

**A MANUAL FOR THE RELIGIOUS
AND MORAL INSTRUCTION
OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE
NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL**

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A Manual for the Religious and Moral Instruction of Young Children in the Nursery and Infant School by Samuel Wilderspin & T. J. Terrington

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SAMUEL WILDERSPIN & T. J. TERRINGTON

**A MANUAL FOR THE RELIGIOUS
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A
MANUAL,
FOR
THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL INSTRUCTION
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IN THE
NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL;

BY SAMUEL WILDERSPIN,

ORIGINATOR OF THE SYSTEM OF INFANT TRAINING; AND

T. J. TERRINGTON,

SECRETARY TO THE HULL INFANT SCHOOL SOCIETY.



Speaking the truth in love.—Eph. iv. 15.

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PREFACE.

RELIGIOUS Education is the most important part of instruction, and pure religious principles the only true foundation of right action. To this effect I have fully expressed myself in my other publications; and have always endeavoured to provide for such instruction in the numerous schools that I have organised, by furnishing an ample supply of select portions of Scripture illustrated by coloured plates. These pictures are of great importance in educating the very young, as they win the attention, and give more clear ideas. They chiefly consist of the miracles and parables of our Saviour, to which simple histories from the Old Testament are added, together with the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, and Apostles' Creed. Select hymns from Watts, Jane Taylor, and others, I have been accustomed to teach; but it appeared to me that a series more simple in style and encouraging in sentiment was much wanted. It should always be our endeavour to impress upon the young mind a high notion of the happiness of true religion, the purity of the Christian character, and the greatness and goodness of God. To lead up infant minds to Him, through the works of creation, I have ever found one of the most effectual modes of instruction. Simple hymns, level to their unfolding understandings, they learn with ease; and it is hoped that several such will be found in this Manual. I first became acquainted with Mr. Terrington, who has assisted me in this work, by being invited over to Hull, to re-organise and train two infant schools which had been established on my plans about eighteen years, and this intercourse led to conversations on the subject of religious education, in which our views very closely coincided; and we therefore determined to unite our efforts for the production of the present work. A large portion of the pieces are by him, as he could write verse with greater facility—but these, for sentiment and style, have my most cordial approval, and long experience leads me to suppose that they are well adapted to the tender mind of a little child. We cannot present truth to it in a too simple, plain, and encouraging manner, or too soon make known the elementary and fundamental truths of Christianity—redemption and sanctification—in their *practical* bearings. It must however be constantly borne in mind that an overdoing is frequently an undoing, and that a little distinctly understood is far better than much held unintelligibly. The following hymns can be read to children, and some committed to memory by dictation, and sung. Singing is a great aid to instruction, especially in an infant school. The same can be done with the moral songs, and children can have them explained, and be questioned upon them. In the "Practical Religious lessons" it is attempted to give an out-

line of religion, so as to furnish a clear idea of its true nature. These may be read over from time to time, and proper questions asked. A text or two can occasionally be learnt by heart, and simple explanation given. The whole should be done with sincerity and reverence, equally distant from levity and from austerity or gloom; and with a simple dependence on the Divine blessing.

In presenting this little volume to the Christian public I have had but one object in view, and that is to please and benefit little children. I have spent no inconsiderable portion of my life amongst them; and I think I know their wants, their wishes, and their capabilities. I have entered into my fourth apprenticeship in their service; and much, very much pleasure I have had in working for them. It is true I have not always had my path strewn with roses, but have had much bitter with the sweet. I have met with great opposition, traduction, and slander, especially with respect to religious principles. Bearing distinctly in mind the express precept to "do good unto all men," I have, in such a charitable work as that of taking young children from the haunts of vice and misery, and placing them under kindly and virtuous discipline, always been ready to give my assistance to any who wished to avail themselves of my plans and long experience; this, perhaps, in a world rather prone to judge uncharitably, may in part have given occasion to misrepresentation. As far as a work intended for the young can make them known, the present may show my fixed religious principles; and, to put the matter in a clearer light, I may also add that I am a member of the Established Church, worship within her walls, communicate at her table, and am instructed by her ministers. Since the annexed Essay was written, in the various sentiments of which I fully agree (except those which relate to myself), great and important events bearing on religious welfare have taken place, and deep interest been excited; but I hope and trust the Providence of God will overrule all to the advancement of pure and practical Christian piety.

I have often regretted that I had not the means to erect a good establishment of my own, wherein I might devote the rest of my life to superintending the instruction of teachers. I never despair, but always hope for change of circumstances. The moral training and religious education of the infant poor is a subject of National importance, and I therefore hope that the labours of my life will not be lost. Should the present volume meet with a favourable reception, it will then be in our power to improve and enlarge it.

SAMUEL WILDERSPIN.

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