

THE
HISTORY
OF
ANN LIVELY,
AND
HER BIBLE.



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SHOULD you like to hear about little Ann Lively and her Bible? Come, then, and be very attentive to what I say; for when I tell a story, I do not like to see children looking about them, and thinking of something else. I must have their attention, or cannot consent to tell my story.



When Ann Lively was a very little girl, she used to sit on my knee, and show me A B C and the rest of her letters. I found it very easy to teach her to read, for she tried to remember all I told her. When she grew older, she used to stand by my chair and read to me very prettily, and always put by her books carefully when she had done.



Ann was so attentive, and took so much pains to improve, that I gave her a very neat little Bible. It was bound in blue leather, and the leaves were gilt on the edges. I gave her this book for her own, because I was sure she would take care of it. She asked her mother for a piece of cloth that evening, and made a case to keep it in.



Ann took great care of her Bible ; when she had done reading, it was always put by very carefully on a shelf in her room. She used to read in it every day, and prayed to God to enable her to understand what she read. I soon found she liked to hear about the Saviour ; for she felt that she could not be happy unless she loved him.



She felt that there was no other way to be happy, because her little heart was inclined very often to do what is not right. This is the case with you, my dear children, as well as with Ann Lively; but the Holy Spirit can give each of you a new heart, and cause you to love what is right and good.



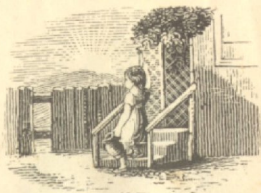
I think Ann soon began to understand what the Bible told her about Christ, and to love him. People are always ready to talk about what they like best, and I found Ann liked to talk about the Saviour. This was because she wished to love him and serve him: she desired to be like Mary, who sat at his feet.



We used to talk very often about Christ, and what he told his disciples. Ann desired to serve him, and he was pleased to give her grace to do so. She reminded me of little Samuel, of whom it is written, that "he grew before the Lord, and was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men." You will not wonder to hear that every body loved her.



Some time afterwards I went to a place a great way off, and it was uncertain when I should return. The day before I went I gave Ann several pretty books, which told her about children and young people who loved the Saviour. I will not stop to tell you their names, but I dare say you have seen some of them.



I did not return till the next year. When I came back, you may be sure I asked about Ann: I was sorry to find that her friends could not give quite so good an account of her as I wished to hear. I do not mean, that they complained of her, but they did not think her quite so good as she used to be. I was sorry to hear this; and as she was in her own room, I went up stairs to see her.



When I opened the door, I was much pleased to find her at prayer. I waited till her prayer was ended, and then asked her how she did, and if she liked the books I had given her. She told me she had read them, and was much pleased with them and hoped she should be a better girl.



The books were put on her shelves, and I was pleased to see that they had been read, though they had not been much soiled, nor had the corners of the leaves been turned down. But on the top shelf lay her little Bible, and I was quite sorry to observe it covered with dust. I could see that it had not been out of its case for some time; it looked as if it had not been opened for a month.



“Ann,” said I, “how is this? I am afraid you do not read in your Bible every day, as you once did.”
“No, ma’am,” she said, “I read the books you gave me instead. They are very good little books, and tell about Christ, and how we are to love him, and that we cannot be happy unless we do so; and I read them instead of my Bible.”



“ Oh, Ann,” said I, “ now I do not wonder that you are not quite so good a girl as you used to be. It is not only necessary to know what the Bible teaches us, but we must keep it in our minds. The Psalmist says, ‘ Through thy precepts, I get understanding ; therefore I hate evere false way.’ If we neglect to make God’s holy word our daily study, we must expect his precepts will be forgotten.”



I told her it was very right to read other good books, and we should be thankful that so many are now written for children; yet we must not neglect God's holy word.

I am glad to say, that Ann attended to what I said. She is now grown up, and it may be said of her, as it was of Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."



Oh how I love thy holy law !
'Tis daily my delight ;
And thence my meditations draw
Divine advice by night.

My waking eyes prevent the day
To meditate thy word ;
My soul with longing melts away
To hear thy gospel, Lord.