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THE
TICKETS.



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No. 33.

THE TICKETS,
OR A STORY FOR
SABBATH SCHOLARS.



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[See page 13.]



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CHAPTER I.

"Dear Mother," cried little Ellen Morris, as she returned one evening from Sabbath School, "will you help me to count all these tickets, and just untie my bonnet, and hear what I have to tell you, I know it will please you so."

"It would please me, Ellen, were you a steady, composed little girl, like Charlotte Campbell, who is never in a hurry, and I dare say never tied her bonnet in such a knot as this. There!—now put it carefully away, and return quietly, and I will first help you count your tickets, and then hear your wonderful story."

Little Ellen tried to walk slowly as she was bid, and put away her things,

but she could not forbear running down stairs, and jumping off the two lower ones, though at another time she would have recollected that her mother had often reproved her for that very thing. She however placed her little chair by the side of the table, and emptying her ticket-bag on it, said, "Mother, I think I had better tell you my story *first*, and then I can count steadier you know."

So Mrs. Morris smiled kindly on her, and she began thus; "Why this is it, mother, Charlotte Campbell and I have been trying this long time, to get tickets enough to purchase a Bible; you know how much we have studied; well, this morning we agreed to get up at sunrise, and learn thirty verses, before school. So we did, and when our teacher, Miss Lawrence, heard us recite, she was much pleased, and said we were the best scholars in the class, and all the girls looked quite ashamed, we were so much praised. So next Sabbath, mama, we are to have our Bibles, and who do you think is to give them to us? Why good old Mr. Pierpont that preached for us to-day; and Miss Lawrence is going to have our names called off, and then we are to rise, and take them before the whole school—but you don't look pleased, mama. for all I am so good."

"No, my dear child," returned Mrs. Morris, "I am not entirely pleased, for I am afraid you are a proud little girl, and therefore, am sorry to see you thus publicly rewarded."

"What! sorry that I am called the best girl in the class, mother?" cried little Ellen.

"You do not understand me, my child, I regret only, that your teacher, though undoubtedly she meant kindly, should have told you so, because there are several little girls, that are as diligent as yourself, and as dutiful and affectionate at home, who, I dare say, felt hurt at this commendation: there is poor Sally Maxwell, for instance, who broke her leg and lay so patiently all winter, don't you think *she* is a good girl, although she has been able to get but few tickets? There is the little girl, too, who staid at home, to take care of her blind father, do you think yourself better than she is? Think a little, and then speak *honestly*, my dear."

"Why then, mama, I don't think I am half as good, no, not half; but Miss Lawrence told me I was the best girl, and I certainly felt a great deal happier than I do now."

"You felt *prouder*, Ellen, and that is the very feeling I want you to guard

against, for it has reigned in many a heart as young as yours, and indeed in every one which is not influenced by the love of God, and taught by his Holy Spirit. Now to discover this enemy, my dear child, and check his advances, we must think what actuates us most, and constantly examine the motives which influence our conduct."

"Examine our motives! mother, I don't understand you."

"Look for the *secret reason* that lies in your heart, my dear, and you will often find it very different from the outward, or apparent one: now, for example, has it been your secret wish to get this Bible, that you may take it into your little room, and read and pray over it, or was it not rather that you might have the pleasure of seeing your own name in it, and have it presented to you before the whole school, by good old Mr. Pierpont? think *once more*, my dear little girl, and tell your mother the whole truth."

Now Ellen was in reality a proud child, but a candid and ingenuous one; her mind, therefore, was open to conviction, and after she had looked thoughtfully down for some moments, she turned her eyes on her beloved parent, who had anxiously watched every feature, and exclaimed "mother, this is the se-

cond time you have told me about my own heart!"

They then proceeded to count the tickets, and although there were just enough to purchase the Bible, Ellen said nothing of having earned them by her great diligence, but only hoped Charlotte Campbell had got as many as herself. She then put them back very carefully into her little bag, and after having repeated a pretty hymn, she had just learned at the Sabbath School, she kneeled down, and resting her head on her little chair, said her evening prayer in a low and distinct voice; she then silently added a simple petition of her own, for she had been early taught to pray in her own childish language, and to do so had become easy to her.

She soon retired to her own little room, with its pleasant window facing the setting sun—where in a very few minutes she fell into a peaceful slumber, such as healthful childhood only experiences.

CHAPTER II.

As Ellen awoke the next morning, she recalled the last evening's conversation with her mother, and as she looked out at the window, and beheld the bright sun, smiling on all the trees and flowers, and heard the birds pouring forth their sweetest notes, she could not help saying to herself:

“How good and kind is God, to make such a beautiful world for us to live in; and yet we are proud and wicked, and do not deserve such pleasant things, but I will ask him this moment to take away my sin.” So thinking to herself, she went to the foot of her bed, and knelt down, and said softly:—

“Oh Lord, thou art very kind to me, but I am a sinful and wicked child. I find I am very proud, but wilt thou pardon me, and enable me to see whenever I am going to do a sinful action, and make me humble, and kind, and good to others, and change my heart by thy Spirit: Oh Lord, I beg this for Christ's sake. Amen.”

As soon as breakfast was over, Ellen begged permission to run across the garden to Charlotte Campbell's; which was granted on condition she would be back soon enough for school; so she ran down the steps, and through the avenue, scarcely noticing her little bed of violets and tulips; though they looked more beautiful and brilliant, than any colors ever made by human ingenuity, for even Solomon, in his most costly robes, was never arrayed so splendidly. But Ellen was in haste to meet her friend, and fancied every moment she should espy her coming along the lane, as they had

agreed to meet there early in the morning. However, she opened the gate that led from the garden into this grassy walk, but no friend appeared; so, finally thinking Charlotte must be helping her mamma, she walked along till she reached Mr. Campbell's house, without meeting any body.

As she opened the door, however, Charlotte ran to welcome her; but her face was very sad, as she cried, "Oh! Ellen, I shall not stand up with you next Sunday."

"Well, that is the very thing I came to talk about;" said Ellen, "and I am going to tell you what mamma said about it."

"Oh, but it will do no good to me to say a word about it, for I have lost my tickets, Ellen, *every one*," and then she burst into tears, adding, "I shall never get a Bible, after all;" for Charlotte was a fearful, desponding little girl, who possessed quick sensibilities, but with little resolution.

"What! lost your bag, Charlotte? How did you miss it? where did you lose it? and are you *sure* it is not to be found?" said Ellen eagerly. "But come," continued she, "don't cry, for I dare say I can find it. Do you remember how I would search for mamma's thimble, till I spied it, shining in a corner of the flower-

bed? well, I will look just so for your ticket-bag."

"Oh!" sobbed out Charlotte, "you are very kind to me; but I saw it go: I will tell you all about it. When we parted last night, I went along, swinging my bag on my finger, just so—till I stopped to look into the pond, and in looking over to see how pretty the shadow of the old elm-tree looked in the water, down went my bag; and I got a stick and tried to reach it, but it floated off a little way, and, just as I thought I had got it, it sunk quite down: but I could not help crying, when I found I must come away without it. I can't tell Miss Lawrence, because I don't know how many I had; and I shall never get a Bible now, I have no courage to try again."

"Yes, you shall; have courage, Charlotte, for you shall have half my tickets, and we will begin together again, and in a month we shall be just as well off as we were before; so don't shake your head, for if you love me, Charlotte, you will take them."

"But that is the very reason I cannot take them; no, I will look on next Sunday, and see you and"—

"Don't say a word about that, Charlotte; for I tell you once for all, it will give me no pleasure to get a Bible while

you have none ; and you must take half my tickets." So saying, the affectionate child ran away from her friend, and hurried home to execute her kind intention.

"Now I feel much happier," thought she, "than if I kept all these tickets ; for I could not look at Charlotte, and see her trying to smile when I knew she felt so sorry ; and mamma will be so pleased, too, and so will Miss Lawrence ; and I dare say she will tell of it to Mr. Pierpont ; and I am sure all that will be better than even to get the Bible. But what would mamma say to my having such motives as *these*?" said she, as the thought occurred to her, that now *self* was again predominant. You see, my young readers, Ellen had learned to look at the secret motive that governed her actions.

"What would mamma say to this," she continued to reason with herself, "and how must I appear before God? not like a good girl, even in the midst of my generosity, but like a selfish one, for I was all this time thinking of my reward. Now I begin to understand what mamma meant, when she talked about our motives."

Ellen now felt perplexed, for she saw she must either disappoint Charlotte or else hear herself commended for benevolence, when she was conscious of hav-

ing acted chiefly from selfish principles. So she sat down to think what course to pursue, and was no doubt assisted by that Spirit, to whose teachings she had just listened, and whose assistance she had implored. And it should be an abundant cause of thankfulness that this same Holy Spirit of God, which is the source of all wisdom, should condescend to enlighten the mind of a helpless, ignorant, insignificant child.

CHAPTER III.

The next week passed off rapidly, without any thing occurring to our two little friends worth relating; except that Ellen had insisted on Charlotte's acceptance of half her tickets; so that the face of the grateful little girl was again dressed in its usual smile of gladness; and the heart of Ellen glowed with increased affection for her, for it is very true, we love our friends the more, the more we oblige them, and consequently our happiness increases also. If any one of my dear little friends will try this experiment, I shall be well repaid for writing this story.

The Sabbath morning rose clear and delightful; not a sound disturbed the sacred stillness, as Ellen lightly tripped along the grassy avenue. Even the wind was fast asleep, and the water in the

beautiful little lake peacefully reflected the face of the heavens. She paused a moment on its bank, and a glow of gratitude swelled her young heart toward the Author of all this beauty.

But she soon heard the bell, which was the signal for the Sabbath Scholars, and she hastened to overtake Charlotte, and several little boys and girls who were coming from every direction toward the village church. Soon were seen the teachers joining their respective classes, and at a distance were some ladies and gentlemen walking leisurely along, among whom was Mr. Pierpont, the aged Minister, with white hair, and a mild, engaging countenance.

Ellen, as she passed him, longed to take his hand and lead him along; for she loved him, not only because he was old and feeble, but because he was a minister of Jesus Christ.

The children now took their places without noise, for the boys knew it was wrong to play on the Sabbath, and therefore it was much more quiet than in some other schools I have seen.

The superintendent, Mr. Bradford, then walked in; with the new Bibles in his hand, and Ellen held down her head when she thought of the part she was expected to act; but she could now search

her heart, and she knew too well the selfishness of its motives to be elated with pride. She felt that during the past week, she had commenced an acquaintance with herself. Such an acquaintance with the selfishness and sinfulness of all our hearts by nature, is the very *first* step in the Christian's difficult path-way toward heaven; the *second* must be the *denial* of our vain and selfish desires and pleasures.

Her teacher now called her to recite, and when she had finished, Miss Lawrence said to her, "you have said your lesson nicely, Ellen, and I am very proud of having two such girls as you and Charlotte. I shall therefore give Mr. Pierpont a good account of you, when he comes this way; give me your tickets now, both of you, that I may be ready."

"I have not so many as I had, ma'am," said little Ellen, and she knew not how to proceed; but Charlotte eagerly took up the story, and related all the circumstances, adding, "I did not want to take the tickets from Ellen, but she would make me: I would now be glad, Miss Lawrence, if you would tell her to take them back; I am sure she deserves one of those pretty Bibles." "No, my dear Charlotte," said her teacher, kindly, "I have no right, and no wish, to take

them from you, but I will go directly to Mr. Bradford and tell him the whole story and"——

"Oh, no, no, Miss Lawrence, pray don't," interrupted Ellen, "that is just what I was afraid of—I could not bear that, I had rather tell you all."

"Well, Ellen, provided you give me a good reason, I will do as you request, but speak quickly, my dear."

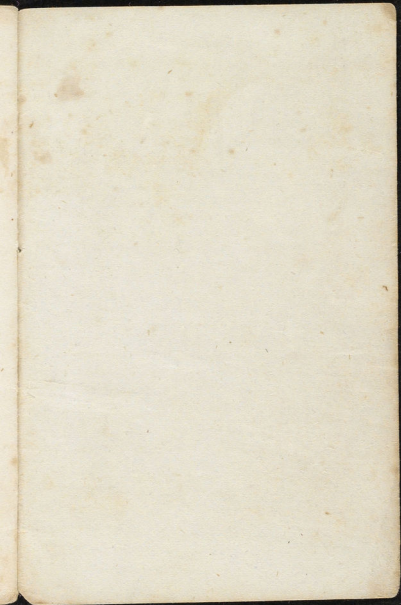
"This is the truth then," said Ellen, "and don't laugh at me, Miss Lawrence, when I tell my thoughts: my mamma, the other day, told me what *motives* meant, and showed me how to understand them, but at first I could not know how any body could see their feelings: but when Charlotte lost her tickets, and I promised her half mine, I thought at first it was all because I was sorry for her; but then, all at once it came to me, that I was hoping I could get the Bible too; for I thought you would be so pleased with me, that you would tell of it, and I should get a great deal of praise: then I thought and thought a great while, till I saw *that* was a *bad* motive, and I did not feel happy again, till I determined to tell you all about it, and beg you not to get any praise for me, for indeed I have been very proud."

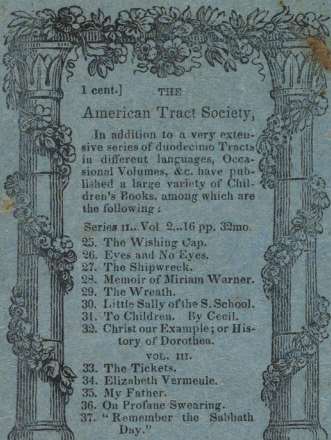
"Well, my dear little girl," said Miss

Lawrence, "I will do as you desire, and you shall earn your Bible quietly, without telling of the sacrifice you have made. "But," continued this ingenuous young lady, "you have taught *me* a good lesson; for though so much older than you, I have too often forgot the *secret motive*. For my own part I see my error in seeking to display your powers of understanding, at the expense of the better qualities of your heart; and if I had indeed destroyed your humility, I should have robbed you of one of the brightest Christian graces."

The scholars had by this time completed their lessons, and the business of distributing the Bibles now commenced. The names were called off, and the children stepped up before Mr. Pierpont, who accompanied each with a suitable and affectionate address; but our little Ellen sat still in her seat and looked on with much composure; she heard not her own name, but she was happier than she had ever been before; and as they each went to their respective homes, those of her class were heard to say, "they never loved Ellen Morris so well before, for they never knew her so kind and obliging."

THE END.





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