

Junior Department

Conducted by REV. S. T. BARTLETT, Colborne, Ont.
 Visited in charge of the Junior League section of
 General Sunday School and Epworth League Board. He
 invites correspondence from all Junior League workers to
 add interest to this Department of the ERA.

The Year of Our Lord

"Dear mother, you call her the Happy
 New Year—
 Is her home in the heavens close by?
 And 'The year of our Lord's' was she
 lingering near
 When the Christ-child came down from
 the sky?
 Did she watch in the manger
 The sweet baby stranger,
 And join in the song of the glad angels,
 when
 They sang, 'Peace on earth, and good
 will unto men'?"

She waited, she lingered for one little
 week,
 To see the world welcoming Him,
 To see how the wise men His cradle would
 seek,
 Whose glory no midnight can dim;
 Then the great angels came,
 With trumpet and flame
 Her holy new name to pronounce and
 record;
 Behold her—the Happy New Year of our
 Lord!

They hide in the heavens—God's beauti-
 ful years!
 They pass on beyond us, unseen;
 But the cry of the soul for Christ's com-
 ing he hears,
 He knows what its faint whispers mean,
 He charms away sadness,
 And brings love and gladness;
 All the years are our Lord's, since to
 save us he came
 To each other and us they repeat his
 dear name.

One blessed old year brought him hither
 to earth,
 And all the years since have been new;
 For all the world was created again by
 his birth,
 And all hearts in his presence grow
 true.
 The dear Christ has come
 To make with us his home,
 Oh, sing with us, angels! we strike the
 same chord—
 Every happy New Year is the year of our
 Lord!

—Lucy Larcum.

Weekly Topics

THOUGHT FOR JANUARY—"God's CARE."

Jan. 14.—"Boys and Girls."—Zech. 3. 1-5.

Does God care for little children? Are boys and girls of value in His sight? Does He look upon the young with pleasure or favor? These questions the Bible definitely and directly answers with an emphatic "Yes!" The picture drawn in our lesson says that "the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." There was to be a place for the children in the restored Jerusalem. The boys and girls were to be numerous and prominent in the social life of the city. What does this mean to-day. (1) It shows us that God has a place for the children. (2) That the innocent and healthy recreations of the young are pleasurable in His sight. (3) That the influences of the city streets ought to be safe and wholesome for the young. All of these propositions may be thought out and demonstrated at length as deemed best by the leader, e.g., let some one be set to work to collect a number of Scripture passages that show God's interest in and care for the boys and girls. Such

references as the following will be in point: Gen. 18, 19, where God spoke of His confidence in Abraham that he would bring up his children to keep the Divine commandments; Deut. 6, 7, where Moses commands the fathers to instruct the children in the Word of God; Deut. 11, 21, where the promise is made to the children who are true to God; Josh. 4, 22, where the children are to be reminded of God's great mercy in the past; Ps. 34, 11, where the children are especially invited to receive instruction; Ps. 78, 4, 5, 6, where the young are included in the covenants of promise; Prov. 17, 6, where the blessing of children is spoken of. The New Testament contains many such passages as Matt. 18, 10, 14; Acts 2, 39, etc., in which it is clearly shown that God has the little ones under His guardianship. The lesson on the young is to love and trust God as their Heavenly Father in return for His love for them, and for the adults it is to consider the needs of the children in the light of responsibility to God for their proper nurture and care. Our second proposition suggests that all that contributes to the happiness and well-being of the children is pleasurable in God's sight. Let the children remember that they can play for the glory of God as well as work for it. The recreations of childhood and youth should assist in their culture as well as their prayers. There is a time for a boy to play as well as to pray. But his play should always be right as to time, place, spirit, and influence. It should always help him and never harm others. There are no such happy scenes on earth as the innocent pleasures of childhood, and he must be a very sour or crabbed individual indeed who thinks of God as displeased with such scenes. Let the juniors learn that everything that will help build up a healthy body, keep a clear mind, and develop wholeness of character do no injury to others is good and commendable in the sight of God. Our third statement in relation to the city streets will provoke thought. The streets are not now safe for the children. Why? Simply because the influences of sin are very pronounced. In the ideal city provision for the safeguarding of the children will be made. For the present we lament the defilements that our children must see and hear in many public places. The remedy is not easy. Parents must ever have their children under their eye, know where they are, how they spend their time, where they take their recreations, and guard them from the too common evils of society. The summary of the teaching for to-day is briefly: Give the children a place. Share in their recreation. Be interested in their general welfare. Guard them from evil influences. Value them as belonging to the family of the loving Heavenly Father, and unite them in His fear and service. It ought to make every boy and girl proud to think that God cares for them. This thought should be a great inspiration to each one to make the life clean and noble in His sight. (Impress the principles of the Pledge in closing this meeting.)

Jan. 21.—"Times of Trouble." Gen. 21. 14-20.

The story of Ishmael can only be told in brief here. For a long time, Ishmael had been the only son of Abraham. His mother was Hagar, an Egyptian woman. According to the custom of the times, Abraham had more than one wife. Sarah, his wife, had no child; but according to promise Isaac was born to her. Isaac and Ishmael then grew up together, Isaac being of course the younger. Sarah was angry at Hagar, who was her maid, because she saw Ishmael mocking her son Isaac. She demanded of Abraham that both Hagar

and Ishmael be sent away. With reluctance Abraham sent them into the wilderness. God promised to care for Ishmael and make him the father of many people. So the mother, Hagar, and the son, Ishmael, wandered away into the wilderness. When their little supply of water was all gone the two outcasts began to be very thirsty and faint. Hagar made the boy lie down under a shrub which grew by the way, and in despair turned herself away from him, for she could not bear to see him die. She cried bitterly over the lad. But he did not die. God had promised to take care of him, and he heard the voice of the lad as he lay there parched with thirst. The angel spoke to the mother and cheered her up. He also showed her a spring of water. Both were refreshed from it. Their water-bottle was re-filled at the spring, and they were strong again to endure their hardships. God was with the lad, and he grew to be a man, and by and by he married a wife out of his mother's country, Egypt, and had twelve sons, who were great men. They lived in tents, moved from place to place, and their descendants became very numerous and powerful. Ishmael lived to be a very old man, being 137 years old when he died. From the story thus briefly told several lessons may be drawn, e.g., God's promise; the lad's cry; the mother's extreme grief; the Divine rescue; God is always true to his word. If we call upon him in our need he will help and deliver us. To have Him with us is to find every need met when other help seems powerless to assist us. If we call upon him he will prove his promise true, and throughout his life he will be our best friend. (If deemed wise, the superintendent will find abundant opportunity from the story to warn against jealousy and strife at home. Children in one home should dwell together in peace and unity. Only as they "love one another" and are mutually helpful will they have the strong plea for domestic peace, founded on mutual affection.)

Jan. 28.—Special Patriotic Service in Memory of Queen Victoria. Prov. 31. 28-31.

On January 22, 1901, in Osborne House, Isle of Wight, this good Queen died. Our boys and girls should be well acquainted with the main facts of her long and glorious reign, and should be taught to hold her memory in highest esteem. For this purpose the memorial service of to-day is planned. The principal facts in connection with her life are here given; but we suggest that a number of short papers be asked for from the most advanced of the juniors on such subjects as "The Queen's family," "The Queen as a mother at home," "The influence of the Queen as a woman," "The facts of where she was born and where she died," "The British nation always love her memory?" "What we owe to the example of Queen Victoria," etc. Add as many unusual features to your service in the way of song and story as possible, place the dates and facts given in the Kanferton poster, on the blackboard, and have all memorize as many of them as possible. Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empress of India, was the only child of Edward, Duke of Kent (fourth son of George III.). She was born in Kensington Palace, on 24th, 1819. The Queen's father died when she was an infant only eight months old. Her mother, the Duchess of Kent, brought up the little girl with admirable care and prudence. As a child the young Princess learned the lesson of reverence and respect, was ship, and gave early evidence of Christian character. When she was only 15 years old, her uncle, William IV., died, on June 20th, 1837, and she was made Queen. She was crowned Queen at Westminster, June

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