lizzie Price was certainly horrid; she can act real mean sometimes, if she is a church member. We were talking together at recess, a number of us girls. I was telling how Charlie Westfield looked and acted at

Fanny Brooks' party the other night. It was real funny, and the girls were nearly convulsed with laughter; that is, I mean, they were very much amused. But Lizzie interrupted me every minute to correct something; she did not think his coat sleeves were so ridiculously short as I made them out; she thought his necktie was quite pretty, and he certainly did not shuffle along in the way I was doing, when he crossed the room. At last I became so provoked that I stopped in the middle of a sentence and said, "Well, really, Lizzie Price, if you think I am not capable of telling the truth, perhaps you would better finish the story yourself," and I walked away. The girls shouted after me, and said it was mean, but I would not go back. The idea of Lizzie Price catching me up in that way! I'm sure I wasn't saying anything bad about Charlie—I like him ever so much—but everybody knows he has outgrown his clothes, and that he is dreadfully awkward, and what harm does it do to have a good-natured laugh over it?

I made up my mind that I would have nothing more to do with Lizzie Price. She is always trying to manage me; I really have to bear a good deal from her sometimes. It was then that the verse came to me, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" Of course it doesn't fit at all, that is just what I say; but I could not help thinking of the dreadful things he suffered, and how patient he was. I do not understand how it helped me, but after thinking about him it did seem too awfully silly in me to be dignified and hurt Lizzie Price's feelings just because she had made me feel uncomfortable. I decided that I would not do it. In the afternoon I

was just as pleasant to her as possible. I would not like to tell even Miss Clarkson about this, because of course there is no connection between the verse and my experience; but then, somehow I got help out of it.

December 17

Something perfectly dreadful has happened. Only a little while before Christmas, too! Aunt Sarah came last week; she generally gives me lovely presents, though I don't think she likes me very well, and I'm sure I don't like her. This morning Lizzie Price and Katie Holland came in to talk over the Christmas entertainment—we are going to have tableaux. Katie wanted Ella Pierson for one of the marble statues in the tableau, and I just laughed at the idea.

“For pity's sake,” I said, “don't do anything to make that girl any vainer than she is now. She is a perfect peacock; and as for her being a marble statue, I am sure she would never do in the world; I think she is just as awkward as she can be.”

We were in the music room, and the door leading into the sitting-room was open. “Zeph!” called Aunt Sarah from the sitting-room, but I didn't go.

Aunt Sarah is always wanting a door closed or opened, or a wrap thrown around her shoulders, or a fan handed to her, and I thought she could wait a little.

“In a minute, Aunt Sarah,” I said, and went on talking. Lizzie

Price had just said that she thought Ella was pretty.

“Pretty!” I said. “How in the world can you think so? Miss Clarkson says that self-consciousness always destroys beauty, and I’m sure there was never a more self-conscious person in the world than Ella Pierson. Why, the airs that she puts on when she flourishes that Japanese fan of hers are too comical. I have seen Mrs. Chester just ready to die with laughing at her.”

“Zephene,” called Aunt Sarah, “close that door immediately.”

When Aunt Sarah calls me “Zephene” and says “immediately” I always go. I ran toward the door, wondering why it needed to be closed in such haste, and oh, dear! I thought I should drop through the floor—no, I didn’t think any such thing, of course, but I felt dreadfully. There sat Aunt Sarah in front of the grate, with the round table drawn up beside her, and Mrs. Pierson in the large chair just opposite, drinking a cup of chocolate! Ella Pierson’s mother, of all persons in the world, to have heard what I said! I never was so ashamed and frightened in my life. “Girls,” I said—and Katie Holland said afterwards that my face was as white as a sheet—“who do you think is in there with Aunt Sarah? Ella Pierson’s mother! And she must have heard every word I said.”

The girls did not stay long after that; some way we could not keep our minds on the tableaux. After awhile Aunt Sarah called me, and then didn’t I get a scolding?

“If you had obeyed my first call,” said she, “it would not have been so bad; in fact I called you three times, but you never obey the first time you are spoken to, never in the world; now you have

been punished for it, and made plenty of trouble for other people as well as for yourself. Mrs. Pierson's face flushed scarlet; I know she heard distinctly all you said."

Well, I cried, of course, and Aunt Sarah told mother about it, and mother was distressed, and said she was afraid my poor tongue would lead me into some terrible trouble if I did not learn to control it. But it wasn't until I came up here to my room and opened this book and read the verses at the top of the December page, that the worst trouble of all struck me. "And their eyes were opened and they knew Him."

I cannot describe how that made me feel. It seemed to rush over me suddenly like something which I had not known before, that Jesus had been listening all the while to what I said, and that if my eyes had been open to see things as they were, I should have known it and been careful. What made me realize it more, was because I had just said aloud, "If I had only known that she was there!" meaning Mrs. Pierson. I knew that I would not have spoken so about Ella for anything in the world if I had known that her mother was within hearing; and to think that Jesus was, and that I really cared more for what Mrs. Pierson would think than I did for Jesus; because of course I knew he could hear me.

It is all dreadful, and I do not know how I am going to get out of it, or what mother will make me do. But the very worst of all is that I must be a dreadfully wicked girl. Why doesn't the fact that God can hear me keep me from saying hateful things, when I know that I try to be nice before ladies and gentlemen whom I

respect?

It is late, and I must go to bed; but I am in dreadful trouble. I don't dare to think of Mrs. Pierson or Ella, and Aunt Sarah is angry, and mother is grieved, and I don't know what father will say; and worse than all is that verse about Him. Why didn't I remember that He was listening?

JANUARY

Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit
before a fall.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graves image.

They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be
God, follow Him.



January 1, 18—

That first verse is true, anyhow. Well, of course they are all true, but I mean I have proved it. If I had not felt dreadfully proud that day, I do not think it would have happened. In history I was marked higher even than Charlie Westfield, and that is something wonderful. Then in grammar I analyzed a sentence on which Katie Holland had failed. I do not wonder that I was proud.

I was walking home from school with my head pretty high, when little Lilian Brooks ran up to me and said, “Oh, Zeph! Won’t you please tell me what a taper is? It is in our reading lesson, and

Miss Morrison will ask questions about it and none of the girls know.”

“A taper,” I said, “why, it is a little bit of a light like those wax candles which you have in your tiny candlesticks for your doll house.”

Lilian looked bewildered and shook her head. “Oh, no, Zeph!” she said. “It can’t be; it is some kind of an animal, because it says, ‘The tapir eats fruit.’”

Lilian said off this sentence as though she had the book open before her and was reading it. I could not imagine what she meant. “Have you learned to spell it?” I asked.

“Y es’m; it is spelled t-a-p-i-r.”

“Oh,” I said, looking wise, “that is not the way you spell a little light; that is spelled t-a-p-e-r. This other word does mean an animal—a kind of snake, like a rattlesnake, you know. It is very long and slippery looking, and ugly.”

Now the simple truth was, that I did not know a thing about a tapir, but I could not bear to tell Lilian so. It seemed to me that I had heard something about a long black snake with a name like that, so I thought I would venture; but I did not know that the boys were within hearing just behind us—Leonard Pierson and Burt Holland and three or four others. Such a shout as they set up when they heard what I told Lilian! Burt Holland just bent himself double laughing, and said, “Oh, oh, boys! Carry me home. I never can walk there in the world. That tapir has been too

much for me!”

Then I knew I had made a dreadful mistake. I was just as angry as I could be, for they kept on laughing and making funny speeches right before Lilian. At last I turned around and said, “You are very wise boys, I have no doubt, and know all about tapirs and everything else; and as for politeness, anybody can see you are perfect gentlemen; your mothers must be proud of you.”

Then I turned the corner and ran home as fast as I could; but I could hear them shouting, “Look out for tapirs!” and then laughing just as hard as they could. The next day was horrid. All my school books had little notes slipped into them from the boys like this:

My Dear Miss Hammond:

I have the honor to inform you that the tapir is a genus of the Perissodactyle division of the Ungulata. Knowing your interest in natural history I make bold to give you this bit of information.

Miss Zephene Hammond:

It may interest you to know that ten different species of the *Paleotherium* tapirs have been discovered.

Miss Hammond. Dear Mum:

In the interest of science I beg leave to state that to the best of our knowledge and belief, tapirs abound chiefly in Miocene and Eocene beds; these they prefer, strange to say, to feather beds. There is no accounting for tastes.

There were dozens of just such notes. I could not leave my desk for a recitation but when I returned there would be two or

three new ones, all about tapirs, and saying things which I did not understand. By noon I was almost too angry to speak to anybody. I thought those boys were too mean for anything. But I took the notes home, and in the evening Lizzie Price and I just worked over them. We got out the pictorial dictionary and the encyclopaedias, and borrowed a book from Lizzie's brother all about animals, and by bedtime we certainly knew a great deal about tapirs. Aunt Sarah says it is the first useful reading she ever knew me to do.

After a while the mistake I had made began to seem real funny to me, and I knew I would never have made it if I had not been so proud of my standing as a scholar. I certainly had a haughty spirit, and there is no doubt but that I had had a fall. I did not know how to pick myself up. The boys had kept on teasing all day. At last I decided what I would do. The next morning the schoolroom grounds were crowded with boys, all waiting for me, and Leonard Pierson was ready to lead them, when I marched up to him.

“Good-morning,” I said. “I don't wonder that you boys were amused over the ridiculous mistake I made the other day. The truth is, I didn't know a thing about tapirs, and did not like to own it; that was dreadfully silly in me. You may have all the fun out of it that you can get, and I'm going to help laugh at it the rest of the time.”

Then I went into the schoolroom. It was queer how suddenly those boys hushed up their fun.

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“That is fair and square, anyhow,” I heard one say; and another, “She has knocked the wind out of our sails now.”

At recess Leonard and Burt and one or two others came to me and said they ought to be ashamed of themselves for teasing me so, and that they hadn’t known much about tapirs themselves until they went to the encyclopaedia that evening.

We have been better friends since than we were before, and we are all pretty well posted upon one point in natural history.

January 18

There are ever so many “good things” that I know I want dreadfully, and I don’t expect to get them. I suppose it is because I do not “seek the Lord.” The honest truth is I don’t know what that means. I wish I did.

January 27

Lizzie Price’s brother is not well. He has had to leave college; the doctor says he must not go back this year. He has taken our class in Sunday-school until Miss Clarkson comes home. I don’t like him one bit, he is so queer. Last Sunday he gave me a letter, sealed and addressed beautifully. I thought it was an invitation to something; it was an elegant envelope, and the note-paper inside was very heavy and beautiful, but every word it had in it was that

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verse, “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him.”

What has that to do with me, I wonder? I’m not a heathen.

FEBRUARY

Fear not, for I am with thee and will bless thee.

Take heed, and beware of covetousness.

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Not by night, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.



February, 18

If I had been going to pick out from the entire Bible the verse which would never have any special lesson for me, I think it might have been that one about coveting. I felt so perfectly certain that I should never be guilty of such a spirit; yet it was that very spirit, I suppose, which made me do the meanest thing I ever did in my life. I had been thinking about the word, too, which made the matter worse. Lizzie Price and I had an argument over its meaning. She said it had a good sense and a bad sense, and I said it hadn't, that there was no sense in such talk. I said it meant wanting things

which were not yours and ought not to be yours, because there was no right way of getting them; and I got real vexed with her because she would insist on her meaning. She wanted to know what the verse meant which said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," and I said there wasn't any such verse in the Bible. Then she found it and showed it to me, and I felt more vexed than ever, and said the Bible contradicted itself then.

As soon as I got home to the big dictionary I found Lizzie was right. So I ought to have been on my guard about my meaning of the word, at least, but I wasn't.

In our gymnasium we have a wand exercise which is real lovely. We form arches, and triangles, and I don't know what not, with the wands, and take the steps which belong to the different shapes, and the music that goes with it is just too lovely for anything. The leader of the exercise changes the motions when she pleases, and uses whatever steps she likes for the day; it depends upon her a good deal whether the exercise is pretty or not. Sometimes there is a wreath exercise joined with it. The boys bring wreaths of flowers, or of autumn leaves, or pretty green leaves, and toss them one by one on the leader's wand, keeping time to the music all the while, and she passes the wreaths on to the wands of any girls she chooses. It is just as pretty as it can be. When we have this wand and wreath exercise the visitors in the gallery always cheer.

The girls are ranged according to their size, and Ella Pierson

and I are of exactly the same height, so of course Miss Otterson does not care which of us leads, and it stands to reason that we ought to take turns; but Ella rushes for her place always, as though she had bought it and meant to keep it forever; and Miss Otterson has the roll arranged in that way, and I never like to ask her right out for the place, so of course I do not get it. But I have thought this long time that it was very mean. I just knew I could toss the wreaths more gracefully than Ella.

Last Friday Lizzie Price's brother came to school with her, and came into the gymnasium. I don't like him, but he is the most distinguished visitor we have for all that, and I wanted to lead the exercise dreadfully that day. I've hinted as much to Ella several times, but she always said "The idea!" and ran to her place as though she was afraid I would push her out of it. Well, on this afternoon, just before it was time for our division, Ella came up to me with her face very long.

"I cannot find my wand anywhere," she said. "I've looked in all the places I can think of, and it is gone. Miss Otterson said we might have the wand exercise today because Mr. Price wants to see it, and the boys have brought lovely wreaths, and here I cannot find that wand. Did you ever hear of anything so provoking? You haven't seen it anywhere, have you, Zeph?"

"How in the world should I see it?" I asked her, for we each have to carry our wands away with us and take care of them. They are very pretty delicate things, on purpose for certain exercises,

and they have our names stamped on them. The very minute after I had spoken I remembered that Ella had hers in her hand when she went with me to the library last night, and I thought to myself that perhaps she laid it on the shelf while she looked at the books. I had my lips opened to ask her if she had looked there, then all of a sudden I shut them.

Why should I ask her that? If she couldn't find it, it would give me the chance which I ought to have for leading; there are just exactly enough wands of that kind for our division, and everyone was present. So I said:

“I haven't seen your wand today,” and it was true, I hadn't.

“Oh, dear!” Ella said, “I wanted it today of all times,” and she looked ready to cry.

Ten minutes afterwards our division was called, and Ella had no wand.

Miss Otterson looked surprised and troubled for a moment, and asked, “Has anyone in the room seen Ella Pierson's wand?”

No one spoke, so she motioned me to lead, and asked Ella to drop out while the wand exercise was given.

I know I led beautifully; I did not miss a wreath, and sometimes Ella does. Every time I caught one on the tip of my wand the people in the gallery cheered. We had a dozen visitors today, too. But I did not enjoy it. I could not help thinking all the while that perhaps Ella's wand was in the library, and perhaps I ought to have told her.

It didn't do a bit of good for me to tell myself that I did not know anything about it, and that it was ridiculous to think it might be there, just because she had it in her hand the day before. I kept saying to myself:

“You might have reminded her of that, and given her a chance, and you would have done it, too, if you hadn't wanted her place.”

The very minute the class was dismissed I ran across the hall to the library, and there, sure enough, on the third shelf, just where Ella was standing the night before, lay the wand. I took it up and looked at it to make certain it was hers, only of course I knew it was, and I was going to take it to her; then I thought I wouldn't, because how mean it would be to give it to her after the exercise was over, and how queer it would look, too. So I laid it back and ran away again; but I never felt meaner in my life. It seemed to me that I had told a lie, though I am sure I did not mean any such thing.

I did not wait for the girls, but went home alone, and when Leonard Pierson overtook me and told me the boys said I did beautifully, I said it was no great honor, I was sure, and if that was the only thing I could do beautifully, I was sorry for myself. And when he asked what made me so cross I got angry, and told him if he didn't like my company I didn't see why he took the trouble to overtake me.

He laughed, and said that was a fact, and he guessed he would

go where the air was clearer, that it looked to him very much like a storm. Then he ran away laughing, and I felt worse than ever. I was cross to Murray, and behaved so badly downstairs that mother asked if I had a headache.

I never really knew what was the matter until I came up to my room and sat down to read my verses as I promised Miss Clarkson. Then I found out that I had coveted Ella Pierson's place, and secured it! I began to understand a little of what might have been meant by the caution, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

It is two or three days since it all happened, but I feel horrid mean about it all the while. Sometimes I think I will tell Ella Pierson the whole story; at other times I think I will not, because what would be the use? She would only feel cross at me, and as it is she will never know anything about it. Somebody put her wand in her desk the next day—I am sure I don't know who—and she has not the least idea where it was when she could not find it.

MARCH

The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy
diseases.

Be sure your sin will find you out.

Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that
be with them.



March 18

Such a time as I have had! I am sure that one verse in the Bible is true, anyhow, and that is, “Be sure your sin will find you out,” though I don’t feel willing to call it exactly sin. That is what I said to Mr. Price the other day—not about this, but something we girls were talking over in the class. I said I didn’t think it was wrong exactly, but—. Then I stopped, and he asked if I thought it exactly right.

I said, “No, of course not,” and he asked if a thing did not have to be exactly wrong, provided it was not exactly right. I don’t

like him any better than I did at first. He is always making you answer questions that condemn yourself, some way. I don't know how he does it.

But the time in school has all been about that wand exercise. I am sure I shall hate it after this. I never want to be in it again, to say nothing of leading it. The first I knew about there being any trouble, Professor Barney sent for me to come to his study.

Of course I was frightened; no one ever has to go there unless something dreadful has happened.

He began to talk to me about that horrid exercise. "How often had I led?" and "Did I enjoy leading very much?" and "How long beforehand did I know I should be able to lead, that day?"

I kept growing more frightened every minute, and I stammered and blushed so in answering, that he must have thought I had done something very wicked indeed. At last it all came out that Ella Pierson had accused me of stealing her wand and hiding it in the library. The idea! I was never so angry in my life.

Ella Pierson had been just as disagreeable to me as she could for days, but I thought that was because she was vexed because I tossed the wreaths better than she—everybody says I did—and I did not suppose she could say so wicked a thing about me as that.

I told Professor Barney that I was not in the habit of being accused of stealing, and that I did not understand what anybody could mean by hinting such a thing, and that my father would see to it that those who had slandered me were punished. I was

dreadfully silly, and rather rude, I suppose, but I was so angry that I hardly knew what I said. He stopped me in the middle of a sentence, and said that that was not a proper way to speak to him, and that it did not accomplish anything, and would make people think I was guilty of some wrong. That if I was entirely innocent, all I had to do was to quietly say so, and he would investigate further; that justice should certainly be done me.

Then I cried as hard as I could. I knew by that time just what was the matter; I wasn't "entirely innocent." If I only had not seen the wand in Ella Pierson's hand when we were in the library—no; I mean if I had only said to her when she asked about it: "You had it in the library last night," then I would have been "entirely innocent," and could have held up my head and answered Professor Barney without getting angry.

I went home and told mother all about it, and she said, "Daughter, there is only one thing for you to do. You must tell Professor Barney just what you have told me, and he will know what to do to set you right, so far as hiding the wand is concerned." If I had only taken her advice it would have been so much better; but I declared that I could not do that. I said Professor Barney would think there was more to it than I told, and that it would not alter things at all, for I was accused of stealing the wand and hiding it, and as I certainly did nothing of the kind, I did not see what the mere fact of my having remembered she had it in her hand had to do with it, anyhow.

Mother did not say I must do it, in the sense that she ordered it; she only sighed, and assured me that it would be the right thing to do, and that I would perhaps be sorry afterwards if I did not. And I was! Some miserable days passed; I never had such a horrid time in school in all my life.

Ella Pierson would not speak to me at all, and I imagined that all the scholars were talking about me. At last I was sent for again to come to Professor Barney's room. All the teachers were there; so was Mr. Price.

I was dreadfully frightened and ashamed, and everything. I felt like a prisoner on trial. I could not imagine what Mr. Price was doing there, but at last it all came out, that he stood just outside the glass doors when I rushed into the library after the exercise, and saw me look over on the shelf where a wand lay, and then run away, leaving it there. He thought very little about it at the time, only to wonder whether the pupils had extra wands, and were allowed to keep them on the library shelves; but when Lizzie came home with the story which was afloat in school, he began to be troubled. He cross-questioned Lizzie until he feared he had guessed the truth; but he hadn't! Horrid man, to think that I would steal a wand and hide it just to get a chance to lead.

I don't know yet how that part of the story got around, only others beside Mr. Price saw me run in there, and when the librarian brought the wand and told where he found it, they put the two things together and made up the rest, I suppose. But by that time I

was so ashamed that I spoke very humbly, I guess.

“Professor Barney,” I said, “you told me that first day that if I was entirely innocent it would be all right. But that is the trouble; I suppose I am not entirely innocent, though I did not steal Ella Pierson’s wand any more than you did. When she asked me about it, I said I had not seen it, and knew nothing about it; that was true, or I thought it was. But the next minute I remembered that she had had it in her hand when she went with me into the library the night before, and I thought perhaps she had left it there. But I did not say a word to her about this, and in five minutes more the class was called, and it was too late. After class I thought I would go and look in the library, and sure enough, the wand was there. But I did not like to tell Ella then. If I had told her the ‘perhaps; which came into my mind, all this trouble would have been saved.’”

“If you had told me the other day exactly how the matter stood, part of the trouble would have been saved,” said Professor Barney, but he spoke kindly, and quite as though he believed me.

“I know it,” I said. “Mother told me so, and I wish I had.”

Of course it was a perfectly dreadful time, and the boys and girls had to be told just how it was, and there was no end of talk. Ella Pierson said she was sorry she had said I stole, but that she thought I was as mean as dirt not to tell her where her wand was. As though I knew where it was! I only thought it might possibly be there. I made up my mind that after this I would tell just exactly how a thing was, and all my perhapses about it, and everything. I

wonder if I will?

One thing I must put down here, it seems so strange. If I had said to her, “Oh, Ella, maybe you left your wand in the library; you had it, you know, when we were there yesterday,” it would all have been right and nice, and I could have led, just the same, for the library was locked, and the librarian did not come until we were half through with our exercise. Charlie Westfield told me that, and his brother is librarian this term.

APRIL

Oh! That men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
and for his wonderful works to the children of men.

Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord
looketh on the heart.

Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with
this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented
at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than
Jonas is here.



April 1

I've been looking ahead at the Sunday lessons. The name of one is, "The good and evil in Jehu." I don't know who Jehu is, nor anything about him, but I couldn't help wondering how I should feel if it read: "The good and evil in Zephene Hammond." I wonder if there ever will be a book written about me, and the bad things I do told as well as the good? Wouldn't that be horrid! I am always getting into scrapes.

There is to be a wedding in our family among the cousins, and the young people of all the families are going with the bride and groom ten miles down the river to another cousin's house, where there is to be a reception. It will be a lovely ride in elegant carriages, and a lovely reception and everything. But it has been discovered, only today, that there is one more cousin than there is room for in the carriages. They went over and over the list, and planned and contrived, and couldn't fix it. At last mother said, "Oh, well, never mind. Someone must just be left out. The children are most of them too young to care a great deal, and we old people who are left at home can do something to make up for it." As if anything could make up for such a ride and such a party as that would be!

My heart was in my throat, or anyhow it bumped and felt as though it was, for fear mother would say that I could be left out. She very often says, "Zephene can do that," when Zephene doesn't want to at all; but she didn't.

When Aunt Sarah said, "It seems too bad to leave anyone at home, when they have all heard about it and are planning to go, but I don't see anything else to be done," mother said:

"No, I don't either. Don't you think Alice would be willing to give it up if we planned a pretty surprise for her in its place? She is the youngest of the party, I think."

Wasn't I glad it wasn't I?

But Alice wants to go dreadfully! Almost more than any of

the others. She says she never saw a grown-up party in her life, and she dreams about it nights, and wonders how it will all be. I think it is too bad for Alice not to go, and I told mother so. That is the good in me, I suppose.

But when mother said, "Well, give her your place then, and you stay at home with me. I'll have a beautiful cake made, and you may invite the girls to come and spend the evening," I said:

"I think I see myself giving up my place to Alice Wells! Why, I am two years older than she."

That is the bad in me. I don't care; I can't help it. I'm going on that ride!

April 4

A strange thing has happened; I've given up my place to Alice! All the girls say, "Zephene Hammond, you are just splendid!" And Lizzie Price says it doesn't seem to her she could have done it. Even Burt Holland, who doesn't like to praise anybody, says it is "pretty plucky," and I know something about it which none of them know.

I hate to tell it, even here, where nobody will ever see it, because I shall tear out this page before Miss Clarkson comes home from Europe. I hate to write it, and yet I want to. I want to see how it looks written out.

This is the thing I know. I overheard them talking about it—

Alicia and Aunt Frances. Alicia is the bride—that is, she is going to be—and she is just lovely. “I cannot think of having any of them left at home,” she said. “We must plan it in some way. I have always meant to have all my cousins down at that beautiful old house together for a merry time, and for more than a year now I have been planning for this special occasion; I am not going to give it up.”

“But what will you do?” said Aunt Frances. “We cannot send one of them off alone, and if we could there is no carriage to get, and no one to drive. If the stage went now as it used to, we could manage it; but I don’t see any way.”

Aunt Frances always talks like that. When people are planning for a church supper and cannot think how to cook oysters and coffee and all those things, and serve them hot, she will look thoughtful and say, “If we only had a church kitchen, with a stove and everything, we could do it nicely.” Of course they could; and if we only had wings we could fly! It does provoke me to hear Aunt Frances go on.

“We must manage it,” said Alicia, and she put her head on one side, as she does when she is studying anything—I saw her through the stovepipe hole; I was peeping down at them and listening; that was horrid, too, but I’ll write it down, for I am going to tear this page out and burn it. At last Alicia said, “I know what I will do. I’ll take one of the girls in the carriage with us; the seats are wide, and we shall not mind it at all. I am sure Roland will not

object.”

Roland is to be the groom, and he would not object to anything that Alicia wanted to do, not if she proposed to walk to her new uncle’s and carry her little baby sister in her arms. Of course Aunt Frances said that wouldn’t do at all; that nobody ought to go in the bride’s carriage except the bride and groom and the best man and his lady; but Alicia said it should do; that she must have all the cousins.

Well, now, just think of the fun of riding all that distance with Alicia and Roland! I admire them both ever so much, and besides, I never was with a bride in my life, and I want to see how they act; and I am the oldest cousin of us young ones, and the one who really ought to have the place. It was only an hour afterwards that I offered my seat in the carriage to Alice Wells, and she is only a second cousin.

I felt awfully ashamed to have them praise me for unselfishness, and I keep thinking about that verse, which I wish wasn’t in my book: “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” I’m glad it is on the page which will get torn out. I don’t see anything very dreadful in it, after all. Nobody has to stay at home, and I might as well have the chance in the carriage as any of them. I’m going to, anyhow.

April 7

This is the day of the ride, and the wedding and. everything, and I didn't go! I mean I didn't go on the ride; I was at the wedding, and at the church reception afterwards, but here I am at home, and all the cousins are gone.

I don't understand it very well. I mean, I don't know why the bride's plan was given up, and of course I cannot ask, for nobody knows that I knew anything about it. There was a good deal of talk about seats being narrower than it was thought they were, and about getting the bridal dresses crushed, and I suppose Alicia had to give up her plan to please the others. I know she almost cried when she kissed me good-by, and whispered that she was so sorry I was not going. And Alice Wells wanted to give up her place to me—really begged me to go—but I wouldn't; and now I am coming to the strangest part of this story.

I am really and truly glad to be at home instead of taking that beautiful ride, though I have a new dress on purpose to wear to the reception. I can't begin to tell you how mean I felt all day Sunday. I kept thinking what if my name was Jehu! I studied ahead and found out about him—how eager he pretended to be to serve God—and I said to myself, "That is just the way I acted about Alice going; I said it would be a shame not to have her when she was named 'Alice Alicia' for the bride." Oh! I've had a horrid time.

When mother came and told me that they had had a plan for

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me to go too, but it hadn't worked well and must be given up, I was so glad that I almost said "Good!" right out loud. Mother has done lots of nice things to make it pleasant for me while they are gone, and I've had a nice time, only I feel horrid mean whenever she says I was an unselfish girl and she is proud of me. I'm going downstairs now in two minutes to visit with mother, and I've just made up my mind what to do; I shall tell her all about it, the stovepipe hole, and the peeking and listening and all. So, old Jehu, you can look out for other company; I'm going to be honest at last, anyhow.

Bible verses are queer! I don't think my name can be Jonah, any more than it is Jehu, but it just seems to me as though word had come to me like his: "Preach the preaching that I bid thee."

Well, He bade me tell the exact truth, and I'm going to.

MAY

He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away that which he seemeth to have.

Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.

Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you.

God loveth a cheerful giver.



May 1

Dick Wilson ought to be able to understand that first verse. It describes him exactly. He has been expelled from school!

That looks dreadfully written out. Suppose it was about my brother! His mother came to school and saw the teachers alone, and they say she cried, and begged hard to have Dick come back and be tried once more; but they wouldn't do it. They said he had been tried a great many times already. It seems he has been

slipping away from school afternoons, and going down to the camp grounds and playing billiards with a lot of fellows there. He has been found out, and been talked to, and he promised to do better, and didn't. That was why the teachers would not take him back. They told his mother that it wasn't as though it was a first offense; that he had been reproved for it more than once, and every effort had been made to help him, but that he simply would not let himself be helped, and they could not have him in the school injuring others.

May 7

I don't know but it is wicked, but I can't seem to help applying that verse about "whosoever hath not," to my experience in school today. I hadn't a line of my history lesson; the girls came in yesterday afternoon and hindered me from studying—to be sure I could have gone to another room, but I did not feel like it. This morning I coaxed mother to give me an excuse, but she wouldn't; she said I had none, that if she wrote anything, she would have to say that I chose to sit and listen to my cousins' chatter instead of studying my lesson.

"Well," I said, "I shall get a demerit then; but I'm glad it is not my French lesson. I never like to disappoint Professor Picard." And all the way to school I comforted myself with the thought that I had my French beautifully, and that Professor Picard would say I

certainly ought to go to France. He said that one day.

A dreadful thing happened to me! I found after we were all seated in class that I had made a mistake in the French lesson, turned over two leaves instead of one, and had the wrong exercise. And the Professor, who had company and had called upon me to translate, was vexed because I could not, and would not listen to my explanation; or rather he made sport of it.

He said, “Mademoiselle Hammond would do well to have some friend go home with her to keep the place in her text book.”

Then I had to go into history without knowing anything about it, and be mortified again. So I honestly think the verse fits me a little, though not in the way it was meant; for I had no history lesson, and that which I thought I had slipped away from me.

May 16

Dick Wilson is sick; they are afraid he is going to die. He is very unhappy; they say he cries a great deal, and when his mother or the minister tries to help him he says it is of no use, that he has been a very wicked boy and deceived his teachers and his friends, and that there is no help for him. It made me feel dreadfully to see that verse about being “separated from God” by sins; it seemed as though it was the way poor Dick felt; though I do not suppose he is worse than a great many other people, only he has got where he realizes it. I think the Golden Texts are sort of dreadful this month.

That next one frightens me every time I read it. Just think what a dreadful thing it would be to hear somebody say that the Lord had forsaken you, and to be told that it was your ow' fault. I do hope Dick will get well.

May 28

I have had a real queer time.

Our class are all going to give Miss Anderson a wedding present. She is going to be married and go as a missionary. We wanted to give her a sewing-machine; the girls were each going to give a dollar, but I couldn't. I had just twenty-five cents, and mother said she could not spare any more, and that that was enough for a young girl, she thought. I behaved very badly, I am afraid—cried, and said I never could do as other girls did, and that if I couldn't give but twenty-five cents I didn't want to give anything.

One night I had a splendid thought; it was while I was drying the dishes. I had been reading in the paper about the new-fashioned needles where you press the thread against a little hole in the top and the needle would be threaded; you could do it in the dark, it said. I was going the next Saturday to Auntie Osborne's, in town, and I decided to take my twenty-five cents and buy some needles and see if I couldn't sell them to people in town who cannot see very well. I didn't tell anybody a thing about it, but I

sent off my letter that night, and got back several papers of needles. I was afraid they would be a humbug—so many things are—but they were not, they worked beautifully. I went outdoors in the dark and threaded one just as easy. What a time I had selling those needles! I wouldn't have done it here where people know me for anything, but Auntie Osborne hasn't lived in town but a few months, and I am a stranger there.

I went around to houses showing my needles, and all the old ladies and some of the young ones were very much pleased. Most of them had never heard of such needles, and bought them gladly. Before I came home I had made my dollar for the sewing-machine. Then I told mother all about it, and told her I was going to earn money after this for my benevolence; that I was going to keep watch of the papers and see what cheap new things there were, and sell them. She said it was a very good plan, and that she did not see why I should object to selling them among my friends at home, but I would not like to do that.

Then I said I wished that I did not have to give a dollar for Miss Anderson's sewing-machine, that I needed it to set me up in business, but that I must, because the others were going to.

Mother told me to be sure and turn back leaves enough in my book, and read the last verse for the month, to see how well it fitted. I came up here at once to see what it was, and here it is; "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." I can't help it, I don't give my dollar very cheerfully; I worked hard to earn it, and I want it for a

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dozen things. I don't care so very much for Miss Anderson. I think the verses are rather hard on me this month.

Dick Wilson is better; he is going to get well. And they say he is a very different boy; but perhaps that won't last. People are often different when they are sick, and go back to being bad when they get well. I have heard father say so.

JUNE

Them that honor me I will honor.

The law of thy mouth is better unto me than
thousands of gold and silver.

Come and let us return unto the Lord.



June 4

Charlie Westfield ought to take that first verse for his, and remember it always; it has proved true in his case. Well, I do not suppose his honor came to him just because of what he did a little while before, but it is queer how it all happened.

We girls and boys were getting up a frolic in honor of Miss Otterson's birthday. Nobody likes her very well, and almost everybody makes fun of her because she is so vain of having taken lessons in gymnastics at the Adelphi. She is always saying, "When I was at the Adelphi they did" so and so, or "At the Adelphi they would never think of permitting such a thing!"

Ella Pierson had been in town spending a few days, and when

she came home she told us what lovely new books they had at Barnes and Benedict's—drawing books in the most elegant bindings; plushes in exquisite colors, and bound with silver or gold, just as you choose. Then she said the drawing paper was exquisite; the first page would be blank, ready for you to sketch whatever you pleased, and the next would have a lovely etching, or perhaps a water color or a little landscape done in oil, then the next page would be blank again; and that was the way it was all through the book. Ella Pierson proposed that we put our money together and buy one of these books, then coax her uncle, who is visiting them and is an artist, to make us some comical drawings on the blank pages about "What they do at the Adelphi."

We were all delighted with the idea, and we got up some of the most ridiculous pictures—caricatures; they were just as funny as they could be. Burt Holland made the rough sketches on slips of paper to give Ella's uncle an idea of what we meant, and some of them were so good we girls wished we had asked Burt to do the drawing; he has a great deal of talent. Miss Otterson has a very queer-shaped nose, and Burt imitated it in the caricatures in the most absurd way. Then the positions which some of the figures were made to take were too funny for anything, and every one of them looked a little like Miss Otterson. Then on every page there was a sentence referring to the Adelphi. Some of them were Miss Otterson's exact words. It was really very funny. Everybody laughed who saw it, and not a boy or girl thought of objecting until

it came to Charlie Westfield. What did he do but declare he thought it a very impolite and unkind thing!

“Nobody likes to be made fun of,” he said, “and those pictures just make fun of her. They are the meanest kind of fun, too, because they show off things about her which she cannot help. She can’t have any other nose than the one she wears, and she can’t get rid of her long neck, nor help being taller than looks well; and I, for one, don’t think we ought to caricature such things.”

We all talked at once, and told him he was too silly for anything, and too good to live, and that he needn’t help buy the book if he didn’t want to; and one or two of the boys were mean enough to hint that he objected because he was so poor he had nothing to give.

“That’s all right,” said Charlie, very quietly. “I am poor; I have very little money to give for anything. I couldn’t raise but five cents toward this present any way I could fix it; but I should like to give that, if the present were something nice that Miss Otterson would enjoy showing to her friends. As it is I can’t join you, and it is no more than fair to tell you that I think you are doing a mean thing.”

“Oh, never mind, Charlie!” Burt Holland said, in his most patronizing tone. “Don’t go into heroics for five cents. I’ll give that, in addition to what I have already promised; and you may be counted in and save your money in the bargain.”

Some of us thought that was mean, and said so, but Charlie

did not say a word. He never talks a great deal.

At last Fanny Brooks spoke. "What is the harm?" she asked. "I don't understand. Charlie, what hurt can it do to give Miss Otterson some funny pictures? It is a lovely book, and will look just beautiful on her center table."

"Yes," said Leonard Pierson; "that's the talk. Explain yourself, old fellow; what harm are we doing?"

Charlie hesitated a moment, then he said, "I am not very good at explaining; I can feel things better than I can tell them. Don't you all feel that such a present as you are planning isn't just what you would like if you were in Miss Otterson's place? And don't you know that she will be a little hurt by it, although she may not show it? It seems to me you must feel those two things, and if you do, why, then those of us who belong to Jesus Christ and try to live by his rule have no business with it. I for one, belong to him, and want to follow his lead every time."

For a minute no one spoke; it seemed so sort of strange for a boy to talk like that! At last Burt Holland made a low bow, and said, "Parson Westfield, I'm proud to meet you. When do you begin extra meetings?" He drawled the words out in a queer way, and made his voice sound just like Deacon Streeter's—he talks through his nose, or else he doesn't, I don't know which it is; his voice has a kind of twang that makes people want to laugh.

Any way, we all laughed, and all the rest of the day the boys and some of the girls called Charlie "Parson Westfield," and we all

said he was “too poky for anything,” and we went on getting our present ready for Miss Otterson. It is to be given on the last day of school,

The next day we almost forgot about it in the excitement of having Dr. Masters visit our school. He is the very biggest doctor in the world, I suppose; at least he is very big indeed and very rich; he gives thousands and thousands of dollars away every year! When he was a boy he spent a very happy summer in this town, and always wanted to come back and see it, and this is the first time he has. He is spending two days with General McMartin, and was coming to visit our school because he came to the little red schoolhouse which stood on the spot where our building stands when he was a boy.

Well, he came, and he is tall and handsome and pleasant. Everybody admired him ever so much, and Ella Pierson was pluming herself upon having handed him a singing-book, because he smiled and said “Thank you” to her, when we had a sensation. It was at the five minutes’ recess, and we were standing around in groups watching to see Dr. Masters go out, when suddenly we heard him say to Professor Barney, “Isn’t there a boy named Charlie Westfield in the school?”

“Oh, yes!” said the professor. “That is he over by the south window.” Then the doctor said something in a lower tone, and Professor Barney raised his voice and called, “Westfield, step this way, please.”

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“Whew!” said Burt Holland. “What is up, I wonder? I wouldn’t be in the Parson’s shoes now for a good deal.” But I guess he would have been for a very little.

“This is Charlie Westfield,” said Professor Barney, and Dr. Masters held out his hand and said, “How do you do, Charlie? I’m glad to meet you. I knew your father, my boy—knew him well, and loved and honored him. A better boy never lived; he wouldn’t have done a mean or small thing no matter what was to be gained by it; and he was always brave enough to stand out squarely for the right, even when it was unpopular. The truth is, he was a servant of the Lord, and tried to honor him in small things as well as great. I hope you are like your father my boy.”

All this time he was holding Charlie’s hand, and had one arm thrown across his shoulder. If ever a boy has a right to feel honored I think it is Charlie Westfield.

June 11

We are not going to give Miss Otterson the caricatures—or yes, we are, but not that kind. Ella Pierson’s uncle is going to make a caricature of each one of us—real splendid work, and the pictures are just as funny as they can be We have all agreed to it and think it will be real fun. He is going to caricature the awkward positions we take, and the mistakes we make. We are each to tell him what we consider our worst mistake, and he will make a

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picture of it. Charlie Westfield has made the funniest outline of himself for it, and he has given ten cents; he says be “happened on an extra five unexpectedly.”

We all like Charlie real well.

JULY

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among uis.

Behold the Lord of God which taketh away the sin of
the world.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee,
and manifested forth his glory.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life.



July 18

I could almost think mother told Mr. Price what I said about the Golden Texts this month, but she says she never did. I told her they would be easy enough, because they were just statements of facts, and had no directions for us to live by. Mother said she thought the fact that Jesus had died for us ought to suggest enough to live by; of course I did not make any answer to that. But on Sunday Mr. Price acted exactly as though he had heard me say those words to mother. We talked about the first miracle, and what

a wonderful thing it would have been to have seen the water turn into wine; then Mr. Price said, "Girls, there is a verse in the lesson which I want you to take for your motto this week. Whenever you repeat the Golden Text, which I know some of you do each morning and evening, let it hinge itself to a certain direction which the mother of Jesus gave to the servants on that day when the miracles of Jesus began. The words are, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.'"

Mr. Price said there was a natural connection between the Golden Text and the direction, because one who could perform such miracles had a right to perfect obedience. Well, we talked about it a good while, and I said of course we would promise; that I thought all respectable people in these days tried to do as God wanted them to. Then, when some of the girls exclaimed over that, I said I didn't mean exactly that, but all people who went to church and kept the Sabbath and tried to live right did, of course, and I was sure I was perfectly willing to try.

I had not the least idea where such a promise would lead me. Nobody but our folks know about what it did. I shall write it out here, because mother says it belongs to the verses. There are five of us girls who take lessons on the violin, and the Choral Union sent word up to our school that the music teacher might select one pupil to compete for the prize which was to be given to the best player. The prize was a ten-dollar gold piece. We girls didn't any of us expect to take it, even if we got a chance to play, but we all

wanted to try, because it is a good deal of an honor to be invited to join in the Choral Union concert.

We all set to work and practiced hours and hours over the pieces to be played; and when the time came for our music teacher to decide which should be chosen, she declared that three of us played with such equal merit that she could not choose between us, and that she would put three cards into a box, two blanks and one with her name on it, then we might draw them out, and the one who drew the card with her name should be the player. So we did it, and I drew her name!

I was too delighted for anything, but Ella Pierson cried dreadfully; her eyes looked as red as could be the next morning. She told one of the girls she wouldn't care so much, only her Uncle Thompson was very fond of violin music, and had told her that if she could get a chance to try for the prize and win it, he would pay for her lessons next year, and have her take of Professor Vitale. He is an Italian who gives lessons in the city, and plays just exquisitely.

I felt real sorry for Ella, but I never had a thought of helping her until just the afternoon before the concert. I had tried on my white dress and sash and everything, to see if it was all just right, and then I said to mother, "Let me play a few notes on my piece, to see if the dress fits the music."

Mother laughed and said she was afraid I was growing vain, and father said, "It would be almost a miracle if a child did not

grow vain, prinked out in finery like that for exhibition.” It was just such a little thing as that which started me. The word “miracle” made me think of that first one, in Cana, and I said over the Golden Text: “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.” That made me think of our promise to Mr. Price, just as he said it would; and I am sure I do not know why I thought of Ella Pierson.

It came to me just then, for the first time, that I might give her my chance to play at the concert. She certainly played the piece as well as I did—in fact she is a better player than I. It is only because this selection is one of Auntie’s favorites, and I have heard her play it often and been drilled by her, that I could do it well enough to be chosen. And Ella cared for the chance of the prize, and I did not expect the prize at all, and would not be in the least disappointed not to receive it; but then, of course, it was fun to perform at the grand concert and be the only little girl in the set. Of course I wanted to, and why should I give up to Ella? Nobody expected me to. I kept drawing the bow over the strings, but even the music seemed to say those words: “Whatsoever he saith unto you do it.” Ever so many Bible verses that I learned long ago came trooping up at the same time to be thought about. “Even Christ pleased not himself,” was one, and “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you,” and “In honor preferring one another.” I did not know there were so many about the same thing. Then there was my promise that I would try all the week to do whatever he

said; and I had been so sure that I was willing to do so!

“For pity’s sake, child,” Auntie said at last, “what are you playing? It sounds like a funeral dirge.”

I wasn’t playing anything, only those words and thinking. I did not seem to feel, then, as though I should do it, although I began to be pretty sure that Jesus was asking me to. And at last I did it! We had quite a time. Auntie thought it was silly, and father said he did not see that I was bound to do anything of the kind; but mother said, “If the child’s conscience has spoken I don’t want to advise,” and at last I told Ella Pierson she might have my chance.

At first she was so surprised she did not believe I meant it; then she said she could not do such a thing, of course! But she did. The concert has been, and was splendid. I sat in the audience with the others and listened; and Ella Pierson took the prize. I think I am glad. I know I am glad. I should like to do everything always just as Jesus wants me to; but dear me! I know I won’t.

AUGUST

Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

I am that bread of life.

Lord, evermore give us this bread.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.



August 18

A very strange and solemn and terrible thing has happened to me! I am sure that is the exact truth; all those words apply to it. It began in a little bit of a way, as it seems to me all large things do. It was last Sunday afternoon. Ella Pierson was staying with us, because her father and mother were gone five miles away to the funeral of a cousin, and Lizzie Price came over to borrow a volume of our Biblical Encyclopaedia for her brother. Ella and I were looking over the Sunday-school lessons for this month, because we didn't know what else to do; there was nothing we

wanted to read, except a lovely story from the circulating library, which mother said was anything but a Sunday book.

We read the Golden Texts, one after another, while Lizzie stood waiting for father to find the right volume, and I giggled, and said they were all about bread and water, and that I didn't think much of either. I said I hated just plain bread, and would be glad not to see a crumb of it for a whole month; and as for water, that in our well tasted so horribly of iron that I did not take a drink any oftener than I could help, and wouldn't drink it at all if mother would let me have all the coffee I wanted. I said some more things, real silly ones, and Ella laughed; but Lizzie Price looked sober, and said she did not think we ought to talk that way about Bible verses.

I said we were not talking about Bible verses, but about bread and water, and I did think it real strange that something more important was not used in the verses, instead of those common things. Then I said something else that was real silly; I'm sure I don't know now what it was, but I know Ella laughed, and Lizzie said I was real wicked, and that perhaps I would be taught a lesson some day; that people often were who made fun of the Bible.

Then I got angry. I told Lizzie that after this we would call her "Miss Pious," that she was always setting herself up to be better than anybody else, and that I should say just what I pleased in spite of her, and oh, ever so many hateful things I said. Lizzie did not answer a word; she just took her book, when father came into the

room, said "Thank you, sir," and went away. After that I did not feel comfortable, and I almost quarreled with Ella because she said she didn't think I ought to have snapped out at Lizzie so. It was a horrid afternoon; I was glad when supper time came.

The next afternoon Cousin Laura offered to take me with them to the beach for a ride. I was glad enough to go, but if I had known all the things that would happen, of course I would never have gone. In the first place, Cousin Dick fixed himself under an umbrella in the sand with a book, and neither knew nor cared what became of Laura and me. Then Mr. Charlie Parker appeared, and took Laura a-walking away up the beach, and she didn't care what became of me after that.

The tide was out, and the ocean was almost as still as a little lake; I never saw it so quiet; and there wasn't a shell of any account; but there was a boat fastened to the shore, and I got in it and took a seat, and played I was a fisherman going out to sea. I never dreamed of trouble, and I don't know when it happened, nor how it happened, but the first thing I knew that boat had got itself loose and drifted out to sea! I had taken a pencil and paper from my pocket, and was trying to make a sketch of the sea and the lights on it for Ella Pierson, and I suppose that is the reason why it happened without my noticing. I shouted to Dick, but he read on and did not hear me, and Laura was nowhere in sight; and the next thing I lost sight of Dick! Oh, dear, dear! Shall I ever forget how I felt when the awful truth came over me that I was lost on the

ocean? It makes me tremble so to think of it that I can hardly write. I'm going to put it into as few words as possible. I stayed out in that awful boat from Monday afternoon until Wednesday night, or rather Thursday morning, for it was almost morning when they found me! Think of how mother and father must have felt all this while. And Cousin Laura and Dick—they say they thought poor Laura would be insane; she blamed herself, you see, for not taking care of me. But I do not think she was to blame; I was supposed to be old enough to take care of myself.

It would make a very long story, if I dared to tell it—all the thoughts that came to me, and what the people said and did, and how they found me at last. Perhaps I will write it someday, but I don't believe I ever shall. I'm telling this part because it belongs to the verses; I was so awful hungry, but that was nothing to the awful thirst! And in the very midst of my troubles I thought of how I had made fun of the Bible verses being all about bread and water, and how I had said I hated bread, and would rather have coffee than water to drink. Then I thought of what Lizzie Price said, that perhaps I would be punished for it. Oh, it was just awful! Of course all the time I was dreadfully afraid. I tried to think, and I tried to pray, but I could only say over and over again, "I am afraid! I am afraid!" I cannot tell it!

Cousin Dick came out on a steam yacht, at last, and picked me up. I was unconscious when they found me, and I have been sick for more than a week. Lizzie Price was so good. Mother says she

shall never forget how she tried to comfort her. She was with her that morning when they brought me home. Everybody else was out searching somewhere, but mother was too weak to go; she kept getting up from the bed and going out to look up and down the road to see if she could not see anything of me. When Lizzie saw the wagon coming that was bringing me home, she was most distracted for fear mother would see it; she just succeeded in coaxing her to come in as they stopped at the gate. Lizzie says if she had seen them lift me out, all limp and unconscious as I was, she is afraid she would have died. Poor, darling mother!

Mr. Price came over to see me every day while I was sick. I like him better than I did. He said one dreadful thing, but not until I was able to walk around the room. I told him all about the bread and water verses, and about how hungry I was, and how dreadfully I felt. I couldn't help it; it seemed to me I must tell somebody, and they told me not to talk about it to mother, because she shudders and turns pale whenever I speak of the boat, so I told him.

He was still for a minute or two, then he said, "Do you know, Zephene, people sometimes learn what it is to do without the Bread and Water of life in the same terrible way?"

"How?" I asked him.

"By having the opportunity for receiving it taken from them; in other words, God will not always wait, and urge his children to be fed. Someday, if they will not accept his help, he will turn away and leave them to find out what soul hunger is, with nothing to

satisfy it.”

I did not say anything to him, but I have thought about what he said a great deal. I almost died, and I was afraid. I almost starved, and it is dreadful to starve. I don't want to have a starved soul. Why don't I try to be fed with the bread which Jesus gives?

Mr. Price sent me a little note, yesterday, to ask if I would join him in praying these words: “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” I didn't tell him I would, or I wouldn't. I wonder if I shall? I don't know what Ella Pierson would say; she says there is time enough for girls as young as we to think about such things; but then, she has never been out in an open boat at sea all alone, or perhaps she would feel differently.

SEPTEMBER

As many as received Him, to them gave He power to
become the sons of God.

One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever.



September 4.

I have settled it! I am sure I can hardly remember when I haven't thought a good deal about being a Christian; I always meant to some time, but I could never feel quite ready. When Lizzie Price joined the church, I remember I had some of the queerest thoughts about it. Sometimes I would feel real vexed at people for talking to me on the subject. Just before Miss Clarkson went to Europe, she tried to get me to promise to be a Christian right away, but I wouldn't. And Lizzie Price has tried to talk to me some, but I wouldn't listen to her. I told Ella Pierson I wasn't

going to have a girl no older than I was myself preach to me.

But ever since I got lost on the ocean I have felt afraid to die, and almost afraid to live, for fear something would happen to me. Mr. Price said there was no need of living so; that I might arrange things so that I need not be afraid, whatever happened. I did not understand him very well, nor more than half believe him, although I knew it must be true; he showed me that lovely Bible verse about keeping people “in perfect peace.” At last I really did wish with all my heart that I was a Christian, but I did not know the way. When Lizzie Price joined the church, or a good while before she did, there were meetings every night, and people prayed and cried a good deal, and spoke in the meetings; Lizzie Price, I remember, said she was such a sinner. I didn’t feel like standing up in meeting and saying so, and we haven’t any meetings, any way, only Sundays and Wednesdays. Of course I could not say it then. It did not seem to me that I ever could. I went to Wednesday evening prayer meeting last week and week before, and listened as hard as I could, but it did not seem to me that there was any use in trying to feel as those men did who talked; I never could in the world.

At last I made up my mind to a dreadful thing. Ever since Mr. Price told me about how, sometimes, God left people, and when they wanted food for the soul they couldn’t get it—he says he did not say that, but it sounded like that to me—and ever since it has frightened me to think of it, and I made up my mind that it had happened to me! God would not let me be a Christian now,

because I had refused so many times. I felt perfectly dreadful! It was worse than being hungry for bread and thirsty for water. At last I told Mr. Price. He tried to talk to me and explain things, but I could not understand, and I cried so I couldn't hear what he said. At last he spoke in a loud, firm voice that startled me: "Zephene, stop crying and listen to me. Suppose that what you fear had really come to pass, would it make any difference with your duty? Ought you not to serve God, whether he fed your soul with peace and made you glad and happy or not?"

"Why, yes, sir," I said slowly, "but then—"

"Never mind the 'but thens,'" he said. "The question is whether Zephene Hammond is in earnest, sincerely means to do right, and will try from this moment to order her life as she believes Jesus Christ wants her to, no matter whether she has a happy hour or not?"

Before I could answer, mother called to me that father wanted me that instant, and I had to run. I was almost glad, for I did not seem to be ready to answer his question. But I kept thinking about it, and all the while I was helping mother this morning my mind was on that. But it was when I was coming back from the cow-yard with the milk-pail that I decided it all. Such a strange place in which to decide such a thing! I always thought it would be in a church, or a prayer meeting, or some dignified, quiet place. As I walked along, balancing the milk, and being careful not to spill it, all at once something said to me, "Zephene, do it. Make up your

mind now, right away, that you will belong to Jesus, and try your very best to serve him, whether you are happy or unhappy, and no matter how hard it is.” And I stood still for a second out there in the tall grass, and said aloud, “I will.”

Then a strange thing happened. Last Sunday Dr. Parton preached on the words, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” Father said he made the meaning very plain, but I did not think much about it until I had said those words aloud, and suddenly the verse came to me and was just as plain! I had “received” him; I had fully decided to let him direct me in everything, and to try every day to serve him, and he had promised all such that they should become sons and daughters of his. For a minute I was so glad I could have shouted, out there in the meadow. It seemed to me as though I must run that minute and tell somebody that it wasn’t too late, that God meant to have me for his child, and feed my soul with his living bread. But I didn’t; instead, I carried the milk to mother, because she was waiting for it.

I have been very busy all day, and have not had a chance to tell even Mr. Price; and Murray is not well, and mother has been busy with him, so that I have not had a minute alone to talk to her. I came up to my room a little while ago to sit down and think how I should tell it, anyway; what words I should use to Mr. Price, for instance, and I laughed when I opened my diary and saw the verses written at the beginning of this month.

The Exact Truth

“Here are the very words for me,” I said: “‘One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.’ I have been as blind as a bat, but now I see in Jesus my Saviour and friend. I’ll copy that verse, sign my name to it, and send it to him.” Why, I’ll put the next one also, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” because the last time I saw him I was so sure God had decided to let me starve!

Saturday

I did it. This morning Mr. Price was in the yard talking with father. I did not think he saw me, but he turned as I passed, and held out his hand with a glad smile. “I received your confession of faith,” he said. “It made me more glad than I can tell you. I have answered it with words which I want you to remember as long as you live,” and he put a lovely hand-painted booklet into my hand, on the cover of which were the words, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever.” I wonder if he knew it was one of our texts for the month?

OCTOBER

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men
unto me.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another
Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.



October 5

Miss Clarkson has come home! It doesn't seem possible that it is almost a year since she went away. I hope she has forgotten all about this blank book which she gave me, and will never ask to see it; there are such silly and horrid things in it. I have been looking it over; I don't see how I could have done such mean things as I have sometimes; but I have told the exact truth, anyhow, about every one of them.

Yesterday the sermon was about the resurrection: "I am the resurrection and the life." It was a beautiful sermon about the soul

being resurrected when it gave itself to Jesus. My soul has been resurrected, then; I thought when I wrote that verse down that it had nothing personal about it; but yesterday's sermon made it very plain. I have a new life to live.

October 13

I want to go on a mission! I have been thinking about it for some days, and now I have made up my mind. I have taken that third verse for my motto: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;" and the thing he did was to go all over, telling people how to be saved. That is what I want to do. I never thought much about it until I wrote down that verse about his "drawing all men unto him." Of course that is the work to fill one's mind; I do not see how people can be satisfied with anything less. I suppose everybody will say I am too young, but I do not see why. I know about Jesus, and I understand what one ought to do in order to become a Christian, so what is the use in wasting all these years, waiting to become a woman? I do not think it is right. I am dreadfully afraid mother and father will not let me go; they will be almost sure to think I am too young. In fact, I talked a little bit with mother about it, and I can see just how she feels; but I know I shall never be happy until they consent to my becoming a missionary.

October 16

I have told Mr. Price about it. He was very nice; I was afraid at first that he might laugh at me, but he did not at all; he talked very gravely. I find that he thinks exactly as I do—that it is the only work in the world worth doing, and that people have no need, and indeed no right to wait until they are men and women. “Young people are the very ones to become missionaries,” he said; “they can reach a class whom older ones cannot.”

It almost took my breath away to hear him say it. Father and mother have such a high opinion of him that I should not be surprised if he could get them to think as he does.

“Would you choose home or foreign missions?” he asked me, and I think my cheeks must have been the color of the crimson sofa pillow when I tried to answer; the question seemed to bring the work so near to me. I said I thought, perhaps, I ought to say foreign, because so few people liked to go far away from home; but that I felt perfectly willing to do so; and besides, I had a taste for the languages, and perhaps could learn some of those difficult native tongues easier than some did; but still, I said, I wanted to go where I was most needed. That was right, he said; some people were willing to work only in certain places, but that was not the true missionary spirit.

October 17

Mr. Price is real queer! This afternoon he came in to see father, and while he waited for him, sat talking with mother, who was sewing. I had my German grammar and was trying to make out a lesson; there is nobody to teach me German, but I think I ought to begin to learn another language, since I think of being a foreign missionary, and I have a German book, so I thought I would make a start with that. I asked Mr. Price where Lizzie was, and he said she had gone on a foreign mission. I was so startled I did not know what to say.

“How is that?” mother asked, smiling, and he explained that she had gone to stay with and amuse Teddy Birket while his mother went to the doctor’s to tell how he was, and get his medicine. Teddy Birket is a little Irish boy who has been sick for three weeks. I don’t see how Lizzie can endure it to go there; they live in one room, and have nothing very comfortable; and sometimes she has to wash Teddy’s face, and feed him his gruel. I should just hate it. I don’t know what her brother meant, by calling it a “foreign mission.” I am sure washing little Irish boys’ faces, and feeding them gruel isn’t missionary work.

Soon after that, Mr. Price told mother that she looked over tired, and when she explained that there had been extra work, and Murray had needed a great deal of care because he was not well, he said, “The truth is, Mrs. Hammond, you need a home

missionary in your family.” Mother laughed and said she had often wished one would come along; she was sure she could find plenty to do. And I am sure I don’t know what either of them meant.

October 29

I think I have been a little goose; and that is the exact truth. I had a chance to go on a foreign mission sooner than I expected. That very night in which I last wrote in this book, father came from the office with a letter from Aunt Sarah, asking to have me come and stay with her for a week. She had sprained her ankle, and wanted me to wait upon her. Now I just perfectly detest going to Aunt Sarah’s. Even when mother and father were going, I used to beg to be left at home; she and I never did get along well. I cried, and acted hateful, and said I would not go a step; and father was just as stern as he could be, and said that was no way to talk; that of course I would go, when my aunt was disabled and needed me, and he was ashamed of the spirit I was showing.

I don’t know what ailed me, but I did not feel a bit ashamed until I was complaining to Mr. Price about how hard it was, and he looked surprised, and said: “Why, I thought you wanted to be a missionary?”

At first I felt vexed, and I guess I answered pertly that I did not call it being a missionary to go and wait on Aunt Sarah’s lame foot. I never heard anybody talk as he did, after that. I believe he

knows the whole Bible by heart. I had told him about choosing that verse “Let this mind be in you,” for my life motto, and he repeated it, and ever so many other verses, about how he “went about doing good,” and “pleased not himself;” and “took upon him the form of a servant.” That last was after I had said that I wanted to be a missionary, and not Aunt Sarah’s servant.

After a while I got dreadfully ashamed of myself; and though I really was not willing to go to Aunt Sarah’s, I did not say anything more about it, and I went, of course. It was fully as horrid as I had expected it would be; but I really and honestly tried to please her, and although she found fault with me the whole time. When at last Cousin Emmeline came and I was at liberty to go home, Aunt Sarah called me to her and told me to tell my mother that she guessed I had done the best I could, and, on the whole, much better than she expected. Mother says that was a great deal for Aunt Sarah to say. I came home last night.

I have learned ever so many things since I went away. One is that I cannot, no I cannot go on a mission! I cannot leave mother, and father, and Murray. I told Mr. Price so this morning, and he smiled and said:

“I hope that is not true; you have been on a mission for the last two weeks—a mission of kindness, and unselfishness, and patience. I hope and believe that the Lord Jesus has much work for you to do in his field; that does not hinder my also hoping and believing that for some years to come, your special field of labor is

to be the dear home where God has set you. It is a very good sign when a girl of your age cannot leave father and mother.” I begin to understand what Mr. Price means.

October 30

Something wonderful has happened! That is, I suppose it happened a good while ago, but I have just heard of it. Mr. Price is going to Japan as a missionary, and Miss Clarkson is going with him. They are to be married in the spring. Just think of her leaving her beautiful home, and all her family, and going away off to Japan! It does not seem to me as though I could! I am so glad to understand at last, that God wants girls of my age to stay at home and help their mothers. I have helped her all I could today, and I know she was pleased. I heard her say to Mr. Price tonight, “What do you think? A home missionary has come to live with us, and she makes my life a great deal easier.”

I felt ashamed and glad both at once. I know I have been a conceited idiot; I wonder that mother has been so patient with me; it seems she understood me all the time, better than I did myself. Mr. Price says that almost the last thing Jesus did before he died on the cross, was to care for his mother. That was beautiful! Just after Mr. Price said it he added:

“I am very glad you have taken the motto: ‘Let this mind be in you.’ Live close to it, and it will lead you safely.” Miss Clarkson

has given me a lovely hand-painted screen, with that text on it. I mean to try to do as he said, and” live close to it.”

This is the last page of my book. I have filled it full. Miss Clarkson wants it for hers, but I do not see why; there is not a line in it fit to read, except the texts, and that is the exact truth. Oh, yes, there is a good deal about Mr. Price. I said I did not like him; that was a mistake. I like him very much indeed; next to father and mother I like Miss Clarkson and him better than anybody in the world. They say perhaps I will come out to them in Japan one of these days, but I do not feel now as though I should. I’m a missionary, and I mean to be, but I belong to the home field for the present. I’m so glad. Old book, good-bye. I wish I had written nice things in you, but some way I couldn’t.

ZEPHENE HAMMOND (*aged thirteen*).



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