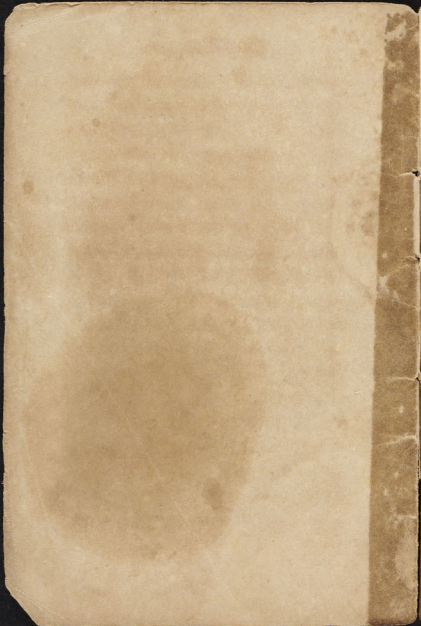




THE  
**BEST FRIEND.**

PHILADELPHIA:  
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,  
No. 146 Chestnut Street,



George S. Felt

6



THE  
BEST FRIEND.

---

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN S. S. UNION, AND REVISED  
BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

---

AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

PHILADELPHIA :  
NO. 146 CHESNUT STREET

---

THE

BEST FRIEND

---

---

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1831,  
by PAUL BECK, Jr. Treasurer, in trust for the American Sunday  
School Union, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court, of the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

---

## THE BEST FRIEND.

---

It was on a pleasant summer's evening that the minister in a town in New England, was taking his usual walk, after spending the day in his study. He was a good old man, who had preached for a long time to the people of his charge; and had been very careful to instruct them in the way of holiness; and he had been able, by God's grace, to persuade many to love God and keep his commandments.

The sun had already gone down in

the west, and shone only on the clouds in the sky, when the minister entered the village grave-yard. We are all apt, when we are walking alone at this time of day, to feel serious and thoughtful. The good old man was taking his walk that he might indulge such feelings, and be happy in thinking of God and of his goodness. He delighted to walk in the grave-yard, among the tombs, and meditate on religious things. He could look around and think on the shortness of life, and raise his thoughts from this world to that which he felt was soon to be his home. Supported by his staff, with feeble steps he walked over the sods which covered many that were once his beloved



hearers, until he came to the spot where lay buried his wife and three lovely daughters. The good clergy-



man leaned upon his staff, and bent over these graves, and was just marking out by their side the spot where he hoped shortly to lie in peace, when

he was startled by the sobs of a child. He turned about, and at a little distance, beheld a lovely little white-headed boy, who was kneeling and sobbing over the grave of his father, who had lately been buried there. With feelings of tenderness and grief, the good man went to the weeping child, and raised him up from the ground, and kissed him. He saw that his face was pale and sorrowful through grief, and that his bright blue eyes were swollen by weeping. He sat down with him beside the grave, and tried to comfort him.

“O sir,” said the child, “let me cry for my father. He lies deep in that grave. They tell me that he will never again be my father. I shall

never see him any more; and he will never kiss me as he used to do. Oh, if he would once more be my father, I would never again offend him. But they say he is dead! O, I would sit here and cry all night—I would never stop, if it would make my poor father come to me! But he will not come; for a few days before they put him in the grave, he called me to him, and told me he was going to leave me, and I should never have a father any more; and he stroked my hair with his sick hand, and told me that when he was buried in the ground, I must be a good boy and love God. O my poor, good father.”

The good minister could not help shedding tears at seeing the sorrow

of this orphan child. He placed his hand in his, and tried to console him. After he had quieted his grief, he spoke of God, and told him that he was a father who would never forsake him. He told him that death was a long sleep; but that the voice of God will one day awake the dead; and that, after a great while, he and his father would both arise from the grave; and that if he was good and tried to serve God, he would go with his father to heaven: and because Jesus Christ died for sinners, God will be merciful to such as trust in Jesus, and do his will; and they will be with him for ever, praising and loving the great Father of all. He told how it happened that every

body must die, and made him understand that it was on account of sin.

He then told him that every body had sinned against God; and for this sin was obliged not only to die, but also to be punished after death; and then told him how he might be saved from punishment by Jesus Christ. He next strove to fix upon the little boy's mind, that he was born to love and serve God, and to be happy with him in the world to come. "And now," said he, "my dear little boy, you have indeed lost a tender father; but I have been trying to point out to you another Father, who has promised never to forsake the poor orphan."

"But," says the child, "what is it to be an orphan?"

"It is to be left without parents while we are yet children."

"I think I understand; but what is a poor orphan?"

The clergyman replied, "It is a child that is left without property as well as without parents. You are a poor orphan; and I hope that God will be your father."

"I hope so too," said the little child; "for I want a father to take care of me."

"Well; if you wish God to be your father, you must try to please him. You must be careful to do nothing that he has forbidden, and to love him more than you love any thing

else. And you must pray to God to take care of you and teach you how to live a pious life. If you will kneel down with me, I will pray for you."

The child immediately knelt down by the grave of his father, and the clergyman knelt with him, and prayed to God that he would provide for the little orphan, and take care of him, and make him a good boy.

It was now dark, except what light was afforded by the bright twinkling of the stars. As they left the graveyard, the minister directed the attention of the child to those shining worlds, and told him they were the works of God; and was highly pleased when he heard him exclaim, "My father made them."

He led the orphan to his home, and resolved to adopt and make him his own child. He became a father to him, and the little boy began to be happy again. But it was not long before the minister was laid upon a sick bed. He grew more and more sick, till at last his friends gave up all hopes of his recovery. The poor child watched over him with the affection of a son, till he saw his friend breathe his last. The good old man who had so long spent his time in worshipping his God, now left his earthly trials, and went into the presence of the same God he delighted to serve.

At the death of the clergyman, the little boy was again left destitute.



His new father was dead ; and every other person soon forgot his sorrows and his situation. Many who saw him, and knew that he was without friends, felt compassion for him ; they pitied him ; “hoped he would be provided for ;” and that was all ;—they did nothing themselves to comfort him or provide for his wants. Many a time he grieved that he was friendless in the world, and the big tear would gush from his eyes and roll down his cheek ; and often would he go to the grave of his kind friend the minister, and sit there, and weep, and think how very good he had been to him, a poor orphan boy.—Why did not some kind Sunday School teacher find him out and take care of him ?

But God was watching over him; and proved that he is kind to the destitute, and will provide for the fatherless. This poor friendless boy was placed in many situations, passed through many trials, but was always protected through the tender mercy of him who heareth even the "young ravens when they cry."

At the age of sixteen, he began to think more seriously about his duty towards God, and found out that he had not loved him as he was commanded to do in the Holy Bible. He thought of the time that he had spent with the good minister, and of his advice, his prayers, and his wishes. He remembered that the pious man had told him that he was born to love

God and to serve him. He knew that he had not loved him as much as he loved other things, and that he had not tried to please him in every thing that he had done. And then he determined he would live no longer in that sinful way ; but would try all his lifetime afterwards to do those things which would be pleasing in the sight of God ; and that he would love him more than he loved all other things. And as he knew that his heart was very wicked, he prayed to God that he would give him a new heart, and teach him how to live a holy life. He did right when he asked God to help him to be good ; for God has promised to help all who will come unto him and ask him to do so for the sake of

Jesus Christ, his Son. God sent his Holy Spirit to guide him, and he was soon able to give his heart to the Saviour, who came into the world to suffer and die for sinners. He found that he loved him, and that he was willing to trust him to save his soul from sin, and from its punishment in the world to come. *Here was a FRIEND indeed!*

Soon after this he determined to become a preacher of the gospel. Some good people, who wish to see more preachers, were very glad to hear of this; and offered to help him. They sent him to school, and then to a college; and now he is studying those things that will fit him to preach according to the bible. And it is

hoped that this orphan may hereafter be known as a missionary of Christ



Jesus our Lord, among the heathens who have never heard about God and Jesus Christ. For it is his purpose to spend his days among those who worship idols; and he means to devote his time in teaching them about

the true God. Thus he may be the means of leading a great many of those guilty and ignorant people to give up their idolatry, and worship the great God who made them, and keeps them alive. So we see that the fatherless may have a father in heaven, who will take care of them, and provide for their wants, and enable them to do a great deal of good.

What better friend can a child have than a Father in Heaven! Seek him with all your heart, and you shall find Him and enjoy Him for ever.

We shall now let you see some of the rules which this little boy made for himself when he was eleven years old.

“The first day of the week is the

Lord's day. I must not work or play on this day, for that would be to break the Lord's day. May God help me, who am but a child, to keep this day as a good child ought to keep it.

“I must think of this, That God is at all times near me; He sees all my deeds, and knows all my heart.

“O Lord, guide my heart by thy grace, for it is prone to stray from the right path.

“I must beg of God that he would give me grace to do his will at all times, that I may serve him with a pure heart, and a right mind.

“O how I ought to love God, whose love to me is so great! I must have gone to hell, if He had not sent his dear Son into the world to die on the

cross for the sins of men, that we might be made good and go to God.

“What a bad heart I must have, if I do not love and fear God! and what a bad child must I be, if I do not mind what His word says to me! For He made me, and he feeds me from day to day. I ought to hate sin, which God hates, and love to do the thing which is right.

“I ought to love God with my whole heart, and to thank him at all times; to put my whole trust in him, and to serve him all the days of my life.

“Plant thy fear, O Lord, in my heart, that it may be a guide to my youth.

“Guard thou my heart, O Lord,



lest it grow proud; keep thou the door of my mouth, lest my lips speak not the truth.

“I must take care to keep in mind those things which I have been told.

“When I rise out of my bed, I must first think of God, and be sure to thank him for his care of me while I slept in the night past, and pray that he would guide me in all my ways, and keep me from harm all the day.

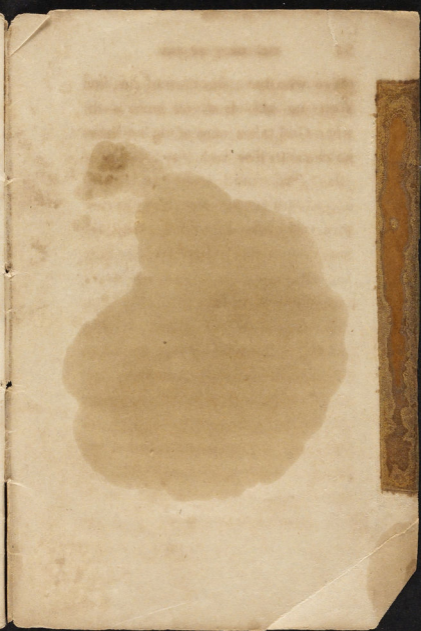
At night too, when I go to rest, I must be sure to kneel down and lift up my heart to God, and thank him for his care of me all the past day.

“I ought to pray that the Lord would give me rest, and guard me all the night from harm while I sleep.

“I must pray that he would bless

those who have the care of me, and keep me safe from all harm:—for when God takes care of us, we have no cause to fear

THE END



ATTRACTIVE AND USEFUL  
**BOOKS FOR BOYS,**

PUBLISHED BY THE  
**American Sunday-School Union,**

*No. 146 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.*

- The Good Son. 72 pp. 14 cents.  
Robert Hamet, the Lame Cobbler. 14 cents.  
The Martyr Missionary of Erromanga; or,  
The Life of John Williams, who was murdered in one of the  
South Sea Islands. 270 pp. 40 cents.  
Travels about Home. 2 vols. 36 cents.  
Letters to a Younger Brother. 25 cents.  
The Harvey Boys: illustrating the Evils of  
Intemperance and their Remedy. 21 cents.  
Life of Washington, new edition. Illustrated  
with fine steel and lithographic engravings. 37 cents.  
The House of Refuge; or, The Story of  
Archibald Thompson. 16 cents.  
The Infidel Class: a Sequel to the above.  
18 cents.  
The Silver Dollar. 72 pp. 14 cents.  
Reuben Kent at School; or, Influence as it  
should be. 87 pp. 4 plates. 20 cents.

BRANCH DEPOSITORIES:

147 Nassau Street, New York; 9 Cornhill, Boston;  
103 Fourth Street, Louisville; 80 Chestnut Street, St. Louis.